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Historical evolution of the English methodology in Pinar del Río

Evolución histórica de la metodología del inglés en Pinar del Río

Evolução histórica da metodologia inglesa em Pinar del Río

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ABSTRACT

The history of the methodology of English teaching in Pinar del Río inexorably goes through the analysis of the economic, political, social, cultural and historical conditions of the development of the Cuban nation in its three historical periods: colony, neocolonial republic and socialist society. On the other hand, it reflects the scientific development of the different sciences related to education, particularly linguistics, psychology, pedagogy and didactics. Thus, it is

intended to achieve a systematization of the evolution of the methodology of English teaching in the various stages of its historical evolution, tracing the teaching methods of teachers and the analysis of their pedagogical work. For its realization, the general methodology of the historical-pedagogical explanation is assumed, based on a qualitative research strategy with the combination of cabinet and field work from participant observation. The analytical-heuristic and synthesis-hermeneutical methods, the critical method and the orality method were used. A historical-methodological analysis of the English teaching is achieved, based on the economic and social context of the time, in such a way that it contributes to the enrichment of pedagogy, culture and history. Through research, regular changes in the historical evolution of the components of English teaching are noted: objectives, content, methods, means and evaluation, as well as differences in teacher training and ways of professional improvement at different times.

Keywords: historical evolution; methodology; English teaching; Pinar del Río.

RESUMEN

La historia de la metodología de la enseñanza del inglés en Pinar del Río pasa inexorablemente por el análisis de las condiciones económicas, políticas, sociales, culturales e históricas del desarrollo de la nación cubana en sus tres períodos históricos: colonia, república neocolonial y sociedad socialista; por otro lado, refleja el desarrollo científico de las diferentes ciencias relacionadas con la educación, particularmente la lingüística, la psicología, la pedagogía y la didáctica. Así las cosas, se pretende lograr una sistematización de la evolución de la metodología de la enseñanza de la lengua inglesa en las diversas etapas de su evolución histórica, rastreando los métodos de enseñanza de los profesores y el análisis de su obra pedagógica. Para

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su realización, se asume la metodología general de la explicación histórico-pedagógica, basada en una estrategia de investigación de tipo cualitativa con la combinación del trabajo de gabinete y campo desde la observación participante. Se utilizaron los métodos analítico-heurísticos y síntesis-hermenéutico, el método crítico y el método de la oralidad. Se logra un análisis histórico-metodológico de la enseñanza del inglés, a partir del contexto económico y social de la época, de manera tal que contribuye al enriquecimiento de la pedagogía, la cultura y la historia. A través de la investigación se notan los cambios regulares en la evolución histórica de los componentes de la enseñanza del inglés: objetivos, contenidos, métodos, medios y evaluación, así como las diferencias en la formación de profesores y vías de superación profesional en distintas épocas.

Palabras claves: evolución histórica; metodología, enseñanza del inglés; Pinar del Río.

RESUMO

A história da metodologia do ensino de inglês em Pinar del Río passa inexoravelmente pela análise das condições econômicas, políticas, sociais, culturais e históricas do desenvolvimento da nação cubana em seus três períodos históricos: colônia, república neocolonial e sociedade socialista; por outro lado, reflete o desenvolvimento científico das diferentes ciências relacionadas com a educação, em particular a linguística, a psicologia, a pedagogia e a didática. Assim, pretende-se realizar uma sistematização da evolução da metodologia de ensino da Língua Inglesa nas várias fases da sua evolução histórica, traçando os métodos de ensino dos professores e a análise do seu trabalho pedagógico. Para sua realização, assume-se a metodologia geral de explicação histórico-pedagógica, baseada em uma estratégia de pesquisa qualitativa com a combinação de

trabalho de gabinete e de campo a partir da observação participante. Foram utilizados os métodos analítico-heurístico e síntese-hermenéutico, o método crítico e o método da oralidade. Realiza-se uma análise histórico-metodológica do ensino da Língua Inglesa, com base no contexto econômico e social da época, de forma a contribuir para o enriquecimento da pedagogia, da cultura e da história. Por meio de pesquisas, constatam-se mudanças regulares na evolução histórica dos componentes do ensino de inglês: objetivos, conteúdo, métodos, meios e avaliação, bem como diferenças na formação de professores e nas formas de aprimoramento profissional em diferentes épocas.

Palavras-chave: evolução histórica; metodologia, ensino de inglês; Pinar del Río.

INTRODUCTION

At present, one of the greatest challenges facing humanity lies in rescuing and preserving the cultural identity of peoples, an aspect that is threatened by the application of neoliberal policies on a global scale. The knowledge and defense of the autochthonous, of the traits and customs that typify a community, country or region constitutes, on the one hand, an urgent need in the face of the vertiginous and imposing advance of the culture of the great powers and, on the other hand, one of the most effective ways to maintain diversity and balance on the planet.

The revelation of the history of the teaching of English in Pinar del Río inexorably passes through the analysis of the economic, political, social, cultural and historical conditions of the development of the Cuban nation. It is in the context of various times that the teaching of English has been a

permanent task of Cuban society since its origins. It has been conditioned, on one hand, by the three great historical periods through which the nation has passed: the colony, the neocolonial republic and socialist society; and on the other hand, for the scientific development of the different sciences related to education, particularly linguistics, psychology, pedagogy and didactics.

It is worth taking into account the classification made by Jack Richards (2005) of the teaching of English in the world in stages or phases. They are:

- Phase 1. Traditional approaches, the entire historical period prior to the 1970s.
- Phase 2. Classical communicative language teaching, from 1970 to 1990.
- Phase 3. Present communicative teaching of languages, from 1990 to the present day.

Of course, it cannot be forgotten that these phases will have a delay of more than 10 years in Cuba and other countries; it is the difference between science and technology, between the first world and the least developed countries. Thus, for example, the Communicative Approach emerged in theory in 1972, it was implemented in practice outside the United States in Asian countries in 1977; and in Cuba at the beginning of the decade of 1990, in the pedagogical higher institutes, exactly the same year that in the world the third phase of the communicative methodology began to take shape.

This article is the result of an investigation that reveals the history of the teaching of English in Pinar del Río, the westernmost province of Cuba. The research provides results for teachers, students, historians and researchers interested in the historical and pedagogical development of the subject. To do this, it achieves three essential objectives: to reveal the

historical evolution of the methodology of teaching the English language from the early stages to the present day; develop a theoretical, historical and pedagogical body that serves as a bibliographic source for the professional training of English teachers and for the improvement and research of teachers in service and honor the glory of those teachers and apprentices who have contributed to the development of the English language in Pinar del Río.

Thus, the objective of this article is to offer a systematization of the evolution of the methodology of teaching the English language in its various historical stages, tracing the teaching methods of teachers and the analysis of their pedagogical work.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The general methodology is the historical-pedagogical explanation, which makes it possible to establish the historical-educational context in which the object of the investigation has occurred and to relate them dialectically. A qualitative research strategy is established, with the combination of cabinet and field work from participant observation, which allows both the analysis of documents and the search and interpretation of historical problems that are part of the historical identity where it is involved in the researcher directly. Because of the approach, it is a case study, as it addresses specific cases of local history.

The methods used are the analytical-heuristic, which allows an adequate interpretation from the work with the written and oral sources. The synthesis-hermeneutic method enables interpretation based on its objective and subjective bases; the critical method analyzes the relation of the concrete projection of a hypothesis or theory in a determined historiography context; and

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the comparative method confronts the fragmented data of the primary sources, by establishing dialogues with the secondary sources.

The research required the use of empirical methods:

The documentary analysis, with the review of official documents, didactic materials, publications, photos and methodologies, as well as the notes of doctoral thesis workshops on the teaching of English by Rodolfo Acosta, Vilma M. Pérez, Arturo Pulido, Luis Mijares, Ernesto Álvarez, Marta Arroyo, Fidelina Castillo and Ileana Garbán. Textual analyzes of books from various periods were carried out, from the early 20th century to the present day, including several texts written by authors from Pinar del Río.

The interview was conducted with more than 300 living sources, among them: Arnaldo Gutiérrez, at the age of 86, Ramón Castro (in 1982), Josefa Aguiar, Carolina Mora, Arturo Pulido, María I. Johnson and Gisela Juliá. Some were consulted by telephone from places as distant as Carmen Ana Fernández in Spain.

The survey was made to students and teachers to explore territories in the search for data, people and sources of information. Key was the observational method to identify and classify processes such as class, methodology, scientific and methodological debates, books, and approaches used in one era or another, in an attempt to reproduce and compare historically.

RESULTS

Before 1959, the triumph of the Revolution, Cuba was one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Most of the population lived in poverty or misery, in subhuman conditions, with a high rate of

illiteracy, unemployment and corruption. The condition of a semi-colony fully allowed the introduction of the American ideology and its lifestyles through the English language, an instrument of submission and colonization in those circumstances. It is from this angle that the essence of the teaching of this language at that time can be interpreted.

The special English centers

The Presidential Decree of 1909 instituted the teaching of English in the Republic of Cuba. On September 10th, 1929, by Presidential Decree 1705, four Special English Centers were created in Havana and two months later five more centers. In the city of Pinar del Río, special English centers (free) were created at the end of the 1930s and, later, in several municipalities such as San Juan y Martínez, San Luis and Consolación del Sur.

The best English teachers of the time were grouped there. People who lived through that time still remember Emilia Delgado, director of the Special Center of San Juan y Martínez, Alicia Galletti, Ofelia Arias and Carmen Rosa Armiñaques, director of the Special Center No.1 of Pinar del Río. The Special Center No. 2 had two classrooms located in front of the "El Paquito" amusement park. Aleida de la Torre and Pedro L. Rodríguez were teachers there.

On the other hand, small private English schools swarmed, and there were even private teachers. However, despite promoting the study of the English language in Cuba, due to its status as a neo-colony of the United States, the training of English teachers was not a priority of the existing education system, rather they were trained in the United States or studied in special centers, or self-taught, to later attend the Normal School, located on Alameda Street.

According to several interviewees who lived in the time before 1959, the teaching of English was based on the method of Leonardo Sorzano Jorrín. The special English schools had four levels, which were essentially aimed at learning grammar using oral and written repetition in search of linguistic correction. A totally structural method, where the memorization of grammatical structures and correct pronunciation were the objectives of the teaching.

The interviewees of the time have expressed that in the church English was taught through the repetition of phrases. They point out that in the special centers there were no books for the students. It is said that Leonardo Sorzano Jorrín was the author of the books English I, II, III and IV, among others. His method consisted of oral and written repetition, as well as phonetics, grammar and pronunciation. It was not really a method, but a course. One way to understand how it was taught in schools before is by interviewing a teacher or an apprentice of the time, or by analyzing the books of that time. His books were used in special centers and other institutions of primary, upper primary and secondary education, among other institutions.

Other entities, such as the Institute of Second Education, the School of Commerce and the Normal School, which trains teachers, had the teaching of English in their study plans. The Normal School required as a minimum level to enter the eighth grade, or to take a placement test, which included the command of English as a requirement. This institute did not graduate English teachers, but if you finished your teaching studies and knew English, then you could teach it.

English in primary, upper primary and secondary education

English was taught in a number of private primary schools, but it was not part of the teaching program until Upper

Primary, which are now the seventh and eighth grades of lower secondary. It was also taught at the Second School Institute, which in 1961 became the "Hermanos Saíz" Pre-University Institute.

Liduvina Aguiar, who lived through the period before and after 1959, remembers English teachers from various centers in Pinar del Río, who taught based on grammatical analysis, repetition and readings of the time, including Teresita González, who learned English in the Special Center of Máximo Gómez (No.1); Carolina Mulkay and Vicente Domínguez (1957), English teachers at the Special Center No.1 in 1957; Flor Reyna, an English teacher in upper primary in 1957; Ubaldo Sánchez, Primary English teacher in 1956; Ivis Espinel and German López, professors before and after 1959; Bessie Negrín, missionary (1929); Marcelino Álvarez, a medical student, taught private classes before 1959, lending English books to students, among them Jorrín's. Liduvina refers that nowadays she helps the children of the neighborhood in matters of grammar and vocabulary, not in pronunciation or in linguistic skills, which she developed very little. However, he points out that the training he acquired at the English Center was solid in matters of writing the language, making sentences and knowing meanings.

Interviewed on July 26, 2019, 66 years after the Moncada Garrison Assault, Lourdes Carmona, an English teacher since 1967, a neighbor of Alicia Galletti, says that La Galletti spoke good English, that she had learned it in the United States and that there he died just a few years ago. It also says that San Juan y Martínez had two special English centers; Galletti was the director of one, while Emilia Delgado was the director of the other special center. According to Lourdes, they were graduates in Pedagogy from the University of Havana, and knowing good English, they were the "sacred cows" in the town. They were already making attempts to practice

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English orally, but with exercises that were highly controlled by grammar. Emilia would come to Pinar del Río upon the triumph of the Revolution, while Galletti would travel to the United States.

According to the legendary mathematics teacher from San Juan y Martínez, Arnaldo Gutiérrez (2016), at the age of 85, Dr. Alicia Galletti was "a small, fine, delicate woman with a lot of culture". She had come from Havana where she studied English at the University. It is not known for sure if she was really a doctor, and where she had achieved that title, but that's what they called her: the doctor.

According to Ramón Castro, in an interview conducted by Acosta in 1982, learning English before 1959 was quite limited, since there were no advances that exist today in schools, such as tape recorders, computers, abundant books and audiovisual materials. The teacher only had his voice, some pictures and textbooks that contained exercises to do orally and in writing. Teachers created dialogues to be able to make students speak. Ramón points out that, despite all these limitations, many people learned the basics about the language, and that his luck was that he was able to go several times to the United States, from where he brought good books and learned good English. He assures that as early as the 1950s he was getting his students to do some oral practice in the classroom, something he learned in the United States. At that time very few teachers created dialogues in an attempt to speech the teaching and get students to develop oral expression. A phrase from the interviewer closes the conversation "The grammar pastille was in full swing." "That's right," said Ramón.

Methodology of teaching English before 1959

In Carolina Mora's opinion, it was very difficult to learn English before 1959 because it was learned following the

teacher's model, if she spoke English correctly and appropriately, fluently and correctly. Oral and written practice exercises were carried out, using the traditional approach with emphasis on grammar. According to Acosta and Vigil (2021), the methods used consisted of the mechanical repetition of words and sentences. The teachers of yesteryear, they refer, facilitated the understanding of written texts through the extraction and subsequent oral repetition of their different constituent elements.

At this time, structural and traditional methods were used that emphasized the grammar of the language, repetition and reading comprehension. It is said that the method most used in special centers was "Tom is a boy and Mary is a girl", mechanical repetition of short sentences. However, some teachers who had taken courses in the United States also used the direct method, by which they offered some oral practice of the language, after having explained the grammar. The texts, or methods as many call them by Sorzano Jorrín (1955), Lado and Fries and Dixon, among others, were used. In addition, in the 1950s, words and sentences were dictated and verbs were conjugated. In the phonetic exercises in the books, each word had the phonetic signs next to it. Repetition, reading and memorization were used, as well as American materials sent by mail or brought in.

Let's see a sample of the analysis that the authors of some books have carried out: *Beginning Lesson in English for the Foreign Born* (Fisher and Dixon), Regents Publishing Co. New York. NY 1943; presents a table of contents of pure grammar, for example, *present tense of verb TO BE; verb to have (plural); Questions. Past Tense; Negative. Present Tense*. It has some illustrations to introduce the vocabulary, for example: "This is a shoe" (picture with a shoe); "Is this a man?" (Illustration of a cup); "Is this a sandwich?" (Illustration of a

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hat). Illogical right? But for the time it went unnoticed.

Teaching English after 1959

The triumph of the Cuban Revolution in 1959 constitutes a milestone in the historical evolution of the nation. In the 1960s, radical transformations were carried out in Cuban education, from the ideas raised by Fidel Castro Ruz in the historical argument "History will absolve me", presented in the trial after the Assault on the Moncada Garrison. Among his ideas was the massive and free nature of education, which brought with it an explosion in enrollment in the then primary and higher education, and later, in secondary education institutions (today pre-university).

Thus, emerging courses for teachers were created during the 1960s, and the "Manuel Ascunce Domenech" Pedagogical Detachment, in the city of Sandino, during the 1971-1972 academic years. There the so-called Alexander Method was used, due to its creator. It consisted of four books: *First Things First, Practice and Progress, Developing Skills, and Fluency in English*. They were used for the training of teachers of English and other specialties, in the fourth year they received translation with the book of *Fluency in English*. The books were the material support of the method, called by many the Alexander Method.

Later, in 1977 the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Pinar del Río was founded, named a few years later "Rafael María de Mendive", and turned into the University of Pedagogical Sciences in 2009, until in September 2015 it joined the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca".

Several books and courses have been used in the Comprehensive Practice of the English Language. Among them: *Comprehensive Practice of the English Language I and II*, by Faustino

Soto and collaborators; *Integrated English Practice*, from a group of authors under the direction of Rosa Antich (1985-1990); the books produced under the coordination of Isora Enríquez: *Integrated English Practice*; the *Spectrum* course (1990s) and the *Interactive English Use Learning course*, by Acosta and Vigil (2020).

In the teaching of Didactics of Foreign Languages, the books of Dr. Rosa Antich and others have been used: *The Teaching of English in the Elementary and Intermediate Levels* (from 1975 to 1985) and *The teaching of foreign languages* (1986 to 1995); The books of Rodolfo Acosta and other authors: *Communicative Language Teaching* (from 1997 to 2020), *Interactive Language Teaching* (2007 to 2020), *Professional Tasks for Pedagogical Training* (2016 to 2020) *New Culture for an excellent language learner* (2017 to 2020); the book by Luis Mijares and coauthors (2013 to 2020) *Manual of foreign language learning strategies* and that of Roberto González (2012 to 2020), *La Clase de Lenguas Extranjeras*. For the Research Methodology, it is used in Pinar del Río *Case Study: Scientific Research Methodology*, by Burgos et al. (2020).

To learn grammar, *A comprehensive English Grammar for Foreign Students was used. Eckersley and Eckersley*; Eckersley's Brighter English, CE (1968); *English Grammar. Eckersley*; and Thomson and Martinet, Stannard Allen, Hornby, and Mackey, the latter of word formation, were also used in the worker courses.

Primary and General Secondary Education

Thanks to the collaboration of the beloved aged Carmen A. Fernández, Blanca Arroyo, María I. Johnson and Gisela Juliá, who always warned that someone was missing, it has been possible to know that:

Between 1960 and 1961 in Pinar del Río most of the basic secondary schools were created, in old and new buildings. The objective was reading comprehension and knowledge of the basic structure of the English language: "Is John a woman?", "Is Miss Smith a woman?" As can be seen, illogical ideas abounded. Classes were taught at these institutions, among others, Mirtha Arias, Yolanda Valverde and Frank Torres, Floraida Romero and Esther Sánchez were first-born in the 60s and, later, María I. Johnson, Blanca Arroyo, Arturo Pulido, Sofía Ramos, Teresa González, Agustina Méndez and Silvia Martín. All of them were trained with purely structural, behavioral-based approaches, and with various levels of command of English, depending on the path traveled in their learning.

Thus, the teacher training plans at the end of the 1960s at the "Enrique José Varona" Pedagogical Institute and the training of English teachers at the Institute for Educational Improvement, gave their visible fruits at the beginning of the years. 70. This allowed the improvement of the teaching of English in all institutions and types of education, with the exception of some educational institutions where Russian was taught. However, the methodologies continued to emphasize grammar, reading comprehension and, in the best cases, some attempts at oral practice due to the influence of direct, and later, audio-oral and audiovisual methods in the late 1960s. Later, the Alexander method would be used in the Pedagogical Detachment in Sandino, where English teachers were trained.

In another vein, in 1961, in what is today the address of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca", the Pre-University Institute "Hermanos Saíz" was founded, following the tradition of the Institute of Second Education, where the San Juan martyrs Sergio and Luis Saíz studied. The institute always had prestigious English teachers, among them: Mateo González, who had also

studied some English in the United States; Floraida Romero; Frank Torres and Esther Sánchez. In addition, Barceló is registered, whose classes had a beautiful dynamic, according to one of his students; He died in the late 1960s. All of these teachers are from the 1960s.

At the end of the 70s, the teaching of English began to undergo changes thanks to the increase in the bibliography, the arrival of new pedagogical ideas and the development of methodological work. Fortunately, the first official documents for the teaching of English in secondary and pre-university would appear. All under a behavioral-based structural approach, where the presentation of a dialogue, the practice of grammatical structures and the production stage prevailed, in which few students could reproduce the dialogues and elaborate sentences.

On the other hand, there was no technology, resources and professional development of today; Grammar was the center and behaviorism the epistemological basis. However, little by little teaching became more objective with the use of teaching aids, as a result of the boom in audio-oral and audiovisual methods in the world, after the Second World War (1939-1945). At that time, real images and pictures were used, it was pronounced slowly, and behavioral-based oral and written exercises were carried out focusing on the structure of the language. It was learned using dictionaries and class notes. There were no books for the students. Repeating the words many times, copying them and reading the sentences, as well as doing oral and written exercises from the books were the matter. The methodologist dictated the classes to be taught in the schools and they trained in the seminars in the form of micro-practices.

The methodology of teaching English at that time was upside down. It was really Alberto Seguí who, at the beginning of the 1960s, brought her down from heaven to earth and put a little bit of

conversation to the teacher with the students through more realistic questions and the memorization and reproduction of somewhat more objective dialogues. He sometimes tried to converse with students who could say little in high school. He thought that first there had to be a reality of dialogue that the students listened to and repeated so that later they could form some knowledge of the language. It did not start from abstract rules of grammar so, by then, Seguí was advanced.

Dr. Rosa Antich de León, being the head of the Committee of Foreign Languages Experts of the Ministry of Education in Cuba in the 1980s, repeatedly visited the Department of English Language of the Higher Pedagogical Institute of Pinar del Río, stage during which supervised Rodolfo Acosta's PhD thesis. The tutor says that the Antich said that she felt something special for Pinar del Río thanks to the nobility, humility and solidarity of its people and that she often recognized the development that was already taking place in the English Language career, to such an extent, which for the special period and the career was prestigious among the best in the country.

The arrival of the Communicative Approach

Once, in 1986, Rodolfo says, being already his tutor, the Antich told him: "You have to see Faustino Soto, he is the only one who is involved in that of the Communicative Approach, he is bringing new things." In the end, he could not contact, but he got the first articles on the Communicative Approach in the *Foreign Language Teaching* magazine, the only copies of which arrived irregularly at the MINED library from the 1930s to the 1960s. Fortunately, the Revolutionary Publishing House brings to light the first books on the Communicative Approach in language teaching, among them: *The Functional-Notional Approach* (1987), by Finnochiaro and Brumfit and *Teaching*

the Spoken Language (1989), by Brown and Yule. Similarly, some publications on the subject began to arrive in the country through different personal and state channels, purchases and donations.

Communicative Approach in its classical stage begins to be implemented officially in Cuba from 2002 on 5th and 6th grades of primary schools, junior high schools and senior high schools. Since then, lists of communicative functions are taught instead of lists of grammar patterns as taught before. However, at the end of 1980, in Pinar del Río the Communicative Approach was used, thanks to a set of investigations carried out under the direction of Rodolfo Acosta and the help of Santiago Rivera. As early as 1985, Acosta had experimentally applied the Communicative Approach at Sandino's "XX Aniversario" elementary school; for the first time in Cuba he was taught to children 5th features degree in English communication rather than grammatical patterns. Later, the experiment was repeated from 1986 to 1989 at the "Carlos Hidalgo" elementary school, attached to the "Tania la Guerrillera" Pedagogical School.

It is worth distinguishing the two phases of Communicative Approach, according to Richards (op. Cit.): Classical phase and current phase (contemporary). According to Acosta *et al.* (2017), the classical phase emphasized communicative functions, while the contemporary phases focus on interaction, spontaneity, the actual use of learning strategies, task-based teaching, and English for specific purposes. Currently, as a result of COVID-19, it is venturing into distance education, hybrid learning and flipped class, as well as creativity to adjust teaching to the new conditions of the pandemic.

Likewise, the book *Communicative Language Teaching* (Acosta, *et al.*, 1997) was published in Brazil and Australia, which collected the experiences and scientific results of the

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authors. They donated more than 400 books received from these countries to MINED, which were distributed to all provinces. Subsequently, it would be used as a textbook of the discipline of Methodology of the Teaching of Foreign Languages, of the specialty career in the higher pedagogical institutes of the country, for which it was published in the CD of the Career for Plan D.

Language schools in Pinar del Río

In 1960 the special centers disappeared and night centers were created for workers to study English, which would give rise in 1964 to language schools. This is how the "Andrés Bello" Language School was founded, inaugurated by Alberto Seguí, on Antonio Maceo Street. Later, in the early 1980s, language schools were created in some municipalities.

According to the interviewed teachers, with experience in language schools, in the early 1970s a purely structural approach was used, there was no connection between the ideas: "Mary is fat", "Helen is thin", "Sam is tall", "Ann is short" The method used was called global-structure; this was based on the Soviet conscious practical approach, thus combining the rules about the language with its use in practice. There were no textbooks yet, just the program.

Likewise, teachers and methodologists from language schools received seminars on linguistic and methodological improvement every July in Havana. Thus it was that they received and used later, around 1975, the audiovisual method based on recordings and slides, with their textbook, and accompanied by pictures made by the teacher, a habit already forgotten due to the regrettable lack of resources, the new technology and the appearance of the Communicative Approach.

Starting in the 1980s, the book, *Comprehensive Practice of the*

English Language, began to be used in language schools, divided into two parts: volume I and II, and volume III and IV, prepared by Faustino Soto, Jorge Morales and Roberto Noda, with a structural-global approach, with cultural information, particularly from the United States, published by Editorial Pueblo y Educación (1980). It was then that, in the 1990s, during the Special Period, the teaching of English was reduced from eight to four semesters with two hours a day in language schools and the Spectrum course was introduced. Since then, the Communicative Approach has been used in its classic version: learning communicative functions, without abandoning grammar.

English in Higher Education in Pinar del Río

Pinar del Río has the Higher Education centers: "Ernesto Guevara de la Serna" University of Medical Sciences and "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" University of Pinar del Río. The latter includes various faculties, among them: the Faculty of Physical Culture and the Faculty of Social and Humanistic Sciences, in which the Foreign Languages Career (CLE) is inserted. It also has the Department of Languages attached to the central level of the University.

English at the University of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río "Ernesto Guevara de la Serna"

The teaching of English at the University of Medical Sciences of Pinar del Río "Ernesto Guevara de la Serna", a distinction obtained in 2008, dates back to 1968 when it was founded as a faculty attached to the Higher Institute of Basic and Preclinical Sciences, today the Higher Institute of Medical Sciences "Victoria de Girón", in Havana.

The long-time professor of English at the Faculty of Medical Sciences Fernando González says that before 1985 the

translation of simple texts related to medicine was taught. He adds that in the 1985-1986 academic years, the Kernel series was introduced produced in the 1980s by Robert O'Neal in five volumes. These were very innovative, as they were from the first generation of courses with a Communicative Focus. He had the book for teachers, in which he explained the methodological procedure of the teacher, the textbook and the students' workbook, divided into 12 units.

Project-based teaching of medical texts and translation of medical texts was used in the late 1980s. That is, the content was introduced and the students were oriented to research topics related to medicine, which had to present them in seminars. In 2009 came the books *Practical Surgery*, *Practical Medicine* and *Medical Speaking*. These books were bought abroad and met the requirements of the profile.

With the arrival of Plan E to Cuban universities in 2016, GNAMEI began the program readjustments to be in tune with the trend of Plan E in Cuban universities. With Plan E, starting in 2017, the use of the Face2Face course began, which was presented in workshops held in Havana, with the collaboration of the British Council. For its part, 3rd years continues as a transitional year with the book *English4Health*, developed in 2018 by a group of Cuban teachers.

English for non-philologists at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca"

The proclamation of the Reform of Higher Education in Cuba occurred in 1962. Thus begins a new stage for Cuban Higher Education. With the application of the principle of universalization of education, the Pinar del Río University Branch was founded in 1972, raising its status to University Headquarters in the 1976-1977 academic year.

The creation of the Ministry of Higher Education occurred in 1976; thus it begins the first improvement and, with it, the Study Plans A (1977-1982). At the end of the decade of the 70s, the teaching of foreign languages for non-philological students at the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca" was organized as follows: the careers of Agricultural Engineer and Forest Engineer received the English language, while the Bachelor's Degree in Economics and Accounting, and that of Mining Engineer studied the Russian language.

The first part of the 1980s was marked by the development of Study Plans B that was in force from 1982 to 1990. The development of reading ability was established as the final objective of the study of the language. For this, specialized texts were used that were worked with the help of the dictionary.

With the arrival of Study Plan D in 2002, the language curricular strategy tries to harmonize the different didactic components of the Teaching-Learning Process, in order to guarantee students a structured transition towards the use of the English language in real situations of study and professional work. The object of study of the English Language discipline became the foreign language in three main fields, based on the Cuban course *At your Pace !: English for General Purposes* in the first two years, *English for Academic Purposes* in the third year and *English with Professional Purposes (IFP)* in fourth year. It was the time of the English Master Plan.

The Language Center of the University of Pinar del Río "Hermanos Saíz Montes de Oca"

At the end of 2013, the Ministry of Higher Education (MES) began a new process to improve the teaching of the English language in Cuban universities, under the guiding document "The improvement of the English language in Cuban universities. Documents for the Board of

Directors of the Ministry of Higher Education, 2013". This pursues the objective of achieving a better quality in the use of this language by graduates, which benefits their insertion in international spaces, for a greater influence on the socio-economic and cultural development of the country.

The current vision in learning the English language projects the gradual incorporation of all the careers attached to the MES to a new modality: students will have four courses to certify that they are capable of understanding and expressing themselves orally and in writing in said language, with competence at a B1 + level (minimum), which subsequently and temporarily changes to A2, based on the standards established by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

In accordance with the new policy, mastery of communicative skills in English will be verified through standardized tests that will allow certification of language proficiency. The tests that will certify the level of communication skills will be prepared using internationally validated methodologies such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System), or TOEFL (Tests of English as a Foreign Language) or another equivalent (On the English language strategy. Document for the teaching vice-rectors, 2014).

The training of English teachers in Pinar del Río

At the national level, something had to come up for the training of foreign language teachers. Once the Literacy Campaign concluded in 1961, among the careers offered to the participants was the training of foreign language teachers at the "Enrique J. Varona" Pedagogical Institute (IPEJV) and the training of translators and interpreters at the Language Institute. "Máxim Gorki", which was founded in 1962 with the

Russian language due to the promising relations of friendship and collaboration with the Soviet Union. In 1964 English, French and German would be included. IPEJV as both the "Gorki" Institute entered 9th grade, so it was a basic training required continuity of studies in higher education to obtain a degree of bachelor. Starting in 1964, the training of English teachers was created in the pedagogical institutes "Enrique José Varona" in Havana, "Frank País" in Santiago de Cuba and Félix Varela "in Santa Clara. From 1964 to 1977, the people of Pinar del Río studied English as an English teacher at the "Enrique José Varona" Pedagogical Institute, located in the "Libertad" School City in Marianao, Havana.

In 1972 the Pedagogical Detachment "Manuel Ascunce Domenech" was created for the whole country, but it would not open the career of an English teacher in Pinar del Río; you had to go to Havana to study it. Already in 1974 the English career began in the Pedagogical Detachment in Sandino, municipality of Pinar del Río. This is how the province would be nourished by teachers of English, which was in the midst of a *boom* in general and higher secondary education, as part of the explosion in enrollment caused by the Revolution in 1959.

In Pinar del Río, the training of English teachers began in 1974, at the "Rafael María de Mendive" Pedagogical Branch in Sandino, with the incorporation of tenth grade students to the III Contingent of the "Manuel Ascunce Pedagogical Detachment" Domenech", which had been created in the country in 1972. This study plan was five years old, at the end of which the graduates received the title of Teacher of English in General Secondary Education. Subsequently, the graduates had to study two years in the modality of course by encounters to receive the title of Bachelor of Education in English Language in the pedagogical institutes.

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The Foreign Languages career

The "Rafael María de Mendive" Higher Pedagogical Institute, converted into the University of Pedagogical Sciences in 2009, was integrated in September 2015 together with the Faculty of Physical Culture and the University of Pinar del Río to form the new University of Pinar del Río "Hnos Saíz Montes de Oca". The Foreign Languages (LE) career is managed by the Department of Foreign Languages Education, which today belongs to the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. It has the social task of preparing professionals to efficiently direct the pedagogical school process in general, and the Teaching-Learning Process of foreign languages, at all educational levels that make up the National Education System.

The professors of the Higher Pedagogical Institute of the 1970s and 1980s used to carry the "Kenyon" dictionary under their arms, as a sign of a special interest in improving the pronunciation of the English language. It was the easiest way to know how a word was pronounced as opportunities to listen to English were limited, due to the poor development of technology and the restrictions imposed by the United States blockade against Cuba. In the 1990s the Spectrum course was used, enhanced according to the teacher's creativity. Thus, the Communicative Approach was incorporated and the development of professional skills was fostered.

Plan E is implemented in the 2016-2017 academic year, to this day. It is located, according to those interviewed, in the second stage of the Communicative Approach, characterized by several interpretations and research in areas such as interactive didactics and learning culture. Plan E reduces the training of foreign language teachers to four years. Today it has been affected by the arrival of COVID-19, which with physical distancing and other limitations has led to the closure of schools temporarily. The solution for teaching English has been

hybrid learning, from home, with technology and face-to-face classes when possible.

Pinar del Río contributions to the teaching of English

The teaching of English in the province of Pinar del Río has made important contributions to the science of Didactics of the language in terms of scientific contributions, publications of books and articles, research, teaching materials, postgraduate courses and participation in international events. Among the theoretical contributions are the following three:

In Pinar del Río, a New Culture of English Language Learning (NCALI) was created from 2016 to 2020, as a research project, under the authorship of research professors Rodolfo Acosta, Arnaldo Gómez, Pedro Vigil and Alexis Ramirez, in response to the need to train excellent learners of the English language; that is, teach them to learn from a global vision of what language is and how it is learned. Acosta *et al.* (2019) argue that the efficiency in learning a foreign language depends a lot on the conception that the learner has about the language itself and its learning. The teacher must be the owner and mediator of this culture. You must know well that learning English means offering students opportunities to reflect on the linguistic system of the language and its interactive and real use in communication (Acosta and Vigil, 2019).

Acosta and Gómez (2017) explain the need to create in students a new language learning culture that involves all the necessary resources and conditions. This project focuses on the need for students to conceive the language as an instrument of communication, to learn to learn the real use of English (and not the English from books as it has traditionally been taught), outside the classroom, in various scenarios, from and towards the general culture, with different strategies

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and technological resources, connected with the world and with themselves, strengthening the psychological factors influencing language learning and offering opportunities for reflection and social interaction that the learning of the linguistic system language requires and its use in the understanding and production of discourse (Vigil *et al.*, 2020).

The Interactive Language Didactics, developed by Acosta and Alfonso (2011), conceives the Language Teaching-Learning Process as an interactive-reflective social process, in which students enjoy, get involved and take responsibility with the solution of tasks that respond to communication needs, which require both attention to content and form, in a context of socialization and cooperation, directed by the teacher, which allows them to acquire knowledge about the language system and develop communication skills in favor of development of thought, communication, culture and the formation of values. It responds to communicative, interactive and intercultural competence, internationally recognized as the general objective of language teaching (Vigil *et al.*, 2020).

The actual use of English is a relatively young topic. It is part of the sociolinguistic dimension of communicative, interactive and intercultural competence. In the definition of communicative competence offered by Hoge (2019), the use of language is clearly expressed in the pragmatic dimension, when he states: "Communicative competence includes the knowledge that the speaker-listener has of what constitutes linguistic behavior, both appropriate and correct, and also of what constitutes efficient linguistic behavior in relation to particular communicative goals. That is, it includes both: linguistic knowledge and pragmatic knowledge. Communicative performance consists of the actual use of these two types of knowledge in the understanding and production of

discourse". Teaching the actual use of English does not in any way mean that academic English with an emphasis on grammar is not also taught.

Books published by Pinar del Río authors up to 2020

- *Interactive English Use Learning*. Pinar del Río, Cuba: Editorial Hermanos Loynaz. ISBN: 978-959-219-610-0. Acosta, R. and Vigil, PA (2019).
- *New culture for an excellent interactive language learner*. Editorial Académica Española (EAE) ISBN 978-620-223974-5. Acosta and Gómez (2017).
- *Professional Tasks for Pedagogical Training of Foreign Language Teaching*. Above: Editora e Publicações. 1st Edição. Brazil. ISBN: 978-85-8219-313-6. Acosta, R., Pérez, J. and Vasconcelos, A. (2017).
- *A Guide to the Teaching of English for the Cuban Context*. Editorial Pueblo y Educación, Cuba. Mijares, L. (2016).
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DISCUSSION

The methodology of teaching English has been colored by two trends: the behavioral-based structural approach from the beginning of the 20th century to 1985 and the Communicative Methodology from 1985 to the present day, particularly in its phase 2: "Classical communicative teaching of languages (1985-2005) "and phase 3:" Contemporary communicative teaching (2005)".

The pedagogical core of the research consists of the constant monitoring of the evolution of the language teaching methodology in various stages of its historical evolution, tracing the teaching methods of the teachers and the analysis of their pedagogical work.

Before the arrival of the Communicative Methodology (CM) at the end of the 20th century, in Pinar del Río oral comprehension was not conceived as an objective in itself, but as a starting point for oral expression; Nor were communicative functions explicitly taught, while the focus was on grammatical structures. The memory and reproduction of words were essential resources in learning, as well as translation, reading and grammar, which were the essential objectives of the teaching of English in that pre communicative age. This does not mean that oral and written expression was not taught, but students were expected to speak through knowledge of structural linguistic aids and behavioral procedures such as repetition and memorization.

Old and boring teaching and learning methods swarmed: grammar studies, reading comprehension, and blackboard review of written exercises. The teachers spent a large part of the class explaining the structure of the language. Thus there were classes whose "grammatical pill or pill" was the use of the "s" in the conjugation of the verb when the subject was third person singular; other pills

were the plural in English, the regular verbs, the irregular verbs, the future with "will" and "shall", and so on. On the other hand, there was no individual protocol; these were protocols for the whole group. The pill helped the learning of the structure, but it solved nothing in terms of the development of communication skills. The methodology of teaching English at that time was upside down.

Through the investigation, the regular changes in the historical evolution of the teaching of English in Pinar del Río are noted in terms of the components of the process, as well as the differences in the training of teachers and ways of professional improvement. It is no coincidence that the interviewees have referred to the qualities of these components during the various stages of history. Examples of this are the reasons why English was learned before 1959 and the current reasons, the conception about the language before and now, the methods before and now, the methodological approach for the development of skills before and now, as well as the ways of overcoming before and now.

Fortunately, some teachers dabble in and create new learning based on phase two of the Communicative Approach: current communicative language teaching (from 1990 to the present day), from various interpretations: task-based teaching, interculturality, reflective teaching, humanism, education distance, hybrid and digital learning. After all, the Communicative Approach, more than a method, is an attitude towards life, and it is not about learning what it is, but about thinking communicatively (Acosta and Carreaga, 2020). Exploring such an approach is as exciting a journey as getting there. This trip has a strong pragmatic load: doing in communication determines being and character depends on the action that breaks down barriers to achieve the intention of communication.

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Pedro Alejandro Vigil García: Conception of the idea, authorship coordinator, general advice on the topic addressed, literature search and review, translation of terms or information obtained, preparation of instruments, application of instruments, compilation of information resulting from the instruments applied, statistical analysis, preparation of the tables, graphics and images, preparation of the database, drafting of the original (first version), revision and final version of the article, correction of the article, revision of the applied bibliographic norm..

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