

Components of Developing Discursive Competence in Pre-Service English Language Teachers

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Abstract: This article examines the main components involved in developing discursive competence in pre-service English language teachers. Discursive competence is considered an essential part of communicative competence, as it enables future teachers to produce, organize, interpret, and maintain meaningful spoken and written discourse in various educational and professional contexts. The study highlights the structural, functional, sociolinguistic, strategic, and pragmatic aspects of discursive competence and explains their role in effective language use. Special attention is given to the ability of future teachers to construct coherent and cohesive texts, use appropriate language according to context, and manage interaction successfully in classroom communication. The article also emphasizes that the development of discursive competence contributes to professional readiness, critical thinking, and effective pedagogical interaction. On this basis, the paper underlines the importance of integrating discourse-oriented tasks and interactive methods into teacher education programs.

Keywords: Discursive competence, pre-service English language teachers, communicative competence, discourse, coherence, cohesion, pragmatic competence, strategic competence, language teaching, teacher education.

Introduction: In the modern system of language education, the professional training of future English language teachers requires not only linguistic knowledge but also the development of communicative abilities that enable effective interaction in real educational contexts. Among the various components of communicative competence, discursive competence occupies a central place because it allows individuals to produce coherent, cohesive, and contextually appropriate spoken and written discourse. For pre-service English language teachers, this competence is especially important, as their future professional activity depends on the ability to explain ideas clearly, organize classroom communication, interpret learners' responses, and participate successfully in academic and pedagogical discourse.

Discursive competence is commonly understood as the ability to connect utterances meaningfully and logically in order to create a unified text or conversation. It

involves the use of grammatical, lexical, and semantic means to ensure coherence and cohesion in communication. In addition, discursive competence includes the ability to choose language forms appropriate to a specific communicative situation, maintain interaction, and achieve intended communicative goals. Therefore, it is closely related not only to linguistic competence, but also to pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and strategic competences.

The relevance of this topic is determined by the growing need to prepare competitive and professionally competent English language teachers who can function effectively in diverse academic and social settings. In the process of teacher education, future teachers should be trained to construct meaningful discourse, manage classroom interaction, and adapt their speech to different teaching situations. However, in many cases, insufficient attention is paid to the systematic development of discursive competence in teacher training programs, where greater emphasis is often

placed on grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation.

For this reason, the study of the components of developing discursive competence in pre-service English language teachers is of both theoretical and practical significance. Identifying these components helps clarify the structure of this competence and provides a basis for selecting effective methods, tasks, and activities for its development. This article aims to examine the main components of discursive competence and to highlight their role in the professional formation of future English language teachers.

The concept of discursive competence has been widely discussed by many linguists and methodologists within the broader framework of communicative competence. One of the earliest and most influential models was introduced by Canale and Swain, [4] who identified communicative competence as a complex system including grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse-related aspects. Later, Canale [3] emphasized that discourse competence refers to the ability to combine language forms and meanings in order to produce a unified spoken or written text. This idea laid the foundation for further studies on the importance of discourse in language teaching and teacher education.

According to Celce-Murcia, [5] discourse competence occupies a central position in the structure of communicative competence because it connects all other components. She explains that discourse competence involves the selection, sequencing, and organization of words, structures, and utterances to achieve a meaningful whole. In this sense, coherence and cohesion are viewed as two fundamental characteristics of successful discourse. Cohesion is achieved through grammatical and lexical links, while coherence reflects the logical and semantic unity of ideas within a text or conversation.

Brown [2] also underlines that effective communication is impossible without the ability to create connected discourse. He states that language learners should go beyond the sentence level and learn how to interpret and produce stretches of language appropriate to context. In his view, discourse competence is developed when learners are exposed to authentic communicative tasks that require them to express opinions, maintain conversations, interpret meaning, and organize ideas

logically.

Hymes, [8] who introduced the broader concept of communicative competence, argued that knowing a language means not only knowing its grammatical rules but also knowing how, when, and why to use it appropriately. His perspective greatly influenced the understanding of discourse as a socially and contextually conditioned phenomenon. From this point of view, discursive competence is not limited to text construction alone, but also includes sensitivity to communicative purpose, social context, and participant roles.

Bachman [1] also contributed significantly to this area by relating discourse competence to language use in real-life situations. In his model of communicative language ability, he connected discourse competence with pragmatic and organizational knowledge. He stressed that successful communication requires not only formal accuracy but also the ability to organize messages effectively and interpret them according to context and intention.

Modern researchers in language pedagogy note that discursive competence is especially important for future teachers. Pre-service English language teachers need to master not only everyday communication but also classroom discourse, academic interaction, instructional explanation, and professional dialogue. Scholars emphasize that future teachers should be able to formulate ideas clearly, create logically structured speech, manage interaction, and respond appropriately in various pedagogical situations. Therefore, the development of discursive competence is now considered an important objective in teacher education programs.

Thus, the views of scholars show that discursive competence is a multidimensional phenomenon which combines coherence, cohesion, contextual appropriateness, strategic interaction, and meaningful text construction. Their ideas confirm that the development of this competence is essential for preparing future English language teachers for effective professional communication.

In conclusion, the development of discursive competence is an essential aspect of preparing pre-service English language teachers for effective professional communication. It enables future teachers

to produce coherent, cohesive, and contextually appropriate spoken and written discourse, which is necessary for successful classroom interaction, academic performance, and pedagogical practice. Discursive competence is not limited to the correct use of language forms; it also involves the ability to organize ideas logically, maintain communication, interpret meaning, and adapt speech according to the communicative situation.

The analysis of scholars' views shows that discursive competence is a multidimensional phenomenon closely connected with grammatical, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and strategic competences. Its main components include coherence, cohesion, functional organization of discourse, contextual appropriateness, and interactional management. These components help future teachers communicate more effectively and perform their professional roles with greater confidence and flexibility.

Therefore, teacher education programs should pay special attention to the systematic development of discursive competence through discourse-based tasks, interactive activities, authentic materials, and reflective teaching practices. Strengthening this competence will contribute not only to the language proficiency of future English teachers but also to their overall professional readiness and teaching effectiveness.

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