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THE CONTENT, STRUCTURE, AND DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

The transformation of education in the twenty-first century is characterized by an increasing emphasis on the development of human capital, particularly the enhancement of individuals' intellectual, social, and communicative capacities. In the context of globalization, intensified information exchange, and expanding intercultural interactions, communicative competence has emerged as a critical determinant of both personal and professional success.

In contemporary educational discourse, communicative competence is no longer regarded as a subsidiary skill but rather as a core component of holistic personality development. It encompasses not only the ability to produce grammatically accurate utterances but also the capacity to employ language appropriately and effectively across diverse communicative contexts. Consequently, the cultivation of communicative competence has become a central objective of modern pedagogical practice.

The concept of communicative competence was first introduced by Dell Hymes, who challenged the formalist view of language by emphasizing the importance of sociocultural context in language use. Hymes argued that linguistic knowledge alone is insufficient for effective communication; rather, speakers must also possess the ability to use language appropriately within specific social situations.

Earlier, Noam Chomsky had proposed the notion of "linguistic competence," focusing primarily on the internalized knowledge of grammatical rules. While Chomsky's model significantly contributed to theoretical linguistics, it largely neglected the functional and pragmatic aspects of language use. This limitation prompted subsequent scholars to expand the framework and incorporate sociolinguistic and pragmatic dimensions into the understanding of language competence.

Building upon these foundations, Canale and Swain conceptualized communicative competence as a composite construct comprising multiple interrelated components, including grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and

strategic competences. Their model has been widely adopted and remains influential in both theoretical and applied linguistics. Further refinement was provided by Savignon, who conceptualized communicative competence as a dynamic, context-dependent process that evolves through continuous interaction and experiential learning.

Communicative competence can be defined as the ability to engage in effective and contextually appropriate communication across a range of social and cultural settings. Its content is inherently multidimensional and encompasses several interrelated dimensions.

First, communicative competence involves mastery of linguistic resources, including phonological, lexical, and grammatical systems. These elements constitute the foundational layer of communication, enabling the formulation of meaningful utterances.

Second, it entails the ability to adapt language use to situational variables. Effective communication requires sensitivity to contextual factors such as formality, participant roles, and communicative intent.

Third, communicative competence incorporates sociocultural awareness, which enables individuals to interpret and respond appropriately to social cues, cultural norms, and interpersonal dynamics.

Finally, it includes strategic abilities that allow speakers to compensate for linguistic limitations, manage breakdowns in communication, and maintain interactional coherence.

From a structural perspective, communicative competence is generally understood as comprising several core components:

Linguistic competence refers to knowledge of the formal properties of language, including syntax, morphology, phonology, and vocabulary. It provides the structural basis for communication.

Sociolinguistic competence encompasses the ability to use language in a manner that is socially and culturally appropriate. This includes understanding norms of politeness, register variation, and context-specific language use.

Discourse competence involves the capacity to produce coherent and cohesive spoken or written texts. It ensures logical organization and continuity in communication.

Strategic competence refers to the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies to overcome communication difficulties, enhance clarity, and sustain interaction.

Socio-psychological competence includes interpersonal skills such as empathy, active listening, and emotional intelligence, which are essential for effective

communication and relationship-building.

The development of communicative competence is a gradual and dynamic process that unfolds across several stages.

At the initial stage, learners acquire basic linguistic elements and engage in simple communicative acts. Language use is largely imitative, and communication is limited in scope.

During the intermediate stage, learners expand their linguistic repertoire and begin to express more complex ideas. They demonstrate increased autonomy and participate more actively in communication.

At the advanced stage, individuals achieve a higher level of fluency and flexibility in language use. They can adapt their speech to diverse contexts and exhibit a refined sense of discourse organization.

The professional stage represents the highest level of communicative competence, where individuals are capable of using specialized terminology and engaging effectively in domain-specific communication.

The development of communicative competence necessitates the implementation of innovative and learner-centered pedagogical approaches.

Interactive teaching methods, such as discussions and collaborative learning, foster active participation and enhance communicative engagement. Role-playing activities provide opportunities for experiential learning by simulating authentic communicative situations.

Problem-based learning encourages critical thinking and promotes meaningful interaction among learners. Additionally, the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) facilitates access to diverse communicative environments and supports the development of digital literacy alongside communicative skills.

In conclusion, communicative competence represents a fundamental component of modern education, encompassing linguistic, sociocultural, and psychological dimensions. Its development is essential for enabling individuals to function effectively in an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world.

The formation of communicative competence requires a systematic and integrative approach that combines theoretical knowledge with practical application. Therefore, educational systems must prioritize the development of communicative competence by adopting innovative pedagogical strategies and fostering interactive learning environments.

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