

**THE MECHANISM OF CHANGE, DEVELOPMENT AND ADAPTATION
OF THE METHODOLOGIES IN DIDACTICS OF LANGUAGES-CULTURES:
THE "3M" MODEL (MATRIX - MODELS - METHODOLOGY)**

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Abstract

This article develops the "3M model" (Matrix - Models - Methodology), which represents the mechanism of change, elaboration and adaptation of methodologies at work in didactics of languages-cultures, a model elaborated on the basis of personal research into the history of methodologies in France and Europe from the beginning of the 20th century to the present day. It is illustrated by four major methodologies that appeared in the French school system and in French as a foreign language during this period: the active methodology (focused on understanding authentic documents), the communicative approach (focused on oral interaction), the plurilingual and pluricultural approach (focused on mediation) and the action perspective (focused on social action). A new methodology emerges as a result of a social change in the intended use goal and use situation of the L2, and a new matrix is formed with these two primary elements, to which are added the action of use and the corresponding language and cultural competences. The new methodology is then generated by applying a range of different models to this matrix: pedagogical, linguistic, cognitive, cultural, methodological, epistemological and ideological. Beyond the example of this particular 3M model, the article shows the value of developing and manipulating models to develop reflection and stimulate creativity in didactics of languages-cultures.

Keywords: 3M model, didactic configurations, methodologies, homology end-means principle, models

1. Introduction

The primary aim of this article is to present and manipulate a model of change and development in major historical methodologies, which I have called the "3M model" for "Matrix - Models - Methodology", the result of my research into the history and current status of didactics of languages-cultures (DLC) since the early 1980s. The interest is not only historical: the mechanism thus modeled is also, in fact, the one that constantly governs the adaptation of methodologies to their environment, from the country level, in the official instructions of national education systems, to the language classroom level, in teachers' practices. The second aim of this article is to use this example, and several other models that I'll have to mobilize, to convince readers of the value of DLC modelling¹.

Here, I give the term "methodology" an empirical definition that also applies to the term "approach" in the expression "communicative approach": a methodology is a coherent set of teaching-learning methods² that, over a certain historical period, with different publishers and in several countries, has proved capable of generating textbooks that are relatively original in comparison with previous textbooks and broadly comparable with each other. We can distinguish between a textbook's "reference methodology" (the one announced, for example, in the preface or on the publisher's website), its "design

¹ I have devoted a complete essay to this tool: *Modélisation, types généraux et types didactiques de modèles en didactique complexe des langues-cultures* (Puren 2022f) (Modelling, general types and didactic types of models in complex didactics of languages-cultures).

² I use "methods" here in the very general sense of "ways of doing things". Depending on the context and terminological traditions, they may correspond to techniques, processes, procedures, strategies, etc., based on specific didactics, general pedagogy, linguistics, cognitive sciences, etc.

methodology" (the one actually implemented by the authors), and its "use methodology" (the one actually implemented by teachers). This use methodology can vary to a greater or lesser extent depending on factors such as institutional goals and orientations, teacher training, experience and conceptions, local pedagogical and didactic traditions, teaching conditions, etc., but even so, textbook use remains broadly comparable. It is clear that a set of teaching-learning methods must be sufficiently coherent, self-sufficient, pervasive, resistant over time and diffused in space to correspond to the historical definition I am proposing here of the notion of "methodology".

The 3M model (Matrix, Models, Methodology)

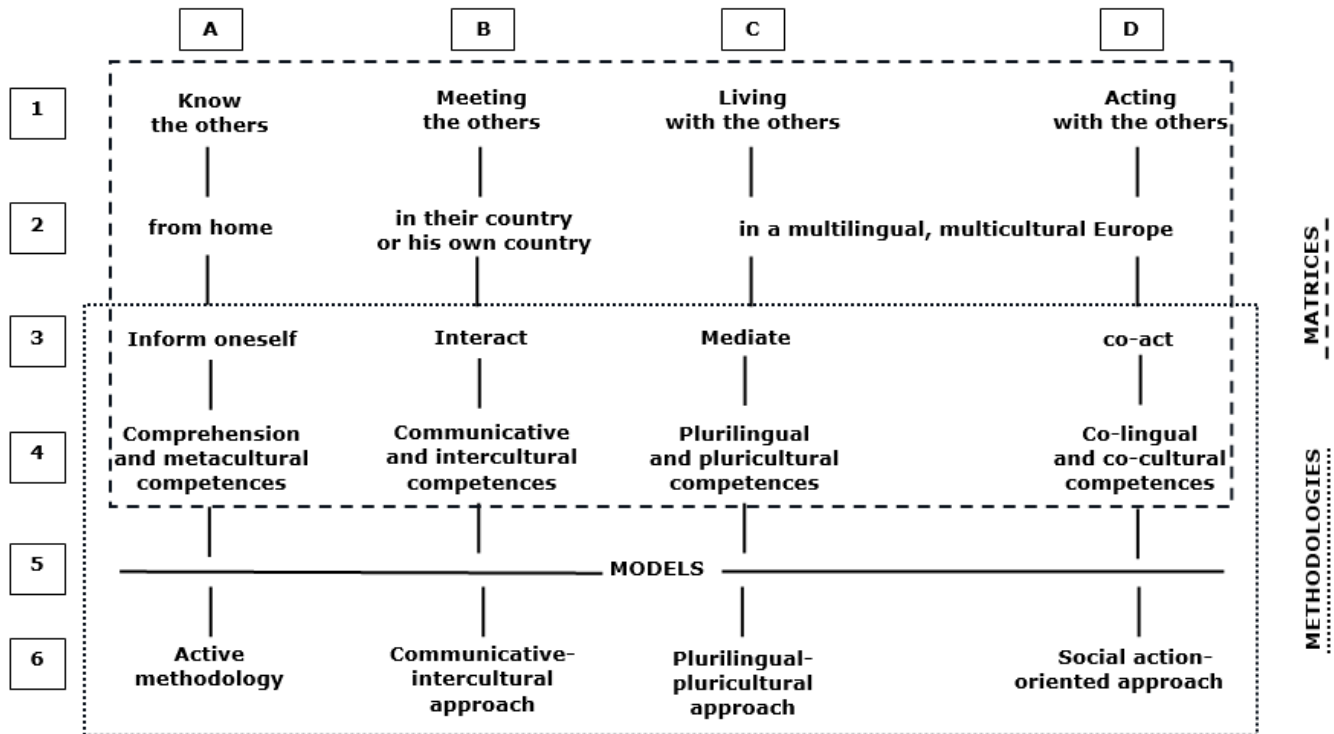


Fig. 1

The three terms that gave the 3M model its name are capitalized in this diagram (fig. 1): "MATRICES", written vertically on the right, "Models" on line 5, and "METHODOLOGIES" vertically below "MATRICES".

This 3M model is itself integrated into this diagram within two other models³:

–A model of "didactic configurations" (identified in the diagram by the letters A, B, C and D, each with, vertically, their six components numbered from 1 to 6. A didactic configuration is a global

³ In the expression "3M model", model has the same meaning as in the expression "systemic model", that of the product of modelling, in this case conceptual modelling. We sometimes use "modelling" in this sense of "model", in particular to avoid confusion with, precisely, the "models" in line 5 of the diagram above (fig. 1), which are of a different epistemological nature.

coherence made up of three elements: a matrix (whose four components are those of lines 1 to 4 of this diagram), and the various models (line 5) that have been used to elaborate the corresponding methodology (line 6). These are (the vertical numbers are repeated below):

[1] the use goal⁴: this is what we want learners to be able to do in L2 in the outside world at the end of their training;

[2] the use situation: this is the environment in which we want learners to be able to achieve this goal;

[3] the use action, which is the specific activity used to achieve the use goal;

[4] the specific language and cultural competences required to perform the intended action;

These first four elements form the indispensable matrix for any new didactic configuration.

[5] different types of combined models which, when applied to the matrix, will generate a new methodology;

[6] the methodology, a comprehensive system for the coherent and synergistic design and management of all teaching, learning and using methods in the classroom, and their interrelationships.

—A model of the historical evolution of didactic configurations (A, B, C and D, from left to right above line 1 of the diagram, fig. 1). For this historical modelling, I have chosen four didactic configurations corresponding to four methodologies that have succeeded one another in school language teaching and in didactics of French as a foreign language since the very beginning of the XX^e century: the active methodology (A), the communicative-intercultural approach (B), the plurilingual-pluricultural approach (C) and the social action-oriented approach, SAOA (D).

A new didactic configuration arises when, for the language being taught (L2), there is a sufficiently significant change in the use goal (line 1) and its use situation (line 2) to render the hitherto dominant methodology inadequate, or at least insufficient, in the classroom. The four methodologies I have chosen seem cover the main use goals currently relevant to L2 teaching and learning in schools, with their corresponding use situations. These four methodologies, in combination or in articulation with each other, are likely to cover most of the current methodological needs in school didactics of languages-cultures. In other countries and in other historical traditions, the methodologies chosen would necessarily

⁴ For the sake of convenience, I'll only talk about "goals" here. But in the case of schools, the teaching-learning of languages and cultures is not only aimed at a specific use goal, but also at the formative and educational goals common to all disciplines.

be different, but I'm making the assumption that the 3M model has worked and continues to work identically.

2. Brief presentation of the four selected methodologies

I present these four methodologies here in a schematic way, but I think it's sufficient to understand the 3M model and give a few bibliographical references for readers who still consider them indispensable or who would like to go further for themselves in the description of these methodologies.

–*Active methodology* (configuration A) is a methodology based on the comprehension of authentic documents. This was the official methodology of language teaching in French schools from the 1920s to the 1960s (cf. Puren 1988a, Part III, pp. 140-188). For the early years of language learning (*i.e.* the first three or four years of middle-school teaching), it took over the essentials of the direct methodology that had preceded it for the previous two decades (cf. Puren 1988a, Part II, pp. 62-139), and adapted to the didactic treatment of authentic documents in the following years, with a special emphasis on literary texts. This approach to the didactic treatment of literary texts, which is characterized by the two-fold central goal of mobilizing and acquiring language and cultural knowledge through collective oral commentary in class, has been constantly enriched up to the present day to deal with all types of authentic document. It comprises a complex system of tasks (preparing, identifying, analyzing, interpreting, extrapolating, reacting, judging, comparing, transposing, extending: cf. Puren 041-en), which can be found in full or in part in all current textbooks, even those claiming to follow the communicative approach, from the moment -at B2 level, and even as early as B1- that authentic documents are used, with the dual goal of collective work on language and culture. All the tasks involved in the current PIRLS and PISA reading comprehension tests can also be found in this model of didactic treatment of authentic texts.

–*The communicative approach* (configuration B) is certainly the best known to readers, since it was dominant for at least three decades, from the mid-1970s (if we take as a reference the publication of the Council of Europe document that widely disseminated it in France, the 1975 *Threshold Level* [COE 1975]) until the mid-2000s (if I take as a reference the publication in France, for French as a foreign language, the first textbook claiming to follow the “action-oriented approach”, *Rond-point 1* (Paris: Éditions Maison des langues, 2005)⁵). This approach was in line with the European project of the time, which was to facilitate encounters between citizens of European countries in order to develop language exchanges and intercultural openness. Readers can download from my site the two best-known French works on the communicative approach, published in 1991: *L'approche communicative. Théorie et pratiques* by Évelyne BÉRARD, and *L'approche communicative en didactique des langues* by Claude GERMAIN (courtesy of the authors, see bibliography for full references).

⁵ In Puren 2019f, I offer a comparison between the final task of a unit in this textbook and its new version published five years later (*Nouveau Rond-Point Pas à pas 1*, 2010), in which the authors, following my suggestions, have endeavored to complete the transition from the communicative approach to the SAOA (see below).

–*The plurilingual and pluricultural approach* (configuration C): this term, also used by the authors of the 2001 CEFR (p. 21), covers a wide variety of teaching methods, all of which - at least in the case of those already implemented in France from the early 1980s onwards - share the objective of increasing the number of languages learned at different levels of proficiency, by building on the languages already known to learners, including, of course, their mother tongue. The aim is no longer to prepare European citizens for occasional encounters with foreigners and the discovery of their cultures. The Council of Europe, in fact, recognizes that Europe is now "multilingual and multicultural" (CEFR 2001, p. 6), and that European citizens will henceforth have to live in this type of society, the specific competence required being mediation skills, i.e. the ability to move oneself and others from one language and culture to another. Awareness of the many social and ecological issues at stake on a planetary scale has broadened this objective to that of training a "citizen of the world".

In France, from the early 1980s onwards, these were mainly "éveil aux langues ("language awareness", for children in elementary school), "didactique intégrée" ("integrated teaching methods", for school learners), and "programmes d'intercompréhension entre langues voisines" ("intercomprehension programs between neighboring languages", for university students). The 2001 CEFR takes up this goal of "diversification of language teaching and educational policies" (COE 2001, p. 19), but shifts from a "multi-" perspective, where the aim is simply to add languages-cultures to one another, to a "pluri-" perspective, where the aim is to teach them in coherence and synergy with one another:

[...] the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence, of which plurilingual competence is one component, again interacting with other components. (CEFR 2001, p. 6)

For the authors of the CEFR themselves, "the full implications of adopting a plurilingual and pluricultural approach have yet to be explored" (COE 2001, p. 21). Other subsequent publications by the Council of Europe that have taken up this project include the 2016 *Guide for the development and implementation of curricula for plurilingual and intercultural education* (COE 2016). More recently, with a view not to "language education" but to the effective learning of a new language, Bruno Maurer has developed an "integrated plurilingual methodology" that operationalizes the approach of facilitating and accelerating the learning of an L2 by systematically drawing on L1 and possibly L2+n (cf. Maurer and Puren 2019d, 4th part, pp. 237-293).

–*"Social Action-Oriented Approach"* (configuration D) is the name I propose for what the CEFR authors call the "action-oriented approach" (COE 2001, title of chap. 2.1, p. 9), to mark the difference with the Anglo-Saxon *Task-Based Learning* (TBL), where the tasks are not real social actions (in the sense of collective actions with collective goals), but communicative tasks, as noted, for example, by Rod Ellis in a 2019 article summarizing the very different orientations of TBL, Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Task-Supported Language Teaching (TSLT) (pp. 454-456). This SAOA was also merely sketched out in the 2001 CEFR, and since then I've been actively involved in its development and implementation in textbooks.

Here I will simply clarify the meaning of the concepts appearing in lines 3 and 4 of this configuration D, which will no doubt be unfamiliar to many readers:

– “Co-action” is to the SAOA what interaction is to the communicative approach, i.e. learning action in homology with the use action, and with the specific characteristics linked to the use situation, which is multilingual and multicultural, and to the aims pursued, which are those of training for democratic citizenship (cf. CFER 2001, p. 4). The model for this learning co-action is project-based pedagogy, since the project approach is currently the preferred mode of action in both the public and occupational domains.

–Co-language competence is the component of language competence that corresponds to the ability of social actors to adopt or create for themselves, and to use, the same language of action in order to act together effectively. This includes, for example, the language of instructions and, more broadly, that of exchanges between the teacher and the learners concerning their joint work; as well as a more contextual language, specific to each cultural theme addressed in successive didactic units or sequences, and which will be shared through joint work on the documentary file for each project carried out by the learners.

–Co-cultural competence is the component of cultural competence that corresponds to the ability of social actors, in order to act together effectively, to adopt or create for themselves, and implement, shared *conceptions* of collective action (on the notion of "conception of action", cf. Puren 045; on the notion of co-cultural competence, cf. e.g. Puren 2008e, 2021d).

Given the subject and limits of this article, I refer for further details, as far as the SAOA is concerned, to the many articles and conferences referenced in the corresponding bibliography on my site (Puren 2011d), as well as to Acar (2021, 2022, 2023, 2024) and to our forthcoming joint work (Acar & Puren 2024).

3. The different types of application models (line 5)

It is the application to the matrix of the "models" in line 5 of the initial diagram (fig. 1) that generates the methodologies. These models are of seven different types: pedagogical, linguistic, cultural, cognitive, methodological, epistemological and ideological. I'll just give two examples for each type of model⁶.

–When a teacher applies **the pedagogical model** of the so-called "active methods", which at the time gave their name to the aforementioned "active methodology", he or she resorts to procedures for stimulating and maintaining student activity (e.g., asking them questions, having them ask their own questions, having them work in groups, etc.: cf. Puren 005, 006). For the SAOA, it became clear to me,

⁶ The reference to one of my online working documents for some of these examples is only intended to enable readers to consult the other models of each type available.

as soon as I read the 2001 CEFR, that a particular pedagogical model was needed for this new methodology: project pedagogy -the project approach being both a model of social action and of educational action. (cf. Puren 2002b-en).

–When teachers apply **the linguistic model** of textual grammar, they are working on the markers of cohesion and coherence in texts. This grammar becomes indispensable as soon as learners work with authentic documents of some complexity. For the SAOA, a specific grammar is needed that focuses on the marks of social action in texts, namely the "grammar of discourse genres" (on the different grammatical models currently available in DCL, cf. Puren 018).

–When a teacher applies **the cognitive model** of socioconstructivism, he or she makes them reflect collectively on their own language errors. In the SAOA, the specific cognitive model is not about language learning: it's about the cognitive operations of the project approach (cf. Puren 016, 2017a).

–When a teacher applies **the cultural model** of the communicative-intercultural approach, he or she asks learners to question their cultural representations. In an SAOA, another component of cultural competence must be mobilized, namely co-cultural competence, which concerns shared conceptions for joint action (on the different components of competence -trans-, meta-, inter-, multi, pluri- and co-cultural, cf. Puren 2011j).

–Whatever the matrix and the methodology generated from it, it is always possible to modify or supplement it with methodological components of other methodologies operating autonomously (cf. Puren 2012f). The designers of the communicative approach, for example, have recycled, without always saying so or even knowing it, a whole series of techniques developed by the direct methodology of the early twentieth century, such as the set of procedures for the direct explanation of a word unknown to students (cf. Puren 059, point 2.3.), the language practice procedure (exercises of identification, conceptualization, application, training, reuse, cf. Puren 2016c-en), or the active and global approach to texts (cf. Puren 2017f, chap. 4). There's no reason why the SAOA should shy away from these, nor from "experiential techniques" (so called because they aim to give students L2 experiences, such as games, singing, drama, simulations...): they've been in constant use, even since Latin grammar was taught to children in the classroom (cf. Puren 2021c-en).

– In all disciplines, epistemological models determine the way in which the relationship between theory and practice is conceived. In the history of DLC, the applicationist model and the empirical model have been opposed to each other (cf. Puren 015-en, 048). When a teacher seeks to diversify his practices as much as possible by borrowing elements from different methodologies, he is applying a different **epistemological model** from that of a colleague who, on the contrary, strives to limit himself to the exclusive and strict implementation of a given methodology (on the different types of coherence in DLC, cf. Puren 058-en). Carrying out complex actions such as projects, in the SAOA, may require the implementation of all available methodologies (cf. Puren 2021i-en).

–When a teacher sees himself solely as a technician in the teaching of a language of international communication, he is applying **an ideological model** different from that which takes into account the educational goals of the SAOA, and who therefore also, or even primarily, sees himself as an educator participating in the civic education of his students (on the relationship between the evolution of methodologies and the evolution of ideas in society, cf. Puren 2006f, 2007c).

It is the choice and application of the model(s) selected from each of these different types of models that will enable us to develop a new methodology based on a new matrix. Within each type of model, certain models will prevail over others, either because they are better adapted to the socio-cultural environment and teaching-learning-use situations, or because they better meet the goals of the educational institution, or because they converge with dominant linguistic and cognitive theories, or with technological innovations, or, of course, because they are at the point of convergence of several of these factors (cf. e.g. Puren 2022c-en on the convergences between didactic innovation and technological innovation). The same mechanism works for subsequent evolutions and adaptations of the same methodology on the part of all actors, from those responsible for educational policy to teachers in their classrooms.

All these types of models had a strong influence on the initial development of methodologies, and all are constantly influencing their implementation, whether intentionally or not, consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly. Linguistic and cognitive(or “psycholinguistic”) models are often presented as decisive by academic didacticians, because they have an epistemological conception of methodology such that it must have a strong internal coherence, which they believe can only be provided by theories, but also the theoretical models are considered more prestigious in their professional circles. Yet one of the conclusions I drew at the end of my *Histoire des méthodologies* was this:

*I was particularly struck [...] by the close and constant relationship between [DLC] and **the economic, political and intellectual life of the country**, which means that the real driving force behind methodological change is not the internal evolution of the didactic discipline (in particular, as is often presented, the changes taking place in the reference theories, be they pedagogical, psychological, linguistic,..), but rather the emergence of new social needs: the teaching of LVEs, and consequently reflection on this teaching, appear as eminently social practices, beyond the individualistic or technocratic illusions that its various actors may sometimes entertain.* (Puren 1988a, p. 262, emphasized in the text)

It is not changes in linguistic and cognitive models that drive the shift from one methodology to another. In fact, these models have not always been involved in the development of new methodologies. The methodologies that differ most from one another are undoubtedly grammar-translation and direct methodology, yet the linguistic model has remained the same, that of morphosyntactic grammar. It was the pedagogical model (active pedagogy), the cognitive model (the empirical model of the "mother-tongue method") and the transition from classical to modern humanities that were decisive in this development. The linguistic and cognitive models sometimes came into play later, in the course of a subsequent evolution of a methodology. This is the case of the cognitive model of socioconstructivism

in the communicative approach, even though its specific grammar - notional-functional grammar- initially led to the implementation of neo-behaviorist practices: at the beginning of the learning process, this type of grammar enabled the direct connection of certain communicative intentions in certain communicative situations with fixed linguistic expressions; indeed, the first communicative textbooks for beginners gave very limited space to grammatical conceptualization, or even excluded it altogether. The SAOA, like the communicative approach, has its own specific grammar (the grammar of discourse genres, cf. above), but none of the didacticians who promote it have so far argued -because to do so would be to deny what is obvious to all contemporaries- that it was this grammar that triggered the emergence of this new methodology. Research into the implementation of this type of grammar in the development of this methodology has barely begun.

In Anglo-Saxon didactics, one of the best-known models of methodology is that proposed in 1982 by J. Richards & T. Rodgers 1982 (p. 165):

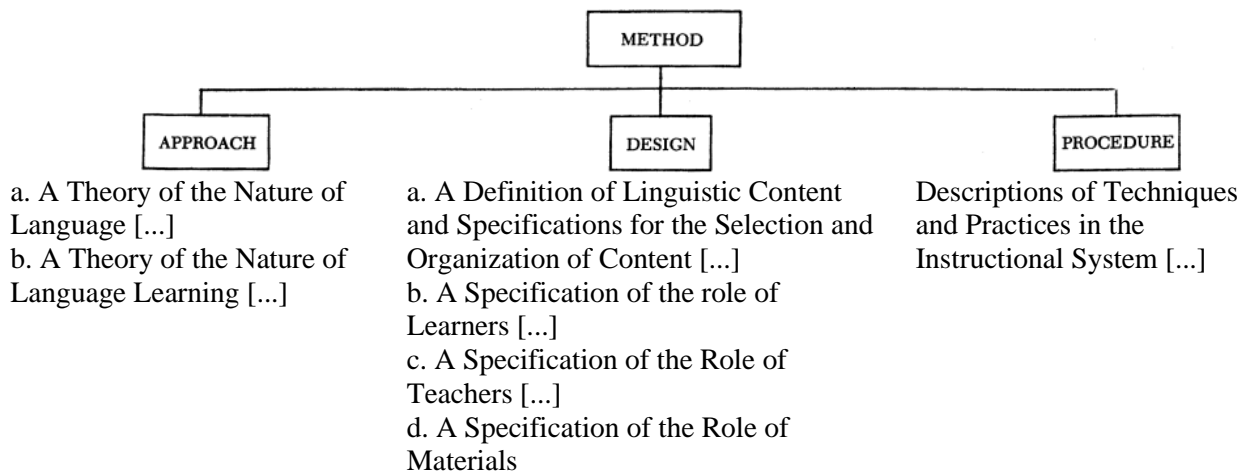


Fig. 2

Although their model is intended to be descriptive only, and they acknowledge that empirical models are sometimes involved in the development of methodologies⁷, they give linguistic theory and psycholinguistic theory a predominant role in determining the objectives and internal coherence of methodologies⁸, which does not correspond to what I myself have learned from my own historical research and current observations in DLC.

⁷ Cf. : "Methodologies can develop out of any of the three categories (in our diagram, clockwise, counterclockwise, or both). One can, for example, stumble on or invent a teaching procedure that appears to be successful on some measure and then later develop (counterclockwise) a design and a theoretical approach which explain or justify the given procedures" (p. 155).

⁸ See, on the same page: "All language teaching methods operate explicitly from a theory of language and beliefs or theories about how language is learned. Theories at the level of approach relate directly to the level of design since they provide the basis for determining the goals and content of a language syllabus. They also relate to the level of procedure since they provide the linguistic and psycholinguistic rationale for selection of particular teaching techniques and activities."

4. The intersection between the "matrices" set and the "methodologies" set, a space for applying the end-means homology principle

This intersection, as shown in the initial diagram (fig. 1), concerns lines 3 and 4. It's the operating space of an empirical principle found in popular sayings such as, in English, "*Practice makes perfect*"; in French, "*C'est en forgeant qu'on devient forgeron*"; or in Spanish, "*La práctica hace el maestro*". But this principle can be found in all vocational training, which cannot be finalized and confirmed without practical experience in the field. Two elements are said to be "homologous" when they share the same characteristics (they are similar) and this enables them to perform the same functions in their respective situations. In terms of language teaching-learning methodologies, this principle can be described in the following terms: when the goal is to train students to perform a language action as L2 users in a certain social situation, the preferred means and criterion of assessment is to have them perform a similar action in a similar situation as learners in the classroom. In other words, we exploit or create a homology between the use action and the use situation, on the one hand, and the learning action and learning situation, on the other.

Thus, in active methodology, the teacher trains students to understand authentic documents, getting them to mobilize their previously acquired linguistic and cultural knowledge and to extract new linguistic and cultural knowledge, because it is precisely these types of tasks on these types of documents that will subsequently enable them to maintain contact with the foreign language-culture from a distance, i.e. from home: in this case, there is a natural homology between the use situation and the learning situation. In the communicative approach, the importance of the simulation technique can be explained by the fact that it enables us to put students in class in a situation similar to a real one, so that it fulfills the same function, i.e. to have them interact orally with others in L2. In the plurilingual and pluricultural approach, readers already know, even without knowing it, that at the end of each didactic unit students will be asked to manage real or simulated multilingual and multicultural situations, and that the whole didactic unit will be organized around preparation for this management. In the SAOA, homology becomes natural again, because the classroom is seen as a veritable multilingual and multicultural micro-society⁹ in which students work together on a joint project to learn and use a foreign language and culture in their own educational field, thus preparing them to apply the same project approach in their personal, public and occupational lives in the same type of society: "co-action", in the classroom, is therefore in perfect homology with the type of action required to "act with others in a multilingual, multicultural society and the world" (cf. initial diagram, fig. 1). The homology, in all methodologies, extends to the specific language and cultural competences (line 4 of the diagram) required to carry out each particular action (line 3).

To sum up this chapter, I'd like to say that the intersection between matrices and methodologies, where the specific actions of each methodology and the corresponding language and cultural competences are located, symbolically represents in this diagram the area of application of the end-means

⁹ In the classroom, there is at least one L1 and one L2, as well as a teaching culture and numerous learning cultures: these are diverse, in fact, even in a homogeneous class with the same mother tongue-culture, due in particular to the different cognitive profiles of the students and their individual learning experiences and strategies.

homology principle: it's the place where use, which is the *end*, is made the principal *means* of learning. The application of this principle has always had a far greater impact on actual textbook design and classroom practice than linguistic and cognitive theories, which have more often than not only been used to support, or even to dress up *a posteriori*, orientations dictated from the outset by empiricism.

5. The "activities-actions" model

The use actions targeted by each of the methodologies -informing, interacting, mediating or co-acting: cf. line 3 of the initial diagram (fig. 1)- are likely to mobilize several language activities, both in the classroom and in the outside world. Thus:

-In active methodology, the "getting informed" action combines reading comprehension in class, which is favored as a learning action because it is homologous to the targeted use action, with the remaining language activities, namely

-*oral production*: understanding the document is worked on through oral comments;

-*listening comprehension*: understanding the teacher's questions and comments, and the students' answers and comments;

-*written production*: the collective oral work carried out in class is taken up or extended individually in writing;

-In the communicative approach, each of these four language activities is worked on more independently from the documents (with oral documents on which only listening comprehension will be worked on, for example, or written documents which will primarily be pretexts for oral interaction between students): they prepare for oral interaction, which is the specific use action of this methodology.

-In the plurilingual and pluricultural approach, there can be no mediation without comprehension and production; but the specific action of this approach is mediation; both comprehension and production are, in this approach, language activities at the service of mediation.

-In the strongest version of the SAOA, that of project-based pedagogy, all other methodological matrices, and therefore all available language activities, must be mobilized in the service of co-action, with pedagogical projects functioning as "methodological integrators" (cf. Puren 053, 2021i-en).

The following table (fig. 3) proposes a model of the relationship between language activities and language learning actions in the four selected methodologies:

Activities-actions model

	Active methodology	Communicative-intercultural approach	Plurilingual-pluricultural approach	SAOA
Oral production	x	x	x	x
Written production	x	x	x	x
Oral comprehension	x	x	x	x
Written comprehension	X	x	x	x
Interaction	o	X	x	x
Mediation	o	o	X	x
Co-action	o	o	o	X

X = language actions

x = language activities explicitly worked

o = language activities implicitly mobilized

Fig. 3

The authors of the CEFR do not explicitly make the important distinction between language action and language activity. It is interesting to note that in the French version of chapter 4.4.3.3, a distinction of this type appears, which confirms, if confirmation were still needed, that the reference methodology in this document is indeed the communicative approach:

4.4.3.3 Interaction strategies

Interaction covers both reception and production activities, as well as the unique activity of constructing a common discourse. Consequently, all the reception and production strategies described above are also part of interaction. However, the fact that oral interaction involves the collective construction of meaning through the establishment of a common mental context [...] means that, in addition to reception and production strategies, there is a class of strategies specific to interaction and focused on the management of its process. (CECR 2001, p. 69, our translation)¹⁰

Comprehension, interaction and mediation are no longer language activities but language actions when they form part of the matrix of a didactic configuration: this is the case for comprehension in the active methodology, interaction in the communicative approach and mediation in the plurilingual approach. By applying the end-means homology principle, they then also become learning actions in their corresponding methodology. In the outside world, as in the classroom, these are complex actions, both linguistic and cultural, which call on language activities as the means at their service. Thus, there can be no mediation without the language activities of comprehension and expression, but in the plurilingual and pluricultural approach, mediation is the goal -i.e., the intended use action, and the

¹⁰ This chapter 4.3.3.3 is reduced, in the original English version, to the following simple sentence: « Face-to-face interaction may of course involve a mixture of media: spoken, written, audio-visual, paralinguistic (see section 4.4.5.2) and paratextual (see 4.4.5.3). » (CEFR, p. 82).

learning action- whereas comprehension and expression are only activities, because they are merely means at the service of mediation.

I also feel it's necessary to distinguish between two different types of language learning activities:

- Some language activities are worked on explicitly as such (these are the ones marked with an "x" in the model of Figure 3): they give rise, within didactic units or sequences, to work on specific documents (e.g. oral comprehension training on an oral document in active methodology, reading comprehension training on a written document in communicative approach), as well as to specific exercises (e.g. in comprehension, training in making hypotheses about the content of texts based on series of key words; or in expression, training in placing the appropriate logical articulators in a series of sentences).

- Other activities are implicitly mobilized in the historical version of methodologies (these are the ones indicated by an "o" in the model of figure 3), where they are still neither signaled nor worked on as such. This is the case for interaction in active methodology, whereas collective oral commentary on documents in class requires constant interaction between teachers and learners, and between learners themselves; or mediation in active methodology and in the communicative approach, whereas explanations of the meaning of words, expressions, sentences and whole texts are mediations, whether in L1 or L2. Finally, it is possible, as I have done, to complete the model by ticking the boxes in the "co-action" line for active methodology, the communicative approach and the plurilingual approach, thus creating the concept of "co-activity" to designate the collective work of learners in the classroom. All these implicitly mobilized activities are not the subject of specific exercises either.

The distinction between language actions, language activities worked on explicitly as such, and other language activities mobilized implicitly, enables me to propose a typology of teaching-learning tasks:

–**The main task** is the learning action in relation to the targeted use action in the didactic configuration: this is comprehension in the active methodology, interaction in the communicative-intercultural approach, mediation in the plurilingual-pluricultural approach, co-action in the SAOA.

–**Complementary tasks** are language activities. For example, written and oral comprehension, as well as written and oral production, in the communicative approach; and all these activities, plus interaction, in the plurilingual and pluricultural perspective; all these activities, plus mediation, in the SAOA.

–**Secondary tasks** are traditionally grammar, lexicon and phonology exercises. But they also include all kinds of exercises targeting language activities. This might be the case, for example, in reading or listening comprehension, with practice in spotting key words as part of an overall comprehension exercise; or, in written expression, with practice in using logical connectors in an argumentative text where these connectors have been replaced by dotted lines, etc.

–**Collateral tasks** are those implicitly mobilized language activities.

6. Modelling: models to manipulate

The models of the different types in line 5 of the initial diagram (fig 1) are, as we have seen with numerous examples, **models to be applied**. The table above (fig. 3) is the result of modelling the historical evolution of the organization of language activities and actions within successive methodological matrices. This model, and the three others we saw earlier -the 3M model, the model of the various components of didactic configurations (vertical lines 1 to 6 in the initial diagram, fig. 1) and the model of the historical evolution of configurations (the succession of configurations A, B, C and D in the initial diagram)- are, as products of modelling, not models to be applied, but **models to be manipulated**. The function of these models is not to guide practices, but to represent systems of ideas and generate new ideas. These are two of the functions that Bernard Walliser attributes to this type of model in his essay *Systems and Models. A Critical Introduction to Systems Analysis* (1977), namely the cognitive and heuristic functions respectively.

We've seen that certain models to be applied are based on theories: the "Applied Linguistics" strategy, which was based on the idea that these models alone were decisive, or even sufficient, still seems to be used today by some Anglo-Saxon linguists and didacticians, despite its blatant inadequacy to the complex nature of DLC. The following table (fig. 4) illustrates the epistemological opposition between theory and model (the latter in the sense of the product of modelling):

Theory vs. model

A theory	A model (modelling)
proposes to represent reality...	
... as it is in itself.	...such that it can be influenced.
Its criterion of validity is its suitability...	
...with reality: accuracy and reliability criteria	... with action : relevance and efficiency criteria

Fig. 4

The "didactics of *languages-cultures*" shares one of its two objects, language, with linguistics, but the project of linguistics is to describe language as it functions, whereas that of DLC is to suggest ways for teachers to improve language learning: DLC is, as French didacticians have been saying since the early 1970s, when they abandoned the expression "applied linguistics", an "intervention discipline".

In an essay on the analysis of the "PPP model" (Presentation-Practice-Production) in articles by Anglo-Saxon didacticians (Puren 2023b-en), I showed how this model is generally presented by them as a model to be applied, which they seek to base on cognitive theories. In reality, however, this model takes up a certain empirical organization of activities within didactic units or sequences, based on the idea that certain language forms must first be taught so that learners can learn them, before they can use them, and that as such its one and only interest lies in the variations in practice that its manipulations allow us to

imagine. These manipulations may *a priori* concern the choice of the three elements, their order, their modes of relationship and the respective importance accorded to each of them.

We might wonder, for example, whether it might not be appropriate in some cases to start with Production. One teacher told me that he did this with illiterate adults: in order to motivate these learners, he began by having them write a short text (to show them that they already knew how to do something), and the rest of the sequence was devoted, with the necessary exercises, to having them improve it. His model, which follows a different but immediately understandable logic to that of the PPP model, was therefore as follows: Production-Practice-Production. In the same way, the translators available online now make it possible to devise sequences based on translations into L2, contributed by the students, of personal written productions initially drafted in L1. Here too, the order of teaching → learning → using is subverted, with didactic sequences beginning with using.

In another case, that of a grammar-focused sequence on a complex grammar point seen before, but in separate parts, it might be quite logical to start with a series of exercises given by the teacher (this would be a Practice phase serving as prospective assessment), follow with the production of an oral synthesis by the students (Presentation phase), and finish with a final Written Production by each of the students, serving as summative assessment.

If we think of an essential competence for teachers, which is to be able to adapt their classroom practices in real time, the PPP model cannot be considered as a procedural model (Presentation → Practice → Production), but as a processual model, i.e. one that must constantly integrate the possibility of recursivity between its elements:

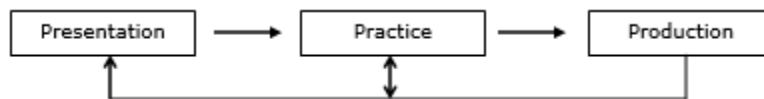


Fig. 5

Experienced teachers will also take part in the presentation if they realize, at the time of practice, that their students have not understood something or need something else, and they will do the same if they notice errors or shortcomings at the time of the final oral production, or at the time of handing in the corrected copies of the written production.

The same type of model manipulation can be carried out on the above table of language activities and actions (fig. 3). This model fulfills its cognitive function by representing, in an immediately comprehensible way, the evolution of what are often indiscriminately referred to as "language activities" within the four methodologies, with a breakdown of their three different statuses.

The difference between activities worked on explicitly and those mobilized implicitly became apparent to me when I asked myself how this model could be completed: it was then its heuristic function

that came into play, and it was this function that led me to propose the concept of "co-activity" alongside that of "co-action".

The heuristic function will also come into play if we ask ourselves how to combine one methodology with another, taking up the language action of the first in the second.

In the case of the communicative approach and active methodology, this involves using an authentic document, such as a literary text, not simply as a pretext for personal exchanges between students, as in the communicative approach, but to encourage in-depth exchanges between students that actually focus on the subject.

The combination of communicative approach and active methodology would consist in using the authentic document as an opportunity for mediation: the whole didactic sequence would then be organized around the "professional" translation in L1 of a poem in L2, or vice versa.

Finally, we might ask how to introduce active methodology to co-action into, in other words, how to make a literary text a support for social action. This is what I proposed back in 2006 in a French article entitled " Explanation of texts and the SAOA: literature between academic saying and social doing ", which led me to invite teachers to ask themselves a whole series of questions:

How do you get students to start by asking themselves: "Why are we now going to do an explanation of a literary text? Which text are we going to choose, and on what criteria? What tasks are we going to perform on this text, and why? How are we going to do it? How much time do we have? Who's going to do what? In other words, let's imagine how we can make this activity, which is inevitably very directive, standardized and boring when imposed, collective and habitual, take place less frequently, but as an autonomous, original and mobilizing mini-project. We'll then have fully reconciled traditional explanation with the new action-oriented perspective, succeeding in ensuring that the scholastic discourse on the literary text becomes, in the space itself of the classroom, a genuine social action. (Puren 2006e, p. 18)

Last example: if we imagine, in the same table of activities and actions (fig. 3), reproducing co-action simultaneously within the model of the plurilingual approach and that of the communicative approach, one of the ideas for implementation that immediately comes to mind is that of an international campaign, in several languages, to raise awareness of a global issue such as ecology, cultural diversity, education for all, and so on. What will be implemented here is what we might call a "plurimethodological approach", i.e. a combination of several methodologies integrated with one another.

In this table (fig. 3), we can multiply the manipulations of the "activities-actions" pair in such a way as to reveal ideas for combining different methodologies. Contrary to Bala Kumaravadivelu's claim (cf. my lengthy analysis of this author's main works, Puren 2022b-en), I consider that we have not entered a "post-methodological" period, but, on the contrary, a "plurimethodological" one, giving the prefix

"pluri-" the meaning it has in "plurilingual" and "pluricultural", namely that of bringing together and synergizing different elements¹¹.

7. Manipulating the 3M model

The interest of the 3M model is the same as that of all modelling: the cognitive and heuristic functions it can perform when operated and manipulated with our own knowledge and experience. Here are a few examples:

–During the initial historical development phase of a new methodology, the first practical experiments always give rise to recursive phenomena between the methodology and the models. The 3M model must therefore be conceived not as a linear procedure (matrix → models → methodology), but as a process with a recursive loop between the last two elements; in other words, the methodology influences the models, and the two-way relationship can continue in a circular fashion:

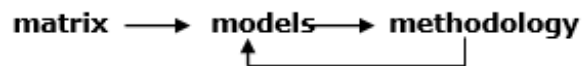


fig. 6

It's the same recursive mechanism that provokes adaptations of a given methodology in certain countries, on the part of certain institutions or textbook publishers, and which starts to work when a teacher wants to modify his or her reference methodology to adapt it to different audiences and different teaching and learning conditions. For example, he will no longer ask his students to constantly answer his questions about the text (constantly using a technique of active pedagogy) if he realizes that this does not motivate them to speak up, but he will invite them to develop their own questioning about the text. An experienced teacher is a professional who is even capable of bringing this recursivity into play in real time in the classroom.

When faced with an audience whose demands, needs or goals differ significantly from those taken into account in his or her reference methodology, a teacher must even apply the recursive logic to the entire 3M model, with adaptations to certain matrix elements:

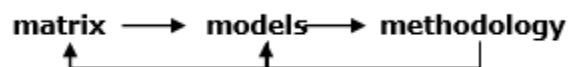


Fig. 7

¹¹ cf. Puren 2020f, 2021f, 2022g-en (+ Acar 2023, 2024) for a presentation of the plurimethodological approach and the alternative "multimethodological" approach in DLC. The difference in meaning produced by the prefix "pluri-" and the prefix "multi-" in these two expressions is the same as that produced by these two prefixes between what the authors of the CEFR call the "plurilingual and pluricultural approach" (COE 2001, p. 19) and "multilingual and multicultural Europe" (COE 2001, p. 3).

–Using the same matrix, different models can generate greater or lesser intramethodological variations. To take this into account, we need to modify the representation of the 3M model as follows:

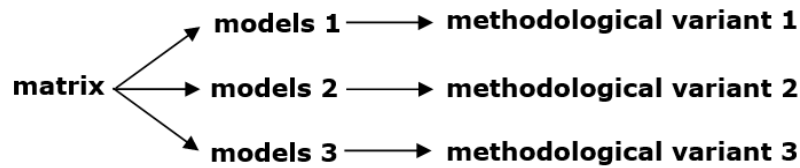


Fig. 8

These variants are inevitably limited in terms of classroom practice if there is an official school methodology, with instructions that go so far as to give precise pedagogical and didactic guidelines, or even certain methodological instructions; if there are textbooks certified by the institution and strictly compulsory for use; or whether a particular methodology has been adopted in initial and continuing teacher training programs.

–Like the PPP model, the 3M model is inverted when a methodology has become so strongly established at an international level that it is imported into certain countries, even though it does not correspond, or not entirely, to local models, or even if to the matrix that would be adequate for the teaching-learning-use of an L2 in these countries. The 3M model that works then - or rather, that dysfunctions then by completely inverting itself, since it's the imposed methodology imposing its models and matrix... - can be represented as follows:



Fig. 9

This is the situation denounced by B. Kumaravadivelu: in his view, the communicative approach to English didactics developed by didacticians from what he calls "the countries of the Center" (i.e. Anglo-Saxon countries) has imposed certain models on the "countries of the Periphery", which are unsuitable for them. This author does not question the matrix of the communicative approach, although in my opinion he should have done so too. Taking the case of English language teaching in Turkey, I've personally argued that the communicative approach could be considered unsuitable for school systems in countries where the vast majority of learners will not later have to communicate regularly with English speakers (Puren 2021j-en).

–Another equally damaging case of dysfunction is that imposed for a time in DLC by what we might call the "applicationist project" -originally that of Applied Linguistics-, which was, in the case of North American audio-lingual methodology, that of both linguistic (based on distributional linguistics) and cognitive (based on behaviourism) applicationism. It was based on the postulate that the models generated by certain theories were both indispensable and sufficient to generate "scientific" methodologies.

–We saw above, in connection with the "activities-actions" model, that different methodologies can be combined. If, in a school system, the same learners in the same year of the curriculum have to pursue several use goals at the same level of importance, and several matrices therefore have to be implemented for their teaching, there are only two possible strategies:

–or a "pluri-methodological approach" combining different methodologies in real time; the 3M model is then as follows:

matrices → models → methodologies

Fig 10

–or a "multimethodological approach" articulating different methodologies over time -from one didactic unit to another, for example, or from one period of the curriculum to another. In this case, we move successively from one "standard" 3M model to another identical 3M model.

8. Conclusion

The 3M model and its operation in DLC seem to me to allow us to draw the following few lessons for this discipline:

–The conceptual interest of this model is to propose a global understanding of the historical change, development and ongoing adaptation of methodologies, based on a single mechanism common to all levels of agents involved in these operations, from society to teachers and learners, via educational managers, didacticians, publishers and textbook authors.

–This model shows the importance of using in the functioning of this mechanism, to such an extent that the object of didactics must not be thought of solely in terms of teaching-learning: the overall didactic problematic is one of teaching-learning-using.

–This model strongly relativizes the actual weight of linguistic and cognitive theories, among the many other types of models -pedagogical, cultural, methodological, epistemological and ideological-involved in this mechanism.

–More broadly, this model invalidates any kind of applicationism, be it scientific (based on these theories), practical (based on supposed "best practices"), methodological (based on strict adherence in the classroom to a single methodological variant imposed on teachers) or technological (based on the belief that new technologies would have mechanical learning-enhancing effects), by raising awareness of the complexity of the factors that influence teaching-learning-using modes.

–More fundamentally, finally, in terms of the epistemological conception of DLC, this model shows the value of modeling to guide and structure didactic thinking, and then manipulating the models

thus produced to enrich that thinking, produce new concepts and generate ideas for practical innovation. Modelling is emerging as a key tool for initial and in-service teacher training.

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