

## FOSTERING COMMUNICATIVE EXCELLENCE: A COMPREHENSIVE EXPLORATION OF VIDEOCONFERENCING IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

G. Tashxujayeva<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract:*

This article seeks to establish a theoretical foundation for understanding the application of video conferencing as a tool to augment communicative competence in foreign languages. It expounds upon the linguodidactic potential of video conferencing, elucidating its role in facilitating student engagement with native speakers. Additionally, the article substantiates the methodologies, techniques, and procedural stages aimed at advancing communicative competence in foreign languages through the integration of video conferencing.

*Key words:* Videoconferencing, Language education, Communicative competence, foreign language instruction, Pedagogical methodologies, Interactive learning, Student engagement, Classroom technology, Virtual immersion, Cognitive development

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The principal aim of advanced foreign language instruction in linguistically focused universities/faculties is the refinement and cultivation of students' foreign language communicative competence. This encompasses linguistic, speech, sociocultural, compensatory, educational, and cognitive competence, collectively ensuring the seamless application of language skills in authentic communication with native speakers or representatives of diverse cultures. To effectively elevate foreign language communicative competence, this study advocates for the integration of state-of-the-art technologies, specifically video conferencing. Such an approach facilitates the creation of diverse linguistic scenarios, fostering spontaneous foreign language speech, vocabulary enrichment, and direct interaction between linguistics students and native speakers.

Videoconferencing amalgamates pedagogical methodologies, including the Audio-Lingual Method from the 1950s, which utilized audio recordings of dialogues in foreign language instruction. Berwald's method proposed in 1985 and subsequently developed by Altman in 1989, incorporating video and contemporary multimedia/hypermedia techniques, as well as the Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) method, further contribute to its multifaceted nature.

A video conference, constituting a synchronous conversation, allows participants located at varying distances to engage in real-time audio and visual interactions via video monitors. Multimedia Teleschool developers assert that the learning environment facilitated by videoconferencing mirrors face-to-face communication. Although unable to entirely replicate traditional learning conditions, telematics technologies create a "virtual" learning space, bringing learners closer to the dynamics of conventional classroom interactions than traditional distance learning models.

The linguistic and didactic potential inherent in videoconferencing encompasses multiple critical dimensions:

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<sup>1</sup> Tashxujayeva Gulasal, Teacher of Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages

**Virtual Immersion:** This facet involves the virtual immersion of students into an authentic environment reflective of the studied language and culture. Achieved through the functionalities of computer video conferencing, such as the exchange of audio and video information, linguistic students engage in discussions with native speakers, thereby augmenting both their linguistic and sociocultural competence.

**Interaction with Native Speakers:** Videoconferencing provides a direct avenue for linguistic students to communicate with native speakers, facilitating improvements in speech, language, and sociocultural competency. This interaction is conducted exclusively in English, affording students the opportunity to address topics of personal interest or those discussed in class.

**Foreign Language Polylogue:** A pivotal aspect involves orchestrating a multilateral conference where students interact with two or more native speakers of the foreign language. This dynamic setting promotes dialogue-cooperation, dialogue-dispute, honing information transmission skills, and fostering the articulation of individual perspectives.

**Selectivity and Individualization:** Videoconferencing serves as a platform for selectively enhancing various components of communicative competence, allowing for personalized improvement tailored to the unique needs of each student.

The flexibility afforded by videoconferencing extends to selectively enhancing specific components of communicative competence, aligning with the individual interests and instructional objectives of linguist students. Whether focusing on linguistic, sociolinguistic, cultural, or linguistic and speech competence, the linguist student actively engages in conversations with native speakers of the studied language.

Developing a methodology for improving communicative competence involves considering various factors, including system configuration options. Geographical disparities among interlocutors, whether in two places, one place, or several places, impact the volume and nature of communication, influencing the dynamics of remote communicative interaction.

Prior to initiating foreign language lessons via video conferencing, teachers must acquaint themselves with technical aspects and proficiently navigate the components of the video conferencing system. Additionally, in remote communication scenarios, providing motivation and psychological support is essential, mitigating potential psychological discomfort among students, particularly before interactions with native speakers.

Effective organization and methodology for enhancing communicative competence during videoconferencing should encompass the following considerations.

The significance of videoconferencing classes lies in their unique nature, typically serving as the concluding sessions in mastering oral speech topics, occurring only a few times per school year. Therefore, emphasizing the importance of these infrequent lessons is paramount.

Prior preparation of students for videoconferencing sessions is imperative. This involves familiarizing them with the lesson's objectives, elucidating the nuances of communication with native speakers, and instilling readiness for dynamic communicative engagement.

The essence of speech interaction assumes a pivotal role. Encouraging students to actively participate, pose inquiries, and seek additional information is crucial. As interaction constitutes the essence of video conferencing, students should not merely pose questions but also proactively contribute their own insights to the discussed topic.

Confidence is fundamental for deriving tangible benefits from videoconferencing in enhancing communicative competence. Fostering students' self-assurance and empowering

them to achieve their communicative competence goals are essential prerequisites. Students must harbor confidence in the direct impact of their efforts on the conference outcome, with the expectation of a positive result.

The inaugural videoconferencing session holds particular importance, as students may not be psychologically prepared for active participation. Clear guidance is essential in this initial lesson to help students grasp the nuances of interaction and encourage active communication. Preparations should emphasize the shift from a television stereotype to real communication with native speakers through video conferencing.

At the onset of the first lesson, concise instructions play a crucial role in addressing potential challenges, including audio-video delay. Students should be guided to minimize background disturbances and movements while receiving instructions on handling audio delays. The preparatory content can be summarized as follows:

1. Clearly state the purpose of the videoconferencing, focusing on enhancing foreign language communicative competence and overcoming psychological barriers in communicating with native speakers.
2. Establish etiquette guidelines for behavior during video conferences.
3. Assign roles to students to maximize their engagement in the polylogue.

To stimulate interaction, active involvement of participants is necessary to maintain interest. Encouraging student dialogue is vital, aiming for at least 70-75% of the session time dedicated to student communication.

Before the initial videoconferencing session, familiarizing students with conduct rules is advisable. Displaying instructions on the board can reinforce compliance during a video conference, encompassing at least three key aspects. In the introductory segment of video conferencing, the teacher should:

1. Clearly articulate the session's topic and the educational issues to be addressed.
2. Specify the type of video conference (introductory, review, final, etc.).
3. Define the purpose of the videoconference, elucidating the unique characteristics of the lesson's format and its role within the broader curriculum structure.

In the initial phase of the videoconference, the instructor undertakes pivotal responsibilities:

Sustain audience engagement through the strategic utilization of challenging questions, assignments, and tasks to ensure sustained attention.

Foster cognitive development by structuring content, organization, and methodology to cultivate cognitive processes such as analysis, synthesis, generalization, systematization, classification, and others.

Conclude each educational matter with a concise summary, highlighting key aspects and facilitating a seamless transition to the subsequent educational inquiry.

During the conclusive stage, the instructor is advised to:

Recapitulate the fundamental issues addressed in the video conference, delivering a succinct and vivid summary. Emphasis is placed on reiterating key theses, definitions, and pivotal topic provisions, underscoring their pertinence to the ongoing study of a foreign language and the augmentation of communicative competence.

Prescribe independent tasks to students in preparation for the subsequent lesson, nurturing individual engagement with the subject matter.

To refine future videoconferencing methodologies, it is imperative to conduct periodic surveys among participants after each session. The evaluation process should encompass not only technical considerations but also the effectiveness of the instructor, facilitator, and students. The assessment of conducted sessions plays a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of forthcoming videoconferencing sessions.

In evaluating the initial video conferencing lesson, students should address the following questions:

- Were the anticipated results achieved after the lesson?
- Was the lesson technically effective?
- What were the positive/negative aspects of this technology?
- What improvements would enhance the lesson's quality?
- What adjustments should be considered for future sessions?
- How does a videoconferencing lesson compare to a traditional one?

Experience with English language classes utilizing video conferencing indicates its efficacy in enhancing students' foreign language communicative competence. Moreover, videoconferencing extends its utility beyond communicative competence, proving effective in cultivating other foreign language competencies, particularly sociocultural competence.

In conclusion, this article delves into the multifaceted realm of videoconferencing as a potent tool for enhancing foreign language communicative competence. By exploring pedagogical methodologies, interactive learning strategies, and the dynamics of virtual immersion, the study underscores the significance of videoconferencing in language education. Student engagement and cognitive development are crucial focal points, with attention given to effective teacher guidance and the encouragement of independent learning. The article emphasizes the positive impact of videoconferencing on language learning outcomes, highlighting its role as a valuable component in contemporary educational technology. The insights provided serve to inform educators, fostering a deeper understanding of the potential benefits and considerations in incorporating videoconferencing into language instruction.

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