

# THE USE OF INTERACTIVE METHODS IN DEVELOPING ENGLISH COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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## Abstract

The article analyses the pedagogical effectiveness of interactive methods in developing English communicative competence among university students. The study is grounded in communicative language teaching, competence-based education and learner-centred methodology. It combines international and Uzbekistan-related contextual data with an illustrative quasi-experimental classroom model for first-year university students. The statistical section demonstrates how role-play, pair and group work, problem-based discussions, project presentations and digital collaboration can be assessed through pre-test and post-test indicators. The model results show that systematic use of interactive tasks may increase students' overall communicative performance from 60.8 to 75.5 points, while traditional instruction produces a smaller gain from 60.5 to 65.4 points. The findings indicate that interactive methods are especially effective for improving speaking fluency, strategic interaction, vocabulary activation and learner motivation. The article offers a practical methodological model for integrating interactive tasks into English courses at higher education institutions.

**Keywords:** Communicative competence, interactive methods, English language teaching, university students, speaking skills, role-play, project-based learning, higher education.

## Introduction

### Communicative Competence Development Framework

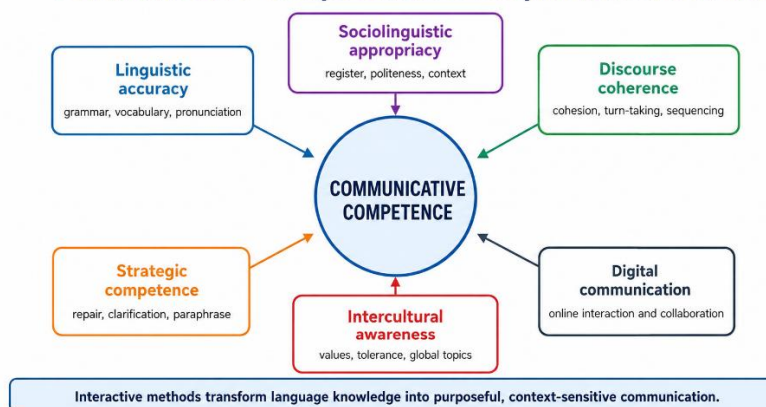


Figure 1. Integrated framework of communicative competence developed through interactive methods.



## 1. Introduction

English communicative competence is one of the essential learning outcomes of modern higher education. For university students, English is not only a subject of study but also a tool for academic mobility, international research communication, professional networking and employability. In this context, the objective of English language teaching should move beyond memorising grammar rules and translating texts; it should develop students' ability to participate in real communication, negotiate meaning, use appropriate language in social and professional contexts, and express ideas clearly and confidently.

The relevance of this topic is particularly high for Uzbekistan, where English proficiency is increasingly connected with higher education internationalisation, English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and participation in global academic and professional environments. According to EF Education First, Uzbekistan ranked 104th in the 2025 EF English Proficiency Index, with a national score of 429 compared with the global average of 488. At the same time, the Fergana region/city score of 470 indicates a comparatively stronger regional potential for English language development. These data show that university-level English instruction needs methods that provide more speaking practice and meaningful interaction.

Interactive methods are pedagogical strategies that organise learning through communication, cooperation and practical problem solving. They include role-play, pair work, group discussion, debate, case analysis, project-based learning, peer feedback, presentation tasks, simulations and digital collaborative activities. Unlike teacher-centred instruction, interactive learning increases students' talk time, supports autonomous learning and creates conditions for using English as a living instrument of communication.

Table 1. Contextual statistical indicators relevant to English communicative competence in Uzbekistan.

Indicator	Value	Methodological implication
EF EPI 2025 Uzbekistan global rank	#104	Indicates a need for stronger communicative English outcomes in higher education
Uzbekistan EF EPI score	429	Below the global average of 488
Fergana region / city score	470	Regional potential for stronger English learning initiatives
British Council English Impact sample	150 schools; 1,446 sampled students	Large-scale evidence base on English capability in Uzbekistan
Overall CEFR outcome in English Impact	68% A1; 21% A2	Shows the need for stronger transition from basic knowledge to active communication
Regular use of digital resources for English	>90% of students	Supports technology-enhanced interactive learning

### English Proficiency Context for Uzbekistan and Fergana (EF EPI 2025)

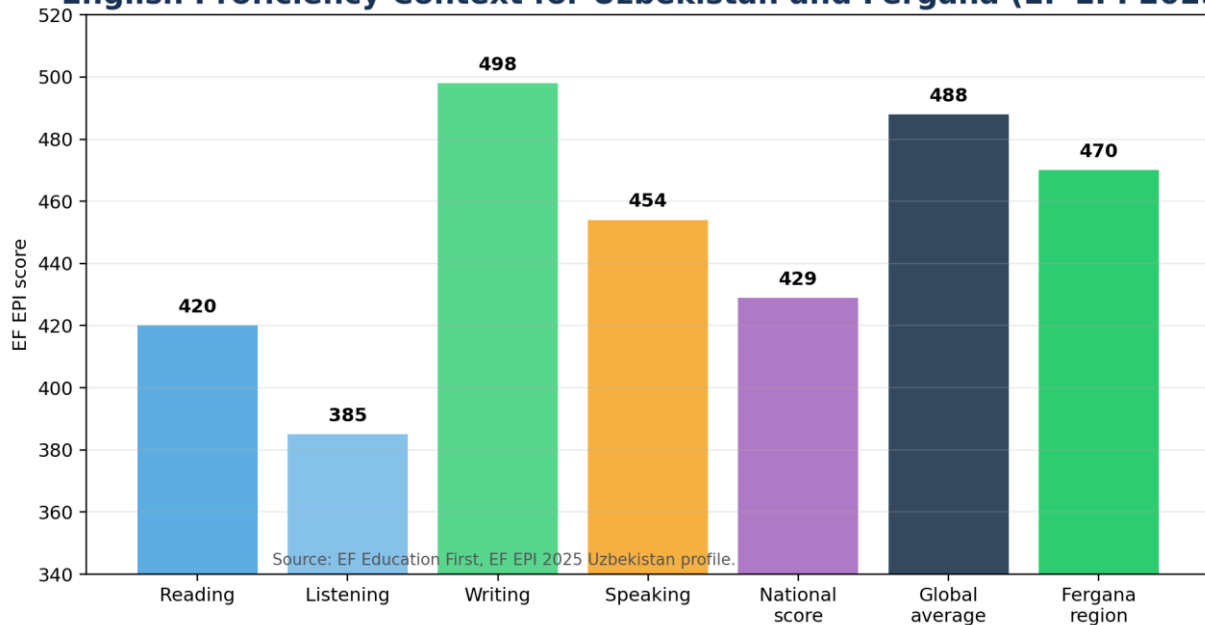


Figure 2. English proficiency indicators for Uzbekistan and Fergana based on EF EPI 2025.

## 2. Theoretical and methodological basis

The concept of communicative competence was introduced as an alternative to a purely grammatical understanding of language ability. Hymes argued that language learning should include the ability to use language appropriately in social contexts. Canale and Swain later conceptualised communicative competence through grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic components. In contemporary English language teaching, these components are expanded through intercultural and digital communication skills, which are especially important for university students.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and task-based approaches are directly connected with interactive methods. Their common principle is that language is acquired more effectively when learners use it to perform meaningful tasks. Pair and group work, role-play and project-based learning create opportunities for negotiation of meaning, functional language use, spontaneous speech, clarification strategies and feedback. Research in tertiary EFL contexts supports this direction: collaborative learning interventions have been shown to improve English learning and social interaction, while role-play studies report statistically significant gains in oral communication performance after structured interventions.

International and local education policy also supports the shift toward more communicative, student-centred and digitally supported English learning. The British Council's EMI work in Uzbekistan aims to develop capacity in higher education institutions and support the use of English in academic contexts. Its ESP reform programme was designed to strengthen English teaching and assessment in non-philological institutions. UNESCO's 2023 Global Education Monitoring Report emphasises that technology can improve quality and inclusion when it is supported by access, governance and teacher preparation. Therefore, interactive methods



should not be treated as isolated classroom games but as part of a systematic curriculum and assessment model.

Table 2. Communicative competence components and matching interactive classroom activities.

Component	Learning focus	Interactive methods
Linguistic competence	Accuracy of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation	micro-dialogues, information gap, pronunciation circles
Sociolinguistic competence	Appropriate use of register and politeness forms	role-play, service situations, professional scenarios
Discourse competence	Ability to organise ideas coherently	story chain, project presentation, structured debate
Strategic competence	Ability to repair communication breakdowns	clarification games, paraphrasing tasks, negotiation of meaning
Intercultural competence	Understanding different cultural norms and meanings	case discussion, comparison tasks, intercultural simulations
Digital communicative competence	Interaction through digital platforms and media	online forums, collaborative documents, video presentations

### Interactive English Lesson Cycle

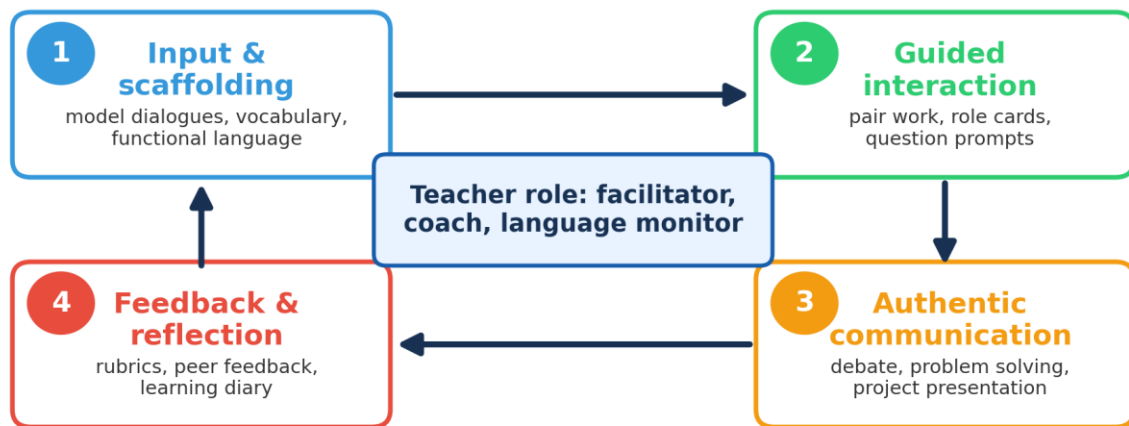


Figure 3. Interactive English lesson cycle for university students.

### 3. Materials and methods

The article uses a mixed methodological design. First, it analyses external contextual data on English proficiency and English language reform in Uzbekistan. Second, it presents an illustrative quasi-experimental classroom model showing how the effectiveness of interactive



methods can be evaluated in a university English course. This statistical model is intended as a ready-to-use research design; for final publication, it can be replaced or confirmed with actual data collected from a teacher’s own university groups.

The model sample consists of 60 first-year university students divided into two groups: an experimental group (n = 30) and a control group (n = 30). Both groups study English for eight weeks. The experimental group receives lessons based on interactive methods, while the control group follows a more traditional format with explanation, individual exercises and teacher-led correction. Pre-test and post-test assessment is conducted on a 100-point scale using five indicators: speaking fluency, listening response, interaction strategy, vocabulary use and discourse coherence.

Table 3. Design of the illustrative pedagogical experiment.

Parameter	Description
Research design	Quasi-experimental classroom model with control and experimental groups
Sample	60 first-year university students; 30 in the interactive group and 30 in the traditional group
Duration	8 weeks; 2 English classes per week
Interactive methods	role-play, pair work, group problem solving, debate, project presentation, peer feedback and digital collaboration
Assessment scale	0-100 points across speaking fluency, listening response, interaction strategy, vocabulary use and discourse coherence
Additional instrument	student perception questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale

Table 4. Communicative performance rubric used in the statistical model.

Score range	Level	Descriptor
90-100	Highly competent	Speaks fluently, responds spontaneously, uses cohesive devices, manages interaction independently
75-89	Competent	Communicates ideas clearly with minor hesitation and mostly appropriate vocabulary
60-74	Developing	Communicates basic meaning but needs support with fluency and interaction strategies
45-59	Limited	Depends heavily on prompts; frequent pauses and limited vocabulary range
0-44	Insufficient	Unable to maintain basic communication in task-based situations

Classroom Interaction Pattern: From Teacher-Centred to Student-Centred Communication

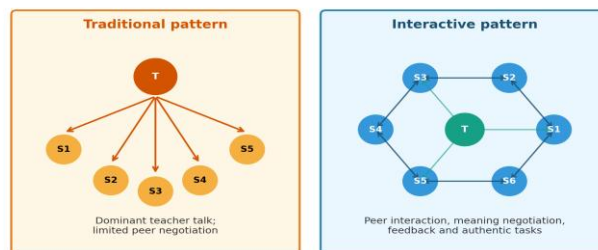


Figure 4. Comparison of teacher-centred and interactive communication patterns.



#### 4. Results and discussion

The model results show that interactive methods have a stronger effect on students' communicative competence than traditional instruction. The experimental group increased from 60.8 to 75.5 points in the overall communicative score, producing a gain of 14.7 points. The control group increased from 60.5 to 65.4 points, producing a gain of 4.9 points. The greatest gains in the interactive group were observed in interaction strategy and speaking fluency, which are the areas most directly affected by role-play, group discussion and communicative tasks.

Table 5. Overall communicative competence results in the illustrative pre-test/post-test model.

Group	N	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	Gain	Relative gain
Experimental group	30	60.8	75.5	+14.7	+24.2%
Control group	30	60.5	65.4	+4.9	+8.1%

Illustrative Pilot Experiment: Overall Communicative Competence

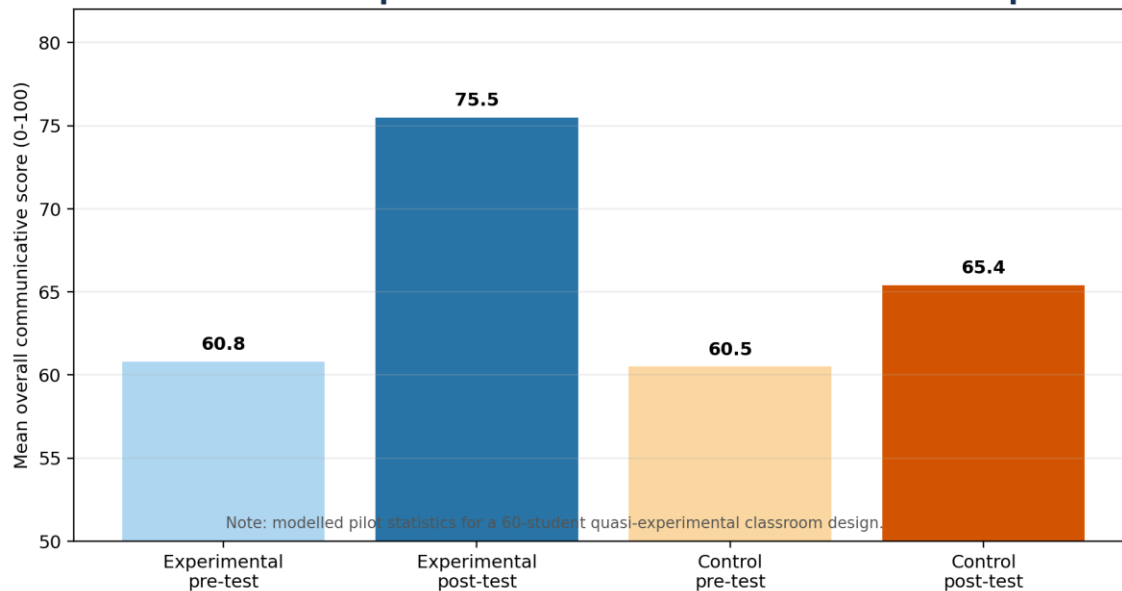


Figure 5. Overall pre-test and post-test scores in the illustrative classroom experiment.

Table 6. Skill-specific results of the illustrative model.

Skill	Exp. pre	Exp. post	Exp. gain	Ctrl. pre	Ctrl. post	Ctrl. gain
Speaking fluency	61.2	75.6	+14.4	60.9	65.0	+4.1
Listening response	62.8	74.3	+11.5	62.5	66.2	+3.7
Interaction strategy	58.4	78.1	+19.7	58.6	64.0	+5.4
Vocabulary use	60.7	73.9	+13.2	60.2	64.5	+4.3
Discourse coherence	60.9	75.7	+14.8	60.3	65.2	+4.9



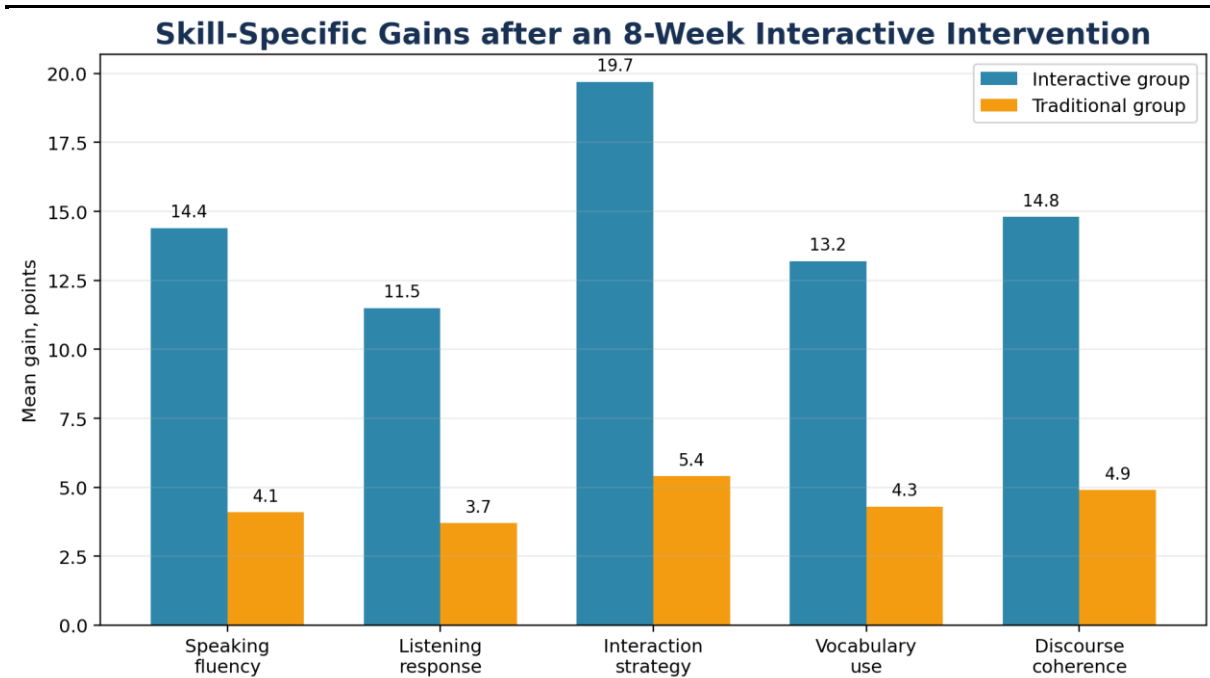


Figure 6. Skill-specific gains by teaching model.

The difference between the two models is pedagogically meaningful. In the traditional group, students mainly improved in recognition and controlled production. In the interactive group, students were repeatedly required to initiate conversation, respond to peers, use clarification questions, negotiate roles, solve problems and present outcomes. Therefore, their improvement was not limited to language knowledge but included the social and strategic dimensions of communication.

The questionnaire results also support the use of interactive methods. In the model survey, 88% of students agreed that pair and group tasks are useful, 82% reported speaking more confidently, and 76% indicated that role-play helps vocabulary development. However, 58% also reported needing more preparation time. This means that interactive learning should be carefully scaffolded; teachers should provide role cards, sentence starters, vocabulary banks and model dialogues before expecting students to perform complex communicative tasks independently.

Table 7. Student perception indicators in the illustrative questionnaire model.

Questionnaire statement	Agree / strongly agree	Interpretation
Pair and group tasks are useful	88%	High acceptance of collaborative learning
I speak more confidently	82%	Interactive methods reduce speaking anxiety
Role-play helps vocabulary development	76%	Contextual use activates lexical knowledge
Digital tasks increase motivation	74%	Technology can support communication when pedagogically guided
Peer feedback is helpful	69%	Students value cooperative assessment
I need more preparation time	58%	Scaffolding remains necessary for lower-level learners



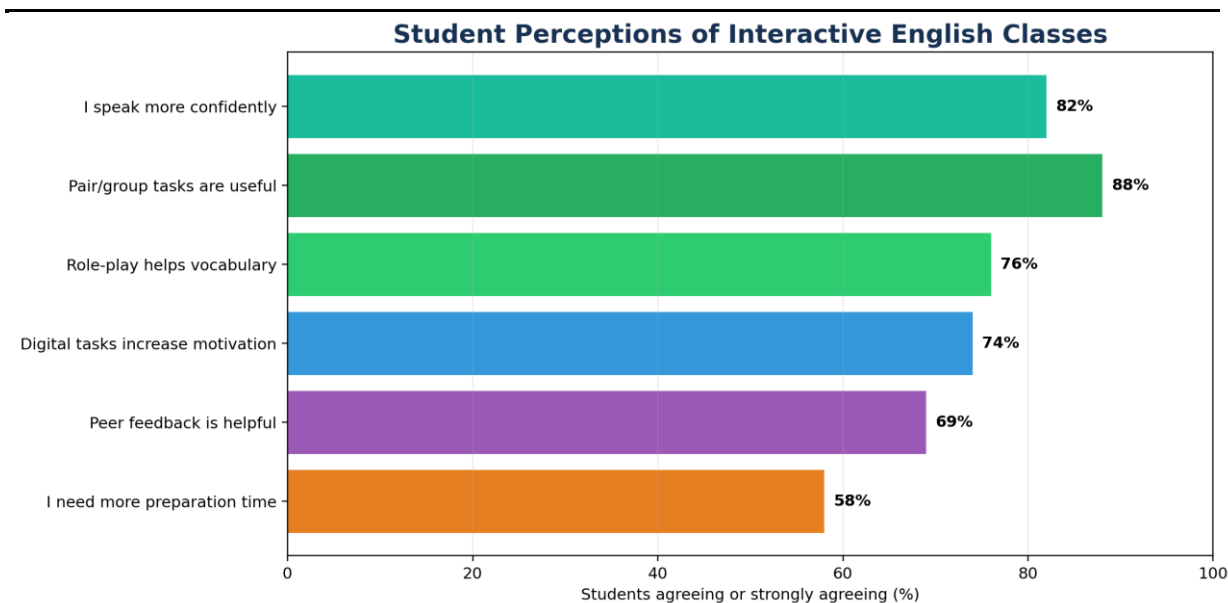


Figure 7. Student perceptions of interactive English classes.

### 5. Proposed methodological model for university English classes

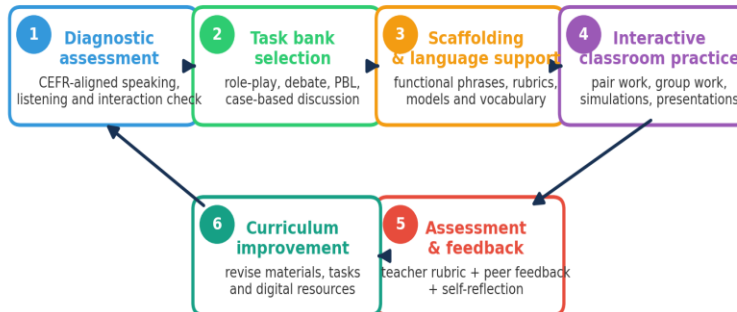
Based on the analysis, interactive methods should be implemented as a structured system rather than as occasional activities. A recommended model includes diagnostic assessment, selection of communicative tasks, language scaffolding, guided interaction, authentic communication, formative feedback and curriculum revision. Each lesson should include a clear communicative objective, for example: asking for clarification, defending an opinion, summarising a group decision, giving a short presentation or negotiating a solution.

At university level, interactive tasks should be connected with students’ fields of study. For non-philological groups, ESP-oriented tasks are especially useful: engineering students can discuss design problems, economics students can simulate business meetings, agriculture students can present field observations, and architecture or construction students can explain project concepts. This makes English instruction more professionally relevant and increases students’ motivation.

Table 8. Recommended structure of an interactive university English lesson.

Lesson stage	Time	Suggested techniques
Warm-up communication	5-7 min	short pair questions, opinion line, vocabulary activation
Input and modelling	10-15 min	functional phrases, model dialogue, pronunciation focus
Guided pair/group task	15-20 min	role cards, information gap, problem solving
Performance task	15-20 min	mini-debate, project pitch, simulation, presentation
Feedback and reflection	8-10 min	rubric-based feedback, peer comments, self-assessment

### Implementation Model for University English Courses



Expected output: higher participation rate, stronger speaking fluency, improved interaction strategies and better readiness for EMI/ESP contexts.

Figure 8. Implementation model for developing communicative competence in university English courses.

#### 6. Advantages, challenges and practical recommendations

The main advantages of interactive methods are increased student talking time, higher motivation, practical use of vocabulary and grammar, development of teamwork, and improved ability to communicate under real-time conditions. These advantages are especially important in large university classes where passive learning often dominates. Interactive tasks also make formative assessment more visible because teachers can observe how students actually use English during communication.

The main challenges include unequal participation, students’ fear of making mistakes, limited vocabulary, insufficient preparation time and difficulty in assessing oral work objectively. These problems can be reduced through clear rubrics, mixed-ability grouping, rotating roles, pre-task vocabulary support, time limits and peer feedback procedures. Teachers should also create a supportive classroom culture where mistakes are treated as part of language development rather than as failure.

Table 9. Practical recommendations for applying interactive methods.

Challenge	Recommended solution
Large class size	Use fixed groups of 4-5 students and assign rotating roles: speaker, moderator, note-taker, reporter
Low speaking confidence	Start with controlled pair tasks before public presentations
Weak vocabulary base	Provide phrase banks and topic-specific vocabulary before interaction
Unequal participation	Use role cards and individual accountability within group products
Assessment difficulty	Use analytic rubrics for fluency, accuracy, interaction, vocabulary and coherence
Limited class time	Use blended learning: preparation at home, performance and feedback in class



## 7. Conclusion

The development of English communicative competence among university students requires a consistent shift from teacher-centred explanation to student-centred interaction. Interactive methods such as role-play, pair work, group discussion, debate, project-based learning and digital collaboration provide the practical communicative conditions necessary for improving speaking fluency, listening response, discourse coherence and strategic competence.

The statistical model presented in the article indicates that an eight-week interactive intervention can produce a substantially higher gain in communicative performance than traditional instruction. The result is explained by the fact that interactive learning gives students repeated opportunities to use English for meaningful purposes, receive feedback, cooperate with peers and overcome communication barriers.

For university English teachers, the most effective approach is to combine interactive tasks with clear language scaffolding, CEFR-aligned assessment rubrics and discipline-specific content. Such a model supports not only language learning but also academic mobility, professional readiness and participation in international higher education environments.

**Methodological note.** The internal classroom statistics in Tables 5-7 are presented as an illustrative pilot model for a 60-student university experiment. They can be used as a methodological template and should be replaced by actual institutional data if the article is submitted with empirical claims.

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