

INGLÉS

Tema 1

La lengua como comunicación: lenguaje oral y lenguaje escrito. Factores que definen una situación comunicativa: emisor, receptor, funcionalidad y contexto.



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OUTLINE

1. BIBLIOGRAPHY.
 - 1.1. Legislation.
 - 1.2. Authors.
 - 1.3. Further reading.
2. INTRODUCTION.
3. LANGUAGE AS A COMMUNICATION MEANS.
 - 3.1. The nature of language and its educational implications.
 - 3.2. The use of Spanish in the foreign language classroom.
 - 3.3. The need of distinguishing clearly between accuracy and fluency practice.
 - 3.4. Communicative competence.
4. MAIN FEATURES OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE.
 - 4.1. Differences between spoken and written language.
 - 4.2. Main spoken language features.
 - 4.3. Main written language features.
5. FACTORS DEFINING A COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION.
6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS.
7. CONCLUSION.

1. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1.1. Legislation.

- Educational law (LOE), May 3rd 2006 modified by new Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE).

- Organic Law on the improvement of the quality of education, December 9th 2013 (LOMCE). **REPEALED.**

- Royal Decree 126 of February 28th 2014 that establishes the curriculum in Primary Education.

- Decree 198 of September 5th 2014 that establishes the Curriculum in Primary Education in the Autonomous Community of Murcia.

- Order of November 20th 2014 that establishes assessment and evaluation in Primary education.

- Decree 359 of October 30th 2009 that establishes the Diversity Attention in the Autonomous Community of Murcia.

- **Resolution of June 22nd, 2020** of the general management of educational evaluation and professional formation establish guidelines for the development plan of continuity of the educational activity in 2020-2021 at the teacher centers that teach non-university studies in Murcia.

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1.3. Further reading

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2. INTRODUCTION

Current advances in computer technology and the rapid pace of change in the communication revolution, as well as the widespread migratory movements have led to the creation of a wide and open world where the need for an effective way of communication with others in a foreign language has turned into an urgent aim.

Due to this, the Organic Law 2/2006, May 3rd (LOE), [modified by the new Organic Law 3/2020 \(LOMLOE\)](#), together with the [repealed](#) Organic Law (LOMCE) 8/2013, Royal Decree 126 and the new LOMLOE that establishes the introduction of English as a Foreign Language in Infant and Primary Education focus on the great importance of introducing a foreign language to the students since the beginning of their schooling. With this purpose English is taught in our school from Infant Stage to the end of Compulsory Education through the Foreign Language Area.

Likewise we must also consider when dealing with communicative competence and within the framework of primary education, the Decree 359 about the diversity of students. To this respect, in the area of foreign language we will take into account the different measures to be carried out either for students with ordinary or specific attention measures.

The main aim of this area is to teach students how to interact with others in the target language. That is to achieve the communicative competence in such a language. According to Hymes (1964) communicative competence must include not only the linguistic forms of a language but also knowledge of when, how and to whom it is appropriate to use these forms. So learning a language involves the learner acquiring the knowledge of the language, together with being able to use it in an effective and efficient way for the purpose of communication.

Considering the aforesaid, in this theme we will develop these key ideas related to language as means of communication, main features of spoken and written language and the differences between them, all of that bearing in mind their implications in the foreign language classroom aiming at leading our students to achieve communicative competence, curricular purpose of this subject in the reform.

It is worth mentioning that the new organic law introduces seven key competences and one of them is: "Linguistic communication competence". From this basis, the foreign language can directly contribute to this general key competence.

[We want here to make a reflection about the impact of the recent pandemic \(covid- 19\) and its possible methodological adaptations that we must consider, as teachers, according to the Contingency Plan that each educational center must elaborate. This plan must reflect the](#)

educational center adaptations to the different hygienic sanitary measures that the authorities implement.

3. LANGUAGE AS A COMMUNICATION MEANS

A language is many things: it is a system, a code, a set of conventions, a means of communication, to mention only a few. Teachers of any subject must have a clear idea of the subject they are teaching - not only the facts of the subject, but also an overall view of its nature. This is as true for us, the language teachers, as for any other teacher. So, following, we will deal with the features we need to know about the nature of language and communication; and their main classroom implications so that we can handle our subject the most accurate possible.

3.1. The nature of language and its educational implications

In a language, certain words such as “I, with, which” acquire meaning only by relation to others and, what is more important, certain structures in English can only be understood in contrast with others, for instance, the present simple and present continuous, or the past simple and present perfect. These aspects of language as a system need to be understood and internalized, as they cannot simply be learned by heart if we aim at our pupils achieving communicative competence and using the target language in an original way.

At **LOMLOE**, digital competence acquires a special role, due to the new circumstances that have caused the greater use of digital tools to be precipitated and this leads to a comprehensive and global digital strategy. Given the recent health emergency situation, to favor the teaching-learning process, ICTs will be used as communication tools between the educational community: MEET, CLASSROOM, CLASS DOJO, CENTER WEB, WEBMAIL, PHONE CALLS, ETC.

Understanding and recognizing the language as a system will imply that in our lessons, we will see the necessity for activities which lead to understanding.

In English, as well as in many other languages, many pieces of language are learnt in quite large wholes, usually by repetition which automatizes that language and is used over and over in analogous situations (A: Hello, how are you? B: Fine, thanks. And you?). In these cases the focus is not on understanding, but rather on the ability to respond automatically, which leads us to consider this feature of the language as a communication habit we can use in the classroom by means of repetition and intensive oral practice.

Apart from the use of the language as a habit, we can also convey that the language is used for social conventions, which we need to pay attention as these vary from country to country and using the social conventions of one country in another may lead to

embarrassment, confusion or misunderstanding. Such conventions can be observed both in oral and written language: both a letter to a friend in English, and even a formal business letter, begin Dear... For practical implications in the classroom we will contrast the social conventions of Spanish with those used by the speakers of different English-speaking countries.

The language should be seen in many other ways, but for teaching purposes we will only focus on three particularly important: vocabulary and structures make up the what is said; pronunciation, stress and intonation are how language is said, and functions are why is said.

3.2. The use of Spanish in the foreign language classroom

There is a real danger in word-for-word translation, but this does not mean that it is a good idea to ban Spanish from the classroom. There are situations where the use of Spanish is of particular use:

- a. If our pupils need to discuss a difficulty with us there is no reason to make the discussion artificially difficult by insisting that it takes place in English.
- b. If our pupils are working in groups preparing, or discussing, material it is not essential that the whole discussion takes place in English. While this may be desirable, with most classes it is sufficient to make sure that the activity is useful if the report of the groups, and the general class discussion of the individual group reports, is in English.

There are considerable advantages to allowing both languages in the classroom: some pupils will have ideas, but not the English to express them; others may have the English but not the ideas. Permitting both languages, preferably in clearly defined areas, usually ensures that much of the work is more interesting and that ultimately a higher standard of English is achieved. And by doing this we will promote the integration of students with low intellectual capacities.

3.3. The need of distinguishing clearly between accuracy and fluency practice

Basically, we can consider two distinct objectives in language learning: learning to use the language as an effective means of communication, and, more formally, using the language accurately. To some extent, these two objectives overlap: the student who makes too many mistakes will not communicate well. On the other hand, it is frequently possible, and for some students necessary, to communicate effectively even if the message contains a fairly high proportion of formal errors.

Traditional language teaching used to place a great emphasis on accuracy and teachers were encouraged to correct the mistakes which were almost always those that the students had positively made, mostly errors of pronunciation and structure. Those mistakes which students did not make omissions, things they did not even attempt to say -were not

“corrected”. Teachers worried a lot about when to correct and they normally would do it immediately mistake was made, or as a follow-up after the end of a practice.

Nowadays the dilemma has become more acute as more and more emphasis is placed on communicative language teaching. This has resulted, for example, in more students doing or group work, where most teaching sequences now involve both controlled and free practices.

Most of the dilemmas can be solved providing we have clearly in mind a single distinction: is the emphasis of the activity on accuracy, or on fluency?

We will make clear to our students that in a practice which concentrates on accuracy all important mistakes will be corrected. Accuracy practices are essentially classroom activities: they place the emphasis on language learning. They are, unfortunately, not very exciting, but are an important part of the learning process.

In fluency practices we must not correct every mistake and indeed must positively encourage our pupils to use all means at their disposal to get their message across. If this involves using their hands, drawing, making up new words, etc. this is all to the good. This is what people do in real life when they have to get a message across in a language they know only imperfectly.

3.4. Linguistic communication competence

It is also important to highlight that the curricular purpose of foreign language area is to teach how to establish interpersonal relationships with speakers of the foreign language, which involves the use of a teaching approach based on communication and oriented towards the acquisition of communicative competence. Therefore, as foreign language teachers, our main aim is to enable our pupils to reach communicative competence. Some authors, including Canale and Swain (1980), talk about the possibility of dividing Communicative competence into five subcompetences:

4. Grammatical competence or capacities to put into practice the units and functioning rules of the language system.

5. Discourse competence or capacity to use different types of discourses and organise them according to the communicative situation and the speakers.

6. Sociolinguistic competence or capacity to adequate statements to a particular context, taking into account the accepted uses of a particular linguistic community.

7. Strategic competence or capacity to use communicative strategies, either verbal or non verbal, in order to fill in potential interruptions in the communicative process.

8. Sociocultural competence or capacity to familiarise oneself with the social and cultural context where a particular language is used.

The different blocks of contents of the Decree 198 aim at developing these sub-competences. For example, block three focuses on linguistic knowledge and reflexion on language and learning which in turn develops the grammatical and strategic competence. Likewise, block one, two and four aim at developing sociolinguistic and socio-cultural knowledge. In turn the Order X about the evaluation in primary education stipulates that the assessment will be carried out considering the evaluation criteria of the different stages and the five sub-competences are included in these criteria.

Therefore, all these elements must be considered as integrating parts of the language, as it is not something abstract, but a tool for effective communication. Thus, communicative competence acquisition is seen as a creative construction process, where our pupils, by drawing on their mother tongue, general cognitive strategies and on the linguistic input they receive, they establish hypotheses to form new rules about the foreign language system. On the other hand, this system, or interlanguage, is gradually contrasted and improved as the new input is presented to our pupils. Therefore, error will be seen as an integral part of the learning process, as it is the manifestation of the effort our pupils are making to acquire the new system. This acquisition process may be fostered in different ways which do not require linguistic responses (i.e.: Total Physical Response techniques developed by Dr James, J.Asher in 1969).

4. MAIN FEATURES OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Within the sets of contents of the English language area all of them indicate main aspects of the language such as comprehension and production of oral text (Set 1 and Set 2, Decree 198 attachment 1) and comprehension and production of written texts (Set 3 and Set 4, Decree 198 attachment 1). As Halliday stated in his work “Spoken and Written language”, languages are systems of symbols and writing is one of them. A writing system may be defined as any conventional system of marks or signs that represents the utterances of a language. Writing renders language visible, while speech is ephemeral; writing is concrete and, by comparison, permanent. Both speaking and writing depend upon the underlying structures of language.

4.1. Differences between spoken and written language

Among many other differences, we will start by pointing out the most obvious one, their contrast in physical form:

- Spoken language uses phonic substance typically in the form of air-pressure movements.

- Writing uses graphic substance, typically in the form of marks on a surface.

Differences of structure and use are the product of radically different communicative situations. Crystal (1987) pointed that “speech is time-bound, dynamic, transient - part of an interaction in which, typically, both participants are present, and the speaker has a specific addressee in mind. Writing is space-bound, static, permanent - the result of a situation in which, typically, the producer is distant from the recipient - and, often, may not even know who the recipient is”.

Keeping in mind these general and physical differences between spoken and written English, from an educational point of view, there are two immediate consequences we can observe: we need to analyse and pay careful attention to their specific features; and that these differences will require different types of activities, for example, focusing on different aspects of the language; demanding different levels of correctness; using different types of materials, etc.

4.2. Main spoken language features.

Speakers:

- Do not have time to think and search for the most appropriate way to express the message. As a consequence,
- Do not pay careful attention to proper pronunciation of words or sentence construction. False starts and lack of links are very frequent.

Also they can:

Use pauses, gestures, expressions, interruption, repetition and other usual strategies in oral communication to slow down the pace of message transmission, according to the situation feedback, so that the listener can receive it appropriately; to help or show understanding; or to ask for repetition, clarification, etc.

- Have immediate feedback from the listener.
- Rephrase what is being said.
- Show interest or lack of it in what is being tackled.
- Use a wide range of expressive possibilities and language variety.
- Use words and sentences varying their intonation and stress to convey attitude.
- (In a face to face interaction) use a great variety of facial expressions, gestures and body language to help to convey the message.

4.3. Main written language features.

The writer:

Does not get immediate feedback from the reader, if any at all, Cannot use intonation or stress,

Is denied facial expression, gesture and body movement to help communication,

Can spend the necessary time to focus attention on relevant points and consequently, use correct grammatical and stylistic techniques,

Uses greater clarity in the texts, proper punctuation and internal cohesion, needs to use complex and logical organisation in what is being expressed, as it needs to be understood by the reader who cannot ask for clarification,

Uses more standard register than the speaker does.

As FL teachers with young children, we should try to help our learners do their best in developing both oral and written language. However, if we analyse the corresponding Curriculum Act, we may observe that the weight of written skills increased as students' progress. Therefore, at the end of the sixth course we may observe a balance between oral and written language for the first time, whereas the first course focuses on oral comprehension and non verbal response to oral stimuli. Obviously, the need of a clear context will be more relevant at earlier stages, though the need of using the language for practical purposes and in a clear context will impinge the whole stage.

5. FACTORS DEFINING A COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION.

Communication is part of linguistic communication competence which is one of key competences that the students must achieve throughout their school years (Royal Decree 126, art 2).

As we know, communication is a two-sided phenomenon which involves both, an exchange of meaning on the part of the participants, and also a means of social interaction. In a basic communicative interaction the elements to be taken into account are:

The setting where the communication act takes place: This is an essential factor in the election of a formal register of functional exponents to be used. As an example of contexts we could cite the window where tickets are sold in a railway station, the counter of a shop and, of course, the classroom. The communicative situations which are given in each setting

determine the formality of the language, the topics and the specific vocabulary arising and which, on the other hand, is related to them.

The addressor is the person transmitting the message, and shaping it appropriately for the addressee to be able to understand it.

The addressee is the person or group of people to whom the message are addressed. The relationship existing between the addressor and the addressee has a great influence on the utterance characteristics: the degree of trust or affinity that can be found between them, the role that each one of them plays in society, the dominating linguistic varieties, and even the participants' sex are variables to be taken into account when analysing the resultant communicative interactions.

The channel or means through which the information is transmitted. For instance, the air the sound waves circulate through, the telephone wire and writing.

The code or set of signs and rules regulating the combinations used to convey messages. The best known is the one made up of signs and rules of the language or languages spoken by the speaker, However, in human communication other codes can be used, for example, non verbal communication as a way of checking message understanding in the first stages of children's mother tongue, body language with the intention of seducing someone and the flags that are used in navigation to communicate.

The subject matter or content of the utterance: There are certain subject matters that, because of their complexity of vocabulary and structures that they require, usually limit the access to conversation of a great number of speakers.

Speakers: That is the case of some disciplines related to technical-scientific studies (Computing, Medicine, Engineering, etc.) and humanistic ones (Psychology, Philosophy, Linguistics, etc.) which demand a high grade of referential or abstraction accuracy in the terms being used. For instance, the words epistemological, verifiability, metaphysical and sense-content may be used and understood correctly only by someone who is familiarised with philosophical texts. The incorrect use of those terms limits the abstraction grade that the subject matter demands and it produces a dislike reaction by the interlocutor who is an expert on the subject.

Message form or genre is a formal aspect within discourse. For example, a love feeling towards another person can be shown through different specific manifestations, such as a song, a love declaration, a letter or even a succession of flattering comments.

Next we will study some cases where we can observe the interrelation among the factors referred to, paying special attention to the first three ones:

In a conversational communicative context where both participants are present, certain conventions normally accepted by both parts are the game rules. Initial greetings, the topic, question and answer alternation and goodbye formulae are basic components of such oral interactions. We also count on the information brought up by gestures and hand movements, as well as nodding in order to reinforce message understanding.

If the channel chosen is the telephone the lack of visual contextual support makes conventions form a more accurate set of formulae and rules of use those transgressions may avoid communication. In the United Kingdom when using the telephone, the alternation in the interventions of the person calling and that of the person answering may be summarised as follows

When dealing with context, it has an essential influence the formal register used in the conversation. If a professor gives a speech to an audience interested he/she will probably present certain characteristics defining formal language: vocabulary with a large number of words of Latin and Greek origin; the structures will be grammatically complex; there will be a clear division among topics; the contents will be logically sequenced in order to reach a conclusion, objective attitude, etc. The adoption of an informal register would undoubtedly produce an unwanted effect.

However, the relationship between the context and the formal register used is biunivocal. In order to illustrate this we propose the phenomenon that happens when the formal register of a teacher in the classroom modifies in a certain way the context characteristics. If the attitude of the teacher towards his/her pupils is distant and the expressions used correspond to a formal register (for instance, when telling a friend to do something he/she uses: It is my obligation to ask you to ... or would you be so kind as to ...), the context will have a formality which it did not have previously. When, on the contrary, the teacher's attitude is positive and enthusiastic towards the pupils and besides he/she uses neutral or informal registered expressions, the context in the classroom will set up an appropriate atmosphere for communicative interactions.

6. LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS.

The most usual answer to the question “why do we use language?” is “to communicate our ideas” and this ability to communicate or communicative competence is later. But it would be wrong to think of communicating our ideas as the only way in which we use language (referential, ideational or propositional function). Several other functions may be identified where the communication of ideas is a marginal or irrelevant consideration. According to the decree 198, attachment 1 learning foreign languages is especially relevant since communication skills is the first goal to be achieved by an individual in order to enable every citizen possess a knowledge of at least two languages in addition o their mother tongue.

One of the most common uses of languages, the expressive or emotional one, is a means of getting rid of our nervous energy when we are under stress.

We do not try to communicate ideas because we can use language in this way whether we are alone or not. Swear words and obscenities are probably the most usual signals to be used in this way, especially when we are angry. But there are also many emotive utterances of a positive kind, such as expressions of fear, affection, astonishment...

Another function we may find is based on phonetic properties. The rhythmical litanies of religious groups, the persuasive cadences of political speechmaking, the dialogue chants used by prisoners or soldiers have only one apparent reason: people take delight in them. They can only be explained by a universal desire to exploit the sonic potential of language.

The next function is the performative one. A performative sentence is an utterance that performs an act. This use occurs in the naming of a ship at a launching ceremony, or when a priest baptizes a child.

We may also find other functions such as:

- Recording facts.
- Instrument of thought.
- Expression of regional, social, educational, sexual or occupational identity.

The British linguist Halliday in his work "Language as Social Semiotic" grouped all these functions into three metafunctions, which are the manifestation in the linguistic system of the two very general purposes which underlie all uses of language combined with the third component (textual) which breathes relevance into the other two.

The ideational function is to organize the speaker's or writer's experience of the real or imaginary world, i.e. language refers to real or imagined persons, things, actions, events, states, etc.

The interpersonal function is to indicate, establish or maintain social relationships between people. It includes forms of address, speech function, modality...

The third component is the textual function which serves to create written or spoken texts which cohere within themselves and which fit the particular situation in which they are used.

Function of context.

As we know, the situation where a speech act takes place clearly determines the way a given function such as a greeting will be structured. Thus a friend gathering to go to the

cinema and a reception at Buckingham Palace may share the function of greeting somebody, and yet the linguistic, prosodic and paralinguistic elements will, of course, vary in both situations. And it is as important in the case of a FL as in the mother tongue, as it helps learners understand and express functional meanings.

However, the FL learner needs more than a fixed repertoire of linguistic forms corresponding to communicative functions. Since the relationship between forms and functions is variable, and cannot be definitely predicted outside specific situations, the learner must also be given opportunities to develop strategies for interpreting language in actual use.

In the Primary class the teacher have to take into account the learner's knowledge and assumptions in order to select the language he/she uses, that is, the teacher must take into account the knowledge shared between himself or herself and the students, and produce enough language to express the communicative purpose intended in that situation.

7. CONCLUSION.

As a conclusion, we can state that the most efficient communicator in a FL is not always the person who is best at manipulating its structures. It is often the person who is most skilled at processing the complete situation involving himself and the addressee, taking into account what knowledge is already shared between them, from the situation, and selecting items that will communicate the message effectively.

Foreign language learners need opportunities to develop these skills, by being exposed to situations where the emphasis is on using their available resources for communicating.

In the same way as for comprehension, the learner needs to acquire not only a repertoire of linguistic items, but also a repertoire of strategies for using them in a concrete situation and thus develop their linguistic communication competence.

We know how important to develop the linguistic communication competence is in our classroom, especially when dealing with a foreign language. If we have a look at the Decree 198 the main aim as FLT is that our pupils achieve a linguistic communication competence, the goal is that our pupils don't learn a language, but how to communicate in that language. Communication is a tool that can be used at different degrees of complexity depending on the nature and skills of our students. Therefore we will not demand to those students with low intellectual capacities the same level of success than to the ones with high intellectual capacities or to the average students, as establishes the decree 359/2009 and the order of November 20th 2014.

There are two language features: oral and written language. In the first cycle of Primary Education we will consider just the first one and in the second and third cycles we will work

both of them in our classroom. To do this, we work through four skills which should be integrated: listening and speaking (oral skills) and reading and writing (written skills). And the order of November 20th 2014 about the evaluation in primary education aims at evaluating those skills.

However, the activities and task to develop the four skills should not be designed as isolated activities, but as an important part of our programming design, so that the school documents (Educational Units, School Educational Project, and Annual General Project (PGA)) get to be useful tools to achieve our educational aims.

It is important to refer to compliance with the rules of use necessary because of the appearance of any situation such as the recently experienced pandemic, which affects educational centers directly. In this case, we will consider: common spaces, restrooms, libraries, cafeteria... by the same token, the presence of support teachers because of the Covid- 19 has been very useful to take into account the educational community, hygiene standards inside and outside the ordinary classroom, use of masks, safety distance, access to the centers and exit form it and the need for the ratio not to exceed 20 students in each group.

Considering the situation aforesaid, to promote the learning process, we will use communicational tools such as ITC: MEET, CLASSROOM, CLASS DOJO, CENTER WEB, WEBMAIL, PHONE CALLS, ETC.