Unit 4. The Communicative Approach.

English Methodologies and Didactic Resources

Facultad de Lengua y Educación



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1. The Communicative Approach

- Framework:

- The transformation of the educational system in Europe and the development of the European common market and the Council of Europe were important changes that promoted the birth of the Communicative Approach.
- In the late 1970s, the assumptions of the situational approach of the British teaching of English as a foreign language began to be questioned, and the audiolingual method went into crisis in the United States as well, due in part to Chomsky's criticisms of structuralism theory. The British linguistics Christopher Candlin (1981) and Henry Widdowson (1978) are two important figures of this moment.





2. Origin

- The communicative approach also arose from the general dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the pedagogical tradition already consolidated, such as the excess of centrality in the figure of the teacher.

There were two important publications that helped to set the bases of the Communicative Approach:

- Alexander's series *New Concept of English* (1967).
- Wilkings proposed a functional and communicative definition of language. It was an excellent base for the creation of the communicative language syllabus based on *Notions* (concepts) and *Functions* (purpose).



3. Goals and Characteristics

- Goal of language: The goal of language is to develop the communicative competence, instead of the linguistic competence of Chomsky. To speak a language properly it is required the ability to use it in different registers, according to the situation.

- The four language skills must be taught in a comprehensible way.
- The teacher is now conceived as an intermediary and responsible for favouring the occurrence of learning as the learner is the protagonist of learning.



4. Threshold Level project and Communicative Method

- From that conception, experts of the Council of Europe established the Threshold Level, which means the contents necessary to acquire a minimum level of communicative ability in a foreign language in a general way.

The Communicative method is:

- The conception of the communicative competence as main objective of the language teaching, by the development of the four linguistic skills.
- And experiential and learner-centred learning.



5. Procedure

- The procedure is divided into three steps:

- 1st: Pre-Communicative activities: They are activities to promote motivation in the learning activity. For example:
- Drill activities.

- 2nd: Communicative activities: Examples of communicative activities are:
  - dialogues about student's personal experiences
  - the study of one of the communicative expression in a dialogue
  - sharing information
  - to identify pictures.
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- 3rd: Social Interaction activities: they are activities of oral productions. For example:
  - dialogues
  - role-playing activities



6. Real Teaching Experiences

- Watch these videos:
- Game and dialogue: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SB_hr8IY4Z8
- Role play: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3AUiMik7sY

7. The Communicative Competence

- **Canale and Swain** developed the idea of communicative competence, a design taken as the basis for objectives in the curricular design and as a guide for teaching methodology.

- This communicative competence consists of 5 sub competences:
- -grammatical
- -discourse
- -sociolinguistic
- - strategic
- -sociocultural.



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8. Teaching by Tasks

- In the words of Giovanni et al. (1996, quoted by Pastor, 2004: 161-162):
- (…) the teaching of the approach by tasks is a teaching through the communication (...) therefore it is included in "procedural methods", which (...) are based on the negotiation processes and decision making of the students themselves.

- By *task* Nunan (1989) defines that it is a part of the class work that makes students understand, manipulate, produce and communicate in the target language focusing more on meaning than on form. (Pastor, 2004: 162).



8. 1 Procedure of a task and real teaching experiences

- Each task, in turn, is developed in three phases:
    - 1st: a first approach, which decides the theme and the organization of work
    - 2nd: A second one of preparation, where the practice of the work is realized
    - 3rd: a third one of execution, that is where the product is elaborated properly.

- Watch this video of a real teaching experience
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lg_PRBUsin0

9. Bibliography

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