

THE IMPACT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN EL LEARNING

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Abstract. This article deals with the importance of improving students' communicative competence and the adoption of CLT in Uzbekistan. The educational authority of Uzbekistan seems to be rather behind implementing this new approach of methodology of ELT. Thus, the researcher is intending to further investigate the impact of communicative competence in EL learning and widen its implementation in our country by advocating effective communicative and interactive ways of teaching.

Key words: communicative competence, information-gap activities, task-completion activities, information-gathering activities, role-plays

As dozens of various theories, methods and approaches of foreign language teaching and learning have been introduced in recent years, opting for the appropriate ones of them has been an issue of debate among FL teachers and methodologists. Language, according to many researchers, is a means of communication, and it comprises four main skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. To acquire these language skills, a language learner needs not only to learn grammatical rules but to practice such skills till s/he gets used to all of them. Whenever a student acquires the skills of the language and manages to use them effectively and appropriately according to the context in which s/he is involved, we can say that this learner has achieved the required level of the communicative competence [1; 12].

In order to define the notion 'communicative competence', it should be noted that the notion consists of two words, of which the word 'competence' is the main one, and they must be, first of all, defined separately. The term 'competence' is defined as the knowledge, ability or capability, while the word 'communicative' has the meaning of exchange or interaction. So, according to Ahmed & Pawar [1; 11], communicative competence is nothing but a 'competence to communicate'; that is, having the ability that allows the person to communicate in order to fulfill communicative needs.

Many scholars and researchers who worked on CLT came to conclusion that this approach proved to be effective and positively-influential on learners' acquisition of foreign language. In order to highlight what positive impacts CLT approach can have on language learners, it is crucial to point out some kinds of communicative activities which can be given to the students in the classroom in order to achieve the learners' communicative competence whether oral or written communicative activities. The activities below are proposed by Richards [3;36] as the main activity types of CLT which develop learners' fluency and accuracy in language use:

a. Information-gap activities. In real communication, people normally communicate in order to get information they do not possess. This is known as an information gap. More authentic communication is likely to occur in the classroom if students go beyond practice of language forms for their own sake and use their linguistic and communicative resources in order to obtain information [3;19]. One of the popular information-gap activities is called 'Describe and Draw'. In this activity one student has a picture which he or she must not show his or her partner, while the partner draws a picture without looking at the original, so the one with the picture will give instructions, and the 'artist' will ask questions. 'Describe and Draw' has many elements of an ideal speaking activity as it is highly motivating, there is a real purpose for communication taking place.

b. Task-completion activities. These are puzzles, games, map-reading, and other kinds of classroom tasks in which the focus is on using one's language resources to complete a task. Task-completion activities are helpful in meeting the immediate needs of the learners and provide a framework for creating classes that are interesting and that can address student needs.

c. Information-gathering activities. These are student-conducted surveys, interviews, and searches in which students are required to use their linguistic resources to collect information. Conducting questionnaires and surveys is one

way of provoking conversation or opinion exchange, and these types of activities are helpful to motivate students to activate natural use of a target language.

d. Role plays, activities in which students are assigned roles and improvise a scene or exchange based on given information or clues. A study by García-Carbonell, Rising, Montero & Watts [2; 484] on the role of simulation and game activities on communicative competence acquisition of a foreign language revealed that such activities are more effective than formal instruction in enhancing the communicative competence.

e. It is appropriate to give students a task to answer simple questions after reading a simple text. Students are expected to be able to find answers in the text, but some effort on their part is also required. It is possible to perform substitution exercises to reinforce the corresponding grammatical constructions. Moreover, they can be asked to fill in the forms developed in advance, as well as to listen to the text and respond to the questions in written form. Mentioned assignments may vary. For example, we can ask students to answer everyday questions within 3-4 sentences in written form. Questions should be relevant and interesting to students to keep the motivational component. And students may be encouraged to write the main idea of the text using simple linguistic patterns. [4;133]

While doing a research it was obvious that communicative competence is closely related to the term CLT, Communicative Language Teaching, which has been acquiring an increasing popularity amongst educational practitioners as well as professional researchers since its inception in Britain in the late 1960s. Communicative Language Teaching is a novel approach in teaching FL leading to genuine communication rather than simply teaching the target language's vocabulary, grammar and structure; moreover, the main activity types of CLT which develop learners' fluency and accuracy in language use are information gap, role play, task completion activities and etc.

Although the educational authority of Uzbekistan is rather behind implementing this new approach of methodology of ELT, our researchers and methodologists have recently realized the importance of improving students' communicative competence and have been making efforts to spread the adoption of CLT in Uzbekistan. For this reason, the researcher is intending to further investigate the impact of communicative competence in EL learning and widen its implementation in our country by advocating effective communicative and interactive way of teaching.

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