Modeling in language-culture didactics: the example of combining models of different documentary logics and learner roles

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to present the value of modeling in language didactics, taking as examples the model of the different documentary logics that teachers can implement, and that of the different roles that students can assume in relation to documents. Based on a literary project carried out by foreign-language students within the methodological framework of the action-oriented perspective, the author shows how exploiting each of these models and combining them can enrich teaching-learning practices by diversifying the forms of L2 use in the classroom as much as possible.

Keywords: models, documentary logics, learner roles, Social Action-Oriented Approach (SAOA), literary project

Acronyms

–CEFR: *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: learning, teaching, assessment* (COE 2001)
–DLC: Didactics of languages-cultures
–SAOA: Social Action-Oriented Approach

Introduction

In didactics of language and culture (DLC), there are different "documentary logics", which determine the tasks that teachers, according to language and cultural objectives defined within their reference methodology, lead students to carry out on the documents they propose for collective oral work in class, and on the documents they ask them to produce themselves, whether these documents are literary or non-literary, textual, audiovisual or "scripto-visual"[1].

As part of the November 2023 Jakarta symposium on "English language and literature", I have chosen to present the model of different documentary logics because one of them is the "social-literary

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[1] That is, both visual and written, such as comic strips, print advertisements, or most scientific texts, which are illustrated with diagrams or data tables.

logic", in which students are invited to act in a real or simulated way as social actors in the social field of literature, for example as literary agents, publishers, literary journalists or members of literary juries. Practices based on this documentary logic have already appeared in some cases among certain teachers, but since the emergence in the 2001 CEFR of the "social action-oriented approach" (SAOA)[2], it is now possible to think of it as such within the set of other documentary logics already available in DLC.

This will lead me to present, in parallel with the model of available documentary logics, another model that is linked to it in classroom practices, that of the different roles assumed by students in relation to the documents worked on in class. And we'll see that it's literature, approached within the framework of pedagogical projects as in the SAOA, that enables the most diversified uses of these two models and the richest combinations between them.

Modeling the different documentary logics

In the following table, I have grouped together the two models mentioned above.

Documentary logics	Learners' roles
1. academic literature logic	1. readers
2. document logic	2. actors
3. communication support logic	3. authors
4. documentation logic	4. agents
5. social-literary logic	
6. mediation logic	
7. complex logic	

These are two "model-series", in which the term "model" does not mean a model to be reproduced, but rather, as we shall see, a model to be manipulated, as in the expression "systemic model". This type of model is the product of a modeling operation, that consists, in a given field of practice, of inducing and selecting a few concepts in such a way as to enable readers to make it work –to "run" it, as we say of a computer model– on their own terrain, according to their own knowledge and practical experience. A model of this kind is neither a theory, even if it is the result of abstract work, nor a practice, even if it corresponds concretely to certain practices; it's an intermediate concept that, in his 1922 book, the French sociologist Émile Durkheim, seeking to express the nature of pedagogy, a discipline he placed halfway between theory (the "science") and practice (the "art" of the artisan), and ended up calling, for want of a better term –in this case, for want of the concept of "model"– a "practical theory" (*une "théorie pratique"*)[3].

To explain what a "systemic model" of this kind is, it's interesting to contrast "model series" with what we might call "compilation series". In the 2001 CEFR, for example, the authors use the following series to describe the notion of "personality factors":

> *6. personality factors, e.g.:*
> *• loquacity/taciturnity; • enterprise/timidity; • optimism/pessimism; • introversion/-extroversion; • proactivity/reactivity; • intropunitive/extrapunitive/impunitive personality (guilt); • (freedom from) fear or embarrassment; • rigidity/flexibility; • open-*

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[2] Cf. e.g. Puren 2002, 2009, 2014, 2021a, Acar 2021a,2022,2023a,2023b.

[3] On models in DCL, see my 2022 essay. It seems to me that many didacticians of English as an international language confuse the two types of models, especially when dealing with the "PPP model" (Presentation-Practice-Production): on this criticism, see my essay of 2023, which is entirely devoted to it.

mindedness/closed-mindedness; • spontaneity/self-monitoring; • intelligence; • meticulousness/carelessness; • memorising ability; • industry/laziness; • ambition/(lack of) ambition; • (lack of) self-awareness; • (lack of) self-reliance; • (lack of) self-confidence; • (lack of) self-esteem. (CEFRL chap. 5.1.3, pp. 105-106)

Clearly, this is not the same type of series as the CEFR subtitle: "Learning, teaching, assessment". The compilation-series is made up of simple examples, the order of which can be altered and the list extended at will, without altering the overall meaning of the series: on the contrary, the meaning is supposed to become clearer as the examples are added to one another. The "Learning, teaching, assessment" series, on the other hand, is a model-series because not only is it a list that is immediately understood as closed, exhaustive, but also because its elements immediately form a coherent whole in the mind of the reader, who also immediately imagines different forms of possible relationships between these elements.

This "Learning, teaching, assessment" model-series is the result of modeling, i.e. of a certain conceptual manipulation, which the reader in turn can carry out in a different way: on analyzing the CEFR, as well as the uses to which it has been put in school systems, we can see that the authors are in fact implementing an order of priority that is exactly the opposite of the one they claim, since they are essentially proposing some kind of certification-type assessment system that will necessarily and strongly determine teaching, and hence learning[4].

Another well-known model series in DLC is the "teaching-learning" series, which some Spanish didacticians in application of the aforementioned "learner-centredness"– invert in their articles, speaking of "*aprendizaje-enseñanza*" (learning-teaching). For some years now, I've been proposing to speak of the discipline as "Didactics of languages-cultures": the reader who discovers this expression immediately wonders about the meaning of this linking of languages and cultures, because he immediately understands that it's a certain model, i.e. a certain overall conception of the discipline[5]. For some years now, I've also been proposing to define its problematic as that of "teaching-learning-using": the reader immediately understands that the concept of "using" is not there as a simple additional example to illustrate the disciplinary problematic, but that it modifies the conception itself[6].

There are many different ways of using models in systems analysis. Here, among all those presented by Bernard Walliser in his *Critical Introduction to Systems Analysis*, I will focus on the following four functions that seem relevant to DLC:

- *pedagogical*: presenting a complex object to others in an immediately comprehensible way,
- *cognitive*: representing a complex object in a simplified but not reductive way,
- *practical*: recognizing certain ways of teaching-learning-using the language-culture,
- *heuristic*: testing its representativeness, exploring what it represents, manipulating it to generate new ideas.

In a humanities discipline such as DLC, the model is fundamentally a tool for managing complexity: unlike theories, which are closed and incompatible with each other because each claims to represent reality in itself, models are not mutually exclusive and are constantly open to reworking, because they are simply tools for understanding how we act and could act on reality. From this epistemological point of view, didactic models are comparable to computer models, which Pierre Lévy believes have modified our relationship with reality:

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[4] This raises the serious question of whether this conceptual manipulation is not also a form of reader manipulation...

[5] cf. Puren 2022 chap. 3.1.3, pp. 12-13

[6] Cf. Puren DLC-DR1, point f, pp. 5-6.

The model is no longer set down on paper, that inert medium, but runs on a computer. In this way, models are constantly rectified and improved as simulations are carried out. [...] From now on [...] we'll be dealing with models that are more or less relevant, obtained and simulated more or less quickly, and this increasingly independently of a horizon of truth to which we could adhere durably. If there are fewer and fewer contradictions, it's because the claim to truth is diminishing. We no longer criticize, we debugge. (1990, pp. 136-137)

In the remainder of this article, I will present the different documentary logics and the different roles assumed by students in each of these logics, showing how they naturally combine in didactic sequences designed in project mode within the framework of the action perspective, the example taken being that of a literary project.

I have already published more or less elaborate versions of these logics and roles in previous publications in French, with concrete examples of extracts from French foreign language textbooks (Puren 2012, 2014, 2014b, 2020a). The most recent and most comprehensive version concerning documentary logics is that of a working document designed in the form of exercises on textbook extracts, with their answer keys (Puren 066). I won't be giving any concrete examples of textbooks here, which doesn't seem to me to be a disadvantage, insofar as it may, on the contrary, facilitate my readers' initial implementation of the last two functions indicated above of the models, namely the practical and heuristic functions.

The academic literature logic

In the teaching of literature at university, the documents are used mainly to represent an author, a work, a literary period or movement, a genre or literary writing process. Teachers assume that learners have sufficient language skills to follow this logic from an immediate literal understanding. Texts are grouped for study according to one or other of these themes.

Elements of this logic can be found in the literary streams of school education, in the teaching of languages-cultures in countries still strongly marked by the literary tradition, or in texts with a strong literary emphasis, such as poems o poetic prose. These elements of academic literary logic are, for example, literary culture information introduced by teachers, and analysis and interpretation tasks requiring the use of tools specific to literary studies. These elements are introduced as a complement to the specific logic of secondary education, the "document logic", which I will now present.

The document logic

This is the historical model for school-based explanations of literary texts in France from the 1920s onwards, in which the document is studied in its own right as representative of the foreign language and culture. The cultural objective becomes as important as the linguistic one as soon as the learners' level of language proficiency allows.

This model has gradually been extended to all types of authentic documents –literary or non-literary, textual, audiovisual or scripto-visual. Whenever possible, we work on files grouping together several documents on the same cultural theme, with a mix of literary documents, non-literary documents (notably journalistic) and documents of all types: textual, visual, oral, audiovisual or "scripto-visual" documents.

Implementing this document logic involves getting learners to perform a number of punctual tasks corresponding to different logical operations. Here's the task analysis model as I was able to establish it back in the 1980s, based on the questions and instructions proposed in numerous French

school textbooks for different languages -German, English, Spanish, French and Italian - between the 1920s and 1980s (Puren 1988, 2006, 2020b):

1. Getting ready
2. Locating
3. Analyzing
4. Interpreting
5. Extrapolating
6. Reacting
7. Judging
8. Comparing
9. Transposing
10. Extending

In these last two documents (Puren 2006, 2020b), you'll find concrete examples of questions and instructions for each of these tasks. But I think that, as teachers, you can already mentally mobilize your own examples. I've been testing this model regularly ever since, and I think it's still a relevant analysis grid for this type of documentary logic, the " document logic", in today's language textbooks.

The model is represented here simply as a list. The various tasks are generally carried out in the chronological order in which they are performed in the classroom, because this is an order that responds to didactic logic, but teachers often carry out recursions. For example, if an interpretation is wrong because the learners haven't spotted a decisive element in the text, they'll go back to a localization task.

It's a model that compiles all attested tasks. But I don't think any teacher asks his learners to do them all. They are chosen according to the objectives and potential of the document. Or, conversely, teachers choose documents according to the tasks they want learners to perform. But I don't think any teacher asks his/her learners to do them all. They are chosen according to the objectives and potential of the document. Or, conversely, teachers choose documents according to the tasks they want learners to perform.

For a consultancy job at the Algerian Ministry of Education between 2015 and 2018 (this was a project to renovate the teaching of national and foreign languages), I was asked to develop this dynamic tasks model of this document logic (Puren 2020b, Point 5, pp. 15-16) :
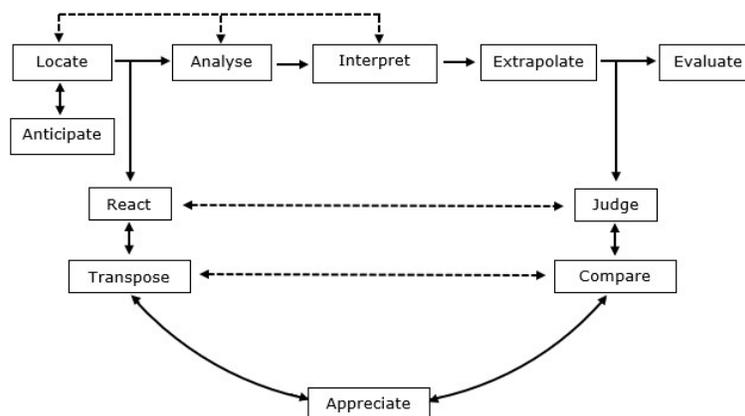
In the same paper Puren 2020b, readers will find, for our purposes here: at point 2 (pp. 3-13), an explanation of each of these tasks, with their objectives and concrete examples of questions or instructions; and at point 5, an explanation of how this dynamic model works. In this model, Three tasks have been added to the previous model:

1) the "anticipate" task, to take into account, in an expert reading, the alternation between the top-down approach and the button-up approach;

2) the "evaluate" task, which appears in the PISA descriptors: learners are encouraged to give their opinion on the quality of the form and/or content of the document, justifying it;

3) the "appreciate" task, which appears in the PIRLS descriptors: learners are invited to explain why the document personally interested them or not, whether they liked it or not.

In principle, document logic assigns to learners only the role of readers. But very early, on in school education, the implementation of an active pedagogy led teachers to offer them more challenging tasks, by offering them two other roles, as actor and author:

Tasks	Learners' roles
Collective explanation of literary texts in the classroom	readers
Expressive public reading of poems, theatrical performances…	actors
Writing texts in a literary workshop	authors

Preparing for these other two roles will inevitably require the teacher to introduce certain elements of academic literary logic.

The communication support logic

In this logic, the documents are used to practice one or other of the language activities, but above all the specific activity of the communicative approach, i.e. oral interaction between students in the classroom.

When it comes to literary documents, they are generally much shorter than those used in documentary logic, or they are used in a very partial way, to locate certain information. In this logic, the text is first and foremost a pretext for provoking exchanges between learners, drawing as quickly as possible on their personal knowledge and experience:

This is the case with communicative textbooks from levels A1 to B1. In textbooks for levels B2 and above, and sometimes even B1, the authors –even if they claim to be communicative– mechanically adopt the document logic, since the aim is to exploit the texts in greater depth in terms of both language form and cultural content.

The documentation logic

The first logic that is characteristic of the Social Action-Oriented Approach (SAOA) is the one that is implemented when the documents proposed to the students, and if possible completed by them, form part of the documentary file which enables them to prepare the production planned at the end of their project. As such, the documents are resources that the students must manage in the service

of their social action: they must not only select the information that will be useful, but also identify the information they are missing and search for it.

Information-related activities require not just communicative competence, but a much broader competence, "informational competence" or "information literacy", which is the ability of a social actor to act effectively and responsibly *on* and *through* information (cf. Puren 2021a).

In a book published by UNESCO in 2008, Forest Woody Horton Jr. proposed the following procedural model for the various tasks required for information literacy:

1. Realize that a need or problem exists that requires info. for its satisfactory resolution.
2. Know how to accurately identify & define the info. needed to meet need or solve problem.
3. Know how to determine if the needed info exists or not, and if it does not, go to Stage 5.
4. Know how to find needed info. if known to exist, and then go to Stage 6.
5. Know how to create, or cause to be created, unavailable info. (i.e. create new knowledge)
6. Know how to fully understand found info., or know where to go for help if needed to understand.
7. Know how to organize, analyze, interpret, and evaluate info., including source reliability.
8. Know how to communicate and present info. to others in approp./ usable formats/ mediums.
9. Know how to utilize info. to solve problem, make decision, or meet need.
10. Know how to preserve, store, reuse, record and archive info. for future use.
11. Know how to dispose of info. no longer needed, and safeguard info. that should be protected.
<div align="right">(Annex B – The information literacy life cycle explained, pp. 59-60)</div>

Note that the reference task of the communicative approach (no. 8) is just one of the eleven types of tasks required for information management in SAOA.

The social-literary logic

The second documentary logic specific to the SAOA is the "social-literary logic". It's the one we're particularly interested here, in the context of this Jakarta symposium devoted to the theme of "Collaboration and innovation in English language and literature teaching". This logic can be defined by the following elements:

–Learners are considered as social agents…

–… engaged in and out of the classroom…

–… in realistic real-life projects…

–… in the social domain of literature…

–… to carry out editorial, journalistic or other socio-cultural activities…

–… designed in multilingual and pluricultural dimensions[7].

To illustrate the specificity of the social literary model, here are a few examples of the activities that characterize it, along with examples of activities from the document model:

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[7] The distribution of literature is now a highly internationalized field, with a very dynamic market.

Social-literary logic (learners as literary *agents)*	Document logic (learners as *readers*, *actors* or *authors)*
-Designing a novel's cover page of front covers. –Writing of back covers. –Selecting book excerpts in support of a presentation of a work in a newspaper or magazine. –Writing reviews (in newspapers, magazines, on the radio, on television, on publishers' websites, on blogs, etc.). –Realizing of press reviews. –Organizing launch campaigns. –Interviewing authors and literary critics (remote or face-to-face). –Organizing literary public debates. –Organizing literary prizes (as in France the "Prix Goncourt des lycéens" (the high school learners' literary award) –Organizing a festival of literature/ poetry/ novels/ theatre, etc." –Professional and editorial translation activities. –Etc.	-The learners themselves take charge of the didactisation of the text (all the questions and instructions, in particular). –Reading of a complete work: distribution of parts and/or themes by groups, writing of reading notes, presentations. –The learners choose the books, organize their reading program, and choose the ways to present their work (exhibitions, slide shows, comics, photo novels, maps, charts, etc.). –The learners can choose the recipients of these reports (their class, other classes, on the Internet, etc.). –Thematic files are created by the learners from texts they have researched themselves. –The study of a work accompanied by contacts with the author. –Writing workshops: pastiches, rewrites (with a change of genre, point of view, scenario, etc.), collective writing, creative writing. –Theatrical performances. –Etc.

Note that activities in social-literary logic, because they are social and therefore have a certain level of complexity, correspond to projects, not simple tasks.

I can now complete the table of the different possible roles of learners working on literary documents:

Activities	Learners' roles
Collective explanation of literary texts in the classroom	**readers**
Expressive public reading of poems, theatrical performances...	**actors**
Writing texts in a literary workshop	**authors**
Acting in the social field of literature.	**agents**

The mediation logic

With regard to the dissemination of literature in the social field, I mentioned above the importance of translation as a mediation tool, and one of the examples I gave of the implementation of social-literary logic concerns professional and editorial translation activities. In fact, this mediation can be combined with all documentary logics:

Documentary logics	Examples of combination with the mediation logic
academic literature	Comparative literature projects
document	–Occasional L1 explanations of difficult words, expressions or structures, and idioms. –Translation into L1 to check comprehension. –Translation into L1 to check understanding of the text's cultural connotations and implicit meanings
communication support	Training to manage multilingual communication situations.
documentation	Mobilization of resources in different languages, including L1.
social-literary logic	–Real or simulated professional translations.

This is why I proposed, in Puren 066, to consider mediation as a logic in its own right. This logic is particularly solicited in the action-oriented perspective in the implementation of projects, to the point that I was led to add in 2018 to a table of the nine functions of language mediation in DLC developed over many years (Puren 033), three additional functions useful or even indispensable to the implementation of the action-oriented perspective:

–Interactions in L1 between teachers and students during the project design, regulation and evaluation phases.
–Use of part of the documentation in L1, and possibly in other L2s.
–Translation in L1 by the learners of the final production of their project to extend their action (real or simulated) in their own country.

The meta-logic, or "complex logic"

We have seen that the logic of mediation can be combined with any of the other logics. But it is in fact all the logics that can be integrated in this way, either in articulation (chronological) or in combination (simultaneous) within the same textbook didactic unit or "didactic sequence". I propose that this "complex logic" –in the sense of a "meta-logic", a logic for managing all available logics– should become a seventh documentary logic. In a contribution to a collective work devoted entirely to the SAOA (Acar ed. 2021b), I showed that projects of a certain complexity lead to the mobilization of all documentary logics, due to the necessary diversification of tasks. The example taken is that of a project presented by a teacher of French as a foreign language at a colloquium in Rio de Janeiro in 2000, involving his high school students in the senior class of a high school in the center of a Central American capital. Their project consisted in selecting and translating French poems into Spanish, to be read at the end of the school year in classes in the suburbs of this city. An analysis of the various tasks carried out by these students reveals the integration of different documentary logics throughout the project (Puren 2021b, p. 22):

Tasks and objectives	Main documentary logics
1. Searching for and quickly reading many collections of poems (or even just the titles in the table of contents) to make an initial selection.	documentation logic
2. Selecting poems based on their ability to immediately provoke the most discussion with students in the schools visited during the public readings. 3. Communicating among project participants to manage the project, especially when working on the poems: exchanges during selection, literary analysis, translation, preparation of the expressive reading, anticipation of student questions and answers.	support logic
4. Exploiting all the didactic potential of the selected poems so that the project serves their own learning of the French language and culture(s).	document logic
5. Conducting a thorough analysis of the selected poems in order to make a professional translation, i.e., rendering the implicit meanings and connotations in a way that is understandable to listeners from another culture.	academic literature logic mediation logic
6. Organizing and carrying out in the field this form of social diffusion and promotion of literature public readings of poems.	social-literary logic mediation logic
7. Eventually, designing, producing, promoting and distributing a collection of poems.	mediation logic

Compared to the previously published version of this table in a slightly different form (Puren 2021b, p. 22), I have added here the logic of mediation opposite the last three tasks. But they are also implemented as a means in the first four. In fact, it's the project as a whole that pursues this objective: it can be described as a "mediation project", since the aim is for the students of this French teacher to bring other students, and indeed other people in their country, into contact with French literature.

Conclusion

Implementing "complex logic" means, as in this case, integrating different documentary logics into projects in an articulated and combined way, so that they become coherent and produce synergistic effects.

This complex logic of documentary logics also leads us to combine this model with another, that of the different roles assumed by students when faced with literary documents. Here, too, there are coherent and synergistic effects: the prior implementation of the academic literary logic, for example, is indispensable to the implementation of the mediation logic for good translation and collective reading.

We've seen the heuristic function of role models: the Latin American teacher can enrich the project by diversifying them as much as possible: in any case, his students will study the selected poems attentively as readers; as agents, they will disseminate their translations in the form of public readings, and thus as authors. He may also suggest that they add a few personal or collective poems to their written collection, in bilingual French-Spanish versions, so that they act as authors this time.

The primary aim of this article was to present the DLC modeling tool on the basis of two concrete models, that of different documentary logics and that of different student roles. Of course, I leave it up to readers to judge the effectiveness of these models and their combination in terms of pedagogical and cognitive functions. And I invite them to test their representativeness and

practicability, drawing on their own knowledge and experience, to test their heuristics in imagining original forms of didactic units or sequences in non-literary fields... and to debug it they need do.

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