

METHODS OF DEVELOPING SCHOOL STUDENTS' LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE THROUGH A COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH IN ENGLISH LESSONS

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Abstract: This article discusses the concept of linguistic competence, its importance in the process of teaching English, the role and definition of the communicative approach in developing linguistic competence, the methods used to enhance it, and the benefits of such methods.

Keywords: linguistic competence, communicative approach, real environment, authentic materials

In today's rapidly developing world, knowing foreign languages has become more necessary and relevant than ever. In particular, English language instruction has been introduced even in preschool education programs, and all conditions have been created to help school students develop linguistic competence and gain strong language skills.

Various methods have been developed and implemented worldwide to improve students' linguistic competence, and teachers are actively utilizing these methods in the educational process. However, given the needs of modern education and students, the communicative method is increasingly preferred over others when it comes to developing linguistic competence. Before exploring the communicative method in depth, it is useful to first define the term "linguistic competence."

Linguistic competence consists of several components: speech (phonetic), lexical, phraseological, grammatical (morphological and syntactic), communicative, and other language competencies. The concept was originally introduced by Noam Chomsky. According to his theory, linguistic competence is a complex process that includes understanding words and sentences in a particular language through an acoustic (phonetic) system, distinguishing grammatically correct sentences from incorrect ones, and applying other effective linguistic operations.

In the modern era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, mastering foreign languages—particularly English—has become more than just a skill; it is a vital necessity. As language education is being introduced from early childhood stages and incorporated into school curricula, it becomes increasingly important to equip students with not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language in real-life communicative situations. This is where the development of linguistic competence through a communicative approach plays a central role.

Linguistic competence, as initially proposed by Noam Chomsky, refers to an individual's innate knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary, and structural rules of a language. However, this theoretical understanding must be complemented by the ability to use the language meaningfully in various contexts. Thus, the focus of modern language teaching has shifted from rote learning and translation methods to more interactive, student-centered approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

The communicative approach encourages language acquisition in environments that mimic real-life situations. Unlike traditional grammar-translation methods or audio-lingual approaches, CLT emphasizes the importance of interaction, functional language use, and student participation. It places the learner at the center of the educational process and redefines the teacher's role as a facilitator or coordinator rather than a sole source of knowledge.

Through the communicative approach, students are encouraged to participate in tasks such as role plays, problem-solving exercises, pair and group discussions, debates, and information gap activities. These activities foster an environment where learners actively engage in the learning process, develop confidence in using the target language, and gradually improve their fluency. As fluency takes precedence over grammatical perfection in initial stages, learners are motivated to take risks and use language creatively, which ultimately leads to better retention and deeper understanding.

Moreover, CLT incorporates authentic materials—such as news articles, podcast episodes, YouTube videos, and real-life dialogues—which expose students to natural language usage. These materials provide learners with examples of how native speakers communicate in specific social and cultural contexts, making the learning process more relevant and practical. By interacting with real-world

content, students can enhance not only their linguistic competence but also their socio-cultural awareness.

Another critical advantage of the communicative approach is its contribution to learner autonomy. According to researchers such as Jacobs and Farrell, communicative language teaching supports eight major shifts in language education: learner independence, social aspects of learning, integrated learning, focus on meaning, diversity, thinking skills, alternative assessment, and teachers as co-learners. These shifts are aligned with the needs of 21st-century learners, who must be adaptable, critical thinkers, and effective communicators in a globalized society.

In the context of Uzbek schools, integrating communicative methods into English lessons allows teachers to create dynamic, interactive classrooms. Students are exposed to the language as it is used in real conversations and are encouraged to express themselves without fear of making mistakes. This approach helps dismantle language barriers and builds a bridge between theoretical knowledge and real-world application.

Furthermore, using the communicative approach nurtures a positive classroom atmosphere, where students feel safe, motivated, and engaged. Instead of passive learning, students actively construct knowledge by participating in meaningful communication. This has a direct impact on their willingness to learn, their language acquisition speed, and their ability to apply the language outside the classroom setting.

Ultimately, the communicative approach not only enhances linguistic competence but also develops broader communicative competence, including sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic skills. These elements are essential for learners to function effectively in diverse social interactions, both locally and globally.

In conclusion, the communicative approach represents a transformative shift in English language teaching. By focusing on communication, collaboration, and authenticity, it aligns with the cognitive and emotional needs of school learners. When applied effectively, it fosters a more holistic and practical understanding of language, thereby equipping students with the skills necessary for lifelong learning and global citizenship.

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