

Content, Components And Pedagogical Conditions For Developing Pedagogical Communication Competence In Future English Language Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the theoretical and pedagogical foundations, content, structural components, and pedagogical conditions for developing pedagogical communication competence in future English language teachers. The study is theoretical and conceptual in nature and is based on comparative and content analysis of research on pedagogical communication, communicative competence, teacher professional knowledge, reflective practice, and preservice teacher education. As a result, an authorial definition of pedagogical communication competence of future English language teachers is proposed, and its motivational-value, cognitive, communicative-activity, and reflective-evaluative components are substantiated. The study identifies several pedagogical conditions for its effective development: modelling professionally relevant pedagogical situations, integrating theory with teaching practice, organizing interactive communication activities, providing systematic feedback and reflection, and incorporating digital and intercultural communication experiences into teacher preparation. A four-stage developmental sequence consisting of diagnostic-motivational, cognitive-design, practical-communicative, and reflective-corrective stages is proposed. The findings may serve as a theoretical basis for improving the professional preparation of future English language teachers and for developing diagnostic criteria and teaching technologies aimed at pedagogical communication competence.

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INTRODUCTION

One of the key objectives of contemporary teacher education is to prepare future teachers not only as specialists who possess sound subject knowledge and methodological skills, but also as professionals capable of establishing constructive relationships with learners, listening to their opinions, expressing pedagogical intentions clearly, managing classroom interaction, providing effective feedback, and selecting appropriate communication strategies in various pedagogical and emotional situations.

Pedagogical communication is particularly important in the professional activity of an English language teacher. This is because communication in the English language classroom simultaneously functions as a means of organizing instruction, an object of learning, and an intended outcome of learning. The teacher not only introduces and explains linguistic material but also engages learners in meaningful communication, provides models of interaction, manages question-and-answer exchanges, facilitates cooperation, and responds to learners' linguistic performance through feedback.

The issue of pedagogical communication has long been studied within pedagogy and psychology. V.A. Kan-Kalik viewed pedagogical communication as a system of professional interaction between the teacher and learners and emphasized its communicative, psychological, and organizational functions in the educational process [1].

Pedagogical communication is not merely a process of transmitting information. It incorporates at least three interrelated dimensions: information exchange, interpersonal interaction, and mutual perception. In this regard, teacher–learner communication serves not only as a means of delivering educational content but also as an important factor influencing learners’ self-confidence, motivation, psychological safety, and the overall atmosphere of classroom cooperation.

The theoretical development of the concept of communicative competence is closely associated with D. Hymes. Hymes argued that knowing a language cannot be reduced solely to the ability to construct grammatically correct sentences; it also involves knowing when, where, and how particular linguistic resources should be used appropriately in a specific communicative context [2].

M. Canale and M. Swain further developed this idea by systematizing the grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic dimensions of communicative competence [3]. Although these approaches provided an important theoretical foundation for communicative language teaching, pedagogical communication competence is broader than general communicative competence.

For a teacher, the ability to communicate effectively in English alone is insufficient. Language must be used in accordance with pedagogical purposes. For example, encouraging a learner, managing a disciplinary problem tactfully, simplifying a complex instruction, correcting an error without reducing motivation, facilitating communication among learners, and maintaining a neutral communicative position during conflict all require abilities that go beyond general communicative competence.

D. Aukštikalnė considers teachers’ communicative competence to be an important prerequisite for successful pedagogical communication and emphasizes the interrelationship between verbal and non-verbal communication skills [4].

L.S. Shulman’s concept of teacher knowledge is also significant for a broader understanding of professional competence. Shulman demonstrated that teaching cannot be reduced to subject knowledge alone; teachers need to integrate general pedagogical knowledge, knowledge of learners, contextual knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge [5].

This perspective is equally applicable to the pedagogical communication competence of future English language teachers. Their communicative behaviour should vary depending on learners’ age, proficiency level, emotional condition, the purpose of the lesson, group dynamics, and the specific pedagogical situation. The CEFR Companion Volume conceptualizes the language learner as a social agent and gives particular importance to interaction and mediation alongside reception and production [6]. This approach makes it possible to view the English language teacher not merely as a transmitter of linguistic knowledge but also as a facilitator of meaning-making, cooperation, and mutual understanding among learners. At the same time, although certain aspects of communicative competence are indirectly developed across teacher education courses, pedagogical communication is not always systematically developed as a distinct professional competence. As a result, a gap may arise between theoretical pedagogical knowledge and real classroom communication.

Therefore, the aim of the study is to determine the content of pedagogical communication competence in future English language teachers, to systematize its structural components, and to theoretically substantiate the pedagogical conditions required for its effective development.

The study addresses the following objectives: to clarify the relationship between the concepts of “communicative competence” and “pedagogical communication competence”; to formulate a refined definition of pedagogical communication competence in future English language teachers; to identify its structural components, criteria, and indicators; to determine the pedagogical conditions that contribute to the development of this competence; to propose a staged mechanism for developing pedagogical communication competence.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The present study is theoretical and conceptual in nature. Rather than presenting artificially constructed empirical data, the study focuses on developing a conceptual structure of pedagogical communication competence through the analysis of classical and contemporary academic sources.

The following criteria were used for selecting the literature: direct relevance to pedagogical communication and teachers' communicative competence; contribution to the theoretical foundations of communicative competence; relevance to pre-service teacher education; coverage of reflective practice, microteaching, role-play, and communication training; publication in scholarly journals, academic publishers, or official international organizations. The following research methods were applied:

Theoretical analysis was used to examine scholarly perspectives on pedagogical communication, communicative competence, and teachers' professional competence.

Comparative analysis was employed to distinguish general communicative competence from pedagogical communication competence.

Content analysis was used to identify recurring communication skills, professional qualities, and teacher preparation strategies reported in academic literature.

Systematization and classification were applied to organize the components and indicators of pedagogical communication competence into a coherent framework.

Pedagogical modelling was used to conceptualize the interrelationships among developmental stages and pedagogical conditions.

Generalization enabled the formulation of an authorial definition of pedagogical communication competence based on theoretical and empirical research findings.

Three key concepts were selected as the logical units of analysis: communicative competence → pedagogical communication → professional communicative activity of the future teacher.

This sequence made it possible to interpret pedagogical communication competence not as a simple form of general communication ability, but as an integrative professional quality directed towards specific pedagogical goals, tasks, and situations.

RESULTS

The theoretical analysis demonstrated that “communicative competence” and “pedagogical communication competence” are interrelated but not identical concepts.

Communicative competence, in a broad sense, refers to an individual's ability to communicate effectively in different social contexts, select appropriate linguistic and speech resources, and overcome difficulties that arise during interaction [2; 3]. Pedagogical communication competence, however, places communication within a professional pedagogical framework.

Based on the analysis, the following definition is proposed: Pedagogical communication competence of a future English language teacher is an integrative professional quality that enables the teacher, in accordance with pedagogical goals and communicative situations, to use verbal and non-verbal resources appropriately in English and, when necessary, in the learners' first language; establish constructive cooperation with learners; manage interaction; provide supportive feedback; solve pedagogical-communicative problems; and reflect on the effectiveness of their own communicative behaviour.

This definition contains six essential characteristics:

purposefulness – communication is oriented towards pedagogical objectives;
situational adaptability – communication resources are selected according to the context;

cooperation – the learner is treated as an active participant in the educational process;

management – classroom communication is coordinated intentionally;

feedback – constructive responses are provided to learner performance;

reflection – communication is analysed and improved continuously.

The study identified four interrelated structural components. This component reflects the future teacher's understanding of communication not as a secondary element of

teaching, but as one of the fundamental professional values of pedagogical activity. It includes: respect for the learner's personality; readiness for pedagogical cooperation; empathy; a positive attitude towards communication; adherence to pedagogical ethics; tolerance towards linguistic and cultural diversity; willingness to listen to learners' opinions.

If a future teacher is familiar with communication techniques but does not perceive learners as equal participants in pedagogical interaction, such techniques may become purely formal.

This component refers to the theoretical knowledge necessary for effective pedagogical communication. It includes knowledge of: the nature and functions of pedagogical communication; verbal and non-verbal communication; communication strategies; pedagogical ethics; active listening; questioning techniques; types of feedback; conflict communication; learners' age-related and individual characteristics; intercultural communication; digital communication ethics.

DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that pedagogical communication competence develops from general communicative competence but differs from it because of its explicit professional orientation. The concepts proposed by Hymes [2] and Canale and Swain [3] provide a theoretical basis for understanding how individuals use language appropriately in different contexts. However, communicative appropriateness alone is insufficient for future teachers. Their communicative behaviour must contribute to learner development, correspond to pedagogical ethics, and support educational objectives. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between:

“to communicate effectively” ≠ “to communicate pedagogically effectively.”

The first refers to a general communicative outcome, whereas the second combines communicative and pedagogical effectiveness. Aukštikalnytė [4] regards teachers' communicative competence as a foundation for successful pedagogical communication. The present study extends this idea by conceptualizing pedagogical communication competence as an integrative professional construct that combines values, knowledge, practical activity, and reflection.

The relationship among the four proposed components is also consistent with Shulman's view that teaching requires a complex integration of professional knowledge and reflective judgement [5]. In the preparation of future English language teachers, subject knowledge should therefore undergo the following transformation:

English proficiency → pedagogically appropriate use of English.
In other words, future teachers should not merely know English. They should be able to use it as a means of: explanation; classroom management; encouragement; feedback; mediation; cooperation. The expanded treatment of interaction and mediation in the CEFR Companion Volume [6] also supports this perspective. Mediation, in particular, helps explain the teacher's role in facilitating meaning-making and mutual understanding among learners. Another important finding concerns the connection between theory and practice. Listening to a lecture on pedagogical communication helps a student know about communication. Responding to an unexpected learner reaction in a real classroom, however, requires the ability to communicate pedagogically in practice. These two levels are not identical. Microteaching is one of the strategies that can reduce this gap. Vigh's study with pre-service teachers indicates that microteaching lesson study can help connect theory and practice, develop pedagogical knowledge, and encourage reflective analysis [9].

At the same time, microteaching itself should not be regarded as an end in itself. Its effectiveness is likely to increase when it is organized as: microteaching + observation + evidence-based feedback + reflection + repeated performance.

Research on communication-focused role-play with student teachers has also reported the development of interactional awareness [8]. This supports the assumption that pedagogical communication competence should be developed not only through theoretical courses but also through carefully designed communicative

experience.

The use of role-play in communication skills training has also been documented in other areas of professional education. Its effectiveness is associated with clearly defined objectives, a psychologically safe learning environment, debriefing, and constructive feedback [13].

Recent research also investigates new technological forms of microteaching, including practice in virtual environments [10]. This suggests that digital communication should become part of the content of pedagogical communication competence.

Furthermore, research on microteaching indicates that it may influence not only technical teaching skills but also how future teachers perceive themselves as teachers [12].

On the basis of these findings, the following didactic formula for developing pedagogical communication competence is proposed:
KNOWING → OBSERVING → MODELLING → COMMUNICATING → RECEIVING FEEDBACK → REFLECTING → RE-COMMUNICATING

This sequence emphasizes that communication should not be taught as a fixed set of rules but as a professional activity that develops continuously through experience and reflection.

CONCLUSION

The theoretical and conceptual analysis conducted in the study demonstrates that pedagogical communication competence is an essential component of the professional preparation of future English language teachers.

The following conclusions can be drawn.

First, communicative competence and pedagogical communication competence are not identical concepts. Communicative competence refers to the ability to communicate effectively in different social situations, whereas pedagogical communication competence involves the integration of communication with pedagogical goals, learner development, educational outcomes, and professional ethics.

Second, pedagogical communication competence of future English language teachers is manifested through the integrated functioning of motivational-value, cognitive, communicative-activity, and reflective-evaluative components.

Third, pedagogical communication in English language teaching has distinctive characteristics. Language functions simultaneously as both the means of instruction and the object of learning, while teacher talk, questioning, elicitation, corrective feedback, mediation, and the organization of learner interaction acquire particular importance.

Fourth, the effective development of pedagogical communication competence requires the following conditions:
systematic integration of pedagogical communication into professional teacher preparation; modelling of authentic professional and pedagogical situations; use of role-play, case studies, microteaching, and other interactive technologies; organization of systematic feedback and reflection; development of digital and intercultural pedagogical communication experience.

Fifth, the development of the competence should be organized through the following stages: diagnostic-motivational → cognitive-design → practical-communicative → reflective-corrective. Thus, the main objective in the professional preparation of future English language teachers should not be merely to prepare “a teacher who speaks English well,” but rather to develop “a reflective teacher who can use English effectively as a means of pedagogical communication.” Future empirical research should develop diagnostic instruments based on the proposed components, criteria, and indicators, identify the initial level of pedagogical communication competence among future English language teachers, and experimentally evaluate the effectiveness of specially designed pedagogical technologies.

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