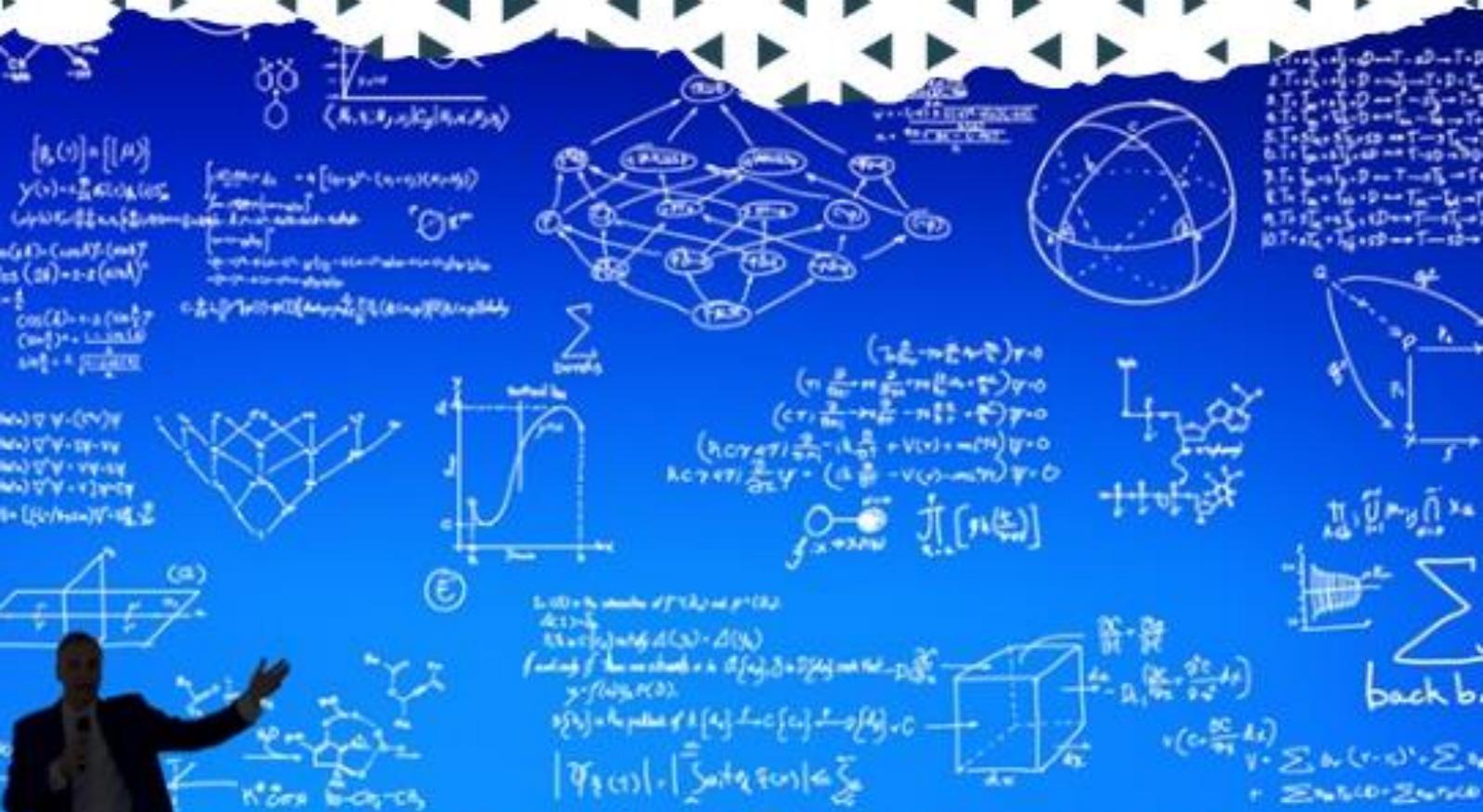




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Enhancing Students' Communicative Competence through Foreign-Literature Instruction

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Annotation. This article examines how integrating foreign literature into language instruction enhances students' communicative competence. It synthesizes theory (communicative competence and comprehensible input), empirical classroom strategies, and practical activities that promote speaking, listening, reading and intercultural communication. Findings show that literature-based tasks — extensive reading, role-play, dramatization, dialogic response and reflective discussion — foster authentic language use, vocabulary growth and pragmatic awareness. Pedagogical implications and assessment approaches are proposed for teachers aiming to develop holistic communicative skills.

Keywords: foreign literature; communicative competence; task-based; dramatization; extensive reading; intercultural; vocabulary; speaking; pragmatic skills; assessment.

Introduction. Developing communicative competence is a central goal of modern language education. Foundational work by Canale and Swain conceptualized communicative competence as an integration of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse and strategic competences; this framework situates communicative tasks and authentic texts at the heart of classroom practice [1]. At the same time, Krashen's input hypothesis emphasizes the importance of meaningful, comprehensible input for acquisition rather than decontextualized practice alone [2]. Foreign literature—short stories, plays, novels, poems—provides rich, contextualized input that combines linguistic forms with cultural meanings, thereby serving as a vehicle for both language and intercultural learning (Lazar, 1993) [3]. Literature-based instruction creates opportunities for authentic discourse: students infer meaning from context, negotiate interpretations, produce spoken and written responses, and practice pragmatic language appropriate to genre and social roles. Teaching literature in language classes is not merely about aesthetic appreciation; it can be systematically harnessed to practice speaking and listening through dramatization, discussion and task-based projects (Carter & Long, 1991) [4]. Research into literature in EFL/ESL settings indicates improvements in vocabulary acquisition, fluency, and willingness to communicate when activities are design-driven and scaffolded (Nunan, 1999) [5]. This article synthesizes theoretical perspectives and classroom-proven pedagogies to offer a practical model for integrating foreign literature with communicative objectives. It outlines specific activity types, sequencing strategies, and assessment methods aimed at measurable development in communication



skills. The goal is to provide teachers and researchers with an evidence-based roadmap for using literary texts as springboards for interactive language use, critical thinking, and intercultural competence.

Main Body. Communicative competence theory reframes language proficiency beyond grammar to include sociocultural and strategic knowledge needed for successful interaction [1]. Krashen's emphasis on comprehensible, meaningful input supports the use of narrative and dialogic texts where language occurs in context [2]. Literature uniquely combines discourse patterns, register variation, and culturally-situated speech acts, providing diverse input for learners at multiple levels (Lazar, 1993). From a task-based perspective (Nunan, 1999), literature can seed realistic tasks: summarization, role-play, information-gap activities and collaborative interpretation tasks that require negotiation of meaning and production of language in communicative contexts [5]. These theoretical strands justify not only exposing learners to literary texts but designing interactive tasks that convert receptive input into productive communicative practice.

Effective instruction follows scaffolded sequencing: (1) pre-reading to build background and activate schemata; (2) guided reading with focused comprehension tasks; (3) post-reading communicative tasks that require speaking and writing; (4) reflection and assessment. Activities should balance form-focused attention (vocabulary, idioms) with fluency-oriented tasks (role-play, storytelling). Lazar (1993) recommends adapting texts to proficiency levels while preserving authentic language features; graded readers and abridged versions are useful transitional materials [3]. Carter & Long (1991) emphasize teacher mediation—question prompts, modeling, and feedback—to sustain productive interaction and to help learners transform literary input into communicative output [4]. Tasks must be purposeful (e.g., preparing a radio interview, staging a scene for class broadcast) so learners use language to accomplish real communicative goals, increasing motivation and uptake.

Classroom activities that develop communication skills

1. Extensive reading clubs: Students choose accessible foreign-language novels/short stories and meet regularly to discuss themes, predictions and character motives. Extensive reading increases exposure to collocations and pragmatic phrasing and creates natural speaking prompts.

2. Dramatization & role-play: Staging scenes or improvising alternative endings pushes learners to perform language in social roles, practicing intonation, register and turn-taking. Guided rehearsal followed by performance encourages rehearsal of target language in context.

3. Socratic seminars / literature circles: Structured discussions with assigned roles (summarizer, questioner, connector) train students in sustained academic talk and negotiation of viewpoints. Tasks require evidence-based speaking and listening.



4. Dialogic response tasks: Students transform narrative passages into dialogues, interviews, or news reports—this shifts focus from monologic comprehension to interactive language production.

5. Creative rewriting and adaptation: Assignments such as rewriting a scene in a different register or cultural context foster pragmatic awareness and stylistic control.

6. Integrated multimodal projects: Podcasts, video adaptations, or illustrated storyboards require planning, scriptwriting and oral presentation—combining language skills with technology enhances authenticity.

When designing activities, pairwork and small-group formats maximize talk time per learner, while teacher observation and targeted feedback address recurrent errors and pragmatics. These activity types have been recommended across literature-and-language teaching scholarship as effective for connecting literary input to communicative outcomes.

Assessment and measurable outcomes. Assessment should capture both form and function. Use a combination of: (a) performance-based assessment (oral presentations, dramatizations) scored with rubrics for fluency, accuracy, interactional competence and pragmatic appropriateness; (b) portfolios documenting written responses, reflections and recordings of oral tasks; (c) pre/post tests for receptive vocabulary and comprehension. Rubrics adapted from Canale & Swain's components can operationalize sociolinguistic and discourse measurements (e.g., turn-taking, repair strategies) [1]. Longitudinal classroom studies suggest that sustained literature programs lead to gains in lexical breadth, speaking fluency and willingness to communicate, especially when classroom tasks prioritize negotiation of meaning over isolated drills (Nunan, 1999). For research validity, mixed-methods designs combining quantitative scores with qualitative discourse analysis of classroom talk are recommended.

Conclusion. Integrating foreign literature into language instruction offers a robust route to improve students' communication skills. The convergence of communicative competence theory and input-based acquisition models supports the claim that literary texts provide rich, contextualized language input which, when paired with communicative tasks, can be converted into productive competence. Practically, teachers should design scaffolded sequences—pre-reading activation, guided interpretation, and post-reading communicative projects—that prioritize meaningful interaction and real communicative goals. Activities such as dramatization, literature circles, dialogic rewriting, and multimodal projects encourage authentic talk, increase student motivation, and promote pragmatic development. Assessment plays a crucial role: performance rubrics, recorded portfolios and discourse analysis permit teachers to measure gains in fluency, strategic competence and sociolinguistic appropriateness, not merely grammatical accuracy. Importantly, success depends on careful selection and adaptation of texts to



learners' proficiency, teacher mediation, and a classroom culture that values risk-taking and collaboration. Research indicates that literature-based programs produce measurable improvements in vocabulary, oral fluency, and readiness to engage in intercultural dialogue when implemented consistently and with clear communicative objectives. For future research, longitudinal experimental studies comparing literature-rich syllabi with more form-focused curricula would clarify effect sizes on speaking and listening outcomes. Teacher-training modules should also be developed so educators can design tasks that balance language focus with communicative authenticity. Ultimately, foreign literature is not an optional enrichment—but a strategic resource for cultivating communicative competence that bridges linguistic form and social use. Educators who harness its potential can help learners become not only more accurate but more effective, culturally-aware communicators.

In-text citation not

Where numbered bracket references appear (e.g., [1]), they correspond to the reference list below. Web-run source markers (inline citations) follow major paragraphs to show key supporting literature.

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