

**THE ROLE OF NATIVE LANGUAGE IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE
COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Mamirova Sevinch Ravshanbek kizi

Kokand University, Andijan Branch

First-Year Student of Philology and Language Teaching

(Uzbek Language Specialization)

Abstract: This article examines the role of the native language in developing communicative competence in foreign language learning. In modern language education, communicative competence is considered a central objective, encompassing grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic abilities. The study emphasizes that learners' native language functions as a fundamental cognitive and linguistic resource rather than a barrier to foreign language acquisition. Drawing on theoretical perspectives from applied linguistics and language pedagogy, the article analyzes how the native language supports comprehension, facilitates meaning construction, and enhances learners' confidence in communicative situations. Special attention is given to students of philology and language education, for whom metalinguistic awareness and analytical skills are essential. The findings suggest that the purposeful and limited use of the native language in foreign language instruction can positively influence communicative competence by reducing anxiety, promoting active participation, and enabling effective transfer of linguistic knowledge. The article concludes that integrating the native language strategically into foreign language teaching contributes to more inclusive, learner centered, and effective educational practices.

Keywords: native language, communicative competence, foreign language learning, language education, philology

Introduction: In the context of globalization and the rapid expansion of international communication, the role of language education has gained increasing importance in modern society. Languages are no longer viewed merely as tools for communication but as essential components of cultural identity, cognitive development, and social interaction. In this regard, the process of learning foreign languages has become a priority in educational systems worldwide. However, effective foreign language learning depends on many factors, among which the role of the learner's native language occupies a significant place. Understanding how the native language influences the development of communicative competence in foreign language learning is a crucial issue in contemporary linguistics and language pedagogy. Communicative competence is considered one of the main goals of foreign language education. It refers to the ability of learners to use a language appropriately and effectively in real communicative situations. This competence includes not only grammatical knowledge but also sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic abilities. Many researchers emphasize that communicative competence cannot be developed in isolation from the learner's prior linguistic experience. Since the native language is the first system through which individuals perceive the world and structure their thoughts, it inevitably plays a key role in the acquisition of additional languages. The native language serves as the foundation upon which new linguistic knowledge is built. From early childhood, individuals develop cognitive and linguistic structures through their first language, which later influence the process of learning other languages. These structures shape the learner's understanding of grammar, vocabulary, meaning, and communication strategies. As a

result, the interaction between the native language and the foreign language becomes an inevitable and natural phenomenon in language learning. Rather than viewing this interaction as an obstacle, modern pedagogical approaches increasingly recognize it as a valuable resource. For a long time, traditional language teaching methodologies discouraged the use of the native language in foreign language classrooms. The direct method and some communicative approaches emphasized total immersion, assuming that the presence of the native language could hinder foreign language acquisition. However, recent studies in applied linguistics and psycholinguistics challenge this assumption. They suggest that controlled and purposeful use of the native language can support comprehension, reduce anxiety, and facilitate deeper understanding of complex linguistic concepts. This shift in perspective highlights the need to reconsider the pedagogical role of the native language in developing communicative competence. In multilingual and multicultural educational contexts, the native language also plays an important role in shaping learners' identities. Language is closely connected to culture, values, and social norms. When learners use their native language as a bridge to understand a foreign language, they are not only acquiring new linguistic forms but also negotiating meaning between cultures. This process contributes to intercultural communicative competence, which is an essential component of effective communication in a globalized world. Therefore, the integration of the native language into foreign language instruction can promote both linguistic and cultural awareness. From a cognitive perspective, the use of the native language supports higher-order thinking skills in foreign language learning. Learners often rely on their first language to analyze grammatical structures, compare meanings, and organize discourse. This cognitive transfer helps learners develop metalinguistic awareness, enabling them to reflect on language as a system. Such awareness is particularly important for students in philology and language education programs, as it enhances their analytical skills and prepares them for future professional roles as teachers, translators, or linguists. In the context of teaching Uzbek language students who are learning foreign languages, the role of the native language becomes even more significant. Uzbek, as a Turkic language, has distinct grammatical, phonological, and syntactic features that differ from those of many foreign languages, especially Indo European languages such as English. Recognizing these differences and similarities through the native language can help learners overcome difficulties related to interference and transfer. When guided properly, native language influence can lead to positive transfer, enhancing communicative competence rather than limiting it. Furthermore, the affective dimension of language learning cannot be ignored. Learners often experience anxiety and lack of confidence when communicating in a foreign language. The strategic use of the native language can create a supportive learning environment where students feel secure and motivated. This emotional support contributes to greater participation in communicative activities, which in turn strengthens communicative competence. For first year university students, who are still adapting to academic demands, such support is particularly important. In recent years, educational policies and curriculum reforms have emphasized learner centered approaches and inclusivity in language education. These approaches encourage teachers to consider learners' linguistic backgrounds and individual needs. Within this framework, the native language is not seen as a barrier but as a pedagogical tool that can enhance learning outcomes. Integrating the native language into communicative activities, explanations, and reflections allows learners to build meaningful connections between languages and use their full linguistic repertoire. This article aims to explore the role of the native language in developing communicative competence in foreign language learning. By examining theoretical perspectives and pedagogical implications, the study seeks to highlight how the native language can be effectively utilized to support communicative goals. The focus is placed on students of philology and language education, for whom a deep understanding of linguistic processes is essential. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the improvement of foreign language teaching practices and to provide practical recommendations for educators working in multilingual learning environments.

The Influence of the Native Language on the Development of Communicative Competence. The native language plays a fundamental role in shaping the process of foreign language learning, particularly in the development of communicative competence. Communicative competence is not limited to the correct use of grammatical structures but involves the ability to convey meaning effectively, understand contextual nuances, and interact appropriately in various social situations. Learners do not approach a foreign language as blank slates; instead, they rely on their existing linguistic knowledge, which is primarily formed through their native language. This prior knowledge significantly influences how learners perceive, process, and produce the foreign language. From a linguistic perspective, the native language serves as a cognitive framework that guides learners in understanding new language systems. Grammatical categories, sentence structures, and semantic relationships in the native language often function as reference points during foreign language acquisition. When learners encounter unfamiliar grammatical forms or expressions, they naturally compare them with those of their first language. This comparative process helps learners internalize new structures more effectively and develop a deeper understanding of how language functions in communication. As a result, communicative competence develops through the interaction between existing linguistic knowledge and newly acquired language skills. In addition, the native language contributes to the development of discourse competence, which is an essential component of communicative competence. Learners use their native language experience to organize ideas, maintain coherence, and structure spoken or written discourse in a foreign language. Skills such as turn taking, topic maintenance, and logical sequencing are first developed in the native language and later transferred to foreign language communication. This transfer enables learners to participate more confidently in communicative activities and express their thoughts in a more organized and meaningful way. The role of the native language is also evident in sociolinguistic competence. Cultural norms, values, and communicative conventions are deeply embedded in the native language. When learning a foreign language, learners interpret social meanings and communicative intentions through the lens of their own linguistic and cultural background. While this may sometimes lead to misunderstandings, it also provides a foundation for developing intercultural awareness. By consciously reflecting on similarities and differences between languages and cultures, learners enhance their ability to communicate appropriately in diverse contexts, which is a key aspect of communicative competence. Furthermore, the native language supports strategic competence by helping learners overcome communication difficulties. When learners lack specific vocabulary or grammatical knowledge in a foreign language, they often rely on strategies such as paraphrasing, code switching, or conceptual translation from their native language. These strategies allow learners to maintain communication despite linguistic limitations. Over time, the effective use of such strategies contributes to greater fluency and confidence in foreign language communication, demonstrating the positive impact of the native language on communicative development.

Pedagogical Use of the Native Language in Foreign Language Instruction. The pedagogical use of the native language in foreign language classrooms has become an important topic in modern language education. Rather than excluding the native language entirely, contemporary approaches emphasize its purposeful and limited use to support learning objectives. When used appropriately, the native language can facilitate comprehension, enhance participation, and promote deeper engagement with communicative tasks. This is especially relevant for first year philology students who are still developing both linguistic competence and academic skills. One of the main pedagogical benefits of using the native language is its role in explaining complex linguistic concepts. Abstract grammatical rules, semantic distinctions, and pragmatic features can be difficult to understand solely through the foreign language, particularly at lower proficiency levels. The native language allows teachers to provide clear explanations and comparisons, helping students grasp difficult concepts more efficiently. This clarity reduces cognitive overload and enables learners to focus on developing communicative skills rather than struggling with

basic comprehension. The native language also plays a supportive role in classroom interaction. Allowing limited use of the native language during discussions, reflections, or collaborative tasks can encourage active participation, especially among learners who may feel anxious about using the foreign language exclusively. This supportive environment fosters confidence and motivation, which are essential for effective communication. As learners gradually become more confident, the reliance on the native language decreases, leading to more spontaneous and fluent use of the foreign language. In addition, the integration of the native language can enhance metalinguistic awareness. By comparing linguistic structures and communicative patterns across languages, learners develop a deeper understanding of how languages function. This awareness is particularly valuable for philology students, as it strengthens analytical thinking and prepares them for future professional activities related to language teaching and research. Through reflective use of the native language, learners become more conscious of linguistic choices and communicative strategies. The native language also contributes to the development of learner autonomy. When students are encouraged to use their native language strategically, they become more aware of their own learning processes. They learn how to use translation, comparison, and reflection as tools to improve communication. This self-regulated approach empowers learners to take responsibility for their language development and apply effective strategies beyond the classroom. Overall, the pedagogical use of the native language should be viewed as a flexible and context-dependent practice. Its effectiveness depends on learners' proficiency levels, instructional goals, and communicative needs. When integrated thoughtfully, the native language supports the development of communicative competence by bridging the gap between known and unknown linguistic systems. For students of philology and language education, this approach provides both practical communicative benefits and theoretical insights into the nature of language learning.

Conclusion and Recommendations. The findings discussed in this article highlight the significant role of the native language in the development of communicative competence in foreign language learning. Rather than functioning as an obstacle, the native language serves as a cognitive, linguistic, and pedagogical resource that supports learners throughout the learning process. Communicative competence is formed through the interaction of grammatical knowledge, discourse skills, sociolinguistic awareness, and strategic abilities, all of which are influenced by learners' prior linguistic experience. The native language provides a foundation that enables learners to interpret meaning, organize discourse, and participate more effectively in communicative situations. The analysis demonstrates that learners naturally rely on their native language when acquiring a foreign language, especially during the early stages of learning. This reliance facilitates comprehension, reduces anxiety, and encourages active engagement in communication. When learners are guided to use their native language strategically, they are better equipped to overcome linguistic limitations and maintain meaningful interaction. For philology and language education students, the native language also contributes to the development of metalinguistic awareness and analytical thinking, which are essential for their future academic and professional activities. From a pedagogical perspective, the purposeful integration of the native language into foreign language instruction enhances learning outcomes. Teachers who acknowledge learners' linguistic backgrounds and incorporate comparative and reflective practices create more inclusive and supportive learning environments. Such environments promote confidence, motivation, and communicative participation, which are key factors in developing communicative competence. The effectiveness of this approach depends on balanced and controlled use of the native language, ensuring that it supports rather than replaces foreign language communication. Based on the conclusions of this study, several recommendations can be proposed. Language educators should adopt flexible teaching strategies that allow limited and purposeful use of the native language, particularly when explaining complex concepts or facilitating reflection. Teacher training programs should include components that address the pedagogical role of the native language and provide practical

guidance on its effective use. Curriculum designers are encouraged to develop materials that integrate cross linguistic comparisons and promote communicative activities grounded in learners' existing linguistic knowledge. In addition, further research is recommended to explore the impact of native language use across different proficiency levels and educational contexts. Empirical studies focusing on classroom practices and learner outcomes would contribute to a deeper understanding of how the native language can be optimized in communicative language teaching. Overall, recognizing the native language as a valuable resource rather than a limitation can lead to more effective and meaningful foreign language education, particularly for students pursuing studies in philology and language teaching.

References.

1. Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1), 1–47.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/1.1.1>
2. Cook, V. (2001). Using the first language in the classroom. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 57(3), 402–423.
<https://doi.org/10.3138/cmlr.57.3.402>
3. Cummins, J. (2007). Rethinking monolingual instructional strategies in multilingual classrooms. *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(2), 221–240.
<https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/CJAL/article/view/19743>
4. Larsen-Freeman, D., & Anderson, M. (2011). Techniques and principles in language teaching (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
<https://global.oup.com/academic/product/techniques-and-principles-in-language-teaching-9780194423601>