Repetition – a persuasive device in didactic discourse

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Résumé : Le discours didactique vise à transmettre efficacement les connaissances. Il va sans dire que la répétition d'un concept, d'une idée, d'une définition ou d'une explication est un phénomène généré par les conditions mêmes de la communication didactique, qui vise non seulement à rendre la connaissance plus facile à assimiler, mais également à éliminer l'ambiguïté du message. Quel que soit le niveau de répétition, sémantique, syntagmatique ou thématique, la répétition est un véritable processus d'argumentation qui donne une structure interne au discours didactique et permet une hiérarchisation de son contenu. La répétition par simplification et amplification illustre le principe de l'élasticité du discours. L'enquête linguistique que nous proposons a pour objectif de présenter des échantillons d'un corpus de text-discours didactique, extraits de manuels de langue et de littérature roumaines pour le cycle du gymnase, révélant le fait que le discours prend toujours la forme de répétition et forme la mémoire de l'élève. Ils contribuent à l'efficacité du processus d'enseignement-apprentissage.

Mots-clés : *discours didactique, répétition, simplification, amplification, connaissance.*

Introduction

Educational or pedagogical communication is one that mediates the realization of the educational phenomenon as a whole, regardless of the contents, levels, forms or partners involved. Teaching is a particular form, mandatory in the circulation of certain content, specific to a systematic assisted communication act. Both educational and didactic communications are considered to be specialized forms of human communication.

In traditional education, manifested in the first part of the period over which we focus in our research, 1990-2015, the emitting teacher limited himself to presenting content to students through expositions and demonstrations in front of the class. Student-listeners watched as expositors and sought to retain as much information as possible. The content was presented to the pupil in a finalized form: ideas, theories, models, suggestions, opinions and working techniques. We could say that the didactic speech was very close to

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the scientific one. The student's subsequent task is to incorporate these contents into his own cognitive structure and subsequently to reproduce them on demand in the form of a monologue speech, despite the fact that, in order to achieve this, he encounters serious processing and understanding difficulties.

The old perspective on the didactic discourse, viewed as *ex-cathedra*, has been replaced in recent years with the interactive model, which analyzes the communicative act as a relationship between partners. Each of them has, at the same time, a double status – transmitter and receiver. This means that the old appointment of the role of transmitter to the teacher and student receiver becomes questionable. Therefore, the didactic discourse is built as a result of the interaction of the partners - locutor vs. interlocutor; orator vs. auditor. To put it directly, through a much simplified approach to the educational process, schoolchildren acquire knowledge, values and norms of conduct by receiving the information provided by the teacher, but especially by discovering themselves following a personal effort.

This study aims to investigate a corpus of authentic documents, consisting of sub-corpuses of official texts from Romania, between 1990 and 2015. Our analysis seeks to identify discursive structures and their dynamics during the study period. We will also investigate the didactic / educational discourse and its evolution. The texts / discourses will reflect these discursive / textual realities with reference to several levels of education.

I. Conceptual preliminaries

In such a situation of interpersonal communication or, more precisely, in a didactic / educational communication, the discourse must relate to certain laws, to certain principles, maxims which, once applied, can improve the communicative act. Besides, the need to report to the laws of discourse is placed in the literature, even in the context of a discursive deontology, underlining the principle of cooperation which corresponds to the communication contract, which also implies, in the opinion of P. Charaudeau, the existence rules, conventions accepted by the participants, governing the communication; belonging to speech of many discursive genres defining the communication situation.

Generally speaking, the literature reflects convergent views on the question of speech laws; according to D. Maingueneau or O. Ducrot, we notice: the law of informality, the law of completeness, the law of interest / pertinence, the law of sincerity, the law of litotes and the law of modality. The latter is found to be the maximum in the system proposed by P. Grice, which also refers to the other laws presented above. These are: the maximum of the quality (the law of sincerity), the maximum quantity (the law of informality, the law of completeness), the maximum of modality / manners (the law of modality, the law of litotes) and the maximum of the relation (law of interest / pertinence). (Maingueneau, 2007: 34-35)

Keeping us in the sphere of the normative aspects of constructing and transmitting a speech, it is necessary to recall the coherence meta-rules proposed by M. Charolles:

a) Repeat meta-rule: a coherent text must include in its linear development elements of strict recurrence;

b) The meta-rule of progression: text development must be accompanied by constantly renewed semantic input;

c) Non-contradiction meta-rule: the development of the text must not introduce any semantic element expressed or assumed by an earlier occurrence or deductible from it by inference;

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d) The relationship meta-rule: the facts in a represented world must be linked. (Reboul, Moeschler, 2010: 59)

Didactic discourse, like other types of discourse, is a *construction*. From the semiotic point of view, this construction is formed around the axes of *thought* (as a type of activity that is served by symbols), *knowledge* (as a potential of actions), and *signs* (such as those of the language system). Such construction involves materials (objects of discourse), operations (interiorization actions) and directives (principles of organization). The objects of the discourse are progressively represented by the discursive activity and from the discursive operations appear, as a logical consequence, the *schematizations* – the verbal representations of some knowledge. In other words, *schematization* means simply presenting the essence of things or events, in a striking manner for the interlocutor's attention and interpretative competence. (Dospinescu, 1998: 213) This is one of the things that connect rhetoric and didactic discourse.

Schematizations materialize with the help of specific operations. The ones we are currently considering are operations involving the relations between statements (speech figures), which can be marked by different connectors, "and", "or", "if... then" etc., logical-discursive, divided into three classes:

- *chanting operations*, which structure the schematics and guide the recipient (pupil) to ease his rebuilding;
- *consequential operations*;
- *consolidation operations* that give schematics a rational organization.

These operations lead to various discursive forms: *analogy, example, explanation, definition, description, repetition*.

In this research we want to highlight various manifestations of a certain discursive structure, the repetition, in sub-corpus of texts / didactic speeches extracted from school textbooks that teach Romanian language edited during the reference period.

II. Repetition and argumentation

The impact of teaching is greatly enhanced by the discursive act of repetition. The didactic discourse relies on a much dense isotope that goes beyond the necessary redundancy that makes a certain sequence coherent. The purpose of the didactic discourse is the efficient transmission of knowledge, it is self-evident that repeating a concept, an idea, a definition or an explanation is a phenomenon generated by the very conditions of didactic communication, which aims, among other things, not only to make knowledge easier to assimilate, but to equally eliminate the ambiguity of the message. In addition, the repetition has a paraphrastic dimension, which brings an information supplement because a repetition enunciation never tells what the paraphrase says; it marks the joints of the thought, with an obvious order of organization of the judgment. According to V. Dospinescu, Moscovici points out that repetition has the function of organizing the thoughts. "The iterative element is the cement" of judgment; it "is the mark of continuity of reflection." (Dospinescu, 1998: 262-263)

The overriding of the rhetorical process of repetition by the didactic enunciator with the explicit or implicit expression, by the act of repetition itself, of densifying the isotopy of his discourse, isotopy beyond the natural redundancy of language in general, is of course one of the striking features of this discourse: "I repeat so that you understand better!"

As a language act repetition favors and maintains contact between the speaker and the auditor. Among the figures that have the effect of enhancing the feeling of presence,

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the simplest is linked to repetition, which is important in argumentation, while in a demonstration or in a scientific reason in general it does not bring anything.

Repeating a discursive sequence has a complementary purpose that overlaps with the pure and simple transmission of information, reinforcing it. Whatever the level on which operates repetition (semantic, syntagmatic or theme), it brings a real process of argumentation that gives didactic discourse internal structure and simultaneously enables a hierarchy of its content. If redundancy is a linguistic internal language law, guaranteeing a minimum of cohesion, the repetition as unrealistic updating of a formal element, of the same signified content or a combination of these two elements, is the discursive strategy of the intention of the enunciator, it is the object of an assumed option from the start, which in the case of the didactic discourse is related to the pedagogical purposefulness itself. Thanks to the repetition we can say that the didactic discourse benefits from a persuasive force and "isotopic immunity" surplus, which increase its coherence and resistance to "noise" by reducing the ambiguity and the pertinence of its transmissibility.

The implicit message of any rehearsal is: "repeat X / because P", a language ac that can be doubled by *ilocutorium* and *perlocutorium*, values that involve the student-interlocutor to the highest degree. We "repeat X / because P" only to the extent that the situational context allows us – he teacher is entitled to do it whenever required according to the didactic logic – and repetition (assertion, question, or injunction) may involve obtaining specific behaviors or activities from the interlocutor (increased attention, unconditional adherence, memorization, etc.).

Simplification and *amplification* are current forms that can embody the discursive act of repetition in the didactic discourse. The simplification presents, beyond the accessibility of the text, another advantage: to highlight the articulations that are more structured for a given paradigm, so to put into play a disclosure process. On the other hand, the oratorical development of a subject is especially the case of amplification by enumerating the parts, an enumeration that recalls a quasi-logical argumentation. (Dospinescu, 1998: 270)

In the context of the Romanian language and literature, the process of education and training presupposes the effective combination of different methods and means, so that the pupil can learn the competences. The basic tool, used both by the teacher and the student, is the school textbook. The school textbook of Romanian language and literature contains a whole context adapted to time. That is why our analysis goes to a corpus of school textbooks that sum up a collection of linguistic data representative of the studied phenomenon. Scientists such as Cordier-Gauthier, Verdelhan-Bourgade, Melancon, Puech Choppin conducted extensive studies on the structure and functions of school textbook teaching as didactic text / discourse. "Textbook is a different type of didactic discourse, reuniting all types of discourse: narrative, descriptive, dialogue, conversation, predictive, injonctive, argumentative, explicative. [...] Beyond its role as socializing tool, the textbook is the material support of cognitive and axiological contents. [...] Seen as a process, it exposes and conveys the linguistic knowledge that contributes to skills and values, and the contents are stored on the product size of the manual." (Domunco, 2014: 216)

Let us take into consideration text [1], a sample of didactic speech taken from a sub-corpus of text / didactic discourse belonging to a seventh-grade Romanian literature textbook edited in 1994.

[1] „(p1) Antiteza

(p2) De la contrastul dintre imaginea amplă a celor două armate, poetul îşi îndreaptă atenţia spre o imagine limitată, pentru a intra mai mult în detalii: contrastul dintre

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figura lui Mihai Viteazul şi aceea a paşei Hassan. Realizarea opoziţiei este deosebit de vie, deoarece personajele sunt văzute în plină mişcare.

(p3) Mihai Viteazul este un om plin de elan […], de cutezanţă […], de vitejie […], este falnic […] şi, hotărât să câştige, biruieşte chiar şi cu preţul vieţii […], ştiind că luptă pentru o cauză dreaptă: libertatea patriei.

(p4) În schimb, paşa Hassan este cuprins de o dezgustătoare laşitate, de o spaimă cumplită, alergând exasperat să-şi caute un loc de ascuns, devenind astfel ridicol. Figura îngrozită a lui Hassan este înfăţişată amănunţit de poet şi din variate unghiuri de vedere: prin aspectul fizic […], prin gesturi disperate […], prin notarea impresiilor auditive […], dar şi acelor vizuale […]. Chipul luminos şi energic al lui Mihai domină figura ridicolă a paşei.

(p5) Procedeul artistic constând în opoziţia dintre doi termeni (cuvinte, situaţii, idei, fenomene, personaje), cu scopul de a reliefa unul din termeni prin celălalt se numeşte antiteză." (Toma, 1994: 46)

The teaching discourse debuts with the title (p1) of the content to be learned by students. It is the discourse reduced to a single lexeme. Then the author proposes an ample presentation of certain aspects identified in the "Paşa Hassan" cult ballad written by George Coşbuc. In the sequence (p2), the discursive act is amplified, and the repetition of the term "antiteză" is rendered with the help of synonyms: "contrast" and "opoziție". Another interesting aspect here is the identification in the text of the ballad of some entities that will help to highlight the characteristics of the antithesis: the two armies and the two characters. In (p3) the author exposes the features of Mihai, the central character, and in (p4) the pupils are given a detailed description of Hassan, the sequence that starts with the discursive connector "în schimb", which emphasizes the opposition that wants to stand out. Finally, the definition of the artistic process appears in (p5). It contains certain terms that could be identified in previous sequences, for example, "opoziție", "situații", "personaje". The statement in (p5) "cu scopul de a reliefa unul din termeni prin celălalt" is correspondent to the one in (p4) "chipul luminos şi energic al lui Mihai domină figura ridicolă a paşei" that represents a manner of repeating the teaching-learning content.

Analyzing text [1], we could remark the amplification as a form that embodies the act of repetition, the oratorical development of the subject by amply exposing the parts, an enumeration that recalls a quasi-logical argumentation. The content is presented, reformulated in order to be memorized by the destinatary-student, without involving him at any degree.

Simplification by selecting content and discursive amplification is the endpoint that didactic rhetoric gives to repetition. The repetition by simplification and amplification illustrates the principle of elasticity of discourse, whose production is based on two seemingly contradictory activities: *expansion* and *condensation*. Expansion is, from the syntactic point of view, beyond coordination, subordination and recursivity, a paraphrase report, from the lexeme, and the syntagma to the discursive definition, paragraph and text. Condensation is the inverse operation whose manifestations are detectable in the construction of all kinds of meta-languages. These two terms are merged into a dynamic antonymic couple by virtue of the recognition, within each term, of a reversible semantic equivalent. In the didactic discourse, being one of teaching-learning of signs, the repetition through simplification (condensation) and amplification (expansion) supports the internalization of discursive practices of (re) formulation and argumentation and withal of cognitive procedures and ways of representation.

[2] „(p1) Personajele
(p2) Numiţi personajele individuale şi pe cele colective din poezie.

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(p3) Selectaţi din primele cinci strofe ale poeziei secvenţele care se referă la cele două oştiri aflate în conflict. […]

(p4) Comentaţi opoziţia dintre imaginile celor două armate, referindu-vă la: starea acestora (organizată sau haotică); poziţia lor pe câmpul de luptă (ofensivă sau defensivă); comportamentul lor (curajos sau laş).

(p5) Antiteza este figura de stil constând în alăturarea a doi termeni (personaje, obiecte, situaţii, fenomene, idei), cu scopul de a sublinia opoziţia dintre aceştia.

(p6) Portretele celor doi conducători de oşti se realizează prin folosirea antitezei. Observaţi diferenţele dintre personajele Mihai şi Hassan, referindu-vă la: poziţia pe câmpul de luptă; rolul activ sau pasiv în cadrul bătăliei; trăsăturile fizice şi morale; comportamentul curajos sau laş." (Crişan, 2009: 151)

In text [2] the antithesis problem is treated differently, even though based on the same literary work. The first discursive sequence (p1) is also the title of the didactic discourse, the lexeme "personajele" representing an essential element in learning the knowledge about this content. This fact can be considered a simplification of the discursive act of repetition. In contrast to text [1], which was a string of assertions that the audience had to adhere to, text [2] is remarked by a harmonious combination of assertions and injunctions involving the student interlocutor in the learning process. For example, (p2), (p3) and (p4) are discursive sequences that invite the students to explore the ballad, appealing to their discursive memory. After discovering by themselves the fact that the two armies are opposite, using the expansion / amplification process, the sequence (p5) (re)formulates the important aspects by inserting de definition of the antithesis. The didactic discourse continues with the knowledge-building phase, as the authors of the handbook propose a learning activity aimed at using knowledge. In (p6) the content is repeated using pairs of antonyms, "activ"-"pasiv" and "curajos"-"laş", lexemes that play an argumentative role in the cognitive process.

Moving to another level, to sub-corpuses belonging to text-discourses of school books of Romanian language for the sixth grade, we identify the content of the antithesis in relation to the popular ballad "Toma Alimoş". Text [3] was edited in 2000 and text [4] was edited in 2012. We can actually notice the difference in discourse construction and the manner in which the interlocutor student is being involved in the teaching-learning process.

[3] „(p1) Antiteza

(p2) Selectaţi din textul operei versurile care conturează portretele celor două personaje, Toma şi Manea. […]

(p3) Citiţi cu atenţie cele două fragmente. Care sunt trăsăturile fizice şi morale ale celor două personaje?

(p4) Procedeul prin care doi termeni (idei, situaţii, personaje) sunt opuşi unul altuia cu scopul de a se evidenţia reciproc se numeşte antiteză (de la cuvintele greceşti anti-contra+thesis- poziţie, aşezare).

(p5) Gândiţi-vă la comportamentul lui Toma şi la cel al lui Manea. Cum consideraţi că sunt aceste personaje? Complet opuse, atât fizic, cât şi moral; asemănătoare; cu mici diferenţe între ele." (Şerban, 2000: 126-127)

In text [3] we notice the repetition of (p1) by expansion. The text is a combination of assertions, questions and injunctions in (p2), (p3) and (p5) that appeal to the literary work to understand the content to learn. The (p4) sequence represents the definition of antithesis, interleaved in the learning process in the same way as text [2] is built. The novelty element is the explanation of the antithesis by segmenting it into the component

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elements in the (p4) sequence: "de la cuvintele greceşti anti- contra+thesis- poziţie, aşezare". This (re)formulation of the didactic discourse evokes the origin of the term and strengthens the persuasive force of repetition.

The last text we chose for semio-linguistic and pragmatic investigation, text [4] is representative for highlighting the discursive form of repetition by amplification in (p2), (p3) and (p4). The author also uses assertions, questions and injunctions, and the didactic discourse finally condenses through (p4), the definition of antithesis. It is remarkable how in text [4] the expansion is realized through the recourse to the literary work in (p2) and (p3), but especially to the discursive memory, to the cultural context of the student interlocutor in (p4).

> [4] „(p1) Antiteza
> (p2) Selectaţi, din text, secvenţele în care este descris codrul. Ce reprezintă aceştia pentru voinici?
> (p3) În text, există o opoziţie între viaţa în codru şi viaţa din sate şi oraşe. […] Explicaţi această opoziţie.
> (p4) Cunoaşteţi un episod biblic în care cetăţile atrag mânia lui Dumnezeu din cauza relelor ce se petreceau acolo?
> (p5) Antiteza este figura de stil constând în alăturarea a doi termeni (personaje, obiecte, situaţii, fenomene, idei), cu scopul de a sublinia opoziţia dintre aceştia." (Crişan, 2012: 219)

Any lesson or part of a lesson on a thematic level starts from a sign, a unique idea or a resumed macro-clause [Eco, 1982: 65], repeated in expansion in the actual text, or vice versa, the text is resumed, repeated - in condensation - in the form of a recapitulative summary. The thematic repetition in the didactic discourse is circular in the sense that it always ends up by returning to the initial point at its first reformulation, which is often re-expressed intralinguistically and / or intersemiotically (table, schema, drawing, etc.). The circularity of the thematic repetition in the didactic discourse in revealed in the following scheme:

Title / intertitle → (Repetition through expansion) →text, occurences of the title / intertitle in the form of the same lexeme or the same syntagma / macro sentences or synonymous lexemes / syntagma / macro sentences → (Repetition through condensation) → Title / intertitle intralinguistically / intersemiotically redenominated (Dospinescu, 1998: 265)

The fact that the thematic repetition in didactic discourse is circular as seen in the representation above can be identified in the texts selected in our investigation to some extent. So they are the representative for the discourse form called repetition. It is the matter of choosing the best didactic text / discourse that helps students get the new information.

The repetition, as an argumentative impact, hinges hard in the process of acquiring knowledge, because the act of repetition highlights their *built* character: is not identical in terms of the *identical* or *analogous* to what is already built, semio-cognitively organized and structured. For that matter the pedagogical effectiveness of the repetition lies in the fact that it allows the representation of the cognitive path. [Idem]

Conclusion

This analysis of the various (sub-)corpuses of didactic text / discourse that include manifestations of textual repetition represents, for our research as a whole, an element that

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confirms that didactic discourse, in the various modes of presentation and representation, is metamorphosing during the period 1990-2015.

Ultimately, the text-discourse of the school textbook is distinguished by the way in which it trains memory as an important constitutive source through repetition as a discursive form. Some may say that any kind of discourse maintains a relationship with the recipient through repetition. But the present study highlights the fact that it is a fact that the didactic discourse develops progressively through simplification / condensation and / or amplification / expansion, being characterized by circularity. We can therefore say that the didactic discourse functions pleonastic, being the only one that capitalizes the repetition in the argumentative plan and makes its exploitation a pragmatic virtue.

In conclusion, the repetition appears to be a simple process that engages many pedagogical resonators. It increases consistency, anchoring itself to the semantic substance that it reinforces, by reiterating the signs at lexeme level, of the signs in the theme and the theme at the global text level. Between simplification and amplification the repetition chants the semiotic becoming of the objects of knowledge, from where the persuasive force of the repetition springs.

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