

Intercultural approach and formation of intercultural communication skills in literary didactics

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Abstract: *The author aims to highlight the thesis that the intercultural approach is a must for literary didactics leading to a general intercultural education. Literary training is analysed in terms of providing with cultural competence, and intercultural communication competence. The way from „Je est un autre” by Rimbaud to „Je est aussi un autre” by Henri Michaux represents the necessity of including intercultural awareness and the development of intercultural communication skills in the mandatory process of teaching literature in FFL class.*

Key words: *Intercultural Approach, Intercultural Education, Literary Didactics, Cultural Competence, Intercultural Communication Competence*

*“L’analyse textuelle est par définition interculturelle” /
“The textual analysis is by definition intercultural”
(Bertrand, 1993)*

INTRODUCTION

The literature should occupy a prominent place in the teaching of French as a foreign language at all levels, and it is surely with good reason since it represents a good way to access the language and culture of France. However, the choice of study material, when dealing with education, is only as the way it is described by the approach which it is subject.

INTERCULTURAL APPROACH

*„Sa démarche représente plus qu’une passion, un art de vivre !” /
“Its approach is more than a passion, a lifestyle!” (Gérard Zuchetto, 2009)*

The intercultural approach is a must for literary or didactic teaching of the literary text due to anthropological texts. It is this anthropological dimension which is the preferred access route to cultural models.

This approach concerns both the content and form of texts and evokes the social function of literature, presented its representative function dimension of cultural references in a given community and therefore its important integrative role and identity. Moreover, the complexity of identity issues instead of producing the didactic interest that is worn them today rather allows to establish a close link between school and life, a link that is played in real life.

It is for this reason that *“it must have been aware that the intercultural is a must also because, if we look more closely, any connection with the text in its intercultural essence FFL (...) has obviously given the “plurality” cultural multiplicity of cultural crossings, characteristics of civilization and even today, beyond this plurality and multiplicity”* [Séoud, 1997: 137].

This thesis we strongly share is also supported by many other educationists including Collès (1992) and Charaudeau (1987). This approach is also called **intercultural education** and is in the perspective of an eclectic methodology in which the need is justified by the fact that *“the pleasure is not the only issue of self-discovery recognition in reading: consciousness of identity as well. That is why it is important to include in our*

educational perspective, both in FFL in FML, a passage through what is called intercultural today" [Séoud, 1997: 137].

It should also be noted that the intercultural approach is not primarily a matter of current events in the light of the vital requirements that creates in us the information society and the internationalization, globalization and its contingencies. It is an ancient need as the man's relationship to the literary text exists and has existed since their appearance, when man began to communicate with others. In this sense, because the intercultural approach helps to identify ways in which stakeholders express their thoughts, their emotions, in a word their worldview, the *"textual analysis is cross-cultural by definition, since even if one remains in a starter culture, it invites us to render visible a memory and identity, buried beneath the ephemeral identity of the present"* [Bertrand, 1993: 53].

The intercultural approach is made possible thanks to the confrontation, comparison with other subjects, other cultures. In this context, the Other becomes a mirror for Self and the Self a mirror to the other. Indeed, thanks to its position of *exteriority* (Bakhtin, 1984) that Todorov (1989) translates by *exotopie*, only the Other can see us in our totality, only the Other can allow us to see ourselves in our totality. Similarly, it is this position that allows you to see the other in its entirety. Thus, foreign culture - French in our case she needs the native culture - Romanian, to elucidate and vice versa. In this regard, Bakhtin states that *"in the field of culture, exotopie is the most powerful engine of understanding. A foreign culture is revealed in its completeness and in depth look at another culture (and she does not engage in all its fullness because other cultures who will see and understand even more). A sense reveals in its depth for meeting and having rubbed another sense, a stranger senses between the two is established as a result of the dialogue that has ended and unequivocal character inherent to the meaning and culture alone"* [Bakhtin, 1984: 140].

While being set to teach literature, intercultural approach seems to neglect a little the text itself, although it speaks of a pedagogy focused on both the form and substance of the text. How to confront the facts without giving prior room for reading and formal analysis and profound texts? The focus on the comparison of cultural data that are mostly the domain of the symbolic, with intersections of looks, can be objectively if it is based on the language of facts, they constitute the primary means by which culture is conveyed.

The objective discovery of cultural properties, the place and the teacher's skills implemented during intercultural gait are also other essential elements that are defined by the establishment of an intercultural methodology, such as that founded by Andreas Rittau.

The intercultural approach in teaching literary leads to the question of *"pédagogie de l'interculturel"/"intercultural pedagogy"* [Séoud, 1997: 149]. The creation of a specialized methodology in terms of world civilization, that global or transboundary `it implies, allows both to address the new writing from all whatever their degree of polyculturalité, of multiculturalism, of cultural mixing or multiple cultural.

In this perspective, intercultural pedagogy designed by Saud involves three steps:

- comparison through a junction looks and a combination of possible multiplied at will,
- distancing or tilting or deceneration through an objective attitude which involves critical for the discovery of other cultures values,
- empathic understanding for understanding each other by putting in place necessary.

The intercultural approach is focused on the analysis and exploitation of the literary text in particular and the general discourse, while relying on an appropriate methodology.

TRAINING OF TEACHING LITERARY SKILLS

As a literary training class FFL, which is the subject of literary didactics, will only respect a logical matter, as long as the teacher will design a course exclusively using knowledge about exposure in his works reference, neglecting the one hand, the question of the transformation of this knowledge into knowledge, secondly, the question of structuring knowledge skills, it will be unable to articulate knowledge and skills, knowledge literature on the one hand, and, on the other hand, communication on an experiment of the literature which is progressively enriched with this knowledge then.

LITERARY TRAINING AND SKILLS TRAINING

„La littérature [est] en péril” /
 “ The literature [is] at risk ”
 (Tzvetan Todorov, 2007)

The success of literary education depends primarily on the ability of teachers to design tasks, problems, sequences of tasks-problems, a longitudinal training plan for task sequences, problems relating to communication on the uses of literature: uses established in the classroom - the varieties of the school literary reading, among others, and social practices that they should consider. But we must emphasize once again, if in the new perspective created by the redefinition of learning objectives in terms of skills, literary knowledge is to be considered as the means to accomplish the tasks they are to consider themselves as means to appropriate knowledge and acquire provisions for benefit of literary production.

In the French Community of Belgium for example, where the learning objectives have been redefined in terms of skills for the past ten years, the complex school tasks supposed to be the main means of acquiring a literary skills being at s exercise in extracurricular situations, namely in real communication situations, have become ends in themselves. But the necessary assessment of learning should not become an obsession which reinforces the control of the school system on almost exclusive basis of learning outcomes, following the model of the famous *"learning outcomes"* of the English specialty literature. As this can lead to divert attention from the majority of teachers of the fundamental question about the specific contribution of French literature we teach humanization of our students, to center exclusively on the effort to make all our students capable of performing complex tasks that now form the backbone of this discipline. This is certainly not a trivial matter that the latter: it is in academic success. The key is to keep the balance between the ends pursued, and never forget to focus on the emancipatory power of literary Saviors, their virtue to elucidate the physical environment as a human and enlighten the choices contribute to individual happiness as the collective harmony. The focus on the tasks on teaching techniques best suited to make possible the acquisition of knowledge to accomplish the latter, astray educational reform whose skills are the cornerstone and it impedes thinking teachers about the potential benefits of what they teach, with regard to the intellectual and emotional development of their students.

To ensure the acquisition or development of *production* skills and speech *understanding* skills on the individual in the world, for example, learning French literature should make it possible and desirable appropriation of certain kinds of knowledge speech. It must also make possible and desirable the knowledge of ownership on the uses of the language conform to the rules or agreements that define these types of discourse.

"Reading comprehension" means *"an operation of the complex spirit of producing a mental model of what the text gives to know, to understand the intention of the author and react, intellectually and emotionally, to both this model and writing that gives to know "* [Dumortier, 2001: 15-20].

Good or senior student's reading skill enables the teacher to go away from a guided reading by teaching experience or seek to propose questions around the text according to the criteria it gives its own reading. It is time to remember the words that "*learning to read is first learn to propose relevant questions to a text and not to respond to that of the master*" (Vigner 1984: 147). From this point of view, while relying on tools that pedagogy of creativity offers us today, it would be desirable that both of our students so that all, without exception, emerging from our direct assistance it can reach a maturity option through the reading exercise. From this point of view, with the choice of the literary text the challenge then seems indisputable.

To identify the skills, you have to cross two categories of variables whose specific values influence the understanding of a literary work and the manifestation of this understanding in educational context: those concerning the work itself and those on the context in task which is imposed and carried out. These are the recurring values of these variables that say *No school reading practices* are related, they belong to the same family situations or reading tasks. Each of these families is a skill, a virtuality to mobilize the necessary resources to fulfil the dual activity of understanding and demonstration of understanding.

These necessary resources at each of our students are, according Dumortier, the following: "*cultural habit or cultural habits of the student, his linguistic broad sense knowledge, domain knowledge dealt with in writing, knowledge of agreements or additional codes involved in the development of writing, his knowledge about the task of understanding and the task of manifestation of understanding, his emotional structures and interest in the area dealt with in writing , its metacognitive resources*" (Dumortier, 2000).

All we can say to our students is that they learn about the man and the art, through tasks related to literature, is beneficial for their intellectual development and social-affectif. All we can make them see, choosing the appropriate literary works or fragments, by presenting them conducive way by focusing and exercising their reflection on the aspects that are right is that these writings give to know "life" as does the fact that none of those who carry other disciplinary knowledge, and they give so much to reflect on the exposure mode of the respective themes on these issues themselves, so to think about issues of enunciation and perspective, particularly on content issues. Academic tasks that may be unique to estimate the acquisition and development of skills related to literary practices never involve similar activities to those that take place in school situations.

Many specialists in skills draw attention to the fact that the possibilities of mobilization of expertise are related to the subject's consciousness of being in a similar situation, or problem related to that in which he has acquired this skill then. Without this awareness, competence is not updated, and the knowledge that it implies are not implemented. We can now understand how important it is that the teacher as designer-task problems through which will vest gradually, skills, would highlight the similar problematic situations, those related to school activities and those relating to the reference social practices. Regarding the literary education, one of the most important consequences of the redefinition of learning objectives in terms of skills, in our opinion, to attract the attention of teachers - focused, usually on a generally chronological organization of literary knowledge, the resources needed to accomplish the task, the resolution of difficulties they entail. This is the teaching of foreign languages who spread the design of the four skills, sometimes called macro-skills: reading, writing, speaking, listening. FFL Teachers must ensure that students are in these four areas, also able to understand or produce messages. Their relative ability depends in particular on variables such as their relation to the matter of the message, its nature, its form, the speaker or the recipient. However, we must clarify that their reading skills, writing, speaking and listening are often fluctuating and that in each of these areas of communication, our students acquire certain skills but others can do their still lacking.

From their different corners of the world, some researchers agree to recommend the use of the literary text in language classes and the implementation of teaching practices of the language of class teaching literature to consolidate the common skills such as language skills, communicative and cultural, or the skills of reading and writing in the target language (cf. Scott Tucker, 2001; Stivale, 2004). Teachers and students thus have an interest in these two areas of teaching come together in dialogue and exchange.

LITERARY TRAINING AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE

Cultural competence is the subject of a growing number of research studies. The exercises that didactics design for classes of French as a foreign language are intended to promote access, through language, behavioral francophone culture. According to numerous studies and didactics especially as those published by the Applied Linguistics Unit of the University of Liège in Belgium, didactics of literature can contribute to the development of this cultural competence. To this end, the role of the teacher is to analyze literary texts in the light of Goffman microsociology and interactional linguistics. An anthropological-sociological analysis of a particular literary text allows to expose what type of reading it in class practice French as a Foreign Language.

Thibault seeks to highlight how the founding narratives and mythological works based cultural transmission of memory through community awareness open literature from the beginning of the teaching then continues through familiarization emblematic figures.

The cultural and intercultural skills are much talked about in the literary text excellent support and source of appearance. Baudelaire's poems, Verlaine and Rimbaud or Musset piece can allow students to discover new ways to express themselves and communicate, new social codes and different cultural models. Our students have the freedom to distance themselves, as these codes and these models are "others", from another century, but they can also feel good in close. This proximity is an asset of the literature of the nineteenth century, admittedly, is trading when the students are willing to enter the reading of the new literary universe that the teacher-trainer offers him and to appropriate it by using various, and sometimes very difficult exercises. One may deplore the scarcity, alongside language skills development exercises, reading and writing skills, exercises aimed at developing cultural competence in the course of French foreign language, because the lack of these skills undermines the understanding of the literary text, and therefore the pleasure it can bring. This is not to dilute or lose the literary text in language practice or avoid learning concepts or literary theories, but rather to clarify the text with the use of appropriate teaching tools. This is another way of being, a way of saying, a literary meeting represents a meaningful step in the world of knowledge and expertise that contributes to the development of each of our students.

LITERARY TRAINING AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE

«Je est un autre » (Rimbaud)

«Je est aussi un autre » (Henri Michaux)

In our society provides information and communication in the European context, the Council of Europe works to promote linguistic and cultural diversity within the framework of its policy to build a European identity. The teaching of foreign languages, including French foreign language, is considered to include, in this vision, not only linguistic performance and verbal communication, but also aspects such as intercultural awareness and intercultural skills. This is to develop in our students the "*life skills*" and the ability to discover "*otherness*", and more than that to discover "*the other friend*."

Under these conditions, the teacher of the French language, now a trainer and facilitator, while retaining its role as the backbone of the education system, is then as a mediator between the two cultures, French and Romanian. Indeed, the way education

happens in the classroom depends largely on what the various FFL teachers deem appropriate.

There are some elements of French culture that can be taught through literature to develop intercultural communication skills, and that are especially important in the didactics of literature: traditions and customs; history and civilization; popular culture, myths and legends; stereotypes; geography; religion, beliefs, ways of thinking and reacting; the theory and practice of democracy and individual rights; daily and family life, the lifestyle and habits - including same-age our students persons; socio-political aspects; fine arts, music, architecture, cinema, literature and festivals; life and contemporary civilization; food; social rules and behavior; politeness, good manners, know-how, degrees of formality; educational systems. All these elements are never sufficiently exploited, foster communication and interpersonal and intercultural interaction.

Indeed, the communication of the traditions, customs, beliefs and lifestyle of French helps a lot our students understand literature and exposed to more vocabulary used in appropriate contexts. The discovery of the differences and similarities in the way of thinking and reacting gives students all age a better sense of tolerance, compassion and generosity and develops their acceptance of others, mutual understanding and flexibility in their thinking. The history and geography, the daily lifestyle and habits, music, fine arts, architecture, cinema, the press are important aspects in teaching French literature, because they are the "the identity of the interlocutor "for its part is" essential to the process of teaching a foreign language" [Drăghicescu, 2005: 23]. It is through cultural identification with his interlocutor that our students can and will act properly in the target environment, using appropriate language and behavior.

CONCLUSION

To summarize, it is clear that globalization demands a more complete understanding of other cultures; hence the teaching of French literature promotes and requires special attention paid to the training of intercultural communication skills. Develop skills for daily behavior, teaching the historical context also represent key landmarks in the literary education of our students. Teaching social aspects of culture, such as interpersonal communication and non-verbal, helps develop positive feelings toward people of another culture. The choice to introduce cultural aspects in FFL classes through teaching literature stems from the opinion of each teacher to share about the importance of these topics for the training and development of intercultural communication skills. It is important that these subjects stimulate motivation and desire to learn from our students. To this end, there are a lot of processes that can be applied in the classroom:

- *Creation of learning situations within the competence of intercultural communication*, which relies primarily on authentic materials and documents. Whether literary texts in textbooks or methods used, illustrating cultural productions marked by filtering the author of articles, cartoons, photos and films, recordings, videotapes or CDs, they can bring into the classroom authentic socio-cultural elements, both in terms of content and the fact that they are common;
- *Simulations* in a teaching environment open to transpose the theoretical explanations in practice, and explicitly to illustrate and reinforce certain behaviors marked by cultural specificity;
- *Initiation situations or appropriate contexts* for the implementation of certain cultural contents, depending on experience and the teacher's expertise, age and already acquired knowledge of students;
- A continuously *improving* of FFL teacher training in a language environment and French culture, to ensure the success of intercultural communication competence;

- Use of the *presence of natives* or in audio and video recordings to solve some problems associated with intercultural training and intercultural communication skills.

It is generally agreed that intercultural awareness and the development of skills and intercultural communication skills should be included in the mandatory process of teaching literature in class FFL. **The age of students, their language and life experience, the context of education, the teacher training are important landmarks in this modern approach will bear fruit for years to come.**

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