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INTEGRATED FRAMEWORK FOR ASSESSING DISCURSIVE COMPETENCE IN HIGH SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS

Annotation

In contemporary EFL education, effective communication requires learners to construct coherent, cohesive and contextually appropriate discourse. This study addresses the methodological gap between productive-skill assessment and systematic assessment of discursive competence in the Uzbek EFL context. It aims to develop an integrated framework for assessing observable dimensions of discursive competence by aligning relevant CEFR descriptors with Uzbekistan's National Multilevel assessment criteria. The study employed theoretical and comparative document analysis of communicative competence models, CEFR descriptors and national assessment criteria. The analysis identified four dimensions: cohesive integration, conceptual coherence, genre and task organization, and sociopragmatic appropriateness. These were operationalized through observable indicators and a four-level analytic rubric for classroom-based diagnostic and formative assessment. The framework establishes methodological correspondence between international and national assessment perspectives without treating them as equivalent systems. Its practical contribution is a structured tool for diagnosing discourse-related difficulties, providing dimension-specific feedback and planning targeted instruction.

Key words: Discursive competence, EFL, high school learners, assessment, CEFR, National Multilevel assessment, coherence, cohesion, sociopragmatic appropriateness, analytic rubric.

ИНТЕГРИРОВАННАЯ МОДЕЛЬ ОЦЕНИВАНИЯ ДИСКУРСИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ УЧАЩИХСЯ СТАРШИХ КЛАССОВ, ИЗУЧАЮЩИХ АНГЛИЙСКИЙ ЯЗЫК КАК ИНОСТРАННЫЙ

Аннотация

В современном обучении английскому языку как иностранному (EFL) эффективная коммуникация требует от учащихся построения связного, целостного и контекстуально уместного дискурса. Данное исследование направлено на устранение методологического пробела между оцениванием продуктивных речевых навыков и систематическим оцениванием дискурсивной компетенции в узбекском контексте EFL. Цель исследования заключается в разработке интегрированной системы оценивания наблюдаемых измерений дискурсивной компетенции посредством соотнесения соответствующих дескрипторов CEFR с критериями Национальной многоуровневой системы оценивания Узбекистана. В исследовании применялся теоретический и сравнительно-документальный анализ моделей коммуникативной компетенции, дескрипторов CEFR и национальных критериев оценивания. В результате анализа были выявлены четыре измерения: интеграция средств когезии, концептуальная связность, организация жанра и задания, а также социопрагматическая уместность. Данные измерения были операционализированы посредством наблюдаемых индикаторов и четырёхуровневой аналитической рубрики для диагностического и формирующего оценивания в условиях учебного класса. Предлагаемая система устанавливает методологическое соответствие между международными и национальными подходами к оцениванию, не рассматривая их как эквивалентные системы. Практическая значимость исследования заключается в разработке структурированного инструмента для диагностики трудностей, связанных с построением дискурса, предоставления обратной связи по отдельным измерениям и планирования целенаправленного обучения.

Ключевые слова: Дискурсивная компетенция, EFL, учащиеся старших классов, оценивание, CEFR, Национальная многоуровневая система оценивания, связность, когезия, социопрагматическая уместность, аналитическая рубрика.

YUQORI SINIF EFL O'QUVCHILARINING DISKURSIV KOMPETENSIYASINI BAHOLASHNING INTEGRALLASHGAN MODEL

Zamonaviy EFL (ingliz tilini xorijiy til sifatida o'qitish) ta'limida samarali muloqot o'quvchilardan izchil, yaxlit va kontekstga mos diskursni yaratishni talab etadi. Mazkur tadqiqot O'zbekiston EFL kontekstida produktiv nutq ko'nikmalarini baholash bilan diskursiv kompetensiyani tizimli baholash o'rtasidagi metodik bo'shliqni bartaraf etishga qaratilgan. Tadqiqotning maqsadi CEFRning tegishli deskriptorlarini O'zbekistonning Milliy ko'p darajali baholash mezonlari bilan muvofiqlashtirish orqali diskursiv kompetensiyaning kuzatiladigan o'lchamlarini baholashga mo'ljallangan integratsiyalashgan tizimni ishlab chiqishdan iborat. Tadqiqotda kommunikativ kompetensiya modellari, CEFR deskriptorlari hamda milliy baholash mezonlarining nazariy va qiyosiy-hujjatli tahlili amalga oshirildi. Tahlil natijasida to'rtta asosiy o'lcham aniqlandi: koheziya integratsiyasi, konseptual izchillik, janr va topshiriqni tashkil etish hamda sotsio-pragmatik muvofiqlik. Mazkur o'lchamlar sinf sharoitidagi diagnostik va formativ baholash uchun kuzatiladigan indikatorlar hamda to'rt darajali analitik rubrika orqali operatsionallashtirildi. Taklif etilgan tizim xalqaro va milliy baholash yondashuvlari o'rtasida metodik muvofiqlikni ta'minlaydi, biroq ularni tenglashtirilgan tizimlar sifatida talqin qilmaydi. Tadqiqotning amaliy ahamiyati diskurs bilan bog'liq qiyinchiliklarni aniqlash, har bir o'lcham bo'yicha aniq fikr-mulohaza berish va maqsadli ta'limni rejalashtirish imkonini beruvchi tizimli vositaning ishlab chiqilganligidadir.

Kalit so'zlar: Diskursiv kompetensiya, EFL, yuqori sinf o'quvchilari, baholash, CEFR, Milliy ko'p darajali baholash, izchillik, koheziya, sotsio-pragmatik muvofiqlik, analitik rubrika.

Introduction. In contemporary foreign language education, communicative competence involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to construct coherent,

cohesive and contextually appropriate discourse. High school EFL learners are expected to express and justify ideas, participate in discussions and produce extended spoken and written texts,

requiring effective organization, cohesion, task fulfilment, genre awareness and contextual appropriateness.

The importance of cohesion and discourse organization has been emphasized in research on language and communicative competence. Halliday and Hasan (1976) highlighted the role of cohesion in creating textual unity, while Canale and Swain (1980) incorporated discourse-related, sociolinguistic and strategic dimensions into models of communicative competence.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) provides an international basis for describing learners' ability to produce coherent and connected discourse. Uzbekistan's National Multilevel assessment system also uses CEFR-oriented levels and criteria for evaluating productive language skills. However, assessing individual productive skills does not necessarily constitute assessment of discursive competence as a multidimensional construct. Although existing criteria provide observable evidence of language performance, they are not specifically organized into a discourse-oriented classroom framework for high school learners. Therefore, this study proposes an integrated framework that interprets relevant CEFR descriptors and national assessment indicators in terms of discourse organization, connectedness, communicative purpose and contextual appropriateness. Its scientific contribution lies in operationalizing selected dimensions of discursive competence into observable classroom assessment indicators and integrating them with relevant CEFR and National Multilevel assessment perspectives.

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to develop an integrated framework for assessing observable dimensions of discursive competence in high school EFL learners by aligning relevant CEFR descriptors with Uzbekistan's National Multilevel assessment criteria.

Objectives The study seeks to:

identify observable dimensions of discursive competence relevant to high school EFL learners;

examine the correspondence between relevant CEFR descriptors and national assessment criteria;

operationalize selected discourse dimensions into observable assessment indicators;

develop an analytic rubric for diagnostic and formative classroom assessment;

demonstrate how assessment results can inform targeted instructional practice.

Methodology. The study employed a qualitative methodological design based on theoretical and comparative document analysis. The framework was developed in three stages: examining approaches to communicative and discursive competence; comparing CEFR descriptors with National Multilevel assessment criteria regarding discourse organization, connectedness, task fulfilment and contextual appropriateness; and operationalizing relevant dimensions into observable indicators and an analytic rubric. National criteria were not treated as equivalent to discursive competence; only conceptually relevant indicators were selected based on explicit correspondence rather than direct equivalence. The official National Multilevel system remains the basis for formal certification, while the proposed framework is intended primarily for classroom-based diagnostic and formative assessment.

Integrated assessment framework. The comparative analysis of CEFR descriptors, Uzbekistan's National Multilevel assessment criteria, and theoretical approaches to discursive competence resulted in an integrated framework comprising four observable dimensions: cohesive integration, conceptual coherence, genre and task organization, and sociopragmatic appropriateness.

Table 1. Alignment of Discursive Competence Dimensions with CEFR-Oriented and National Assessment Perspectives

Dimension	Observable indicators	CEFR-oriented focus	Relation to national assessment
Cohesive integration	linking devices, reference, lexical cohesion, connections between ideas	connected and linked discourse	relevant to coherence, cohesion and connectedness in productive performance
Conceptual coherence	logical progression, thematic unity, development of ideas	coherent organization and development	relevant to organization and development of the response
Genre and task organization	task fulfilment, rhetorical structure, genre conventions	communicative purpose and text organization	relevant to task response and organization
Sociopragmatic appropriateness	register, tone, audience awareness	sociolinguistic and pragmatic appropriateness	relevant to context-sensitive language use

The table demonstrates methodological correspondence rather than one-to-one equivalence. The four dimensions should therefore not be interpreted as official structural categories of the National Multilevel assessment system. Rather, the alignment makes discourse-related aspects of learners' productive

performance more visible for classroom diagnosis and instructional planning. To operationalize the framework for classroom assessment, an analytic rubric with four qualitative performance levels was developed.

Table 2. Analytic Rubric for Discursive Competence

Dimension	Developing	Functional	Effective	Advanced
Cohesive integration	Linking is limited; ideas appear separately.	Basic cohesive devices are used with some inconsistencies.	Cohesive devices appropriately connect ideas.	Cohesion is flexible, natural and contributes to textual unity.
Conceptual coherence	Ideas may be fragmented or listed.	Main meaning is clear, but progression may be uneven.	Ideas are logically organized and developed.	Ideas show strong thematic unity and sophisticated progression.
Genre and task organization	Task is only partially addressed.	Main task is addressed, but organization is uneven.	Task is fulfilled with appropriate organization.	Task is fully developed with effective rhetorical organization.
Sociopragmatic appropriateness	Register and tone are frequently inappropriate.	Generally appropriate, with some inconsistencies.	Register and tone suit the context and audience.	Language is flexibly adapted to purpose, audience and situation.

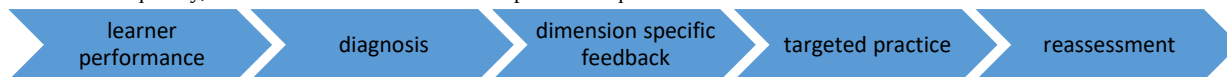
The descriptors in Table 2 are researcher-developed classroom descriptors and should not be interpreted as official CEFR levels or National Multilevel score bands. The four

performance levels—Developing, Functional, Effective and Advanced—are intended to help teachers identify the specific strengths and weaknesses of learners' discourse performance.

Thus, the main result of the study is an integrated assessment framework connecting discursive dimensions → observable indicators → CEFR-oriented descriptors → national assessment perspectives → classroom feedback. The framework is designed to complement, rather than replace, existing national assessment procedures by providing a more detailed basis for diagnosing and developing high school learners' discursive competence.

Discussion. The proposed framework addresses the methodological gap between general productive-skill assessment and classroom diagnosis of discursive competence. Its central principle is that discourse performance is multidimensional.

Consequently, assessment can follow the developmental sequence:



Each dimension can be linked to appropriate instructional activities. Cohesive integration can be developed through discourse-marker and linking activities; conceptual coherence through idea-sequencing and paragraph-organization tasks; genre and task organization through genre analysis and task planning; and sociopragmatic appropriateness through register comparison and contextualized role-play.

This approach positions assessment as a component of instruction rather than merely a measurement procedure. The framework can therefore help teachers identify specific discourse difficulties and select targeted activities for learners' further development.

Conclusion. The study developed an integrated framework for assessing selected dimensions of discursive competence in high school EFL learners. Four observable dimensions were identified: cohesive integration, conceptual coherence, genre and task organization, and sociopragmatic appropriateness.

Grammar and vocabulary remain important, but they do not independently determine whether a learner can construct coherent, connected and contextually appropriate discourse.

The four dimensions provide a practical basis for identifying specific difficulties. For example, a learner may produce grammatically accurate sentences but fail to establish logical relationships between ideas. This can be diagnosed as a problem of conceptual coherence. Similarly, limited use of cohesive devices may indicate difficulties with cohesive integration, while inappropriate register or tone may indicate sociopragmatic difficulties.

By establishing methodological correspondence between these dimensions, relevant CEFR-oriented descriptors and national assessment perspectives, the framework provides a basis for discourse-sensitive classroom assessment. Its main methodological contribution is the transformation of the abstract construct of discursive competence into observable assessment dimensions and researcher-developed descriptors that can support diagnosis, feedback and instructional planning.

Importantly, the framework is not intended to replace the official National Multilevel assessment system. Rather, it provides a complementary classroom-based tool through which teachers can identify specific discourse-related difficulties and connect assessment results with targeted instructional practice.

Further research should empirically validate the framework through expert evaluation, classroom piloting and inter-rater reliability analysis.

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