

## HEURISTIC MODEL FOR DEVELOPING RHETORICAL COMPETENCE IN THE PROCESS OF TRAINING PRIMARY EDUCATION TEACHERS

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**Abstract:** The modernization of contemporary primary education requires future teachers not only to possess subject knowledge and pedagogical skills but also to demonstrate highly developed rhetorical competence as a fundamental component of professional communication. Effective pedagogical interaction, classroom management, cognitive activation of learners, and the formation of students' value orientations depend largely on the teacher's ability to construct persuasive, logically structured, emotionally expressive, and pedagogically appropriate discourse. In this context, rhetoric is increasingly interpreted not merely as an oratorical art, but as an integrative professional competence that synthesizes communicative culture, critical thinking, reflective practice, and heuristic problem-solving abilities.

**Keywords:** rhetorical competence, pedagogical rhetoric, heuristic learning, teacher education, primary education teachers, communicative skills, professional discourse, competence-based approach, reflective practice, educational modeling.

### **Introduction:**

The transformation of contemporary educational systems under the conditions of globalization, digitalization, and the intensification of sociocultural interactions has substantially redefined the professional profile of the teacher. In particular, the modern primary education teacher is no longer perceived merely as a transmitter of subject knowledge or an executor of predetermined instructional algorithms. Instead, the teacher increasingly functions as a mediator of meanings, a constructor of educational dialogue, a facilitator of cognitive engagement, and a regulator of the communicative environment within the classroom. This paradigmatic shift from reproductive instruction toward dialogical, learner-centered, and competence-oriented education has foregrounded the centrality of professional communication and rhetorical mastery as indispensable components of pedagogical activity. Consequently, the development of rhetorical competence among future primary school teachers emerges not as an auxiliary or optional element of training, but as a foundational prerequisite for effective educational practice. Within the epistemological framework of contemporary pedagogy,

communication is interpreted as a complex socio-cognitive phenomenon that integrates linguistic, psychological, axiological, and pragmatic dimensions. The teacher's speech functions simultaneously as an instrument of knowledge transmission, a mechanism of motivation, a means of socialization, and a technology of influence. Every pedagogical action— explanation, questioning, feedback, evaluation, encouragement, or conflict resolution—is mediated through discourse. Therefore, the quality of the educational process is directly contingent upon the structural coherence, persuasiveness, emotional expressiveness, and ethical appropriateness of the teacher's verbal behavior. Insufficiently developed rhetorical skills frequently result in cognitive disorientation of pupils, decreased learning motivation, communicative barriers, and weakened pedagogical authority. Conversely, rhetorically competent teachers are capable of constructing intellectually stimulating, psychologically safe, and dialogically rich learning environments that promote both academic achievement and holistic personal development.

The concept of rhetoric, historically rooted in classical philosophical traditions, has undergone substantial reinterpretation in modern pedagogical science. Whereas classical rhetoric emphasized oratorical performance and persuasive speech as public art, contemporary educational rhetoric conceptualizes rhetorical mastery as an integrative professional competence that synthesizes logical reasoning, linguistic accuracy, emotional intelligence, ethical responsibility, and situational adaptability. In the pedagogical context, rhetoric transcends formal eloquence and becomes a cognitive-pragmatic system through which teachers design instructional discourse, regulate classroom interaction, and construct meaningful educational experiences. Hence, rhetorical competence may be defined as the teacher's ability to purposefully organize communicative acts in accordance with didactic objectives, learners' psychological characteristics, and situational contingencies while maintaining clarity, expressiveness, and dialogical reciprocity. Despite the recognized importance of communication skills in teacher education, empirical observations indicate that the formation of rhetorical competence within higher pedagogical institutions often remains fragmented and insufficiently systematized. Traditional curricula frequently prioritize theoretical linguistic knowledge or general methodological training while underestimating the procedural and creative dimensions of speech practice. As a result, future teachers may demonstrate adequate mastery of grammatical norms or methodological terminology yet encounter difficulties in spontaneous explanation, persuasive argumentation, improvisational dialogue, and conflict-sensitive communication. Such discrepancies reveal a contradiction

between the objective demands of contemporary pedagogical practice and the existing models of teacher preparation. Resolving this contradiction necessitates the elaboration of innovative pedagogical approaches that ensure the organic integration of rhetorical training into the holistic structure of professional education. One of the promising theoretical and methodological directions capable of addressing this challenge is the heuristic approach. Heuristic learning theory, grounded in constructivist epistemology, posits that knowledge and skills are most effectively acquired through active discovery, problem-solving, reflective experimentation, and creative self-expression.

Within this paradigm, learning is not reduced to the reproduction of ready-made patterns but is conceptualized as a process of independent construction of cognitive and behavioral strategies. Applied to rhetorical training, the heuristic approach encourages future teachers to explore communicative situations, analyze discursive difficulties, generate alternative speech solutions, and evaluate their effectiveness through reflective practice. Such organization of the educational process transforms rhetorical competence from a set of prescriptive norms into a dynamic system of personally meaningful communicative experiences. The heuristic paradigm is particularly relevant for the development of rhetorical mastery because pedagogical communication inherently involves unpredictability and situational variability. Classroom interaction is characterized by spontaneous questions, unexpected misunderstandings, emotional reactions, and diverse learner needs that cannot be fully regulated through predetermined scripts. Therefore, effective teachers must possess not only declarative knowledge about speech techniques but also heuristic flexibility—the capacity to rapidly construct adequate communicative responses in novel contexts. This flexibility presupposes the integration of analytical thinking, creative imagination, and reflexive self-regulation, which are precisely the qualities cultivated through heuristic educational technologies such as problem-based tasks, simulations, role-playing, case analysis, and microteaching. Consequently, the heuristic model of rhetorical development appears to correspond more closely to the real conditions of professional practice than traditional reproductive methods. Furthermore, the significance of rhetorical competence extends beyond purely instructional functions and encompasses broader sociocultural and axiological dimensions. Primary school teachers occupy a crucial position in shaping children's linguistic culture, communicative ethics, and value orientations. At the early stages of schooling, pupils implicitly internalize patterns of speech behavior modeled by the teacher, including norms of argumentation, dialogical respect, emotional regulation, and critical reasoning. Thus, the teacher's rhetorical culture performs not

only an instrumental but also a formative role, contributing to the development of students' communicative identity and civic consciousness. From this perspective, rhetorical mastery becomes a factor of social sustainability and cultural continuity, reinforcing the responsibility of teacher education institutions to ensure its systematic formation. The integration of rhetorical training into professional preparation also aligns with the competence-based paradigm that currently dominates international educational policy. Competence-based education emphasizes the formation of complex, transferable abilities that enable individuals to effectively solve real-life problems. Rhetorical competence fully corresponds to this criterion, as it synthesizes cognitive knowledge, operational skills, motivational attitudes, and reflective capacities within a unified functional structure. Therefore, its development requires multidimensional pedagogical strategies that address not only the acquisition of theoretical concepts but also the formation of value orientations, behavioral habits, and self-assessment mechanisms. The heuristic model proposed in this study is designed precisely to operationalize such multidimensionality by integrating motivational, cognitive, activity-based, and reflexive components into a coherent system. Another factor determining the relevance of this research is the rapid expansion of digital communication technologies, which significantly modify the modalities of pedagogical discourse. Modern teachers increasingly interact with learners through online platforms, multimedia presentations, and hybrid learning environments, where speech must be adapted to new formats and audiences. Digitalization demands conciseness, clarity, multimodal expressiveness, and intercultural sensitivity, thereby complicating rhetorical requirements. Consequently, teacher education programs must prepare future educators for these emerging communicative challenges. The heuristic approach, with its emphasis on adaptability and creative problem-solving, provides a flexible framework for addressing such complexities and for cultivating transferable communicative competencies suitable for diverse contexts. From a methodological standpoint, the elaboration of a heuristic model for developing rhetorical competence necessitates the conceptualization of rhetoric as a structured system comprising interrelated components. These components include the motivational-value sphere (professional orientation toward communication and pedagogical influence), the cognitive sphere (knowledge of linguistic, psychological, and rhetorical principles), the operational-activity sphere (practical speech skills and strategies), and the reflexive-evaluative sphere (self-analysis, feedback interpretation, and continuous improvement). Only the systemic interaction of these elements ensures sustainable professional growth. Therefore, the proposed model aims to create pedagogical conditions under which each

component is consistently activated and reinforced through targeted educational activities. The research problem addressed in this article arises from the need to reconcile theoretical insights into pedagogical rhetoric with practical mechanisms for its formation within higher education institutions. Although numerous studies highlight the importance of communicative competence, relatively few offer comprehensive models that integrate heuristic principles into rhetorical training specifically for primary education teachers. This gap underscores the novelty and scientific significance of the present investigation. By developing and substantiating a heuristic model, the study seeks to contribute both to the theoretical enrichment of teacher education methodology and to the practical optimization of training processes.

#### **Literature review:**

In the contemporary scientific discourse on teacher education, the problem of rhetorical competence has been conceptualized by various foreign scholars as a complex, multidimensional professional phenomenon that integrates cognitive, communicative, and reflective dimensions. Research in this area underscores that rhetorical competence is not only about mastery of linguistic norms but also involves the ability to strategically organize discourse, effectively persuade diverse audiences, and adapt speech behavior to contextual demands. One significant contribution to understanding the role of rhetoric in teacher education comes from educational research that highlights the inherent rhetorical nature of teacher preparation.

#### **Methodological section:**

In the present study, the development of rhetorical competence among future primary school teachers was approached through an integrative methodological framework combining heuristic, constructivist, and competence-based strategies. Specifically, heuristic methods were employed to stimulate independent discovery and problem-solving in communicative contexts, enabling students to generate original rhetorical solutions during simulated teaching scenarios, microteaching sessions, and role-playing exercises. Simultaneously, constructivist principles guided the design of instructional activities that emphasized dialogic interaction, collaborative discourse, and reflection on practical experiences, thereby ensuring that learners actively constructed knowledge about rhetorical norms and strategies rather than passively receiving prescriptive instructions. The competence-based orientation informed the operationalization of rhetorical mastery into measurable components, including motivational-value engagement, cognitive understanding of speech structures, operational-activity proficiency in verbal execution, and reflexive-evaluative skills for continuous self-assessment.

**Results:**

The implementation of the heuristic model in the training of future primary school teachers demonstrated a significant enhancement in multiple dimensions of rhetorical competence. Participants exhibited marked improvement in cognitive understanding, showing deeper awareness of rhetorical structures, persuasive strategies, and situational speech adaptation. In the operational-activity domain, students' practical performance during microteaching, role-playing, and simulated classroom scenarios revealed increased fluency, coherence, and flexibility in speech, as well as more effective argumentation and audience engagement. The motivational-value component was strengthened, reflected in heightened professional orientation toward communicative efficacy, increased confidence in public expression, and greater sensitivity to ethical and pedagogical dimensions of discourse. Finally, the reflexive-evaluative dimension indicated that participants developed the ability to critically analyze their own and peers' communicative behavior, identify areas for improvement, and implement corrective strategies autonomously. Collectively, these results validate the efficacy of the heuristic approach in transforming declarative knowledge into procedural communicative skills, highlighting that structured engagement with heuristic, problem-based, and reflective activities substantially elevates the overall quality of teachers' rhetorical competence in both traditional and digitally mediated educational contexts.

**Discussion:**

The findings of this study resonate with ongoing debates among foreign scholars regarding the role and nature of rhetorical competence in teacher education. On one hand, James Paul Gee emphasizes that language functions as a socially situated practice, arguing that effective teaching depends on the teacher's ability to navigate multiple discourse communities and to adapt communicative strategies to diverse learner contexts. Gee's perspective underscores the notion that rhetorical competence is not merely a technical skill but a form of socially embedded knowledge, enabling teachers to mediate learning experiences, scaffold understanding, and construct inclusive classroom environments. From this viewpoint, heuristic approaches to rhetorical training are particularly valuable, as they simulate authentic communicative challenges and require teacher candidates to make context-sensitive decisions in real time. Gee advocates for reflective engagement with these situational interactions, aligning closely with the reflexive-evaluative dimension of the proposed model. Conversely, Deborah Britzman presents a more critical perspective, contending that teacher preparation must account for the inherent tensions between standardized curricular demands and the

unpredictable, performative aspects of classroom discourse. Britzman asserts that overemphasis on technique or prescriptive rhetorical forms risks producing educators who can imitate pedagogical scripts without internalizing the ethical and relational dimensions of communication. She highlights the necessity of cultivating interpretive judgment, improvisational skill, and reflective responsiveness—qualities that can be systematically fostered through heuristic and problem-based learning strategies. In her critique, Britzman challenges simplistic models of teacher training, arguing that rhetorical competence must be understood as a dynamic, emergent capability rather than a set of static competencies.

### **Conclusion:**

The study demonstrates that the development of rhetorical competence in future primary school teachers is most effectively achieved through a heuristic, integrative approach that combines cognitive, operational, motivational, and reflexive components. By engaging students in problem-solving, simulation, microteaching, and reflective analysis, the proposed model transforms declarative knowledge into procedural skills, enhancing communicative flexibility, argumentation quality, and pedagogical influence. The research confirms that rhetorical mastery is not merely an ancillary skill but a foundational dimension of professional teacher competence, essential for effective classroom management, learner motivation, and ethical communication.

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