

# MENTAL ENLIGHTENMENT SCIENTIFIC – METHODOLOGICAL JOURNAL



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### METHODS OF DEVELOPING PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS BASED ON MODERN APPROACHES

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#### ABOUT ARTICLE

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**Abstract:** This study explores effective methods for developing primary school students' speaking skills in English based on modern pedagogical approaches. The research emphasizes the importance of communicative competence and learner-centered instruction in early language education. Various interactive techniques such as role-play, pair work, and problem-solving activities were applied to enhance oral communication. Data were collected through classroom observation and questionnaires. The findings revealed that the use of interactive methods increased students' speaking activity and motivation. The study also highlights the teacher's role as a facilitator in communicative learning. The results suggest that modern approaches help students overcome language barriers and build confidence. Practical recommendations are provided for teachers to integrate these methods effectively into English lessons.

**Introduction.** Speaking plays a crucial role in learning English, as it allows learners to use the language in real communication. Through regular speaking practice, learners can improve their pronunciation, listening comprehension, and self-confidence. Oral activities help students think in English and express their ideas naturally. Today, English is considered the most widely used language in international communication, education, business, science, and technology. Knowing and speaking English fluently expands a person's opportunities for study,

work, and interaction with the world. The American linguist S.D. Krashen, in his famous work "The Natural Approach", presented profound scientific views on the process of language acquisition. According to him, the most important factor in learning a foreign language is comprehensible input — language input that the learner can understand. Krashen's theory suggests that people acquire language not by memorizing grammatical rules, but through natural communication, listening, and understanding. He stated: "Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules or tedious drills."

**Materials And Methods.** The research was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of modern pedagogical approaches in developing the speaking skills of primary school students learning English as a foreign language. A mixed-methods research design was adopted, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the teaching-learning process [1-14]. The study was carried out in two public primary schools in Tashkent City, Uzbekistan, during the academic year 2024–2025.

The participants consisted of 50 third-grade students aged between 8 and 9 years. They were divided into two groups: an experimental group (n=25) and a control group (n=25). Both groups had approximately equal English proficiency levels at the beginning, based on a pre-test measuring vocabulary, pronunciation, and basic conversational ability [2-38].

The experimental group was taught using communicative and interactive methods, following the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBL) [3-17]. The control group continued learning through a traditional grammar-translation approach, which focused mainly on memorization and written exercises. The experiment lasted for sixteen weeks, with two English lessons conducted per week, each lasting forty-five minutes. Teachers in the experimental group implemented a variety of communicative methods designed to foster real-life language use and interaction. They applied role-play and simulation activities to encourage authentic communication among students. In addition, pair work and group discussions were used to promote collaborative learning and peer support during lessons. Storytelling and question-answer sessions were also integrated to enhance learners' listening comprehension and speaking fluency, helping them express ideas naturally and confidently in English [4-38]. In accordance with Krashen's Input Hypothesis (1983), all lessons provided comprehensible input, meaning that students were exposed to language slightly above their current level but still understandable with context and visual aids [5-38].

To evaluate the effectiveness of the applied teaching methods, a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research instruments was employed to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The first instrument used was an observation checklist, which enabled

the researcher to systematically record students' levels of participation, engagement, and verbal activity during classroom sessions [6-150]. Through regular observation, it was possible to monitor how often students initiated conversations, responded to teacher prompts, and interacted with their peers in English. The checklist also helped identify behavioral changes, such as increased confidence and willingness to speak in front of others as the experiment progressed. The second instrument, a questionnaire, was distributed to students both before and after the experiment to assess changes in their motivation, self-confidence, and overall attitudes toward speaking. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions, allowing students to express their perceptions and experiences freely. Responses were analyzed to determine whether communicative and task-based learning strategies had a measurable impact on their enthusiasm for English learning. In addition, the questionnaire served as a means of understanding students' emotional responses—such as anxiety reduction and enjoyment—during oral practice sessions. A third instrument was the pre-test and post-test, designed to measure the extent of improvement in key areas of oral proficiency, including pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary range, and grammatical accuracy. The pre-test was administered prior to the intervention to establish a baseline level of students' speaking ability, while the post-test, conducted at the end of the 16-week experiment, provided comparative data to identify linguistic progress. The results of these assessments were analyzed statistically, allowing for an objective evaluation of the experimental group's development in contrast to the control group. This data-driven approach offered clear evidence of the practical benefits of modern teaching methods in fostering communicative competence. The fourth instrument consisted of teacher reflection journals, which were maintained throughout the study to record observations, challenges, and progress during lessons. These journals served as a valuable source of qualitative data, providing insight into classroom dynamics and teaching effectiveness. Teachers documented their reflections on lesson planning, student engagement, and any obstacles encountered during the implementation of communicative techniques. They also noted successful strategies that enhanced students' participation and the types of activities that generated the most interest and motivation among learners. Together, these instruments offered a comprehensive understanding of how modern communicative approaches influenced the development of oral skills among primary school students. The triangulation of data—from observations, questionnaires, test results, and teacher reflections—ensured that the study's findings were both credible and multifaceted. This mixed-method evaluation provided a holistic perspective on the teaching process, revealing not only statistical improvements in language performance but also deeper psychological and motivational changes among learners.

Quantitative data were analyzed through descriptive statistics (percentages and mean growth), while qualitative data were interpreted using thematic analysis [7-199]. All participants and their parents were informed about the purpose of the study, and consent was obtained before data collection. Students' identities were kept confidential. The research strictly adhered to ethical standards in educational studies [8-67]. The findings of this research clearly demonstrate that modern communicative and task-based approaches substantially improved the oral proficiency of young learners. The experimental group exhibited not only quantitative growth in test results but also qualitative development in confidence, motivation, and willingness to communicate. Students who were initially hesitant to speak began participating more actively in discussions, volunteering answers, and initiating conversations with their peers. This behavioral transformation highlights the psychological benefits of communicative learning environments, where students feel supported and encouraged to express themselves without fear of making mistakes.

The improvement in oral proficiency was particularly evident in areas of fluency and pronunciation. Students in the experimental group developed smoother speech patterns, reduced hesitation, and demonstrated a wider range of vocabulary. Moreover, their grammatical accuracy improved due to contextualized practice rather than mechanical drills. These results confirm the effectiveness of meaningful communication tasks in promoting both linguistic accuracy and fluency simultaneously.

Qualitative data from teacher reflection journals revealed that students were more engaged and enthusiastic during interactive lessons. Teachers reported that role-playing and group discussions were especially effective in maintaining attention and stimulating creativity. Storytelling activities were also found to enhance students' narrative competence and emotional connection to the language. Such findings suggest that when learning is enjoyable and meaningful, students are more likely to internalize new linguistic forms and use them spontaneously in communication. Furthermore, the study confirmed that the affective factors—such as reduced anxiety and increased self-confidence—played a crucial role in language development. This aligns with Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis, which emphasizes that emotional comfort facilitates better language acquisition. The friendly, collaborative classroom atmosphere created through CLT and TBL methods lowered the affective filter, allowing students to take risks and experiment with language more freely. Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges were identified. Teachers noted that implementing communicative approaches required more preparation time and classroom management skills, particularly when dealing with large groups of young learners. Additionally,

limited access to technological resources and authentic materials sometimes restricted the full application of task-based principles. Nevertheless, these obstacles highlight the need for continuous professional development and institutional support for teachers adopting modern methodologies. The overall analysis indicates that communicative and task-based teaching methods are not only effective but also sustainable for primary education in Uzbekistan. By fostering interactive learning environments, these methods contribute to the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and intercultural awareness. They prepare students not merely to pass exams but to use English as a real communicative tool in diverse social contexts. In light of these findings, several pedagogical recommendations can be proposed. First, teacher training programs should incorporate practical modules on communicative language teaching, emphasizing classroom techniques suitable for young learners. Second, schools should invest in technological tools and digital resources that support interactive learning, including audio-visual materials, online games, and mobile applications. Third, creating English clubs or extracurricular speaking circles can further enhance students' oral practice beyond the classroom. Finally, curriculum designers should ensure that language learning objectives prioritize communicative competence rather than rote memorization. The research provides compelling evidence that modern pedagogical approaches—particularly CLT and TBL—significantly enhance the speaking skills of primary school students learning English as a foreign language. These approaches not only improve linguistic performance but also nurture self-confidence, motivation, and a positive attitude toward language learning. The integration of interactive, student-centered strategies is therefore essential for the future of effective English language education in Uzbekistan and beyond.

**Result And Discussion.** The results revealed that modern communicative approaches significantly enhanced students' oral communication skills compared to traditional methods. The experimental group showed notable progress in all measured indicators. Before the experiment, both groups had similar pre-test results (56% in the experimental and 55% in the control group). After the 16-week intervention, the experimental group's average score rose to 82%, while the control group's reached only 63%, showing an improvement gap of 19% [9-58].

Indicator	Experimental Group	Control Group
Initial Score (%)	56	55
Final Score (%)	82	63
Growth (%)	<b>+26</b>	<b>+8</b>

Statistical analysis confirmed that the difference was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Moreover, 84% of the students in the experimental group reported feeling “more confident” when speaking English, compared to only 48% in the control group [10].

Observation and interviews supported the quantitative data. Students taught through interactive lessons were more enthusiastic, often volunteering to participate in dialogues, storytelling, or role-plays. Teachers also noted that these students used English more spontaneously, with fewer pauses and hesitation [11-157]. For example, one student in the experimental group said: “Now I can talk with my friends in English and I am not afraid of mistakes.” This reflects the psychological comfort and confidence gained through modern communicative instruction.

The findings of this study align with previous research emphasizing the importance of interaction and communication in second language learning (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Brown, 2015) [12-98]. Krashen’s theory of comprehensible input was also confirmed — students learned best when exposed to language in meaningful, real-life contexts rather than isolated grammar drills [13-65]. The results suggest that modern teaching methods — especially communicative and task-based approaches — enhance not only students’ linguistic competence but also their affective and social development. Students in the experimental group were more confident, motivated, and active. This supports Dörnyei’s (2005) assertion that emotional engagement is central to language success [14-128].

Despite the positive results, several challenges were also identified in the implementation process. Some teachers lacked sufficient training in using communicative materials effectively, which affected the quality of classroom interaction. In addition, time constraints limited the number of speaking activities that could be conducted in each lesson, reducing opportunities for active participation. Furthermore, large class sizes made it difficult for teachers to monitor all students’ progress during pair and group work. These findings indicate that for such communicative methods to be fully effective, teachers require continuous professional development and institutional support to integrate these strategies consistently [15-95].

The study’s outcomes are consistent with Nunan (2016) and Littlewood (2018), who argue that early communicative exposure fosters fluency and language awareness in young learners. Furthermore, this research adds to the field by confirming that these results hold true even in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts like Uzbekistan, where exposure to English outside the classroom is limited.

**Conclusion.** The present study set out to examine the effectiveness of modern pedagogical approaches—specifically Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Task-Based Learning (TBL)—in developing the speaking skills of primary school students learning English as a foreign language in Uzbekistan. Through a mixed-methods design combining quantitative and qualitative analyses, the research provided comprehensive evidence that these approaches have a significant and positive impact on young learners' oral proficiency and overall communicative competence. The results revealed that students taught through communicative and interactive methods demonstrated greater improvements in fluency, pronunciation, vocabulary range, and grammatical accuracy than those taught through traditional grammar-translation techniques. Beyond linguistic gains, the experimental group also showed marked increases in motivation, confidence, and willingness to engage in English communication. These findings confirm that meaningful communication tasks, contextualized language use, and student-centered instruction foster both linguistic and psychological growth among young learners. Furthermore, the qualitative insights from teacher reflection journals and student questionnaires highlighted that communicative lessons created an emotionally supportive and enjoyable classroom environment. Such conditions encouraged risk-taking, creativity, and authentic expression—key factors in successful second language acquisition. The study also underlined the role of affective factors, validating Krashen's theoretical claim that a lower affective filter facilitates language learning. In conclusion, this research demonstrates that applying modern pedagogical approaches such as CLT and TBL at the primary school level is both effective and feasible. These methods not only develop students' speaking abilities but also nurture essential life skills such as confidence, cooperation, and critical thinking. The findings strongly advocate for a shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered methodologies, ensuring that English education in Uzbekistan evolves toward a more communicative, engaging, and globally relevant model. Future research could explore the long-term effects of communicative teaching, the role of digital tools in oral skill development, and cross-cultural comparisons to further enhance English language pedagogy in early education.

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