USING THE AUTHENTICAL DOCUMENTS IN THE TEACHING- LEARNING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE SYSTEM

Andreea Petre
Lecturer, PhD., Transilvania University of Braşov

Abstract: The aporoaching of authentical documents represents a compulsory challange of modern teaching system taking into consideration the fact that in the process of teaching a foreign language, the teacher balance the linguistic elements with civilisation ones.
The advantage of working with original documents relies on real facts which offer the students the opportunities of expressing not only their own points of views but also the possibities of increasing cultural and linguistic components.

Keywords: authentical documents, teaching process, linguistic components, cultural features, foreign civilisation.

Authentic documents, although not originally conceived for the purpose of learning a foreign language, come to meet a very practical need of the nowadays didactics. Authentic documents make the necessary connection between the activity of learning a foreign language and everyday reality, where the main stress is placed on communication, but also on the civilization behind the language. In the process of teaching the French Language and Civilization to the students of psychological and pedagogical profile, the use of this type of documents directs their interest to the actualities of real and practical life situations, and it also provides them with the motivation and the possibility to develop an active and creative attitude during the course of French language.

It is obvious that this type of didactic endeavour demands for caution. The teacher must take into account a set of variables in the decision to introduce authentic documents as study material. Besides the main objective of the course, to familiarize students with the vocabulary of specialty, the teacher's projective activity must take into account the student's level of language knowledge, their specialization and interests, as well as the set of competences they should acquire in their second year of language study.

It is well known that the foreign language study books for high school include standard language and grammar rules. But, the live contact with a foreign language is, most of the times, with the language used spontaneously by the native speakers, rather than with the formal language, and that is not always to be found in study books, but it is most likely present in the authentic documents.

An important distinction must be made at this point: between the "didacticised" documents, where the texts are modified (selection of the paragraphs, introduction of connectors, and so on) and the original documents. Authentic documents cover various domains, and come in different formats, as: telephone books, maps, train schedules, publicity texts, administrative forms, meteorological bulletins, newspaper and magazine articles, artistic and documentary films, television shows, book reviews, books, and so on. All these, utilised as didactic resources, without any modification, provide a rich and authentic image of the world and help students to develop a favourable attitude towards the study of foreign languages and civilisations.

This can be a way to facilitate the contact of the Romanian students, the future Educational Sciences specialists, to the current facts of the French educational system,

BDD-A27445 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:59:08 UTC)

offering them the possibility to confront, analyse and compare concrete situations presented in the documents chosen by the teacher with the situations encountered during their pedagogical practice.

There can be no doubt that the use of the authentic documents must follow a thorough evaluation of student's knowledge of French and a revision of the grammar, that is why it is recommended for the second year of study, and for students who acquired medium to advanced language knowledge, level B and C in the Common Framework.

For instance, the choice of an article such as „Un chemin détérminé par la naissance", published in the special number of monthly magazine „Science & vie", 272 from 2015, answers to many selection criteria, such as:

learning needs

course objectives

up to date

communication skills needed for the students as future specialists in education sciences

The article is also relevant for the information it contains regarding the up-to-date issues of the French educational system and it can serve as basis for analyze and comparison with the Romanian realities in this area [Corina-Amelia Georgescu, 196, 2011].

In the first stage, the pre-reading activities, the professor appeals to the student's curiosity, when, starting from the title of the article, asks them to imagine the content. In this stage, their attention can be captivated by proposing a polemic statement, closely connected to the theme at hand, with the purpose to construct the lexical network needed for the comprehension of the text.

In the stage of documentation, the students have to detect the most important elements of the text, comprised in the questions: "who?", "when?", "where?", "what for?", and "whom may this concern?" To distinguish the components of the article, the students will ponder over the title and apply it to the content, following certain stages of analysis:

Is the title intriguing?

Does it appeal to the reader's curiosity?

Is there any real correspondence between the title and the content?

The student's attention will also be directed towards the subtitles, which anticipate the contents of paragraphs and facilitate the comprehension of the text: „Une mobilité sociale en basse", „Des dépenses éducatives inégales", „ Un systeme scolaire élitiste".

After the target reader is defined, the writer's intention is communicated: to inform and to persuade.

The main idea of each paragraph should be pointed out, a fact that facilitates the comprehension of the text. The target reader is approximated in this stage: he/she should be comprised within an urban, highly educated public, which is the age segment interested in reading social and educational sciences articles.

After reading the text, the students are asked to share personal reactions, in a discussion initiated by the teacher in order to determine the reason for which the magazine "Science & Vie" decided to publish the article in a number titled "Les nouvelles lois de la famille". This pedagogical step involves several aspects. On one hand, the students are offered the chance to speak freely, which may not come too handy, at first, but which can prove extremely useful and exciting to all the parties involved, the students and the professor, as well. On the other hand, to express personal opinion, the student needs to take the initiative and to use the foreign language in authentic communicational contexts. The professor is the mediator and facilitator of dialogue in this type of activities; he appeals to team work to enhance the exchange of information and opinions. The teams are assigned different tasks: one of them may debate the mirroring problems of the educational field, as they appear in the French article, with reference to the Romanian education system, while the other team may inquire

BDD-A27445 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:59:08 UTC)

and synthesize aspects of the French system, based on the information that the article provides. The teams are thus able to exchange information, personal judgements and ideas, in agreement or as argument, to make connexions and to apply their inter-disciplinary knowledge regarding the educational systems.

This strategy means that the professor has a secondary part to play in the didactic process, as he becomes a moderator; his interventions are short, made with the purpose to keep the dialogue centred on the theme and to avoid the deviations from the topic [Traian Nica, Cătălin Ilie,158, 1995]. He is also an observer, as he is offered the possibility to notice the students' skills and to evaluate them: the linguistic resources, but also their speech and language difficulties, their ability to make themselves understood using synonymy and questions in order to clarify the ambiguous statements. The debate and the dialogue are also the teacher's tools for assessment of the students, rating their interventions by frequency and duration.

Apart from the didactic purpose of practicing speaking, the team work has psychological and social implications: it reveals the student's temperament and character and makes them cope with situations when not everybody agrees with their opinions, even if they are in the same team, and makes them prove their tolerance and the team spirit which can prove useful both during and after their university years.

The disadvantages implied by this didactic strategy must also be taken into account by the teacher. Even inside the same team there can be differences of language knowledge; there is the possibility that the students who are not confident in their speech skills, even if the theme of the activity is interesting and exciting and they want to take part in the debate, to be de-motivated by the language barrier and give up the activity[Corina –Amelia Georgescu,77, 2011]. It is essential that the teacher has a clear picture of the students' level of language knowledge. But the mediator role of the teacher is essential, as the team activity involves dissensions and disorder, taking turns and paying attention. It is effective to assign the themes of conversation beforehand, so that the students are able to inform and prepare their interventions in time, as one of the aims of these activities is to involve every student in the conversation and to help them surmount the inhibition and clumsiness of speaking a foreign language in a public debate.

To conclude, the use of an authentic document, meant to contribute to the reading and comprehension skills and to enhance the speaking skills, represents a certain provocation and opportunity for both the teacher and the students, despites the disadvantages stated above. Still, by methodical use of the authentic documents, the students are able make the habit of working with them and gradually give up the foreign language phobia. The approach of current themes of interest, close to the debates the students have at other specialty matters of study facilitate their contact with the French realities and the comparisons between the Romanian and French systems, the identification of the problems and the search for solutions, if we take into account the fact that the authentic documents address to the future specialist. Thus, the foreign language classes during the university years are no longer separated from the specialization, but bring forth issues of present interest and linguistic reality.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cerghit, I, *Metode de învățământ*, EDP, București, 1997

Courtillon, J., *Elaborer un cours de FLE*, Hachette, Paris 2003

Cuq, J. P., Gruca I., *Cours de didactique de français langue étrangère et seconde*, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2002

Cyr, P., *Les stratégies d'apprentissage,* Clé International, Paris, 1998

BDD-A27445 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:59:08 UTC)

Mourlhon-Dallies, F., *Enseigner une langue à des fins professionnelles*, Didier, Paris, 2008

Nica, T. și Ilie, C., *Tradition et modernité dans la didactique du français, langue étrangère,* Celina, 1995

BDD-A27445 © 2017 Arhipelag XXI Press
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:59:08 UTC)