

THE CULTURE OF A NATION THE BASILAR FACTOR FOR AN EFFECIENT LEARNING OF ITS LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to bring (1) a model of a didactic unit prepared for those students from 18 to 22 years who learn Italian language, (2) give the students the opportunity to know some Italian cultural patterns and help (3) the development of thinking, investigation, research, work in group, interpretation and writing skills for different types of texts.

The presented didactic unit has been used for students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, in Tirana, Albania and has aroused interest and motivation by building a spirit of teamwork and willingness to work further with units of this format.

This occurs because learning a foreign language does not mean only knowing to speak or write it, to learn its grammar or vocabulary, it is obvious that to have a deep knowledge of a foreign language, it is also essential to be aware of the nation's culture from which that language comes from. As a matter of fact one of the fundamental objectives of glottodidactics is precisely the awareness of the culture of the language to be learnt because only in this way it is possible to know the psychology and the outlook of a nation.

It is not easy to have knowledge of the culture of a nation, because it has to be clearly defined which cultural patterns have to be provided in language classes and what their nature will be. The concept of culture is quite broad and as such its use requires to be clearly defined.

Glottodidactics throughout the world has clearly defined the type of culture which should be provided in language classes.

That is of anthropological type and as such it should provide cultural models which ensure the students not only with a general cultural knowledge with regard to that language but also with a specific knowledge, especially for language classes in our Faculty with which we operate, therefore specific aspects which are related with that language in order to have the proper cultural background on that language at the end of the course.

Key words: culture, lesson, foreign language, lecturer, student

Introduction

In the Faculty of Foreign Languages in Tirana, Italian language is learnt as a first foreign language (LB), branch of Italian language in the first cycle of Bachelor and in the second one Master of Science in the profiles such as teaching, communication and translation, as a second foreign language (LC) and third language (LD) in all other branches in this faculty, such as English, German, Spanish, French and Balkan Slavic languages in the first and second cycle of university studies as well.

This means that the language is learnt by a great number of students who at the same time study other languages and cultures important for their studies profile, that is why learning another foreign language and its culture complicates somehow the teaching and learning of some languages and cultures at the same time, but on the other hand makes it more diverse, more intriguing, interesting and motivational.

It is clear that the Italian language lecturer should have the student's profile clear so that in the presentation of Italian cultural patterns he has a general culture of that student's profile with whom he works, this because during the presentation of the Italian cultural patterns he often has to make approaches of cultures as he will need to find similarities and differences. This should be done not only between Italian and Albanian language, but also between cultural patterns of other languages. In order to achieve this purpose he can rely on the students who have as a study profile (LB) that specific language and they can also bring themselves cultural patterns of that language and they can review those models by seeing the usage, the type and the way they appear together with the lecturer.

Didactic unit that we present below aims to make the students know some aspects of Italian culture such as: music, cinema, Italy's art cities, free time.

This unit aims not only to be aware of some aspects of Italian culture but also to develop some skills such as:

- The ability of investigation
- The ability of research
- The ability of work in group
- Development of critical thinking
- The ability to interpret facts and data
- Journalistic writing ability
- The ability to present papers efficiently

Didactic unit

Didactic unit Italy and us	
<u>The public to whom it is addressed</u>	Age 18-22
<u>Level</u>	B2- C1 (According to the European Portfolio of languages)
<u>Time</u>	10-12 hours
<u>Organization</u>	This unit is divided into four learning units LU, Unità di apprendimento in (Ita) UA), which includes different fields of the Italian culture.
<u>Objectives regarding social competences</u>	<p>LU1 – Developing a positive interdependence between students, in order to create a harmonious relationship between them.</p> <p>LU2 - presentation of ideas, argumentation, critical ideas, accepting different ideas, solving conflicts.</p> <p>LU3 – Information processing, the development of a brainstorming, contributions of ideas, reaching an agreement, talking about things that give you pleasure.</p> <p>LU4 - The organization of learning the material, stimulating hearing, involvement, collaboration, emotions, interaction between students, evaluation of friends contributes in joint effort.</p>
<u>Linguistic objectives</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and meaning of a written song • Indicative mood, imperfect tense, present perfect and past perfect • Enriching the vocabulary, writing an article. • Journalistic prose. • Enrichment of the vocabulary regarding travelling, places and elements of art (the use of infinitive and qualitative adjectives). • Deepening of the journalistic prose. • Tenses such as present, historical present typical of journalistic prose, conditional • Formal register.
<u>Cultural objectives</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of Italian music and stereotypes presented in it. - Awareness of Italian cinema. - Awareness of Italy's art cities. - Understanding how the young Italian spends their spare time. - Talking about other Italian stereotypes.
<u>Means and materials</u>	Laboratory, computer, internet, images, video projector

<p><i>Development of LU1 Time 2 hours</i></p>	<p>Motivation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Free listening of songs. Selecting one of them to be further discussed</i> “La tipica ragazza italian” di Dj Matrix http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J3GyG3rsAzQ “Maschi contro femmine” F. Baccini http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSPjaShSsxM “Le donne di Modena” F. Baccini http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7x_C6xOfRxo 2. <i>Second listening</i> Questions about it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the song about? - Who is the main character? - What characteristics are mentioned? - What is emphasized? 3. <i>Work in pairs</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find approaches of stereotypes in the song in Albanian language or LB - Find the differences and similarities in comparisons and given stereotypes - Translation of the song sentence by sentence - Poetic translation of the song if it is possible 4. <i>Analysis:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of the poetic text, its nature and characters presented - Discuss about the translation of the song - Try to agree and write the final translation of the song. - Study of the basic concepts. - Game <i>numbered heads together</i> on the content of the song. 5. <i>Brainstorming</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talking about other stereotypes of young Italian and young Albanian and the young people of language B. This is organized with groups composed of 3-4 students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Findings and approaches of stereotypes, at least one for each group. 6. <i>Feedback with the teacher :</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What do you think about stereotypes? - What have you noticed yourself? - What have you felt about the Albanians stereotypes that exist? - Do you think stereotypes are significant to know a nation? 7. <i>Relax</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Singing the song together and for those who want karaoke of the
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	song
<u>Development of LU2</u> <u>Time 4 hours</u>	Italian cinema
<u>Motivation phase</u> <u>Globalization phase</u> <u>Analysis phase</u> <u>Summary phase</u>	<p>Watching two parts of films</p> <p>“ La grande Bellezza” di P. Sorrentino</p> <p>“ Benvenuti al Sud” di L. Miniero</p> <p>http://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=benvenuti+al+sud+film+completo</p> <p>http://soggettointercultura.wordpress.com/ (working tabs and parts of the film)</p> <p>“ Maschi contro femmine” M. Brizzi, M. Martani</p> <p>http://www.chili-tv.it/film/maschi-contro-femmine-2010</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad discussion (plenary) and activation of prior knowledge. - Role with interviews in pairs. - Questions about parts of interviews that they have watched and personal questions about the types of movies that are watched, etc. <p>Division of class into groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group in favor films. 2. Group against films. 3. Neutral group, neither for nor against. <p>One of the students becomes the moderator and leads the debate.</p> <p>Groups speak one after the other.</p> <p>The moderator tries to make all the members of the first two groups active. Meanwhile the third group does not participate.</p> <p>Then the moderator makes a summary of what it is said for and against films.</p> <p>Creating new groups</p> <p>Drafting of an article about Italian films they saw, one for each group.</p> <p>Later the leaders of the groups are gathered to prepare an only article, which then is read and submitted to a free and open discussion.</p>
<u>Development of LU3</u>	Imaginary travelling in Italian art cities.
<u>Time</u>	3 hours
<u>Way of working</u>	Investigation groups
<u>Motivation</u>	<p>Watching lots of photos, or video images of different Italian art cities. (Rome, Florence, Venice, Naples, Pisa, Bari)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brainstorming <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students helped by teachers create a brainstorming of vocabulary with regard to travelling and cities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brainstorming - 2. With regard to vocabulary of places and artistic elements (such as museums, churches or monuments, famous artists and known pieces). - Plenary discussion (open) on the argument in question. Everyone is invited to express his opinion on travel experiences that he has had as well those wishing to do and personal preferences.
<u>First phase</u>	<p>Each group agrees on which city they are interested in visiting. Through cooperative learning students, under the guidance of teachers, decide how to conduct a research.</p> <p>Each group member is assigned a number and then tasks are given to the group.</p>
<u>Second phase</u>	<p>Students divided into groups go to the laboratory.</p> <p>Each member conducts an individual research assigned by the group.</p> <p>Each group proceeds in this way.</p>
<u>Third phase</u>	<p>Groups are gathered again, they examine the materials collected and prepare an article to deliver a presentation in class. Meanwhile the group presents the article, the others take down notes and they simultaneously should try to memorize information on which the last check will be done.</p> <p>Open discussion.</p>
<u>Development of LU4</u>	Specific news: Rubric to deepen the knowledge on young Italian and their free time.
<u>Time</u>	2 hours
<u>Way of working</u>	Cooperative learning
<u>Motivation</u>	<p>The lecturer presents the topic “I giovani italiani e il loro tempo libero”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A rubric dedicated to young and their free time is watched by them. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hPYU9S7Tsnk - After the video, the lecturer delivers students a questionnaire, to understand how they spend their free time. - Open discussion on questionnaire’s results.
<u>First phase</u>	<p>The lecturer proposes each group to write an article about one of the developed Learning Units in class.</p> <p>Groups work on different arguments and they write the final article.</p>
<u>Second phase</u>	<p>After writing the article about (cinema, music, art cities, spare time), groups are disintegrated. Each new group now is composed of new members from each preliminary group and each of them talks about the work the preliminary group has done, so that each group knows the other groups work.</p>
<u>Third phase</u>	<p>The students using power point will present a role play with a rubric format entitled “I giovani italiani e il loro tempo libero”, “Young Italians and their</p>

	leisure time”, dividing the roles, screenwriter, filmmaker, journalist etc.) The rubric will be registered and presented to the class. It will be the class to give the judgment on the other groups work. - The presented rubric will have the value of check.
<u>Last check</u>	- Test including questions (multiple choices) - Structuring a brainstorming and other techniques which emphasize the fulfillment of predefined objectives.
<u>Self- Assessment</u>	Self-assessment in relation to the work in group: - Which were the positive and negative aspects of this experience? - How did you feel working with your friends in group? - Were your friends of the group ready to help you in difficult situations? - Were you evaluated? - Could you express freely your opinions during the discussion? - Do you think there are elements to be improved and which are those?
<u>General evaluation of the lecturer</u>	In addition to social skills, the lecturer will also evaluate the linguistic skills, such as: - The ability to share tasks. - The ability to get information through research. - The ability to use technologies. - Grammatical correctness. - The ability to present personal ideas. - The ability of presentation - The behavior in group.
<u>Final discussion</u>	Discussion about the difficulties encountered during the work, the applied social relationships and the analysis of the work in group. Unresolved questions Personal problems regarding the group

Conclusions

During the use of this unit in the classes it was noticed

- In general, the creation of a creative and productive working atmosphere which certainly brings efficiency in the final product
- In general, having a positive climate with small conflicts, but nevertheless a productive climate which encouraged positive debate, from which better ideas emerged.
- Difficulties working in group at the beginning, some of them prefer working individually and they want to be evaluated in this way.
 - The lecturer intervenes to clarify the objects and the goal of the work in group

- The lecturer clarifies the mode of assessment, initially in group and then individually
 - Initial difficulties with a small group of students to accept the task assigned by the group leader
- The lecturer makes clear the fact that the leader will also do his own work and he will be changed so the student might be the protagonist of the following group.
- The group leader is often faced up to challenges to keep the group together
 - The lecturer makes clear that if the group does not work together, the group and each of them will get a negative final evaluation.
 - There are students who try to give their task to others.
- The lecturer makes it clear there is not only an evaluation for the group but also an evaluation for each person
 - It is noticed that there are students who show little interest in cultural aspects on which they will work
- The lecturer clarifies that if the group presents new proposal regarding the cultural aspect on which he would like to work, he also has to present this to other groups and after it is accepted by them unanimously they can work on that proposal, this occurs because later there are distributions and new groups are created.
 - It is noticed that good students try to do everything on their own without giving access to others
- The lecturer clarifies that they have to work in group because they will be evaluated in group.
 - It is noticed that there are students who although they have done the assigned work they have difficulties in delivering it properly.
- The lecturer motivates this kind of student giving him a specific evaluation, if he has done a very good work.

Despite the problems encountered during the hours of this unit, what really matters is the fact that they can be sorted out individually and in group and undoubtedly the fulfillment of the objectives clearly defined by this unit.