

SOFIA UNIVERSITY "ST. KLIMENT OHRIDSKI"

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DEPARTMENT OF METHODOLOGY

JORDANOVA CHAKAROVA STOYKA

## **A V T O R E F E R A T**

of a dissertation on:

### **Developing the Communicative Competence of Students through Project-Oriented Learning in Bulgarian Language**

for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences professional direction 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching in... (Methodology of Bulgarian language teaching)

**Supervisor:**

**Prof. Dr. Tatiana Angelova**

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# CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION TEXT

## INTRODUCTION

### **1. CHAPTER Design of the dissertation research**

- 1.1. Subject of methodological research
- 1.2. A research question
- 1.3. Hypothesis - a probable answer to the research question
- 1.4. Target group of research participants
- 1.5. Purpose and tasks of the dissertation research
- 1.6. Research procedures

### **2. CHAPTER Theoretical positions and concepts necessary for carrying out the research**

- 2.1. The concept of communicative competence
  - 2.1.1. *Components of communicative competence*
  - 2.1.2. *The concept of strategic competence as an element of communicative competence*
- 2.2. Essence of the concept of literacy. Literacy Concepts
- 2.3. A comparison between the concept of literacy and the concept of competence. Relationship between functional literacy and communicative competence
- 2.4. The key competences as an element of the educational content in the educational documentation in the Bulgarian language in the high school stage of education
- 2.5. Developing communicative competence in relation to digital and civic competence in the context of Bulgarian language learning

### **3. CHAPTER Experiential project-oriented learning in conditions of authentic communication**

3. 1. Essence of constructivism

*3.1.1. Constructivism in philosophy*

*3.1.2. Constructivism in psychology*

*3.1.3. Constructivism as an educational philosophy*

3.2. Project-oriented learning - essence, functions in Bulgarian language learning, terminological polysemy

*3.2.1. The project method*

*3.2.2. Project-oriented, project-based and problem-based learning*

*3.2.3. Project-oriented learning in Bulgarian as a method*

*3.2.4. Project-based learning in Bulgarian*

*3.2.5. Problem-based learning in Bulgarian*

*3.2.6. Conclusions*

#### **4. CHAPTER: Content and functional features of experiential project-oriented learning of the Bulgarian language**

4.1. Description of the "Dream Dress" project. A model for developing the communicative competence of first and second high school students through project-oriented learning

4.2. Relation of project-oriented learning to Bulgarian language curricula in high school

4.3. Methodical model for developing communicative, civic, digital competences through project work within the framework of the Bulgarian language education in the 12th grade

4.4. A study of the effectiveness of project-based learning

4.5. Measurement of the motivation for learning and participation in project activity and the level of improvement of communicative competence during the conducted project-oriented training

CONCLUSIONS

CONTRIBUTIONS

PUBLICATIONS ON THE TOPIC

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES

The dissertation contains:

Volume: 327 pages (213 pages of text, 114 appendices)

Literature: 81 sources

46 titles in Bulgarian;

11 documents

24 titles in English and Russian;

Tables: 4

Figures: 22

## INTRODUCTION

Bulgarian language training, as is known, is always in the focus of public attention. It is loaded with special expectations due to the importance that language and communication have for the successful self-expression of the personality in all spheres of life. This applies both to the mastery of knowledge about the language system and to the level of communicative competence that students achieve. Modern training in the Bulgarian language is oriented towards building the ability to practice the language fully, to form working models for speech behavior, i.e. to develop students' communicative competence. According to A. Petrov, Bulgarian language education is in a state of transition, in which old and new educational models appear in parallel and "this "transitional" period is the initial phase of a new educational phenotype called communicatively oriented Bulgarian language education" <sup>1</sup>. How to implement communicatively oriented learning within the classroom is a methodological challenge, the solution of which is related to the application of new models of teaching and learning. It is necessary for them to take into account the real limitations set by the educational system itself - the number of hours, the large volume of theoretical knowledge, the formal (already established) relationships and uniform communication in school, the differences in the background knowledge and motivation for learning of the students, etc.

The teaching experience directs us to the study of methodological models in which communicative competence is improved in conditions of authentic communication within the framework of project-based learning. Thus, simultaneously with the work on the students' language competence, an opportunity is added to improve sociolinguistic, discourse and, above all, strategic competence (the four elements of communicative competence). In our opinion, project-oriented learning has a good educational potential - the statement is a consequence of our work on an interdisciplinary project called "The Dream Garment" .

The dissertation research is aimed at substantiating the potential of project-oriented learning as a method for developing the communicative competence of students in the first and second high school stages, in the context of Bulgarian language learning. A methodical model

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<sup>1</sup> Petrov, A. (2012). Problems of communicatively oriented teaching in the Bulgarian language (5th - 12th grade), S.: Bulvest 2000, p.70 - 71.

of project-oriented learning was constructed as a variant of communicative-oriented learning within the framework of the competence approach.

Since in the methodological literature, as well as in various documents in the educational system, there is some ambiguity in the use of the concept of competence and the types of key competences, in the use of the concept of literacy, as well as some polysemy in the use of the concepts "project-oriented" and "project-based learning", we analyze these concepts. For the purposes of the dissertation, a working definition of communicative competence is derived, its elements are indicated and its relation to other competences and to the understanding of literacy is analyzed.

Constructivism is analyzed as a starting concept on which the content and understanding of the above-mentioned concepts and methods in education is based. The constructivist understanding of some learning-relevant issues in philosophy, psychology, and education is traced to outline the context in which project-based learning is implemented. The concept of project-based learning is defined and distinguished from the concept of project-based learning.

For this purpose, own models have been constructed, based on the concept of project-oriented and project-based learning and the individual components of project-oriented and project-based learning. The two types of project activities are compared in terms of content, structure and potential in relation to the development of communicative competence in Bulgarian language education. The methodological model for project-oriented learning is focused on developing communicative competence through authentic communication in real social settings. It is also a model for building interdisciplinary connections with professional education. In connection with the development of communicative competence, a study of the effectiveness of conducted project-oriented training according to the proposed model was carried out. For research purposes, the motivation for learning and participation in project activity was measured as a consequence of the implemented project-oriented training according to the specified model.

The analyzed project "The Dream Garment" was carried out at the "Princess Maria Luisa" Vocational High School for Clothing, Sofia, for seven years. It is implemented in different forms - as a project accompanying the Bulgarian language studies or more often, as part of an extracurricular activity (interest club). The project is led by two teachers - one in Bulgarian language and literature and another in professional training (fashion design). The

idea of an interdisciplinary project, linking native language and professional learning, is the teachers who saw in clothes and clothing a productive starting point, linking the development of students' communicative and professional skills in a complete project process. The project suggests developing various aspects of communication such as: application of knowledge and skills acquired in training; coordination of ideas and decisions in the team; ability to organize an effective communication strategy to achieve a specific goal; a means of promoting the overcoming of communication barriers; an opportunity to master the professional language, to understand the communicative function of the garment, etc.

In general, the activities that the students need to carry out on the specific project are most often related to authentic communication and are the following: making contact with various institutions; joint creation of models of the outfits, selection of materials, sewing of outfits; search for sponsors (students communicate via e-mails or by phone with representatives of companies); organizing a charity fashion show to raise funds for training courses; making contact with famous Bulgarian designers to present their collections in the review, preparing a scenario for the event, etc. Participation in all these activities causes, in our opinion, positive changes in the personality of students (depending on how actively they participated): psychologically, socially, axiologically, and has a significant effect on communicative competence, especially on its strategic component, and on self-feeling in general them as competent to cope in a communicative or other situation.

### ***Significance and relevance of the researched problem for project-oriented learning in Bulgarian***

The problem of finding working pedagogical models for the application of the competence approach in education, including the implementation of the communicative-speech approach in the teaching of the Bulgarian language, continues to be topical. The educational system is still looking for effective methods and approaches to sufficiently achieve the set educational goals, especially in humanitarian education.

We turn our attention to researching the educational possibilities of project-based learning because, in our opinion, it can provide a space for a (somewhat) absent segment in education - a space to transfer what is learned in school to a real-life context: when the student faces a real problem (life, social) that needs to be solved. If in professional education, special study disciplines for applying knowledge and skills (study practices, production practices, etc.) are provided, in general education subjects the teacher must look for teaching methods by

means of which to ensure this application in the extremely limited teaching time , with which he has <sup>1</sup>. We believe that it is precisely in authentic interactions with the environment that knowledge and skills can be transformed into real competence - both communicative and socio-cultural, civic, etc. For us, in the content of the concept of competence (from the Latin *competare* - "capable of (for) something"), the following semantic aspect is also immanently present: to be able to apply your knowledge and skills in order to successfully realize a given goal in different conditions, with different people, in different circumstances.

Therefore, the problem of finding educational models in which the language can be practiced is significant for us, i.e. authentic training in the Bulgarian language, in which the language is mastered in the process of its use, for example when working on a project and as a result of group work during the project. This, in our opinion, is also the educational context in which the competence approach can be fully realized, specifically in the teaching of the Bulgarian language: "One cannot delve into the nature of the language without studying its connections with the essence of man, with consciousness, his thinking, culture, activity" <sup>2</sup>.

In our pedagogical practice, we have seen various examples of project activity, which, however, differ from each other too much: in terms of educational goals, organization, complexity, duration, educational potential, etc. Therefore, we felt it necessary to try to make a general distinction between the types of projects used in education. Moreover, in the methodical literature, two terms to denote project activity function: "project-oriented" and "project-based learning", without any differentiation in their content. Therefore, we assume that under *project-oriented learning* we will understand a pedagogical method aimed at the realization of an authentic project, going beyond (not necessarily tied to) the educational content of the academic subjects and oriented towards activities and goals carried out outside school, in real social conditions.

By *project-based learning* we will understand the assignment of projects directly related to the learning content. It is characteristic of them that they are aimed at the realization of a pedagogical goal related to the application of knowledge and skills in a specific educational subject; assigned projects are more specific, with a shorter deadline for implementation and are usually carried out within the framework of class activities.

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<sup>2</sup> Dimchev, K. (1998). *Bulgarian language education as a system. Second revised edition* . Sofia: Siela, p. 44.

The comparison we make between the two project-based learning options leads us to the conclusion that for the formation of communicative competence, project-oriented learning provides more suitable conditions because of the authentic nature of the project, because of the possibility of real social interactions, because communication at school, regardless of what pedagogical methods are applied, it remains largely formalized (the participants are the same, they know each other and have already established forms of communication, the situation and roles are already set: student - teacher, student - student).

For us, project-oriented learning is a reliable approach to language learning, because it sets additional motivation for learning the language through the authentic context that the project sets, forms an attitude to search for options for dealing with communicative and other difficulties. Knowledge of the language system is the basis on which communicative competence is built, but it is not limited to the skills of speech behavior, but also includes non-linguistic elements in the process of communication. In order to realize the meaning of the concept of *competence*, real experience is needed, i.e. the activities should be carried out due to their causal necessity, and not according to an artificially created pedagogical context, in which the effectiveness of the educational activity is objectified by placing an assessment on the student (often it is also the leading motive for learning). In project-oriented learning, students' achievements are measured by the successful implementation of the project activities and the possibility to continue the work on the project with the next activity in order to achieve a satisfactory result for the participants.

### **1.1. Subject of methodological research**

The subject of the methodical study is the functions of project-oriented learning as a method of forming communicative competence through the learning of the Bulgarian language in the two high school stages. The basis of the research is a realized interdisciplinary project offering authentic communication in real social conditions and implementer in such conditions. Since it is based on the key role of motivation in communication and learning, the influence of the implemented project-oriented training on the learning motivation of the student participants and its role in their overall cognitive and speech development is also investigated.

### **1.2. A research question**

What functions does the project-oriented training in Bulgarian have for achieving communicative competence by students of a vocational high school (in the high school stages) in the period 10-12th grade?

The research question is decomposed into the following two sub-questions:

- How working on projects that go beyond the educational institution and place the student in real social relations (e.g. with institutions, companies, media, etc.), in which language is a tool for achieving specific goals, improves the communicative competence and speech behavior of the student participants ?
- How does participation in project activities carried out in a real social context affect the student's personality psychologically, morally, socially and culturally?

### **1.3. A hypothesis**

expression, goal-setting and planning skills, and team work of the students from the target group are improved .

#### **Microhypotheses:**

- Students from the target group with deficits in communicative-speech competence and language preparation are stimulated to achieve higher academic results;
- In authentic communication, students of the target group develop their own communication strategies, including non-verbal means, to compensate for difficulties or breakdowns in communication or to achieve their communication goals;
- Project-oriented learning contributes to the formation of the key competencies of students from the target group;
- Project-oriented learning contributes to the ability of students of the target group to plan and organize project activities and to work in a team;
- Personal changes can be observed in the students of the target group regarding the motivation to communicate, to share, to express and self-express;
- Positive changes in self-esteem, motivation for learning and self-development, ability to solve problems, assume responsibilities, etc. are observed in participating students;
- The value orientation of students from the target group changes.

### **1.4. Target group of research participants**

The target group of the research is students from the first and second high school stage at the "Princess Maria Luisa" Vocational High School for Clothing, Sofia. The project was implemented over a period of seven years, with a different number of students from the 8th to the 12th grades being included in each school year. The conducted study of the effectiveness of project-oriented training is for a period of one school year (2022-2023), and the number of persons examined is 28 students from the 8th-12th grade who participated in the project.

### **1.5. Purpose and tasks of the dissertation research**

For the purposes of the research, theoretical statements and concepts necessary for its implementation are analyzed. Among them, the more important are statements about: the competence approach in the training, the communicatively oriented training in the Bulgarian language, the semiotic ideas about the garment as a sign in the context of the project-oriented training in the Bulgarian language. An adequate terminological apparatus is used for these statements, in which the key concepts are "constructivism" (understood as an educational philosophy), "key competences", "communicative competence", "literacy", "digital and civic competence", "project-oriented learning" .

#### **Purpose of the study :**

To investigate the educational possibilities of project-oriented learning in Bulgarian in the two high school stages and their implementation to improve the communicative competence of the learners from the target group, and the related digital and civic competence, as well as to study the influence of this type of learning on the students' motivation for learning, for personal expression.

#### **Tasks of scientific research arising from the goal:**

- To be made analysis of the theoretical statements and the state of the problem in relation to the communicatively oriented teaching of the Bulgarian language in the high school stage of education;
- To analyze the concept of communicative competence and its relation to other competences and the concept of literacy in the education system, connecting to the studied problem;
- To analyze the project method in education, to identify two methodological models: project-oriented and project-based learning (in Bulgarian);

- To describe the specifics, functions and methodological characteristics of project-based learning and to compare it with project-based and problem-based learning;
- To construct a methodological model for:
  - project-oriented learning: description of an authentic project and observations during its implementation in a learning environment for the needs of the high school stage;
  - project-based training in Bulgarian in the high school stage ;
  - problem-based learning in high school.
- To investigate which of the educational content in Bulgarian language in the curricula (8th - 12th grade) can be taught through project-oriented learning. Conversely, in the course of experiential learning, examine how it stimulates the inclusion of curricular content topics that enable the integration of a wider range of competencies.
- To construct an educational experiment that includes the entry and exit level of communicative competence of students from the target group.
- To analyze and summarize the results of the conducted experiment with project-oriented learning through a conducted research of communication skills and attitudes towards participation in project activities at the beginning and at the end of the project;
- To investigate the impact of experiential learning through questionnaires on the attitudes, willingness to participate in projects and motivation to learn of the participants in the learning experiment.
- To identify favorable conditions for the implementation of project-oriented training for the improvement of communicative and other related competencies (civic, digital) in Bulgarian language training at the high school level.

## 1.6. Research procedures

The research procedures in the dissertation text are adequate to the set goals and objectives. *The method of theoretical summary* was used, various sources of information were analyzed and basic concepts related to the topic of the text were derived. An attempt has been made to systematize the conceptual apparatus used, and the study begins with the philosophical and psychological statements of *constructivism* and its functioning as an educational philosophy, outlining the basic principles and understandings of the nature of the educational process. In connection with them, the educational documents and the concepts, approaches and goals of the training, specifically in the Bulgarian language training, have been analyzed. With

a view to realizing the educational goals laid down in the documents, the concept of *communicative competence* and its related concepts was introduced in the study of the Bulgarian language . In accordance with the philosophical and educational positions, *the method of the projects* was considered . Its main characteristics are indicated and two types of project activities are identified - *project-oriented* and *project-based learning* .

Within one academic year, *an experiential project-oriented training was methodically planned and conducted* . The result of the impact of the work through projects on the students is established through *a model for evaluating the effectiveness of the implemented training* , indicating the state at the beginning and at the end of the process. This result is examined through a specially designed language test, identical at the beginning and at the end of the training, consisting of tasks aimed at establishing the level of project work skills and the abilities to create a written text with a pre-set communicative task.

In accordance with the set research tasks to study the motivation for learning and to involve the student participants in project activities, a study was conducted in which the presence or absence of a change in the stated motivation was tracked. For this purpose, a specially created *questionnaire is used* , which is provided to the students at the beginning and at the end of the training.

## **STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION**

The structure of the dissertation text reflects the logic of the conducted research: analysis of theoretical views and concepts, registration of the state of the problem in the practice of education, development of a system of methodological models for the implementation of communicatively oriented education and application of the competence approach in education, conducting research , analysis and summary of the results of conducted experimental training. The dissertation has a volume of 327 pages, and the content is structured in an introduction, four chapters, conclusions and a conclusion, followed by a list of sources used and two appendices in a volume of 114 pages.

## **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION**

**The INTRODUCTION** argues for the choice of the topic of the dissertation, as well as the significance and relevance of the researched problem for project-oriented learning.

**IN THE FIRST CHAPTER: Dissertation research design** – the subject of research is determined, research questions and the hypothesis are formulated, as well as the resulting goals and objectives of the research, the research procedures used are specified.

**IN THE SECOND CHAPTER : Theoretical statements and concepts necessary for the implementation of the study** - theoretical statements related to the concept of communicative competence and the functioning of this concept as an element of the educational content in the educational documentation in the Bulgarian language in the high school stages are presented, analyzed and compared education.

For the needs of the dissertation research, the relationships between such concepts as communicative competence, functional literacy and their relationship with digital, civic and other key competences are explored and explained.

We analyze the concept of communicative competence and its components - linguistic, discourse, sociolinguistic and strategic, and the possibilities for its development in the context of Bulgarian language learning. We pay attention to the concept of strategic competence, because it is on the periphery of attention in mother tongue education, but it seems to us an important element of communicative competence.

The multifunctionality of language (its ability to define, evaluate, express, share, organize and create) sets its fundamental role both as an instrument of knowledge and as a means of communication and as a separate being.

**The first chapter** outlines the trends in modern teaching in the Bulgarian language, related to with the gradual shift in focus from mastering the language system to developing the functional aspects of communication. The system-structural approach in education is losing its dominant role, and **the communicative-speech approach** is gaining more and more importance . The communicative-speech approach requires bringing the situation of communication in the class as close as possible to life situations, it is expected that the main speech activities - listening, reading, writing and speaking are well known, which implies that there should be active dialogues and discussions in the classes, which at the same time should be tailored with the educational content and to be aimed at achieving the goals of the Bulgarian language education. In order to mark this attitude as the goal of Bulgarian language education, the formation of **communicative competence is also emphasized** .

A question we ask ourselves is the development of what competences are essential for language learning - a set of competences that allow the full participation of the individual in various social practices (domestic, scientific, media, etc.). Next is the question of the appropriate teaching methods, when among the expected results of learning Bulgarian are: students to have knowledge of the language, communication, perception and creation of discourse, to make sense of the relationship between people with different values, to be able to manage communication accordingly your goals.

The communicative approach, as a methodological framework, assumes that the learning process takes the form of communication and exchange of ideas. Through various speech activities, the pedagogical interaction aims to activate the personal experience of the students, to give communicative models and models of linguistic and non-linguistic behavior in different communication situations, to give the opportunity to observe different manifestations of written and oral communication as material for reflection and self-reflection on communicative behavior. The aim is for the participants to self-correct their speech products, to discover strategies for successful communication according to their own qualities, skills and understanding. We believe that for this purpose, the learning content and the applied teaching methods need to take into account the needs and interests of the students and the learning should be organized around real speech situations. As an example of working teaching methods within the framework of the communicative approach, discussions, solving cases, the method of projects, etc. can be mentioned.

Swain , Jan van Eck, etc. is traced. A working definition of the concept of communicative competence is formulated and its components are indicated. For the purposes of the presentation, the concept of *communicative competence* is understood as the ability to organize a speech activity adequate to the communication situation, in its productive form, the ability to connect linguistic means with a specific sphere and situation of communication, as well as with the conditions and goals of communication . The concept of *communicative competence* is considered generic, consisting of four components: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence and strategic competence, taking into account the influence of non-verbal means on the effectiveness of communication .

Four main components of communicative competence and their main characteristics are derived (the model of M. Kunali is followed): *linguistic competence* , *sociolinguistic competence*, *discourse competence*, *strategic competence* .

Emphasis is placed on the concept of *strategic competence*, the content of which refers to the effectiveness of communication and the ability to compensate for difficulties in communication using linguistic and non-linguistic means. It includes psychological, sociocultural, semiotic, cognitive, linguistic, etc. elements in communication, organized as a reaction, *overall behavior* of the person to achieve a certain communicative goal. In Bulgarian language education, not enough attention is paid to the formation of strategic competence, therefore we think it is necessary to use additional teaching methods that contribute to the full development of this aspect of communicative competence.

Communication as a complete process of information exchange and interaction cannot be understood only as a speech activity, because the meaning of non-verbal signs in a communicative situation can be even greater than that of linguistic ones. Therefore, the non-verbal aspects of communication cannot be isolated or ignored. We therefore consider the role of non-verbal cues in communication in the context of psychology, rhetoric and semiotics.

Communicatively oriented learning creates conditions for making cross-curricular connections, through which it is possible to "rearrange the context" in which language and communication transform information and meaning from one area of knowledge to another. An example of this can be the interaction between language and professional training (in this case, the fashion design training of the students participating in the project). In the training of professional fashion designers, it is good to pay attention to fashion as a semiotic system and its relationship with language. On the one hand, the garment can be accepted as an element of communication - a semiotic sign, and on the other hand, the semantic level of the garment is expressed precisely in language. In *The System of Fashion*, Roland Barthes analyzes clothing in three different manifestations, that is, in three structures: "one technological, the other iconic and the third verbal"<sup>3</sup> (the first is the garment itself; the second is the garment-image - a photograph in a magazine or a drawing; and the third is the one described through language - for example in an article). According to R. Barthes, the language of fashion is a " supercode " which, imposed on the garment itself, turns it into a signifying system, i.e. gives it meaning. He uses the opposition between language and speech, introduced by Saussure , to describe the relationship between clothing and clothing.

Describing the garment (eg the designer's idea of presenting a garment) through language is one of the tasks for professional designers, the other is understanding the semiotic

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<sup>3</sup> Barthes, R. (2005). *The system of fashion* . Sofia: AGATA-A

nature and communicative function of clothing. As a non-verbal sign, clothing is a carrier of information for the wearer and can be turned into a controlled message, part of a strategy to achieve a communicative goal. Strategic competence is a complex complex of knowledge, ideas, skills and behavior that are subjectively organized as an action to overcome difficulties and achieve a goal.

**In connection with the clarification of the concept of communicative competence,** theoretical propositions related to the concept of literacy, its content and its main components are analyzed: language literacy, basic literacy, reading literacy, functional literacy, multifunctional literacy.

*The concept of literacy is subject of analyzes and research, because it is perceived as key in the new paradigm of modern education and its development leads to changes in normative documents, goals, expected results, teaching methods and approaches in Bulgarian education.*

A comparison is made between *the concept of literacy and the concept of communicative competence*. In order to clarify the essence and scope of the concept of competence, and in particular communicative competence, it is compared with the closest conceptual system in terms of content - that of literacy. We attempt to distinguish the two systems and summarize the approach by which they function in synthesis. In the normative documents in our educational system, a certain semantic polysemy is observed in the use of the concepts of competence and literacy, especially in connection with their varieties and relations, which can mislead the teacher as the addressee. Therefore, we bring out the main similarities and, accordingly, differences in the two concepts, concluding that from the point of view of teaching practice, the synonymous use of the two concepts is unacceptable.

<i>Components of communicative competence</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Skills</i>
<b>Language competence</b>	about the grammar of the language, about its literary norms, knowledge about linguistic units	to construct expressions correctly linguistic analysis skill skills to detect and edit language errors
<b>Sociolinguistic competence</b>	about which linguistic means are appropriate in different speech situations and for which speech communities	language to be used appropriately in different social contexts

<b>Discourse competence</b>	about suprasentential units and text types in different communication situations and the means of their construction	to create and perceive oral and written discourse with cohesion and coherence and to be subject to different genre forms
<b>Strategic competence</b>	knowledge about the overall process of communication; about obstacles and deficits in the communication process	to overcome interruptions and barriers in communication through the use of verbal and non-verbal communication strategies

*Scheme 1. Components of communicative competence*

<b>Types of literacy</b>	<b>Essence</b>
<b>Multifunctional literacy</b>	skills to extract information from texts that are exchanged through different media ; competence to create, understand, interpret and critically evaluate written information in multimodal texts.
<b>Functional literacy</b>	the ability to read and write at a higher level than the previous one ; allows full-fledged professional and social development of the personality and effective participation in the group to which he belongs, in public life, in the professional sphere .
<b>Basic literacy</b>	mastery of literary norms and appropriate use of language in a given context.

*Scheme. 2 Relationship between the types of literacy according to the National Strategy for the Promotion and Enhancement of Literacy*

We assume that the concepts of the literacy system are located hierarchically and are mastered in stages in education, and the types of key competences are located horizontally, meaningfully interact and are mastered simultaneously, with each subject focusing on the development of a certain competence, using the resources of the other competences depending on the context of a specific pedagogical discourse .

The concept of key competences is more general than that of literacy, as it covers a wider range of knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is also presented as the main approach in modern education (competence approach) and the formation of competences is accepted as the

ultimate goal of education in all subjects. Literacy is focused rather on knowledge of language and skills to use it appropriately, as well as basic skills to master and use knowledge and skills from other scientific fields and to solve real-life cases.

In the first chapter, an analysis of various documents in the education system is made: DOS <sup>4</sup>, UP <sup>5</sup>on BE <sup>6</sup>, Preschool and School Education Act, European Reference Framework for Key Competences, etc.

When we talk about competences in our education system, they are most often understood as a dynamic set of knowledge, skills, attitudes and attitudes that are acquired in the learning process and are "key" to the personal, social and professional development of each student . The concept of **key competences** is enshrined in the Act on Pre-school and School Education (ZPAO) and general education is directly linked to the development of the eight key competences from the European Reference Framework for Key Competences , with a ninth one - skills to support sustainable development and to healthy lifestyle and sports:

<b>Key competences according to DOS, UP</b>	<b>European reference framework for key competences</b>
1. Competences in the field of the Bulgarian language (in the resources of the Ministry of Education and Culture the term language competences is used)	1. Language literacy;
2. Skills for communication in foreign languages (in the resources of the Ministry of Education and Culture the term communicative competences is used)	2. Multilingual competence
3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in the field of natural sciences and technologies	3. Mathematical competence and competence in the field of exact sciences, technology and engineering
4. Digital competence	4. Digital competence
5. Study skills	5. Personal competence, social competence and competence to acquire learning skills
6. Social and civic competences	6. Civil competence
7. Initiative and entrepreneurship	7. Entrepreneurial competence

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<sup>4</sup>State Education Standards.

<sup>5</sup>Curriculum.

<sup>6</sup>Bulgarian language.

8. Cultural competence and creative expression skills	8. Cultural Awareness and Performance Competence
9. Skills to support sustainable development and for a healthy lifestyle and sports	

*Scheme.3. Relationship between key competences in normative documents in the Bulgarian education system and European reference framework for key competences*

When comparing the two systems for key competences, it can be seen that although the DOS follow the philosophy of the European reference framework for key competences, they reformulate them and add one more competence. In addition, some of the "key competences" in our country are called "skills" and not competences, and in general there is no attitude to perceive and systematize an unambiguous system of competences, although their achievement is defined as the main goal of education in all subjects. In the documents of the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are also other types of competences beyond those listed, without clearly clarifying their relation to the key ones. For example, what content is included in the key *social* and *cultural* competences and what - in the sociocultural competences introduced in the DOS and UP in the Bulgarian language? Why do we talk about competences in the field of the Bulgarian language and they are called language competences, i.e. as if "linguistic" is a generic term that includes subtypes of competences, and the DOS for the Bulgarian language defines three equal areas of competence that students are expected to develop through learning the Bulgarian language: linguistic (it also appears as a subtype), sociocultural (missing in the key competences) and communicative (identified as key in foreign language learning)? Why is the plural form used - "linguistic", "sociocultural", "communicative" competences, what are their components, etc. Regarding the use of the concept of literacy, we see that it is used in the European Framework of Reference for Key Competences as the first in the order of competence and it marks the mastery of the mother tongue, and in DOS and UP it is avoided and replaced by "competences in the field of the Bulgarian language (language competences)".

It was concluded that in the educational documents and in the educational resources of the Ministry of Education and Culture the concepts of competence and literacy are distinguished to a certain extent, but regarding the system of competences, including competences in the Bulgarian language, there is no unambiguous model regarding the types of competences and the scope of their content. There is a drive to shift the focus of education from

teaching knowledge to mastering key competencies and developing students' problem-solving abilities. The competence approach requires complex methodological solutions and the application of innovative approaches and practices in the teaching and learning process. It is oriented towards activities related to the achievement of student activity results, it requires that the learning content of a given learning subject be presented in a more general context, in order to use the integrative possibilities of the approach, i.e. to realize interdisciplinary interaction.

We present *three main approaches* for the formation and improvement of communicative competence in the high school educational stages (as well as the other competences, which in their nature and implementation are internally determined):

1. The development of communicative competence is the main focus of **Bulgarian language learning**.
2. Communicative competence should be developed by contextually linking and orienting the learning content **in individual subjects** (e.g. in philosophy, history and civilization, etc.) to speech activities applicable in the personal, social and civic spheres (e.g. mastering the functional aspect of the language is a prerequisite for successful speech in relation to the other academic disciplines).
3. Communicative competence should be developed **through inter-subject connections** , organizing the learning content of two or more learning subjects in relation to the achievement of certain real (communicative) goals (e.g. when working on authentic (interdisciplinary) projects, when searching, analyzing and synthesizing information from different fields of knowledge with a view to achieving a real social goal or product, forming and expressing one's own position, discussions on civil and other problems, etc.);

The derived three approaches to work on communicative competence also imply three different ways of organizing the pedagogical interaction. In this sense, we offer methodological options for improving communicative competence in connection with digital and civic competence by implementing a project within the framework of Bulgarian language education. We believe that project-oriented learning as a method of teaching and learning is effective and applicable within all three approaches and largely contributes to the development of communicative competence, as it implies authentic communication in real (most often communicative) interactions with the environment.

We analyze the relationship between the development of communicative competence and other competences, since it does not develop independently, but is always in relation to others. The most obvious is its interaction with digital and civic competence in view of the fact that digital implies the development of specific skills and forms of communication, and civic sets one of the main contexts in which the personality functions and is of key importance for the development of society.

Digital and civic competence (digital civic competence <sup>7</sup>) can enrich the learning of the Bulgarian language by supporting the formation of some groups of skills such as: the ability to speak and write in an online environment; ability to "read" media texts, to recognize argumentative strategies in the text; to compare sources and check the credibility of information. Obviously, here we are talking about gaining real experience so that students can navigate in such a complex and uncertain environment as the digital one and be able to use it rationally for their purposes. Project work is a suitable model of pedagogical interaction, in which knowledge and skills acquired in different subjects can be integrated, the student is directed to active interaction with the real and virtual environment, solves problems, critically evaluates information from various sources. Digital civic competence (as a type of civic competence) has a significant relation to learning the Bulgarian language in connection with communication in the civil, public and institutional sphere, as it covers analysis, critical thinking, creation of texts according to the goals and situation of communication.

**IN THE THIRD CHAPTER (" Experiential project-oriented learning in conditions of authentic communication")** it is stated that the theoretical foundation of the competence approach is constructivism as an educational philosophy. For the purposes of the research, the main philosophical and psychological positions of constructivism are analyzed in order to be transferred to the context of education and, in particular, to the selection and implementation of specific methods of teaching in the Bulgarian language. The research focuses on the project method, whose potential for developing communicative competence is the subject of analysis in the dissertation. In order to clarify the content and specifics of the different types of project activity in education, we distinguish between project-oriented and project-based learning and the functionally related problem-based learning. An additional reason for the attempt to distinguish project-oriented from project-based training is the

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<sup>7</sup> Vasileva D. (2021). *Digital Citizenship Competence and Media Stereotypes* . Sofia: Polynom, p. 18 .

terminological polysemy in the use of both names in the scientific literature. Often in research papers, there is a coincidence of using the acronym PBL to mean both project-based and problem-based learning. We present methodological models of learning through the three methods indicated.

The main ideas of constructivism, the constructivist theory of learning and its application in humanitarian education are clarified. The specific way of perceiving the educational process and the roles of the participants in it are described. Unlike the traditional (for our educational system) philosophy of teaching, constructivism takes into account the psychological characteristics of the cognitive process and takes into account its subjective nature. It justifies the social nature of learning and seeks to realize it through teaching and learning methods that emphasize creative activities and communication in the lesson.

The term constructivism has different connotations depending on the context of the scientific field in which it is used. The concept itself attracts philosophical, psychological, sociological, educational, etc. problems and ideas, because it is simultaneously a theory of learning and a theory of knowledge<sup>8</sup>. Therefore, we analyze the specifics of the constructivist concept in a philosophical, psychological and educational aspect.

A number of questions that philosophical constructivism raises in the field of ontology and epistemology are analyzed in an attempt to provide answers to what is the nature of knowledge, what and how we can learn, and how far and how knowledge relates to "reality". We are interested in questions such as: is objective knowledge of the world possible by reason; to what is knowledge directed: to objective reality, to subjective reality or to the linguistic world, and what is the nature of knowledge itself; what is the understanding of concepts such as truth and opinion; about the relationship between thinking and being, between theory and practice. We analyze and compare the views on these issues of moderate and extreme constructivism, traditional views and theoretical positions of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Paul Sartre and others.

Regarding *constructivism in psychology*, we analyze the psychological positions of constructivism, which mainly focus on the problem of how knowledge is organized and how learning takes place. Common to the various theories and schools within constructivism is the

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<sup>8</sup> Damyanova, A. (2005). Constructivism – the new educational paradigm?, *Bulgarian language and literature (electronic version)* . 2005, No. 5.

idea that the way people generate knowledge is through their experiences, and that learning is an active process of interaction with the environment in which a unique system of meanings is created. According to them, knowledge is organized in cognitive structures (schemas) that are constructed and reconstructed in the process of learning and adapting to reality. Learning takes place in experience, with new knowledge being integrated into existing cognitive structures, knowledge and meanings. In this way, already created (individual) mental structures, knowledge and meanings are transformed and enriched, and this also determines the subjective nature of learning itself.

Within constructivism, two paradigms stand out most distinctly - that of *cognitive constructivism*, according to which learning is more of an individual process, and that of *social constructivism*, according to which learning occurs mostly in the process of dialogue and social interactions with others. In both concepts, learning is understood as a process controlled by the student himself, in which he creates his own understandings of the world, rather than learning fixed truths.

Cognitive constructivism focuses on the intellectual side of learning. The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget is considered its founder. He formulated a theory of the child's cognitive development ( theory of cognitive development ), identifying key stages in mental development that have an impact on learning, which, according to Piaget, consists in transformation and not in the accumulation of knowledge. He defines it as the process of adapting to reality, during which students create and test their own hypotheses about the world.

Social constructivism places greater importance on the influence of the environment on the learning process, emphasizing the leading role of language and speech in this process. Its founder is the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky, according to whom all mental functions initially have a biological, natural character, but in the process of development they are transformed into functions of a higher level and acquire a "cultural" character. This happens during the social interaction of the child with the adult and with other children. Each child individually creates his own concepts, with everyday ones formed spontaneously in everyday experience, and scientific ones - through formal school education. Mechanical (spontaneous) memorization is considered more of a biological process, while purposeful, rational thinking, imagination and creativity arise in the process of social interaction, in which speech plays a crucial role.

Jerome's ideas Bruner, an American psychologist who made significant contributions to the field of cognitive psychology and learning theory. Bruner also understood learning as an active social process. The researcher focuses on studying how people develop their conceptual models and how they codify the information in these models. According to him, the student acquires his knowledge on his own, as the information received from the outside goes through a complex process of transformation in the consciousness of the individual. According to him, there are three ways in which we learn experientially: *an inactive model* (through action and immediate reactions to the environment), *an iconic model* (through schemas, images) and *a symbolic model* (through language). These models suggest that learning is a process of discovery, dialogue and collaboration, which encourages students to make their own discoveries in the relevant field<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, it is important for him to move to new, heuristic (constructivist) methods of teaching and learning, which will overcome the old models of behaviorism, which perceives students as passive receivers of knowledge.

The examined philosophical and psychological ideas and theories of constructivism realize their practical value in the so-called constructivist approach in education or as a philosophy of education. It brings out specific understandings of the role of the student, of the teacher's work as a methodology and as educational goals. The student is not an object of learning, but an active subject who constructs his own knowledge on the basis of the knowledge he already has, the concepts he has built, the patterns of understanding and behavior he has already mastered. The teacher needs to provide a suitable creative environment and tasks that arouse interest in order to set in motion motivated processes of search, research and understanding of phenomena. The teacher constructs the context in which the learner seeks to create his knowledge and understanding. Therefore, knowledge must be put before a problem that arouses (personal) interest and, in its complexity, unlocks the search for new meanings and new patterns of organization of knowledge and experience.

Along with the advantages, we also point out some disadvantages of the constructivist learning model, such as: simultaneous work with many subjects (understood as independently forming their own knowledge based on their unique experience) is difficult to organize equally and fairly according to the needs of each one; in discussions and teamwork, it is likely that individual meaning is not formed, but group thinking is followed; constructivist learning is difficult to be objectively evaluated, since the learning process is inherently perceived as

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<sup>9</sup> Bruner, JS (1973). *Going beyond the information given*. New York: Norton.

subjective; constructivism implies a heuristic learning process that requires time (the pace of learning for each student is individual), and is not limited within a lesson ; in its implementation as a free process of formation of knowledge and skills, according to the needs of the student, it is very likely that the requirements standardized by the curricula will not be sufficiently achieved; work with motivated students is assumed, but the reality is often different.

Often the constructivist approach is contrasted with the traditional (behaviourist) approach to learning. *The extremes of embracing and rejecting either model of learning lead to deficits in student learning, and overcoming that particular deficit often requires methods and means characteristic of the "opposite" approach.* Therefore, we find it productive to combine a more structured, clearer and controllable process of teaching and learning (the so-called traditional), which provides the basic knowledge, with some active, constructivist approaches and teaching methods, which ensure the transformation of knowledge in own understandings of phenomena. If we accept that these are two stages in the educational process, which can go both sequentially and in parallel, we believe that it is necessary to place another, third segment in this educational chain - the understanding of the acquired experience, its ethical, *social* , personal-psychological, scientific value and meaning, it is important to be a subject of discussion and an equal element of the learning process, in order to provide in the student's mind concepts, principles and goals of a more general nature, so that the student in his "construction" reaches criteria and ideas of a general order, according to which the existence of the individual in society is ultimately organized and the sustainability of society and culture itself is ensured. It is important for the teacher to assist, to "accelerate" <sup>10</sup>the production of meaning, but also to correct failed models and interpretations of experience.

All this determines the methodological peculiarity of constructivism. It orients the teacher to search for an individual approach to the student and adhere to the principles of activity and awareness of learning. The leading place is occupied by interactive and heuristic methods of teaching and learning - discussions, solving cases, project-oriented learning, problem-oriented training and others.

*The project method* is presented in the same chapter in view of modern trends in education, which focus on the formation of personal qualities that support the learning and socialization of students: motivation to learn, critical thinking, goal setting, teamwork,

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<sup>10</sup> In the sense of maieutics - a practical method created by Socrates, according to which truth is achieved through the continuous "birth" of true knowledge in dialogue , through questions that will make the interlocutor realize his own mistakes and find his own sequence of logical questions, until it reaches an irrefutable truth.

formation of civic consciousness etc. The project method has great potential for achieving the complex goals that education sets for itself - simultaneously supporting the formation of knowledge, skills and competences through the personal experience that students acquire in the process of working on a project. We consider it as a method in the teaching of the Bulgarian language, since it assumes the production of different types of oral and written texts, from different spheres of communication and in different situations, according to the purpose of the project.

In the analysis of the theoretical statements related to the project method, we find a certain terminological polysemy in both foreign language and Bulgarian scientific studies. They refer to the use of the names *project-oriented learning* and *project-based learning*, and in the foreign language sources we find coincidences of abbreviations for *project-based* and *problem-based learning* ( Project - based learning ( PBL ), Problem - based learning ( PBL ). Therefore, we try to derive specific characteristics of the three names mentioned, distinguishing project-oriented from project-based learning and justifying them as two varieties of the project method, and as functionally related to them - to clarify the specifics of problem-based learning. We offer methodological models for each of the above-mentioned methods, with which we want to clarify the features available in our opinion and the differences in their content, goals and educational potential. We proceed from our personal experience and observations of a Bulgarian language teacher and the various types of projects implemented in the teaching process.

Theoretical statements related to the project method are presented. In the methodological literature, project-based learning is present as a form of learning, as an educational technology, and as a method of learning. The use of the term is polysemantic. In this case, we have preferred to call the two above-mentioned varieties of project-based learning *methods*, because we name learning models in the Bulgarian language, in which the teacher and students are involved interactively. As is well known, a teaching method is a model of interaction between the teacher and the student/students. The construct allows describing the pedagogical interaction of Bulgarian language classes, with the teacher looking for cross-subject connections.

The project method makes it possible to carry out the so-called learning by doing ( learning by doing ), corresponding to constructivist ideas about learning as a natural process of constructing one's own knowledge in and through experience. When working on projects, it is necessary to apply knowledge and skills from various scientific fields, to solve authentic

problems, and this supports the development of cognitive, personal and social skills, communication skills, cooperation skills, critical thinking, creativity, etc.

*The clarification of the specifics of the concepts was carried out by analyzing different sources in connection with the use of the three names . It is found that in the scientific literature, project-oriented and project-based learning are not clearly distinguished and are most often used as synonyms or have similar semantics. One can see the coincidence of the used abbreviations denoting problem-based and project-based learning (PBL). We accept that project-oriented and project-based learning are understood as the organization of learning through project activities, which have differences in terms of the subject area, the sphere of implementation, the level of complexity of the activities and the purpose of the projects, the duration, the connection with the educational content and the educational programs. Of particular importance is the difference in their potential for building personal and social skills and competences (especially communicative and civic competence), the level of independence and freedom in choosing a project goal, the way of working, the possibilities for showing initiative, overcoming internal barriers , authentic communication.*

We derive the following working definition for project-oriented learning: *under project-oriented learning, we will understand a method of organizing activities with an educational goal through the realization of an authentic project, going beyond (indirectly related to) the educational content of a subject and oriented to activities and goals in and outside school , usually with a social or personal focus. It involves real, authentic interactions with people and institutions and is aimed at achieving a real socially or personally meaningful result or effect*

A methodical model for project-oriented learning of the Bulgarian language in high school is proposed and its main characteristics and distinguishing features are described. In contrast to the projects developed in a school environment on topics set by the teacher and aimed at the educational content (project-based learning), in which communication is most often formal and the pedagogical goals are scientific in nature, in project-oriented learning it is possible to maximize degree to work on skills and competencies through gaining real life experience. The pedagogical goals of the proposed model of project-oriented learning within Bulgarian language learning are more complex and are aimed at forming skills and competences in a wider context, and the teacher chooses how and to what extent to link the project activities with the curriculum . This method is particularly suitable for teaching the

Bulgarian language, because when working on projects of this type, a large number of authentic speech products are necessarily created: from different spheres of communication, from different genres, from texts of different forms (written and oral), with different author's communicative intentions. They are motivationally and meaningfully bound and arise naturally in the process of working on the project. Students have the opportunity to observe others and self-observe in various communicative situations, to analyze, correct and build communicative strategies in real situations, to evaluate their communication skills according to their effectiveness in relation to the invested communicative intention.

The relationship between the project activities performed by the students and the topics and goals of the Bulgarian language curriculum is analyzed.

*We also offer a working definition for project-based learning : a method of organizing activities with an educational purpose through the implementation of projects aimed at constructing and applying knowledge and skills on topics of the educational content of a given educational subject (specific educational content is considered on the basis of a project). The goal is for the students to understand, apply and transform scientific (theoretical) information, using it to construct their own product, according to the project goal set in advance by the teacher.*

A methodological model for project-based learning in Bulgarian is proposed and its main characteristics and distinguishing features are described. The aim is to master specific educational content in the Bulgarian language curriculum for the 10th grade (public speaking on a civil issue). The pedagogical objectives correspond to the "competencies as expected learning outcomes" set in the document.

Methodical work within project-based learning can be better planned and structured, the teacher supports and directs the students' work according to the cognitive context through clear instructions and criteria. The context in which the learning project is placed is narrower than that of project-oriented learning, but (although, in our opinion, to a lesser extent) gives the opportunity to develop similar skills and competences: communication skills; the skills and attitudes for goal setting, planning and realization of one's own idea; improvement of communicative, civic, digital competence. There is the possibility of cross-curricular connections, for example, with knowledge provided for mastering classes in philosophy, history, foreign languages, vocational training subjects, etc.

Problem-based learning involves analyzing and solving a meaningful problem in the context of the learning content of a given subject. The problem is the first element of the learning process. It is good if it is real and stems from a phenomenon or event that the students can observe. The problem should not be well-structured and imply a clear-cut solution, but should be open-ended and multi-faceted to engage students in real and relevant intellectual inquiry <sup>11</sup>. In this model of organization of the learning process, the emphasis is on research and formation of new knowledge, and not on the final product. The work process implies a series of questions that arise when analyzing the problem and lead to new questions. In order to arrive at an answer, the search and selection of reliable information, logical reasoning, making assumptions, constructing hypotheses, joint decision are required. It can be said that the model of problem-based learning refers to the model of scientific inquiry, of scientific research.

A methodological model of problem-based learning is proposed for organizing a language workshop in the context of Bulgarian language learning in the 12th grade (on the topics in the curriculum: "Speech behavior in communicative practice"; "Working with texts of different styles and genres with common topic/with the same subject of communication").

*In the sixth subsection - Conclusions* - a comparative table of the three interactive methods is presented:

<b>Comparison parameters</b>	<b>Project-based learning</b>	<b>Project-based learning</b>	<b>Problem-based learning</b>
Essence	Project-oriented learning implies the realization of an authentic project, going beyond (indirectly related to) the learning content of the learning subjects and oriented to activities and goals outside the learning environment.	Project-based learning involves the assignment of a project directly related to the learning content.	Problem-based learning involves analyzing and solving an authentic problem in the context of the learning content of a given subject.
Orientation	Oriented towards the realization of a real social or personal goal, without being	Oriented towards the realization of a goal related to the application of	It is oriented towards independent

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<sup>11</sup> The posed problem should not require an unequivocal solution, but should lead to discussions and allow different interpretations in which the students form their own point of view and argumentation of the solutions they propose. A good option is to use problems that have arisen in the process of joint work or are currently relevant for society. It would be beneficial to allow students to discover problems of interest to them, with the teacher setting only the contextual framework.

	directly tied to specific learning content.	knowledge and skills in a specific subject.	studies, gathering information, forming theses or hypotheses, presenting and justifying one's own decisions, in order to independently reach the formation of knowledge and understanding on a given topic.
Duration	Projects are more complex, take place over a longer period of time and may involve students from different grades.	The projects are more specific, with a shorter implementation period and are usually carried out within the framework of educational activities.	Projects can be realized within the hour on a certain topic
Implementation	It is mainly implemented in real social conditions.	It is mainly implemented in a school environment.	It is carried out in a school environment, usually in the form of discussions and research.
Result	It emphasizes the work process and the final product. Project work should lead to the creation of a real product or artifact in relation to the team's pre-set social goal.	Focuses on the final product. Project work should lead to the creation of a real product or artifact in relation to the previously set learning objective.	Emphasis is placed on the process of work (learning) and not on the end result.
Skills developed	Aims to improve personal qualities and "soft" skills necessary to form an attitude for self-regulated learning and active behavior when solving a problem or implementing an idea.  The main emphasis is on the ability to set goals, plan and organize actions in order to realize one's own idea. This includes maintaining	Aims to upgrade and organize knowledge and skills from a specific scientific field, applying them in practice.	Aims to improve cognitive and metacognitive skills, by independently reaching knowledge before it is explained by the teacher.

	motivation, attitude to deal with problem situations, initiative, will, self-control, etc.		
Communicative environment	It includes authentic communication with people and institutions inside and outside of school.	It mainly involves formal communication (official-business) teacher-student or student-student.	It involves mostly formal communication.
Role of teacher and student	<p>Students themselves choose and formulate the idea and purpose of the project, according to their interests.</p> <p>Students themselves choose which activities to participate in according to their qualities and interests.</p> <p>They are looking for solutions to authentic life problems that have arisen in the process of work.</p> <p>The teacher supports, encourages, to the smallest extent controls the decisions and activities of the project. Making mistakes at work is seen as one of the ways to learn from experience.</p>	<p>Usually, the main activities and the purpose of the project are set in advance by the teacher.</p> <p>Students work in teams to create a final product to present.</p> <p>tasks in which knowledge is applied are more often sought .</p> <p>The teacher directs, supports and encourages the team without directly interfering in the project activities, but sets criteria and goals.</p>	<p>The problem is most often posed by the teacher, but it can also arise in the work process. It is poorly constructed to enable students to explore knowledge and different solutions.</p> <p>The teacher directs and supports the cognitive process by provoking manifestations of in-depth independent and critical thinking when finding a solution to a problem.</p>
Opportunities for interdisciplinary connections	<p>It assumes the inclusion of knowledge and skills from different academic disciplines, according to the specific activities of the project.</p> <p>It sets a broader context of constructing new and applying existing knowledge and skills from different fields.</p>	Presupposes to a lesser extent cross-subject connections.	It assumes intersubjective connections.
A form of learning and participation	The organization of work implies active learning and teamwork.	The organization of work implies active learning and teamwork.	The organization of work implies active learning and teamwork.

Competencies mastered	The widest complex of competences is perfected.	A complex of competences is perfected.	A complex of competences is perfected.
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*Table 4. Comparison between project-oriented, project-based and problem-based learning*

The analyzed methods, although to varying degrees, provide an opportunity to develop personal and social qualities (in our opinion, project-oriented learning offers the greatest opportunities). All three methods imply the development of communicative competence, with project-oriented learning setting more speech situations and in more spheres of communication due to authentic communication in real social conditions .

All three presented methods of active learning implement the ideas of constructivism in education. Students become initiators of their own learning, construct knowledge, skills and competencies in authentic situations of making and inventing solutions. Their knowledge is organized as personal experience, and the question of why they need to know one or another scientific fact is dropped.

#### **4. CHAPTER: Content and functional features of experiential project-oriented learning of the Bulgarian language**

A methodological model of project-oriented learning is presented. The phases of the project are described and some basic principles of pedagogical interaction in working on the project are derived. The relationship of project-oriented learning to Bulgarian language curricula in high school stages has been analyzed.

In order to verify the results of the project-oriented training carried out under the "Dream Dress" project, two studies were carried out, implemented in two stages, using the model for evaluating the effectiveness of implemented training, consisting of a study of changes in the knowledge and skills of students before and after the implemented project activities.

A methodical model of project-oriented training is presented based on a one-year training on the "Dream Garment" project. The project is implemented in the period from 2017 to 2023 at the "Princess Maria Luisa" Vocational School of Clothing, Sofia. Students from 8th

to 12th grade participate voluntarily in it, the leaders are two teachers - one for Bulgarian language and literature and one for special subjects related to fashion design and the construction and modeling of clothing. The number of student participants is variable, but in each of the school years, between 20-30 students are included in the project, some of them participating episodically, only for a specific activity, and others participating permanently in formed teams. The project is being worked on throughout the school year.

The activities and phases of project implementation are described. A general *model for project work* in the context of project-based learning is proposed :

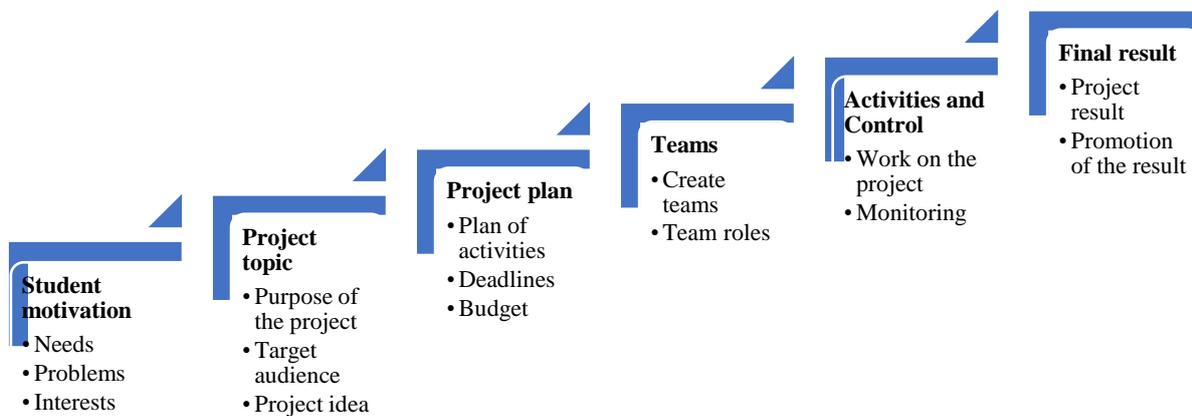


Fig. 2

Some basic principles of pedagogical interaction are described, such as: voluntary participation in the project; compliance with deadlines; independent search for information and solutions; a positive attitude among students is aimed at; goals can be achieved in different ways; creativity, initiative, independence are stimulated; making mistakes is perceived as a natural learning process, etc.

The development of students' communicative competence takes place through authentic communication, in the context of the implementation of project activities. is implemented outside the school and implies communication with institutions, companies, organizations and people outside the institution. In this way, real social interaction and communication is ensured and a number of skills and competences laid down in the curricula can be effectively and efficiently developed (e.g. in relation to the spheres of communication, communication on the Internet, interview, presentation, etc.) . The students' participation in the project supports the

improvement of almost all key competences and allows the development of all aspects of communicative competence - linguistic, sociolinguistic, strategic and discourse. Due to the specifics of the project, the development of skills related to non-verbal communication is of particular importance (e.g. the perception of clothing as a way of communication, as a sign; awareness of the communicative, semantic, psychological aspects of fashion and its phenomena ).

Since project-oriented learning is not only aimed at mastering knowledge or skills, which are only included in the Bulgarian language curricula, but aims at improving communicative competence (and other competences) in general, it can be said that in the work process affect elements of the Bulgarian language curricula of different grades. We analyze the potential of project-oriented training for the application of knowledge on topics from the Bulgarian language curricula in the high school stages, general education preparation (UP on BE for 8th grade <sup>12</sup>, 9th grade <sup>13</sup>, 10th grade <sup>14</sup>, 11. class <sup>15</sup>, 12. class <sup>16</sup>) and the Bulgarian language curricula in the second high school stage, profiled preparation (UP in BE for 11th and 12th grades <sup>17</sup>).

The project activity provides a meaningfully and functionally binding context of speech performances. For the most part, the activities of the project are related to communication: through different in style, purpose and type of oral and written statements, in which students can apply their skills for successful speech behavior and immediately receive feedback through the achieved result in communication. In a conversation situation with a representative of a company, for example, the student hears and tries to apply the norms of legal speech, to correctly use the forms of politeness, to adapt his language expression to the requirements of the communicative situation. In writing, students send e-mails with a request for assistance to companies or an application to institutions, etc. When speech behavior is mastered within a lesson or cycle of lessons, communication is subordinated to a learning task, the

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<sup>12</sup> Study programs in Bulgarian language and literature for class VIII . Bulgarian language component (general education). <https://web.mon.bg/bg/1999>

<sup>13</sup> Study programs in Bulgarian language and literature for class IX . Bulgarian language component (general education). <https://web.mon.bg/bg/1691>

<sup>14</sup> Study programs in Bulgarian language and literature for class X. Bulgarian language component (general education). <https://web.mon.bg/bg/2238>

<sup>15</sup> Study programs in Bulgarian language and literature for class XI . Bulgarian language component (general education). <https://web.mon.bg/bg/100522>

<sup>16</sup> Study programs in Bulgarian language and literature for class XI . Bulgarian language component (general education). <https://www.mon.bg/bg/100523>

<sup>17</sup> Curriculum in Bulgarian language and literature. Bulgarian Language Component, Language and Society Module - XI and XII grades (profiled preparation). <https://web.mon.bg/bg/100598>

communication situation is formal (teacher-student or between students), the conditions are somewhat "sterile" in terms of meaning and motivation. The student often strives to perform the communicative task correctly and not successfully, because there is a lack of context and real conditions in which he can set his communicative goal, deploy his own communicative strategy, freely choose the form, linguistic and non-linguistic (non-verbal) means, with which to achieve it. Project-oriented learning allows communicative practice to be authentic, which organizes available knowledge and skills into communicative experience or communicative competence.

*Third paragraph - Methodical model for developing communicative, civic, digital competences through work on a project within the framework of Bulgarian language education in the 12th grade.*

By working on projects, a complex of competences is improved at the same time and the possibility of interdisciplinary connections is assumed. Project-oriented learning contains more potential for acquiring a complex of skills and competencies in experience, because it is not limited by specific study subjects and topics, and knowledge, skills and activities are defined and organized according to their need to achieve the project goal. In this sense, a methodical variant of a lesson ("Job Interview") is presented, which illustrates the possibilities for developing communicative competence, as well as digital, civic and other competences within the framework of training in the subject of Bulgarian language and literature at the junior high school stage.

For the needs of the dissertation, a study of the effectiveness of the project-oriented training was conducted, and an experiment was carried out based on the model for the effectiveness of training carried out at the input and output of the system. The study consists of setting the same version of test tasks at the beginning of the project activity and at the end of the project. There are three assignments, they require free answers from the students and are related to the level of their communication and project skills.

The research was conducted in a vocational high school in the capital. The participants are 28 students from the 11th grade and 12th grade aged 16-19, of which 1 boy and 27 girls. Participants were kept the same at baseline and exit.

*The main hypotheses of the study are that working with the project method:*

- increases the levels of students' communicative competence;

- develops the skills to plan activities, to work in a team, to create own texts with a specific communicative purpose;
- increases levels of decision-making when choosing between alternatives.

**The first assignment** is implemented in three stages. In the first stage, students are introduced to the text from which they extract information. The source text is understood as a context in which to implement all three tasks. The text is an authentic email requesting assistance in connection with financial support for a drug addiction treatment center.

In the second stage, the students propose their idea for a charitable initiative to help drug-addicted youth, thus defining the purpose of their project. The context of the assignment implies the realization of a civic initiative to solve a social problem and at this level it focuses on civic competence.

In the third stage, the students are expected to plan the activities for the realization of the previously formulated goal of the project. It is expected that the main activities necessary to achieve the goal will be indicated; they should be adequate to the set project goal; be clearly formulated; to observe their logical sequence when enumerating.

**The second assignment** is carried out in two stages. The first stage of the assignment requires making a choice about the type of text that will convince the addressee to join the initiative indicated by the students. The choice of appropriate language means, suitable for the communication situation (formal/informal communication; oral (dialogue) or written communication (e-mail, message), direct/indirect) depends on the choice of the addressee and the form of communication.

In the second stage of the assignment, the students create their own text (dialogue, e-mail, message), which aims to convince the addressees to join a charitable activity to raise funds to support an initiative. Students are expected to clearly express the purpose and idea of their design and cause in their own written text; to present adequate persuasive arguments; to determine whether the semantic unity of the created text has been achieved, which would ensure the successful achievement of the communicative goal.

**The third task** is implemented in two stages. In the first stage, the students determine the addressee of the letter to whom they will send the invitation, which also depends on the selection of appropriate language means.

In the second stage, students prepare an electronic letter and are expected to demonstrate knowledge of its structure and features and their ability to clearly and concretely formulate the content of the invitation using language appropriate for the purpose. It is expected to demonstrate the level of knowledge and skills related to the application of the norms of the modern Bulgarian literary language.

### **Evaluation**

The tests were evaluated by three independent experts, teachers of Bulgarian language and literature. Each task of the test is evaluated according to predetermined criteria. For the assessment of the first task, the criterion was applied: "Degree of clearly expressed and adequate activities/steps for organizing a charity event", with the highest score being 2 points. For the assessment of the second task, four criteria were applied, as follows: "Clearly stated idea and purpose of the charitable cause", "At least two adequate persuasive arguments are indicated", "Achieved semantic unity of the written text", "Achieved levels of linguistic culture of the written text". The maximum achievable points for each of the criteria is 2. Three criteria are applied to evaluate the third task: "Demonstrates knowledge of the structure and features of creating an electronic letter", "Able to select and combine linguistic means in view of their stylistic appropriateness", "Applies the norms of the modern Bulgarian literary language (grammar, lexical, spelling, punctuation)". The maximum achievable points for each of the criteria for the third task is 2.

In the first task, the values of the obtained evaluations from the three experts were averaged. In the second task, the evaluation obtained by the three experts in total from the four criteria was averaged. In the third task, the total score for each of the three criteria is averaged. The procedure was performed on the data from the ascertainment and exit test. Results on tasks from the ascertainment and exit test were compared by t- test for two independent samples.

### **Results**

The results are presented through quantitative and qualitative data analysis in order to determine the presence or absence of changes in the knowledge and skills of the students after the training through the project method.

	<b>Task 1.</b>		<b>Task 2.</b>		<b>Task 3.</b>	
	<b>Establishing test</b>	<b>Outbound test</b>	<b>Establishing test</b>	<b>Outbound test</b>	<b>Establishing test</b>	<b>Outbound test</b>
<b>Task average _</b>	2.49	2.81	3.07	5.09	2.73	4.32

<b>Standard deviation</b>	0.29	0.29	1.35	1.11	1.56	1.22
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## Conclusions

When performing the *first task*, a greater part of the examined persons demonstrated an increase in the results in the exit test compared to the establisher. In five of the examined persons, a (albeit slight) decrease in results was observed, but in each of them the number of listed steps was greater in the outgoing test, but some of the specified activities were not adequate to the set goal or were vaguely formulated. The students' ability to clearly and concretely formulate their idea is important for the results of the research of the first assignment. There is a difficulty in formulating consistent, equal, logical and chronologically connected steps for the realization of a project.

When performing the *second assignment*, an increase in the results for each of the criteria was observed when comparing the establishing and exiting test. In some of the examined persons, the increase is significant. Difficulties in reasoning are seen, often using emotional arguments or appeals without giving reasons. In the exit test, higher levels of the skills for formulating a clear goal, argumentation and, accordingly, the semantic connectivity of the text are established. When the demonstrated skills for clearly formulating an idea and goal and presenting convincing arguments for its achievement in the exit test increase, the semantic coherence of the text also increases, in which criterion we have the highest improvement. The results for the level of language culture also show an improvement, but it is the least pronounced. Punctuation errors are observed, spelling, grammar and lexical errors are allowed.

During the performance of the *third assignment*, there is a lack of confidence in the knowledge and skills to create an electronic letter, omitting elements from it. Most of the surveyed persons use speech etiquette formulas, most often template expressions, but in most cases there is no attempt to create an original text of the invitation. A lack of reflection is often observed, i.e. the content of the invitation is not consistent with the context of the task, important information is missing, the addressee does not introduce himself or does not introduce the team.

The results of the research allow us to conclude that project-oriented learning can improve students' communicative competence when it is related to real communication in

different situations and is organized as speech behavior to achieve a specific communicative goal related to project activities. Real interactions with unknown people, organizations and institutions motivate students to improve their communicative competence in all four of its elements: in relation to sociocultural competence – to select the linguistic means suitable in a given speech situation and to use the language appropriately in different social contexts, .is to perceive language as an intersection of society, culture and man; in relation to discourse competence – to start, continue and finish the speech act, to create and perceive oral and written discourse with cohesion and coherence, using different genre forms. The students' language competence can be improved, insofar as project-oriented learning is also related to the creation of different types of texts (letters, invitations, etc.).

One of the main indicators of the completeness of the student's learning and education process is the level of his **motivation to learn** . This initial premise determines the behavior and attitudes of young people towards the learning process and is related to their individual-personal and social development. In scientific literature, the concept of motivation describes a wide range of phenomena: attitudes, desires, drives, aspirations, expectations, incentives, values and meanings of situational conditions, goals, intentions, etc. Motivation refers to the activation, direction and regulation of behavior and activity. Most often in psychology, there are two types of motivation, including the motivation for learning - external and internal motivation, as well as "spillover motivation" <sup>18</sup>. The locus of control that prevails among the participants is also of interest to us , as well as the question of the degree of change in the students' motivation after the training. In order to investigate the influence of project-oriented training on the motivation for learning and participation in project activity, as well as on the development of communicative competence of the student participants, a survey was conducted through a questionnaire presented at the beginning and at the end of the work on the "Dream Dress" project .

The purpose of the study is to establish the change or the absence of such in relation to the students' attitudes about: proceeding to the realization of an interesting idea, the attitudes towards teamwork, the motivation for self-directed learning, the more common localization of control, the leading type of motivation for learning and the effect of project-based learning on communicative competence and its elements.

The study included 28 participants, of which 27 girls and 1 boy between the ages of 16 and 19 from a metropolitan vocational high school.

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<sup>18</sup> Yankulova, J. (2016). *Educational Psychology* . Sofia: Paradigm.

The study is implemented through a survey divided into two modules. The first module covers ten statements, five related to *students' motivation to participate in a project activity* and five to *their motivation to learn*. The second module refers to the degree of *communicative competence demonstrated by the students*. A total of 16 statements are presented in the two modules, each of which is rated on a six-point agreement rating scale. The scale is: 1 (strongly agree), 2 (rather agree), 3 (agree), 4 (rather disagree), 5 (strongly disagree), 6. (disagree).

*In the first module, when studying the motivation for participation in a project activity,* based on the data after the project-oriented training, it is established that:

- the willingness to start implementing one's own idea increases, which is probably due to the experience gained, increased confidence and motivation when working on a project;
- the readiness to occupy a leadership position increases, i.e. the sense of competence and the attitude of assuming responsibilities in the project activities and in the organization of the team;
- a large part of the surveyed persons do not have well-developed skills for working in a team and prefer, for the most part, to work independently. After working on the project, the attitude to participate in team activities increased (from 17.86% in the incoming test to 33.13% in the outgoing test), but the share of those who preferred to work independently remained high.
- respondents (82.17% in the entry test and 100% in the exit test) indicate that they strive to do everything necessary to progress, which speaks of a good motivation for coping and self-development, but calls into question the understanding of "do everything necessary" and the ability to objectively self-assess, as the answers somewhat contradict the results of the previous statement;
- the percentage of subjects who are confident in their ability to learn new things and cope in an unfamiliar situation increases significantly (from 64.29% in the incoming test to 96.43% in the outgoing test). This speaks of an increase in coping motivation, an increase in the feeling of personal competence, a higher self-esteem, and a shift from an external to an internal locus of control for some of the participants.

*The second part of the module examining motivation deals with the degree of **motivation to learn**.* The results show that after the project-oriented training:

- motivation to learn and overcome difficulties is improved. Working on an authentic project shows the participants that in real social relations, unforeseen obstacles and difficulties

often arise, to overcome which qualities such as patience, will, persistence, creativity are needed.

- the students' opinion about the applicability of what they learned at school in dealing with real life problems improves significantly (from 35.72% in the incoming test to 71.43% in the outgoing test). The reason for this may be that the authentic project implies and shows how knowledge and skills from different scientific fields are organized according to the achievement of the real goal.
- students find it difficult to synthesize and apply the information presented to them in school. It remains abstract and inapplicable to a large part of them, which suggests a low motivation for learning. We believe that setting more complex tasks, applicable in real life, will help to organize the knowledge and show its applicability.

*The second module* is composed of 6 questions examining **the degree of communicative competence demonstrated by the students** . The results show that after the project-oriented training:

- a significant percentage of the participants who have overcome the communication barrier set in the statements – starting a conversation with a stranger or requesting information from a stranger over the phone – is observed. The reason can be found in the experience they acquire during the implementation of the project activities, where a similar type of communication is often necessary;
- participate in a media appearance increases significantly, which speaks of greater confidence in their communicative competence and the disappearance of basic barriers in communication (fear, shame, insecurity, etc.) after working on an authentic project ;
- The majority of students have the attitude to adapt their communicative behavior to the situation and the purpose of communication (level of sociolinguistic and strategic competence), but experience is needed to build working models that are effective in real situations;
- The majority of the surveyed persons understand the role of non-verbal signs in communication and try to recognize and use them (refers to the level of strategic competence), and this attitude improves after working on the project;
- There is an increase in the positive attitude towards conducting a dialogue and agreeing on positions, taking into account the other point of view. This would support teamwork as well as the development of effective communication strategies to achieve communication and other goals.

Based on the data from the conducted research, it can be concluded that project-oriented learning has a very good potential to support the strengthening of motivation for learning and participation in project activities. Authentic communication enables the simultaneous development of all four elements of communicative competence, including overcoming communication barriers, developing effective communication strategies, and applying and developing language knowledge and communication skills.

## CONCLUSION

The current dissertation research is focused on exploring the possibilities that exist project-oriented learning as a method for forming communicative competence in the context of Bulgarian language learning in the first and second high school stages. The basis of the research is a realized interdisciplinary project, giving the opportunity for authentic communication in real social conditions. A study was conducted on the effectiveness of the project-oriented learning and measurement of the motivation for learning and participation in project activity, as well as the improvement of the communicative competence of the students participating in the project activity. The hypothesis of the study was confirmed, that by working on projects that place the student in real social relationships, communication skills, motivation for learning, and the need for personal expression are improved.

*In accordance with the set goals and objectives of the study, the following main results were achieved:*

1. The available scientific literature in the field of communicatively oriented learning in the Bulgarian language was studied with the aim of analyzing supporting concepts, constructs and concepts that would provide the theoretical foundations of the study.
2. The state of the problem with regard to the development of communicative competence in Bulgarian language education at the high school stage has been analyzed, and a number of documents in the education system have been studied and one's own pedagogical experience has been analyzed.
3. The specifics, functions and methodological characteristics of project-oriented learning are described and a comparison is made with project-based and problem-based learning;
4. A methodological model of project-oriented learning has been developed: an authentic project and observations during its implementation in a learning environment are

described. In order to differentiate the method, a methodological model of project-based learning and problem-based learning was constructed.

5. A study of the potential of project-oriented learning for the development of communicative competence within the framework of Bulgarian language learning in the first and second high school stages and the relationship of project activities to the Bulgarian language curricula (8th - 12th grade);
6. An analysis and summary of the results of the realized project-oriented training was made through a research of communication skills and attitudes to participation in project activities at the beginning and at the end of the project;
7. Some specific conditions for the application of project-oriented training for the improvement of communicative and other related competences (civic, digital) in the teaching of the Bulgarian language in the high school stages have been derived.

With the help of the conducted research, the functionality of the created model of project-oriented training for developing communicative competence and other competences within the framework of Bulgarian language learning is established. The proposed methodical model can serve the teachers to realize interdisciplinary connections and improve the key competences. Authentic settings and communication, which are the main features of project-based learning, serve to acquire personal experience and competence from students and support their socialization and motivation for learning and independent problem solving. An opportunity is also created to enrich the experience of teachers, especially in the field of humanitarian education, insofar as the method provides an opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills of students in real conditions - the currently missing segment in the humanitarian education system.

## CONTRIBUTIONS

- *The concept of project-oriented learning has been defined, and a sufficient number of sources have been analyzed and referenced.* The analysis shows ambiguity in the use of the concept, where project-oriented and project-based learning are synonymously mixed. In the dissertation, own models and the separate characteristics of project-oriented and project-based learning are presented and distinguished. The comparison shows that both methods imply the development of communicative competence, with project-oriented learning setting more speech situations in more spheres of communication due to authentic communication in real social conditions. In view of this understanding, project-oriented learning creates conditions for developing all components of communicative competence.
- *A methodological model of project-oriented learning was constructed, designed for the first and second high school stages.* The phases of the project are described and some basic principles of pedagogical interaction in working on the project are derived. Typically, this type of project involves activities outside the school and authentic communication, e.g. interaction with institutions, companies, organizations and people outside the institution. In this way, for the development of communicative competence, real social interaction and communication is used, and a number of skills and competences laid down in the Bulgarian language curricula can be effectively and efficiently developed.
- *The elements of communicative competence are derived and a comparison is made with the concept of literacy.* The dialectical method was used to distinguish the two systems and summarize the approach by which they function in synthesis. It is accepted that the elements in the literacy system (basic, functional, multifunctional) are located hierarchically and are mastered in stages in education, and the types of key competences (linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, strategic) are located horizontally, meaningfully interact and are mastered simultaneously, with each subject focusing on the development of a particular competence. In both theoretical models (for literacy and for competence), the semantic parameters of the terms vary, and this makes their unambiguous interpretation difficult, therefore synonymous usage is often observed.

- *Implemented is an educational experiment using the method of project-oriented learning* , the results of which show the positive influence on the development of students' communicative competence. A positive effect on the motivation for learning and participation in project activity is also observed.
- *Constructed is a model for building interdisciplinary connections with vocational training.* Specifically, the training in the Bulgarian language is bound and the education of fashion design, applying the method of project-oriented learning. In the exhibition, the concept of fashion is interpreted from a semiotic point of view, the concepts of the semiotic system (sign - object - interpretant ) are applied , and the relationship of this system with language is analyzed and used for the needs of education. On the one hand, clothing is an element of communication – a semiotic sign, and on the other hand, at the semantic level, clothing is expressed in language. Describing the garment (eg the designer's idea of presenting a garment) through language is one of the tasks for professional designers, the other is understanding the semiotic nature and communicative function of clothing. As a non-verbal sign, clothing is a carrier of information for the wearer and can be turned into a controlled message, part of a strategy to achieve a communicative goal. In this way, training in fashion design can contribute to the development of communicative competence and, more specifically, strategic competence as the least represented component in Bulgarian language education.

## **LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ON THE THEME OF THE DISSERTATION**

1. Project-oriented learning as a method for developing the communicative competence of high school students . *Bulgarian language and literature* , issue: 5, 2020, 459 – 470. ISSN ( print ): 0323-9519, ISSN ( online ): 1314-8516 <https://bel.azbuki.bg/bulgarian/sadarzhanie-na-sp- balgarski-ezik-i-literatura-2020-g/sp-balgarski-ezik-i-literatura-knizhka-5-2020-godina-lxii/>
2. Development of civic competence through project-oriented learning in high school (8th - 12th grade) . *Digital civic competence and media stereotypes* (editors: D. Vasileva, I. Panov). Montana: Polimona, 2021, 59 – 68. ISSN ( online ): 978-619-7190-79-3, ISBN: 978-619-7190-786.

<https://zenodo.org/record/5831592#.YePkqP5BxPY>

3. Project-oriented and project-based learning - characteristics, comparison and application in Bulgarian language learning (8th - 12th grade).

*Bulgarian language and literature* , volume: 64, issue: 5, 2022, 100 – 110 . ISSN ( print ): 0323-9519, ISSN ( online ): 13148516, doi:<https://doi.org/10.53656/bel2022-5-10-ACHprbol>, Ref , Web of Science

[https://azbuki.bg/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Bel\\_05S\\_22\\_Stoyka-Chakurova.pdf](https://azbuki.bg/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/Bel_05S_22_Stoyka-Chakurova.pdf)

4. Constructivism as an educational philosophy, *Language and literary education in the perspectives of citizenship* , editor/s: Tatiana Angelova, publishing house: Az-buki, 2022, pp. 32-41, ISSN ( online ): e-ISBN 978-619-7667-39 -4  
<https://azbuki.bg/nachalo/test/ezikovoto-i-literaturno-obuchenie-v-perspektivite-na-grazhdanstvenostta/>

5. The concept of competence and the concept of literacy as elements of the educational content in the educational documentation in the Bulgarian language in the high school educational stage , *Bulgarian language and literature* , volume: 64, issue: 3, 2022, pp. 268-282, ISSN ( print ):0323-9519, ISSN ( online ):1314-8516, doi:10.53656/bel2022-3-4-SCH  
<https://azbuki.bg/uncategorized/koncepcziyata-za-kompetentnost-i-koncepcziyata-za-gramotnost-kato-elementi-ot-uchebnoto-sadarzhanie-v-uchebната-dokumentacziya-po-balgarski-ezik-v-gimnazialniya-obrazovatelyn-etap/>