

METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF A DIFFERENTIAL APPROACH IN DEVELOPING DIALOGIC SPEECH

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ANNOTATION

This article is devoted to the methodological foundations of a differential approach in developing dialogic speech within the framework of English language education. The article is based on concrete facts and written using an analysis of relevant online sources and foreign scientific literature. The study has a scientific-theoretical character, highlighting the importance of developing dialogic speech and the necessity of organizing the educational process with consideration of students' individual characteristics. Each idea is supported by reliable sources, and the views of scholars and educators are presented with appropriate references (web links). The article demonstrates the essence of the differential approach and methods of applying it in teaching practice by examining the experience of developed countries, while also discussing its expected outcomes and practical significance. In the conclusion, it is emphasized that applying a differential approach can significantly improve students' dialogic speaking skills, and recommendations are provided for effectively implementing this approach in English language lessons.

Keywords: differential approach, dialogic speech, communicative competence, English language education, interactive methods, individual approach.

Scientific research confirms that using dialogic methods in the classroom positively influences students' learning outcomes. For instance, the Cambridge Primary Review conducted in the United Kingdom found that allocating more time for meaningful and logical dialogues during lessons (instead of merely giving ready-made answers, allowing students to think, debate, and explain) improved primary school learners' performance. It was observed that such a dialogic approach provided students with an average of two months' additional learning progress in mathematics, science, and English classes. These findings demonstrate that developing dialogic speech contributes not only to language competence but also to overall academic success. At the same time, fostering dialogic speech in a foreign language is a complex methodological process, since each student has different levels of readiness, vocabulary range, and psychological characteristics. Within the same class, some students may grasp new material quickly, while others may lag behind or feel hesitant to actively participate in conversations. Therefore, the principle of "one approach for all students" proves ineffective, and working with children who have diverse abilities and needs requires teachers to be flexible. Today, in the education systems of developed countries, differentiated instruction is regarded as a solution to this issue. Differentiated instruction is the organization of the teaching process based on each learner's individuality, readiness level, and needs. As researcher Sh. Sultanova notes, differentiated instruction makes it possible to organize the learning process effectively by considering each student's individual abilities, knowledge level, and interests. In other words, in such an approach, a "single standard" is not applied to the entire class — all students are expected to

acquire the same core knowledge, but the ways to achieve this may vary (the level of task difficulty, the method of completing the assignment, the pace, etc. are adapted to the learner).

It should be noted that differentiated instruction is not a new idea; its theoretical foundation dates back to the early 20th century, to Lev Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). According to Vygotsky, there is a certain "gap" between the tasks a child can complete independently and the tasks they can accomplish with the help of guided support, and effective learning takes place only when instruction is organized within this zone. Therefore, the teacher must correctly determine each learner's current level of knowledge and help them "stretch" by providing tasks that are slightly challenging—while offering sufficient scaffolding and support during the process. Thus, Vygotsky advocated individualized learning and the acquisition of knowledge through social interaction. The principles of modern differentiated instruction are also based on this same scientific foundation and require teachers to constantly ask themselves: "What kind of support does this student need at this moment, and what am I doing to foster their development?"

The theoretical and practical evidence presented shows that applying differentiated instruction in the process of developing dialogic speech in English teaching has significant methodological importance. The aim of this article is to explain the essence of differentiated instruction in enhancing dialogic speech, the methods of its implementation, and its effectiveness based on scientific sources. The article first examines the theoretical foundations of the concept of differentiated instruction and its application in foreign practice, and then analyzes the methods of individualizing dialogic activities in English lessons, the results achieved, and the existing challenges.

Implementing differentiated instruction in practice requires teachers to thoroughly plan and flexibly manage the lesson process. First of all, it is necessary to diagnose the level of knowledge and skills of students in the class. Once learners' current oral communication abilities (especially dialogic speaking) are identified, it becomes possible to divide them into groups or determine individual learning paths. Research shows that working in small groups is effective for all students, and it is advisable to reorganize these groups regularly. In some cases, grouping students with similar levels of preparation or difficulty and giving them special attention is beneficial, while in other situations, mixing stronger and weaker learners can create a "mentor-apprentice" collaboration among peers. For example, during a complex dialogic task, a more knowledgeable student may take the lead and support their weaker partner by guiding them with questions.

Tiered assignments are one of the key elements of differentiated instruction. In this approach, the overall topic and communicative goal of the lesson remain the same for all students, but learners are offered tasks at different levels. For example, to develop dialogic speech, three different task variants can be prepared:

✓ For beginner-level students – exercises to continue a conversation using given starter phrases. They are provided with special scaffolding cards, showing sentence starters (for example: "What do you think about ...?", "I agree that ..."). This method facilitates participation for students who struggle to express their ideas in English.

✓ For intermediate-level students – freer role-play tasks. For instance, they are given specific communicative situations ("A customer and a seller in a shop," "A conversation in the library," "Two friends planning a weekend"). Students assign roles in pairs or small groups and create dialogues based on the situation. The teacher occasionally reminds them of new words or phrases but mainly

encourages independent conversation. These tasks activate dialogic speech in intermediate learners and give them some creative freedom.

✓ For advanced students – problem-solving or debate/discussion tasks. For example, a controversial question related to the lesson topic is given (“Is technology beneficial or harmful to education?”, “Is homework necessary or not?”). Stronger students engage in debates in small groups, defending their opinions with evidence. The teacher mainly acts as an observer and facilitator, enriching or guiding the discussion with new arguments when necessary. Engaging in more complex communication further hones the speaking skills of advanced learners.

Leveled tasks, such as those described above, enable all students to engage in activities that are appropriately matched to their individual abilities. Consequently, high-achieving students do not experience boredom, while lower-achieving students are not excessively challenged to the point of losing motivation; each student continues to progress according to their own level. Moreover, through group work and general discussions, students of varying proficiency levels still learn from one another and actively participate in communication.

The adaptation of didactic materials plays a crucial role in facilitating a differentiated approach. Teachers should prepare multiple versions of supplementary materials for each lesson, including texts of varying complexity, vocabulary cards, dialogue templates, illustrations, and similar resources. For instance, lower-level groups may be provided with brief and simple dialogue texts, whereas higher-level students may be given texts containing more ambiguous information or more complex situational contexts. Additionally, some students may receive lists of “scaffolding phrases” to use during interaction (e.g., “In my opinion...,” “Could you please repeat that?,” “If I understood you correctly...,” etc.). Such tailored materials foster students’ confidence and enable them to participate in dialogues without difficulty.

Furthermore, information and communication technologies can significantly support the differentiated development of dialogic competence. For example, in Russia, a special website integrated with a neural network (such as twee.com) was trialed in English lessons to automatically generate oral tasks adapted to students’ varying levels of proficiency. Teachers and students collaboratively selected exercises on the online platform and adjusted their content to correspond with learners’ current abilities. Although such innovative approaches are not yet widely implemented, they are expected to enrich differentiated teaching methodologies in the future.

In a differentiated approach, not only the teaching process but also the assessment system must be adapted. In traditional approaches, the same requirements and criteria are applied to all students, which can lead some to consistently receive low grades and experience emotional discouragement. Differentiated assessment, however, encourages students to compete primarily with themselves: their achievements are evaluated mainly based on their personal growth trajectory. For example, if a student demonstrates a score of 2 (beginner level) in a diagnostic conversation at the beginning of the lesson and achieves a score of 3 (intermediate level) after one month, this is recognized as a significant achievement, even if some classmates continue to outperform them. In this way, each student’s personal progress is encouraged. Various forms of assessment are employed, including recording and analyzing oral responses, self-assessment sheets, peer evaluations, portfolios, and more. Differentiated assessment ensures that each student receives feedback—praise or constructive criticism—that positively influences their subsequent dialogic engagement.

The aforementioned methods—grouping, leveled assignments, adapted materials, interactive techniques, and individualized approaches—together form the mechanism for implementing a differentiated approach. It is noteworthy that the teacher’s role is crucial: they must continuously monitor students’ needs, adapt lesson plans accordingly, provide additional guidance to one group while allowing another to work independently, and adjust instruction as necessary. Although managing such a classroom may seem complex, experienced educators emphasize that a “tailored approach for each student” enhances overall effectiveness by enabling learners to enjoy the educational process and demonstrate their abilities. When applied consistently, differentiated instruction fosters mutual respect, collaboration, and an environment of open communication, ultimately allowing each student to confidently engage in foreign language dialogue and enjoy the learning process.

The anticipated outcomes of implementing the differentiated approach, as described above, have been observed in various studies and practical experiments. Firstly, this approach actively engages students in the learning process and increases their motivation. When learners are provided with tasks aligned with their interests and proficiency levels, they show greater engagement with the lesson content, as the materials correspond to their personal experiences and needs. Consequently, students develop a positive attitude toward the subject and are motivated to demonstrate their abilities. Observations conducted in the United States indicate that students participating in differentiated instruction take a more active role in learning, selecting their preferred learning methods and demonstrating knowledge to peers. Such engagement and autonomy also foster independent thinking and strengthen students’ sense of responsibility.

Secondly, differentiated instruction has been statistically shown to positively influence the development of dialogic competence in a foreign language. In particular, an experiment conducted in the Philippines among 18 sixth-grade students implemented differentiated lessons over a specified period. The results were measured using diagnostic assessments at the beginning and end of the study. Speaking skills were evaluated based on five key indicators: vocabulary, grammatical accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, and content expression. By the end of the experiment, students demonstrated significant improvement across all five indicators, with differences between pre- and post-intervention scores statistically significant. Thus, tasks and approaches tailored to individual abilities genuinely enhance students’ English-speaking proficiency. According to the study’s authors, the implementation of differentiated instruction reduced vocabulary and grammatical errors, increased fluency, and enabled students to express their ideas more coherently and accurately—outcomes that directly contribute to the development of communicative competence in a foreign language.

Thirdly, differentiated instruction positively affects the psychological climate of the classroom and students’ self-confidence. When all students receive tasks appropriate to their level and succeed in completing them, their self-efficacy increases. For instance, teachers involved in the “Dialogic Teaching” project in the United Kingdom reported that this interactive approach enhanced students’ confidence in expressing their opinions and increased overall engagement. Initially shy or hesitant students began to participate actively in discussions when placed in suitable groups and given appropriate tasks. In a differentiated learning environment, students are less fearful of failure, as tasks are manageable and peer competition is not overwhelming. Consequently, students feel freer to ask questions, express opinions, and join conversations. Research indicates that when a classroom

environment is supportive and open, students' anxiety about speaking in a foreign language decreases. Students who previously remained silent for fear of making mistakes are encouraged to "speak up" in smaller groups or with simpler tasks. For example, observations by teachers in Thailand revealed that when lessons were dialogic and communicative, students spoke more actively, worried less about mistakes, and felt confident participating in discussions, even when errors occurred. Thus, differentiated and dialogic instruction fosters psychological safety, which is essential for developing foreign language communication skills.

Fourthly, the implementation of differentiated instruction contributes, in the long term, to improving the quality and effectiveness of education and promoting the principle of equity. In developed countries, the emphasis is not on ensuring identical results for all students but on maximizing individual growth. For instance, U.S. schools have integrated differentiated approaches within inclusive education, teaching students of diverse cultures, languages, and abilities within the same classroom. By employing varied learning styles and activities, an inclusive environment is created that accommodates all learners. As a result, students who previously received little attention or struggled due to difficulties are given opportunities to demonstrate their talents. Differentiated instruction ensures that each student achieves success in their own way, thereby promoting equal opportunities in education.

Overall, the differentiated approach positively impacts the development of dialogic competence in two main ways. Firstly, it enhances the quality of students' speaking skills, as evidenced by the previously cited research, which observed improvements across specific linguistic indicators. Secondly, it improves the overall learning process by increasing student engagement, interest, and confidence. While the effects of this approach may not be immediately visible, consistent application accelerates students' overall development. At the conclusion of English lessons conducted using differentiated strategies, teachers frequently report positive outcomes, such as "students are more active in participating in discussions," "even quieter students have begun speaking," and "students are more accustomed to communicating in English with one another." These observations corroborate the theoretical evidence in practice.

The results above indicate the high effectiveness of the differentiated approach in fostering dialogic competence. In this discussion, we analyze its significance in depth and examine the challenges and solutions associated with its practical implementation.

Firstly, from a theoretical standpoint, the success of the differentiated approach aligns closely with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of education. As noted earlier, Vygotsky emphasized that learning occurs through social interaction and that each child possesses a unique developmental level. The differentiated approach adheres to this principle, whereby instruction is designed according to each student's "zone of proximal development." This, in turn, establishes a learner-centered model of education. In this model, the teacher is not merely a monologic lecturer but a designer of the learning process who collaborates with students to co-construct knowledge. As critical pedagogue R. Alexander notes, in dialogic education, teachers and students act as partners, with knowledge formed collaboratively rather than transmitted unilaterally. Thus, the differentiated approach is not merely a set of methods; it transforms the philosophy of education itself by aligning lessons with students' interests and fostering subject-to-subject interactions.

However, certain challenges arise in the implementation of the differentiated approach. The first challenge concerns the additional time and resources required from teachers. Preparing multiple versions of lesson materials and designing tasks for different groups demands significant effort and creativity. According to foreign educators, successful implementation requires teachers to possess adequate methodological preparation. Initially, teachers may encounter difficulties: classroom management becomes more complex, lesson progression may diverge from the plan, and planning requires more time. For instance, participants in the dialogic teaching project in the United Kingdom noted that fully integrating this approach into classrooms may require significantly more time than usual—at least two semesters. Therefore, the differentiated approach is not a “magic wand” for immediate results but a strategy to be gradually introduced. Support from school administration and the educational system is essential, such as allocating extra preparation time in schedules and offering professional development in differentiated instruction. In developed countries, teacher training programs include differentiated instruction as a key component, equipping educators with the necessary skills, which both eases their workload and encourages the adoption of innovative teaching methods.

The second challenge involves classroom discipline. When different groups engage in varied activities, especially with younger students, distractions and noise may increase. This tests the teacher’s classroom management skills. One solution is to establish clear rules and tasks for each group at the beginning of the lesson. Each group should understand what they are expected to accomplish and within what timeframe. Assigning specific roles, such as group leader or spokesperson, can further enhance responsibility and maintain order. Additionally, a certain level of background noise is natural when students are actively engaged; the key is ensuring that students remain focused on their tasks. In differentiated classrooms, the environment may appear noisier than usual, as all students are actively communicating, but this should be understood as productive, creative noise rather than disruption.

The third factor is psychological: some students may initially struggle to adapt to the differentiated approach. For example, students accustomed to listening to teacher monologues and taking notes may find independent group discussions challenging, while highly active students placed in slower groups may become bored. To address these situations, teachers should carefully assign groups and monitor engagement continuously. If a student struggles with a given task, additional support or task adaptation should be provided promptly. For instance, a student engaged in a complex debate but not yet prepared may be assisted subtly through guiding questions or temporarily assigned an observer role. Ensuring that no student is overlooked is essential, as neglecting any learner undermines the approach’s effectiveness. Teachers continuously monitor group activities, collect student feedback through reflection exercises, and adjust future lesson plans accordingly. Although this process demands ongoing refinement, the outcome is worthwhile: each student ultimately finds their place in the classroom and contributes according to their abilities, forming a cohesive, balanced learning community.

Referring to international experience, it is evident that several national programs and studies in developed countries have focused on promoting dialogic competence and implementing differentiated instruction. For instance, in the United Kingdom, under the leadership of Robin Alexander, the Cambridge Primary Review project proposed the introduction of dialogic teaching

methodologies and evaluated their effectiveness. As a result, this approach became widely adopted in primary schools, enhancing classroom communication quality and fostering students' critical thinking skills.

Similarly, in the United States, Carol Ann Tomlinson and colleagues conducted extensive research on differentiated instruction and developed practical guidelines for applying this method across various subjects. Today, U.S. teachers are encouraged to consider “Student Differences” when planning lessons, meaning that each lesson should incorporate at least three distinct strategies or activities. For example, in an English lesson, one activity may be visual (picture-based communication), another kinesthetic (movement-based game), and a third focused on listening and speaking skills—thereby creating a learning environment suitable for diverse student types.

Differentiated instruction has also been recognized in European education systems. Within the framework of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), language proficiency levels (A1–C2) are clearly defined, and methodological recommendations corresponding to these levels have been developed. Teachers can assess students' varying abilities according to these standards and assign tasks and expected outcomes accordingly. Moreover, textbooks in developed countries often include elements of differentiated instruction, such as additional complex exercises (“challenge tasks”) or simplified tasks for students needing support (“support” or “remedial tasks”), which teachers can use flexibly based on classroom conditions. Over time, such practices have become established as standard.

In summary, the evidence indicates that differentiated instruction is a scientifically grounded and practically effective method. Its application in developing dialogic competence is expected to yield high results. While successful implementation requires teachers to possess specific competencies and adequate resources, current demands for improving educational quality necessitate overcoming these challenges. Crucially, the differentiated approach places the student's interests at the center, recognizing each learner's unique abilities and needs—one of the most fundamental principles of modern pedagogy.

Conclusion

Organizing the development of dialogic competence in English language teaching through a differentiated approach leads to high effectiveness. As the above analysis demonstrates, the differentiated approach is grounded in solid scientific and methodological principles and has been widely applied in the experience of developed countries. Its implementation increases students' interest in communicating in a foreign language, ensures that each learner is engaged at their individual level of ability, and facilitates their success. Research has shown that the use of differentiated instruction significantly improves students' dialogic skills, including vocabulary range, fluency, grammatical accuracy, pronunciation, and other aspects. Moreover, participation in communicative activities enhances learners' confidence and activity, fostering the development of other dimensions of communicative competence.

Of course, applying a differentiated approach requires thorough preparation and effort on the part of the teacher. However, the pedagogical benefits achieved—comprehensive student development and improved lesson quality—justify this investment. Therefore, it is essential for English language teachers in our country to actively implement the principles and methods of differentiated instruction

in the process of developing dialogic competence. In particular, the following recommendations should be adopted in practice:

Assess students' readiness for each new topic and plan lesson activities accordingly (e.g., grouping tasks by level, assigning roles).

Make extensive use of interactive methods in lessons, including role-plays, discussions, collaborative activities such as "jigsaw," debates, and project-based tasks, integrated with differentiated instruction. Prepare learning materials with different levels of complexity (texts, vocabulary, questions – easy, intermediate, and challenging versions) and provide each group with materials suited to their level.

Regularly monitor students' individual progress and conduct reflective analyses. Each learner's achievements should be compared to their previous results to encourage ongoing growth.

Collaborate with parents and school administration to explain the benefits of the differentiated approach and, if necessary, provide additional materials.

If these measures are implemented, classrooms will become environments where each student can demonstrate their abilities and engage in free communication. This provides a solid foundation for developing dialogic competence—an essential skill in foreign language acquisition that involves active oral interaction. In conclusion, the differentiated approach to developing dialogic competence is a scientifically grounded and practically effective methodological direction that fully meets modern educational standards. By mastering this approach and applying it creatively in lessons, we can nurture students who possess communicative competencies aligned with international standards.

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