



<https://doi.org/10.70728/c.series.v08.i04.035>

METHODOLOGICAL ADVANTAGES OF VARIATIVE CLASSES IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: A FLIPPED CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract. This article investigates the methodological advantages of variative classes in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in secondary education, with particular attention to the integration of the Flipped Classroom model. Variative classes, which organize learners according to proficiency level, enable differentiated instruction, effective scaffolding, and communicative interaction. Grounded in sociocultural theory, communicative language teaching, and cognitive load theory, this study analyzes how variative grouping enhances learners' communicative competence. The findings indicate that variative classes significantly improve learner engagement, reduce affective barriers, and provide more valid assessment of communicative performance. When combined with the Flipped Classroom approach, variative classes create an optimal environment for developing speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

Keywords: variative classes, communicative competence, Flipped Classroom, EFL methodology, differentiated instruction

Abstrakt. Ushbu maqola o'rta ta'limda ingliz tilini chet tili (EFL) sifatida o'qitishda variativ sinflarning uslubiy afzalliklarini o'rganadi, ayniqsa Flipped Classroom modeli integratsiyasiga e'tibor beradi. O'quvchilarni malaka darajasiga ko'ra tashkil etadigan variativ sinflar tabaqalashtirilgan o'qitish, samarali iskala va kommunikativ o'zaro ta'sirni ta'minlaydi. Ijtimoiy-madaniy nazariya, kommunikativ tilni o'rgatish va kognitiv yuk nazariyasiga asoslangan ushbu tadqiqot variativ guruhlash o'quvchilarning kommunikativ kompetentsiyasini qanday oshirishini tahlil qiladi. Topilmalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, variativ sinflar o'quvchilarning faolligini sezilarli darajada yaxshilaydi, ta'sirchan to'siqlarni kamaytiradi va kommunikativ faoliyatni yanada to'g'ri baholashni ta'minlaydi. Flipped Classroom yondashuvi bilan birlashganda, variativ sinflar gapirish, tinglash, o'qish va yozish ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish uchun maqbul muhit yaratadi.

Kalit so'zlar: variativ sinflar, kommunikativ kompetentsiya, Flipped Classroom, EFL metodologiyasi, differentsial ta'lim

Аннотация. В данной статье исследуются методологические преимущества вариативных классов в преподавании английского языка как иностранного (EFL) в

средней школе, с особым вниманием к интеграции модели «перевернутого класса». Вариативные классы, организующие учащихся в соответствии с уровнем владения языком, обеспечивают дифференцированное обучение, эффективную поддержку и коммуникативное взаимодействие. Основываясь на социокультурной теории, коммуникативном обучении языку и теории когнитивной нагрузки, данное исследование анализирует, как вариативная группировка повышает коммуникативную компетентность учащихся. Результаты показывают, что вариативные классы значительно повышают вовлеченность учащихся, снижают аффективные барьеры и обеспечивают более достоверную оценку коммуникативных навыков. В сочетании с подходом «перевернутого класса» вариативные классы создают оптимальную среду для развития навыков говорения, слушания, чтения и письма.

Ключевые слова: вариативные классы, коммуникативная компетентность, «перевернутый класс», методология EFL, дифференцированное обучение

Introduction

One of the most persistent challenges in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education is learner heterogeneity. In secondary school classrooms, students differ widely in their language proficiency, learning pace, motivation, and communicative ability. In traditional mixed-ability classes, teachers often struggle to meet the needs of both high-achieving and low-achieving learners simultaneously, which leads to reduced participation, limited interaction, and ineffective learning outcomes.

To address this issue, many educational systems have introduced variative classes, which group students according to their language proficiency and learning needs. This organizational model makes it possible to implement differentiated instruction, provide appropriate input, and create a more supportive learning environment.

At the same time, modern language education increasingly emphasizes communicative competence rather than mere grammatical accuracy. According to Hymes (1972), knowing a language means being able to use it appropriately in social contexts. This perspective has led to the development of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritizes interaction, meaning-focused tasks, and learner engagement.

The Flipped Classroom model further strengthens these principles by moving direct instruction outside the classroom and using class time for communicative and collaborative activities Bergmann & Sams’ options in 2012. When applied in variative classes, flipped learning allows students to prepare at their own pace and use classroom time for meaningful communication. Therefore, this study aims to examine the methodological advantages of variative classes in EFL teaching from a Flipped Classroom perspective.

Variative classes and differentiated learning is variative classes are based on the principle that learners benefit most when instruction matches their current level of competence. Tomlinson argues that differentiated instruction improves learner motivation, engagement, and achievement by adapting content, process, and product to students’ readiness and learning profiles. In EFL contexts, this means providing input, tasks, and feedback that correspond to learners’ linguistic abilities.

Ellis (2006) notes that second language acquisition is most effective when learners are exposed to comprehensible input and opportunities for meaningful output. Variative grouping ensures that students are neither overwhelmed nor underchallenged, creating optimal conditions for language development.

Communicative competence includes grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies Canale & Swain's options, in 1980. Learners must not only know linguistic forms but also use them appropriately in real communicative situations. CLT emphasizes interaction, negotiation of meaning, and task-based activities as key mechanisms for developing communicative competence.

Sociocultural Theory and ZPD means Vygotsky's in 1978 sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction in learning. According to the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), learners achieve higher levels of performance when supported by teachers or peers. Variative classes allow teachers to provide more targeted scaffolding because learners in each group have similar developmental needs.

Cognitive load theory is Sweller explains that working memory has limited capacity, and learning is hindered when cognitive load exceeds this capacity. In mixed-ability classes, tasks are often too easy for some learners and too difficult for others. Variative grouping reduces extraneous cognitive load by aligning task difficulty with learner proficiency.

Flipped Classroom and language learning is the Flipped Classroom shifts knowledge transmission to the pre-class phase and reserves classroom time for application and interaction Bishop & Verleger, in 2013. In EFL education, this allows students to study grammar, vocabulary, and listening materials at home, while using classroom time for speaking, discussion, and collaborative tasks. Variative classes make flipped learning more effective because students work with materials suited to their level.

Methodology

This study adopts a theoretical-analytical and pedagogical design. Data were drawn from EFL teaching practices in variative secondary school classes, curriculum documents, and existing empirical research on flipped learning and communicative instruction. The analysis focused on three dimensions: instructional organization, learner interaction, and assessment practices.

Results and Discussion

Increased communicative interaction is in variative classes, learners communicate with peers of similar proficiency, which reduces anxiety and increases participation. This leads to more frequent use of English in pair work, group discussion, and problem-solving tasks.

Effective scaffolding and differentiation teachers can design level-appropriate tasks and provide focused feedback. In Flipped Classroom settings, learners arrive prepared, which allows classroom time to be devoted to meaningful communication.

Fair and valid assessment variative classes allow CEFR-based assessment adapted to each level. This ensures that communicative competence is evaluated realistically and fairly.

Reduced cognitive and affective barriers mean by matching instruction to learners' levels, variative classes reduce frustration, cognitive overload, and fear of speaking, creating a supportive learning environment.

Conclusion

Variative classes provide a powerful methodological framework for teaching English as a foreign language. When combined with the Flipped Classroom approach, they support differentiated instruction, communicative interaction, and learner autonomy. As a result, students develop stronger communicative competence and greater confidence in using English.

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