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1 - www.ina.dz,

2 - www.enp.edu.dz

3 - www.epau.edu.dz

4 - www.ensv.dz

5 - www.usthb.dz

6 - www.esi.dz

7 - Institut National de formation en Informatique

8 - Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en Informatique

9 - The diploma granted at the end of the secondary school level.

10 - Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

11 - English as a Foreign Language, English as a Second Language

12 - The Information and Communication Technologies.

13 - Woozley, Ian, "Second Language Acquisition and the Communicative Approach". Last retrieved June 2010

from http://niigatajet.net/Documents/Second_Language_Acquisition.pdf

14 - "PowerPoint": Microsoft Office Suite

Build one efficient curriculum – based on strongly working approaches - for all technological and scientific fields of study at the Algerian university will give the Algerian learner better opportunities to participate to international events and make his productions be considered and acknowledged.

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According to Colaric, S., and Jonassen., D.H., (2001), Students learn (i) how to target relevant information as the net contains innumerable resources about every topic and therefore avoid “infobesity”, (ii) how to select the relevant information is very useful though tedious. They also learn (iii) how to avoid the worldwide web traps referred to by Colaric and Jonassen who listed them in “the traps and three faulty assumptions that can entangle instruction in the Web” among which are:

- The World Wide Web is a vast library that can be used to convey knowledge;
- That searching and finding information on the Web equal learning;
- That hyperlinking is good instruction.

Morgan, M., (2008) stated, on the use of the “ICT tools”, that “PowerPoint is a medium that many foreign students, in the Digital Age are familiar with, in their native languages. It makes reticent students more amenable to giving oral presentations”. “Instruction is given to them not to read aloud from slides but as a means for illustrating their speech with figures, tables, graphics, sound or video. PowerPoint is not their presentation but a tool that guides their presentation”.

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORKS

In this paper, we propose English Language Learning Activities as a new curriculum to Algerian third (3rd) year students, who are state engineers-to-be, in computer engineering.

The previous syllabus contained units that focused more on grammar acquisition and some translation techniques (Grammar Translation Method).

The new syllabus was designed considering well-known and efficient theoretical bases such as the “Task-based Approach” - learning by doing, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) - learning by communicating - and “local” immersion. These approaches enable students to use the English language better, thanks to the “Four Skills” that help them construct their activities. This proposal obeys the socio-constructivist vision of education.

When the material conditions will be made available by our institution – ESI - we will proceed to the launching of these activities online. This will grant learners the opportunity to work online, deliver their oral activities in synchronous/asynchronous communication modes, share and discuss their information with their local or foreign fellow students.

4.1. The Design of an “Informal” CV

This activity is meant to allow students to talk about themselves. By “informal”, we mean Curriculum Vitae that is not meant for “job seekers” but that which enables students to talk about themselves before their fellow students as well as invoke debates. Students feel free to design and achieve their “résumé” the way they want it to be delivered to their peers. Presentations generally focus on their civil status, educational background, job experience – if any – their town’s cultural background, such as local and traditional dishes, clothes jewelry, and places to visit, etc.

4.2. The Design of a Grammar Lesson

Grammar is important to learn for ESL students because they become able to express personal thoughts with an appropriate syntax. Effective use of syntax is important to show different attitudes and express power and identity. The Algerian students find English tenses difficult to learn, as the system differs from Arabic and French. Therefore “design a lecture” on one of the English conjugation tenses is useful for students as they will seek for information in different sources - mainly educational websites - synthesize the collected data to build a lesson, make a document and finally deliver it, orally, to their fellow students, in class, through a “PowerPoint”¹⁴ presentation. The students, in charge of such a task, also learn to work collaboratively, as they work in pairs (“tandem”).

4.3. The Design of an Exposé

The third activity is about an exposé that deals with the numerous fields of computer engineering (for example, from computer electronic components to Anti-Virus programs), the Information and Communication Technologies (smart phones, tablets, mobile applications, smart watches, etc.), and the Semantic Web languages and services (e-commerce, e-learning, social networking, Big Data and the Web of Things, etc.). The goal is to give students an opportunity to seek for information on the Internet, compose a document, synthesize it, learn the vocabulary and terminology, and integrate the syntax. The students email the document to their tutor as an oral presentation with a slideshow.

4.4. Underlying Activities

All the activities - students must perform - need vocabulary understanding and sentence making. Students must deliver an oral presentation – through a data show device - for each activity. The teacher scores both the students’ speech and slideshow.

3.3.2. The Communicative Approach

The communicative style of language teaching began in the 1970s and developed in response to a growing dissatisfaction with prevailing methodologies, and in recognition of theoretical advances.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is generally regarded as an approach to language teaching Richards, J.C., and Rodgers, T.S. (2001). Its primary function is communication in language use so as learners develop communicative competence, or communicative ability Hymes, D. H., (1971). In other words, its goal is to make use of real-life situations that needs communication. Communicative language teaching draws its theories about learning and teaching from a wide range of areas such as cognitive science, educational psychology, and second language acquisition (SLA) Doughty, C.J. and Long, M.H., (2003).

Wesche and Skehan, (2002). describe “CLT” as:

- Activities that require frequent interaction among learners or with other interlocutors to exchange information and solve problems. « What is important for acquisition is the opportunity for learners to engage in meaning negotiation » Ellis, p. 199. (2000).

- Use of authentic (non-pedagogic) texts and communication activities linked to “real-world” contexts, often emphasizing links across written and spoken modes and channels.

- Approaches that are learner-centered in that they take into account learners’ backgrounds, language needs, and goals and generally allow learners some creativity and role in instructional decisions. Robert. B. Kaplan, (2005:208).

4. OUR PROPOSAL: INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

The course is composed of three activities to be delivered in class by students – in turns - before their fellow students. These are: (i) the design of an “informal” CV, (ii) the design of a grammar lesson on English conjugation and (iii) the design of a free theme “exposé”. This latter requires from students to choose topics that deal with themes from the many fields of computer engineering, information and communication technologies, and the semantic web languages and services. These activities make use of all the four skills in tandem – oral/written – and production/comprehension. (cf. 3.2. The Four Skills).

The course requires that learners attend compulsory weekly sessions of one hour and thirty minutes. Sessions are held in smaller groups (a maximum of 20 persons). During these sessions, learners make presentations of the planned tasks.

There are two other skills, along with these four skills, that are of great importance: Grammar and Vocabulary. The former, according to Musumeci. D, is loosely understood to be a set of rules that govern language. The latter, according to Chapelle and Jamieson (2008) is the most important aspect of language for students to learn. Their importance lies in the fact that:

- Grammar in Communicative Language Teaching is fundamentally concerned with “making meaning” in the language, whether by interpreting someone else’s message, expressing oneself, or negotiating when meaning is unclear. Musumeci. D.

- Vocabulary plays an essential role in creating understanding of language through what a student hears and reads in school. It becomes more important than grammar as it helps learners communicate successfully with people.

3.3. The learning Approaches

3.3.1. The Task-based Approach (Action-oriented Approach)

The Task-based Approach to Learning implies the notion of “*Learning by doing*”. “It has been recognized and promoted as a fundamental principle underlying learning throughout history” Doughty, C.J. and Long, M.H., (2003). It is “based on the constructivist theory of learning and communicative language teaching methodology” Jeon, I.J., and Hahn, J.W., (2006).

In research on Second Language Acquisition, Swain, M., (1995) states that “learners need to actively produce language”.

This Task-based approach is action-oriented, as far as it views users and learners of a language, primarily as "social agents" who have tasks to accomplish (i) in a given set of circumstances, (ii) in a specific environment and (iii) within a particular field of action. The action-based approach takes into account the cognitive, emotional and volitional resources as well as the full range of abilities that are specific to and applied by individuals as social agents.

Some benefits of this approach, according to Woozley¹³ are:

- Language is viewed and learned within its social and cultural context;
- Focus is on meaning, rather than language structure;
- Course content is based on student needs;
- Teaching is more learner-centered;
- Activities are based on real-life communication;
- The use of pair-work and group-work activities.

“The Behaviorist current, [...] strongly marked the conceptions of language learning for over half a century, proposing essentially associativist theories (applying memorial-imitative procedures) to account for the activity acquisition of language”. Bailly. D, (1997:33)

3.1.2. The Constructivist learning

Piaget - views knowledge as a constructed entity made by every learner through a learning process. Learners construct their own knowledge based upon prior knowledge. The learner interacts with study material. This model calls for “learner-centered instruction”.

3.1.3. The Socio Constructivist vision

Vygotsky (1978) states that Interaction with others, especially with peers and teachers, is necessary for [...] learners; under [...] guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers they learn to solve problems independently. Vygotsky, (1978; 86). The implication of peers and tutors in learning creates learners’ interaction, which leads to collaborative learning. The latter occurs through discussion dialogue, collaboration and information sharing.

3.2. The Four Skills

Language learning needs the four skills. Learners, whose final purpose is to use the language, must practice these skills to acquire the targeted language.

TABLE I. THE “4 SKILLS”

	Comprehension	Production
	<i>Input</i>	<i>Output</i>
Oral	Listening	Speaking
Written	Reading	Writing

The four skills, described by Chapelle and Jamieson (2008) are:

- Reading: the search for information to retrieve to perform the different activities (assignments) must go through reading. The Internet is considered an abundant source of reading input;
- Writing has become very important in our daily lives for professional or non-Professional communication (e.g. e-mail motivation letters, etc.);
- Listening is a constructive process that involves decoding comprehension and interpretation. It requires the speaker’s attention and knowledge to achieve understanding in real time;
- Speaking and pronunciation “automaticity of oral language” will develop through oral practice and interaction with peers;

maximize opportunities for learners to use the target language. Emphasis is more on meaning (the messages they are creating or the task they are completing) rather than form (correctness of language and language structure).

As Krashen says « Language acquisition does not require extensive use of conscious grammatical rules, and does not require tedious drill. Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding ». Krashen, Stephen D. (1988).

3. THE THEORETICAL BASES

The design of a course must obey to some rules. The following theoretical bases and approaches support our proposal.

3.1. The Learning Theories

The role of the instructional designer is “to prescribe an appropriate strategy and context for learning that is based on learning theories” Krauss, F., Ally, M., (2005) Instructional design should be far from the traditional syllabus design, centered more on content and on the instructor’s “predominance”. Today teachers become “facilitators”. Modern instructional design, according to Gregory 2001 considers learners no more as “passive recipients of educational content, but as active makers of meaning, capable of exercising independent judgment and of democratic collaboration”. To get learners more implied in their learning, Jowallah. R, 2008 states that “The only way to get [learners] actively involved in their own learning is by using “technology-supported learning”,

These new visions of learning derive from three main learning theories that led education towards great changes in the perception of “actors” – design, construct, deliver, and assess knowledge – on the one hand and “content” - to be analyzed, constructed, and returned in a richer way - on the other hand.

These main learning theories have been discussed by many researchers in the field of instructional design, didactics and psychology – dedicated for education. Hadjerrouit. S., 2007 briefly describes these theories in what follows:

3.1.1. The Behaviorist Vision

Skinner, the father of Behaviorism in Education, initiated “The Behaviorist learning theory” which assumes that the goal of learning is to transmit efficiently knowledge from instructor to the learners. Instructors are central to learning activities.

we started the design of a new program. We have recently undertaken its implementation for third year students in Computer Science at ESI.

2.1. English at INI⁷

E.S.I stands for “Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Informatique”. Our school opened its doors in 1969 under the name of C.E.R.I⁸. In 1982 it became I.N.I, until 2008 – when The Ministry of Higher Education and Research decided to create National Higher Schools – then INI became ESI. “CERI” was the first center, in Africa and the Middle East, to train state engineers in computer engineering. It trained many African and Arab students.

E.S.I trains students to become state engineers in computer engineering. E.S.I is considered a very serious school in Algeria. Each year, the candidates who wish to join ESI get the highest scores in the “Science” and “Mathematics” series of the Algerian “baccalaureate”⁹. ESI delivers a diploma after five years of studies. Universities and IT companies from all over the world, acknowledge it. Some students hold positions in well-known United States of America companies such Google and Microsoft, as well as renowned universities, such as M.I.T¹⁰ and Harvard University.

The English course lasts three years. During the first two years students get basic knowledge of English grammar for leveling purposes, as students come different parts of Algeria and with different levels. As for the third year, they used to learn some elements of techniques for text translation.

2.2. English at E.S.I

At different levels of their studies – students rarely use conversational English in class; they use it only to answer questions or read some text under teacher’s command. Most of the EFL/ESL¹¹ course books available are grammar and vocabulary courses that do very little to develop learners’ communicative skills.

The opportunity to give students chance to communicate in English with peers is one of the goals of the new curriculum – at least for a university season under our tutoring. Communicate with other students, all over the world, happens mostly with the (ICTs)¹² – mainly through social networking websites. The design of this course allows students to become independent - makers of their own pathway - as they may dedicate their free time for their own learning to improve their skills for the better.

Pedagogical activities – to be detailed later in this paper - are used because, when delivered in “face – to - face” mode or “online”, they

Architecture and Urbanism³; Veterinary National Higher School⁴; University of Science and Technology “Houari Boumediene”⁵, all of them located in the neighborhoods of our School, ESI⁶.

The Algerian university system is different from those in Europe. They are, « unfortunately dominated by the grammar-translation method of language teaching, Therefore English is only taught as a means to accessing literature, be it classical, technical or otherwise. Any of the group that actually work, will almost certainly be trying to improve their English, as a means of improving their job prospects or job performance; their needs will be much broader » (McCarthy, 1999)

- Most of bibliographical references in computer science literature are published in English. Students have to acquire basics of this language to learn or upgrade their knowledge during their studies. Therefore, Algerian students, aware of the importance of English - as a global leading language for science and technology, are faced with:

- The inadequacy of English Learning curricula in many specialties of scientific and technological fields. The content, mostly based on classical methods of language learning, is reduced to the acquisition of grammar and sentence structure, consolidated by structural exercises. Visiting the university institutes and the national higher schools will show heterogeneity of programs designed for English as a transversal unit of study. From one institute to another, the educational offer is different. This is because teachers, with different backgrounds and with local - or even narrow - vision of the educational objectives, have built those programs.

- The “reluctance” of University lecturers of English (Ph.D. holders) to teach English for technology and science. Every year, ESI offers academic positions, in vain. Some teachers, fresh graduates generally from other *wilayates* of the country, submit applications. These candidates often opt for offers close to their home because of housing problems or for financially more interesting opportunities outside the university.

- The only teachers available to deliver English courses are contractors – originally teachers from secondary schools, motivated by some extra money.

Our students are future state engineers in computer engineering. We teach English to third-year students. Most of these come from secondary school with a heterogeneous English level. We are currently experimenting a new programme of English - a second foreign language- as a possible solution to the problems listed above. In 2008

practice of any other language is banned. The importance of English language lies in the fact that it is considered the language of Science and Technology throughout the world. This syllabus design is supported by theoretical bases such as Communicative and Task-Based Approaches and the integration of the four skills, necessary to all language learning and acquisition.

Our article is organized as follows: After a short introduction, we situate the context of our work. The next section deals with the new proposal. The fourth section is an enumeration of the theoretical bases on which our proposal is built. Our paper ends with a conclusion and future developments this syllabus may have.

2. THE CONTEXT

One of the basic objectives of research in the field of second language (L2) learning and teaching is to provide useful techniques for teaching in the language classroom. The aim of this article is to address a new English syllabus for students in computer science in a university context. Though Arabic is the national language, Technology & Science fields, at University level, are taught in French. The Algerian politics relegated the French language to a second position and officially considered it the first foreign language. The lack of Algerian university lecturers kept French the teaching language of technologies and science fields. Humanities and literature have been taught in Arabic since the 1975 University reforms.

English is taught from the 8th year/grade at Middle School as a second foreign language, as an option between Spanish, German or Italian; French, being the first foreign language. No great consideration is officially given to the English language as only Algerian-Arabic and French languages are used at home and outdoors and English - when chosen as Second language- remains confined within the walls (intra-muros) of university classes.

At University level, the importance of English language lies in the fact that it is considered the language of Science and Technology throughout the world. The latest bibliographic references, sought by students, in the fields of science and technology are generally available in English, exclusively.

The English language is included as a transversal learning unit – i.e. not a fundamental unit of study - in different curricula of Technology & Science fields in national higher schools and university institutes. We may name some of these: National Higher School of Agronomy¹; Polytechnics National Higher School²; Polytechnics Higher School of

ELLA English (Through) Language Learning Activities

M. Mohammed BELLAL
ESI.Algiers, Algeria

Abstract

“ELLA” stands for “English (Through) Language Learning Activities”. It proposes a different way to teaching English as a second foreign language (FL2) in technology classes at University level, in Algeria. The programs of English, as a unit of study, in most of Algerian engineering schools and University institutes of science and technologies, are heterogeneous. They are, in most cases, let to teachers to design a curriculum according to the needs of the study matter. These programs often contain some grammar reviews and text translation to meet terminology needs. Therefore, Algerian students have, in this case, very few opportunities to practise English language outside the academic context. Our article aims at proposing an appropriate strategy and context for language acquisition based on efficient and working learning theories. The main goal is to give students opportunities to practise English better, thanks to both the instructional approaches, dedicated to Language learning and the Information and Communication Technologies tools.

Keywords- *Language learning; communicative approach; task-based approach; “the 4 skills”; distance learning.*

1. INTRODUCTION

We propose, in this paper, an alternative way to teaching English as a foreign language in technology classes in a university context. We name our proposal “Alternative way” because the programs of English as a unit of study, in most of Algerian engineering schools and University institutes of science and technologies, are heterogeneous. Teachers of English are often involved in the design of a curriculum that meets the needs of the study matter. These programs often contain some grammar reviews and text translation to meet terminology needs. Therefore, Algerian students have very few opportunities to practise English language outside the academic context.

This proposal invokes instructional design that enables an appropriate strategy and context for language acquisition based on efficient and working learning theories. We want our proposal “ELLA”- (English Language Learning Activities) be a proposal with the support of theoretical bases.

English is considered a second foreign language, in Algeria, after Arabic and French languages. Students have very few opportunities to practise English, except in academic contexts. Therefore, our proposal aims at providing students with an Immersion-like situation, where the