



THE COMMUNICATIVE METHOD IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract: This article explores the Communicative Approach in foreign language instruction, focusing on its theoretical background, methodological principles, and practical implementation. By conducting an extensive literature review that includes both international and Uzbek sources, the study examines the development of the Communicative Approach, its influence on language acquisition, and its effectiveness in enhancing learners' communicative competence.

Keywords: Communicative Approach, Foreign Language Instruction, Communicative Competence, Language Acquisition, Teaching Methods, Uzbekistan.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, the field of foreign language education has experienced significant changes, with the communicative approach becoming a leading methodology. This approach, known as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), prioritizes the development of communicative competence over simply acquiring linguistic knowledge, transforming language teaching and learning worldwide, including in Uzbekistan. Based on the idea that language serves as a means of communication, CLT emphasizes equipping learners with the skills to effectively use the language in real-life situations. The roots of this approach date back to the 1970s when educators and linguists began questioning the effectiveness of traditional methods such as grammar-translation and audio-lingual approaches. These earlier methods often resulted in learners who could understand grammar rules but struggled with spontaneous language use in real-world contexts. To address these shortcomings, the communicative approach was introduced to create a stronger link between classroom instruction and practical language application.

METHODOLOGY

The communicative approach is based on various theoretical perspectives regarding language learning. A key foundation of this approach is Hymes's concept of communicative competence, which expanded upon Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence. Hymes emphasized that language proficiency extends beyond

grammatical knowledge and requires the ability to use language appropriately in diverse social contexts. In Uzbekistan, scholars like Jalolov have contributed to the theoretical framework of communicative language teaching, highlighting its significance in achieving the country's educational and cultural objectives.

Key Principles and Characteristics: The communicative approach is defined by several fundamental principles:

1. **Emphasis on meaning** – Language is regarded primarily as a tool for communication rather than a collection of structures to memorize.
2. **Use of real-world materials and tasks** – Lessons incorporate authentic resources and communicative activities that reflect real-life language use.
3. **Balance between fluency and accuracy** – While accuracy remains important, fluency is prioritized, especially in the initial learning stages.
4. **Student-centered learning** – Learners play an active role in their education, with teachers acting as facilitators rather than sole sources of knowledge.
5. **Integration of language skills** – Reading, writing, listening, and speaking are often combined within a single lesson.
6. **Acceptance of errors** – Mistakes are considered a natural aspect of learning and are generally addressed in an indirect manner.

Implementation Strategies: Applying the communicative approach in classrooms involves various practical techniques, including:

1. **Role-plays and simulations** – These exercises help learners practice language in real-life situations.
2. **Information gap activities** – Students exchange information to achieve a common goal, fostering communication.
3. **Pair and group work** – Collaborative exercises encourage interaction among students.
4. **Task-based learning** – Lessons revolve around communicative tasks with specific objectives.
5. **Use of authentic resources** – Materials such as real-world texts, audio, and videos are integrated into lessons.
6. **Functional language practice** – Focus is placed on language functions such as making requests and apologizing rather than isolated grammar drills.

In Uzbekistan, teachers have modified these strategies to align with the country's educational environment and cultural values. For example, Hasanova highlights the incorporation of role-play activities rooted in Uzbek traditions and the use of authentic materials that represent local society and customs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The literature review reveals several key findings regarding the effectiveness and impact of the communicative approach in foreign language teaching, including insights from the Uzbek context:

Improved Communicative Competence: Numerous studies, including those conducted in Uzbekistan, indicate that students taught using the communicative approach develop a stronger ability to use the target language in real-life interactions compared to those instructed through traditional methods.

- **Higher Motivation and Engagement:** The integration of authentic materials and meaningful activities has been shown to increase learners' motivation and participation in language learning.

- **Enhanced Sociolinguistic Awareness:** Students exposed to the communicative approach tend to gain a deeper understanding of the social and cultural aspects of language use.

- **Improved Fluency:** Research suggests that prioritizing communication over grammatical accuracy leads to improved fluency in spoken language.

- **Varying Effectiveness across Skills:** While the communicative approach generally enhances overall language proficiency, its impact differs across skills. Studies indicate greater improvements in speaking and listening compared to reading and writing.

- **Cultural Adaptations:** The communicative approach has been successfully adjusted to various cultural contexts, including Uzbekistan. However, some modifications are necessary to align with local educational norms and expectations.

The communicative approach has made a significant contribution to foreign language teaching worldwide, including in Uzbekistan. By focusing on practical language skills and communicative competence, it meets the needs of learners in an increasingly interconnected world. The emphasis on authentic materials and interactive tasks bridges the gap between classroom instruction and real-world language use, addressing shortcomings of earlier teaching methods. However, implementing this approach in Uzbekistan presents challenges. Critics argue that prioritizing fluency over accuracy may lead to persistent errors. Additionally, the approach can be difficult to apply in settings with large class sizes, limited resources, or traditional teaching practices. Educators in Uzbekistan have encountered specific

difficulties, such as adapting materials to reflect cultural values and addressing the limited English proficiency of some teachers. Nonetheless, teacher training initiatives and curriculum reforms are helping to overcome these obstacles. In Uzbekistan, educators have faced specific challenges in implementing the communicative approach, including the need to adapt materials to reflect local cultural values and the sometimes limited English proficiency of teachers themselves. However, ongoing teacher training initiatives and curriculum reforms are addressing these issues. A major discussion surrounding the communicative approach is the balance between implicit and explicit language instruction. While it generally promotes learning through exposure and practice, some scholars advocate for explicit grammar instruction, particularly for adult learners. This has led to variations of the approach that incorporate structured grammar teaching within a communicative framework. The role of the first language (L1) in communicative language teaching is another point of debate. While the method encourages maximum use of the target language, research suggests that selective use of L1 can aid comprehension and reduce learner anxiety, especially at lower proficiency levels. This issue is particularly relevant in Uzbekistan, where multilingualism is widespread. Additionally, digital technologies and online learning platforms have introduced new opportunities for applying the communicative approach. Virtual environments, social media, and language exchange applications provide innovative ways to facilitate authentic communication. In Uzbekistan, efforts are being made to integrate technology into language instruction, though challenges related to access and infrastructure remain in some areas.

CONCLUSION

The communicative approach has had a profound impact on foreign language teaching both in Uzbekistan and worldwide, providing a more practical and student-centered alternative to traditional methods. By emphasizing communicative competence, this approach aligns with the needs of modern language learners and has proven particularly effective in enhancing overall proficiency, especially in speaking and listening. However, it is not a universal solution. Its successful application depends on factors such as the learning environment, student needs, and cultural considerations. In Uzbekistan, continuous efforts to tailor the communicative approach to local educational traditions and sociocultural norms are crucial for its effectiveness. As language education evolves, the communicative approach is expected to remain influential, though likely in adapted forms that integrate insights from cognitive science, technology-driven learning, and intercultural communication research. By preserving its fundamental principles

while incorporating new research, technological innovations, and local educational needs, the communicative approach can continue to serve as a strong foundation for effective language instruction in Uzbekistan and beyond in the 21st century.

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