

# Anthony Mollica. Ludolinguistica. Imparare una lingua con giochi di parole

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Scudéry *Mathilde d'Aguilar* the protagonist Mathilde is an explicit rewriting of the character of Laura, and as such she must be read to be correctly interpreted. Rushworth in chapter 8 shows how the perception of Petrarch's translations into French changes when it is understood that for nineteenth-century French critics Petrarch was considered French and not Italian.

Among these methodological interventions it is worth mentioning the one by Raimondo, who introduces a new formal interpretative scheme based on the figures of Orpheus and Hermes: it is really a pity therefore that the interesting and original analysis could not benefit from the reproduction of the texts of two of the contemporary translators of Petrarch's poems. The reader's task is therefore complicated in reading, despite the step-by-step help provided by the author of the article. In the third part, in addition to analyzing some poets who "rewrite" Petrarch (Chapter 12), there are the interventions of the French poet Roubaud, who reconstructs the formal history of the sonnet (Chapter 13), and the intervention of the English poets Atkins, which illustrates seven different methods for translating, and Sheppard, who follows the method of the Oulipo group and Queneau to show many different ways of translating the third sonnet of RVE. Finally, the Appendix contains a description of the EUROPETRARCA project, an electronic database for all translations of Petrarch's poetry, which is useful for researchers and teachers, from middle school to the Academy.

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**Anthony Mollica. *Ludolinguistica. Imparare una lingua con giochi di parole*. 2. Loreto: Eli-La Spiga Edizioni, 2020. Pp. 234. ISBN 9788853627148.**

Anthony Mollica has garnered the well-deserved reputation of being a teacher's teacher for instructors of Foreign Languages. He has been warmly welcomed to workshops and conferences, especially those focusing on Italian as a Foreign Language (IFL), in North America and in Europe.

In this his latest volume, written in Italian, he offers IFL instructors a thorough and yet concise guidebook to accompany them throughout their language teaching career. Mollica's pages offer a plenitude of examples for teachers to use in order to enhance student learning and engagement. As the title indicates: *Ludolinguistica* exists to show how language proficiency in Italian might

be increased through incorporating games and fun activities into lesson plans as complementary activities. Underpinning the idea, however, is not merely fun and play; it entails much serious and demanding work on Mollica's part in order to motivate, be entertaining, and teach the Italian language and culture (7) successfully. This is the second of a three-volume set of manuals, all derived from the original and much lauded work of *Ludolinguistica e Glottodidattica* (Edizioni Guerra/Soleil, 2010). Here Mollica has revisited his previous pages, adding new activities and updating the bibliographic references.

The nine chapters of this volume give us a series of workable modules that begin with the easiest of game typologies in the language classroom and increase in difficulty, from the *crucipuzzle* (wordfinders) and simple crosswords presented in the prefatory chapter and extending beyond. Let it be clear, however, that even the simplest of activities can be adapted for added challenge as language proficiency improves. And conversely, even the more difficult activities can be reconfigured to suit students at earlier stages of learning. Aware of this, Mollica guides instructors with clearly explained games and exercises. His expertise in calibrating activities to appropriate learner levels evinces his own extensive practical classroom knowledge and experience. He knows and demonstrates that teachers can come back to favourite or effective activities at any point of the learning process, using them to scaffold further language acquisition. In this volume the chapters include: activities with focus on cognate words (*i veri e falsi amici*); number games, maze puzzles, adjective and adverb exercises, column matching activities, tongue twisters, proverbs, idiomatic expressions, and a chapter presenting a particularly Italian language game called *Il colmo*, a high level proficiency game that requires subtle knowledge of how language functions through double entendres or overlapping signification. This last does not have a distinct English typology but might be called "How do you top..?" For example, "how do you top the blind man who picked up his hammer and saw?"

Each chapter of the manual is introduced with a brief history of the activities described there; evidence of many of these is unsurprisingly found in the teaching resources and treatises of many centuries past. Chapters end with an admirable list of further references to support today's IFL instructors, including suggestions for internet sites and recommendations for more detailed theoretical perspectives.

Teachers of IFL will appreciate that the volume is presented clearly, with accurate instructions for how to use each game or activity for maximum pedagogical benefit. The pages are adequately illustrated, replete with templates that

include line drawings, comic strips, and puzzle formats. Although Mollica does not mention Benjamin Bloom's taxonomy of learning (1956, revised 2001), he inadvertently subscribes to its tenets, supporting how student engagement in creating word and language play enhances familiarity of and self confidence in for students of Italian of all ages and levels. His work also reflects a more recent learning taxonomy, namely that of L. Dee Fink. To his taxonomy, Fink adds elements like personal development and "becoming a better student," as well as skills management (L. Dee Fink, 2003). His work is fully in line with Mollica's goal of having students learn not only the language but also how to be creative in expression, and more appreciative of another culture (232).

Beyond considerations of pedagogical theory, the strength and appeal of this volume lies first and foremost in the variety and impressive number of sample exercises, examples, and suggestions for further activities. Mollica is a generous mentor, unafraid to share with fellow teachers the numerous original games and ideas he has developed. For example, for an exercise requiring students to match adjectives with the letters of their name to describe themselves, Mollica provides almost five pages of possibilities for students to choose from (116–119). As a bonus he adds instructions on how to make the exercise more appropriate to students with higher levels of proficiency. The bulk of the adjectives is appropriate for adolescents and teens. But he has not overlooked words more suitable for adult learners. It is true that he ineluctably omits some letters (W, X, Y) which do not lend themselves easily to adjectives in Italian, but on the whole, the list is a practical and fun vocabulary builder.

The volume is enhanced with two prefaces and a postface offered by three notable Italian language experts: Massimo Vedovelli, Tullio de Mauro, and Stefano Bartezzaghi. The latter writes that with this publication, Mollica has become a purveyor of a supergame of words who leads learners beyond language learning simply for functional communication, and who allows us, teachers and students alike, to love the Italian language (234). His observation is certainly corroborated by all the pages of this entertaining and instructive manual.

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