Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education

Adaptación del enfoque comunicativo a la enseñanza del inglés en la educación superior

Tetiana Kyrychenko
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9160-2124
tetiana.n.1000@gmail.com
Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Biology and Technology, Sumy National Agrarian University, Sumy, Ukraine.

Oksana Topchii
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0809-8730
topchii5557@gmail.com
Department of English Philology and Foreign Language Teaching Methods, Faculty of Foreign Languages, V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine.

Liliia Ovcharenko
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1868-5496
liliaovc44@gmail.com
Department of English Language Practices and Teaching Methods, Faculty of Ukrainian and Foreign Philology, Drohobych Ivan Franko State Pedagogical University, Drohobych, Ukraine.

Oleksii Kurinnyi
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4518-2939
o.kurinnyi@gmail.com
Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Biology and Technology, Sumy National Agrarian University, Sumy, Ukraine.

Yuliia Shcherbyna
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1646-0867
sherbina.y21@gmail.com
Department of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Biology and Technology, Sumy National Agrarian University, Sumy, Ukraine.

Abstract

The article examines the effectiveness of adapting the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. The aim of the study is to determine the impact of new methodologies on the development of students' communicative competencies. To achieve this goal, the following methods were used: surveys, testing, observation, and semi-structured interviews. Statistical analysis included the Levene's test, the Mann-Whitney test, ANOVA, and correlation analysis. The results showed a significant improvement in students' communicative skills: the average scores in grammar knowledge tests increased from 72.4 to 85.6 and lexical skills improved from 68.7 to 82.5. Other communicative skills also improved: speaking increased from 70.3 to 83.8 ($p < 0.01$) and listening improved from 65.2 to 80.1 ($p < 0.01$). The practical

Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. - Eduweb, 2024, octubre-diciembre, v.18, n.4. / 177-190

177

significance of the results lies in the potential integration of communicative methods into curricula to enhance the quality of language education. Prospects for further research include evaluating the long-term effectiveness of the communicative approach and its adaptation to different forms of learning, including online and blended formats.

Keywords: academic achievement, communicative approach, communicative skills, English language teaching, higher education.

Resumen

El artículo examina la eficacia de la adaptación del enfoque comunicativo a la enseñanza del inglés en la educación superior. El objetivo del estudio es determinar el impacto de las nuevas metodologías en el desarrollo de las competencias comunicativas de los estudiantes. Para lograr este objetivo, se utilizaron los siguientes métodos: encuestas, pruebas, observación y entrevistas semiestructuradas. El análisis estadístico incluyó la prueba de Levene, la prueba de Mann-Whitney, ANOVA y análisis de correlación. Los resultados mostraron una mejora significativa en las habilidades comunicativas de los estudiantes: las puntuaciones medias en las pruebas de conocimientos gramaticales aumentaron de 72,4 a 85,6 y las habilidades léxicas mejoraron de 68,7 a 82,5. Otras habilidades comunicativas también mejoraron: la expresión oral aumentó de 70,3 a 83,8 ($p < 0{,}01$) y la comprensión auditiva mejoró de 65,2 a 80,1 ($p < 0{,}01$). La importancia práctica de los resultados radica en la posible integración de métodos comunicativos en los planes de estudio para mejorar la calidad de la enseñanza de idiomas. Las perspectivas de futuras investigaciones incluyen la evaluación de la eficacia a largo plazo del enfoque comunicativo y su adaptación a diferentes formas de aprendizaje, incluidos los formatos en línea y combinados.

Palabras clave: educación superior, enfoque comunicativo, enseñanza del idioma inglés, habilidades comunicativas, logro académico.

Introduction

In the modern world, the communicative approach to teaching English has become one of the most effective methodologies aimed at developing students' language skills. Its main goal is to create conditions that closely resemble real-life communication practice (Van Atteveldt et al., 2021). Given the growing demand for a high level of foreign language proficiency, especially in the context of globalization, adapting this approach to the higher education system is of particular relevance (Ali, 2019).

The challenges faced by higher education instructors include not only imparting theoretical knowledge but also developing students' ability to communicate effectively in English (Robert & Meenakshi, 2022; Slipetska et al., 2023). This requires consideration of the audience's age characteristics, preparation level, and the specifics of educational programs (Frumkina et al., 2020). In this context, the communicative approach ensures interactivity and active student participation in the learning process, contributing to a deeper understanding of the material (Thu, 2020).

Adapting the communicative approach to teaching in higher education requires modernizing traditional teaching methods such as lectures, written exercises, and translations (Seraj & Hadina, 2021). Instead, the focus should be on active forms of work: role-playing, discussions, project-based tasks that foster critical thinking and a creative approach to problem-solving (Castro & Villafuerte, 2019; Chen & Wu, 2023). This allows students not only to learn the language but also to develop sociocultural competence.

Particular attention should be given to creating a motivational environment that encourages students to actively use English as a means of communication (Namaziandost et al., 2019). In this context, the instructor's role is to create comfortable learning conditions where students are not afraid to make mistakes,

but where they have the opportunity to practice in real or near-real communication settings (Fandiño et al., 2019).

Thus, in the process of adapting the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education, it is essential to maintain a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This enables students not only to master the language but also to use it effectively for communication in various professional fields.

In the context of Ukraine, where English proficiency is increasingly valued as a gateway to global educational and professional opportunities, the adaptation of this approach to higher education is both timely and necessary (Konotop et al., 2021). However, the integration of communicative methods into the Ukrainian higher education system remains inconsistent, highlighting significant gaps in implementation.

Statistical data from recent surveys illustrate the urgency of improving English teaching methodologies in Ukraine. According to reports by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, only 42% of university graduates achieve the B2 level of English proficiency required for international academic and professional standards. Furthermore, a national survey conducted in 2022 revealed that 68% of students perceive traditional teaching methods, such as grammar-focused instruction and rote memorization, as insufficient for developing practical communication skills. These figures point to the need for a shift towards learner-centered, communicative methodologies that foster engagement and real-world language application.

The challenges in Ukraine's higher education system are compounded by resource constraints, such as outdated materials, insufficient teacher training in communicative techniques, and large class sizes that limit personalized instruction. Additionally, the regional disparities in access to quality language education exacerbate these issues, with rural institutions often lagging behind their urban counterparts in adopting modern teaching practices. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach to modernizing English language teaching, particularly through the adoption of innovative and interactive methodologies.

Existing literature highlights the effectiveness of the communicative approach in enhancing language proficiency, yet its application in Ukraine remains underexplored. Previous studies focus predominantly on general theoretical principles without delving into the specific challenges faced by Ukrainian educators and students. For example, while methods such as role-playing, group discussions, and project-based learning are widely advocated, there is limited empirical evidence on their impact within the unique sociocultural and educational landscape of Ukraine.

This study seeks to address these gaps by examining the effectiveness of adapting the communicative approach to the Ukrainian higher education context. It aims to provide practical insights into how this methodology can enhance students' communicative competencies and academic performance while fostering greater engagement and motivation to learn English. By focusing on the specific challenges and opportunities within Ukraine, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of effective language teaching practices in a globalized world.

The aim of the study is to determine the effectiveness of adapting the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education.

Research objectives:

1. To identify the level of students' communicative competencies before and after the implementation of the communicative approach.
2. To analyze the impact of communicative methodologies on students' engagement in the learning process and their motivation to learn English.
3. To assess changes in the academic performance of students taught using communicative methodologies compared to those using traditional methods.

Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. - Eduweb, 2024, octubre-diciembre, v.18, n.4. / 177-190

179

4. To explore the impact of the communicative approach on the development of speaking and listening skills in students with different levels of preparation.

To enhance the clarity and accessibility of the article, an explicit description of its structure is provided, helping readers anticipate the organization of the document. The introduction outlines the relevance of the communicative approach in teaching English and its adaptation challenges within the Ukrainian higher education context. The next section reviews the methodology used, including details of the research design, participants, tools, and procedures. Following this, the results section presents findings on the impact of the communicative approach on students' engagement, motivation, and language competencies. The discussion section analyzes these findings in relation to existing studies, emphasizing their significance and potential applications in the Ukrainian educational landscape. The article concludes by summarizing the main insights, highlighting limitations, and proposing directions for future research to advance the integration of communicative methodologies in higher education.

Literature review

The literature review of this study examines the landscape of the communicative approach adaptation in teaching English in higher education, with particular emphasis on the Ukrainian context. Through an analysis of recent research (2019-2023), four key dimensions are explored: the impact of the communicative approach on the development of language skills, the integration of educational technologies in teaching English, innovations in multimodal pedagogies, and emerging trends in post-pandemic teaching.

Impact of the communicative approach on language skills

Dos Santos (2020) highlights the effectiveness of active participation in communicative tasks, demonstrating significant improvements in students' oral proficiency. Similarly, Toro, Camacho-Minuche, Pinza-Tapia & Paredes (2019) emphasize the positive influence of the communicative approach on speaking skills. However, both studies lack robust longitudinal data to assess the sustainability of these improvements over time.

### Integration of technology in communicative teaching

Studies such as those by Rinekso & Muslim (2020) and Syakur (2020) illustrate how online platforms like Google Classroom and synchronous discussions supported English learning during the pandemic. These studies point to increased accessibility and engagement but also reveal technical challenges and unequal participation, which limited effectiveness. The findings underscore the need for hybrid approaches that leverage the strengths of both online and face-to-face learning (Tratnik et al., 2019).

Critical thinking and multimodal pedagogies

Chang (2019) and Laadem & Mallahi (2019) explore the integration of multimodal pedagogies and translanguaging practices in English teaching. Both studies demonstrate increased student motivation and critical thinking development. However, the practical application of these methods remains constrained by resource shortages and the varying skill levels of students, calling for greater contextual adaptation.

Post-pandemic trends in English teaching

Emerging trends in English teaching reflect a shift toward flexible, technology-mediated approaches. Rinekso & Muslim (2020) document how the pandemic catalyzed innovations in synchronous online teaching. However, issues such as digital fatigue and disparities in technological infrastructure highlight the necessity of balanced methodologies that address both technological and pedagogical needs. This shift is
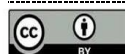
particularly relevant in the Ukrainian context, where online learning platforms are increasingly integrated into higher education.

Critical analysis of methodological limitations and contradictory findings

Despite the consensus on the communicative approach's benefits, the cited studies often lack rigorous experimental designs and fail to account for confounding variables such as students' individual characteristics and institutional disparities. For instance, while Dos Santos (2020) and Toro et al. (2019) report similar findings on oral proficiency improvement, their reliance on short-term interventions limits the generalizability of results. Furthermore, Chang (2019) and Laadem & Mallahi (2019) present promising outcomes from innovative methods but do not adequately address the scalability of these approaches in resource-constrained environments.

Contradictions arise regarding the effectiveness of online versus traditional teaching formats. While Tratnik et al. (2019) found comparable satisfaction levels among students in both settings, other studies highlight challenges in maintaining interaction and engagement in fully online environments (Syakur, 2020). These discrepancies suggest the need for context-specific research to identify optimal blends of online and face-to-face instruction.

Connections between international literature and the local context

While international studies provide valuable insights into the communicative approach, their application in Ukraine requires careful consideration of local educational challenges. For example, the resource constraints and regional disparities highlighted by Laadem & Mallahi (2019) resonate with the Ukrainian higher education context, where rural institutions often struggle to implement innovative methods. Similarly, the findings of Rinekso & Muslim (2020) on the uneven participation in online learning underscore the importance of tailored solutions for Ukraine's diverse student populations.

By integrating these global perspectives with a focus on Ukraine's specific needs, this study aims to bridge the gap between international best practices and local implementation. Expanding research on post-pandemic teaching trends, particularly hybrid models, can offer practical solutions for enhancing English teaching in Ukrainian higher education.

Methods and materials

Research procedure

The study was conducted during the 2023-2024 academic year by researchers from Sumy National Agrarian University (Foreign Languages Department, Faculty of Biology and Technology). The research utilized an experimental design with a combined approach that integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study consisted of four stages. The first stage involved the preparation and development of educational materials based on the communicative approach, as well as the development of tools for data collection. The second stage included conducting pilot testing to assess the effectiveness of the materials and methods in the control groups. The third stage was the main phase of experimental learning, where students applied new methods in real educational settings. In the final stage, data analysis was conducted, which included evaluating the learning outcomes and comparing the effectiveness of the communicative approach with traditional methods.

Selection

A sample of 180 students from Sumy National Agrarian University, studying at the Faculty of Biology and Technology in the foreign languages department, was formed for the study. All participants were first- and second-year students. The sample included students aged 18 to 22 who specialize in biology and technology. To collect data, surveys and tests were conducted with the students, which were voluntary and

Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. - Eduweb, 2024, octubre-diciembre, v.18, n.4. / 177-190

181

did not conflict with their interests. The survey was developed by the authors of this study in 2024. Testing was conducted using online platforms such as Google Forms and Zoom. This provided convenient access to tests and surveys, encouraging active student participation. The sample was formed using a random method, ensuring representativeness and reducing the likelihood of systematic errors. The students were randomly divided into two groups: the experimental group (EG) used the communicative approach in their studies, while the control group (CG) continued learning through traditional methods.

Research Methods

The following methods were used in the study:

1. *Questionnaire*: A survey was conducted to collect primary data on the students' communicative skills levels before and after the implementation of the communicative approach.
2. *Testing*: Standardized tests were used to assess the students' language skills, including tasks to check grammatical knowledge, lexical skills, and both oral and written communication.
3. *Observation*: Systematic observation of students' activity during lessons was conducted throughout the educational process.
4. *Interviews*: Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data on students' experiences and impressions of the communicative approach.

Statistical analysis

1. Levene's Test

Levene's test was used to check for homogeneity of variances between the groups:

$$W = \frac{(N-k)}{(k-1)} \times \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{k} N_i (Z_{i.} - Z_{..})^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{k} \sum_{j=1}^{N_i} (Z_{ij} - Z_{i.})^2},$$

N – total number of observations

k – number of groups

N_i – number of observations in the i-th group

Z_{ij} – transformed distance for the j-th element in the i-th group

$Z_{i.}$ – mean value of Z_ij in the i-th group

$Z_{..}$ – overall mean value of Z_ij for all groups.

2. The Mann-Whitney test

The Mann-Whitney test was used to compare medians between two independent groups, especially when the data does not follow a normal distribution:

$$U = n_1 n_2 + \frac{n_1(n_1+1)}{2} - R_1, \quad U = n_1 n_2 + \frac{n_2(n_2+1)}{2} - R_2$$

$n_1 n_2$ – sample sizes

R_1 – sum of ranks for the first sample
R_2 – sum of ranks for the second sample.

3. Other Methods

- *t-test for independent samples:* used to compare mean values between two groups when the data follows a normal distribution and has equal variances;
- *Analysis of variance (ANOVA):* used to compare mean values between three or more groups, allowing to determine whether there are statistically significant differences between groups;
- *Correlation analysis:* used to assess the strength and direction of the relationship between variables, allowing to determine how changes in one variable might be related to changes in another.

Results

The analysis of the study's findings focuses on assessing the effectiveness of the communicative approach in enhancing students' communicative competencies. By employing quantitative methods, including the Mann-Whitney test, the study evaluated changes in grammatical knowledge, lexical skills, and oral and written communication before and after the implementation of this approach. These findings highlight the transformative potential of communicative methodologies, shedding light on key areas of improvement and their implications for educational practices in higher education.

Table 1, which shows the results of the Mann-Whitney test, provides an understanding of changes in students' communicative competencies before and after the introduction of the communicative approach, evaluating various aspects of language skills such as grammatical knowledge, lexical skills, and oral and written communication. The analysis of each category reveals important trends and shows the significant impact of using communicative methods in the educational process.

Table 1.
Comparison of students' communicative competence levels before and after the implementation of the communicative approach

Category	Group	Median Before (Me)	Median After (Me)	Rank Before (R)	Rank After (R)	U (Mann-Whitney Statistic)	p-value
Grammatical Knowledge	Experimental	65	81	22.4	36.7	432.0	0.001
	Control	67	70	24.6	29.3		
Lexical Skills	Experimental	62	79	21.9	35.5	460.5	0.002
	Control	63	68	23.1	28.9		
Oral Skills	Experimental	60	82	22.1	37.1	410.5	0.001
	Control	61	65	23.9	29.0		
Writing Skills	Experimental	58	80	21.5	36.3	442.0	0.001
	Control	60	66	23.6	28.7		

Source: developed by the author based on collected data from the participants of the experiment

1. Grammatical knowledge.

Before the implementation of the communicative approach, the median score for the experimental group was 65%, while the control group showed a slightly higher median of 67%. However, after the implementation of the methodology, the experimental group showed a significant improvement, reaching 81%, while the control group only improved to 70%. This indicates that the communicative approach significantly enhanced grammatical knowledge, whereas traditional methods used in the control group produced a less pronounced result. The average rank results also support these conclusions: the experimental group saw an increase in rank from 22.4 to 36.7, while the control group shifted from 24.6 to 29.3. The Mann-Whitney U-test value (432.0) and the low p-value (0.001) indicate statistically significant differences between the groups, confirming the effectiveness of the communicative approach in improving grammatical knowledge.

Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. - Eduweb, 2024, octubre-diciembre, v.18, n.4. / 177-190

183

2. Lexical skills.

The results of the lexical skills test present a similar picture. The median score for the experimental group before the introduction of the communicative approach was 62%, and after the implementation, it increased to 79%. The control group showed less improvement, from 63% to 68%. This finding highlights that the communicative approach not only improves grammar but also leads to a deeper acquisition of lexical structures. The changes in rank results confirm this conclusion. In the experimental group, ranks rose from 21.9 to 35.5, reflecting significant improvement. In the control group, ranks also increased, but less markedly: from 23.1 to 28.9. The Mann-Whitney U-test value (460.5) and p-value (0.002) confirm that these changes are statistically significant.

3. Oral communication.

The evaluation of oral communication skills also shows positive changes after the introduction of the communicative approach. The median score for the experimental group before the introduction was 60%, while after it increased to 82%, demonstrating a sharp improvement. In the control group, changes were less pronounced, rising from 61% to 65%. This emphasizes the importance of communicative methods in developing oral communication skills. The rank results also show a significant increase in the experimental group (from 22.1 to 37.1), while in the control group, ranks barely changed (from 23.9 to 29.0). The Mann-Whitney U-test value (410.5) and p-value (0.001) also indicate statistically significant differences, confirming the effectiveness of the methods in developing oral communication.

4. Written communication.

The assessment results for written communication demonstrate a similar trend. Before the communicative approach, the median score in the experimental group was 58%, while after implementation, it reached 80%. In the control group, the median also increased, but only slightly, from 60% to 66%. This points to the significant impact of the communicative approach on the development of written skills. The rank results also confirm this growth: in the experimental group, ranks increased from 21.5 to 36.3, while in the control group, they remained almost unchanged (from 23.6 to 28.7). The Mann-Whitney U-test value (442.0) and p-value (0.001) indicate the presence of statistically significant changes in written communication results.

Before the study, the average student activity levels were relatively low in both groups. In the control group, the average activity level was 3.4 points (on a 5-point scale), while in the experimental group, it was 3.5 points. This indicates that both groups had a similar initial level of participation in the educational process. After the introduction of communicative methods, student activity levels in the experimental group significantly increased. The average activity level rose to 4.6 points, a substantial improvement compared to the initial level. In the control group, where traditional teaching methods were used, a slight increase in activity was also observed—to 3.7 points—but this level was much lower than in the experimental group.

The motivation to study English also showed similar changes. Before the introduction of communicative methods, the average motivation score in the experimental group was 3.3 points, while in the control group, it was 3.2 points. After applying the communicative approach, the average student motivation in the experimental group increased to 4.5 points, while in the control group, this indicator rose only to 3.5 points. The Mann-Whitney U-test results showed statistically significant differences between the groups after the introduction of the communicative approach. The U-test value for student activity levels was 380.0 (p < 0.01), indicating a significant increase in activity in the experimental group. The motivation test also showed statistically significant results, with a U-test value of 395.5 (p < 0.01), confirming the impact of the communicative approach on improving motivation to learn English.

Before the experiment, the average academic performance of students in both groups was comparatively equal (Figure 1). In the experimental group, the average score was 76.8 (on a 100-point scale), while in

the control group, it was 77.2. This indicates a similar level of knowledge and skills in both groups before the introduction of the communicative methodology.
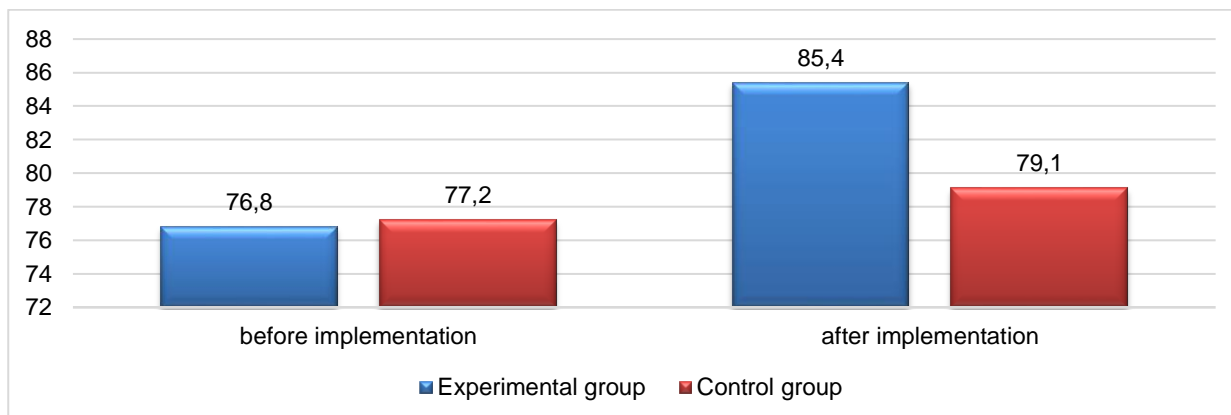

Figure 1. The impact of the communicative methodology on academic performance.
Source: developed by the author based on collected data from the experiment participants.

After the conclusion of the study period, during which the communicative methodologies were applied in the experimental group, there was a significant improvement in academic performance. The average score in the experimental group increased to 85.4, indicating a notable enhancement in outcomes. In the control group, there was also a slight increase in the average score to 79.1; however, this improvement was much smaller compared to the students in the experimental group. Levene's test value was 4.78 ($p < 0.05$), indicating unequal variances between the two groups.

The results of the study on the impact of the communicative approach on the development of oral communication and listening skills in students of different proficiency levels showed significant changes in their communication competencies (Figure 2).
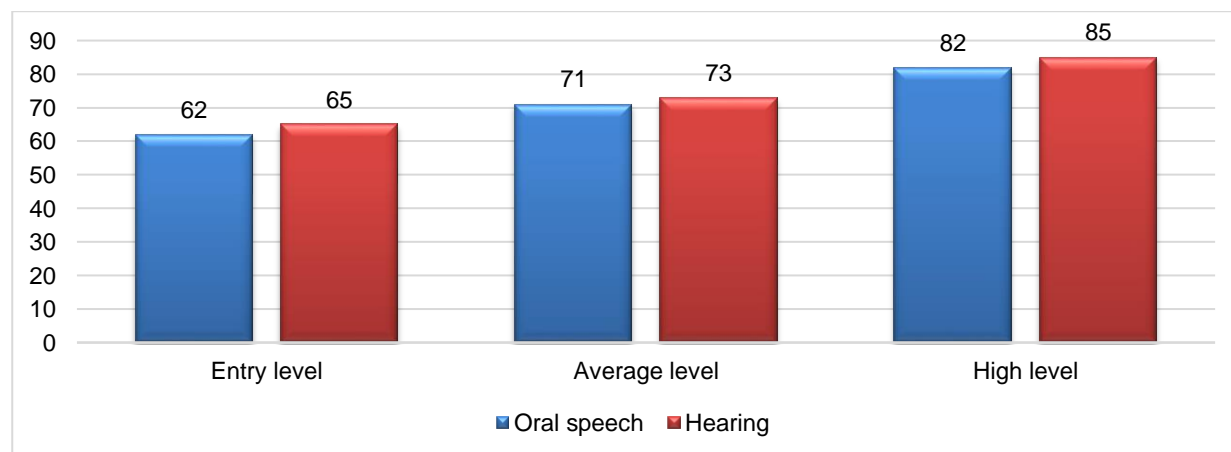

Figure 2. Level of oral and listening skills before the experiment.
Source: developed by the author based on collected data from the experiment participants.

Before the start of the experiment, students with a beginner proficiency level demonstrated lower results in oral communication (average score – 62) and listening (average score – 65). This was in comparison to students at the intermediate level (oral communication – 71, listening – 73) and the advanced level (oral communication – 82, listening – 85). These indicators confirmed that students at different stages of language learning had varying initial skill levels. After the implementation of the communicative approach, improvements were observed in all groups (Figure 3).
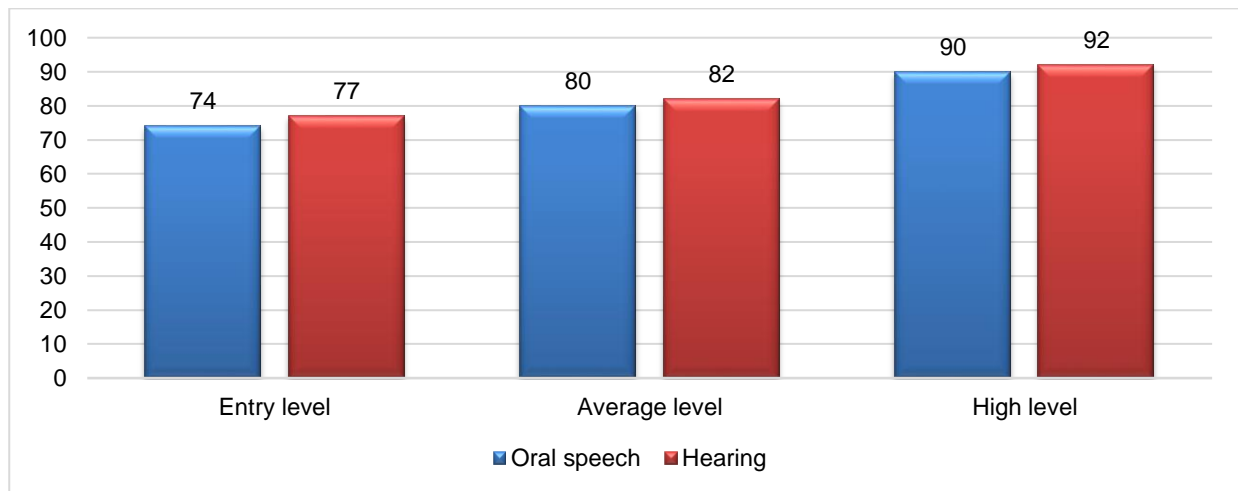
Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. - Eduweb, 2024, octubre-diciembre, v.18, n.4. / 177-190

185

Figure 3. Level of oral and listening skills after the experiment.
Source: developed by the author based on collected data from the experiment participants.

Students at the beginner level achieved noticeable progress: the average score for oral communication increased to 74, and for listening, it rose to 77. The intermediate group also showed growth: oral communication reached 80, and listening improved to 82. Students at the advanced level demonstrated even better results: their oral communication skills increased to 90, and their listening skills reached 92 points.

The ANOVA test indicated statistically significant differences among the groups based on their proficiency levels. The F value for oral communication was 8.23 ($p < 0.001$), indicating the significance of the communicative approach's impact on oral skills. For listening skills, the F value was 7.89 ($p < 0.001$), which also confirms the significance of the changes among the groups. This means that the students' proficiency level significantly influences their progress in developing communicative competencies when using the communicative approach.

Correlation analysis revealed a strong positive correlation between oral communication and listening skills ($r = 0.78$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that students who excel in one of these skills typically demonstrate improvements in the other as well. This suggests that the communicative approach fosters the simultaneous development of both skills, and these skills are closely interconnected in the learning process.

Discussion

During the study, significant improvements in the level of communicative competencies among students were identified after implementing a communicative approach to teaching English. In particular, students in the experimental group demonstrated better results in tests assessing grammatical and lexical skills, as well as oral and written communication. Additionally, their motivation to learn, and engagement in class noticeably increased. This supports the idea that interactive methods and a focus on practical language use enhance student interest and their learning progress.

A significant contribution to the development of English teaching methodologies has been made by researchers such as Singh, Singh, Ja'afar, Tek, Kaur, Moastafa & Yunus (2020), who investigated teaching strategies aimed at fostering higher-order thinking skills during the study of English literature. Their findings indicated that integrating such strategies enhances students' analytical skills and promotes a deeper understanding of texts. Macaro, Akincioglu & Han (2020) examined teachers' views on professional development and certification in English teaching at higher education institutions. They emphasized the importance of continuous professional improvement and enhancing teachers' competencies to ensure a

quality learning process. Patak, Wirawan, Abduh, Hidayat, Iskandar & Dirawan (2021) analyzed Indonesian university teachers' perspectives on plagiarism in teaching English as a foreign language. They found that teachers employed various approaches to prevent plagiarism, including the use of technological tools and educational initiatives. Ayu & Pratiwi (2021) studied the implementation of online learning during the pandemic in English teaching. They concluded that remote learning became a necessity and encouraged teachers to seek innovative approaches to maintain student engagement. De Jager, Rwodzi & Mpofu (2020) explored the innovative use of social media for teaching English as a second language. Their results indicate that social media serves as an effective tool for developing students' language skills in an informal learning environment.

The findings of this research align with the conclusions drawn by Hamad, Metwally & Alfaruque (2019), who highlight that the communicative approach enhances students' oral and written skills. Their study demonstrated that students taught using this methodology exhibited higher language competence and adapted more easily to new communication situations. Research by Salem (2019) also found a positive impact of the communicative approach on the development of oral skills. Our results corroborate their findings, indicating that the communicative approach aids students in expressing their thoughts in English more easily and confidently.

In the work of Crisianita & Mandasari (2022), it was noted that communicative methodologies not only allow students to develop language skills but also facilitate better integration of knowledge across other disciplines. Our study also revealed that students in the experimental group found it easier to apply their knowledge in different contexts, underscoring the versatility of the communicative approach. Similar conclusions were drawn in the research conducted by Chen, Chen & Yang (2019), who found that students learning English through a communicative methodology were more satisfied with the learning process and exhibited a higher level of motivation. Our study confirmed these results, showing an increase in the motivation and engagement of students in the experimental group during classes.

In the study by Saed, Haider, Al-Salman & Hussein (2021), it was found that the communicative approach positively affects students' awareness of the practical significance of language in real life. A similar effect was observed in our research, where students in the experimental group displayed a higher capacity for practical language application, indicating an increase in their motivation and interest in learning English. The practical application of the obtained results involves integrating the communicative approach into English language curricula at higher education institutions. Implementing the research findings will help create more effective teaching materials, improve language skill assessments, and develop specialized courses for educators (Zhylin et al., 2023).

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study include a limited sample size, which consisted only of students from one higher educational institution, potentially affecting the generalizability of the results to other contexts or regions. Furthermore, the study focused solely on the impact of the communicative approach on English language learning.

Recommendations

Based on the obtained results, it is recommended to implement the communicative approach in English language curricula at universities. It is also suggested to improve the methods of assessing language skills, particularly by introducing interactive testing and tasks that reflect real-life language use.

Conclusions

Based on the conducted research, it can be asserted that the implementation of the communicative approach in English language teaching significantly improves students' communicative competencies. The analysis of test results showed that students who were taught using the communicative methodology

Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. - Eduweb, 2024, octubre-diciembre, v.18, n.4. / 177-190

187

demonstrated significant improvements in grammatical knowledge and lexical skills. The communicative approach positively affects students' motivation and engagement in the learning process, reflected in increased interest and independence in using English. The results also indicated that students who underwent training using the communicative approach achieved significant improvements in academic performance. Future research may focus on studying the long-term effects of the communicative approach, particularly its impact on students' language skills after completing the course.

Practical implications

The results of this study highlight several practical applications for educators and policymakers. First, institutions should prioritize the integration of communicative teaching methodologies into English language programs, emphasizing interactive activities such as role-playing, group discussions, and project-based learning. Second, training programs for instructors should focus on equipping them with the skills needed to effectively implement communicative techniques, including managing diverse student needs and fostering a motivational learning environment. Third, adopting hybrid teaching models that blend face-to-face and online learning can enhance flexibility and accessibility while maintaining the interactive elements essential to the communicative approach.

Recommendations for future research

Future studies should investigate the long-term effects of the communicative approach, particularly its impact on students' language retention and real-world communication skills after completing their courses. Additionally, research could explore the effectiveness of this methodology in different educational contexts, such as rural versus urban institutions, to address regional disparities in language education. Finally, examining the integration of emerging technologies, such as AI-driven language learning tools, with communicative teaching practices could provide innovative solutions for enhancing language proficiency in diverse learning environments.

Bibliographic references

Ali, S. S. (2019). Problem based learning: A student-centered approach. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(5), 73–78. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n5p73

Ayu, M., & Pratiwi, Z. F. (2021). The implementation of online learning in English language teaching during pandemic: The teachers voice. *Journal of Research on Language Education*, *2*(2), 93–99. Retrieved from: https://ejurnal.teknokrat.ac.id/index.php/JoRLE/article/view/1316/619

Castro, L., & Villafuerte, J. (2019). Strengthening English language teaching in rural schools through the role-playing: Teachers' motivations. *International Journal of Educational Methodology*, *5*(2), 289–303. https://doi.org/10.12973/ijem.5.2.289

Chang, S. Y. (2019). Beyond the English box: Constructing and communicating knowledge through translingual practices in the higher education classroom. *English Teaching & Learning*, *43*(1), 23–40. https://doi.org/10.1007/s42321-018-0014-4

Chen, C. M., Chen, L. C., & Yang, S. M. (2019). An English vocabulary learning app with self-regulated learning mechanism to improve learning performance and motivation. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *32*(3), 237–260. https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1485708

Chen, H. L., & Wu, C. T. (2023). A digital role-playing game for learning: Effects on critical thinking and motivation. *Interactive Learning Environments*, *31*(5), 3018–3030. https://doi.org/10.1080/10494820.2021.1916765

Crisianita, S., & Mandasari, B. (2022). The use of small-group discussion to imrpove students'speaking skill. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Learning*, *3*(1), 61–66.

De Jager, L., Rwodzi, C., & Mpofu, N. (2020). The innovative use of social media for teaching English as a second language. *TD: The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa*, *16*(1), 1–7. Retrieved from: https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-1d2c55516c

Dos Santos, L. M. (2020). The discussion of communicative language teaching approach in language classrooms. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, *7*(2), 104–109. https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.509.2020.72.104.109

Fandiño, F. G. E., Muñoz, L. D., & Velandia, A. J. S. (2019). Motivation and e-learning English as a foreign language: A qualitative study. *Heliyon*, *5*(9), e02394. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2019.e02394

Frumkina, A., Diachenko, M., Polyezhayev, Y., Savina, N., & Hadi, F. (2020). Readiness of future teachers for integrated teaching of educational subjects in foreign language. *Revista Práxis Educacional, 16*(38), 502–514. Retrieved from: https://periodicos2.uesb.br/index.php/praxis/article/view/6023

Hamad, M. M., Metwally, A. A., & Alfaruque, S. Y. (2019). The impact of using YouTubes and audio tracks imitation YATI on improving speaking skills of EFL learners. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(6), 191–198. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n6p191

Konotop, O., Bykonia, O., Bondar, O., Shevchenko, Y., & Kasianchuk, N. (2021). Practice of using GoToMeeting/Zoom in the study of foreign languages. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers*, *12*(3), 176–185. Retrieved from: https://jett.labosfor.com/index.php/jett/article/view/557

Laadem, M., & Mallahi, H. (2019). Multimodal pedagogies in teaching English for specific purposes in higher education: Perceptions, challenges and strategies. *International Journal on Studies in Education, 1*(1), 33–38. Retrieved from: https://acortar.link/Kd78G9

Macaro, E., Akincioglu, M., & Han, S. (2020). English medium instruction in higher education: Teacher perspectives on professional development and certification. *International journal of applied linguistics*, *30*(1), 144–157. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijal.12272

Namaziandost, E., Neisi, L., Kheryadi, & Nasri, M. (2019). Enhancing oral proficiency through cooperative learning among intermediate EFL learners: English learning motivation in focus. *Cogent Education*, *6*(1), 1683933. https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2019.1683933

Patak, A. A., Wirawan, H., Abduh, A., Hidayat, R., Iskandar, I., & Dirawan, G. D. (2021). Teaching English as a foreign language in Indonesia: University lecturers' views on plagiarism. *Journal of Academic Ethics*, *19*, 571–587. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10805-020-09385-y

Rinekso, A. B., & Muslim, A. B. (2020). Synchronous online discussion: teaching English in higher education amidst the covid-19 pandemic. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, *5*(2), 155–162. https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v5i2.646

Robert, R., & Meenakshi, S. (2022). Rereading oral communication skills in English language acquisition: The unspoken spoken English. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, *12*(11), 2429–2435. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1211.25

Saed, H. A., Haider, A. S., Al-Salman, S., & Hussein, R. F. (2021). The use of YouTube in developing the speaking skills of Jordanian EFL university students. *Heliyon*, *7*(7), e07543. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2021.e07543

Salem, A. A. (2019). A sage on a stage, to express and impress: TED talks for improving oral presentation skills, vocabulary retention and its impact on reducing speaking anxiety in ESP settings. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(6), 146–160. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n6p146

Seraj, P. M. I., & Hadina, H. (2021). A systematic overview of issues for developing EFL learners' oral English communication skills. *Journal of Language and Education*, *7*(1), 229–240.

Singh, C. K. S., Singh, T. S. M., Ja'afar, H., Tek, O. E., Kaur, H., Moastafa, N. A., & Yunus, M. (2020). Teaching strategies to develop higher-order thinking skills in English literature. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, *11*(80), 211–231. Retrieved from: https://www.ijicc.net/images/vol11iss8/11816_Singh_2020_E_R.pdf

Slipetska, V., Bortun, K., Zhylin, M., Horlachova, V., & Kosharnyi, K. (2023). Structure and semantics of verbal means of expressing states of emotional tension in English publicistic texts. *Amazonia Investiga*, *12*(67), 212–222. https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.67.07.19

Syakur, A. (2020). The effectiveness of english learning media through google classroom in Higher Education. *Britain International of Linguistics Arts and Education (BIoLAE) Journal*, *2*(1), 475–483. https://doi.org/10.33258/biolae.v2i1.218

Thu, N. T. H. (2020). Communication skills and reflection practice in smart english teaching and learning environment: A case study. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)*, *15*(17), 221–237. https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v15i17.15235%0d

Adaptation of the communicative approach to teaching English in higher education. - Eduweb, 2024, octubre-diciembre, v.18, n.4. / 177-190

189

Toro, V., Camacho-Minuche, G., Pinza-Tapia, E., & Paredes, F. (2019). The use of the communicative language teaching approach to improve students' oral skills. *English Language Teaching*, *12*(1), 110–118. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v12n1p110

Tratnik, A., Urh, M., & Jereb, E. (2019). Student satisfaction with an online and a face-to-face Business English course in a higher education context. *Innovations in education and teaching international, 56*(1), 36–45. https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2017.1374875

Van Atteveldt, W., Van der Velden, M. A., & Boukes, M. (2021). The validity of sentiment analysis: Comparing manual annotation, crowd-coding, dictionary approaches, and machine learning algorithms. *Communication Methods and Measures*, *15*(2), 121–140. https://doi.org/10.1080/19312458.2020.1869198

Zhylin, M., Mendelo, V., Cherusheva, G., Romanova, I., & Borysenko, K. (2023). Analysis of the role of emotional intelligence in the formation of identity in different European cultures. *Amazonia Investiga*, *12*(62), 319–326. https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.62.02.32