FORMATION OF READING COMPETENCE

Loredana Eugenia IVAN
University of Bucharest

Abstract: *Starting from Paul Cornea's affirmation about reading competence, seen by the critic as the totality of the necessary knowledge for reading and comprehending texts, and approaching it from two perspectives : a normative one of the implicit reader (in this case , every text creates its own "Model Reader " according to Umberto Eco) and a descriptive one, of the real reader, when, because of the infinite variety of texts and subjects , only a componential determination is possible(what are the knowledge categories involved , generally, in reading) , we are going to explain in this paper and to consider the reading competence as a synthesis of at least three competences: communicative, literary and cultural.*

Key words*: competence, literary competence, cultural competence.*

"Competence is the mobilization of knowledge and skills in order to solve some families of problem-situations and to realize some projects."(J.L. Dufays, *Introduction*, in DUFAYS, J.L. and COLLES, L).

"Competence doesn't lie in the resources (knowledge, skills) that should be mobilized, but in the very mobilization of these resources. Competence is the order of the *know- how to mobilize*."(Ph. Perrenoud, Competence, language et communication).

The notion of "competence" was introduced in linguistics by Chomsky. Unlike the saussurian concept of "langue", which involves a system of a paradigmatic nature (set by disjunctive relations:"or...or"), "c*ompetence* implies the preponderance of the syntactic aspect (conjunctive relations: "and…and"), the aptitude of producing and understanding an infinite number of utterances". Greimas considered that linguistic competence is the particular case of a more general skill, a "savoir faire" of the politeness rules, circulation rules, the way of dressing, of expressing feelings, etc…;this "savoir faire" is included in every human behavior , explaining the way in which the subject with the necessary skills can became an "actant".

The communicative competence is a relatively recent concept introduced at the end of the 60's by Dell Hymes, who opposes an empiric and social vision of language to the abstract idealism theorized by Chomsky; if for the creator of transformational grammar a real rhetoric of metonymy functions, since "competence" means "grammar" and "creativity" means "syntactic productivity", Hymes plans to go beyond grammar as an organization of linguistic characteristics and descriptive frame and to study stiles and strategies of speaking, that facilitate the accomplishment of the purposes through discursive strategy.

Formation of communicative competence is based not only on learning and practicing the strategies and forms of the social interaction, but also on the assimilation of meta-linguistic knowledge. To integrate this kind of knowledge in curricula is justifiable through three distinct arguments. First of all, knowledge of language structure and functions allows improvement of the communication skills. Secondly, knowing the linguistic system of the maternal language helps in studying foreign languages. Thirdly, studying grammar helps students to develop logical thinking and allows learning and practice of the inductive, deductive, transductive strategies, essential for any heuristic demarche.

BDD-A5702 © 2009 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:52:59 UTC)

Communicative competence shows that current speaking is not deductible from language knowledge; capacity to translate, to choose the (appropriate) style that serves the (suitable) strategy of a (given) situation.

Literary competence involves knowledge of code systems and the trans-textual experience. Similar to *communicative competence,* but in a greater measure than this one, due to the specialization of the reference object, *literary competence* is not reduced to "acquisition". Its main characteristic is represented by "creativity" because literary reading is not only about the use (situation adequate) of conventions that form the manner, style, group and author, but also the capacity of inventing complementary meaning, establish relationships and producing inference. "Because every literary work is subscribed to a zone of literary possibility that cannot be exhausted by any conventional system" (Paul Cornea).

To reach *literary competence*, the reader must have:

I. Knowledge and skills

1. Theoretical component (notions of theory and history of literature)

-literary theory knowledge and the ability to use it in a literary analysis;

2. Textual component (text interpretation elements)

-knowledge about the texts and the ability to apply this knowledge in order to analyze and interpret literary works;

3. Contextual component (elements from the history of literature, art and mentality)

-knowledge about the contexts in which literary works are produced and received and the ability to apply this knowledge in order to analyze and interpret literary works;

-knowledge about the essential steps in the evolution of forms and development of Romanian literature, in general;

4. Written component (producing literary texts).

II. Attitudes

-pleasure of reading; cognitive and emotional participation at the experience offered by the literary work;

-appreciation for the esthetic value;

-objective, critic attitude to the ideas transmitted by the literary work;

-respect for the inheritance of national literature.

As a conclusion, knowing the vocabulary and the combination rules, meaning the semantic and grammatical restraints specific to every language, any speaker can have significance in the sequence of grapheme, in writing or he can recover it from the significant networks through reading.

Cultural competence is not measurable as a standard dimension, but, eventually and approximately as a list of attributes, and one cannot define it only as "reference screen used by the individual for framing his perceptions" (Moles), but also as the ability to integrate knowledge, to use it in a productive way.

Cultural competence includes the summarized corpus of basic knowledge in various domains, the small encyclopedia offered by the elementary compulsory education. This corpus also contains:-a set of common sense realities showing the affirmations known as true in that particular society, which refer to the acceptable way for the "real world", -a treasury of wisdom, made of aphorisms, sayings, etc. that concentrate the multi-secular experience of the community,-the way of understanding and evaluating existence,-a list of venerated personalities and an aggregate of myths and symbols, forming together the consciousness of solidarity and uniqueness of the group.

BDD-A5702 © 2009 Universitatea din Pitești
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:52:59 UTC)

Cultural competence amasses "truths" of various sources, very disputable, but invested with an equal and unequivocal authority. R. Escarpit writes about the matter: "Any group, for its cohesion, produces an informational binder that is evidence. Evidence is not explored, is not sought, is not read; is given. Belonging to the same family as the stereotype or conditioning, is just more deceiving, being colored by that ***good*** sense named in a very reveling way, ***common***. Integrated to thinking and language, it uses strong arguments in order to dissimulate the fact that it is irrational…And then, we admit as obvious that soil is solid, that our weight center is placed on the vertical of the sustaining polygon, that day follows night, that parallels never intersect, that steeling is bad even if it seems possible and appealing, that Lamartine (or Racine, or Baudelaire) is a great poet, even if we are bored by his poetry , that blacks are inferior to whites(or vice versa) and that we are going to win because we are the best. Some of these evidences are harder to be obtained than others and they are valued more. They constitute culture." (Escarpit).

Through objectives and content, school curriculum aims not only the acquisition of reading competence, but also the forming of cultural competence, idea explicitly formulated "general objectives" of the school subject and in the "forming profile of the compulsory education graduate".

Outlined by the perspective of these exigencies, literature class must be a space of reading and culture initialization, a space that simultaneously or successively puts into theme reading the text and the text itself. From here, the dual statute of the literary work, both "medium" for the development of reading competence (offers support for the formation and application of the concepts and strategies of comprehending and interpretation) and "literary work", esthetic object recorded in the cultural memory. And also from here the necessity to structure measures capable of integrating the dialog relation between the reader and the text and to value both the reading process and the text that allows it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cornea, Paul, *Introducere în teoria lecturii*, Ed. a II-a Iaşi, Polirom, 1998.
Chomsky, Noam, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, Cambridge, 1965.
Descaunes, Luc, *La lecture*, Collection "Clefs", Paris, 1976.
Eftenie, Nicolae, *Introducere în studierea limbii şi literaturii române*, Piteşti, Paralela 45, 2008.
Escarpit, Robert, *Sociologie de la literature*, Paris, 1960.
Goia, Vistian, *Didactica limbii şi literaturii române*, Cluj, Ed.Dacia, 2001.
Pamfil Alina, *Limba şi literatura română în gimnaziu - Structuri didactice deschise*, Ed. Paralela 45, 2004.
Perrenoud, Ph, *Competences, langage et communication, în Didactigues des langues romanes*, Bruxelles, DeBoeck-Duculot, 2000.

BDD-A5702 © 2009 Universitatea din Piteşti
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.42 (2026-11-15 19:52:59 UTC)