



Pedagogical Opportunities Of The Communicative Approach In Preparing Future Teachers For Mediation Activities

Muqimova Dilbarxon Xusanboyevna

Independent Researcher at Fergana State University, Uzbekistan

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the pedagogical opportunities of the communicative approach in preparing future teachers for mediation activities. It focuses on developing active listening, questioning, paraphrasing, empathy, negotiation, and reflective communication skills. The findings show that role-playing, simulated mediation, collaborative problem solving, and reflective feedback effectively combine communicative and mediation training. The communicative approach helps future teachers develop both theoretical knowledge and practical skills for managing communication and resolving interpersonal conflicts constructively.

KEYWORDS: Communicative approach, mediation, future teachers, communicative competence, conflict resolution, active listening, pedagogical communication.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary education requires teachers to perform functions that extend beyond the transmission of subject knowledge. Teachers regularly encounter disagreements among students, communication difficulties, interpersonal tension, misunderstanding between participants in the educational process, and situations requiring neutral and constructive intervention. Consequently, the ability to facilitate dialogue and help conflicting parties reach mutually acceptable solutions is becoming an important component of professional pedagogical competence.

The communicative approach provides an appropriate methodological basis for preparing future teachers for such activity. Canale and Swain emphasize that communicative competence includes not only grammatical knowledge but also sociolinguistic and strategic abilities necessary for effective communication [1]. Littlewood similarly associates communicative learning with meaningful interaction, social situations, and learners' ability to use language appropriately for concrete purposes [2]. These principles correspond closely to mediation, because a mediator must understand different viewpoints, manage interaction, clarify meanings, and create conditions for constructive communication.

The Council of Europe considers mediation a mode of communication in which a person creates conditions for interaction, facilitates understanding, co-constructs meaning, and helps communication continue across linguistic, cultural, or interpersonal barriers [3]. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to determine the pedagogical opportunities of the communicative approach in preparing future teachers for mediation activities and to identify effective methods for developing the relevant professional competencies.



Research devoted to communicative competence, communicative teaching, mediation, conflict resolution, and peer mediation was examined. Particular attention was paid to the relationship between communicative skills and the professional actions required from a mediator.

The analysis focused on active listening, clarification, questioning, paraphrasing, summarizing, negotiation, emotional regulation, neutral communication, and collaborative decision-making. These skills were considered in relation to pedagogical situations that future teachers may encounter during professional activity. The methodological potential of role-playing, simulations, collaborative tasks, case-based situations, reflective discussion, and peer feedback was also examined.

The results show that the communicative approach creates conditions for transforming mediation preparation from predominantly theoretical instruction into practical communicative experience. Future teachers need to learn how to conduct dialogue under conditions in which participants have different interests, emotions, and interpretations of the same situation. Communicative activities enable students to practice maintaining interaction, listening without interruption, asking clarifying questions, and expressing ideas without intensifying disagreement.

Active listening is particularly significant. During mediation, the teacher must understand not only the factual content of a conflict but also the needs and concerns expressed by each participant. Paraphrasing and summarizing help future teachers check whether the message has been understood correctly and demonstrate attention to the speaker. Open-ended questions encourage participants to explain their positions, while neutral reformulation helps replace accusatory statements with language focused on problems and possible solutions.

Role-playing and simulated mediation provide strong pedagogical opportunities because they reproduce situations close to professional reality. Students can alternate between the roles of mediator, conflicting parties, and observer. Such practice develops flexibility in communication and enables future teachers to experience mediation from different perspectives. Research on school conflict resolution demonstrates that mediation training can develop constructive negotiation and conflict-management behaviors [5]. Cohen also emphasizes the practical importance of structured mediation training, active listening, clarification, and collaborative problem solving in educational contexts [6].

Collaborative tasks further strengthen mediation readiness. When future teachers solve a controversial pedagogical problem together, they learn to coordinate viewpoints, provide arguments, respond to disagreement, and search for common ground. The communicative approach therefore develops the ability to treat disagreement not only as a negative event but also as a situation that can be managed through dialogue.

Reflection represents another important pedagogical opportunity. After simulated mediation, students can analyze which questions reduced tension, which statements created misunderstanding, whether neutrality was maintained, and how effectively the participants moved toward agreement. This reflective process connects practical experience with theoretical knowledge and supports conscious improvement of communication strategies.

The findings indicate that communicative competence and mediation competence are closely interconnected. Mediation requires more than knowledge of conflict theory. A future teacher must be capable of creating a psychologically safe communicative environment, maintaining

neutrality, recognizing different perspectives, and guiding participants toward constructive interaction.

North and Piccardo describe mediation as a process concerned with facilitating communication, constructing meaning, and adapting information for others [4]. In teacher preparation, this understanding broadens mediation beyond formal conflict settlement. Teachers mediate when they clarify misunderstandings, help students understand one another, facilitate group cooperation, and prevent communicative difficulties from developing into serious conflicts.

The effectiveness of communicative preparation depends on systematic practice. Isolated exercises cannot sufficiently develop mediation competence. Preparation should gradually move from diagnosing students' initial communicative abilities to communicative training, simulated mediation, reflective analysis, and assessment of professional performance. Feedback should evaluate not only whether a conflict was resolved but also how the future teacher listened, questioned, maintained neutrality, managed emotions, and supported communication.

The teacher educator also plays an important role in creating an environment in which disagreement can be expressed respectfully. Future teachers should experience communication based on cooperation rather than simply study it theoretically. Such experience can contribute to the development of professional confidence, empathy, communicative flexibility, and responsibility for maintaining constructive relationships.

The communicative approach has significant pedagogical potential for preparing future teachers for mediation activities. It enables the integration of theoretical knowledge about conflict and mediation with practical communicative experience. Active listening, open-ended questioning, paraphrasing, summarizing, neutral reformulation, negotiation, collaborative problem solving, and reflection constitute essential skills that can be systematically developed through communicative training.

Role-playing, simulated mediation, collaborative tasks, case-based situations, and reflective feedback allow future teachers to practice mediation in conditions close to professional pedagogical activity. Such preparation develops their ability to understand different positions, manage interpersonal communication, prevent escalation, and facilitate mutually acceptable solutions.

Thus, preparing future teachers for mediation activities on the basis of the communicative approach should be organized as a systematic and practice-oriented process. The integration of communication training with conflict-resolution preparation contributes to the formation of teachers who are capable of creating a cooperative educational environment, managing difficult interactions constructively, and supporting effective dialogue among participants in the educational process.

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