

LInC Symposium / abstract
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The myth of the Communicative Approach

The so called “communicative approach” has gone through extreme transformations since it was first created, more than forty years ago. This paper explores its historical evolution: its beginning as a conceptual tool by Krashen and its later conversion into a practical methodology with Terrell. Its current status in the world of Second Language Teaching and Learning is also discussed. Many 2L textbooks claim to be 100% “communicative”, all at the same time just as many claim to have surpassed such practice. The term has also become a broader and more ambiguous label for many different things; the paper explores what means to be “communicative” these days.

The paper compares the application of the *Communicative Approach* in the teaching of Spanish as a Second Language in South Australia: different groups, at different levels of proficiency, in different language institutions, all of them claiming to be “communicative” through the implementation of the Terrell textbook *Dos Mundos*, are explored and compared. The systematic comparison of the day to day practice in these groups that share a common base allows us to detect, through their similarities and differences, some obscure aspects of our practice, i.e., contradictions and collisions with the various institutions’ curriculums, syllabuses and policies, or some more practical problems, like logistic constrictions. All these come to shed some light over the use and meaning of this approach.

The paper concludes that the term “communicative” may be currently overrated and overused among the 2L Teaching community, and deals with some different alternatives for the future.