

COMMON CHALLENGES IN TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS WITHIN THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract. *This thesis is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the main challenges arising in the process of teaching speaking skills within the communicative approach. The main aim of the study is to identify methodological, psychological, and organizational barriers encountered in classroom practice, as well as to provide a scientific justification for effective ways of overcoming them. The methodological framework of the study is based on theoretical analysis and pedagogical observation. It also examines mechanisms for developing communication through role-plays, pair and group work, and problem-solving activities. The results of the study show that the communicative approach increases learners' oral activity and has a positive impact on their ability to speak freely and confidently.*

Key words: *communicative approach, speaking skills, interaction, assessment, psychological barriers in the classroom.*

Introduction. The Communicative Approach (CA) has long been positioned as a principled alternative to form-dominated language teaching because it prioritizes meaning negotiation, purposeful interaction, and the development of communicative competence.

In practice, however, teaching speaking within CA frequently reveals a set of persistent contradictions: institutions demand measurable outcomes, teachers face time pressure and heterogeneous groups, and learners often expect explicit correction and examination-oriented preparation. Consequently, classroom speaking may become either a loosely structured “free talk” with limited learning value or a tightly controlled drill that undermines communicative intent.

The core problem is not the theoretical inadequacy of CA but the difficulty of translating its principles into stable classroom routines that generate both interactional authenticity and pedagogical accountability. Within the specialty which emphasizes philological and methodological rigor, it is especially important to articulate challenges as systemic, not incidental, and to relate them to task design, interaction management, teacher cognition, and assessment validity.

A first common challenge concerns the mismatch between the interactional demands of CA and the linguistic readiness of learners. CA expects learners to use language as a tool for accomplishing communicative goals, yet many students in EFL contexts enter university with limited lexical resources, weak automatised grammatical patterns, and minimal experience of spontaneous speech. Research on communicative competence underscores that fluency emerges through repeated opportunities to retrieve and recombine language under time constraints, but these opportunities must be calibrated to the learner's current interlanguage and must include supportive planning conditions and clear outcomes¹.

¹ Richards J. C. *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. -48 p.

In Uzbekistan's higher education settings, this challenge is intensified by large class sizes and the uneven quality of prior schooling, which makes it difficult to set a single task level that is simultaneously motivating for stronger students and manageable for weaker ones. An effective CA implementation therefore depends on principled scaffolding, including controlled pre-task input, focused lexical preparation, and staged performance demands, rather than on immediate "full communication" that can overwhelm learners.

A second challenge is the tendency to treat speaking as an activity rather than a skill with measurable subcomponents. In many classrooms, "speaking" is equated with time spent talking, yet productive speaking competence involves strategic planning, discourse organization, interactional management, pragmatic appropriacy, and intelligible pronunciation. When tasks do not specify which components are targeted, feedback becomes random and assessment becomes inconsistent. Methodological literature emphasizes that communicative tasks must contain a clear communicative outcome, an information gap or reasoning gap, and conditions that encourage negotiation of meaning².

A third challenge is teacher cognition and the persistence of form-centered beliefs. Even when teachers declare commitment to communicative teaching, they may revert to teacher-fronted explanation and immediate correction because these practices provide a sense of control and efficiency. This is partly driven by institutional expectations and partly by the understandable concern that errors may fossilize if left unattended. However, an excessive focus on accuracy during communicative tasks can reduce willingness to speak, increase monitoring, and inhibit fluency development. Russian and post-Soviet methodological traditions have produced strong expertise in explicit grammar instruction, which can be an asset, but CA requires that explicit knowledge be integrated into communicative performance rather than replacing it³. The challenge is therefore not "grammar versus communication" but timing and mode of attention to form. The concept of focus on form suggests that teachers can briefly draw attention to problematic language during meaning-focused interaction, typically in response to communication breakdown or recurrent errors, thereby preserving communicative flow while still addressing accuracy⁴.

Implementing this requires professional skill: the teacher must decide when an error is communicatively significant, how to recast or prompt without humiliating the speaker, and how to recycle corrected forms in subsequent tasks so that feedback leads to uptake rather than momentary awareness.

International research on foreign language anxiety demonstrates that fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension directly reduce willingness to communicate and can cause learners to remain silent even when they know what to say⁵. Pair and small-group tasks can reduce the social cost of errors, but only if roles are clear and if accountability is maintained so that quieter students are not overshadowed by dominant speakers. Teachers must cultivate an environment where errors are treated as developmental evidence and where communicative

² Ellis R. *Task-based Language Teaching and Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. -387 p.

³ Пассов Е. И. *Коммуникативный метод обучения иноязычному говорению*. Москва: Просвещение, 1991. -223 с.

⁴ Ellis R. *Task-based Language Teaching and Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. -387 p.

⁵ Horwitz E. K., Horwitz M. B., Cope J. *Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety*. *Modern Language Journal*. Hoboken: Wiley, 1986. Vol. 70, No. 2. P. -P.125-132.

success is valued alongside accuracy⁶. In addition, local materials and contexts matter. Uzbek scholars have emphasized the need to adapt communicative methods to national curricula and learner needs, including the integration of speech situations relevant to students' academic and professional trajectories⁷.

Addressing the challenges therefore requires an integrated methodological stance. Teachers need diagnostic awareness of learner readiness, the ability to design tasks with clear outcomes and interactional demands, competence in managing group work and classroom norms, and literacy in formative assessment.

Conclusion. Teaching speaking within the Communicative Approach faces persistent challenges stemming from learner readiness, unclear operationalization of speaking objectives, teacher beliefs about correction, affective barriers, interaction management, and the validity and transparency of assessment. These challenges are interconnected and must be addressed as a single pedagogical system rather than as separate methodological techniques. An integrated solution is to build pedagogically authentic task cycles that scaffold language, structure interaction, and embed selective formative feedback with opportunities for re-performance, thereby supporting both fluency and accountable progress.

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⁶ Richards J. C. *Communicative Language Teaching Today*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. - 48 p.

⁷ Jalolov J. J. *Chet tili o'qitish metodikasi*. Toshkent: O'qituvchi, 2012. -432 b.

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