Carlo Nofri

Guide to Glottodrama Method

Learn foreign languages through Drama

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GLOTTO® DRAMA

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Carlo Nofri

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1. Theoretical Framework

1.1 Nature and aims of the Glottodrama project

The Glottodrama project arises from the recognition of the great pedagogical value represented by the experiences of theatrical foreign language teaching, that is those experiences taken from the use of drama resources in the learning of foreign languages. A field of teaching experimentation that has revealed the great potential of this approach to linguistic learning but has also pointed out the limits of the experiences often carried out without the support of professional actors.

Attempts to apply theatre to foreign language education that have been limited mainly to the dramatization of given texts and that have represented an expansion of those already tested acting activities as the dramatization and role-play very common nowadays in the teaching practice inspired by the communicative approach.

In other words these experiences couldn't fully exploit the pedagogic potential of all those activities and techniques used in typical Drama workshops which target the actors' training. Therefore the project has tried to intensify these experiences overcoming the simple formula of "theatre in a foreign lan-

guage", that often runs the risk of overshadowing the acting aspects enhancing the linguistic and formal aspects or not concentrating adequately on the laboratory phase run by the professionals of acting. The general idea is to integrate the language training path with a specific work on the reciting aspects that free the capacity to make linguistic acts adequate to real communicative situations, including paralinguistic aspects, mastering a higher level of means of expression and a greater understanding of their pragmatic effects.

The Glottodrama is a flexible methodology that can be fitted to any level of knowledge and to any educational context: from the elementary level of study in order to familiarize with the language to higher levels in order, to know and master deeper linguistic and "trans-grammatical" aspects.

Therefore the Glottodrama can be conceived and stand alone as the main language course but also as a parallel activity, that integrates those courses based on different methodological options.

It does not clash with the already existing learning programs of the different European school systems, but it proposes a new learning opportunity aiming first of all at the gaining of oral skills.

1.2 Targets of the project

The first language targeted by the project has been Italian for foreigners. The core of the project has been the creation, experimentation and scientific formalization of a methodology for foreign language teaching through theatrical resources able to clearly point out theoretical principles, application rules and learning goals. This is because the project has aimed at the intro-

duction of an independent methodology that does not simply represent the mere integrative support to other learning courses, but is able to present itself also as a self-sufficient path competitive to other teaching methodologies. To achieve this we have tried to overcome the improvisation, the subjectivity or the incompleteness of other experiences.

In fact our preliminary inquiry into the experiences carried out at an international level has highlighted that almost no application of theatre to language learning has made a systematic evaluation of the results reached not only from a qualitative point of view (subjective perception of the learning experience that students and teachers have) but also from a quantitative point of view (measurements of the results achieved by the students according to the competence describers of the Common European Framework). The experimentations made required the production of original learning material and specific training of the teachers (language and drama teachers).

Following the good results reached with the learning of the Italian language, the project intends to apply the methodology to the teaching of other European languages.

1.3 The theoretical picture. Learning how to drive the language: from the linguistic competence to the communicative competence

Learning a foreign language is like learning to drive a car more than studying the bases of theoretical physics. That is why the main target of language learning is "to know how to do" rather than "to know". While the concept of linguistic competence stresses the capacity of producing and understanding state-