

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Theoretical Foundations for Developing the Communicative Competence of Future Teachers on The Basis of Communicative Grammar

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## Abstract

The present paper examines the theoretical foundations for developing the communicative competence of future teachers on the basis of communicative grammar in higher pedagogical education. The relevance of the study is conditioned by the growing need to prepare teachers who are able not only to master grammatical knowledge, but also to use language effectively in pedagogical interaction, academic discourse, and professional communication. The paper argues that grammar should be interpreted not as a closed system of rules to be memorized, but as a functional resource for creating meaning in concrete communicative situations. Within this perspective, communicative competence is understood as an integrative quality combining grammatical accuracy, discourse coherence, sociolinguistic appropriateness, strategic flexibility, and pedagogical sensitivity. The study is based on theoretical analysis, comparison, and synthesis of linguistic, pedagogical, and methodological sources devoted to communicative competence, communicative language teaching, functional grammar, and teacher education. The results demonstrate that communicative grammar provides an effective theoretical basis for the formation of future teachers' communicative competence because it connects language form with meaning, context, intention, and interaction. The paper identifies the most important conceptual principles of this process, including the competence-based approach, the communicative-activity approach, contextualization of grammatical material, integration of receptive and productive speech activity, and reflection-oriented pedagogical practice. It is concluded that the development of communicative competence in future teachers becomes more effective when grammar instruction is organized as purposeful speech activity linked with professional communication, classroom discourse, and real pedagogical situations.

## KEY WORDS

Communicative competence, communicative grammar, future teachers, higher pedagogical education, grammar teaching, professional communication, competence-based approach, communicative approach, pedagogical discourse, teacher education.

## INTRODUCTION

The modernization of higher pedagogical education has intensified attention to the quality of professional speech

training of future teachers. In contemporary educational practice, a teacher is expected not only to possess subject

knowledge and methodological readiness, but also to communicate clearly, appropriately, convincingly, and ethically in diverse pedagogical situations. The effectiveness of explanation, feedback, dialogue with students, collaboration with colleagues, and participation in academic communication depends to a great extent on the level of communicative competence. For this reason, the problem of developing communicative competence in future teachers has become one of the central questions of pedagogical theory and practice.

At the same time, the formation of communicative competence cannot be reduced to the acquisition of general speech habits or the memorization of linguistic rules. Professional communication in the teaching sphere requires a flexible command of language as a tool of explanation, persuasion, interpretation, organization, and interaction. Future teachers need to understand how grammatical structures function in real speech, how they express intention, regulate meaning, create coherence, and support communication in changing contexts. This makes the appeal to communicative grammar especially important.

The concept of communicative competence emerged in reaction to formal linguistic models that separated language structure from actual use. D. Hymes argued that the knowledge of a language includes not only grammatical correctness, but also the ability to use utterances appropriately in social communication [1]. Later, M. Canale and M. Swain elaborated the model of communicative competence by including grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic components [2]. Subsequent research confirmed that grammar remains an essential part of communication, yet its pedagogical value is fully realized only when it is taught as a means of meaning-making rather than as an isolated system of forms [3; 4].

In teacher education this issue acquires particular significance. A future teacher must be able to transform grammatical knowledge into pedagogically meaningful speech behavior. Grammar in this context is not an end in itself. It becomes a resource for constructing classroom discourse, formulating questions, explaining content, organizing interaction, expressing evaluation, and maintaining professional dialogue. Therefore, the theoretical basis for developing communicative competence should integrate linguistic, didactic, and pedagogical perspectives.

The purpose of this paper is to identify and interpret the

theoretical foundations for developing the communicative competence of future teachers on the basis of communicative grammar. The paper seeks to clarify the conceptual relationship between grammar and communication, to determine the pedagogical principles that ensure the effectiveness of this relationship, and to show how communicative grammar can function as a basis for professional speech formation in higher pedagogical education.

The study is theoretical in character and is based on the methods of analysis, comparison, interpretation, and synthesis of scientific literature in linguistics, pedagogy, psycholinguistics, and methodology of language teaching. The methodological framework combines the competence-based approach, the communicative-activity approach, the functional view of grammar, and the pedagogical principle of contextualized learning. These approaches were selected because they allow grammar to be interpreted not as a static set of rules, but as a dynamic means of communication embedded in social and professional interaction.

The analytical procedure included the examination of major scholarly works devoted to communicative competence, communicative language teaching, grammar instruction, and teacher professional formation. Special attention was paid to the transition from formal grammar teaching to communicative grammar, to the interrelation of grammatical and discourse competence, and to the role of language in pedagogical communication. Comparative interpretation was used to trace how different theoretical traditions address the problem of language use, while synthesis was employed to formulate an integrated conceptual model applicable to future teachers' professional preparation.

The research also relied on the principle of pedagogical projection. This means that general theoretical propositions about grammar and communication were interpreted through the lens of teacher education. The central question was not merely how grammar functions in language, but how communicative grammar can support the development of professional speech behavior in future teachers. Thus, the theoretical sources were analyzed in relation to pedagogical discourse, classroom interaction, and educational communication.

The analysis shows that the first theoretical foundation for developing communicative competence on the basis of communicative grammar is the functional understanding of

language. Traditional grammar often presents linguistic forms as closed patterns to be learned and reproduced, whereas communicative grammar interprets these forms in relation to meaning, intention, and context. In this perspective, a grammatical structure is significant not only because it is correct, but also because it performs a communicative task. Tense, modality, voice, sentence type, and syntactic organization become meaningful when they are linked with the speaker's purpose and the discourse situation. For future teachers, this functional orientation is especially important because pedagogical communication is always purposeful. A teacher does not merely produce grammatically correct sentences; he or she explains, motivates, questions, instructs, evaluates, and supports.

The second theoretical foundation is the integrative nature of communicative competence itself. The works of Canale, Swain, and later scholars demonstrate that grammatical competence is inseparable from discourse, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence [2; 3]. Grammatical correctness without coherence, appropriateness, and adaptability is insufficient for effective communication. This is particularly visible in teacher education, where future teachers need to choose language forms according to educational intention, students' level of understanding, emotional tone, and institutional norms. Communicative grammar contributes to this integration by teaching grammar as a system of choices within communicative action. Students learn not only what is grammatically possible, but also what is contextually effective.

A third theoretical foundation is the competence-based approach in higher education. This approach shifts attention from the volume of acquired knowledge to the learner's ability to apply knowledge in practical and professional situations. Within such a framework, communicative grammar is valuable because it enables the transition from theoretical knowledge of language to the ability to use language in real communication. Future teachers must be able to construct coherent explanations, formulate educational tasks, maintain dialogue, and respond spontaneously to classroom situations. These actions require not fragmentary knowledge of grammar, but the operational command of grammatical means in living speech. Thus, communicative competence develops when grammar becomes part of action rather than remaining an abstract subject of study.

The results also show that contextualization is a decisive theoretical and pedagogical principle. Grammar taught outside

communication tends to remain passive, while grammar introduced through context is more readily transformed into speech behavior. S. Thornbury and D. Larsen-Freeman have shown that grammar is most productively learned when learners see how forms function in meaningful discourse [4; 5]. For future teachers, contextualization should include educational situations: classroom instructions, explanations, reflective statements, evaluative comments, and professional discussions. When grammatical material is embedded in such contexts, it becomes professionally relevant and psychologically accessible. This relevance increases motivation and strengthens the transfer of language knowledge into practice.

Another essential result concerns the communicative-activity approach. This approach interprets language learning as participation in speech activity directed toward solving communicative tasks. In this sense, grammar is not mastered through passive recognition alone, but through purposeful use in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The communicative competence of future teachers develops more effectively when they engage in pedagogically oriented speech activities, such as explaining concepts, moderating discussions, responding to learners' questions, interpreting educational situations, and presenting arguments. Such tasks create conditions in which grammatical choice becomes part of communicative problem-solving. The learner begins to perceive grammar not as external obligation, but as an internal instrument of expression.

The study further reveals that reflection is an important theoretical foundation of communicative grammar in teacher education. Future teachers are not ordinary language users; they are reflective practitioners who must be able to analyze their own speech and its pedagogical effect. Reflection allows them to understand why a particular grammatical choice was effective, how linguistic form influenced comprehension, and how professional communication can be improved. This idea corresponds with the general theory of teacher professional growth, according to which effective teaching requires conscious analysis of one's own action [6; 7]. Therefore, communicative grammar should include not only practice, but also reflection on the relation between grammatical form, communicative intention, and pedagogical outcome.

The analysis also makes it possible to identify the importance of discourse orientation. Communicative competence is realized not in isolated sentences, but in coherent discourse.

For future teachers, discourse competence includes the ability to organize speech logically, maintain thematic unity, connect utterances, and adapt speech structure to pedagogical goals. Grammar plays a central role in this process because discourse coherence depends on tense consistency, reference, cohesion, subordination, modality, and syntactic organization. In the communicative-grammatical framework, grammar therefore becomes a means of discourse construction. This understanding is crucial for professional training because classroom communication is inherently discursive.

Finally, the results indicate that communicative grammar has particular value for the formation of pedagogical discourse. Teacher speech has its own characteristics: clarity, accessibility, dialogicity, ethical correctness, instructional precision, and adaptive flexibility. These qualities are supported by grammatical choices. The ability to formulate open and closed questions, express possibility and obligation, soften criticism, structure explanation, or summarize discussion depends on grammatical competence integrated with communicative intention. Consequently, communicative grammar offers a direct pathway from language study to professional formation.

The findings confirm that the development of future teachers' communicative competence requires a revision of traditional attitudes toward grammar teaching. If grammar is treated solely as a normative system of forms, it contributes only partially to communicative development. Such teaching may improve accuracy, but it does not necessarily prepare learners for real interaction. In contrast, communicative grammar allows grammar to be reconceptualized as a resource for speech, discourse, and pedagogical action. This reconceptualization is especially important in teacher education, where language always functions in relation to another person's understanding, response, and development.

One of the central implications of the study is that grammatical competence and communicative competence should not be opposed. Earlier methodological debates sometimes created the false impression that communication can develop independently of grammar or that grammar instruction inevitably suppresses speech freedom. The present analysis suggests a different conclusion. Grammar is indispensable for communication, but its educational role changes when it is integrated with context, function, and discourse. Communicative grammar resolves the opposition by showing that grammatical accuracy and communicative

appropriateness are complementary dimensions of effective speech.

This conclusion is supported by contemporary views in language pedagogy. R. Ellis, J. C. Richards, and T. S. Rodgers argue that the most effective teaching models combine attention to form with communicative activity [8; 9]. In the preparation of future teachers, such combination is pedagogically justified because professional speech must be both correct and purposeful. A teacher who communicates fluently but inaccurately may create confusion, while a teacher who is accurate but unable to adapt language to learners' needs cannot achieve educational effectiveness. Communicative grammar helps overcome this imbalance by linking grammatical instruction with real pedagogical purposes.

The discussion also reveals the importance of professional orientation in the development of communicative competence. Future teachers need communicative competence not only for everyday interaction, but also for specifically educational situations. This means that grammar instruction in pedagogical universities should include elements of academic and classroom discourse. Such orientation creates a bridge between language training and professional identity. Students begin to understand that the mastery of grammar contributes to their future effectiveness as educators, mentors, and organizers of learning. This professional relevance increases the motivational power of grammar instruction, which is often perceived as abstract or formal when detached from practice.

Another important point concerns the role of the teacher educator. The shift toward communicative grammar does not diminish the importance of systematic instruction. On the contrary, it demands higher pedagogical competence from the instructor. The teacher educator must select communicatively meaningful material, design professionally relevant tasks, organize discourse-based interaction, and guide reflection on language use. Thus, communicative grammar requires not methodological simplification but greater pedagogical sophistication. It presupposes that the educator understands both the linguistic system and the communicative realities of teacher professional activity.

The analysis further suggests that communicative grammar supports the development of strategic and sociolinguistic awareness. Future teachers often face situations in which literal grammatical correctness is not enough. They need to reformulate, clarify, soften, emphasize, encourage, or redirect

communication according to the emotional and cognitive state of learners. These processes involve strategic competence and sensitivity to context. When grammar is taught communicatively, students learn to perceive grammatical forms as part of interpersonal interaction. This contributes to the formation of flexible and responsible communicators.

At the same time, the study makes it clear that the successful implementation of communicative grammar depends on curricular coherence. Sporadic use of communicative tasks cannot guarantee sustainable development of communicative competence. What is needed is a systematic model in which grammatical material is progressively linked with speech practice, discourse building, pedagogical situations, and reflective analysis. Such a model corresponds with the logic of higher pedagogical education, where professional competence develops through the integration of knowledge, skill, and value orientation.

The present paper has shown that communicative grammar provides a substantial theoretical basis for developing the communicative competence of future teachers in higher pedagogical education. Its significance lies in the fact that it unites grammatical knowledge with meaning, discourse, context, and professional action. Communicative competence, in this perspective, is not a sum of separate language elements, but an integrated ability to use linguistic means accurately, appropriately, coherently, and purposefully in pedagogical communication.

The analysis has demonstrated that the main theoretical foundations of this process are the functional understanding of grammar, the integrative model of communicative competence, the competence-based approach, contextualization, the communicative-activity approach, reflection, and discourse orientation. Together, these foundations create a pedagogically productive framework in which future teachers can transform grammatical knowledge into real communicative and professional ability.

It can therefore be concluded that the development of communicative competence becomes most effective when grammar instruction is organized not as memorization of isolated rules, but as purposeful speech activity connected with educational interaction and teacher professional growth. In such conditions, future teachers acquire not only linguistic correctness, but also the communicative flexibility and pedagogical sensitivity required for successful work in modern education.

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