

# The Communicative Method in Foreign Language Teaching – a Means and an Approach to Actively Engaging Students in Speaking

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## **Abstract:**

This article explores the communicative method in foreign language teaching, emphasizing how students can express their personal views, approve or reject their teacher's or peers' opinions, and engage in discussions using various speech situations. It highlights how the communicative-action approach considers students' experiences, worldviews, interests, and emotions while learning a foreign language. Unlike traditional approaches that rely on prepared topics or texts, this method focuses on discussing real-life issues.

**Keywords:** communicative method, communicative-action approach, communication, situation, discussion, problem.

## **Introduction**

In modern foreign language teaching, the primary objective is to create a free and interactive foreign language environment that enables communication in various situations. The communicative-action approach plays a crucial role in achieving this goal by facilitating interaction in all aspects of language learning. Through this approach, teachers and students become equal partners, achieving maximum engagement in real communication.

The communicative method shifts from social interaction to communicative situations, which can be real, conditional, imaginary, or fairy-tale-like. These scenarios should align with students' age and psychological characteristics. Role-playing, dramatization, and improvisation not only enhance students' intellectual abilities but also develop their psychological readiness for communication.

By participating in discussions and using different speech situations, students express their personal viewpoints, agree or disagree with their peers or teacher, and internalize the learning process. The effectiveness of language acquisition increases when students personally relate to the situations being discussed. Using visual aids such as situational cards, photographs, and newspaper clippings helps students imagine characters and participants, encouraging them to invent new interactions.

### **The Communicative-Action Approach**

This approach integrates students' experiences, worldviews, interests, and emotions into foreign language learning. Instead of relying on pre-prepared topics or texts, lessons focus on discussing real-life problems. Students are encouraged to explore non-equivalent vocabulary, understand non-verbal communication, and recognize sociolinguistic connotations related to the target language's culture, traditions, and customs.

Students are naturally curious about their peers' lives, contemporary music, and sports, which makes incorporating such information into lessons essential. This not only enhances their interest in the language but also fosters socio-cultural competencies.

In teaching grammar, it is important to show students the practical function of grammatical rules in conveying meaning. Instead of traditional drills, activities such as role-playing, pair work, and comparative exercises prove more effective in developing logical and analytical thinking skills.

#### **Developing Speaking Skills**

When teaching speaking skills, it is essential to consider the relationship between monologue, dialogue (ethnic character dialogue, inquiry dialogue, persuasive dialogue, and information exchange dialogue), and polylogue.

Monologue learning follows either a "top-down" (starting with a complete text and creatively modifying it) or "bottom-up" (starting with a simple idea and building up to a full monologue) approach. These methods allow students to engage in meaningful text-based activities such as pair work, question-and-answer exercises, and table completion tasks.

Dialogue learning can be approached through "standard dialogues" (mini-dialogues on everyday topics) or "free dialogues" (interviews, discussions, and debates). Sometimes, a dialogue may evolve into a monologue when a participant expresses their viewpoint in response to a statement.

The "top-down" dialogue approach involves modifying a sample dialogue and adapting it to a new situation, while the "bottom-up" approach requires students to build a dialogue from given cues. During role-play exercises, questions can help transition a dialogue into a monologue or polylogue.

At the elementary level, teachers use role-playing games where students embody given topics and plots. In middle school, logical thinking and analytical tables, case-study methods, and communicative techniques such as the "snowball" and "chain story" approaches are implemented. In high school, discussion-based role-playing games allow students to present their viewpoints on real-life issues relevant to their curriculum.

#### **The Benefits of Communicative Methods in Foreign Language Teaching**

Since Uzbekistan's independence, educational reforms have placed greater responsibility on teachers, leading to the adoption of innovative teaching methods. The communicative approach has proven to be highly effective in foreign language instruction.

Previously, the grammar-translation method was widely used, where students performed structured grammar and translation exercises. This approach, however, did not contribute to developing practical communication skills. With independence, new communicative-oriented textbooks and resources have significantly improved language learning.

Twenty years ago, fluent foreign language speakers in Uzbekistan were rare, and communication with foreigners was typically conducted through interpreters. This was because students focused on grammatical exercises and translations rather than speaking skills. However, the widespread adoption of the communicative method has transformed language learning, allowing students to engage in real conversations.

With Uzbekistan's increased interaction with the global community, teachers have been exposed to advanced foreign methodologies and have actively integrated communicative techniques into their lessons. As a result, students trained under this approach are now successfully working in various industries and confidently communicating with foreign partners.

### **Core Principles of the Communicative Method**

The communicative method focuses on practical language use through real-life discussion exercises rather than rote memorization of grammar rules. Grammar and vocabulary are introduced as needed during lessons, making learning more organic and engaging.

Role-playing is a key element of this method. Unlike traditional exercises that emphasize grammar drills, role-playing emphasizes collaborative interaction, which naturally strengthens students' vocabulary and grammar comprehension. Teachers create task-based language environments, encouraging students to think critically and communicate effectively.

### **Conclusion**

The communicative-action approach serves as a bridge between traditional and modern teaching methods, optimizing language instruction for better results. By fostering real-life discussions and interactive learning, this method enhances students' linguistic abilities, critical thinking skills, and cultural awareness.

Furthermore, extracurricular activities such as language clubs significantly contribute to students' communicative competence. In such clubs, students explore the culture, history, and traditions of the target language's speakers. They may also perform theatrical adaptations of folk tales and famous literary works, using puppetry or dramatization.

In summary, the communicative approach maximizes the potential of both traditional and modern teaching methods, leading to highly effective foreign language instruction.

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