Communicative Competence of Tourism and Sports Managers

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Abstract

The theoretical part of the article focuses on the defnition of communicative competence and its components according to main theoretical issues. Empirical research of the article is based on the evaluation of the change of communicative competence level in comparison to first and last year Bachelor and Master students on tourism and sports management study program. Research has showed that first year students have lower communicative competence than last year students.

Key words: communicative competence, level of communicative competence.

Introduction

Communication plays a significant role in a specialist's social competence development. Some authors define communicative competence as communicative skills. According to this theory, the development of social-communicative skills and interpersonal communication competence were analyzed by such authors as Craig-Unkefer L. A., Kaiser A. P. (2003), Hwang C. C. (2005), Jones E. A., Carr E. G., Feely K. M. (2006), Katz L. (2003), Kim M. (2004), Miyahara A. (2000), Simpson B. L. (1997), Holmes J., Fillary R. (2000). However, the concept of communicative competence includes communicative flexibility (McDowel, 1997), critical and creative thinking (Marsick, Bitterman, van der Veen, 2000) and conflict management (Lundegard, I., Wickman, 2007. Therefore, it is true to claim that communicative competence should be analyzed as a multidimensional concept. The ***problem of research area*** focuses on the idea that we lack research works and epistemological views emphasizing a holistic view on communicative competence level research. ***Relevance*** of the article lies in the fact that the definition of communicative social competence is presented and communicative competence is examined as a multidimensional concept. Also, the article contains empirical data analysis, emphasizing change of first and last year student's communicative competence level. ***The object*** of research is communicative competence.

The aim of research is to identify change in communicative competence level.

The objectives of research are:
1. To formulate the definition of a specialist's communicative competence focusing on the main theoretical issues;
2. To determine change in student's communicative competence level;
3. To differentiate empirical data according to the year of study focusing on Bachelor and Master studies.

The research methods:
1. Scientific literature synthesis;
2. Survey based on the questionnaire "Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)" by Richmond V. and McCroskey J.;
3. Primary data analysis.
4. Statistical analysis.

1. The concept of communicative competence

Usually communicative competence is understood as an ability to get on well with others via verbal or non-verbal articulation or it is compared to linguistic or any other sensory competence. Therefore, splitting communicative competence into separate components would be quite wise. Communicative competence components are presented as linguistic, thematic, socio-cultural, compensatory, and learning (Павлова, 2004).

It is clear that communicative competence, based on speaking, reading, writing and listening skills, starts with linguistic competences of an individual, including socio-linguistic skills as well. That is ability to manage linguistic means and text recognition processes. The other part of communicative competence is thematic competence which is based on extra-linguistic information management. At the same time regional geography information management as a thematic competence plays a significant role for communicative competence formation in tourism managers. Furthermore, socio-cultural competence comprises behavioral and ethical skills and cognition of a socio-

cultural context. Also, compensatory competence is a corresponding part of communicative competence. That is an ability to reach mutual understanding and to withdraw from difficult linguistic communication. Finally, all these competences come to the central point which is competence of learning to learn and develop communicative competence. The process of communicative competence development consists of 6 levels shown in the reverse pyramid (Fig. 1).
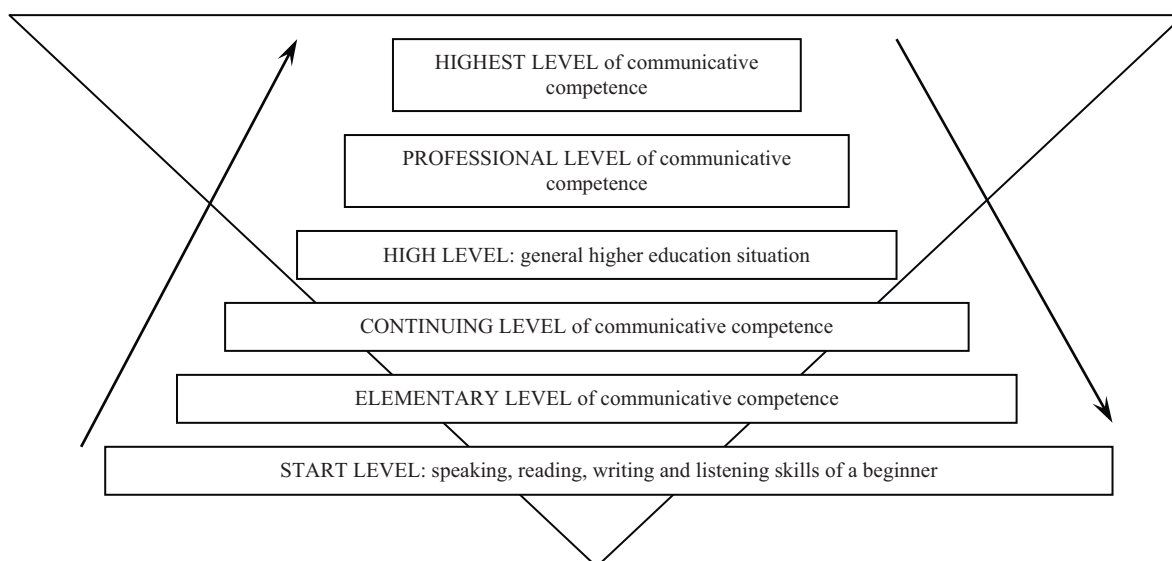
adapted from: Pavlova, 2004.

Fig. 1 Reverse pyramid of communicative competence development

The development process of communicative competence starts at a beginner's level where an individual has an ability to manage and possess audio communicative and writing skills. While developing these linguistic skills, an individual reaches an elementary level of communicative competence. The third level is called a continuing level of communicative competence development that helps an individual to come to a high level in the area of general higher education. Then a professional level of communicative competence comes which is then developed into the highest level, communicative competence level of an educated linguist.

An individual, having a high level of communicative competence, can show a pretty high level of his or her social competence in various situations not only in personal life, but in working environments as well. Sometimes working environments serve as learning and development environments for acquiring communicative competence to strengthen the level of communicative competence of an individual.

Various literature sources and authors present their own understanding of a communicative competence content shown in of Table 1.

Table 1

Content of communicative competence

No.	Author/source	Content of communicative competence	Relation to communicative competence
1.	Lundegard, I.; Wickman, Per-Olof *(2007)*	Action competence, to make communicative choices in the dialogue, human conflicts of interest of a broader kind	The ability to take into consideration social factors and human conflict of interest that lies behind environmental questions and sustainable development of communicative competence
2.	Bakx, A. W. E. A, Van der Sanden, J. M.; Sijtsma, K; Croon, M. A.; Vermetten, Y. J. *(2006)*	Personality characteristics, self-perception, communication in relation to performance, showing sympathy	Self-perceived communicative competence and learning conceptions play in acquisition and development of social-communicative competencies.

Table 1 to be continued

3.	Kowalski, T. J. *(2005)*	Role-related and context-dependent skills	Movement toward improving superintendent communication competence attenuated by three deficiencies: (1) failure to define competence in relation to this position, (2) absence of curricular guidelines for achieving competence, and (3) absence of criteria for assessing competence.
4.	De Bildt, A.; Serra, M.; Luteijn, E.; Kraijer, D.; Sytema, S.; Minderaa, R. *(2005)*	Fear of changes in the existing situation	Communicative skills and subtle social skills, that concern overlooking activities or situations and fear of changes in the existing situation, seem to play a far greater role.
5.	Hwang, Caroline, C. *(2005)*	Intercultural communicative competence, various social interactions	Intercultural communicative competence at three levels: cultural awareness, phraseological accuracy, and pragmatic appropriateness. It delineates some of the underlying thought patterns: the values, attitudes, and feelings.
6.	Euler, D. *(2001)*	Verbal/non-verbal articulation and interpretation of statements, metacommunication, sensitivity to latent communication, reflection, and action	Social competencies and transfer across situations are important. A model of social communicative action was developed with these elements.
7.	Marsick, V.; Bitterman, J.; van der Veen, R. *(2000)*	Collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and creativity	This paper explores a common assumption: education must be made an open, interconnected chain of learning opportunities, available for people from cradle to grave. A learning community, using theories and models such as social learning, situational cognition, and communities of practice to describe ways to develop group learning and communicative competence
8.	McDowell, Earl E. *(1997)*	Interpersonal communication competence, communicative flexibility, and rhetorical sensitivity	Results indicated significant relationships among all variables. In addition, significant differences occurred between gender groups and between age groups in rating the communication flexibility variable. Results also indicated that extension students were rhetorically sensitive, more flexible, and perceived greater communication competence, as well as being rated more positively by their interviewer than day students.
9.	Kramsch, C. *(1996)*	Linguistic accuracy, ability to recognize cultural differences, find social equivalent	To acquire cultural competence students have to become familiar with the cognitive, affective, and behavioral facets of politeness.

Prepared by authors

Some authors accept competence as skills. Having this attitude, social-communicative skills and the development of interpersonal communicative competence were analyzed by such authors as Craig-Unkefer L. A., Kaiser A. P. (2003), Hwang C. C. (2005), Jones E. A., Carr E. G., Feely K. M. (2006), Katz L. (2003), Kim M. (2004), Miyahara A. (2000), Simpson B. L. (1997), Holmes J., Fillary R. (2000). On the other hand, the concept of communicative competence embraces communicative flexibility (McDowel, 1997), critical and creative thinking (Marsick, Bitterman, van der Veen, 2000). Therefore, it is true to claim that communicative competence is a multidimensional concept.

2. Data collection plan and summary of survey results (Change of communicative social competence level)

Normally, a data collection plan shows how research is set up and how data is going to be collected. This is quite easy if you follow a form of an outline. In order to collect data about the change of communicative competence level, several steps were taken into consideration (Fig. 3).
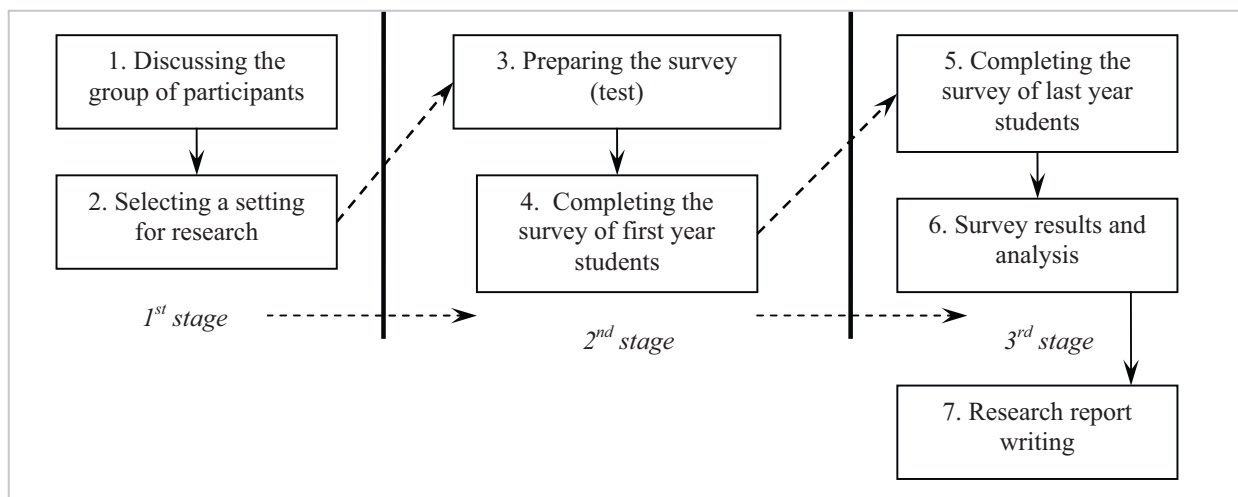
Fig. 2. Data collection plan for research

The test was prepared by adapting a personal report on communication apprehension according to Richmond V. and McCroskey J.

Survey was conducted in April-May, 2008. Data was collected by surveying first and last year Bachelor and Master students. The questionnaire "Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)" prepared according to Richmond V. and McCroskey J. includes two parts. The introductory part indicates the aims of the survey and directions how to complete the form, the secondary part contains (the main part) 24 questions that determine the content of the survey.

85 Bachelor students and 38 Master students on tourism and sports management study program (Lithuania Academy of Physical Education) participated in the survey. Results were grouped according to Bachelor and Master studies. Comparing general results, an obvious change in a communicative competence level was noticed. Empirical results reveal that almost ¾ of first year Master students reported a lower communicative competence level. About 75% of first year Master students reported low communicative competence, while only 13,6% of last year Master students show lowed level of communicative competence. What is more, research results showed that there were no first year Master students showing high level of communicative competence; however, 31,8% of last year Master students reported high communicative competence. Speaking about Bachelor students, it became clear that about a half less last year students reported low communicative competence (accordinaly 59,5% and 25,6%). The change in an average communicative competence level between first and last year Bachelor students was 25, 4% and the change in a high level was 9,3%. Detailed results are presented in Figures 3 and 4.
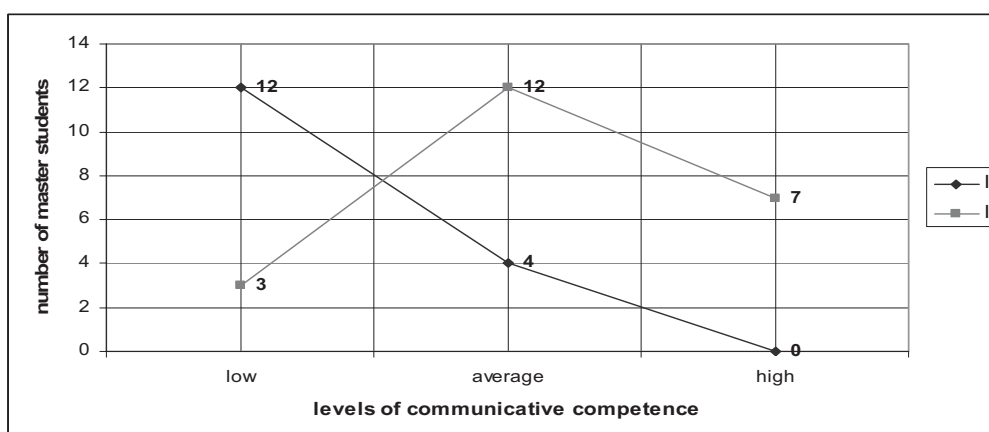
I, II – years of study

Fig. 3 Change of communicative competence level (Master students in tourism and sports management)
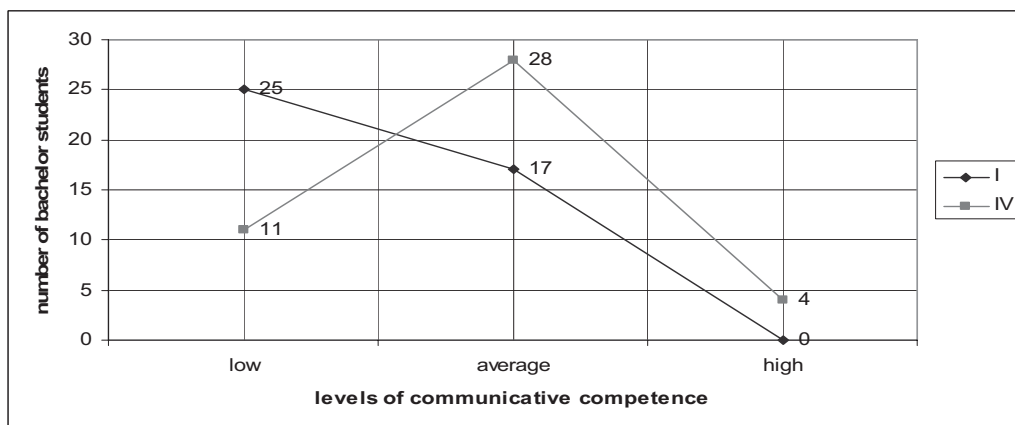
I, IV – years of study

Fig. 4 Change of communicative competence level (Bachelor students in tourism and sports management)

In order to prove reliability of research results, statistical analysis was completed. Results of statistical analysis show that there is a clear difference between first and last year Bachelor students ($\chi^2(2) = 12,12$; $p < 0,01$). That means taht empirical results are statisticslly reliable. Moreover, empirical results of first and the last year Master students show that they are also statistically reliable ($\chi^2(2) = 15,85$; $p < 0,01$). Therefore, last year Bachelor and Master students at Lithuania, Academy at Physical Education have a higher level of communicative social competence. Detailed statistical data of research is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Statistical data on communicative competence of first and last year Bachelor and Master students at Lithuania Academy of Physical Education

Competence	Year of study	N	M (average)	SD (standard deviation)	t	p
Communicative social competence	B I	42	2,76	0,42	**-2,85**	**0,005**
	B IV	43	3,08	0,59		
	M I	16	2,25	0,45	-4,86	0,001
	M II	22	3,18	0,66		

B – Bachelor studies, M – Master studies

I, II, IV – year of study

Research data is analysed according to levels, since research participants had to eveluate given tenses using a 5 – point scale. The parameter M in *Table 2* is average of student's communicative competence level. The range of 1–2 points means that a communicative competence level is low, the range of 3 points shows an average level of competence and 4–5 points reveal a high level of communicative competence. Average difference between communicative competence levels of first and last year Bachelor students is 0.32 points out of 5 and average difference between communicative competence levels of first and last year Master students is 0.93 points out of 5. Data in *Table 2* shows that communicative competence average levels of first and last year Bachelor and Master students are different.

Conclusions

1. It is not correct to limit the definition of communicative competence to communicative or interpersonal skills as well as verbal or non-verbal skills. Communicative competence is rather more than skills. It is more correct if we define communicative competence as a multidimensional concept. According to theoretical analysis, communicative social competence is not limited to linguistic skills, linguistic management of information or behavioural and socio-cultural environment cognitive skills. Communicative social competence is rather an interpersonal verbal or non-verbal communication process, which reveals social interaction interests of the participants, reflective skills, encourages critical thinking, creativity and anxiety management skills.

2. Statistical data analysis of empirical data indicates statistical reliability of first and last year Bachelor and Master students' communicative competence level change. Statistical reliability of data

is shown by the parameter *p* which is less than 0.01, and the *chi-square (χ^2)* test shows quite high results 12.12 (Bachelor students) and 15.85 (Master students). The higher the meaning of the chi-square is, the higher statistical reliability of the data is. The parameter of standard deviation also proves statistical reliability of research data.

3. Research was conducted using adapted questionnaire of Richmond V. and McCroskey J. called "Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24)". According to empirical research data, it is true to claim that communicative competence level of first and last year Bachelor and Master students changed, that is increased. The average level of communicative competence of both research groups changed from average to high: Bachelor students – from 2,76 (first year) to 3,08 (last year), Master students – from 2,25 (first year) to 3,18 (last year). Research data proves that the level of tourism and sports managers' (Bachelor and Master studies) communicative competence increased during the period of study.

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Turizmo ir sporto vadybininkų komunikacinė kompetencija

Santrauka

Ugdant specialistų socialinę kompetenciją svarbi yra komunikacija, nuo kurios neatsiejama ir komunikacinė kompetencija.

Straipsnio aktualumą lemia tai, kad teorinėje dalyje atskleistas komunikacinės kompetencijos turinys bei suformuluota jos definicija, o empirinėje dalyje pateikti rezultatai įrodo akivaizdų turizmo ir sporto vadybos pirmo kurso bakalauro ir magistro studijų ir baigiamojo kurso bakalauro bei magistro studijų studentų komunikacinės kompetencijos pokytį.

Paprastai komunikacinė kompetencija suprantama kaip verbalinė ar neverbalinė artikuliacija, ji lyginama su

lingvistine ar kita sensorine kompetencija. Galima teigti, kad specialistų komunikacinė kompetencija yra skaidoma į atskirus gebėjimus. L. Pavlova (2004) pateikia tokius komunikacinės kompetencijos komponentus: lingvistinę kompetenciją, teminę kompetenciją, sociokultūrinę kompetenciją, mokymosi kompetenciją.

Individo komunikacinės kompetencijos vystymosi procesas prasideda jau individualiu lygiu. Žmogus geba valdyti ir pasitelkti komunikacinius kalbėjimo ir rašymo gebėjimus. Vystydamas šiuos lingvistinius gebėjimus, individas pasiekia aukštesnį komunikacinės kompetencijos lygį. Trečias lygis yra tęstinis komunikacinės kompetencijos lygis, kuriame individas tobulina bendravimo gebėjimus ir kompetenciją veiklos metu. Taip pereinama į aukštą komunikacinės kompetencijos lygį aukštojo mokslo sistemoje. Profesionalus komunikacinės kompetencijos lygis perauga į aukščiausią išsilavinusio lingvisto komunikacinės kompetencijos lygį.

Kai kurie autoriai kompetenciją tapatina su gebėjimais. Dalis mokslininkų, pavyzdžiui, L. A. Craig-Unkefer, A. P. Kaiser (2003), C. C. Hwang (2005), E. A. Jones, E. G. Carr, K. M. Feely (2006), L. Katz (2003), M. Kim (2004), A. Miyahara (2000), B. L. Simpson (1997), J. Holmes, R. Fillary (2000), nagrinėjo socialinių ir komunikacinių gebėjimų, tarpasmeninės komunikacinės kompetencijos plėtotę remdamiesi būtent šia nuostata. Tačiau komunikacinės kompetencijos sąvoka apima ir komunikacinį lankstumą (McDowel, 1997), kritinį, kūrybinį mąstymą (Marsick, Bitterman, van der Veen, 2000) bei interesų konfliktų valdymą (Lundegard, Wickman, 2007). Vadinasi, galima daryti išvadą, kad komunikacinė kompetencija multidimensinė sąvoka.

Tyrimo metu pasinaudota V. Richmond ir J. McCroskey klausimynu, kurį sudaro 2 dalys: įvadinė (t. y. duomenys apie dalyvius) ir pagrindinė (24 teiginiai komunikacinės kompetencijos lygiui nustatyti). Tyrime dalyvavo 85 turizmo ir sporto vadybos bakalauro studijų ir 38 magistro studijų studentai.

Empirinio tyrimo rezultatai rodo, kad pirmo ir paskutinio kursų LKKA bakalauro studijų studentų pasiskirstymas pagal komunikacinę socialinę kompetenciją statistiškai patikimai skiriasi ($\chi^2(2) = 12,12$; $p < 0,01$). Taip pat statistiškai patikimai skiriasi pirmo ir paskutinio kurso magistro studijų komunikacinės socialinės kompetencijos rezultatai ($\chi^2(2) = 15,85$; $p < 0,01$). Vadinasi, tiek bakalauro, tiek magistro studijų baigiamojo kurso studentų komunikacinės kompetencijos lygis yra aukštesnis.