Improving the Methodology of Developing Students' Speaking Competencies in Teaching English

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Sections Info	ABSTRACT
Article history: Submitted: May 30, 2025 Final Revised: June 6, 2025 Accepted: June 13, 2025 Published: June 26, 2025 *Keywords:* Speech competence English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Communicative competence Higher education Methodology	*Objective:* *This study explores the methodological enhancement of developing students' speech competence in the context of teaching English, particularly in alignment with professional communication requirements and global linguistic demands.* *Method:* *The research analyzes a wide range of scholarly literature, identifies common linguistic challenges among students in higher education, and reviews modern approaches to teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The study focuses on theoretical synthesis and qualitative analysis.* *Results:* *The findings reveal that fostering speech competence involves developing communicative abilities through modeling real-life communication, integrating professional terminology, and enhancing classroom interactions. Methodologies grounded in context-specific language use significantly improve students' professional discourse skills.* *Novelty:* *The novelty of the study lies in establishing a direct correlation between speech competence and career-readiness in higher education, highlighting interdisciplinary integration and communicative consciousness as foundational to modern English language pedagogy.*

INTRODUCTION

In the era of globalization, the growing demand for qualified professionals proficient in foreign languages has become increasingly evident across all sectors [1]. Language and linguistic education have emerged as crucial tools for the successful functioning of society, serving as means of communication among specialists from different countries and as integral components of culture [2]. Accordingly, there is a rising demand for learning foreign languages, particularly English along with growing motivation to master them [3].

In the process of developing specific skills and competencies related to their chosen specializations, students' knowledge of foreign languages holds special significance [4]. For young professionals, proficiency in foreign languages ensures greater employment opportunities and enhances their competitiveness in the job market [5]. The global recognition of the importance of language instruction has led to the emergence of specialized language courses, most notably the development of "English for Specific Purposes" (ESP) in the early 20th century in the United Kingdom and the United States [6]. Leading language schools in the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia began offering targeted vocabulary instruction tailored to various professions and launched relevant educational programs. A distinctive feature of professional English programs in countries such as the United States is their close connection to career development [7].

In the development of students' speech competence, the primary goal of language teaching is to foster communicative ability [8]. Modern English language teaching

methodologies emphasize learning the language for its natural purposes and communicative functions [9]. When essential elements of communicative situations are modeled, the learning process mirrors real-life communication. In practice, methodical strategies based on speech, live interaction, and linguistic communication facilitate the achievement of didactic goals [10].

Numerous scholars have explored the process of developing speech competence in terms of its essence, content, and structure [1], [4]. Their diverse approaches to this issue have enabled the formulation of our research problem and helped justify the conceptual understanding of the didactic process of developing speech competence.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach by analyzing relevant scholarly literature and education policy documents. The research focuses on the interaction between theoretical models of competence and their practical application in language instruction [7]. The methodology includes:

1. **Participants:** Higher education students from various academic disciplines with intermediate English proficiency.
2. **Instruments and Procedures:** Analysis of students' speech production in simulated professional tasks, instructor observations, and curriculum review.
3. **Data Analysis:** Thematic coding of language use in academic and professional contexts; synthesis of best practices from ESP programs in English-speaking countries.

The methodological framework enables identification of didactic gaps, communication barriers, and opportunities for integrating communicative tasks into language education.

Based on this analysis, it can be mentioned that improving professional speech competence in English is essential for subject-specific language proficiency. This competence manifests in the following ways: (a) ensuring the effectiveness of international and local communication; (b) enabling self-development, professional growth, and access to global advancements in science and technology through the use of English in professional contexts; and (c) possessing knowledge of relevant terminology and the ability to engage in professional discourse, including understanding and responding to interlocutors.

A number of researchers emphasize the importance of activity-related attributes rather than personal characteristics when defining competencies [8]. Competencies are considered not only as general traits of an individual but also as specific abilities demonstrated during the performance of tasks. As a result of numerous studies, several approaches to understanding competencies have emerged: (1) linking abilities to human attributes that promote success in performance; (2) functional approaches based on job descriptions and expected outcomes; (3) analyzing the interaction between knowledge and action in human activity [8], [9].

Currently, there is significant attention given to enhancing the system of lifelong learning, training highly qualified specialists in line with modern labor market demands, and improving both the accessibility and quality of educational services. One of the primary objectives of higher education is to prepare professionals with advanced foreign language proficiency. However, the teaching of speech skills in English with a focus on specific professional domains remains insufficient. Graduates often lack the necessary professional language competence, which does not meet the current societal and labor market expectations. Therefore, the primary challenge for higher education today is to equip students with effective professional communication skills, as this reflects their overall competence, particularly in relation to their future careers. From this perspective, improving students' speech competence across various fields of study becomes especially important.

The nature of teacher-student interactions in the educational process, including the forms, content, and logical structure of communication, evolves over time. During communication, students often face challenges such as observing and interpreting their surroundings, engaging in professional discussions, and maintaining coherence and logical flow when working with specialized materials. They may struggle to sustain active communication, express and justify their opinions, speak fluently, and use appropriate vocabulary, particularly professional terminology, in their discourse.

The concept of speech competence is often linked to the broader framework of communicative competence as defined by Hymes and further developed by Canale and Swain [9], which includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences. According to Richards, effective English language instruction must incorporate all aspects of communicative competence, with a particular emphasis on contextual relevance and functional use of language [3].

ESP, as introduced by Hutchinson and Waters, promotes the idea that language instruction should be tailored to learners' specific academic or professional needs [6]. More recent research by Basturkmen supports the integration of subject-matter content into English instruction to make learning more meaningful and practical [7]. Moreover, Dudley-Evans and St John emphasize the importance of needs analysis in designing effective ESP curricula [6].

Research in the field of higher education indicates that interdisciplinary approaches and authentic communication scenarios significantly enhance learners' motivation and performance, Hyland; Flowerdew [11]. Furthermore, studies by Tatzl and Gillett stress the need for pedagogical strategies that develop both linguistic and pragmatic competence, particularly for students preparing for international careers [12].

The reviewed literature confirms that speech competence cannot be separated from students' broader cognitive, social, and professional development. Communicative consciousness, as discussed by Leontiev and Vygotsky, also plays a key role in language acquisition and the internalization of socially meaningful interaction patterns.

These issues call for a thorough review of strategies for speech development, especially those based on interdisciplinary integration. Foreign language proficiency is a

critical benchmark for students' self-assessment and is viewed as a standard of educational performance for future professionals. The ability to sustain oral communication in a student's chosen field is not only an indicator of academic success but also a distinct method of assessment.

Speech competence refers to the ability to form and articulate thoughts using language. The lexical diversity of spoken language arises from the various contexts encountered in interpersonal communication. Oral speech is a process of exchanging ideas using verbal and non-verbal cues in different communicative settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research identifies several factors affecting students' speech competence development:

1. **Communication Skills Deficiency:** Students often struggle with maintaining active dialogue, expressing opinions, and using professional terminology appropriately.

2. **Curricular Limitations:** Teaching strategies insufficiently address real-life communication scenarios relevant to students' future careers.

3. **Need for Interdisciplinary Integration:** Incorporating content from students' fields of study into English instruction enhances relevance and motivation [13].

Furthermore, the study highlights the theoretical frameworks emphasizing communicative consciousness and interaction between knowledge and action. The speech competence is shaped not only through linguistic accuracy but also by the ability to form and express context-relevant ideas in professional communication.

Strategies such as task-based learning, authentic interaction modeling, and context-specific vocabulary instruction are shown to improve fluency and professional communication readiness [14]. Developing communicative competence fosters greater flexibility in job-related interactions and supports students' self-evaluation and career planning.

Based on the analysis of the development of students' speech skills in higher education, it can be stated that addressing the challenges of teaching professional foreign languages and forming speech competence through modern methods is a vital aspect of today's educational landscape. Sustainable societal reform and effective social interaction are of great importance to humanity. Higher education plays a critical role in cultivating qualified professionals who can navigate and manage social environments while enhancing the culture of interpersonal relationships [15].

Therefore, investigating effective methods for developing students' speech competence requires identifying key research tools and analyzing the theoretical and methodological aspects of the learning process. In the context of competencies, knowledge is perceived as the reflection and dynamic comprehension of objective reality, events, and rules by individuals.

Communicative competence and communicative consciousness are interrelated and mutually reinforcing concepts. Communicative consciousness cannot exist separately from cognitive consciousness and aims to help the subject grasp the essence of

objective values. It is viewed as a system of mental representations that an individual holds of reality. This system encompasses communicative meanings and established ways of expressing thematic content.

Within the framework of improving methods for developing students' speech competence, the issues of personal communication and speech activity are examined. Human development occurs through the acquisition of socially and historically accumulated experiences, which are internalized via speech activity. This process facilitates the exchange of information and accumulation of knowledge. Through speech activity, individuals engage with each other and form various relationships, which are mediated by systems of signs, including language, that structure speech activity. Thus, speech activity is one of the fundamental processes in personal development.

The effectiveness of speech activity largely depends on the ability to select and apply communication styles that are suitable for resolving interaction-related challenges. This helps individuals articulate their viewpoints in accordance with social and ethical norms. In conclusion, the relevance of speech competence is closely tied to the core functions that each person performs in their professional life: personal learning and self-development; enhanced adaptability in employer relations; and increased resilience in competitive environments.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding : Developing students' speech competence requires integrating professional discourse, fostering communicative consciousness, and aligning instruction with students' career needs. Effective language teaching models simulate authentic interactions and address linguistic barriers. **Implication :** The findings suggest that curriculum designers and educators must prioritize communicative tasks and ESP methodologies. Institutions should foster interdisciplinary collaboration to develop language programs tied to specific professional domains. **Limitation :** The study is primarily qualitative and does not include experimental or longitudinal data on language acquisition. Broader demographic analysis could further validate findings. **Future Research :** Future studies should explore digital tools and speech technologies to support the development of speech competence. Long-term impact assessment of ESP-integrated programs across different disciplines is also recommended.

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