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THE ROLE OF INDEPENDENT WORK IN DEVELOPING COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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Nowadays, independent work plays a key role in the process of learning foreign languages. It gives students the opportunity to take responsibility for their own progress and to develop skills at their own pace. In particular, independent work helps improve communicative competence, which is one of the main goals in foreign language education.

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) focuses on interaction as the main method of learning a language. This approach supports the idea that communication should be meaningful and related to real-life situations. Independent tasks, such as writing emails, recording voice messages, reading articles, or preparing presentations, allow students to practice language in authentic ways. According to Harmer (2007),

students learn to communicate effectively when they are exposed to real communication situations.

Each language skill can be improved through well-organized independent tasks:

Speaking: learners can practice dialogues or role-plays by recording themselves or talking with partners online. They can also participate in language exchange apps or record short videos describing their daily routine or opinions on various topics. Online platforms like Tandem and HelloTalk offer a safe environment for practicing spoken language with native speakers.

Listening: students can listen to podcasts or videos with subtitles, then summarize the content or answer questions. They can also use interactive listening platforms, such as TED Talks or BBC Learning English, which allow them to hear different accents and speech rates. Learners can be asked to keep a listening journal to reflect on key ideas and new vocabulary.

Reading: learners can read adapted texts or articles and complete vocabulary or comprehension tasks. They can use graded readers, online newspapers, or e-books that match their level. Websites like Breaking News English or News in Levels are especially useful for independent reading tasks that promote global awareness while supporting language development.

Writing: students can write blog posts, letters, or short essays, which helps them to express their thoughts and structure them correctly. Keeping a learning diary or writing reflections on topics discussed in class can also be very effective. Platforms such as Lang-8 allow learners to receive corrections from native speakers, encouraging accuracy and learner autonomy.

Independent work supports both fluency and accuracy. Fluency improves because students work at their own pace and get more exposure to language use. At the same time, accuracy can be developed through repeated practice, grammar correction tools, and teacher feedback. As Richards (2006) notes, fluency and

accuracy must be balanced for effective communication. Language learning apps like Duolingo, Quizlet, and Grammarly can assist in identifying common errors and reinforcing grammatical patterns through repetition.

Another advantage of independent work is that it motivates learners. They can choose topics they are interested in and set personal goals. This increases engagement and encourages lifelong learning. Independent learners often show more initiative and critical thinking, which are important for mastering a foreign language. Additionally, modern digital tools, such as Quizlet, Kahoot, or Grammarly, make independent work more interactive and personalized.

Moreover, independent work prepares students for real-life communication. In many everyday situations, such as traveling, working abroad, or studying in international environments, learners must use the language independently. Practicing this during their studies makes them more confident and prepared for such experiences. Learner autonomy, according to Little (1991), is essential for the development of effective communicative skills.

Independent learning can also include project-based assignments, where students create posters, infographics, videos, or presentations on cultural topics or current events. These tasks foster creativity and allow learners to use language in meaningful contexts. Such projects can be presented to peers in class or shared online, which promotes interaction and peer feedback.

Teachers also play a significant role in organizing independent work. They must guide students, provide useful resources, and check the results. At the same time, they should allow students enough freedom to explore language use and make mistakes. Feedback after independent tasks should be constructive and focused on helping learners improve specific skills. Teachers can also encourage students to reflect on their learning process, identify challenges, and plan future strategies, which strengthens metacognitive awareness.

In conclusion, independent work is an important element in developing communicative competence. It enhances learner motivation and autonomy, giving students a sense of ownership in their educational journey. Through regular practice, learners build confidence and overcome the fear of making mistakes. Independent tasks can be adapted to suit different levels and learning styles, making them inclusive and flexible. Overall, integrating independent work into foreign language education supports the development of well-rounded, communicatively competent learners. It allows students to apply the language in meaningful situations, helps improve all four skills, and supports both fluency and accuracy. Therefore, teachers should include various independent tasks in their lessons and encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning. Independent work not only supports academic success but also prepares learners for real communication in the global world. It increases learners' confidence, nurtures autonomy, and leads to better language outcomes when integrated thoughtfully into the curriculum.

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ПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ БАРЄРИ У ВИВЧЕННІ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ ТА ШЛЯХИ ЇХ ПОДОЛАННЯ

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