

CUED SPEECH IN SPAIN

The article below describes the successful use of Cued Speech within an educational model which uses Cued Speech to complement oral practices, the Complemented Oral Model (Modelo Oral Complementada, MOC).

Note: LPC is the French name for Cued Speech

From La Palabra Complementada (LPC or Cued Speech) to the Modelo Oral Complementada (MOC)

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The existence of Cued Speech has been known in Spain since its conception at the end of the 60's (Cornett, 1967) but it is only since 1983 that it has been applied in a consistent manner. Professor Cornett was invited to give a talk on Cued Speech for the first time in Spain at the 1st Latin American Congress of Parents' Associations which took place in Cartagena (Spain) in 1983 and which was organised by APANDA, the Association of Parents of Children with Hearing Impairment). From that date the technique was put into use with children in the Centre 'Principe de Asturias' (APANDA) and in 1988 the first results were published (Torres, 1988. Torres & Ruiz, 1996).

Between 1983 and 1990 APANDA's team of professionals organised a number of national meetings on Cued Speech (Madrid, San Sebastián, La Coruña, etc.) and Professor Cornett was present at several of them. In addition APANDA's team contacted the French Association of LPC (Langage Parlé Completé or Cued Speech) and the Centre 'Comprendre et Parler', (Understand and Speak) in Brussels; they were also in contact with the team led by Professor Jesús Alegría, of the Universidad Libre (Brussels), who for some years had been investigating the cognitive linguistic development of pupils who had been exposed to Cued Speech, whether at home, at school or both.

In 1990 Cued Speech was well known in Spain under the name La Palabra Complementada, later LPC, and there was information available on the advantages for prelingually deaf children. However

systematic application within the family environment was the exception, although many professionals and many centres used it as an occasional support system.

In 1992 the MOC group (Modelo Oral Complementado, literally Complemented Oral Model) was set up in the University of Malaga. Its main objective was to bring together a group of prelingually deaf children who, since babyhood, would have had LPC as their only augmentative means of communication, as much in the home as in school. This group is perhaps the one which, at international level, has been exposed most purely to LPC, and further research is envisaged in the future.

Ten years later, the MOC group has received the National Prize Fiapas 2002 for its work in the creation of a model of intervention, based on LPC, that has enabled deaf children to become autonomous learners through reading and writing. If one compares the children using MOC with those taught using other methodologies (signed Spanish or sign language, total communication, classic oralism) in various aspects of cognitive linguistic development (Santana, 1999: Santana & Torres, accepted for publication), significant differences can be seen in favour of the children using MOC, who obtain results similar to their hearing peers at the age of 10.

This data which is now appearing will be the stimulus for LPC to become more rigorously established in the education of deaf children, particularly during their early years. The MOC group is continuing in its determined efforts and has become a reference point for LPC in

Spain, both in rehabilitation and in training for professionals and parents, from Spain as well as overseas.

MODELO ORAL COMPLEMENTADO (Complemented Oral Model)

The agreement of collaboration reached between the University of Malaga and the Department of Education in the Region of Andalucía and Malaga is providing the institutional framework for the development of the project.

The work includes the study of international research, which evaluates different systems of communication for use with hearing impaired people (sign language, signed Spanish, classic oralism, total communication and oralism complemented by Cued Speech). It also offers scientific data on the use of **LPC** in a project on oral rehabilitation in the Castilian language, based on the stimulation of language within more general cognitive processes. In this context **LPC** is an instrument to guarantee the perception of speech whereas **MOC** has become an Instrumental Enrichment Program developed for its progressive application with the hearing impaired, between the ages 0 to 12 years.

In short it is a work of protracted investigation with practical applications, begun in 1992 and centred on the study of **cognitive linguistic development** in deaf people, with particular impact on **reading development**.

The emphasis of **MOC** on reading is justified by the fact that reading is the most powerful cognitive tool for learning. Through reading we access centuries and centuries of culture. But the acquisition of reading skills is dependent on the understanding of spoken language. Oral and written language only differ in the change of form. Why has reading deficiency in the hearing impaired been a central recurrent theme that has never been addressed in general terms over the centuries? The answer is in the poor command of oral language and more specifically in the deficiencies of some of its components, mainly, but not exclusively, phonological awareness.

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MOC contributes to the solution of this problem in that it contributes to the **early and natural development of oral language**. With **LPC** the phonology of words comes before their meaning. This is the way all children learn their mother tongue, firstly the sounds, then the meanings and afterwards reading. **MOC**, in such an important way, simply restores the natural process of verbal learning, spoken and written.

The final objective of **MOC** has been to ensure that deaf children should be autonomous learners making use of their linguistic knowledge and reading skills.

Lastly, it is worth pointing out that **MOC gives back to parents a leading role** in the education of the deaf child. This is achieved using **LPC** which allows them to communicate with the deaf child, from the earliest age, without restrictions on content, form or code. Parents have never before had such a means at hand to contribute to the linguistic development of their deaf child.

Taking into account the present technological developments to alleviate the effects of deafness, in particular the cochlear implant, the information provided by **MOC** can serve to re-orientate speech therapy intervention at an early age in deaf children, overcoming the limitations and barriers to education which until now have existed.

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