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1. THE LANGUAGE

Within the Communicative Language Teaching approach (CLT), Secondary and adult education frameworks include the teaching of the four skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and the three language components (grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation).

![Diagram of Language Components](image)

**Figure 1: Adult notion of the language to be taught**

However, Cameron (2001:19) suggests an approach in which the oral skills have preference over the written ones, as children will probably still be grasping the complexities of their mother tongue literacy skills –a shallow orthography- when beginning L2 learning –a deep orthography-. Besides, she puts forward vocabulary as the most important language component, replacing the explicit teaching of grammar with the notion of becoming aware of the language’s formal features through the process of learning vocabulary chunks, which is also consequent with some of the psycholinguistic features of children, not yet ready to follow metalinguistic reasonings. This framework has been represented below (Figure 2). The focus is not on grammar learning, but on expressing ideas in a meaningful context with the resources at hand.

![Diagram of Children's Notion of Language](image)

**Figure 2: Children's notion of the language to be taught**
2. THE LEARNERS’ FEATURES

- **Before reading**

  Small children require the teacher’s individual attention as much as possible. Their attention span is small (five to fifteen minutes). For the teacher, it can be quite disconcerting when a three-year-old wanders off in the middle of a song or story to play with a toy. It does not mean they are not following what is going on; it is probably because some other child had the toy before and they see this as their only opportunity to get hold of it. We must not take it as a personal rejection. It is very difficult to hold the attention of a whole group of small children and the best way to do it is to ring the changes every five to ten minutes—unless you see that they are all really absorbed in what they are doing, in which case the teacher can let it go on a bit longer.

  Usually, children of this age love what is familiar and may seem indifferent to something new. However, this does not mean that the teacher should never try anything new, because what is new in one lesson has become familiar by the second lesson.

  Young children may spend a long time absorbing language before they actually produce anything. It is not a good idea to try to force them to speak in the target language as this can create a lot of emotional stress. By doing repetitive songs, rhymes, games and plenty of choral work, children will be able to produce language without the stress of having to speak individually.

  Children of this age are less inhibited. They are not afraid to be imaginative and they are not yet bound by the constraints that demand that adults be logical. As they are so young, they are not carrying any negative attitudes left over from previous school experiences. They are curious about everything, keen to learn, and very receptive. However, they can be selfish and uncooperative. If they want something, they will push another child over to get it and show little concern for the other child’s feelings. Some of them will use temper tantrums to try and get their own way, and may scream or bite. Some may need help with going to the toilet and there could be occasional accidents with incontinence.

- **While/after learning how to read**

  In the primary school years (6-11 years), children are in the concrete operational stage, that is, they are not as egocentric as before, they can perceive something else beyond their own realities and point of view, and have an incipient comprehension of physical and mechanical realities and causal relationships, though they cannot yet carry out abstract operations. Their memory techniques are progressively developed, being able to review, organize and use imagery, recall and scripts for learning. The first metacognitive abilities appear, so that they can start learning how to carry out intellectual processes such as planning, decision-making and strategic choice for solving problems.

  Linguistically speaking, they have learnt nearly everything regarding the oral aspects of the language, including discourse and pragmatic skills such as illocutionary intentions, speech registers and topic shifts. Nevertheless, some grammatical aspects are still in the process of being learnt, such as the full use of co-ordinators, conditionals, and relative clauses. Another very important task ahead is the achievement of complete proficiency for the symbolic communication represented by reading and writing, which, for the English learners, has an added degree of complexity, due to its deep orthographic system.
This is the situation of prospective Primary learners, whose job is learning a new language with the cognitive and linguistic tools they have and with the help of the teacher (and probably a textbook).

3. THE TEACHING PROCESS

- Language learning takes place best of all in an anxiety-free and joyful atmosphere
- The development of receptive skills (listening) takes place before the development of productive skills (speaking)
- Children learn by what they see, hear and do.
- Children usually go through a silent period, in which they understand but are unable to speak. Thus, listening activities should take a large proportion of the class time.
- Written activities should be used very sparingly with younger children. Children of six or seven years old are often not yet proficient in the mechanics of writing in their own language.
- Humour, stimulation of pupils' fantasy, vivid illustrations, clear visual aids and a good teaching system are important devices for successful learning.
- Use the second language as much as possible. It is not difficult to give instructions for the usual classroom routines in English: using gestures as well, the children will soon become used to them. The teacher can also use words that are similar to the mother tongue, or use visual cues, or even build an 'English hat'. Wearing it, the teacher is supposed to understand only English.
- There should be different groupings: whole class/pairwork/groupwork/individual.
- Feedback is vital for learning. Feedback is a time in class when the children and teacher can look back at, and reflect on, what they have been doing. Feedback can take place immediately after the children have done an activity, at the end of a series of activities, or on a fixed day each week or fortnight. But it must be regular.

In general, the components of a lesson plan (for children) should include

1. a needs analysis of the students' features;
2. the aims to achieve;
3. the contents (concepts, procedures and attitudes);
4. the methodology or course of action (stages, timing, activities and groupings);
5. anticipated problems;
6. aids, materials and techniques and
7. evaluation: (students, teacher and lesson plan).

The most important consideration is bearing the learners' features in mind when teaching the language, and being able to review—and if needed, adapt—this process. In order to do this, we have introduced a set of questions that do not constitute a systematic test, only a starting point for reflection.
Questions for the teacher

**STARTING NOTIONS**
1. What is the first thing that comes into my head when I think about programming a unit of work? (a grammar point/a vocabulary point/a function)
2. What is it that I want my students to learn? (a grammar point/a vocabulary point/a function)
3. Is it a lesson plan for children or a lesson plan adapted to children?
4. Is it a realistic lesson plan? Can it be implemented in practice?

**TOPICS**
5. What are the topics I have selected for doing it? (topics I think children like/topics I hate but children like)
6. Are the topics meaningful for children?
7. Can they apply them in their life outside the classroom?

**AIMS**
8. Do I teach procedures?
9. Do I teach attitudes?
10. Do I show them learning techniques?

**METHODOLOGY**
10. What is the procedure I am using? (explicit/implicit)
11. Is my methodology consequent with the aims, contents and chosen materials?
12. Do I ask my students to participate?
13. Do I use different groupings?

**EVALUATION**
14. Is my evaluation really consequent? (i.e. if I teach speaking, do I really test speaking?—content validity-)
4.1. Listening

THEORY OUTLINE
Listening is just listening, no verbal response has to be involved.
Listening is the first task for child learners, not grammar.

Two tasks for listening:
- development of ear training skills, the mechanics of listening
  Discrimination of isolated sounds, discrimination of sounds in connected speech,
  discrimination of stress patterns and identification and understanding intonation patterns
- Listening for perception: ear-training activities
  Word and sentence level: discrimination of sounds and noises, identification
  of stress patterns, clapping rhythms, discriminations of phonemes, words,
  clauses, identification and pointing to pictures or objects, moving along with
  rhythms or stress patterns and moving or stopping following the music.
- development of comprehension
  Understanding general and specific meanings, making inferences, predictions, making
  connections within the text, summarising, rejecting redundant information, turning input
  into intake and relating information to own experience

Listen and do activities (do: paint; choose; pick; guess; say; put; find; identify; mime; draw)
  Listen and find mistakes
  Listen and fill in gaps, grids, maps, charts, trees, graphs,
  Listen and read pictures or texts
  Listen for true/false visual or textual answers
  Listen to familiar texts
  Picture dictations

Listening and pronunciation/speaking activities: songs and chants
  Traditional children’s songs: choosing rhymes, circle and singing
  games, jump rope rhymes, ball bouncing rhymes, clapping rhymes,
  bedtime songs, songs about animals

Listening procedure: listening does not involve examination, thus, teachers are expected to carry
out a series of tasks in order to prepare children for listening:
1. introduce the listening: tell children what is what they are going to listen to
2. talk about the topic of the listening BEFORE it
3. be very clear about the task they will have to do while listening (paint, point, colour,
   fill in a chart…etc.) BEFORE it
4. listen to the text WITHOUT ITS TRANSCRIPTION several times, to do several
   different tasks. Leave time to the children to check in pairs their answers
5. listen again to correct those answers
6. do something AFTER the listening (complete the story, sing the song, etc)
LISTENING TECHNIQUES (1): *Total physical Response*

1. **Procedure**

   Teacher says and exemplifies action
   Teacher says and exemplifies action // students do the action
   Teacher says // students do the action
   Volunteer students say actions// other students do the action
   Introduce ‘paper and pen’ tasks
   Introduce more complex TPR activities (combine with songs, stories, etc)
   Review activities from time to time, each time in a more complex way

2. **Do**

   Use verbs in the infinitive
   Use simple sentences, make them complex little by little
   Say name of student once you have said the order
   Use taped material from time to time
   Use mime, gestures or visual material whenever you can
   ...

3. **Don't do**

   Do not translate
   Do not ask your students to translate
   Do not use written language
   Do not explain grammar
   Do not spend more than 15 minutes with each activity (unless drawing is involved)
   Do not ask your students to repeat, only do as you say
   Do not feel embarrassed
   ...

4. **Examples of activities**

   Listen and point
   Listen and do
   Listen and match
   Listen and draw
   Listen, do and sing
   Listen and colour
   Listen and cut
Colour the mouse

1 Colour the mouse’s head brown.
2 Colour his tail brown too.
3 Colour his shirt green.
4 Colour his trousers red.
5 Draw flowers on the ends of the sticks in the mouse’s hand. Colour them yellow, orange, red, blue, and pink.
6 Draw the sun in the sky. Colour it yellow.
7 Cut out the picture and stick it on the front of your card.

(Phillips, 1993: 155)
In the playground. Picture dictation for children

(Phillips, 1993: 150)
Listening techniques (2): *Storytelling*

What to do before/ during / after telling a story?

(Organize activities: before, while and after)

- Give students drawings so they order them before and after the story
- Show them a drawing for them to imagine what is the story about
- Mime it with students
- Write it down on strong paper, cut it and give one line to each student, so that they lift their line when you say it
- Write it down and cut it, and then give the whole disorganized story so students can short it out while they listen to it
- Assign one word to each student and they stand up whenever they listen to that word
- Ask questions so that students may create part of the story (they can use their first language)
- Write down some vocabulary and their drawing so that they can link word and picture
- After telling it several times, introduce very easy errors (on main words) so that they can tell you: ‘you are wrong’
- Tell students to tell it using visual support and some vocabulary
- Tell students to draw a different ending
- Tell students to imagine what each character would say at a given situation. (If you do it in Spanish you may also check they are understanding)
Once upon a time there was a town called Hamelin. The people in the town had a problem: the town was full of rats! There were rats in the street, in the houses, in the schools, in the shops, even in their beds! “We must get rid of the rats!” The people said. But how?

Then, one day, a strange man came to the town. He wore a tall hat and had a flute. “I can get rid of the rats”, he said. “What will you give me if I take them all away?” “Lots of money!” said the people.

So the Pied Piper started to play his flute. Strange music came out of the flute, and soon rats came out of all the shops, houses and schools. The road was full of rats! They all followed the Pied Piper.

The Pied Piper led the rats:
Over the bridge
Up the hill
Down the hill
Round the castle
Along the road
Past the little house

Through the garden of the big house
Into the wood
Out of the wood
And into the river

(Phillips, 1993: 29)
Listening techniques: use of DVD

USES:
1. Whole-lesson
2. Part-time
   a. Illustration of topic
   b. Highlighting language points
   c. Settling a class: Relaxation

RECOMMENDATIONS
1. The length: btw. 30scs and 5 min
2. The section should have meaning in itself
3. A short section can provide work in class for an hour or more
4. Sts. Should watch a complete section, although later divided in parts
5. Sections can be used receptively & productively
6. Sts. Should watch the same section several times for different learning purposes (each)
7. Clear instructions before viewing
8. All the class should participate

Types of activities

Anticipating and predicting
Watching without sound
Observing non-verbal language
Recalling
Static images
Information gap
Dialogues and interactions
Comprehension
Transferring information
Drama activities

Activities…
4.2. SPEAKING

THEORY OUTLINE

- In order to speak, children need lots of input (listening, reading (?), teacher's talk…)
- Memory of complete phrases and vocabulary are the two key elements for helping children speak
- Children understand much more than they are able to produce (speak)
- Speaking involves pronunciation (1) and meaningful communication (2).

Pronunciation, or mechanical production, can be carried out through:
   - Listen and repeat drills; discrimination practice with visual support; meaning contrasts with pictures; identification of sounds, stress and intonation with tongue twisters, rhymes, poetry, songs dialogues and chants; body movements (i.e. clapping, walking, snapping fingers or dancing) following intonation, stress or pausing; learning by heart of sentences, rhymes or chants; reading aloud?

Meaningful communication can be carried out through:
   - Games with mime, gestures and physical movement; dialogues; jokes and riddles; guided interviews, question and answer patterns, games, surveys and questionnaires; discussions and debates; describing pictures, maps and charts; identifying picture differences; problem solving activities; information gap activities; role plays: dialogues, simulations and plays; story-telling activities; cross-cultural activities

- The process to teach children how to speak involves:
   - Input phase, rehearsal phase and performance: a sequence of repetition and recycling
SPEAKING TECHNIQUES (1): Songs

1. Procedure
Pre singing(a)----singing(b)----after singing activities (c)

(a) Before the song:
- Teacher presents author and song
- T. explains difficult vocabulary on BB
- T. and students listen to the song
- T. says (reads) the song enunciating carefully (and does actions)
- T. asks personal opinion of students about song
- T. asks details about song (If they recognise any word, if they had listened to it before, where, what is the song about, etc)

(b) Sts. Do something while they listen to the song:
- Associate pictures
- Order lines or verses (in groups, with flashcards)
- Rise flashcards with specific words (written or pictures) when they listen to them
- Do actions with the help of teacher (first volunteers, then the whole class)
- Learn to sing and do the song (without written version)
- Girls sing one part and boys another
- A volunteer sings some lines and the rest of the class the other part
- All the class sings (with different combinations)

(C) Sts. Practice (if they already know how to read and write!) with the written version of the song:
- Fill in blanks (very easy words)
- Fill in blanks with already given words or pictures
- Follow pictures while singing
- Identify or match specific words
- Find errors (when they already know the song)
- Order lines (with the whole song) or words, or stanzas

2. Do
- Introduce song
- Introduce difficult words
- Do actions alone, then with students
- Listen to it several times for different purposes
- Always let students sing it at the end
- Make sure it practices listening, not memory, or something else
- Make sure it foster learning practice, not testing
- Make sure it is meaningful for students
- Introduce visual and environmental support
- If possible, try to use songs which cover other areas in the Primary Curriculum (i.e. numbers, colors, size, shape, creativity, co-ordination, etc.)
3. Don't do

Do not give students a written version of the song until finished
Do not use written material until everything else is carried out
Do not practice grammar reflection or analysis
Do not give students written versions with words to fill in (unless you use pictures)
Do not ask students to sing until you are sure they already know and understand the song and its pronunciation
Do not translate the song word for word: let students get the general meaning, not in detail
Do not ask for a detailed understanding of every single word
Do not present very long songs
Do not demand a too long stretch of attention

4. Examples of activities

The train

The Train
This chant should be said to the rhythm of a steam train moving off slowly, gathering speed, and finally entering a tunnel with a whistle. The stress on the words is vital, and is marked above each one.

- .
Coffee, coffee

- . .
Milk and sugar, milk and sugar

- . . . .
Strawberries and cream, strawberries and cream

- . . . . . .
Chocolate cake and chocolate biscuits

- . . . . . .
Chocolate cake and chocolate biscuits

- . .
Fish and chips

- . .
Fish and chips

- . .
Fish and chips

- .
SOUP

- ______
S-O-O-O-U-P

(Phillips, 1993: 110)
Five little elephants

Five Little Elephants

• • •

Five little elephants

• • •

Standing in a row

• • •

Five little trunks

• • •

Waving hello

• • •

“Oh” said an elephant

• • •

“Time to go”

Four little elephants...

Phillips (1993:109)

The Hokey Cokey

(Aristotelous, 1980: 15)
SPEAKING TECHNIQUES (2): Storytelling
SPEAKING TECHNIQUES (3): Questionnaires and surveys
SPEAKING TECHNIQUES (4): Information gap activities
4.3. Reading & Introduction to Writing

THEORY OUTLINE

Important: Make sure your students know how to read and write properly in Spanish.

1. Procedure:
Pre reading (a)-----while reading (b)-------follow up (C) activities

(a) guiding questions
   introducing vocabulary
   presenting the text
   brainstorming
   before-questions, true/false statements
   creating expectations
   making predictions
   using illustrations
   using headlines or titles
   guessing word meanings

(b) +(c) questions
   matching
   ordering, classifying, labeling
   circle, underlining, ticking
   finding mistakes
   filling in
   listing
   discussing
   expressing opinions
   listening
   debates
   word-ordering, word recognition
   synonyms

2. Types of activities & techniques

labelling
making posters
sending messages
highlighting features of texts with different colours
letters and e-mail messages
simple stories
reading or filling questionnaires, charts and the like
crosswords
identifying or writing minimal pairs
games
The washing line

The person on the ground floor plays football.

Jane and Mary’s school uniform is a blue skirt and white blouse.

The person on the top floor likes whales.

Dawn loves swimming.

The schoolgirls live on the second floor.

Bob plays number nine in his local football team.

Peter’s hobby is karate.

Dawn lives below Jane and Mary.

Anne’s flat is on the top floor.

Peter lives on the third floor.

(Phillips, 1993: 156)