

The importance of the communicative approach in teaching english verbs

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Annotation. *This article explores the significance of the communicative approach in teaching English verbs, emphasizing how it promotes practical usage, learner engagement, and retention. Traditional grammar instruction often isolates verb forms, leading to difficulties in real-life application. By contrast, the communicative approach focuses on using verbs in meaningful contexts, integrating activities such as role-plays, discussions, and real-world scenarios. This article outlines effective methods for implementing the communicative approach, highlighting its benefits in improving fluency, comprehension, and student confidence in verb usage.*

Keywords: *Communicative Approach, English Verbs, Language Learning, Contextual Learning, Fluency, Grammar Instruction, Student Engagement.*

Verbs are the backbone of any language, as they convey actions, states, and processes. In English, mastering verbs is essential for both written and spoken communication. However, many students struggle with verb forms such as tenses, aspects, and irregular verbs due to the abstract nature of traditional grammar-based teaching methods. Simply memorizing conjugations and rules is not enough for learners to use verbs effectively in real-life conversations.

The communicative approach shifts the focus from grammar drills to practical language use. This method emphasizes meaningful communication over isolated language forms, encouraging students to use verbs naturally in speaking and writing. Instead of treating verbs as abstract rules to memorize, the communicative approach immerses learners in activities where verbs are used in authentic contexts, promoting deeper understanding and fluency⁸². This article examines how the communicative approach can enhance the learning of English verbs by making instruction more practical, interactive, and relevant to students' needs.

Methods

1. Teaching Verbs in Contextualized Scenarios

One of the main principles of the communicative approach is using language in context. Teaching verbs in isolation can be confusing for students, but placing them in real-world contexts makes them easier to understand and remember.

- **Role-plays:** Students act out scenarios such as ordering food at a restaurant, scheduling appointments, or discussing daily routines, using verbs relevant to the context (e.g., “*Can I have...?*”, “*I need to book...*”).

- **Situational Dialogues:** Teachers introduce dialogues set in specific contexts (e.g., a shopping trip or a vacation) to practice verb structures naturally (e.g., past tense for narrating events).

- **Storytelling Activities:** Students create and narrate stories in groups, practicing verb tenses such as the past simple, past continuous, and present perfect.

2. Using Task-Based Language Learning (TBL)⁸³

The communicative approach often employs task-based activities, where students complete meaningful tasks that require specific verbs and grammatical structures.

- **Group Projects:** Students plan and present group tasks (e.g., planning a trip or organizing an event), practicing future tenses (*will*, *going to*) and modal verbs (*should*, *must*, *can*).

⁸² Littlewood, W. (2004). The task-based approach: Some questions and suggestions. *ELT Journal*, 58(4), 319-326.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/58.4.319>

⁸³ Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching* (3rd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

- **Problem-Solving Tasks:** Students work in pairs or small groups to solve practical problems (e.g., arranging a meeting or preparing a to-do list), reinforcing correct verb use in collaborative settings.

- **Real-Life Assignments:** Assign activities where students interview classmates or community members, using verbs to describe actions and experiences (e.g., *What did you do last weekend?*).

3. Incorporating Games and Interactive Activities

Games make learning verbs more engaging and reduce the stress associated with language production. The communicative approach integrates games to foster interaction and reinforce grammar without students feeling overwhelmed.

- **Verb Charades:** One student acts out a verb while others guess the action (e.g., *jump, run, think*), encouraging quick recall and participation.

- **Board Games:** Use games like sentence-building board activities where students create sentences using verbs in the correct tense or form.

- **Find Someone Who...:** This interactive game requires students to find classmates who have performed certain actions (e.g., *Find someone who has eaten sushi*), practicing question forms and verb usage.

4. Emphasizing Fluency over Accuracy in Early Stages

The communicative approach prioritizes fluency over accuracy in the early stages of learning, allowing students to build confidence before focusing on grammatical precision⁸⁴.

- **Error Tolerance:** Teachers should encourage students to speak freely, even if they make mistakes with verb forms. Corrections can be made later to avoid discouraging participation.

- **Peer Feedback:** Rather than only teacher-led correction, students can offer constructive feedback to peers, promoting collaboration and self-monitoring of verb usage.

- **Speaking Practice through Pair and Group Work:** Regular interaction with classmates allows students to practice verbs without fear of making mistakes, gradually improving both fluency and accuracy.

5. Using Authentic Materials for Verb Practice

Exposure to authentic language materials helps students see how verbs are used naturally by native speakers. These materials include:

- **Videos and Films:** Students watch short clips or movies and describe the actions or events using appropriate verbs.

- **Newspapers and Magazines:** Reading activities focus on identifying and analyzing verb forms in articles (e.g., headlines using present simple to report news).

- **Songs and Podcasts:** Listening to songs or podcasts allows students to practice verb patterns in informal contexts, such as phrasal verbs and contractions (*gonna, wanna*).

Conclusion

The communicative approach offers a practical and engaging way to teach English verbs by focusing on meaningful communication rather than rote memorization of rules. Through contextualized activities, task-based learning, games, and authentic materials, students develop a deeper understanding of verb usage and gain the confidence to apply it in real-life situations. Emphasizing fluency over accuracy in the early stages encourages students to speak without fear, fostering a positive learning environment.

By integrating verbs into interactive scenarios, students not only learn grammar but also develop essential communication skills. The communicative approach ensures that students view verbs as tools for expressing ideas and interacting with others, rather than isolated rules to memorize. Ultimately, this method equips learners with the skills needed to use English verbs accurately, fluently, and confidently in diverse contexts.

⁸⁴ Widdowson, H. G. (2003). *Defining issues in English language teaching*. Oxford University Press.

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