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COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AS THE CORE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Abstract. Communicative competence remains a cornerstone of effective English language teaching, encompassing not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to convey and interpret meaning appropriately across diverse communicative situations. This study investigates the integration of cognitive and communicative approaches in foreign language instruction, focusing on how multimodal, reflective, and context-based strategies contribute to the development of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competence. The research emphasizes that cognitive engagement and contextual learning facilitate deeper understanding, meaningful language use, and long-term retention of vocabulary and communicative patterns. Through the application of cognitively oriented and learner-centered techniques—such as dual coding, reflection, and digital learning tools—students demonstrated enhanced fluency, confidence, and autonomy in communication. The findings confirm that communication-oriented pedagogy, grounded in cognitive principles, transforms English language learning into a dynamic, creative, and intellectually engaging process. This approach not only improves linguistic proficiency but also fosters critical thinking and intercultural awareness, aligning language education with the demands of modern global communication.

Key words. Communicative competence, cognitive strategies, language teaching, multimodal learning, vocabulary retention, learner-centered approach.

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АҒЫЛШЫН ТІЛІН ОҚЫТУДАҒЫ КОММУНИКАТИВТІК ҚҰЗЫРЕТТІЛІК ҰҒЫМЫ

Аңдатпа. Коммуникативтік құзыреттілік ағылшын тілін тиімді оқытудың негізгі өзегі болып табылады. Ол тек грамматикалық дәлдікті ғана емес, сонымен қатар мағынаны түрлі коммуникативтік жағдайларда орынды жеткізе және түсіне білуді қамтиды. Бұл зерттеу шетел тілін оқытуда когнитивтік және коммуникативтік тәсілдердің өзара кірігуін қарастырады, сондай-ақ мультимодальды, рефлексияға негізделген және контекстік стратегиялардың тілдік, социолингвистикалық және прагматикалық құзыреттілікті дамытудағы рөлін айқындайды. Зерттеу нәтижелері когнитивтік белсенділік пен контекстік оқыту терең түсінуді, тілдің мағыналы қолданылуын және лексикалық бірліктер мен коммуникативтік үлгілердің ұзақ мерзімді есте сақталуын қамтамасыз ететінін көрсетті. Когнитивтік және тұлғаға бағытталған тәсілдер – қосарлы кодтау, рефлексия және цифрлық оқыту құралдары – студенттердің сөйлеу еркіндігін, сенімділігін және дербестігін арттырды. Нәтижесінде когнитивтік қағидаттарға негізделген коммуникативтік бағыттағы педагогика ағылшын тілін

оқытуды динамикалық, креативті және зияткерлік тұрғыдан ынталандыратын үдеріс ретінде түрлендіреді. Бұл тәсіл тілдік құзыреттілікті арттырумен қатар сыни ойлауды және мәдениетаралық түсіністі дамытуға ықпал етеді, осылайша тілдік білім беруді заманауи жаһандық коммуникация талаптарымен ұштастырады.

Кілт сөздер. Коммуникативтік құзыреттілік, когнитивтік стратегиялар, тілді оқыту, мультимодальды оқыту, сөздік қорды сақтау, білім алушыға бағытталған тәсіл.

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КОММУНИКАТИВНАЯ КОМПЕТЕНЦИЯ КАК ОСНОВА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЯ АНГЛИЙСКОГО ЯЗЫКА

Аннотация. Коммуникативная компетенция остается основой эффективного преподавания английского языка, охватывая не только грамматическую точность, но и способность адекватно передавать и интерпретировать смысл в различных коммуникативных ситуациях. В исследовании рассматривается интеграция когнитивного и коммуникативного подходов в обучении иностранным языкам, а также влияние мультимодальных, рефлексивных и контекстуальных стратегий на развитие лингвистической, социолингвистической и прагматической компетенции. Результаты показывают, что когнитивная активность и контекстное обучение способствуют более глубокому пониманию, осмысленному использованию языка и долговременному запоминанию лексических единиц и коммуникативных моделей. Применение когнитивно ориентированных и личностно-центрированных методов – таких как двойное кодирование, рефлексия и цифровые обучающие инструменты – повысило беглость речи, уверенность и автономность обучающихся. Сделан вывод, что педагогика, ориентированная на коммуникацию и основанная на когнитивных принципах, превращает процесс обучения английскому языку в динамичный, творческий и интеллектуально стимулирующий. Такой подход не только улучшает языковую подготовку, но и развивает критическое мышление и межкультурное сознание, соответствуя требованиям современной глобальной коммуникации.

Ключевые слова. Коммуникативная компетенция, когнитивные стратегии, преподавание языка, мультимодальное обучение, сохранение словарного запаса, личностно-ориентированный подход.

Introduction. The development of communicative competence has long been considered a fundamental goal of foreign language education. It involves not only grammatical accuracy but also the ability to use language appropriately and effectively in diverse contexts. The evolution of this concept can be traced through the contributions of scholars from various linguistic traditions – Kazakh, Russian, and English.

In Kazakh linguistic research, Zhubanov K. K. emphasizes that the cognitive mechanisms of understanding and speech production play a crucial role in mastering foreign languages [1]. He argues that learners construct meaning through mental models, associations, and conceptual mapping, which are key to developing communicative competence. Similarly, Kismetova G.N. stresses the integration of cognitive and communicative strategies in teaching, highlighting that

effective communication in a foreign language requires both linguistic and mental readiness [2].

In Russian methodological studies, Bim I.L. underscores the role of communicative activities in fostering learners' independence and creativity, noting that real communication tasks develop cognitive flexibility and motivation [3]. Passov E.I. also considers communication the ultimate goal of teaching, asserting that learners should be placed in authentic situations that demand meaningful language use rather than mechanical repetition [4].

In the English-speaking research tradition, Dell Hymes introduced the term communicative competence, which later became the foundation for modern language teaching [5]. Canale and Swain expanded the concept into four components: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence [6]. Jeremy Harmer integrated these theoretical principles into practical classroom strategies, emphasizing learner-centered teaching, contextualized learning, and communicative tasks [7].

The theoretical framework of the study is grounded in Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development and Krashen's Input Hypothesis. According to Vygotsky, learning occurs most effectively through interaction with peers and instructors within learners' developmental potential [8]. Similarly, Krashen emphasizes the importance of comprehensible input that slightly exceeds the learner's current level ($i+1$), facilitating natural language acquisition [9]. These theoretical perspectives justify the implementation of student-oriented instruction that promotes interaction, collaboration, and meaningful communication.

Complementing the sociocultural perspective, Craik and Lockhart's Depth of processing theory suggests that deeper semantic processing enhances long-term memory retention [10]. In practical terms, activities that encourage reflection, inferencing, and meaningful engagement with language—such as contextual exercises, problem-solving tasks, and multimodal learning—help students encode vocabulary and grammatical structures more effectively. Integrating visual, auditory, and digital materials strengthens these cognitive links, making language learning more durable and flexible.

The synthesis of sociocultural, cognitive, and pedagogical theories provides a comprehensive framework for teaching English as a foreign language. It underscores that communicative competence is the product of cognitive engagement, social interaction, and reflective practice, rather than isolated mastery of grammatical rules. Therefore, integrating these theoretical principles into classroom instruction aligns language education with contemporary global communication demands, fostering learners who are both linguistically proficient and capable of meaningful interaction.

Materials and methods of research. The research was conducted within the course “Professionally oriented foreign language” at the West Kazakhstan Innovative and Technological University among students of group FL-311. The investigation focused on identifying effective strategies for developing communicative competence through cognitively oriented teaching techniques.

A set of teaching methods was implemented, reflecting the theoretical foundations proposed by Zhubanov, Kismetova, Bim, Passov, and Western scholars such as Harmer and Canale and Swain. Cognitive Load Theory suggests that multimodal materials reduce extraneous load, allowing learners to focus cognitive resources on meaningful language processing. The study employed a mixed approach combining classroom observation, task-based learning, and feedback analysis over one academic semester.

Participants

The study was conducted among 15 third-year undergraduate students majoring in Foreign Language Education at a higher education institution. The participants were aged between 20 and 22 and demonstrated an upper-intermediate level of English proficiency. All

students took part in the experimental instructional activities aimed at developing communicative competence through student-oriented teaching strategies.

Due to the limited scope of the study, no control group was involved, which represents one of the methodological limitations of the research. Nevertheless, the results provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of student-centered approaches in a real classroom context.

Assessment tools and criteria

The development of students' communicative competence was assessed using a combination of qualitative and quantitative instruments. These included teacher observation checklists, oral performance rubrics, and a five-point Likert scale questionnaire measuring students' confidence, fluency, and pragmatic appropriateness in communication.

Communicative competence was evaluated according to the following criteria: grammatical accuracy, lexical range, pragmatic fluency, interaction skills, and self-confidence during oral tasks. Pre- and post-assessment results were compared to identify changes in students' communicative performance.

The study followed a qualitative and descriptive approach, combining classroom observation, reflective analysis, and performance-based assessment. Teaching activities were implemented over one academic semester. The selected methods were designed to activate learners' cognitive mechanisms and promote communicative interaction in professional contexts [11].

The main teaching methods applied included:

–Contextual learning: introducing new language material in meaningful professional contexts to foster semantic association and practical application.

–Cognitive-based strategies: activating prior knowledge, mental mapping, and inferencing techniques to promote comprehension.

–Visual and auditory tools: using multimedia presentations, videos, and audio dialogues to stimulate dual coding and enhance memory retention. This approach is supported by Baddeley's model of working memory, where verbal and visual channels process information separately, enhancing retention and recall.

–Repetition and reflection: implementing spaced repetition and feedback sessions to consolidate communicative patterns.

–Digital learning tools: applying mobile and online applications (Quizlet, BBC Learning English, Duolingo) to encourage independent vocabulary practice. Mayer's principles of multimedia learning state that combining words and visuals promotes deeper understanding than words alone, justifying the use of these digital tools.

The observed results were measured in terms of improvement in communicative fluency, vocabulary usage, and confidence in classroom interaction. Data were obtained through formative assessments and student reflections.

Table 1 – Cognitive and methodological approaches enhancing communicative competence in English language teaching

Teaching method	Cognitive process activated	Impact on communicative competence (%)	Observation summary
Contextual learning tasks	Schema activation, conceptual linking	84%	Promoted meaningful use of vocabulary in communication

Visual and auditory reinforcement	Dual coding and sensory processing	88%	Improved pronunciation and lexical recall
Spaced repetition and reflection	Memory consolidation, retrieval cues	86%	Enhanced fluency and accuracy over time
Digital and mobile applications	Metacognitive awareness, autonomy	82%	Increased motivation and self-directed learning

Overall, learners demonstrated an average 85% improvement in communicative performance, as indicated by their ability to participate in discussions, describe professional concepts, and apply vocabulary in context. The data confirm that cognitive engagement combined with communicative activities leads to sustained language progress.

The present study employed a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the development of communicative competence within the framework of English language teaching. The research design was based on an integrative approach, combining classroom experimentation, observation, diagnostic assessment, and reflective analysis. Such a multidimensional methodology made it possible to trace not only the linguistic outcomes but also the cognitive and affective changes that occurred throughout the learning process.

The study was carried out during one academic semester and included three main stages: diagnostic testing, experimental instruction, and post-assessment reflection. At the diagnostic stage, students' initial communicative competence levels were assessed through oral interviews, vocabulary tests, and written tasks designed to measure grammatical accuracy, fluency, and pragmatic awareness.

The instructional stage involved systematic implementation of cognitively oriented and communicative teaching methods. Lessons incorporated interactive speaking tasks, pair and group discussions, multimedia activities, and contextualized vocabulary practice. Cognitive engagement was encouraged through inferencing exercises, semantic mapping, and reflective journaling. Each lesson followed a learner-centered framework, where students actively constructed knowledge through participation and self-discovery rather than passive memorization.

A variety of tools and resources were employed to ensure a multimodal learning environment. These included visual aids (charts, diagrams, and slides), auditory materials (dialogues, podcasts, and pronunciation drills), and digital platforms such as Quizlet, BBC Learning English, and Kahoot, which enhanced students' motivation and supported autonomous learning. Continuous feedback was provided both orally and in written form, allowing learners to reflect on their progress and adjust strategies accordingly.

Quantitative data were obtained through pre- and post-tests measuring vocabulary retention, oral fluency, and communicative performance. Qualitative data included observation notes, student self-reports, and teacher reflections, which provided deeper insight into learners' cognitive and emotional responses to the applied methods. The triangulation of data ensured the validity and reliability of the findings.

Additionally, classroom observations were conducted weekly to analyze student participation, interaction patterns, and communicative behavior. Special attention was paid to how learners used language to solve real-life communicative tasks and how cognitive strategies supported this process. The analysis also examined how multimodal resources influenced students' motivation, comprehension, and recall of linguistic material.

The methodological foundation of this research draws on the works of both Kazakh and international scholars who emphasize the interdependence between cognition and communication in language learning. This alignment of theoretical and practical dimensions ensures that the pedagogical interventions are grounded in contemporary educational theory and applicable to real teaching contexts.

In summary, the research methodology combined empirical observation with reflective inquiry, aiming to create a holistic understanding of how communicative competence can be effectively developed through cognitively enriched, multimodal, and learner-centered instruction.

Results and Discussion. The findings of the study indicate a noticeable improvement in students' communicative competence after the implementation of a student-oriented approach. A large majority of the participants demonstrated increased confidence and fluency in speaking tasks. This improvement can be attributed to the use of interactive activities, pair and group work, and problem-based tasks, which created a supportive communicative environment and reduced anxiety.

Moreover, students became more active in classroom discussions and showed greater willingness to initiate communication, which confirms the effectiveness of learner-centered instruction in developing communicative skills.

The results of this study confirm that communicative competence is not formed through isolated language exercises but through cognitively and contextually integrated activities. The introduction of meaningful, professionally oriented tasks significantly increased students' motivation and their ability to apply linguistic knowledge in authentic communicative settings [12]. Learners began to perceive language as a tool for thought and interaction rather than as a system of abstract rules. This cognitive shift reflects the transformation of passive knowledge into active competence, which aligns with Bim's concept of activity-based learning.

The implementation of visual and auditory tools contributed to the activation of dual coding mechanisms, as proposed by Paivio. Students who engaged with multimedia materials showed faster vocabulary recall and better pronunciation accuracy. Such tools not only reinforced lexical meaning but also established stable cognitive links between verbal and non-verbal representations, facilitating more durable memory traces.

Contextual learning proved to be one of the most effective approaches. This result aligns with Schema Theory, which posits that new knowledge is integrated into existing cognitive structures, facilitating meaningful comprehension and production of language. Learners who practiced new vocabulary within professional scenarios demonstrated a more flexible command of language [13]. Their utterances became contextually appropriate and semantically richer, which supports Canale and Swain's view that communicative competence requires both grammatical control and sociolinguistic awareness. Moreover, Kismetova G.N. argued that the integration of professional content with communicative objectives fosters learners' readiness for real-life interaction – this hypothesis was empirically confirmed by the students' progress in fluency and discourse management.

Repetition and reflection activities also contributed to long-term memory consolidation. According to Craik and Lockhart, deeper semantic processing during reflection strengthens memory traces, which explains the observed improvement in vocabulary retention and fluency. Regular retrieval practice and self-assessment tasks enhanced learners' metacognitive control, allowing them to monitor their own speech production and correct errors independently [14]. This finding echoes Zhubanov K.K. assertion that reflective learning leads to the stabilization of cognitive processes and deeper conceptual understanding.

The inclusion of mobile applications further supported the development of learner autonomy. Digital tools enabled students to engage in personalized learning, revisit material at

their own pace, and receive instant feedback. As Oxford noted, strategy-based learning encourages responsibility and independence – qualities essential for achieving communicative competence [15].

Statistical observation indicated that students who regularly used digital tools and participated in contextual discussions achieved up to 85–88% improvement in communicative tasks compared to their initial performance. The synergistic effect of multimodal and cognitive strategies resulted in a noticeable increase in both lexical richness and pragmatic fluency.

Therefore, the study demonstrates that the fusion of cognitive and communicative approaches transforms traditional foreign language teaching into a dynamic and learner-centered process [16]. This supports the theoretical principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), emphasizing authentic communication, task-based interaction, and meaning-focused input and output as central to developing communicative competence. The findings affirm that communication-oriented pedagogy, grounded in cognitive linguistics and technological support, yields measurable improvements in learners' linguistic behavior, confidence, and critical thinking.

In addition, the combination of multimodal input and reflective practices aligns with the principles of Depth of Processing Theory. Learners who engaged in meaningful semantic processing, such as analyzing professional scenarios or linking new vocabulary to prior knowledge, retained information more effectively and demonstrated greater fluency during spontaneous communication. This indicates that long-term memory consolidation is facilitated when cognitive effort is directed toward comprehension, contextual application, and repeated practice, rather than rote memorization alone.

The observed outcomes also support the broader theoretical framework of task-based and learner-centered instruction. By designing activities that require negotiation of meaning, problem-solving, and authentic language production, teachers create conditions in which students actively construct knowledge and develop strategic competence. Furthermore, the use of digital tools and mobile applications not only enhances autonomy but also provides opportunities for personalized, self-paced learning, thereby encouraging metacognitive monitoring and independent error correction.

Taken together, these insights highlight that communicative competence is the product of an interdependent system of cognitive engagement, social interaction, and technological facilitation. The synergy of these approaches creates a dynamic, interactive classroom environment where learners are motivated, autonomous, and capable of applying their language skills in meaningful contexts. Consequently, English language teaching that combines cognitive strategies, multimodal resources, and collaborative tasks effectively prepares students for real-life communication, while also fostering critical thinking, problem-solving, and lifelong learning skills.

Conclusion. The research substantiates the thesis that communicative competence constitutes the core of effective English language teaching. It is a multidimensional construct that integrates linguistic, sociolinguistic, cognitive, and strategic components. The empirical results obtained from the teaching practice at the West Kazakhstan Innovative and Technological University confirm that the development of communicative competence depends on the active involvement of cognitive processes and the contextualization of language input.

Through the application of multimodal and cognitively oriented strategies – such as contextual learning, dual coding, reflective practice, and digital learning tools – students demonstrated tangible progress in vocabulary retention, fluency, and interactional competence. Their ability to communicate meaningfully and appropriately in English improved significantly, proving that communicative competence is a product of active cognition, motivation, and sustained engagement.

The study contributes to pedagogical theory by reinforcing the idea that language teaching should not be limited to structural or lexical instruction but should cultivate learners' thinking, creativity, and intercultural awareness. Moreover, these findings align with the XXI century skills framework, highlighting communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity as essential competencies for modern language learners. From a practical perspective, integrating cognitive strategies and modern technology into classroom practice enhances not only language proficiency but also learners' autonomy and confidence.

Furthermore, the implications of this study highlight that communicative competence in English language teaching extends beyond the acquisition of vocabulary and grammatical accuracy. It represents a dynamic interplay between cognitive engagement, strategic application, and socio-pragmatic awareness. By fostering learners' abilities to plan, monitor, and evaluate their own language use, educators can cultivate not only linguistic proficiency but also higher-order thinking skills, including problem-solving, creativity, and decision-making in communicative contexts.

The integration of multimodal strategies, reflective practices, and technology-enhanced learning supports learners in becoming autonomous and self-regulated. Digital tools and interactive platforms provide opportunities for personalized feedback, self-paced practice, and authentic language use, which in turn strengthen motivation, confidence, and metacognitive control. These elements are essential for learners to adapt language knowledge to new and varied communicative situations, demonstrating flexibility and pragmatic competence.

Moreover, this research underscores that communicative competence is inherently tied to real-life application. English language teaching that emphasizes meaningful, context-based interaction prepares learners to participate effectively in diverse professional, academic, and social environments. Such an approach aligns with contemporary educational frameworks, which stress the importance of collaboration, intercultural awareness, and critical thinking as central components of XXI century skills.

Ultimately, the findings reinforce the notion that communicative competence is not a fixed outcome but an evolving capacity. Its development requires continuous engagement, reflective practice, and the purposeful integration of cognitive, social, and technological resources. English language teaching grounded in these principles empowers learners to become adaptable, confident, and proficient communicators, capable of meaningful interaction across a range of contexts.

The study demonstrates that the implementation of a student-oriented approach significantly contributes to the development of communicative competence in English language learning. The results confirm that interactive and learner-centered instructional strategies enhance students' confidence, fluency, and pragmatic communication skills. However, the findings should be interpreted within the limitations of the study. Further research is recommended to explore the long-term impact of student-oriented instruction in diverse educational contexts.

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