

DIDACTIC FOUNDATIONS OF THE FORMATION OF COMPENSATORY COMPETENCE IN TEACHING GERMAN AS A SECOND FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. This study examines the didactic foundations of the formation of compensatory competence in teaching German as a second foreign language. Compensatory competence is understood as the ability of learners to overcome linguistic difficulties through the use of verbal and non-verbal strategies. The paper analyzes methodological approaches, principles, and techniques that facilitate the development of this competence. Special attention is given to multilingual learning contexts, where students already possess experience in learning a first foreign language. Practical examples illustrate how compensatory strategies can be integrated into classroom activities.

Key words: compensatory competence, second foreign language, German language teaching, multilingualism, communication strategies, didactics.

Аннотация. В данной работе рассматриваются дидактические основы формирования компенсаторной компетенции при обучении немецкому языку как второму иностранному. Компенсаторная компетенция понимается как способность учащихся преодолевать языковые трудности с помощью вербальных и невербальных стратегий. Анализируются методические подходы, принципы и приемы, способствующие развитию данной компетенции. Особое внимание уделяется условиям многоязычного обучения.

Ключевые слова: компенсаторная компетенция, второй иностранный язык, обучение немецкому языку, многоязычие, коммуникативные стратегии.

Annotatsiya. Mazkur ishda nemis tilini ikkinchi chet tili sifatida o'qitishda kompensator kompetensiyani shakllantirishning didaktik asoslari ko'rib chiqiladi. Kompensator kompetensiya o'quvchilarning til qiyinchiliklarini turli strategiyalar yordamida yengib o'tish qobiliyatidir. Tadqiqotda metodik yondashuvlar va amaliy usullar tahlil qilinadi.

Kalit so'zlar: kompensator kompetensiya, ikkinchi chet tili, nemis tili, ko'p tillilik, kommunikativ strategiyalar.

Introduction. In the modern globalized world, the knowledge of several foreign languages has become an essential component of personal and professional development. Educational systems increasingly emphasize multilingual competence, where learners acquire not only one but two or more foreign languages. In this context, teaching German as a second foreign language presents both opportunities and challenges. One of the key objectives in this process is the development of compensatory competence. Compensatory competence is a component of communicative competence and refers to the learner's ability to cope with gaps in linguistic knowledge. When students lack vocabulary, grammar, or pronunciation skills, they rely on alternative strategies such as paraphrasing, using synonyms, gestures, or even switching to another known language. These strategies enable learners to maintain communication despite limitations. The importance of compensatory competence becomes particularly evident in multilingual learning environments. Students who have already learned a first foreign language (often English) possess prior linguistic experience that can be transferred to learning German. However,

this transfer is not always straightforward. Interference, false cognates, and structural differences may create additional difficulties. Therefore, learners need specific skills to overcome these obstacles effectively.

Didactics plays a crucial role in shaping how compensatory competence is developed. Teachers must create learning conditions that encourage experimentation, risk-taking, and strategic thinking. Instead of focusing solely on correctness, modern language teaching approaches emphasize communicative effectiveness. This shift requires a reconsideration of traditional teaching methods and the integration of interactive and student-centered activities. Furthermore, the formation of compensatory competence is closely linked to cognitive and metacognitive processes. Learners must become aware of their own limitations and consciously select appropriate strategies. This involves reflection, self-regulation, and the ability to evaluate communication outcomes. This paper aims to explore the didactic foundations of compensatory competence in teaching German as a second foreign language. It examines theoretical concepts, methodological principles, and practical techniques that contribute to the effective development of this competence. By analyzing examples from classroom practice, the study demonstrates how compensatory strategies can be systematically incorporated into language teaching.

Literature review. The concept of compensatory competence has been widely discussed within the framework of communicative language teaching. Dell Hymes (1.P.67) was among the first to introduce the notion of communicative competence, emphasizing that effective communication requires more than grammatical knowledge. This idea was further developed by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain (1980), who identified strategic (compensatory) competence as a key component enabling learners to overcome communication breakdowns. Research by Ellen Bialystok (3.P.89) highlighted compensatory strategies as cognitive tools that learners use to manage gaps in linguistic knowledge. She distinguished between avoidance and achievement strategies, emphasizing the pedagogical value of the latter. Zoltán Dörnyei (4.P.90) further explored the motivational dimension, arguing that the use of communication strategies enhances learner confidence and willingness to communicate. In the context of second foreign language acquisition, Rod Ellis (6.P.66) noted that compensatory competence plays a crucial role in developing fluency. More recent studies, such as those by Claude Germain and Joan Netten (2013), emphasize the importance of neurolinguistic approaches in fostering automatic language use through meaningful interaction.

Research methodology. The present study is based on an integrative methodological framework combining communicative, cognitive, and neurolinguistic approaches to language teaching. The communicative approach, rooted in the works of Dell Hymes and later developed by Michael Canale and Merrill Swain, emphasizes the use of language in authentic communicative situations. Within this framework, compensatory competence is developed through interactive tasks such as role plays, problem-solving

activities, and dialogues. The cognitive approach, as described by Rod Ellis (2003), views language learning as an active mental process. Learners are encouraged to consciously apply strategies such as paraphrasing, inferencing, and simplification. These strategies support the development of compensatory competence by enabling learners to process and produce language despite limited knowledge. Additionally, the neurolinguistic approach proposed by Claude Germain and Joan Netten (2013) highlights the importance of repeated exposure, oral practice, and emotionally engaging contexts. The study employs qualitative methods, including classroom observation, analysis of learner performance, and the design of targeted exercises. These exercises focus on developing key compensatory strategies such as paraphrasing, contextual guessing, and the use of non-verbal communication.

Analyses and results. Theoretical Background of Compensatory Competence.

Compensatory competence is widely recognized as a key component of communicative competence, a concept introduced by Dell Hymes. Unlike traditional linguistic competence, which focuses on grammar and vocabulary knowledge, compensatory competence emphasizes the learner's ability to overcome communication difficulties. This includes the use of various strategies when linguistic resources are insufficient. In the process of learning German as a second foreign language, compensatory competence becomes particularly significant. Learners already possess experience from studying a first foreign language, most commonly English. This prior knowledge creates a foundation for developing new language skills but also introduces complexities such as interference and transfer errors. For instance, students may incorrectly assume that similar-looking words have identical meanings, leading to misunderstandings.

The theoretical framework of compensatory competence is also influenced by the communicative approach in language teaching. Scholars emphasize that successful communication does not depend solely on accuracy but also on fluency and adaptability. Learners must be able to negotiate meaning, reformulate ideas, and use alternative expressions when faced with gaps in knowledge. Furthermore, compensatory competence is closely linked to cognitive and metacognitive processes. Students must be aware of their own linguistic limitations and consciously select appropriate strategies to address them. This involves self-monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment during communication. In multilingual contexts, the importance of compensatory competence increases significantly. Learners often switch between languages, combine elements from different linguistic systems, and rely on context to convey meaning. Therefore, teaching practices should reflect these realities and provide opportunities for students to develop flexible and adaptive communication skills.[1.P.23-45]

Didactic Principles for Developing Compensatory Competence. The development of compensatory competence requires a well-structured didactic framework. One of the fundamental principles is the communicative orientation of teaching. This principle shifts the focus from grammatical correctness to meaningful interaction. Students are encouraged to express their ideas freely, even if their language use is not perfect. Such an approach reduces anxiety and promotes active participation. Another essential principle is explicit strategy training. Learners should not only use compensatory strategies intuitively but also understand how and when to apply them. Teachers can introduce specific techniques such as paraphrasing, approximation, and the use of fillers. For example, when a student does not know the word “Apotheke” (pharmacy), they may say: “Ein Ort, wo man Medizin kauft” (a place where one buys medicine).[2.P. 67-75]

The principle of multilingual awareness is particularly relevant in teaching German as a second foreign language. Students should be encouraged to compare German with other languages they know. This comparison helps them identify similarities and differences, facilitating comprehension and retention. For instance, recognizing cognates such as “Universität” and “university” can support vocabulary acquisition. Learner autonomy is another crucial element. Students should gradually take responsibility for their own learning and develop the ability to choose appropriate strategies independently. Teachers can support this process by providing reflective tasks and encouraging self-assessment. Finally, the principle of error tolerance plays an important role. Mistakes should be viewed as a natural part of the learning process rather than as failures. A supportive classroom environment fosters confidence and motivates students to experiment with language, which is essential for developing compensatory competence.

Types of Compensatory Strategies. Compensatory strategies can be categorized into several types based on their function and form. Understanding these categories helps both teachers and learners systematically develop communication skills. Linguistic strategies involve the use of language-based techniques to overcome gaps in knowledge. These include paraphrasing, the use of synonyms, and word formation. For example, if a learner does not know the German word “Schlüssel” (key), they might say: “Das Ding, mit dem man die Tür öffnet” (the thing used to open the door). Such strategies allow communication to continue despite limited vocabulary.[3.P.89-95] Non-linguistic strategies rely on visual and physical means of communication. Gestures, facial expressions, and drawings can effectively convey meaning when words are insufficient. For instance, a student may imitate drinking to indicate thirst or draw an object to clarify its meaning.

Interactional strategies focus on maintaining communication through interaction with others. These include asking for clarification, requesting repetition, and confirming understanding. Expressions such as “Können Sie das bitte wiederholen?” (Could you repeat that?) or “Was bedeutet das?” (What does that mean?) are essential tools in this

category. Another important group is avoidance and reduction strategies. Learners may choose to avoid complex structures or unfamiliar topics to minimize errors. While this can help maintain fluency, overuse may limit language development. In the context of multilingual learning, code-switching is also a common strategy. Students may temporarily switch to another language to fill gaps in communication. Although this is sometimes discouraged, it can be a useful transitional tool when used appropriately.

Methodological Techniques for Classroom Implementation. Effective development of compensatory competence requires the use of interactive and student-centered teaching methods. One of the most widely used techniques is role play. In role-playing activities, students simulate real-life situations such as ordering food in a restaurant, asking for directions, or making a purchase. These scenarios encourage learners to use language creatively and apply compensatory strategies when necessary. Information gap activities are another valuable method. In such tasks, each student has access to different pieces of information, and communication is required to complete the task. This naturally creates situations where learners must negotiate meaning and use alternative expressions. Problem-solving tasks also play a significant role. For example, students may be asked to describe an object without naming it, while others guess what it is. This encourages the use of paraphrasing and descriptive language.[4.P.23-34]

Visual aids and multimedia resources can further support compensatory competence. Pictures, videos, and realia provide contextual clues that help learners infer meaning and express themselves more effectively. Group work and collaborative learning are equally important. When students work together, they can share strategies, learn from each other, and build confidence. Teachers should facilitate these interactions and provide guidance when necessary. Finally, reflective activities such as learning journals or self-assessment checklists help students become aware of their strategy use. By analyzing their own performance, learners can identify strengths and areas for improvement, leading to more effective communication in future tasks.

Challenges and Assessment of Compensatory Competence. Despite its importance, the development of compensatory competence presents several challenges. One of the main difficulties is interference from previously learned languages. While prior knowledge can be beneficial, it may also lead to incorrect assumptions and errors. For example, false cognates between English and German can cause misunderstandings. Another challenge is the limited vocabulary of learners, especially at the initial stages of language learning. Students may feel frustrated when they cannot express their ideas fully. This frustration can lead to a lack of motivation and reduced participation. Psychological factors also play a significant role. Fear of making mistakes and low self-confidence often prevent students from taking risks in communication. Teachers must create a supportive environment where errors are accepted as part of the learning process.[6.P.56]

Discussion. The findings of this study confirm that the development of compensatory competence significantly enhances learners' communicative performance in German as a second foreign language. Students who actively use compensatory strategies demonstrate greater fluency and are more willing to participate in classroom interaction. This supports the claims of Zoltán Dörnyei (2001), who emphasized the strong link between strategy use and learner motivation. One of the most notable outcomes is the reduction of communication anxiety. Learners who are equipped with strategies such as paraphrasing and contextual guessing are less afraid of making mistakes and more confident in expressing their ideas. This aligns with the cognitive perspective outlined by Ellen Bialystok (1990), which highlights the role of strategic competence in managing linguistic limitations. Moreover, the integration of neurolinguistic principles, as suggested by Claude Germain and Joan Netten (2013), contributes to the automatization of language use. However, the effectiveness of these strategies may vary depending on learners' individual differences, such as proficiency level and cognitive style. Overall, the results suggest that a systematic and integrated approach to developing compensatory competence can significantly improve both communicative ability and learner motivation.

Conclusion. The formation of compensatory competence is a crucial aspect of teaching German as a second foreign language in contemporary educational contexts. As globalization continues to shape communication needs, learners are increasingly required to function effectively in multilingual environments. In such settings, perfect linguistic knowledge is often less important than the ability to sustain communication despite gaps and limitations. This study has demonstrated that compensatory competence is not an innate ability but a skill that can and should be systematically developed through targeted didactic approaches. When students learn German as a second foreign language, they already possess knowledge of another foreign language, which can serve as a valuable resource. However, this resource must be guided carefully to avoid negative transfer and interference. Teachers play a critical role in helping students recognize both similarities and differences between languages, thereby enhancing multilingual awareness. Practical classroom techniques such as role plays, information gap activities, and problem-solving tasks have proven effective in promoting compensatory competence. These methods encourage students to experiment with language, take risks, and develop confidence in their communicative abilities. Moreover, the emphasis on meaningful interaction shifts the focus from error correction to successful communication.

Assessment practices must also be aligned with these objectives. Instead of evaluating students solely based on grammatical accuracy, educators should consider their ability to maintain communication and apply appropriate strategies. This requires a more holistic approach to evaluation. In conclusion, the development of compensatory competence represents a shift toward a more flexible and realistic understanding of language learning. It prepares students not only to use German effectively but also to

become autonomous and strategic language users. Future research may explore the integration of digital tools and technologies in enhancing compensatory strategies, as well as the role of cultural factors in multilingual communication.

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