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Situational Foreign Language Instruction in Competency-Based Learning Framework: Ukrainian Experience

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Abstract. Competency-based learning and developing communicative competency is the main strategy guided by the state policy in the education of Ukraine. It has led to a need for reforms in the curriculum and requires rethinking the foreign language teaching approaches in modern educational institutions. The authors claim that situational foreign language instruction has the didactic potential to achieve the learning goals of the competency-based framework. Situational instruction functions as the key component of the updated model of learning. Using a quasi-experimental design, 137 students and 91 foreign language teachers were purposely selected from institutions of secondary education to be the study participants. Validated pre- and post-experimental tests, questionnaires, didactic materials, and a scoring rubric were used to collect the necessary data on students' performance. The data showed that the proposed situational instruction was effective and received positive responses from the participants of the learning process. The use of communicative situations in the competency-based learning framework makes it possible to approximate the students' learning to the real-world

situations of interaction with people of different cultures who speak foreign languages, and enhances the development of communicative competency.

Keywords: competency-based learning; situational foreign language instruction; learning model; communicative situations

1. Introduction

Recent years have changed the educational discourse in Ukraine, which objectively determines the corresponding transformations in school foreign language (FL) education as well. First of all, transformation initiatives motivate rethinking the FL teaching approaches in modern educational institutions, their reorientation to competency-based learning, in particular, clarifying goals and content of education, and changing the means of their implementation in school practice (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2016; Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2017). The Common European Framework on language education (Council of Europe, 2020) highlights the importance of syllabus design based on the competency approach. This assumption has become a priority in some declarations and recommendations of the Council of Europe and, accordingly, state educational documents of European countries (European Parliament, 2018) and accordingly influenced the educational policy of Ukraine (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2019).

The basic issues of competency-based learning are outlined by Rychen and Salganik (2003) as the assessment of student competencies, the design of competency frameworks, and the integration of competency development into educational practices. Bowden (2004) highlights the theoretical basis and some practical insights of competency-based application into practice. The theoretical foundations of competency-based education involve concepts such as mastery learning, constructivism, and outcomes-based education, which emphasize personalized learning, active student engagement, and the attainment of specific learning outcomes as the basis for instruction and assessment. Rambe (2013) studied competency-based learning in school practice which involves shifting the focus from traditional time-based measures to a learner-centered approach that emphasizes mastery of specific skills, knowledge, and abilities, allowing students to progress at their own pace and ensuring a deeper understanding of the subject matter. O'Sullivan and Bruce (2014) came up with valuable assumptions about teaching and learning in competency-based education, namely that students learn at different rates and in different ways, and that learning is best achieved through personalized instruction, active engagement, and the mastery of specific competencies.

Competency-based learning and developing communicative competency as a main learning goal are a core focus of educational research in Ukraine. Guided by the established state policy in the sphere of education, many Ukrainian scholars have investigated this approach from various perspectives. Scientists have presented their views on the structure and essence of competency-based FL learning, analyzed the components of the content of school textbooks, and shared

the experience of conducting lessons designed in accordance with the competency approach. For example, Martynova (2004) studied the didactic context of a competency-based learning framework; Savchenko (2018) concentrated on the organizational peculiarities of competency-based teaching; Polonska (2017) researched competency-based learning in primary schools; and Red'ko (2018) analysed the theoretical and methodological aspects of competency-based active FL learning in secondary schools. All of the above create the basis for expanding the reach of scientific research that reveals various aspects of the introduction of new or updated instructions into school practice within a competency-based learning framework. However, not all the aspects have been sufficiently investigated and there are still some issues requiring insight into the context of improving the process of developing communicative competency in secondary schools.

Students are expected to master FL communication skills, including the ability to produce and identify texts by the topics and tasks of communication (Nunan, 1991). This can only be ensured by learning that uses specific didactic tools to simulate the act of communication outlined by the learning goals. Thus, there is a need to update the didactic and methodical approach to and functions of FL communication skills mastered by students, directing them to their development and proper use in a competency-oriented educational environment as a prototype of real-life conditions in today's mobile, multicultural space. The more the communicative actions of students in school FL learning are approximated to real-world situations, the more successful and convincing the school education system will be in developing learners who can succeed in modern society.

The present situation requires certain changes in teaching approaches, which involves selecting methods, forms and means of teaching to suit the conditions of a socially advanced world (Lassnigg, 2015). This leads to the need to design a learning model which would ensure the achievement of the outcomes expected of educated citizens for successful performance in the modern world, and contribute to the development of key competencies to suit the competency-based learning paradigm of modern secondary schools.

Research Question

This paper aimed at defining and creating a theoretical background for implementing situational FL instruction into competency-based learning school framework. The present study assumed that situational FL instruction may yield effective competency-based learning in a secondary school framework. Specifically, it sought answer to the following research questions:

Will situational FL instruction enhance the learners' educational outcomes and help them to reach the goals of competency-based learning? The supporting research questions were:

- a) What are the specific requirements of the updated competency-based learning model?
- b) Will the situational FL instruction provide developing learners' competencies?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Foreign Language Instruction and Communication

Communication as a pedagogical category expresses subject-subject relations that significantly affect the entire process of formation, education and personal development of a schoolchild (Savignon, 1983). In general high school education, teaching FL communication is not only seen as a way to transmit societal values, nurture personal development, and assist students with their growth, but it is also recognized as a significant tool to engage with different values of the global community and facilitate the understanding of the learner's own values (Bigich et al., 2013).

The idea of situational FL teaching is not new for the world, or in particular, European society. Its basic approaches were outlined by Savignon (1972) which then became the focus of scientific query of Rychen and Salganik (2003), Pinter (2006) and Harmer (2007). Being a traditional teaching strategy rooted in the communicative approach (Canale & Swain, 1980), situational FL instruction in the post-modern era is being reconsidered by scholars in various ways including its place in competency-based learning. Consequently, this is the focus of the present paper.

As Brown (2000) claims, the effectiveness of any teaching process relies heavily on how closely the academic activities performed within that process align with the intended main goal. This strongly relates to FL teaching and learning, based on the theory of communicative interaction which emphasizes the importance of effective communication in language learning, focusing on meaningful interactions and real-life situations to develop language proficiency and promote authentic language use. It highlights the role of context, collaboration and interactional strategies in facilitating language acquisition and communication skills..

Accordingly, correspondence of the content of teaching FL communication to the real process of communication is one of the most important requirements for modern school FL education, including in Ukraine. This problem has become particularly relevant in recent years. Following Young (2012) in the conditions of globalization and technological transformations, the competency approach to teaching any school course turns into a philosophy that presents innovative views on education. Moreover, the very idea of competency in the European and world environment is gradually approaching the level of a teaching strategy (Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). In this context, we view situational foreign language (FL) instruction as a valuable tool that should closely simulate real-life communication, thereby promoting the development of key competencies as the objective of competency-based learning. Thus, situational FL instruction is the focus of our scientific investigation.

2.2. Competency-based learning model with situational FL instruction

The concept of "competency-based foreign language learning" is an educational approach that focuses on developing various important skills and intercultural communication abilities in learners. It is a multifunctional system designed to

enhance learners' overall competency in the target language.. Therefore, teachers strive to help students develop practical communication skills and the capacity to engage in appropriate communication in different situations in personal, public, and educational contexts, as required by the curriculum. This includes performing specific tasks and addressing typical communication needs that arise in real-life situations. In this respect Halliday et al. (1964) remarked: "...when we acquire our primary language, we do so by learning how to behave in situations, not by learning rules about what to say..." (p. 179)

The designed learning materials play a crucial role in helping learners achieve their goals. These materials are carefully selected, organized in a logical manner, and tailored to specific situations. Exercises and tasks are used to effectively present and activate the learning process, guiding students to develop the mechanisms of communicative interaction in speaking and writing in the target FL (Jacobs, et al., 2016) .

As noted above, the previous scientific and theoretical findings need to be reviewed. Outlining conceptual approaches is necessary to update not only the learning goals and content, but also to determine effective means that can ensure their successful implementation in school practice (Giroux, 2018). In our opinion, this could be an updated model of the learning process, which would foster development of key subject competencies by means of an FL. This is in line with the aims of European and global educational developments.

The concept of "didactic modeling" involves a creative research process that leads to the modification or improvement of a specific scientific subject of investigation. Scholars view didactic modeling as a valuable tool that promotes the development of the academic process and curricula by establishing organized and coherent procedures within educational institutions (Rodriguez Sandoval et al., 2022). Accordingly, a didactic model refers to a structured framework or approach used in education to guide the teaching and learning process. It provides a systematic plan or design that outlines the sequence of activities, resources and instructional strategies needed to achieve specific learning objectives. It required the effective cooperation of two key role players in the academic process – the student and the teacher (Harfitt & Chow, 2018).

The predicted model does not necessarily involve a complete transformation of the object of study, but may allow partial change of individual components and/or updating their functions in accordance with new paradigms or trends in FL teaching.

In the present research study, we focus on clarifying the methodological appropriacy of using and broadening functions of situational FL instruction in the competency-based learning. In such situations, modeling can anticipate students' learning outcomes with the goal of enhancing the tools (exercises and tasks) used for acquiring the foreign language. This includes modifying the communication topic to provide more or in-depth information, as well as adjusting the linguistic

and speaking resources required, based on changes in the curriculum and the timetable determined by educational authorities for a specific level of study. It is unlikely that the created model will successfully produce all the expected outcomes in different conditions of its use. However, the new/updated object as our research goal must differ from the previous one in terms of basic qualitative and quantitative indicators. The model lays a foundation for practical interpretation in the classroom.

Situational FL instruction involves both direct communication between two or more individuals and expressing thoughts about objects in the communicative environment. It includes sharing positive or negative attitudes, personal experiences, justifying thoughts and views, commenting on actions and behavior, presenting activity plans and goals, and explaining actions in social or academic settings. Such communicative actions are performed by the communicator in various interactive ways (dialogue, project work, didactic games), expressing his thoughts as an individual and adding them to the content of verbal interaction with other communicators (Wang & Castro, 2010). His communication should be adapted according to the context.

Therefore, for successful situational FL instruction in modern schools, we have determined the following types of activities to be methodologically appropriate. They comprise dialogue communication, when the interlocutors clarify certain issues and demonstrate convincing arguments, (dis)agreement, surprise, or their attitudes towards the object of communication.. Another activity to develop communicative competency is a monologue statement with a demonstration of and justification for one's thoughts regarding the object of communication. In addition, group discussion is beneficial within the framework of the performance of collective tasks, when certain problems are discussed by airing of different points of view. Moreover, project activity also involves active group work that enables discussions of the content and plan of the project, the functions of the participants, commenting on the actions being performed, justifying the methods of activity, and verbal presentation of the outcomes. As an essential part of situational FL instruction, a didactic game can stimulate real communication among participants as they generate narratives that situationally (often spontaneously) arise in the game process within the limits of a certain communication topic. This contributes to the conscious selection and activation of thematically appropriate language units in communicative activity; and ensures compliance with appropriate communicative behavior. Finally, communication in the form of written correspondence, including texting in the chat facility during online conferences, can be used to discuss certain issues that arise situationally.

Usually, situational tasks of any kind, thematically selected and methodically and normatively instructed in terms of language, involve the creation of imaginary educational communicative environments where students master the ability to communicate FL (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The content of the situation should be clear and accessible to students of a certain age category/grade, taking into account their academic and life experience and potential opportunities, as well as their social needs.

To operationalize the concepts mentioned above, there is a need to define, characterize and justify the functions of learning and speaking situations in competency-based FL learning. In addition, it is advisable to differentiate these functions both in terms of content and methods of use. These can be didactic and methodical functions. The didactic functions are inherent in learning any FL, ensuring the organization of situational learning in accordance with its conceptual grounds. We consider them as typical and specific to situational communication on any topic and for different age groups of students.

The methodical functions support the learning process of students in a specific grade by providing them with appropriate language and communication resources specific to a particular FL. These functions align with the communication topic, exercises and tasks, presentation methods, material activation, and level of mastery assessment. They also consider the complexity of the language material, the differences in morphology and syntax compared to the students' native language, and the resulting difficulty in acquiring it.

Thus, in addressing the requirements of the modern schools and directing them to the competency-based paradigm (Martynova, 2004), we have defined the main functions of educational communicative situations. In the didactic sense, social function specifies situations where communication takes place; organizational function identifies communicators and outlines the tasks to be performed. Additionally, managerial function is associated with the selection of information input, included in the communication within the limits of a certain competency aligned with learning goals. Reflexive function relates to the decision-making on additional didactic tools (illustrative material, diagrams or tables), the use of which is adapted to the communicative situation and which is added to the learning materials.

Methodological functions are linked to aligning the language material with the communication topic, based on the developed competencies, and effectively employing student learning activities to accomplish assigned tasks. Furthermore, methodological functions involve the controlled use of language units and speech patterns that match the competency content and the social context. They regulate the appropriate use of forms, methods, resources, and learning types that support the completion of specific situational tasks and ensure that students adhere to the normative communicative behavior within the given situational conditions.

In order to determine the potential of current school textbooks to provide didactic support to learning, in particular, the materials that can contribute to the development of key competencies, we analyzed their content. We focused on textbooks, since they are the main materials used in learning (Stern, 1983), and therefore should objectively contain appropriate materials, in particular thematic lexical resources and specific exercises and tasks that could contribute to the achievement of the goals.

We analyzed 17 textbooks in English, German, French, and Spanish for different grades. It turned out that most of them did not have a clearly presented system of competency-based learning. The textbooks in the majority contained random autonomous rubrics appealing to the learner's experience within a section of the topic being studied:

"Tell me about the season you like", "How did you spend your vacation...", "Tell me what you do in an FL classroom", "What would you like to buy in the store ..."
(Nesvit, 2014, p.58).

These are communicative tasks that have nothing to do with the peculiarities of communicative situations and their functions in the process of organizing and generating communication about a certain topic (competency). They are not at all true-to-life, do not motivate learning, and do not encourage creative thinking. On the contrary, they limit the extent to which the learning material addresses the topic being studied.

Observations show that students mainly articulate information in a monologue within the limits of the outlined task, and that their communication does not demonstrate engagement with the produced thematic content. Learners do not make generalizations, or draw conclusions typical in real communication. Their conceptualization of a topic is often incomplete, and many of them lack the thematic lexical resources for formulating complete statements in accordance with the specified topic. There are significant hiatuses in their communication skills, which are not appropriate for real communication. Moreover, the logic of statements is particularly problematic.

No doubt, these downsides limit communication and alienate students from real-life interaction. In this context, there is a need to revise how the content of learning materials is selected to achieve the goals of competency-based FL learning. A learning model is needed that is aimed at developing key competencies by means of communicative situations. This makes it possible to gradually adapt students to the real conditions of communication within the limits of the subject using appropriate materials selected for the curriculum for each grade (Savchenko, 2018).

We assume, that situational FL instruction has the potential to approximate the students' educational actions to real-life communication conditions. Organizing situational communication involves formulating the situation in a methodically appropriate manner and selecting language tools appropriate to the topic within the limits of a specific key competence. It should be aligned with the student's educational experience (Fink, 2003) and provide them with opportunities to use communication activities that could potentially be needed in relevant social environments.

4. Methods

4.1 Instruments

4.1.1 Proposed FL competency-based learning model

It is suggested that the content validity of the designed FL competency-based learning model with situational FL instruction is analyzed according to the model presented in Figure 1.

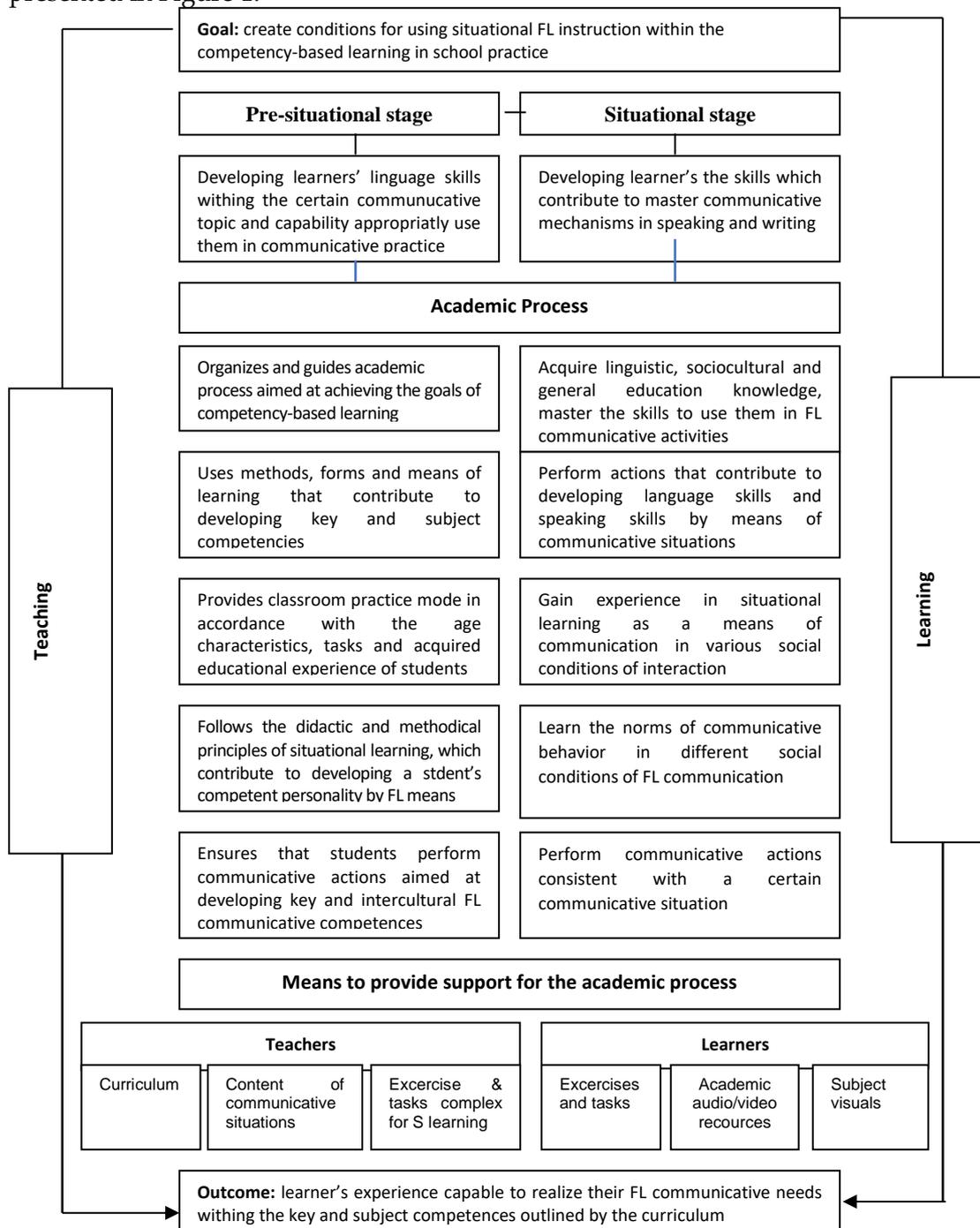


Figure 1: Situational FL instruction in the competency-based learning

4.1.2 Survey Questionnaire

The final stage of the experimental study was the conducting of a survey (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001) to check the respondents' attitude to the proposed instruction of the objectives of the academic process. The two questionnaires (for teachers and students) with developed questions were designed for this purpose.

4.2. Research Design

In order to check the proposed situational FL instruction efficiency in the competency-based learning incorporated in the designed model, we conducted quantitative research with a quasi-experimental design (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019). We undertook a comparative analysis of the learners' proficiency in situational FL instruction versus traditional classroom. At the final stage of the research, participants (students and teachers) assessed communicative situations by answering questions on the suggested survey.

The outcomes were compared with those of the students who worked in a traditional classroom without intervention.

4.3. Participants

Verification of the effectiveness of the proposed instruction was carried out during the 2021-2022 academic year. The secondary schools were located in different regions of Ukraine: Kyiv city (school #176, #125), Novovolynsk city (Volyn region, liceum #5), Zhytomyr city (school #23), Ivankiv village (Kyiv region, liceum #1) participated in the experimental study. The experiment was carried out in the real conditions of the academic process in the 5th, 7th, and 9th grades, where students studied English, German, or Spanish. The researchers did not interfere in the process. A total of 137 students (2 groups of students from each foreign language) and 91 teachers were involved in the experimental learning. The number of learners in control groups varied from 9 to 12. The participants were selected according to their will and level of interest to take part in the experimental study after familiarising them with the main points of the proposed intervention.

4.4 Procedure

The first phase (pre-experimental) involved diagnostic testing (Ye, 2017) of students' communicative skills in the form of performing speaking tasks consistent with the curriculum and educational experience of students in grades 5, 6, and 7. (See appendix for several types of communicative tasks designed for students).

We determined the level of proficiency according to the worked out scale: *advanced, sufficient, basic, low*. In Table 1, we present the level descriptors.

Table 1: Levels and descriptors

Level	Descriptor
<i>Advanced</i>	Students' communication in terms of language indicators and volume of information meet the expected requirements. Hesitation pauses are mostly absent. The communication is emotional and convincing.

Level	Descriptor
<i>Sufficient</i>	The students' phrases are close to the standard. Their content is clear, although some linguistic inaccuracies are noticed. Some hesitation pauses are present, which makes the utterances somewhat slowed down.
<i>Basic</i>	The speech products of most students contain language errors, which hinder the understanding of the content of statements that are not complete and contain a significant number of hesitation pauses.
<i>Elementary</i>	Articulated texts do not meet the requirements either in terms of content or language content.

Before the experiment started the teachers-participants were familiarized with the procedure, and they were provided with didactic materials for conducting it independently: 1) didactic materials for the pre-situational stage: a list of exercises for developing language skills with students, within the content of certain competences; 2) for the situational stage: complexes of designed communicative situations of various types (with oral support and without), which were consistent with the curriculum and educational experience of students in Grades 5, 6, 7.

The study aimed at implementing the content of situational FL instruction during three lessons with exercises and tasks of the pre-situational and situational stages: students performed the educational activities within the communication topics addressed by the teachers' lesson plans at the time of the study.

We were interested in the students' learning outcomes both at the pre-situational and situational stages. Carrying out the learning at the pre-situational stage enabled teachers to optimize the time allocated for this and to focus on further activities. Usually, students had to perform the educational activities planned for this stage during the first (out of three planned) session, taking into account that other types of learning activities planned by the teachers were also performed there. Learners' activities within the proposed communicative situations were to be carried out in the second and third classes. The types and forms of its implementation were determined by the key competences to be developed within the communicative situation. Up to 20 minutes was allocated to conduct learning in the classroom according to the lesson plans. This time was sufficient to achieve the goals.

4.5. Data Analysis

We define the term "instruction efficiency" as the degree of approximation to reality to the most expected result. In other words, we consider instruction to be effective when the obtained outcomes are close to the predicted ones, particularly when they fall within the relative range of 0 to 1 and are closest to the predicted outcome. Therefore, based on our objectives, instruction that significantly aids in aligning learning outcomes with real-world conditions is considered effective, especially when it involves using FL communication within specific key competencies.

The effectiveness of the proposed instruction was determined according to the quality indicators of students' proficiency level on three occasions: pre-

experimental, mid-experimental and post experimental phase. We determined the level of proficiency according to the scale in Table 1: *advanced*, *sufficient*, *basic*, and *low*.

Two objects of FL situational instruction were determined for the obtained learning results: 1) the effectiveness of students' performance of pre-situational exercises and tasks and 2) the quality of students' FL utterances within the proposed communicative situation.

5. Results

We present the obtained outcomes in general, without differentiating them by language. At the time of the approval, the research was conducted in accordance with the teachers' curricula and corresponded to the current educational experience of the students following the requirements of the educational programs.

5.1. Peculiarities of the updated competency-based learning model

Considering communicative situations as a multifunctional instruction, let us consider the dynamics of their use. The situational FL instruction proceeds with two stages: pre-situational and situational.

Pre-situational stage provides language practice: substitution, transformation exercises, completing sentences, filling gaps in sentences/dialogue replicas, forming sentences according to a sample, among others. Usually, such exercises should contain lexical units, informationally relevant to communication topics. An important role at this stage belongs to semi-communicative exercises, which should be created in the form of peculiar micro-situations (1-2 sentences/replies):
say/write that you will (not) do it too, ...; confirm your opinion, deny/agree, add to what you have heard/read, evaluate, clarify, ask again...

Such exercises can often be performed as activities. The pre-situational stage introduces students to the communication and information environment, in which they learn thematic lexical units typical of the content of the academic communicative situation, project work, or role-play by performing exercises (Qing, 2011). They familiarize themselves with some thematic information materials and gain the experience of performing communicative acts of speaking and writing using lexical units and speech patterns typical of a certain thematic area.

The situational stage aims at developing learners' communication mechanisms and acquiring communicative behavior experience (Adams, 1973), which is consistent with the content of a certain competency. The proposed guideline for situational communication, its volume and informational depth of the content are determined in many ways by the requirements of the curriculum, the outlined tasks, the educational experience of the students, their ages, and potential opportunities.

The designed competency-based learning with situational FL instruction offers communicative situations that ensure the selection of lexical and informational

material, consistent with the content of the developed competencies. The instructional materials take into account the educational experience and potential capabilities of students in particular, and, if necessary, support communication in different time forms. It is important that the situational instruction motivates students learning to develop a certain key competency. From the methodological perspective, communicative situations in the designed model must adhere to the principle of including thematic material when determining the content of situations and aiming at developing certain competencies. Additionally, the principle of integration should be considered when planning students' learning activities so that several competencies can be developed within one communicative situation.

In order to effectively teach situational communication, it is essential to incorporate various types of communicative tasks such as monologues, dialogues, project work, and didactic games. These tasks should be designed to align with the specific needs and characteristics of the social environment in which the communication takes place. In this context, the proposed situations in the instructional model aim to simulate real communication scenarios by designing appropriate academic tasks for the students. This approach facilitates the development of both language skills related to the specific theme being taught and the overall communicative abilities necessary for effective communication. Moreover, the situational learning process consists of two stages, allowing students to progressively enhance their language skills and communicative competencies. Communication supports are also integrated into the instruction to serve as guidance for students' situational activities, helping them develop specific competencies required in the given context.

By implementing this approach, the desired learning outcome is achieved, which is the ability to effectively use foreign language communication skills in accordance with the key and subject competencies specified in the curriculum.

5.2. Effectiveness of the proposed FL competence-based learning model

The effectiveness of the proposed instruction was determined according to the above indicators of the quality of the student's performance at pre-situational and situational stages. The obtained results were compared with those demonstrated by the students working in the traditional FL classroom. The obtained results are illustrated in Figure 2.

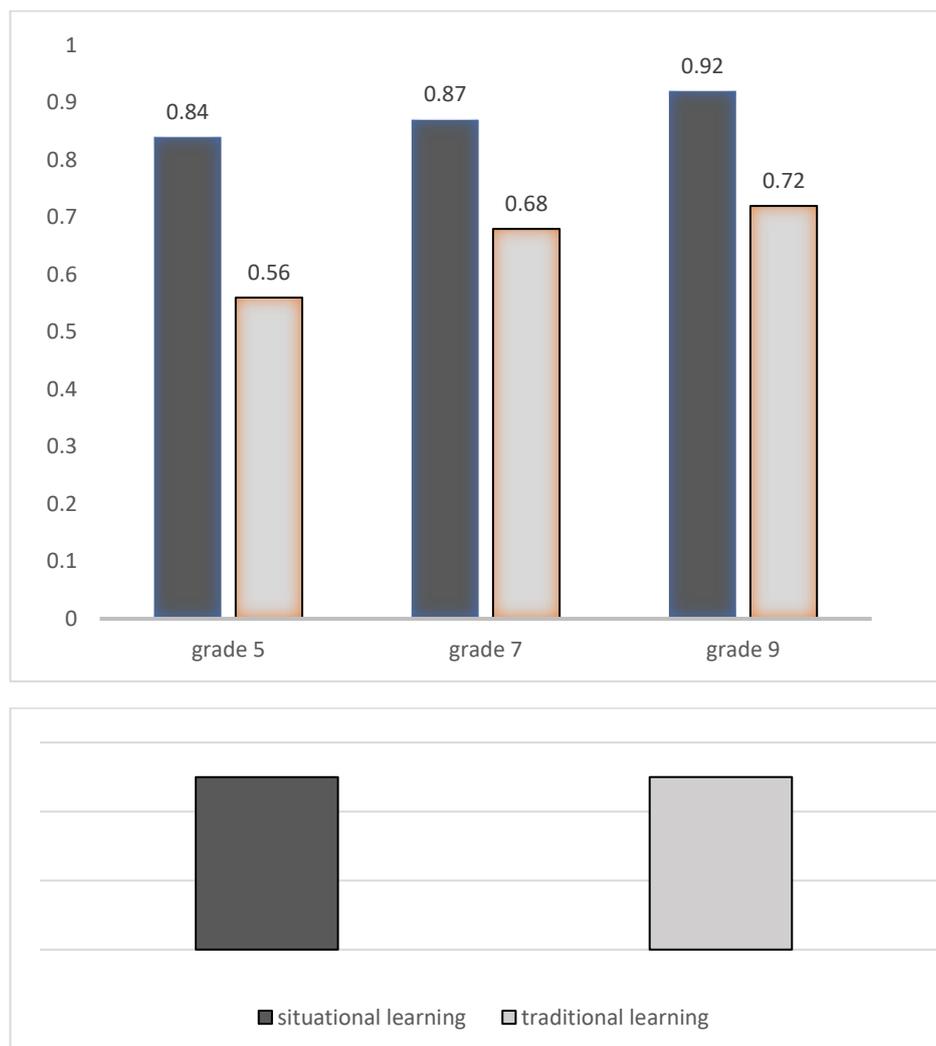


Figure 2: Students' outcomes at pre-situational and situational stages

The diagrams illustrate the quantitative difference depending on the type of learning two stages.

The post-experimental phase of the research study involved using a survey to check teachers' and students' attitudes to the situational FL instruction. The participants were asked to provide response to the suggested questionnaires. Below we present tables that illustrate the attitude of teachers and students to communicative situations as a means of competency-based learning. Students with English, German, French, and Spanish as a FL took part in the survey. They were introduced to examples of communicative situations and typical exercises that they had to perform at the pre-situational stage. Appropriate materials were designed for pre-situational and situational stages. After the special consultations were conducted, the teachers independently carried out the assessments.

Table 2: Teachers' survey results

№ п/п	Question	Total number of respondents	Responses					
			Yes	%	Not fully	%	No	%
1.	Do you have a positive attitude to FL situational learning to develop students' key competencies?	91	84	92	7	8	-	-
2.	Are you satisfied with the communicative situation(s) content?	91	87	96	4	4	-	-
3.	Do you consider the sets of exercises and tasks that prepare students for situational statements to be methodologically appropriate?	91	82	90	9	10	-	-
4.	Do you support the proposed phasing of the FL situational learning to develop learners' key competencies?	91	89	98		2	-	-

Table 3: Learners' survey results

№ п/п	Question	Total number of respondents	Responses					
			Yes	%	Not fully	%	No	%
1.	Do you understand the content of the proposed communicative situations?	137	129	94	8	6	-	-
2.	Are the pre-situational exercises that prepare you for performing situational tasks effective for you?	137	118	86	19	14	-	-
3.	Are you satisfied with the presented examples of complex communicative situations with verbal support?	137	132	96	5	4	-	-

6. Discussion

Communicative situations as fragments of communicative interaction designed in educational conditions become a meaningful tool, with certain goals to perform functions of real communication (Socius, 2003). They enable students to master

the mechanisms of FL communication effectively, which include language standards, information content, and communicative culture, and correspond to the established norms of speech interaction with speakers of other cultures and traditions (Jacobs, 2016).

The use of the updated instruction fostered positive learning outcomes revealed in various aspects. Students more thoroughly mastered lexical units within the content of the key competencies that were supposed to be formed. Consequently, the learners' communication contained a significantly smaller number of pauses, which indicated a sufficient level of developed fluency based on the target vocabulary. With the use of verbal support, students were able to create coherent, logically constructed statements and the content of the statements contained samples of evaluative judgments, generalizations, and conclusions, demonstrating their attitudes to the subject of communication. All these results indicate the positive impact on students' communicative skills.

However, the empirical results reported here should be considered in the light of some limitations (Creswell, 2014). In this context, it is worth noting that not all students who were trained on the new instructions were able to demonstrate a sufficient level of proficiency. Typical shortcomings were those that, in our opinion, were caused by the psychophysiological characteristics of individual students. Among them were insufficient memory skills, inefficiently developed skills to use the acquired educational experience in the process of mastering other courses, in particular, the native language; and a lack of interest in the content of the proposed instruction, including low motivation for learning.

Observations showed that students who had traditional learning experiences mentioned these problems. Therefore, the implementation of the proposed instruction significantly changed the efficacy of the students' productive communication. These changes resulted in better student outcomes. For instance, students more actively manipulated target lexical units within the framework of developed key competencies and the informational content of the produced texts was significantly improved. Apart from that, the students' statements were coherent, logically constructed and contained patterns of evaluative judgments. Students' attitudes to the subject of communication showed improvement.

The final stage of the research, the survey, which aimed to evaluate the proposed situational FL instruction, demonstrated the validity of the designed model. The data collected from the survey showed that the vast majority of respondents (both students 96% and teachers 92%) assessed the communicative situations and situational FL instruction positively. This made it possible to introduce updated situational FL instruction into the competency-based learning framework on a wider scope. Furthermore, the data provided us with a positive answer to the research question we put at the beginning.

7. Conclusion

Based on the research data we assume that the situational FL instruction to develop learners' key competencies can provide students with the ability to adapt more effectively to the conditions of real life in a multicultural FL society. The use of communicative situations as essential components of the designed model in the competency-based learning framework makes it possible to approximate the students' learning to the real conditions of interaction with members of other languages and cultures, which is in line with the main strategies of FL teaching and learning in secondary education (Lassnigg, 2015).

The presented situational FL instruction to develop intercultural communicative competence of students of general secondary education institutions was positively received by teachers and students. The survey results revealed exceptionally positive attitudes to situational instruction.

Further investigations could explore the preparation of thematic situational tasks for general secondary and higher education institutions. These tasks should aim to develop foreign language communication and learners' communicative behavior within the competency-based education framework.

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Appendix

Types of communicative tasks designed for 5th-grade students

Monologue

1. - *Your friend from the UK is interested if Ukrainian children eat healthy food. Tell him/her*
 - *what children in Ukraine eat for breakfast, lunch, and supper;*
 - *typical ingredients of traditional Ukrainian dishes;*
 - *what you had yesterday (the day before yesterday).*
2. - *Your British friend is interested in the weather in Ukraine. Describe today's weather.*
3. - *Your English-speaking friend is curious about your day's activities and how you spend your time. Give him/her the information*
 - *on which activity you spend the most time;*
 - *how much time you spend at school;*
 - *which activities you plan ahead of time;*
 - *how much time you spend with your family and friends;*
 - *what time do you usually go to sleep.*
4. - *You went on a sightseeing holiday to a foreign country. Comment on the trip and the place of your destination. Give your friend information on*
 - *the time and duration of your holiday;*
 - *the name of the country, its capital city, and its location;*
 - *places of interest and sights you visited;*
 - *your impressions of your stay in the country.*

Dialogue

1. - *You are having a conversation with your English-speaking friend on the Internet about the types of free time activities and leisure. Discuss*
 - *free time activities popular in his/her country;*
 - *his/her likes and dislikes in outdoor activities;*
 - *what he/she likes doing for fun;*
 - *if he/she spends his/her leisure time with a family member (a friend).*
2. - *You are talking to your English-speaking friend about school life and his/her daily routine. Ask him/her how much time he/she spends :*
 - *watching TV;*
 - *chatting online with friends;*
 - *playing computer games;*
 - *doing his/her schoolwork;*
 - *reading for pleasure.*
3. *You are talking to your friend if he/she likes his/her hometown/village. Ask him/her :*
 - *what the name of his/her hometown is and where it is located;*
 - *if he/she likes the place he/she lives in;*
 - *what he/she likes most about his/her hometown;*
 - *if there is anything he/she dislikes about it;*
 - *what places he/she likes to visit in his/her hometown.*

Project work

1. - Make a poster with pictures and photos to describe your favorite season and weather. Talk about it.
2. - Imagine yourself working as a fashion designer. Create a computer presentation with photos or pictures of a seasonal clothing collection. Comment on it.
3. - Create a poster “All about Ukraine” and make an illustrative overview of the country. Include quick facts on Ukraine, its holidays and traditions, famous landmarks, and foods. Make an oral presentation in English.

Didactic game

1. - Imagine you are chatting online with your friend from the UK. Discuss and arrange your plans for the weekend, depending on the weather (you are planning to spend time actively). Find out about his/her plans and tell him/her about your plans.
2. - Your birthday is coming up. Think over the menu of the holiday table with Ukrainian dishes. Make a shopping list of necessary products and goods. Talk to the members of your family. Agree/disagree with their suggestions.
3. - Fill out a questionnaire about your family's favorite things and activities (books, food, memory, activities and hobbies, family members, weather, etc.). Complete the questionnaire and talk about its content. (Kovalenko, 2022).