BLENDING DIFFERENT METHODOLOGIES IN THE ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH

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Abstract:
The goal of training social actors in language teaching set by CEFR (CoE, 2001) (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) has shifted the ultimate goal of language teaching from training successful communicators to training social actors who have the ability to carry out social actions in and/or outside the classroom, which gave rise to a new approach called the action-oriented approach (AoA) in language teaching. One of the unique characteristics of the AoA is that it combines or blends the previous methodological matrices in coherence and synergy. While there are different definitions of blended learning in the literature, this article focuses on one version of blended learning, which is combining or blending different methodologies within the framework of the action-oriented approach (AoA).

Keywords: action-oriented approach, blended learning, mini-projects

1. Introduction

There is no single definition of blended learning and different authors use the term to encompass different combinations or blending. Driscoll (2002, p.1) provides four different definitions of blended learning as follows:

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"1. To combine or mix modes of web-based technology (e.g., live virtual classroom, self-paced instruction, collaborative learning, streaming video, audio, and text) to accomplish an educational goal.

2. To combine various pedagogical approaches (e.g., constructivism, behaviorism, cognitivism) to produce an optimal learning outcome with or without instructional technology.

3. To combine any form of instructional technology (e.g., videotape, CD-ROM, web-based training, film) with face-to-face instructor-led training.

4. To mix or combine instructional technology with actual job tasks in order to create a harmonious effect of learning and working".

Procter (2003, p.4) defines blended learning as "*the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning*". This definition goes beyond mixing modes of delivery to include what Procter (2003) calls models of teaching (e.g. instructional and constructivist models) and styles of learning.

Neumeier (2005) defines blended learning "*as a combination of face-to-face (FtF) and computer-assisted learning (CAL) in a single teaching and learning environment*" (p. 164). Although Neumeier (2005) gives a definition of blended learning as a mixture of face-to-face (FtF) and computer-assisted learning (CAL), he also argues that the distinction between the two is getting vaguer since the classrooms will finally be provided with integrative mobile technology.

Different from Neumeier (2005), Sharma (2010) presents three main definitions of blended learning: a combination of face-to-face and online teaching, a combination of technologies, and a combination of methodologies. While the first definition refers to the blending of traditional learning (face-to-face component) and online learning, the second definition refers to the blending of media and tools in online learning. The third definition refers to the blending of different pedagogical approaches regardless of the learning technology. Thus, Sharma's summary of the definitions of blended learning extends beyond a mere blending of online and face-to-face teaching-learning, especially when he refers to blending different pedagogical approaches.

Puren (2022a) draws attention to the fact that blended learning, for which he uses the term hybrid learning, does not have to refer only to distance or face-to-face learning by arguing that methodological blending is also necessary.

The two forms of the implementation of the action-oriented approach, namely, pedagogical projects and mini-projects (Puren, 2009, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2016, 2017, 2019b, 2021a; Acar, 2021) also allow the blending of digital technology in the teaching-learning environments. For instance, while carrying out pedagogical projects or mini-projects, the learners may seek and manage information through digital technologies, work together on common documents online, make presentations in class, and project their productions on the internet in and/or outside the classroom. This article, however, focuses on one variant of blended learning, which is combining different methodologies within the framework of the action-oriented approach (AoA). One of the unique

characteristics of the AoA is that it combines the previous methodological matrices in coherence and synergy, which Puren (2021b) calls plurimethodology.

2. The Action-oriented Approach

In this article, the action-oriented approach (AoA) is used to refer to social action-based learning (SABL) as used by Acar (2020a, 2021) to stress the rupture between the communicative approach (CA) and the AoA. SABL also refers to the same thing as what Puren (2015, 2019a, 2020) names the social action-oriented approach (SAOA). The change of terminology from the AoA to SABL or SAOA is due to the opposing characteristics of both the reference situations and reference actions of the CA and SABL or SAOA (Puren 2020).

Van Ek's (1975) *The Threshold Level in a European-Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults*, which was developed for the Council of Europe (CoE), illustrates the characteristics of the reference situation as well as the reference action of the communicative approach as follows:

> "*Nevertheless, by far the largest single group of learners, everywhere, consists of people who want to prepare themselves, in a general way, to be able to communicate socially on straightforward everyday matters with people from other countries who come their way, and to be able to get around and lead a reasonably normal social life when they visit another country*" (p.2).

Thus, the reference situation characterized by the threshold level document is the short-term contact situation (when visiting abroad) and the reference action is language interaction (which is described linguistically in terms of functions and notions), which, to Puren (2004), refers to speaking with the others. Puren (2020) indicates that both this reference action and the reference situation reflect the characteristics of the communicative approach, which he indicates as inchoate, individual, punctual, and perfective. Thus, the ultimate goal of the communicative approach is to prepare the learners to communicate with the users of the target language when they visit another country or when they meet a visitor in their own society. The trip situation is mainly a short-term contact situation, where the users are involved in short-term language interaction in the target language.

The two further documents of CoE, after the threshold level document, namely, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CoE, 2001) and Common European Framework of Reference for Languages Companion Volume (CoE, 2020) set a new goal for language teaching and learning, that of training social actors. CoE (2001, p.9) indicates it as follows:

> "*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."

Since this short quote indicates that the learners will no longer be prepared just for language interaction realized in terms of speech acts but that speech acts can have full meaning when they are part of social actions, the reference action of SABL, which is social action, emerges as a new action for which the social actors (social agents) will be prepared. Thus, communication is no longer the ultimate of language teaching and learning as in the CA but just a means of social action. Puren (2020) outlines the characteristics of SABL as the repetitive, the durative, the imperfective, and the collective, which are opposed to the characteristics of the CA, namely, inchoate, individual, punctual, and perfective. In other words, Puren (2020, p.26) argues that:

"…most of the social work we do are repeated more or less identically throughout the day, week, month or even year; have a certain duration, or at least are part of the duration; do not end completely (they are always subject to being resumed and/or extended later); are carried out collectively, or in relation to others, or at least taking into account the actions of others."

These characteristics are opposed to the characteristics of language interaction in short-term contact situations, that of the CA. The reference situation indicated both by CoE (2001) and CoE (2020), on the other hand, is no longer short-term contact situations such as tourist trips but a multilingual and multicultural society, where social actors act together.

"Chapter 8 discusses the principles of curriculum design involving the differentiation of language learning objectives, especially in the context of building an individual's plurilingual and pluricultural competence in order to deal with the communicative challenges posed by living in a multilingual and multicultural Europe" (CoE, 2001, notes for the user).

The transition from the CA to SABL can be explained as a transition from talking with the others to acting with the others (Puren, 2004, 2020), in which language interaction is not dispensed with but put at the service of social action. Puren (2006, p. 8) puts forward that "It is no longer just a matter of preparing European citizens to communicate during punctual meetings, but to work between them in the long term (a shift in objective from "talking with" to "acting with")."

3. Blending Different Methodological Matrices in the Action-oriented Approach

In Table 1 below, Puren (2020, p.33) illustrates "*the four methodological matrices currently available in France, which correspond to the major methodologies that have succeeded one another since the beginning of the 20th century: the active methodology, the communicative approach, the plurilingual and pluricultural methodologies, and the social action-oriented approach.*" He further argues that "*all these "methodological matrices" must remain available, and they must be combined and/or articulated with each other, because they are all indispensable if school curricula are to cover the totality of the aims and objectives of school teaching of modern foreign languages*" (Puren, 2020, p.33).

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

	TARGETED SOCIAL COMPETENCES		Act for the intended use	Privileged act of learning
	Language competence	Cultural competence		
1. Reading matrix: (1920-1960)	Ability to maintain contact with the foreign language from a distance on the basis of authentic documents	Ability to mobilize and extract knowledge about the foreign culture from and about authentic documents: *metacultural component.*	read, speak on a document (*« parler sur un document »*)	Collective oral explanations in class of authentic documents
2. Communicative-intercultural matrix : (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*	meet, talk with others (*« parler avec d'autres »*)	Interactions in class in simulations and role-playing
3. Plurilingual-pluricultural matrix : (1990-...)	Ability to "live together", *i.e.* to manage linguistically the permanent cohabitation with allophones in a multilingual and multicultural society	Ability to understand the attitudes and behaviours of others and to adopt common attitudes and behaviours acceptable in a culturally diverse society: *pluricultural component*	live with the others, talk to each others (*« se parler »*)	Cross-language conceptualization activities
4. Social-action matrix : (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 the others common conceptions of society and collective action on the basis of shared contextual values: *co-cultural component*	act with the others, consult with the others (*« en parler avec les autres, se concerter »*)	real or simulated social actions carried out in project mode in class society and/or outside

« Matrices méthodologiques actuellement disponibles en didactique des langues-cultures »
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Puren (2020, p.33) puts forward that "*because it is complex, any pedagogical project is likely to require students to mobilize all the methodological matrices*" and illustrates how a project presented by a Guatemalan teacher of French as a foreign language allows for the students to combine and articulate all the methodological matrices that follow each other in France since the beginning of the 20th century in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2: Combinations and Articulations of
All the Available Methodological Matrices in a Project

DOMINANT METHODOLOGICAL MATRICES	AM	CA	PM	SAOA
1. To design themselves the main lines of this project: which establishments to choose, which contacts to make, how to present the project on this occasion, with which purposes and objectives;		X		X
2. To collectively define the criteria for selecting the poems according to the purposes and objectives chosen and select them, to divide the work into groups;		X		X
3. To study the selected poems in depth so as to be able to render, in their translation into Spanish, the maximum number of connotations, implicit and stylistic effects according to the target audience;	X		X	
4. To translate the poems among themselves, justifying and defending their choices when there was disagreement; to compare their translations, to argue them, to take the necessary collective decision	X		X	
5. To prepare collectively the expressive readings and the answers to the reactions, remarks and possible questions of their audience;	X		X	
6. To carrying out their project in the classroom.		X		X

AM = Active methodology, and reading and metacultural competences
CA = Communicative approach, communicative and intercultural competences
PM = Plurilingual methodologies, plurilingual and pluricultural competences
SAOA = Social-action oriented approach, co-lingual and co-cultural competences

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What Table 2 illustrates is that "*SAOA is not intended to replace previous methodologies, but to enrich the various methodologies available to educational leaders, textbook authors, and teachers*" (Puren, 2021a, pp. 22-23). Thus, the AoA (SABL or SAOA) allows for the combinations of different methodological matrices, which doesn't mean an eclectic approach. Puren (2021b, p.40) argues that "*it is not simply a matter of juxtaposing them - even in a "reasoned" eclecticism that would correspond to a "multimethodological" approach- but of putting them in synergy within a "plurimethodological" approach*"".

Acar's (2020b, p. 1455) following mini-project proposal also illustrates how a mini-project integrates different methodological matrices:

A. As a whole class, organize a birthday party to celebrate the birthday of one of your classmates.
B: Discuss as a whole class why we celebrate birthdays (What's the point of a birthday party?) and how it is celebrated (How do you celebrate it in your family/community/culture?) and whether you (as a whole class) would like to realize this birthday party in reality, not as simulation.
C: Decide collectively on which student you will organize the birthday party for as well as the date and the place of the birthday party (in the classroom or a place outside the classroom).
D: Make an individual search on the internet and then discuss as a whole class as to what makes a good birthday party.
E: Prepare a list of needs. Allocate each task among the classmates and each student will get the necessary items.

F: Search for the close friends and/or family members and/or all the teachers of your classmate (also their contact information) for whom you are organizing the birthday party.
G: Prepare an email text or an invitation card as a whole class and send the email or the invitation card to them or call them on the phone telling them their attendance will be a surprise for the classmate and thank those who reply to you (if you realize that some of the close friends and/or family members and/or the teachers of your classmate do not know English, translate, as a whole class, your email text or invitation card into your native language (Turkish) and send the email or the invitation card to them in your native language (Turkish) or talk to them on the phone in Turkish).
H: As a whole class, realize the birthday party.
I: Do a collective self-evaluation of the organization and realization of the birthday party: What went well? What could have been done to make it better? Why? How?

It is important to note that the implementation of a matrix implies that it is the matrix that primarily and strongly influences the corresponding practices.

Step A *As a whole class, organize a birthday party to celebrate the birthday of one of your classmates* is the mini-project as a whole, whose different steps will be analyzed in terms of the implementation of different methodological matrices.

Step B *Discuss as a whole class why we celebrate birthdays (What's the point of a birthday party?) and how it is celebrated (How do you celebrate it in your family/community/culture?) and whether you (as a whole class) would like to realize this birthday party in reality, not as simulation* corresponds to the implementation of the plurilingual approach since this step can be realized by the students in L1 (Turkish). It is because this mini-project was proposed as an alternative to the activity titled a project in unit six of the English textbook *Let's Learn English* used by students at the average age of 12 in the seventh grades of public secondary schools in Turkey and the students at this level in Turkey may not carry out this step in L2. If, however, this step is realized in L2 (English) by the students, this step, then, will correspond to the CA.

Step C *Decide collectively on which student you will organize the birthday party for as well as the date and the place of the birthday party (in the classroom or a place outside the classroom)* corresponds to the implementation of the CA if the students carry out the discussion in L2.

Step D *Make an individual search on the internet and then discuss as a whole class as to what makes a good birthday party* corresponds to the implementation of the AoA since when the students make an individual search on the internet about what makes a successful birthday party it is an information management activity (locating information concerning the characteristics of a good birthday party), which corresponds to the implementation of the AoA. When the students discuss as a whole class what makes a good birthday party to decide how they will celebrate the birthday, they pool their information (the CA), but it is to decide among themselves how their party will be: it is a decision in relation to their action (the AoA).

Step E *Prepare a list of needs. Allocate each task among the classmates and each student will get the necessary items* corresponds to the implementation of both the CA and the AoA since this activity will lead students to have a discussion for them to carry out specific collective work.

Step F *Search for the close friends and/or family members and/or all the teachers of your classmate (also their contact information) for whom you are organizing the birthday party* refers to an information management activity and hence corresponds to the implementation of the AoA. If it is done in a group discussion in L2, it also corresponds to the implementation of the CA.

In Step G, *Prepare an email text or an invitation card as a whole class and send the email or the invitation card to them or call them on the phone telling them their attendance will be a surprise for the classmate and thank those who reply to you* corresponds to the implementation of the CA and the second part *(if you realize that some of the close friends and/or family members and/or the teachers of your classmate do not know English, translate, as a whole class, your email text or invitation card into your native language (Turkish) and send the email or the invitation card to them in your native language (Turkish) or talk to them on the phone in Turkish)* corresponds to the implementation of the plurilingual approach since this activity refers to the interlanguage mediation.

Step H *As a whole class, realize the birthday party* is social action and hence corresponds to the implementation of the AoA.

Step I *Do a collective self-evaluation of the organization and realization of the birthday party: What went well? What could have been done to make it better? Why? How?* corresponds to the implementation of both the CA and the AoA. If this evaluation is done in L2, there is the implementation of the CA along with the AoA but if this evaluation is done in L1, there is the implementation of the plurilingual approach along with the AoA.

This analysis is shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3. An Analysis of the Different Methodological Matrices in the Mini-project

Methodological matrices	RM	CA	PM	SAOA
B: Discuss as a whole class why we celebrate birthdays (What's the point of a birthday party?) and how it is celebrated (How do you celebrate it in your family/community/culture?) and whether you (as a whole class) would like to realize this birthday party in reality, not as simulation.			X	
C: Decide collectively on which student you will organize the birthday party for as well as the date and the place of the birthday party (in the classroom or a place outside the classroom).		X		
D: Make an individual search on the internet and then discuss as a whole class as to what makes a good birthday party.				X
E: Prepare a list of needs. Allocate each task among the classmates and each student will get the necessary items.		X		X
F: Search for the close friends and/or family members and/or all the teachers of your classmate (also their contact information) for whom you are organizing the birthday party.		X		X
G: Prepare an email text or an invitation card as a whole class and send the email or the invitation card to them or call them on the phone telling them their attendance will be a surprise for the classmate and thank those who reply to you (if you realize that some of the close friends and/or family members and/or the teachers of your classmate do not know English, translate, as a whole class, your email text or invitation card into your native language (Turkish)		X	X	

and send the email or the invitation card to them in your native language (Turkish) or talk to them on the phone in Turkish).				
H: As a whole class, realize the birthday party.				X
I: Do a collective self-evaluation of the organization and realization of the birthday party: What went well? What could have been done to make it better? Why? How?		X		X

4. Conclusion

With the emergence of the AoA, it is no longer a question of preparing learners to travel to different countries to have interpersonal communication with the users of the target language in short-term contact situations as in the CA but of preparing them to act with others on a long-term basis in a multilingual and multicultural society in major domains of social life indicated in CoE (2001) as personal, public, educational and occupational. The rupture between the CA and the AoA is mainly due to the rupture between the characteristics of short-term contact situations and language interaction on the one hand and those of the multilingual and multicultural society and acting with the others on the other. Thus, the ultimate goal of the AoA is not to train successful communicators but social actors, and communication in the AoA is just a means of social action. Unlike the different methodological applications of the CA (including task-based language teaching), which consider themselves the best and unique methodologies, the AoA does not reject the previous methodological matrices, including the CA.

The pedagogical projects and the mini-projects as two forms of the application of the AoA correspond to a plurimethodological approach since the complexity of the pedagogical projects and the mini-projects (Puren, 2022b) may require the mobilization of the different methodological matrices. Thus, the AoA does not reject or replace the previous methodologies but embraces them all by combing them and putting them in synergy within a plurimethodological approach (Puren, 2021a, 2021b). This does not mean, however, that all the different methodological matrices are combined randomly or put side by side as in an eclectic perspective (juxtaposition) but the different activities corresponding to different methodological matrices during the pedagogical project or mini-project are put together in synergy and coherence.

Conflict of Interest Statement
The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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