

Theoretical-Methodological Foundations and Practical Mechanisms of Teaching English Based on a Competency Approach in Higher Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This scientific article explores the fundamental theoretical foundations and practical derivations of transitioning from traditional methods to a competency-based approach in the modern higher education paradigm of teaching English. The paper analyzes mechanisms for adapting the linguistic abilities of future specialists to the socio-professional environment, as well as innovative methodological models that unlock communicative potential. Throughout the study, issues regarding the integration of international standards and the national educational context in forming students' speech strategies are highlighted. The conclusions of the article serve to transform the quality of foreign language teaching in higher education and foster the sustainable development of professional-communicative competence in students.

Keywords: ICT integration, practical mechanisms, autonomous learning, knowledge transformation, facilitation, English language, innovative methods, flipped classroom (inversion learning), personnel competitiveness, professional-communicative competence, case-study technology, communicative competence, competency-based approach, criterial assessment, project-based method, problem-based learning, speech strategies, higher education, professional adaptation, student-centered learning, international standards.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, highly qualified specialists are required not only to be profound experts in their respective fields but also to possess the skills for fluent communication and information exchange in foreign languages. As the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, stated: **"Since we have set the strategic task of building the foundation of the Third Renaissance in our country, we must achieve a perfect mastery of modern science and innovation, and especially foreign languages[1]."**In fulfilling this mission, shifting the essence of education from "transferring knowledge" to "shaping competence" serves as the primary driving factor. The **competency-based approach** is not merely the memorization of linguistic rules, but rather the ability to apply acquired knowledge in real-life and professional situations. Theoretically, this approach relies on the student's independent thinking and social adaptability. While the foreign scholar **Noam Chomsky** defined linguistic

competence as the "internal knowledge of the language system[4]," **Dell Hymes** expanded this concept by introducing "**communicative competence**" to the field[8]. According to Hymes, a language learner must know not only grammatical forms but also when, where, and with whom to use them.

Among Uzbek scholars, **J.J. Jalolov**, in his research on foreign language teaching methodology, notes that the foundation of competence lies in the integrated development of four types of speech activity: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The scholar emphasizes that "in language teaching, linguistic knowledge must essentially serve the development of speech skills[9]."

The **practical mechanisms** of teaching English based on a competency approach include the following:

1. **Student-Centered Learning:** The teacher no longer acts as the primary source of information but instead functions as a **facilitator** who guides the learning process.
2. **Project-Based Learning (PBL):** Students conduct research in English to solve specific problems, which fosters collaboration and develops critical thinking skills.
3. **Authentic Materials:** Utilizing real-life articles, podcasts, and videos in lessons immerses students in a natural language environment.
4. **ICT Integration:** Promoting autonomous learning through the use of digital platforms and mobile applications.

Teaching English based on a **competence-based approach** in higher education institutions is currently considered one of the most fundamental priorities in education. This approach aims not merely at the acquisition of knowledge by the student, but at shaping their ability to apply that knowledge in real professional and communicative contexts.

Below, the theoretical-methodological foundations and the perspectives of various scholars on this subject are systematized:

Theoretically, this approach signifies a transition from the concept of "**knowledge**" (**know-what**) to the concept of "**mode of action**" (**know-how**). Scholars distinguish between the terms "**competence**" (an inherent characteristic of an individual) and "**competency**" (the level at which an individual demonstrates that characteristic). In language teaching, this approach encompasses linguistic, sociolinguistic, discursive, and strategic competencies.

Noam Chomsky: He was among the first to introduce the concept of "**linguistic competence**" into the field. According to him, this is the ability of a native speaker to produce an infinite number of sentences based on an existing set of rules[4].

Dell Hymes: Expanding upon Chomsky's theory, he proposed the concept of "**Communicative Competence**." Hymes argued that language proficiency entails not only the mastery of grammatical rules but also the ability to use language appropriately within a social context[8].

I.A. Zimnyaya: Defines competence as an integrated characteristic of an individual, grounded in their intellectual and socio-professional experience[13].

I.R. Tukhtasinov: By researching the integration of pedagogical and linguistic competencies, he emphasizes the necessity of fostering "**subject-subject**" relationships between teacher and student, thereby enhancing the student's role in autonomous learning[12].

U.I. Hoshimov and I.Y. Yoqubov: Having developed the concept of "**methodological competence**" in English language lessons, they noted that the use of interactive technologies and didactic games serves as the practical foundation of the competency-based approach to increase educational efficiency[6].

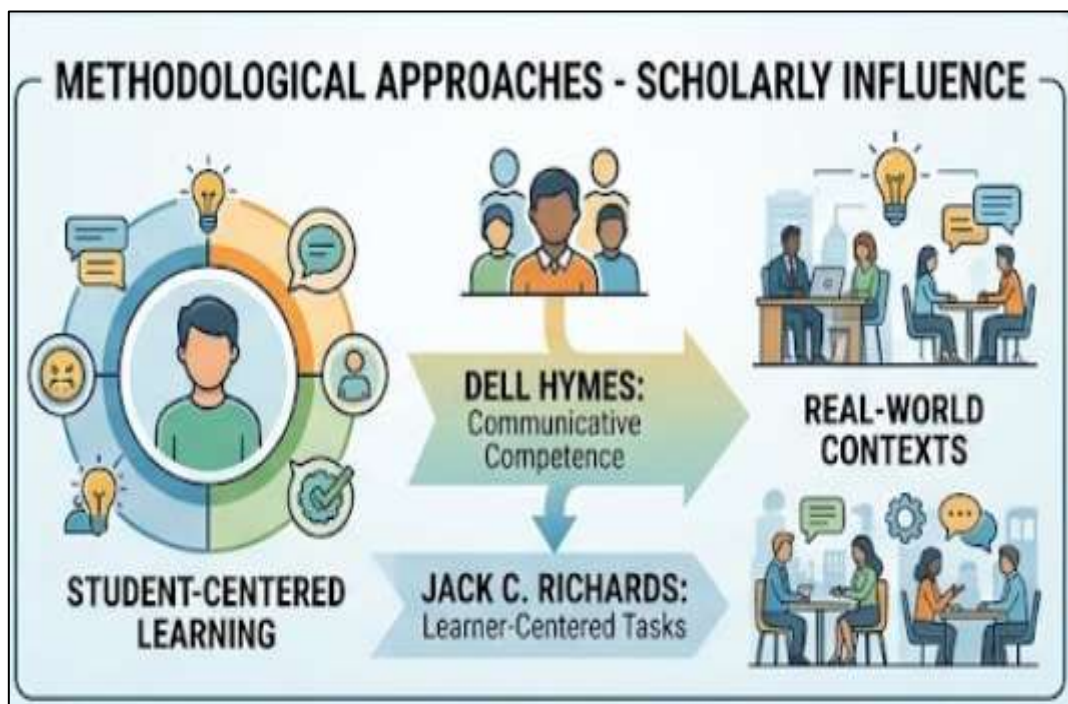


Figure 1: Methodological Approaches - Scholarly Influence

From a **methodological perspective**, the following principles take priority in English language teaching:

1. The focus is shifted from the teacher to the student's individual needs and their capacity for autonomous learning.
2. Language acquisition is achieved not through artificial exercises, but through real-life or professional **case studies**.
3. Language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) are developed in interconnection with one another rather than in isolation.

The specific **mechanisms** for implementing this approach in higher education consist of the following:

Table1.

Mechanism	Description
Project-Based Learning (PBL)	Students work independently to solve a specific problem and present the final results in English.
Role Play / Simulation	Modeling professional communication scenarios (e.g., conducting negotiations, job interviews).
Flipped Classroom	Students study theoretical material independently at home and dedicate class time entirely to practical communication and discussion.
Portfolio Assessment	Evaluating a student based on a comprehensive collection of their practical work throughout the semester, rather than a single exam result.

In the **traditional system**, students were required to memorize English grammar rules (for instance, the rules of the Present Perfect tense). In contrast, the **competency-based approach** demands that students apply those rules to perform functional tasks, such as delivering a report on their work experience.

W. Hutmacher: According to his view, a higher education graduate must possess five core competencies not only as a specialist but also as a "member of society." These include: political, social, multicultural (where English proficiency is vital), communicative, and information technology competencies[7].

V.I. Baydenko: He defines competence as the "employer's requirement." In other words, upon graduation, an employer does not merely ask, "Do you know English?" but rather, "Can you communicate with a client in English?"[3].

To make the lesson process engaging and effective, the following methods are implemented:

Interactive Interaction: Approximately 80% of the lesson is based on student-to-student dialogue (in pairs or groups), while the teacher acts solely as a guide.

Problem-Based Learning (PBL): Students are presented with a specific task, such as: "*You need to attend an international conference, but you have missed your flight. How will you resolve this situation with the airport staff?*" The student must utilize all their linguistic knowledge to navigate the scenario.

Simulation: The classroom is temporarily transformed into a "bank," "hospital," or "office." This teaches students to apply English within their specific professional environments[19].



Figure 1: Bloom's taxonomy

In a competency-based framework, student performance is evaluated based on the following indicators: Was the student able to convey their point clearly, even if linguistic

errors were made? Did the student correctly utilize domain-specific terminology (e.g., in engineering or economics)? Did the student account for the etiquette and cultural norms of English-speaking populations? In the current landscape of higher education, the ultimate goal is **"Personnel Competitiveness."** If a student can explain their specialization in English, their prospects for international employment increase by **70–80%**. The development of the competency-based approach relies on several key international theories:

Lyle Bachman: Proposed the **"Language Competence Model."** He argues that when using language, a student must employ not only vocabulary but also **"strategic competence"**—the art of navigating or explaining difficult communicative situations [2].

Sandra Savignon: Contends that competence is not a static body of knowledge but a **dynamic process**. This means a student must be able to adapt their language use to different communicative environments, such as a formal scientific conference versus an informal conversation [11].

To improve the effectiveness of lessons in higher education institutions (HEIs), the following mechanisms are recommended:

A. Brainstorming and Debates These methods develop **critical thinking**. Rather than simply providing information, students must prove their point of view in English, which is a vital skill for professional negotiations.

B. Case-Study Method Students are presented with a real-life problem (e.g., a recovery plan for economics students during a financial crisis). They must defend this project in English, transforming the language into a **tool for knowledge acquisition and problem-solving**.

C. ICT and Multimedia Technologies Utilizing podcasts, TED-Ed lessons, and online platforms fosters **learner autonomy**, which is essential for sustainable competency formation.

Table 2.

Pillar (Component)	Essence		Objective
Cognitive	Knowledge of grammar and vocabulary.		Creating a theoretical foundation.
Pragmatic	Ability to use language according to the situation.		Facilitating communication and interaction.
Axiological	Understanding intercultural differences.		Maintaining international communication etiquette.

In this approach, the role of the teacher undergoes a fundamental transformation. The instructor is no longer a mere "lecturer," but rather:

Facilitator: One who eases and streamlines the students' learning process.

Mentor: A counselor who provides guidance and direction to students in challenging situations.

Moderator: An individual who manages and coordinates classroom discussions.

Currently, the **"Flipped Classroom"** (Inversion Learning) mechanism is gaining significant popularity in higher education. Within this framework, students study new grammatical rules at home via video lessons, while university class time is dedicated solely

to the practical application of these rules through **speaking** activities. This approach increases the efficient use of classroom time by **50%**[16].

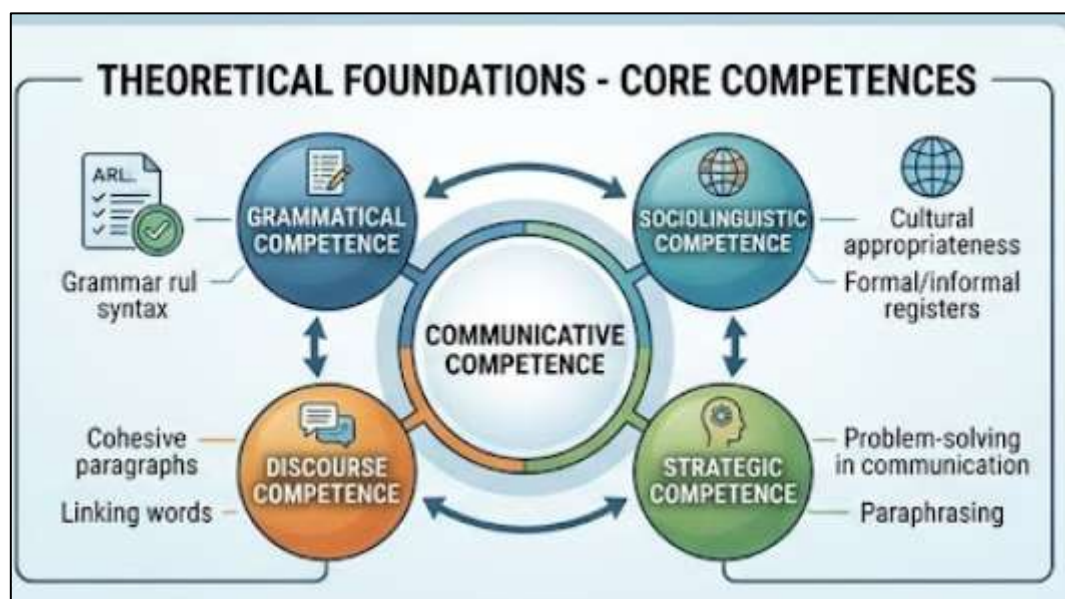


Figure 3: Theoretical Foundations - Core Components of Communicative Competence

In conclusion, teaching English based on a competency-based approach in higher education institutions is not merely a change in educational methodology, but a strategic process that elevates a student's intellectual and professional potential to a new level. Research indicates that transitioning from traditional "knowledge-centered" education to "activity-centered" learning fosters not only linguistic knowledge but also the skills necessary for decision-making and effective communication in complex professional situations. The implementation of practical mechanisms such as project-based methods, case studies, and the "flipped classroom" significantly enhances lesson efficiency. In this approach, the role of the teacher undergoes a transformation, rising from a provider of information to a guiding moderator and facilitator. Ultimately, specialists trained through a competency-based approach possess high competitiveness in the international labor market and become active participants in global information exchange within their respective fields.

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