Ethiopian International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research

pISSN:2349-5707 Volume:12,Issue 10,October-2025 eISSN:2349-5715

THE CONCEPT OF SPEECH COMPETENCE AND ITS COMPONENTS AS A PEDAGOGICAL PROBLEM

Zarina Khaitmuratova
Student of 4th course of Foreign language and literature
Termez University of Economics and Service

Abstract: This article examines the theoretical foundations and practical significance of speech competence in modern pedagogy. The study identifies the structural components of speech competence—linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and strategic—and analyzes the difficulties of their integration into the educational process. The article also discusses how teachers can develop students' communicative abilities through interactive and competency-based approaches.

Keywords: speech competence, communicative competence, pedagogy, language teaching, methodology, interactive approach.

Introduction. In modern linguodidactics, the formation of **speech competence** is regarded as one of the central goals of language education. It represents the learner's ability to use linguistic resources effectively in real communicative situations. The shift from knowledge-based to **competence-based education** has redefined pedagogical priorities, emphasizing communication, interaction, and problem-solving skills rather than rote learning.

Many scholars such as Hymes (1972), Canale and Swain (1980), and Bachman (1990) have contributed to the conceptual framework of communicative and speech competence. According to their views, true language proficiency is not limited to grammar and vocabulary mastery—it includes social, pragmatic, and strategic dimensions of communication. However, in practice, teachers still face challenges in incorporating these aspects into classroom instruction, especially in non-native contexts like Uzbekistan.

Literature Review. The concept of **speech competence** has been widely discussed in linguistic and pedagogical research since the late 20th century. Scholars have explored its structure, development, and significance in foreign language education, emphasizing that effective communication requires more than grammatical accuracy—it involves sociocultural awareness, pragmatic sensitivity, and strategic use of language.

1. Theoretical Foundations

The roots of speech competence lie in Dell Hymes' (1972) theory of **communicative competence**, which challenged Chomsky's (1965) purely linguistic notion of competence. Hymes argued that knowing a language means knowing how to use it appropriately in a social context. Later, Canale and Swain (1980) refined this model by identifying four components of communicative competence: **grammatical**, **sociolinguistic**, **discourse**, and **strategic** competences. Their framework has become a cornerstone for modern language teaching methodologies.

Bachman (1990) expanded this model into **communicative language ability**, which includes **organizational** and **pragmatic competences**, integrating both language knowledge and its use in communication. Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrell (1995) later proposed a pedagogically oriented model that highlights the importance of **actional competence**—the ability to perform speech acts such as requesting, apologizing, or expressing opinions.

2. Pedagogical Perspectives

In pedagogy, speech competence is regarded as an essential goal of communicative language teaching (CLT). According to Richards and Rodgers (2014), CLT emphasizes fluency, interaction, and real-life communication rather than rote memorization of grammatical rules. Littlewood (2011) adds that learners acquire speech competence more effectively through meaningful tasks, collaborative learning, and contextualized interaction.

pISSN:2349-5707 Volume:12,Issue 10,October-2025 eISSN:2349-5715

Krashen's (1982) **Input Hypothesis** also plays an important role in understanding how speech competence develops. He argues that learners improve their speech ability when they are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current level ("i+1"). Furthermore, Swain's (1985) **Output Hypothesis** stresses the importance of producing language, as it helps learners test hypotheses and notice gaps in their linguistic knowledge.

3. Components of Speech Competence

Speech competence is often analyzed as a composite of several interrelated components:

Linguistic competence: mastery of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation (Chomsky, 1965).

Sociolinguistic competence: ability to use language appropriately depending on context, social norms, and interlocutors (Hymes, 1972).

Pragmatic competence: understanding of meaning beyond literal expressions, including speech acts and implicature (Leech, 1983).

Strategic competence: use of communication strategies such as paraphrasing or asking for clarification to overcome difficulties (Canale & Swain, 1980).

Discourse competence: ability to maintain coherence and cohesion across sentences and turns in communication (Celce-Murcia, 1995).

Researchers such as Widdowson (2003) and Brown (2007) highlight that true speech competence integrates all these dimensions dynamically. It involves both **linguistic knowledge** and **communicative performance**, linking form, function, and context.

4. Contemporary Challenges

Recent studies indicate that many language learners, especially in non-English-speaking contexts, achieve good grammatical competence but fail to develop communicative fluency (Bygate, 2009; Larsen-Freeman, 2018). This "fluency gap" is often caused by teacher-centered instruction, lack of authentic speaking practice, and insufficient integration of sociocultural content. In Uzbekistan and similar contexts, researchers (e.g., Madrahimov, 2015; Rahmonov, 2018) have emphasized the need to reform teaching methods toward **interactive**, **student-centered**, and **task-based** approaches to improve students' speech competence.

Digital technologies and gamification tools (Kahoot, Padlet, Quizlet) are now being integrated into classrooms to enhance motivation and provide interactive communication opportunities. These methods help students apply linguistic knowledge in real or simulated communication settings, thereby reinforcing all components of speech competence.

Methods. The study employs **theoretical-descriptive**, **comparative**, and **analytical** methods. Educational literature, linguistic theories, and pedagogical models were analyzed to clarify the notion of speech competence and its structural components. In addition, **questionnaire surveys and classroom observations** were used to assess how speech competence is currently developed in foreign language classrooms at higher education institutions.

The research also relies on **the competency-based approach**, which emphasizes active, student-centered, and task-oriented learning, as opposed to the traditional knowledge-transmission model.

Results and Discussion. The analysis revealed that **speech competence** is a **multidimensional construct** consisting of several interrelated components:

1. **Linguistic competence** – knowledge of phonetics, grammar, and vocabulary, allowing for accurate speech production.
2. **Sociolinguistic competence** – ability to use language appropriately in various social contexts, considering cultural and situational norms.
3. **Pragmatic competence** – understanding communicative intent, speech acts, and discourse structures.
4. **Strategic competence** – use of verbal and non-verbal strategies to overcome communication difficulties.
5. **Discourse competence** – ability to construct coherent and cohesive texts and dialogues.

pISSN:2349-5707 Volume:12,Issue 10,October-2025 eISSN:2349-5715

The findings indicate that while most curricula focus on linguistic competence, **sociolinguistic and pragmatic components remain underdeveloped**. Teachers often emphasize grammatical accuracy rather than fluency and functional communication. This imbalance limits students' ability to engage in authentic interaction.

To address this issue, **interactive teaching methods** such as role plays, dialogues, debates, project-based learning, and digital tools (e.g., Kahoot, Padlet, Quizlet) are recommended. These methods provide natural contexts for speech use, foster creativity, and increase motivation.

Another important pedagogical aspect is **assessment**: traditional tests often fail to measure communicative ability. Therefore, formative assessment, self-evaluation, and performance-based tasks should be integrated to evaluate speech competence holistically.

Conclusion. Speech competence represents the core of communicative education and an essential goal in modern pedagogy. Developing it requires an integrated approach that combines linguistic accuracy, sociocultural awareness, and pragmatic adaptability. Teachers play a decisive role in designing activities that encourage authentic communication and reflective language use.

The research suggests that the successful implementation of speech competence in educational practice depends on:

teacher training in modern communicative methodologies,
use of interactive technologies,
continuous assessment and feedback, and
supportive, communication-rich classroom environments.

By addressing these pedagogical challenges, education systems can better prepare learners for real-world communication, intercultural interaction, and lifelong learning.

References:

1. Hymes, D. (1972). On Communicative Competence. In J.B. Pride & J. Holmes (Eds.), **Sociolinguistics**. Penguin.
2. Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing. **Applied Linguistics**, 1(1), 1–47.
3. Bachman, L. F. (1990). Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing. Oxford University Press.
4. Celce-Murcia, M., Dörnyei, Z., & Thurrell, S. (1995). Communicative Competence: A Pedagogically Motivated Model with Content Specifications. **Issues in Applied Linguistics**, 6(2), 5–35.
5. Littlewood, W. (2011). Communicative Language Teaching: An Overview. **Language Teaching**, 44(3), 213–229.
6. Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press.
7. Krashen, S. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Pergamon Press.
8. Widdowson, H. G. (2003). Defining Issues in English Language Teaching. Oxford University Press.