

**EDU WORLD 2018**  
**The 8<sup>th</sup> International Conference**

**WAYS TO VOCABULARY ENRICHMENT DURING THE  
PREPARATORY PROGRAM OF ROMANIAN FOR FOREIGNERS**

Magdalena Danuta Pruneanu (a)\*

\*Corresponding author

(a) University of Pitesti, Targu din Vale Str, No.1, Pitesti, Romania, magda26jkl@yahoo.com

*Abstract*

Teaching a foreign language is an activity that requires accuracy. In order to achieve the ultimate goal with maximum efficiency, the use of language as a means of communication, in any form, written or oral and in any circumstance, the teacher must stagger and clarify the facts of the language with rigor, each aspect has its place and a well-established way of teaching. In traditional education, most of the time, language lessons were organized on well-defined themes, the words used were directly dependent on these themes, and rarely the students were obliged to acquire a lexical, if not passive but of a low frequency. Modern learning focuses on the need to know the fundamental vocabulary words of broad interest that can be used in everyday situations. In terms of teaching and learning the vocabulary of a foreign language, two levels are known as being important: At the first level the lexical elements will be subordinated to the grammatical structures, keeping within the limits of the minimal fundamental vocabulary. At second level, the means used for the new lexeme significations are totally linguistic. The ability to think and express in the target language is a basic objective without which a foreign language cannot be acquired. The ability to establish connections, relationships and parallelisms in the target language must become a daily habit. In the formation of this skill, the linguistic means of enriching the lexicon are considered to be a support of great importance and efficiency.

© 2019 Published by Future Academy [www.FutureAcademy.org.UK](http://www.FutureAcademy.org.UK)

**Keywords:** Foreign language, vocabulary, teaching, learning, speaking.



## 1. Introduction

Language is defined as a social product, consisting of a set of rules necessary for communication. Speaking is like an individual segment of language that is used in a statement, in a communication act. Speech is also attributed to the quality of creation and freedom act belonging to the speaker. The relationship between language and speech can be synthesized as follows: language is a general social phenomenon and is manifested through speech; an individual, particular manifestation of the language by speaking to each individual, while speech is the concrete manifestation of language in oral communication between people (Moldovan, Pop, & Uricaru, 2002). Language mistakes must be detected and corrected in advance to prevent the occurrence of defects that uproot later with great effort. The use of various methods and means, from composing to conversation, literary debates, dramatizations offers real possibilities to enhance the capacity for active manifestation, to use a nuanced language with great intellectual and affective potential, giving all students the right to solve and create the same exercises, the same kind of composition. (Cosăceanu, 2003).

An appropriate vocabulary implies a clear pronunciation of words and sentences, an adequate combination of words in sentences and in phrases, so that what the student wants to express is presented in a clear, correct, nuanced form. Knowing that creative skills and attitudes do not develop automatically, with biological maturity of the individual, but special, early, systematic and relevant intervention is required, any teacher needs to assess his or her formative mission with utmost responsibility and relevance (Morărescu, Tetean-Vințeler, & Sofian 1993).

By addressing the acquiring, practicing and valuing aspects by the act of speaking a foreign language, it is found that the process can be approached from two directions: the explanatory and the applicative aspect. The vocabulary enrichment aims to blend the explanation with the application. In terms of teaching and learning the vocabulary of a foreign language, two levels are known as being important.

In traditional education, most of the time, language lessons were organized on well-defined themes, the words used were directly dependent on these themes, and rarely the students were obliged to acquire a lexical, if not passive but of a low frequency. Modern learning focuses on the need to know the fundamental vocabulary words of broad interest that can be used in everyday situations.

For Romanian, as a foreign language, it is good to have a fundamental vocabulary organized on the basis of the frequency and availability of words.

## 2. Problem Statement

Modern methods focus not only on understanding the meaning, but rather on acquiring the skill to use the words, on actively capitalizing their combining possibilities, to achieve the speaking act (Cerghit, 2006, p. 73).

However, the precursory phenomenon and the implicit condition for the birth of fluent speech is knowing the words' meaning. Learning the meaning is not done mechanically, but words are seen in their phraseological dependence.

The vocabulary enrichment actually involves the ways in which the semantic decoding is done in an advanced language learning phase.

At second level, the means used for the new lexeme significations are totally linguistic. The ability to think and express in the target language is a basic objective without which a foreign language cannot be acquired.

### 3. Research Questions

The ability to establish connections, relationships and parallelisms in the target language must become a daily habit. In the formation of this skill, the linguistic means of enriching the lexicon are considered to be a support of great importance and efficiency.

#### 3.1. Self-definition by context

The isolated word has no communicative value, its meaning, separated from the entourage of other words, conceals its significance and does not represent much for the speakers. The words' meaning is determined by their contextual position, so that a word placed in a lexical context in which it is the only unknown element, its sense can be established more easily, the context can define a situation, and this defines the word.

By contextual self-definition, a global sense of the word is established. Even some grammatical forms can gain value through contextual self-definition. A grammatical form is not a phenomenon in itself, detached from lexicology and semantics, but directly involved with it. Any grammatical phenomenon actually enhances a word and confers it a new meaning.

In the examples: "*The student's book is new*" and "*I give the student the book*", the word "*student*" signifies two distinct values of the same lexicon, possessor and beneficiary, determined values required by the specific lexical context in the two statements.

The importance to be given to the context is proven, in cases of lexical polysemy, of partial synonymous, homonymous, understanding of language-specific expressions.

#### 3.2. Antonyms

A frequent and effective means of semantisation of the unknown lexicon is the antonimic pair. When the meaning of one of the members of the pair is known, the semantic determination of the other is made through the prism of the first. The essential condition to be considered is the use of the pair with the basic meanings.

For example, in the "*good*"-"*evil*" pair, "*evil*" is defined as the opposite of "*good*", signifying a phenomenon with negative qualities ("*good man*"-"*evil man*"), but avoiding defining in special circumstances as "*good weather*"-"*bad weather*". Semantics of non-specific oppositions are done by other means or by very clear oppositional textual parallels, after the basic antonymic meanings are well known, entering the usual vocabulary of the students. Very easy situational dialogues can be built, including pairs in opposition.

### 3.3. Synonyms

In languages that have a wide lexical variety, the knowledge of synonyms is of great importance. When a word is well known, understanding the meaning of its synonym is not a difficulty for perfect synonyms.

In the case of partial synonymy, complications arise, and the synonymous relationship is made by contextual parallelism. It should be noted that some words can only enter a synonymous relationship in certain contexts. For example: “*Florin Piersic is a great artist of the Romanian stage. He is also a very good cinema actor.*”

Although the semantic sphere of the word “*artist*” is much broader than the word “*actor*”, in such a context, the two lexemes establish a synonymous relationship, being substitutable.

But if we have the contexts: “*Eminescu was a great artist of the word*”, substitution by the word “*actor*” is no longer possible, and there is no synonymous relationship between them.

With the help of the context, the polysemy of words can be shown, as well as the fact that some meanings enter new synonymous series: “*exit*” = a way out of a building, but also the figurative “*solution*”. In explaining any synonym or polysemantic words, it is necessary to draw the students’ attention to how to look for and choose the right dictionary meanings.

### 3.4. Periphrasis

Periphrasis is a kind of word definition, expressed through the elements already known. It can also be considered a good lexical repetition exercise. The periphrasis definition requires a perfect knowledge of all the words used in the definitions, as well as the maximum expression clarity. Example: “*I bought a locker and two keys for the desk drawer*” (Romanian language has the same word “*frog*” for both the amphibian animal and the door locker).

### 3.5. The word family

The means of explaining the lexical meanings presented up to now are only used at an advanced stage of language learning, when the basic vocabulary is perfectly known. In these phases, in pursuit of the expansion of the expression possibilities, of communication tuning, the word family represents a possibility of widening the semantic fields. If the meaning of the word -base is well known, the meaning of derivatives as well as their integration into different morphological classes are easier to achieve.

The immediate contextuality of the members of a word family is not only edifying but also mandatory.

### 3.6. Translation

It has been many years since the vocabulary books, with pages divided into two columns, one for the target language, and another for their translation into their native language, were indispensable for foreign language classes. Questioning students (“*How to say ...?*”) was a current method of checking, and one of the most serious mistakes a student could have done was not to have saved the list of words with their translation indicated by the teacher.

It is superfluous to note that this method only partially solves the problem of acquiring the lexicon of a target language, because the word is not a unit in itself, which is self-defining, but is mostly dependent

on contexts. In various contextual combinations, the word changes its meaning, due to the phenomenon of polysemy, a phenomenon that contributes substantially to enriching the vocabulary of a language.

It goes without saying that modern language learning, based on the concept of language is a system and that the memorization of translated words is not recommended. However, the problem of learning with translation remains open, claiming that it has very high inconveniences and most of the discussions are converging towards its elimination.

If mental translation is used when it is necessary to express in the target language, in a real communication, the foreign language will appear to foreign speakers more curiosity than a necessary means of communication.

Translation means a solution, at the most to interpret the word, but not to learn a language. It is argued that different kinds of translation exercises would result in the elimination of interferences.

We believe that this advantage does not balance with the big drawback, the braking of thinking and fluent speech in the target language.

A concession can be made to translate as a method of semantic decoding, when all other means, being exhausted, could not make decoding, a situation that is supposed to happen quite rarely.

### **3.7. Dictionary**

The dictionary is an important auxiliary for those who study a foreign language. The necessity of dictionaries is indisputable, but they present a number of inconveniences if used as language learning materials. We have shown that not all the words of one language have perfect equivalents in another, and then the solution offered by the dictionary is either not elucidating, or confusing, generating perplexities. Also, language-specific nuances can not always be reproduced, resulting from polysemy, antonymy, synonymy, and lexical homonymy.

Bilingual dictionaries must be used with great caution, being a more useful tool for those who know a great deal of a language. Higher efficiency in learning is used by monolingual, school level dictionaries, through which it is easier to fix and enrich the lexicon.

### **3.8. Language Glossaries**

For foreign students learning Romanian, there are a number of difficulties that can not be overcome easily without a number of auxiliary materials. For example, it is difficult for a foreign student to identify which gender a noun belongs to in Romanian until the student becomes familiar with the abbreviations, which for a beginner is complicated enough.

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

This investigation, on the application of didactic methods for the enrichment of foreign students' vocabulary, is the result of my concern to improve the teaching and learning of vocabulary notions within the Preparatory program of Romanian language. The instructive-educational issues related to vocabulary lessons are multiple and important, therefore the teacher must:

- show students the richness, variety and meaning of the forms existing in Romanian language;
- highlight the importance of the lexical elements used in a listened / read message;

- teach the foreign students to apply them using their own words;
- make the foreign students understand that the correct use of semantic categories is an absolutely necessary condition for oral and written expression;
- demonstrate that the vocabulary study contributes to a better understanding of a particular text.

## 5. Research Methods

As psychological reactions, especially discouraging, play an important role in the oral language acquisition mechanism, they must be circumvented by providing helpful materials to ease and impart safety, both practically and mentally, to the student's work.

For this reason, special glossaries are useful for beginners, in which the fundamentals of the basic vocabulary, alphabetically arranged, should be indicated by their number and gender, and the marking of phonetic alternations would increase their efficiency. Such glossaries should accompany each reading unit, and at the end of the handbook be a general repertoire, with definitions and synonyms.

## 6. Findings

The teachers of foreign language know the tendency of learners to make analogies and parallels, to lean on their native language, both in terms of structure and lexicon. This hinders the establishment of direct links between thinking in the target language and speaking; the use of the new code is hampered, while also imparting a slow rhythm of free speech (Lemnaru 2013). Moreover, not all the words of a language have perfect equivalents in another language, as neither grammatical structures have. A transposition in which equivalences are not absolutely perfect risks serious mistakes or semantic incompatibility.

## 7. Conclusion

Our article highlights the possibilities of enriching the vocabulary and, as we have seen, they are varied. Whatever the technique used to introduce a new word, it is important to note that teaching vocabulary is a long and complex process that requires attention, time, training, creativity from the teacher. Arousing the student's interest in a new word, making him/her "interact" with it, and making him/her use it appropriately in communication situations is a difficult task for the teacher. Harmonely, well-used and balanced at the right time, they ensure a semantic decoding, followed by the widening of the sphere of applied lexical knowledge of foreign students.

## References

- Cerghit, I. (2006). *Metodele de invatamant [Teaching methods]*. Bucuresti: Polirom.
- Cosăceanu, A. (2003). *Language teaching: disciplinary reconstruction*. Bucuresti: Universitatea Bucuresti.
- Lemnaru, A.C. (2013). *New Methods in Teaching Romanian Language for Foreign Students*. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, (76), 451-455. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.04.144>
- Moldovan, V., Pop, L. & Uricaru, L. (2002). *Nivelul Prag in predarea limbii romane ca limba straina [Threshold level. For learning the Romanian language as a foreign language]*. Strasbourg: The Council of Europe.
- Morărescu, S., Tetean-Vințeler, D. & Sofian, M. (1993). *Jocurile didactice si invatarea limbilor straine [Didactic games and teaching and learning languages]*. Cluj-Napoca.