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FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCY: CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

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Abstract. *The article provides an analysis of existing scientific views on the concept of “foreign language communicative competency” in general and its individual elements in particular. The absence of a unified approach to the content of the concept of foreign language communicative competency, the inconsistency of the content and components of the terminology “competency” and “communicative competency” are substantiated. It is clarified that regarding communication, both the concepts “competence” and “competency” are applied, which can be used either as synonymous terms or have distinct meanings. The main criteria for distinguishing between the terms “competence” and “competency” are defined: the objectivity criterion, behavioral criterion, and activity criterion. The conclusion is drawn that in the context of foreign language communicative competency, it is appropriate to employ a comprehensive approach when differentiating between the concepts of competence and competency.*

Concepts of communicative competency in domestic and foreign scientific literature are analyzed, and the main direction of their evolution is established: the clarification of the structural composition and scope of the concept of communicative competency. The absence of a unified classification of the components of foreign language communicative competency is identified, and differing views on the concepts of language and speech competence are discussed. The use of the term “language competence” as linguistic knowledge and “speech competency” as the practical utilization of linguistic knowledge is proposed.

Author-provided definitions for the terms “objective foreign language competence”, “foreign language communicative competence” and “foreign language communicative competency” are presented. A multi-level structure for the concept of foreign language communicative competency is proposed, consisting of a language component (language competence and speech competency), a sociocultural component (sociocultural competence and competency), and personal and value components. It is concluded that the goal of forming foreign language communicative competency is the development of all its elements.

Key words: *foreign language communicative competency, communicative competency, communicative competence, objective communicative competence.*

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ІНШОМОВНА КОМУНІКАТИВНА КОМПЕТЕНТНІСТЬ: СУТНІСТЬ ТА СТРУКТУРА

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Анотація. У статті представлений аналіз існуючих наукових поглядів на концепт «іншомовної комунікативної компетентності» взагалі та окремі його елементи зокрема. Доведено відсутність єдиного підходу до змісту поняття іншомовної комунікативної компетентності, строкатість змісту та складових елементів термінологічних понять «компетентність» та «комунікативна компетентність». З'ясовано, що по відношенню до комунікативної застосовують як поняття компетентність, так і компетенція, які можуть вживатися як у якості синонімічних понять, так і мати відмінне значення. Визначено основні критерії розмежування термінів компетентність та компетенція: критерій об'єктивності, поведінковий та діяльнісний критерії. Зроблено висновок, що у контексті іншомовної комунікативної компетентності доцільно використовувати комплексний підхід під час розмежування понять компетентність та компетенція. Проаналізовано концепти комунікативної компетентності у вітчизняній та закордонній науковій літературі, встановлено основний напрямок їх еволюції: з'ясування структурного складу та обсягу поняття комунікативна компетентність. Виявлено відсутність єдиної класифікації складових елементів іншомовної комунікативної компетентності, відмінність поглядів на поняття мовної та мовленнєвої компетентності. Запропоновано використання поняття «мовної компетенції» у якості мовних знань, а «мовленнєвої компетентності» як актуалізації мовних знань, їх практичного використання.

Надано авторські визначення понять «об'єктивна іншомовна компетенція», «іншомовна комунікативна компетенція», «іншомовна комунікативна компетентність». Запропоновано багаторівневу структуру концепту іншомовної комунікативної компетентності, елементами якої є мовленнєвий компонент (мовна компетенція та мовленнєва компетентність), соціокультурний компонент (соціокультурна компетенція та компетентність), особистісний та ціннісний компоненти. Зроблено висновок, що метою формування іншомовної комунікативної компетентності є сформованість усіх її елементів.

Ключові слова: іншомовна комунікативна компетентність, комунікативна компетентність, комунікативна компетенція, об'єктивна комунікативна компетенція.

Introduction and current state of the research problem. Proficiency in at least one foreign language is an urgent necessity in today's world, a consequence of ongoing globalization and global integration. Recent conclusions in the fields of pedagogy, psychology, and neuropsychology underscore the exceptional effectiveness of early foreign language acquisition during preschool age. This not only leads to advantages in cognitive development but also allows individuals to reach a level of proficiency in a foreign language equivalent to that of native speakers. The European Union Commission has repeatedly emphasized that ensuring proficiency in at least two foreign languages in early childhood should be a priority for each member country. Since moving towards membership in this organization and seeking to nurture the future's essential skills in its children, contemporary Ukrainian preschool pedagogy has embarked on developing effective methodologies for fostering early foreign language communicative competency in children. Along with that, before devising these methodologies, it is crucial to understand the goals and desired outcomes of this process. A significant positive step in this direction was taken in the Basic Component of Preschool Education in 2021 [1], defining the development of language competency in a foreign language as a variable component of the preschool education standard. However, effective communication in a foreign language goes beyond mere speech and is encompassed by the concept of "foreign language communicative competency."

The concepts of "communicative competency", "competence", and "competency" are widely researched in both domestic and foreign scientific communities by J. Raven, N. Vazirani, D. Moor, N. Lopatynska, M. Golovan, S. Leiko, P. Kolyasa, N. Bibyk, A. Mudryk, O. Ovcharuk, K. Ponomareva, O. Chenusha, A. Bogush, V. Cox, B. Willis, K. Row, D. Haims, H. Widdowson, M. Canale and M. Swain, I. Bim, Y. Schmidt, T. Marchii-Dmytrash, N. Kopylov, Yu. Iashchenko, S. Petrenko, O. Tryfonova, H. Ivanchuk, O. Kaniuk, N. Havrysh and others. A review of the scientific literature reveals the ambiguity and varying content in each component of the concept of foreign language communicative competency. At present, defining the content of the concept of "foreign language communicative competency" and its components is seen as a relevant scientific problem, especially in the field of preschool pedagogy, requiring further investigation.

The purpose and objectives of the study are to refine the definition of "foreign language communicative competency" and identify the structural elements of this phenomenon.

Research methods. During the research, various theoretical methods were employed, including literature and document analysis, a range of general theoretical methods were used: abstraction and concretization, analysis and synthesis, comparison, contrast, structuring, induction, and deduction.

The statement of the main material research. The complexity of defining the content of the concept of foreign language communicative competency can be likened to a snowball effect, where the ambiguity of each element of the concept further complicates the development of a unified scientific position.

Firstly, concerning the term "communicative," there exists a practice of using both "competence" and "competency." The root of this issue in the domestic science is often attributed to inaccuracies in the translation of foreign sources, specifically the words "competence" and "competency" [4, p. 131], due to the existing synonymy between these terms in domestic and foreign explanatory dictionaries [9, pp. 2-4], and taking into the account that the origins of both words trace back to the same Latin word "competentia" [6, p. 290]. Along with that, an analysis of foreign scientific literature reveals a similar

issue abroad. The reason behind this is often attributed to fundamental procedural and philosophical differences among those involved in defining and developing these concepts. These terms are sometimes referred to as “Humpty-Dumpty words” the meanings of which depend on the specific researcher’s interpretation [10, p. 98]. Currently, two approaches can be identified in the relationship between the concepts of “competence” and “competency”: 1) their interchangeability and identity of meaning; 2) differentiation of these terms based on the following criteria.

1. *The criterion of objectivity, in relation to a specific individual* (N. Havrysh, A. Bogush, M. Holovan, S. Leiko), defines competence as including knowledge, a range of issues, and experience that do not relate to a specific individual but are what a person should have for successful performance in a certain type of activity. Competency, on the other hand, pertains to a specific individual and is their integrated characteristic.

2. *The activity criterion*, introduced by N. Homsy, in modern interpretations, distinguishes competence as knowledge possessed by the subject, while competency refers to the actualized, competency applied in action.

3. *The behavioral criterion* (O. Chenusha, A. Bogush, V. Cox) defines competence as knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable an individual to act in standard situations. Competency encompasses both competences and personal characteristics, experience, or is limited to personal qualities, enabling action in non-standard situations.

Taking into account the ambiguity of the content load of the concepts “competence” and “competency”, we share the views of scientists [10, p. 100], according to which the preference for a certain criterion of differentiation between the concepts of “competence” and “competency” depends on the specific context within which these terms are considered. In the context of researching the issue of foreign language acquisition, we consider it appropriate to apply a *comprehensive approach* to distinguish between the concepts of “competence” and “competency”. From a methodological point of view, we believe it is justified to use the term “*objective competence*”, the content of which consists of program requirements that serve as guidelines in teaching. Taking into account the urgent problem of the formation of knowledge and skills of foreign speech in artificial communication conditions, which makes it impossible to use a foreign language in real communication conditions, we consider it necessary to distinguish between “competence” and “competency” from a subjective point of view, the first of which assumes that a person has special language knowledge and primary (non-automated) skills, and the second is the effective implementation of speech based on the use of special knowledge, skills, involvement of personal qualities and experience, value orientations.

Secondly, there is no single approach to the concept of “communicative competency” in scientific literature. The beginning of the scientific investigation of the phenomenon of “communicative competency” was carried out in the late 1960s by D. Hymes, who understood it as language knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge in various communicative situations [8]. Subsequently, the concept of communicative competency evolved and acquired new features. G. Widowson defined communicative competence as knowledge of language and sociolinguistic circumstances, contrasting this concept with the notion of communication ability as the ability to use knowledge as a means of creating meaning in language. M. Cenal and M. Swein understood communicative competence as a system of knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for communication. According to the model of communicative competency or communicative language ability by L. Bachman, its structural elements are language knowledge and strategic

competence. In contemporary domestic scientific thought, it is worth noting the concept of communicative competence by O. Selivanov [7, pp. 230-231].

Thirdly, the aforementioned diversity of views on the concept of communicative competence/competency forms the basis for the existence of various definitions of the concept of foreign language communicative competency. Some researchers (I. Bim, Y. Schmidt) relate this concept to the ability and readiness to communicate with native speakers of a foreign language according to the situation and cultural traditions. Others associate foreign language communicative competency with knowledge and skills (T. Marchiy-Dmytrash). N. Kopylov supports a subjective activity-behavioral approach to the concept of foreign language communicative competency [2, p. 270].

There are various approaches to defining the structural elements of foreign language communicative competence/competency. Currently, most researchers identify language and speech competence/competency within foreign language communicative competency. Some researchers distinguish these concepts as knowledge and their practical use, while others include an activity component in the concept of language competence/competency or refer to it entirely. In our opinion, the resolution of the content of the concepts of language and speech competencies should be sought in the concepts of language and speech. We believe that regarding language, the term “competence” should be used, encompassing knowledge of the language (vocabulary, grammar, phonetics). Speech competency, as a subset of language competence, involves the activation of this knowledge, the practical use of language during communication (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). We also believe that discourse competency, defined as “the ability to logically link sentences to produce coherent speech segments,” is part of speech competency [2, p. 271].

Language, its expressions, and vocabulary contain reflections of the culture of the people who use it. Due to this essential element, sociocultural competency is a part of foreign language communicative competency that involves both the knowledge and practical application of the cultural component of a foreign language in real communicative situations required to engage in the social aspect of language use as linguistic markers of social relationships, levels of politeness, dialects, and accents as markers of belonging to a specific social group [3, p. 62].

Taking into account the analysis provided above, we propose the following author’s definitions for these terms. **Objective Foreign Language Communicative Competence** – the content of programs and program requirements, the attainment of which is the goal of forming foreign language communicative competency. **Foreign Language Communicative Competence** – the linguistic and sociocultural knowledge of a foreign language that an individual possesses. **Foreign Language Communicative Competency** – an integrated quality of an individual, based on linguistic and sociocultural knowledge, skills, and abilities, experience, values related to foreign language communication, general communicative qualities of an individual that mutually activating each other, enable the realization of actual communicative activities with native speakers of a foreign language in accordance with the sociocultural specifics of the foreign language and facilitate the effective achievement of communication goals.

Therefore, we believe that foreign language communicative competency has a structure that includes the following components:

1. **Language Component** (two levels): **The first level** is language competence, which consists of *linguistic knowledge* expressed through phonological-phonetic, lexical, and grammatical components. **The second level** is speech competency, which encompasses

speech skills, abilities, and experience that enable the use of linguistic knowledge in real communicative situations.

2. **Sociocultural Component** (two levels): **The first level** is sociocultural competence, which includes knowledge about non-verbal language, ethnic and social norms, standards, behavioral stereotypes of native language speakers, etiquette, national culture, and its specifics, as well as knowledge about adapting language use to different communicative situations. **The second level** is sociocultural competency, involving the application of sociocultural knowledge in real speech situations, the adaptation of speech to the social context of communication, and consideration of cultural language peculiarities.

3. **Personal Component** – general communicative abilities, manifesting as the capacity to achieve set communication goals through planning, organization, control of speech activities, conflict resolution; the ability to continue communication when linguistic resources are insufficient.

4. **Value Component** – value orientations, views, and convictions regarding the importance and necessity of foreign language communication.

The levels of the first two components of foreign language communicative competency determine the level of proficiency in a foreign language. The development of the language component ensures the formation of a bilingual personality, while the sociocultural component results in a bicultural personality.

Conclusions and perspectives of further researches. Consequently, it has been determined that Foreign Language Communicative Competency is an integrated quality of an individual which enables the realization of actual communicative activities with native speakers of a foreign language. Its structural components are language, sociocultural, personal and value components. In the future, we consider it's relevant to develop methods and techniques of forming foreign language communicative competency in preschool children.

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