

THE COMPARISON OF NATIVE LANGUAGE TEXTBOOKS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ALBANIA, ITALY AND MONTENEGRO

Pranvera Kraja

University of Shkodra “Luigj Gurakuqi”, Albania, E-mail: v.kraja@yahoo.com

Abstract

The paper aims to highlight the differences and similarities in the structure of the textbooks construction, the volume of knowledge and inter-subject integration between subjects in native language textbooks that are taught in primary schools in Albania, Italy and Montenegro. Albanian language textbooks for compulsory education were submitted to a radical change. They were conceptualized as integration between Albanian language and Reading literary, which until 2005 were taught as separate subjects, with separate program and text. This new conception of the Albanian language textbooks was a new experience for albanian educational tradition. In this context, practice application of native language textbooks of Italian and Montenegrin primary schools, will show the real level of our texts compared with foreign experience and expertise. This comparison will focus mainly on two aspects: the structure of texts construction, and the integration of language texts with other subjects. Knowledge integrations, has special significance and is being presented from contemporary new developments as necessary alternative to be implemented in textbooks. Differences evidence between the textbooks will be accompanied by short examples from these texts. Texts analysis indicated that Albanian language textbooks of primary school on comparison with the Italian language textbooks contained twice more language skills; less than one third of the orthography and punctuation classes included on the Italian language textbook, and not determining the integration type on Albanian language texts. Also, the analysis showed that Albanian language textbooks of primary school taught in Montenegro, were much simpler and more practical than the Albanian language textbooks taught in Albania. Literary texts included on the Reading book were fun for kids, with very rich pedagogic apparatus, over which there are realized some of the different kinds of child education and the integration with Language, Social education, Figurative education, Aesthetics, Technological training, etc.

Key words: *elementary school, native language textbook, comparison, structure, knowledge.*

Introduction

Albanian language textbooks for compulsory education in Albania, were submitted to a radical change. They were designed as integration of the Albanian language subject with Literary reading, which until 2005 were taught as separate subjects, with separate programs and textbooks. This new conception of the Albanian language textbooks was an innovation for the Albanian educational tradition. Obviously, the conception of the Albanian language textbooks was a result based on several studies, which demanded a few years time, work and research for the ideas to be crystallized and the goals why this integration should be done. Proposals were dictated by the latest requirements and developments of didactics worldwide. In 2005 these efforts come to the end by the publication of the integrated textbook of the Albanian Language (language + reading) in a single text.

Aims of study

This paper will present ways of conception the Italian language textbooks on primary education and Albanian language textbooks taught in Montenegro and in Albania. The paper aims to highlight the differences and similarities in the structure of the textbooks construction, the volume of knowledge and inter-subject integration between subjects in native language textbooks that are taught in primary schools in Albania, Italy and Montenegro.

Research topics

The comparison of native language textbooks taught in primary schools in Albania, Italy and Montenegro will focus mainly on two aspects: the structure of texts construction, and the integration of language texts with other subjects. The study aims to answer these research questions: Which was the level of our textbooks compared with Italian and Montenegrin language textbooks regarding the structure of the texts and the volume of language knowledge? How it was realized the criteria of language integration + other subjects in the textbooks used in Italy, Montenegro and in Albania?

Comparison of the Italian native language textbook with Albanian textbook

In this paper we will compare native language textbooks of the second grade of elementary school that are used in Italy¹ and Albania².

The conception of the Italian language textbook for second grade of elementary school, titled "Friends, Reading 2" is realized based on four major topics:

1. Environment and nature
2. Others and I
3. Fantasy
4. Countries and cities

The content of these topics aims developing to the pupils these types of education: civil, health, affective, food, road and environmental education.

Construction of the Italian language text for second grade, aims to develop these linguistic and expressive skills: a) understanding; b) speaking; c) writing; d) productive skill.

It contains 12 major teaching units, in which there are treated all the above topics and types of education, through literary pieces and suggested activities. At the end of each major teaching unit will be organized one hour "Lab work" or "Practical work" titled "What can I do". This class aimed developing to the pupils the following skills: musical, motor, linguistic and expressive skills, building projects skills.

Italian language textbook for second grade of elementary school has a total of 121 lessons, among which 107 lessons are literary pieces and laboratories (or creative work) and 14 lessons are knowledge of the language. Expressed in percentages, literary pieces and laboratory works (exactly 96 readings and 11 laboratory work) made 88.5% of the text. 96 of the readings pieces were divided into the following six types of literary texts where the pupils received knowledge for: indicative, poetic, descriptive, informative, introductory and instructional texts (for following rules and instructions).

¹ Pianca, 2006. " Friends, Reading 2". Readings, reflections linguistique, the proposed laboratory. Published: The school, Brescia, Italy.

² Petro & Gjokutaj, 2007. "Albanian language 2". Rprinted: Albas, Tirana, Albania.

Linguistic knowledge made 11, 5% of the text and they had this distribution between language sections:

- Orthography 11 lessons
- Lexicon 2 lessons
- Grammar 2 lessons

From the above structure we can easily make comparisons in terms of percentage between parts of linguistic knowledge and literary pieces in Italian and Albanian language textbooks (Table 1).

Table 1

Textbook	Literary pieces (%)	Linguistic knowledge (in total) (%)
Friends, Reading 2	88, 5	11, 5
Albanian Language 2	77, 6	22, 4

By table 1, in Italian textbook "Friends, Reading 2" linguistic knowledge make 11, 5% of the text, while in Albanian textbook AL 2, linguistic knowledge make 22, 4% of the text (almost the double of percentage of Italian text).

Another issue to be discussed is this: *What is the place occupied by orthography in the volume of linguistic knowledge?* Though pupils are too young, orthography as linguistic section occupied a significant place in the textbooks of Italian language on primary education. From the structure of the text "Friends, Reading 2", we notice a small number of grammar and lexicon classes and a very big number of orthography lessons: 11 orthography lessons, 2 lexicon lessons and 2 grammar lessons. Or in other words, 73 percent of all grammar classes were occupied by orthography. While in the Albanian language 2 (AL 2), this report appears inverted: 23 percent of grammar classes belong to orthography and 77 percent belong to other linguistic knowledge (Table 2).

Even teachers who have worked with this text, support the evidence that there are really few orthographic classes in AL 2 (Kraja, 2012). From the study for analysis of AL 2 textbook of the authors Petro & Gjokutaj (2007), surveyed teachers on the question *"In which language rubrics exercises are not sufficient?"*, gave the following answers: 54 percent of the 94 teachers interviewed thought that the classes of orthography and punctuation are not sufficient; 38 percent thought that the grammar classes are not sufficient; and 12 percent of the teachers answered about the insufficiency of lexicology classes (Kraja, 2012, p. 234).

Let's make a comparison with Albanian language textbooks taught in the third and fourth grade. For this, besides the textbook of AL 2, I analyzed also textbooks of AL 3³ and AL 4⁴. The data are presented summarized in Table 2, which shows the importance that orthography and punctuation have in overall volume of linguistic knowledge taught in Italian and Albanian textbooks.

Table 2

Text	Linguistic knowledge (%)	Orthography & Punctuation (%)
Friends, Reading 2	27	73
AL 2, Albania	77	23
AL 3, Albania	71	29
AL 4, Albania	82	18

³ Petro & Pepivani, 2006. "Albanian Language 3, for the third class of the Primary School". Reprinted: Albas, Tirana, Albania.

⁴ Petro & Pepivani, 2007. "Albanian Language 4, for the fourth class of the Primary School". Reprinted: Albas, Tirana, Albania.

Orthography and punctuation in "Friends, Reading 2" occupies 73 percent and orthography and punctuation in AL 2 occupies 23 percent of linguistic knowledge. From Table 2, we note that also in AL 4, there aren't too many orthography classes (18 percent). In this aspect, AL 3 seems a little better making so the 29 percent.

Let's go further with the comparison. If we make together all classes of orthography & punctuation developed in three Albanian language textbooks they made 70 percent and compared with 78 percent the orthography lessons in "Friends, Reading 2", we convince for very small number of orthography lessons present in our textbooks.

Besides the two elements compared above, the particular of Italian text and the difference with our Albanian language textbooks, stands also on:

1. Naming the theme and type of education in any literary piece of the Italian text. Thus, in the literary pieces it was determined from beginning the themes and the type of text. For example. on page 111 to the "Friends, Reading 2" it is given the theme of the text, "*Others and I*" literary headline of "*Milk's teeth*" and at the page bottom type of the text "*Indicator Text*".
2. Integration of "Friends, Reading 2" with other objects appears too clearly with a specific rubric symbol (circular with different colors) by determining immediately the subject which it was joined with and activities that will develop. Concretely note how it was realized the integration of language + other subjects. For illustration, I am giving only one example for each subject integration performed on the Italian textbook:
 - *Language + Science*: Colour and write the names of the mushroom body parts (p. 18).
 - *Language + Maths*: Fill out the graph for hours that you watch TV every day. With the help of the teacher prepare a graph to record the answers given by you and by all classmates (p. 127).
 - *Language + Geography*: Describe your kitchen by following the space instructions (p. 132).
 - *Language + Technology*: Mark with X the means of transport (p. 57).
 - *Language + History*: Complete the table writing the months according to the seasons (p. 63).
 - *Language + Music*: What are city voice? Fill the table with relevant data. Select a place and describe it using the table's data you just filled (p. 137).
 - *Language + Art and Image*: Draw Plasma family at home, then colour it (p. 52).
 - *Language + Habit motor*: Play this simple and funny game (Describes the game with words), (p. 90).

Let's go back to the Albanian language text. In Al 2 text there are treated four linguistic lines: reading, speaking, writing and grammar. On the basis of these lines it is built all of the texts content, which aims to enable the learner to speak fluently the beautiful Albanian language, to write correctly and without errors respecting literary norms, to understand the information he/she reads, and to read well, fluently with intonation.

While, the integration of the Albanian Language 2 + other subjects, is realized by the contents of reading pieces. Pupils get scientific information on:

- *Nutritional values of food* at literary piece "The soup with vegetable".
- *Health knowledge, personal hygiene and oral hygiene* at "When I am sick" and "Tooth brush and soap".
- *Scientific information about nature* at "How is rainbow formed?".
- *Birds and insects reproduction* in "Breakfast at the village" and "The butterfly".

- *Galaxy, the underwater world in "Stars", "Astrobubble" and "Astrofish".*

As you noticed above, in our Albanian language textbooks, there are included some of the education types that are developed even in the Italian language textbooks, but they are not defined and marked on the text as rubric denominations.

Comparison of the Montenegrin language textbook with Albanian textbook

While the comparison with textbooks of Montenegro⁵ and Albania⁶, will be done through analysis of native language textbooks of the third class.

In the Republic of Montenegro in former Yugoslavia, there were used both Albanian language and literary reading textbooks for learning the Albanian language in primary school from Albanian population. Their conception was new according to contemporary pedagogical criteria, but reading textbooks were separated from the Albanian language textbooks. A particular practice in Montenegro was that pupils' reading textbooks came together with teacher's book (methodological guide for the teacher) and pupils' exercise notebook which contained:

- Methodological models for literary pieces analysis in prose and poetry.
- Extra readings, where literary texts included were illustrated with pictures and drawings, containing questions and answers, etc. I liked the working practice and relevant pedagogy followed for the completion of the pupils' exercise notebook. *"Working with reading exercise notebook can be done at school and home and lasts as long as the pupil has the patience and interest. Pupils should not be forced to read books, though it may have negative effects, such as the loss of reading desire"*⁷.

Literary texts involved in reading books of Montenegro, were very amusing for children. Pupils except reading, were enabled to listen, think and judge. Literary texts were very nice, with good quality and attractive illustrations and with very rich pedagogical apparatus.

While the Albanian Language textbooks in Montenegro were simple, practical and had a gradual escalation of difficulty from class to class. They were completed and each class had: the text language for pupil, pupil's exercise book and teacher's book. Despite the fact that pupils in Montenegro use two separate texts, language textbooks were drafted by the new criteria, where the integration of the Albanian language with literary reading was essential.

Also Albanian Language textbooks in Albania are associated with teacher's book. Teacher's book 3 is available for teacher and contains methodological guidance for the development of classes, general objectives of the text that aims to develop, analytical subject plan to the pupils, model lessons for teacher, tests for pupils.

Let's make the comparison between Albanian language textbooks 3 that is used in Montenegro and in Albania, regarding the structure of the texts and the volume of knowledge. AL 3 that is taught in Montenegro⁸ contained a total of 46 lessons where 13 were grammar lessons and 33 were literary ones and non literary texts, speaking and writing. Said with percentage, 28 percent made linguistic knowledge or "linguistic practice" as the author calls, and 72 percent reading, speaking and writing. Approximate figures has in AL 3 that is

⁵ Gjolaj, 2007. "Literature 2: We want, we want, of course we want". Printed in Podgorica, Montenegro.

Beci, 2007. "Albanian Language 3: The dance of words and sentences". Printed in Podgorica, Montenegro.

⁶ Petro and Pepivani (2006). Albanian language 3. Riprinted: Albas, Tirana, Albania.

⁷ Gjolaj (2007). "We want, we want, of course we want 2". Teacher's book. Printed in Podgorica, Montenegro, p. 5.

⁸ Beci (2007). Albanian language 3: The dance of words and of sentences. Printed in Podgorica, Montenegro.

taught in Albania, where from a total of 144 lessons, 43 lessons are linguistic knowledge or 29,8 percent and 70,2 percent are reading, speaking, writing⁹ (see Table 3).

Table 3

Textbook	Literary pieces (%)	Linguistic knowledge (in total) (%)
AL 3, Montenegro	72	28
AL 3, Albania	70,2	29,8

Linguistic knowledge of Montenegrin AL 3 text, are simple, very effectively treated, with not many rules and definitions to be remembered. The author of this text states: *"The knowledge given and the ways of handling it, is linguistic practice"*.¹⁰ In the language textbooks in Montenegro, the treatment of the main parts of the speech in tables, is positively evaluated¹¹ (see Table 4):

Table 4

Subject	Predicate	Complementary parts
Blerta	ate	figs
Robert	bought	apples
We	vintage	grapes

Let's see something else. During the analysis, I noticed that Montenegrin linguistic knowledge AL 3, are taught to the second grade in Albanian AL 2 text. For comparison facility, linguistic knowledge studied in these texts, I presented summarized in Table 5.

Table 5

Text	Linguistic knowledge
AL 3 Montenegro	Text and the sentence; additional parts of the sentence; words that indicate people, animals and objects; nouns; adjectives; the verb and its conjugation in three tenses (present, past, future); subject and predicate; column and comma; nouns and adjectives gender; personal pronouns.
AL 2 Albania	Text, sentence, shorter sentence; addition and removal of words in the sentence; nouns, the gender and the number of nouns; personal nouns; synonyms and antonyms; adjectives; the verb and its conjugation in three tenses (present, past, future); verbs have to / to be; personal pronouns; simple / composed sentences; positive and negative sentences; interrogative and indicative sentences; compound words; division of words at the end of the line; usage of the capital letter; usage of punctuation.

From Table 5 we observe that linguistic knowledge in AL 2 Albania are more numerous than in AL 3 Montenegro, apart the knowledge from the syntax "Subject and predicate" which are not given in AL 2, Albania. Much bigger is the difference if we compare AL 3 textbooks in both countries (Albania and Montenegro). AL 3 text used in Albania contains more broadened linguistic knowledge than AL 3 Montenegro, in each area of language, as in syntax, morphology, lexicology, orthography & punctuation. From this comparison we can

⁹ Petro and Pepivani (2006). Albanian language 3. Rprinted: Albas, Tirana, Albania.

¹⁰ Beci, 2007. The dance of words and sentences 3. Teacher's book. Printed in Podgorica, Montenegro, p. 8.

¹¹ Beci, 2007. Albanian Language 3: The dance of words and sentences. Pupil's book. Printed in Podgorica, Montenegro, p. 68.

say that the Albanian language textbooks for grade II-IV used in Montenegro are far simpler than the corresponding texts that pupils use in Albania, in terms of language skills studied.

In aspect of integration language + other subjects, we can say that this criteria is realized in the textbooks used in Montenegro and in Albania. Thus, through the themes of literary reading and teaching apparatus in the AL 3 Montenegro, it was realized the integration with the Albanian Language, Social, Visual education, Aesthetics, Technological capability, as well as child education for: peace, respect and support for each other, civilized behavior, mutual love, maintaining the common property, love for creative work, etc.

While textbook of AL 3 Albania, realizes integration in largest percentage of cases with Social education, Natural science, Visual Education; in average percentage it is integrated with Mathematics, History and Technological capability; and in lower percentage it is integrated with Physical education, Foreign language and Informatics.

Conclusions

From the comparison of the native language textbooks used in the primary school in Albania, Italy and Montenegro, regarding to the building structure and the volume of language skills and integration of language + other subjects, we go to the following conclusions:

Albanian language textbooks contain twice more linguistic knowledge in comparison with the Italian language textbooks; less than a third of spelling and punctuation classes included in Italian language text; Albanian language textbooks, contained some of the types of education that developed in the Italian language textbooks, but they are not defined and marked on the text as rubric denominations.

The analysis showed that the Albanian language textbooks for grades II-IV used in Montenegro are much simpler than the corresponding texts that pupils use in Albania, in terms of language knowledge studied. Similarity in comparison has the realization of language integration with other subjects through literary pieces in Albania and Montenegro textbooks.

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