

SPEECH, TEXT AND CONTEXT: ANALYSIS OF SPEECH AND LANGUAGES TEACHING IN THE COMPULSORY SCHOOLING

Mónica Belda Torrijos

Polytecnic University of Valencia

monica.belda.torrijos@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The mastering of language is a necessary instrument to access the knowledge, for autonomous control of the sources and fields of science and knowledge. It also implies a necessary tool for the education of autonomous beings, who are capable of establishing and mastering the social and professional relations of their environment.

In the last decades, we have witnessed a confluence between new language sciences (pragmatic, linguistic, discourse analysis) and new objectives entrusted to the area of language. Those no longer have as object of study the system of the language in use; communicative approaches of the teaching of languages insist on the need to develop not so much a knowledge about the language but a know-how with words. That is to say, there is a coincidence in which the object of study is not to be the code but the linguistic uses.

KEY WORDS: Language; teaching; speech analysis; linguistics

Introduction

Discourse analysis is the discipline that studies language as a manifestation of the individual's act of communication. From the discursive point of view, language is a social practice linked to specific parameters of the situation and communicative goals, making it impossible to conceive of its success disconnected from the situational and cultural context in which it is framed.

The most unanimously accepted definition of language is that which refers to its semiotic faculty nature showed in an activity conditioned by the biological characteristics of the subjects and by the adaptation to the transmission channel. Language is the communicative

faculty of man that is realized in a plurality of languages. However, the term "language" is problematic because it is not something tangible or object of perception, what exist are the individual languages.

Thus, as Saussure considered essential distinction between *language* and *speech*. For this reason the study of language involves two parts: an essential one: language, which is social in its essence and independent of the individual; the other secondary, aims at the individual part: speech. Language becomes, then, a social product derived from the faculty of language and a set of necessary conventions adopted by the social body, to allow the exercise of that faculty.

However, we tend to speak of language as something that exists in and of itself, and we say that language has certain functions, humanizing something that is only an abstract construct. It is the languages that are really object of observation and these are very diverse and that their existence obeys to sociocultural or even political reasons. Languages are identity elements of the individuals who use them, even more than other cultural elements. For this reason, language is fundamental to the speakers themselves and is often attacked by speakers of other cultures, whether for cultural or ethnic reasons.

For all the above, it can be said that language has no functions, but uses, that is, we use it (actually, we use languages and acts of speech) to cover a series of needs for which language is the more suitable means.

These uses or activities of language can be called habitus, understood as any activity perceptible in one way or another by other individuals. This view of language implies that language must be understood as something collective, which implies effects on the environment and on other individuals, apart from individualistic approaches to it. Consequently, language and speech are products of our activity, not independent and active objects.

Language is part of a culture and its uses depend on the group that conforms it, so it is not easy to classify the different uses of language or speech acts, as these will be as diverse as diverse are the cultures that use language to communicate. Because of this diversity of languages and cultures, language studies represent a complexity that many linguists of the 20th century have neglected. The practice of linguistic activity can be as diverse as the contexts in which it is carried out, which is why the studies of the last years of language emphasize interaction in its supra-individual and collective aspects. All of this implies that, in relation to language learning and teaching, the following aspects must be taken into account:

- Language is one's own culture, sociocultural activity therefore there will always be to that taken into account, as a means of rapprochement between them. [1]

- The essence of language is its activity, should prioritize use over reflection. [SEP]
- Languages are variable both synchronic and diachronically. The regulations must conform to this fact.
- Care should be taken with those languages in danger of disappearing because they are essential elements for humans.

The analysis of discourse arises from the conjunction of two theoretical currents: the first part of the social interpretations of language that start from anthropology, sociolinguistics and ethnography of communication. Thus, in front of the linguistic competence that consists in the acquisition of the knowledge of a series of grammatical norms, it appears the communicative competence that also includes the knowledge of all the contextual aspects of the communication. Likewise, the acceptance of linguistic variation, or the use of linguistic expressions associated with communicative requirements, gives rise to the concepts of register and gender.

Therefore, the communicative competence considers that the individual not only has knowledge of the grammatical rules of their language, but also is competent to know in which situation they can be used properly. This competence is articulated in four sub-competences:

- The linguistics that concerns the knowledge of the language as a system
- The discourse that refers to the structuring of a text with coherence and cohesion.
- The sociolinguistic and pragmatic that alludes to the linguistic variation according to the social context.
- The strategic competence that concerns the knowledge of the mechanisms that allow planning and solving communication problems. [SEP]

Communicative competence is achieved by acquiring a language in its social and communicative context. Context is understood as the set of elements that surround and condition communication. This entails an important methodological change in the study of language, since it can not be studied isolated from the social and contextual component, it is necessary to study authentic linguistic samples taken from real situations, both oral and written. Thus arises the so-called Conversational Analysis that considers that the conversation is the most spontaneous manifestation that best characterizes the interactions of individuals.

There are three factors that determine the context: situational factors, such as the channel, participants, etc; extra situational, as the cultural and social factor of the participants in the communication and non-verbal, kinetic movements that give meaning to the communicative. To which must be added the co-text, ie the knowledge of ideas, events and information that makes interpretation possible, in addition to the linguistic information that surrounds the statement. Likewise, it is important to achieve an adequate final interpretation to take into account the so-called inferential process in which the meaning of words incorporates a series of statements that do not appear explicitly and is called implicit information. The implicit information that must be inferred in each communicative act is called implicature.

Associated with the concept of context registration and gender arise. The register refers to the functional variety or set of linguistic features that is used in adaptation to the parameters of a particular situation. Thus, the concept of adequacy is fundamental in language teaching.

The second current from which the present analysis of discourse arises is the linguistics of the text, which considers the text as the superior unit of communication resulting from the actual use of language. The properties that a text must have to ensure that it has unity of meaning are coherence and cohesion. And the linguistic strategies used to construct the different approaches of the sender to the contents of its discourse are the so-called processes of modalization and polyphony.

Consistency is the semantic mechanism that makes a text form a meaningful unit through thematic progression and information structure. Cohesion represents the way to connect particular statements through explicit linguistic procedures. The mechanisms of cohesion are divided into so-called maintenance of reference (ellipsis, anaphora, repetition, etc.) and connectors.

Another of the elements of great importance in the analysis of the text are the marks of the approach of the issuer towards the contents enunciated, what we call modality, understood as a series of marks of subjectivity or the presence of the emitter in his speech. These marks are: suprasegmental, morphological, syntactic, and lexical procedures.

The concept of polyphony is related to the presence of the issuer in the text, and it refers to the presence of different issuers in the text. Likewise, a classification based on the intention with which it was created arises in the linguistics of the text. The objectives of the text make it to be configured in a certain way, with a particular organization and the use of different linguistic resources. Thus we have narration, description, argumentation, exhibition and dialogue.

Finally, all these principles of discourse analysis must be concretely translated into language teaching, it is necessary to find concrete proposals that transcend theoretical concepts to become practical didactic realities. The text becomes the centerpiece from which to develop the student's communicative competence. It is about using authentic texts that allow the student to be aware of the social power of language and how its adequacy has real consequences for its status. From the text, one can also teach grammar in a contextualized way.

The study of language: communication and grammar

Reflection on languages should be seen as one more element of the general task of teaching: for students to understand how the world works. Linguistic knowledge is an inexcusable goal for this task since language is a defining part of human behavior.

But to acquire this linguistic knowledge it is necessary to know the grammar of the language in which we communicate. A language is not something static and closed, but a dynamic and productive system in which grammar works as a machinery for creating and understanding meanings and, in its knowledge, cognitive mechanisms and social relations also come into play.

The development of linguistic competence can hardly be acquired if it is not from the reflexive understanding of the mechanisms of language. The development of one's own linguistic awareness involves bringing to light the non-conscious knowledge that students already have about their language, and learning to value linguistic diversity.

It is therefore necessary that students not only improve their expression or enhance their understanding, but also are able to understand how their language works and to adequately characterize the central elements of that functioning.

In order to arrive at this knowledge it is fundamental that they understand the following general considerations about how the language works:

- **Linguistic Productivity:** The grammar of a language is the system that regulates the combination of simple elements. It is a characteristic of language. It means that from an always limited number of words of a language, the speaker is able to produce or formulate an infinite number of sentences when combined according to the rules of grammar.
- **Economics of resources:** The condition that saves efforts, in the case of communication, is the contextualization of linguistic utterances. Supporting ourselves in the context, in the shared situation or knowledge we are able to say

more with less. For this reason, grammar and pragmatics must be adequately articulated and complemented. [1]

- Cognitive Approach: The objective of linguistic research should make visible the non-conscious knowledge that the speakers have of their own language: each has internalized a set of construction guidelines that they share in large measure with the other members of their linguistic community. Therefore, the study of the language should not be considered as something alien to the individual, but as an investigation of each one of us. Language becomes a privileged window for the study of the most exceptional of our organs: the brain. [1]
- Grammar, norm and writing: A linguistic norm is a social convention in the desirable use of a particular language, especially a standard language. The best known form of linguistic norm, but not the only one, is the prescriptive or normative language. [1]
- Grammar and context: Speaking and writing correctly means knowing how to handle the devices of management of contextual data and make our partner can access such data as provided by us. This is the role that corresponds to the knowledge of grammar. And this is the perspective that should lead us to fit optimally the study of grammar within the global study of communication and the development of communicative skills.

Languages in teaching

From the middle of the twentieth century to the present day learning and teaching languages in compulsory education has undergone some changes of perspective. Likewise, in the last 10 years technological advances describe new realities and propose new ideas about the teaching of languages in our day.

We can say that sociolinguistic changes, information and communication technologies and psycholinguistic studies have had an important effect on language teaching and learning.

- Changes in the linguistic characteristics of schools and classrooms: it increases their internal diversity and the heterogeneity of their problems in terms of language training for schoolchildren. [1]
- Significant changes in the beliefs about the coexistence of language knowledge and its teaching in compulsory schooling. [1]
- Novelties in the linguistic uses and functionality of these uses due to information and communication technologies. [1]

- Changes in expectations regarding the language training of schoolchildren.

The central objective in the linguistic training of students in compulsory schooling is the learning of the skills of using languages for the different needs that social life demands in the different contexts in which it is developed. Some forget that for learning to occur it is imperative that this use is accompanied by reflection on one's own use and the language tool. In this way, speaking and listening, reading and writing are only the vehicles through which knowledge of all other curriculum subjects is transmitted.

The relationships between the use of languages in the different curricular areas and the learning of these languages and the curricular contents of these areas make it necessary to involve the educators in the solution of the problems that derive from heterogeneity linguistics of the schools. It is evident that the central role of verbal language in schooling, the linguistic diversity of schoolchildren and the curricular requirements demanded by teaching in two or three languages require a planning of the teaching of languages that concerns all teachers and not only to language ones.

This planning about the teaching of languages must be formalized in the School's Language Project describing the sociolinguistic reality of the center, identifying the problems and difficulties of the linguistic education of the students and proposing the ways to its overcoming.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Camps, A. Y Ferrer, M. (coords.) (2000). *Gramática a l'aula*. Barcelona: Graó

Lomas, C. (coord.) (1996) *La educación lingüística y literaria en la enseñanza secundaria*. Barcelona: ICE Universitat de Barcelona/ Horsori

Ruiz, U. (coord.) (2011) *Lengua castellana y literatura. Complementos de formación disciplinar*. Barcelona: GRAÓ