

Methodological Principles

The communicative approach

The nature of language

From the functional-pragmatic point of view, language is seen primarily as a social activity whose function is to fulfil certain communication needs which emanate from the interaction between people. Everything that is expressed is thus linked to a context. Its meaning is provided by the topic of the discourse and the communication situation in which it takes place. This view of language as a mediator in the communication process implies that knowledge of a language involves mastering the following aspects:

- ❑ its linguistic dimension: morpho-syntactical, phonological and lexical content;
- ❑ its socio-linguistic dimension: the rules that adapt the message to its socio-cultural context and its communicative functions;
- ❑ its discursive dimension: all discourse must be cohesive and coherent;
- ❑ its strategic dimension: to ensure that the interaction is carried out as planned and according to the participants' communication objectives.

These ideas inform the communicative approach to language teaching and learning adopted in this Guide.

Contextualisation

The language that we teach must always have a meaning within a given context so that it can be used in real life. In order that the learner can use the language effectively, the four skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) must be learned in an integrated way, together with all the relevant strategies for adapting what is learned to new situations.

The topics and situations selected to provide contexts for what is learned should respond to the requirements of the target group, in this case the adult trade unionist. The tutor will choose grammatical structures, functions and the appropriate vocabulary to respond to the learner's communication needs.

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