

Characterization of the Cuban English teacher's didactic coherence
Caracterización de la coherencia didáctica del profesor de inglés en Cuba
Caracterização da coerência didática do professor de inglês em Cuba

¹ Maria de la Caridad Smith Batson*

² Silvia Mirian Morgan Scott

¹ Universidad de Las Tunas. Cuba. ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-4414-0772>

² Universidad de Guantánamo. Cuba. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2776-9587>.

*Autor para la correspondencia: cariemay65@gmail.com.

Abstract

The teaching-learning of English calls for a re-dimensioning of the process of formation and development of the English language professional's research skills. These constitute a valuable tool to achieve the solution of problems that arise. The objective is to characterize the didactic coherence of the teacher to direct the teaching-learning process of communication in English and how linguistic problems are detected and solved. Methods used were: analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, documentary analysis, observation (to tutoring sessions of professors prior to the culmination of studies and to presentations of course work), experts' criteria and techniques such as the survey and the interview. The results obtained by means of triangulation indicate that there are formative insufficiencies in the research order in the professionals under study, which can be attributed to the scarce treatment of the micro-skills related to the structural-conceptual description of the macro-skill of research.

Keywords: objective; content; method; forms of organization; evaluation; teaching aids

Resumen

La enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés aclama por una redimensión del proceso de formación y desarrollo de las habilidades investigativas del profesional de la lengua inglesa. Estas constituyen una valiosa herramienta para lograr la solución de problemas que se originen. El objetivo es caracterizar la coherencia didáctica del profesor para dirigir el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la comunicación en inglés y cómo se detectan y resuelven problemas lingüísticos. Se emplearon métodos como: el análisis-síntesis, la inducción-deducción, el análisis documental, la observación (a sesiones de tutoría de profesores previas al ejercicio de culminación de estudios y a presentaciones de trabajos de curso), el criterio de expertos y de técnicas como la encuesta y la entrevista. Los resultados obtenidos mediante la triangulación, indican que existen insuficiencias formativas en el orden investigativo en los profesionales en estudio, que pueden atribuirse al escaso tratamiento de las microhabilidades relativas a la descripción estructural-conceptual de la macrohabilidad investigar.

Palabras clave: objetivo; contenido; método; forma de organización; evaluación; medios de enseñanza

Resumo

O ensino-aprendizagem do inglês exige um redimensionamento do processo de formação e desenvolvimento das competências de investigação do profissional de língua inglesa. Estas constituem um instrumento valioso para a solução dos problemas que se apresentam. O objetivo é caracterizar a coerência didática do professor na condução do processo de ensino-aprendizagem da comunicação em inglês e a forma como são detectados e resolvidos os problemas lingüísticos. Os métodos utilizados foram: a análise-síntese, a indução-dedução, a análise documental, a observação (das sessões de tutoria dos professores antes do exercício de culminação e das apresentações dos trabalhos de curso), o julgamento de peritos e técnicas como o inquérito e a entrevista. Os resultados obtidos através da triangulação indicam a existência de insuficiências formativas na ordem da investigação nos profissionais em estudo, o que pode ser atribuído ao escasso tratamento das microcompetências relacionadas com a descrição estrutural-concetual da macrocompetência da investigação.

Palavras-chave: objetivo; conteúdo; método; forma de organização; avaliação; meios de ensino

Introduction

This is a susceptible topic, since this has nothing to do with training, formation or development. Thus it is a topic in construction having to do with many allies, other inherent topics, teachers' sensibility and awareness. Didactic coherence refers to the logical and consistent alignment of teaching methods, materials, activities, and assessments with the learning objectives and the needs of the students. In the context of teaching oral and written communication, it involves creating a structured and interconnected approach that effectively develops language skills.

Thus, there are some key points and hints for maintaining didactic coherence, according to Smith (2021a), which among others include: aligning objectives with activities for a lesson, scaffolding learning, integrating skills, a balance in the use of authentic and non-authentic materials created by the teacher to meet the needs of the learners, providing consistent feedback for the teacher himself and for learners, attaining a balance between explicit instruction and practice, adapting the personal and the non-personal components of the teaching learning process to learners' needs, creating thematic units, organizing the micro-curriculum for attaining communication skills, using consistent terminology of the teacher's language in the classroom and linking assessments to objectives.

The many years of training undergraduate teachers-to-be in the field of English as foreign language, and the experience of long years of carrier, make these authors possible to characterize didactic coherence in a teacher. Here, it is assumed as the consistency, logic, and alignment in the instructional approach, ensuring that all aspects of teaching work together harmoniously to facilitate effective learning, and it can be categorized into the following key areas: preparation, planning, execution and control.

There must be previous moments to teaching, to think about formation that include teacher's aims for instruction and education, this is the moment when the process starts, just exactly before planning. This moment may be individual or in team work, but there is necessarily a moment of isolation, because there are some personal aims the teacher might want to follow or attain, and ensure that each lesson activity ahead directly contributes to the stated learning objectives for oral and written communication.

In the case of planning, there is a lesson build process that progresses from simpler to more complex tasks, activities, exercises and practice that may allow learners to gradually develop their skills. This practice must perfectly combine, in the case of foreign language learning: reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities that reflect real-world language use, which learners can later reproduce.

Execution then, incorporates age-appropriate, real-world texts and media to increase relevance and engagement with learners, and offer, as well, regular, constructive feedback that aligns with the

learning objectives and assessment criteria already thought about and planned. There is a need to combine direct teaching of language structures with wide opportunities for language learners to apply the knowledge acquired. Organize lessons around themes or topics to provide context and coherence across different language skills; for the aspects related to execution, the teacher employs uniform language teaching terms and concepts throughout the course to avoid confusion, that is to say, an effective use of teachers' language.

Control, or assessment, there is much consent today in the use of both terms to suggest there is a measurement of both, the process the teacher carries out, and the learners results, because we regularly assess student progress and adjust teaching methods accordingly to maintain coherence with their learning pace, this way teachers ensure that evaluations accurately measure the skills and knowledge outlined in the learning objectives, through the linguistic content taught.

Research abilities have been widely paid attention to worldwide, however, for the last twenty years in the Cuban context, it has been an objective in training, and thus, professional development assumes it, as a paramount component for action research and for paving the way for immediate professional solutions to problems encountered in the teaching learning process and pedagogical professional problems and case studies.

Here are shown the results from a research project undertaken to respond to priorities of the national Ministry of Education and insufficiencies at territorial scale that have to do with the strengthening of the methodological work in junior high and teacher training schools, specifically Rita Longa Aróstegui, in Las Tunas, for the formation and development of research skills and attitudes, along with other pedagogical and professional topics, such as guidance, training, English teaching for oral and written communication and the mode of action.

There are requirements delimited for the third improvement in the English subject and the profile of the teacher training school graduate, which show a need of a re-dimension, in order to strengthen the continuous training of teachers, and most particularly, postgraduate training in the modality of postgraduate courses in the specialty of English, for those are the professional in charge of mentoring trainees at schools before graduation.

Different notorious authors have given prominent results to English Didactics. Among them, the works of Camacho & Patterson (2012), Hawthorne et al. (2022), Smith (2021b; 2024), among many others, have considered key principles for balancing instruction and practice; taking into consideration personal and non-personal components of the teaching learning process (TLP), and they account for:

- Aim delimitation rule in the TLP, for they explicit instruction and practice time, linked to an educational in an spiral approach from easy to difficult and from simple to complex, at the

time there is a revisiting and build upon previously taught communicative functions, grammatical structures, vocabulary and pronunciation in new contexts and situations. This is one of the challenges and perspectives from Enríquez et al. (2016), as an assumption needed for educating in Cuba for a better world.

- Skills integration in and for learning, at the time teachers combine listening, speaking, reading, and writing in practice activities.
- A careful selection of authentic materials dealing with real-world contexts and every day and situations in texts or media to practice communication and enhance relevance to intercultural relations.
- A feedback loop, providing immediate feedback during the different types of practice to reinforce correct usage of language.
- Differentiation, tolerance, and inclusion, to offer meaningful practice activities at varying difficulty levels to cater to different types of learning, multiple intelligences, and learners' differences.
- Reflection on teachers' beliefs, to encourage students to reflect on their use of new language structures as language awareness mechanisms.
- Real-world application, at the time the teacher creates scenarios where learners can use the language in meaningful varied contexts.

Dr. Rosa Marta Antich's (1921-2005) pedagogical approach focused on the teaching of English and the training of foreign language teachers. Her work was reflected in the creation of didactic materials and in her commitment to the education of new generations of Cubans, her legacy continues to inspire those involved in language teaching. Enríquez and Solorzano (2013) reflect on Antich (1981)'s ideas on *English Composition* and asseverate that they constitute indispensable theoretical bases for language teaching in Cuba, for she explored the methodological and practical foundations for the development of the four fundamental skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the theoretical underpinnings on which each technique is based, according to the way in which the process is developed in language classrooms in the Cuban context. Furthermore, she recapitulates essential contents to favor trainees' critical reflection on the knowledge acquired, allowing their self-checking.

In addition to exposing the topics' theoretical bases that support each aspect covered are given, and the requirements and describes the requirements and procedures and their relation to thought and culture of English speakers. There is a summary of didactic tips for the development of each aspect, with various practical suggestions to be carried out in methodological lessons for the treatment of

different linguistic aspects, necessary for language learning and teaching. (Enríquez and Solorzano 2013)

There is an account for Antich's (1987) work on the cultural context, addressing an approach to connecting language learning with the culture of English speakers shows a recognition of this important factor, also for a comprehensive skill development indicates a holistic approach to language teaching, which is a strength in her methodology, and the promotion of trainees' critical reflection and self-checking aligns well with modern pedagogical approaches, addressing the practical application of didactic tips, showing a bridge between theory and practice, crucial for effective teacher training.

However, technological integration, given the timeframe of her work until 2005, the role of modern technology in language teaching was fully explored, element that carries a differentiation, though her approach addressed diverse learning needs within a classroom, nevertheless, the focus on interdisciplinary connections seems to be primarily on language teaching, and not clear emphasis to other subject areas, just history of the culture of English speaking people.

Didactic coherence of English teachers plays a crucial role in effective language instruction. It encompasses the alignment of teaching methods, materials, and assessments with learning objectives and students' needs. By maintaining this coherence, teachers create a more structured and effective learning environment, enabling students to develop their English language skills systematically and comprehensively. As we delve deeper into this topic, we will explore the various components that contribute to didactic coherence and their impact on successful English language teaching and learning

Materials and methods

The research methodology adhered to expert standards, employing declared methods, techniques, and instruments. The process was structured in stages to operationalize the variable effectively. Steps included designing a descriptive scale, choosing appropriate activity-specific tools, developing materials, and validating the scientific instruments.

The study sample comprised 40 junior high school teachers from the Rita Longa teacher training school: 10 each from the first, second, and third years, and 18 from the fourth year. This sample represented 84.26% of the total population and was selected using proportional stratified sampling (Gamboa, 2019a). The sampling method accounted for population size and heterogeneity regarding the investigated variable, ensuring proportional representation from each municipality in the province.

The sample selection considered the continuous nature of trainee practicums across all four years, with English didactics playing a leading role in this curricular activity. The aim was to foster the

progressive development of didactic coherence, habits, and skills throughout the academic years, reflecting a key aspect of teachers' professional responsibilities, tasks and functions to complete in the teaching learning process, as part of the more general pedagogical process.

The research progression involved several phases: preparing the team of applicators (all project researchers), collecting data, organizing and presenting processed information, tabulating and visually representing data, analyzing and interpreting results, characterizing the variable's development level, formulating a description of the teacher's didactic coherence, and drawing conclusions to inform future actions and decisions.

Other methods used were analysis-synthesis, induction-deduction, document revision and analysis, observation (to lessons of professors and trainees) and experts' criteria, along with techniques such as the survey, the observation and the interview. The results obtained by means of triangulation indicate that there are training and professional development insufficiencies in the teachers under study, which can be attributed to the scarce treatment of professional guidance as part of the micro-curriculum organization related to the structural-conceptual description of didactic coherence.

Results and discussion

The project focused on the solution of problems and insufficiencies to achieve oral and written communication in the English subjects in seventh, eighth and ninth grades, so its mission is to diagnose the current state of the teaching of macro skills: reading and listening comprehension, as well as written and oral expression, to focus on the most effective techniques and procedures to teach the micro skills that correspond to each of them, in order to unveil the didactic coherence the English teacher needs to prepare, plan, direct and assess the teaching-learning process efficiently.

In practice, a didactic strategy with a theoretical component for the teaching of oral and written communication was projected, in addition, deepening in the use of the 5E methodology to favor the development of communicative skills, are some of the advances offered as a justification through the study. In this study was intended to elaborate systems of exercises and types of exercises for mechanical, meaningful, communicative and creative practice in such a cyclical way, which guarantees the development of oral and written communication in the classroom and outside it for the Cuban context, in Las Tunas.

In this sense, the training process in Pedagogical Schools demands a re-dimensioning on the formation and development on English language professional's research skills, as well as teachers in this type of institutions claim for academic and scientific improvement, to obtain greater and better coherent ways of professional performance, in order to teach to learn and vice versa the oral and

written communication in English at this instance, taking into consideration the goals for which it stands.

The arguments outlined above, allow us to frame main objectives to the research, which are:

- To contribute to the contextualization and didactic coherence of teachers in the municipality of Las Tunas, through scientific research, as well as to achieve significant positive changes in the training process;
- To improve the continuous permanent professional training of teachers to teach oral and written communication through postgraduate courses and research as a process.
- To employ strategies, such as curriculum organizers to significantly enhance a didactic coherence through the subjects of the discipline Didactics and postgraduate courses in the teacher training program, for both, teachers and teachers-to-be.
- To set the sub-skills those comprise the macro skill didactic coherence and facilitate their measuring.

This new way to approach the formation and development of a didactic coherence in teachers ensures that trainees not only acquire the necessary knowledge, but also develop a coherent understanding of how these elements interrelated, to solve problems they find in the role as future teachers. On the other hand, the resulting strategy is a tool for graduates to be better prepared to navigate the complexities of teaching effectively, and adapt to diverse learners' needs and contexts, in their continuous professional growth throughout their careers.

Curriculum organizers help in the instruction, training and development of the didactic coherence of trainees for their future role of teaching and in teacher certification. While the concept of didactic coherence in English teaching is valuable, there are several critical aspects that authors have overlooked, and we assume:

- Cultural sensitivity addressed and defended by Antich (1975), in order to address the importance of cultural context in English language teaching. Didactic coherence should include an awareness of students' cultural backgrounds and how they influence language learning.
- Technological integration due to the fact that in today's digital era, the role of technology in enhancing didactic coherence is crucial. This is a demand that still authors need to explore and exploit much more, and give evidence on how digital tools, online resources and artificial intelligence can be coherently integrated into English teaching methods.
- Learner autonomy for fostering independent learning skills as part of didactic coherence and encouraging trainees, students and teachers, each in his role, to take responsibility for their own learning as an essential aspect of modern language pedagogy.

- Differentiation and inclusivity to address how didactic coherence can accommodate diverse learning needs, styles, and abilities within a single classroom.
- Authentic language use, incorporating real-world language use into the teaching approach, which is crucial for maintaining coherence between classroom learning and practical application.
- Interdisciplinary connections, to explore how English teaching can coherently integrate with other subject areas, enhancing overall educational value, plus the lesson educative component.
- Continuous professional development and the importance of ongoing teacher training, emphasizing in maintaining, improving and validating all around didactic coherence over time.
- Assessment alignment, through a deeper exploration of how various assessment methods can be coherently aligned with teaching practices. It can be beneficial to take into account CERF's pedagogical action-oriented approach through professional guidance to attain a didactic coherence in teacher training and professional development.
- Emotional and social aspects of learning, addressing and conveying the affective and experiential factors in language learning and how they relate to didactic coherence.
- Local and global contexts, to balance local educational needs with global language trends and requirements, on the light of current thinking at world scale, at the time of discussing the need to attain a didactic coherence for English teaching.
- Final considerations

By considering these elements, which are added today as a whole, because they all have had an atomized treatment, and are not part of the traditional framework of language teaching, a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of didactic coherence in English teaching can be achieved, leading to more effective and holistic language instruction.

At the time of balancing explicit instruction with varied practice opportunities, there are opportunities to help adolescents internalize new language structures and gain confidence in using them. This approach caters to different learning styles and helps maintain engagement throughout the lesson. It is important to consider the non-personal components of the teaching learning process of teacher education.

When the objective is analyzed as the leading component of the process of teaching in Didactics, the fact of integrating instructive, educational and developmental aspects to the cognitive purposes of training, takes into account the intentions of the affective and experiential domains, as well as the

indications given in official documents and the guidance got from auxiliary means. There is a need to express taxonomies of verbs to formulate communicative objectives and aims in language functions instruction, in such a way that they reveal in which actions the effect of learning will be tested and foresees its decomposition in partial goals and ways for their fulfillment, to accomplish and stimulates learners' protagonist role, active learning through projects design, creative and metacognitive work and encourage action research to solve professional problems of communication in the English classroom through these actions.

- The objective as the leading component of the teaching process in Didactics

Taking into account these previous perceptions based on the authors experience, there is indeed an integration of instructive, educational, and developmental aspects, considering cognitive, affective, and experiential aspects for teaching, while aligning with official documents and auxiliary means is also taking into account. This holistic approach ensures a comprehensive and well-rounded educational experience. Let us expand on this idea with examples of issues to implement, for achieving such integration.

Curriculum organizers for the micro-curriculum can play a crucial role in developing didactic coherence among trainees, preparing them effectively for their future roles as educators, linked to a coherent use of the personal and non-personal didactic components following are evidences on how curriculum organizers can help attain a didactic coherence, first during training, and later, as a continuum professional development.

The idea of a structural framework to organize the curriculum in terms of developing a didactic coherence in English teacher provide a clear, logical structure for the entire training program, helping trainees understand how different components of their education fit together. For example, using a spiral-loop learning curriculum approach, where topics are revisited with increasing complexity throughout the program, in such a way that competences align curriculum components with specific sub-competencies required for teaching; allowing trainees see the direct connection between their learning and the future job requirements, micro-practice in the classroom, using contents integration, help creating a matrix that shows how each course contributes to specific teaching competencies, as in the case of Integrated English practice, Linguistic Studies (pronunciation, lexical items and grammar) and History of the Culture of English Speaking countries, unveil and suit the relation theory-practice.

Theory-practice integration guarantees a balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application, helping trainees see the relevance of theory in real-world teaching scenarios, and pairing the theoretical courses at college with corresponding practical period experiences every academic year ensures perdurable knowledge embedded in reflective practice, which incorporates

reflective activities throughout the curriculum and develop trainees' ability to critically analyze their own teaching practice, as when including reflective journals or portfolios as part of assessment in a flexible and personalized manner, to attain a cultural competence on the need of the didactic coherence development, prepared for diverse educational settings with an awareness and sensitivity and with an emphasis a lifelong ongoing learning and continuous professional development.

Another fruitful idea that needs more attention supported by and linked to the above discussed are the interdisciplinary connections, to highlight the links between different subjects and pedagogical approaches, in order to encourage trainees to think holistically about education, and teacher educators to conceive their lessons this way. For instance, the integration of language teaching methodologies with cultural studies and educational psychology.

Necessarily a progressive skill development flourishes if the content is organized to build skills and competences progressively from basic to advanced, from easy to complex levels, because there is explicit help to trainees understand their growth trajectory in attaining a coherent didactic mode of action, at the time of structuring practicum experiences from classroom observation to full lesson planning and delivery.

Developing didactic coherence requires a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that goes beyond simply teaching isolated skills or theories. It involves creating a cohesive educational experience that integrates various aspects of teaching and learning, with a reflective practice, because encouraging trainees to become reflective practitioners, so as to teach real communication. This is crucial. This skill helps them continually improve their teaching and maintain coherence in their approaches throughout their careers. Technology integration is a fact in today's digital age, technology should be seamlessly integrated into training programs, preparing teachers to use it effectively and coherently in their future classrooms.

Conclusions

By developing a didactic coherence in trainees is a complex but crucial aspect of teacher education. It requires a well-structured, comprehensive approach that prepares future educators to create logical, interconnected, and effective learning experiences for their students. By focusing on these aspects, training programs can produce graduates who are not only knowledgeable and skilled but also capable of delivering coherent, impactful education in diverse and evolving educational contexts.

The ultimate goal is to cultivate educators who can think critically, adapt flexibly, and consistently apply sound pedagogical principles to create meaningful learning experiences. This coherence in teaching approach will, in turn, benefit students by providing them with clear, consistent, and effective educational experiences that prepare them for success in their future endeavors.

The practice of linking assessments to objectives is not just a technical requirement but a fundamental principle of effective education. It ensures that our evaluation methods are meaningful, our teaching is focused, and our learners are given the best opportunity to demonstrate their true capabilities. As educators and trainers, we must continually strive to maintain and improve this alignment, recognizing its central role in creating coherent, impactful learning experiences.

Didactic coherence is not about rigidity, but rather about creating a consistent, logical, and aligned approach to teaching that can flex and adapt to meet student needs while maintaining overall integrity and effectiveness in the learning process.

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Conflicto de interés

Los autores declaran que no existen conflictos de intereses

Contribuciones de los autores

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Silvia Mirian Morgan Scott: Conceptualización, Revisión y edición, Metodología