



The principles of CBLT and the development of key competencies.

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Abstract: This article provides the application of Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) in foreign language education, focusing on its role in fostering essential learner competencies for navigating a globalized world. Drawing on the principles of CBLT, which prioritize practical skills over rote learning, the study explores the development of three key competencies: value-semantic competence, which enables students to align language use with personal values and meaningful decision-making through interactive debates; learning and cognitive competence, cultivated via project-based learning to enhance independent intellectual skills, critical thinking, and information management; and cultural awareness competence, built through immersive cultural lessons that deepen intercultural understanding and communication. The findings underscore CBLT's effectiveness in preparing learners for authentic communication and cultural engagement, offering a framework for educators to design dynamic, competency-driven foreign language curricula.

Key words: CBLT, principles, skills, competencies, communication, language use.

Introduction

The educational landscape has evolved to prioritize not just knowledge acquisition but the development of competences that allow learners to perform tasks effectively in real-life situations. In foreign language teaching, this transition means moving away from rote learning and grammatical drills towards a holistic approach where language is taught as a tool for communication, cultural understanding, and personal growth.

The modern global landscape, characterized by rapid change and interconnectedness, has placed a premium on the flexibility, adaptability, mobility, and creativity inherent in education and lifelong learning. These qualities have become central themes in both national and international debates on higher education and vocational training¹.

Furthermore, seminal contributions to the theoretical understanding of the concepts of "competence" and "competency"—especially as they pertain to young professionals entering today's competitive market—have been provided by researchers such as Hymes, Canale, Swain, Bremer, Kohl, Schneckenberg, Wildt, Rychen, Salganik, Weinert, Nunn, and others. Their work has been instrumental in shaping our comprehension of how linguistic, cognitive, and communicative skills can be effectively integrated into professional training programs.

Development of key competencies is possible in any class at a general education school, including foreign language lessons. Let us consider some methods for organizing lesson themes as well as the choice of means and forms of conducting them that facilitate the acquisition of the skills and abilities characteristic of these competencies.

¹ Rychen D.S., Salganik L.H (Eds.). (2001). Defining and Selecting Key Competencies Göttingen Germany: Hogrefe & Huber.



Materials and Methods

In 1986, Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) was implemented as a method to instruct refugees in the United States who sought federal support to acquire practical language skills for everyday life and employment contexts. By the 1990s, CBLT had gained widespread recognition among national policymakers and curriculum development experts as the leading, cutting-edge approach to teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to adults.

Competency-Based Language Teaching (CBLT) offers several benefits: (1) Both Competency-Based Approaches (CBA) broadly and CBLT specifically move away from superficial or irrelevant content, ensuring that students are not burdened with lessons lacking purpose. (2) CBLT enables learners to acquire knowledge tailored to their unique requirements within society and their chosen professional or academic domains. (3) It encourages instructors to tap into their creativity, designing engaging activities that align with the specific competencies targeted, the learners' capabilities, and their linguistic needs.

Additionally, Nunan highlights further strengths: (1) Clearly defined objectives, when communicated effectively to students, help them understand their journey as language learners, fostering awareness of realistic outcomes achievable within a course and framing learning as a step-by-step accumulation of attainable milestones. (2) Students gain a deeper understanding of their responsibilities as learners, transforming their previously unclear perceptions into a more defined perspective. (3) It becomes easier for learners to assess their own progress. (4) Classroom tasks are perceived as directly connected to practical, real-world demands. (5) Skill development is recognized as a progressive journey rather than an immediate, all-or-nothing achievement².

Result and Discussion

Value-semantic competence is related to the learner's value orientations, his ability to understand and perceive the surrounding world, as well as the skill of choosing goals and meanings for his actions and conduct. It is formed during discussions and in situations of moral choice that occur in debate lessons conducted in individual, pair, or group work formats. In foreign language classes, this competence can be developed by selecting the following lesson themes:

Theme "Food": *Imagine that your birthday is coming soon, and you need to create a menu for a festive table.*

Theme "Family": *Create your family tree and talk about your family.*

Theme "Travel": *Imagine that you have embarked on a journey. Describe your vacation in the form of a "traveler's diary."*

These themes contribute to the development of value-semantic competence, helping students become aware of their values and goals through practical assignments in English classes³.

This aligns with CBLT's emphasis on relevance and practicality. Rather than focusing solely on grammar or vocabulary drills, these activities require students to use the language purposefully, linking it to their values and real-life contexts. By engaging in tasks that mirror authentic situations,

² Nunan, David., (2002), Performance-Based Approaches to the Design of ESL Instruction, Plenary Presentation, Spain TESOL, Madrid.

³ Хуторской А.В. (2003), Ключевые компетенции как компонент личностно-ориентированной парадигмы образования // Народное образование. № 2.



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students develop a deeper understanding of how language reflects their personal goals and cultural perspectives, a hallmark of CBLT's learner-centered approach.

Learning and Cognitive Competence represents a collection of abilities that allow students to independently engage in intellectual pursuits, incorporating aspects of methodological reasoning, logical thinking, and broad scientific inquiry. To nurture this competence during foreign language lessons, educators are encouraged to adopt the project-based learning approach. This method bolsters students' intellectual skills, equips them to autonomously build their understanding, manage information effectively, and sharpens their critical and imaginative thought processes. When employing project-based learning, students cultivate several key competencies: informational competence, which involves collecting and evaluating data and communicating with individuals as information sources; and communicative competence, which entails fostering teamwork skills and addressing differences within a group⁴.

This directly reflects CBLT's core principles. CBLT prioritizes functional outcomes over theoretical knowledge, and project-based learning fits seamlessly into this framework by requiring students to apply language skills to tangible tasks. For example, a project might involve researching a topic in English and presenting findings, which mirrors real-world demands like workplace communication or academic inquiry. By focusing on student autonomy and skill application, this approach ensures that learning is meaningful and tied to specific competencies, a key feature of CBLT.

Cultural Awareness Competence, in the context of studying a foreign language, refers to a student's capacity to understand and move within the cultural framework of English-speaking societies. This competence encompasses a knowledge base that includes familiarity with significant cultural milestones, appreciation of artistic principles, and insights into foreign cultural norms. In English classes, this awareness can be developed by immersing learners in the ambiance of cultural celebrations. Lessons themed around holidays like Christmas, Halloween, Thanksgiving, St. Patrick's Day, or St. Valentine's Day offer opportunities to delve into regional studies, providing a window into the traditions, customs, and lifestyles of English-speaking communities. Additionally, cultural awareness can be enhanced through lessons centered on etiquette and the nuances of cross-cultural communication. For example, hosting a "Courtesy Day" could focus on teaching English greetings, introductory phrases, ways to express appreciation, and similar topics. Events like "Traditional European and Asian Food Day" or "Sports Day" could also prove valuable for building intercultural communication skills⁵.

This connects to CBLT's focus on contextualized learning and real-world applicability. By integrating cultural themes into language instruction, students don't just learn linguistic forms—they acquire the ability to use language appropriately in culturally specific situations. This mirrors CBLT's goal of preparing learners for authentic interactions, such as navigating social norms or participating in cross-cultural exchanges.

Conclusions

We can conclude that this article emphasis on value-semantic competence, learning and cognitive competence, and cultural awareness competence reflects CBLT's commitment to developing well-

⁴ Weinert F.E. (2001). Concept of Competence: A conceptual clarification. In: Defining and Selecting Key Competencies/Rychen D. S. & Salganik, L.H. (Eds.). Göttingen, Germany: Hogrefe & Huber, pp. 70–101.

⁵ Zimnyaya I.A. (2003). Key Competences – New Paradigm of Education Result. The Higher Education Today Vol. 5, pp. 34–42.



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rounded, practical abilities rather than isolated linguistic knowledge. The proposed methods—debates, project-based learning, and culturally immersive lessons—prioritize student engagement, real-life relevance, and skill application, all of which are central to CBLT. These activities reject trivial or disconnected content, instead fostering competencies that prepare students for personal, academic, and professional success in a globalized world. Furthermore, the focus on student needs, autonomy, and creativity in lesson design echoes CBLT's adaptability to learners' specific goals and contexts, making this text a clear illustration of the approach in action.

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