

## DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION THROUGH INTEGRATED SKILLS

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**Abstract.** *This article discusses the role of integrated skills in developing learners' communication in English language teaching. Communication requires the combined use of listening, speaking, reading, and writing rather than the separate practice of each skill. The integrated skills approach helps learners use English naturally, express their ideas clearly, understand different types of information, and participate actively in classroom interaction. The article explains the importance of integrated skills, their benefits for communicative competence, and practical ways of applying them in English lessons.*

**Keywords:** *integrated skills, communication, English language teaching, communicative competence, speaking, reading, writing, listening.*

### Introduction

In modern English language teaching, the development of communication has become one of the central aims of instruction. Traditional approaches often treated language skills separately, focusing on reading, writing, listening, and speaking as independent components. However, real communication rarely occurs through one isolated skill. In authentic situations, individuals usually combine several skills simultaneously: they read information, listen to responses, express opinions orally, and produce written messages based on received input.

Therefore, the integrated skills approach has gained particular importance in contemporary language pedagogy. This approach is based on the idea that language should be taught as a unified system in which receptive skills, such as reading and listening, support productive skills, such as speaking and writing. Through this connection, learners become able to process information, interpret meaning, and express their ideas more effectively. Developing communication through integrated skills is especially important in foreign language contexts, where learners may have limited opportunities to use English outside the classroom. In such conditions, the classroom should provide meaningful communicative situations that encourage learners to interact, negotiate meaning, and apply language in purposeful tasks.

### Theoretical Background

The integrated skills approach is closely connected with communicative language teaching.

Communicative language teaching emphasizes the practical use of language for meaningful interaction rather than mechanical memorization of linguistic forms. From this perspective, learners should not only know language structures but also be able to use them appropriately in different social and academic contexts. Communicative competence includes several important components: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence.

Integrated skills instruction contributes to all these components. For example, reading activities develop learners' understanding of discourse organization; speaking activities improve fluency and interaction; listening activities enhance comprehension and response strategies; writing activities strengthen accuracy, coherence, and argumentation. Thus, integrated skills teaching provides a comprehensive framework for developing communication. It allows learners to move from input to output, from comprehension to expression, and from individual understanding to collaborative interaction.

### **Main Discussion**

Developing communication through integrated skills means designing lessons in which different language skills are systematically connected. For instance, a reading text can serve as a basis for oral discussion, vocabulary development, and written reflection. Similarly, a listening activity can lead to note-taking, group discussion, and a short written summary. In this process, learners do not simply practise separate exercises; they engage in meaningful language use. One of the major advantages of integrated skills instruction is its authenticity. In real-life communication, language users combine skills naturally. A student may listen to a lecture, take notes, ask questions, and later write a report. A professional may read an email, discuss its content with colleagues, and prepare a written response.

Therefore, integrated skills lessons prepare learners for practical communication beyond the classroom. Another important benefit is the development of learner autonomy. Integrated tasks require learners to analyze information, select relevant ideas, express opinions, and evaluate responses. These activities encourage active participation and independent thinking. As a result, students become not only language learners but also active users of English. Integrated skills also improve vocabulary acquisition.

When learners meet new words in reading or listening materials and later use them in speaking and writing, vocabulary becomes more meaningful and memorable. Repeated exposure to lexical items in different contexts helps students understand both meaning and usage.

Furthermore, integrated skills instruction supports fluency and accuracy at the same time.

Speaking and writing tasks provide opportunities for production, while reading and listening offer models of correct language use. Through this balance, learners can gradually improve their ability to communicate clearly, accurately, and confidently.

### **Practical Implementation in the Classroom**

An integrated skills lesson should be carefully planned and logically organized. The teacher should select materials that correspond to learners' level, interests, and communicative needs. The lesson may begin with a warm-up activity to activate background knowledge. This can be followed by a reading or listening task that introduces the main topic. After comprehension activities, students can participate in pair or group discussions. Finally, they may complete a written task such as a summary, opinion paragraph, reflection, or short report. For example, on the topic "**Healthy Lifestyle,**" students may first discuss their daily habits. Then they read a short text about health and lifestyle choices. After identifying the main ideas and key vocabulary, they discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different habits in groups. At the final stage, students write a short paragraph about how they can improve their lifestyle.

In this lesson, reading, speaking, listening, and writing are integrated around one communicative purpose. Such lesson organization helps students understand language as a tool for communication. It also increases motivation because learners see the practical value of classroom activities. Instead of learning disconnected grammar rules or vocabulary lists, students use English to exchange information, express personal opinions, and solve communicative tasks.

### **Challenges of Integrated Skills Teaching**

Despite its advantages, integrated skills instruction may present certain challenges. First, it requires careful lesson planning. Teachers need to ensure that all activities are connected and serve the same communicative objective. If tasks are not logically organized, the lesson may become fragmented.

Second, learners may have different levels of ability in different skills. Some students may be strong readers but weak speakers; others may speak confidently but struggle with writing. To address this issue, teachers should provide scaffolding, such as useful phrases, vocabulary support, models, guided questions, and collaborative tasks. Third, time management can be difficult. Since integrated lessons include several stages, teachers should plan activities realistically and focus on quality rather than quantity. It is better to conduct fewer tasks effectively than to include too many activities without sufficient practice.

### **Conclusion**

Developing communication through integrated skills is an effective and academically grounded approach in English language teaching. It reflects the natural use of language and prepares learners for real-life communicative situations. By combining listening, speaking, reading, and writing, teachers can create meaningful, interactive, and learner-centered lessons. The integrated skills approach contributes to the development of communicative competence, vocabulary acquisition, fluency, accuracy, critical thinking, and learner confidence. Although it requires careful planning and appropriate classroom management, its pedagogical value is significant. Therefore, integrated skills instruction should be considered an essential component of modern English language teaching.

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