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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIVE METHOD IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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Abstract. This paper intends to describe communicative method, its brief history, application in the classroom as well as its activities. In fact, unlike conventional teaching strategies, this method greatly benefits to enhance communicative competence with the help of differentiated activities. Presently, in many institutions much emphasis is laid on employing this very method in order to encourage the learners to speak L2 more confidently. Before highlighting its importance in education, the author focuses on its way of emergence and usage in teaching along with the perceptions of other scholars. Overall, in a bid to succeed in the target language the implementation of communicative method is highly proposed by a host of teachers and other stakeholders.

Keywords: *communicative competence, communicative method, teaching strategies, language proficiency, concept, content, games*

Indeed, throughout the history of foreign language teaching techniques, there have been many attempts to find the most successful way of SLA and there has been a consensus that the communicative method of learning a foreign language is more productive to learn foreign languages as opposed to other approaches. Dating back to its history, it could be stated that the communicative method was introduced in the United Kingdom in the 1960s and 1970s, when English started to gain international recognition as a language of communication [1, 13]. The conventional methods that were widely employed at the time (audio-lingual, grammatical translation, and others) turned out to be insufficient to fulfill the needs of the foreign language learners. The explanation for this was a new group of students known as



"pragmatists," who took a strictly functional approach to language as a communication tool, and what they expected was not a deep, systematic mastery of the language being learned, which was the goal of conventional learning programs, but the ability to put their experience into practice right away. In a bid to achieve this goal, the Council of Europe took a series of steps in the 1960s to establish a program to improve the teaching of foreign languages throughout Europe. A group of experts was tasked in 1971 with researching the feasibility of developing a method for teaching foreign languages to adult learners. In this respect, in 1971, the English specialist D. Wilkins was confronted with justifying the principles and content of a modern approach to teaching foreign languages, and in 1972, the Congress of Linguists and Economists of Europe, held in Stuttgart, reaffirmed the need for a new teaching method capable of addressing a critical sociocultural challenge—to achieve a high level of proficiency in a foreign language [2, 67]. Following that, in the 1980s and 1990s, a variety of research projects were carried out with the aim of developing a communicative education system. Project No. 12: "Learning and teaching modern languages for communication" took a prominent position among them. The communicative focus of training sessions and instructional materials used to teach a foreign language as a means of communication is given special emphasis in the integrated communicative method, which was systematized on the basis of theoretical advances and practical experience in teaching foreign languages in the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, and other Western European countries. Finally, three levels of initial (basic) language acquisition were identified:

Based on these levels, detailed standards and material have been established for a variety of Western European languages. The training materials were expected to develop linguistic competence (the ability to use linguistic units in accordance with communication situations), sociolinguistic competence (the ability to use linguistic units in accordance with social situations), and discursive competence (the ability to use linguistic units in accordance with communication situations) (the ability to understand and achieve coherence in the perception and generation of

individual utterances), "strategic" competence (the capacity to compensate for language proficiency deficits by verbal and nonverbal means), socio-cultural competence (familiarity with the socio-cultural context of language functioning), social competence (ability and readiness to communicate with others). Since the 1970s of the twentieth century, there has been a surge of interest in communicative language teaching in Russia. Passov, his colleagues, and students conducted scientific research on such teaching. They coined the word "communicative method," which has its theoretical foundation in a number of scientific works [3, 233]. In a methodological textbook, V.G. Kostomarov and O.D. Mitrofanova substantiated "the concept of active contact as the leading principle of teaching a foreign language." Its content is revealed in more specific concepts that define the communicative method [4, 52]:

- practical orientation of training;
- functional approach to the selection and presentation of language material;
- situational-thematic presentation of educational material;
- study of vocabulary and morphology on a syntactic basis;
- concentric arrangement of educational material and highlighting several stages of training.

The communicative approach was aimed at teaching speaking at first. Its use has broadened dramatically in recent years, and it is now used to teach all forms of speech interaction, including productive (speaking, writing) and receptive (listening, reading). The communicative method as the ultimate goal of learning involves the formation of communicative competence, which consists of linguistic, speech, subject, socio-cultural and educational competencies. More precisely, the term "competence" first appeared in the works of American linguist N. Chomsky in 1972, and it is now used to describe general and precise educational objectives and content in language teaching methodology. It's important to differentiate between the terms "competence" and "competency." Shukin states that competence is "a complex of

knowledge, skills, and abilities acquired in the course of classes and constituting a meaningful component of learning”, whilst competency is “personality traits that determine their ability to perform activities based on the formed competence” [5, 212]. According to Fast, communicative competence is described as "the capacity and genuine readiness to communicate adequately to the aims, spheres, and circumstances of communication, readiness for verbal contact, and mutual understanding" [6, 18].

In our view, communicative language competence, when teaching a foreign language, is a body of knowledge about the language system and its units, their construction and functioning in speech, the ways of formulating thoughts in the target language and understanding the judgments of others, the national and cultural characteristics of the speakers of the target language, the specifics of various types of discourses; it is the ability of a language learner to communicate by means of his means in various types of speech activity in accordance with the communicative tasks to be solved, to understand, interpret and generate coherent statements.

For the improvement of CC of L2 users, the following methods can be applied:

- **Pair work.** It's also divided into two categories: "open" and "closed." Open work in a pair, depending on whether only one couple talks to the entire class, setting an example for others. Alternatively, the whole class can be split into pairs and work at the same time - this is known as closed work in pairs.
- **Games.** These are short, entertaining English games and designed to pass the time, provide a break, and change activities. The same can be said for larger-scale "Role-playing games," which are pre-planned and simulate a variety of scenarios in order to meet the learning objectives.
- **Discussions/debates.** Prepared in advance, critical thinking skills are developed, and both prepared and unprepared speeches are practiced. In most cases, the whole party participates in the discussion, and there are leaders. Debates and discussions aid in the use of the language in circumstances as similar to real-life

speech contexts as possible, in order to address issues in the political, social, and cultural spheres of life.

- **Presentations.** Learners are required to present their topics in front of others and it shapes their self-assurance, motivation and communicative competence. In fact, speaking skills are more likely to be enhanced with the help of oral speeches.

Other activities including drama, role-plays, interviews, open talks and etc. can also be integrated to the lesson content for the improvement of CC.

In sum, the communicative method as the ultimate goal of training involves the formation of communicative competence, which consists of linguistic, pragmatic, socio-cultural and strategic competencies. Furthermore, all of the abovementioned activities are intended at the formation and development of the communicative competence of students. It is advisable that the types of activities replace each other in the lesson. Therefore, it is necessary to plan the course of the lesson in advance, select the appropriate exercises for each type of activity.

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