TEMA

40

Communication Strategies. Definition and Typology

Estrategias de comunicación. Definición y tipología.

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Material de elaboración propia a partir de las fuentes oficiales que se citan al final del tema. No es un temario oficial ni sustituye a la normativa publicada.

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1. INTRODUCTION

"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world," wrote Ludwig Wittgenstein in the Tractatus (5.6, in Ogden's 1922 translation). Every teacher of English knows what happens at those limits. A fifteen-year-old wants to say that the ice cream is melting, cannot find the verb, and says "it becomes water". She has not failed to communicate; on the contrary, she has found a way round the limit, and her listener understands. That small act of improvisation is what applied linguists call a communication strategy, and it is the subject of Topic 40: Communication Strategies. Definition and Typology.

In order to address it, I will divide this topic into five main sections. Firstly, I will trace the origin of the concept, from interlanguage research to the model of communicative competence. Secondly, I will examine how communication strategies have been defined and which criteria have been proposed to delimit them. Thirdly, I will present their typology, from the classical taxonomies of the 1970s and 1980s to the psycholinguistic and the interactional classifications of the 1990s. Fourthly, I will look at how the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages treats strategies. Finally, I will reflect on the pedagogical and didactic implications of the topic within our current educational framework.

Before moving on, I would like to mention the sources consulted for the preparation of this topic. These include: Færch and Kasper's edited volume Strategies in Interlanguage Communication, Bialystok's Communication Strategies, and Dörnyei and Scott's review article "Communication Strategies in a Second Language: Definitions and Taxonomies", as well as the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment and its Companion Volume. I have also drawn on the LOMLOE (Organic Law 3/2020), Real Decreto 217/2022 and 243/2022, and Decreto 110/2022 and 109/2022 of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura.