

## **Two Models of Reuse Situations in Language Textbooks**

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### **Abstract**

With the advent of the communicative approach and the rise of functional-notional syllabi in language teaching, the units of communicative textbooks have begun to be organized around communication situations related to cultural themes. The language objectives of the unit, on the other hand, have largely been specified in terms of functions and notions. Thus, all the unit contents logically serve these functional-notional objectives of the textbook units. At the end of the units of such communicative textbooks, the students are presented with communicative simulations or role-plays, whose function is to enable them to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities presented in the textbook unit. With the action-oriented approach, however, the coherence of the textbook unit is not provided through communicative simulations and role-plays but through mini-projects, which have the double function of both enabling the students to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities of the unit (actional reuse situations), and educating for social action. This educational dimension of mini-projects is what mainly differentiates them from both the communicative simulations and role-plays offered to the students at the end of the communicative textbooks. It should also be noted that the other difference, namely the different status of communication (both the means and the goal in the communicative approach, only means in the action-oriented approach) is also important in distinguishing between mini-projects and communicative simulations and role-plays. In this article I discuss two models of reuse situations in language textbooks and argue that only the mini-projects have the potential to train students capable of acting in a foreign language-culture as social actors.

**Keywords** mini-projects, action oriented approach, reuse situations, social actors

### **Introduction**

The reference action in the communicative approach (CA), as well as in task-based language teaching (TBLT) as promoted by task-based methodologists (Ellis, 2003; Estaire and Zanon, 1994; Nunan, 1989; Willis, 1996), is language interaction described in terms of

functions and notions. Thus, the aim is to prepare students for involvement in language interaction in short-term contact situations as stressed in Van Ek's (1975) *The Threshold Level in a European-Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults*. To this end, communication is considered as both the means and the goal: involving learners in communicative activities with the goal of training communicators. Consequently, "the reference exercise of the communicative approach was the simulation, where the learner was asked to act as if he were a user, to communicate in class as if he were communicating in society" (Puren, 2006, p. 6). The basic function of these simulations is to create an authentic situation in what the communicative paradigm considers an artificial environment (the classroom) to allow the students to interact with each other by using functions and notions.

After the Threshold Level document, the Council of Europe (2001, 2018) introduced two further documents, which are part of the same project, namely, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001) and the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume (CEFR CV, 2018), which indicated a departure from the goal of training communicators as the ultimate goal in language teaching.

The approach adopted here, generally speaking, is an action-oriented one in so far as it views users and learners of a language primarily as 'social agents', i.e. members of society who have tasks (not exclusively language-related) to accomplish in a given set of circumstances, in a specific environment and within a particular field of action. While acts of speech occur within language activities, these activities form part of a wider social context, which alone is able to give them their full meaning (CEFR, 2001, p.9).

This short passage from CEFR (2001) indicates that the targeted actions of CA, namely, speech acts do not have full meaning in isolation. Thus, the reference action of the action-oriented approach (AoA) as indicated in this passage is social action, which alone can give full meaning to speech acts. In line with this designation, it can be stated that the speech action, which is defined as talking with and acting on the other (Puren, 2004), is put at the service of social action, which is defined as acting with others (Puren, 2004). Accordingly, unlike CA and TBLT, which consider communication as both the means and the goal, AoA considers communication at the service of social action. The above quote from CEFR (2001) also clearly indicates that users and learners of a language should be considered as social actors (social agents). This new goal, that of training social actors, is guided by the new reference situation indicated again in both CEFR (2001) and CEFR CV (2018), that of a multilingual and multicultural society along with the reference action, which is social action. Thus, it is not a

question of just training communicators who will be involved in short-term contact situations as indicated in the Threshold Level document but as Puren (2009a) states

it is now a question of training citizens of multilingual and multicultural societies capable of living together harmoniously (and foreign and second language classes in France are mini-societies of this type), as well as students and professionals capable of working with others over the long term in foreign languages and cultures (p. 125).

Since the new reference action in AoA is social action, AoA is renamed as the social action-oriented approach (SAOA) by Puren (2009b, 2020) and social action-based learning (SABL) by Acar (2020c, 2020d, 2020e, 2021b). The current dominant methodology, namely, TBLT, with its communicative tasks, would certainly be insufficient to realize these objectives since its main goal is to train successful communicators (Acar, 2021b, p. 308). In consequence, the question is which reference learning action represents social action in the classroom? Puren (2009a, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016, 2017, 2019) argues that social action in and/or outside the classroom is best represented by pedagogical projects and mini-projects and hence these are the basic reference learning activities that can train learners as social actors. Puren (2020, p.3) presents the methodological matrices currently available in school didactics of languages and cultures in France in table 1 (page 26 below).

As can be seen in the table, while the privileged learning act was the collective oral explanations of authentic documents in the active methodology, simulations and role-playing were the basic learning acts in CA. While cross-language conceptualization activities correspond to the basic learning acts in plurilingual-pluricultural approaches, real or simulated social actions carried out in project mode are the reference learning acts of the co-language and co-cultural perspectives or SABL. Although some TBLT methodologists (e.g. Willis, 1996; Willis and Willis, 2007) consider projects merely as a type of task, Puren (2020), in the above typology, clearly displays the rupture between CA (as well as TBLT) and SABL. Besides, Puren (2014a, 2014b, 2019) also shows the differences between communicative tasks and pedagogical projects in his different analyses. Similarly, Nunn (2020, p.52) argues that “tasks are not projects, but they can support projects and can be self-directed”. Despite these well-grounded studies, some ELT curricula, as well as researchers, still consider AoA/SABL as TBLT as discussed in detail by Acar (2021a).

Table 1. *Methodological Matrices Currently Available in School Didactic of Languages and Cultures in France*

	TARGETED SOCIAL COMPETENCES		Targeted using act	Privileged learning act
	Language competences	Cultural competences		
<b>1. Reading matrix:</b> active methodology (1920-1960)	Ability to maintain contact with the foreign language from a distance through authentic documents	Ability to mobilize and extract knowledge about the foreign culture from and about authentic documents: metacultural component.	reading, speaking out on ( <i>"parler sur"</i> )	Collective oral explanations in class of authentic documents
<b>2. Communicative-intercultural matrix:</b> communicative-intercultural approach (1980-1990)	Ability to exchange information with visiting foreigners on an ad hoc basis during initial contacts or short stays	Ability to control cross-representations in interaction with others: intercultural component	meeting, talking with ( <i>"parler avec quelqu'un"</i> )	Interactions in class in simulations and role-playing
<b>3. Plurilingual-pluricultural matrix:</b> plurilingual-pluricultural approaches (1990-...)	Ability to "live together", <i>i.e.</i> , to manage linguistically the permanent cohabitation with allophones in a plurilingual and pluricultural society	Ability to understand the attitudes and behaviors of others and to adopt common attitudes and behaviors acceptable in a culturally diverse society: pluricultural component	living with, talking to each other ( <i>"se parler"</i> )	Cross-language conceptualization activities
<b>4. Social-action matrix:</b> co-language and co-cultural perspectives (2000-...)	Ability to "make society" and to work in a foreign language in a long-term with native and non-native speakers of that language.	Ability to developing with others common conceptions of collective action on the basis of shared contextual values: co-cultural component	acting with, consulting with ( <i>"en parler avec quelqu'un/entre nous"</i> ) = <i>"se concerter"</i> )	real or simulated social actions carried out in project mode in class society and/or outside society

### Communicative Reuse Situations in Communicative Textbooks

In communicative textbooks, the unit is the unit of communication, mostly indicated at the very beginning of the unit by the objectives of the unit in terms of functions and notions. The final production of the students (semi-free production) is realized through role-plays and simulations, whose function is to enable them to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities of the unit. In the

English textbook *Upswing English* used in the eighth grades of public secondary schools by the students about the age of 13 in Turkey for example, unit objectives are only announced as can-do descriptors under the subtitle *Language Skills and Learning Outcomes*. These can-do descriptors show the communicative objectives of each unit. For unit one (friendship), for example, unit objectives are only announced in the following way:

Students can...

- understand the specific information in short conversations on everyday topics, such as accepting and refusing an offer/invitation, apologizing and making simple inquiries.
- interact with reasonable ease in structured situations and short conversations involving accepting and refusing an offer/invitation, apologizing and making simple inquiries.
- structure a talk to make simple inquiries, give explanations and reasons.
- understand short and simple texts about friendship.
- understand short and simple invitation letters, cards and emails.
- write a short and simple letter apologizing and giving reasons for not attending a party in response to an invitation (Tıraş, 2020, p.7).

Announcing objectives only in terms of communicative objectives, at the very beginning, show that the unit is a communicative unit. At the end of this unit, the final activity, which will enable the students to reuse the language content of the unit, is titled *project*, as all the final activities at the end of all the units in this textbook. The final activity called *project* at the end of unit one is:

Work in pairs. Write a dialog and then act it out. Follow the information below.

Imagine that your partner is your best friend. You invite him/her home and he/she comes over to your house. Then your dialog starts. While you prepare the dialog, you should divide it into three parts.

Part 1

Welcome your friend and let him/her come in.

Part 2

Serve food/drinks and chat. You may offer to do something fun at home.

### Part 3

Say goodbye and invite him/her to come over again (Tıraş, 2020, p.7).

In unit four (on the phone) of the same textbook (*Upswing English*), the unit objectives are again stated in terms of can-do descriptors, which are purely communicative, as follows:

Students can...

- understand phrases and related vocabulary items.
- follow a phone conversation.
- make a simple phone call asking and responding to questions.
- express their decisions taken at the moment of conversation.
- understand short and simple texts with related vocabulary.
- write short and simple conversations (Tıraş, 2020, p.7).

The final activity of this unit, which will enable the students to reuse the language content of the unit, is again titled *project*, whose instructions are given as follows:

**Group Work:** Work in groups of four. Imagine that one of you works at the call center of an international company. The other three people are customers, and they phone the call center one by one. Read the role cards below and act out a call center drama in the class.

**Student A:** You are working at the call center of an international company. Your job is to receive phone calls from the customers and try to solve out their problems. Greet each customer, ask how you can help them and try to solve their problems. Try to be kind toward each customer.

**Student B:** One of your items has broken down. You phone the call center and ask whether it is under warranty. If it is, ask how you can deliver it. If not, ask how much it will cost to have it repaired.

**Student C:** You have bought an item from the website of an international company, but you didn't like it. Phone the call center of the company and ask how you can change or return it.

Student D: You have learned that an international company is about to start a campaign for a new product. Phone the call center and learn about the details by asking various questions (Tıraş, 2020, p.54).

These communicative simulations offer students communication situations where they have to perform a communicative task. Thus, these are simulated communicative tasks. This is a typical example of the function of communicative simulations and role-plays as providing the students with communication situations to allow them to reuse the language content, oral comprehension, oral production, written comprehension and written production activities that they studied during the unit. It can easily be observed that these simulated communicative tasks serve the communicative objectives of these units. Consequently, it should be pointed out that they are not projects although the textbook titles them as projects.

### **Actional Reuse Situations in Social Action-based Textbooks**

Since the ultimate goal of SABL is to train social actors rather than communicators, the unit objectives in social action-based textbooks will logically be stated in terms of social actions. It should also be noted that communication in such a textbook model is not eliminated but rather its status changes from being both the objective of the unit and the goal (in semi-free production) but just a means at the service of social action. The reuse situation at the end of the units of a social action-based textbook, on the other hand, is provided by mini-projects rather than communicative simulations and role-plays. Such a model is presented in detail by Acar (2020c, p.36) in table 2 as follows:

Table 2. *Social Action-based Textbook Design*

<b>1. Social action</b> e.g. Be able to say it (social action of protest)
<b>2. Two mini-projects which are variants of the same social action (at the end of the unit)</b> ( e.g. We will make an online petition to make our views known and/or we will write an open letter to express our outrage.)
<b>3. Linguistic and cultural resources (linguistic &amp; cultural content):</b> a) linguistic resources to be provided in the unit (functions, notions, grammatical items, lexis, and phonology.) b) cultural resources
<b>4. Methodological resources (methodological content):</b> various tasks (language and/or non-language), grammatical exercises, cognitive operations, and various language activities in different modes of communication: reception, production, interaction, and mediation.
<b>5. Evaluation:</b> The evaluation of the mini-projects is carried out through collective self-evaluation by the students and/or an evaluation by the teacher and/or even public evaluation.

In such a model, the unit is the unit of ‘mini-project’ since the objective of the social action is announced at the very beginning of the unit as well as the linguistic resources that the social actors (students) will need to be able to carry out the mini-project and the social actors will follow the action-scenario of the mini-project from the beginning of the unit while at the end of the unit they will complete the final production of the mini-project. What is important to note is that in such a model, the function of the mini-project is not only to allow the students to reuse the language content of the unit but also to educate them as social actors, in other words, democratic citizens who can live together harmoniously, students and professionals who can work together effectively in a foreign language (Puren, 2009a). Consequently, a mini-project in such a model is not solely a pretext to offer a final reuse situation where the students can reuse the language resources (grammar, lexis, phonetics), functions and notions as well as oral and written production and comprehension activities that they studied during the unit. Such a textbook design is presented by the textbook *Version Originale 4* directed by Puren. Acar (2020a, 2020b, 2020d) also presents concrete mini-projects to be utilized in social action-based textbooks. What differentiates mini-projects from final communicative simulations and role-plays of communicative textbooks is first of all their educational purpose. Mini-projects also differ from final communicative simulations and role-plays in terms of the presence of a design stage as shown in the mini-project proposed by Acar (2021b, p.312).

A: As a whole class, prepare a cookbook with local recipes to promote Turkish cuisine to the world and share it on social media like Facebook.

B: Open up Facebook account with a title you choose (e.g. Turkish cuisine, recipes for the world, etc.). You can also seek ways to invite your peers from other countries to share their cuisine on your Facebook account. Decide collectively on a title for your cookbook which reflects the content of your cookbook and add some inspiring subtitles on the cover to reflect your class identity (e.g. best recipe suggestions from class 8A of secondary school X).

C: Search the internet as to what a recipe includes (e.g. The name of the meal, the number of people the meal can serve, ingredients and amount of ingredients, the steps of preparation instructions for cooking, the statement of cooking time, etc.) and decide collectively on the criteria for evaluating the recipes of the groups and agree on a format for your cookbook.

D: Search the internet and/or consult your parents as to which recipes best represent your local cuisine. If your parents suggest recipes in your native language, write down every detail you searched in C and translate, as a group, the parents’ recipes into English. Search the internet for the relevant pictures to accompany your recipe.

E: In groups, write the recipe for your meal in the format you collectively agreed on in C.



F: In groups, present your recipes in the class.

G: The other classmates will listen to you, take notes, and evaluate your recipes by using the evaluation grid you formed collectively. Make suggestions to the groups whose recipes are not in line with the criteria and format you formed and developed collectively.

H: As a whole class put together all the recipes in a single word or PDF format.

I: Share your cookbook on social media.

J. Follow up (as a whole class) on the likes and dislikes and the comments received from people about the cookbook on the social media.

The design stage of this mini-project, which is reflected in the steps, illustrates the complexity of this mini-project because a mini-project is a complex social action. The educational dimension is also reflected by the collective dimension of this mini-project as well as the autonomy given to the students in this design: *Open a Facebook account with a title you choose, decide collectively on a title for your cookbook, search the internet and/or consult your parents, decide collectively on the criteria for evaluating the recipes of the groups etc.* The final social action, *sharing the cookbook on social media*, which the students will carry out at the end of the unit indicates that the ultimate goal of this mini-project is not communication but social action. Communication, however, does not disappear in this mini-project as can be seen in the different steps of this mini-project. Thus, communication is put at the service of social action unlike final communicative tasks, whose ultimate goal is communication. As Estaire and Zanon (1994) state, “the last task in the unit, the final task, is a communication task which marks the highest point of communication in the unit” (p. 15).

Finally, the only function of this mini-project is not a pretext to offer a final rescue situation but it has an educational purpose, which is to train social actors, unlike final communicative tasks, which do not have such a dimension. One of the unique characteristics of SABL is that there is a preference for real action and this mini-project reflects this characteristic since the social actors (students) are encouraged to carry out a real social action *preparing a cookbook and sharing it on social media*, which also differentiates mini-projects from final communicative tasks, which are mostly artificially simulated. Informational competence (Puren, 2008a), which is indicated at steps C and D in this mini-project, is yet another important characteristic of mini-projects that differentiate them from final communicative tasks. Mini-projects require the social actors to know how to seek and manage information while final

communicative tasks do not necessarily train students in information management. Finally, collective evaluation (self/peer/public) is an indispensable characteristic of mini-projects unlike final communicative tasks and this is reflected in this mini-project at step G (collective peer-evaluation at the end of the group products (recipes)) as well as public evaluation at step J. Puren (2008b, p.11) outlines the different characteristics that differentiate CA and SABL in language textbooks in table 3 as follows:

Table 3. *Different Characteristics that Differentiate CA and SABL in Language Textbooks*

<b>The communicative approach</b>	<b>The action perspective</b>
	privileges
the focus on the learner and inter-individual dimension (the group of 2), even if it organizes pooling to create new communication situations,	the focus on the group and the collective dimension (the large group), even if it organizes work in sub-groups to improve collective action,
	because they respond
to the objective of training of a face-to-face communicator.	to the purpose of education of a social actor.
	To that end, it offers learners
realistically-simulated situations	real-authentic actions
	encouraging autonomy
of the learner	of the group
immediately after a very directed linguistic preparation	from the beginning of the project design
	in activities that promote
individual free expression	collective decisions
	and which are evaluated
based on a criterion oriented to	based on criteria oriented to
	process :
	Reflection on the realization of future, ongoing and completed action (metacognition)
communication :	and action:
efficiency in the transmission of information	the success of the project

## Conclusion

At the end of the units of communicative textbooks, communicative reuse situations are provided through communicative simulations and role-plays so that the students can reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities that they worked on in the unit. Since the goal of SABL is to train social actors, the reuse situations in social action-based textbooks are provided through mini-projects, which also have the function of educating for social action besides allowing the students to reuse the functions and notions, the relevant language content, oral and written comprehension and production activities of the unit. This educational dimension of mini-projects is the most distinguishing characteristic that differentiates them from both the communicative simulations

and role-plays offered to the students at the end of the communicative textbooks. The second distinction, which is also important, is the change in the status of communication, which is no longer both the means and the goal, but only a means at the service of social action. Thus, the unit objectives in social action-based textbooks should be stated in terms of social actions rather than functions and notions to maintain the coherence between the objectives and the final reuse situation (actional reuse situations). Consequently, the unit content in such a social action-based textbook functions as resources to enable the social actors to be able to carry out the mini-projects at the end of the units. This indicates that the ultimate goal of these mini-projects is not to train communicators but to train social actors. Communication, however, is not abandoned in SABL but is put at the service of social action.

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