

THE ACTUALITY OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SOCIAL ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH (SAOA): A MATTER OF CONTEXTUALIZED AND FINALIZED CONSTRUCTION

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Acronyms used throughout the article:

- CEFRL: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment (see COE 2001)*, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, Language Policy Unit, 2001, 260 p., <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>.
- CA: Communicative Approach
- FFL: French as a Foreign Language ("Français Langue Étrangère, FFL")
- AOM: Audio-Oral Methodology
- AVM: Audio-Visual Methodology

- SAOA: Social Action-Oriented Approach (see Note 2)

ABSTRACT

This article deals with a particular example of didactic engineering within the framework of a global reform of language teaching in a given school system, in this case Algeria, for the reform of the methodology of teaching national and foreign languages which is in progress there, centered on the implementation of the Social Action-Oriented Approach (SAOA). However, mastery of the communicative approach (CA) is essential to implement this AP, and in the absence of a single and coherent description of this approach, it is therefore essential to build an adequate model. The article may be of interest beyond the particular case of Algeria, insofar as the combination of the communicative approach and the action-oriented perspective is a choice that is currently imposed in school education in many countries (this is the case in France, for example). The article proposes a theoretical process, a practical approach, and several tools to design this combination: a table of "Different methodological matrices available in foreign language-culture didactics", to be combined and articulated between them; different existing lists of CA principles to be prioritized according to local institutional priorities ; finally, a "Conceptual map matrix of the communicative approach " allowing, by adding, deleting and relating its elements, to build a conceptual map of CA in adequacy with the teaching-learning-use environment (it is a "situated" construction), and which therefore takes into account the finalities and objectives of the school teaching of the language-culture (it is a "finalized" construction). Many concepts of the systemic theory used for the presentation of the "general system of research in didactics of languages and cultures" will be found in this article: *Théorie générale de la recherche en didactique des langues-cultures. Essai* (Puren 2015a, also available in Spanish (2015a-es).

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on a particular example of didactic engineering in the context of a comprehensive reform of language teaching in a particular school system.

The first version of this text, heavily edited here, was written in May-June 2018 with the aim of providing some ideas for the elaboration of a "Learning framework for communication and action skills in national and foreign languages" for the Algerian school system. This referential is intended for curriculum writers, teacher trainers and textbook designers as well as for teachers themselves in their classrooms, as part of a global reform of these teachings. It will follow several other references already produced, devoted to the competencies of written comprehension, one general, and four others divided into different domains, including that of communication and that of action¹.

For this reform of the teaching of national languages (Arabic and Tamazight) and foreign languages (mainly French, English and Spanish), the choice of those in charge, in terms of

¹ The other two are those of decoding and literary experience. The ideas I expose in this article are of course only my own.

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teaching-learning methodology, has been the Social Action-Oriented Approach (SAOA)² for two strong convergent reasons:

-It seemed to them to be the method most in line with the primary purpose of language teaching, namely to make a specific contribution, alongside other school subjects, to the training of a citizen who is a social actor and who is engaged in "making society" with others on the basis of shared values and a common collective project.

-It is oriented towards social use, like the language tests of the PISA surveys, tests in which they decided to make Algeria participate in order to regularly confront its school system with recognized international standards.

The concrete experience of workshops for the elaboration of classroom sequences in SAOA with inspectors of different languages in 2015-2016 has clearly shown, however, that this approach is difficult to understand and impossible to implement from pre-communicative didactic traditions: in social action, communication is certainly no longer both the means and the objective, as in the communicative approach (henceforth "CA"), but it is an indispensable means, which precisely makes it more delicate to conceive and to implement. The failure in Algeria, as in other African countries, of the implementation, from the 2000s onwards, of the "competency-based approach" or of the "pedagogy of integration" –with which SAOA shares a certain number of fundamental principles and the same type of learning and reference use, namely the project– is moreover based on the same analysis: Since innovation has been taken over by *pedagogy*, the *didactic* traditions of the different languages may not have evolved, and in particular may not have integrated one of the main principles of implementation of CA, namely the development of interactions between students themselves in real or simulated communication situations (cf. PUREN 2016h, 2018e)³.

1. THE IMPOSSIBLE DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

Introduction of part 1

It seems to me that it is possible to propose –even if one can always criticize them– some *definitions* of the communicative approach. I will gladly risk two of them:

–a historical definition:

Dominant methodology among educationalists in Western countries from the mid-1970s to the mid-2000s⁴.

–and a didactic definition:

Methodology that has as its objective of use language communication conceived mainly as an exchange of information between native and non-native speakers in encounter situations⁵, and as a learning objective this same communication simulated in class between learners.

² This approach is called "Action-Oriented Approach" in CEFR. I add "social" to "action" to distinguish it from "Task Based Learning", whose tasks were initially, and still are most often, only communicative (cf. Puren 2009b-en, 2014a-en)

³ Note: "-en" after the year in the references of my personal articles means that they are in English; "-es", in Spanish. Examples: PUREN 2002-en, PUREN 2004b-es. When there is only the year or a number, the article or document is in French. Examples: PUREN 2016h, PUREN 050.

⁴ The first French FFL textbook claiming to be based on the SAOA, *Rond-Point 1* (Paris: Édition Maison des langues) was published in 2004. But it still retains many features of the communicative approach (cf PUREN 2016a).

⁵ Even though, as we will see later (cf. quotation of ROULET 1977, p. 6), the authors of the French *Threshold Level* have broadened the audience of learners beyond travelers, the implementation of CA in FFL textbooks has inherited the "genes" of the tourist trip (cf. PUREN 2014a-en).

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On the other hand –and we will see why throughout chapter 1.2– any exhaustive and objective *description* of CA is impossible: one can only make multiple, fragmented and even partly contradictory descriptions.

1.1. Reference publications used

The following analysis is based mainly on two of the four general works published in French on CA:

–Evelyne BÉRARD, *L'approche communicative. Théorie et pratiques*, 1991 (henceforth "BÉRARD"),

–Claude GERMAIN, *L'approche communicative en didactique des langues*, ed. 1993 [1st ed. 1991] (henceforth "GERMAIN").

I have chosen them (1) because they are the most general works published in French on this approach, (2) because they both try to take into account the diversity of its interpretations –and even of its conceptions and operationalizations for the first one⁶–, but also (3) because they are available online⁷, and they will thus allow all my readers (at least those who read French...) to do for their own account the contextualized and finalized construction approach that I propose here⁸.

My readers may also, if they can get them, extend their documentation with the works of WIDDOWSON H.G. (*Teaching Language as Communication* 1st English 1st ed. 1978) and HYMES Dell H. (*Vers la compétence de communication*, French translation 1984, 1st English ed. 1973). It turns out that these two works are very different from the two previous ones, and very complementary to each other:

–In the first book, Widdowson offers a practical study of "certain issues that seem to me to arise from adopting a communicative approach to the teaching of language." ("Introduction," p. IX) throughout six chapters entitled (1) "Usage and use," (2) "Discourse," (3) "Linguistic skills and communicative abilities," (4) "Comprehending and reading," (5) "Composing and writing," (6) "Towards an Integrated Approach".

–In the second book, HYMES offers a theoretical analysis of the concept of "communicative competence" from a linguistic perspective, the author's thesis being presented as follows in the "General Preface" dated 1982:

What is needed is a linguistics that can describe any speech feature that is relevant in a given case, and that can relate linguistic elements to each other in terms of role relations, status, tasks, and so on. Such linguistics must be based on social theory and ethnographic practice as well as on practical phonetics and grammar (p. 14, back-translation into English from the French translation).

Finally, two books have been published in French on the question of evaluation in a communicative approach: Sibylle BOLTON, *Évaluation de la compétence communicative* in 1987 and Denise LUSSIER, *Évaluer les apprentissages dans une approche communicative* in 1992. I will have the opportunity to quote them again in chapter 1.3.2, "Examples of evolution".

⁶ After a first part entitled "Essay of definition of the communicative approach", E. BÉRARD devotes the second part of his book to an "analysis of didactic sets", and the ^{third} and last part to "an experience of FFL [French as a foreign language] class".

⁷ See the links in the final bibliography of this article.

⁸ In this article, "situates" and "finalizes" have the meaning that these qualifiers have in epistemology: in relation to the situation of the observer or the actor within his environment, and in relation to the end, the objective that they pursue.

1.2. Multiple interpretations

No matter how much we read and how carefully we read, it is impossible to arrive at a single, stable and coherent interpretation of CA. The reason for this is given by BÉRARD:

The first observation that must be made is that the communicative approach uses various theoretical elements that are sometimes difficult to reconcile. [...] The important differences that can exist between the discourse on the didactics of the FFL [French as a foreign language] and the practices in the classroom on the manuals are related to the modes of access to information, to the circuits of training and to the relation theory/practice, application of a theory or theorization of a practice. (p. 26 & p. 27)

We find the same idea even more clearly exposed at the beginning of the work of GERMAIN (however published in a collection entitled " *Le Point sur...*" [Statement on...]!...) :

*It is clear that there is not ONE, but **several conceptions or interpretations**⁹ of what the communicative approach is. Contrary to what has happened in the past with the direct method, the French audio-visual structural-global method (SGAV), the American audio-oral method or the British situational method, the communicative approach does not constitute a body of homogeneous doctrine on which the didacticians would have agreed, far from it! It is why some people have rather spoken of a communicative "movement" or "approach" in the sense that it was understood in the past.*

The interpretation, or rather the interpretations, of the communicative approach are so numerous that it is no longer clear what is or is not communicative. (p. 3)

As we can see –cf. the "diverse theoretical elements" in the first quotation, and the pointed absence of a "homogeneous body of doctrine" in the second–, these two authors explain the diversity of the descriptions of CA first of all by the plurality of the theoretical references, showing thereby that they privilege, to use BÉRARD's terms above, a conception of the didactics of language-cultures more as "application of a theory" than as "theorization of a practice". This conception has undoubtedly prevented them from giving more weight to many other factors which they cite for some of them, but which have undoubtedly been more decisive factors than they think: the diversity of theories, in fact, is explained first of all, in my opinion, by the fact that they have come to support *a posteriori* diverse interpretations of CA.

1.3. Multiple factors of divergent interpretation

The multiplicity of interpretations of CA is produced by the convergence of many different factors:

1.3.1 Important differences between the English and French threshold levels

Between the first two *Threshold Levels*, the 1975 English *Threshold Level* of and the 1976 *Un niveau seuil*, which served as reference documents both for the subsequent *Threshold Levels* for other European national and regional languages and for the construction of CA in Europe, there are already important differences which one of the authors of the French *Threshold Level*, Eddy ROULET, presents in a booklet *Présentation et guide d'emploi (Presentation and User's Guide)* of this document, published the following year by the Council of Europe:

The CREDIF team in charge of developing the French threshold level was largely inspired by the well-known work of J. van EK for English, but it deviated from it on several points: consideration of a more diversified public, priority given to speech acts, development of a notional grammar. [...] the French threshold level has been designed in a more open manner, and it also takes into consideration the language needs of four major categories of learners: migrant workers and their families, specialists or professionals who do not leave their country of origin, and older teenagers or young adults in a school setting. (1977, p. 1 & p. 4)

⁹ The capital letters are in the text, the enrichment in bold is mine. We will see further on, in chapter 2, the differences I make between the concepts of "interpretation" and "conception", as well as between these concepts and those of "representation" and "operationalization".

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Given the proximity of the two publications, these differences can only be explained by different interpretations, which therefore occurred very early in the construction of the CA.

1.3.2. A methodology subject to a long process of differentiation and evolution

CA has been disseminated in many countries for three decades for all foreign languages, and has therefore undergone a long process of differentiation and evolution.

- Example of differentiation

Among the "socio-historical conditions" that "explain the characteristics that a movement in emergence takes on" –in this case CA– GERMAIN cites the "American milieu" marked at the time by the audio-oral method (p. 6), the "British environment", marked by the "situational method" (pp. 12-14) and the "French environment", marked by the audiovisual method (pp. 14-15)¹⁰.

In the French-speaking world, the final activity of the didactic unit of the textbooks has indeed remained for a long time that of the audiovisual methodology, namely the management of a "communication situation", whereas in the Anglo-Saxon world, the notion of "task [communicative]" was imposed from the beginning with the *Task Based Learning* (cf. PUREN 2004a, chap. 1 pp. 11-14; or 2004b-es).

- Examples of evolution

(a) There has been an exaggerated limitation, as opposed to Audio-Oral Methodology (AOM) and Audio-Visual Methodology (AVM), of the attention initially given to phonetics, grammar and vocabulary –denounced by certain didacticians (cf. on these various points the analysis of GERMAIN, pp. 94-97)–, before a rather early correction of these excesses as regards grammar¹¹, later for phonetics, and still more for vocabulary.

(b) The question of cultural competence was not asked at the beginning. There is no occurrence of the concept of "intercultural" in BÉRARD and GERMAIN. In the first book, there are only four occurrences of the concept of "representation", three of which are related to the image of the language in the learners, and only one in a context where the term "intercultural" could have appeared, but where the idea remains implicit:

Wouldn't certain strategies be linked to the social functioning of a group, the representation that one has of the other during an exchange being well inscribed in a social dimension? (p. 20)

In GERMAIN, we find only one occurrence of the concept of "representation", and it does not concern culture but linguistics: it appears in the definition of the "ideational macro-function" of statements, which, according to the linguist Michael Halliday, ensures "the representation of experience" (p. 28).

The theme of interculturality –with in particular the promotion of "intercultural dialogue" between nations– had emerged in the major international institutions in the same years as CA, at the beginning of the 1970s. But it is only after the first publication of the works of BÉRARD and GERMAIN that the intercultural approach will be developed by the language-culture didacticians as a mode of management of the culture parallel to the CA as a mode of management of the language, with in particular the publication in 1993 of the work of Genevieve Zarate¹². The intercultural approach in the service of CA will then

¹⁰ In the conceptual map of CA that I propose in the final annex of this article, these different "environments" are included in the "didactic and methodological environment" pole.

¹¹ The first French textbook of FFL to have carried out this return to a systematic and progressive teaching of grammar was *Sans Frontieres* (VERDELHAN Michele, VERDELHAN Michel, DOMINIQUE Philippe, *Sans Frontieres* 1. Paris: CLE international, 1982).

¹² ZARATE Genevieve, *Representations de l'étranger et didactique des langues*, Paris : CREDIF-Didier, 128 p. In this regard, it should be noted that the public of the French *Threshold Level* of 1976 (*Un Niveau seuil*) was enlarged in comparison with the English *Threshold Level* of 1975, and that the objectives were also enlarged to include intercultural competence: "The *Threshold Level of linguistic competence* is

naturally take up the "genes" of the global reference situation of this approach, namely the tourist trip (cf. PUREN 2014a-en). The first FFL textbook (and the only one I know) systematically implementing the intercultural approach was published in 1994 in Italy¹³.

(c) The consideration of the components of communicative competence in the reflections and proposals concerning the evaluation was late:

-In the *présentation et guide d'emploi* booklet of *Un Niveau Seuil* (ROULET 1977), the assessment is mentioned only twice, and it is not the assessment of learners, but of "teaching materials" (p. 5 and table p. 6), and "the objectives and content of an existing course" (p. 7). In the Spanish version of the *Threshold Levels, Un nivel umbral* (SLAGTER 1979), in the two and a half pages of chapter XI *Grado de dominio* ("Degree of Mastery", pp. 32-34), the author explains the main reason why this document does not allow for a fine-grained assessment of students -what we would now call a "scale of competences", like those of the CEFRL- even for oral communication, the only "skill" taken into account in this book: it is simply because it describes only the "threshold level", i.e. the minimum degree of competence below which a speaker can neither understand what is said to him, nor make himself understood.

-The question of the evaluation of communicative competence does not appear in either BÉRARD or GERMAIN, and both of them deal with evaluation only rarely and in a very punctual manner. ALTE (Association of Language Testers in Europe) was founded in 1989; Sibylle BOLTON's book, *Evaluation de la compétence communicative en langue étrangère*, originally written in German, was published in France in 1987, and Denise LUSSIER's book, *Évaluer les apprentissages dans une approche communicative*, was published in 1992¹⁴. For this question of the evaluation of communicative competence to really take importance in the conception of CA, until it becomes central, it is necessary to wait until 2001 and the publication of the CEFRL, whose authors will propose for this purpose, as we know, a model of "competence to communicate linguistically" with three components: linguistic, sociocultural and pragmatic (chapter 2.1.2, p. 13).

(d) In some French textbooks, after the publication of the CEFRL, there has been a shift from simulated communicative mini-tasks to social tasks designed as pedagogical mini-projects (cf. PUREN 050). This is a much earlier trend among Anglo-Saxon educationalists, as GERMAIN observes:

-In 1987 in the PRAHBU N.S. "Procedure Focus" syllabus (*Second Language Pedagogy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 153 pp.), with tasks such as "calculating distances, plotting a route using road maps, evaluating job applications based on a biographical sketch, etc." (p. 117). The focus is on meaning and task performance rather than language" (p. 117);

-and in 1992 in the tasks proposed by LONG Michael H. and CROOKES Graham, "Three approaches to task-based syllabus design", *TESOL Quarterly*, vol. 26, Issue 1, pp. 27-56) as they are heard "in everyday life": "repainting a fence, dressing a

conceived as a statement of the knowledge and skills that a learner must acquire in order to be able to assert him/herself in a simple but effective way as an individual in a foreign environment, not merely "surviving", for example by completing the formalities associated with a trip, but by striving to communicate with those he meets, seeing them not only as "guides", "traders" or "state employees", but as human beings whose concerns and way of life he comes to understand, appreciate -even share. This, we believe, is the goal of most people who decide to learn a language. (Foreword, p. iii)

¹³ BERTOCCHINI Paola, COSTANZO Edvige, DUMAZ Michel, *Special France*, Turin : Éd. Eureka Edizioni, 1994; The file 2 is available on the download page of the PUREN 2011j document.

¹⁴ This book by LUSSIER has been digitized in pdf format by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France within the framework of its Gallica program (<http://aalllica.bnf.fr/>). It can be immediately downloaded legally for the sum of 5 euros on the site www.leslibraires.fr/.

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child, filling in a form, buying a pair of shoes, booking a plane ticket, typing a letter, etc." (p. 118).

These tasks are quite comparable to those that the authors of the CEFRL will give in 2001 as examples of tasks in an action-oriented approach:

A task is defined as any purposeful action considered by an individual as necessary in order to achieve a given result in the context of a problem to be solved, an obligation to fulfil or an objective to be achieved. This definition would cover a wide range of actions such as moving a wardrobe, writing a book, obtaining certain conditions in the negotiation of a contract, playing a game of cards, ordering a meal in a restaurant, translating a foreign language text or preparing a class newspaper through group work. (p. 10)

We remain within the framework of CA as long as the action, even relatively complex and with a social dimension, is first conceived as a means at the service of communication, whereas in SAOA, it is the opposite. For example, the three French didacticians of FFL, DALGALIAN G., LIEUTAUD S. and WEISS F., imagine in their 1981 book actions such as surveys, interviews, preparation of a trip, correspondence, the setting up and realization of a show and interdisciplinary work (p. 61). But they remain within the framework of the communicative approach: in their "methodological schema, it is a question in phase 1 of "making communication emerge from the needs of the action" (p. 78); in phase 2, of "introducing the linguistic tools of communication" (id.); in phase 3, of achieving the "resolution of the task by communicating with the tools acquired in phase 2" (p. 79); and finally, in phase 4, of "simulating a new exchange" (id.).

I have also shown (PUREN 2009b-en, pp. 11-14) that in the CEFRL the pedagogical project, *i.e.* the most complex form of social action in a learning context, is always mentioned together with simulation and role-playing, *i.e.* as a means of eliciting communicative interactions between learners.

In the Anglo-Saxon area, the notion of "task", undoubtedly under the influence of the notion of social action introduced by the CEFRL, will subsequently pursue an evolution which will lead some didacticians to integrate the pedagogical project itself: we have reached the end of a semantic evolution that has taken the notion of "task" very far from the initial conception of the specific communicative tasks of reuse¹⁵; too far, no doubt, for us to consider that it is still the same concept.

This evolution of the notion of "task" has also had the perverse effect of preventing most didacticians from perceiving the ruptures that need to be built between CA and SAOA. They have considered the latter as an "extension" of the former, which has not allowed them to clarify their historical interpretations of CA by taking the sufficient distance from it that only an external position allows.

1.3.3. Different theoretical models mobilized at different times with different impacts

The theories and theoretical models¹⁶ mobilized in the construction of CA have been diverse. GERMAIN thus notes, following STERN whose work *Fundamentals Concepts of Language Teaching* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983, 582 p.) he quotes several times, that...

... much of the confusion about the communicative approach stems from the fact that it is born of a double contribution: on the one hand, a contribution coming from a research

¹⁵ Examples of tasks given by David NUNAN in his 2004 reference book, *Task-Based Language Learning*: "1. Look at the map with your partner. You are at the hotel. Ask your partner for directions to the bank. 2. You are having a party. Tell your partner how to get from the school to your home" (p. 26). This last example can be compared with the same one conceived in SAOA in « Différents niveaux de l'"agir" en classe de langue-culture : TP sur la notion de "compétence" », PUREN 054, p. 4.

¹⁶ On the notion of "theoretical models", cf. PUREN 2015a pp. 4, 12-13, 17, and diagram on p. 48. They

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tradition of a rather linguistic nature, language being seen, however, in a communicative perspective, and on the other hand, a contribution whose research tradition finds its sources in psychology and pedagogy. (p. 5)

BÉRARD makes the same type of observation:

This diversity of theoretical tools prevents us from considering the relationship between theory and practice, when it comes to implementing a foreign language curriculum, in terms of applying theory to practice. The communicative approach integrates theoretical elements; the difficulty lies in determining at what level each of these elements is involved and whether it is conceivable to use the elements in isolation¹⁷. (p. 26)

The "theoretical entries"¹⁸, moreover, took place at different times. GERMAIN thus rightly notes that "cognitive psychology [...] is attempting at the present time [*i.e.* in 1991 or 1993] to serve as a foundation, **albeit a *posteriori***, for the [communicative] approach" (p. 57, emphasis added). As a dominant methodological construction for three decades, but relatively open, CA has been able to function during all this time as an "attractor" of all the theoretical novelties, which the communicativist methodologists have at first attached to it.

The consequence is that it is sometimes difficult to measure, for all the theories that have successively entered the CA "construction system"¹⁹, their real level of impact on the design and even more on the implementation of CA –in other words, to distinguish between those that have given rise to a "theoretical mobilization" by entering into a field research process, and then to a "praxeological modeling", and those that have only been the object of a "praxeological modeling", and those that have been merely "rhetorically mobilized"²⁰. This question would certainly require extensive research over time, which I have not conducted. I will therefore content myself with briefly presenting below a few examples that seem to me to be illustrative.

(a) Pragmatic theory and its theoretical models of speech acts and notional-functional grammar (cf. BÉRARD pp. 23-26) can certainly be considered as "constitutive" elements (in the strong sense of having participated in the constitution, in the construction of CA), even if they have not generated new praxeological models²¹.

correspond exactly to what BÉRARD calls, in the following quotation, "theoretical tools". Constructivism, for example, is a theory; interlanguage is the corresponding theoretical model or tool concerning the learning process; there is a corresponding "praxeological model" (cf. next chap. 1.3.4.), namely the exercise of conceptualization by the students of their own errors. The search for another, more ambitious theoretical model, that of a teaching progression model based on general rules for the construction of the interlanguage, has failed.

¹⁷ It should be noted that the last part of the sentence quoted above ("... and if it is conceivable to use the elements in an isolated way ") operates a syntactic rupture with respect to what precedes it, which is probably not unrelated to the logical rupture: if a teaching program is not an application of theory to practice, in what way is a plurality of theoretical references a practical problem? It is one of the epistemological peculiarities of models, precisely, unlike theories, that they can function in a way that is both opposing and complementary with the effect of enriching practice (cf. PUREN 016, commentary n° 3, point 5, p. 2).

¹⁸ See PUREN 2015a, chap. 5.2.4, pp. 34-35.

¹⁹ The system of constructing a methodology works in the same way as the research system as I presented it in my 2015 essay (PUREN 2015a).

²⁰ On these notions of "theoretical mobilization," "praxeological modeling," "pragmatic modeling," and "rhetorical mobilization," cf. my essay cited in the previous note (PUREN 2015a), respectively Chapter 4.1 pp. 21-23, Chapter 3.3, pp. 17-18, and Chapter 4.2 pp. 23-24, as well as the representation of these four notions in the diagram on page 48.

²¹ In the communicativist textbooks of levels A1 and A2, speech acts and concepts were presented at the beginning of the didactic unit in dialogue situations, in the same way as morphosyntactic grammar and vocabulary in the dialogues of audiovisual courses; then in lists of concepts and functions, as in the threshold levels..., and like the verbal and grammatical paradigms of the traditional and direct manuals; at the end of the unit, they were worked on in simulated or real situations of dialogue reuse, as in the audiovisual courses.

(b) On the other hand, at the opposite extreme, the interpretation of the interactions between learners, by some FFL didacticians who want to apply the socioconstructivist theory, as "co-constructions of meaning", is clearly a rhetorical mobilization, because this is so far from the realities and objectives that can reasonably be achieved in the foreign language classroom, within the framework of a communicative approach, where the dialogue models proposed for the presentation of language forms and for their reuse are mostly reduced to simple exchanges of information²².

(c) The theoretical model of interlanguage is probably situated between the two extremes in this continuum. The inaugural article by L. SELINKER ("Interlanguage", 1973) and the book by S. PIT CORDER developing the same notion (*Introducing Applied Linguistics*, 1973) were published, as we can see, before the English and French Threshold Levels. This model is really introduced in the didactic reflection in France only in 1980 with an article in French by the same S. PIT CORDER, "Que signifient les erreurs des apprenants ?" ("What do learners' errors mean"), but it imposes itself quickly, and it is for example very present in the works of BÉRARD (1991) and GERMAIN (1993). As for the corresponding praxeological model, *i.e.* the conceptualization of their own errors by the learners, it is already available, since it is a simple transposition of the model of grammatical conceptualization on the correct enunciations, of current use since the direct methodology of the years 1900. On the other hand, it is not certain that the praxeological model of interlanguage has been implemented frequently in the classroom, if we are to believe the results of a 1999 thesis research summarized by its author, Marie-Christine FOUGEROUSE, in a 2001 article (§ 10): following her numerous observations in classes given in Paris by teachers trained in the didactics of FFL, she noted that "according to [her] survey, the practice of inductive grammar remains in the minority: two thirds of the teachers prefer the deductive approach", *i.e.*, the one that starts from the rule in order to produce correct statements right away.

(d) The "individual learning strategies" offer yet another case. The notion is presented, for example, in an 1976 article by Bernard PY entitled "Étude expérimentale de quelques stratégies d'apprentissage d'une langue étrangère par les adultes" ("Experimental study of some learning strategies of a foreign language by adults"). But it does not appear in GERMAIN's work, nor even in BÉRARD's, although she could have linked it closely to the notion of "learner-centeredness": she considers indeed that "all the work" of the Council of Europe since 71, by "contributing to the promotion of a communicative type of approach", in particular the analysis of needs and the threshold levels, "participates in a movement of learner-centeredness". It was probably not until the publication in 1998 of Paul CYR's book entitled *Les stratégies d'apprentissage* that this notion came to feed this phenomenon, which is particular from the point of view of the history of methodologies, of a methodology that is in a way still a bit "in the making". But, as I have already pointed out above in this same sub-chapter 1.3.3, further research would be necessary to trace faithfully and in detail the fate of the different theoretical models in the constitution and evolution of CA.

What will undoubtedly emerge from this research is the diverse nature of the influences that are often grouped together under the convenient, but too general, heading of "theories". Let us take the case of the presence, which is surely not accidental, of the same logical operator "inter" in three fundamental concepts of the communicative approach: *interaction*, *interlanguage*, *intercultural* (cf. PUREN 2010i). This convergence can be interpreted as an effect of cognitive theory, which is interested in what happens in the learner's head when he is confronted with two different objects: his action and that of his "interlocutor", his mother tongue and the foreign language, his culture and the foreign culture; or as the effect of a more general epistemological movement, which is no longer interested in the objects in themselves, as in structuralism, but

²² On page 22 of my 2015(a) essay, one can see the difficult efforts of Dominique BUCHETON and Elisabeth BAUTIER, specialists in linguistics and educational sciences, in a 1996 article concerning the mother tongue entitled "Interactions: co-construction of the subject and of knowledge", to defend the interest of mobilizing this theory, even though they recognize that it has not succeeded in generating a praxeological model in French mother tongue classes.

in the phenomena of contacts thus produced, a movement which continues to this day with the ubiquitous notion of "network"; or as an effect of another epistemological evolution observed in all Western societies as well as in all sciences or human disciplines, including language and culture didactics, namely a constant shift from an object perspective to a subject perspective (cf. PUREN 1998f). Another example, this time of ideology, is the coupling that has taken place between the communicative approach, in which the dialogue exchange is central since it is both the means and the objective, and the intercultural approach, which is contemporary, as already mentioned above, with the international promotion of "intercultural dialogue" by the major international institutions: such a convergence leads one to think that this coupling is not a matter of the History of Science but of the History of Ideas.

1.3.4. Borrowing from different praxeological models

CA is a relatively complex and open methodological construction: this is what is suggested by the notion of "approach", as opposed to the notion of "method" (in the sense of "methodology"), a term that connotes a strong and firm coherence such as that of the previous methodological construction, the "audiovisual methodology" (AVM). So that it is logical –contrary to what BÉRARD thinks (p. 62) in coherence with the weight she gives to the theoretical references– that the textbooks and classroom practices claiming to be based on CA actually incorporate a good dose of "eclecticism". Examples:

(a) In the first French FFL textbooks claiming to be based on CA, the basic support is still that of the AVM, namely a basic dialogue: the didactic treatment is that of the "document logic". Other authentic supports are added to the didactic unit to work in priority such or such language activity (the four skills + interaction), the didactic treatment being then done according to a different logic, specific to CA, the "support logic"²³.

(b) In French FFL textbooks, morphosyntactic grammar has always been maintained in parallel with the specific grammar of CA, namely notional-functional grammar. It is even always on the first one that the language progression in the textbooks has been based, in combination with the choice of communication situations and cultural themes, the second one not providing in itself any principle of progression or even gradation.

(c) Sometimes from level B1 onwards, and always from level B2 onwards, the textbooks are no longer strictly speaking "communicative", the work on the language being done mainly by means of collective talk in class on authentic documents: we then return to the configuration prior to CA, that of the active methodology and its "document logic" (cf. PUREN 066-en), with the macro-task of "explanation" or "commentary" of texts (cf. PUREN 2012j).

On the other hand, didactic traditions in some countries have blocked principles that are at the root of CA. A striking case is the continuation in France of the strict application of the direct method (*i.e.* of the non-use of the learners' mother tongue), whereas, as GERMAIN rightly points out (p. 93), three of the first great specialists in CA, H.G. WIDDOWSON (in 1978) and M. CANALE and M. SWAIN (in 1980) considered it logical that the work of acquiring communicative competence in a foreign language should be based on the communicative competence already acquired in the mother tongue, and, possibly, in other foreign languages.

The interpretation of these different borrowings (which are thus in fact "occult heritages", even unconscious: cf. PUREN 1988c, chap. 2.1.4, pp. 29-30) can be interpreted as eclecticism only against a background of expectation of global coherence, such as that of BÉRARD. As I have pointed out several times in other publications²⁴, from the moment when this background of expectation has disappeared, as is the case at present, the heterogeneity of the components of a given methodology appears not as eclecticism, but as a way of dealing with complexity: a

²³ On the different "logics" of processing authentic documents, see PUREN 066. I note that this second logic, the "support logic", already appeared parallel to the first one in the third generation of audiovisual courses, whose prototype is *Archipel* (Paris: CREDIF-Didier, 1982): cf. 1988a, p. 238.

²⁴ See, e.g., PUREN 1994e, "Préface d'octobre 2008," p. 7, and 2015f, p. 11.

global coherence, in fact, cannot allow for the management of the contradictions inherent in any teaching-learning environment, and the multiple adaptations that its unpredictable variations constantly demand (cf. "The components of complexity", PUREN 046). All methodologies have thus been constituted in part by "copying and pasting" into their "software" some "objects" (to continue with the computer metaphor and its lexicon), *i.e.* parts of methodological code that can function in a relatively autonomous way because they are dedicated to particular, precise and indispensable activities²⁵.

1.3.5. Many internal and external shifts and contradictions

It is inevitable, if one considers the elements presented in the preceding subchapters of section 1.3, that if one considers the CA as a whole, one finds many internal and external shifts, tensions and contradictions. Here are seven examples, presented in no preferred order.

(1) There is a mismatch between the primary social goal of CA –the language and cultural management by learners of situations involving encounters with foreigners– and the goals and needs of many learners, who are unwilling or unable to consider such encounters.

(2) In terms of a "cognitive model of reference" (on this concept, cf. PUREN 016), GERMAIN rightly remarks that "in practice, the analysis of needs gradually comes to be confused with an inventory of language behaviors put in relation to the circumstances in which they occur" (p. 39), which clearly refers, from the point of view of cognitive theory, not to constructivism, to which the communicativist methodologists have appealed elsewhere with the concept of interlanguage and with their concept of interlanguage. 39), which clearly refers, from the point of view of cognitive theory, not to constructivism, to which communicativist methodologists have appealed elsewhere with the concept of interlanguage and their proposals for the treatment of learners' errors, but to a neo-behaviorism.

(3) The fundamental principle of the intercultural approach, in line with cognitive theory, is that of working with learners on their *representations* of the foreign culture, which are phenomena of contact, in their minds, between their culture and the foreign culture. However, few real proposals for the implementation of this approach have been made in the textbooks²⁶, and the communicativist methodologists have in the end relied for the most part on the non-explicit postulate –although it is debatable, and should be seriously verified in the field– that an external contribution of objective *knowledge* about the foreign culture (*i.e.*, a "meta-cultural" approach) would necessarily produce in the learners not only a modification of the *representations they have* of it, but above all a better acceptance and valorization of the differences with their own culture (cf. PUREN 2011j, "Critique n° 3", pp. 17-18, including note 16, p. 17).

(4) There is a strong contradiction between two founding elements of CA, namely the "analysis of language needs" (which takes place before the beginning of the course and without the participation of the learners), and the "learner-centeredness", which would require at least taking into account the needs that emerge in the course of learning. Hence the iconoclastic position that RICHTERICH ended up taking in a 1979 article entitled "L'anti-définition des besoins langagiers comme pratique pédagogique" ("The anti-definition of language needs as a pedagogical practice", available at PUREN 060), even though he was known (and is still almost always presented, moreover, especially by specialists of the French on Specific Purpose) as a theorist promoting the analysis of language needs.

(5) The learner-centeredness logically leads to the radical questioning of textbooks as such, since they, by function, predetermine the contents, the progression, the supports

²⁵ For a list of these methodological objects with, for each of them, a bibliographic reference, cf. PUREN 2017e, slide n° 28 with his comments, as well as the appendix, slide n° 31.

²⁶ See some examples in PUREN 1997c, and in PUREN 2011j, pp. 15-17.

and the learning processes. This questioning was made by certain didacticians (Francis Debyser and then Robert Galisson: cf. PUREN 2013k, pp. 1-3), but it was never followed by effect: the "death of the textbook" announced by Francis DEBYSER in 1974 never happened, so that there has always been a significant gap between the pedagogical principles of CA (learner-centeredness and what it implies in terms of learner autonomy and empowerment), on the one hand, and the approach implemented by the textbooks that claim to follow it, on the other.

(6) The principle of "learner-centeredness" in school education finds its limits in the educational finalities: "to educate", *educere* in Latin, is to lead (*ducere*) the student out of (prefix e-) his present state, to make him "grow up"). It also comes up against the constraints of collective teaching as well as the weight of school programs and the preparation for exams and other certifications. As a result, the incessant reminder of this principle is often, in the discourse of communicativist methodologists, pure incantation (cf. PUREN 1995a). It is certainly neither possible nor desirable, in school education, to make "the choice of a language pedagogy **entirely** conceived according to the needs and motivations of the learner", as DALGALIAN G., LIEUTAUD S. and WEISS F. demand in their 1981 book (p. 84, I emphasize).

(7) CA was developed, at least in France, with reference to intensive or semi-intensive classes (5h/week minimum) given in France by native teachers to groups of 10-15 adults of different language-cultures, and this "global problematic of reference" strongly shaped its initial construction and for a long time determined the proposals of its methodologists (cf. PUREN 1998c), so that unavoidable problems in school teaching have not been taken into account in CA, such as the status and function of the source language (cf. PUREN 033), the construction and maintenance of motivation among learners, the loss of knowledge over the years, the management of heterogeneity, or the level of mastery of the foreign language and culture among teachers.

Conclusion of part 1

The only way to overcome the problem of the impossible description of CA is to assume a particular interpretation of it. We will see that in the case, on which I base myself here, of a project of institutional reform integrating an introduction of CA into classroom practices, this interpretation can only be a moment of an overall process aiming at the construction of an "adequate model" of CA.

2. THE PROCESS OF CONSTRUCTING AN ADEQUATE MODEL OF COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

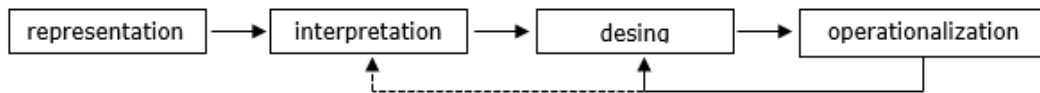
Introduction of part 2

The process of constructing an adequate model of the communicative approach presented here was itself constructed *a priori*, in an abstract way, by means of four concepts –representation, interpretation, desing and operationalization– the whole of which responds to the two main principles of systemic theory: it is made up of elements linked together in a recursive manner -which ensures that it functions in a stable and coherent manner– while being open to the environment. The construction of this process, which aims to build a model of CA, is therefore itself a matter of "theoretical modeling". The following chapter 3 will propose the corresponding concrete approach, which comes under the other type of modeling, "praxeological modeling". The following chapter 3 will propose the corresponding concrete approach, which belongs to the other type of modeling, the "praxeological modeling"²⁷.

²⁷ On the notion of system and systemic theory, I refer to my presentation of it in the "Introduction" of my 2015 essay (PUREN 2015a), pp. 7-9, where I propose a conceptual model (or "theory", if one prefers...) of the "general system of research". The two types of modelizations, theoretical and praxeological, are defined in the body of the essay on pages 17-18, and represented in the diagram of this general system on page 48.

CA is indispensable to the implementation of SAOA, but it is an approach that, for the reasons we have seen in the previous chapter 1, does not have a single, stable and coherent description in itself: this is why it has been the subject in the past, and can only continue to be the subject today, of multiple and diverse *representations, interpretations, desings* and *operationalizations*.

These four concepts of *representation, interpretation, desing* and *operationalization* correspond to as many different theoretical phases of the original construction of CA, which are situated in this chronological order from the initial mental image to the concrete implementation in the field:



These phases are often confused with each other, especially those that are contiguous and in recursive relationship, and that sometimes intertwine: *desing* and *interpretation*, *operationalization* and *design*. But this is precisely why it is important to distinguish between them: to know when they are mixed, and to know, when it is necessary, to unmix them.

2.1. Representation

The mere reading of the different descriptions of CA made by communicativist methodologists can only produce representation of this approach, and the risk of subjectivity is maximal during this phase. In-depth research and a detailed analysis of the sources, influences and backgrounds, as well as of its evolution during the 1970s and 1990s, make it possible to diversify and even complexify these representations, but not to go beyond them: the search for objectivity can only produce a multiplication of different and sometimes contradictory descriptions that end up giving the object either, if one looks at it from a distance, a diffuse overall vision, or, if one looks at it closely, the image of a conglomerate, that is, a juxtaposition of heterogeneous fragments. Any "presentation" of CA, to play on words, is a "re-presentation", that is to say a new presentation that simply adds to all those that have been made before.

2.2. Interpretation

In order to go beyond this stage of representation, a first work of contextualized mental elaboration of the CA is necessary, which produces a certain *interpretation*. "Interpreting" consists in elaborating the meaning of an object by consciously putting its elements *in contact and in relation* (cf. the prefix "inter") with external elements. In my model of task-based analysis of the didactic treatment of authentic documents in the language-culture classroom (cf. PUREN 041, p. 6), "interpreting" thus consists of relating the contents of the document to the extratextual knowledge that specialists in written comprehension call "world knowledge". "Interpreting" CA is also about relating it, in this case, to one's own methodological, didactic, pedagogical, linguistic, sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, etc. knowledge and experience. The "subjectivity" also intervenes in this operation insofar as it is the subject who interprets, even if he does so with objective knowledge. Thus, there are as many legitimate interpretations of CA as there are didactic traditions: this is not a matter of relativism, but of "relationalism", to use a concept proposed by the sociologist Karl Mannheim (cf. PUREN 2011e, p. 9). In the project of institutional reform of language teaching underway in Algeria, those in charge have to agree on an official interpretation of CA.

2.3. Design

In order to move from the interpretation stage to the design stage, it is necessary to have a project that goes beyond a single descriptive project of reading or writing about CA, to a normative project of intervention, *i.e.*, the construction of CA as a teaching-learning tool:

-From a pragmatic point of view, the design must necessarily take into account the actors, learners and teachers, as well as the global environment of action in which the project will have to be inscribed with its different components: socio-political/ cultural/

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linguistic, ideological and pedagogical, didactic and methodological, organizational and technological, scientific²⁸.

–From an epistemological point of view, projects function as mediators between objectivity and subjectivity: to a certain extent, the subject must take into account the resistance and constraints of the object as well as of the environment; but to another extent, he remodels the object and gives it meaning according to his project, which creates its own environment; to the point that Jean-Louis LEMOIGNE (2005) could propose to add, next to the concepts of objectivity and subjectivity, the one of "projectivity"²⁹, and next to the paradigm of "object-knowledge-", the one of "project-knowledge": *from a didactic engineering point of view, there can be no desing of CA independently of the reform project in which this method is embedded.*

Whereas representation and interpretation are more or less conscious and elaborated mental images, design is a model of action. This is why I have defended since the publication of the *CEFRL* (2001) the idea that the treatment of culture in SAOA requires the passage from the paradigm of *representation* –key concept of the intercultural approach– to that of *desing* –key concept of the "co-cultural approach"³⁰.

In this case, the design will result in a CA model, with the characteristics of any model:

–From an epistemological perspective, models function as mediators between theory and practice (cf. PUREN 2015a pp. 15-17) ;

–From a pragmatic point of view, the model represents, with respect to the next phase of operationalization, exactly what an engineer's model of a bridge represents with respect to the bridge once built³¹.

2.4. Operationalization: development and implementation

Operationalization", the last phase in the process of building a CA model, corresponds to two distinct phases whose objectives and actors are not identical.

2.4.1. Initial operationalization of the model

The operationalization at the end of institutional construction consists of a *fine-tuning of the initial desing in the field*, that of the elaboration of textbooks and that of teaching-learning in classrooms. We can compare this operationalization –this is of course only an explanatory comparison– to what is called in management the "experimental development" within the "Research & Development" function of companies, and which the INSEE defines as follows:

²⁸ These different types of environments can be found on the "conceptual map of the communicative approach" reproduced in the final annex to this article. They are listed here, as they are arranged there, in no hierarchical order.

²⁹ In this 2005 article, J.-L. Lemoigne quotes this passage from Bachelard's *Le nouvel esprit scientifique* (1934): "Above the subject, beyond the object, modern science is based on the project. [...] In the scientific thought, the meditation of the object by the subject always takes the form of the project". For an interpretation of this concept of "projectivity" in research in language-culture didactics, as well as the corresponding bibliographic references, see PUREN 2015a p. 8, note 14 p. 8, diagram p. 49, and final bibliography.

³⁰ Cf. PUREN 2002b-en. For an extended definition (in its different components) of the concept of "conception", cf. PUREN 045. For a critique of the exaggerated semantic extension taken by the concept of "representation" among didacticians specialized in interculturality, cf. PUREN 2011/05/04 (in French).

³¹ As Herbert SIMON (1969) explains, engineers are by definition designers of artificial devices (cf. PUREN 2015a, pp. 39-40), which corresponds to one of the teacher's main functions, which is to design learning devices. The same metaphor of the mock-up can be used to designate what an expert teacher does, who "prepares to teach", as opposed to what a novice teacher does, who "prepares his lesson": the former builds the "mock-up" of his lesson, the latter builds the lesson itself, which is both more costly in terms of time and energy, and which prevents him from having the flexibility that is indispensable in the real time implementation in the classroom.

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Experimental development (based on knowledge obtained through research or practical experience) is carried out –by means of prototypes or pilot plants– with a view to launching new products, establishing new processes or substantially improving existing ones³².

In this case, the prototype of the new product is the initial version of the institutional model of CA, which will be "tested" in different classrooms considered representative of the diversity of teachers, learners and national teaching-learning environments. The objective is to provide feedback to recursively rework this design, or even the interpretation (see the arrows from right to left in the diagram above), in order to develop the final "official" CA design.

This "experiment", however, is special:

–It does not have the same function as in academic research, where the aim is to validate or invalidate hypotheses or to seek answers to research questions. It consists of a number of field experiments designed to fine-tune the institutional model of CA in order to ensure its feasibility, effectiveness and sustainability in the field.

–It does not have the same function as in the field of didactic innovations, where generally it is above all a question of demonstrating the interest by gathering the maximum of favorable conditions in specially arranged environments and over a short time. The aim here is the opposite, because what is aimed at is not innovation but *change*³³, to develop a model that can be generalized as quickly as possible and become permanent in the teachers' practices, taking into account the global environment (cf. *above*, chapter 2.3., p. 14) and the institutional capacities of this environment, in particular by means of initial training at the university and continuing education.

The title of this article makes the actuality of CA depend on the construction of a CA model that is...

– *contextualized*, *i.e.* appropriate for students, teachers and real school teaching-learning environments,

–and *finalized*, *i.e.* in adequacy not only with the finalities and objectives of this teaching-learning, but also with the institutional strategy of operationalization.

2.4.2 The operationalization of the model by teachers in the context of the implementation of the reform

After the operationalization of the model by the institution –its development– comes its operationalization by the teachers –its *implementation*. But the institutional model of CA should be considered, like any didactic model, as a *tool* in the hands of each teacher: there is no more sense for a teacher to "apply" a model than for a carpenter building a piece of furniture, for example, to "apply" his plane: it is a "tool", which he "uses", his professional use consisting in adapting not the tool –he does not modify it –but his use.

This comparison is not taken at random: teaching is to a large extent a craft, *i.e.* teachers must modify their practices to implement the institutional reform, and to do so they must "use" the institutional model of CA. But this use implies that they themselves operationalize it in their field according to their working environment, that is to say that they adapt its use; in the same way that a carpenter must make exactly the piece of furniture ordered, but that he must be able to decide during the course of the work at what moments, for what purpose and in what ways he will use his plane, taking into account its functions, constraints and limits of use

³² "Research and Development/ R&D/ Research and Development Work. Definition," www.insee.fr/fr/metadonnees/definition/c1174. INSEE, "Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques", is an agency of the French Ministry of Finance.

³³ On the difference between *innovation* and *change*, see PUREN 2016d, 2018c and 2021e chap. 6 p. 217. Making this difference and taking it into account is particularly important at a time when punctual experimentations of more or less temporary technological innovations are multiplying.

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There is in teaching, as Yves LENOIR (2004) writes, quoting in passing another specialist in educational sciences, Marc Bru, "an irreducible autonomy of practice" because of its singular, complex, contextualized, multiple and interdependent characteristics" (p. 17). The working environment of teachers who use the CA model and their learners will never be exactly the same as that of its initial operationalization –that of its institutional development– and this use will depend also on the level of training and professional profile of each teacher.

Pedagogues also frequently speak of the teacher as an "expert". Yves LENOIR, in his 2004 article quoted above, presents two opposing conceptions of expertise, one empirical on the basis of "*experientiation*" (p. 11) and the other "techno-instrumental" on the basis of *experimentation* (p. 20). In my opinion, like many specialists in educational sciences, he locks himself into a theory-practice dichotomy which however he denounces (pp. 11-13), but which he is content to deny (theory would be a practice, and practice would integrate theory, p. 13), whereas it should be overcome by involving the mediation of the model, and the mediation of the tool or more generally of the technology³⁴: just as the craftsmen do not adapt their tools, but the use they make of them, the "expert technicians" do not adapt the bridge maquette they received from the engineers, they do not "experiment" with the model of the bridge that the maquette represents... and even less with different versions of the bridge (!): they adapt their use of the maquette in the field.

Conclusion of part 2

The construction process presented throughout this chapter 2 does not aim at an "adaptation" or a "contextualization" of CA: this would imply that there was a "first", or "reference", or "standard" version of the object; such a version has never existed, as we saw in chapter 1. This process aims at *matching* a CA model with specific purposes, objectives, learners, teachers and the global teaching-learning environment.

This matching is partly reciprocal, in that the implementation of CA may in turn require changes in the environment (e.g., more frequent use of basic dialogues and pair or small group work than in existing didactic traditions) or even in the objectives and contents (e.g., more emphasis on oral interaction training and on situations of the everyday life). The whole process described here is therefore a "research-modeling" approach (cf. PUREN MR5, chapter 1.3, pp. 9 *sqq.*).

It is not a question, by means of this whole process of construction of the CA, of building an "adapted version", but an *adequate model*, that is to say, one that can be for the teachers in front of the students –where everything is played out, finally– an effective tool for the implementation of the reform. However, the effectiveness of a tool in the field also depends, necessarily and strongly, on the competence of its user, and the question arises, consequently, of the training of teachers in the use of the model. *This training must be consistent with the fact that it is not a question of application, but of use, with all that this implies*³⁵.

The same applies to the tool that is the textbook; a few years ago I proposed a "Scale of levels of competence of the teacher in the use of his textbook" (PUREN 2015e, Document 3): a whole research project is to be carried out in order to elaborate the same levels of competence of a teacher in the implementation of an educational reform, which would make it possible to conceive, as for training in the use of textbooks, "formative progressions" and "formative differentiations"³⁶. Finally, and this will not be the least complex, it remains to design the new

³⁴ In another domain, that of the conception of school streams, Jean-Yves ROCHEX, after so many others, insists on the necessity of escaping from the binary opposition theory-practice, recalling Henri Wallon's "triad", "theory, technique, practice", which he had proposed to implement in the ambitious project of global reform of the French educational system that he had conceived with Paul Langevin after the "Liberation" (of France, in 1944) (cf. PUREN 2013/12/06)

³⁵ The same principle applies, of course, to SAOA, and to any combination of CA and SAOA that has been defined by the institution.

³⁶ In the sense of "grammatical progression" and "pedagogical differentiation". For proposals for formative progression in research training, specifically in the use of conceptual tools, see PUREN 2013a, chap. 1.3, pp. 7-8.

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textbooks and the training in the use of these new textbooks in coherence with the reform and the training in the implementation of the reform, of which the implementation of an adequate model of the CA is only one of the components.

3. AN EXAMPLE OF A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO BUILDING AN ADEQUATE MODEL OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

Introduction of part 3

As indicated in the introduction to the previous chapter 2 (p. 13), this practical approach to building an adequate model of CA is a "praxeological modeling": it corresponds to what is commonly called a "practical" or "concrete" model, as opposed to the "theoretical", "abstract" or "conceptual" models produced by "theoretical modeling"³⁷.

This chapter 3 is composed of five sub-chapters whose titles put end to end form a single sentence stating the concrete approach of this construction:

3.1. Consider the communicative approach as indispensable, ...

3.2 ... but to place it in the whole of the didactic configurations currently available in didactics of languages-cultures, ...

3.3. ... select and prioritize the basic principles that are appropriate to its finalities and objectives, and to the overall teaching-learning environment and to its strategic choices,

3.4. develop an appropriate conceptual map,

3.5. ... finally, to implement it in articulation and/or in combination with SAOA.

3.1. Consider the communicative approach as indispensable, ...

Even if SAOA is progressively imposed in the French textbooks of FFL from the middle of the years 2000³⁸, the CA remains unavoidable in school didactics of languages-cultures:

(a) As I have already pointed out in the general introduction to this article, mastering the implementation of CA is a prerequisite for the correct implementation of SAOA: one can work effectively together and "make society" together only if one is able to communicate well with others. In SAOA, communication is no longer both the goal and the means, as it was in CA, but it is an indispensable means. The two methodological constructs can and should be articulated and combined in textbooks and practices of teaching, with the fundamental characteristics of both opposed and complementary (cf. PUREN 2014a-en).

(b) CA is already perfectly in adequacy –because it has been historically developed for this purpose– with one of the reference social objectives of all modern school language teaching, which is the training in foreign language communication conceived mainly as an exchange of information by means of oral language interaction with native speakers (cf. PUREN 029).

(c) CA is one of the methodological matrices available to the designers of teaching materials and to teachers to enrich and adapt teaching-learning practices. Its reference mode of work, the pair work, as well as its specific documentary logic, the

³⁷ Cf. *supra* note 18. [Note dated March 13, 2020: in the last version 2.0 of my 2015a essay, I introduced a distinction, which I felt was necessary, between process-oriented "praxeological models" and product-oriented "methodological object-models" (cf. p. 40, in part. note 30). The process of developing a contextualized communicative approach is by definition a process of reconceptualization, and the models it produces are also intended to be implemented by teachers in a way that is "open" to adaptation (Cf. in the present text, *supra*, chapter 2.4.2)].

³⁸ The first French as a foreign language textbook claiming to be based on PA dates from 2004: *Rond-Point 1*, Madrid-Paris: Difusion-Edition Maison des langues.

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"support logic" (cf. PUREN 066-en), naturally aims at eliciting the most intensive interactions of the students with each other in the classroom as soon as possible.

(d) In the school teaching of mother tongues and foreign languages, still marked by didactic traditions characterized by a mainly transmissive teaching, centered on the programs and privileging the written supports as well as the school exercises of language, the introduction of CA, if its institutional model takes it into account, is able to provoke the necessary ruptures to call into question these traditions (cf. *infra* chapter 3.3 point 4).

3.2. ... but to place it in the set of methodological matrices currently available in language-culture didactics, ...

The "evolution of didactic configurations" and "the current challenges of language and cultural education in a multilingual and multicultural society" (titles of the documents PUREN 029 and PUREN 052, respectively) show the differences in the "methodological matrices" currently available in language and culture didactics (see table below)³⁹:

Different methodological matrices available in foreign language and culture teaching

	TARGETED SOCIAL COMPETENCES		Targeted using act ¹	Privileged learning act
	Language competences	Cultural competences		
1. Reading matrix: active methodology (1920-1960)	Ability to maintain contact with the foreign language from a distance through authentic documents	Ability to mobilize and extract knowledge about the foreign culture from and about authentic documents: metacultural component.	reading, speaking out on (" <i>parler sur</i> ")	Collective oral explanations in class of authentic documents
2. Communicative-intercultural matrix: communicative-intercultural approach (1980-1990)	Ability to exchange information with visiting foreigners on an ad hoc basis during initial contacts or short stays	Ability to control cross-representations in interaction with others: intercultural component	meeting, talking with (" <i>parler avec quelqu'un</i> ")	Interactions in class in simulations and role-playing
3. Plurilingual-pluricultural matrix: plurilingual-pluricultural approaches (1990-...)	Ability to "live together", <i>i.e.</i> , to manage linguistically the permanent cohabitation with allophones in a plurilingual and pluricultural society	Ability to understand the attitudes and behaviors of others and to adopt common attitudes and behaviors acceptable in a culturally diverse society: pluricultural component	living with, talking to each other (" <i>se parler</i> ")	Cross-language conceptualization activities
4. Social-action matrix: co-language and co-cultural approaches (2000-...)	Ability to "make society" and to work in a foreign language in a long-term with native and non-native speakers of that language.	Ability to developing with others common conceptions of collective action on the basis of shared contextual values: co-cultural component	acting with, consulting with (" <i>en parler avec quelqu'un</i> " = " <i>se concerter</i> ")	real or simulated social actions carried out in project mode in class society and/or outside society

1. With the appropriate expressions in French.

All these matrices and each of them can be relevant in an articulated or combined way⁴⁰:

–They can be used alone, before or after another one in an articulation within the didactic units or sequences, or from one year to another during the same school curriculum;

³⁹ This table is also available in French and in Spanish (PUREN 073 & 073-es).

⁴⁰ Articulation occurs when two elements are used in succession, one after the other; combination occurs when they are used simultaneously, one with the other.

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–They can be used with others, in methodological combinations at the macro level (that of constituted methodologies)⁴¹, at the meso level (that of methodological "objects"), and/or at the micro level (that of minimal units of methodological coherence, the "methods")⁴².

In their current reform project, the strategic choice of Algerian officials, as we have seen in the general introduction to this article, has been to give priority to the articulation between the communicative matrix and the social action matrix. The other two matrices, active and plurilingual-pluricultural, cannot be discarded. Indeed:

–In the teaching of mother tongues, the use of authentic texts, especially literary texts, as teaching aids is quickly established in the first years of the curriculum, even if dialogue aids and small fabricated texts are kept in parallel for some time;

–In foreign language teaching, as we noted earlier (cf. *supra* chap. 1.3.4, points *a* and *c*), the "document logic" takes precedence over the "support logic" at least from level B2 onwards.

–Both the logic of the communicative approach (cf. *supra* chap. 1.3.4 references to H.G. WIDDOWSON and to M. CANALE and M. SWAIN) and the sociolinguistic situation in Algeria constitute strong arguments for the implementation of the plurilingual (and pluricultural) matrix.

3.3. ... select and prioritize the basic principles that are appropriate to its finalities and objectives, the overall teaching-learning environment and its strategic choices, ...

CA, like any methodology, can be presented by definitions, as I proposed in the introduction to Chapter 1, p. 3, or by descriptions, which will then call upon many more elements: in the first case, we can speak of presentation at the macro level, in the second case, of presentation at the micro level. In the first case the presentation is very coherent, but also very abstract and general; in the second case the presentation is very concrete and very detailed, but also very fragmented, with sometimes –as we have seen precisely in the case of CA– contradictory elements. It is therefore frequent, in the books on language-culture didactics, to see also proposed presentations of intermediate level, in the form of a list of fundamental principles possibly illustrated by some concrete examples of methodological implementation.

It seems to me that it is interesting to start at the latter level to approach the work of contextualized and finalized interpretation and design of CA. Here are four lists that can be used for this purpose:

(1) Principles for implementing CA in a course for foreign learners in France according to BÉRARD (p. 91):

- 1. Try to give a foreign student the linguistic means to survive in France as quickly as possible.*
- 2. Carry out work in the classroom essentially from authentic documents and from the learners' productions in order to have a communicative frame of reference closer to that of reality than it is in the Audiovisual Methods.*
- 3. Rethink the comprehension/expression relationship by giving more importance to comprehension at the beginning of learning.*
- 4. Use diversified methodological techniques.*

⁴¹ Two concrete examples of the implementation of these different methodological matrices are available on my website: 1) on two video sketches (PUREN 2016b), and 2) in a plurilingual pedagogical project on poetry (PUREN 053 & 2021i-en).

⁴² On these different levels of methodological coherence, see PUREN 2017e, slides 24 *sqq.* On the "meso" level, see also PUREN 2012f.

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5. Find a pedagogical dimension that is sometimes evacuated by the audiovisual (organization of work, work in small groups, realization of tasks, etc.).
6. Redefine the student-teacher relationship and the student-student relationship while creating a classroom climate that promotes interaction.
7. Involve learners in their learning by having them actively participate in the organization of the work and in the management of the group.

This list clearly shows the weight of the author's three reference environments: France, the previous audiovisual methodology, and the reference audience for FFL in France.

(2) In negative: by principle, according to GERMAIN (pp. 91-92), the CA...

1. is not focused on linguistic form. This does not mean that form is absent. It means that the first criterion for the choice of language content is not the language itself: each lesson can be constructed from either language functions, notions, situations or themes, but each time, the choice of language elements is subordinated to this first choice;
2. is not primarily based on learning objectives derived from theoretical goals or purposes; rather, it is based on the needs, interests or expectations of the learners, from which the learning objectives are derived;
3. is not to disconnect the student from the real situations of language production. Instead of practicing the language from prefabricated dialogues, the main goal is to familiarize the student with linguistic variation, taking into account the various parameters of the communication situation; in order to sensitize the student to the various registers of language, and to the linguistic variation which results from it, the authors recommend the use of authentic documents;
4. is not centered on one-way exchanges teachers → learners; on the contrary, in a communicative approach, interaction activities between students (simulation, role play) are encouraged, as well as interaction in small groups.

(3) The "five principles that constitute a "curriculum" or program that can be described as communicative", according to CANALE & SWAIN, according to GERMAIN (p. 93):

1. Communicative competence is made up of four types of "competences": grammatical competence, socio-cultural competence, discourse competence and strategic competence.
2. A communicative approach must be based on the language communication needs of the learners.
3. The L2 learner must participate in fully meaningful interactive activities.
4. Optimal use should be made of the language skills that the learner has already developed in his or her native language.

(4) The five basic principles that I intuitively retain for my part (Ch. Puren), because they would seem to me to be effective in changing certain characteristics of the didactic traditions in Algeria that can most hinder the implementation of the reform:

1. focus on oral interaction between students in class;
2. to take into account in the students' productions, at least initially, the meaning of the messages and the success of the communication, and not primarily their linguistic correction;
3. take into account the needs of students as they learn, which involves continuous assessment and remediation;
4. to systematically propose to the students re-uses in social communication situations, if not real, at least simulated but real;
5. diversify the "instances" to which learners can appeal, especially those related to the experiential (cf. PUREN 052, <http://www.christianpuren.com/biblioth%c3%83%c2%a8que-de->

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[travail/052/commentary](#) p. 5, and PUREN 017 "Émotion"), since in CA, communication is learned through classroom communication and learner interaction.

From these four lists, we must select and prioritize the various CA principles that we will retain in order to build the appropriate model. This work naturally leads to an explanation of the selection criteria and the strategic choices made.

3.4. ... develop an appropriate "conceptual map", ...

It is possible to imagine a fourth way of presenting a methodology, both detailed and abstract, in the form of a conceptual map. I propose in the final appendix of this article a "conceptual map matrix of the communicative approach"⁴³. It is a "map matrix" in the sense that it allows for the generation of multiple maps, depending on the specific CA model to be constructed. Concretely, we can perform the following successive operations on this matrix:

1. Verify that one has sufficient knowledge of the different elements listed here in the four environments, the implications and the tools that constitute the different poles of this matrix, with the help of the bibliographic references proposed, or others that may be found in the reference works mentioned, or in other personal readings.

2. Delete all the elements that are not relevant or not a priority for his reform project⁴⁴, and possibly add other elements that are essential.

But the objective is to remove as many as possible and add as few as possible, so as to obtain a map appropriate to its use, or, to use the cartographic metaphor, a map "at the right scale". It is not a *framework*, which would necessarily be firm and rigid⁴⁵, but of a *map*, which means that it must be at a scale that allows only the indications appropriate to the "journey" that one wants to make, in this case to the development of the adequate model of the CA for the projected reform.

3. Hierarchize the elements within their respective poles.

4. Establish finally the relations between the elements of the different poles by materializing them with single or double arrows, adding if necessary the nodes that seem necessary.

3.5. ... finally, to implement it in articulation and/or in combination with SAOA.

For this last moment of the process, I refer my readers to chapter 3 of my 2015a article, a chapter entitled "The specific 'features' of SAOA, and the complementarity of the specific 'features' of the communicative approach." The detailed analysis I make in 6 points on 5 pages (pp. 8-12) corresponds exactly to the type of work needed to prepare this implementation of CA in articulation and/or in combination with PA. But what I propose here must of course be taken up again in function of the previous phases and in the perspective of the construction of the adequate model of CA.

Conclusion of part 3

Like the process presented in Chapter 2, the approach presented above in Chapter 3 aims at the same type of contextualized and finalized construction of an adequate model of CA. Like the process, the approach, because it is like the process itself, is composed of different

⁴³ This appendix should be printed in A3 format if it is to be read and used comfortably in paper format.

⁴⁴ It is obvious, for example, that elements of the socio-political environment in which CA was built in Europe must be reviewed before an adequate model of this approach can be introduced into the current reform in Algeria. But like other irrelevant elements of other environments, they can help, by contrast, to make explicit those that are relevant. The "poles" of this conceptual map can be compared with the "entries" of the general system of research in cultural language didactics (PUREN 2015a, diagram p. 48). The similarities are not coincidental: even if the logic of didactic engineering is different from that of academic research, the overall environment is the same.

⁴⁵ Except for inventing, as the authors of the *CEFRL* have done, an object as physically and epistemologically improbable as only a surrealist painter such as Salvador Dali could have represented: an "open and flexible" framework (*CEFRL*, p. 13).

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operations that are always susceptible to recursion. This is precisely why it is important to have a good understanding of its chronological logic, in order to know how to reverse it at the right moment with full knowledge of the facts... and the consequences. This process and this approach will necessarily be intertwined during the construction work, but it is also necessary to have distinguished one from the other.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This process and this approach thus linked constitute the complex mode of construction proposed here of a given methodological model from a given methodological matrix, CA, within the framework of a determined reform. It seems to me, however, that this mode can itself function as a model for the treatment of each and every "methodological matrix" available (cf. *infra* chap. 3.2) within the framework of any didactic reform concerning the school teaching of language-cultures.

Readers who are familiar with the competency-based approach and its variant "pedagogy of integration", as well as the way they have been implemented in Africa⁴⁶, will be able to appreciate the difference between the reform approach applied on that occasion and the one I am proposing here. I leave it to them to judge for themselves the relevance of my proposal; I have tried, in any case, to conceive a type of didactic engineering ...

-which is both rigorous in its internal mechanics and in accordance with the "state of the art" in language-culture didactics as well as with the requirements of a "complex didactics" of languages-cultures⁴⁷,

-but which at the same time respects the responsibility and the necessary margin of freedom of all the actors involved, from the designers of the educational reform to the teachers.

In this article, I have not addressed the problematic of FSP (French for Specific Purposes), where the link between communication and action is as strong as it is natural, since it is a language used in Algeria at the university level for scientific studies as well as for scientific and technical professional training. The FSP methodology was initially conceived in France on the basis of the needs analysis and communicative approach as they appear in the *Threshold level*, more than 40 years ago, and it has evolved little since then. It would be necessary to revisit its conception in order to bring it into line with SAOA, and to begin to implement them jointly in the scientific and technical streams of secondary education⁴⁸. This would imply, in particular, moving from the notion of "communicative competence" to that of "informational competence" (cf. PUREN 2009c & 2020c slides 29-32). But this is a subject in its own right, which would be the subject of another study, and another article.

⁴⁶ Cf. PUREN 2016h and 2018e, references already cited in the general introduction, and especially the thesis of Mohamed Said BERKAINÉ, also available online (PUREN 064).

⁴⁷ Cf. my 2003 manifesto (2003b-en), where one will easily recognize the orientations that I have taken up here.

⁴⁸ The last two levels of the seven levels of the "Learning Framework - Communication Domain" of secondary education to which I referred at the beginning of the general introduction (p. 2), already integrate the information processing skills required when using a language for the study of other subjects.

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ANNEX: CONCEPTUAL MAP MATRIX OF THE COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH (CA)

