

THE ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH TO LANGUAGE PRACTICE FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS STUDENTS: INTEGRATING CASES AND SCENARIOS INTO SYLLABUS DESIGN

The transition from knowledge-oriented language instruction to competence-based language education has become one of the defining tendencies of contemporary higher education. Within the framework of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), language learners are no longer viewed primarily as recipients of linguistic knowledge but as social actors who use language to perform meaningful actions in diverse personal, social, educational, and professional contexts. This shift has been particularly evident in the development of the Action-Oriented Approach (AoA), which has emerged as one of the most influential paradigms in modern language education.

The theoretical foundations of the Action-Oriented Approach originate in the CEFR (2001) [2] and have been further elaborated in the CEFR Companion Volume (2020) [3]. According to the CEFR, language users are understood as social agents who mobilize linguistic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic, strategic, and intercultural competences to accomplish tasks in specific circumstances and environments. Scholars such as Brian North and Enrica Piccardo have emphasized that language learning should not be reduced to the acquisition of grammatical structures or vocabulary items; rather, it should prepare learners to participate actively in authentic social and professional practices. Piccardo and North (2019) [12] describe the Action-Oriented Approach as a natural evolution of communicative language teaching that places purposeful action, collaboration, agency, mediation, and real-world tasks at the center of learning [12, p.21].

The approach also resonates with broader educational theories. Constructivist perspectives on learning (Vygotsky[15], Bruner[1]) emphasize the social nature of knowledge construction and the importance of meaningful interaction. Experiential learning theory (Kolb[5]) highlights the role of authentic experience, reflection, and application in knowledge development. Task-based language teaching (Ellis[4], Nunan[10], Willis[16,17]) similarly advocates the use of realistic communicative tasks as a means of developing language competence. However, the Action-Oriented Approach extends beyond task completion by focusing on learners as participants in social action who co-construct meaning and collaboratively achieve goals.

For Applied Linguistics students, the Action-Oriented Approach is particularly relevant because their future professional activities require them to operate in multilingual, multicultural, and technology-rich environments. Graduates are expected to communicate effectively, conduct research, mediate between languages and cultures, create digital content, and solve professional problems in authentic contexts. Consequently, language practice courses should provide opportunities for learners to develop these competences through meaningful scenarios that mirror real-life situations.

The present paper discusses the integration of the Action-Oriented Approach into the syllabus design of a language practice course for Applied Linguistics students. It explores how

real-life cases and scenarios can be incorporated into thematic modules to promote communicative competence, learner autonomy, creativity, critical thinking, and professional identity formation. The proposed model demonstrates how curriculum content may be aligned with programme learning outcomes while simultaneously responding to contemporary educational demands and students' personal interests.

The syllabus described in this study was designed for undergraduate Applied Linguistics students and aligned with several programme learning outcomes. Among the most relevant outcomes are the ability to understand language systems and apply linguistic knowledge in professional activity; knowledge of language norms and discourse conventions; competence in creating oral and written texts of various genres; effective use of language in educational, social, academic, and professional communication; information retrieval through digital technologies; and the creation of digital content.

Rather than organizing instruction around isolated grammar topics or vocabulary fields, the syllabus employs a thematic and scenario-based structure. Each topic is developed through a sequence of communicative actions that culminate in a meaningful product or performance. Students are required to solve problems, make decisions, negotiate meaning, collaborate with peers, and present outcomes to authentic audiences. Such a design creates a direct connection between language learning and future professional activities.

The selected thematic modules include:

- Career Path;
- Travel Worldwide;
- Keep Calm and Do Sports;
- Cultural Heritage.

Each module represents a field of social action in which language serves as a tool for achieving practical goals.

The first scenario focuses on professional self-identification and career planning. The topic addresses one of the most immediate concerns of Applied Linguistics students: future employment opportunities. The module begins with a brainstorming session devoted to potential career paths for Applied Linguistics graduates. Students discuss advantages and disadvantages of various professional trajectories and collaboratively create informational posters for prospective university applicants. This initial stage encourages learners to reflect on their professional aspirations while practicing persuasive and informative discourse. The next stage introduces authentic materials related to university majors and professional opportunities. Video-based activities and role-playing exercises encourage students to compare their own educational experiences with international examples and discuss future career prospects. A significant component of the scenario is devoted to the job application process. Students analyze authentic job descriptions for positions such as translator, language teacher, localization specialist, content creator, or language-service provider. They discuss professional requirements and evaluate their own qualifications in relation to those requirements. Subsequently, students prepare a curriculum vitae using the Europass format. This task combines writing practice with self-assessment and reflection. Learners evaluate their skills, qualifications, and experiences while simultaneously producing a document that may be used for real employment opportunities.

The scenario culminates in a job interview role-play. Students assume the roles of applicants and employers, conduct interviews, ask and answer questions, and evaluate candidates. The final discussion focuses on hiring decisions and professional suitability. This scenario illustrates the Action-Oriented Approach by placing students in authentic professional

situations where language use serves practical purposes. Rather than merely discussing employment vocabulary, students perform actions associated with real job-seeking processes.

The second scenario addresses travel, intercultural communication, and global mobility. The topic was selected because it combines personal relevance with significant opportunities for communicative interaction. The module begins with discussions of students' most memorable travel experiences. Participants share personal stories, describe challenges and positive experiences, and reflect on factors that contribute to successful journeys. This stage encourages spontaneous speaking and narrative competence. Students then engage in a brainstorming activity devoted to designing the journey of their dreams. Free from financial or temporal constraints, learners imagine ideal travel experiences and discuss them with peers. Such activities stimulate creativity and provide opportunities for extensive communication. The central project of the scenario is the creation of a travel agency proposal. Students gather information, conduct research, design presentations or websites, and develop attractive travel packages based on their classmates' preferences. The task requires extensive reading, writing, planning, and digital content creation. The assessment stage is organized as a carousel activity. Students present their travel packages to potential customers who rotate between different agencies. Customers ask questions, evaluate offers, and justify their decisions. The final stage takes the form of a conference where travel agencies present their products to the entire class and respond to challenging questions from competitors. The scenario integrates language learning with project work, creativity, persuasion, negotiation, and intercultural awareness. It exemplifies the Action-Oriented principle that learning occurs through participation in purposeful social activities.

The third scenario focuses on health, well-being, and healthy lifestyles. The topic is highly relevant for university students who often face academic stress and changing life circumstances. The module opens with discussions of students' preferred methods of maintaining physical and mental well-being. Learners exchange practical advice and identify common interests. Students then create social media content, such as Instagram or TikTok posts, designed to help first-year students adapt to university life while maintaining healthy habits. This task introduces contemporary digital genres and develops multimodal communication skills. Role-play activities involving interactions between freshmen and more experienced students provide opportunities for authentic communication and peer mentoring. Discussions also address unpleasant sporting experiences, encouraging learners to express opinions, share emotions, and provide recommendations. An important component of the module involves collaborative reading activities. Students analyze sections of scholarly and popular articles discussing both the benefits and risks of physical activity. Through a carousel format, learners become responsible for specific sections of the text and subsequently share information with classmates. The final project requires students to transform health-related information into practical safety guidelines presented as posters. They then defend their recommendations through presentations and interactive question-and-answer sessions. This scenario demonstrates how language learning can be integrated with health literacy, digital communication, critical reading, and collaborative knowledge construction.

The fourth scenario explores culture, intercultural communication, and cultural stereotypes. These themes are particularly important for Applied Linguistics students, whose future careers frequently involve intercultural mediation. The module begins with discussions concerning the meaning of culture and the role of intercultural communication in contemporary

society. Students examine their own perceptions and experiences while developing intercultural awareness. Subsequent brainstorming activities focus on cultural stereotypes and their influence on communication. Learners discuss situations in which stereotypes may facilitate understanding and situations in which they may create barriers. Students then analyze authentic audiovisual materials, including comedic performances based on intercultural misunderstandings. Through guided research and discussion, they identify cultural references, unpack humor, and explore the social implications of stereotypes.

The creative component of the scenario requires students to produce their own dialogues inspired by the analyzed materials while focusing on Ukrainian cultural realities. Such tasks encourage linguistic creativity and cultural reflection. The module concludes with a whole-class discussion devoted to intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity, and responsible communication in multilingual environments. This scenario illustrates how language practice can support intercultural competence and critical cultural awareness while simultaneously developing communicative skills.

The implementation of the Action-Oriented Approach through cases and scenarios offers several pedagogical advantages.

First, it shifts language learning from an analytical focus on linguistic forms toward meaningful participation in real-life activities. Students use language as a tool for achieving goals rather than merely demonstrating knowledge.

Second, scenarios support learner autonomy and agency. Students make decisions, conduct research, solve problems, and create original products. Such activities encourage ownership of learning and foster intrinsic motivation.

Third, the approach promotes the development of transferable soft skills, including teamwork, critical thinking, creativity, presentation skills, negotiation, and project management. These competences are increasingly valued in contemporary professional environments.

Fourth, scenario-based learning facilitates integration between personal interests and professional preparation. Students are encouraged to connect academic content with their own experiences, aspirations, and future careers.

Fifth, the approach supports self-assessment and reflective learning. Through reference to CEFR descriptors and authentic performance tasks, learners develop awareness of their strengths, weaknesses, and learning goals.

Finally, the model demonstrates considerable flexibility. Projects may be implemented in face-to-face, online, hybrid, or asynchronous formats. This flexibility is especially important in educational contexts characterized by uncertainty and disruption, where continuity of learning must be maintained across different modes of participation.

Conclusions

The Action-Oriented Approach provides a productive framework for redesigning language practice courses in Applied Linguistics programmes. By organizing instruction around authentic scenarios and meaningful social action, educators can create learning environments that integrate communicative competence, professional preparation, digital literacy, and personal development.

The four scenarios presented in this paper—Career Path, Travel Worldwide, Keep Calm and Do Sports, and Cultural Heritage—illustrate how thematic modules can be transformed into fields of action in which students act as social agents. Through participation in realistic

tasks, collaborative projects, and reflective activities, learners develop linguistic competence alongside critical thinking, creativity, intercultural awareness, and professional identity.

The findings suggest that scenario-based syllabus design effectively operationalizes the principles of the CEFR and the Action-Oriented Approach. It encourages a transition from language learning as knowledge acquisition toward language learning as purposeful social participation. Moreover, its flexibility makes it particularly suitable for contemporary higher education contexts where resilience, adaptability, and learner agency are increasingly important.

As language education continues to evolve in response to technological, social, and professional transformations, the integration of cases and scenarios into syllabus design offers a promising pathway for preparing Applied Linguistics students to function successfully as multilingual professionals and active participants in a complex global society.

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