

The Role of the Interrogative Model in Teaching English via the Communicative Approach

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Abstract. *This article provides an in-depth analysis of how the interrogative model can support and enhance the communicative approach in teaching English. The effective teaching of English as a second language (ESL) has increasingly emphasized communicative competence, which involves not only the mastery of grammatical rules but also the ability to use language effectively in real-life situations. This article explores the role of the interrogative model in enhancing language learning within the framework of the communicative approach. The interrogative model, based on the strategic use of questions, fosters active student participation, critical thinking, and deeper understanding. In conjunction with the communicative approach, this model enhances students' language proficiency by encouraging interactive, real-world communication and problem-solving.*

Key words: *interrogative, language, approach, question, model, student, teaching, interaction, skill, process, communication, competence.*

Introduction

In the field of English language teaching (ELT), the “communicative approach” has become a dominant pedagogical framework. It prioritizes the development of practical communication skills over rote memorization of rules or vocabulary. Central to this approach is the interaction between students and the target language, emphasizing authentic communication, fluency, and the functional use of language. Within this context, the “interrogative model” of teaching, which emphasizes the use of questioning as a tool for learning, plays a significant role in engaging students and facilitating deeper understanding.

Method

The “interrogative model” is based on the principle that asking questions promotes cognitive engagement and enhances learning. By encouraging students to think critically, inquire deeply, and respond actively, this model aligns well with the communicative approach's goals of fostering practical language use and critical thinking skills. This article examines how the interrogative model complements the communicative approach and how it can be effectively integrated into English language teaching.

The Interrogative Model: Key Features

The interrogative model of teaching is centered on the strategic use of questions to guide the learning process. Questions serve several functions in the classroom, including:

- 1. Stimulating Curiosity:** Open-ended questions provoke students to think critically about the subject matter, creating opportunities for them to explore, hypothesize, and generate ideas.
- 2. Encouraging Active Participation:** Rather than passively absorbing information, students are required to respond to questions, thus becoming more actively involved in their learning process.

3. Promoting Reflection and Analysis: Questions push students to reflect on their existing knowledge, analyze language structures, and apply new information in practical contexts.

4. Fostering Collaboration: Questions encourage discussion and collaboration between students, enhancing their ability to use language in interactive, real-life situations.

These features of the interrogative model are particularly valuable when integrated into the communicative approach, which aims to create a dynamic and interactive learning environment.

The Communicative Approach and Its Relevance to English Language Teaching

The “communicative approach” to language teaching focuses on enabling students to communicate effectively and fluently in real-world situations. It emphasizes the practical use of language rather than its theoretical aspects. This approach is based on the following principles:

- *Authentic Communication:* Language is taught through real-life scenarios and tasks that mimic the actual use of English in daily life, such as ordering food in a restaurant, discussing opinions, or negotiating.
- *Task-Based Learning:* Students engage in communicative tasks that mirror real-world communication, which fosters the practical use of language.
- *Focus on Fluency:* Although accuracy is important, the communicative approach places more emphasis on fluency and the ability to express ideas clearly and effectively.

By integrating the interrogative model, the communicative approach is enhanced by fostering more dynamic and engaging classroom interactions. The model’s emphasis on inquiry and critical thinking complements the communicative approach’s focus on fluency and real-world communication.

Results and discussion

How the Interrogative Model Supports the Communicative Approach in English Teaching

The interrogative model can significantly enhance the “communicative approach” by promoting an environment where students are not only practicing language but also engaging in critical thinking and problem-solving. Some specific ways in which the interrogative model supports the communicative approach include:

1. *Encouraging Spontaneous Communication:* Through the use of open-ended questions, teachers can prompt students to respond without relying on scripted responses. This fosters spontaneous communication and helps students practice using English in authentic contexts.
2. *Building Confidence:* When students are asked questions that require them to think critically and share their thoughts, they build confidence in using the language to express their ideas. This is especially crucial in a communicative classroom, where students need to feel comfortable making mistakes and experimenting with language.
3. *Promoting Critical Thinking:* The interrogative model encourages students to question and analyze the language they encounter. By engaging with questions that require more than simple factual answers, students develop analytical skills that go beyond surface-level understanding and promote deeper cognitive engagement with the language.
4. *Facilitating Interactive Learning:* In a classroom based on the communicative approach, students are frequently required to interact with one another. The interrogative model facilitates this by providing the means to generate discussion, encourage peer-to-peer learning, and promote collaborative language use.
5. *Real-Life Language Use:* The interrogative model supports the communicative approach’s focus on real-world communication by engaging students in problem-solving tasks, debates, and discussions that require them to use language pragmatically and effectively.

Examples of Interrogative Techniques in English Language Teaching

To demonstrate how the interrogative model works in a communicative classroom, consider the following examples of questioning techniques:

1. **Clarification Questions:** These questions help ensure that students understand the language and concepts being discussed. For example, a teacher might ask, "Can you explain what you meant by that phrase?" This encourages students to think about their responses and ensure they are clear in their communication.
2. **Exploratory Questions:** These questions invite students to examine deeper meanings and implications. For example, "Why do you think the author chose this particular word in the text?" Such questions foster analytical thinking and promote the use of language for thoughtful discussion.
3. **Reflective Questions:** These questions encourage students to think about their learning and its application. For instance, "How would you handle this situation if it happened in real life?" These types of questions encourage students to reflect on how they would use language in authentic scenarios.
4. **Evaluative Questions:** These questions encourage students to assess ideas, opinions, or arguments. For example, "Do you agree with the opinion expressed in the article? Why or why not?" These types of questions promote debate and the use of language in expressing personal views.

Conclusion

The interrogative model plays a crucial role in enhancing the "communicative approach" to English language teaching. By using questions strategically, teachers can create an interactive, student-centered environment that promotes active participation, critical thinking, and real-world language use. The integration of questioning techniques within the communicative approach encourages students to engage with language not just as a set of rules, but as a dynamic tool for communication, problem-solving, and self-expression. Ultimately, this approach helps students develop not only language proficiency but also the confidence and skills necessary to use English effectively in diverse real-life contexts.

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