**UNIVERSITE FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY DE COCODY-ABIDJAN**

**UFR LLC**

**DEPARTEMENT D’ANGLAIS**

**DIDACTIQUE CURRICULAIRE**

**(CURRICULAR DIDACTICS)**

**LICENCE 3 ANGLAIS**

**(Tronc commun)**

**DDA 6205**

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**FACULTY OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURES, AND CIVILISATIONS**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH**

**LICENCE 3**

**Specialty :** Language Didactics

**Academic year :** 2022-2023

**Semester 5**

**Course Title :** Curricular Didactics

**Prerequisite :** General didactics-Approaches to second/foreign language teaching

**Duration :** 20 hours Lecture

**Instructor :** Pr KOUASSI Jérôme

**Course Aim and Outcomes**

**Aim**

The aim of this course is to allow the students to first have a clear cut idea of the characteristics, goals, and functions of second/foreign language teaching syllabuses before being enlightened on different kinds of language teaching syllabus.

**Specific Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes the course is intended to produce are as follows :

* The students will be able to describe the characteristics, goals, and functions of second/foreign language teaching syllabuses;
* The students will be able to identify and design different kinds of second/foreign language teaching syllabuses.

**Course Schedule**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DATE / SESSION** | **TOPIC** | **Tasks/activities** | **Materials/Sources** |
| Session 1 | .Syllabus : characteristics, goals, and functions.Structural or formal syllabuses.Situational syllabuses  | Explanations in plenary | Booklet on Curricular Didactics  |
| Session 2 | .Notional/Functional syllabuses.Process or negotiated syllabuses.Procedural syllabuses  | Explanations in plenary | Booklet on Curricular Didactics  |
| Session 3 | .Task-based syllabuses.Communicative syllabuses | Explanations in plenary  | Booklet on Curricular Didactics  |
| Session 4 | .Synthetic Type A syllabuses.Analytic Type B syllabuses  | Explanations in plenary | Booklet on Curricular Didactics |

**Grading Procedures:** Grades for this credit will be based on:

* **A final exam**
* **A passing grade: 10/20**

**Readings**

BREEN, M. ‘Contemporary paradigm in syllabus design’, *Language Teaching*, 20, 1987, 81-91. <http.//dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800004365>

 NUNAN, D. *Syllabus Design*, Oxford, UK: OUP, 1988.

NUNAN, D. *The Learner-Centred Curriculum: a study in second language teaching*, Cambridge, UK: CUP, 1988.

RAJAEE NIA, Mahdi et al. ‘A critical review of recent trends in second language syllabus design and curriculum development’, *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, Volume 2 Number 2, 2013, 63-82.

RICHARDS, J. *Curriculum Development in Language Teaching*, Cambridge, UK: CUP, 2001.

 RICHARDS, J. ‘Curriculum approaches in language teaching: forward, central, and backward design’, *RELC Journal* 44 (1), 2010, 5-33.

 SAVIGNON, Sandra J. ‘Communicative language teaching: linguistic theory and classroom practice’, http://yalepress.yale.edu/excerpts/0300091567\_1.pdf

SOWEL, E.J. *Curriculum Development: an integrative approach* (3rd ed.), Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004.

STERN, H.H. *Issues and Options in Language Teaching*, Oxford, UK: OUP, 1992.

WHITE, R.V. *The ELT Curriculum Design: innovation and management*, Oxford, UK: OUP, 1988.

WILKINS, D.A. *Notional Syllabuses*, Oxford, UK: OUP, 1976.

***Curriculum***

The definition of curriculum is complex because there are as many definitions as there are writers in the field. It can go anywhere along the range from a list of subjects for a course to the perception of the ultimate goal of education as a whole. What is required when referring to the term is “the grasp of the basic notions education involves as well as the structural organization every author states within this definition for the term curriculum” (Moreno, 2000: 11) Evidence of what has been mentioned before is the following listing of the same concept defined by different authors:

 Curriculum can be defined, as an educational program which states:

a) “The educational purpose of the program (the ends)

b) The content teaching procedures and learning experience which will be necessary to achieve this purpose (the means)

c) Some means for assessing whether or not the educational ends have been achieved.” (Richards, Platt and Platt, 1993, p.94)

 d) “Curriculum is a very general concept which involves consideration of the whole complex of philosophical, social and administrative factors which contribute to the planning of an educational program.” (Allen quoted in Nunan, 2000, p.6)

 e) “Curriculum theory encompasses philosophy and value systems; the main components of the curriculum: purposes, content, methodology and evaluation; and the process whereby curricula are developed, implemented and evaluated”. (White, 1993, p.19).

***Syllabuses***

“Syllabus is essentially a statement of what should be taught, year by year – through language – syllabuses often also contain points about the method of teaching and the time to be taken.” (Lee, 1980, p.108) Another opinion is that a “syllabus is a more detailed and operational statement of teaching and learning elements which translates the philosophy of the curriculum into a series of planned steps leading towards more narrowly defined objectives at each level” (Dubin & Olshtain, 1997, p.28).

Syllabuses are more localized and are based on accounts and records of what actually happens at the classroom level. Given these definitions it is suggested that it seems helpful to define a curriculum and a syllabus as separate entities. To sum up it is possible to see syllabus design as part of course design, which in turn, forms part of the design of the curriculum as a whole.

**CURRICULUM: CHARACTERISTICS, GOALS AND FUNCTIONS CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS**

***Characteristics***

There are conflicting views on what distinguishes syllabus from curriculum. Nunan (1984: 31) defines the curriculum as general statements about language learning, learning purpose, experience, evaluation, and the role and relationships of teachers and learners. The term curriculum covers all the activities and arrangements made by the institution throughout the academic year to facilitate learning whereas syllabus is limited to particular subject of a particular class. Syllabuses, according to him, focus more narrowly on the selection and grading of content (1993:8). They are more localized and concerned with what actually happens in the classroom. Wilkins (1981) does not take a different view when he suggests "syllabuses are specification of the content of language teaching which have been submitted to some degree of structuring or ordering with the aim of making teaching and learning a more effective process". Syllabus designer are concerned with the answers to the following questions: What does a learner of a new language need to know, and what does a learner need to be able to do with this knowledge? (Breen, 1987, p. 85). To design a syllabus is to decide what gets taught and in what order. Despite this difference, the two terms curriculum and syllabus are generally used alternatively to refer to the same thing.

***Goals and functions***

Any teaching situation requires the use of a syllabus. Syllabuses are designed to provide an idea of the content of a given course, the teaching approach, the materials, the activities, expected learning outcome from the course, a course schedule, assessment methods, and the way the teaching is organized. A syllabus can be referred to as a vehicle that takes the teacher into the classroom. It provides the context for carrying out classroom activities.

**APPROACHES TO SYLLABUS DESIGN**

1. **STRUCTURAL OR FORMAL SYLLABUSES**

According to Krahnke (1987), the structural syllabus is, doubtless, the most familiar of syllabus types. It has a long history, and a major portion of language teaching has been carried out using some form of it. The structural syllabus draws on structural views of language instruction. It is based on a theory of language that assumes that the grammatical or structural aspects of language form are the most basic or useful. The structural syllabus is one in which the content of language teaching is a collection of the forms and structures, usually grammatical, of the language being taught.

Rationales

Breen (1987) suggests three rationales:

* The first argument is that it is well established and it is informed by a long tradition of linguistic analysis.
* The second major justification for the Formal syllabus is that it presents learners with a subject matter which is systematic and rule-governed. When we learn something new, the fact that we can begin to see patternedness and regularities within it will reduce the 'learning load' it demands of us.
* A third justification for the Formal syllabus is that because the linguistic system is analyzable in certain ways, these analytical categories or schemas can be incorporated in a plan for teaching the system, and — further — it may be that the same analytical categories or schemas make it easier for the learner to uncover how the new language works. Such a syllabus calls upon the human capacity to be meta-linguistic; to reflect upon, talk about, and try to work out just how a language works.

Merits

Karanke (1987), cited in Mahdi et al., mentions the positive characteristics of the structural syllabus:

* Structure is the most general component of communicative competence. Every utterance, if it is reasonably well-formed, involves a given structure, which can be sued for variety of functions, situations and meanings;
* Its content is relatively easy to describe. Noun, verb, imperative, plural, and gerund are terms that are generally shared within the language profession, and there is general agreement about what they mean;
* Structural knowledge is the most measurable components of the communicative competence. Because of the relative fitness of structural knowledge and its relatively clear definition, measurement tasks are easily prepared to determine how much students have not learned;
* Generally, students who ultimately achieved high proficiency in a new language were students who had earlier received instruction in the form of language. (Evidence from Higgs and Clifford, 1982)

Drawbacks

Despite the merits mentioned earlier, some criticisms are leveled against the structural syllabus. For it violates most, if not all, of the types of reward that should be catered for in foreign language teaching materials as suggested by Stevick (1972) which can be summarized on the following grounds:

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* Relevance of the content to the student's own language needs.
* Completeness or inclusion of all the language necessary for the stated aims.
* Authenticity of the materials both linguistically and culturally.
* Satisfaction of the students with their day to day progress in the classroom.
* Immediacy of the usage of the students has learned in the classroom.

Breen (1987) also mentions several notorious weaknesses associated with structural syllabi:

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* Usability, applicability, or transferability of structural knowledge: Structural knowledge may be teachable, and there is some evidence (Hartwell, 1985) that is learnable, but there is almost no evidence that it affects behavior in language use to any great degree.
* It can mislead learners into thinking they are learning a language when, in fact, they are learning facts or information about a language.
* Sequencing or grading problems: A strictly structural syllabus prevents students from producing structures they have not been taught. Either the students have to be severely limited or controlled in their use of the new language until the needed structures have been taught or their errors must be tolerated or ignored until the appropriate instruction appears in the sequence.

1. **SITUATIONAL SYLLABUSES**

The limitations attributed to the structural syllabus led to an alternative approach where the point of departure became situational needs rather than grammatical units. The underlying premise is that language is related to the situational contexts in which it occurs. The designer of a situational syllabus tries to predict those situations in which the learner will find him/herself, and applies these situations, for instance; seeing the dentist, going to the cinema and meeting a new student, as a basis for selecting and presenting language content. Unlike structural/formal syllabus, situational syllabus offers the possibility of selecting and sequencing different real life situations rather than different grammatical items, vocabulary topics, life situation. In other words, it is designed in such away to provide realistic situation based on a communicative view of language and experimental theory of language learning.

The situations are usually presented to the students in form of dialogs (usually at the beginning of the lesson, and it includes listening, memorization as well as provides the students models for student improvisation) and role plays (which are the students expected to create, supply or fill in much of the language that occurs in the situation). The content of situation can be created by materials writer or teachers or taken from real life.

Types of Situational Syllabus

Alexander (1976) differentiates three types of the situational syllabus based on type of information:

* Limbo Situation: In this type, the information of the specific setting is of little importance. For example; the topic of introducing someone at the setting of a dialogue taking place at the stadium. It can be said that the setting is considered irrelevant, i.e. unimportant, because the main important thing is the language focus.
* Concrete Situation: The information is about the specific and concrete setting and the language associated with it. For example: The topic of ordering a meal at a restaurant.
* Mythical Situation: The information depends on fictional story line, frequently with a fictional cast characters in a fictional place.

Merits

* It has the potential advantage of tapping students’ knowledge of the world as an aid to learning, and also of providing realistic, and hence motivating, materials.
* It also may serve the purpose of bridging cultural gap by various conversations and topics that are implied with typical social conventions and customs of the countries and people the learners are interested in.
* It is manageable to take situational syllabus as a foundation, upon which we can incorporate many other syllabus types, for instance, grammatical/structural, functional/notional syllabi, etc.
* Situational syllabus will have a countless resource to utilize, so as to construct and design a variety of courses without worrying about repetition and boredom.

Drawbacks

* Too much use of predetermined and artificial situations can lead to lack of transfer because students are led to pre-learned routines and patterns of language use rather than creative and negotiated uses of language.
* It is difficult to create authentic language instructional purposes because:

a. The actual patterns of use of native speakers in many situations are still unknown and intuition is not a reliable guide.

b. In addition, even when accurate native speaker norms are available it’s extremely difficult to write focused and natural dialogues.

c. A third problem with authenticity in situational content is its tendency to become outdated.

This syllabus may reflect unwanted foreign language values, in other words it is not culture-free.

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1. **NOTIONAL-FUNCTIONAL SYLLABUSES**

A functional-notional syllabus is based on learning to recognize and express the communicative functions of language and the concepts and ideas it expresses. In other words, this kind of syllabus is based more on the purposes for which language is used and on the meanings the speaker wanted to express than on the forms used to express them. Hedge (2000, p. 246) highlights how the ‘communicative revolution’ in the 1970s urged educators to go beyond structural analyses of language provided by linguists and start to consider what ‘communicative ability’ in a language entailed. It became apparent that developing such ability required a different view of language.

Underlying theories

The notional-functional approach draws on theories and descriptions of language that emphasize the functional and social aspects of competence (e.g. Hymes’ model of communicative competence and Halliday’s functional grammar). These syllabuses consist of a list of functions (e.g. apologizing and requesting) and notions (e.g. past time and possibility) together with the linguistic exponents required to realize them in communication.

The methodology employed was typically still PPP, i.e. it was accuracy based. Thus, this approach still involves what White (1988) termed a Type A approach, i.e. one where the objectives are defined in advance and that is essentially ‘interventionist’ and ‘other-directed’ (p. 31). The functional view of language went beyond the sentential level, and highlighted the importance of discourse in context (Malinowski, 1923). The importance of context in defining the illocutionary force of any utterance was acknowledged, and it was stressed that knowledge of the structure of written or spoken texts was more useful to language learners than isolated, albeit grammatically correct, sentences.

Merits

* The learners learn how to use language to express authentic communicative purposes.
* Learners may be motivated by the opportunity to use language to express their own purposes, ideas and emotions.
* It caters more readily to the teaching of the pragmatic aspects of language, such as the linguistic devices needed to display politeness, and also to the teaching of cultural/ceremonial topics, such as when and how to greet people.

According to Richards and Rodgers (2001) one of the strengths of notional functional syllabus which has helped the emergence of communicative approaches to language teaching is that it considers the needs of the learners and the meanings that they need to convey. It also emphasizes the fact that the students and their communicative purposes are at the very core of the teaching program (Raine, 2010).

Drawbacks

* Functions and notions are quite abstract and some learners may have difficulties thinking of communicative functions outside a specific context.
* Different kinds of structures are often used to express the same communicative function, so that it is difficult to follow a progression from simpler to more complex structures.
* Regarding pragmatic considerations, Raine (2010) states that in NFS the content is not arranged based on the formal structures of language, but they are arranged based on the functions. For this reason, it is difficult to use them for the creation of new sentences.

Another shortcoming can be ascribed to Grading. White (1988) states that there are no clear-cut criteria for grading of functions and it mainly depends on the material designer’s intuition.

1. **NEGOTIATED OR PROCESS SYLLABUSES**

Negotiated syllabus is a social and problem-solving model for syllabus design, in which the learner plays the main role and where negotiation is the key concept. This model draws upon general philosophical and educational principles rather than on second language acquisition principles, and its origins can be found in the work of Breen and Candlin (1987), Breen (1984, 1987), and Breen and Littlejohn (2000).

The emergence of negotiated syllabus

There are clearly strong reasons for having a negotiated syllabus. Clarke (1991) sees the interest in negotiated syllabuses arising from humanistic methodologies like community language learning which are very learner-centered, from needs analysis which focuses on learners’ needs, from work in individualization and learner autonomy, and from learner strategy research which sees the learner playing a central role in determining how the language is learned. A negotiated syllabus involves the teacher and the learners working together to make decisions at many of the parts of the curriculum design process, making it a ‘dynamic’ and ‘negotiated’ syllabus rather than a ‘static’ and ‘imposed’ one. It is a way of giving high priority to the recognition of learner needs within a course and to the need to continually adjust courses while they are running to suit changing needs and circumstances. Negotiated syllabuses are also called “process syllabuses” (Breen, 1987). The word process in the term process syllabus indicates that the important feature of this type of syllabus is that it focuses on how the syllabus is made rather than what should be in it.

Breen and Littlejohn (2000) list situations where a negotiated syllabus is almost unavoidable:

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* Where the teacher and students have different backgrounds.
* Where time is short and the most useful choices must be made.
* Where there is a very diverse group of students and there is a need to find common ground.
* Where initial needs analysis is not possible.
* Where there is no course book.
* Where the students’ past experiences must be part of the course.
* Where the course is open-ended and exploratory.

There is some debate over what aspects of the syllabus could be negotiated. Breen and Littlejohn (2000) see the range of decisions open to negotiation as including some aspects of the curriculum, namely goals, content and sequencing, format and presentation, and monitoring and assessment. A negotiated syllabus tries to integrate content (subject-matter) and learning experience, by bridging the gap between what should be taught and what is actually taught. As Breen (1984, p. 56) suggests, a process (negotiated) syllabus is about “who does what with whom, or what subject matter, with what resources, when, how, and for what learning purpose(s)”. Hence the focus is not so much on the outcome, but on the process. A process syllabus is personal, intrinsic and is one of ‘reality’ in process.

Merits

Nation and Macalister (2010) enumerate the followings as the advantages of a negotiated syllabus:

* This syllabus is responsive to the wants of the learners and involves them in the process of learning and decision-making.
* Involving the learners in shaping the syllabus has a strong effect on motivation, satisfaction and commitment to the course. It changes from being the teacher’s course to the learners’ course.
* If the negotiation is carried out in English, then this may be one of the most involving meaning-focused activities in the program.
* The negotiation also develops learners’ awareness of the goals of language-learning activities and how these goals can be achieved.

Breen (1987) also purports that all courses have to adjust in one way or another to the reality of the teaching situation and the negotiated syllabus gives clear recognition to this. Furthermore, a negotiated syllabus will preserve and promote autonomy among learners by granting them a role in decision-making processes.

Drawbacks

Learners may be reluctant to negotiate or to let their classmates negotiate because they feel it should be the teacher’s expertise guiding the course:

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* Learners may also not know enough of the range of options they could choose from and thus may make unimaginative choices.
* Teachers may feel that using a negotiated syllabus removes too much of their power and status.
* Learners may find it difficult to reach agreement about what they should be doing.
* A fully negotiated syllabus requires considerable teacher skill and time in accessing and producing resources.
* Process syllabi also lack a reasoned proposal for task sequencing, which seems to be based mostly on the learner’s wants and wishes.
* Despite recent SLA findings, process syllabi leave no room for focus on form.
* It assumes a high degree of autonomy and a high degree of expertise in learners, which would be unacceptable in some contexts.

1. **PROCEDURAL SYLLABUSES**

With the growing dissatisfaction with the Structural and Oral-Situational syllabi, Prabhu who was working at the Regional Institute of English in Bangalore at the time evolved an approach which was called Communicational Teaching Project. Based on this approach, a project named the Bangalore/Madras or the Bangalore Communicational Teaching Project was undertaken in Southern India in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Johnson (1982) defines procedural syllabus as ‘a syllabus of tasks which are graded conceptually and grouped by similarity’. Prabhu recognizes that the acquisition of a linguistic structure is not “an instant, one-step procedure, and claims with Krashen that language form is acquired subconsciously through ‘the operation of some internal system of abstract rules and principles’ (Prabhu, 1987, p. 70) when the learner's attention is focused on meaning, i.e., task-completion, not language”. Prabhu (1987) himself mentions that tasks in a procedural syllabus should be intellectually challenging enough to maintain students’ interest, for that is what will sustain learners’ efforts at task completion, focus them on meaning and, as part of that process, engage them in confronting the task’s linguistic demands.

Underlying Theory

The hypothesis underlying this project was that language form is best learnt when the learner’s attention is focused on meaning. More specifically, Grammar-construction by the learner is an unconscious process which is best facilitated by bringing about in the learner a preoccupation with meaning, saying or doing (Prabhu, 1987).

In procedural syllabus there is no syllabus in terms of vocabulary or structure. Accordingly, only a few tasks which are sequenced according to difficulty and grouped by similarity constitute this type of syllabus (Mohsenifar, 2008). The cognitive processes, triggered in students’ minds through task completion occur at two levels, Conscious and Unconscious. At the conscious level, meaning-building happens when meaning is understood or conveyed. While at the unconscious level, the system-building occurs when grammatical system is developed.

Nature of task in procedural syllabus

Prabhu (1987, p. 24) defines a task as “an activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome from given information through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate that process”. Opinion-gap, information-gap and reasoning-gap activities are the kinds of tasks used in the Procedural syllabus. Opinion gaps involve expressing a personal preference, attitude, or feeling when faced with a situation. Information-gaps are operationalized as information sharing between or among learners. Reasoning-gap tasks imply inferring and deducing from, and practical reasoning about a given piece of information.

Merits

* Innovative: the procedural syllabus is novel in comparison to the conventional syllabuses which mainly focused on presenting lists of notions, functions, or structures.
* Focus on meaning: In procedural syllabus, students learn linguistic forms through communication.
* No pre-selection of linguistic items: Procedural syllabus is not structurally or lexically graded. Rather the contents of materials are characterized in holistic units of communication or tasks.
* Naturalness: Prabhu believes that focus on form deters language learning. In his opinion, through focus on meaning, a natural process of learning occurs.

Drawbacks

* The prominence of reasoning: the communicational project relies too much on student reasoning. Prabhu (1987) feels that learners need the security of working with problems in which the answers are clearly right or wrong, and he wishes to encourage guessing and trial-and-error without too much freedom to go astray, so he prefers a small range of possible answers. He claims that open-ended questions make greater demands on the students' language than is appropriate at this early receptive stage.
* The second criticism concerns Prabhu's discouragement of group work. This is because of the fear that learners will use their mother tongue, and that learner-learner interaction will promote 'pidginization'. In this approach so much importance is given to message (meaning) that learners felt success is achieved when messages are conveyed, by whatever impoverished and inaccurate linguistic means.
* No rationale exists for the content (task selection) of such a syllabus (Long & Crookes, 1992).
* Grading task difficulty and sequencing tasks appear to be arbitrary processes, which are left partly to judgments by the classroom teacher (Long & Crookes, 1992).
* Johnson & Johnson (1999) believe that the lack of any structural or semantic planning in this syllabus leads to inadequate coverage of the language. So there is interval between students’ first exposure to some language items and their mastery. Johnson (1982) points out that implementation of this syllabus results in a long period of ‘incubation’ between the time that an item is first heard and its mastery by the student.
* Since it is, in fact, a random selection of chunks of the content of other subjects, this syllabus lacks any real life task.
* Markee (1997) also criticizes procedural syllabus for its tasks being teacher-led and less adaptive to learners’ needs, and also for being not so much innovative alongside other syllabi such as notional functional and natural approach.
1. **TASK-BASED SYLLABUSES**

Underling theory of task-based learning

According to Krahnke (1987, p. 59) “The primary theory of learning underlying task-based instruction is Krashen’s acquisition theory (Krashen, 1982). Acquisition theory argues that the ability to use a language is through exposure to the language and participation in using it. Nunan (2001) also asserts that task-based syllabuses offer a specific realization of communicative language teaching and differs from the previously proposed syllabuses like structural and functional notional syllabuses on the ground that task-based syllabuses start with needs analysis. This needs analysis results in a list of the target tasks that the learners need to carry out in real-life situations such as going through a job interview, completing a credit card application, and finding one’s way from a hotel to a subway station.

Definition of a task

Skehan (2003) defines task s an activity in which, a) Meaning is primary. b) Learners are not given other peoples’ meaning to regurgitate. c) There is some sort of relationship to comparable real world activities. d) Task completion has some sort of priority. e) The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome. Nunan (1988 pp.45-46) cites Candlin (1987) who mentions the characteristics of a good task, some of which have been listed below. A good task should:

* Promote attention to meaning, purpose, negotiation;
* Encourage attention to relevant data;
* Draw objectives from the communicative needs of learners;
* Define a problem to be worked through by learners, centered on the learners but guided by the teacher; and
* Provide opportunities for meta-communication and meta-cognition (i.e. provide opportunities for learners to talk about communication and about learning).

The psycholinguistic rationale for TBLT

Raya quotes Ellis (2009) that the psycholinguistic rationale for TBLT is that:

* Learners have their own built-in syllabus, which directs how they gradually learn the L2 systems.
* The primary goal of any form of language instruction is the development of implicit knowledge as, without this, learners will not be able to communicate effectively.
* Implicit knowledge can best be achieved by providing learners with opportunities to experience the L2 as a communicative tool.
* To assist learning, instruction needs to draw learners’ attention to form while they are communicating through what is known as focus on form. The learning that results is incidental rather than intentional.

Merits

As Krahnke (1987, p. 60) says “the intent of task-based learning is to use learners’ real-life needs and activities as learning experiences, providing motivation through immediacy and relevancy....” In addition, task-based language instruction can be the vehicle for instruction in other types of content or knowledge at the same time as it addresses language acquisition” (Krahnke, 1987, p. 61).

Krahnke (1987) mentions that task-based learning “can also be valuable for learners who have a clear and immediate need to use the language for well-defined purposes:

* Task-based learning can be especially useful for learners who are not accustomed to more traditional types of classroom learning or who need to learn cognitive, cultural, and life skills along with the language.” (p. 61)
* Task-based syllabuses can be very useful in ESP courses.
* It also helps language learners to acquire language instead of learning it.

In this regard, Nunan (2004, p. 30) maintains that “in a task-based syllabus, grammatical and functional items will reappear numerous times in a diverse range of contexts”.

Drawbacks

* It ignores addressing explicit meta-linguistic knowledge, or the ability to make descriptive or prescriptive statements about language and manipulate language as an end in itself. Or in Nation and Macalister’s (2010) words, it focuses on fluency at the expense of accuracy.
* Another problem discussed by Krahnke (1987, p. 61) is that task-based learning requires a high level of creativity and initiative on the part of the teacher.

Krahnke (1987) also believes that the evaluation in task-based syllabuses can be difficult because the nature of tasks or tasks-based learning makes it difficult to measure learners’ knowledge by the utilization of traditional discrete-point achievement tests.

1. **COMMUNICATIVE SYLLABUSES**

Origin and characteristics

Communicative language teaching (CLT) refers to both processes and goals in classroom learning. The central theoretical concept in communicative language teaching is ‘‘communicative competence,’’ a term introduced into discussions of language use and second or foreign language learning in the early 1970s (Habermas 1970; Hymes 1971; Jakobovits 1970; Savignon 1971). Competence is defined in terms of the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning and looks to both psycholinguistic and sociocultural perspectives in second language acquisition (SLA) research to account for its development (Savignon 1972, 1997). Identification of learners’ communicative needs provides a basis for curriculum design (Van Ek 1975).

Understanding of CLT can be traced to concurrent developments in Europe and North America. In Europe, the language needs of a rapidly increasing group of immigrants and guest workers, and a rich British linguistic tradition that included social as well as linguistic context in description of language behavior, led the Council of Europe to develop a syllabus for learners based on notional-functional concepts of language use. The syllabus was derived from neo-Firthian systemic or functional linguistics, in which language is viewed as ‘‘meaning potential,’’ and the ‘‘context of situation’’ (Firth 1937; Halliday 1978) is viewed as central to understanding language systems and how they work. The syllabus described a threshold level of language ability for each of the major languages of Europe in view of what learners should be able to do with the language (Van Ek 1975). Language functions based on an assessment of the communicative needs of learners specified the end result, or goal, of an instructional program. The term communicative attached itself to programs that used a notional-functional syllabus based on needs assessment, and the language for specific purposes (LSP) movement was launched.

Shaping a Communicative Curriculum

Communicative syllabuses are generally task-based and designed in terms tasks that will involve learners in using the language to achieve communication goals. The tasks create the context for them to use the language in an integrated way. Unlike structural syllabuses which include the discrete elements of language, communicative syllabuses include tasks which allow whole language teaching and learning.

Savignon (1983, 1997) suggests a communicative curriculum which has potentially five components. These components can be regarded as thematic clusters of activities or experiences related to language use. They provide a way to categorize teaching strategies that promote communicative competence. Use of the word ‘‘component’’ to categorize these activities seems particularly appropriate in that it avoids any suggestion of sequence or level. Experience with communicative teaching methods has shown that the five components can be profitably blended at all stages of instruction. Organization of learning activities into the following components serves not to sequence an instructional program, but rather to highlight the range of options available in curriculum planning and to suggest ways in which their very interrelatedness can benefit the learner.

Language for a purpose, or language experience, is the second component on the list. In contrast with language analysis, language experience is the use of language for real and immediate communicative goals. Not all learners are taking a new language for the same reasons. It is important for teachers to pay attention, when selecting and sequencing materials, to the specific communicative needs of the learners. Regardless of how distant or unspecific the communicative needs of the learners, every program with a goal of communicative competence should pay heed to opportunities for meaningful language use, opportunities to focus on meaning as well as form. In a classroom where the language of instruction is of necessity the second language, learners have an immediate and natural need to use it. Where this happens, language for a purpose is a built-in feature of the learning environment. In those settings where the teacher shares with learners a language other than the second language, special attention needs to be given to providing learners with opportunities for experience in their new language. Exclusive use of the second language in the classroom is an option. In so-called content-based instruction, the focus is something other than the language. The content, history, music, or literature, for example, is taught in the second language. Immersion programs at the elementary, secondary, or even university level, where the entire curriculum is taught in the second language, over greatest possible exposure to language for a purpose. In addition, task-based curricula are designed to provide learners with the most opportunity to use language for a purpose. The most successful teaching programs are those which take into account the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of language learning and seek to involve learners psychologically as well as intellectually. The wider the variety of communicative, or meaning-based activities, the greater the chance for involving all learners.

Merits

* Use of authentic and real-life materials and tasks;
* Language used purposefully;
* Flexibility;
* Learner involvement in classroom activities;
* Tasks that allow the use of language in an unpredictable way;

Drawbacks

* Difficult to set criteria for sequencing;
* Too much flexibility might sometimes be misleading;
* The content of the syllabus might not include enough language input for learner performance.

1. **SYNTHETIC (TYPE A) VERSUS ANALYTIC (TYPE B) SYLLABUSES**

Wilkins (1976) draws a distinction between synthetic and analytic types of syllabuses. A synthetic language teaching strategy is one in which the different parts of language are taught separately and gradually. Here, the acquisition is a process of accumulation of parts until the whole structure of language has been constructed. In contrast, analytic syllabuses are organized in terms of the purposes for which people intend to learn the language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to fulfill those objectives.

White (1988) recognizes two types of syllabuses namely Type A and Type B. According to him, Type A syllabi are concerned with what should be learned. Without considering who the learners may be or how languages are acquired, they determine a series of objectives and they ‘pre-package’ the language by dividing it into small, discrete units. They are product-oriented, so they evaluate the outcomes in terms of mastery of the language. All synthetic syllabi are considered Type A syllabi. Type B syllabi, on the contrary, are concerned with how the language is learned and how this language is integrated with learners’ experiences. The different elements of the syllabus emerge from a process of negotiation between learners and teachers; they are oriented toward the process; and evaluation criteria are set by the learners themselves. As we will see later, procedural, process, and task-based syllabi are considered Type B syllabi despite their differences.