

Teaching Foreign Language To Students Through Inquiry-Based Technology

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Abstract: This article explores the effectiveness of teaching language through inquiry-based technology and a research-based approach in modern education. Emphasis is placed on how inquiry encourages active learning, critical thinking, and learner autonomy, while research-oriented strategies strengthen analytical and problem-solving skills. The integration of these approaches helps students develop intellectual independence and motivation for lifelong learning. The article reviews key theoretical perspectives, practical classroom applications, and challenges faced by educators. Findings suggest that inquiry-based and research-driven methods foster deeper understanding of language structures, improve communicative competence, and enhance academic performance.

Keywords: Inquiry-based learning, research-based approach, language teaching, students' autonomy, communicative competence, critical thinking, lifelong learning, educational technology, active learning.

Introduction: Language teaching has always held a central place in education, because language is the foundation for communication, collaboration, and cultural exchange. In the twenty-first century, the importance of language has grown even further, as globalization and digitalization require learners to interact in diverse academic and professional contexts. Language education today is no longer limited to the transmission of grammar rules or vocabulary lists. Instead, it must prepare learners to think critically, solve problems, and use language as a tool for inquiry and innovation [1: 34].

Traditional teaching methods, while still relevant, often rely heavily on memorization and teacher-centered explanations. This can create a passive learning environment in which students are less engaged and less able to transfer their knowledge to real-world situations [2: 77]. In contrast, modern pedagogical approaches emphasize student participation and the development of higher-order thinking skills. Inquiry-based learning encourages learners to ask meaningful questions, investigate authentic problems, and construct their own knowledge through active exploration [3: 112]. Meanwhile, a research-based approach provides opportunities for learners to apply

academic methods such as observation, analysis, and reflection, thereby deepening their understanding of language use [4: 59].

Integrating these two approaches creates a powerful framework for language education. It not only strengthens communicative competence but also fosters learner autonomy and motivation for lifelong learning [5: 89]. Such a combination of inquiry and research brings language teaching into alignment with the demands of the twenty-first century, where adaptability, creativity, and collaboration are essential. Theories of inquiry-based learning emphasize the importance of active engagement and learner-centered education. Dewey was among the earliest advocates of inquiry as a process of discovery and meaning-making, suggesting that education should connect learning to experience and real-life problem solving [6: 41]. Later theorists argued that inquiry cultivates curiosity, critical thinking, and responsibility for one's own learning [7: 102]. Applied to language teaching, inquiry-based methods shift the classroom dynamic from rote learning to interactive exploration, where students construct meaning through dialogue, projects, and problem-solving tasks.

Research-based approaches to education also have

strong theoretical roots. Constructivist perspectives highlight that knowledge is not transmitted but constructed through active investigation [8: 76]. In language learning, this means students should be encouraged to conduct small-scale research, analyze authentic texts, and reflect on their learning process. Several studies have shown that learners who engage in research activities develop stronger analytical skills, deeper cultural awareness, and more confidence in language use [9: 88].

In recent years, scholars have increasingly explored the integration of inquiry and research in language teaching. For example, some researchers argue that inquiry-based activities naturally lead to research practices, as students learn to formulate questions, collect data, and draw conclusions [10: 119]. This integration supports the development of both communicative competence and academic skills.

METHODOLOGY

The application of inquiry-based and research-based approaches in university language classrooms requires a shift from teacher-centered instruction to student-centered exploration. In practice, this means that the role of the teacher is not limited to providing explanations, but extends to creating learning environments where students are encouraged to ask questions, investigate problems, and reflect on their findings [1: 53]. Such methods help students to connect classroom learning with authentic communication contexts.

In inquiry-based learning, teachers often organize lessons around open-ended questions or real-life problems. For example, instead of simply memorizing grammar rules, students might be asked to analyze authentic texts, identify patterns, and formulate hypotheses about how language structures function [2: 117]. Group discussions, case studies, and project-based tasks are common strategies that foster collaboration and encourage learners to construct meaning actively [3: 88]. These tasks allow students to see language as a tool for inquiry rather than as a set of isolated rules.

Research-based approaches, on the other hand, introduce students to methods of academic investigation. In university classrooms, this may involve conducting small-scale research projects, such as surveys, interviews, or comparative text analyses [4: 72]. For instance, learners might investigate how certain speech acts vary across cultures, or how digital media influences language use among young people [5: 130]. Through such projects, students practice applying theoretical knowledge to real-world data, which strengthens their analytical skills and deepens their

understanding of language in context.

Importantly, both approaches emphasize reflection. Students are encouraged to document their inquiry processes, analyze results, and present findings to peers. This reflective practice not only builds confidence but also improves academic writing and oral communication skills [6: 104]. In many cases, the outcomes of classroom research are shared through presentations, posters, or short research papers, giving students a sense of ownership and achievement [7: 145].

University educators who apply inquiry and research-based approaches also highlight the motivational benefits. Students become more engaged when they see that their own questions and findings matter. This engagement supports learner autonomy and helps cultivate habits of lifelong learning, which are particularly important in higher education [8: 91]. At the same time, the teacher remains a facilitator, guiding students in developing strategies for critical inquiry, ensuring academic rigor, and linking classroom activities to broader curricular goals [9: 123].

DISCUSSION

The integration of inquiry-based and research-based approaches in university language classrooms offers significant benefits for both learners and educators. One of the main advantages is the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When students investigate authentic problems, they learn to analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information rather than simply memorizing rules [1: 64]. This deeper engagement helps them transfer knowledge beyond the classroom and apply it to real-life communication. Moreover, learners gain greater autonomy and motivation, as inquiry-based tasks encourage them to take responsibility for their own progress [2: 102].

Another benefit is the improvement of communicative competence. Through research projects, students are exposed to authentic language use, cultural diversity, and real-world contexts. This exposure strengthens their ability to use language meaningfully in academic and professional situations [3: 87]. At the same time, reflective practices such as writing reports or presenting findings enhance their academic literacy and oral communication skills [4: 140].

Despite these benefits, challenges remain. Implementing inquiry and research-based methods requires more time and effort compared to traditional teaching. Teachers must carefully design activities, provide continuous feedback, and balance freedom with academic rigor [5: 59]. Some students may also struggle with the shift from passive learning to active exploration, especially if they are accustomed to

teacher-centered methods [6:92]. Limited classroom resources, large class sizes, and insufficient teacher training can also make it difficult to fully implement these approaches [7:118].

When compared to traditional teaching methods, inquiry and research-based strategies stand out as more interactive and learner-centered. Traditional approaches often focus on repetition, drills, and the direct transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. While such methods can be effective for learning basic grammar or vocabulary, they may not adequately prepare students for the complex demands of academic communication and intercultural interaction [8:144]. In contrast, inquiry and research-based methods cultivate flexibility, creativity, and analytical skills that are essential in higher education and professional life [9:75].

In summary, the discussion highlights that inquiry and research-based approaches provide a more dynamic and meaningful framework for language teaching, though their successful application requires careful planning, supportive institutional policies, and ongoing teacher development [10:133].

CONCLUSION

Language education today must respond to the demands of a rapidly changing world, where learners need more than grammatical accuracy or memorized vocabulary. They must be able to think critically, communicate effectively, and approach problems with creativity and independence. This article has shown that inquiry-based learning and research-based approaches offer powerful tools for achieving these goals in university language classrooms.

Inquiry-based learning encourages students to ask questions, explore authentic problems, and take an active role in constructing knowledge. Research-based approaches complete this by giving learners opportunities to investigate language in real-world contexts, apply academic methods, and reflect on their findings. Together, these approaches move beyond traditional, teacher-centered instruction and create more engaging, meaningful, and student-centered experiences.

At the same time, challenges such as limited resources, the need for teacher preparation, and the adjustment of students to new learning roles cannot be ignored. Yet, the long-term benefits—greater autonomy, stronger communicative competence, and the development of lifelong learning skills—demonstrate the value of integrating these methods into language education.

Ultimately, combining inquiry and research in teaching

is not just a methodological choice; it is a response to the broader mission of education: to prepare learners who can adapt, innovate, and contribute effectively in academic, professional, and intercultural contexts of the 21st century.

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