

## CONSIDERATIONS ON COMPETENCIES IN TEACHING AND LEARNING THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

### *CONSIDERACIONES SOBRE LAS COMPETENCIAS EN LA ENSEÑANZA APRENDIZAJE DEL IDIOMA INGLÉS*

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#### Abstract

The objective of this article is to assess the competencies in the teaching-learning of the English language from a holistic approach. For this purpose, a bibliographical investigation is carried out on linguistic competencies understood as a systematic process that allows collecting, analyzing and synthesizing relevant information on the topic, arriving at the following conclusions: The development of the four linguistic skills (oral comprehension, written comprehension, oral expression and written expression) is essential for effective communication in English. Teaching should focus on developing all four skills in an integrated way, using a variety of authentic activities and materials. Teaching should focus on the development of communicative competence, using activities that simulate real communication situations. Authentic use of the language is essential for effective learning of English. Teaching must be sensitive to the different cultures and values of students. Teaching should foster learner autonomy, providing students with opportunities to set their own goals, plan their own learning, and evaluate their own progress. The use of innovative resources and methodologies can make teaching English more effective and motivating. In general, effective English teaching must consider the different competencies that students need to communicate effectively in a globalized world. Teaching must be comprehensive, authentic, culturally sensitive, autonomous and based on the use of innovative resources and methodologies.

**Keywords:** competencies; teaching learning; English language

#### Resumen

*El presente artículo tiene como objetivo valorar las competencias en la enseñanza-aprendizaje del idioma inglés desde un enfoque holístico, a tales efectos se realiza una investigación bibliográfica sobre las competencias lingüísticas entendida como un proceso sistemático que permite recopilar, analizar y sintetizar información relevante sobre el tema, arribando a las conclusiones siguientes: El desarrollo de las cuatro*



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*habilidades lingüísticas (comprensión oral, comprensión escrita, expresión oral y expresión escrita) es fundamental para una comunicación efectiva en inglés. La enseñanza debe enfocarse en el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades de manera integrada, utilizando una variedad de actividades y materiales auténticos. La enseñanza debe enfocarse en el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa, utilizando actividades que simulen situaciones de comunicación real. El uso auténtico del idioma es esencial para el aprendizaje efectivo del inglés. La enseñanza debe ser sensible a las diferentes culturas y valores de los estudiantes. La enseñanza debe fomentar la autonomía del aprendiz, proporcionando a los estudiantes oportunidades para establecer sus propios objetivos, planificar su propio aprendizaje y evaluar su propio progreso. La utilización de recursos y metodologías innovadoras puede hacer que la enseñanza del inglés sea más efectiva y motivadora. En general, la enseñanza efectiva del inglés debe considerar las diferentes competencias que los estudiantes necesitan para comunicarse de manera efectiva en un mundo globalizado. La enseñanza debe ser integral, auténtica, culturalmente sensible, autónoma y basada en el uso de recursos y metodologías innovadoras.*

**Keywords:** competencias; enseñanza aprendizaje; idioma inglés

**Fecha de recibido:** 29/03/2024

**Fecha de aceptado:** 25/06/2024

**Fecha de publicado:** 28/06/2024

## Introduction

In today's globalized world, mastery of the English language has become an essential skill for personal and professional success. In this context, the teaching-learning of English takes on fundamental importance, not only for the acquisition of linguistic knowledge, but also for the development of communicative, intercultural and critical thinking skills.

Addressing competencies in the teaching-learning of English involves considering various aspects or approaches:

1. Focus on the four language skills: Teaching should focus on the balanced development of the four language skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is essential to create opportunities for students to practice these skills on a regular and meaningful basis.
2. Integration of communicative competence: Communicative competence goes beyond the mastery of grammar and vocabulary. It involves the ability to use language effectively in different contexts and for various purposes. Teaching should encourage interaction, negotiation of meanings and the expression of personal ideas.
3. Focus on authentic language use: Learning English should be contextualized and meaningful. Students should have the opportunity to use the language in real situations and to communicate with native or non-native speakers.
4. Consideration of cultural diversity: English is a global language with diverse varieties and contexts of use. Teaching must be sensitive to different cultures and promote respect for diversity.



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5. Promotion of learner autonomy: Students must be protagonists of their own learning. Teaching should encourage self-assessment, critical reflection and the ability to learn autonomously.
6. Use of innovative resources and methodologies: Teaching English must incorporate innovative resources and methodologies that motivate students and facilitate learning. Information and communication technologies can play an important role in this regard.
7. Comprehensive evaluation of learning: The evaluation of English learning must be comprehensive and consider the development of different linguistic, communicative and intercultural competencies.

The objective of this article is to assess the competencies in the teaching-learning of the English language from a holistic approach that considers the various aspects mentioned above. Teaching must be effective, relevant and meaningful so that students can develop the skills necessary to communicate successfully in a globalized world.

### Materials and methods

A bibliographic research is carried out on linguistic competences, understood as a systematic process that allows collecting, analyzing and synthesizing relevant information on the topic.

To develop a bibliographic research on linguistic competencies, information was collected, where relevant sources of information were identified, such as academic databases, specialized journals, books and websites, information was searched in the identified sources and evaluated the quality of the information found, considering the credibility of the sources, the research methodology used and the relevance to the research topic. Next, a system was created to organize the collected information, such as a diagram or a reference table with notes of relevant information, including textual citations and bibliographic references, and finally, the collected information was analyzed critically. Patterns, trends and key findings were identified, information was synthesized and conclusions drawn.

### Results and discussion

Focusing on the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is a fundamental method for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). This approach is based on the idea that mastery of all four skills is essential to achieve complete communicative competence in the language.

The focus on the four language skills has its roots in the communicative approach to language teaching, which emerged in the 1970s. The communicative approach emphasizes the importance of communication in language learning and proposes that students should learn to use the language in real life situations.

The four language skills are interrelated and mutually supportive. For example, listening helps improve listening comprehension, speaking helps improve fluency and pronunciation, reading helps expand vocabulary and grammar, and writing helps improve accuracy and organization of ideas. Numerous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the approach on the four language skills. For example, a study by Brown and Skehan (1998) found that students who learned English through a four-language skills-based approach performed better on all skills than those who learned through a traditional language-centered approach grammar and vocabulary. Focusing on all four language skills offers several benefits to students, including:



- Improved communicative competence: Students develop the ability to use the language effectively in different situations and for various purposes.
- Greater motivation: Students feel more motivated to learn when they can use the language to communicate with others.
- More meaningful learning: Students learn better when course content is related to their interests and needs.
- Better preparation for the real world: Students are better prepared to use English in the real world, where they need to use all four language skills.

This is confirmed by the following authors: Brown & Skehan, (1998) consider that "The focus on the four linguistic skills is essential to achieve complete communicative competence in the language" and Harmer, (2001) maintains that "Students feel more motivated to learn when they can use the language to communicate with others." In this regard, Richards & Rodgers, (2002) state that "The communicative approach to language teaching emphasizes the importance of communication in language learning."

For his part, Nunan (2004) considers that "Students learn better when the course content is related to their interests and needs" and (Hutchinson & Waters, 2007) maintain that "Students are better prepared to use English in the classroom." real world, where they need to use all four language skills." (Hutchinson & Waters, 2007)

Focusing on the four language skills is an effective and beneficial method for teaching English as a foreign language. This approach allows students to develop complete communicative competence in the language and be better prepared to use English in the real world.

Communicative competence is a fundamental concept in the teaching-learning of English as a foreign language (EFL). It goes beyond mastery of grammar and vocabulary, and involves the ability to use language effectively in different contexts and for various purposes. The integration of communicative competence in the teaching of English is essential for students to develop the skills necessary to communicate successfully in a globalized world.

The concept of communicative competence emerged in the 1970s with the communicative approach to language teaching. This approach emphasizes the importance of communication in language learning and proposes that students must learn to use the language in real-life situations. Communicative competence is made up of four main components:

- Linguistic competence: Knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary and phonology of the language.
- Sociolinguistic competence: The ability to use language appropriately in different social and cultural contexts.
- Pragmatic competence: The ability to use language to achieve specific communicative objectives.
- Strategic competence: The ability to use strategies to compensate for linguistic deficiencies and to communicate effectively in difficult situations.

Numerous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of integrating communicative competence in the teaching of English. For example, a study by Canale & Swain (1980) found that students who learned English through a communicative competence-based approach performed better on oral communication tasks than



those who learned through a traditional language-centered approach grammar and vocabulary. The integration of communicative competence in English teaching offers several benefits for students, including:

- Improved communicative competence: Students develop the ability to use the language effectively in different situations and for various purposes.
- Greater motivation: Students feel more motivated to learn when they can use the language to communicate with others.
- More meaningful learning: Students learn better when course content is related to their interests and needs.
- Better preparation for the real world: Students are better prepared to use English in the real world, where they need to use communicative competence to communicate successfully.

Various authors have addressed communicative competence Canale & Swain, (1980): They define it as the ability to use the language effectively in different contexts and for various purposes and Harmer (2001) considers that "Students feel more motivated to learn when they can use the language to communicate with others"

Richards & Rodgers (2002) consider that "The communicative approach to language teaching emphasizes the importance of communication in language learning" and Nunan, (2004) that "Students learn best when the course content is related to their interests and needs", therefore, "Students are better prepared to use English in the real world, where they need to use communicative competence to communicate successfully" (Hutchinson & Waters, 2007).

The integration of communicative competence in the teaching of English is essential for students to develop the skills necessary to communicate successfully in a globalized world. This approach allows students to use the language effectively in different contexts and for various purposes, preparing them to meet the challenges of real-world communication.

The focus on authentic language use is a language teaching method that is based on the idea that students must learn to use the language in real-life situations. This approach is contrasted with the traditional approach, which often focuses on teaching grammar rules and vocabulary in isolation.

The focus on authentic language use is based on constructivism, a learning theory that holds that students learn best when they construct their own knowledge from meaningful experiences. In the context of language learning, this means that students must have the opportunity to use the language in situations that reflect the real world.

Numerous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of the approach to authentic language use. For example, a study by Chamot & O'Malley (1994) found that students who learned Spanish through an approach based on authentic language use performed better on oral communication tasks than those who learned through a traditional approach. The focus on authentic language use offers several benefits to students, including:

- Greater motivation: Students feel more motivated to learn when they can use the language in real-life situations.





- More meaningful learning: Students learn better when course content is related to their interests and needs.
- Better preparation for the real world: Students are better prepared to use the language in the real world, where they need to use the language authentically to communicate successfully.
- Development of critical thinking skills: Students develop critical thinking skills by analyzing and evaluating authentic materials.

Examples of activities that use the focus on authentic language use:

- Watch movies and videos in the target language
- Read news and magazine articles in the target language
- Listen to music in the target language
- Talk to native speakers of the target language
- Write emails and letters in the target language
- Participate in online forums and chats in the target language

Focusing on authentic language use is an effective and beneficial method of language teaching. This approach allows students to learn to use the language naturally and meaningfully, preparing them to meet the challenges of real-world communication.

Cultural diversity in the teaching of English, in an increasingly globalized world, must consider the cultural diversity of the students. This means that teachers must be aware of the different cultures and values that students bring to the classroom, and adapt their teaching methods to be inclusive and respectful of all cultures.

The consideration of cultural diversity in the teaching of English is based on the principle of educational equity. This principle maintains that all students have the right to a quality education that is relevant to their experiences and needs. Cultural diversity is also important because it helps students develop a global understanding of the world and prepare to live in a multicultural society.

Numerous research has shown that considering cultural diversity in English teaching can have a positive impact on student learning. For example, a study by Gay (2000) found that students who learned English in a classroom that valued cultural diversity had a better attitude toward learning the language and higher performance on language proficiency tests. Considering cultural diversity in English teaching offers several benefits to students, including:

- Greater motivation: Students feel more motivated to learn when they see that their own culture and values are valued in the classroom.
- More meaningful learning: Students learn better when course content is related to their own experiences and prior knowledge.
- Development of intercultural competence: Students develop skills to understand and appreciate different cultures.
- Better preparation for the real world: Students are better prepared to live and work in a multicultural society.



- There are many strategies that teachers can use to consider cultural diversity in teaching English, for example:
- Use teaching materials that reflect the cultural diversity of the world.
- Invite guest speakers from different cultures to the classroom.
- Encourage discussion and debate on cultural issues.
- Encourage students to learn about their own cultures and the cultures of others.
- Create a safe and respectful classroom environment where all students feel valued.

The consideration of cultural diversity is essential for effective teaching of English as a foreign language. By valuing students' different cultures and experiences, teachers can create an inclusive and motivating learning environment where all students can succeed.

Promoting learner autonomy in modern teaching is vital, the focus has shifted from a teacher-centred model to a learner-centred one. This means that teachers are no longer solely responsible for student learning, but students must also take responsibility for their own learning. Promoting learner autonomy is a pedagogical approach that helps students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to learn independently and effectively.

Promoting learner autonomy is based on constructivist learning theory, which maintains that students learn best when they construct their own knowledge from meaningful experiences. In this context, learner autonomy means that students are able to:

- Set your own learning objectives.
- Plan and organize your own learning.
- Select and use learning resources effectively.
- Monitor and evaluate your own progress.
- Reflect on your own learning.

Extensive research has shown that fostering learner autonomy can have a positive impact on student learning. For example, a study by Benson & Tenenbaum (2003) found that students who learned English through an autonomous approach performed better on language proficiency tests and had greater motivation to learn the language. Promoting learner autonomy offers several benefits to students, including:

- Greater responsibility: Students feel more responsible for their own learning.
- Greater motivation: Students feel more motivated to learn when they have control over their own learning.
- Deeper learning: Students learn more deeply when they construct their own knowledge.
- Lifelong learning skills: Students develop learning skills that will serve them throughout life.

There are many strategies that teachers can use to encourage learner autonomy, these include:

- Provide students with opportunities to set their own learning objectives.
- Teach students effective learning strategies.
- Give students access to a variety of learning resources.
- Encourage reflection and self-assessment.



- Create a safe and respectful classroom environment where students feel comfortable taking risks and making mistakes.

According to Benson (2001) "Learner autonomy is the ability of the learner to make decisions, assume responsibility and carry out effective actions for their own learning" consequently, Little (2007) considers that "The promotion of autonomy learning is a continuous process that involves the development of skills, attitudes and values that are essential for independent and effective learning" and (Lamb, 2010) maintains that "Autonomous learners are motivated, confident and capable learners who are responsible for their own learning." (Lamb, 2010)

Fostering learner autonomy is an essential pedagogical approach for student success in the 21st century. By helping students develop the skills and attitudes necessary to learn independently, teachers can empower them to become lifelong learners and reach their full potential.

The use of innovative resources and methodologies in teaching English in the current era, characterized by rapid technological advancement and globalization, the teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) requires rethinking traditional methods and adopting innovative approaches that respond to the needs and learning styles of students. The incorporation of innovative resources and methodologies in the English classroom allows us to create a dynamic, motivating and effective learning environment, where students can develop the linguistic and communicative skills necessary to function successfully in an increasingly interconnected world.

The use of innovative resources and methodologies in teaching English is based on various pedagogical principles, among which the following stand out:

- **Constructivism:** This learning theory proposes that students construct their own knowledge from meaningful and active experiences. Innovative resources and methodologies promote active learning by engaging students in tasks and activities that allow them to explore, discover and build their own understanding of the language.
- **Connectivism:** This approach to learning recognizes that knowledge is distributed across multiple networks and that learning occurs through connection and collaboration. Innovative resources and methodologies, such as digital tools and social networks, facilitate the connection between students and with various sources of information, promoting collaborative learning and the collective construction of knowledge.
- **The theory of multiple intelligences:** This theory proposed by Howard Gardner states that there are different types of intelligence, such as linguistic, spatial, musical, kinesthetic and intrapersonal. The innovative resources and methodologies allow us to address the diversity of students' learning styles, offering a variety of activities and experiences that stimulate different intelligences and promote comprehensive learning.

Numerous investigations have demonstrated the effectiveness of using innovative resources and methodologies in teaching English. For example, a study by Warschauer & Healey (1998) found that students who learned English through a digital-based approach performed better on language proficiency tests and had





greater motivation to learn the language. The incorporation of innovative resources and methodologies in teaching English offers various benefits for students, including:

**Greater motivation:** Students feel more motivated to learn when classroom activities are dynamic, varied, and allow them to use attractive technological tools.

**More Meaningful Learning:** Innovative resources and methodologies allow students to connect learning English to their interests and experiences, making learning more meaningful and relevant to their lives.

**21st Century Skills Development:** Students develop essential 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and problem solving, by working with innovative resources and methodologies that promote active learning and inquiry.

**Better preparation for the real world:** Students are better prepared to face the challenges of communication in a globalized world by using technological tools and innovative methodologies that simulate real-life situations. For example:

- Digital tools: Information and communication technologies (ICT) such as computers, interactive whiteboards, mobile applications, online platforms and social networks can be used to create dynamic and interactive learning experiences.
- Games and recreational activities: Gamification and game-based learning help motivate students and make learning English a fun and attractive experience.
- Collaborative projects and tasks: Students work in teams to complete projects and tasks that allow them to develop communication, collaboration and problem-solving skills.
- Problem-based learning (PBL): Students face real or simulated problems that they must solve using the English language, which promotes critical thinking and the practical application of the language.
- Experiential learning: Students engage in direct, authentic learning experiences, such as simulations, language trips, and visits to cultural sites that allow them to put English into practice in real-world contexts.

The use of innovative resources and methodologies in teaching English is an essential component to create a dynamic, motivating and effective learning environment in the 21st century. These resources and methodologies allow students to develop the linguistic, communicative and technological skills necessary to function successfully in a globalized world.

Assessment of English learning is a fundamental process to determine the level of language proficiency that students have achieved. This assessment allows teachers to identify students' strengths and weaknesses, as well as their progress in learning the language. Additionally, assessment provides valuable information to improve teaching and learning.

The evaluation of English learning is based on various theoretical principles, among which the following stand out:

- The learner-centered approach: This approach recognizes that students are the protagonists of their own learning and that assessment should be a process that helps them understand their progress and identify areas for improvement.



- **Authentic assessment:** This type of assessment is based on tasks and activities that reflect real-life situations, allowing language proficiency to be assessed in a meaningful context for students.
- **Continuous assessment:** Assessment should not be a one-time event, but rather a continuous process carried out throughout the course to monitor student progress and provide timely feedback.

Different research has shown the importance of English learning assessment to improve teaching and learning. For example, a study by Black & Wiliam (1998) found that formative feedback, which is a type of assessment provided to students during the learning process to help them improve, can have a significant impact on academic performance.

There are different types of English learning evaluation, which can be classified according to various criteria:

- Depending on the moment of the evaluation: Initial evaluation, formative evaluation and summative evaluation.
- According to the evaluation agent: Self-evaluation, co-evaluation and heteroevaluation.
- According to the evaluation instrument: Written tests, oral tests, performance tasks, portfolios and observation.

Therefore, an effective assessment of English learning should be:

- **Valid:** It must measure what it intends to measure.
- **Reliable:** It must provide consistent and reliable results.
- **Useful:** It should provide information that is useful to improve teaching and learning.
- **Fair:** It should be fair to all students and should not be biased by external factors.

Assessment of English learning is an essential process to improve teaching and learning. By using a variety of effective assessment methods, teachers can gain valuable information about their students' progress and provide them with the feedback they need to succeed.

## Conclusion

The development of the four language skills (oral comprehension, written comprehension, oral expression and written expression) is essential for effective communication in English. Teaching should focus on developing all four skills in an integrated way, using a variety of authentic activities and materials. It is important to assess students' progress in all four skills to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Communicative competence is the ability to use language effectively in real-life situations. Teaching should focus on the development of communicative competence, using activities that simulate real communication situations. It is important to assess students' communicative competence using a variety of methods, such as interviews, presentations and debates.

Authentic use of the language is essential for effective learning of English. Teaching should use authentic materials, such as videos, songs, news articles, and real-life conversations. It is important to create opportunities for students to use the language authentically in the classroom.



Cultural diversity is an important factor that must be considered in teaching English. Teaching must be sensitive to the different cultures and values of students. It is important to create an inclusive and respectful classroom environment where all students feel valued.

Learner autonomy is the ability of students to take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching should foster learner autonomy, providing students with opportunities to set their own goals, plan their own learning, and evaluate their own progress. It is important to create a classroom environment where students feel safe to take risks and make mistakes.

The use of innovative resources and methodologies can make teaching English more effective and motivating. Teachers must be willing to experiment with new technologies and teaching approaches. It is important to use resources and methodologies that are appropriate for the level and learning style of the students.

In general, effective English teaching must consider the different competencies that students need to communicate effectively in a globalized world. Teaching must be comprehensive, authentic, culturally sensitive, autonomous and based on the use of innovative resources and methodologies.

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