

INTEGRATING LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND TEACHING METHODOLOGY IN EFL TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract: The growing demands of modern education require EFL teachers to possess both strong language proficiency and effective teaching skills. However, these components are often taught separately in teacher education programs, creating a gap between theory and practice. This paper explores the importance of integrating linguistic competence with teaching methodology in the preparation of future English teachers. Drawing on frameworks such as Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the study highlights how integrated training improves classroom performance. It also discusses practical strategies, including reflective practice and micro-teaching, as tools for developing professional competence. The paper concludes that a holistic approach to teacher education is essential for preparing confident and effective EFL teachers.

Keywords: EFL, linguistic competence, teaching methodology, teacher education, PCK, CLT, reflective practice.

Introduction: In the context of globalization and increasing intercultural communication, the role of English language teachers has become significantly more complex. Modern educators are expected not only to demonstrate high levels of linguistic accuracy but also to effectively facilitate learning through appropriate teaching strategies. As Richards and Rodgers (2001) note, successful language teaching depends on both knowledge of the language and the ability to apply this knowledge pedagogically.

However, in many teacher education programs, linguistic competence and teaching methodology are still taught as separate subjects. This separation often leads to a situation where pre-service teachers possess strong theoretical knowledge but lack the practical ability to implement it in real classroom contexts. Borg (2006) emphasizes that teachers' cognition—including their beliefs, knowledge, and language awareness—plays a crucial role in shaping classroom practices.

Therefore, bridging the gap between “knowing the language” and “knowing how to teach the language” has become a central issue in EFL teacher education. This paper aims to explore how integrating these two components can enhance the professional competence of future English teachers.

Literature Review: The concept of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), introduced by Shulman (1987), provides a theoretical foundation for integrated teacher education. PCK refers to the ability to transform subject matter knowledge into teachable content. In the context of EFL, this means that teachers must understand not only the structure of the English language but also how to present it in ways that are accessible and meaningful to learners.

Another important framework is Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritizes interaction and real-life communication in language learning. According to Richards and Rodgers (2001), CLT requires teachers to use language fluently and flexibly in the classroom, highlighting the importance of strong linguistic competence.

Additionally, Krashen's (1982) Input Hypothesis suggests that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level. This implies that teachers must be capable of adjusting their language use to meet students' needs.

Freeman (2002) further argues that teacher learning is not a linear process but a continuous development in which language proficiency and teaching practice evolve together. This supports the idea that integration, rather than separation, should be the guiding principle in teacher education.

Methodology: This study employs a qualitative research design based on a comprehensive review and analysis of existing literature in the field of EFL teacher education. Academic books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and theoretical frameworks were examined to identify key patterns and effective strategies for integrating linguistic and methodological competencies. The analysis focuses on synthesizing theoretical insights and practical implications relevant to teacher training programs.

Discussion: The integration of language proficiency and teaching methodology provides several important pedagogical benefits. Firstly, it allows teachers to act as effective language models, which is essential for learners' language acquisition (Krashen, 1982). Secondly, strong linguistic competence helps teachers manage classroom interaction more effectively, explain concepts clearly, and respond to students' needs in real time, which aligns with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

In addition, practical training methods such as micro-teaching and reflective practice support the development of integrated competence. These approaches enable pre-service teachers to apply theoretical knowledge in real teaching situations and improve their performance through reflection (Farrell, 2015).

However, challenges still exist. Many teacher education programs lack sufficient practical training opportunities, and some teachers struggle to balance language accuracy with pedagogical skills. Therefore, a more integrated and practice-oriented approach is needed to improve teacher preparation.

Implications for Practice: To address these challenges, teacher education programs should adopt a more integrated curriculum design. This may include:

- Combining language development courses with teaching methodology modules
- Incorporating task-based and communicative activities into training
- Providing regular opportunities for teaching practice and feedback
- Encouraging continuous reflection through journals and peer discussions

Such measures can help create a more cohesive and effective learning experience for future teachers.

Conclusion: In conclusion, the integration of linguistic competence and teaching methodology is not merely desirable but essential in EFL teacher education. A teacher who is proficient in English but lacks pedagogical skills—or vice versa—cannot fully meet the demands of modern classrooms. By adopting an integrated approach, teacher education programs can better prepare future educators to navigate the complexities of language teaching with confidence and competence. Ultimately, this integration leads to more effective teaching and improved learning outcomes.

Adabiyotlar, References, Литературы:

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