



Enhancing Communicative Competence in Generation Z Linguistic Students Through Reflective Methods

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Abstract

This article explores the use of reflective methods as a pedagogical tool to develop communicative competence among linguistics students from Generation Z. The study highlights the need to adapt teaching strategies to the characteristics of modern university students, who often struggle with superficial information processing and reduced emotional intelligence. Reflective methods offer a promising solution by encouraging deeper cognitive engagement, metacognitive awareness, and critical thinking skills essential for communicative competence. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combines theoretical analysis with empirical investigation. The theoretical framework is grounded in the CEFR model, which identifies the pragmatic component as the most challenging for students. The empirical phase involved a three-stage intervention—diagnostic, formative, and control—conducted with first-year linguistics students at NUST MISIS, Russia. A targeted set of tasks was developed based on four selected reflective methods to address weaknesses identified during the diagnostic stage. Pre- and post-test assessments of impromptu speech revealed significant improvement, with over half of the participants enhancing their performance. These results confirm the effectiveness of reflective methods in fostering communicative competence and suggest that the task model presented in this study can serve as a practical framework for addressing the communicative challenges specific to Generation Z learners.

Keywords: *Communicative Competence, Generation Z, Linguistic Students, Reflection, Reflective methods.*

A. Introduction

In the modern world, communicative skills are not only a means of interaction but also an indispensable professional tool. One of the key requirements for a graduate of Linguistics, according to the Federal State Educational Standard for Higher Education, particularly in Russia, is the ability to demonstrate advanced foreign language use in varied communicative settings—i.e., a high level of communicative competence development (Russian Ministry of Education and Science, 2021). To achieve the established objective, the characteristics of the modern generation of students, also known as Generation Z, should be considered. Generation Z was shaped by digital technologies that significantly influenced their formation as individuals (Turner, 2015). On the one hand, representatives of this generation demonstrate high digital literacy, multitasking skills, social responsibility, and openness to diversity (Seemiller & Grace, 2016). On the other hand, they encounter a number of challenges—difficulty concentrating, struggles with in-depth information analysis, weakened interpersonal connections, and reduced

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emotional intelligence (Chicca & Shellenbarger, 2018). Therefore, a need for adopting teaching methods aligned with the specific traits of modern students has emerged.

In this context, reflective teaching methods are gaining increasing popularity due to their potential to develop autoanalysis and metacognitive awareness skills that ultimately foster more active and goal-directed learning (Moon, 2004). Reflection helps students comprehend and analyze obtained knowledge and experience. This is particularly relevant for Generation Z, who are prone to superficial perception of information, while a profound comprehension stimulates more conscious use of language in communication (Schön, 1983). Furthermore, reflection teaches students to analyze the interlocutor's actions and reactions as well as their own. The ability to see the situation from different angles improves collaboration and conflict-resolution skills (Hatton & Smith, 1995). Finally, reflective methods facilitate critical thinking, which allows students to analyze and interpret information more effectively, resulting in improved argumentation skills (Brookfield, 2017).

The aim of the study is to empirically evaluate the potential of reflective methods for developing communicative competence among students of linguistics. Research objectives: to describe the characteristics of students of Generation Z and their impact on the process of learning English; to examine the concept of "communicative competence," its components, characteristics of formation, and approaches to its development; to identify the main features of reflective methods and their potential in the process of developing communicative competence; to elaborate a set of tasks based on reflective methods for the development of communicative competence; and to evaluate the efficacy of the elaborated set of tasks based on reflective methods for the development of communicative competence.

The scientific novelty of the study is the identification of key features for communicative competence development through reflective methods among modern university linguistics students from Generation Z. The theoretical significance lies in expanding the understanding of the potential for reflective methods to be incorporated in higher education settings to develop communicative competence. The practical significance lies in the development of a task set based on reflective methods that can be implemented within the educational process to support this aim.

B. Literature Review

1. Characteristics of Generation Z and their impact on English language learning

The modern university students belong to Generation Z, and they possess some unique characteristics that appear to affect the learning process greatly. According to M. V. Vorobyova (2019), representatives of Generation Z are digitally savvy, resulting in advanced online communication skills but increased susceptibility to misinformation. Furthermore, A. R. Bukharbaeva and L. V. Sergeeva (2020) define Generation Z's cognitive processing as "clip thinking" (pp. 787–796), which means perceiving information fragmentarily. This may impede profound analysis of information, while this analytical skill appears to be fundamental for specialists in linguistics. On top of that, as noted by V. A. Zakharova (2019), modern university students value a practice-oriented approach towards education, demanding transparent illustration of how acquired knowledge can be employed in a real-world professional context.

The above-described characteristics of Generation Z generate specific pedagogical requirements. The study of V. V. Shatalova and D. V. Likhachevsky (2018) suggests that implementing micro-learning structures with 10-minute lecture blocks complemented by reflective tasks. This approach promotes active class participation while enhancing students'

motivation and content engagement. Additionally, G. F. Ruchkina and V. K. Shaidullina (2020) emphasize the importance of continuous interaction with the teacher and regular feedback for Generation Z students owing to their need for systematically analyzing knowledge acquisition, identifying errors, and seeking improvement strategies. Notably, the research highlights that university students particularly value those teachers who adopt collaborative rather than authoritarian teaching approaches, which they consider more effective for achieving learning outcomes.

In terms of language teaching and learning, clip thinking poses the primary challenge for developing communicative competence among the representatives of Generation Z, as mentioned by K. N. Antonova (2019). Specifically, the study found that modern students struggle with productive language skills. While Generation Z excel in algorithmic tasks such as fill-the-gap exercise or pattern-based sentence formation, they face difficulties with producing continuous speech on the topic. For this reason, researchers, namely T. I. Leontyeva and S. N. Kotenko (2017), suggest paying special attention to tasks focusing on argumentation skills (e.g., defending a viewpoint with evidence) and collaborative discourse (structured group discussions).

To conclude, the modern generation of university students possesses a number of unique features that shape their perception of reality. Unsurprisingly, the digital era has changed dramatically communication paradigms, impacting the development of communicative competence. Consequently, educators are required to adapt their teaching methods and approaches to create a nurturing educational environment that both accommodates Generation Z's learning preferences and effectively develops their communicative skills in academic and professional contexts.

2. The concept of “communicative competence” and its structural components

The concept of communicative competence has evolved greatly since its initial formulation. The first person to talk about language competence was N. Chomsky (1965), who offered the notion of linguistic competence focused exclusively on grammatical knowledge. D. Hymes (1972), as cited in the work of E. V. Krasilnikova (2009), subsequently expanded this study by introducing the notion of “communicative competence” (pp. 179–184), arguing that successful communication requires not only grammatical accuracy but also sociocultural knowledge, such as social context, cultural norms, and communication rules. In essence, it can be said that both grammatical and sociolinguistic knowledge constitute fundamental components of communicative competence.

The idea was further developed by M. Canale (1983), who became a game-changer in the language field. The scholar systematized the concept by identifying four equally essential components of communicative competence. They include: grammatical competence (encompassing vocabulary, syntax, phonology, orthography), sociolinguistic competence (context-appropriate language use), discourse competence (ability to produce coherent spoken and written texts), and strategic competence (communication repair strategies). Equally important, M. Canale proposed a paradigm shift in language teaching, advocating for communicative approaches grounded in authentic interaction scenarios. The research also provides practical recommendations for implementing these principles in educational settings.

The works mentioned above became a theoretical foundation for the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), developed by the Council of Europe as a standardized assessment system for European languages. The system provides clearly defined proficiency levels (A1-C2), the primary objective of learning a foreign language (developing communicative

competence), and its three core components (linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic), which substantially align with Canale's model (table 1) (CEFR, 2018).

Table 1. The description of the communicative competence

Communicative language competences	Aspects of the parameter
Linguistic	General range
	Vocabulary range
	Grammatical accuracy
	Vocabulary control
	Phonological control
	Orthographic control
Sociolinguistic	Sociolinguistic appropriateness
Pragmatic	Flexibility
	Taking the floor
	Thematic development
	Coherence
	Propositional precision
	Spoken fluency

Moving to Russia's Federal State Educational Standard (FGOS VO 3++) for Linguistics, as well as European standards, it mandates the development of communicative competence, but through the following sub-competences, which are divided into Global Competences (GC) and General Professional Competences (GPC):

- business communication skills (GC-4);
- linguistic knowledge application (GPC-1);
- text production and understanding (GPC-3);
- cross-cultural interaction (GPC-4) [12].

Notably, these requirements mirror CEFR components while adding specific Russian educational priorities. This correlation is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Correlation of FGOS and CEFR components of communicative competence

FGOS VO 3++ for Linguistics	CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference)
GPC-1	Linguistic component
GC-4 GPC-4	Sociolinguistic component
GPC-3	Pragmatic component

Taking everything into consideration, while diverse theoretical approaches to understanding communicative competence exist, they collectively emphasize the need for a multifaceted developmental approach. This study adopts the Common European Framework of Reference as its theoretical foundation, as it provides the most systematic and comprehensive model of communicative competence. Concerning the modern generation of university students, it is important to note that they demonstrate significant challenges in developing pragmatic competence, stemming from their characteristic metacognitive patterns described earlier. To address this recently emerged problem, this research proposes implementing reflective teaching methods.

3. The potential applications of reflective methods in developing the communicative competence among linguistic students

Reflection is an interdisciplinary phenomenon that serves as a crucial tool for developing self-awareness and metacognitive skills, ultimately enabling students to become active participants in their cognitive activity. In this context, the analysis of educational activity made by I. V. Moushtavinskaya (2009) represents a particular interest. The researcher elaborated a five-stage model that consists of diagnostic assessment, learning planning, material selection, performance analysis, and future goal-setting. This analysis demonstrates that reflection constitutes an integral part of the learning process, enhancing students' ability to critically evaluate their progress while deepening their understanding of course material.

Research on reflective practices in language education demonstrates their significant pedagogical value. The research of O. A. Almabekova (2014) establishes that reflective methods enable learners to understand their role in the group, the intentions of the interlocutors, and adjust their behavior in accordance with the communication goal. Yu. V. Baklagova (2020) further substantiates these benefits, noting that reflective methods can come in handy, improving both language learning outcomes and overall educational effectiveness. The primary value of these methods for language teaching is their capacity to facilitate systematic analysis of speech acts and communication strategies, enable contextual adaptation of linguistic behavior, develop a holistic understanding of language learning processes, and promote learners' autonomy through self-directed improvement. Consequently, these methods address both the cognitive and practical dimensions of language learning.

Moving to the classification of reflective methods, M. V. Golubeva's study (2011) identifies four distinct yet complementary categories, each serving a specific pedagogical function in developing the communicative competence: diagnostic-analytical, narrative, graphic, and interactive methods. Firstly, diagnostic-analytical methods are characterized by their structured and systematic approach to self-assessment. One notable example is the method "All in my hands", which employs a hand diagram where each finger represents a reflection stage from goal identification to action evaluation (Table 3). This method appears to be particularly effective for analyzing oral and written speech (Kozhukhovskaya & Poznyak, 2011).

Table 3. Method "Everything in my hands"

1 st finger	Difficulties during the lesson
2 nd finger	What you have liked during the lesson
3 rd finger	Your mood
4 th finger	What you have done today
5 th finger	What you have learnt

Secondly, narrative methods put an emphasis on personal expression and storytelling. An example of these methods is "Cinquain" – a five-line poem, where each line has particular rules and purpose (Table 4). Unlike traditional poetry, this format prioritizes semantic content over rhyme, thereby training students in logical discourse construction and precise formulation of ideas (Pavlyukovets & Pantyukhova, 2014).

Table 4. Method "Cinquain"

1 st line	A noun (the title of the cinquain)
2 nd line	Two adjectives, describing the noun
3 rd line	Three verbs, showing the action of the noun
4 th line	A short sentence (author's attitude to the problem)
5 th line	A noun (author's feelings, associations, connected with the title)

Thirdly, graphical methods use visual elements, namely diagrams, mind maps, and drawings to represent information in a structured and logical way. The “Fishbone” diagram (Fig. 1) is a perfect representation of this group as it maps core issues (head) with supporting components (bones), proving invaluable for structuring complex speaking and writing tasks while developing analytical skills (Daricheva et al., 2022).

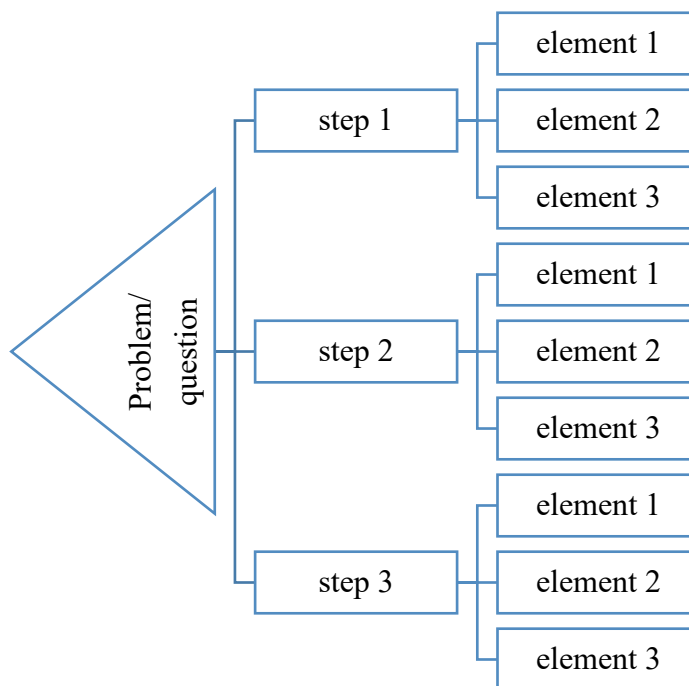


Figure 1. Method “Fishbone”

Finally, interactive methods are used to foster collaborative learning and social interaction. They can be presented in the form of group discussions, role-plays, project tasks, etc. The example of these methods is “Bloom’s Daisy” (Fig. 2), which looks like a flower where each petal corresponds to different thinking levels, teaching students to analyze information and develop complex ideas (Samigulina & Salina, 2023).

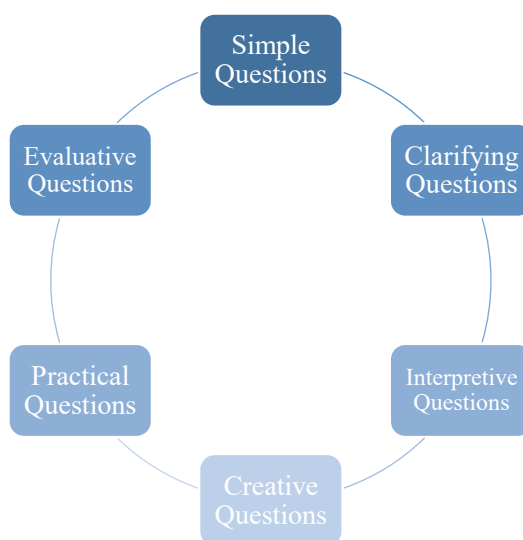


Figure 2. Method “Bloom’s Daisy”

To summarize, a comprehensive literature review of scholarly research reveals that reflective methods offer substantial versatility in language education, particularly in terms of developing the pragmatic component of communicative competence, which causes dramatic difficulties for the modern generation of students. These methods systematically address three critical elements of the pragmatic component based on CEFR: topic development, statement structure, cohesion, and coherence. These features make reflective methods a useful tool for developing communicative competence among linguistic students.

C. Methods

This study employed a mixed-method research design, integrating both theoretical and practical approaches to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives. The rationale for using a mixed-method approach lies in its ability to explore theoretical constructs in depth while also measuring the empirical effectiveness of reflective methods in enhancing communicative competence. The research was conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year at the National University of Science and Technology MISIS (NUST MISIS), targeting first-year Linguistics students. This approach allowed for a systematic and holistic investigation of how reflective teaching strategies impact Generation Z learners' communicative development.

The research procedure was divided into three main stages. The first stage involved the development of a theoretical framework, which was established through a thorough literature review on key concepts such as the characteristics of Generation Z, communicative competence, and reflective teaching methods. In the second stage, a set of reflective-based tasks was designed in alignment with the curriculum for first-year students at NUST MISIS, using the coursebook *Outcomes Upper-Intermediate* as the primary instructional material. The third stage consisted of implementing these tasks in real classroom settings, where student engagement and performance were closely observed and documented throughout the learning process.

Data collection was carried out through a combination of pre-tests and post-tests aimed at assessing students' communicative competence before and after the intervention. These assessments evaluated multiple dimensions of communicative competence, including fluency, vocabulary usage, contextual understanding, and the ability to express ideas reflectively. In addition to the tests, classroom observations and field notes were used to capture qualitative data on student participation, engagement, and behavioral changes during the implementation of reflective tasks. These varied instruments ensured a robust dataset for evaluating the intervention's impact.

The collected data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Pre-test and post-test scores were compared to determine statistically significant changes in students' communicative competence, employing descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. Qualitative data from classroom observations and field notes were subjected to content analysis to identify patterns of student engagement, reflective behavior, and communicative progress. This integrated analytical approach provided a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of reflective methods in improving communicative competence among first-year Linguistics students, particularly within the context of Generation Z learners.

D. Results and Discussion

This section shows the results of the empirical part of the study, where we elaborated and then implemented the set of tasks based on reflective methods aimed at developing the communicative competence (pragmatic component) among first-year linguistics students at the

National University of Science and Technology MISIS. The study was conducted in three stages: diagnostic, formative, and control.

1. Initial assessment of communicative competence proficiency in linguistics students

The aim of the diagnostic stage was to assess the initial level of the development of the communicative competence (pragmatic component) among first-year linguistics students with declared B2 (upper-intermediate) level of English. To evaluate this, participants were asked to deliver a two-minute monologue in the form of impromptu speech on the topic “How food reflects cultural identity”, simulating a UNESCO forum presentation. The tasks requirements were logically structured speech, valid arguments with examples, and coherence and cohesion of the text. The assessment criteria aligned with CEFR standard are presented in the Table 5.

Table 5. The evaluation matrix for the monologue task

Criteria	Points	Description
Topic development	0	The monologue is off-topic; no arguments or examples are given.
	1	The monologue addresses the topic, but arguments are weak AND/OR no examples are given.
	2	The topic is developed with arguments and 1-2 supporting examples.
	3	The topic is fully developed with clear, logical arguments supported by 3 or more relevant examples.
Structure	0	The monologue doesn't have a clear structure (introduction, body part, or conclusion is missing).
	1	One part is missing AND/OR parts poorly correlate with each other.
	2	The monologue has an appropriate structure but the parts are uneven (e.g. introduction is twice as long as the conclusion).
	3	The monologue is perfectly structured with balanced and interrelated parts.
Cohesion and coherence	0	The monologue lacks logical transitions between ideas; sentences are disjointed.
	1	The monologue has minimal linking devices (<4) AND/OR abrupt transitions between parts.
	2	The monologue has basic cohesion (5-7 linking devices); transitions are logical but occasionally uneven.
	3	The monologue has advanced cohesion (>8 linking devices) and smooth, logical transitions throughout.
Final point: 9		

Scores were categorized into three proficiency levels: low (0-4 points), basic (4-7 points), high (8-9 points). Results revealed a predominance of basic level (53%, n = 8), while 33% (n = 5) and 13% (n = 2) of the participants scored “low” and “high” respectively (Table 6).

Table 6. Level of the communicative competence (pragmatic component)

Students (n)	Low	Basic	High
	5	8	2
Percentage	33%	53%	13%

After the analysis of students' mistakes, the key challenges were identified. They included structural inconsistencies, particularly omission of one logical part (usually conclusion); weak exemplification caused by overuse of abstract statements without concrete examples; incoherent

transitions – abrupt shifts between ideas or logical parts. These findings were taken into account when elaborating a set of tasks based on reflective methods for developing communicative competence.

2. Implementation of a set of tasks based on reflective methods aimed at developing communicative competence (pragmatic component)

According to the study’s hypothesis that reflective methods foster the development of communicative competence, a set of tasks based on these methods was elaborated. All the tasks are based on the topic “Food and Culinary”, mirroring the unit of the same name in the Outcomes Upper-Intermediate textbook, which aligns with first-year linguistics students’ curriculum at NUST MISIS.

Fishbone

The “Fishbone” diagram was adapted to help students deconstruct and plan monologues. In this task, students worked with a recipe text, identifying the central problem (“How to prepare X?”) and key components to solve it – ingredients, steps, serving suggestions (as shown in the Fig. 3). After analyzing the text students were to deliver 2-minute speech on the same topic, focusing on coherence.

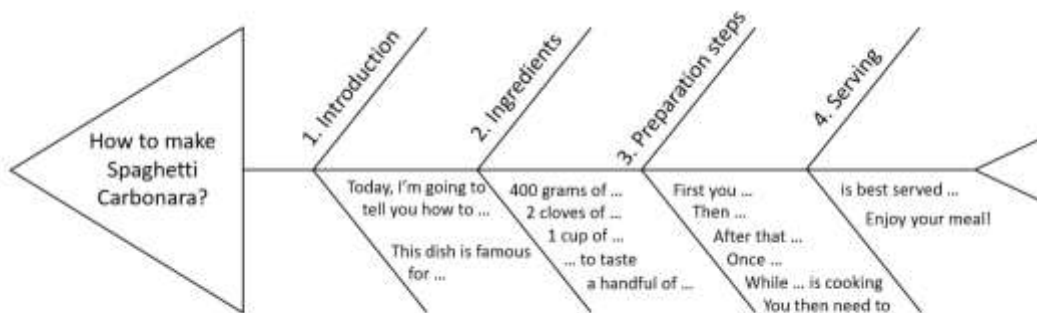


Figure 3. Completed “Fishbone” diagram based on the pasta Carbonara recipe

Bloom’s Daisy

The “Bloom’s Daisy” method was used to enhance students’ critical analysis and argumentation skills. Students were asked to read the text “Food, Friends, Family” from their textbook (Outcomes Upper-Intermediate) and in small groups create questions across six levels (Fig. 4). After that, students worked with useful phrases for delivering monologues, they had to divide phrases into three categories (giving opinion, exemplifying, structuring) as shown in the Figure 5.

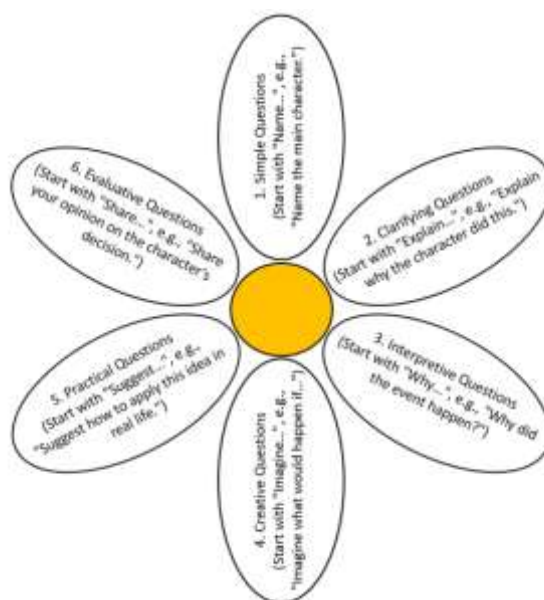


Figure 4. Types of questions and their examples according to method “Bloom’s Daisy”



Figure 5. An exercise for practicing useful phrases for monologue

After working with useful phrases, students started to discuss the questions giving their opinion on the topic, providing arguments and exemplifying them to improving their skills in synthesizing ideas and using cohesive devices.

Cinquain

The “Cinquain” method was used to improve students’ paraphrasing and topic development skills. Students had to create a five-line poem with rigorous structure (Fig. 6) and then transform their poems into a continuous speech based on their cinquains (1-minute monologue), incorporating examples. This exercise strives to teach students to make coherent monologues where all the logical parts are smoothly connected with each other.

One noun	Food
Two adjectives/adverbs	Delicious, comforting
Three verbs	Sprinkle, peel, soak
Four-word phrase	Helps to brings people together
One word (synonym or association)	Nourishment

Figure 6. Possible cinquain on the topic “Food and Culinary”

Everything is in my hands

This task, based on the reflective method “Everything is in my hands”, is aimed at analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the students’ speech as well as the speech from the video at TED-talk by Michael Silverstein called “The future of food”. Students were given the scheme for the analysis of the speaker’s performance (Fig. 7), and after watching the video, they had to discuss it in small groups.

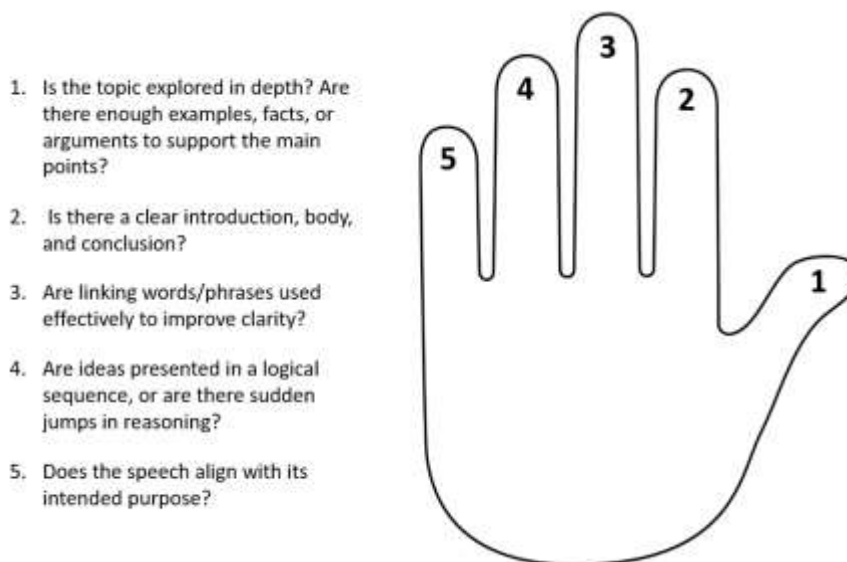


Figure 7. The scheme for speech analysis

The next step was practicing performing their own monologues, considering the pros and cons of the presenter's speech from the video. Students were given the topics randomly; they had one minute to prepare and two minutes to present a monologue in their groups. While one person in a group is answering, others are taking notes according to the suggested scheme. After each performance, there was a group discussion for giving and receiving feedback.

3. Control stage: follow-up testing

To evaluate the efficacy of the implemented set of tasks based on reflective methods for developing the communicative competence (pragmatic component), students underwent the

follow-up testing, where they had to deliver a monologue on the topic “The Role of Food in Celebrations and Rituals”, assessed using the identical criteria to the initial test. The results of the follow-up testing are presented in Table 7.

Table 7. The results of the follow-up testing

Student	Points	Level of communicative competence (pragmatic component)
1	8	High
2	7	Basic
3	6	Basic
4	7	Basic
5	5	Basic
6	8	High
7	7	Basic
8	4	Low
9	9	High
10	8	High
11	6	Basic
12	5	Basic
13	8	High
14	9	High
15	7	Basic

The follow-up testing revealed significant improvements as 12 out of 15 students demonstrated progress, increasing their total scores. The number of low-level performers decreased from four to one, while the number of high-level performers showed considerable growth, expanding from two to six students. Speaking of the “basic” level, the average performance score increased from 6.1 to 6.3 points, indicating consistent improvement within this category. The dynamics in communicative competence development (pragmatic component) are presented in Diagram 1.

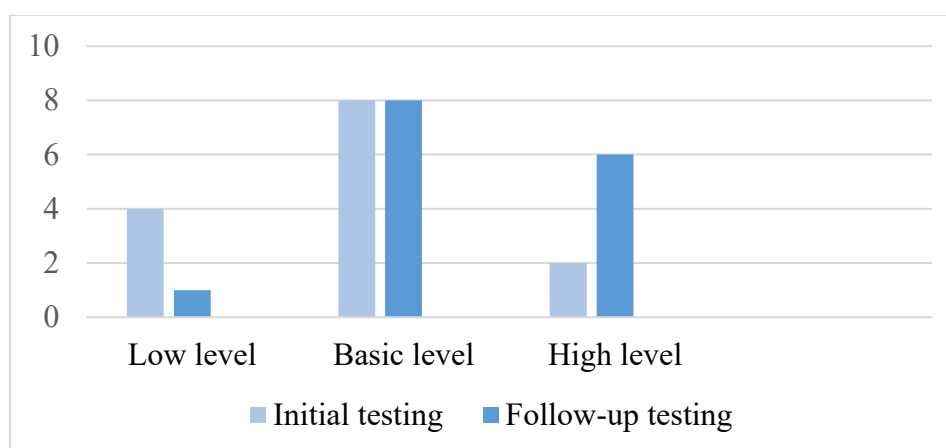


Diagram 1. The dynamics in communicative competence development (pragmatic component)

Table 8 provides a detailed comparison of students’ results on the initial and follow-up testing, marking improvements (+), declines (-), or no change (0). The data confirms that most students progressed, with only three maintaining their initial scores.

Table 8. The comparison of the results

Student	Initial test	Follow-up test	Change
1	6	8	+
2	7	7	0
3	4	6	+
4	6	7	+
5	3	5	+
6	7	8	+
7	5	7	+
8	4	4	0
9	9	9	0
10	6	8	+
11	4	6	+
12	4	5	+
13	7	8	+
14	8	9	+
15	5	7	+

Are reflective methods equally effective with weaker language skills?

Although the study demonstrated significant improvements overall, the results also revealed that one student remained at “low” level despite working with an elaborated set of tasks. This raises the question of whether reflective methods are universally effective or their success depends on the student’s initial language abilities.

To address this issue, a differentiated approach could be used. This approach involves the implementation of tiered reflective activities, each tailored to address the specific needs of learners at different stages of competence development.

For students with weaker language skills, the focus should be placed on structured and scaffolded activities to maximize the learning outcomes. For instance, the method “Everything in my hands” may be adapted to incorporate more explicit guidelines (e.g. sentence starters or templates) to facilitate the process. Additionally, pairing these students with peers to give them supportive feedback. This interaction helps build students’ confidence while enhancing basic communication skills, such as organizing thoughts and structuring ideas in a logical way. Conversely, students who demonstrate higher language skills can engage in more complex reflective activities, which require them to critically analyze and synthesize information, like the method “Bloom’s Daisy” does.

This differentiated approach ensures that all students receive adequate cognitive and linguistic challenge that can benefit their language skills development. Figure 8 shows the alignment of reflective practices with corresponding proficiency levels.

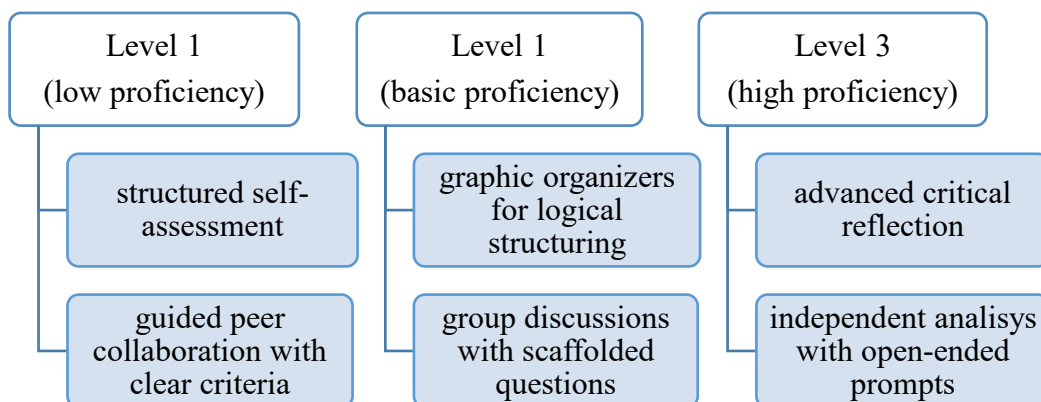


Figure 8. The alignment of reflective practices with proficiency levels

What are the long-term effects of reflective methods on communicative competence development?

While the study demonstrated the short-term gains, the sustainability of these results remains uncertain. Therefore, the long-term retention and application of reflective methods for real-world communication contexts require further investigation.

One possible solution to this issue can be an implementation of a cyclical reinforcement framework that will embed reflective practices into ongoing learning processes (Fig. 9). To ensure long-term effectiveness, three key strategies can be implemented. Firstly, it is imperative to implement regular reflective activities throughout the curriculum, not just the main course. These periodic exercises will help maintain and strengthen acquired skills over time. Secondly, there should be a focus on practical assignments, e.g., debates or presentations, which require reflection on real communication situations. These tasks aim to connect theoretical knowledge with actual language use. Finally, it is recommended to utilize ongoing feedback systems, particularly digital tools. One example of these tools can be AI-supported reflection journals that automatically generate thought-provoking questions, thus maintaining students' involvement while offering an individualized approach.

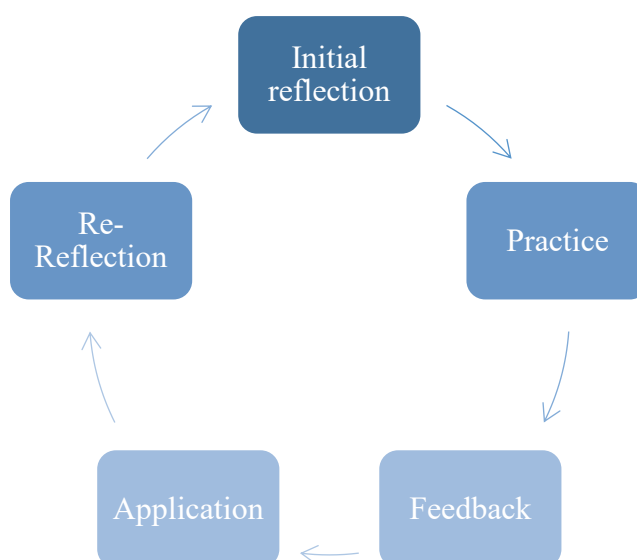


Figure 9. Cyclical reinforcement framework representing the reflection process

E. Conclusion

The study explored approaches for enhancing communicative competence among linguistic students by integrating theoretical analysis with classroom applications. The primary focus was placed on the specific needs of the modern generation of university students; thus, the study examines how reflective methods can address current challenges in language education. The theoretical foundation established three key components of communicative competence (linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic) aligned with CEFR standards. The study also revealed the unique learning characteristics of Generation Z, particularly in language learning. Modern students struggle with continuous speech production, maintaining logical coherence in discourse, and constructing effective argumentation. These challenges primarily relate to the pragmatic component of communicative competence, making it the focal point of this study. Further, these insights led to the selection of four reflective techniques specifically designed to address the difficulties faced by students: the “Fishbone” method for monologue structuring, the “Bloom's Daisy” for text analysis and evaluation, the “Cinquain” for concise speech planning, and the “Everything in my hands” method for self-evaluation.

The practical implementation of these methods yielded significant results. When tested with first-year linguistic students at NUST MISIS, the elaborated set of tasks based on reflective methods demonstrated measurable improvements in the pragmatic component of the communicative component. Following the intervention, 80% of the participants showed progress in their performance, with average scores increasing from 5.6 to 6.9 points. Taking the study's results into consideration, a couple of important findings emerge. Firstly, structured reflection enhances learners' ability to produce organized and coherent messages. Secondly, critical analysis of language use promotes a deeper understanding of communicative strategies. These outcomes confirm the potential of reflective methods for developing the pragmatic component of communicative competence. The study may benefit language educators, curriculum designers, and researchers working with the modern generation of students, as it offers an evidence-based approach to enhancing communicative competence among linguistic students. The study provides actionable strategies based on reflective methods that address the challenges faced by university students, such as fragmented thinking and weak argumentation. These insights can be taken into account when designing course programs and curricula. Looking ahead, the study opens several promising avenues for further investigation. Further studies could examine possibilities to use reflective methods in mixed-ability classrooms or the long-term retention of communicative competence improvements.

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