IMPLEMENTING A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

This article examines the theoretical foundations, essence, and practical implementation of a competency-based approach in teaching English in higher education institutions. The necessity of developing not only linguistic knowledge but also communicative and professional competencies among students is emphasized. The paper analyzes effective methods for forming competencies in English language classes, the roles of teachers and learners, assessment strategies, and the use of modern pedagogical technologies. The competency-based approach is presented as a key factor in improving the quality of foreign language education and preparing competitive specialists for the global labor market.

Keywords

competency, competency-based approach, English language teaching, higher education, communicative competence, professional competence, educational quality.

Introduction. In the context of globalization, English has become the dominant language of international communication, science, technology, and business. Consequently, teaching English in higher education institutions is no longer limited to the transmission of grammatical rules and vocabulary. Instead, it aims to prepare students to use the language effectively in real-life and professional contexts. This shift has led to the growing importance of implementing a competency-based approach in foreign language education.

The competency-based approach focuses on learning outcomes that reflect students' ability to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes in practical situations. In English language teaching, this approach helps develop students' communicative abilities, critical thinking, autonomy, and readiness for professional interaction. Therefore, the integration of a competency-based approach into higher education English programs has become a pressing pedagogical necessity.

The concept and essence of the competency-based approach. The competency-based approach is an educational paradigm that prioritizes learners' ability to perform tasks and solve problems in real-life situations rather than merely acquiring theoretical knowledge. The term *competency* originates from the Latin word *competere*, meaning "to be capable" or "to correspond," and refers to an individual's integrated ability to act effectively in a specific context.

In higher education, the main goal of the competency-based approach is to train graduates who possess professional, communicative, social, and personal competencies demanded by the labor market. In English language education, this approach emphasizes the practical use of language as a tool for communication and professional activity.

Current state of English language teaching in higher education. Traditional approaches to teaching English in higher education have often focused on grammar translation, memorization of vocabulary, and test-based assessment. Although such methods contribute to the development of theoretical knowledge, they frequently fail to equip students with sufficient communicative skills for real-life interaction.

Modern educational standards require English language teaching in higher education to focus on:

• developing communicative competence;
• implementing English for Specific Purposes (ESP);
• fostering independent and critical thinking;
• integrating information and communication technologies (ICT).

The competency-based approach provides a methodological foundation for achieving these objectives and aligning language education with contemporary societal and professional demands.

Key competencies Formed in english language teaching

1. Communicative competence

Communicative competence refers to the ability to use English effectively in oral and written communication. It includes several components:

• Linguistic competence (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation);
• Speech competence (listening, speaking, reading, writing);
• Sociolinguistic competence (awareness of cultural and social norms);
• Strategic competence (ability to overcome communication difficulties).

The development of communicative competence is the central objective of competency-based English language instruction.

2. Professional competence

Professional competence involves the ability to use English within a specific field of study or occupation. Students of engineering, economics, medicine,

education, and other disciplines must acquire specialized terminology and skills for professional communication. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) plays a crucial role in developing this competence.

3. Information and communication competence

In the digital age, learning English is closely connected with the use of online resources, digital platforms, electronic textbooks, and mobile applications. Students must be able to search for, analyze, and use information in English effectively, which enhances their academic and professional performance.

4. Social and personal competencies

English language classes also contribute to the development of social and personal competencies such as teamwork, responsibility, self-confidence, creativity, and lifelong learning skills. Through interactive tasks and collaborative activities, students learn to express their ideas, respect different opinions, and work effectively with others.

Organizing English language instruction based on the competency-based approach. Implementing a competency-based approach requires reconsideration of teaching content, methods, and forms. The following teaching strategies are particularly effective:

• problem-based learning;
• project-based learning;
• role-playing and simulations;
• case study analysis;
• blended learning and flipped classroom models.

Classroom activities should be designed around real-life and professional situations that encourage students to actively use English, think critically, and collaborate with peers.

Assessment within the competency-based framework. Assessment in a competency-based approach goes beyond traditional testing. It evaluates students' ability to apply language skills in practice. Effective assessment tools include:

• oral presentations;
• project work;
• portfolios;
• written assignments;
• continuous (formative) and final (summative) assessment.

Such assessment methods provide a more comprehensive picture of students' progress and competency development.

The role of the teacher in a competency-based approach. Within the competency-based framework, the teacher's role shifts from that of a knowledge transmitter to a facilitator, mentor, and motivator. The teacher:

• designs lessons focused on competency development;
• applies interactive and student-centered methods;
• encourages learner autonomy and reflection;
• integrates modern technologies into the teaching process.

This new role requires continuous professional development and methodological flexibility from educators.

Conclusion. In conclusion, implementing a competency-based approach in teaching English in higher education is a crucial factor in improving educational quality and preparing competitive, globally competent graduates. This approach enables students not only to acquire language knowledge but also to develop the ability to use English effectively in academic, professional, and social contexts. Therefore, the competency-based approach should be regarded as a fundamental principle in modern English language education at the tertiary level.

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