

Title of the study: The pragmatic argumentative competence in the textbooks for teaching French as a foreign language in Colombian higher education.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current functional vision of language that uses language for communicative and interactional purposes in accordance with the common interests of a society, is seen by the author of this research as one of the facts leading to the educational parameters of our national context to adopt and use foreign textbooks in the teaching-learning process of French, as they are presented as bearers of this vision. However, we, as teachers guiding the individual and collective processes of learners, can perceive that there are still weaknesses in the development of intellectual skills that allow for a critical stance in the face of the real problems of the present day. We perceive that all the communicative tasks proposed by these textbooks and that learners should develop are not enough for them to really achieve decision-making and problem solving based on argumentative competence.

The issue in which this problem arises is of direct concern to language teachers and researchers, and depending on the nature of their training and abilities, **they are therefore led to reflect on the proposal of projects that aim to address** these textbooks used in classrooms and to observe whether it is really implicit, explicit, or non-existent the treatment of argumentative competence from the perspective of various pragmatic

functions, and how they are carried out.

Many studies emerge with the aim of researching argumentation and its application in different areas of education, including language teaching (Gamboa, S. 2011; Macias, D. 2008; Achury, C and Alvarez, J. 2013; Ciro, L. 2007). Yet, while there is an abundance of literature on argumentative competence, **much of this literature is largely** theoretical and focuses on the purpose of argumentation as an individual-discursive, but not strictly pragmatic, practical.

As being argumentation a key element in decision making, it is therefore a mandatory aspect to be developed in students in order for them to achieve success in decision making. Butt, N. (2010) argues that today's world requires citizens with critical thinking skills, capable of making decisions. To achieve this, educational institutions play an imperative role.

An approach guided by a critical pedagogy therefore **seems appropriate because** it aims to break this traditional paradigm of transmission of general knowledge and is concerned instead with creating educational spaces where teachers lead students to be an active part of real life, to know the environment outside the classroom

walls and to take a stand on current problems in society. Economic, political, social and cultural interests must manifest themselves throughout this training and educational transformation.

The impact of this project lies in the fact that we will first know which textbooks are in use in higher education institutions for French learning on a national scale and through the analysis of the most widely used ones, we will document whether they are appropriate for the achievement of these generic skills among French learners. This will be done by analytically describing the approaches to argumentation and the type of activities proposed by these textbooks, in order to situate argumentation within a pedagogical and didactic framework. In this way, it will be possible to see whether these books contribute to the development of these skills and really aim to train people capable of acting in such a changing and demanding world.

This analysis thus represents an important asset because through the approach of the material and its analysis, one feeds in a way the content analysis, being an emerging research method and which is considered essential in professional practices. Filling the void of a lack of textbook revision in our country regarding argumentation, critical thinking, decision making and problem solving in French, therefore represents an essential value in establishing justification.

Finally, in addition to analysing the material used in the pedagogical

and didactic practices of language courses in Colombia, this research also aims to contribute with a theoretical framework concerning critical thinking based on argumentation with the objective of knowing how to act and make concrete decisions in a real context. Although this is a theoretical approach, it could represent the starting point for a critical and contextualized practice where it is no longer a question of addressing topics separately and theoretically and without a specific objective, but of linking these required skills to achieve real critical training.

Thus, through the proposal of a well-defined theoretical framework, we will contribute to the notion of generic competences, taking into account that there is evidence of the current vacuum in the treatment of these competences, bearing in mind that they are vaguely or not at all taken into account in higher education curricula: "Curriculum design influences university teachers and students to focus on the content of academic subjects when teaching, rather than on the development of critical thinking. This is due to a specification of academic content rather than generalizable skills" (Kember, 1997, cited by Pithers, R.T. and Soden, R. 2000).

This rationale was taken and translated from the master thesis "La compétence argumentative pragmatique des manuels de FLE pour l'éducation supérieure colombienne". Universidad Pedagógica Nacional, 2015. Researcher Edwin Londoño A.