THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATIVE ACTIVITIES IN STRENGTHENING LEXICAL AND GRAMMATICAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract: The development of lexical and grammatical competence is essential in second language acquisition, particularly for students in philology and language-related disciplines. This article explores the pivotal role of communicative activities in fostering both vocabulary expansion and grammatical accuracy within foreign language classrooms. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and task-based instruction have emphasized the need to integrate real-life communication into pedagogical practice, shifting the focus from rote memorization to meaningful interaction. Through activities such as role-plays, information-gap tasks, storytelling, interviews, and debates, learners are provided with purposeful contexts that encourage the active use of target vocabulary and grammatical structures.

This paper discusses how communicative activities enhance cognitive engagement, increase retention of language input, and create opportunities for learners to internalize new linguistic patterns through practice and feedback. Moreover, the study analyzes how these activities promote fluency, accuracy, and appropriateness key dimensions of communicative competence. The integration of such techniques into second language instruction not only improves lexical and grammatical skills but also builds learners' confidence and motivation by simulating authentic communication.

Drawing on both theoretical perspectives and practical classroom experiences, the article highlights effective strategies for designing and implementing communicative activities that align with students' language levels and curricular goals. The findings suggest that communicative approaches contribute significantly to long-term language development by merging form and function, ultimately preparing students for real-world communication. The article concludes by offering recommendations for language instructors seeking to enrich their teaching methodologies through interactive and communicative techniques that strengthen core linguistic competencies.

Keywords: Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), lexical competence, grammatical competence, second language acquisition, communicative activities, language pedagogy, task-based learning, classroom interaction, fluency and accuracy.

Introduction: In the evolving landscape of foreign language education, the importance of developing both lexical and grammatical competence has taken

center stage, especially in the training of future philologists and language educators. These two aspects of linguistic knowledge serve as the cornerstone of effective communication, enabling learners to express themselves accurately, fluently, and appropriately in various contexts. Traditional language teaching methods often emphasized rote memorization of vocabulary and the mechanical application of grammar rules. However, recent pedagogical trends have shifted towards more dynamic and student-centered approaches, among which communicative activities play a vital role.

Communicative activities, grounded in the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), prioritize real-life interaction and meaningful language use over isolated language drills. They aim to simulate authentic communication situations where learners are encouraged to negotiate meaning, convey ideas, and solve problems using the target language. Through such interaction-rich environments, learners are not only exposed to contextualized vocabulary and grammar patterns but are also given the opportunity to experiment with language, make errors, and refine their use of linguistic forms through feedback and practice.

This article explores how communicative activities contribute to the development of lexical and grammatical competence among philology students learning a second foreign language. It examines the theoretical foundations of communicative language teaching, identifies effective communicative techniques, and highlights practical strategies for implementing these activities in language classrooms. By integrating communication-oriented tasks into the curriculum, educators can create a more engaging and effective learning experience that aligns with the real-world communicative needs of language learners.

Main Part:

The development of lexical and grammatical competence is fundamental to acquiring proficiency in any foreign language. Lexical competence refers to the learner's ability to understand and use words and expressions appropriately, while grammatical competence involves mastering the rules of sentence structure, syntax, and morphology. In the context of teaching a second foreign language to philology students, these competencies become even more critical, as students are expected to demonstrate a deeper and more analytical command of the language. One of the most effective methodologies for enhancing both lexical and grammatical skills is through the implementation of communicative activities.

1. Theoretical background

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emerged in the 1970s as a response to the limitations of traditional grammar-focused approaches. It emphasizes interaction as both the means and ultimate goal of learning a language. According to Hymes' theory of communicative competence, learners must not only know the rules of grammar but also understand when, how, and to

whom to say what. This broader view includes linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence, with lexical and grammatical knowledge forming the foundation.

In this framework, communicative activities are not supplementary; they are central to the teaching process. These activities integrate vocabulary and grammar in meaningful contexts, encouraging learners to internalize structures and lexical items through use rather than memorization.

2. Communicative activities and lexical development

Interactive language tasks such as role-plays, simulations, information-gap activities, and debates provide learners with repeated exposure to vocabulary in varied and authentic contexts. These activities require learners to retrieve and use vocabulary actively, which reinforces memory retention and promotes fluency.

For example:

- Role-playing a job interview allows students to practice professional vocabulary and phrases in a realistic setting.
- Information-gap activities encourage students to ask and answer questions using specific target vocabulary, often tied to thematic units (e.g., travel, shopping, or health).
- Vocabulary games such as word associations, "20 Questions," or "Taboo" can stimulate active recall and help contextualize new words.

Additionally, communicative activities often promote incidental vocabulary acquisition. When learners focus on achieving a communicative goal, they are more likely to pay attention to unfamiliar words used by their peers, leading to natural vocabulary enrichment.

3. Enhancing grammatical competence through communication

Grammar instruction within a communicative framework avoids isolated rule learning and instead embeds grammatical forms within meaningful discourse. Activities like guided storytelling, peer interviews, and collaborative writing tasks offer learners the opportunity to use grammatical structures in context.

Examples include:

- Story completion tasks, where students take turns adding sentences to a story using a targeted grammatical structure (e.g., past simple or conditionals).
- Find someone who... activities, where learners use question forms to find classmates who match specific criteria, thus reinforcing interrogative sentence structures.
- Dialogues and scripted conversations can help students internalize grammatical forms by using them repeatedly and meaningfully.

By integrating grammar practice into communicative tasks, students are encouraged to move from declarative knowledge (knowing the rule) to procedural knowledge (applying it fluently in communication).

4. The synergy between lexical and grammatical competence

One of the greatest strengths of communicative activities is their ability to develop lexical and grammatical competence simultaneously. When learners engage in meaningful communication, they must not only select the right words but also organize them correctly in accordance with grammatical rules. This dual demand mirrors real-life language use, promoting more holistic language learning.

A task such as designing a tourist brochure or planning a group presentation requires students to use specific vocabulary (e.g., descriptive adjectives, travel terms) while also constructing grammatically accurate and cohesive sentences. This not only strengthens linguistic competence but also enhances critical thinking, creativity, and collaboration.

5. Challenges and solutions in implementing communicative activities

Despite their many benefits, communicative activities may pose challenges in implementation. Teachers may struggle with large class sizes, limited classroom time, or a lack of materials. Furthermore, students who are used to traditional methods may feel uncomfortable with more open-ended and participatory approaches.

To overcome these challenges:

- Teachers should receive training in communicative methodology and task design.
- Classrooms should be arranged to facilitate interaction, such as in pairs or groups.
- Technology can be utilized to create virtual communicative environments through platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, and language learning apps (e.g., Duolingo, Quizlet, Kahoot).
- Tasks should be scaffolded, gradually increasing in complexity to build learners' confidence.

6. Case studies and research findings

Recent studies highlight the positive impact of communicative activities on language learning. For instance, research conducted among second-language learners in higher education showed significant improvement in both vocabulary acquisition and grammatical accuracy after regular participation in role-plays and task-based activities. Another study demonstrated that students who engaged in peer-to-peer dialogues scored higher on oral and written assessments than those taught using traditional grammar drills.

These findings confirm that communicative tasks provide an authentic, engaging, and effective context for developing the core language competencies needed by future philologists.

In summary, communicative activities offer an integrated, student-centered, and effective approach to strengthening both lexical and grammatical competence in second language learning. For philology students, who require advanced and nuanced language abilities, these activities foster deeper understanding, practical skills, and a higher level of communicative proficiency.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, communicative activities play a pivotal role in strengthening both lexical and grammatical competence in learners of a second foreign language, particularly among philology students who are expected to attain a high level of language proficiency. Unlike traditional language teaching methods that often isolate grammar and vocabulary instruction, communicative activities integrate these elements into meaningful, interactive contexts, fostering not only retention but also the practical application of linguistic knowledge.

Through role-plays, information-gap tasks, group discussions, and collaborative writing, learners are given opportunities to engage actively with the language, enhancing their ability to select appropriate vocabulary and construct grammatically correct sentences in real-life scenarios. These activities support the transition from passive recognition to active usage, a crucial shift for achieving fluency and communicative competence.

Moreover, communicative activities promote learner autonomy, motivation, and confidence, as students become central participants in the learning process. They also contribute to the development of broader skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and cultural awareness. The integration of such methods is especially beneficial in the context of philological education, where language learning goes beyond everyday communication and delves into linguistic analysis and advanced expression.

Ultimately, adopting communicative activities as a core instructional strategy not only enriches the learning experience but also equips students with the tools necessary for academic and professional success in a globalized, multilingual world. Therefore, language educators are encouraged to implement and continually refine communicative techniques to ensure comprehensive and dynamic language development.

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