

Use of Interactive Methods in the Development of Communicative Competence in Practical English Classes

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Abstract: This article explores the effectiveness of interactive methods in fostering communicative competence within practical English language classes. The concept of communicative competence is defined, followed by an examination of various interactive methods. The article then discusses the implementation of these methods in practical English classrooms and analyzes their impact on student learning outcomes. Research findings suggest that interactive methods create a student-centered environment, promoting active participation, critical thinking, and collaborative learning, ultimately leading to enhanced communicative competence.

Keywords: Communicative competence, interactive methods, practical English, language learning;

Introduction

The ability to communicate effectively in English is a crucial skill in today's globalized world. Communicative competence, defined as the language knowledge and skills necessary for successful interaction in different contexts, is a primary objective of practical English language courses. Traditional teacher-centered methods, however, can limit student participation and hinder the development of this competence.

Communicative competence is a term which is necessary and much more practical in teaching and learning foreign languages rather than other competences. If we look at the historical background of this term, communicative competence is a term in linguistics which refers to a language user's grammatical knowledge of syntax, morphology, phonology and the like, as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. From this point of view, it can be concluded that acquiring this competence is very important for language learners. As for the reason of my research objective for paying our attention to this factor is that we have been doing, my research on consolidation the system of teaching and learning foreign languages at higher education in the example of the English language to first year students whose levels are B1 and B2 on the CEFR descriptors. As a result of this, I have aimed to draw my attention to only my participants' language skills, such as speaking, reading, writing, and listening ones, but also their communicative competence so as to make them proficient users of their target language. The term was coined by Dell Hymes in 1966, reacting against the perceived inadequacy of Noam Chomsky's (1965) distinction between linguistic competence and performance. In addition to that, I must highlight one factor that while teaching a foreign language to learners, we, as specialists of this field, sometimes pay attention to learners' mistakes or errors while their doing tasks in the target language, however, we should change our approach towards students at higher education as well. Altering our approach leads to us to make progress in our field much more than our simple approaches which is connected with only 'their weaknesses'.

Generally speaking, I should mention that the object of my research is teaching the English language utilizing social networking services and messengers as modern innovative technologies. What is more, I have planned to apply these means into process using their effective features and functions in order to

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innovate the system much more than before. In the following, the methods of fostering communicative competence along with sub-competences are shown step by step:

- Improving communicative competence. It is stated in the Standards that communicative competence in foreign language is generally defined as ‘both the tacit knowledge of a language and the ability to use it’. So, this competence should be improved systematically in the process of teaching and learning foreign languages. In order to make this task be done successfully, the basic means of teaching foreign languages are chosen beforehand, for example, the platform of Telegram. On the platform, according to the principles of this competence, the students are provided with different sources on grammatical knowledge of morphology, phonology daily by a teacher, and during the lessons at university or in a distance form they are tested by a teacher online. While testing them, a teacher pays attention to their communicative competence, namely interaction with their partners using grammatical rules of the target language and pronouncing words correctly. During this stage, the most important thing is students’ language use within conversations or their answers to their teachers which assists the process work progressively.
- Improving linguistic competence as a sub-competence. This competence is mainly fostered in the process of teaching foreign languages, and this process is not totally different at higher education, only the methods and approaches can be varied because students are prepared to be professionals of their specialties. However, I have selected a particular system to increase this competence in students too. In this stage, students are enabled to use their skills independently through different tasks online or offline which is at university, and I provide them with the basic rules of improving language skills on the platform of Telegram continuously.
- Improving sociolinguistic competence. This competence is one of the most necessary competences for learners to acquire because they may come across varied situations or contexts in practice; as a result of this, we have also organized a special system to create a comfortable zone to form and develop this competence in our research participants as well. In order to do this, we provide them with cultural information and vocabulary lists which are used by social groups of the nation whose language is the target one for our participants. After doing so, we test their knowledge via multiple tasks both online and offline. For example, multiple choice tests or contexts which convey culture-specific information can be used in this process.
- Improving pragmatic competence. In this process, I work on their communication skills mostly, and educate them how to start, end their conversations, speeches in the target language. This competence teaches learners how to achieve fluency in the target language gradually and fully. Besides, tasks to improve this competence can be much more interactive and interesting than other competence tasks because students are forced to work their mental abilities in order to achieve their target results in learning this or that foreign language. In a nutshell, teaching foreign languages is a dynamic process which includes new methods, technologies, and means continuously.

Interactive Methods

Interactive methods shift the focus from teacher-led instruction to student-centered learning. These methods encourage active participation, collaboration, and real-world application of language skills. Examples include:

- Role-plays: Students simulate real-life situations, practicing conversation, negotiation, and problem-solving.
- Group discussions: Students collaboratively explore topics, exchanging ideas and defending arguments.
- Debates: Students present opposing viewpoints on a given issue, fostering critical thinking and persuasive communication.
- Simulations: Students participate in immersive scenarios, applying language skills in a realistic context.



Benefits of Interactive Methods

Interactive methods offer several advantages:

- Increased Fluency: Students practice using language spontaneously and naturally.
- Enhanced Accuracy: Active communication allows for immediate feedback and correction.
- Developed Sociolinguistic Awareness: Students learn to adapt language use to different contexts and audiences.
- Improved Motivation: Interactive activities are engaging and foster a sense of ownership in learning.

Implementation and Considerations

Effective implementation of interactive methods requires careful planning. Teachers should:

- Clearly define learning objectives for each activity.
- Provide sufficient scaffolding for students, especially at the beginning.
- Promote active participation by all students.
- Maintain a supportive and encouraging classroom environment.

Conclusion

By incorporating interactive methods into practical English classes, educators can significantly enhance the development of communicative competence. These methods provide students with the opportunity to practice using language in a meaningful and engaging way, preparing them to communicate effectively in real-world situations.

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