



## TOPIC 1:

### LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATION: ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE. FACTORS THAT DEFINE A COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION: TRANSMITTER, RECIEVER, FUNCTIONS AND CONTEXT

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Humans are the only specie that has the abilities to comprehend and express both oral and written language. Communicating through verbal and non verbal language, combining verbal and non verbal aspects, clearly separate humans from animals.

Taking into account the legal Catalan framework (LEC 12/2009), the education Department has developed several documents in order to specify the different competences associated to the **linguistic ambit**. The most relevant document is the Catalan curriculum, regulated by Decree 119/2015.

The linguistic competence in foreign language is structured in 5 dimensions:

- **Oral communication dimension**
- **Written expression dimension**
- Reading comprehension dimension
- Literary dimension
- Plurilingual and intercultural dimension.

Within this topic, **oral communication and written expression dimensions** are going to be treated concerning theoretical, methodological and assessment aspects. Is is interesting to take into account the linguistic competences that are in each of this two dimensions.

### Oral communication Dimension:

- **Competence 1:** Obtain the basic information and understand easy oral texts adapted about the daily life, the media and the academic world.
- **Competence 2:** Plan and produce brief and easy oral texts appropriate to the communicative situation
- **Competence 3:** Interact orally according to the communicative situation using the basic conversational strategies.



### Written expression Dimension:

- **Competence 7:** Plan easy texts from the identification of the most relevant elements of a communicative situation
- **Competence 8:** Produce easy texts with adaptation to the communicative situation and supported.
- **Competence 9:** Revise the text to improve the function of the communicative situation and with specific supports.

## 1. Language as communication

The main purpose of language is communication, which is defined as the exchange of information between two or more individuals, which involves the complex processes of production and comprehension. It includes both verbal and non verbal elements.

### 1.1. Oral language

The pedagogical orientations born in the 1970s gave priority to oral expression rather than the written one when learning a new language. They highlighted the importance of **speak well and to be able to listen comprehensively**. It is known that mistakes done in oral communication will influence written expression. This is also contemplated in the Catalan curriculum, which is based on competencies and regulated by Decree 119/2015.

The organic law LOMCE (2013) in its article number 19 , also underlines the importance of oral comprehension and expression because:

- a) Human language is mainly oral.
- b) Children learn to speak before they start primary school.
- c) Oral language takes part in all statements of affective, social and intellectual human life.

When teaching oral language, it is necessary to take into account two important aspects:

- It is more complex than written language because the interlocutor is directly present and it is produced automatically.
- - It is necessary to treat phonic aspects and prosodic aspects (features, intonation, accent, rhythm,...)

### 1.1.1 Components of oral language

According to Lindfors (1920-1995), **oral language has 3 components**, which are used together by speakers in social situations.

- a) **Phonological aspects:** Combination of sounds to create morphemes.
- b) **Semantic components:** Is made up of morphemes that form words.
- c) **Syntactic components:** Is formed by the rules that enable people to combine morphemes into sentences.

The author also sustains that children's language occurs through:

- The interaction among people
- The interaction and the stimulus from the environment
- Children's own thinking activities

### 1.1.2 Methodology for teaching oral language

Students must feel the need to communicate starting by their own experience.

As teachers, we must make our best in order to help them feel the need to communicate. In that sense, the educator always has to start any activity by children's interest and experiences. The objective, according to the catalan curriculum regulated by Decree 119/2015 is to create real and significant contexts. The **4 methodological principles** when teaching a language are:

- a) **Principle of activity:** Learning by doing and practicing
- b) **Principle of socialization:** promote students' interaction
- c) **Principle of individualization:** mental and linguistic development is different in each child.



**d) Motivation:** the starting point of any learning is being emotionally engaged with that.

### 1.1.3. Techniques to promote oral communication

There are loads of different activities to promote oral interaction. Some of them are individual (monologues) and some others require more than one subject (dialogues or group conversations). As teachers, being creative is an important point to promote real life situations which involve children to combine **linguistic resources** (lexical, semantic and morphological aspects) with the **extra linguistic resources** (gestures and body language): dramatization, exposition or explanations, telephone conversation, interviews or surveys, etc.

### 1.1.4. Assessment of oral language

According to the evaluation order ENS/164/2016, there is one dimension specifically for oral communication that comprises 3 competences:

#### Oral communication Dimension:

- **Competence 1:** Obtain the basic information and understand easy oral texts adapted about the daily life, the media and the academic world.
- **Competence 2:** Plan and produce brief and easy oral texts appropriate to the communicative situation
- **Competence 3:** Interact orally according to the communicative situation using the basic conversational strategies.

Each competence is based on grading levels, which are established on the document "*Competències bàsiques per l'àmbit lingüístic*" and regulated by the Catalan curriculum.

To promote **oral productions** in English, the teacher will provide a rich environment with a wide variety of activities. In this sense, **cooperative**

**work** is crucial. Not only this, but also activities based on **real, known and close situations for students**.

## 1.2. Written language

Written language is considered a second form of language, concerning oral language as the first one. In written code there is a lack of reaction on receivers' side and there are not paralinguistic features (gestures or body language), either.

### 1.2.1. Methodology for teaching oral language

As the Catalan curriculum says, for covering the **written expression dimension** the methodology applied is based on tasks that require their publication (blogs, posters, magazines, etc.) in order to locate them in a **real context** of language. Therefore, the written task will be almost always framed into a learning sequence that requires the other basic linguistic skills such as **speaking, reading, interacting or listening**. The activities will promote the enjoyment for writing. Seeing that, they will encourage students to do a creative use of English (creating rhymes, create stories, songs, etc.). For that, **ICT tools** can become a good help.

- All the written productions will have a very **clear objective and a specific person or the people who is going to be addressed to**.
- Writing activities will be always considered as a **process** more than as an objective itself. To make that possible, the **teacher has a crucial role as a guide** in order to provide the students with the necessary supports and patterns.
- **Brainstorming** for activating children's previous knowledge and the purpose of the task



### 1.2.2. Techniques to promote oral communication

There are 3 main types of practices to promote oral communication:

- a) **Controlled practice:** involves activities such as scrambled sentences, short texts, substituting some missing words, etc.
- b) **Guided/directed practice:** It implies following a model and writing short texts with oral instructions, link sentences logically, take notes of what they hear, etc.
- c) **Free practice:** In involves activities such as reading real articles from the newspaper, talk orally about a topic, etc.

### 1.2.3. Assessment of written language

According to the evaluation order ENS/164/2016, there is one dimension specifically for oral communication that comprises 3 competences:

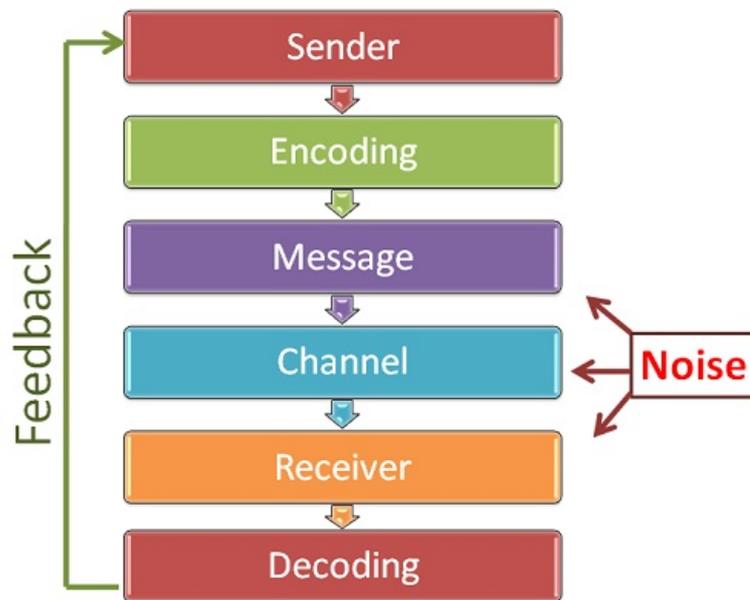
#### Written expression Dimension:

- **Competence 7:** Plan easy texts from the identification of the most relevant elements of a communicative situation
- **Competence 8:** Produce easy texts with adaptation to the communicative situation and supported.
- **Competence 9:** Revise the text to improve the function of the communicative situation and with specific supports.

Writing activities will be always considered as a **process** more than as an objective itself. To make that possible, the **teacher has a crucial role as a guide** in order to provide the students with the necessary supports and patterns.

## 2. Factors that define a communicative situation

Communicating is the process of transferring information in which the addresser transmits the information to a receiver.



### 2.1. Functions of the communicative act

The anthropologist Malinowski (1884-1942) defended that there are 3 main functions of the communicative act:

- a) **Cognitive function:** The capacity of relating information
- b) **Expressive function:** The capacity of indicating the mood
- c) **Conation function:** The capacity to persuade others.

Another author, Jakobson (1896-1982), whose ideas were based on structuralism and functionality, talked about more functions of language, such as:

- a) **Referential**
- b) **Emotive**
- c) **Conation**
- d) **Metalinguistic**
- e) **Poetic**

### 3. Conclusion

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The result of linguistic and neurological researches can conclude that human speech is related to a neuronal network distributed along the brain. Human language is the unique being a symbolic **communication system that is learned** instead of biologically inherited.

Languages are alive, they change along through time, none is static. They change together with social, environmental and cultural conditions. In that sense, learning a language is a complex process that several authors have research about. In that sense, the catalan curriculum regulated by decree 119/2015 structures the general linguistic dimensions and competences that should be taken into consideration in order to help students to acquire it.

### 4. Bibliography and webgraphy

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## 5. General overview

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### 0. Language as communication

In 1970 new methodological approaches sustained the importance of leaning oral language before written one in order to speak well and listen comprehensively.

#### 1.1. Oral language

##### 1.1.1. Components of oral language

- Phonological: combining sounds to create morphemes
- Semantic: combining morphemes to form words.
- Syntactic: combining words to form sentences.

##### 1.1.2. Methodology for teaching oral language

- start by children's' interest and their necessity to communicate among others.
- The methodological principles are: socialization, individualization, activity and motivation

##### 1.1.3. Techniques to promote oral communication

- Drama, conversation, interviews...etc. Always based on real contexts and situations.

##### 1.1.4. Assessment of oral language

The assessment needs to be continuous and formative.  
It should combine different instruments and techniques

#### 1.2. Written language

##### 1.2.1. Methodology for teaching oral language

There are 3 basic stages: controlled, guided and free production.

It needs to be based on oral production and real life contexts.

### **1.2.2. Techniques to promote oral communication**

following the curriculum, there should be activities of planning, producing and revising written language.

### **1.2.3. Assessment to promote oral communication**

It is important to base the assessment on the specific linguistic competences of the written expression dimension and how are they graded.

## **2. Factors that define a communicative situation**

Sender→encoding→MESSAGE→channel→Receiver→Decoding.

## **6. Key concepts**

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- Oral comprehension dimension
- Written expression dimension
- 3 components of oral language (Lindfors), which are used together by speakers in social situations:
  - a) Phonological aspects
  - b) Semantic components
  - c) Syntactic components
  
- Functions of the communicative act:
  - a) Cognitive function: The capacity of relating information
  - b) Expressive function: The capacity of indicating the mood
  - c) Conation function: The capacity to persuade others
  
- Practices to promote oral communication:
  - a) Controlled practice:
  - b) Guided/directed practice
  - c) Free practice: