DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Abstract: *This article explores the role of interactive technologies in developing communicative competence in language education. Grounded in sociocultural and communicative language teaching (CLT) theories, the study investigates how digital tools such as video conferencing platforms, collaborative whiteboards, and language learning apps enhance learners' speaking, listening, and interaction skills. Using qualitative data from classroom observations and teacher interviews, the study highlights how technology fosters real-time communication, authentic language use, and learner autonomy. The findings suggest that, when thoughtfully integrated, interactive technologies significantly improve communicative competence by providing meaningful, task-based, and socially engaging learning experiences.*

Keywords: *Communicative competence, interactive technology, language education, digital tools, online collaboration, speaking skills, EFL.*

In language education, the development of communicative competence—the ability to use language appropriately in real-life situations—remains a central goal. Traditional methods, while useful for grammar and vocabulary instruction, often fall short in offering students sufficient opportunities for authentic interaction and communicative practice.

The rise of digital tools has introduced new avenues for language learning. Interactive technologies such as Zoom, Google Meet, Padlet, Jamboard, and mobile apps have expanded classroom boundaries and enabled learners to communicate beyond the constraints of physical space. These platforms offer instant feedback, real-time collaboration, and authentic communication contexts—all of which are crucial for fostering communicative competence.

This study explores how interactive technologies can be employed to enhance communicative competence among language learners. It examines the theoretical basis for their use, practical implementation strategies, and the observed outcomes in real classroom settings.

The concept of communicative competence was first defined by Hymes (1972) and later elaborated by Canale and Swain (1980), who outlined its core components: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. These competencies

require more than linguistic knowledge—they depend on the ability to use language in social contexts effectively.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes real-life communication and interactive tasks, aligning well with the capabilities of modern digital tools. According to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, language learning occurs through social interaction, and technology facilitates this interaction in both synchronous and asynchronous modes.

Recent studies (Chapelle, 2009; Godwin-Jones, 2018) have shown that technology-supported language environments increase learner engagement and provide authentic communication opportunities. Virtual exchanges, online discussions, and collaborative digital projects allow students to practice language in meaningful, goal-oriented contexts.

Despite the benefits, effective use of interactive technologies requires clear instructional goals, teacher digital literacy, and access to infrastructure. Without pedagogical planning, technology risks becoming a passive delivery tool rather than an active learning medium.

This research used a qualitative case study approach to explore the effects of interactive technologies on communicative competence in language classrooms.

Participants:

- 5 EFL teachers and 60 B1–B2 level students from two language schools.
- Teachers had experience integrating interactive digital tools into communicative tasks.

Data Collection:

- Classroom observations during speaking-focused lessons using Zoom, breakout rooms, Jamboard, and collaborative apps.
- Semi-structured interviews with teachers.
- Student feedback forms regarding engagement and perceived communication improvement.

Focus:

- How interactive tools were used to facilitate speaking and listening.
- Student participation and interaction patterns.
- Teacher strategies and challenges.

Teachers reported that interactive technologies created a dynamic and communicative environment where learners felt more confident speaking English. Breakout rooms in Zoom, for example, allowed students to engage in small-group discussions, role-plays, and peer feedback sessions in a low-pressure setting.

Digital whiteboards (Jamboard, Miro) and collaborative documents (Google Docs) facilitated real-time group writing and brainstorming, encouraging students to negotiate meaning, correct each other, and use target language naturally.

Student feedback indicated that using familiar technologies helped reduce anxiety and increased willingness to speak. Many appreciated the flexibility of online interaction, especially asynchronous tools like video comments or discussion boards, which gave them time to reflect and prepare.

Teachers emphasized the importance of task design. Activities that were communicative, meaningful, and goal-oriented—such as problem-solving tasks, simulations, and digital storytelling—resulted in higher learner engagement and better use of the target language.

Challenges included occasional technical problems (e.g., connectivity), uneven student participation in online platforms, and the need for structured guidance. Teachers also noted the time required to design and monitor interactive tasks effectively.

The results support the view that interactive technologies, when integrated purposefully, can significantly enhance communicative competence. These tools align with CLT and sociocultural principles by providing learners with opportunities to use language in authentic, social, and task-based contexts.

The use of breakout rooms, collaborative tools, and real-time feedback mechanisms fostered spontaneous interaction, peer correction, and negotiation of meaning—all essential for developing discourse and strategic competence.

Moreover, learner autonomy increased as students had more control over their interaction pace and style. The asynchronous elements (e.g., Padlet, VoiceThread) supported shy or hesitant learners who typically struggle in face-to-face discussions.

However, the study highlights the necessity of **teacher mediation**. Technology alone is insufficient; meaningful learning occurs when tasks are communicative, learner-centered, and embedded within a coherent instructional plan. Teachers must be equipped with both technological and pedagogical skills to design activities that promote real communication.

Interactive technologies offer powerful tools to develop communicative competence in language learners. By enabling real-time communication, fostering collaboration, and supporting learner autonomy, these tools extend the reach of language instruction beyond traditional classroom boundaries.

To fully benefit from these technologies, educators must align their use with communicative goals, receive proper training, and provide clear guidance to students. When implemented thoughtfully, interactive digital tools can bridge the gap between language knowledge and language use, ultimately preparing learners for authentic communication in real-world contexts.

Future research could examine long-term effects of interactive technologies on fluency and sociolinguistic competence, as well as explore the role of AI-based platforms in supporting personalized language interaction.

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