Essence of the Discursive Competence as a Part of Professional Interaction of Future Physicians

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The article is concerned with essence of the foreign language discursive competence of future physicians. All participants of the communication process should know model of verbal and nonverbal behaviour, depending on the circumstances that unfold. When join in communication, for realization of the set communicative goal it is necessary to be able to choose a particular model of verbal behaviour among those models, which already exist, taking into account the communicative situation and the conversation strategy. However, medical students have difficulty connected to the perception and forming of speech messages in in real communicative situations. Furthermore, knowledge of rules and regulations of the foreign language is not in every instance relevant to ways of formation of opinion. Moreover, it is related with in the context of the foreign language learning insufficient level of discursive competence formation. Discursive competence is an important part of the teaching and learning activities. It reflects the nature of cognitive, informational, communicative and reflexive activities and has an impact on the success of communication. Discursive competence of the future physician is the ability of the medical specialist to form, perceive and interpret holistic monologues (messages, presentations, reports, speeches) and dialogic/polylogical (discussions, consideration, conversation, interviews, telephone conversations) oral discourses in a foreign language in accordance with communicative intention within the scope of professionally oriented communication with due consideration of specifics of their pragmatic and grammatical organization, the relationship between extra-linguistic and linguistic factors and the rules of speech etiquette.

Keywords: competency, competence, discursive competence, future physicians, formation of the foreign language discursive competence.

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Introduction

There are expansion of international cooperation in all fields of knowledge and current situation on the global job market require future alumni of a higher medical school to be not only a qualified specialists who have knowledge and skills only in professional field but they should be first of all competent professionals with knowing of foreign language as a means of international communication.

That is, competent professional should be able to communicate freely in foreign languages with colleagues from around the world, discuss issues of the medicine developing, taking into account the current trends, make speeches in international medical congresses, symposiums and conferences with reports and furthermore, choose appropriate variant of the foreign verbal behaviour according to communicative situation.

It is for this reason that is necessary to improve future physicians’ knowledge of the foreign verbal speech in accordance with the Common European Framework and it is necessary to create new approaches to teaching of foreign languages as compulsory subject in a higher medical school, implement interactive teaching technologies and techniques, which will facilitate the development of a foreign verbal discursive skills on the basis of the gaining systems of knowledge in the education process.

It is in accordance with the National Doctrine for Development of Education in Ukraine the language education system should give opportunity to use practically at least one of the foreign languages that means learning of the language linguistic component in close combination with the sociocultural component and pragmatic effectivities.

Goal of the foreign language learning in a higher medical school is acquisition of foreign languages as means of communication as well as acquisition of professionally directed foreign language competence for successful performing of the further professional activity.

Concept of communicative competence as common communicative quality of the person, that includes the developed communication skills and formed skills and abilities of the interpersonal communication and knowledge about its main regularities and rules directly or in connection with research of other issues are considered in the works of Oleksii Bodalov, Yurii Yemelianov, Oleksandr Kyrychuk, Yakiv Kolomynckyi, Nina Kuzmina, Alvina Panfilova, Larysa Petrovska, Nina Tarasevych, Tamila Yatsenko and so forth.

Most scientists consider the communicative competence as a significant component of the professional competence, which has its own specificity in each activity.

Problem of the communicative competence development in the process of the foreign language learning was studied in the works of Liudmyla Byrkun, Iryna Zymnia and so forth.

Modern discourse theory serves as a theoretical basis for the discursive competence (Olena Aleksandrova, Volodymyr Karasyk, Oleksandr Kibryk, Olena Kubriakova).

Competence and Competency

Concepts of the «competence» and «competency» are considered from different perspectives by scientists.

Andrii Khutorskii distinguishes terms of «competence» and «competency». He indicates that the competence is a set of interrelated human features (knowledge, ability, skills, and ways of activity). Competency in this field is having competence by the person including the personal feelings about object of activity [Khutoskii, 2003: p. 55].
Competence should be understood, in accordance with definition of these terms, as specified requirement, standard of future physicians’ educational level, while competency should be understood as their actually formed personal qualities and minimal experience.

Foreign communicative competence is an integral characteristic of the professional activity of a specialist, which includes the following substructures: activity (knowledge, ability, skills, and ways of the professional activity performing); communicative (knowledge, ability, skills, and ways of the professional communication performing) [Yefimova, 2013].

Future professional should be able to use the foreign languages as means of international communication, which includes the formation of the appropriate level of a foreign language communicative competence of the users. Communication is considered as the process of verbally or in writing interaction, which cognitive essence includes an exchange and evaluating of information [Feldman, 2003]. In view of this, communicative competence is considered as formed if the future professional uses a foreign language with the purpose to get and increase own knowledge and experience [Hymes, 1971: p. 28].

**Essence of the discursive competence**

Communicative competence is complex and multidimensional concept in the modern sociolinguistics. It is considered as system that performs functions of balancing of existing language forms, which are determined on the basis of the communicant’s language competence in the context of certain social functions [European Recommendations on Language Education, 2003]. Communicative competence means that each speech has rules which are regulated by the common grammar rules and learning of which provide ability to use language in the process of communication. Essence of the communicative competence are revealed through pragmatic, discourse and informative components.

**Pragmatic (strategic) component** is considered as the rules of the coming into contact with an interlocutor, ability to maintain this contact during the process of communication, and complete communication logically. Communicative pragmatic means, in other words, readiness to transfer to communicative meaning in the specific situation of communication. This readiness is related, in the foreign language classes, as a rule with possibility of the student to orientate quickly in the foreign language speech communicative strategy, in other words, ability to adapt verbal and cogitative process to the given by the communicative situation conditions.

**Discourse** component is considered as the rules of the meaning constructing of the specific speech. Discourse is the form of the communicative meaning («what should be said» and «in what manner say something»), which is always addressed to the interlocutor, listener or reader and is characterized by the following features: coherence, logic, organization. Mentioned features of the discourse are especially identified in written speech when lexico-grammatical connection, logic of meaning and the speech appropriate organization are more important in the verbal speech.

**Information** component is purposed on getting the meaningful subject of communication. In the process of the information component forming student gets a set of necessary concepts in the foreign language classes. These concepts describe any given situation, information from past experience in the form of knowledge and patterns of behaviour, knowledge of the real world, ability to describe the real world and own attitudes towards it by means of foreign language form and so forth.
Communicative competence is being gaining by students in the process of foreign language learning be means of communicative approach, basis of which includes reorient from form to function, from the linguistic competence to communicative, from the language correctness to spontaneity and authenticity, in other words, the naturalness of communication.

Communicative competence includes several sub-competencies. Discourse competence is one of the most significant and communicative relevant. It includes knowledge of different types of discourses and rules of the discourse construction as well as ability to create and understand these discourses with taking into account different communicative situations.

**Conceptual diapason of the term “discourse”**

Nonna Sukalenko things that this term is situated between text, context, functional style, sublanguage [Sukalenko, 2001: p. 254]. Florii-Batsevych determinates discourse as set of communicants’ verbal and cogitative actions, which are related with learning, understanding and presentation of the word by a speaker and understanding of the linguistic view of a sender world by a listener.

Discourse is determined in the modern linguistics as complex communicative phenomenon that includes text as well as extralingual factors (knowledge and concepts about the world, attitudes and purposes of the addressee), which are necessary for adequate understanding of a text. Unlike a text, discourse is, first of all, the sample of certain communicative intentions realization in the context of a specific communicative situation in relation to a specific partner, who represents other culture, with expressions of verbal and non-verbal means which are appropriate in specific situation. Adequacy of communicants’ language behaviour, however, is determined by the success of speech interaction, in other words, by the achievement of a communicative goal as well as agreement with the verbal and non-verbal behaviour rules which are characteristic of a specific linguocultural community.

New approach in the definition of discourse computation was formed mostly in the teaching of foreign languages. Discourse competence are determined by foreign scientists (Michel Canale, Merrill Swain) as knowledge of different discourse types and principles of discourse construction as well as ability to create and understand the discourse with taking into account of the communication situations [Canale, Swain, 1980]. H. Douglas Brown considered discourse as the human ability to connect sentences in discourse fragments and creates complete semantic text from the set of phrases [Brown, 1987: p. 143]. There is the discourse approach in the study of linguistic phenomena contributed to the modification of methods and techniques of teaching a foreign language because it shows procedural and effective unity of the language behaviour in combination of its verbal and non-verbal components. Hence the idea of the text which is the source of information about the discourse, is the central section in the process of communication, complex sign which created by means of semantic elements which are connected into a hierarchical structure by the author’s communicative intention [Kruchyna, 2008: p. 91] and text exactly should serve as the main unit language communication teaching, has started up in the theory and practice of the foreign language teaching.

Olha Kucherenko things that discourse is more important than text in accordance with the modern concept of language teaching. It is because «unlike a text, discourse includes also extralingual conditions of communication» what is the necessary condition for forming of the communicative competence, i.e. the ability to correlate language means with specific spheres, situations and communicative tasks» [Kucherenko, 2000: p. 89]. Researcher distinguished
several components of the discursive competence, such as textual, genre, tactical and strategic. Strategic component includes the ability to understand a communicative intention and plan a communicative event. Tactical component includes formed skills to analyse the communicative situation and choose language means which are adequate in this situation for achieving of the communicative goal. Genre component includes knowledge of genre norms and the ability to choose type of texts and create the discourse in accordance with specific genre canons. Textual component seen as the ability to make sentence in a manner that will form textual unity. At the same time, text is considered in the aspect of the research issue, in the narrow sense, as in the traditional dictionary definitions, as sequence combination of items united by a semantic connection with a fundamental characteristic such as coherence and integrity [Kucherenko, 2000: p. 84-89].

Transition to the text and the sentence does not imply the actual quantitative predominance of the textual material. It is the issue of a qualitatively new direction when using texts at classes. Discourse basis of studying give the opportunity to consider the language units in the condition of natural realization of its meaning, structure and function of which promote the most complete understanding of the language behaviour of native speakers of the language which learnt. Textual component can be indicated as the ability to accept, understand and create the text (verbal or written). Discourse competence is a wider field of activity, which includes strictly linguistic skills and abilities as well as knowing of a sociocultural register which can be determined as a set of typical and specific language formulas, communicative models or structures testing socially, and those which concentrate a language experience of communication participants.

**Formation of the discursive competence in the process of foreign language learning by future physicians**

Discourse competence is the ability of the linguistic persona to create and accept cohesive discourses of the different types (written and verbal) in accordance with communicative intention in borders of a specific situation with taking into account specific of their semantic and pragmatic and grammatical organization on macro and micro levels and relationship between their extra-linguistic and linguistic components. Availability of the discourse competence in the students includes their ability to create and accept different type of discourses with taking into account a communicative situation that is observance of parameters of one type of discourse or using of different types of discourse depending on changes of a communicative situation during the speech acts. It is impossible to know different types of discourses of native and especially of foreign language without special preparation. It is proved that all people have different ability to understand and duplicate different texts. Probably, it is because each person exists in his/her special spheres, such as family, public or professional and exactly there meets with special discourses. But, it is the fact that each one has the set of discourses of native language that is necessary for communication. These sets of discourses are gained because of communication and interaction with other communicants whose language is the sample in different real-life situations. Communicant gain, as a result, to his/her own experience necessary nomenclature of discourses. Classroom is still the main place during studying of the foreign language, where is used discourses that are characteristics of alien cultures. It is exactly in the classroom student who learn the foreign language have the opportunity to learn which discourse choose with taking into account the situation and form his/her own
speech correct but with using different tools that is without using identical lexical units and grammatical forms, starting own speech in different way, when talking personally or by means of telephone, on the street or at home with representatives of different social group, even if the speech topic are always the same [Shevchenko, 2005].

Despite sufficient levels of grammatical knowledge, future physicians do not always choose grammatical constructions and speech formulas in the correct manner. A lot of difficulties arise in the process of the stylistically appropriate lexical means choosing, because students have almost no idea about lexis’ systemic organization. Consequently, when using with didactic purposes professionally directed English texts such as scientific article, article from the reference textbook, formal letter, and fragments from educational texts, attention should be drawn to the row of conventions inherent to the British legal community, for example, on the strict restrictions on the imperative mood using, strong language, complete emphatic refusal, negative particles, negative constructions and so forth. Therefore, a discourse competence as a part of future physicians’ discourse competence serves as one of ways for solving of such problems. It promotes the students’ linguistic observational skills development in different contexts, which in turn leads to conscious acceptance of appropriate stylistic and lexical means, grammatical structures and to their appropriate using when forming of texts. When using a discourse approach attention should be drawn to the relationship among the language form, its content, function, and a communicative situation.

Individual’s discourse competence realizes by means of performing of different communicative activity types, such as accepting, understanding, reproducing (verbal or written). There are three stages for gaining of skills for forming/accepting of discourse:

a) indoctrination (introductive speech of lecturer with reference on the communicative purpose of communication, presentation of discourse, control under understanding and analysis of situation);

b) training (acceptance and analysis of a few discourses of the same type); exercises for consolidation of language means, reproducing of discourses);

c) practice: controlled communication (forming/understanding of discourses), free communication (forming / understanding of communicative act with using of learnt type of discourse with taking into account a problem situation of a foreign language cultural environment).

Each of type of activity can be connected with texts in verbal or in written forms, or in both of them. It is necessary, for forming of communicative motivation, to create favourable didactic conditions, use personal individualization which includes taking into account the context of the student’s activity of his/her experience, his/her interests and desires, spiritual needs, outlook, emotional and sensual spheres, the individual’s status in the team. In accordance with the mentioned above information we can make the following conclusion: students, especially those who have a certain knowledge of foreign languages, should not learn by heart texts as samples of language realization of a certain sense/ theme, they should, in return, be studied to accept and form discourses with taking into account the communicative purpose and communicative situation. It is rather difficult language skills which are necessary for performing of these actions, so their forming demands purposeful, continuous, systematic learning, creating of modern the lecturer’s arsenal.

Experience of working with students shows that they have relatively low level of a discourse competence formation. This is manifested in the fact that students often have difficulty when choosing language means, which would appropriate in the context of discourse,
when choosing language and behaviour reactions and strategies, which are not adequate in the specific communicative situation, students are not able to achieve communicative purposes during introduction to problem and during discussing considering a problem. With purpose to help students to avoid difficulties of communication it is used the situation analysing approach (Case method), which characterized by the wide pedagogical opportunity. Realization of these approaches take possibility to student actively interact, learn from each other, (collectively, in groups, learn in cooperation), when lecturer and student are in equal position, and none of the participants prevailed over the other. Students get know how to be democratic, communicate with other people, think critically and make decision.

Conclusions

Discourse competence is the human ability to create connected part of speech with taking into account grammatical, lexical and syntactic rules, communicative situation and extralingual factors, which are integral components of the communication process, logically forms utterances into completed texts and represent these text in accordance with style of speech and the principles of rhetorical efficiency. Formation of the foreign language competence of students includes shift of accent from language form of the text, which served as the sample of discourse models using in a verbal discourse to ways and means of expression and achieving of interlocutors’ communicative purposes.

References


