

Aspects regarding the development of specialized language communication skills of foreign students

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Abstract:

Comunicarea, ca principiu general de conviețuire socială este integrată într-un set de instrumente și de conținuturi didactice utilizabile în cadrul cursurilor de limbaj specializat de la anul pregătitor pentru formarea și dezvoltarea competenței de comunicare profesională a studenților străini care învață limba română. Predarea-învățarea limbajului specializat la anul pregătitor de limba română are ca finalitate dezvoltarea unor competențe de comunicare profesională ale studenților străini, aceștia fiind interesați să urmeze studii universitare de specialitate în diferite domenii, în România. Astfel, devine necesară înțelegerea și achiziționarea de către studenții străini a acestui cod lingvistic specific limbajelor specializate. Fundamentarea teoretică a limbajelor specializate din sfera terminologiei va fi reevaluată cu ajutorul principiilor didacticii limbilor străine și al normelor Cadrului European Comun de Referință pentru Limbi.

Cuvinte-cheie: comunicarea, limbaje specializate, studenți străini, româna ca limbă străină, terminologie

Abstract:

Communication, as a general principle of social coexistence, is integrated into a set of tools and didactic contents usable within specialized language courses from the preparatory year for the training and development of professional communication competence of foreign students learning Romanian. Teaching-learning specialized language in the preparatory year of Romanian aims to develop professional communication competences of foreign students, who are interested in pursuing specialized university studies in various fields in Romania. Thus, it becomes necessary for foreign students to understand and acquire this linguistic code specific to specialized languages. The theoretical foundation of specialized languages in the field of terminology will be reassessed with the help of the principles of foreign language teaching and the norms of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

Keywords: communication, specialized languages, foreign students, Romanian as a foreign language, terminology

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Introduction

Communication is the process of transmitting information, ideas, opinions, views, either from one individual to another or from one group to another; no kind of activity, from the banal activities of the daily routine that each of us experiences daily to the complex activities carried out at the level of organizations, societies, cultures, can be conceived outside the communication process. The small encyclopedic dictionary offers the term "communication" a particularly complex definition, covering almost all the fields in which this term is used: "Notification, news, news. (DR) Bringing to the attention of the parties to a process of some procedural acts (action, meeting, decision) in order to exercise the rights and execute the obligations that arise for them from these acts, within the limits of certain terms that usually run from the date of communication. Presentation in a circle of specialists of a scientific work. "A fundamental mode of psycho-social interaction between people, carried out in articulated language or through other codes, in order to transmit information, obtain stability or change individual or group behavior." (*Mic dicționar enciclopedic*, 1978: 222). Communication has been perceived as a fundamental element of human existence since antiquity. In fact, the very etymology of the term suggests this; the word "communication" comes from the Latin language; *communis* means "to agree", "to be in connection with" or "to be in relationship", although the term circulated in the vocabulary of the ancients with the meaning of "to transmit to others", "to share something with others", which can translate us today to the approach of specialized language in teaching the Romanian language to foreign students through an "agreement" regarding the sometimes polysemantic meanings and meanings of specialized terms.

Communication is an irreversible and cumulative process. No one can go back to past communication experiences to revise or undo them, nor can one escape their influence when engaging in new communication. Unfortunately, however, one cannot determine with sufficient accuracy the nature and degree of this influence on present communicative performance. Thus, the success versus failure of communication cannot be attributed to a single individual (either the speaker or the addressee), but to all its protagonists. No one can independently carry out a communication process, nor can they fully control it. In other words, an individual performance in communication cannot be identified and measured (Haney, 1979: 220), but only a collective performance. In the context of the communication process, foreign students must be helped to achieve those specific optimal



communication parameters: efficiency, economy, precision, simplicity, morality, etc. (Kotarbiński, 1976: 148-163).

Communication is not reduced to the action of an individual to emit a complex of signs, even if we admit that it is not carried out gratuitously, but with a view to the “consumption of the symbolic content” by someone else. Communication cannot be restricted to the reaction of an individual to a complex of signs, regardless of whether this complex is present as such in reality or is emitted by another individual. “Communication involves the summation of the action of emitting a complex of signs with the action of receiving it. The two conjugated actions are equally necessary for the achievement of communication and must be given equal importance” (Fârte, 2004: 18).

The ability to understand Romanian and to communicate in Romanian as a foreign language is today one of the basic skills that foreign students must possess if they want to truly integrate into the Romanian university community and why not into Romanian society.

Communication skills of foreign students in specialized language

The process of teaching-learning-assessing Romanian as a foreign language in the Romanian university environment has a rich tradition. Awareness of the need to link the entire process to quality language education has sharpened the need for alignment with international practices. One of the most well-known European and international language and educational policy documents is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CECLR), to which the University Curriculum for Romanian as a Foreign Language also refers. The CECLR proposes a set of common standards, which allow the production of transparent and coherent language policies. The authors of this document also proposed a new code of communication between those involved in the teaching/learning/assessing of a foreign language.

The names of the levels of linguistic competence are well known (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2) which remove the intuitive ambiguity in the development of communicative competence scales and which demonstrate the need for a descriptive scheme, with clear and exact parameters, which make the measurement of progress in the process of acquiring a language more credible. Alignment with international methods, strategies, teaching tools and practices of language teaching becomes a very serious imperative. In order to meet the needs of foreign students and to help them progress in acquiring Romanian as a foreign language, it is nevertheless necessary to plan and organize the entire teaching process in the field of RLS appropriately. Therefore, there are

some steps that foreign students must take during the learning process, in order to achieve certain objectives and to assimilate certain linguistic knowledge that they should possess in order to achieve oral and written communication in Romanian: "The use of a language, including its learning, comprises a series of actions carried out by people who, as individuals and social actors, develop a set of general competences, but especially, a communication competence based on the exploitation of linguistic means. They use the competences they have in various contexts and conditions, complying with different constraints in order to carry out communicative activities, which allow the reception and production of texts on certain topics on specific domains, applying the most appropriate strategies, to carry out the given tasks. The control of this activity by the interlocutors leads to the consolidation or modification of competences" (CECRL, 2003: 15).

The communication skills of foreign students in Romanian as a foreign language courses in the field of specialized terminology can be developed by first familiarizing them with the units of measurement in culinary recipes, or with the specific formulations of a weather report, from various types of materials that describe the state of health (medical language), or that highlight certain geographical aspects, or from watching video materials about scientific methods, technological processes (how to make cheese, wine, perfumes, build various monuments or cars, etc.), about various inventors and about various inventions (technical language). Thus, foreign students manage to better understand the impact of science and technology on the world and everyday life, also encountering vocabulary specific to the scientific field studied, thus enriching their knowledge of the Romanian language and developing their specialized language.

Thus, any course for teaching and learning Romanian as a foreign language is built according to the needs, motivations, characteristics of the foreign student, but also according to the requirements of the field that motivates him to learn Romanian as a foreign language. The learning process focuses, in principle, on the basic communication needs in the different fields of social life, thus requiring the delimitation of specific objectives and the selection of appropriate thematic contents. The acquisition and development of linguistic communication competence cannot be separated from the educational context in which it occurs. The organization of the process of studying Romanian as a foreign language must be achieved through a full concordance between the needs, motivations, particularities and resources of the foreign students who pursue this objective. In this regard, according to the CECLR (CECRL, 2003: 4-5): the reasons underlying a person's language learning (the



need to learn a language), the linguistic contents that must be mastered to achieve the goals, the motivations that mobilize personal resources in the learning process, personal and socio-professional identity (age, gender, social environment and level of education), the degree of adequacy of the teacher's professional training, the vastness and relevance of learning means (traditional, technical and IT), the time allocated to studying a language, etc. The connection of these elements of the educational context will be reflected in the skills that the foreign student acquires in studying Romanian as a foreign language during the teaching-learning process.

Learning Romanian as a foreign language by foreign students in order for them to develop communication skills in the socio-educational field and then in the specific professional field involves, in addition to general linguistic communication skills, a set of additional linguistic acquisitions specific to the specialized language. In this sense, we can talk about the formation of a communication skill in a specialized language. Thus, the reason for using communication skills is to carry out certain types of activities that are associated with certain institutional interaction situations (Plăcintar, 2006: 28), of professional training of foreign students. For this reason, in the process of teaching and learning Romanian as a foreign language, it is necessary to aim for the formation of a communication competence in a specialized language, which involves guiding foreign students towards linguistic acquisitions in the area of these languages specific to a field of activity/professional activity. Specialized languages include linguistic content (especially terms) used in specialized fields of activity, but a certain linguistic form can be found at the same time in both the common language and the specialized languages, as there are various bidirectional lexical transfers: "Regardless of the field of professional activity, all terminologies are made up of both words from the common language and strictly specialized words, which individualize each specialized language and make it difficult to decode" (Burtea-Cioroianu, 2019: 39).

The communication competence in a specialized language of foreign students is defined by the degree of mastery and use by them of thematic contents from the area of various existing professional activities, but also of the linguistic and terminological resources specific to specialized languages. Therefore, the linguistic preparation of foreign students admitted to university or postgraduate study programs conducted in Romanian becomes important, within the preparatory year of the Romanian language in order to acquire communication competence in a specialized language. Currently, access to specialization within the preparatory year of the Romanian language is achieved exclusively by



studying specialized languages related to the following fields: mathematics and natural sciences; agronomy; engineering sciences; biological and biomedical sciences; social sciences; humanities and arts; sports science and physical education, IT, etc. In this context, the professional training of students does not represent an objective in itself, because the study of Romanian as a foreign language in the preparatory year is, rather, focused on a communication component, the connection with the future professional training of foreign students being ensured through the study of specialized languages.

In Romanian as a foreign language courses, the teacher aims to achieve certain specific objectives, such as: the acquisition by foreign students of elements specific to the specialized language; the development of foreign students' capacity to transfer linguistic forms from the common language to specialized languages and from these languages to the common language; the correct use in acts of communication of basic lexical elements of a terminological ensemble; the integrated valorization of linguistic contents (phonetics, vocabulary, grammar) in written and oral communication contexts adapted to a certain professional field; the deepening by foreign students of the competences of reception (understanding of written and heard text) and production (writing, oral expression) of specialized texts, within the limits of levels B1-B2 of the CECLR; the development of the interaction potential of foreign students through a correct adaptation to various professional communication situations specific to the field studied. E. Mincu remarks: "Knowledge of things in a certain sphere of activity is indispensable in the process of training a specialist, unlike knowledge of the language itself, and constitutes a special effort for additional knowledge: in medicine – knowledge of medical terminology; in technology – knowledge of technical terminology, etc. The additional effort is oriented towards knowledge of the activity tool that varies from one field to another" (Mincu, 2017: 276). Of course, beyond the acquisition of a linguistic communication competence in Romanian, the interest of foreign students is oriented towards future professional training, towards the development of professional competences, but, for this to be achieved, the existence of linguistic communication competence is essential. Thus, the development of professional communication competence can be achieved gradually, through a transfer from specialized linguistic contents to scientific contents specific to a certain field. In the process of teaching and learning Romanian as a foreign language within the specialized language, the foreign student is at the center of attention, emphasizing his needs for understanding and receiving specialized vocabulary, involving close



cooperation with specialized disciplines. It is well known that: "Specialized languages are relatively closed, since with the help of terms, knowledge is transmitted as precisely as possible in a certain field. Specialized languages, specific to a professional activity or to fields such as science and technology, computer science, economics, etc., have their own terms and rules for organizing the linguistic statement. They produce texts with a degree of difficulty, which can constitute an obstacle to understanding the statement, especially for those who study Romanian as a foreign language. The causes of these difficulties can be found especially in the way of constructing such a specialized text and in the use of an often difficult terminology consisting of foreign words, archaisms, borrowings, etc." (Burtea-Cioroianu, 2019: 40).

While for a native speaker of Romanian, specialized language represents a difficult task, for foreign students learning Romanian it is a real challenge, requiring a double effort: the acquisition of a new linguistic code and the management within the acquired code of a very vast professional vocabulary. Therefore, among the means that can be used for the acquisition by foreign students of the communication competence in a specialized language, specific to various scientific fields, the following can be highlighted: the delimitation of a primary corpus of terms necessary for understanding the elementary aspects specific to the respective scientific fields; the identification of elements of the common language that have been terminologized, in order to make the transition to the specialized language area; the explanation of aspects related to the polysemy and synonymy of terms specific to the respective scientific field; the explanation of the mechanisms for the formation of specialized terminology specific to the scientific field studied; the approach to specialized lexicon from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Conclusions

The Romanian language preparatory year aims to familiarize foreign students with the specificities of the specialized language through the integrated use of the contents specific to this professional field. Taking specialized language courses, which complement the professional training of foreign students in the preparatory year, allows them to finally know, understand and use adequately the language specific to the future academic and professional field of training in the Romanian language programs they chose upon arrival in Romania. At the end of the Romanian as a foreign language course, the level of knowledge of the Romanian language by foreign students must be achieved for all four linguistic competencies: reception of written text, production of oral discourse, reception of oral discourse, production of written text.



The variety of specialized languages lies in the diversity of human activity domains, of their characteristic concerns, each of them having its own set of linguistic characteristics, its own vocabulary formed by the migration of various lexical units from the common language to the special languages, which acquire new meanings and a narrower area of use, targeting only a certain social group, which practices the respective scientific and professional activity. Therefore, the communication competence of foreign students in a scientific language that the study of specialized languages aims at within the preparatory year of the Romanian language is materialized through the general objective of this discipline: acquiring specialized communication competence in the Romanian language, at an intermediate level, by familiarizing foreign students with the particularities of the specialized language and by the integrated use of the contents specific to this professional field.

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