

The didactic speech – a new disciplinary field in the Educational Sciences

Adia CHERMELEU*

Abstract: The studies in the field of Communication Sciences have demonstrated that the didactic speech, also known as *pedagogical communication*, may as well favor and hinder the learning, depending on the way it is used. The peculiar nature of the communication in the educational institutions results not only from the stake specific to the school system, but also from the social practices, in accordance with the educational objectives of the society applying it. This paper is based on a series of reflections born during the debates with the students specializing on the *Pedagogy of Elementary School and Preschool Education* during the classes: *The didactics in the field of language and communication* –in the preschool education and the *Didactics of Romanian language and literature teaching* –in the elementary school education. We aimed to bring to the present the main features of the *didactic speech*, as a form of meeting between the *language sciences* and the *education sciences*, as well as the need of introducing, at the level of the initial and life-long training of the teachers, of a *initiation in the rhetoric*, in the speech analysis and the comprehension of the lecture, considering that in front of a class of pupils is not only a history expert, a literature or mathematics expert, but also a specialist in the *pedagogy* of such relevant specialization and in the *didactics* of discipline.

Keywords: didactic speech, rhetoric, pragma-didactics, argumentation, life-long training

1. Linguistics and pragma-didactics in the current research studies

As of the '80s, the linguistics studies and, in particular, those related to the linguistics of utterance begin to water the field of the pedagogical researches dealing with the language and its capacity to act upon the other and to contribute to the „collective construction of the meaning”²³. The pedagogical researches regarding the textual typology and the linguistics of utterance started from the taxonomy theories drafted by Bloom²⁴ and have carried on by the concerns for learning based on argumentation, understood not only within its rhetorical dimensions, but especially as a new disciplinary field, where the language sciences and the education sciences meet. On the other hand, the sociolinguists, inspired by the works of Bateson²⁵, defining the communication as a message exchange between partners having a relationship, showing a greater importance to the non-verbal aspects of the communication. From this perspective, the information–content of the communication – is delivered especially

* Associate Professor, PhD. , Western University Timișoara, Faculty of Sociology and Psychology, Department of Education Sciences, Timișoara, Romania, e-mail address : adia.chermeleu@e-uvt.ro

²³ Tristan Horde, (1977), Claude Desirat, *Formation des discours pédagogique*, in « Langages », vol. 11, nr. 45, p.7.

²⁴ B. S. Bloom, (1976), *Human characteristics and school learning*, McGraw – Hill, New York.

²⁵ G. Bateson, J. Ruesch, (1988), *Communication et société*, Seuil, Paris.

through a verbal code and digital means, while the relational aspects— a message about a message and about how it should be understood – also call up to other methods and communicational techniques, such as mimics, gesture, attitude, voice etc. From the communicational perspective, the notion of *pedagogical relation* itself has got, in time, a new meaning, to be further refined by more recent studies²⁶. If the communication, in general, is based on a common background of knowledge, the didactic communication targets a transaction, in the sense that the action making the other one participate should result, at least in modifying the knowledge of the other one. The pedagogic traditional conception has been firstly based on the understanding of the education process as transmission of knowledge and information, and the training for communicative skills of the professors has been focused, for a long time, on the key-concept of *pedagogical communication*, in its persuasive dimension, while the more recent studies have been focused on the formative valence of the didactic communication, on the representations on reality of the pupils²⁷. In time, the concept of *pedagogical communication* has been replaced with the one of *didactic speech*. The difference between the two concepts is substantiated, in the specialty studies, starting from the difference between *pedagogy* and *didactics*. Starting from the definition of the speech, which we owe to Benveniste, this means “any statement involving a speaker and a listener, as well as the intent of the first to influence the other, in a certain way”²⁸. From this perspective, the didactics considers the *transfer of the contents*, while the pedagogy aims the *stimulation of the receiver*. While pedagogy is general, didactics has a specific nature, existing as many didactics, as there are fields of study to teach. The concept of *didactic speech*, inferred from the differences between pedagogy and didactics, refer, to a certain extent, to a *metaspeech*, a speech of second degree, that targets the “manipulation from a semantic perspective of the speeches-statements through a new cognitive aim, by reference to a virtual recipient the pedagogy shall update”. The teacher/pupil communication establishes an allocutive report of learning and meets the terms the didactic speech develops, speech that, “except for the actual pedagogical communication situations, remains a hidden speech”²⁹. Due to the enrichment of the reflections on the relations between linguistics and didactics, i.e. between the language sciences, the communication sciences and the education sciences, there have occurred the first approaches trying to analyze the *didactic speech (of the teacher)* from the inter and trans-disciplinary perspective, there have been created the connection bridges between the pragmatic and didactic linguistics, which, in time, led to a new discipline: the *didactic pragmatics*, centered on a comparative approach, by which the analysis of speech from the perspective of the two sciences is attempted³⁰. In the center of the didactic speech analysis is the *didactic relation* between the teacher and his/her disciples or the *didactic contract*, understood as “expectations system as compared

²⁶ Mircea Miclea, (2011), *Cuvânt înainte*, in M. Minder, *Didactica funcțională. Obiective, strategii, evaluare. Cognitivismul operant*, ASCR Publishing House, Cluj-Napoca.

²⁷ Philippe Perrenoud, (1994), *Métier d'élève et sens du travail scolaire*, ESF, Paris.

²⁸ Émile Benveniste, (1966), *Problèmes de linguistique générale*, Gallimard, Paris.

²⁹ Joseph Melançon, (1981), *Le discours didactique littéraire*, in « Études littéraires », vol. 14, p. 376.

³⁰ Gérard Sensevy, Serge Quilio, *Le discours du professeur. Vers une pragmatique didactique*, (2002), in « Revue Française de Pédagogie », no. 141, p. 47-48.

to scientific knowledge delivered between teachers and pupils³¹. Inseparably connected to the idea of comprehension which, in its turn, targets the teaching-learning act, the didactic speech is specific to the educational units. When he/she teaches, the professor *informs*, *ratiocinates* and *explains* – the dominant discursive practices, which presupposes a *didactic metaspeech*, respectively, „a didactics of the discursive skills”, required for those training for a didactic career³². An explanatory speech presupposes, besides the scientific knowledge specific to a field of study, social legitimacy conditions and a didactic reflection on the explanatory function of the language, as long as we know that „not everything can be explain to everyone”³³. From the declarative perspective, the didactic speech is a form of the scientific speech, situated in a privileged relation with the explanation, reasoning and comprehension. Depending on the form of communication –verbal or written – the didactic speech refers to *the speech of the teacher* or to the *didactic text*, analyzed, in general, by the textual linguistics and by psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and psychoanalysis. If, for linguistics, *the text* is nothing but an abstract object³⁴, *the speech* is produced in an actual communication situation, as a result of a complex network of social and ideological determinations. For example, for Jean-Paul Bronckart³⁵, when creating a speech four parameters must be considered in analyzing any type of speech: *the social area*, *the speaker*, *the receiver* and *the purpose* of the language act, parameters that can hardly form the object of a strictly linguistic theorization. The three perspectives, the communicational, the discursive and the textual, reflected by the recent studies, have required and have rendered possible the closeness between the language sciences and the education sciences, to the extent that the didactic intervention does not target only the metalinguistic information, but also a *science of the explanation*. The analysis of the didactic configurations of the educational speech presupposes the conception of a *theoretical model* targeting the pragmatic effectiveness of this type of speech. The model proposed by Reuter³⁶ starts from the descriptive dimension of the didactic speech and describes the main *functions* that the interaction of the teaching-learning process should meet: the ranking and the structuring of scientific disciplinary knowledge must serve an *informative or explanatory function*. The *evaluative function* is based on a system of values that describe the vision of the professor, while the *transformational function* announces events, explains those already occurred and it dramatizes them. Moreover, there is a *positional* and *speech textualization* function, placing the text in a field of practices, by targeting certain accurate skills, as well as *writing and reading management* function, controlling the understanding or facilitating several types of reading. The didactic speech is thus conceived, “as an exchange affected not only by the speaker and by the recipient, but by the referent (the context, the reality, the world...), as well. Such a model can only lead to the question regarding the <<subject>> in the school environment, in other words

³¹ Guy Brousseau, (1998), *Théorie des situations didactiques*, La Pensée sauvage, Grenoble, p. 470.

³² Eddy Roulet, (1991), *Vers une approche modulaire de l'analyse du discours*, in « Cahiers de linguistique française », II., p. 53-81.

³³ Jean-François Halté, (1988), *Trois points de vue pour enseigner les discours explicatifs*, in « Pratiques », no. 88, juin, p. 4-7.

³⁴ J.-M. Adam, (1990), *Éléments de linguistique textuelle*, Mardaga, Liège.

³⁵ Jean-Paul Bronckart, (1985), *Le fonctionnement des discours*, Delachaux et Niestlé, Neuchâtel-Paris.

³⁶ Y. Reuter, (2000), *La description. Des théories à l'enseignement-apprentissage*, ESF, Paris.

the interrogation of different referents, capable of authorizing a complex outlook about the subject-pupil and subject-teacher³⁷. This approach proposed a gradual replacement of the *communicative skills* concept that has dominated the didactics of the last decades³⁸, with the concept of *discursive skills*³⁹, including the fundamental textual dimensions of the speech, as well as the mastering of the speech construction techniques, in its linguistic, textual and situational dimensions. For example, the integrated teaching of native language grammar involves, through the multi-dimensional construction of the didactic speech, a lot more than just the mastering of vocabulary, of syntax structures and language acts. Besides the linguistic skills, the teaching of a grammar course also targets the mastering of textual (hierarchical, relational, declarative and compositional) structures, as well as mastering the situational (social, referential and psychological) constraints.

The socio-linguistics, psychoanalysis and pragmatics studies have analyzed the didactic speech from the perspective of the subject in the school environment, in all his dimensions –individual, collective and cognitive- as *agent* of the social environment⁴⁰, then as *actor* in tension with the context⁴¹ and, finally, as *author*, characterized by identity relations or language practices⁴². Lacan psychoanalysis has a different approach on the subject's problematic from the perspective of the existence philosophy, where the subject in the school environment is not the one thinking, but the one desiring or, better said, not the one only thinking, but also desiring, approach leading, in time, to a *new paradigm in education, the integral education* or the *trans-disciplinary education*, a peculiar phenomenology, understood as a *condition* of the didactic relation acting as a mediator between the analytical intelligence and the affectivity. In this paradigm, the language and the particular way it is used in the didactic relation shall be analyzed from the perspective of the identity construction, which led to a fruitful meeting between pedagogy and cultural anthropology: „Apart from the implementation of the speech and the social, language practices of the pupils, isn't the School also a space of mediation through the Other, the relation through which the apprentice should build an identity?“⁴³

2. The rhetoric dimensions of the didactic speech

Any human communication is an *exchange of meanings* and the educational relation in the school context, respectively the *didactic speech*, represents a special form of this exchange. Numerous linguists have described the main functions of the communication, highly important functions from the perspective of the didactic speech analysis. In D. Huisman⁴⁴ opinion, the human communication differentiates itself through three main dimensions: *an informative dimension*, where the cognitive content is delivered starting from the classical pattern sender - message –

³⁷ Rosine Galluzzo-Daffion, (2007), *Didactique du discours : une question de sujet*, in « Actualité de la Recherche en Éducation et en formation, Strasbourg, p. 4-5.

³⁸ Şoitu, I., (1997), *Pedagogiacomunicării*, EDP, Bucharest.

³⁹ Eddy Roulet, (1985),

⁴⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, (1982), *Ce que parler veut dire. L'économie des échanges linguistiques*, Fayard, Paris.

⁴¹ Alain Touraine, (1992), *Critique de la modernité*, Livre de poche, Paris.

⁴² Catherine Kerbrat-Orecchioni, (1988), *L'énonciation*, Flammarion, Paris.

⁴³ Rosine Galluzzo-Daffion, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁴⁴ D. Huisman, (1982), *Le dire et le faire*, ESF, Paris.

receiver; a *persuasive dimension*, an intentionality, by which the transformation of the other one is attempted, the determination of the other one to act in a certain way; finally, an *expressive dimension*, of an affective-emotional nature, by which the sender expresses himself/herself, which confers the speech a *cathartic function*. Through the social, political, economic and cultural finalities of the education, the educational speech is mostly based on the communication persuasive-rhetoric function, function that derives from its affective-emotional dimension, aiming to appeal and transform. „In other terms, it is not enough for a pedagogic speech to be transparent to be understood, it is not enough to inform to draw the attention, it has to appeal and to move, to touch both heart and spirit, to cause excitement and the enthusiasm, to create sense and to cause the meeting”⁴⁵. The emergence of a didactic rhetoric at the end of the last century for streamlining the didactic speech and action has occurred, especially „as a remodeling of the general rhetoric, in the plan of a comprehensive theory of persuasion, aiming to determine the adhesion of the audience, the change of opinion and the intended change of the audience conducts”⁴⁶. The universal applicability itself of the rhetoric have transformed it in a theory that has allowed for the approach of different areas of knowledge and existence in an inter and trans-disciplinary perspective, among which the one maneuvered by the conjunction of the language sciences with the education sciences. Often mistaken for the manipulation of doctrinaire or even propagandistic speech, starting from the *perverted effects of the communication*⁴⁷, *the new rhetoric*, understood as „multi-disciplinary reconsideration of Aristotle rhetoric”⁴⁸ or as „art comprising the action and the verbal or written communication, respectively as theoretical and practical aggregate for influencing the receiver’s opinion, from a double perspective, psycho-theoretical and pragmatic”⁴⁹, becomes a constant dialectics of the European culture the resurrection of which, has come up, in the 20st century, with *integrating models on all levels of knowledge and educability*. The didactic rhetoric is structured as a special neo-rhetoric, subordinated to the general rhetoric as a science of human interaction and as art of the transfer of ideas. It *aims to educate* from a pragma-didactic perspective, the teaching-learning process becoming a „form of intercultural and inter-linguistic mutual mediation, of negotiation between the educational agents”⁵⁰. By the speech restructuring of the new *functional didactics*⁵¹, based on remediation and support intervention and on a interdisciplinary conception on the teaching process, the didactic rhetoric makes the changeover from an approach centered on the task to the approach centered on the pupil, in consensus with the rapid social changes and with the diversification of the learning methods. It tries to stimulate the desire of the pupils, not to pervert it, targets their freedom and not their blind obedience, tries to stimulate the pupils

⁴⁵Stéphane Martineau, (2006), *La dimension persuasive de la communication dans la relation éducative en contexte scolaire*, LADIPE et CRIFPE, Université du Québec àTrois – Rivières, p. 3.

⁴⁶Mircea Breaz, (2013), *Retorică și discurs tautologic în comunicarea didactică persuasivă*, ASCR, Cluj-Napoca, p. 14.

⁴⁷D. Huisman, *op. cit.*

⁴⁸Al. Săndulescu, (1976), *Dicționar de termeni literari*, the Publishing House of the Academy of S.R.R., București, p.292.

⁴⁹Mircea Breaz, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁵⁰*Ibidem*, p.86.

⁵¹Michel Minder, (2011), *Didactica funcțională. Obiective, strategii, evaluare. Cognitivismul operant*, ASCR, Cluj-Napoca.

through affective involvement, is criticizes the others and itself, being aware of the slippages that can result in the ideologization of the educational act. The importance of knowledge and the mastering of the rhetorical instruments in drafting and analyzing the educational speech results from at least three main research directions resulting from the specialty literature: the emphasis of the rhetorical-discursive mechanisms in the didactic conceptualization; the analysis of the rhetorical –didactic methods of influencing the audience in the educational environment; the configuration of a didactic stylistics, i.e. of the intellectual or conceptual didactic style. For instance, among the rhetorical attributes of the didactic speech there are known, in general, the main *persuasive virtues*⁵²: *clarity* as the resultant of the attribute of terms, *pithiness*, *artlessness*, *simplicity*, and *conciseness*. Moreover, considering the fact that the „teacher is a specialist in the human behavior, whose duty is to entail highly complex changes in a material – that is itself extraordinary complicated”⁵³, the didactic rhetoric is part of perfecting the means by which the modern didactics avoids the pedagogical empiricism, the methodological eclecticism and the scientific manipulation of the conduct, and the teacher is asked to leave his/her role of knowledge transmitter, for becoming an organizer of learning contingencies, through the orientation and control of behavioral changes, towards the targeted direction. In this context, the didactic speech is built based on the communicative, discursive and rhetorical skills of the teacher, which presupposes the awareness of the typology of arguments and the mastering of the argumentative strategies, the use of figures of speech ⁵⁴ etc. The inclusion of the rhetoric dimension allows the teacher to have a hierarchical, global and coherent representation on how the didactic speech is organized and on how it works and allows him/her to create integrated pupil-focused activities, understanding the pupil in his /her making. For example, the educator in the preschool education has the noble and difficult task of developing and educating the child’s language, for preparing her for the school stage, in parallel to the child’s initiation on the language of sciences and arts. The kindergarten is, in the same time, the first place for the child’s social interaction, the stage that has to start the building of child’s identity, her interaction outside the family environment, which corresponds to the beginning of her awareness process of the *self* as being different from the *Other*. The linguistic skills aimed to be reached at the end of the preschool stage unite to the socio-cultural and pragmatic skills, mediated by the language development, which render possible the meeting with others and reduce the effects of the *cultural shock* caused by the *rite of passage* from the stage of the child spoiled by the family to the stage of initiation into the school responsibilities. The rhetorical skills of the educator shall allow the child to create a enabling and securing environment, which would stimulate verbal interaction and the evolution from the action language to the description language.

3. Conclusions

The presentation of the main features of the didactic speech and of the pragma-didactics, as a form of encounter between the language sciences and the education sciences, does not represent a research *per se*. The ideas and reflections above-illustrated are part of a more complex research study, in progress, attempting to

⁵²Mircea Breaz, *op. cit.*, p. 15-28.

⁵³Michel Minder, *op. cit.*, p. 19-20.

⁵⁴Aristotel, (2004), *Retorica*, Editura IRI, București.

demonstrate the need for introducing rhetorical elements in the classes of Language and communication in the preschool education didactics, in the classes of Didactics of teaching the language and literature in the elementary school education, as well as in the classes of Romanian Language and Literature for children, in the initial training of students, as well as the need for introducing a class of Didactic rhetoric, for the life-long training of professors. Individually, the experts in preschool and elementary school education sciences shall be able to address personal interrogations regarding the construction of their own didactic speech, from the perspective of both creation, as well as interpretation of the same. In a broader plan, the discursive and rhetorical skills of the experts in the preschool and elementary school shall offer them a transdisciplinary vision over the teaching-learning process, in accordance with the current educational paradigm.

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