

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES TO TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A FOCUS ON COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Abstract: This article explores innovative approaches in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL), with a particular emphasis on developing communicative competence among learners. The shift from traditional grammar-focused methods to learner-centered, communicative techniques reflects the evolving needs of 21st-century language learners. This paper examines several contemporary approaches, such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and the integration of digital technologies, and discusses their effectiveness in enhancing learners' ability to use English in real-life contexts.

Key words: English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Communicative Competence, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), Innovative Teaching Methods.

ИННОВАЦИОННЫЕ ПОДХОДЫ К ПРЕПОДАВАНИЮ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА КАК ИНОСТРАННОГО: АКЦЕНТ НА КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТИ

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются инновационные подходы к преподаванию английского языка как иностранного (EFL), с особым акцентом на развитии коммуникативной компетенции учащихся. Переход от традиционных методов, ориентированных на грамматику, к коммуникативным методикам, ориентированным на обучающегося, отражает меняющиеся потребности изучающих язык в XXI веке. В данной статье рассматриваются несколько современных подходов, таких как коммуникативное обучение языку (CLT), обучение языку на основе задач (TBLT) и интеграция цифровых технологий, а также обсуждается их эффективность в развитии способности учащихся использовать английский язык в реальных жизненных ситуациях.

Ключевые слова: Английский как иностранный язык (EFL), коммуникативная компетенция, коммуникативное обучение языку (CLT), обучение языку на основе задач (TBLT), инновационные методы обучения.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in English has become an essential skill. Traditional methods of English language instruction, such as the Grammar-Translation Method, often emphasized accuracy and rote memorization over communication. However, the demand for more practical language skills has led to the development of innovative



teaching approaches that prioritize communicative competence — the ability to use language appropriately and fluently in various social contexts. This article aims to analyze some of the most effective and innovative methods in EFL teaching and their contribution to building communicative competence. The concept of communicative competence was first introduced by Dell Hymes in the 1970s and further developed by Canale and Swain. It includes four key components:

- Grammatical Competence – knowledge of vocabulary and rules of grammar
- Sociolinguistic Competence – understanding of social and cultural context
- Discourse Competence – ability to produce coherent and cohesive texts
- Strategic Competence – ability to overcome communication breakdowns

Modern teaching methods aim to address all these components rather than focusing solely on grammar or vocabulary. CLT is one of the most influential methods in modern EFL classrooms. It emphasizes:

- Student interaction and authentic communication
- Use of real-life situations and role-plays
- Focus on fluency over accuracy in early stages
- Integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills

CLT helps learners to develop both confidence and competence in using English for real communication. It promotes a student-centered classroom where the teacher acts as a facilitator rather than a knowledge transmitter. TBLT is another innovative approach that supports communicative competence through meaningful tasks. These tasks are goal-oriented and resemble real-life activities, such as planning a trip, conducting an interview, or solving a problem in groups.

Key features of TBLT include:

- Focus on the completion of meaningful tasks
- Emphasis on communication rather than language form
- Use of collaborative learning and peer interaction

TBLT encourages learners to use English as a tool to achieve a specific outcome, which naturally improves their communicative abilities. Technology has revolutionized language education by providing tools that support interaction, collaboration, and access to authentic language materials. Some effective uses include:

- Online discussion forums and chats to practice written communication
- Video conferencing tools like Zoom or Skype for speaking practice
- Language learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Memrise) to reinforce vocabulary
- AI-powered tools for real-time feedback and pronunciation practice

Technology also supports individualized learning and gives students more opportunities to practice English outside the classroom. While innovative approaches offer numerous benefits, they also present challenges:



- Lack of teacher training in new methods and technologies
- Large class sizes that hinder interaction
- Limited resources in low-income or rural areas
- Assessment issues, since communicative competence is harder to measure than grammar knowledge

To overcome these, institutions must invest in professional development and adapt methods to local contexts.

Conclusion

Innovative approaches such as CLT, TBLT, and the use of digital technologies have transformed English language teaching from a passive, grammar-heavy process into an active, communicative experience. These methods support the development of all aspects of communicative competence, preparing learners to use English effectively in the real world. However, successful implementation requires adequate resources, trained teachers, and a flexible curriculum that puts communication at the heart of language learning.

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