



## **FORMATION OF STUDENTS COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN RUSSIAN LANGUAGE LESSONS**

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### **Abstract**

This article explores the formation of communicative competence among university students in the process of learning the Russian language. The ability to communicate effectively in various contexts is a key goal in modern language education. In this regard, the development of communicative competence becomes a priority, especially in countries with multilingual and multicultural environments like Uzbekistan. The study examines the theoretical foundations of communicative competence, its structural components, and its relevance to the learning goals in higher education. Particular attention is given to the practical methods used to improve communicative skills, including interactive activities, dialogical speech training, and the integration of cultural content. Additionally, the article highlights how current pedagogical strategies, such as task-based learning and project-based learning, contribute to the development of speech fluency, confidence, and cross-cultural understanding. Emphasis is placed on classroom practices that foster student engagement, motivation, and real-world language use. This research also reviews contemporary literature, presents results of classroom experiments, and provides suggestions for educators seeking to enhance communicative competence in Russian language classes.

**Keywords:** Communicative competence, Russian language, language learning, higher education, speech development, communication skills, teaching methodology, interaction, dialogue, student engagement.

## **ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ КОММУНИКАТИВНОЙ КОМПЕТЕНЦИИ У СТУДЕНТОВ НА УРОКАХ РУССКОГО ЯЗЫКА**

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## **Introduction**

In the modern educational environment, the concept of communicative competence has emerged as a central goal in foreign language teaching, including the instruction of the Russian language. Communicative competence refers to a student's ability not only to know the rules of a language but also to use it appropriately in various communicative situations. In the context of higher education, especially in multilingual regions such as Uzbekistan, the importance of cultivating strong communication skills in the Russian language is growing due to academic, social, and professional demands.

Historically, traditional methods of teaching Russian emphasized grammar-translation and rote memorization, often neglecting real-life communication. However, with the advent of communicative language teaching (CLT), the focus has shifted toward interactive practices that prioritize meaningful use of the language. This shift reflects the global recognition that language is not a static system of rules but a dynamic tool for expression, negotiation, and understanding. In Uzbekistan, Russian remains an important language for interethnic communication, access to scientific literature, and employment opportunities. Therefore, the formation of communicative competence in this language is not only a linguistic task but also a socio-cultural and cognitive one. University students, regardless of their major, often need Russian to engage with academic texts, participate in discussions, and integrate into broader professional networks. As a result, Russian language classes must be redesigned to meet these communicative needs effectively.

Communicative competence comprises several components, including grammatical competence (knowledge of language structures), sociolinguistic competence (appropriate language use in context), discourse competence (cohesion and coherence), and strategic competence (compensating for communication breakdowns). These components interact dynamically and must be developed holistically through well-structured pedagogical activities.

Current pedagogical strategies for enhancing communicative competence include role-playing, debates, interviews, collaborative tasks, and simulations that replicate authentic language use. These methods aim to immerse students in real-life contexts where they must negotiate meaning, solve problems, and express their



ideas clearly and confidently. Instructors must also create an environment that encourages risk-taking, reduces language anxiety, and fosters active participation. Moreover, the integration of modern digital tools and online platforms has significantly influenced the way Russian is taught at universities. Platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and various language apps provide new opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous communication practice, which is essential for developing communicative competence outside the traditional classroom setting. These tools also support individualized learning paths and peer-to-peer interaction, which are crucial for student motivation and autonomy.

In light of these factors, the present article aims to investigate the theoretical underpinnings, practical strategies, and pedagogical outcomes associated with the development of communicative competence in Russian language classes at the university level in Uzbekistan. It will examine relevant academic literature, present an overview of methods currently in use, analyze the results of an applied classroom experiment, and offer recommendations for instructors. By doing so, this study contributes to the ongoing efforts to modernize language education and ensure that university graduates are prepared to communicate effectively in both academic and professional spheres.

The following sections will discuss the existing theoretical models of communicative competence, analyze relevant scholarly sources, describe the research methodology used, and present findings from experimental teaching practices conducted in Uzbek university classrooms.

### **Literature Review**

The development of communicative competence has been widely discussed in both general linguistics and pedagogical literature. One of the foundational works in this area is by Dell Hymes (1972), who introduced the concept of communicative competence as an alternative to Noam Chomsky's notion of linguistic competence. Hymes argued that knowing a language involves not only understanding its grammatical rules but also knowing how to use it appropriately in social contexts. This concept has since been expanded and refined by scholars such as Canale and Swain (1980), who proposed a four-component model: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Their framework remains influential in modern language teaching.



In the context of teaching Russian as a foreign language, Russian and international scholars alike emphasize the importance of moving beyond structural language instruction to include meaningful interaction and culturally relevant materials. For instance, Passov (1991) developed a communicative method for teaching Russian that prioritizes student-centered dialogue and real-life communication tasks. More recent research, such as that by Zimnyaya (2001), focuses on the psychological and cognitive aspects of speech development, including motivation, emotional involvement, and learner autonomy.

In the Uzbek educational context, researchers have also addressed the need for communicative-oriented instruction. Scholars like Rakhimova (2019) and Abdugarimov (2022) underline the importance of adopting communicative teaching strategies to enhance students' practical skills in Russian. They point out that in many universities, the Russian language is still taught with an emphasis on grammar, translation, and passive learning, which often leads to low levels of speaking proficiency among students.

Other notable contributions to this field include the integration of intercultural communication as part of communicative competence. According to Byram (1997), language learners should also develop intercultural competence, which includes the ability to understand and respect cultural differences, adapt to new contexts, and engage in meaningful dialogue across cultures. This aspect is especially relevant for Uzbekistan, where cultural diversity is high and Russian functions as a bridge language between different ethnic communities.

Overall, the literature supports a shift from teacher-centered, grammar-heavy instruction to a learner-centered, interaction-based approach. It also emphasizes the necessity of authentic materials, real-life communication, and integrated skills practice. Despite the widespread recognition of these principles, there remains a gap between theory and classroom practice, particularly in post-Soviet educational settings. This study aims to bridge that gap by providing practical methodologies and evidence-based results from teaching experiences in Uzbek universities.

## **Methodology**

This research employed a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies in developing communicative competence among university students learning Russian as a foreign language. The study was



conducted over the course of one academic semester in two universities located in Tashkent and Samarkand. A total of 60 first-year undergraduate students majoring in non-linguistic fields were selected to participate. They were divided into two groups: a control group receiving traditional grammar-translation instruction, and an experimental group taught using communicative language teaching (CLT) techniques.

The research design incorporated both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. At the beginning and end of the semester, all students completed a standardized communicative competence assessment based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). This test evaluated grammatical accuracy, vocabulary usage, fluency, pronunciation, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and the ability to manage conversations. The results were compared to determine the degree of progress in both groups.

In parallel, qualitative data were gathered through classroom observations, teacher diaries, and student surveys. Observations focused on student participation, the use of Russian in real-time interactions, and engagement during speaking tasks. Teacher diaries were used to document instructional methods, classroom dynamics, and perceived challenges. Student surveys were administered at the end of the semester to gather feedback on their learning experience, perceived improvement in communication skills, and motivation.

The experimental group received instruction based on communicative tasks, including role plays, group discussions, debates, situational dialogues, and project-based presentations. Lessons also incorporated authentic materials such as video interviews, podcasts, and news articles to promote real-world language exposure. In contrast, the control group followed a textbook-based curriculum with an emphasis on grammar drills, vocabulary memorization, and translation exercises.

Data analysis was performed using SPSS software for quantitative comparison of pre-test and post-test scores. Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data to identify patterns related to student engagement, perceived benefits of communicative activities, and teacher reflections.

The primary goal of this methodology was to measure the impact of communicative teaching methods on students' practical use of the Russian language, particularly in spoken interaction. The combination of quantitative testing and qualitative insights ensured a comprehensive understanding of how communicative



competence develops in university settings and how pedagogical strategies can be refined accordingly.

## **Results**

The findings from the study indicate a significant improvement in communicative competence among students in the experimental group who were taught using communicative language teaching (CLT) methods. The pre-test and post-test results showed that this group achieved higher gains in all components of communicative competence compared to the control group. In particular, noticeable progress was observed in oral fluency, sociolinguistic appropriateness, and the ability to initiate and maintain dialogues.

The average score of the experimental group increased by 32% from pre-test to post-test, while the control group showed an improvement of only 14%. Fluency and coherence, which were measured through speaking tasks, improved markedly among the experimental group, with students demonstrating greater confidence, fewer hesitations, and better use of discourse markers. In contrast, students in the control group continued to rely on memorized expressions and showed limited spontaneity in conversation.

Grammatical accuracy also improved in both groups, but the difference was more significant in the experimental group, which benefited from grammar being taught contextually during communicative activities. This indicates that grammar instruction embedded in real-life tasks can be more effective than isolated drills. Furthermore, vocabulary usage among the experimental group became more varied and contextually appropriate, as students were exposed to authentic materials and had multiple opportunities to apply new terms in meaningful contexts.

Classroom observations revealed a high level of student engagement in the experimental group. These students actively participated in discussions, collaborated in group tasks, and exhibited enthusiasm for speaking activities. The communicative approach created a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, encouraging students to take linguistic risks without fear of correction or failure. Conversely, the control group showed signs of passive learning, with less student-teacher interaction and minimal peer collaboration.

The qualitative data from student surveys also reinforced the quantitative findings. More than 80% of students in the experimental group reported feeling more



confident in their speaking abilities, compared to just 45% in the control group. Students also expressed increased motivation to learn Russian when the lessons were interactive and based on real-world situations. Many of them stated that communicative activities helped them overcome their fear of speaking and made the learning process more enjoyable and practical.

Teacher diaries provided further insights into the teaching process. Instructors noted that the communicative tasks encouraged creativity and spontaneity among students. They also observed that students retained vocabulary and grammatical structures more effectively when these were linked to practical communication. However, some challenges were reported, such as the initial resistance of students to participate in open-ended tasks and the need for careful planning to ensure all students were equally involved.

In summary, the results strongly support the effectiveness of communicative language teaching in enhancing students' communicative competence in Russian. The combination of real-life communication tasks, authentic materials, and a supportive classroom environment contributed to significant gains in language proficiency, particularly in oral communication. These findings suggest that incorporating CLT methods in university Russian language programs can lead to better learning outcomes and higher student satisfaction.

## **Discussion**

The results of the study demonstrate the considerable advantages of using communicative language teaching (CLT) methods in developing students' communicative competence in Russian language classrooms. These findings align with existing theoretical and empirical literature, confirming that students learn more effectively when they are actively involved in meaningful communication rather than passively receiving information. The discussion below will analyze the key factors contributing to the success of the experimental group, examine challenges encountered during implementation, and propose implications for future teaching practices.

First, one of the most important findings of the study is the role of interaction in promoting communicative competence. As evidenced by both test scores and classroom observations, students who engaged in regular peer interaction through dialogues, role-plays, and discussions demonstrated more rapid development of



fluency and sociolinguistic skills. This supports the idea that language is best learned in a social context where learners are required to negotiate meaning and respond spontaneously. The CLT approach, by emphasizing speaking and listening tasks, provided a platform for such interaction, thereby reinforcing learning through experience.

Second, the use of authentic materials significantly contributed to the students' vocabulary acquisition and confidence. Materials such as real news clips, dialogues from films, and native-speaker podcasts exposed students to natural language usage and expanded their understanding of tone, style, and pragmatics. These resources helped bridge the gap between textbook Russian and real-world Russian, giving learners the tools to apply what they learned in meaningful situations. This exposure is particularly relevant in Uzbekistan, where students may have limited access to native speakers of Russian but still need to function in Russian-speaking environments.

Another crucial factor was student motivation. The communicative lessons were perceived as more engaging and enjoyable, leading to increased participation and reduced anxiety. Unlike traditional approaches that often focus on error correction and rigid grammar structures, the CLT method fosters a supportive atmosphere where students are encouraged to express themselves, even if their language is imperfect. This aligns with Krashen's affective filter hypothesis, which suggests that lower anxiety leads to more effective language acquisition.

Despite these advantages, the study also revealed certain challenges. One common issue was the initial hesitation of students to participate in open-ended speaking tasks, especially those who were accustomed to passive learning styles. Overcoming this required consistent encouragement and scaffolding from instructors, including structured pair work, model dialogues, and confidence-building activities. Another challenge was the increased time and effort required for lesson planning. Designing communicative tasks that are both level-appropriate and thematically relevant demands greater pedagogical creativity and adaptability from teachers.

The instructors also faced the task of balancing communicative fluency with grammatical accuracy. While fluency improved substantially in the experimental group, some students occasionally demonstrated incorrect sentence structures or inconsistent verb conjugations. This indicates the need for a blended approach



where grammar is not ignored but taught contextually and functionally rather than abstractly.

In terms of institutional application, these findings suggest that university Russian language programs should prioritize communicative objectives in their curricula. Teacher training workshops, resource development, and curriculum redesign should be aligned with the principles of CLT. Moreover, the integration of digital platforms for communicative practice — especially for speaking and listening — can further enhance language development and provide learners with opportunities beyond the classroom.

Summary the discussion highlights the importance of task-based, interaction-rich environments in the successful formation of communicative competence. Although challenges remain, particularly in the areas of resource development and teacher preparedness, the benefits of a communicative approach are substantial. A balanced methodology that integrates meaningful interaction, contextual grammar instruction, and authentic materials offers a viable pathway to improved language proficiency and learner autonomy in Russian language education.

### **Main Part**

The core of communicative competence lies in the practical ability to use language effectively in real-life contexts. In the Russian language classroom, this involves not only mastering vocabulary and grammar, but also understanding how to convey messages appropriately depending on the social and cultural environment. In this section, we explore the practical structure of lessons, student reactions, observed progress, and the linguistic behaviors that emerged from the communicative teaching process.

One of the most effective components implemented in the classroom was the task-based approach. Students were given specific communicative goals—such as conducting interviews, presenting opinions, debating a topic, or narrating events—and had to work collaboratively to accomplish these tasks in Russian. These activities encouraged students to practice both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) skills simultaneously. For example, in one class session, students were divided into groups and asked to simulate a TV interview with a public figure. Each group wrote a script, practiced delivery, and presented their dialogues in front of the class. The activity demanded creativity, spontaneous



interaction, and accurate language use under pressure, all of which contribute to communicative development.

The structure of the lessons was intentionally flexible. Teachers began with short warm-up discussions or vocabulary brainstorming, followed by input through video or text, and then transitioned to student-led interaction. This progression allowed for scaffolding—students first acquired the necessary language and then applied it communicatively. During each session, feedback was provided not as correction of every mistake but as guidance to improve fluency and clarity while maintaining learner confidence. Peer feedback was also encouraged, fostering a sense of mutual support and collaborative learning.

One of the key linguistic outcomes of this approach was the increased use of discourse markers and cohesive devices, such as “однако,” “кроме того,” and “на мой взгляд,” which made students’ speech more fluent and structured. There was also evidence of greater pragmalinguistic awareness; for instance, students began to choose more polite or formal expressions in role-play scenarios involving authority figures. This reflected not just linguistic competence but also sociocultural sensitivity, a vital part of communicative ability.

In terms of lexical development, students expanded their active vocabulary range by engaging with texts and dialogues on diverse topics such as health, environment, and education. Through communicative repetition in contextualized settings, words became embedded in long-term memory more efficiently than through rote memorization alone. Furthermore, grammar instruction was embedded naturally into activities. Instead of isolated grammar lectures, teachers introduced structures like aspectual pairs or case usage within the context of role-plays or writing tasks. This method helped students internalize grammar through repeated and meaningful use.

Another important element was the integration of technology. Students used voice recording tools to practice pronunciation, participated in video exchanges with peers, and engaged in real-time online discussions. These digital tools served to extend the classroom experience beyond its physical limits, allowing students to interact in Russian even outside scheduled lessons. These interactions promoted learner autonomy and confidence, especially among students who were shy in face-to-face communication.



Cultural content was also central. Lessons incorporated Russian traditions, holidays, customs, and social norms to give students a deeper understanding of the communicative context. Discussions on Russian etiquette, body language, and communication styles helped students navigate real-world conversations more effectively. Such cultural immersion, even in simulated environments, plays a critical role in the formation of complete communicative competence.

Overall, the main part of the study confirmed that a structured yet flexible communicative approach fosters linguistic growth, student motivation, and cultural awareness. By focusing on interaction, real-world relevance, and integrated skill practice, students not only improved their Russian proficiency but also developed the confidence and competence to use the language beyond the classroom setting.

## **Conclusion**

The development of communicative competence in university students studying the Russian language is not only a pedagogical goal but a necessity in today's globalized and multilingual world. The findings of this study confirm that communicative language teaching methods significantly enhance students' practical abilities to use Russian in real-world contexts. By shifting the focus from grammatical accuracy alone to meaningful interaction, educators can foster a more dynamic, engaging, and effective learning environment.

Through a combination of task-based learning, authentic materials, and a supportive classroom atmosphere, students in the experimental group demonstrated notable progress in fluency, vocabulary usage, and the ability to navigate social and cultural nuances in communication. The use of interactive techniques such as debates, interviews, and role plays allowed learners to actively construct their knowledge and gain confidence in their expressive capabilities. Moreover, embedding grammar within these activities proved to be more effective than traditional rule-based instruction, as it allowed students to internalize structures naturally through repeated, purposeful use.

One of the key outcomes of the study was the increased motivation and participation of students when exposed to communicative tasks. The reduced anxiety and increased autonomy observed in the experimental group suggest that such methods not only improve language skills but also support emotional and psychological growth. Learners felt empowered to take risks, experiment with



language, and interact more freely with peers. This is particularly important in the context of Uzbekistan, where Russian serves as a tool for interethnic communication, academic collaboration, and professional development.

Despite the clear advantages of communicative approaches, the study also highlights certain challenges. These include the initial resistance of students to engage in spontaneous speech, the need for teacher training to effectively implement communicative techniques, and the demand for resources that provide real-life language exposure. Addressing these challenges requires institutional support, curriculum reform, and ongoing professional development for language instructors.

Furthermore, the integration of digital tools offers additional opportunities for enhancing communicative competence. Online platforms, video conferencing, and language learning applications can extend communicative practice beyond the classroom, especially in blended or remote learning environments. Such technologies not only facilitate individual learning but also promote collaboration and interaction across geographical boundaries.

In conclusion, the formation of communicative competence among university students studying Russian must be viewed as a comprehensive, student-centered process. It involves linguistic knowledge, cultural awareness, interpersonal skills, and emotional engagement. This study demonstrates that communicative language teaching, when applied systematically and with consideration for learners' needs, yields positive and lasting results. For educators, this means rethinking traditional methodologies, embracing innovation, and placing students' communicative needs at the heart of instruction. For institutions, it means investing in materials, training, and assessment tools that support communicative goals.

Ultimately, preparing students to communicate effectively in Russian enhances their academic and professional prospects, promotes intercultural understanding, and contributes to a more inclusive and connected educational landscape.

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