



The Inclusion of Linguistic Diversity in Foreign Language Curricula

Angela Tramontelli
Department of English- Linguistics, North Carolina State University



I. Introduction

Thesis statement: Sociolinguistically informed materials that highlight language variation are effective in addressing the need for meaningful instruction of cultural perspectives in foreign language teaching.

A.) Culture in Foreign Language Teaching

- Language proficiency requires more than grammatical knowledge (Hymes, 1972; Kransch, 1993; Byram, 1997).
- Information about the culture of the target language must be included in foreign language teaching (Peterson & Coltrane, 2003).

B.) Materials Development

- Practice lags behind theory: The cultural content included in language teaching is often superficial or incidental, and does not support language learning (Tomlinson, 2012).
- Effective materials for cultural awareness in language teaching should emphasize the intersectionalities of language and culture rather than treating them as separate constructs (Pulverness & Tomlinson, 2013).

C.) Dialect Diversity & Sociolinguistics

- Accents and dialects reflect the social characteristics and cultural contexts of their speakers (Lippi-Green, 1997; Wolfram, 1998; Edwards, 2009).
- Teaching awareness of dialect diversity promotes appreciation of culture (Adger et al., 2007; Reaser & Wolfram, 2007).

II. Learning Objectives

- Students will learn key linguistic terminology and concepts, and gain the ability to apply them as tools for analyzing language.
- Students will understand that variation in language is a result of cultural and social differences.
- Students will develop an appreciation of the target language as an expression of its cultural context.

III. Curriculum Overview

Unit 1: History of the Target Language



ATTIVITÀ DI DISCUSSIONE:
Una Lingua Nazionale

- A) Discuteremo le figure pubbliche sono importanti per l'unità della lingua italiana (per esempio Dante Alighieri, Galileo).

- B) Quali eventi sociali hanno attirato gli italiani a parlare tutti la stessa lingua (WWII, la televisione, la scuola,...)?

Unit 2: Levels of Linguistic Analysis

Livelli di analisi di lingua: La fonologia

La pronuncia Toscano

/R/, /p/, /s/ tra due vocali ("intervocaliche")

Io cosa > [la bassa]
Il sapone > [il sup^on]

piacere > [piācere]
la gente > [la gente]

/k/, /h/
/p/, /ʃ/ > /ʃ/
/dʒ/ > /ʃ/

Unit 3: Regional Dialects

Siciliano

Un dialetto meridionale estrema



A) Tradurre la frase in dialetto ad Italiano Standard:

In siciliano: Lu sonnu di la notti cunsigilia l'omu.

In italiano Standard: Il sonno della notte consiglia l'uomo.

Unit 4: Diastatic Variation- Language Across Society

IL LINGUAGGIO DEI GIOVANI
Youth language, slang

Significato: to communicate via Skype
Fare un selfie: to take a selfie



IV. Sample Materials

A.) Lesson Plan: Regional Variation in the Target Language

II. L'Italiano regionale

Purpose: In this lesson plan, students are introduced to the three major regional varieties of Italian (Settentrionale, Centrale, Meridionale). They will learn the necessary technical linguistic vocabulary to be able to analyze and describe differences among Standard Italian and regional features on lexical, phonological, and grammatical levels.

Key ideas:

- Students will learn to identify the lexical, phonological, and grammatical features that distinguish regional varieties of Italian.
- Students will understand that variation is a natural part of any language and occurs on multiple levels.



Materials needed

- I Geosinonimi worksheet
- Fonologico Regionale chart
- Linguistic map
- Matching guise exercise

Background information

Although Standard Italian is the native first language of most Italians, and is the most widely spoken language in every region, the linguistic landscape of modern Italy is multi-layered and complex, featuring many varieties of Italian and non-Italian languages and influences. One reason for this is that while a language variety, or variety of方言, they may form a mean of a language spoken by a group of people from the same region, it may also be used by people from other regions who have adopted it as their language. Spots a variety of that language, even though some varieties (or accents) are more noticeable than others.

As in the United States, even a unified national language would sound slightly different from place to place. *Platino regionale* is the term for the language heard in Italy that, while considered to be the same language as Standard Italian, is distinguished by a set of regional features and characteristics. These features are called *geosinonimi*, which literally means “language that is the same in all regions.”

These features are called *geosinonimi* because they are shared by all regions of Italy, and therefore are not unique to any single region. These features can range from the level of individual sounds (phonology/phonetic), whole words (lexicon/lexical), and grammar (grammatical). Some languages that are as close physically or geographically tend to be more linguistically similar, the language found in neighboring geographic regions often share these features, which creates regions of dialects within the country. This is why there are so many similarities between *Settentrionale*, *Centrale*, and *Meridionale* regions tend to share similar linguistic features. As a result, there are three main types of regional dialects in Italy.

V. Applications & Conclusions

ACTFL World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages

- Communication
- Cultures
- Connections
- Comparisons
- Community

- The American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages outlines five target goals to optimize students' mastery of the target language in real life, communicative settings and with cultural understanding and global competence.
- Understanding linguistic diversity directly enables students to achieve each of these objectives.
- Materials such as those outlined here are therefore optimally suited for application to FLT in primary, secondary, university, and study abroad contexts.

References

- Adger, C. T., Wolfram, W., Christian, D. (2007). *Dialects in Schools and Communities*. 2nd ed. Mahwah, NJ: Laurence Erlbaum Associates.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Clevedon: Cambridge University Press.
- Edwards, J. (2009). Multiculturalism and multilingual education. In J. B. Prude & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings*. (pp. 169-213). Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.
- Lippi-Green, R. (1997). English with an accent: Language, ideology, and discrimination in the United States. London: Routledge.
- Hymes, D. H. (1972). On communicative competence. In J. B. Prude & J. Holmes (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics: Selected Readings*. (pp. 169-213). Oxford: John Wiley & Sons.
- Kramsch, C. (1991). *Context and culture in language education*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Lippi-Green, R. (2009). *Developing Materials for Language Teachers*. London: Sage.
- Reaser, J. A., & Tomlinson, B. (2007). Materials for cultural awareness. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Applied Linguistics and Materials Development* (pp. 1-20). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Wolfram, E. & Cole, N. (2006). Cultural studies and language teaching. Center for Applied Linguistics. Retrieved from <http://www.cal.org/resources/Digest/0305portrait.html>
- Pulverness, A. & Tomlinson, B. (2013). Materials for cultural awareness. In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Developing Materials for Language Teachers* (pp. 41-60). London: Sage Academic.
- Boone, J. S., & Wolfram, W. (2007). Teaches the Crucible: Language and life from the Atlantic to the Appalachians: dialect awareness curriculum. North Carolina Language and Life Project: Raleigh, NC. <http://www.ncslu.edu/linguistics/dialectcurriculum.php>
- Tomlinson, B. (2012). Second language acquisition and materials development: In B. Tomlinson (Ed.), *Applied Linguistics and Materials Development* (pp. 12-20). Hantington, GBR: Bloombury Academic.
- Westcott, W. (1988). Language ideology and dialect: Underwriting the Oaklawn Ebionics controversy. *Journal of English Linguistics*, 26, 108-121.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks to Drs. Jeffrey Reaser and Stephany Dunstan for your guidance and mentorship. Thanks also to Dr. Walt Wolfram and NC State Sociolinguistics for being an amazing community of awesome human beings and scholars.

Grazie a Drs. Fiora Biagi e Alice Vanucci di Siena Italian Studies per il vostro entusiasmo e sostegno.

Please contact atramon@ncsu.edu with questions or comments.