Glossary for observation-instrument communicative modern foreign language teaching

Authentic language teaching material:
Authentic language teaching material is taken from a real life context, or lifelike, and may, for example, be offered in the original layout, so that language learners become familiar with the target language as it is used in daily life.

Chunks:
A chunk is a short sentence or group of words that belong together, and which often occur in a fixed combination in a specific context, and are therefore learned as a whole, for example: I would like ..., Je voudrais ..., Ich möchte ..., Me gustaría ...

Cognate:
Cognates are words within the same language or in different languages that are related, by sharing the same linguistic derivation, and consequently resemble one another in sound and/or form.

Communicative language teaching;
Communicative language teaching is an approach which is centred around the development of writing, speaking, reading and listening skills, with the aim of learning to communicate in the foreign language. The development of these skills is done by exposing language learners to a lot of input in the target language (e.g. the target language used by the teacher, texts, audio material, video material) and having students produce the target language frequently themselves (output). Attention to form (e.g. correct sentence structure and spelling) is only taught in service of the ability to express a message. Language learners learn grammar rules to be able to communicate, but do not have to be able to explain the rules. For more information see Key objectives, Knowledge base and CEFR.

Communicative achievement:
Communicative achievement occurs when the message reaches the correct result with the recipient. The issue here is whether the content of the message comes across and whether there is any confusion with the recipient regarding the message/content. The message does not have to be grammatically correct.

CEFR (levels)/ERK:
CEFR is the abbreviation of Common European Framework of Reference. (In Dutch: ERK, "Europees Referentiekader") . The CEFR distinguishes six levels of language proficiency, from beginner to near-native: A1 and A2 Basic user, B1 and B2 Independent user, C1 and C2 Proficient user. The different levels are defined using can-do statements (also called descriptors). These are descriptions of what a language user should be able to do in a foreign language at different levels in the different skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing). The CEFR has a positive approach and is based on what the language learner *can* do in a foreign language, not on what the learner *cannot* do.

Evaluation, formative:
Formative evaluation is aimed at gathering information about the performance and the learning process of language learners so that both the teacher and the language learner gain insight into the weaknesses and strengths and then base decisions regarding the further course of the learning process on the outcome. Formative evaluation is integrated in every phase of the learning process, so that teachers and language learners always know where the language learners are in relation to the intended learning objectives. Giving feedback is a frequently used form of formative evaluation.

Evaluation, summative:
Summative evaluation is aimed at making a decision about success at a certain level. A summative evaluation gives a result that counts for a final assessment, for example a(n) (written) exam.

Research Team Multilingualism and Education

Focus on form, planned and unplanned:

Focus-on-form means paying attention to form aspects of language (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation), embedded in a meaningful, communicative activity. *Focus-on-form* is therefore opposite to a *focus-on-forms* approach in which language learners are taught language forms in isolation, separate from a communicative context (for example, grammar gapfill exercises). Focus on form can be both planned and unplanned.

In *planned* focus-on-form, when designing and planning the lesson, a teacher considers which form aspect(s) should be given attention to ensure that language learners can adequately perform the communicative tasks in the lesson in question. The teacher then uses activities in which the learners' attention is drawn to the pre-selected language form(s) in the most natural way possible.

Unplanned focus-on-form, for example, is when the teacher gives spontaneous feedback on language production by language learners or when he explains a grammatical construction when a language learner asks a question about it.

Free vs. guided production:

In guided production the context is given and the content is (exactly) prescribed. An example of an assignment that encourages guided production is the completion of a given dialogue. Free production happens when the content is at most generally prescribed and this content can be realized in many different ways, both in terms of content and formulation. An example of a task that provokes free production is a debate on a current theme in which language learners can express their own opinions. There is no hard cut between guided and free; there is a continuum.

Functional vs. creative language activities:

Functional language activities are tasks aimed at a goal that corresponds with communicating in real-life situations, such as writing an e-mail, making an appointment at the dentist, listening to an announcement at a train station or reading movie reviews in order to plan a trip to the cinema. Creative language activities, on the other hand, are tasks in which language learners use the target language to create or develop something through imagination that is not practical/functional, but which primarily focuses on the expressive function of language. Examples of creative language activities are an improvisation assignments (drama), writing a poem or writing an alternative ending to a story.

Integrated language teaching:

Integrated language teaching happens when different communicative language skills reinforce each other or build on one another within the same lesson or series of lessons or the same theme.

Modeling:

Modeling is an instructional method in which the teacher shows how a language task can be performed while thinking out loud and explaining what strategies he uses. The teacher also represents the "prototype" of the target language speaker in class and serves as a *model* for the intended pronunciation. The teacher may also present or model the assignment for the group, together with leaners. In addition to the teacher and/or fellow language learners, examples of the execution of a language task can also serve as a model, for example by using model letters for writing letters and model dialogues for interviewing.

Perception and imagination;

Students' perception includes the experiences, interests and daily life of language learners. Teaching materials and/or language tasks that connect with the experience of language learners may, for example, use contemporary songs or social media, or deal with topics that are relevant in their current life or their near future. Teaching materials and/or language tasks that are connected to students' perception are recognizable, conceivable or possible within the learners' sphere, without language learners actually having to have experienced them to understand. Connection to imagination means that the subjects and/or activities appeal to the emotions and/or critical thinking skills of language learners.

Plurilingualism:

Plurilingualism is the ability to understand and use two or more languages.

Research Team Multilingualism and Education

Plurilingual repertoire:

Plurilingual repertoire is the ability to apply different skills in two or more languages, such as vocabularies, grammar, etc.

Scaffolding:

The term scaffolding is used for the didactic repertoire that a teacher can use to enable a language learner to ultimately perform a language task autonomously. The teacher offers language learners a step (or scaffolding) that enables them to progress in their language development (with regard to form and/or content). An example of scaffolding is using a writing frame for writing a letter. It is essential for the teacher to gradually phase out the scaffolding; the teacher gives language learners a lot of support at the beginning, but less and less as their expertise/skill grows.

Strategies for speaking/writing/listening/reading:

These are tactics used to perform language tasks and/or to solve problems in communication. Language reception strategies (listening/reading skills) are aimed at promoting text comprehension. An example of a language reception strategy is to use titles, headings, and pictures to predict what a text is about (reading) and to use focus questions to enable language learners to extract specific information from a text (listening). Language production strategies (speaking/writing skills) are aimed at delivering a message with limited language resources. An example of a language production strategy is making use of online translation machines (writing) and making use of body language (speaking).

Target language, learning/communication tool:

By "target language" we mean the language that is learned (eg French in the French lesson). The target language can be used in two ways: as a communication tool and as a learning tool. The target language is used as a communication tool if the target language is used to convey a message, for example if a teacher uses the target language in greetings, explanations, etc. The target language is used as a learning tool when the target language is used instrumentally, with the aim of stimulating foreign language development of language learners. When a teacher uses the target language as a learning tool, for example, he uses variation in tempo, segmentation, correction, repetition or thinking time to focus the language learners' attention on the language aspect to be learned.

Translanguaging:

Translanguaging is a pedogical approach where learners' plurilingual repertoire is appreciated and applied in order to stimulate and support learning in an educational/school setting.

Research Team Multilingualism and Education