



## IMPROVING EFL LEARNERS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE THROUGH Integrating Cultural Insights

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**Abstract:** Before turning directly to the consideration of the features development of communication skills in children of senior preschool age.

Consider the essence of the concepts of "skills" and "communicative skills". Analysis of the definitions of the concept of communicative skills in various scientific fields showed the approach in all areas is different. So in psychology, communication skills are considered as abilities for interpersonal interaction, in other words, readiness. In pedagogy, communication skills are, first of all, conscious actions of subjects aimed at building the right way their communication behavior.

**Keywords:** terminology, language, loading, exercise, translation, semantics, result, feature.

Approach to the interpretation of the concept communication skills reflected in sociology is interrelation of approaches of teachers and psychologists. In this area communication skills are seen as an ability manage their activities in terms of solving communication problems<sup>1</sup>.

The communicative method precisely defines objectives headed by free communication through conversation, reading, listening comprehension and writing. For those aims, the communicative method uses contemporary elements of tele-, radio communication, etc. which are natural in the world of exchanging information. Nevertheless, a book remains the main but not the only tool of language learning at school. A teacher can choose any book which corresponds to his/her purposes and defines his/her methodological approach towards language teaching. But a book should be both interesting and accessible for students. A textbook should help learning the language, but not give interesting or boring facts about it. On the other hand, even the most attractive textbook will not give any results, if its contents (drills, exercises, rules, etc.) are separated from the communicative learning with the help of a teacher as a professional counsellor. An English language teacher must know English as well as his mother tongue. The teacher must be aware of the laws

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<sup>1</sup> Burns A., Richards J.C., "Pedagogy and Practice in Second Language Teaching" Cambridge University Press, 2012, p227



according to which language functions. The teacher must be acquainted with the last methodological points of view, but he is not to be obliged to acquire those if they do not conform to his purposes and aims. The teacher ought to know the difference between general linguistics and pedagogical linguistics in order not to convert lessons at school to linguistic seminars. What is communication? It seems to me, communication is first of all exchanging opinions, information, notions of social, cultural, political and other aspects of everyday life. Communication always has associations with written and oral discourse<sup>2</sup>. But communication includes a surprised face, a smile, a nervous movement or a smoke above the fire of Indians, as well. Communication is also advertising the colour of the president's suit, flags, posters or a whistle of a boy under the window of his sweetheart. The world around us is the world of communication in various spheres. And only at language lessons the only means of communication are textbooks and the lecturing teacher. In the classroom, the teacher is the source of information. And this communication is under control rather than free. In this case, the purpose of a teacher is to transform the communication with students to a pleasant, attractive and emotional lesson. Real communication is always informative, unpredictable and unexpected. If the teacher is always informative, interesting and unexpected, then even before the beginning of the lesson students will be disposed for a good lesson. But if the previous lesson is just the same as the next one, students will be bored with it before the lesson starts. Working on their own, students fulfil the task of a communicative intercourse, and the best way of it is a free dialogue between students but excluding the teacher who is always correcting and evaluating<sup>3</sup>. There are a lot of students who can and know how to speak English but they happen to keep silent facing the criticizing teacher. At free work, however, students are more willing and ready for decision-making and to ask the teacher for his advice.

When a teacher is not a dictator, students try to learn language themselves. In small groups, even the shyest students engage in communication at the same level as a "non timid" students. It never happens, however, if the teacher stands in front of the all class. Work in groups which transform a student into the main person of the language lesson is the kind of work which develops the communicative abilities of students<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> Жинкин Н.И. Язык. Речь. Творчество. -Москва, Лабиринт, 1998. -368с.

<sup>3</sup> Richard L. Sparks, Karen M. Teaching a foreign language using multisensory structured language techniques to At-Risk Learners // Sheffield, 1991

<sup>4</sup> Richard L. Sparks. L. Ganschow. Foreign Language Learning difficulties. // London, 1998



A language teacher can not limit himself only to textbooks or teaching aids, even the poshest or the most contemporary, but he must be in constant relation with the language by the modern means including television, video, etc. It can also be a newspaper, or a recorded telecast or a radio report. The more variety is in aids of learning and the more up-to-date reflection of the mass media influence is shown by them, the more successful will the communicative intercourse be. Speaking about communication, it is necessary to take into account a specific national character and specific type of communication in English. Students ask: "What is the English for it" when they want to know the equivalent of some Lithuanian gesture. Born in Lithuania, children acquire specific gestures which are common to this country, or a city, or a community. The language is acquired in the same specific logical-emotional communicative system as well.

Can a child or the children acquire not only nominative forms of a second language but the whole complex composing the language of communication, as well? In other words, can a learner communicate with the native speaker at the same level? N. Chomsky defined the ability to speak with the native speaker in the same terms as competence. He claimed that real competence in studying a language could be developed in intuitive language of native language conditions.

Is there a pedagogical norm in defining competence? N. Chomsky (1965) considers people who do not know grammar or cannot read and write as non-competent. If we take for an example a man from a countryside who can neither speak nor write, we can say that in these communicative conditions there is no need for writing or reading, and that is why he is completely competent in justifying his everyday communicative needs. Then, we can say that competence is personal verbal perfection which corresponds to the personal communicative needs.

Teachers always seek to fill the heads of students with various grammar rules and to transform them to a source of language perfection. This purpose can not be achieved in most cases. At the same time, it is not useful since it is impossible to grasp a lot of. The English teacher should fix flexible aims which could vary in every single case. Communication is a necessity in order to keep contact at a certain level and at a certain communicative frame.

What are the relations between communication and competence and which determines what: whether communication defines competencies or vice versa?

In fact, I used to correct every students mistake. But later on, I understood that not in every case we need to pay attention to wrong usage of language, and if we do it this must be done in the same way which does not disturb the course of



communication. Attention must be drawn to one more element of communicative intercourse. It is spontaneity. In many cases normative rules will not allow to evaluate colloquial situation and respond to communicative stimulus. Many times a teacher can spot a student not finding the right word. That happens when the student thinks not about what to say, but how to say.

Structural exercises, which had spread in methodology in the middle of the century, were determined to teach topics which must extract words from students active memory according to the situation. But these exercises did not teach free usage of language in unexpected situations. In fact, knowledge of the topics appeared to be non communicative because it was impossible to predict the situation with all its unexpected moments. Dialogues and topics must be a part of teaching process, but they are to carry unexpected elements, spontaneity and situation, which require immediate and logical solution of communicative problems. Dialogues must help to understand situation. They are useful in case when they involve ability to practise it in a free manner.

Questions of practical liberty and personal necessity are the key ones not only from linguistic point of view, but from social and political one as well. This question must be presented to every student personally. Even in primary school, students should know why he is learning English. Then they will be highly motivated. In the second half of the XXth century behavioural approach emerged. Behavioural linguists covered methodology with their ideas and defined language teaching methodology as a mechanical reflection of language reality. This automatic and drill-based language learning relied on right understanding of primary language of a growing child who is being brought up in a natural language atmosphere. But it is difficult to compare the perception of English by a child in an English speaking family and the perception of it in a non-English one. Behaviourists claimed that the only way of language learning was a mechanical repetition of semantic and grammatical forms. And what is true in a natural way of language perception, here becomes senseless. A "behavioural" student cannot achieve natural language usage and he isolates himself by situations which cannot be universal in every case.

Structural linguists claimed that direct language atmosphere is essential for acquiring the studied language. By this statement, oral discourse was the only means of communication. Creation of a language atmosphere was considered as compulsory condition for learning a second language. Mostly oral discourse is to be the only means of communication or at least the dominating means. But very often foreign language is used in a written form.



Differently from behaviourists and structuralists, uses of communicative method suggest every teacher should define the importance of every language discipline and teach language in correspondence with local solutions. Communicative thinking does not provide a strict ideological structure and does not give a chance for a teacher to define what is main and what is subordinate.

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