

## Communicative Teaching of a Foreign Language and its Practical Significance

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**Abstract.** Recently, the concept of "communicativeness" and "communicative approach" in teaching have become especially popular in the field of foreign language studies. In foreign methodological literature, this concept is referred to as Communicative language teaching (CLT) or Communicative approach. In a broad sense, these terms denote such an approach in learning a foreign language, in which communication, the process of interaction with a speech partner is both a means and a goal of learning. This article focuses on these issues.

**Keywords:** communication, learning goal, learning ability, communicative learning, principle of communicative tasks, replica.

This approach to learning appeared in the 70s-80s of the last century as a result of numerous independent research and developments both in Europe and in the United States. On the one hand, this happened because with the creation of the European Economic Community, the demand for foreign languages increased significantly, especially in Europe. This increased demand has led to teachers having to change their approach to teaching foreign languages. Traditional methods, such as grammar-translation, meant that students begin to learn a foreign language several years before they have to use it in real life. But these settings were not suitable for adult learners who were busy with work, and for schoolchildren whose learning abilities were not yet sufficiently developed. As a result, it became clear that a higher impact approach was needed for these categories of students.

On the other hand, a significant contribution to the development of the communicative approach in teaching foreign languages contributed by scientists. For example, in the UK, applied linguistics experts questioned the effectiveness of the situational learning method that was dominant in the country at that time. This happened partly in response to Chomsky's ideas about the nature of language. Chomsky demonstrated that the then widespread structural theories of language could not explain all the creative diversity of the real communication process [7]. In addition, British linguists Christopher Candling and Henry Widdowson found that increased attention to the structure of a language does not contribute to its better acquisition. They believed that by mastering grammatical

structures, students also need to develop communication skills and understand the functions of language.

In the United States, linguist and anthropologist Dell Hymes developed the concept of communicative competence. This was done in response to Chomsky's concept of the linguistic competence of the ideal native speaker. Communicative competence clarified what it means to “know a language”<sup>1</sup>. In addition to the speaker's mastery of the structures of language, communicative competence also implies the ability to adequately use these structural elements in various communication situations. This idea was cleverly formulated in Hymes's statement that “there are rules of usage, without which the rules of grammar are useless”. Hymes did not develop a specific definition of the concept of “communicative competence,” but subsequent authors, in particular M. Canale, associated this concept with foreign language teaching.

In Russia, scientific research was also carried out on this topic and developed the concept of communicative teaching a foreign language. Russian scientist, founder of the Lipetsk Methodical School, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, E. I. Passov, created his own theory of communicative foreign language education. According to this theory, the concept of communicability is considered from two perspectives: theoretical, i.e. as a category (concept), and practical (empirical), i.e. as technology. Interpreting communication as a technology or strategy of education, E. I. Passov identifies its following characteristics<sup>2</sup>:

- Motivation of any action and any activity of the Student;
- The purposefulness of any action and any student's activities,
- Personal meaning in all the student’s work.
- Speech and mental activity, i.e. constant involvement in the process of solving communication problems, constant connection of cognitive and communicative thinking.
- An attitude of personal interest, which involves the expression of a personal attitude towards problems and subjects of discussion.

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<sup>1</sup> Hymes, D. H. *Sociolinguistics. Selected Readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Education, 1972 pp. 269–293

<sup>2</sup> Пассов, Е. И. *Коммуникативное иноязычное образование: готовим к диалогу культур [Текст]: Пособие для учителей учреждений, обеспечивающих получение общего среднего образования / Е. И. Пассов; Мн.: Лексис, 2003.— 184с*

- The connection of communication with various forms of activity - educational and cognitive, social, labor, sports, artistic, everyday.
- Interaction of communicators, i.e. coordination of actions, mutual assistance, support for each other, cooperation, trusting cooperation.
- Contact in three levels: emotional, semantic and personal.
- Situationalism, which is expressed in the fact that communication between students and teachers and students among themselves in the process of mastering speech material can always be characterized as a system of relationships generated by the situational positions of the communicants.
- Functionality, meaning that the process of mastering speech material always occurs in the presence of speech functions that have priority over the form of speech units.
- Heuristics as the organization of material and the process of its assimilation, excluding arbitrary memorization and reproduction of what has been memorized.
- Content as an objective characteristic and informativeness as a subjective characteristic of educational materials;
- Problematicism as a way of organizing and presenting educational materials;
- Expressiveness in the use of verbal and non-verbal means of communication.

Only compliance with all the listed parameters and their optimal use gives the right to call the educational process communicative. It is this quality of the model that is the basis of this concept.

According to modern foreign researchers, the main distinctive characteristics of communicative learning are the following<sup>3</sup>:

1. In a statement, content is primary (and not structure or form).
2. Dialogues, if used, are based on communicative functions and are not usually memorized.
3. New vocabulary is introduced only in context.

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<sup>3</sup> Finocchiaro, M. *The Functional-Notional Approach: From Theory to Practice.* / M. Finocchiaro, C. Brumfit.— New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.— 180 p

4. Learning a language means learning to communicate.
5. The goal of training is effective communication.  
in a foreign language.
6. Drilling tasks can be used, but only occasionally.
7. Pronunciation should be understandable (but not necessarily like a native speaker).
8. When explaining grammar, any means is used that benefits the students and is appropriate to their age, interests, etc.

In practice, when teaching, for example, grammar

communicative approach means the following sequence of actions<sup>4</sup>:

- First, students read the text. The emphasis is on  
on their active involvement in the learning process.
- Then examples from the text are highlighted for this  
grammar rule and are analyzed by the students themselves.
- Further, these examples are used as a basis for tasks that are aimed both at developing the structure  
itself and its form, and at the semantic meaning that we can convey using this structure.
- And finally, students themselves must find similar examples in the text and derive the  
corresponding grammatical rule.
- The word “approach” opens up wide opportunities for the teacher in teaching a foreign language.  
That is, thanks to this interpretation, the teacher receives the right to teach a foreign language in the  
way that best suits the specific learning situation.
- This also means that teachers are free to interpret teaching rules depending on the tasks they are  
given.

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<sup>4</sup> Thacker, C. *English in Mind. Teacher’s Book 1.* / C. Thacker, C. Pelteret.— Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.— 130 p

– Teachers can use a wide range of tasks and exercises when teaching a foreign language.

- And most importantly, this should help us avoid a situation where students who are “competent in grammar” turn out to be “incompetent in communication”.

The last point means that there are students who have a good command of grammatical material, know all the rules, can easily construct grammatical structures, but when it comes to real communication, they have problems. Accordingly, what we need to strive for is to make our students “communicatively competent.” This doesn't mean they have to be "grammatically incompetent", grammar is of course very important. But no less important is the connection between form and meaning, the function of the grammatical structure being studied. Therefore, it is very important that after students become familiar with a certain grammatical construction, learn to transform and combine it, and do a sufficient number of exercises with a given execution mechanism, they also learn to easily and freely use this construction in real communication situations. This is where the full significance of the communicative approach to learning comes into play.

Grammatical accuracy will be more important if a teacher wants to achieve clarity in students' statements, correct their speech, and measure the success of their learning. Freer speech practice gives students more choice, can be more vague, and implies less involvement from the teacher. Communicatively-oriented learning implies a personality-oriented approach, the emphasis is shifted to the students themselves, they are given more initiative and freedom in the classroom. But this does not mean that foreign language lessons are spontaneous. They are clearly structured by the teacher, who plays a very important role in the learning process. He carries out enormous preparatory work, organizes communication, gives communicatively significant tasks. Work on verbal literacy serves as the basis for verbal fluency. The communicative approach involves teaching students vocabulary, grammatical structures and functions, as well as communication strategies, so that they can successfully solve the problems they face in the communication process.

Thanks to its universality, flexibility and practicality, the communicative approach remains the focus of attention of both Russian and foreign scientists, continues to develop, and will be a subject for research, improvement and development in the practice of teaching foreign languages in Russia and abroad for a long time.

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