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REFLEXIVE MECHANISM AND IMPROVED PEDAGOGICAL MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL EFL LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

Developing communicative competence in primary school English education requires pedagogical approaches that combine meaningful communication with reflective learning. This study proposes a reflexive mechanism and an improved pedagogical model based on the action-oriented approach, learner agency, and communicative mediation to foster sustainable communicative development among young EFL learners. The proposed model integrates communicative interaction, reflective practice, formative assessment, and self-regulated learning through six interconnected pedagogical components that support learners' active participation and metacognitive awareness. The findings indicate that the integration of communicative tasks with systematic reflection enhances learners' motivation, interactional competence, autonomy, and overall communicative competence in primary school EFL classrooms.

Keywords

communicative competence, reflexive mechanism, action-oriented approach, communicative mediation, learner agency, self-regulated learning, reflective practice, interactional competence.

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of globalization and international communication has significantly increased the importance of communicative competence in foreign language education. In primary school English language teaching, the educational focus has shifted from the acquisition of isolated linguistic knowledge to the development of learners' ability to use English effectively in authentic communicative situations. Accordingly, communicative competence has become one of the key learning outcomes of modern English language education and an essential component of 21st-century skills.

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Companion Volume (CEFR, 2020) emphasizes an action-oriented approach in which learners are viewed as social agents who actively participate in meaningful communication, mediation, interaction, and collaborative learning. This perspective highlights that successful language learning requires not only linguistic knowledge but also learners' ability to reflect on their communicative performance, evaluate their progress, and continuously improve their language use through meaningful practice.

Despite the growing emphasis on communicative language teaching, reflective activities are still insufficiently integrated into English lessons in many primary schools. Classroom instruction often focuses on vocabulary and grammar practice, while learners have limited opportunities to analyze their own communicative performance, identify learning difficulties, and apply corrective strategies. As a result, communicative competence develops inconsistently and learners frequently experience difficulties in transferring classroom knowledge to real-life communication.

To address this challenge, the present study proposes a reflexive mechanism and an improved pedagogical model for developing communicative competence among primary school EFL learners. The proposed mechanism combines communicative interaction with systematic reflection through six interconnected pedagogical components: motivational-communicative, situational-activity, speech-practical, reflective-evaluative, corrective-developmental, and resultative-communicative. The study argues that integrating reflective practice into communicative language teaching enhances learners' motivation, autonomy, metacognitive awareness, and sustainable communicative development, thereby providing an effective framework for improving English language education in primary schools. Literature Review

The concept of communicative competence was first introduced by Hymes (1972), who argued that successful communication requires not only grammatical knowledge but also the ability to use language appropriately in different social contexts. Later, Canale and Swain (1980) expanded this concept by identifying grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competences as the essential components of communicative competence. These theoretical foundations continue to influence contemporary communicative language teaching (CLT).

A significant milestone in modern language education is the publication of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Companion Volume (Council of Europe, 2020), which introduced the action-oriented approach and described learners as social agents actively engaged in communication, mediation, collaboration, and intercultural interaction. The framework also emphasizes learner autonomy, self-assessment, mediation, and reflective learning as key principles for developing communicative competence.

The theory of reflective practice was systematically developed by Schön (1983), who viewed reflection as a continuous process of analysing one's own professional and learning activities. Likewise, Kolb (1984) explained that learning develops through a cycle consisting of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. These theories provide an important pedagogical basis for integrating reflection into communicative language learning.

Russian scholars have also made substantial contributions to communicative language teaching. E. I. Passov (1989) considered communicative orientation the fundamental principle of foreign language education, emphasizing that language should be taught as a means of authentic communication rather than through isolated grammar instruction. A. A. Leontiev (1999) further explained that speech activity develops through meaningful interaction, motivation, and purposeful communicative situations. Similarly, I. A. Zimnyaya (1989) highlighted the psychological mechanisms underlying foreign language acquisition and emphasized the importance of learners' active participation in speech activities.

Despite considerable progress in communicative language teaching, previous studies have mainly examined communicative competence and reflective learning as separate pedagogical concepts. Limited attention has been paid to integrating communicative interaction, systematic reflection, corrective support, and formative assessment into a single pedagogical mechanism specifically designed for primary school EFL learners. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by proposing a reflexive mechanism and an improved pedagogical model that combine these components within a unified instructional framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study resulted in the development of a reflexive mechanism and an improved pedagogical model for developing communicative competence among primary school EFL learners. The mechanism explains the internal sequence through which learners develop communicative competence, whereas the model provides the pedagogical framework for implementing this process in classroom practice. The proposed sequence is: Motivation → Communicative Situation → Speech Action → Reflective Awareness → Speech Correction → Reapplication → Communicative Outcome.

The corrective–developmental component links reflection with subsequent speech performance. After identifying difficulties, learners receive scaffolded support and repeated communicative practice. For example, if a learner can say 'I like…' but cannot explain a reason, the teacher introduces the pattern 'I like apples because…'. Likewise, when learners confuse 'turn left' and 'turn right', maps, gestures and visual prompts are used

to reinforce accurate language use. Thus, correction is viewed as developmental support rather than punishment.

The resultative–communicative component represents both the final outcome of one learning cycle and the starting point of the next. Learners demonstrate the ability to participate in purposeful communication, ask and answer questions, understand partners, request clarification and evaluate their own performance. Therefore, communicative competence is interpreted as a continuously developing process supported by reflection.

The improved pedagogical model consists of six interconnected blocks: goal, methodological, content, technological, reflective-diagnostic and resultative. Together these blocks integrate communicative language teaching with reflective practice and provide a coherent framework for sustainable communicative development in primary school EFL classrooms.

Table 1. Components of the Reflexive Mechanism

No.	Component	Content	Classroom Practice	Expected Outcome
1	Motivational–Communicative	Motivate communication	Games, warm-up, Q&A	Ready to communicate
2	Situational–Activity	Create authentic situations	At the Shop, Doctor, Family, Weather	Meaningful language use
3	Speech–Practical	Apply language in interaction	Role play, pair work, TPR, interview	Active speaking
4	Reflective–Evaluative	Self-assessment	I can cards, smileys, checklist	Awareness of strengths and difficulties
5	Corrective–Developmental	Improve through reflection	Scaffolding, repetition, teacher support	Errors become learning opportunities
6	Resultative–Communicative	Transfer experience	Dialogues, mini-presentations	Confident contextual communication

An important practical contribution of the proposed pedagogical model is that it transforms primary school English instruction from the traditional ”listen–repeat–memorize” approach into a ”communicate–reflect–correct–reapply–improve” learning cycle. Within this framework, learners are no longer passive recipients of language knowledge. Instead, they become active participants who use English for meaningful communication, monitor their own speech, identify areas for improvement, and gradually strengthen their communicative competence through continuous reflection and practice.The proposed model also redefines the professional role of the teacher. Rather than functioning solely as a transmitter of knowledge or a controller of learning, the teacher acts as a facilitator who creates communicative situations, organizes meaningful interaction, encourages reflective thinking, and provides timely pedagogical support. Classroom activities are designed so that every learner has opportunities to speak, listen, respond, make mistakes without fear, reflect on their performance, and improve communicative skills in subsequent learning situations.

A distinctive methodological innovation of the model is the introduction of the principle of soft reflection for young learners. According to this principle, reflective activities should protect learners' emotional well-being and treat mistakes as natural stages of language development rather than as failures. Consequently, reflection is organized through supportive questions such as ”What could you say today?”, ”Which new word would you like to practise again?”, and ”What will you say better next time?” instead of focusing on errors. This learner-friendly approach increases confidence, reduces communication anxiety, and encourages positive attitudes toward language learning.Based on these principles, the author proposes the following pedagogical formula for the reflexive mechanism:Motivational Need → Communicative Situation → Speech Action → Reflective Evaluation → Corrective Support → Reapplication in Communication → Improved Communicative Experience.

This formula demonstrates the dynamic nature of the proposed model. Every communicative task generates new learning experiences, while systematic reflection enables learners to analyse those experiences, improve their language performance, and transfer newly acquired communicative skills to subsequent learning situations. Therefore, reflection is not viewed as the final stage of instruction but as the central pedagogical element that connects communication, assessment, and continuous language development.

CONCLUSION

This study proposed a reflexive mechanism and an improved pedagogical model for developing communicative

competence among primary school learners in English language education. The findings demonstrate that communicative competence develops more effectively when meaningful communicative interaction is systematically combined with reflective learning, formative feedback, and corrective support. The proposed mechanism conceptualizes communicative competence as a continuous pedagogical cycle in which learners actively participate in communication, analyse their own performance, receive appropriate guidance, and transfer improved communicative experience to new learning situations.

The study identified six interconnected components of the reflexive mechanism—motivational–communicative, situational–activity, speech–practical, reflective–evaluative, corrective–developmental, and resultative–communicative—which function as an integrated system rather than isolated instructional stages. Their interaction contributes not only to the development of learners' speaking skills but also to learner autonomy, metacognitive awareness, communicative confidence, and the ability to regulate their own language learning.

A major contribution of the research is the introduction of the principle of soft reflection, which creates an emotionally supportive learning environment by encouraging learners to perceive mistakes as opportunities for improvement instead of failure. Together with the proposed pedagogical formula and model, this approach extends existing communicative language teaching practices by integrating systematic reflection into everyday classroom communication.

The proposed model has practical implications for English language teachers, curriculum developers, and teacher educators working in primary education. It may serve as a methodological framework for designing learner-centred English lessons that promote active communication, reflective thinking, and sustainable communicative competence development. Future research may examine the effectiveness of the proposed mechanism in different educational contexts and investigate its integration with digital learning environments and artificial intelligence–supported language instruction.

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