ASPECTS OF TEACHING AND ASSIMILATING ROMANIAN PHRASES BY FOREIGN STUDENTS

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Abstract: The knowledge of Romanian as a foreign language also supposes the assimilation of the basic vocabulary, of the orthographic, orthoepic and morphologic rules, as well as of the syntactic patterns for constructing the discourse. However, in order to nuance and add expressiveness to speech it is necessary to know certain fixed lexical joinings, that is the phrases. This is why when teaching Romanian as a foreign language it is necessary to insert the most common Romanian phrases and expressions, whose increased iteration in the language imposes their assimilation by the foreign speakers. The importance of the assimilation and correct usage of Romanian phrases and expressions by foreign speakers is obvious, because, in the absence of some correct semantic explanations, they are deficiently used, especially from a stylistic and semantic point of view.

Keywords: phrase, expression, Romanian, semantic, vocabulary.

1. Introduction

The knowledge of any language implies the assimilation of the basic vocabulary, the knowledge of the orthographic, othoepic and morphological guidelines and the knowledge of the syntactic patterns for constructing the discourse. Even if someone knows all this, he would neither be able to understand any text in the respective language, nor be able to speak with shades of difference, expressively, unless both the fixed lexical joinings and the so called lexemes are part of his vocabulary. Among the latter, the *phrases* are most frequently used. According to the DEX, *phrases* are "groups of words with a unitary meaning, which grammatically act as a single part of speech".[1]

Phrases represent true documents concerning the way of living, of thinking, of feeling, of expressing of the Romanian people. They were conceived from the desire to specifically express the observations on the world, to transfer them the characteristic sensibility. They are part of the national literary artic thesaurus. Their picturesque marks the language, charming it and giving it an emotional, expressive force. Their unique form crystallized in time was preserved by virtue of the speech, a rich and diverse popular creation and the artistic literature. The writers have easily discovered the strong expressive values of most phrases and that is why they used them in their works. Thus, one of the basic features of phrases consists in expressiveness, in their figurative meaning, in the effect their usage gains. This is the very idea sustained by the linguist Th. Cristea in his studies on phraseology: "the more expressive is a stable joining of words (so it has a deep affective charge), the more we are justified to call it a phrase."[2] And Cecilia Căpăţînă thinks that: "the global sense of a phrase can often be a

[1]Academia Română, *Dicţionarul explicativ al limbii române (DEX)*, ediţia a II-a, Editura Univers Enciclopedic, Bucureşti, 1996, p. 580.
[2]Theodor Hristea (coord.), *Sinteze de limbaromână,* cap. Introducereînstudiulfrazeologiei, EdituraAlbatros, Bucureşti, 1984, p. 142.

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summation of two or more figurative meanings."[3]Keeping the phrases in the given form is a necessity, for this form contains most different information on the Romanian language, on our unique way of being.

It is well known that phrases preserve old facts, archaisms: *dodii, brânci, seamă, iveală, vileag, hac*etc., old grammatical forms: *ziuă, roate, câmpii, lături*etc., old constructions *aminte, afund, îndelete.* The heritage of these phrases has led and is still leading to the variety and the expressiveness of communication. Through phrases one expresses our material and spiritual culture, our mental, our high priority occupations, our particular way of relating to time and space, to other peoples, the human typology, the religious belief, old habits, traditions.

The phrases specific to the Romanian language represent crystallizations of some individual representations of the life experience that outline a particular way of thinking and expressing. They illustrate the collectivity in most different stances, appear in the individual communication as an eloquent proof of the linguistic integration of the individual in the national language, even as a proof of the individual creativity. The phrases designate notions just as words do: *băgare de seamă,a da drumul, de vază, cu dare de mână, din topor, a lua parte, a avea degând, a da din gură, cu scaun la cap* etc. They can establish relationships at the sentence level: *împreună cu, odată cu, afară de, în urma, în ciuda, în pofida* etc. and at the phrase level:*cu toate că, chiar dacă, de vreme ce, îndată ce, pe când, ca şi cum, ca şi când, de parcă, măcar că* etc.

The phrasing was usually obtained through abstractization or by emptying the sense of some terms: *caii de la bicicletă, în dorul lelii, de-a valma, cu ghiotura, a băga fìtile* etc., through ellipsis *ţine minte, la cheie, în cap, cu cap, cuminte, a o scoate la cap, din cap, cu carul* etc., through comparison: *cât o ceapă degerată, ca-n palmă, ca pe ace, cât negru sub unghie, ca naiba* etc., through repetitions: *an de an, clipă de clipă, zi de zi, faţă-n faţă, cap în cap, cap la cap, nas în nas* etc.

Victor V. Grecu states that: "Speakers who wish to express their ideas more clearly, more precisely, with more shades of difference, often feel the need to use more words, which approximately express the same logical, notional content. In speech one frequently uses synonyms to accomplish the communication, the clarity and the characteristic of the expression."[4] Thus, the idea that "synonyms essentially reflect the progressive evolution of the language, one using for new senses several voiced complexes, based on coincidence or the resemblance of some traits."[5] outlines the fact that *phrases* express the same contents with more shades of difference and more expressively than their semantically equivalent words, that is their synonyms, do.

The process of teaching Romanian as foreign language needs the presence of the most common Romanian phrases and expressions, whose increased frequency in language imposes their knowledge by foreign students. The importance of the assimilation and correct usage of Romanian phrases and expressions by foreign speakers is obvious, because, in the absence of some correct semantic explanations, they are deficiently used, especially from a stylistic and semantic point of view.

2. The importance of knowledge of the most frequent in the Romanian language by foreign students

[3]Cecilia Căpăţînă, *Elemente de frazeologie*, EdituraUniversitaria, Craiova, 2007, p. 4.
[4] Victor V. Grecu, *, Limba română contemporană. Lexicologia*, ediţia a IIa revăzută şi augmentată, vol. II, Editura Alma Mater, Sibiu,2003, p.91.
[5] *Idem.*

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The need for studying the phrases becomes obvious especially in the process of learning a foreign language. In order to correctly speak that language it is not enough to only know words from the basic vocabulary and grammar rules, but also one must assimilate the lexical combinations. It often happens that one association of words in a language does not correspond to the association of the same words in another language (for example, the correspondent of the English phrase *to have a dance with*[6]is not **a avea un dans cu*, but the verbal collocation *a dansa cu*). In the specialized languages, the knowledge of the technical phrases is unanimously accepted. Any good specialist in a certain domain must know and use fixed lexical combinations specific to his domain (for example, in the banking or financial domain: *operaţiuni bancare, obligaţiuni garantate, obligaţiuni negarantate, obligaţiuni subordonate, piaţă monetară, piaţa primară a titlurilor de stat, piaţa scontului, sistem de bancă electronică, titluri de stat*[7]etc.)

The European Union supposes, aside several unifications of some systems and different values, a correct understanding. This understanding means finding the best equivalents of the fixed and free combinations in the target language. If Romanian lacks the main instrument, that is a dictionary of the most frequent fixed lexical combinations, translated into the other European languages, it means that any translation will be inaccurate. The need for knowing these lexical joinings, and especially the phrases, derives from the existence of some universal models of combining the words and from the specificity of any language of having preferences, constraints and combinational interdictions.

In Romanian, due to the increased frequency of some phrases and expressions, their knowledge by foreign students imposes itself. In order to facilitate their assimilation by the foreign students, they can be grouped according to the base verb. Thus, for *a da (to give): a da explicaţii, a da exemple, a da examen, a da telefon, a da înapoi, a da mâna, a da împrumut, a da foc, a da în primire, a-şi da seama, a da afară*[8], for *a (se) face (~to make): a face o vizită, a face o excursie, a face o plimbare, a face o partidă de şah, a face o glumă, a face o propunere, a face cumpărături, a face piaţa, a face curăţenie*[9], *a se face bine, a se face lumină, a se face seară, a se face noapte*[10], for the verb *a (se/si) pierde (to lose): a pierde din vedere, a-şi pierde cunoştinţa, a-şi pierde minţile, a-şi pierde urma*. Phrases are equivalents of some words, which results from examples such as: *a da lămuriri, a da explicaţii, a vărsa lacrimi*[11], *cu totul, peste tot,* (*bun*) *de tot, mi-e totuna, cu toatea cestea, cu toate că, înainte de toate*[12]. The correct usage of locutions and phrases is the best example of the sense of language. They are proof of a very good assimilation of the phraseologic luggage.

An important matter is that of preserving them through usage, through the exact knowledge of their meaning, through reading the works of our great writers. This issue is strictly related to the process of teaching Romanian as foreign language, because, often, in the absence of some correct semantic explanations, they are deficiently used, especially from a stylistic and syntactic point of view.

Foreign students can obtain a real linguistic competence if they have contact with the specific method for updating the rules of the semantic and syntactic compositionality. It is important to gradually insert phrases into Romanian lessons: phrases and their locutional

[6] *Macmillan English Dictionary*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London, 2002, p. 656.
[7]Viorica Bobircă, *Manual de limba română pentru studenţii străini economişti*, Editura Academiei de Studii Economice, Bucureşti, 1998, p. 47-109.
[8] Lacrima Madilena Michail, *Limba română pentru greci*, Casa de redacţie Antonis Stamoulis, Salonic, 2008, p.49-50.
[9] *Ibidem*, p. 54.
[10] *Ibidem*, p. 81.
[11] *Ibidem*, p. 199.
[12] *Ibidem*, p. 211.

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derivates of the auxiliary verbs: *a da, a face, a fi, a avea, a lua, a sta, a pune* etc., the connective locutions in lessons that teach the syntactic inter-sentence and inter-phrase relationships.

3. Conclusions

Reporting to locutions and phrases for a person who wants to learn Romanian as foreign language is a problematic matter because the changes in language, the lexical novelties from different domains, reflect the actual linguistic reality. In the evolution of a spoken language, phrases play an important role regarding the expressiveness of the sent message but, at the same time, may contribute to a certain difficulty of receiving the language specific to the domain of interest for one who studies Romanian as foreign language. In this situation it is very important to disambiguate the context, offering as many clues as possible on the basic meaning of locutions through other common terms. The terms from a certain domain, after initially being part of common language contexts, are re-introduced in the specialized communication, being taken over to other domains than the original one. The more general language tends to absorb more terms, the more the texts initially considered specialized tend to de-specialize, and as vocabulary grows, it becomes accessible to both specialists from other domains and common language speakers. Therefore, the importance of decrypting the sense of phrases by foreign students willing to learn Romanian and of observing the differences in the given contexts, is normal.

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