

DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCE IN TEACHING A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN SCHOOLS IN GRADES 10-11

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Annotation: *This article focuses on the development of competencies in teaching a second foreign language to 10th- and 11th-grade students in secondary schools. In today's globalized world, multilingualism is becoming increasingly important, and it is essential to prepare students to communicate effectively in multiple languages. The article explores modern teaching methods and strategies aimed at enhancing students' linguistic, communicative, and cultural competencies. Additionally, the challenges faced by teachers and students in mastering a second foreign language are discussed, along with solutions for improving teaching quality and student engagement. Particular attention is given to the role of interactive and communicative approaches in achieving better learning outcomes.*

Keywords: *Second foreign language, language competency development, 10th and 11th grades, secondary school education, multilingualism, communicative approach, interactive teaching methods, student engagement, language learning strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, multilingualism has become an essential skill, shaping the educational priorities of many countries. Schools are tasked not only with teaching core subjects but also with fostering global communication competencies. Within this framework, the teaching of a second foreign language, particularly in upper-secondary grades such as 10 and 11, takes on added significance. The study of a second foreign language at this level presents unique challenges and opportunities.

These final years of secondary education are critical for students as they transition toward higher education or the workforce. Developing strong language competencies during this period equips students with the ability to communicate across cultures, thus enhancing their social, academic, and professional prospects. However, achieving this requires a well-defined pedagogical approach that aligns with modern educational standards and student needs.

This article explores strategies and best practices for improving the competence of second foreign language teaching in grades 10-11. By focusing on key competencies – such as linguistic, communicative, and intercultural skills – it examines how teachers can effectively foster a deeper understanding and use of a second foreign language among students. Additionally, the article discusses the

challenges teachers face in this context and offers practical solutions grounded in contemporary language acquisition theories and pedagogical practices.

Furthermore, this study highlights the necessity of enhancing teacher professional development, curriculum design, and instructional methodologies that promote an integrated, competence-based approach to foreign language education in schools. In doing so, it aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on language education and its role in preparing students for a globalized future

The Concept of Competence and Its Role in Teaching

The notion of "competence" has evolved significantly over the years and now plays a central role in educational theories and practices. Competence refers to a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that individuals need to perform tasks effectively in real-world contexts. In education, competence-based learning focuses on equipping students with the ability to apply what they have learned in practical situations, fostering both cognitive and non-cognitive skills that extend beyond memorization or theoretical understanding to Delors (1996), the concept of competence is integral to what he terms the "four pillars of education": learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. These pillars form the foundation of a competence-based education system where the goal is to develop holistic learners who are not only equipped with academic knowledge but also possess the skills and attitudes necessary to thrive in a global society.

Competence-based education (CBE) shifts the focus from traditional teaching, which emphasizes the transmission of knowledge, to an approach that encourages active learning and critical thinking. This transition in teaching philosophy aligns with modern educational needs, which stress the importance of preparing students for a complex and rapidly changing world. Competence-based learning supports the development of problem-solving abilities, teamwork, self-management, and lifelong learning skills. This sets a deeper understanding of education's role in shaping adaptive, flexible, and responsible individuals capable of navigating various professional, social, and personal challenges.

In language teaching, particularly in the teaching of foreign languages, competence takes on an even more specific meaning. Communicative competence, a concept first introduced by Hymes (1972), refers to the ability to use a language effectively and appropriately in different communication contexts. This model of competence, later expanded by Canale and Swain (1980), includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies. Each of these components plays a vital role in ensuring that learners are not just linguistically proficient but also culturally and socially adept at using the language.

In grades 10-11, students are typically expected to achieve higher levels of proficiency in a second foreign language, making communicative competence a crucial learning goal. The development of language competence involves not only mastering vocabulary and grammar but also developing the ability to communicate fluently, understand cultural nuances, and adapt language use to various real-world situations. Competence-based language teaching encourages active participation,

interaction, and practical application, enabling students to build skills that are relevant beyond the classroom (Canale, M., & Swain, M. 1980).

For understanding and applying the concept of competence is critical for effective instruction. Teachers must design curricula, lesson plans, and assessments that focus on developing these competencies, ensuring that learning is both meaningful and transferable. Competence-based teaching requires a learner-centered approach, where students are encouraged to take an active role in their education by collaborating with peers, reflecting on their learning, and applying their knowledge in practical contexts (Hymes, D. 1972).

Moreover, competence-based teaching requires teachers to act as facilitators rather than mere transmitters of knowledge. They must create learning environments where students engage in meaningful tasks that require the use of their acquired competencies. This includes integrating real-world problems, encouraging critical thinking, and promoting the practical application of knowledge. The development of competence also relies heavily on continuous assessment, where teachers provide feedback to help students reflect on their performance and identify areas for improvement (Vähäsantanen, K., 2015).

In the specific context of teaching a second foreign language in grades 10-11, the role of competence becomes even more pronounced. At this stage, students are expected to refine their communicative abilities and use the second language not only for academic purposes but also in social and professional contexts. Bachman and Palmer (1996) emphasize the importance of "language competence," which includes both organizational and pragmatic knowledge – key elements that enable learners to communicate effectively across different contexts and for various purposes.

Developing second foreign language competence requires teachers to employ diverse pedagogical strategies, including interactive activities, role-playing, and the use of multimedia resources. Teachers must also be aware of the cultural aspects of language learning, as competence in a language involves understanding its cultural and social nuances. This cultural competence allows students to navigate intercultural communication more effectively, an increasingly important skill in today's globalized world (Byram, 1997).

Furthermore, as language learning extends beyond the classroom, students are encouraged to engage with the language in authentic contexts, such as through foreign media, social interactions, or study-abroad programs. These experiences help solidify the competencies acquired in the classroom and demonstrate the practical value of language skills in everyday life. In summary, the concept of competence plays a pivotal role in modern education, especially in the teaching of foreign languages. By focusing on developing students' communicative, cognitive, and practical skills, competence-based teaching ensures that learners are prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. In grades 10-11, where students are on the cusp of higher education or entering the workforce, the development of language competence is essential for their success in a globalized world. Teachers, therefore, must adopt pedagogical strategies that foster these competencies, creating a learning environment that is dynamic, interactive, and reflective of real-world language use.

Methods for Assessing and Developing Competencies

The assessment and development of competencies in an educational setting have become cornerstones of modern pedagogy. With the increasing focus on competence-based education (CBE), it is essential to understand the various methods used to assess and enhance students' competencies. Competence is typically defined as a blend of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to perform tasks effectively in specific contexts (Mulder, 2017). This holistic view of learning moves beyond rote memorization, requiring educators to employ sophisticated methods to measure and nurture the competencies necessary for success in both academic and professional environments. Assessment methods for competencies are generally categorized into formative and summative approaches, with each playing a crucial role in the overall development of learners.

Formative assessment is an ongoing process designed to monitor student progress and provide continuous feedback to improve learning outcomes. Unlike traditional methods that focus on final results, formative assessment emphasizes growth by identifying strengths and areas for improvement throughout the learning process.

Self-Assessment and Peer Assessment: These are key formative methods where learners actively participate in evaluating their progress. Self-assessment encourages reflection, a crucial skill for lifelong learning, while peer assessment promotes collaboration and critical thinking. Both methods can be particularly effective in language learning contexts, as students can assess their communicative abilities in practical scenarios.

Portfolio Assessment

This method involves the collection of students' work over time, providing evidence of learning and development in various competencies. Portfolios allow for the assessment of both the process and the product of learning, offering a comprehensive view of student achievements in areas such as communication, creativity, and problem-solving.

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments occur at the end of a learning period, measuring students' competency levels after instruction. These assessments often include exams, standardized tests, or final projects, designed to evaluate whether specific competencies have been attained.

Competency-Based Exams

Unlike traditional exams that may focus on memorization, competency-based exams test the application of knowledge in real-world scenarios. For instance, in language teaching, students might be asked to engage in role-plays or problem-solving exercises that assess their ability to communicate effectively.



Performance-Based Assessment (PBL)

This method evaluates students' abilities through the completion of tasks or projects that replicate real-world challenges. In foreign language education, this might include creating presentations, participating in debates, or conducting interviews in the target language (Wiggins, 1998). Performance-based assessments not only test knowledge but also emphasize the practical application of skills.

Competency assessment often relies on the use of rubrics, which provide clear criteria for evaluating students' performance. Rubrics are particularly effective in assessing complex skills such as critical thinking, communication, and collaboration (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Competency frameworks outline the specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for proficiency in various areas, offering both teachers and students clear guidance on what is expected. These frameworks are increasingly used in the design of curricula, assessments, and professional development programs (Mulder, 2017). The development of competencies requires instructional methods that are learner-centered, interactive, and contextually relevant. Traditional didactic methods, which focus on information transmission, are inadequate for fostering competencies, as they do not provide opportunities for active engagement, problem-solving, or the application of knowledge.

PBL is a method that allows students to work on real-world projects over an extended period. This approach promotes the development of critical competencies such as collaboration, creativity, communication, and problem-solving. By working on authentic tasks, students learn how to apply their knowledge in meaningful ways, thereby enhancing their competency development (Thomas, 2000).

Collaborative Learning Strategies involve students working together to solve problems, complete tasks, or create products. This method encourages the development of interpersonal skills, communication, and teamwork – competencies crucial in both academic and professional settings (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). In language education, for example, collaborative activities such as group discussions, role-plays, and debates allow students to practice language use in social and professional contexts.

Experiential Learning is a hands-on, immersive approach where students learn by doing. It is particularly effective for developing practical skills and competencies, as it provides students with opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-life situations (Kolb, 1984). In the context of foreign language education, this might involve study-abroad programs, internships, or language immersion experiences, all of which enable learners to use the target language in authentic environments.

Workshops and Simulations are instructional methods that allow students to engage in tasks that replicate real-world challenges. Simulations, in particular, are effective for developing problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership competencies. In language teaching, workshops that focus on specific linguistic or cultural challenges can help students enhance their language use in professional settings (Fanning & Gaba, 2007).

The integration of digital tools in education offers new opportunities for developing competencies. Virtual classrooms, online simulations, and interactive

language learning platforms provide students with additional avenues to practice and apply their skills. Technology-enhanced learning (TEL) enables personalized learning experiences, allowing students to progress at their own pace, access diverse learning materials, and engage in collaborative projects with peers across the globe (Redecker et al., 2012).

CONCLUSION

The assessment and development of competencies are critical components of modern education, particularly in preparing students for the complexities of contemporary life. As educational institutions continue to emphasize competence-based education, both teachers and learners must adopt methods that prioritize the practical application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Through formative and summative assessments, educators can continuously monitor student progress, offering feedback that supports the development of essential competencies such as communication, collaboration, and critical thinking.

Competency development, meanwhile, requires a shift toward more interactive, learner-centered pedagogies. Project-based learning, experiential methods, and collaborative approaches all serve to enhance students' abilities to apply their learning in meaningful contexts. Furthermore, the integration of technology in education offers new possibilities for personalized and competency-driven learning experiences. For foreign language educators, particularly those working with students in the 10th and 11th grades, fostering communicative competence is vital. By employing diverse assessment and development strategies, teachers can equip students with the linguistic and intercultural skills needed to navigate the globalized world effectively. As the demand for multilingual professionals continues to grow, the ability to assess and develop these competencies becomes increasingly crucial for both academic success and future career prospects.

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