

Drafting of Foreign Language Teaching Methods under the Intercultural Education Approach

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to reflect the change in the drafting of the Italian language teaching methods in years. Unlike Western Europe, in which the intercultural element is studied round the '80s, this concept entered Albania after the '90s, with the fall of the totalitarian regime. Before the '90s, there has been a pronounced lack in the selection of the teaching methods of foreign languages which were mainly based on the teaching of the grammatical structures. But after the '90s, changes are noticed in the drafting of these methods, taking into consideration elements which constitute the concept of intercultural. These elements are implemented so that students gain the skills of interactive communication.

Keywords: Intercultural, Skills, Communication, Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

In a context of globalization communication among different cultures has become of a great importance. Learning a foreign language is an important bridge between peoples, because it encourages the process of mutual communication among cultures trespassing not only the linguistic borders but cultural barriers as well.

Taking into account the fact that intercultural education is a multidimensional process, interactive among subjects, an enriching process of everyone's personal culture, the reprocessing of texts and the adaptation of techniques for better assimilation of linguistic and cultural competences, is necessary.

By learning a foreign language, knowledge of intercultural education can be transmitted, since in order to communication with a subject of a different culture, it is necessary that besides linguistics, other sub competences are known so that the objective of the intercultural communication competence is achieved. By knowing the linguistic and trans linguistic elements the student is able to use language in an operative way in cultural context.

The teaching methodology of foreign languages has undergone continues changes because it is considered as a liaison among cultures in which empathy, tolerance and awareness of a new culture can grow. The tendencies of foreign language teaching aim at developing linguistic, lexical and communicative competency. Now the student can gain competence in a level of verbal codes, as well as knowledge on non-verbal codes, thus of trans linguistic elements and this affects in one's better integration of the two codes.

2. METHODS

Researcher Laeng M. Supported the idea that in the field of education, every fact must be brought as a conceptual construction because it is necessary to establish which of the concepts on education will we refer to, at which subject is the educative acting addressed, on what context will it take place, what is the purpose and lastly by means of what sources can these goals be achieved.¹

¹Laeng M., Atlante della pedagogia. Le idée, le didattiche, i luoghi, Tecnolid 1993

Now the teaching methods are drafted according to the common European framework of references, having in mind the objectives that are aimed to be achieved. It fully describes what the students of a language must learn to use it for the purpose of communication. It also counts the knowledge and dexterity that the students must profit in order to have an effective linguistic behavior. This description includes even the cultural context that supports language. In an intercultural viewpoint, the essential objective of learning a foreign language is to favor the harmonic development of the student and his/her identity, responding to the enriching experience of the other in the field of language and culture.

The teaching methods I have selected are:

- “Nuova grammatica Italian per I stranieri” - Giovanni Battaglia, Bonacci Editore- Roma.
- “Bravissimo”- Katerine Kterinov, Maria Clotilde Botiosi Katerinov, Edizioni Bruno Mondadori, 1999
- “L’italiano per I stranieri, Due” - Gruppo META (Lorenzo Blini, Francisco Matte Bon, Raffaella Nencini, Nicoletta Santoni), Bonacci Editore, Roma 1993 (it is the third edition of this method).
- “L’italiano e l’Italia 4” - Prof. As. Dr Klodeta Dibra, MA Renata Martini, Publishing House Albatros, first edition 2007.

The first method “Nuova grammatica Italian per I stranieri” - Giovanni Battaglia, Bonacci Editore-Roma, is a method composed of 66 units, divided into two main parts. This teaching method has been used not only by those who wanted to learn the Italian language, but even by those who have wanted to deepen and to understand the logical and grammatical connections of this language. The first part of this method treats the arguments connected with phonetics and the different part of the sentence (articles, pronouns, nouns, adjectives, verbs) up to the conjugation of the regular verbs. The second part treats the irregular verbs, the usage of prepositions, the Italian phrase logical usage and the idiomatic locution and the usage of verb mood.

Teachers are advised to encourage dictation so that students can practice and write correctly. This method also uses illustrations to help the students be clear on and memorize the new words.

From the content of this method it is obvious that the grammatical structures are treated in more details and thus paying more attention and giving more space to this aspect compared to the other sections. It is noticed the absence of cultural exchange, which is by now a very important element. Below are given examples of the sections which have the two parts:

Part I

Lesson 4 – Table of content of the definite and indefinite article/illustration: eagles/numbers from 11-20/ the verb “to make” in present simple, indicative mood/prepositions

Lesson 5 – plural form of masculine gender part a,b,c/ illustration: Rossi family at home/verb “to arrive” in present simple, indicative mood/ordinal numbers 1-10

Part II

Lesson 40 – Conversation: At a tourist agency/Conjugation of irregular verbs (stay, go, come), in imperfect tense, indicative mood/usage of words: expressions with the verbs stay, go/ reading part: a series of road accidents caused by the fog.

Lesson 58 – Conversation: At the drugstore/conjugation of irregular verbs in the subjunctive

mood of the verbs drink, collect, hush, choose, know, cook, take off/ Use of words: idiomatic phrases formed with the verb make and and the noun cross/Reading: a weakness of intelligent people.

The teaching method “Bravissimo”- Katerine Kterinov, Maria Clotilde Botiosi Katerinov, Edizioni Bruno Mondadori, is a method which begins from the elementary level and step by step passes to the acquisition of the competences for communicative aims. This method consists of 20 units, each unit has 6 rubrics:

- What happened?- a certain situation is given in a dialogue where the linguistic structures and functions of the lesson are shown.
- Let's learn: communicative activities which aim at learning the pragmatic aspects of the language use and enriching the vocabulary with new words.
- The moment of Grammar- Grammatical scheme accompanied with explanatory notes and grammar exercises.
- Say it In Italian- Authentic oral and written texts for the development of reproductive abilities.
- Discovering...- Texts with different arguments about the Italian culture and civilization.
- Summary- texts for evaluation and self-evaluation of what has been learnt so far for both for specific parts, integrated ones, for the development of grammatical and lexical competences.

Compared to the first teaching methods in which every unit consists of 4 rubrics, we notice the enrichment of the rubrics and the aim of developing the competence of communication, intertwining of grammar with culture and the Italian civilization, is much more emphasized. Let us have a look at some examples to materialize it.

If we see unit 1, there is a situation of a youth party in the first rubric. In the second rubric it is given how should we make an introduction, get informed about the nationality, identity, origin, in which there will be new words related exactly to this argument. The third rubric will deal with grammatical aspects by giving the respective explanations for; personal pronouns, conjugation of the verb to be in the present simple, indicative mood, adjectives ending in -o-a-e, co- ca. Interrogative pronouns. Definite and indefinite articles.

In the rubric Say it in Italian- there will be part to develop the ability of listening, writing and speaking. In the column Discovering...- there will be reading and speaking parts and they will speak to the foreigners and the visitors. In the last column it will be seen how much has the capacity of either oral or written reproduction been urged.

In this unit the grammar exercises are intertwined with the topic of the lesson e.g.:

Completare i dialoghi con la forma corretta del verbo essere:

1. Qui solo noi italiani?
2. No, italiano anch'io
3. Voi ragazzi, di dove ?
4. Le ragazze tutte straniere, vero?

In the meantime, to develop the ability of speaking, we will see the way the exercises are drafted

and we will notice that the vast part of the exercises is collaboration between the students creating dialogues for different situations.

Lavorate in gruppi di tre (A, B, C). Ciascuno sceglie una nazionalita' tra quelle dell'esercizio 7. Chiedete e rispondete in modo formale come nel modello:

A. Lei, signore e' tedesco?

B. No, sono inglese.

Another element is also used in this method such as the game :

Abbinare le parole del gruppo A a quello del gruppo B:

fratello	femmina
padre	moglie
genitori	madre
marito	figli
maschio	sorella

As far as the urging of listening abilities is concerned, it is done by means of cassettes, in which listening and writing are combined, e.g.:

Ascoltate le due conversazioni. Dite di quali persone si parla.

- Woody Allen
- Christofer Lambert
- Whitney Houston
- Barbara Streisand

Whereas in the civilization rubric of this unit, it is treated some information about Italy, in which it is given the area of Italian territory, population, the different reasons why it is visited or why many foreign o and study in Italy.

The following units have been structured in the same way this unit, which was taken as an example, was drafted, being too strict to this scheme.

The advantage of this content is that the student who learns the Italian language is enriched not only linguistically but culturally as well, thus greatly improving his communicative performance. Another element that is very important for the inter-culture of the foreign languages and that we have mentioned so far is the integration and interaction, very clearly shown in this teaching method and that we are capable of changing from the preceding one whose qualities we materialized above.

The third teaching method we will analyze is "L'italiano per I stranieri, Due"- Gruppo META (Lorenzo Blini, Francisco Matte Bon, Raffaella Nencini, Nicoletta Santoni), Bonnacci Editore, Roma 1993 (it is the third edition of this method). This is the method I am using currently

in the teaching process of the Italian language at the Polytechnic University of Tirana. This method consists of 21 units, each unit contains 5 rubrics. Since it is a new edition it let's know that improvements and enrichment of rubrics have been made, aiming at the improvement of communication and the better assimilation of grammatical structures and the Italian civilization. Let's see it in concrete terms:

- Rubric I: Content of knowledge and functions.
- Rubric II- Grammar content
- Rubric III- New words
- Rubric IV-Content of civilization
- Rubric V-Phonetics and orthography (rubric which is not present in each unit)

Let us analyze unit nr. 10 with the respective rubrics by giving concrete examples:

The first rubric is about the elements that serve to create situations in the future when the act is sure; the elements that serve to create situations for the future but there is also an element of doubt; the way how to express our desires; the elements that give a hypothesis for the future.

Rubric II will explain the future tense of the verbs have to and think. The employment of this tense when there are elements of doubt and its employment in announcements. The usage of hypothetical compound clauses when formed by the subjunctive mood (imperfect tense) and by the conditional mood, especially when we use the verb *volere*, *piacersi* in the conditional mood.

The employment of the hypothetical compound clauses, when formed by the present simple tense and the future tense in the indicative mood.

Rubric III deals with the vocabulary used when we want to write down an announcement, when we want to express a superstition and new word related to the horoscope.

As far as the forth rubric is concerned, we will see that there will be given some announcement models; different Italian superstitions; an interview with the director of Italian Greenpeace; horoscope; literature parts taken from the book of Cesare Pavese "Passero per piazza di Spagna".

The fifth rubric belonging to phonetics and orthography is not covered.

In this unit, we will notice a combination of grammar exercises with the topic of the respective unit.

Whereas the last column, the one about civilization, gives information about the well-known Italian actor Alberto Sordi.

The fourth method "l'italiano e l'Italia 4"- Prof.As.Dr Klodeta Dibra,MA Renata Martini, Publishing House Albatros, first edition 2007.

The fourth method "l'italiano e l'Italia 4"- Prof.As.Dr Klodeta Dibra,MA Renata Martini, Publishing House Albatros, first edition 2007 is a teaching method used in high schools and the one I have analyzed is for the fourth grade of high school. This method contains 12 units and each unit has 6 rubrics. Different from the proceeding methods, this one has intertwined the element of cultural exchange. This is obvious in the employment of typical Albanian names like Blerta, Armir, Alma. It is also obvious in the different situations like in the fourth unit " a visit to Berat" or in unit nr 9 "Journey to Shkodra" in which apart from other things, it is treated the

Albanian civilization as well. Previously we spoke about the duty that intercultural education has which is the promotion of dialogues and of a constructive cohabitation between subject belonging to different cultures. In this method we see that the majority of the situations occur between characters or nationalities and cultures different from each other and it is understood that the acceptance of the concept of variability is a key element in the drafting of this text. The characters facing the respective cultures do not lose their identity, they simply enrich their horizon over the other cultures. It also encourages the improvement of communicative ability leaving too much space to the communicative activities, different exercises, creative moments or the treatment of many arguments on the Italian civilization. A combination of interaction with the exercises mentioned above is present, as well as integrity and cultural exchange. Much importance is dedicated in this method to inter-culture, as a very important element in the compiling of the teaching methods of foreign languages. Let us see the rubrics dealt with:

Rubric I: Thematic

Rubric II: New words

Rubric III: Employment of linguistic structures

Rubric IV: Grammatical observation

Rubric V: Creativity

Rubric VI: Civilization

Let us illustrate more specifically by means of a lesson what we said above:

Lesson 9

The first rubric of the lesson is a letter about the impressions after a visit to Shkodra. Then the next part is about the new words and language use, in which students are taught the way of writing a letter. Concerning grammar, explanations about the direct and indirect speech are given. In the communication section held in class, there are some exercises such as:

Attivita' 3. Mandare e ricevere lettere e' un grande piacere. Preferite scrivere una lettera, mandare una comunicazione con e-mail oppure realizzare una comunicazione con Chat?

In the creativity section, different exercises are given where students can develop writing skills on different arguments such as:

- Provate a riassumere la lettera di Chiara dell'Unita' 9. (20 righe)
- Momento di scrittura: Elaborate un saggio sul tema "Le leggende". Riportate vos stessi qualche leggenda della storia del nostro popolo.

3. CONCLUSION

It is clearly seen the importance of intercultural education that has been emphasized throughout the years, being reflected also in the teaching methods of foreign languages. The impact it has had in the compilation and improvement of the methods is very obvious, it has enriched them with the needed elements that constitute the element of inter-culture. These are methods which have been reprocessed by not simply leaving them with the explanation of the grammatical aspects but by combining them with the civilization aspect. In this way other values are added

to the teaching process of foreign languages, encouraging not only the development of linguistic concepts, but also the communicative concept of the student. Thus, the role of the teacher in this aspect changes, seeing him/her not simply in the role of a teacher, but furthermore, in the role of a mediator.

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