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CONTEXTUALIZACIÓN
CANARIAS

TEMA 1

**LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATION:
ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE.
FACTORS THAT DEFINE A
COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION:
SENDER, RECEIVER, FUNCTION
AND CONTEXT**

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INTRODUCTION

Human beings are social creatures by nature, and as such, language serves as our primary tool for interaction and social cohesion. *Communication can be defined as a dynamic, social, and reciprocal process of exchanging information, ideas, and emotions between individuals.* It is not merely the transmission of messages, but a complex act of negotiation of meaning within a specific sociocultural context by means of a common system of symbols.

We can affirm that in order to learn a language, one has to practice using it to communicate meaning to others. Traditionally, foreign language teaching concentrated on getting students to learn items in isolation, focusing on the "learning" of rules rather than the "acquisition" of a tool. However, language is not just a "subject" or a package of knowledge; it is a fundamental part of being human. To learn it well, we must become involved in it as a human event, a genuine exchange of messages. As **Canale and Swain** famously established, achieving Communicative Competence implies more than just 'knowing' the language; it involves the ability to use it effectively in diverse social situations.

In the 21st century, we belong to the Information and Knowledge Society, which demands a shift from vertical, one-way communicative models toward an **EMIREC-EMIREC** model (Sender/Receiver).

In Spain, Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, on Education (**LOE**) in the new wording provided by Organic Law 3/2020, of December 29, amending Organic Law 2/2006 (**LOMLOE**) establishes, as a general objective for Primary Education, the acquisition of basic communicative competence in a foreign language. Specifically, in our community, **Decree 211/2022, of November 10**, which establishes the organization and curriculum for Primary Education in the **Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands**, places Plurilingual Competence.

As educators, we must respond to the global challenges of the **2030 Agenda** and the demands of the 21st century—particularly **Goal No. 4**: "*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*". In doing so, education becomes the key to achieving many other Sustainable Development Goals, within a school environment that fosters multilingualism and communicative competence

Throughout this essay, we will explore the multifaceted nature of **language as a social tool**. First, we will define the concepts of language and communication, analyzing the features of Communicative Competence. Secondly, we will examine the **differences and similarities between oral and written language**, focusing on their unique pedagogical implications. Finally, we will identify the **factors defining a communicative situation**—namely the addresser, the addressee, the message, the code, the channel, and the context—and how they interrelate to ensure that our students in Canarias become competent, plurilingual and critical citizens.

1. LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATION

1.1. DEFINITIONS AND DESIGN FEATURES

The word language has prompted innumerable definitions. According to the Longman Dictionary of Teaching and Applied Linguistics by **Richards and Platt**: "*language is the system of human communication consisting of structural arrangements of sounds or written language into larger units like morphemes, words, and sentences*". **Sapir** (1921) described it as a "purely human and non-instinctive method of communicating ideas, emotions, and desires by means of voluntarily produced symbols". Meanwhile, **Trager** (1949) defined it as the institution whereby humans interact using arbitrary vocal symbols in terms of their total culture.

Three views of language down the centuries have distinguished language-as-product from language-as-tool and language-as-activity or process.

We consider **language-as-product** when we make the language an object of study, as linguists do and examine the system of rules (phonological, syntactic, morphological and semantic). We identify parts of speech and observe the dialectical variations, neologisms and what happens to the sound system in different contexts. Language-as-product is sometimes referred to as *langue*, or as the language code.

Language-as-tool, a concept emphasizes the ways we can use a language to operate upon the environment (things, people, ourselves...). Each language has great potentiality for conveying our intentions, our personal meaning. We may wish to ask, to order, to state, to deny, to persuade... We will need to know how to do these things in a new language so that we can express nuances of meaning. As we learn a new language, we have to internalize its potentialities as an instrument.

With language-as-activity or language-as-process we go beyond linguistics into pragmatics and social psychology. Can we use a language to effect our purposes, whether in oral or written form? We need to learn how to conduct communicative episodes: how to initiate interaction with speakers of the language, how to respond to the initiative of others, how to avoid and how to terminate communication. We need to know what levels of language we should use in different circumstances, when to speak, when to remain silent, how to look for hidden meanings behind words and gestures. This is speech as a social event and it can be learned only through experience with language in use.

To distinguish human language from other signaling systems, **Charles Hockett** proposed a set of 13 **design features**:

1. **Auditory-Vocal Channel**: Sound is used between the mouth and ear.
2. **Broadcast Transmission**: A signal can be heard by anyone within earshot.
3. **Rapid Fading**: Auditory signals are transitory and disappear quickly.
4. **Interchangeability**: Speakers can reproduce any linguistic message they understand.
5. **Total Feedback**: Speakers hear and can reflect upon everything they say.
6. **Specialization**: Sound waves of speech serve no other function than to signal meaning.
7. **Semanticity**: Signal elements convey meaning through stable associations with the real world.
8. **Arbitrariness**: There is no natural connection between the sign and the reality it refers to.

9. **Discreetness:** Speech uses a small set of sounds that contrast clearly (e.g., /b/ vs /p/).
10. **Displacement:** The ability to talk about events remotely in space or time.
11. **Productivity:** The infinite capacity to express new meanings using old elements.
12. **Traditional Transmission:** Language is passed down through teaching and learning.
13. **Duality of Patterning:** Sounds with no intrinsic meaning combine to form meaningful words.

1.2. FROM LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE TO COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

The shift from linguistic competence to communicative competence represents one of the most significant paradigm shifts in modern language pedagogy. Traditionally, language teaching was confined to the mastery of formal structures—grammar, syntax, and lexicon—often viewed through the lens of **Noam Chomsky’s generative grammar**. However, as our society evolved into an interconnected global landscape, the mere knowledge of rules proved insufficient for real-world interaction.

To achieve this, we must transition from teaching 'about' the language to teaching 'how to use' the language. This transition is framed by the landmark contributions of Dell Hymes, who argued that being competent requires knowing not just the code, but also the sociocultural rules of use: knowing when, where, and to whom to speak. **Hymes** identified **four criteria for CC**:

- **Systematic Potential** (possessing a system),
- **Appropriacy** (knowing what suits a situation),
- **Occurrence** (knowing how often something is said), and
- **Feasibility** (knowing if a structure is possible).

For that reason, it is clearly important to guide our students about the process, that is, we need to know how to communicate effectively and for doing so it is important to know how to do it (how to greet someone, how to apologise, how to ask for something, common expressions, formal or informal vocabulary, types of texts, etc).

If we analyse the newer foreign language teaching approaches, we can see that communication has an important role into classroom and **the main goal is to reach communicative competence**, both verbally and non-verbally. Therefore we have to study all the language’s possibilities both oral and written ways and its functions inside communicative situations besides factors that come into play in a communicative act.

Following **Krashen**, we advocate for the **Communicative Approach**, bridging the dichotomy by involving learners in solving real-world communication problems. In this sense, language should not be considered an aim in itself, but rather a useful tool to communicate. This methodological revolution transforms the teacher into a facilitator and the student into an active participant in the construction of their own knowledge

These days it’s very difficult to think in a society without communication, especially when the mass media has so much power and all the people communicate by internet.

In the same way, our pupils are growing up in an interconnected and plurilingual world where knowing a foreign language is a vital necessity for freedom and democracy. We belong to the “Information and Knowledge Society” (Web 3.0), which demands a shift from vertical, one-way communicative models to an **EMIREC-EMIREC model** (Sender/Receiver - Sender/Receiver).

The term EMIREC is a concept from communication theory, particularly prominent in the works of Canadian theorist **Jean Cloutier** in the 1970s. It is a compound word of the French (and Spanish) words for "Sender" and "Receiver."

What does it mean?

The word is formed by combining:

- **EMI**: Émetteur (Sender / Emisor)
- **REC**: Récepteur (Receiver / Receptor)

The core idea is that in the modern digital and interactive age, the traditional roles of "the person who talks" and "the person who listens" have merged. **An EMIREC is an individual who is simultaneously a sender and a receiver of messages.**

It has some **Characteristics**:

- **Horizontalism**: There is no hierarchy. Both parties have the same power to create and consume information.
- **Interactivity**: It describes the "prosumer" (producer + consumer). Think of social media: you read a post (Receiver), but you immediately comment or share your own thoughts (Sender).
- **Community**: It shifts the focus from "mass media" (one-to-many) to "community communication" (many-to-many).

Today it's relevant because although Cloutier developed this in the context of early audio-visual media, it is the perfect definition for the Internet era. Every time you participate in a video call, edit a Wikipedia page, or tweet, you are acting as an EMIREC.

In short, this model treats communication as a dialogue between equals rather than a lecture from an expert to an audience. Thus, the English area must develop "*intercultural awareness*" and attitudes of tolerance, valuing the foreign language as a vehicle for understanding different origins and cultures.

This development of Communicative Competence (CC) is not just a pedagogical choice but a legal imperative. **Organic Law 2/2006**, of May 3, on Education (**LOE**) in the new wording provided by **Organic Law 3/2020**, of December 29, amending Organic Law 2/2006 (**LOMLOE**) establishes, as a general objective for Primary Education, the acquisition of basic communicative competence in a foreign language.

Subsequently, LOMLOE is implemented at the national level for Primary Education through **Royal Decree 157/2022**, of March 1. This Royal Decree establishes the organization and the core curricula for this stage, serving as a framework for the Autonomous Communities to develop their own curricula.

At this point, it is necessary to mention a novel element of LOMLOE: **the Student Exit Profile** upon completing basic education—or in other words, what a citizen needs at the end of basic education to face and respond to the challenges of the 21st century. This competency profile will be stage-specific when the student finishes primary school. Furthermore, plurilingual competence will be one of the factors providing English teachers with a useful benchmark for designing relevant and meaningful learning situations and activities.

Specifically, in our region, **Decree 211/2022, of November 10, establishing the organization and curriculum of Primary Education in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands**, sets in its Objectives (Article 5.f): “*To acquire, in at least one foreign language, the basic communicative competence that allows them to express and understand simple messages and to manage in everyday situations*”. Furthermore, **Order of May 31, 2023**, regulating the assessment and promotion of students enrolled in the stages of Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Compulsory Secondary Education, and Baccalaureate, and establishing the requirements for obtaining the corresponding qualifications in the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, which develops this curriculum, organises Foreign Language teaching around Specific Competences. These aim not only for grammatical correctness but for communicative efficiency within real-world, diverse contexts.

In **the Canary Islands**, foreign language learning is of fundamental importance, particularly through the **Bilingual Programs** promoted by the Consejería de Educación. The goal is the development of a plurilingual and intercultural profile, as stated in the Exit Profile of **our students**.

In alignment with the “**Agenda 2030**” (SDGs 4 and 5), our approach ensures an inclusive, equitable, and quality education. This is achieved through the “**Universal Design for Learning**” (UDL/DUA), providing multiple means of representation and expression to respond to the diversity within the classroom.

In **the Canary Islands**, resources such as the **Plan de Comunicación Lingüística (PCL)**, the **Red de Radios Escolares de Canarias**, and **eBiblio Canarias** are essential to integrate the Digital Competence into the development of the four linguistic skills in a practical way.

This was further refined by **Canale and Swain**, whose model defines the **sub-competences of our current curriculum**:

- **Grammatical Competence**: Mastery of the linguistic code (lexis, morphology, syntax, spelling).
- **Sociolinguistic Competence**: The ability to produce appropriate utterances depending on the context and status of participants.
- **Discourse Competence**: Producing unified written or spoken texts characterized by cohesion and coherence.
- **Strategic Competence**: Using verbal/non-verbal tools to compensate for communication breakdowns.
- **Sociocultural Competence**: Knowledge of the social and cultural context in which the language is used.

2. ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE

2.1 GENERAL NATURE AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Linguists generally consider speech and writing to be **counterparts**—two sides of the same coin—rather than alternative processes. Historically, there was a deep-rooted dichotomy in how these two modes were perceived. For centuries, **written language was considered superior** because it was the medium of literature, providing language with permanence, authority, and standards of linguistic excellence. Conversely, spoken language was often ignored or viewed as lacking organization and rules.

However, modern linguistics, led by figures such as **Leonard Bloomfield**, revolutionized this view by insisting that **speech is the primary medium of communication**. This shift is based on the fact that speech is many centuries older than writing, it develops naturally in children without formal instruction, and writing systems are essentially derivative, as they are based on the sounds of speech. Today, we understand that neither medium is intrinsically better; instead, they serve different social and communicative functions that complement each other.

In our **classrooms in Canarias** this distinction is crucial. According to **Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE)** and **Decree 211/2022**, our primary objective is to help students acquire a basic communicative competence that allows them to handle both oral and written messages in everyday situations. While oral language comes first in the child's history as an individual, writing is a fundamental step in education, serving as the basis for future instruction and access to diverse fields of knowledge.

2.2 CONTRASTIVE FEATURES: SPEECH VS WRITING

While both speech and writing are fundamental manifestations of the human linguistic faculty, they are far from being identical mirrors of each other. Historically, linguistics—from Saussure to the structuralists—prioritised the spoken word as the primary and 'natural' form of language, relegating writing to a secondary, representative role. However, in the modern educational framework established by the **LOMLOE and the CEFR** (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages), we recognize that both modes possess distinct cognitive, social, and structural properties that our students must master.

Understanding the contrastive features between speech and writing is essential for developing true communicative competence. As Halliday (1989) noted, **speech** is 'process-oriented' and dynamic, relying heavily on the immediate shared context and paralinguistic cues such as intonation and gesture. In contrast, **writing** is 'product-oriented' and synoptic, requiring a higher degree of formal planning, syntactic complexity, and explicitness to bridge the physical gap between the writer and the reader

To understand how to teach these effectively, we must analyse their differences, which arise from radically different communicative situations. As we will explore in the following paragraphs, these differences center on their **physical form** (phonic vs. graphic substance), their **temporal dimensions** (time-bound speech vs. space-bound writing), and the **level of planning** required for each.

CHARACTERISTICS OF ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE

Oral Language

- a) When we speak, we **pay less attention to speech** and the complete and perfect pronunciation of words.
- b) **We haven't so much time** to look for the most adequate form to transmit the message.
- c) **Repetitions and pauses** are necessary strategies in oral communication because they aid the improvement of a better reception of the message.
- d) Another strategy is **paraphrase**, it's to say, to transmit the same message with other clearer words.

- e) It's also important to say that oral language could be greater **influenced by linguistic variations** than written language. People use many familiar expressions in conversations that aren't used in writing.
- f) **Intonation, modulation, rhythm**, are essentials to aid a message's comprehension.
- h) Finally, oral language has a fundamental role **non-verbal strategy** (gestures, body-movement...) which are very supportive in oral interactions.

Written Language

- a) **Time** that we use to make written sentences permits us to choose better, certain correct expressions more adequate for the context.
- b) This type of language is **more homogeneous** than oral. It isn't normal than in written language people use many linguistic variations, although it's likely to find changes in the register: formal, neutral and informal. There are also factors that influence its modification: for example, thanks to the feminist movement it began to be used chairperson instead of chairmen. This was "politically correct" and helped to make messages as precise as possible.
- c) Written language develops **more slowly than the oral one**, it's to say, the new expressions are acquired before by oral language and after they go in written one.

It's essential to mention the importance that our **Curriculum** gives to communication and the ability so that students are able to comprehend and transmit messages in oral and written language as in a foreign language as in a native language.

Spoken language precedes written language in the acquisition process, but written language, as a model of language, is superior.

When talking about Language, we have to say that in Britain there were a lot of attempts to establish an Academy that put certain grammatical norms and looked after good language use, but it was impossible. Anyway, there have always been a more relevant variety of language. It's known as "**Standard English**" or *Received Pronunciation (RP)* and appears in books, conferences, politician's speeches and so forth (*only 3% of English people*).

Certain **factors** that have contributed to its success are the following: it's used in famous British Public Schools, in the BBC, in dictionaries, published materials, intelligibility, the media, phonemic chart, regionals, social prestige, ...

In contrast, there are others varieties of social English that do not enjoy the prestige of RP and are even looked down upon. For instance:

- Sub-standard
- Glasgowian
- Cockney (working-class districts or slums)
- Scouse (from Liverpool)

2.3. THE SOUND-SPELLING RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between how a language is spoken and how it is written is a fundamental aspect of linguistic study and a primary challenge in the foreign language classroom. To understand this relationship, we must first distinguish between different writing systems. While non-phonological systems (like pictograms or logographs) do not show a clear link between symbols

and sounds, phonological systems—which include syllabic and alphabetic writing—base their graphic representation on the sounds of the language.

A. Transparent vs. Opaque Orthography

In a perfect alphabetic system, there would be a direct, one-to-one correspondence (isomorphism) between graphemes (the smallest unit of written language) and phonemes (the smallest unit of sound).

- **Transparent Systems:** Languages like Spanish have a very regular system where letters consistently represent the same sounds.
- **Opaque or Deep Systems:** English shows a marked tendency toward irregularity. This "Deep Orthography" means that the 26 letters of the English alphabet must represent approximately 44 different phonemes.

B. Key Challenges in the English System

The lack of a simple correspondence in English leads to several complexities that our students in Canarias must navigate:

1. **Homophones:** Words that have the same sound but different spellings and meanings, such as see/sea or write/right.
2. **Homographs:** Words that share the same spelling but have different sounds and meanings, such as the present and past tense of the verb read.
3. **Multiple Spellings for One Sound:** A single phoneme can be represented by various graphemes. For example, the sound /f/ can be written as "f" (fish), "ff" (off), "ph" (phone), or even "gh" (laugh).
4. **Silent Letters:** English contains many letters that are written but not pronounced, such as the "k" in know or the "e" in make.
5. **Spelling Patterns:** Despite the irregularities, there are rules we can teach, such as the "Magic E" (which changes the vowel sound, as in hop vs. hope) or consonant doubling before adding suffixes (stop → stopping).

C. Pedagogical Implications and Teaching Strategies

Because the relationship between letter and sound in English is so complex, learning to write and read requires more skill and practice than listening or speaking. In our classrooms, we adopt specific strategies to bridge this gap:

- **Orality First:** Following the Natural Approach, we initially prioritize oral communication. We use conversational routines and formulaic language (e.g., "How are you?") through songs, games, and role-plays so students become familiar with the sounds before tackling their written form.
- **Synthetic Phonics:** We implement systematic methods like Jolly Phonics. This approach teaches the relationship between graphemes and phonemes through multi-sensory techniques, such as using gestures (NVC) to associate a sound with its written symbol.
- **Multi-sensory Memorization:** For "tricky words" that do not follow standard rules, we use strategies like "Look-Say-Cover-Write-Check".
- **Inclusion and UDL:** We must be particularly aware that dyslexia is common in English due to its opaque orthography. Under the UDL framework, we provide visual aids, color-coding for sounds, and digital tools with audio-support to ensure all students can access written texts effectively.

In the context of English language teaching, a major implication is the opaque relationship between sounds and spelling. While Spanish has a very regular system, English shows a marked tendency toward irregularity, where 26 letters must represent roughly 44 phonemes. This lack of isomorphism leads to challenges like homophones (same sound, different spelling) and homographs (same spelling, different sound).

In English, the relationship between sounds and spelling is opaque, with many exceptions. Consequently, we prioritize an "Orality First" approach in Primary, using Synthetic Phonics and conversational routines (e.g., "How are you?") before advancing to complex writing.

In conclusion, mastering the sound-spelling relationship is a journey from decoding sounds to achieving literacy. By starting with Synthetic Phonics and supporting students with visual and digital resources, we help them overcome the irregularities of the English language and become confident readers and writers

3. FACTORS DEFINING A COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION

Communication is not just a process of sending information; it is the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop. Traditionally, in the foreign language classroom, we focused on the message as a static piece of grammar; however, the etymology of the word communication—from the Latin *communis* (to put in common)—reminds us that it is a social and reciprocal act. Communication is not just a process of sending information; it is the mechanism through which human relations exist and develop". Traditionally, in the foreign language classroom, we focused on the message as a static piece of grammar; however, the etymology of the word communication—from the Latin *communis* (to put in common)—reminds us that it is a social and reciprocal act

3.1. COMMUNICATION THEORIES AND MODELS

Communication is defined as the exchange of information, ideas, or attitudes between two or more individuals through a common system of symbols known as a code. To understand the evolution of this process, we must analyze the most influential theoretical models:

- **The Mathematical-Linear Model** (Shannon & Weaver): Originally designed for electronic messages, it views communication as a one-way, vertical flow from a source to a destination. It introduces critical technical concepts: Entropy (noise or distortions that diminish message integrity) and Redundancy (the repetition of elements to counteract noise and ensure the message is intelligible).
- **The Circular Model** (Osgood & Schramm): This model broke the linear tradition by stating that communication is a continuous, circular process where both participants act as encoders and decoders. It highlights the principle of Feedback, allowing the sender to calculate the effect of their words and adjust the message accordingly.
- **The Functionalist Perspective** (Lasswell): Summarized by the famous query: "Who says what to whom, through which channel, and with what effect?". In this view, the sender controls the distribution but not necessarily the interpretation.
- **The Socio-educational Model** (EMIREC): Relevant for the current Information and Knowledge Society (Web 3.0), this model proposes the figure of the EMIREC (Sender/Receiver), where both teacher and students have the same status and cooperatively construct knowledge through multidirectional communication.

- **Connectivism** (Siemens): A modern model recognizing that in a digital society, learning and communication are no longer individual activities but processes that interact within digital networks.

3.2. KEY CONSTITUTIVE FACTORS

According to **Roman Jakobson**, any act of verbal communication is defined by **six essential factors**. In our classrooms, mastering these factors is vital for students to achieve Communicative Competence as required by Decree 101/2023.

1. **The Addresser** (Sender/Speaker/Writer): The person who initiates the communicative act by encoding a message. In the modern EMIREC model, every participant is seen as both a sender and a receiver, establishing a multidirectional flow.
2. **The Addressee** (Receiver/Listener/Reader): The person who decodes and interprets the message. The relationship between the sender and receiver is crucial, as it determines the gestures, vocabulary, and register used.
3. **The Message**: The content or information transmitted. It operates on two levels: what the sender means and what they say unintentionally through non-verbal signs.
4. **The Code**: A limited group of signs (e.g., the English language, Morse code, or gestures) known by both the speaker and the listener. Communication succeeds only if both participants handle the same code.
5. **The Channel** (Contact/Medium): The physical means or psychological connection through which the message travels, such as air, paper, the telephone, or digital ICT tools.
6. **The Context** (Setting): The situation in which the participants find themselves. It is the most influential factor in defining the ****formality, topic, and vocabulary**** used in a speech act.

3.3. THE COMPLEXITY OF CONTEXT

Context is not merely a physical location; it is a multifaceted construct that linguists categorize to explain how meaning is negotiated. In the framework of LOMLOE, creating Learning Situations that provide a rich and realistic context is essential for students to use English as a functional tool for real-life interaction.

Linguists distinguish between:

- **Linguistic Context** (Co-text): Refers to the parts of a text or speech that precede and follow a word, contributing to its full meaning.
- **Context of Situation**: Formulated by Malinowski and expanded by Halliday, it encompasses the external circumstances of the communicative act. Halliday identifies three core components:
 - **Field**: The total event and the social purpose of the communication (e.g., a teacher explaining a legend in the Vostell Malpartida Museum).
 - **Mode**: The function of the text and the channel used (e.g., a spoken description vs. a digital report on Scholarium).
 - **Tenor**: The participants and their social relationships, including their status and roles (e.g., the horizontal interaction in Cooperative Learning groups).

4. FUNCTIONALITY OF LANGUAGE

Language is essentially functional because it performs multiple purposes and is used across diverse contexts. While the most immediate answer to "why do we use language?" is to communicate ideas and feelings, this is not its only role. Language is a social tool that allows humans to interact, express regional or social identity, and even perform physical acts through speech.

4.1. JAKOBSON'S FUNCTIONS

One of the most influential classifications was proposed by **Roman Jakobson** in his work "Linguistics and Poetics". He argued that any act of verbal communication is composed of six constitutive factors: Addresser, Addressee, Context, Message, Contact (Channel), and Code. To each factor corresponds a **specific language function**:

- **Referential (or Ideational) Function**: Focused on the Context. Its purpose is to convey factual information or describe the world (e.g., "The weather is sunny in Canarias").
- **Emotive (or Expressive) Function**: Focused on the Addresser (Sender). It expresses the speaker's attitude, feelings, or internal state (e.g., "Wow! What a beautiful view!").
- **Conative (or Imperative) Function**: Focused on the Addressee (Receiver). The message is used to produce a reaction or influence the behavior of the listener, typically through imperatives or vocatives (e.g., "Peter, open the door, please").
- **Phatic Function**: Focused on the Contact (Channel). Its main goal is to establish, maintain, or check the communicative channel rather than communicating complex ideas (e.g., "Hello?", "Are you with me?"). Malinowski emphasized this as a tool to signal friendship and social bonding.
- **Metalinguistic Function**: Focused on the Code. It is used whenever speakers talk about the language itself (e.g., "What does 'opaque' mean?").
- **Poetic Function**: Focused on the Message. It highlights the aesthetic, phonetic, and rhythmic properties of the message itself. It is the dominant function in songs, rhymes, and literature.

4.2. HALLIDAY'S METAFUNCTIONS

While Jakobson focused on the components of the communicative act, the British linguist **Michael Halliday** proposed a more abstract model by grouping language uses into **three Metafunctions**:

1. **Ideational Function**: Concerned with language as a means of organizing the speaker's experience of both the real and imaginary world.
2. **Interpersonal Function**: Used to establish, indicate, or maintain social relationships between people, including modality and forms of address.
3. **Textual Function**: Serves to create coherent and cohesive spoken or written texts that fit the particular situation in which they are used.

4.3. SPEECH ACTS THEORY

J.L. Austin revolutionized the field by demonstrating that "**to say is to act**". He distinguished between Constatives (sentences that describe a state of affairs) and Performatives (sentences that perform an action, such as "I promise" or naming a ship). To analyse the effect of speech, he proposed a threefold distinction:

- **Locutionary Act:** The basic act of saying something meaningful and understandable in a language.
- **Illocutionary Act:** The intended function or "force" behind the utterance, such as ordering, advising, or promising.
- **Perlocutionary Act:** The actual result or effect produced on the listener (e.g., the listener becoming happy, or performing the requested task).

5. DIDACTIC IMPLICATIONS AND CLASSROOM APPLICATION

The theoretical transition from linguistic to communicative competence profoundly transforms our methodology. Following the 2026 educational guidelines and the communicative approach, our methodology must be active, contextualized, and student-centered.

- **Active Methodologies:** We must implement Project-Based Learning (PBL) and Learning Situations (*Situaciones de Aprendizaje*) where language is used to solve real-world tasks. For instance, organizing a "School Podcast"; using the Canarian School Radio Network to act as EMIRECs, and eBiblio Canarias for authentic input.
- **Interdisciplinary Integration:** Language as a tool allows connections with other areas (e.g., Arts, Natural Sciences). Teaching specific vocabulary through CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) reinforces the referential and metalinguistic functions.
- **Sustainable ICTs:** Using platforms like eBiblio provides authentic input (channels) and helps recreate diverse communicative situations (contexts) without leaving the classroom. Use of Canarias' Red de Emisoras Escolares (School Radio) to act as EMIRECs and eBiblio for authentic input.

6. ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL INCLUSION

In accordance with LO 8/2021 and the principles of LOMLOE, inclusion is mandatory. The complexity of English's opaque orthography poses a significant barrier for students with Specific Educational Support Needs (NEAE), particularly those with dyslexia.

- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL/DUA):** We must provide multiple means of representation. For the sound-spelling relationship, using Synthetic Phonics (like Jolly Phonics) combined with total physical response (TPR) gestures ensures that visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learners can all decode the code effectively.
- **Individualized Responses:** For students struggling with the written channel, we prioritize oral communication and scaffold their learning with visual aids, pictograms, and adapted reading materials (e.g., lowering the cognitive load of the message while maintaining the communicative function).

7. COMPETENCE-BASED EVALUATION

Evaluation in the communicative paradigm must be continuous, formative, and integrative. We no longer evaluate isolated grammar rules; we evaluate the student's ability to communicate successfully in a given context, moving away from traditional exams to rubrics, portfolios, and systematic observation to assess real communicative sub-competences.

- **Evaluation Instruments:** We move away from traditional written exams toward varied instruments such as systematic observation, learning portfolios, and analytical rubrics.
- **Assessing Oral and Written Skills:** Rubrics should assess the sub-competences (sociolinguistic, strategic, discourse). For example, evaluating a role-play not just on vocabulary (code), but on the use of non-verbal strategies to overcome a communication breakdown (strategic competence).
- **Feedback:** Providing constructive feedback helps students understand their role as EMIRECs and improves their self-regulation.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, communication is not just a technical transmission of data but a human experience that bridges cultures. In the lands of Canarias, our mission as educators is to provide students with the "key" to the Profile of Exit, forming plurilingual, critical, and open-minded citizens. As we have explored, language is the primary tool for social interaction, and by balancing the oral and written modes within meaningful contexts, we empower our students for the challenges of the 21st century. To finish with a reflection: *"Through learning a language, we learn about culture; through culture, we learn respect; and through respect, we can hope for peace"*.

Throughout this essay, we have explored the multifaceted nature of language not merely as a "subject" or a set of static rules, but as a vital human event. As it has been demonstrated, communication is the primary engine of social interaction and the core of the learning process.

By analyzing the factors defining a communicative situation—from Jakobson's traditional elements to the multidirectional EMIREC-EMIREC model—we have moved beyond a linear transmission of information toward a horizontal and participative construction of knowledge. In our classrooms, this theoretical framework is brought to life through Learning Situations where both oral and written modes are balanced to provide students with functional tools for the 21st century.

This pedagogical shift is firmly anchored in our legal framework. The LOMLOE and, specifically, Decree 211/2022 of Canarias, place Communicative Competence as the backbone of the curriculum, ensuring that our pupils develop the necessary sub-competences (grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse) to "do things" with the language. Furthermore, the integration of regional resources such as the literacy promotion plans and the digital tools provided by the Government of Canarias alongside the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), ensures that we provide an inclusive, digital, and equitable education for every learner.

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APPENDIX

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDY OF THE TOPIC

The purpose of this topic, as identified in its title, is to analyze language as a primary tool for social interaction, the fundamental differences between oral and written modes, and the constitutive factors that ensure communicative success: sender, receiver, function, and context.

To start its study, it is recommended to first consult the topic index to obtain a global view of its structure and carefully read the introduction, which clearly explains the general meaning of the topic and its essential components. **The topic is organized** around the shift from traditional grammar-based teaching toward the development of Communicative Competence as the core objective of the Primary English curriculum.

During the reading and underlining of the various sections, **special attention** should be paid to Hymes' and Canale & Swain's models of Communicative Competence and Jakobson's factors and functions of communication, as these elements help to discriminate the core content of the topic and prioritize the elements that must be mastered.

Once this comprehension phase is completed, the memorization and elaboration of the summary proceed in a logical order: firstly, the legal justification and the contribution to the student's Profile of Exit; subsequently, the theoretical analysis of spoken versus written language and the functional application of communication theories in the classroom

CONNECTION TO THE SYLLABUS: BRIEFLY OUTLINING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REMAINING UNITS WITHIN THIS CONTENT BLOCK

ARTICULATION WITH THE REST OF THE SYLLABUS

This topic is closely related to the block of themes addressing Communication and Language, specifically with **Topic 2**. Their connection is evident in both the organization of the elements to be studied and the contents treated, as the headings of these themes are very similar and only the specific focus of the communicative interaction (theoretical foundation vs. classroom ecosystem) changes.

For this reason, it is highly recommended to maintain a common structure when studying the themes corresponding to the communicative paradigm, incorporating the specific differential elements of each topic. Furthermore, due to its content, this topic has a clear relationship with the **topics of Block 2: Linguistic Skills (3, 4, 5, and 6), especially with Topic 15**, as it mentions in its heading "the development of oral communication" and collects practically the same information regarding oral discourse features and interaction.

In the same way, the heading of **Topic 18** identifies "The foreign language as an object of study", as do Topics 5 and 6 regarding grammar and lexis. Therefore, the contents of the first

part of the current topic relative to Communicative Competence and to the factors defining a communicative situation result equally valid and applicable in these sections.

Finally, Topic 1 serves as the theoretical pillar for the Practical Application of the entire syllabus in Canarias, providing the basis for designing Learning Situations (SA) and the implementation of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL), which are mandatory requirements under Decree 211/2022.

CONCEPTUAL GLOSSARY: KEY TERMS FOR TOPIC 1

- **Communicative Competence (CC):** The ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various social contexts, going beyond mere grammatical knowledge to include sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic skills.
- **EMIREC (Sender/Receiver):** A horizontal communication model where every participant acts simultaneously as a "Sender" (Émetteur) and a "Receiver" (Récepteur), reflecting the interactive nature of the modern digital society.
- **Mediation:** A key LOMLOE activity where students act as bridges to facilitate understanding between others.
- **Scaffolding:** Temporary support (visual or verbal) that teachers provide to help students reach autonomy.
- **Linguistic Competence:** Often associated with Chomsky's generative grammar, it refers to the internalised knowledge of formal language structures, such as grammar, syntax, and lexicon.
- **Student Exit Profile (Perfil de Salida):** The set of competences and skills that students must possess at the end of their basic education to successfully face 21st-century challenges.
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL/DUA):** A pedagogical framework that aims to provide all students with equal opportunities to learn by offering multiple means of engagement, representation, and expression.
- **Opaque Orthography:** A characteristic of the English language where there is no direct, one-to-one correspondence between sounds (phonemes) and letters (graphemes), unlike "transparent" systems like Spanish.
- **Synthetic Phonics:** A multi-sensory method for teaching literacy that focuses on connecting individual sounds (phonemes) to their written symbols (graphemes) to blend them into words.
- **Learning Situations (Situaciones de Aprendizaje):** Meaningful, contextualised activities designed to help students resolve real-world problems by mobilising their competences in an integrated way.
- **Functionalism:** A perspective that views language not as a static object, but as a social tool used to perform specific functions, such as expressing emotions, influencing others, or maintaining social contact.
- **Standard English / Received Pronunciation (RP):** The prestigious variety of English traditionally used as a model for instruction, though modern pedagogy now values plurilinguism and diverse linguistic varieties.

CONSOLIDATION AND SELF-ASSESSMENT QUIZ: TOPIC 1

Instructions: Answer the following questions to verify your mastery of the unit. This questionnaire covers the theoretical foundations, contrastive linguistics, and the legal/practical framework for Canarias.

PART 1: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

1. **Define 'Language' from a functionalist perspective.** How does it differ from viewing language as a 'product'?
2. **List and briefly explain 4 of Charles Hockett's design features** that distinguish human language from other systems.
3. **What is the 'EMIREC' model?** Explain why this horizontal communication model is relevant in the context of the Information and Knowledge Society (Web 3.0).

PART 2: COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

4. **Compare Chomsky's 'Linguistic Competence' with Hymes' 'Communicative Competence'.** What was the fundamental shift in focus?
5. **According to Canale and Swain, what are the five sub-competences** included in our current curriculum?

PART 3: ORAL AND WRITTEN LANGUAGE

6. **Identify three contrastive features between speech and writing.** Consider aspects like time, planning, and paralinguistic elements.
7. **Explain the term 'Opaque Orthography' (or Deep Orthography).** Why does it make English more challenging for Spanish students compared to their mother tongue?
8. **What is 'Synthetic Phonics'?** Name a specific method or resource used in Canarias to teach the sound-spelling relationship.

PART 4: THE COMMUNICATIVE SITUATION

9. **Name Jakobson's six constitutive factors of communication** and their corresponding language functions.
10. **Define 'Speech Acts' according to J.L. Austin.** What is the difference between an *illocutionary* and a *perlocutionary* act?

PART 5: LEGAL & REGIONAL CONTEXT

11. **Which specific regional Decree** establishes the curriculum for Primary Education in Canarias?
12. **How do "School Radio Network" contribute** to the development of communicative competence in our region?

ANSWER KEY

1. **Language as functionalist tool:** It sees language as a social tool for interaction. Language-as-product focuses on the static system of rules (grammar/syntax), while functionalism focuses on language-in-use to achieve purposes.
2. **Hockett's Features** (Any 4): e.g., Arbitrariness (no natural connection between sign and meaning); Displacement (talking about things remote in time/space); Productivity (infinite capacity for new meanings); Duality of Patterning (meaningless sounds forming meaningful words).
3. **EMIREC:** Stands for Émetteur (Sender) and Récepteur (Receiver). It describes a horizontal model where roles merge; participants are simultaneously producers and consumers of information ("prosumers"), essential for interactive digital environments like the Web 3.0.
4. **Competence Shift:** Chomsky focused on the internalised knowledge of formal structures (code). Hymes argued that being competent requires knowing the socio-cultural rules of use: knowing when, where, and to whom to speak.
5. **Sub-competences:** Grammatical, Sociolinguistic, Discourse, Strategic, and Sociocultural.
6. **Speech vs. Writing:** Speech is time-bound/transient, spontaneous, and uses paralinguistic aids (gestures). Writing is space-bound/permanent, highly planned, and must be more explicit (less deictic).
7. **Opaque Orthography:** A system without a one-to-one correspondence between sounds and letters. English is "Deep" because 26 letters must represent roughly 44 phonemes, unlike the "transparent" (regular) Spanish system.
8. **Synthetic Phonics:** A multi-sensory literacy method connecting individual sounds (phonemes) to symbols (graphemes). Example: Jolly Phonics.
9. **Jakobson's Factors/Functions:** Addresser (Emotive), Addressee (Conative), Context (Referential), Message (Poetic), Contact (Phatic), and Code (Metalinguistic).
10. **Speech Acts:** The idea that "to say is to act". Illocutionary is the intended force (e.g., promising); Perlocutionary is the actual effect on the listener (e.g., making them happy).
11. **Regional Decree:** Decree 211/2022, of November 10.
12. **Regional Resources:** School Radio Network enhances oral expression and phatic/poetic functions through podcasts. Ebiblio fosters digital reading habits and literacy through its reading platform and audio supports.

OBJECTIVES OF THE TOPIC

The **main goals of this topic** are:

1. To define the concept and design features of human language.
2. To analyze the differences between oral and written language.
3. To identify communication theories, moving from linear to circular models.
4. To evaluate the factors and functions that define any communicative act.

APPLICATION TO REAL CASES

The description of language as a means of communication in this topic provides vital theoretical foundation elements for resolving practical scenarios. Specifically, by applying the resolution steps, we will see in scenarios based on students with phonological decoding difficulties

(dyslexia) or in the design of real communicative tasks (Learning Situations) how the theory is applied in the classroom. The description of the communicative methodology, the differences between the oral and written code, and the theoretical foundation based on Jakobson's factors and Canale and Swain's subcompetencies will allow us to theoretically ground our interventions.

This guarantees sound responses to practical cases where, for example, it is necessary to solve a failure in the communication channel or to adapt written input to the needs of a student with specific educational support requirements (NEAE).

INTEGRATION INTO THE GENERAL DIDACTIC PROGRAMMING

In relation to didactic programming, its design requires identifying how communication theory underpins our decisions. Throughout the topic, it has been made clear that the Foreign Language (English) is not an end in itself, but a vehicle for social interaction; therefore, these contributions must be incorporated into our document in the following way:

- In the formulation of the specific competencies, the need to train plurilingual students capable of acting as **"EMIRECs"** in physical and digital contexts will be justified.
- In the design of the basic knowledge (formerly contents), the **factors of the communicative situation** (sender, receiver, context) will be included for the Communication block.
- In the methodology, we will use the **communicative approach** and the action-oriented approach proposed by the CEFR to justify the use of tools such as School Radio Network. In the oral defense before the panel, the arguments from this topic (such as the evolutionary differences between the acquisition of oral versus written language) will serve to justify the sequencing of our programming.

DEVELOPMENT IN THE DIDACTIC UNITS/LEARNING SITUATIONS (RELATIONSHIP WITH SESSION 3)

Our units or Learning Situations (SdA) specify the curriculum. The objectives, knowledge, and competencies of each SdA must include the communicative skills described in this topic. **For example**, when designing an SdA in which students must write an email to a foreign school (Channel: digital; Context: international friendship), we will be directly applying the functions of language (Phatic and Referential). Likewise, Synthetic Phonics activities applied in assembly sessions or routines materialize the theory on the sound-grapheme relationship (Opaque Orthography) developed in section 2.

