



FEATURES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISCURSIVE COMPETENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the characteristics of developing discourse competence in high school students. Discourse competence includes students' ability to construct oral and written speech in a logical, coherent, and understandable manner. The article provides detailed information on the components of discourse competence, effective methods for its development, and pedagogical technologies. Additionally, the importance of using interactive methods, linguistic and pragmatic exercises, and modern information technologies is highlighted. The research findings demonstrate the impact of discourse competence on students' critical thinking, communicative adaptability, and academic achievements.

Introduction

The modern education system requires not only mastering traditional knowledge but also developing students' communication skills. One of the key components of this process is discourse competence. This article analyzes the content, methods, and significance of developing discourse competence among high school students. Discourse competence is the ability to express thoughts clearly, logically, and coherently in different communicative situations. It plays a crucial role for high school students by enhancing their communication culture, critical thinking, and social adaptability.

Many linguists have studied the importance of teaching discourse competence to high school students. Notably, Van Dijk¹ [1], who contributed to text linguistics, discourse analysis, and critical discourse analysis (CDA), defines discourse competence as: "The ability of students to express their thoughts clearly, coherently, and comprehensibly in various communicative situations." Van Dijk highlights the following key aspects of discourse competence:

- **Coherence in Speech** – The ability to structure thoughts logically. High school students need to develop coherent speech to express their ideas clearly in both spoken and written communication. According to Van Dijk, achieving coherence requires not only mastering linguistic rules but also applying discourse strategies during text creation.

¹ Van Dijk, T. A. (1997). *Discourse as Structure and Process*. SAGE Publications.



• Communicative Adaptability – Adjusting speech according to the audience and context. Van Dijk emphasizes the importance of choosing appropriate linguistic elements based on the communicative situation. In his view, communicative adaptability goes beyond knowing grammatical and lexical rules.

• Understanding and Producing Texts – Engaging in both written and spoken communication. Van Dijk asserts that text comprehension is based on cognitive models, meaning that students interpret texts based on prior knowledge and experiences. If students develop logical analysis and idea extraction skills, their academic success will improve.

M.A.K. Halliday² [2] argues that discourse competence is the most important factor in learning a foreign language. He states that if students only focus on grammar rules, their communication ability remains limited. Developing discourse competence enables students to:

- Analyze and comprehend texts.
- Develop topics and construct meaningful texts.
- Express thoughts logically and coherently.

As a result, students can communicate in a foreign language without difficulty and express their ideas clearly and consistently. Various methods and technologies can be used to enhance discourse competence. The following strategies focus on improving students' communication skills by engaging them in real-life communicative situations.³ [4] Interactive methods, which are among the main elements for communicative situations, especially ensure the active participation of students and expose them to real communicative contexts:

• Debates – Teach students how to support their opinions with evidence, helping them develop logical and structured speech.

- Role-playing – Helps students practice communication in real-life situations.

• Collaborative Projects – Encourage group work and structured expression of thoughts.⁴ [6]

Another linguist, Dell Hymes⁵ [5] approaches this issue differently by focusing primarily on speech. He explains that discursive competence is an essential component of communicative competence, as it is necessary for effective communication in various speech situations. According to Hymes, students should focus on:

- Using appropriate language in oral and written communication based on context,
- Choosing the right style for formal and informal situations,
- Employing argumentation and reasoning techniques effectively.

As a result, students will develop the ability to communicate successfully in academic, professional, and social settings in the future.

Developing discourse competence is essential for academic success and effective communication. By using interactive methods and modern teaching strategies, students can enhance their ability to understand and produce texts, communicate effectively, and adapt to

² Halliday, M. A. K. (1985). *An Introduction to Functional Grammar*. London: Edward Arnold.

³ Gee, J. P. (2011). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method*. Routledge.

⁴ Innovative pedagogical technologies and interactive methods. Ministry of Public Education of the Republic of Uzbekistan.

⁵ Hymes, D. (1972). "On Communicative Competence." In *Sociolinguistics*, ed. J.B. Pride & J. Holmes, 269-293. Penguin.



different contexts.⁶ [6] Thus, discourse competence is not just important in language studies but plays a crucial role in all academic disciplines and real-life communication. Teaching students how to use language units in different contexts enhances their adaptability in communication. The use of linguistic and pragmatic exercises is crucial for developing students' analytical thinking skills. Below are the most essential ones:

- Text Analysis – Understanding the structure of texts in various genres and reconstructing them.
- Writing Texts – Developing written speech through writing essays, compositions, and academic articles.
- Dialogue Exercises – Enhancing communication skills through interactive conversations.

Several scholars have discussed the importance of discursive competence and the role of modern technologies in its development as well-known linguists Michael Canale and Merrill Swain⁷ [7] introduces the concept of communicative competence, emphasizing discourse competence as a key component of effective communication. They stated that Discursive competence is the ability of students to express their thoughts clearly, logically, and coherently in various communicative situations Traditional educational approaches have not been sufficiently effective in developing this competence. Therefore, the need for using modern technologies is increasing. Integrating these methods into the educational process can effectively develop students' discourse competence. As well as Vygotsky highlights in his sociocultural theory the importance of interactive and technology-enhanced learning in developing cognitive and linguistic abilities. The most important are as follows:

- Online Platforms (Edmodo, Google Classroom, Moodle) – These allow students to express their thoughts through written and oral communication.
- Audiovisual Tools – Watching video lessons and listening to podcasts helps improve students' comprehension skills.
- AI-Based Communication – Engaging with AI chatbots enables students to learn how to express their ideas clearly. These scholars suggest that integrating modern educational technologies (e.g., AI-based learning, multimedia tools, virtual discussions) can significantly enhance students' ability to engage in discourse effectively. Integrating modern technologies into education is essential for developing students' independent learning skills, improving text processing abilities, and improving communication competence. Interactive teaching tools not only increase learning efficiency but also boost students' interest. Therefore, the use of modern technologies is becoming an indispensable part of today's education system.⁸

Conclusion

The development of discourse competence is essential for high school students, as it enhances their ability to express ideas clearly, adapt communication to different contexts, and engage effectively in both spoken and written discourse. Scholars such as Van Dijk and Halliday emphasize that mastering discourse competence requires more than just linguistic

⁶ . Research Gate. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication>

⁷ Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.

⁸ <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/358663359>



knowledge - it involves coherence in speech, communicative adaptability, and the ability to understand and produce texts. Van Dijk highlights that logical structuring of speech, context-aware communication, and cognitive engagement in text interpretation are crucial for students' academic and personal success. Halliday reinforces this perspective by arguing that focusing solely on grammar limits students' communicative abilities, whereas developing discourse competence enables them to use language effectively in real-world situations. Therefore, educators must prioritize discourse competence in language teaching, incorporating strategies that promote coherence, adaptability, and text analysis. This approach not only improves students' linguistic proficiency but also enhances their critical thinking, problem-solving, and overall academic performance, preparing them for success in both education and professional life.

Using new approaches and interactive methods in discursive competence development enables students to express their ideas clearly and fluently. Developing high school students' discursive competence enhances both the teaching process and their social and intellectual growth. By utilizing didactic opportunities, students improve their ability to communicate effectively, structure their thoughts logically, and navigate various communicative situations with confidence. Integrating innovative approaches and interactive methods fosters clear and fluent expression, equipping students with language proficiency, critical thinking, and analytical skills that contribute to their long-term success. Since, discursive competence extends beyond language and literature, its development should be prioritized across all subjects to enhance students' communication skills, analytical abilities, and structured reasoning. A strong focus on these competencies in education ensures that students are well-prepared for both academic excellence and real-world challenges.

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