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Language activities, concept and a new theoretical framework for learning foreign languages

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Abstract

The developments and rapid changes do not mean always bringing innovation in all areas of human activity. In the fact, the evolution does not all the time implies extraordinary progress, but, however, with regard to the foreign languages a new communication approaches and language activities have had a continuous progress in terms of teaching, learning and assessment, always referring to the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages".

In this context, the main purpose of this study is to analyze the concept of language communication activities and to support this approach by comparing their objectives more efficiently in communication, starting from the theoretical aspect and their implementation into practice.

We have tried to give a clearer and more accessible vision a regarding the acquisition process which is based in comprehension authentique documents, reflection of the systematic production, which favorites the students' autonomy.

To accomplish the tasks and to conduct the activities we first must understand the notions and concepts which frequently encounters in learning process.

In order to achieve our goals it is helpful to use activities which promote students to practice the foreign language precisely and consistently to generate a discussion or conveniently, describing a process in most simple way, with aim to complete the phrase by answering the posed questions, taken into consideration the strategies and objectives for achieving our expectations.

What should we learn? How should we learn? Which activities? What is the result that we expect? These questions we will try to answer in this paperwork.

Key words: activity, objective, communication, teaching, evaluation.

Introduction

Nowadays, learning the foreign languages and cultures is very important in every aspect of life. Knowledge of foreign language is one of the founding principles of the EU, which facilitate a free movement among the people, professional qualifications recognised abroad, simultaneously favours reciprocal understanding and strengthens co-operation between different countries and peoples.

Therefore, it is essential to approach and to select a particular strategy, a methodology and a unique platform, that suggest learning of the foreign languages, although, at the same time promotes transparency, coherence and effectiveness, also helps to achieve the objectives during the process of learning of the foreign languages.

The Reference Framework for Languages promotes:(CEFR 2001:3)*"[...] also supports teaching and learning methods that help young people, but even the youngest, to harbour the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to gain more and more independence in thought and action in order to become more accountable and cooperative in their relations with others. In this sense, this work contributes to the growth of democratic citizenship".*

From this approach we understand that languages issues is not only linguistic but a complex acquisition, also emphasizing the importance of promoting the different cultures, traditions and people values, as well during this process, learners pass through different stages, where linguistic activities are conducted, expressing the skills and strategies

performed by the teacher, which subsequently express the student's abilities by facilitating their communication.

To accomplish tasks and to conduct the activities first we should understand the notions and approaches, cause during the learning process frequently students may encounter in considerable confusion, particularly when the students may have established a different understanding of the terms of their everyday use.

LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES

When we discuss about the language activities, we always try to instigate from the linguistic perspective, interactive and interpersonal communication, encountered on abilities that the social actors possesses.

Numerous linguistic activities relate to the reception, production, interaction and mediation (especially translation and interpretation activities), each of them can be performed verbally or in writing or in two forms, while in terms of language users it is considered such as: (CEFR 2001:16) *"[ ] social actors who have to perform tasks that are not only linguistic in circumstances and in a given environment, within a specific action field. "*

So, we figure out that to accomplish these communicative tasks or to perform these acts through speech activities, when it comes to a social activity carried out by one or more subjects or associates who through linguistic strategies manipulate with their abilities, with the aim to reach a certain predetermined objectives to resolve the tasks. Perception or imagination means the learner perceived situation in which he/she acts, and on the other side the tasks to be accomplished in an environment and under certain conditions of daily life.

In order to understand better the interconnectedness and complexity of all these processes, we must still give an explanation of the notions, always citing the European Framework of Reference for Languages where: (CEFR 2001:17)

"Language activities relate to the exercise of language communication skills in one certain field, to handle (understand and / or produce) one or more texts for the purpose of accomplishing a task".

However, language learning activities, including the involvement of oral or written production activities, are among the most necessary processes in the language interaction game throughout the accomplishment of these activities.

They are also divided into: learning or comprehension activities that imply multiple forms of learning activities, initially dealing with the meaning of; the teaching unit's content, whereas production or expression activities plays an important role in many professional and academic researches too.

Thus, for the realization of the interaction process, at least two actors should be involved in communicating process where the speaker precedes the conversation while the listener prepares a response.

Therefore, learning to interact implies not only the process of action but when we conduct these activities we also try to respect the social rules which present the socio-linguistic skills as element that plays the main role in communication. (Tagliante :2005), CEFR: *also proposes a model called "action" not far from the so-called" communicative "approach, but more focused on the actions the student can do with mother tongue".*

Thus, explaining the multiple linkages of foreign language activities which helps the process of accomplishing tasks with native language recognition as the basis for achieving the objectives formally or dimensionally as (Pendanx,1998:13), also states: "*Learning a foreign language is about three dimensions: on the one hand, the cultural, cognitive, and affective framework in which the learner develops his / her own activity, and which determines how he conceives the foreign language and its learning; On the other hand, the institutional situation in which the teaching is carried out and specifically its*

impacts on the role of classroom communication: lastly, the activities in the classroom that determine the student's activity and give a certain direction to his learning process".

From the Pendanx, citation we are aware that the various dimensions mentioned above are intertwined in any form of use for learning foreign languages, it is also assumed that any teaching/ learning act of a language is related in some way to each of these dimensions, such as: strategies, tasks, texts, individual skills, language communication skills, language activities and fields.

Since Language is a complex instrument which leads to development of the society, it is required the knowledge of language competences, notion and tasks.

According to (Bourguignon, 2006:52) *"Basic concepts such as "task " and "competence" in achieving the objectives have been reduced to a single "communicational" term, i.e. communication-action, To explain the logical linkage of linguistic activities, according to the active perspective if communication is involved in completing a task, it is not completed, as communicative competence is only a part of the general jurisdiction".*

When discussing about language activities, the concept of learning through the accomplishment of communicative tasks implies certain skills, according to the Framework that fulfil or complete this process as:

The linguistic communication ability: that itself contains several components: a linguistic component, a socio-linguistic component, and a pragmatic component. Each of these components contains in itself knowledge, skills and certain communication skills that complete the process of language production, which is related to the knowledge of lexicon, phonetics, syntax and other dimensions of the language system.

Socio-linguistic ability: include all socio-cultural parameters of language use or linguistic communication by implying and applying social norms such as: rules of conduct, how you approach someone, respecting different social groups, their status, regulating relationships between generations, sexes etc.
That is encoded by the language and presents the rules of operation of a particular society or community.

Pragmatic ability: refers to the functional use of language resources as the realization of language acts in the practical or conceptual terms, while all categories includes social actors, imaginations, mechanisms and capacities for which cognitive reality proves the necessary behaviour and accomplishment of a communication act.

Then, it should be taken into a consideration the fact, that human skills vary and are highly individual and their activities are different, based on their skills and requirements during the act of communication, by using appropriate strategies that enables to understand and to produce texts related to topics involved in educational fields, professional fields, public domains and personal areas. To meet these daily needs through communication skills, certain tasks must be accomplished. So what do we mean by the notion of ″Task″?

With the (Pendanx, 1998:13) *″Task″ we mean any deliberate action imagined by the actor as necessary to achieve a certain result in the function of solving a problem, fulfilling a problem, of a given purpose.″*

Hence, how do we accomplish a certain task especially if it is not about the linguistic standard?

It is very clear that teachers are based on institutionally standardized study programs, authoring and drafting of approved texts, with didactic tools as an indispensable part of language activity in a certain dimension regardless of other dimensions.
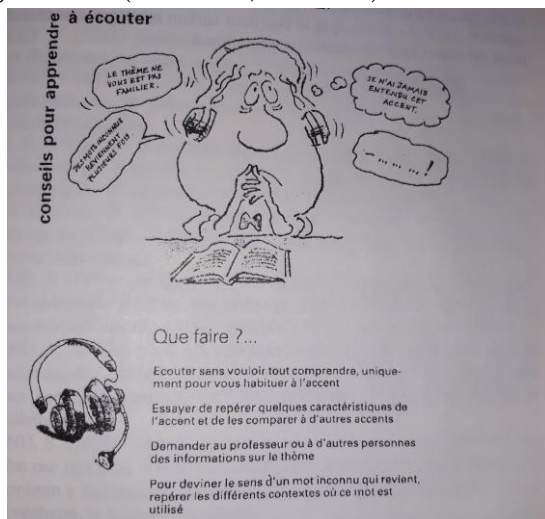
Though, in this case which methodological approach should be used? What skills and activities should be developed to communicate? For example taking an **awareness-raising activity**, we note that when students are confronted with an unknown text, depends on their response we will be aware of the situation in which data and competencies are based (listening, reading, speaking and writing).

We notice that the communication between students is encouraged, instructed, how to accomplish the language activities.

This figure makes a number of suggestion to further improve the awareness activities which is one of the most difficult tasks for the students, as well as through this activities we can analyse their performance, which is necessary to improve and enrich the learning quality required particularly in the learning process.

The task objectives are presented below.

What can you do? (Pendanx, 1982:77)

Fig.1 represents a communication lesson

Table.1 Listen unintentionally to understand everything, simply to be taught with accent
(Catherine, Élodie, Émilie, Marie&Noëlle 2015:28)

Écoutez et dites ce que vous entendez		% +	% -
a.Français	a.Française	90	10
b.Libanais	b.Libanais	83	17
c.Allemand	c.Allemande	89	11

Table 2. Try to find some accent features and compare them with other accent

Français	English	% +	% -
a. Parlement	a. Parliament	70	30
b. Commission	b. Commission	82	18
c. Région	c. Region	92	8

Table 3. Ask teachers or other people for information on the topic/similarity between languages French/English (Catherine, Véronique M.Kizirian, Monique 2012:22)

Avez vous une expression similaire dans votre langue?		% +	% _
a. Photographie	a. Photographie	100	0
b. Hôtel	b. Hôtel	100	0
c. Architecture	c.Architecture	100	0

Table 4. Find the different contexts where this word is used(Catherine, Élodie,Émilie, Marie –Noëlle 2015: 55)

Drôle d' expression	% +	% _
Ce n'est pas la mer à boire	73	27
Context: Apprendre le français, ce n'est pas la mer à boire. Je connais déjà de mots		

This analysis implies many functions that can be combined between, as we can see in the first table where it is required phonetic (pronunciation), while in second table is required accent features and compare them with other accent, in third table it is required to find the similarity between languages French/English and in the fourth table it is required to find the different contexts where the word is used.

In this case it denotes that, the students from the levels A1+, possess different knowledge and they express it in a

different way, students has the full freedom to select language activities, thus in order to accomplish assigned a task.

And as a result of this activity were scored according to the number of the correct answer the total number of the correct answers from his activities 86.9% of the students' respondent correctly while 13.1% of them responded incorrectly. However this activity was conducted with 30 participants.

This situation represents the complexity and connectivity between the language activities as an inseparable part of the foreign language learning process as a common correlation formation with the strategy with a certain purpose of actions selected by an individual or certain group to accomplish a task; who is assigned or who undertakes to perform it.

CONCLUSION

Clarification of some terminological concepts of methodological and didactic approaches from the new framework in foreign language learning, principles and strategies, is very much needed nowadays. Especially for students who study foreign languages, as well as, for all other interested parties in an institutional, or on their own way, where it might be useful for them to handle different situations and circumstances.

Also, we have noticed that tasks can be solved in multiple ways with different approaches and involving students' freedom to choose a way to complete the tasks under teacher supervision. So we can conclude that students' awareness and knowledge about this issue may require more freedom and flexibility for them, as a result will permit students more creativity.

Finally, we can conclude that the teacher must constantly be vigilant and arrange all the problems that arise throughout the teaching process, starting from the strategy, the objective of the assignment written and oral during the foreseen

interactive and intercultural activities on purpose to understand and to accomplish the tasks in the most accurate way.

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