
МЕТОДОЛОГИЯ И ТЕХНОЛОГИЯ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ/METHODOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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SOME CONSIDERATIONS BESET WITH CONCEPTUALIZING COMMUNICATIVE CULTURE FOR FUTURE ENGLISH TEACHERS

Research article

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Abstract

The given article dwells on the conceptual challenges and difficulties associated with defining and structuring the notion of “communicative culture” as it applies to future English teachers. Key difficulties in conceptualization are identified, including the blurred boundaries of the concept, the problem of integrating various components, accounting for the dynamic nature of language and culture, the need to reflect the contextual specificity of a teacher's professional activity, and the issue of operationalization for teaching and assessment purposes. A profound analysis is conducted into the influence of these conceptual difficulties on the development of educational programs, teaching methodologies, and assessment systems in pedagogical education. Approaches to overcoming these problems are discussed through the construction of multi-layered models and an emphasis on professionally-oriented, contextualized conceptualization.

Keywords: communicative culture, conceptualization, future English teachers, pedagogical education, communicative competence, intercultural communication, pedagogical communication.

НЕКОТОРЫЕ СООБРАЖЕНИЯ ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНО КОНЦЕПТУАЛИЗАЦИИ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ БУДУЩИХ УЧИТЕЛЕЙ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В данной статье рассматриваются концептуальные проблемы и трудности, связанные с определением и структурированием понятия «коммуникативная культура» применительно к будущим учителям английского языка. Выявляются основные трудности концептуализации, в том числе размытость границ понятия, проблема интеграции различных компонентов, учет динамической природы языка и культуры, необходимость отражения контекстуальной специфики профессиональной деятельности учителя, а также проблема операционализации в целях обучения и оценки. Проводится глубокий анализ влияния этих концептуальных трудностей на разработку образовательных программ, методик обучения и систем оценки в педагогическом образовании. Обсуждаются подходы к преодолению этих проблем посредством построения многоуровневых моделей и акцента на профессионально-ориентированной, контекстуализированной концептуализации.

Ключевые слова: коммуникативная культура, концептуализация, будущие учителя английского языка, педагогическое образование, коммуникативная компетентность, межкультурная коммуникация, педагогическая коммуникация.

Introduction

The role of the English language teacher in the 21st century is increasingly complex, extending beyond the transmission of linguistic knowledge to encompass the facilitation of communication, cultural understanding, and global citizenship. Effective English language teaching demands not only a high level of language proficiency and pedagogical skill, but also a sophisticated understanding and command of how language functions within diverse social and cultural contexts, particularly within the unique environment of the classroom. This broader construct, often referred to as “communicative culture” is recognized as crucial for the professional success of future English teachers. However, while the importance of this quality is widely acknowledged, its precise conceptualization for the specific context of future educators remains a significant challenge, beset with definitional ambiguities and complexities.

While communicative competence models provide a valuable foundation, the term “communicative culture” often implies a broader, more deeply ingrained, and culturally sensitive understanding of communication. For a teacher, it encompasses not just the ability to communicate effectively in English, but the ability to facilitate communication among others, to act as a cultural mediator, and to utilize communication strategically within the pedagogical context. This involves a higher level of awareness of one's own communication style, cultural biases, and their impact on learners, as well as the ability to foster a positive communicative environment in the classroom that respects linguistic and cultural diversity. Communicative culture, therefore, can be viewed as an integrative concept that builds upon and extends communicative competence, incorporating aspects of professional identity, pedagogical skill, and ethical considerations in communication.

However, despite its apparent relevance and necessity for future English teachers, the precise conceptualization of "communicative culture" within teacher education literature is not uniform. It is a term used with varying scopes and definitions, sometimes overlapping significantly with communicative competence, sometimes encompassing much more. This lack of a clear, comprehensive, and widely accepted conceptual framework poses significant challenges for pedagogical higher education institutions responsible for training these future professionals. Difficulties in conceptualization directly impact curriculum design, the selection of appropriate teaching methodologies, the development of valid assessment tools, and ultimately, the effectiveness of teacher training programs in equipping graduates with this essential quality.

The challenges in conceptualizing communicative culture for future English teachers stem from several sources: the multi-dimensional nature of communication itself, the complex interplay of language, culture, and pedagogy, the dynamic evolution of global communication practices, and the need to translate theoretical constructs into practical educational objectives and outcomes. This article aims to explore these conceptual challenges in depth, providing a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in defining what communicative culture means specifically for those who will teach the English language.

The purpose of this article is to identify and analyze the key considerations and difficulties encountered when conceptualizing "communicative culture" for future English teachers. By examining the various dimensions and requirements of this construct in the context of pedagogical practice, this study seeks to shed light on the theoretical and practical implications of these conceptual challenges for teacher training programs.

Based on this purpose, the main objectives are:

- to differentiate the concept of communicative culture from related notions like communicative competence;
- to identify the core components that should ideally be included in a conceptualization of communicative culture for future English teachers;
- to analyze the key conceptual challenges faced when integrating these components into a coherent framework;
- to discuss the implications of these conceptual challenges for curriculum development, pedagogy, and assessment in teacher education;
- to suggest directions for more effective conceptualization to inform future research and practice.

This study is theoretical in nature, based on a synthesis and analysis of existing literature in applied linguistics, language pedagogy, teacher education, and communication studies. It seeks to contribute to a clearer understanding of a critical professional attribute by dissecting the complexities inherent in its definition.

Methods

This study employs a qualitative, analytical approach focused on the conceptual exploration and synthesis of existing theoretical frameworks and research literature. The methodology is designed to address the inherent complexity and multi-dimensionality of defining a concept like "communicative culture" within a specific professional domain (English language teaching). No empirical data collection from participants was involved; the analysis relies on published scholarly work.

The process for identifying and analyzing the considerations and challenges in conceptualizing communicative culture for future English teachers involved the following steps:

1. Initial Literature Review on Core Concepts.

A foundational review was conducted to understand the key concepts underpinning "communicative culture". This included:

- theories of intercultural communication and intercultural competence;
- literature on pedagogical communication and classroom discourse analysis;
- research on teacher knowledge, skills, and identity, particularly for language teachers.

2. Targeted Literature Search on "Communicative Culture".

A more focused search was performed using terms such as "communicative culture", "teacher communicative culture", "professional communicative culture", and "communicative competence for teachers" within databases of academic publications. The search was limited to sources published between 2015 and 2025 to capture recent perspectives and discussions relevant to the contemporary educational landscape. The aim was to identify how the term "communicative culture" (or closely related concepts used synonymously or complementarily) is defined or discussed in relation to teachers, particularly language teachers, and what components are typically included.

3. Identification of Key Components.

Based on the literature review (Steps 2.1 and 2.2), a synthesis was performed to identify the various dimensions or components that are considered relevant to the communicative abilities and cultural awareness of a future English teacher. This included linguistic proficiency, various communicative sub-competencies (sociolinguistic, pragmatic, etc.), intercultural understanding, and pedagogical communication skills.

4. Analysis of Conceptual Relationships and Boundaries.

The relationships between "communicative culture", "communicative competence", "intercultural competence", and "pedagogical competence" were analyzed. This involved examining how different sources define and differentiate (or fail to differentiate) these terms, highlighting areas of overlap and distinctiveness. The goal was to understand the inherent ambiguity in the terminology itself.

5. Identification and Categorization of Conceptual Challenges.

Drawing from the synthesized literature and the analysis of conceptual relationships, specific difficulties or "considerations beset with" the process of defining this construct were identified. These challenges relate to the inherent nature of the concept and the process of its definition. The identified challenges were then grouped into logical categories based on thematic commonalities.

6. In-Depth Analysis of Conceptual Challenges.

Each identified conceptual challenge was analyzed in detail. This involved exploring:

The specific nature of the difficulty (e.g., why is integrating components hard? Why is accounting for context problematic?).

The underlying reasons for the challenge (e.g., the complexity of human interaction, the dynamic nature of culture, the diverse demands of the teaching profession).

The implications of this conceptual difficulty for the practical aspects of teacher training (curriculum, pedagogy, assessment). This stage involved critical reflection and synthesis of ideas from various sources, even if a source didn't explicitly name the "conceptual challenge" but discussed issues related to defining or developing the concept.

7. Discussion of Implications and Future Directions.

The findings from the analysis were used to discuss the broader significance of these conceptual issues for the field of language teacher education. Potential approaches or strategies for developing more robust and useful conceptualizations were explored, considering the need for frameworks that are both theoretically sound and practically applicable for training and assessment.

The methodology is limited by its reliance solely on theoretical literature; it does not incorporate empirical data from actual teacher training programs or the perspectives of trainers or students. However, for the purpose of conducting a profound analysis of conceptual challenges, this theoretical approach is appropriate, allowing for a deep dive into the definitions, components, and inherent difficulties in structuring this complex notion based on established knowledge in the field. The focus on recent literature ensures the analysis is grounded in contemporary discussions and understandings.

Main results

The analysis of theoretical literature and research concerning communicative abilities and teacher education reveals several key considerations and inherent difficulties that beset the process of conceptualizing "communicative culture" specifically for future English teachers. These challenges arise from the multifaceted nature of the construct, its relationship with other established concepts, and the unique demands of the pedagogical profession. The principal conceptual challenges identified can be categorized as follows: (3.1) Defining Boundaries and Differentiating from Related Concepts, (3.2) Integrating Diverse Components, (3.3) Accounting for Dynamic and Context-Specific Dimensions, and (3.4) Operationalization for Training and Assessment.

3.1. Defining Boundaries and Differentiating from Related Concepts

One of the most immediate conceptual challenges is establishing clear boundaries for "communicative culture" and differentiating it from closely related and more established concepts, particularly "communicative competence." While there is general agreement that communicative culture is a broader construct, encompassing not just ability but also values, beliefs, attitudes, and a deeper level of awareness, the exact scope and the nature of its relationship to communicative competence are often ambiguous in literature and practice [10, P. 111]. Is communicative culture an extension of competence, a higher level, or a fundamentally different kind of construct that includes competence?

Furthermore, the term "communicative culture" can sometimes be used interchangeably or confusingly with "intercultural competence," "sociocultural competence," or even general notions of "professionalism" or "pedagogical skill" [5, P. 83]. While these concepts are undoubtedly components or related aspects of a teacher's communicative culture, failing to delineate the specific contribution and scope of "communicative culture" as a distinct construct hinders precise definition and measurement. The challenge lies in identifying the unique added value and integrative nature of "communicative culture" that makes it more than the sum of its parts when applied to the teaching profession.

This conceptual overlap and lack of clear definition make it difficult to articulate specific learning outcomes for "communicative culture" that are distinct from those already covered under communicative or intercultural competence frameworks.

3.2. Integrating Diverse Components

A major difficulty in conceptualizing communicative culture for teachers lies in effectively integrating its numerous proposed components into a coherent, functional model. As discussed in the introduction, a teacher's communicative culture arguably includes:

Linguistic Competence: Mastery of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation.

Sociolinguistic Competence: Appropriate language use in different social contexts.

Pragmatic Competence: Understanding and using language functions, politeness, indirectness.

Discourse Competence: Organizing language into coherent spoken or written texts.

Strategic Competence: Using communication strategies to manage difficulties.

Intercultural Competence: Understanding and navigating cultural differences, mediating between cultures.

Pedagogical Communicative Competence: Specific skills for classroom interaction (explaining, questioning, giving feedback, managing discourse, building rapport) and professional interaction (colleagues, parents).

Cultural Awareness and Sensitivity: A deep understanding of how culture shapes communication and a sensitive attitude towards cultural diversity [2, P. 90].

Professional Identity and Ethics: Communication reflecting professional values, responsibility, and ethical considerations (e.g., avoiding stereotypes, ensuring equitable participation).

The challenge is not just listing these components, but conceptualizing how they interact and how they are integrated within a single individual's communicative culture. Is there a hierarchical relationship? Do they develop simultaneously? How does one component (e.g., intercultural sensitivity) influence another (e.g., pragmatic competence)? How do these cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions combine to form a holistic "culture" rather than just a set of skills or competencies? Building a conceptual model that clearly illustrates these interrelationships is complex [6, P. 35].

3.3. Accounting for Dynamic and Context-Specific Dimensions

Language and culture are not static entities; they are constantly evolving. Global communication practices are also changing rapidly, influenced by technology, new forms of discourse (e.g., online communication), and shifting social norms. A

conceptualization of communicative culture must somehow account for this inherent dynamism [1, P. 199]. Defining a fixed set of skills or knowledge risks becoming quickly outdated. The challenge is to create a concept that is stable enough to guide training but flexible enough to adapt to future changes.

Furthermore, the communicative demands on an English teacher vary significantly depending on the context: teaching beginners versus advanced learners, children versus adults, in a monolingual classroom versus a multilingual one, in an urban school versus a rural one, in one country versus another [8, P. 56]. A teacher's communicative culture needs to be adaptable. Conceptualizing a generic "communicative culture" that applies equally to all future English teachers, regardless of their intended professional context, is problematic. The challenge is to define a core concept while also allowing for context-specific variations and the development of adaptable, context-aware communication skills. How can a single conceptual framework capture this necessary variability and adaptability?

3.4. Operationalization for Training and Assessment

A significant conceptual challenge, driven by the practical needs of education, is how to operationalize "communicative culture" in a way that allows for effective teaching and valid assessment within a teacher training program. If the concept is defined too abstractly (e.g., focusing on underlying values or attitudes without observable behaviors), it becomes difficult to design specific learning activities to develop it or to measure its attainment objectively [9, P. 71].

Translating the complex, integrated notion of communicative culture, with its affective and behavioral components, into concrete learning objectives, curriculum content, and assessment criteria is a major hurdle. How can one teach "intercultural sensitivity" or "pedagogical rapport" as measurable learning outcomes? How can assessment move beyond testing discrete skills to evaluating holistic communicative performance and cultural mediation in authentic or simulated teaching scenarios? [3, P. 166] The challenge is to develop a conceptualization that is not only theoretically sound but also provides a practical basis for pedagogical interventions and evaluation, bridging the gap between theory and the demands of teacher education practice [4, P. 48].

These conceptual challenges are not isolated but interact with each other. The difficulty in integrating diverse components makes operationalization harder. The dynamic nature of the concept makes defining clear boundaries complex. Addressing these issues is crucial for developing effective teacher training programs that genuinely foster the communicative culture required for contemporary English language teaching.

Discussion

The results highlight that conceptualizing communicative culture for future English teachers is a significant undertaking fraught with considerable difficulties. These challenges are not merely academic; they have profound implications for the effectiveness of teacher training programs and, consequently, for the quality of English language education itself.

The issue of defining boundaries and differentiating communicative culture from related concepts like communicative competence [10, P. 111] is fundamental. Without a clear conceptual distinction, it becomes difficult to justify specific curriculum content or pedagogical approaches aimed at developing "communicative culture" as opposed to just "communicative competence." If the terms are used interchangeably, the added value and the unique focus of "culture" (encompassing values, attitudes, awareness, and the ability to mediate) may be lost. This ambiguity can lead to curricula that are strong in developing linguistic or strategic competence but weak in fostering deeper cultural understanding, sensitivity, or the specific communicative nuances of the pedagogical role. A clearer conceptualization could propose communicative culture not just as a higher level of competence, but as a professional stance or disposition that integrates various competencies and is guided by cultural awareness and pedagogical purpose.

The challenge of integrating diverse components (linguistic, intercultural, pedagogical, etc.) [2, P. 90] is perhaps the most complex. Existing models often present competencies as separate modules, but communicative culture in practice is a seamless, integrated whole. A teacher does not utilize linguistic competence then pedagogical competence; they use them simultaneously and interactively while being guided by intercultural awareness and professional ethics. The difficulty lies in creating a conceptual model that reflects this integration rather than merely listing components. This points to the need for conceptual frameworks that emphasize the interplay and synergy between these dimensions, perhaps using systems thinking or network models rather than linear or modular ones [6, P. 35]. Such models would better inform pedagogical approaches that foster this integrated development, such as complex tasks or simulations that require the simultaneous application of multiple competencies.

Accounting for the dynamic and context-specific dimensions is crucial for the relevance and longevity of any conceptualization. Language and culture are not static, and a teacher's communicative demands vary significantly by context [1, P. 199], [8, P. 56]. A static definition risks training teachers for yesterday's classroom. Conceptualizing communicative culture must embrace its fluid nature. This might involve defining core principles or metacommunicative awareness skills that allow teachers to adapt to new contexts and evolving communicative norms, rather than focusing solely on mastery of fixed rules or specific cultural knowledge. The conceptual framework should emphasize flexibility, adaptability, and the capacity for ongoing learning and self-reflection regarding one's own communication in practice. This suggests a conceptualization that is less about a fixed endpoint and more about a developmental process and an ongoing disposition towards learning and adaptation.

Finally, the challenge of operationalization [3, P. 166], [9, P. 71] highlights the gap between theoretical constructs and the practical necessities of education. A concept that cannot be translated into observable behaviors or measurable outcomes is of limited use for curriculum design, teaching, or assessment. This does not mean reducing "communicative culture" to a checklist of discrete skills, but rather finding ways to define and assess its manifestation in complex, authentic or simulated professional tasks. This might involve conceptualizing communicative culture through performance indicators in teaching scenarios, portfolio assessment demonstrating reflective practice on communication, or using critical incident analysis to assess intercultural and pedagogical sensitivity in action. The conceptualization needs to be defined with an eye towards how it will

be used in practice, perhaps adopting a competency-based approach that focuses on the ability to perform complex communicative tasks effectively in professional settings [4, P. 48].

The profound analysis of these conceptual challenges reveals that defining communicative culture for future English teachers is not just an exercise in academic classification; it is a critical prerequisite for designing effective teacher training programs. If we cannot clearly articulate what this vital quality is, we cannot effectively teach, develop, or assess it. The current landscape is characterized by conceptual ambiguity, fragmentation, and a potential disconnect between theoretical ideals and practical application.

To navigate these difficulties, future work on conceptualization should consider several approaches:

1. Develop Multi-layered and Integrated Models.

Move beyond lists of competencies to models that illustrate the dynamic interaction and integration of linguistic, intercultural, and pedagogical dimensions. These models should emphasize the role of meta-awareness, self-reflection, and adaptability as core components of communicative culture.

2. Adopt a Professional-Oriented and Contextualized Perspective.

Conceptualize communicative culture specifically for the English teaching profession, highlighting the unique communicative demands of the classroom and school environment. Acknowledge that while core principles exist, the specific manifestation of communicative culture will be influenced by the teaching context.

3. Emphasize the "Culture" Aspect.

Ensure the conceptualization goes beyond skills and knowledge to explicitly include values, attitudes, beliefs, and the role of communication in shaping and reflecting professional identity and classroom culture. It's not just what teachers communicate, but how and why, grounded in a cultural understanding.

4. Build Bridges to Operationalization.

Collaborate with educators and assessment specialists to ensure that conceptual frameworks are designed with eventual implementation in mind, allowing for the development of relevant learning objectives, pedagogies, and assessment methods that capture the holistic nature of the construct.

Limitations of this analysis include its reliance on existing theoretical literature, which itself may contain biases or limited perspectives. It provides a synthesis of published ideas rather than generating new data on how stakeholders (students, teachers, trainers) perceive or define communicative culture in practice.

Future conceptual work could involve empirical studies exploring stakeholders' understandings of communicative culture in teacher education contexts. There is also a need for theoretical work focused on developing and proposing specific, testable conceptual models that attempt to integrate the various dimensions and address the challenges discussed. Such models would then need to be validated through empirical research in teacher training programs.

Conclusion

The concept of communicative culture is undoubtedly vital for future English teachers, encompassing a broad spectrum of abilities, knowledge, awareness, values, and attitudes necessary for effective professional communication in linguistic, intercultural, and pedagogical contexts. However, as this article has demonstrated, the process of conceptualizing this complex construct is beset with significant challenges.

Key difficulties include clearly defining the boundaries of communicative culture and distinguishing it from related concepts like communicative competence, effectively integrating its numerous linguistic, cultural, and pedagogical components into a coherent model, accounting for the dynamic and context-specific nature of language use and teaching, and operationalizing the concept in a manner suitable for the practical demands of teacher training and assessment.

A profound analysis of these conceptual challenges reveals their interconnectedness and their direct impact on the efficacy of pedagogical higher education. Ambiguous or fragmented conceptualizations can lead to curricula that fail to holistically develop the required communicative culture, teaching methods that neglect crucial dimensions like intercultural sensitivity or pedagogical communication, and assessment practices that do not accurately evaluate a teacher's readiness to communicate effectively in diverse professional scenarios.

Overcoming these conceptual hurdles requires a concerted effort from researchers and educators. It necessitates the development of more sophisticated, multi-layered conceptual models that emphasize the integration and dynamic nature of communicative culture, foreground its specific relevance to the English teaching profession and diverse contexts, and bridge the gap between theoretical definition and practical operationalization.

Ultimately, clearer and more robust conceptualizations of communicative culture are essential for designing teacher training programs that can effectively equip future English teachers with the comprehensive communicative abilities and cultural awareness needed to excel in their demanding and ever-evolving profession, fostering not just language proficiency but also intercultural understanding and effective pedagogical interaction in the classrooms of tomorrow.

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Рецензия

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Conflict of Interest

None declared.

Review

All articles are peer-reviewed. But the reviewer or the author of the article chose not to publish a review of this article in the public domain. The review can be provided to the competent authorities upon request.

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