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Review article

Oral communicative competence in the initial training of speech therapists

La competencia comunicativa oral en la formación inicial del logopeda

A competência comunicativa oral na formação inicial do terapeuta da fala

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is to achieve inclusive, equitable and quality education, with lifelong learning opportunities. This is why the teacher's oral communication acquires an indispensable role, with special uniqueness in the initial training of the speech therapist. The study aims to critically review the scientific literature on oral communicative competence in the initial training of speech therapists, identifying theoretical models, components and gaps in its curricular development. For this purpose, a qualitative narrative review was carried out in the databases Scopus, Redalyc, Google Scholar and SciELO, with keywords "oral communicative competence", "initial training of speech therapists" and "speech therapy education". Articles were selected using inclusion and exclusion criteria, and a critical thematic analysis was carried out. Three

dominant approaches were identified: the linguistic-structural, the sociocultural and the professionalizing approaches. The most recurrent components were the grammatical, pragmatic, strategic, sociocultural and affective components, and a structural gap was confirmed between the theoretical models and their application in the initial training of speech therapists, with limitations in the didactic proposals contextualized to educational practice and in the availability of validated instruments to evaluate oral competence in the exercise of the profession. Oral communicative competence is present in the initial training curricula for speech therapists and requires the development of curricular proposals that articulate theory-practice in the academic, work, research and extension dimensions, delving into speech therapy care for students with language and communication disorders.

Keywords: oral communicative competence; speech therapy education; initial training; speech therapy; professional model.

RESUMEN

Es propósito de la Agenda 2030 para el Desarrollo Sostenible el logro de una educación inclusiva, equitativa y de calidad, con oportunidades de aprendizaje durante toda la vida. Es por ello que la comunicación oral del docente adquiere un rol indispensable, con especial singularidad en la formación inicial del logopeda. El estudio se propone revisar críticamente la literatura científica sobre la competencia comunicativa oral en la formación inicial del logopeda, identificando modelos teóricos, componentes y brechas en su desarrollo curricular. Para ello se realizó una revisión narrativa cualitativa en las bases de datos Scopus, Redalyc, Google Scholar y SciELO, con palabras clave "competencia comunicativa oral", "formación inicial de logopedas" y "educación logopedia". Se seleccionaron diferentes artículos mediante criterios de inclusión y exclusión y se realizó un análisis temático crítico. Se identificaron tres enfoques dominantes: el lingüístico-estructural, el sociocultural y el profesionalizante. Los componentes más recurrentes fueron el gramatical, el pragmático, el estratégico, el sociocultural y el afectivo, y se constató una brecha estructural entre los modelos teóricos y su aplicación en la formación inicial del logopeda, con limitaciones en las propuestas didácticas contextualizadas a la práctica educativa y en la existencia de instrumentos validados para evaluar la competencia oral en el ejercicio de la profesión. La competencia comunicativa oral está presente en los currículos de la formación inicial del logopeda y requiere del desarrollo de propuestas curriculares que articulen teoría-práctica en las dimensiones académica, laboral, investigativa y

extensionista, profundizando en la atención logopédica a educandos con trastornos del lenguaje y la comunicación.

Palabras clave: competencia comunicativa oral; educación logopedia; formación inicial; logopedia; modelo del profesional.

RESUMO

O objetivo do Desenvolvimento Sustentável até 2030 é alcançar uma educação inclusiva, equitativa e de qualidade, com oportunidades de aprendizagem ao longo da vida. É por isso que a comunicação oral do professor adquire um papel indispensável, com especial singularidade na formação inicial do terapeuta da fala. O estudo tem como objetivo rever criticamente a produção científica sobre a competência comunicativa oral na formação inicial de terapeutas da fala, identificando modelos teóricos, componentes e lacunas no seu desenvolvimento curricular. Para tal, foi realizada uma revisão narrativa qualitativa nas bases de dados Scopus, Redalyc, Google Scholar e SciELO, com as palavras-chave "competência comunicativa oral", "formação inicial de terapeutas da fala" e "educação da terapia da fala". Foram selecionados diferentes artigos mediante a aplicação de critérios de inclusão/exclusão e análise temática crítica. Foram identificadas três abordagens dominantes: a linguístico-estrutural, a sociocultural e a profissionalizante. As componentes mais recorrentes foram a gramatical, a pragmática, a estratégica, a sociocultural e a afetiva, e confirmou-se um fosso estrutural entre os modelos teóricos e a sua aplicação na formação inicial dos terapeutas da fala, com limitações nas propostas didáticas contextualizadas à prática educativa e na presença de instrumentos validados para avaliar a competência oral no exercício da profissão. A competência comunicativa oral está presente nos currículos de formação inicial de terapeutas da fala e exige o desenvolvimento de propostas curriculares que articulem a teoria-prática nas dimensões académica, laboral, de investigação e de extensão, aprofundando o atendimento fonoaudiológico de alunos com perturbações da linguagem e da comunicação.

Palavras-chave: competência comunicativa oral; educação em terapia da fala; formação inicial; terapia da fala; modelo profissional.

INTRODUCTION

In the current context of social, political and economic transformations worldwide, education systems are obliged to rethink their training models to respond to society's new demands. For higher education, this means training professionals capable of acting critically and ethically in diverse contexts, with high communicative responsibilities. In the case of the Bachelor's Degree in Speech Therapy Education, this requirement is even more relevant, since speech therapists act as agents of change in processes of communicative and social inclusion, especially with learners who have language and communication disorders.

Communicative competence has been widely addressed from educational psychology, applied linguistics and didactics (Marín Ube et al., 2025; Valdés León et al., 2022; Vila Huaman & Velasco Loayza, 2023). However, most of these approaches focus on general linguistic competence or written communication, without delving into oral communicative competence as a specific professional skill of speech therapists. It involves not only normative command of the language but also the ability to use oral language effectively, in context and ethically in the different spaces of interaction that speech therapists establish with learners, teachers, families and community agents.

These studies are valuable contributions that serve as a reference for analyzing oral communicative competence, as they reveal the importance of its acquisition for the successful performance of professional functions. In this regard, Roméu (2014) argues that language teaching should focus on the comprehension, analysis and construction of meaning in real contexts, which is fully applicable to the training of speech therapists.

Internationally, studies on oral communicative competence have been abundant in the field of foreign languages and teacher education (Canale, 1983; Celce-Murcia, 2007; Núñez Cortés & Errázuriz Cruz, 2020). In contrast, Alfonso Almaguer (2010), Marín Pedraza and Campos Maura (2015) and Meneses Romero et al. (2025) argue that the specific literature on the training of speech therapists is scarce, and even more limited in Spanish-speaking contexts.

Most research focuses on the assessment of or intervention in language disorders, but studies on the communicative training of the professionals who intervene in these processes are limited, according to Valdés Valdés et al. (2019), Parés Ojeda et al. (2021) and Tibau Avello et al. (2024).

Oral communicative competence cannot be understood as a set of isolated skills, but as a pedagogical professional competence (Pompa Montes de Oca & Pérez López, 2015) that integrates theoretical, procedural and attitudinal knowledge and is manifested in the ability to communicate effectively with diverse actors. It becomes an indispensable skill in the training of education professionals, who must integrate linguistic knowledge and interactive skills into their practice.

From this perspective, oral communicative competence in the training of speech therapists cannot be limited to the classroom or to the practice of disciplinary content. It is a cross-cutting competence that must be developed in the curricular dimension (through university-workplace links), in the social dimension (as a tool for transformation and inclusion) and in the extension dimension (in community actions and social interaction). This articulation requires a critical view of the role of speech therapists in society and training that integrates oral communication as a formative axis.

This involves mastering oral communication as a tool for mediation, inclusion and human development. However, this formative expectation is not translated into explicit methodological guidelines on how to develop this competence in initial training. The educational strategy of the program, although it includes objectives related to communication, is limited in the articulation of systematic actions and in the use of specific methods for its development in the academic, work, research and extension components.

This gap between what is established in the Professional Model of the Bachelor's Degree in Speech Therapy Education and training practice has been evidenced in studies carried out at the University of Sancti Spíritus "José Martí Pérez" (UNISS), which found that speech therapy students do not develop consistent practices of active listening and do not communicate adequately in the different training settings. This is worrying considering that a substantial part of speech therapy intervention is carried out through the contextualized use of oral language, in diagnostic assessment, therapeutic intervention and guidance for families and teachers.

These elements have been pointed out in case studies and curricular analyses (Tibau Avello et al., 2024), but they have not been systematically reviewed in the scientific literature. It is therefore necessary to review the aspects of oral communicative competence, identifying theoretical models, approaches, components, experiences reported in the training of speech therapists and gaps in its development, in order to identify theoretical and empirical gaps that guide research and generate transformations in the training process.

This review is justified by the need to strengthen the initial training of a professional who acts as a linguistic mediator in contexts of communicative diversity and whose oral competence directly affects the quality of speech therapy intervention and the educational inclusion of people with language and communication disorders. This will make it possible to move towards more coherent training in line with current social demands.

The result is a qualitative narrative review that critically analyzes the theoretical models, components and gaps of oral communicative competence in the initial training of speech therapists. It is based on a systematic search in the Scopus, Redalyc, Google Scholar, SciELO and EBSCO databases, with publications in Spanish and English. The following keywords were used: "competencia comunicativa oral", "educación logopedia", "formación inicial de logopedas", "oral communication competence" and "speech therapist training".

The inclusion criteria were: empirical, theoretical or review articles; studies in higher education or professional training; and texts addressing oral communicative competence in educational contexts. The exclusion criteria were: articles without reference to professional training; studies focused exclusively on written language or foreign languages; and works without identification of authorship or institution. The analysis process included critical reading and thematic coding, grouping by conceptual axes and triangulation among authors and approaches.

DEVELOPMENT

Definitions and models of communicative competence

The term competence comes from the Latin word "competens"; among its meanings, it essentially refers to opposition to obtain something, or the situation of companies that compete in a market by offering or demanding the same product or service. It also designates a rival person or group, hence its commercial meaning. In another sense, it refers to "expertise", "aptitude" and "suitability to do or intervene in a given matter", implying abilities and skills to take on a task and succeed in it. Therefore, competence is considered to mean capacity, aptitude and permission, that is, being capable.

The global context requires educational sciences to take on, with greater force, the need to study competency-based training. Traditional teaching conflicts with the requirements of the contemporary world; there is rapid technological development and great struggles for the control of knowledge,

which makes it necessary for institutions at all educational levels to take on this challenge. For López Gómez (2016), the concept of competence is probably one of the most frequently referred terms in current pedagogical discourse.

According to Pérez Marchant and Novoa Lagos (2024), since Chomsky introduced the term competence into the field of education in the second half of the last century, particularly linguistic competence, those interested in teaching have had to deal with its multiple meanings and confusing definitions. The multiple etymology of the word in contemporary pedagogical contexts is one of the aspects that creates the most confusion, as well as the deep resistance of many teachers and institutions to working along the lines of competencies.

A contextualization of competencies in higher education is made by Montes de Oca Recio and Machado Ramírez (2014), who describe competence as a psychological configuration that integrates various cognitive, metacognitive and motivational components and personality qualities in close functional unity, self-regulating efficient performance in a specific sphere of activity, in accordance with a model built in a concrete historical context and with the socially desirable mode of performance.

Zayas Valiente et al. (2025) define competencies as "complex and holistic formations that are shaped by the functional integration of qualities, attributes and elements that have been established and consolidated in the subject". According to these authors, competencies are configured from "conceptual, procedural, attitudinal and motivational elements and other features and characteristics of the subject's personality" (p. 237).

Likewise, Bórquez Mella et al. (2023) define competencies as "complex processes that people put into action-performance-creation in solving problems and carrying out activities in various contexts, requiring the integration of knowing how to be, to know and to do, considering the demands of the context and thus assuming the consequences of their actions, seeking human well-being" (p. 3).

Reiné (2024), in turn, states that competence consists of the subject applying his or her knowledge to the context and autonomously using and integrating that knowledge with flexibility, dedication, perseverance, commitment and responsibility towards oneself and others in order to solve existing problems. When competent, the subject applies knowledge to the context, seeks experiences, takes the initiative and faces risks with the conviction of reaching the goal.

Consistent with the above definitions, it can be stated that there is a diversity of criteria, but at the same time certain analogies can be seen, which are of great interest for understanding the concept. Among them are the following:

- They are generally considered permanent characteristics of people.
- They are manifested when a task or job is performed, so they are related to the successful performance of an activity.
- They are considered to condition people's work performance, directly constituting the fundamental cause of success.
- They are transferable to the development of other activities under the same or different conditions.
- They reveal an objective relationship among the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions.

Taking these criteria into account, it is assumed that competence is not innate but is built in the process of training and development, which involves a participatory and interdisciplinary process. To carry it out, it is necessary to start from the premise that content is socially constructed and historically developed. This means that its results (which are none other than the competencies indispensable for professionals) are achieved through the close relationship among the core knowledge, generalized skills and professional and social values, issues that have been mentioned and that demand a more active role from students.

Competence is not a single pattern but a set of skills that allows the variability that gives rise to individual development; therefore, the education system must set two goals: developing students as individuals and developing students as members of society.

These goals are realized in different communicative situations, determined by the set of extralinguistic factors on which the nature of a linguistic act of learning depends. Applying these components in the pedagogical process involves understanding the interrelationships established between them and the individual conditions of learning. It is precisely in these training settings that the development of communicative competence takes on greater prominence.

Beginning in the 1980s, a conceptualization of communicative competence and its components began to be proposed, with different models that include subcompetences (grammatical, sociolinguistic, discursive, strategic, organizational, pragmatic, cultural and ideological). In Canale's (1983) model

of linguistic competence, its components correspond to knowledge of grammatical rules, including grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence.

The best-known and most widely accepted concept of communicative competence is the one proposed by Canale and Swain (1980) and expanded by Canale (1983), which approaches it from the perspective of the following components:

- Grammatical or linguistic competence: command of the linguistic code.
- Sociolinguistic competence: appropriateness of the utterance in content and form.
- Discursive competence: ability to combine structures and meanings in the development of an oral or written text.
- Strategic competence: command of verbal and non-verbal communicative strategies used to compensate for deficiencies in communication and make it more effective.

In this regard, Sirlopú Vera et al. (2023) highlight the components of communicative competence, pointing out knowledge of the linguistic code associated with linguistic competence, knowledge of discourse interpretation associated with pragmatic competence, knowledge of the social environment associated with cultural competence and knowledge of cultural elements associated with ideological competence. For Mendoza Fillola (2003), it is the sum of several competencies and subcompetencies, a set of numerous skills and operational knowledge that goes far beyond the mere linguistic knowledge involved in communicative acts. It is a capacity that must be acquired, since one learns to speak by speaking, in the sense that oral communicative competence is acquired only by speaking.

For their part, Pulido Díaz & Pérez Viñas (2004) add three other competencies to communicative competence: learning, affective and behavioral competence. Aguirre Raya (2005) argues that communicative competence and all its accompanying elements should be analyzed from three dimensions, cognitive, communicative and sociocultural, which results in an integrative approach to the analysis of this competence.

The authors analyzed offer a holistic view of communicative competence, revealing it as a psychological configuration that integrates the capacities to interact in various contexts, with different aims and purposes. This includes action involving cognitive processes, command of discursive structures and the individual's interaction with the surrounding environment, in which cultural knowledge is acquired in a constant feedback process.

We agree with Niño Rojas (2008), who states that communicative competence is a set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to communicate appropriately in a given context, which in this case could be the different contexts that make up the educational dimensions of the training process: curricular (academic, work and research), socio-political-ideological and extension. These elements can be contextualized in the initial training of education professionals.

Rodríguez Muñoz and Sánchez Fernández (2018) argue that communicative competence is a broad notion that encompasses a heterogeneous set of skills and abilities that a language user (native or not) must acquire and uses at a specific moment of a given communicative event; however, oral communicative competence is considered a capacity in constant use in oral production with regard to discourse coherence. Various studies agree that communicative competence is the result of the sum of different competencies, skills or abilities.

Therefore, Cuero Ortiz et al. (2025) consider communicative competence to be a complex psychological configuration shaped by the functional integration of qualities, attributes and elements that have been established and consolidated in the future education professional, through which they demonstrate efficient comprehension, interpretation, organization and production of acts of meaning through different systems of linguistic and non-linguistic signs, as well as adequate communicative interaction, based on command and integration of knowledge about the process of human communication.

According to Achi (2025), communicative competence involves "articulating linguistic and pragmatic knowledge" that guides meaningful interaction in the classroom. In this regard, teachers face the challenge of promoting functional and authentic learning.

The analyses carried out made it possible to establish three major models in the study of aspects related to communicative competencies:

- the linguistic-structural model, which focuses on grammatical correctness and textual cohesion and whose main representatives are Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983);
- the sociocultural model, which emphasizes contextual appropriateness and interaction and is present in the studies of Roméu (2014) and Zayas Valiente et al. (2025);
- the professionalizing model, which integrates knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes for performance, as shown in the studies of Pompa Montes de Oca and Pérez López (2015) and Reiné (2024).

Although the models coincide in integrating knowledge when addressing aspects related to communicative competencies, none is built from the perspective of the initial training of speech therapists, nor do they consider communication with people with language disorders as a specific context.

In summary, communicative competence should be considered unitary, since it reaches that higher category in interactive and dialogic skills, with greater or lesser depth, through learning, use and contact with a plurality of norms that become linguistic culture, precisely as a result of that insurmountable human exchange. Schools should teach this with a broad vision and flexible and renewable criteria, very close to the codification of the standard language and its other structural and functional variants, in accordance with an adequate language policy, which should have regularities but whose specificities should be contributed by the school.

Components of oral communicative competence: their impact on the initial training of speech therapists

One of the ways in which communicative competence materializes is oral communicative competence, which refers to the relevant and appropriate way of transmitting feelings, ideas and knowledge in different communicative situations and contexts, also involving the use of non-verbal and paraverbal resources (Villa & Poblete, 2007). According to Cenoz (2004), it is the capacity to synthesize the psychological, cultural, legal and linguistic rules that allow human beings to express themselves appropriately in a given environment, participating in social, academic and professional life and projecting the individual dimension of the human being into a social dimension.

Oral communicative competence is a notion born of linguistics and directed towards an interdisciplinary conceptualization that integrates a body of knowledge capable of, on the one hand, developing the skills or aptitudes necessary for living in society and, on the other, producing interpersonal and intergroup relationships for communication. Today, communicative competence is conceived as an integrative and holistic concept that gives way to social development through the interactions that take place in social groups (Balaguer Fábregas et al., 2015).

The main references found in research on oral communicative competence are aimed primarily at the specialty of Foreign Languages, which also justifies the need to achieve this competence in the other professionals trained in teacher education programs, especially speech therapists.

It is important to reiterate the responsibility of all teachers, not only Spanish Language teachers, in the teaching and learning of oral communication, since correct communication is essential in all areas of knowledge. Teachers need to internalize that the concepts, principles and laws of their science can only be known through the use of language and, within it, oral communication.

The particular case of oral communicative competence in education professionals is distinctive and takes on extraordinary value, given the work of teachers and the various forms and contexts of communication they face, both in guiding families and teachers and in working with the community. It should be conceived as an integration of knowledge to communicate the content of their profession appropriately, which should make them a linguistic model in their various settings of action.

Referring to the essence of the training of teaching professionals in Cuba, García Acevedo et al. (2016) argue that initial training marks the beginning of the appropriation and development of knowledge, habits, skills, attitudes and values, among other essential aspects for future professionals, which must be gradually and permanently consolidated throughout their working life.

Initial and in-service training has been the subject of study by numerous authors, who consider that it imposes new challenges on professional pedagogical activity from and for educational practice, through scientific research aimed at solving existing problems and attending to emerging priorities. The idea of an innovative university highlights the need for permanent transformation and the search for solutions to the numerous challenges of social development, in which initial and postgraduate training must play an important role.

The training of speech therapists has been present in emergency courses, qualification or specialization courses, the training of therapist teachers and defectologists, and the Bachelor's Degree in Speech Therapy Education, among others. In all of them, as part of their professional training, students are prepared for speech therapy work in schools.

The basic objective of the Bachelor's Degree in Speech Therapy Education is to train teachers specialized in comprehensive attention to the development of language and communication in learners at different levels of the national education system. In this regard, their role in comprehensive educational attention to children, adolescents and young people as part of comprehensive speech therapy care is recognized.

To achieve this purpose, the Professional Model (MES, 2016) expects speech therapists to master their mother tongue as the basic support of communication and the material substrate of thought, in order to understand what they read or hear, construct correct oral and written texts and have good spelling, handwriting and writing skills, which will allow them to serve as a linguistic model in their educational work and to be active and permanent defenders of the richness and correctness of language and communication in the contexts in which they work.

Among the main professional problems of the Bachelor's Degree in Speech Therapy Education, according to the current needs and prospects of the improvement of the national education system and the approach to attention to diversity in Cuban education, two closely related to communication are identified:

- Effective educational communication and the use of alternative forms of communication in the various contexts of action of the speech therapy teacher.
- Knowledge and efficient use of the Spanish and English languages, at the independent user level, as resources for communication in professional performance.

Speech therapy education professionals must solve the problems inherent in the process of comprehensive speech therapy care that takes place in educational institutions, the family and the community, with the aim of stimulating the development of language and communication; preventing, diagnosing, correcting or compensating for language and communication disorders; and promoting the comprehensive development of the personality of children, adolescents and young people.

The training of speech therapists is considered a continuous process that is present throughout a person's life and, in the case of higher education graduates, continues at the postgraduate level, given that the dialectical changes in daily life and the development of science do not allow training to stop at a static step if it is to be considered continuous.

Speech therapy (understood as speech therapy and phoniatrics, phonoaudiology and language therapy), in its most general and current conception, covers specific and broad fields of action, viewing communication as a process of exchange in all its diversity, including pathologies of hearing, language, speech and voice, in language development and in acquired language, whether functional or organic. In particular, it focuses on language (both oral and written) as the quintessential form of human communication.

This indicates that speech therapists are needed in a wide variety of settings, given the variety of individuals they may have to attend to, which includes people of any age, a diversity of pathologies and the presence of underlying or concomitant conditions in other areas (intellectual, visual, psychological, neurological).

Hence, Parés Ojeda et al. (2021) state that speech therapists are professionals whose field of action is language difficulties, so they must be equipped with theoretical and practical knowledge of the factors that directly and indirectly intervene in the development and execution of communication.

The importance of professional skills in the professional training process has been widely recognized; thus, Curbeira Hernández et al. (2019) point out that "professional skills are important components of the qualities that professionals must possess in order to be suitable. Mastering them enables them to successfully face the tasks inherent in their profession and solve the problems of the organization where they work. These skills will continue to be improved during the practice of the profession" (pp. 430-431).

The internal structure of the Bachelor's Degree in Speech Therapy Education must respond to the different contexts in which speech therapy work is carried out, and its disciplines must respond to the object of work of these professionals, as the professional model should also state. Graduates of the Speech Therapy program have particular characteristics that distinguish them from other higher education graduates.

They are professionals capable of solving problems related to the process of comprehensive speech therapy care that they direct from regular and special educational institutions. These specialists coordinate the system of educational influences exerted by the family and the community, as an expression of the integration of the content of the curricula of the sciences they study in fulfilling their professional functions. Based on the above regarding professional pedagogical skills, when contextualized to speech therapists, the skills to be developed are of three types:

1. Skills common to all higher education professionals.
2. Professional skills for directing the pedagogical process.
3. Professional skills specific to speech therapists.

The first and second types must be systematized throughout the program with the contribution of all disciplines, while the third type includes communicative skills according to the Professional Model

and other skills such as diagnosing language and communication disorders and directing speech therapy care, in which the Speech Therapy discipline and the Research-Work Training discipline play an important role.

Professional skills are the essence of professional performance and are oriented towards the transformation of the object of the profession, according to Mulet González (2014); moreover, it is essential that they appear in the curricula and that all disciplines and subjects contribute to their development. As part of these professional skills, communication is established as an element that cuts across all educational dimensions of the training process: curricular (academic, work, research and extension).

Communication is an activity in which relationships are established among people through verbal and non-verbal codes, socially and therefore culturally conditioned, and which allows the manifestation and improvement of human cognitive development. Undoubtedly, developing oral communicative competence requires prior preparation or training by teachers, as well as a series of personal qualities, in order to gradually reach the level of professional communicator in daily practice.

From the Vygotskian perspective, language is a psychological tool that mediates cognition and social interaction. Roméu (2014) extends this idea to the field of teacher education, proposing that language teaching should focus on the construction of meaning in real contexts, which implies developing communicative competence as a situated, critical and dialogic capacity. In this sense, oral communication is not only a means of transmitting information but a social practice that constructs identities, power relations and shared meanings.

Fernández Pérez de Alejo (2015) highlights the requirement that speech therapy teachers receive professional training aimed not only at assimilating professional knowledge but also at forming and developing skills, so that they are competent in their modes of action, independent, active and creative (p. 20). It is therefore important to develop in speech therapists, from their initial training, the competencies inherent in their mode of action.

In this regard, Valdés Valdés et al. (2019) point out that graduates of the Speech Therapy program must solve problems related to the process of comprehensive speech therapy care in the different educational institutions, regardless of whether learners have special educational needs associated or not with a disability. In this reflection, it is important to highlight the complexity of the object of the profession, which is framed in diverse school, social and age contexts.

Oral communicative competence has been understood as an individual quality that brings together a set of skills that allow interlocutors to interact in order to understand, interpret and appropriately use oral language in diverse communicative situations. Its development in the professional sphere has been considerable, since it guarantees disciplinary training and interaction between professionals and their target audience (Núñez Cortés & Errázuriz Cruz, 2020).

In this regard, speech therapists need to develop the different components that distinguish oral communicative competence (grammatical, pragmatic, strategic, sociocultural and affective), which are expressed in the performance of their functions. Speech therapists must master oral communication not only because of their therapeutic function but because their professional identity includes being a linguistic model. This means speaking correctly, listening actively and producing coherent oral texts.

This implies developing actions aimed at phonological and morphosyntactic correction, the appropriate use of language according to context, the use of verbal and non-verbal supports, respect for linguistic and cultural diversity, as well as emotional management in interaction, empathy, active listening and regulation of tone of voice in each of the interactions they establish. Most authors do not operationalize these components in real training contexts; only Mendoza Fillola (2003) refers to interaction with subjects who have specific communicative needs, but without a concrete didactic proposal.

The study found that there is insufficient research on oral communicative competence in the initial training of speech therapists, even though it is recognized that speech therapists must be a linguistic model (Ministerio de Educación Superior [MES], 2016; Valdés Valdés et al., 2019), although how to develop this competence in the program is not made explicit. The Professional Model prioritizes communication, but educational strategies do not articulate concrete actions for its development, so students show deficiencies in active listening and oral expression during their training.

In the assessments made by the speech therapy program team at the University of Sancti Spíritus, it is noted that the work emphasizes linguistic correctness over authentic interaction, so there is greater emphasis on grammar and less on pragmatic and strategic aspects.

These findings highlight the existence of a structural gap between what the professional model declares and what is developed in training. Oral communicative competence is not taught as a professional competence but as formal command of the language, which limits future speech

therapists' preparation to interact effectively in diverse educational contexts; therefore, it is considered a comprehensive professional competence that includes knowing, knowing how to do and knowing how to be, and that transcends the classroom, so it requires coherent articulation and a critical view of the role of speech therapists in society.

Consequently, oral communicative competence in the training of university professionals should enable each student to develop the necessary and sufficient skills to establish effective communication, through the efficient use of linguistic, extralinguistic, cognitive, semantic and pragmatic means and resources in accordance with the characteristics of each communicative situation and context. Likewise, students must acquire the skills necessary to know how to behave during the communicative act, transmit and receive coherent and efficient information, and initiate, develop and conclude the communicative act appropriately.

The initial training of speech therapists needs to rethink oral communicative competence as a cross-cutting axis, with explicit, assessable and contextualized strategies. This implies reviewing methodological guidelines; designing systematic listening and oral expression activities; articulating the university with professional practice contexts; and training university teachers who are communicative models.

The literature reviewed agrees in defining communicative competence as a functional integration of knowledge, skills and attitudes (Reiné, 2024; Tobón, 2013; Zayas Valiente et al., 2025). However, few studies address its specificity in the initial training of speech therapists, contextualized to educational practice with populations with language disorders. Therefore, based on the theoretical arguments of reference, oral communicative competence in the initial training of speech therapists is defined as a complex psychological configuration made up of cognitive, motivational and axiological components for developing the oral communicative act when speaking and listening, which should enable effective educational communication in the various contexts of action and active participation in society.

Once speech therapists have achieved oral communicative competence, they should serve as a linguistic model for children, adolescents and young people, and in guiding families, teachers and the community, as well as the educational agents and agencies of the environment, whether or not they present language and communication disorders.

CONCLUSIONS

Communicative competence and oral communicative competence are concepts with a dialectical relationship. The former is defined as a unitary competence, since it reaches that higher category in interactive and dialogic skills, with greater or lesser depth, and focuses on a compendium of knowledge, capacities, skills or aptitudes involved in the production of coexistence and interpersonal and intergroup relationships.

The latter is understood as a multidimensional construct (grammatical, pragmatic, strategic, sociocultural and affective), an individual quality that brings together a set of skills that allow interlocutors to interact in order to understand, interpret and appropriately use oral language in diverse communicative situations, and which are insufficiently developed in the initial training of speech therapists. It should enable each student to develop the necessary and sufficient skills to establish effective communication, through the efficient use of linguistic, extralinguistic, cognitive, semantic and pragmatic means and resources in accordance with the characteristics of each communicative situation and context in which speech therapists interact in their professional practice when speaking and listening.

Given this interdependence, a conceptual position on oral communicative competence is adopted, as a complex psychological configuration made up of cognitive, motivational and axiological components for developing the oral communicative act when speaking and listening, which should enable effective educational communication and serve as a linguistic model for children, adolescents and young people, and in guiding families, teachers and the community, as well as the educational agents and agencies of the environment, whether or not they present language and communication disorders.

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Conflict of interest

Authors declare no conflict of interests.

Authors' contribution

The authors participated in the design and writing of the article, in the search and analysis of the information contained in the consulted bibliography.

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