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METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL**<http://mentaljournal-jspu.uz/index.php/mesmj/index>**DEVELOPING THE LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE OF FUTURE ENGLISH
TEACHERS THROUGH A LEARNER-CENTRED APPROACH: A CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK****Hilola Khasanova***MA student of Jizzakh state pedagogical university
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Jizzakh, Uzbekistan***ABOUT ARTICLE**

Key words: linguistic competence, learner-centred approach, pre-service teachers, communicative competence, task-based learning, English teacher education. Constructivist pedagogy. Interactive learning. Formative assessment. Professional development.

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Abstract: This article develops a conceptual framework explaining how learner-centred strategies foster linguistic competence among future English teachers. Drawing on theories of Noam Chomsky, Dell Hymes, Michael Canale, Merrill Swain, and Lev Vygotsky, the study integrates communicative competence theory with constructivist pedagogy. A qualitative conceptual analysis of twelve peer-reviewed sources (1965–2020) demonstrates that interactive communicative practice, authentic task engagement, reflective learning, and formative assessment significantly improve grammatical accuracy, fluency, lexical diversity, and pragmatic appropriateness. The findings confirm that learner-centred environments enhance both linguistic proficiency and professional self-efficacy in teacher education. The proposed framework offers practical guidance for higher education institutions seeking sustainable competence development.

Introduction. Linguistic competence is widely recognized as a foundational component of professional competence in foreign language teachers. According to Noam Chomsky, linguistic competence refers to a speaker's implicit knowledge of grammatical rules enabling

language production and comprehension [9, p. 4]. However, subsequent scholarship expanded this concept to include communicative dimensions. Dell Hymes introduced the concept of communicative competence, emphasizing the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts [1, p. 277]. Further elaboration by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain identified grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences as core components [2, p. 29].

In teacher education, linguistic competence is not limited to language mastery but includes the ability to model accurate and contextually appropriate language use. Research demonstrates that insufficient linguistic proficiency among teachers negatively affects student achievement [10, p. 112]. Consequently, higher education institutions increasingly adopt learner-centred methodologies that promote active engagement, autonomy, and communicative practice [3, p. 45].

The learner-centred approach is rooted in constructivist learning theory, particularly the works of Lev Vygotsky, who emphasized social interaction and scaffolding in cognitive development [6, p. 86]. This pedagogical orientation aligns with communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT), which prioritize meaningful communication over mechanical drills [5, p. 19].

This article aims to develop a conceptual framework that explains how learner-centred strategies contribute to the development of linguistic competence among future English teachers.

Methodology. The study employs qualitative conceptual analysis based on systematic review principles. Twelve peer-reviewed articles and foundational theoretical works published between 1965 and 2020 were analyzed. Selection criteria included relevance to communicative competence, learner-centred pedagogy, teacher education, and empirical evidence on language development outcomes.

The analysis followed three stages:

First, theoretical constructs of linguistic and communicative competence were examined [1], [2], [9].

Second, empirical studies evaluating learner-centred methods in teacher education were reviewed [7], [8], [11].

Third, the findings were synthesized into a conceptual framework integrating theoretical and empirical insights.

Data extraction focused on definitions, methodological approaches, sample characteristics, and reported outcomes. Emphasis was placed on statistically significant

findings and documented improvements in language proficiency indicators such as fluency rates, lexical diversity, and pragmatic appropriateness.

The review indicates strong empirical support for learner-centred approaches in developing linguistic competence.

Results and discussion. Studies demonstrate that communicative and task-based instruction significantly increase speaking fluency and grammatical accuracy compared to traditional grammar-translation methods [7, p. 214]. For instance, a quasi-experimental study involving 120 pre-service teachers showed a 23% increase in oral proficiency scores after a semester of task-based instruction [8, p. 68].

Research on TBLT indicates improvements in lexical complexity and interactional competence when learners engage in authentic communicative tasks [5, p. 74]. Furthermore, reflective teaching practices enhance metalinguistic awareness and self-regulation among future teachers [11, p. 301].

Formative assessment strategies, including peer feedback and self-assessment, have been shown to strengthen strategic competence and learner autonomy [12, p. 145]. These findings collectively confirm that learner-centred environments facilitate deeper linguistic processing and sustained competence development.

Based on the reviewed literature, the proposed conceptual framework includes four interconnected components:

- Interactive Communicative Practice
- Authentic Task Engagement
- Reflective and Metacognitive Development
- Formative Assessment and Feedback

Each component directly corresponds to one or more dimensions of communicative competence.

The synthesis of theoretical and empirical literature demonstrates that the development of linguistic competence among future English teachers cannot be achieved through decontextualized grammar instruction alone. While structural accuracy remains a foundational element of linguistic competence as originally conceptualized by Chomsky [9, p. 4], contemporary teacher education demands a multidimensional understanding that incorporates communicative functionality, discourse management, sociocultural appropriateness, and strategic adaptability. The theoretical shift introduced by Hymes [1, p. 277] and later systematized by Canale and Swain [2, p. 29] reframed competence as socially situated performance rather than merely internalized grammatical knowledge. This

reconceptualization is particularly relevant in preparing English teachers, whose professional role requires them not only to master linguistic forms but also to model authentic communicative behavior in pedagogical settings.

The findings reviewed in this study confirm that learner-centred approaches operationalize communicative competence theory in measurable ways. Empirical classroom observations reported by Lightbown and Spada [7, p. 210] indicate that in communicative classrooms, student talk time frequently exceeds 60% of total instructional time, compared to approximately 30–35% in traditional teacher-fronted instruction. Increased opportunities for output production are closely associated with improved fluency development and greater syntactic complexity. Output hypothesis research further supports the idea that language production pushes learners to process language more deeply, notice gaps in their knowledge, and refine grammatical accuracy. For pre-service teachers, such sustained communicative engagement is essential because it builds automaticity and confidence in language use, both of which are necessary for effective classroom management and spontaneous interaction.

Task-based language teaching (TBLT), as articulated by Ellis [5, pp. 74–80], contributes significantly to discourse competence and pragmatic development. Authentic tasks require learners to negotiate meaning, manage turn-taking, and adjust language use to achieve communicative goals. These processes foster discourse-level organization and cohesion, which are critical components of professional linguistic performance. In teacher education programs, task-based instruction allows future teachers to simulate real classroom scenarios, including explaining grammatical rules, responding to unexpected student questions, and facilitating discussions. Such simulations create cognitively demanding environments that mirror authentic teaching conditions, thereby strengthening both linguistic and pedagogical competence.

The relevance of sociocultural theory, particularly Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development [6, p. 90], provides additional explanatory depth. Linguistic competence develops most effectively when learners participate in scaffolded interaction slightly beyond their current level of independent performance. In learner-centred environments, peer collaboration and guided instructor feedback create conditions for such scaffolded growth. For instance, collaborative dialogue during problem-solving tasks enables pre-service teachers to articulate grammatical reasoning, challenge assumptions, and co-construct meaning. This dialogic process accelerates internalization of linguistic structures and enhances metalinguistic awareness. Empirical findings indicate that collaborative tasks lead to greater retention of complex grammatical forms compared to individual practice exercises [5, p. 80].

Reflective practice emerges as another crucial dimension in the development of linguistic competence. Farrell [11, pp. 301–305] emphasizes that systematic reflection allows teachers to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and classroom application. Pre-service teachers who maintain reflective journals demonstrate improved ability to identify recurring language errors, analyze pragmatic misalignments, and adjust instructional strategies accordingly. Reflection thus transforms passive linguistic knowledge into active pedagogical awareness. Moreover, reflective dialogue sessions conducted after microteaching activities have been shown to enhance accuracy in future lesson delivery and improve linguistic precision in instructional explanations.

Formative assessment also plays a central role in strengthening strategic competence. Black and Wiliam [12, pp. 145–150] demonstrate that formative assessment practices, including peer review and structured feedback cycles, significantly enhance learner achievement. In the context of teacher education, self-assessment checklists encourage pre-service teachers to monitor pronunciation clarity, grammatical accuracy, lexical range, and discourse coherence. Peer feedback sessions promote collaborative evaluation and expose participants to diverse linguistic strategies. Quantitative evidence suggests that writing coherence scores may improve by up to 18% within one academic term when structured formative feedback is consistently implemented [12, p. 150]. These findings confirm that assessment practices are not merely evaluative but developmental, directly contributing to competence growth.

The integration of these components—communicative interaction, task-based engagement, reflective practice, and formative assessment—illustrates the dynamic nature of linguistic competence development. Rather than functioning as isolated instructional techniques, these elements operate synergistically. For example, a task-based group project may generate communicative interaction, which is subsequently analyzed through reflective journaling and refined via formative feedback. This cyclical process promotes continuous linguistic refinement. The conceptual framework proposed in this study positions such integration as essential for sustainable competence development.

Another significant implication concerns the relationship between linguistic competence and professional identity formation. Research in teacher education suggests that language proficiency strongly influences self-efficacy beliefs [10, p. 112]. Pre-service teachers who perceive themselves as linguistically competent demonstrate greater willingness to experiment with interactive teaching methods and are more confident in managing spontaneous classroom discourse. Conversely, insufficient linguistic confidence often leads to

overreliance on textbooks and scripted instruction. Learner-centred training environments mitigate this issue by providing repeated opportunities for authentic language use in low-risk settings, thereby strengthening both competence and confidence.

The findings also highlight the importance of lexical development within learner-centred frameworks. Studies on communicative instruction reveal that exposure to meaningful input combined with productive output significantly increases lexical diversity indices [7, p. 214]. For future teachers, lexical richness is particularly important in explaining abstract concepts, providing varied examples, and maintaining student engagement. Task-based activities that require academic presentation or debate foster advanced vocabulary acquisition and collocational awareness, further enhancing professional linguistic repertoire.

Discourse competence, often underemphasized in traditional curricula, receives substantial reinforcement through learner-centred pedagogy. Structured discussions, role-plays, and problem-solving tasks demand coherent organization of ideas, appropriate use of discourse markers, and adaptation to audience needs. These skills directly translate to classroom teaching, where clear instructional discourse is fundamental. Empirical studies indicate that learners participating in communicative tasks exhibit improved cohesion and coherence in oral presentations compared to those engaged primarily in grammar drills [5, p. 74].

Pragmatic competence also benefits from interactive learning contexts. Sociolinguistic appropriateness—such as politeness strategies, register variation, and culturally sensitive communication—develops through exposure to authentic communicative scenarios. In teacher education, pragmatic awareness is essential for managing diverse classrooms and interacting with colleagues and parents. Learner-centred activities that incorporate authentic materials, including recorded dialogues and case studies, provide contextualized input that enhances pragmatic sensitivity.

Despite strong evidence supporting learner-centred approaches, implementation challenges must be acknowledged. Large class sizes, limited instructional time, and examination-oriented curricula can restrict opportunities for sustained communicative practice. However, research suggests that even partial integration of learner-centred strategies yields measurable improvements in proficiency outcomes [7, p. 210]. Therefore, incremental curricular reform remains a viable pathway for institutions seeking to enhance teacher preparation programs.

The analysis further indicates that technological integration amplifies the effectiveness of learner-centred methodologies. Digital platforms supporting collaborative writing,

discussion forums, and virtual simulations expand opportunities for interaction beyond classroom boundaries [8, p. 68]. Technology-mediated tasks promote multimodal communication and expose pre-service teachers to contemporary forms of discourse. Such exposure is increasingly relevant in globalized educational environments.

Conclusion. The development of linguistic competence among future English teachers requires a comprehensive learner-centred framework grounded in communicative competence theory and supported by empirical evidence. The review confirms that interactive practice, authentic tasks, reflective learning, and formative assessment significantly enhance grammatical accuracy, fluency, discourse coherence, and pragmatic appropriateness.

The proposed conceptual framework synthesizes established theoretical constructs and empirical findings, offering a structured model for higher education institutions. Implementing learner-centred strategies in teacher education programs can strengthen both linguistic and pedagogical competence, ultimately improving educational outcomes in foreign language classrooms.

Future research should conduct longitudinal experimental studies to validate the framework across diverse educational contexts.

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