

MODERN METHODS AND CHALLENGES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

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This article discusses modern methods in foreign language teaching and their effectiveness. It also analyzes key linguistic and methodological challenges in learning a foreign language. Based on academic literature, the advantages and disadvantages of approaches such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are examined. This article aims to provide useful insights for both language learners and educators in developing effective teaching strategies.

Key words: Foreign language teaching, communicative approach, task-based learning, content and language integration, language interference, pronunciation difficulties, grammatical complexity, educational technologies.

Introduction: In today's globalized world, knowing foreign languages is essential not only for education and academic research but also for cultural cooperation and professional success. Therefore, developing effective language teaching methods and addressing existing challenges are among the most relevant issues. This article explores the main principles of foreign language teaching and the difficulties encountered in this process. In today's era of globalization, foreign language proficiency has become one of the key factors for personal development, academic achievements, and professional success. As information technologies continue to evolve rapidly, cultural, scientific, and economic relations between different countries are strengthening. Therefore, improving foreign language teaching methodologies and addressing existing challenges in the learning process are among the most pressing issues of today.

The education system of the Republic of Uzbekistan places significant emphasis on foreign language instruction, with several reforms being implemented in this regard. In 2012, the Presidential Decree on "Measures to Further Improve the System of Learning Foreign Languages" laid the foundation for a comprehensive reform, introducing foreign language education from preschool levels onwards. Today, foreign languages are taught in schools, colleges, and higher education institutions using the Communicative Language Teaching approach, which focuses on developing students' practical communication skills. Additionally, preparation for international language proficiency tests such as IELTS and TOEFL has been strengthened. Various teaching approaches are employed to ensure effective foreign language acquisition. Traditional grammar-translation methods are gradually being replaced by interactive techniques. For instance, higher education institutions in Uzbekistan have adopted Task-Based Language Teaching and Content and Language Integrated Learning methodologies, enabling students to acquire a foreign language in a natural learning environment. Furthermore, under the "Modern Foreign Languages" curriculum, efforts are being made to integrate foreign language learning with subjects such as informatics, business, and technology. However, several challenges persist in the process of foreign language instruction. In Uzbekistan's educational institutions, issues such as language interference, pronunciation difficulties, and grammatical complexities are considered major obstacles to language acquisition. For example, due to the absence of articles in the Uzbek language, learners often struggle with the correct usage of "a," "an," and "the" in English. Additionally, the pronunciation of English phonemes such as /θ/ and /ð/ poses difficulties for Uzbek learners, as these sounds do not exist in their native language. In Uzbekistan, the use of online platforms such as Duolingo, Memrise, and BBC Learning English is increasing. According to Uzbekistan's state education standards, starting from 2023, obtaining a B2-level language proficiency certificate has become a key requirement for university admission and graduation exams.

In today's world, the effective application of modern methods in foreign language teaching has become increasingly important. Although various language teaching approaches have been developed globally, each has its own advantages and limitations. In Uzbekistan, significant reforms have been implemented in foreign language education, with a noticeable shift from traditional methods to interactive and communicative approaches. The communicative approach now holds a leading position in the education system. The primary goal of this method is not merely memorizing grammatical rules but enabling students to apply the language

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in real-life situations. Lessons in schools and universities are becoming more practice-oriented. For instance, in several higher education institutions, students are divided into small groups to engage in discussions on different topics, create short role-play videos, or analyze real-life scenarios. These techniques help students use the language in a dynamic and natural setting. Task-based learning is also widely used in foreign language teaching. In this method, students complete real-world tasks as part of their language learning process. Activities such as booking a hotel, conducting official correspondence with international partners, or participating in job interviews allow learners to acquire practical skills. This approach is particularly beneficial for students preparing for careers in tourism and business. In regions like Khiva and Samarkand, where tourism is rapidly developing, knowledge of foreign languages is essential for interacting with international visitors. Therefore, educational institutions in these areas place a strong emphasis on practical training. Additionally, some universities have adopted content and language integrated learning (CLIL), where foreign languages are taught in conjunction with other subjects. For example, at Inha University and the Tashkent Institute of Chemical Technology, certain subjects are delivered in English. This enables students to not only learn a foreign language but also master professional terminology in that language. For young people aspiring to study at foreign universities or work in international companies, this is a highly valuable practice.

Key Challenges in Foreign Language Learning

As with any educational system, foreign language instruction in Uzbekistan faces several challenges. One of the primary issues is the influence of the native language. Since Uzbek does not have articles, students often struggle with the correct usage of "a," "an," and "the" in English. Additionally, differences in sentence structure between Uzbek and English sometimes lead students to arrange words incorrectly. To address this issue, teachers can employ contrastive analysis to clearly explain the distinctions between the native and target languages. Another major challenge is pronunciation. Some sounds in English, French, or German do not exist in Uzbek, making accurate pronunciation difficult for learners. For example, English sounds like /θ/ (think) and /ð/ (this) are often pronounced as /s/ or /z/ by many students. Similarly, nasal sounds in French and the "ch" sound in German pose difficulties. To help overcome these challenges, many universities have established specialized phonetic laboratories. Moreover, the lack of a sufficient language immersion environment in educational institutions remains a significant issue. Many students speak English or another foreign language during class but revert to their native language outside the classroom, leading to a faster loss of acquired skills. To address this, some universities have introduced dedicated conversation clubs such as "English Club" and "Speaking Corner", but these initiatives are not yet widespread in all institutions.

Conclusion

The effective teaching of foreign languages has gained global significance, making the integration of modern methods into the education system a crucial task. In Uzbekistan, there has been a noticeable shift from traditional approaches to interactive and communicative methods in recent years. Specifically, the practical implementation of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has contributed to making the learning process more effective. In schools and higher education institutions, students have the opportunity to use the language in real-life situations, significantly enhancing their communication skills. At the same time, several challenges persist in foreign language education in Uzbekistan. One of the major difficulties is native language interference, which leads to grammatical and pronunciation errors among learners. For example, the absence of articles, differences in word order, and the lack of certain phonemes in Uzbek complicate the process of mastering a foreign language. Additionally, the lack of a language environment hinders the practical application of acquired knowledge.

To enhance the effectiveness of foreign language teaching, the following areas should be prioritized:

1. Implementing contrastive analysis and specialized training to minimize language interference.
2. Utilizing phonetic laboratories and audiovisual technologies to address pronunciation challenges.
3. Expanding Speaking Clubs and Language Immersion programs to create a more immersive language environment.
4. Enhancing teacher training and further integrating modern technologies into the educational process.

In the future, the widespread adoption of innovative approaches, digital technologies, and artificial intelligence will help overcome existing challenges in foreign language education. Additionally, creating more practical learning opportunities and developing an education system that aligns with international standards will make the process of learning foreign languages in Uzbekistan more effective and results-driven.

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