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Presentation: The Three Challenges for Language Teaching: Language Competence, Assessment Methods and Digital Revolution

The report is about current problems and challenges that affect language teaching due to the change of the educational paradigm, digital revolution and the geopolitical situation along with new requirements of the labour market. Language teaching is focused today more on the formation of the language competence of students than on the key four language skills. The language competence has been defined and analyzed in the paper. The author raises the problem of selecting assessment methods because traditional ways of measuring students' progress do not fully reveal the skills acquired during language learning. It is also mentioned that the breakthrough of different devices into the educational market brings both positive and negative consequences as well as online learning and plagiarism.
Key words: multi-competence, language competence, digital competence, higher education, e-learning, communication, assessment

Dear colleagues and guests,

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for the opportunity to be present here and share my ideas and experience in such a great event!

The problem of teaching in the framework of traditional education and innovative environment is so acute today both within the EU and outside it.

I have been teaching ESL students at the economic university for almost ten years, in my research I've paid much attention to using multimedia technologies, interdisciplinary teaching and innovative methods, but even now I can't definitely say which approach is the most suitable for this or that case. The reason is that education simultaneously affects and is affected with economic, political and social changes.

In my presentation I pointed out three interconnected and interrelated challenges that require thorough consideration when teaching a foreign language. And in the end, I would like to discuss them with you.

So, I would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about they are Language Competence, Assessment Methods and Digital Revolution.

Didactically and methodically, it sounds like that: What to teach today? How to measure results? And The pros and cons of Online Learning: How to act and react?

To start with, I'd like to show you what recommendations have been recently offered by the European Commission (if you want you can google its full version).

On the slide you can see the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.

And, the first question to answer is: What's a competence? There are many definitions of the term. For example, it is defined as an ability to do something well or efficiently; a specific ability or skill;the knowledge

that enables one to speak and understand a language *(linguistics)*, etc.

So, the Key Competences of a student. Literacy Competence "can be developed in the mother tongue, and/or in the official language of the country. The thing is that a good level of literacy needs to be ensured in at least one of these languages to allow for further competences development." – Students must know their mother tongue or an official language.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGICAL ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICAL COMPETENCE "with the emphasis on critical questioning and problem solving, is a prerequisite for the functioning of technologically advanced, knowledge based societies and economies. Thus, Students should know Maths and Computer Science.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND LEARNING COMPETENCE - "includes three specific aspects:
- personal - including self-awareness, physical and mental well-being;
- social - covering interpersonal interactions and working with others;
- learning - focus on lifelong learning strategies and career management skills. It also addresses a number of *transversal skills* such as creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, decision taking, self-regulation, etc. as well as some new ones, such as resilience, ability to deal with uncertainty and complexity. Thus, teamwork skills should be emphasized in the class.

CIVIC COMPETENCE includes active citizenship, participation, involvement and building a sustainable future and further highlights the role of citizenship, democratic values and human rights in today's increasingly connected global societies. Understanding the need to support sustainable societies, economies and ecosystems, as well as practice sustainable lifestyles is a key element of this competence. Thus, both patriotism and cross-cultural awareness should be formed in the classroom.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETENCE is aligned with the JRC Entrepreneurship Competence Framework. In addition, creativity and the ability to plan and manage processes are highlighted as essential dimensions of an entrepreneurial mindset. Thus, time management skills and creativity should be developed.

But I'd like only to draw your attention to the following three ones: digital (by the way, it's used instead of ICT now), language and cultural competencies.

LANGUAGES COMPETENCE focuses on helping people to communicate across borders, to make use of mobility within Europe and in a globalized economy.

DIGITAL COMPETENCE is aligned with the Digital Competence Framework (2013), which includes 5 areas, which I mention a bit later. Despite common notions such as the Internet, e-learning, multimedia technologies, it also recognizes the embedding of social media and the emergence of new technologies (Artificial intelligence, robots, virtual and augmented reality).

Finally, it's well-known and widely discussed **CULTURAL AWARENESS AND EXPRESSION COMPETENCE** that takes into account a wider range of contemporary forms of cultural expressions and also to more clearly describe how this competence is a crucial element in understanding, developing and expressing ideas and one's place or role in society, or in other words, being able to view and shape the world with a sense of identity that is constructed in relation to others. Positive and open-minded attitudes towards other cultures and cultural differences are important.

Therefore, today's "English" has become not a subject that should be mastered at school or university but a tool for acquiring other competencies, widening knowledge of other countries and nations as well as creating not a multi-task but **'multi-competent'** professional for the future.

So, that is our teaching target. Thus, challenge #1, in my opinion, is how to teach ESL students not a language but a language competence, not foreign words and structures but form skills and competencies using foreign words and structures.

Language Competence (LC) is differently viewed by scholars, linguists and philosophers.

Basically, it is defined as a system of linguistic knowledge possessed by native speakers of a language. Noam Chomsky introduced this concept in his elaboration of generative grammar, where it has been widely adopted and competence is the only level of language that is studied. (Chomsky was the first one who attempted to provide an accurate definition of language competence. He made a distinction between two very well-known terms: 'competence' and 'performance.' By competence, Chomsky meant the shared knowledge of the ideal speaker-listener set in a completely homogeneous speech community. This knowledge enables a user of a language to produce and understand an infinite set of sentences out of a finite set of rules. Performance, on the other hand, is concerned with the process of applying the underlying knowledge to the actual language use. Now, there is no doubt that what Chomsky called competence is what we claim to be linguistic competence nowadays, a person's internalized grammar of a language, i.e. a person's ability to create and understand sentences, including sentences they have never heard before, and a person's knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language. However, grammatical knowledge is not enough to help us participate effectively in a communicative situation. According to Chomsky, competence is the ideal language system that enables speakers to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences in their language, and to distinguish grammatical sentences from

ungrammatical sentences. In Chomsky's view, competence can be studied independently of language use, which falls under "performance", for example through introspection and grammaticality judgments by native speakers.

Thus, *competence* is abstract knowledge and cognitive *capability*. In other words, when we *know* a language. This language has been called I-language (internal language, in one individual, the only real object of study for some linguists, hence only idealized versions of 'languages' like English being studied). *Performance* is the actual behavior when we use a language. This output has been called E-language (external language, or any specific data we can gather from actual language use, such as the sentences from a conversation.

Many other linguists – functionalists, cognitive linguists, psycholinguists, sociolinguists and others have rejected this distinction, critiquing it as a concept that considers empirical work irrelevant and left out many important aspects of language use. Also, it has been argued that the distinction is often used exclude real data that is, in the words of William Labov "inconvenient to handle" within generativist theory.)

Thus, Language competence is a broad term which includes the following:
❑ linguistic or grammatical competence (phonemes, morphemes, semantics, syntax, pragmatics),
❑ discourse competence,
❑ sociolinguistic or socio-cultural competence,
❑ strategic // textual competence.

Sometimes, LC is also divided into *Organizational Competence*, which includes Grammatical and Textual Competencies with Vocabulary, Morphemes, Syntax and Phonemes as well as Cohesion and Rhetoric; and Pragmatic Competence that consists of Illocutionary and Sociolinguistic Competencies.

The thing to point out on the following slide is the difference between Language Competence and Communicative Competence that seem to be used interchangeably at first sight. So, the key differences between LC and CC are as follows:

Language Competence (LC)	Communicative Competence (CC)
knowledge of, and proficiency in, the use of a language	a theory of the nature of such knowledge and proficiency
LC is a part of CC It includes grammar and lexical competences	CC includes the competences as follows: • language, • socio-linguistic, • strategic.
inborn	acquired
Verbal communication	Verbal and non-verbal communication

The definition of LC is "LC is a competence that focuses on helping people to communicate across borders, to make use of mobility within Europe and in a globalized economy."

Therefore, a challenge for modern education is not to teach a language but to form a language competence for further effective communication.

The problem is that we all know how to deliver a lecture, which method to use, how to design tasks, develop reading and writing skills, to widen vocabulary and use grammar structures. Finally, in economic sense, we get 'a product' that has 4 skills better or worse completed – reading, writing, speaking and listening – that's the criteria of how most exams measure language knowledge. We get an employee, who can speak fluently, write emails and can even read for professional purposes!

However, we lack a co-worker that will be an active listener, helpful, a person, who can read understanding the message of the text but not only foreign words, who can speak both fluently and clearly understanding the culture of a partner. Today they call it "soft skills".

The question is: Does anyone know how to assess LC? Today, we assess reading tasks, writing and listening skills, and speaking. But do we assess linguistic competence as a separate unit, socio-cultural competence the others? Probably, no.
So, in a modern classroom the following challenges take place:
- ✓ The issue of content of teaching material
- ✓ The shift of the teacher's role in the process of education from "a teacher" to "an educational manager"
- ✓ Assessment criteria for Language Competence

Today there are various assessment methods. Tell me please, which of them do you usually use in the classroom? (feedback from the audience)
Among the most popular used in higher education I've outlined the following:
- ▪ Presentations
- ▪ (Discursive) essays
- ▪ Projects
- ▪ End-of-year assessment worksheets (paper and electronic)

They are common, effective, comprehensive enough, useful and interesting.
But, there are questions that still need to be answered. For instance,
- ✓ How to assess ESL students' achievements? (presentations, essays, projects, etc.) Do you assess a presentation itself or interaction as well, a project only or a teamwork?
- ✓ How to measure production exercises in Online Education that is fast-growing and becoming extremely popular and worldwide implemented today? Production exercises in a broader sense require language competence, some personal experience, imagination, written interaction, cohesion, etc. So, today, it is almost impossible to assess such kinds of tasks in Online Education. One task in an essay will generate hundreds and even thousands different essays, ideas and styles and even

neologisms that cannot be widely and comprehensively evaluated by the system and algorithms.

✓ How to match traditional assessment criteria with students' creativity, vision, needs and abilities? I teach groups with different levels of English, but!

Is there any place in the assessment schedule for their commitment and efforts, learning abilities, physiological and psychological peculiarities? No, we still assess tasks themselves – correct-incorrect, passed or failed, true or false, on time or out of the deadline.

Moreover, one research has shown that occupational students of ESL, for example, need various types of listening comprehension and conversational skills, while university teaching assistants need to produce phonologically acceptable and fluent connected discourse in order to be rated as successful. Students in elementary and secondary schools need more diverse language skills, some related to literacy, in order to make normal progress in school. Of particular importance in the school setting is mastery and use of context-reduced language, a text-related type of language observed principally in formal school contexts. Furthermore, evidence suggests that the language skills which elementary and secondary students need can vary developmentally as well as contextually. Thus, *communicative competence*, as a concept, can mean different things for different groups of students; program planners, administrators, and teachers will be able to provide better instruction only after considering the specific communicative needs of specific learners in terms of the specific purposes for which the language is to be used.

And the third challenge is Digital Revolution. According to The Digital Competence Framework (2013) Students "should try to be significantly flexible to be relevant in today's society and in the future, recognizing the embedding of social media and the emergence of new technologies, such as Artificial intelligence, robots, virtual and augmented reality." as it was mentioned above.

Digital Competence includes 5 areas:

(1) Information and data literacy, including management of content,

(2) Communication and collaboration and participation in society,

(3) Digital content creation, including ethical principles,

(4) Safety,

(5) Problem solving.

But, I'd like to discuss in brief the effect of Online Education that each of us is facing in this or that extent.

According the Distance Education Enrollment Report 2017, conducted by the new Digital Learning Compass organization, reveals the number of higher education students taking at least one distance education course in 2015 now tops six million. Actually, in 2015 the E-learning market was worth some place around $165 billion. At a 5% expansion consistently, that puts us on track for a nearly $182 billion market in 2017 and hitting practically $240 billion by 2023.

Here's a list of a number of statistics that are seen as trends in light of the current development in the field of eLearning:

1. In a comparative blasting development, corporate eLearning has developed by a stunning 900% over the most recent 16 years.
2. Also, around 77% of U.S. organizations offer web-based preparing as an approach to enhance their representative's expert improvement.
3. eLearning has additionally prompted an expansion in income for 42% of organizations.
4. 67% of associations now offer portable learning in some shape.
5. 99% of portable clients trust that eLearning has upgraded their experience.
6. The eLearning market is anticipated to be a $37.6 billion market by 2020.
7. Social learning approaches have a 75:1 ROI proportion over electronic preparing.
8. By 2019, video will be in charge of 80% of the web activity on the planet.

According to statistics, a year-to-year increase of 226,375 distance education students, a 3.9 percent increase, up over rates recorded the previous two years; more than one in four students (29.7 percent) now take at least one distance education course (a total of 6,022,105 students); the total of 6 million for fall 2015 distance education students is composed of 2.9 million taking all of their courses at a distance and 3.1 million taking some, but not all, distance courses; public institutions command the largest portion of distance education students, with 67.8 percent of all distance students; large enrollment drops among for-profit institutions were driven by a few of the largest institutions; the majority of for-profits grew their distance enrollments; the number of students studying on a campus has dropped by almost one million (931,317) between 2012 and 2015.

"Distance learning continues to grow, demonstrating that institutions remain committed to expanding programs that meet the needs of today's students. Distance learning offers flexible, yet rigorous education opportunities that provide individuals with access to the in-demand skills needed to achieve their career goals," said David Daniels, managing director, Higher Education Services, Pearson [8].

Susan Aldridge, president of Drexel University Online, says online degree programs in 2018 will increase their use of modern technologies to enhance their curriculums.

One example is virtual reality, which can allow students across disciplines to learn in simulated environments. Aldridge also says there will be a greater emphasis on using remote technologies, such as videoconferencing and robotic telepresence, to allow for more face-to-face interaction among students and instructors who are spread across the country.

"There are now companies designing these new technologies in ways that we've never seen before," says Aldridge. "And really forward-thinking universities are purchasing these subscriptions."

Gamification – or learning presented in a game format – is also expected to rise in popularity in online higher education, experts note. As predicted last year, experts say the use of artificial intelligence will likely proliferate at online degree programs too. Some online classes, Aldridge points out, even have chat bots that essentially serve as teaching assistants [7].

Of course, there are many benefits of e-learning (comment on them). But, the minuses are of great importance as well (comment on them).

Pros of Online Education	Cons of Online Education
Accessibility to the leading schools and universities worldwide	Requires self-motivation and good time-management skills
Updated educational content	Assessment of the skills required and acquired
Cheaper than traditional	The issue of content and a student-centered approach
Unlimited opportunity for time and place	The consequences for the economy and employers are under question in the long run
Adds more to your CV	The change in the educational paradigm may result in that what cannot be even imagined

In the end, I would like to finish my presentation with the following African Proverb that says: "Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors." So, be positive, enjoy challenges and keep on experimenting! That brings me to the end of my presentation. If you have any further questions, I would be happy to talk to you. Thank you for your attention!

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