CENTRO DE FORMACIÓN
AL-ALBA

TEMA 13

HISTORIA DE LA EVOLUCIÓN DE LA DIDÁCTICA DE LAS LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS: DE LOS MÉTODOS DE GRAMÁTICA-TRADUCCIÓN A LOS ENFOQUES ACTUALES.

TOPIC 13

HISTORY OF THE EVOLUTION OF DIDACTICS IN THE LEARNING OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES: FROM GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHODS TO PRESENT-DAY APPROACHES.

Oposiciones 2025

Cuerpo de maestros. Lengua Extranjera: inglés

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0. CONCEPTUAL MAP.

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                    Methodological principles
                          and approaches

    The Traditional      The Modern         Current
      approach           approaches        approaches
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- The Direct method
- The Oral approach
- The audiolingual method

- The Communicative Approach
- The Humanistic Approaches
- The Learner-centered Approach
- Natural approach
- Task-based learning
- PPP model

1. INTRODUCTION, EPISTEMOLOGICAL, NORMATIVE AND CURRICULAR JUSTIFICATION.

1.1. INTRODUCTION.

The possibility of communicating in a foreign language is a necessity today. It is a pressing need in the context of globalization, the circulation of professionals and workers between different countries, but also in cultural exchanges and the communication of news and knowledge. There is, therefore, a great social demand for students to develop communicative competence in a foreign language.

It is in this framework that **Organic Law 2/2006, 3rd May, of Education (LOE) and Organic Law 3/2020, 29th December, 3rd May of Education (LOMLOE)** reinforce the role of the first foreign language specialty, understanding the stage of primary education as a period of students' communicative approach to English.

Along this topic we shall see an many different methodological approaches to consider organizing our lessons. Teaching in English Primary Education is not just teaching vocabulary and grammar. Nowadays, we can find different methods and approaches that can help students achieve the communicative competence.

All these aspects will be studied in isolation along the topic.

Because as **Brian McLennan** once said: *"Communication is what makes a team strong"*.

1.2. EPISTEMOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION.

In the first place, we shall establish the difference between: approach, method and technique. According to Edward **Anthony (1963)** we can differentiate these three confusing terms:

- **Approach:** the way we look at language, the way we investigate the nature of the language. The term Approach is longer than the term Method. One approach can include several methods.

- **Method:** the way we teach a language. The term method has much to do with FLT than the term "approach" which is more theoretical.

- **Technique:** with each method we use a variety of techniques or procedures in the classroom.

These three terms are used in educational contexts. Along this topic we shall analyze different methods and approaches to find the best ones to teach FL. Even we will study the most used along the years, following a chronological order.

1.3. NORMATIVE AND CURRICULAR JUSTIFICATION.

Article 11 of RD 157/2022 1st March, which establishes the basic curriculum of Primary Education, establishes the set of objectives, competences, content stated in the form of basic knowledge, pedagogical methods and evaluation criteria for Education. Primary constitutes the curriculum of this stage. This topic is related to several of the curricular elements as reflected in:

- **Articles 17 of LOMLOE, 7 of RD 157/2022 of 1st March and 5 of Decree 101/2023 of 9th May**, which include the General Objectives of the Stage.

  Objective F) Acquire in at least one foreign language the basic communicative competence that allows them to express and understand simple messages.

- The **Annex in Decree 101/2023** specifies the Competency Profile and defines the key competences that students must have acquired and developed at the end of each cycle and introduces the operational descriptors that guide the level of performance expected at the end of the course in each cycle. Although the area contributes to the development of the 8 key competences, those directly related to the topic are:

  Plurilingual Competence, Competence in Linguistic communication and Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence.

- **Annex II** of the **Order 30/05/2023** includes the curricular development of the English area, where the 6 Specific Competences, the Assessment Criteria associated with them and 3 blocks of Basic Knowledge of the area are formulated. The block of basic knowledge directly related to the topic is

  block A "Communication".

2. THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH: THE GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD.

In the 18th century, modern languages were taught using the same procedures that were used from teaching Latin.

By the 19th century, *Grammar-Translation Method* had become the standard way of studying foreign languages in school.

The so-called *Grammar Translation Method* was about learning grammar rules, memorizing long lists of vocabulary and translating texts.

This method derives from the traditional approach to teaching classical languages such as Latin and Greek.

A) CHARACTERISTICS:

- Use of the grammar book to learn and study structures (great grammar importance).
- Memorizing long lists of vocabulary.
- No attention is provided to pronunciation.
- Main skills involved: reading and writing.
- Translation of sentences.
- High use of the dictionary.
- Use of L1 to explain classes.

B) ADVANTAGES-DISADVANTAGES:

Advantages	Disadvantages
It develops good readers and discipline in the class. Learning of vocabulary. Development of students´ memory processing skills.	Knowing about the language but not knowing how to use it. No listening or speaking skills. Little motivation for students. Inaccurate pronunciation.

C) EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES:
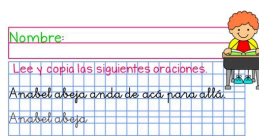
Copying words   Reading texts   Use of textbook activities

3. THE MODERN APPROACHES.

In the following subsection, we are going to deal with the Modern Approaches. All of them appeared as a reaction against the *Grammar-Translation Method.*

All of them try to use the language in a more functional and communicative way. Because as **J.A. Rassias** once said; *"speak a language to learn it, don't learn a language to speak".*

3.1. THE DIRECT METHOD (NATURAL METHOD).

According to the **Webster´s New International Dictionary** defines the Direct Method as *"A method for the teaching of foreign languages, especially of modern languages, through conversations, discussion and reading of the foreign languages, without using the students´ L1"*.

It was established in England around 1900. It appeared against the *Grammar-Translation Method* and other traditional approaches, for having a greater demand for oral communication.

It is also called *Natural Method* because it claims that a language can be learnt without the use of the L1.

A) CHARACTERISTICS:

- Translations are prohibited.
- Grammar is taught inductively.
- No textbook.
- Use of L2 to explain classes.
- Order of skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.

B) ADVANTAGES-DISADVANTAGES:

Advantages	VS	Disadvantages
It helps to think in the L1 / It is very useful to help students improve their listening and pronunciation skills.		It promotes only oral skills / it needs teachers with a high level of language or native teachers.

C) EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES:

Dialogues   Role plays   Listen and match; listen and circle   Filling the gaps   True-false exercises

3.2. THE ORAL APPROACH.

It was developed in England around 1920. They attempted to have a more scientific method to learn English than the *Direct Method*.

It was influenced by British Structuralism; the main classroom activity is the practice of structures.
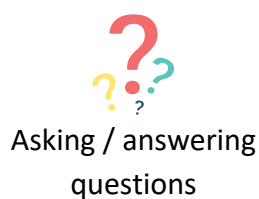
A) CHARACTERISTICS:

- Teach language skills through structures.
- Oral skills are taught first and then the written ones.
- Errors are not allowed.
- L1 is never used.
- Use of textbooks and audiovisual aids (flashcards, photos, etc.)

B) ADVANTAGES-DISADVANTAGES:

Advantages	VS	Disadvantages
The skills order / Language is learnt in *"real"* situations.		They only repeat structures.

C) EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES:

Singing songs

Repetition drills

Playing with voice sounds

Asking / answering questions

Role plays

3.3. THE AUDIOLINGUAL METHOD.

This method was developed in 1950, it is based on the idea that students can learn by repetition. It based on behaviorist theory, which professes that certain trait of living things, as humans, can be trained using a system of reinforcement.

Even, there are similarities between the *Oral Approach* and the *Audiolingual Method* as both come from Structuralist ideas.

But this method was developed when USA entered in the II World War (1950s). They wanted their soldiers to be fluent in German, Italian or Japanese. So, this method emphasizes

A) CHARACTERISTICS:

- Order of skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- The material is presented in a dialogue form.
- It fosters pronunciation.
- No translation; no grammar explanations.
- L1 is never used.
- Teach languages through structures.
- Vocabulary is strictly limited in context.
- A language laboratory is the central point of this method; use of tape recorded.

B) ADVANTAGES-DISADVANTAGES:

Advantages	Disadvantages
The skills order / from simple repetitions to more complex / development of pronunciation skills / most part of the lesson is taught in L2.	They only repeat structures / there is no meaningful learning / too much repetition can be boring for children.

C) EXAMPLES OF ACTIVITIES:

Repetition drills

Listen and repeat the word

Repeat sentences, structures...

4. CURRENT APPROACHES.

Next, we can point out that the following methods are more competencial and contextualized in our nowadays society. (Aquí podemos relacionarlo con los ODS / PLE / RETOS DEL SIGLO XXI con el párrafo que cada uno de vosotros haya realizado).

All of them help children learning to communicate in a foreign language developing their Communicative Competence, as it is compulsory in Primary Education as established in **Decree 101/2023, 9th May**, which establishes the organization and curriculum of the Primary Education stage in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia **Article 5**, objective "F" and in **Royal Decree 157/2022, Article 7** "F".

4.1. THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH.
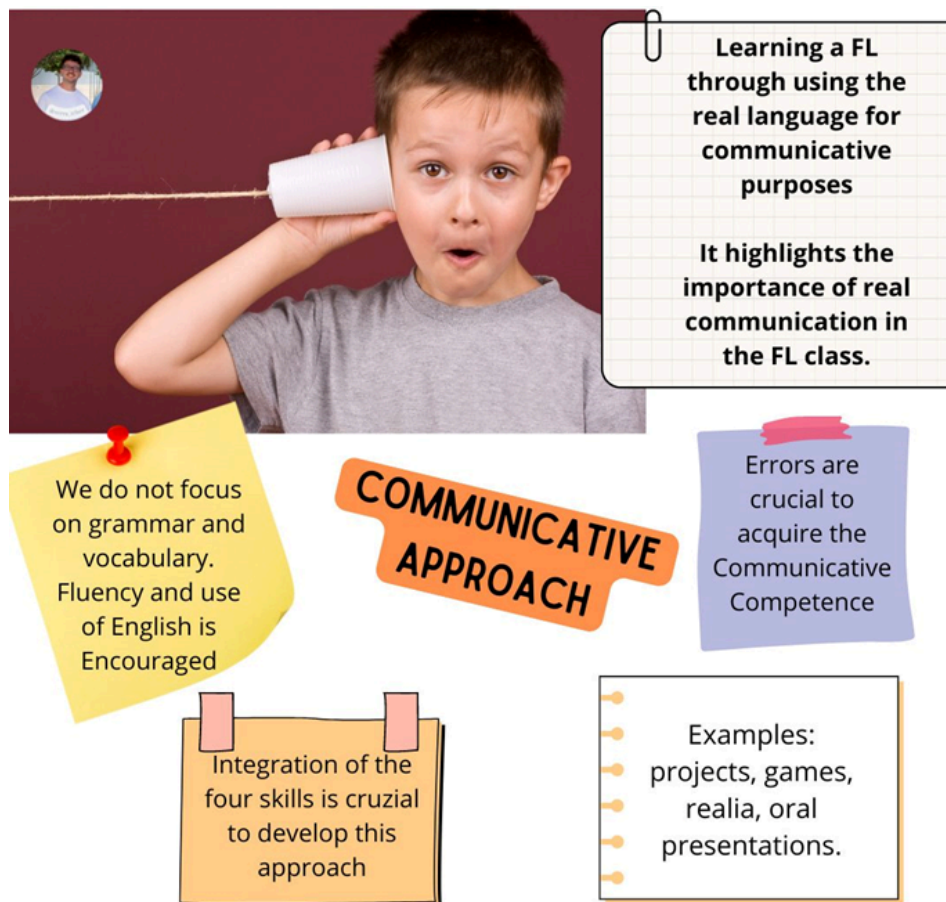
It is based on the idea that learning language successfully comes through having to communicate real meaning. This method arose in the 70s as a reaction to the *Audiolingual Method.*

The *Communicative Approach* is a teaching approach that highlights the importance of real communication for learning to take place.

Instead of focusing on the acquisition of grammar and vocabulary (Linguistic Competence), the *Communicative Approach* aimed at developing the learner´s competence to communicate in the target language.

When learners are involved in real communication, their natural strategies for language acquisition will be used and this will allow them to use the language.

Noam Chomsky was great responsible for this method. He claims that a language is about creativity, not simply repeating structures.

Besides, some British linguistics such as **Hymes or Canale** pointed out the importance of a communicative use of the language.

Characteristics

- Objective: For the learner to develop the communicative competence.
- Using L2 for different purposes and functions.
- Producing different types of texts.
- Use of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing.
- Using strategies in order to communicate efficiently.
- Functional use of the language.
- Errors are normal.
- Great variety of materials (songs, realia, textbook, videos, etc.).

Advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	• Real use of the language. • Skills integration. • Development of the Communicative Competence.
Disadvantages	• is it good for all levels? • Is it good to abandon structures?

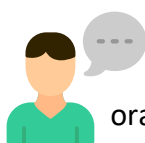**Examples of activities**

ALIBI

Projects

Games

Realia

Asking / answering questions

oral presentations

A walk in the park
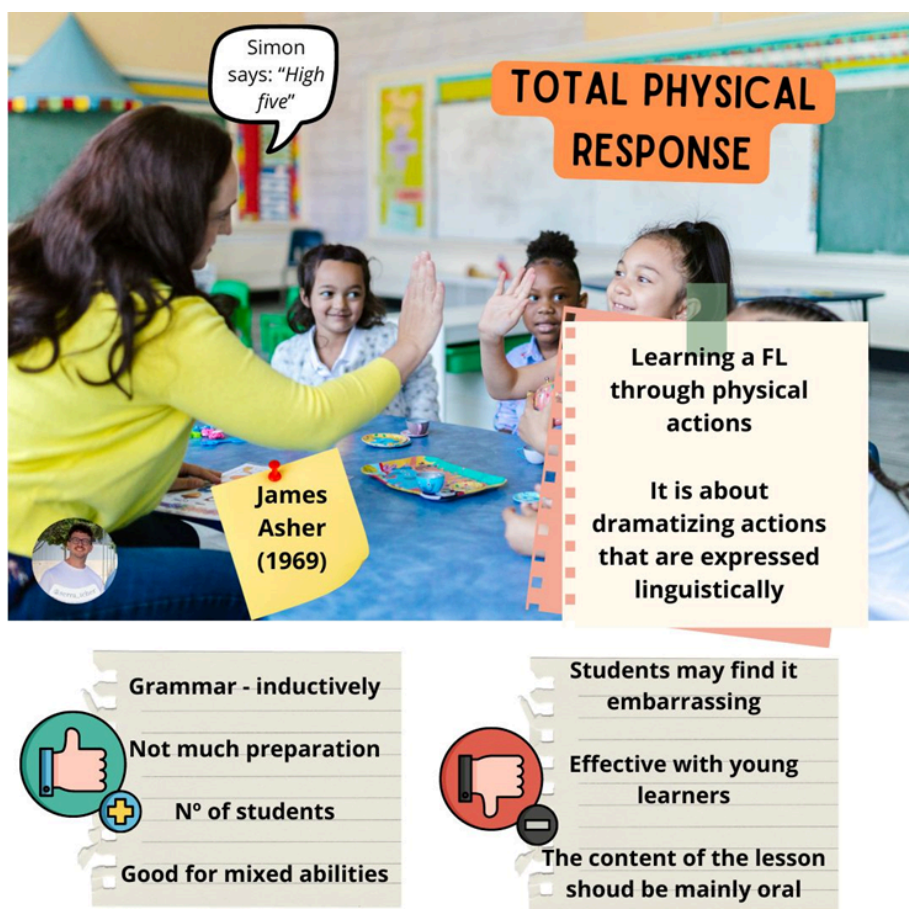
Emails

Cooperative learning

4.2. THE HUMANISTIC APPROACHES.

The humanistic approaches focus on the learners´ emotional factors. What counts is the student as a whole person.

We all learn in a different way, as **Sir Ken Robinson** once stated: *"Each person learns in a different way, this is why it is so important the way we teach".*

So, lets highlight some of the most relevant Humanistic approaches that contributes to the acquisition of a foreign language:

4.2.1. TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE.

James Asher (1969) was the responsible of the method *Total Physical Response*. It attempts to teach language through physical activity.

Total Physical Response (TPR) is dramatizing actions that are expressed linguistically. For example: *"I get up" / "I have a shower"* and the student represents the action with physical movements.

TPR can be also possible with instructions that are followed by an immediate action from the hearer like the game *"Simon says".*

Therefore, it is based upon the way that children learn their mother tongue. Parents have *"language-body conversations"* with children the parent instructs *"Give me the ball"* and the child does so. These conversations continue for many months before the child starts to speak itself.

Characteristics

- Grammar is taught inductively.
- Meaning is more important than form.
- There is a silent period, until the learner is ready.
- Grasping the spoken language must come prior to speaking.
- Comprehension is developed through body movements.
- The period of listening helps a learner to be ready to speak.

Advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	- It does not require a lot of preparation. - It does not matter the number of students. - The level of stress is very low. - Classes are practical. - Good tool for acquiring new vocabulary. - It can be used as part of the measures of DUA Principle; Provide multiple forms of expression. - It is good for Kinesthetic learners (Gardner, 1987).
Disadvantages	- Some students might find it embarrassing. - Very useful for the early stages of a didactic unit (Presentation stage). - You cannot teach everything. - It is very effective with young learners. - The content of your lesson should be mainly oral.

Examples of activities
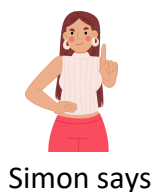
Simon says

Skipping rope

Run and touch

Fishing flashcards

Student races

Show me

4.2.2. SILENT WAY.

This method was developed by **Caleb Gattegno** in **1963** that makes use of silence as a teaching technique. The teacher should be as silent as possible to encourage students to speak in the target language.

It is called *"The Silent Way"* because the student keeps silent over a considerable amount of time. After that Silent Period, the student bursts out and starts to speak suddenly.

Characteristics

- Teacher in silence, the student is encouraged to speak.
- Learning is facilitated is the student discovers rather than remembers.
- Gestures and body language are used.
- It is a student-centre method. The teacher monitors. It gives autonomy to student. Very useful to develop the S.C.5. related to the reflexion of our students' learning skills and abilities as reflected in **Order 30/05/2023 Annex II.**
- It promotes the key competence Social and civic and learning to learn competence reflected in **Decree 101/2023 Annex.**

Advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	• It promotes autonomy and learning to learn skills in students. • Students have the opportunity to correct themselves. • Good relationship between students.
Disadvantages	• Too much responsibility on learners. • Too much silence is not good to achieve the communicative competence. • Teacher is only an assessor.

Examples of activities

Show me

Run and touch

Dictations using sticks and mini flashcards

4.2.3. COMMUNITY LANGUAGE LEARNING.

This method was developed by **Charles Curran in 1970**. The teacher is a "*counsellor*", and the students are the "*clients*". The teacher provides to the students only the language they need. The learners are encouraged to work together, interacting and helping each other.

Characteristics

- The teacher is a "counsellor" and students the "clients".
- It is used only the language that students need.
- It is based on interaction.
- This method is centred on the learner.
- It is works very well with low tier students.
- It creates a good relationship between the students and the teacher.

Advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	• It is centered on feelings. • The class became a real community. • Students become much more aware of their peers.
Disadvantages	• Objectives are unclear. • Too much freedom to our students.

Examples of activities

Group work tasks:

Projects

Translation

Debates

oral presentations

Discussions

4.2.4. SUGGESSTOPEDIA.

Lozanov developed this method in **1971**. He claimed that *"Suggestopedia"* is a system for liberation. Liberation of the preliminary negative thoughts regarding difficulties in the process of mastering a language.

Lozanov states that a relaxed but a focused state in the learner contributes to acquire a language properly. It is based on the power of suggestion in learning. It makes use of music, a relaxing environment and a good relationship between learners and teachers. Music is key in suggestopedia.
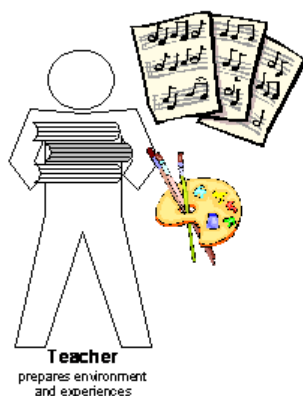
Physical surroundings and atmosphere in the classroom are the vital factors to make sure students feel comfortable.

Characteristics

- Importance of decoration, furniture… looking for relaxation.
- The teachers´ voice should be calm.
- Children do not make errors.
- Use of classical music or opera for learning.
- It has been the most criticized method in the history.

Advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	• Subconscious learning and a relaxed atmosphere. • Students acquire a language independently. • Comfortable environment.
Disadvantages	• It needs to be completed with other methods and techniques. • Music can be a distractor. • Little oral and written production

Teacher
prepares environment and experiences

Learner
playful state
receives on multiple levels

Relaxed Review
set to music

4.3. THE LEARNER-CENTERED APPROACH.

Since 1970s methodologists claimed that a students should have an active role in the learning of languages. This method views learners as active agents. They bring their own knowledge, past experiences, education and ideas. This impacts how they learn new information. It differs significantly from a traditional instructor-centered approach.

Characteristics

- Teacher as a helper of students.
- Learner autonomy is the goal.
- Active role of students.
- It develops learning strategies **S.C.5. Order 30/05/2023 Annex II.**

Advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages	Disadvantages
More responsibility to students of their own learning.	Individual needs of each student.

The autonomy and involvement of students in our lessons is linked with the idea of **Benjamin Franklin;** *"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember, involve me and I learn".*

4.4. NATURAL APPROACH.

This method was developed by **Stephen Krashen** in the late **1970s** and early **1980s**. It is about learning a FL in the same way students learn their mother tongue.

The *Natural Approach* is designed to develop basic communication skills. The syllabus will depend on the students´ interests and motivations.

The main goal of learning activities is to promote subconscious acquisition, rather than conscious acquisition.

Krashen and Terrel often recommend techniques and activities from other methods, which are adapted to the principles of the *Natural Approach, TPR, Direct Method, Communicative Approach,* etc.

Characteristics. It is based on 5 hypotheses:

1. Monitor Hypothesis: it claims that a learner acts as a monitor of what they produce.

2. **i+1 Hypothesis:** Krashen states that students need to be exposed as much input as possible, it should be varied and with good quality. The level of input that students are exposed to should be graded a stage further of the students' present state of competence.

3. Affective Filter Hypothesis: Krashen states that motivation and a relaxed atmosphere let students acquire a new language.

4. Natural Order: it claims that grammar is learnt following a specific order. Errors are part of the learning process.

5. Acquisition vs Language: it claims that there are two ways of developing competence in L2. Acquisition should be favored.

- Acquisition: it is a natural and unconscious process.
- Learning: it is not a natural and conscious process.

The early production stage is usually marked with errors as the student struggles with the language. Teacher must correct students´ mistakes.

Advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages	• Priority to receptive skills. • Imitation of L1 acquisition.
Disadvantages	• Acquisition takes a long time. • Few opportunities in real life.

4.5. TASK-BASED LEARNING.

In 1970, Prabhu used *Task-based Learning* with secondary education students. For him, learning languages takes places if students are thinking of something else (projects/tasks) rather than the structures themselves.

In TBL learning involves the performance of meaningful tasks, the focus is on the authentic use of language for genuine communication.

According to **Nunan, D. (2004)** teachers in this method, need to be prepared to adopt several roles in the classroom and provide students useful feedback and practice.

Characteristics.

- The objective is to develop tasks with a problem-solving element.
- Provide students to exchange meaningful information.
- Learners should talk or write to each other.
- Teachers help them to think, solve and learn.
- It is related to real world.
- It is against *PPP Model* (*Communicative Approach*).
- The cooperate, exchange information, etc.

Advantages-disadvantages.

- Advantages: it develops communication strategies.
- Disadvantages: use of L1 and it is difficult for young children.

4.6. PPP MODEL.

PPP MODEL
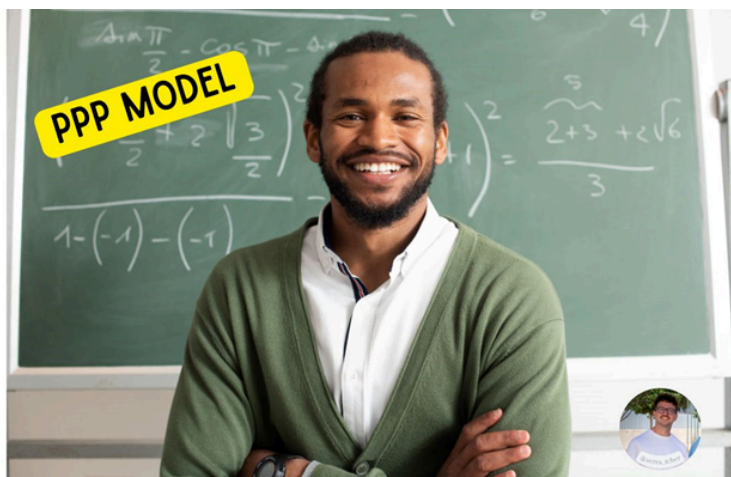
Teachers **present** the new vocabulary and grammar. The Presentation stage is used in the early stages of the DU / LS.

Once the vocabulary and grammar have been introduced, it is time to **practice** them in a guided way.

In the last step, students are ready to use the language in a more **communicative** way. Communication and use of English are encouraged.

This method is considered as one of the most striking approaches of English teaching, as it is made up of three different b:

- **Presentation:** of the new vocabulary and structures. Aspects of the language in a context that students are familiar with. Examples: what´s this / repetition drills / playing with voice sounds, etc.
- **Practice:** activities in which students can practice the language in a guided way. Examples: asking / answering questions, etc.
- **Production:** students use the language in a more communicative way. They use language in a context, in an activity set up by the teacher who will be giving minim support. Examples: Role-plays, conversations, oral presentations, etc.

Even, this method has some characteristics:

- Flexible structure.
- In the Presentation stage, the teacher is the protagonist, and the learners have a passive role.
- In the Practice stage students practice the new language introduced in the previous stage.
- In the Free production stage, the teacher acts as a guide and students are the main protagonists of the teaching-learning process.

The *PPP Model* is a widely spread model in foreign language teaching at all levels. Furthermore, modern publishers are based on this approach when organizing the English books.

5. CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES.

Here are some key ideas to develop English in the class in a communicative way:

- Language as instrument of communication not simply a system of structures and words.

- Communicative competence as main goal.

- Constructivism: Children construct their knowledge from what they already know **(Krashen, 1981. i+1 theory).**

- Contextualization: Traditionally, language items were presented in isolation, current curricular activities are contextualized.

- Cooperative learning: The student is not only supposed to learn from the teacher, but also from his/her classmates.

- Comprehensively input: **(Krashen, 1981. i+1 theory).**

- Silent period hypothesis: After being exposed to comprehensively input there is a silent period. The output emerges when the learner is ready.
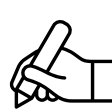
- Errors are natural as **Noam Chomsky (1975)** established.

- Oral skills should precede the written ones. We should promote the development of oral skills in FL subjects. **(Article 10, Decree 101/2023)**.

- Pleasant classroom atmosphere (Affective filter hypothesis **Krashen, 1981**).

- Inclusion: **DUA (Universal Design for Learning)**. Inclusion of all students in all activities and situations. **Universal Design Learning principles reflected in Order 30/05/2023 Article 15 and Decree 101/2023**. Normalization, Inclusive education, equal opportunities and specific measures to the students who need them and nondiscrimination.

- Use of ICTS: Use of apps and websites to develop the digital competence. Such as Kahoot, Loom, Flipgrid, etc. As recommended in **Order 30/05/2023 Annex II**. The use of the ICTs contributes to the development of the Digital competence as reflected in **Decree 101/2023 Annex and RD 157/2022 Article 9.**

6. CONCLUSION AND PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTENTS.

6.1. CONCLUSION.

Along this topic we have highlighted many different methods and approaches along the history. All of them have been considered with their main characteristics, advantages, disadvantages and many exercises to carry them out.

Even, we have explained how methods changed along the years, starting from the most traditional ones, until we reach the most communicative ones.

It is compulsory for the English teacher a conscious planning of the teaching to help students acquire the Communicative Competence and the Plurilingual Competence as reflected in **Order 30/05/2023, LOMLOE and RD 157/2022.**

If we do not consider a properly methodology when organizing the English lesson, we cannot expect children acquire a foreign language properly.

6.2. PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTENTS.

7. REFERENCED AND RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRPAHY. LEGAL REFERENCES AND WEBSITES.

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