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The Role of Phraseological Units in Language Acquisition and Vocabulary Development

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Abstract:

This article presents the programmatic and methodological support system developed for fostering metacompetence in academic lyceum teachers within distance-based continuous professional development courses in Uzbekistan. The study examines the theoretical foundations of need-based course design, identifies the didactic requirements for modular distance learning curricula, and describes a three-stage methodology — design, preparation, and evaluation-and-implementation — for creating short-term professional development courses aimed at metacompetence formation. The research employs a theoretical analysis of pedagogical literature, comparative analysis of international frameworks (UNESCO, ISTE, TPACK, SAMR), and pedagogical design methodology. The results include a structural description of the need-based course development framework, its module architecture, didactic requirements, and the integration of smart-didactics and cloud-based platforms. The findings are intended for curriculum developers, methodologists, and institutional leaders engaged in continuous teacher professional development.

Keywords: metacompetence, distance learning, advanced training, need-based courses, module design, smart-didactics, cloud technologies, academic lyceum, professional development, methodological support.

I. INTRODUCTION

The accelerating pace of digital transformation in education has fundamentally altered the nature of teachers' professional roles. Within the context of Uzbekistan's ongoing educational reforms — most notably the Law on Education (2020) and the national 'Uzbekistan 2030' strategy — continuous professional development is no longer a periodic exercise but an ongoing necessity.

Academic lyceum teachers, in particular, face a dual challenge: preparing students rigorously for higher education while simultaneously cultivating the metacognitive and adaptive capacities that characterize effective contemporary pedagogy.

Metacompetence — defined as the superordinate, self-regulating capacity that enables professionals to acquire, integrate, and apply new competencies in changing circumstances — has attracted growing scholarly attention since its systematic treatment by Brown [1], Le Deist and Winterton [2], and Xolodnaya [3]. In the context of teacher professional development, metacompetence manifests as reflective practice, strategic self-regulation, adaptive decision-making, and the ability to design one's own continuing learning trajectory.

Despite this recognition, the programmatic and methodological infrastructure for developing metacompetence through distance-based advanced training courses remains underdeveloped in Uzbekistan's academic lyceum sector. Existing courses often focus on subject-content updates or ICT skill-building, leaving the deeper metacognitive layer unaddressed. This gap motivates the present study, which proposes a systematic programmatic-methodological support framework — grounded in need-based course design, modular architecture, smart-didactics, and cloud-platform integration — as a basis for metacompetence-oriented distance training.

Research aim: to develop and substantiate a programmatic and methodological support system for forming metacompetence in academic lyceum teachers through need-based distance advanced training courses.

II. METHODS

The study is based on a multi-method theoretical research design:

Pedagogical, psychological, and instructional-design literature was systematically reviewed to identify the state of knowledge on metacompetence, need-based course design, and distance advanced training. Sources included seminal works by Flavell [4], Brown [1], Le Deist and Winterton [2], Orbodoeva [5], Shabanov [6], Dimitrova [7], Vasilenko [8], Emanuel [9], and Varzanova [10], as well as international framework documents from UNESCO [11], ISTE [12], and the developers of the TPACK [13] and SAMR [14] models.

Existing distance-learning and professional development frameworks were compared across national and international contexts to identify convergences and gaps relevant to the Uzbek academic lyceum setting. Particular attention was paid to the degree to which each framework addresses the metacognitive level of teacher competence.

The need-based course creation methodology — comprising design, preparation, and evaluation-and-implementation stages — was operationalised drawing on established instructional design principles and adapted to the metacompetence-specific objectives of the study.

Normative documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Law on Education, 2020; State Educational Standards for continuous professional development) and the OTTKQTMOI institutional regulations for advanced training course development were analysed to ensure alignment between the proposed framework and prevailing regulatory requirements.

III. RESULTS

3.1. Theoretical foundations: need-based course design and metacompetence

The concept of 'need-based course design' refers to the systematic alignment of a professional development programme with the diagnosed learning needs, professional roles, and developmental goals of its target audience. Vasilenko [8] defines educational needs as 'the learner's requirement to acquire the competencies necessary to address significant challenges in their personal and professional life.' In the context of advanced training, this means that course content, structure, and assessment must emerge from a prior analysis of participants' actual competence gaps — not from a generic syllabus.

Emanuel [9] operationalises this principle in continuous professional education as an 'individually oriented route defined by variable elements in an open system, aimed at achieving

educational goals aligned with professional interests and needs.' This implies that need-based distance courses must offer flexible, modular pathways rather than linear, uniform curricula. The identification of each teacher's developmental trajectory — their motivational profile, metacognitive awareness, and reflective capacity — becomes a prerequisite for course design.

In relation to metacompetence, Brown's [1] framework establishes that it functions as an 'overarching ability' integrating all other competencies. Le Deist and Winterton [2] describe it as 'superstructural', accelerating the acquisition of new competencies as contexts change. For academic lyceum teachers, whose subject domains, student profiles, and institutional demands are in constant flux, this superstructural quality is particularly salient: metacompetence provides the cognitive infrastructure for sustained professional self-renewal.

Orbodoeva [5] situates metacompetence as a 'supra-systemic competence' encompassing the management of one's own competencies, meta-learning strategies, and adaptive readiness. Shabanov [6] complements this with the notion that metacompetence enables 'strategic analysis of a learning situation and the identification of the most effective learning pathway' — precisely the outcome targeted by need-based course design. These converging perspectives establish the theoretical coherence of linking need-based design with metacompetence development.

3.2. Three-stage methodology for need-based metacompetence course creation

The programmatic-methodological support system is structured around a three-stage course-creation methodology, adapted from established instructional design practice and aligned with the metacompetence-specific objectives of the study.

Stage I — Design. This is the most complex and consequential stage of course development. It encompasses: (a) collecting and analysing existing materials on the course subject, identifying overlaps and gaps relative to comparable courses; (b) elaborating the course project — the master planning document addressed to developers (not learners), specifying the curriculum outline, learning objectives, content structure, didactic methods, data presentation formats, assessment instruments, and the logical sequencing of topics from simple to complex; and (c) drafting the course syllabus — the primary regulatory document visible to participants — which covers learning objectives, module architecture, a schedule of workload allocations, and guidelines for using course materials.

The course syllabus must satisfy several didactic requirements: learning objectives must be stated explicitly so participants can anticipate expected outcomes; module structure must be presented in detail, since prior orientation to each unit enhances motivation; the workload plan must specify approximate hours for each learning activity, including independent study, forum participation, and assignment completion.

Stage II — Preparation. This stage operationalises the design by producing the instructional materials package — defined as 'a complete, self-contained set of materials enabling independent learner engagement, analogous to a tutor present at the learner's side.' Materials may be delivered in print, electronic, or mobile-application formats, and can also be accessed via open online courses.

Instructional materials must satisfy three categories of requirements. Didactic requirements include: explicit learning objectives for each module; scientifically grounded content; sufficiency of information (minimising the need for additional sources); modular structure; and a glossary of key terms. Methodological requirements include: clear navigation and visual layout; instructional coherence across media; alignment of activities with reflective and metacognitive objectives. Technical requirements include: compatibility with the delivery platform; accessibility across devices; and stable performance under varied network conditions.

Stage III — Evaluation and Implementation. The final stage involves expert review of the course prototype by a methodological council, pilot testing with a representative cohort of academic lyceum teachers, iterative revision based on feedback, and formal implementation within the institutional advanced training system. Assessment of learner outcomes at this stage feeds into the ASADDIE Evaluate cycle (see Section 3.4), generating evidence for future course refinements.

3.3. Modular architecture and didactic requirements for metacompetence-oriented courses

The modular structure is the organisational backbone of the proposed programmatic support. Each module constitutes an independent learning unit with its own objectives, content, activities, and assessment. The metacompetence-oriented module architecture is organised around the four structural components identified in the development model (see Section 2.1 of the dissertation): motivational-purposive, cognitive-content, process-activity, and reflective-evaluative.

The overall course is divided into the following module categories:

– **Diagnostic module:** assesses participants' initial metacompetence profile using validated instruments (questionnaires, reflective journals, diagnostic tasks) and identifies individual developmental priorities.

– **Conceptual modules (2–3 units):** provide the knowledge base for metacognitive self-regulation, reflective practice, and professional learning strategies, with emphasis on critical analysis rather than passive reception.

– **Practice modules (2–3 units):** engage participants in applied tasks — case studies, collaborative projects, e-product design using LearningApps.org, Google Workspace, wiki environments — that require deployment of the metacognitive strategies studied in conceptual modules.

– **Reflective integration module:** consolidates learning through portfolio review, peer assessment (360° format), structured reflective logs, and the elaboration of individual professional development plans.

3.4. Smart-didactics and cloud platforms as instruments of metacompetence formation

The concept of smart-didactics, as elaborated in Section 2.3 of the dissertation, provides the pedagogical rationale for integrating digital and cloud-based tools into the metacompetence-oriented course framework. Smart-didactics is oriented not merely toward digital literacy but toward the formation of individuals capable of realising their professional potential through innovative technological environments.

Three smart-didactic instruments are particularly relevant to metacompetence development:

Individualised learning processes. Digital platforms enable multi-dimensional personalisation: by content, pace, presentation format, group composition, repetition frequency, and degree of external support. Each of these parameters can be calibrated to the individual developmental trajectory established in the Specify stage. Varzanova [10] emphasises that the effectiveness of professional development support depends on its capacity to activate each teacher's internal learning motivation and to orient support toward individual growth priorities.

Digital pedagogical technologies. The SAMR model (Puentedura [14]) provides a framework for understanding the progressive integration of technology into the learning process: from Substitution (digital tools replacing analogue ones with no functional change) through Augmentation and Modification to Redefinition (tasks only possible with digital tools). For metacompetence development, the Modification and Redefinition levels are most relevant, as they require learners to engage in complex, self-directed, collaborative cognitive work that would be impossible in a purely analogue environment.

Meta-digital (software-hardware) complexes. Simulators, augmented reality tools, and activity-logging sensors enable the creation of immersive learning environments in which metacognitive monitoring, strategic decision-making, and reflective self-assessment occur in real time. In the context of academic lyceum teacher training, wiki-environments (for collaborative knowledge creation), cloud repositories (for portfolio management), and synchronous video-conferencing platforms serve as the primary meta-digital instruments.

Dimitrova [7] notes that meta-skills develop specifically through the process of designing one's own professional activity — in particular, through the creation of electronic learning products using cloud tools. This insight informs the inclusion of e-product design tasks in the practice modules described in Section 3.3. The creation process itself — from conceptualisation and material

development to presentation, peer review, and reflective closure — enacts all four components of metacompetence simultaneously.

IV. DISCUSSION

The programmatic-methodological support system proposed in this article represents a departure from prevalent approaches to advanced training in several respects. First, whereas most distance professional development courses in Uzbekistan's academic lyceum sector focus on subject-content or ICT skills — the lower layers of teacher competence — the present framework deliberately targets the metacognitive layer: the capacity to regulate, reflect on, and strategically develop one's own competence profile.

Second, the explicit incorporation of need-based design principles addresses a structural limitation common to centralised training systems: the tendency to offer standardised curricula that do not account for the heterogeneity of participants' prior knowledge, motivational profiles, and developmental needs. As Vasilenko [8] observes, educational needs are shaped by a teacher's age, experience, subject domain, institutional context, and individual values — all of which vary substantially within any cohort of academic lyceum teachers.

Third, the alignment with international frameworks — particularly UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework [11], ISTE Standards [12], and the TPACK model [13] — ensures that the proposed system is benchmarked against current international good practice, while the prioritisation of the metacognitive level goes beyond what these frameworks explicitly address. This represents a contribution to the field: most international frameworks are competency-taxonomies rather than development models, whereas the present study offers a complete operational methodology for metacompetence formation.

A limitation of the present study is its predominantly theoretical character. The didactic requirements, module architecture, and smart-didactic instruments described here have been derived through literature synthesis and logical modelling rather than empirical validation. The effectiveness of the system can only be assessed through systematic experimental testing — involving pre- and post-measurement of metacompetence indicators, monitoring of learning process quality, and analysis of transfer to classroom practice. This empirical phase is addressed in Chapter III of the dissertation.

Additionally, the contextual feasibility of the proposed cloud-based tools must be assessed against the actual material-technical conditions of Uzbekistan's academic lyceum institutions, which vary substantially by region. Implementation strategies may need to be adapted to accommodate differences in internet connectivity, device availability, and teachers' prior digital experience.

V. CONCLUSION

This article has developed and substantiated a programmatic and methodological support system for developing metacompetence in academic lyceum teachers through need-based distance advanced training courses. The following conclusions are drawn:

1. Need-based course design — grounded in systematic diagnosis of participants' educational needs and individual developmental trajectories — is the foundational principle of effective metacompetence-oriented professional development. Without this diagnostic foundation, courses risk misalignment between content and developmental need.
2. The three-stage course-creation methodology (Design → Preparation → Evaluation and Implementation) provides a coherent operational framework for translating metacompetence development objectives into structured, quality-assured distance learning courses.
3. The modular architecture — comprising diagnostic, conceptual, practice, and reflective integration modules — ensures that all four metacompetence components (motivational-purposive, cognitive-content, process-activity, reflective-evaluative) are systematically addressed throughout the course.

4. Smart-didactics, cloud-based platforms, and digital pedagogical technologies — particularly at the SAMR Modification and Redefinition levels — are not merely delivery vehicles but active instruments of metacompetence formation, enabling individualised pathways, collaborative knowledge construction, and real-time reflective practice.

5. The proposed system is aligned with international benchmarks (UNESCO, ISTE, TPACK) while extending beyond their scope to address the metacognitive level of teacher competence, making a substantive contribution to the theory and practice of continuous professional development in Uzbekistan.

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