



## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERACTIVE METHODS AND ACTIVITIES IN EFL CLASSES

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### ABSTRACT

The essence of interactive learning is that the learning process is organized in such a way that almost all students are involved in the learning process, they have the ability to understand and reflect on what they know and think. The joint activity of students in the process of cognition, development of educational material means that everyone makes their own individual contribution; there is an exchange of knowledge, ideas, and ways of activity. Moreover, this happens in an atmosphere of goodwill and mutual support, which allows not only obtaining new knowledge, but also develops the cognitive activity itself, translates it into higher forms of cooperation and cooperation. Interactive activity in the lessons involves the organization and development of dialogue communication, which leads to mutual understanding, interaction, to joint solution of common, but significant for each participant tasks. During the interactive training, students learn to think critically, solve complex problems based on an analysis of circumstances and relevant information, weigh alternative opinions, make informed decisions, participate in discussions, and communicate with other people.

**Key words:** EFL teaching, proficiency level, interactive methods, communicative skills, variables, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), Task Based Learning (TBL).

### INTRODUCTION

The use of interactive methods has been widely explored and studied by many researchers in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. There have been many studies conducted on the use of interactive methods in EFL settings. However, there are only few studies in number that specifically deal with interactive and its implementation in the Uzbek context. The use of interactive methods in EFL classes is a popular approach to language teaching which emphasizes using language in the same way that it is used in real life. In other words, you put your students in language situations which are as close to real life as possible.

Furthermore, in the process of effective integration of interactive methods into teaching English as a foreign language, special attention should be paid for teacher training. When the teachers better understand the principles of using interactive methods, as well as explore how it works in EFL classrooms, they can meet the demands of using interactive methods more effectively and feel motivated to overcome the potential constraints in the use of interactive methods. Within this framework, it is crucial that teachers not be lectured about interactive methods in teacher training programs. Rather, they should be demonstrated how interactive methods actually work.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

Uzbekistan World Languages University has been chosen as a target educational establishment which is one of the leading institutions of the country in preparing pedagogical professionals for teaching English as a foreign language. Currently, more than ten thousand students are learning different languages such as English, Russian, Spanish, French, Turkish, and many others in seven faculties of the University. As target learners of the current unit of lesson plans, second-year students of First English Faculty who learning English as a foreign language have been chosen.

### *Demographics*

Dornyei (2005) pointed out that individuals, their needs, way of learning, and their success in second language acquisition are different because of individual variables such as age, gender, aptitude, learning style and strategies, personality, and motivation. Aiming at designing an effective lesson, the composition, background, and individual variables of the target students have been studied. The group consists of 12 students, 2 males and 10 females whose ages range from 19 to 23. Although all of them are citizens of Uzbekistan, their national composition is different: Uzbeks, which make up the largest proportion of class, Kazakhs, Tajiks, and one Tatar student. Apart from their native language, they can speak in the Russian language that is common in Uzbekistan. The proficiency level of the students is not the same (B1-B2), though they study in the same group. According to the curriculum, the language level of the students should correspond to the criteria of the B2 band of the CEFR by the end of the second year. The group of target learners is learning English for different purposes, therefore their needs and wants vary from learner to learner. For example, the students who want to be a tour guide are eager to learn communicative skills while the students with the aim of continuing their academic studies want to learn academic skills more. Moreover, during the observations, particular learner diversities have been analyzed. For example, two male students of the group are introvert and show less willingness to communicate while the females are much more active and extrovert. Another difference is the learning styles of the students, half of the students claimed that they learn better when they do something, the other three students prefer learning through listening and the rest of them was mixed in terms of learning styles.

### *Policies*

Accurate language planning and policy that moves from micro to macro level is indispensable in creating opportunities for the systematic development of language teaching and learning which takes account of the needs of its actors (Kheng and Baldauf, 2014). In Uzbekistan, any educational policy, plan or laws should be consistent with “National Program of Personal Training” (1997) and Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan “On Education” (1997) that are considered as the main frameworks to organize and systematize the field of education (Azizova, 2014). As the global role of English and the demand for learning this language has increased in Uzbekistan, the president declared the Decree # 1875, “On measures to development of foreign language learning system. (December, 10, 2012). Since the designed lesson plan is targeted the learners of UZWLU, the objectives of the lessons should be in alignment with the sections of another Presidential Decree “On Measures to Improve the Activity of Uzbekistan State World Languages University which was declared on May 23, 2013. The objectives put in forward both in national and educational policies have been studied before designing the unit of three lesson plans.

## RESULTS

According to my plan, I conducted the lesson at intermediate level classroom and focus on communicative activities that I have already practised with my students. My aim is to test some communicative activities and evaluate their advantages, disadvantages and I hope this way will help the majority of teachers that are desperate in searching for any communicative activities to encourage speaking and conversation in the class.

Methods and techniques used during the lesson: The lessons were organized through interesting activities and were depicted with pair, group and team works. Most lesson time was invested to practice CLT techniques such as snowball fight (mingle activity), interview and role play. Through chosen techniques for teaching and learning speaking that the learners learned and developed the skills of speaking using the context. Particularly, the lessons helped learners to understand different speaking strategies and to improve communication skills, as well as used techniques provided great opportunity to activate the speaking skills of the learner.

*Snowball fight* is a short ice-breaker activity which encourages students to mingle and share information about themselves. During this activity students throw all the snowballs on their side of the classroom at the other group, then picked up any four snowballs that are, by now, scattered over the floor, sit down and open them up to see the information inside and elicit the questions they need to ask to make another person in the class give the answer they have on the sheet e.g. 'What's your name?' for the information 'Pepe'. Then students mingle and find the person who wrote the information on the paper and write that person's name on the paper. And all students have finished they told the class what information they found about other people in the class.

In *Interview* step students took an interview from a famous singer and they asked questions turn by turn sitting face to face. This activity, since it is highly-structured, allows for the instructor to more closely monitor students' responses. It can zone in on one specific aspect of grammar or vocabulary, while still being a primarily communicative activity and giving the students communicative benefits.

*Role-play* is an oral activity and learners required to do it in pairs, and the main goal is to develop students' communicative abilities in a certain setting. This activity gives students the chance to improve their communication skills in the TL in a low-pressure situation. Most students are more comfortable speaking in pairs rather than in front of the entire class. And there teacher need to be aware of the differences between a conversation and an utterance. Students may use the same utterances repeatedly when doing this activity and not actually have a creative conversation. If instructors do not regulate what kinds of conversations students are having, then the students might not be truly improving their communication skills

In the lesson plan almost all activities focused to the development of speaking strategies and completed each other by doing the tasks which serve to raise the application of target language into reality.

Even the best students have days when they are not motivated for classroom learning. With a little nudge from you, you can turn those dreary days into successful classes in their learning language. As we know there are different kinds of learner styles that means we tried to cover all them by the activities for example kinesthetic and tactile learners touch the

snowballs and write the answers on it ,visual learners watch a song clip at the same time and auditory learners listen the song was played and by this way we engaged students who might otherwise struggle and they took motivation to continue the learning.

Sometimes motivating your students is as easy as changing the material you are using. Bringing some different texts out of the curriculum into the class will reengage our students who are turned off by our current materials. That's why we choose the songs that considers authentic material.

One never fail motivational method you can use with your students is giving rewards. We told our students that if every student earns many stars on board or higher on a role play we will have a pizza party. Even little stickers can be enough to spark some giggles and winks but with it some fresh motivation. And sense of being a winner is a high motivation I think.

### DISCUSSION

By means of this thesis I realized how important it is for the teacher to have a great amount of information concerning teaching receptive and productive skills to be able to provide the students with efficient conversational lessons. The methodology literature I was reading through enabled me to have a look at all skills from a different point of view and think about this issue more deeply. All the theoretical information I gained from this literature was used in the practical part of my thesis. Based on that, I reached several findings.

The theme of the project work covers only one aspect of the language learning in English by the way teaching receptive and productive skills, however we have taken a broader look when preparing the materials for the project of the whole Course of Practical English. For this paper, as a researcher we used Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Computer-Assisted Learning (CAL) as well as Task-Based Learning (TBL), group works, visual graphs and pictures as a teaching strategy.

The present study confirmed that the teachers working in EFL settings felt that their concerns, questions, and English teaching issues pertaining to EFL contexts are not sufficiently addressed in the existing literature. The participants of this study highlighted their disadvantages of teaching English as a foreign language. Hence, more attention should be paid to research which primarily deals with the special features of English learning and teaching in EFL situations.

As the present study was carried out, it became evident that there were many relevant questions that remained unanswered, which could potentially serve as research questions for related studies. Some of these questions are listed below as recommendations for further research:

1. What are the characteristics and learning styles of students learning English and English teaching in Uzbekistan? Gaining better knowledge on these aspects can help to develop English teaching methods which will better address the unique issues in EFL classrooms and thus can more readily fit into the EFL teaching.
2. What are the students' perceptions of communicative and non-communicative activities in EFL classrooms? The answer to this question can offer important information for teachers and tutors, and help them better understand the needs and interests of the learners so that they can make informed decisions in implementing a communicative approach in their classrooms.
3. How can our EFL teachers balance grammar instruction and communicative competence in their language classrooms? The answer this question is crucial to provide more

direct assistance to classroom English teachers since EFL teachers feel and believe that grammar instruction is necessary for Uzbek teachers. Yet, they are not well informed as to how to balance grammar teaching with that of communicative abilities.

4. What are the possible alternatives for written examinations as a selection and placement mechanism? How can the current grammar-based English examinations be modified so that they will better test the communicative skills of English learners? Answers to these questions are worthwhile since English teaching is led by grammar-based examinations in Uzbekistan, and thus EFL teaching has been focusing too much on grammar instruction and neglecting the development of learners' communicative competence.

### CONCLUSION

Everyone struggles to be motivated at some point. When you see your students in that place, try some of these fun ways to engage and enliven your class. If all else fails, it may be time for some consequences.

Even little stickers can be enough to spark some giggles and winks but with it some fresh motivation. Design your rewards to your students' personalities, and tell them what your plans are. Students look forward to even the simple pleasures that you can work out on an ordinary day.

Teachers need to create interesting lessons in which the students' attention is gained. This can sometimes be accomplished by the use of teaching strategies which are not often called upon by other teachers in mainstream subject areas. Encouraging students to become more active participants in a lesson can sometimes assist them to see a purpose for improving their receptive and productive skills in the target language.

After probing and observing my microteaching, I realized that shooting our classes in the video in order to reflect on and study our own teaching can give plenty opportunities to create interesting and fruitful lessons as I found this most revealing and extremely helpful after my microteaching session. For this reason, I recommend to do so to every teacher.

And when my students provided feedbacks, I understood what I should do next and I fully recommend to use getting feedbacks frequently even from students time by time.

In selecting materials for students, teachers should pay careful attention considering students' present linguistic and cognitive level. Interesting stories, anecdotes, jokes, sports and similar topics will prove interesting and motivating for the learners.

Learning by doing should be the focus of teaching receptive and productive skills. The methodology should be based on controlled and free verbal and non-verbal communication practices.

One of the best ways of helping learners to activate their knowledge is to put them in "safe" situations in class where they are inspired and encouraged to try to speak a foreign language. Teachers should try to create such activities in which learners feel less worried about using their skills and less under pressure.

To satisfy students' expectations, teachers should be supplied with sufficient amount of authentic materials, such as newspapers and magazines. The tasks based on receptive and productive skills could be based on describing the photos to each other and guessing the place in the world where the action has happened. Connection between the picture and reality makes it even more tempting for students to express their points of view to a particular event.

The material of this research is believed to be useful and applicable at the lessons of Practical English, culture and speech practice in both universities and advanced English

classes and schools. This project work can help to create the teaching aids, handouts, etc. Teachers and students are welcome to use the results of this work for further investigation and practical work.

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