

COURSE: ADVANCED CONVERSATION

45 clock hours

2 weekly meetings – 1 ½ hours each

The development of oral skills, mainly those related to production, is the most common objective of a foreign language learner.

Students learning Spanish in Córdoba are immersed in a context where they are permanently exposed to linguistic input. In these cases, Spanish courses for foreigners offer them the possibility to access comprehensible input, to learn with a greater degree of metalinguistic awareness and to receive meaningful feedback, which is not always possible in a context of social interaction. In addition, courses allow them to come closer to and reflect upon the target culture and produce a variety of text types (recipes, interviews, debates, presentations, argumentation, surveys, narratives) that students will need in their daily lives or which will contribute to their appropriate performance in different communicative situations.

The method leading this proposal is the communicative one. Oral practice and group work are pillars in this method. By manipulating language, students discover its social function and develop communicative skills. On the other hand, the task-based approach proposes a use of the language oriented mainly toward meaning rather than linguistic structure. It has been proved that the exchange with native speakers in conversation has a greater influence on foreign-language learning than the work on linguistic structures during the class. Therefore, it is relevant that courses should offer the possibility to interact in classroom situations which are close to reality and which propose out-of-classroom activities where students have to use the language meaningfully.

It is important to point out that, although class activities focus on oral production, there will be reading and listening comprehension activities to help students increase their repertoire of expressive possibilities, in the different aspects of language. On the other hand, grammatical reflection will not be absent. In fact, this proposal presents a series of grammar topics which, according to the course instructor, students will need. This does not mean they will be dealt with exhaustively throughout the course. The grammar dose offered during classes will be subject to students' communicative needs.

Finally, it is essential to recognize that the Spanish class for foreigners is a meeting point for different cultures; it is an opportunity to develop the ability to reflect and place oneself in an attitude of estrangement before other behavior, views, typical customs that we individuals tend to naturalize and transform into “normality” parameters. It is, definitely, a possibility to cultivate dialog and respect to others.

Objectives

- To develop production skills that will permit interaction in the social context
- To learn the Argentine linguistic variety and the social norms ruling linguistic uses
- To get in touch with Argentine and *Cordobés* culture in particular
- To value one's own and other people's culture as a starting point for mutual respect
- To develop learning strategies which promote learners' autonomy
- To use complex grammatical structure of the Spanish language.

Contents

UNIT 1: THE SPANISH LANGUAGE IN LATIN AMERICA

Topics (sociocultural contents)

Characteristics of Spanish in America. Features of Argentine Spanish. Some characteristics of Spanish in Córdoba. Italianisms, anglicisms, and indigenous words incorporated into the Spanish of the *Río de la Plata* region. Neologisms. Discussion about linguistic innovations: Enrichment or contamination?

Communicative contents

Having conversations, starting from communicative situations, using vocabulary or typical expressions of Spanish in Argentina. Interviewing native speakers in order to collect typical words of Spanish in Córdoba. Presenting points of view about linguistic change.

Linguistic contents

Review of necessary linguistic structures for different communicative exchanges, with different purposes (greeting, requesting, inviting, commenting, telling). Expressions to state own's opinion: *creo que, me parece que, pienso que, para mí, yo opino que*; negative correlatos with the present subjunctive: *no creo que, no me parece que, no pienso que*, etc. Connectors to organize an argumentation: *en primer lugar, primeramente, por otra parte, en segundo término, en conclusión, para finalizar*, etc. Causal connectors: *a causa de que, dado que, ya que*. Consecutive connectors: *por lo tanto, por ende, por esa razón*.

UNIT 2: POPULAR LINGUISTIC PRODUCTIONS: FLIRTATIOUS COMPLIMENTS

Topics (sociocultural contents)

The definition of flirtatious compliments as a custom and as a linguistic act. Different types of flirtatious compliments. Classification by tone. Linguistic and literary resources used. The character and history of *Jardín Florido*. Different positions on this custom. Confrontation with other cultures.

Communicative contents

Explaining the characteristics of this custom in one's own country. Presenting the differences found. Creating flirtatious compliments. Telling the story of a typical personage in Córdoba from crucial facts in his/her life. Describing the personage. Interviewing native speakers about his/her characteristics. Presenting one's own point of view about the custom of telling flirtatious compliments.

Linguistic contents

Simple perfect preterit and imperfect preterit of the indicative. Time connectors in narrative. Argumentative resources. Concessive connectors: *si bien, a pesar de que, pese a que, aun cuando*. Conditional sentences with the imperfect preterit of the subjunctive (frequent structure in some flirtatious compliments).

UNIT 3: CÓRDOBA'S LEGENDARY PERSONAGES

Topics (sociocultural contents)

Personages in Córdoba's oral history: *la Pelada de la Cañada, el fantasma del Teatro Libertador, Don Luis, la mujer de la laguna, la mujer del angelito, Ramonita, Simón de la rosa, la Papa de Hortensia*. Peculiar personages in students' hometowns.

Communicative contents

Telling stories about legendary personages. Describing them.

Linguistic contents

Simple perfect preterit, imperfect preterit and pluperfect preterit of the indicative. Imperfect preterit of the subjunctive in narratives. Verbs changing their meaning depending on whether they are followed by *se* or not: *acordar/acordarse, quedar/quedarse, ir/irse*, etc.

UNIT 4: WHAT ARE WE ARGENTINES LIKE? CULTURAL STEREOTYPES

Topics (sociocultural contents)

How we Argentines see ourselves and how others see us. Non-verbal communication in Argentina according to foreigners: personal distance and physical contact in different communicative situations. Discussion about the cultural stereotypes of different communities. Ethnic humor. Cultural identities.

Communicative contents

Characterizing different cultural groups. Giving one's opinion about the possibility of this characterization. Making recommendations about non-verbal behavior in Argentina. Interpreting jokes and explaining the stereotypes they build.

Linguistic contents

Adjectives to speak about character. Uses of the verb *ser*. The contrast with the verb *estar*. The use of the present subjunctive to give recommendations: *es aconsejable que*, *es recomendable que*, *te/le aconsejo que*, etc. The imperfect preterit of the subjunctive in clauses subordinated to verbs in the conditional: *sería aconsejable que*, *te recomendaría que*, *sería preciso que*, etc.

UNIT 5: THE HISTORY OF ARGENTINA IN THE PAST FORTY YEARS

Topics (sociocultural contents)

The main political events in the last forty years in Argentina's history. The successive military coups. The *Cordobazo*. The military dictatorship. Missing people and *Madres de Plaza de Mayo*. The Malvinas War. The return of democracy. The trial of the Military Junta. The *Menem* decade. The crisis in 2001. The *Kirchner* period.

Communicative contents

Relating historical events. Reporting words said in another place and time. Expressing one's opinion.

Linguistic contents

Preterits of the indicative. Reported speech. Language verbs. Argumentation resources.

UNIT 6: SOCIAL ISSUES IN CÓRDOBA: *CARREROS* (horse-drawn cart drivers)

Topics (sociocultural contents)

Social issues in Argentina. *Cartoneros* (cardboard collectors) in Argentina. Their relationship with the crisis in 2001. The “white train”. *Carreros* in Córdoba. Their social role. Conflicts with other social actors.

Communicative contents

Expressing feelings and sensations about social phenomena in Argentina.

Expressing conditions with varying degrees of probability (*si no existieran los cartoneros...*, *si los ciudadanos tuviéramos más conciencia ambiental...*, *si no hubiera explotado la economía argentina...*). Presenting arguments to defend a point of view in a role-play. Describing the ideal world in which we would like to live.

Linguistic contents

Verbs of feeling or concern with the present subjunctive: *me preocupa que, me molesta que, me duele que, me da pena que*, etc. Conditional sentences with the indicative and with the imperfect and pluperfect preterits of the subjunctive. The use of the present subjunctive and the imperfect preterit of the subjunctive in compound sentences with unknown antecedents. The use of the imperfect preterit of the subjunctive in compound sentences beginning *Me gustaría que, Me encantaría que...*

UNIT 7: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Topics (sociocultural contents)

The native forest in Córdoba. The environment and the productive model. Environmental issues and poverty. Garbage in Córdoba.

Communicative contents

Talking about changes and transformations. Expressing cause and purpose. Expressing objections about a statement. Expressing impersonality and generalization. Expressing probability about the present and the past.

Linguistic contents

Specific vocabulary about the environment. Verbs expressing change: *volverse, quedarse, convertirse en*. General and specific uses of the prepositions *por* and *para*. Concessive connectors followed by the subjunctive. Impersonal *se*, passive *se* and *se* used in accidental actions. The use of *uno, una, cualquiera, todo el mundo* and the second person with a general or impersonal reference. Simple and compound conditional and imperfect and perfect future of the indicative to express probability.

UNIT 8: ORAL TRADITION LITERATURE: NICKNAMES, SAYINGS, IDIOMS

Topics (sociocultural contents)

The literature of oral tradition: characteristics. Classification of the so-called linguistic folk. Characterization of nicknames, sayings and idioms.

Communicative contents

Interacting in dialogs starting from different communicative situations using nicknames, sayings and idioms. Reflecting on their appropriateness in different communicative situations.

Linguistic contents

Repertoire of sayings, nicknames and idioms. Ways of incorporating them in different phrases.

Methodology

The communicative method and the task-based approach guide this proposal. In general, classes will start with a reading or listening activity (movies, fragments of radio or TV programs, literary texts, songs, etc.). Reading and/or listening comprehension will be checked through different strategies. Subsequently, students will be encouraged to produce different oral texts (dialogs, debates, instructive texts, dramatizations, interviews, surveys, oral presentations, games, etc.) with an increasing level of complexity.

Evaluation

Taking into consideration that learning a language implies the development of skills, evaluation will be continuous throughout the course. The instructor will assess students' processes.

There will be two breaks throughout the process for students to be able to focus more deeply on a certain topic and prepare an oral presentation. This work will also be graded.

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