MODERN AND TRADITIONAL STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING ADULT LEARNERS' COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

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Abstract:

Our article aims to shape the language learning activities of adult student, modern and traditional strategies for developing communicative competence, as well as the program and study of the English course. The authors discussed adult education principles and approaches in course design (personalized approach, meaningful learning, visual learning principles, technology-based communication) and the effectiveness of four instructional management strategies: visual reasoning strategy, video-based discussions, controlled discovery activities, and internet technology-based communication tasks. The results of this study show an improvement in communicative English skills among adult students.

Keywords: principles, technology-based communication, new competencies, communicative competence, determine causality, make hypotheses.

In today's fast-paced world, the range of skills required for teaching science is wide. To constantly innovate and adapt to new standards and requirements, university teachers need to develop new competencies, soft skills, and attitudes. This includes communicative competence in native and foreign languages, critical thinking, ICT skills, social intelligence, and cultural awareness [1, 2]. Since the roles of university teachers are varied and the expectations placed on them in terms of personal and professional development and advancement in an international scientific environment, teachers should have EFL communicative competence [3, 4]. In the recent past, the foreign language teaching curriculum in all universities and colleges of Uzbekistan has not developed communicative competence among university students [3]. They were taught reading and translation skills, mainly with some emphasis on English vocabulary and grammar. Little attention has been paid to developing their communication skills. Furthermore, most English textbooks and

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teaching materials designed by Uzbek scholars for widespread use in universities were based on the traditional reproductive approach and had little focus on communication.

Due to these factors, many university students, teachers, and professors did not have sufficient foreign language skills. Currently, they must recognize that EFL communication skills are required for successful career development in the international environment. Therefore, the problem of developing communicative competence in adult language learning has become a topic of particular interest for university teachers. Various aspects of teaching communicative skills to adult students in the EFL class are developed in the context of creative writing and critical thinking [5], and extracurricular activities [6]. This study focuses on formulating the content and teaching of the EFL course that encourages teacher participation in language learning and the development of communicative EFL skills in adult students.

This study focuses on the following theoretical questions: 1) What is EFL teachers' communicative competence and how can it be revealed and measured? 2) Which pedagogical principles and approaches of adult education can we apply to the design of English courses? Much research has been done to analyze the concept of communicative competence. Most researchers agree that communicative competence is a combination of two interconnected competencies: linguistic and social. According to Canale and Swain, communicative competence is the ability to use the language system appropriately in cross-cultural situations, given the functions and varieties of language and shared socio-cultural conditions [11]. Communicative competence is therefore a more complex ability that involves more than just knowing the rules of language. In our opinion, it is a combination of language skills and social values and attitudes, as well as the practical ability to use the language for a real communicative purpose in a variety of settings (socio-cultural, academic, and professional).

The assessment of communicative competence, therefore, includes the assessment of language skills (grammar and vocabulary) in context and practical language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in different situations. Communicative competence is demonstrated by producing or receiving oral or written texts in different contexts with a specific communicative purpose. These contexts

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correspond to different situations of personal, social, academic, and professional life [12]. Motivation and responsibility are important factors that lead to adult learners being successful in language learning. When designing course content and instruction, it is important to consider learners' needs and goals. When developing teaching materials or selecting teaching strategies, EFL teachers should draw on learners' personal experiences and strengths in language learning. This relevance to learners' needs and the personalized approach to delivering the course will create a sense of ownership and responsibility for learning outcomes in participants [14]. Meaningful learning in adult education is another challenging topic to improve learning efficiency. This approach to language learning requires a shift in focus from language as an educational goal to language as a social medium [13]. Learning language in context gives adult learners a better understanding of how to use vocabulary and grammar rules for meaningful communication. This approach helps adult learners see that what they are learning is a real-life language that suits their communication needs. Using visuals in the classroom is essential in today's increasingly visual world. Visualization in the form of charts, diagrams, drawings, and pictures can help adult learners understand and remember information better than mere verbal or textual descriptions. In addition, a visual object has become an essential part of foreign language communication [16]. Animated films, comics, YouTube videos, films, etc. have become an integral part of language teaching. They can encourage critical thinking, generate ideas and stimulate discussion. Videos can offer even more opportunities for language learning.

The main objective of the study was to shape the content of the EFL course and to identify the most effective strategies for the successful development of communicative EFL competencies in adult learners. Adult learners had a clear understanding of why they came to the course and what they wanted to get out of it. They came to the course with different learning backgrounds and life experiences, which allowed the teachers to use a wide range of classroom activities. We intended to encourage our participants to engage in more intellectual learning so that they could learn consciously. The results showed that the thinking involved in the learning process, the use of visual objects, and the face-to-face and virtual communication environment served as the main factors for successful language

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learning. They made the learning process meaningful, interesting, exciting, and creative.

The results of the study support our idea that the course content should correspond to the needs and interests of the participants in the languages and subjects to be learned. In our case, the content of the textbook, complemented by the additional activities of the teachers, created a great motivating effect on the learners. However, the content of the course taught in the classroom did not fully correspond to the measurement content of the test. This explains the fact that the final test results were not as high as we expected.

During course delivery, we saw the benefits of involving adult learners in productive and critical thinking activities. The discussion through questions was a really good tool to develop the learners' critical thinking skills (e.g. determine causality, make hypotheses, etc.). Our learners need such skills not only for interacting with people in academic and professional settings but also for day-to-day interaction. We should point out that video-based discussion as a strategy was based on the pedagogical framework discussed in the article and focused on goals and outcomes to maximize the learning potential of our adult learners. The review part had even greater potential as it helped learners to engage in various conversational activities to apply what they had learned and make the language part of the learners' natural communication skills. Learners were responsible for discovering the learned content through self-directed learning. Therefore, guided discovery activities have shifted the focus from the teacher as an educator to the learner as an explorer. Using this strategy made the learning process more student-centered and encouraged learners' autonomy and communication, as learners had to discuss the language together.

Conclusion:

In today's globalized world, Uzbek professionals need to develop communication skills in English to grow personally and professionally in the international scientific and academic environment. The study discussed the principles and approaches for designing EFL course programs and the effectiveness of certain instructional management strategies in developing communicative EFL competencies in adult learners who use the language for genuine communicative purposes in social, educational, and professional contexts. The assessment of communicative

competence includes the assessment of language skills (grammar and vocabulary) in context and practical language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) in different situations.

The course was designed based on the following principles and approaches of adult education: personalized approach, meaningful learning, principles of visual education, and technology-based communication. Internet technologies served both as educational content and as a teaching method. The results of this study support the fact that the use of a visual reasoning strategy, video-based discussions, guided discovery activities, and web technology-based communication tasks contributed to meaningful and purposeful language learning and active communication that support the improvement of the communicative EFL competencies of adult learners. In addition, video-based discussions and a visual thinking strategy encouraged critical thinking and encouraged adult learners to think about values when learning a language. Thus, the results support the methodology of this course and raise questions about how specific thinking strategies can be integrated into EFL teaching.

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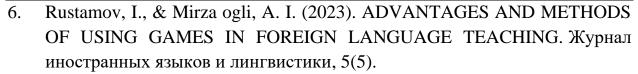
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