Wednesday, 22 April 2015
5 pm, room 1-G

Intercultural Communicative Competence: A Model

Over nearly five decades the Council of Europe and the Common European framework have been working on the Modern Language Projects, to study and promote a model able to generate communicative performance along with communicative competence: we are moving from the language taught as form to the language as a communicative tool, and though some local variations in the trend, the communicative focus has now overwhelmed the formal attention. We learn how to understand and to speak, aiming for efficacy rather than correctness: the European labels of competence (i.e. the well-known A1-2. B1-2, C1-2 levels) are founded on the “know-how” of the foreign language.

But this real use of the language in international contexts, increasingly frequent and present in everyday life, rightly addresses another problem: people from diverse cultures may interpret differently the same words, gestures, values: “university”, “professor”, “test”, “grade” are quite easily translatable concepts, as are “state”, “citizen”, “democracy”, “government” – but the idea linked to these concepts is different for an Italian, a Brazilian, an Arab or a Chinese person. While talking, even common words may be overlaid with dissimilar concepts.

This open lecture aims to propose a model of description of the critical points in intercultural communication, so that each person may start creating a personal handbook, site, index, database,… (an illustrative work in progress can be compared on www.unive.it/labcom).

This open lecture forms a part of Prof. Scarpa's course at VIU on Intercultural Communication .

Paolo Balboni (1948) is full professor of "Applied Linguistics" at the University Ca' Foscari Venice. Former Vice-Dean at the University for Foreigners of Siena, where he also led the Center for Linguistic Studies, Prof. Balboni was Dean of the School of Foreign Languages and Director of the Department of Linguistic Sciences at Ca' Foscari University, where he currently directs the Center for Linguistic Studies. He is founder of the Itals Laboratory, which is specialized in training teachers of Italian as a foreign language, and the Laboratory of Theory of Communication. He is editor of three reviews on linguistic studies and has published several works about the teaching of mother tongue and secondary, ethnic and foreign languages.

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