E-learning and the Interaction

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1. Introduction

The *Romanian* section at Lund University, Sweden, still seems to be the only one of the language sections, in Northern Europe – after nearly 10 years from start - to have the *entire* curriculum-programme (i.e. all the four levels), at distance, i.e. exclusively by means of internet. (Ditvall, 2006-3). Once online, in 1999, the interest for the *Romanian studies* increased rapidly, and is higher and higher every year.

The question that arises is: *Why do not more sections or teachers develop this highly effective, rational, modern, innovative education-system in language-teaching?!*

2. Pedagogical impediments?

The teacher-beginner in online-education may fear on one side the problem of "how to construct" the course-material on the internet-tool and on the other side the problem of the interaction with the students, i.e. with the class – taking into account the distance!

Or maybe the (somewhat) experienced teacher cannot handle, fully, the "problem" of interaction – most online-teachers seem to use still the mailing as a communication-tool, which *does take* time, which *is* stressing – facts that can "persuade" this teacher to abandon this kind of teaching.

In this paper we will present the *Romanian case* – which may give a few solutions to the problems above.

3. The geographic area

At the Romanian section, neither the teachers nor the students live in Lund (except one or two students registered every other/third/fourth year). The teachers live in different places in Sweden, one of them lives longer periods in Romania. The students are spread all over Scandinavia (i.e. the whole of Sweden, Denmark and Norway) and the rest of Europe (Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Rep. of Moldova, Romania etc), the USA and the rest of the world – i.e. countries where Scandinavians attending our courses are temporarily or permanently settled down (Ditvall, 2001 & 2004).

Yet the number of the registered students at Romanian increases every year! From the very start of online-education the number increased rapidly - from about 3 students every other or third year, before 1999 (when online-Romanian started) to about

[1] Research-field: e-learning and language university-studies.

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120 students per term, every year, after 1999 (Ditvall 2006-2). Before 1999 only one level could be attended, after 1999 the whole education programme can be attended, every year, every term - all the four levels are running in parallel.

How is this evolution possible? The answer is: the e-learning-based pedagogical system. Thanks to this modern way of teaching and learning, on an IT-based course the students can log in and attend the whole course-material from all over the world, at any time.

The student has access to all the lecture series, other type of lessons, exercises and keys, the audio-files – the whole curriculum is there. The time-table helps the student follow how the course runs, namely tells him which module runs which period and which lessons-exercises he must go through which week.

The student may even work (i.e. study), within the course, at an individual level - in case he is delayed with the start of a certain module, without "disturbing" the other students who study according to the ordinary schedule.

The student can log in the course at any time of the day and night, throughout the term – he can follow the discussions that had been held in the different forums, from the beginning of the term and he can go through questions and answers that have arisen during the last time.

Taking the exams is not a problem either! The exams held orally are taken directly via the computer with help of a webcamera. The written exams take place at other universities in Sweden – our student is given the possibility to take the exam when other students at that university are taking theirs - and the students living in the rest of Europe take their exams at the Swedish Embassy in their country.

Thus, the geographical distance is no impediment neither in "coming into the classroom", attending the lectures, attending the discussion-forums, not even in taking the exams!

Compare:

- To attend a campus-course the student must live in the university-town[2].
- *This* was the big problem of the Romanian section before 1999 (when online-courses started): there were only 3-5 students (who lived in Lund) every other or third year. The section was on the way to be abolished.

4. Access in continuum

On the other hand, we may explain the increasing percentage of students – apart from the non-existent-geographic impediments – by the fact that our courses with their whole curriculum are easily accessed - the course-material is "there", once the student has logged in. This material consists of lectures, text-reading lessons, glossary-lists, exercises, audio-files and key to the exercises.

Even the material in the discussions-forums is "there" – for being consulted during the whole term. The questions and the answers between the students and the teachers, as well as between the students themselves remain in the forums till the end of the term. In this way a student who started the course with delay or the student who has

[2] Including the surroundings.

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been absent a certain period (our students are in general "full-time working people", their work including often a lot of travelling within their country and abroad) can easily go through all the items discussed – and all "instant" information - within the course from the very first day of the class.

The student has the entire course "there". And it "remains" "there" – while the course runs – that is the student can at any time go back to the entire lectures, verify details, solve previous-exercises, practice for example pronunciation, glossary a s o - in continuum.

It seems that "the teacher is nearby the whole time when the course runs". His information is reachable at any time.

This is possible because our educational model is not connected to the factors of time and room. Everything is reachable once the student has logged in.

Compare: To mention only a few examples:

- In a campus-course the student has to write down, himself, the notes when attending a lecture – the notes could often turn to be incomplete (the lecturer "runs through" his lecture too fast, etc).
- The teacher's scratch-points on the blackboard, during a lecture or a lesson may often, in the student's personal notes, lack complete information (many details may "disappear" from the mind when the student goes through them a week after).
- When practising reading proficiency or pronunciation in the classroom (laboratory-exercises are not included) only a few students may practice (due to lack of time), and then maybe only once every other week.
- Finally, the items above are absolutely impossible to obtain if the student was absent that day or a longer period and does not have any "school-mates" either to ask for help).

5. Indirect interactivity

Above we mentioned the "indirect"[3] so called "passive" interactivity between the teachers and the students, by means of the discussion-forums. There the students write questions and comments every day. The teachers answer as well every day. Thus they "contact" each other with a high frequency. In addition, as we said, the students can, in these forums, contact each other at any time.

The interesting thing with this kind of interaction is: 1) on one side the students have access to the information during the whole term – the info "remains" there (a lucky way of creating the dynamic class-atmosphere) and 2) on the other side this is - for the teacher - an highly effective way of working (one student puts a question – the teacher answers – other students having the same question can see the answer) – compare the mailing-interactivity below.

The interactivity by means of mails is another type of "indirect, passive" way of communication. It seems that the majority of the teachers focus on this kind of

[3] Terms like "Indirect-passive, direct-active" belong to our terminology.

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interaction (Madsen 2006). In her project-investigation Hanne Madsen reveals that the teachers (her informants) feel that it is important to use the mailing either individually or through the e-books to be sure that the students have got the information. On the other hand the teachers admit that the "mailing" is a burden for them. A great part of the teachers are worried of the fact that they get the same question from several students and a very large part of their time goes to answering, in fact, individually, to a huge part of the "class", who have, by individual mails asked the same question. In addition, they mention the fact that the in-mail boxes are steadily full of mails from the students – and this is very stressing and at last exhausting.

Now, we do not understand why these teachers do not use the discussion-forum? Some of them do – it is true – but they immediately say that it is very difficult to make the students write their questions there (for fear to "ask silly questions that can be seen of other students").

The tendency to prefer to remain "anonymous", behind the computer, is an item which we are aware of (Ditvall 2006-1). But our task is to "break down" this tendency, at a very early stage (directly, in a consequent way, right from the beginning) because otherwise this individual interactivity, which leads to no classroom-dynamics, will turn negative on the student himself. To work alone, to have only one-person-communication (i.e. with the teacher through mails), beside the technical problems that may arise and the difficulties imposed by the course itself – all this may finally knock the student down, he does not manage to go through the course.

We, the teachers, have to use the discussion forums – once we answer at a question from one student, the other students will see the answer. It is important to explain to the students, regularly and clearly, that this way of communication is requested at this kind of IT-based course.

Now, if there are still students who continue the mailing – the teacher can solve this problem easily in this way: in the reply-mail the teacher tells the student that the answer is in the forum. If the teacher does this operation a few times… the student will, for sure, get accustomed, without knowing it, to the new forum-communication. We have experienced it and it works! The student discovers soon that there are other people in the class with lots of questions and "problems", like his. He feels to be a part of a community! Attending the course becomes easier! The motivation becomes higher! We can then be more sure that the student *goes through* the course.

There is more to say in this respect, but we choose to close the item here.

6. Direct interactivity

Below we will insist on the "direct" so called "active" interactivity – our latest innovative point within online-pedagogy. To communicate directly via the computer is maybe not an innovation, nowadays, but what is new in our research is the *way* in which we have planned the interactive studying-schedule, namely including a high rate of flexibility - nearly without borders!

The evolution of the Romanian studies, i.e. the steadily increased number of students, may be explained (apart from the item of no geographic distance) also by the result of our latest experiment (from spring-term 2007), namely the direct – live - interaction between the teacher and the student by incorporating the "skype-

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programme" in our courses (Ditvall 2007). An easy programme to install – easy to handle and that runs completely freely, which is of major importance for our students.[4]

The web-camera can be afforded at the low price of about 30 euros.

The direct interaction and the feed-back take place regularly, at a flexible level. The teacher establishes the scheme – the days, the hours and the intervals (usually on 20 minutes), and gives clear instructions on how the student is expected to book time for "his" interval.

The interaction-interval is meant to be used for different purposes (given in the instructions), namely 1) for general questions about details in the course, 2) for the weekly training (in reading proficiency, pronunciation, grammar etc), 3) for the previous-exercise-training or 4) for remaining-exams (exams that should have been done at a former limit of time).

The student chooses, himself, and indicates when he books up his interval, the item he wants to do when he speaks with the teacher.

An example of a skype-interaction-day:

- Student 1, from Stockholm, wants to do oral proficiency-training from the running lesson (i.e. the lesson of the week).
- Student 2, from Malmö (South Sweden),wants to do grammar-training from last-week-lesson.
- Student 3, from Oslo (Norway), wants to take rest-exam in the text-reading-module.
- Student 4, from Brussels (Belgium), wants to train conversation.
- Student 5, from Sofia (Bulgaria), wants to take rest-exam from last year in grammar.
- Student 6, from Copenhagen (Denmark), wants to have a question-answer moment, about the course in general (he has been absent some period)
- a s o

We work both with one student per interval and with several students[5] at the same time (depending on the module we work on). When working with several students, these share of course the same motive for interaction (the first student who books the interval and his wish shows the others what is going to happen in this interval).

The teacher sees his students, and viceversa, by means of the webcamera.

We have access to a "white" board – where the teacher makes comments, where different kinds of instant exercises can be done. The positive aspect of this is that the student (and the teacher) has access to the material on the whiteboard 30 or 60 days back – easy, for the student, to go on practising the interaction-items – easy, for the teacher, to know what has been done at the previous skype-sessions.

Thus, the students have great flexibility and independence in choosing the interaction-day and time and the item they want to work on. They have – live – access to their teachers the whole week, in general two days per teacher (three teachers will cover the whole week of direct interaction!). They can even decide themselves when

[4] We, the teachers, can develop and include highly sophisticated IT-programmes to make our courses very up-to-date, with the latest version of technical equipment – but *this* is not the aim of online-courses. Our aim must be to use the technical items which can be afforded by our students.

[5] We have had up to 4 students - the programme allows up to 9 students.

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they want to take remaining-exams (if they did not have the possibility to do that within the ordinary exam-week).

Compare: At a campus-course:

- you "see" the teacher in the classroom maybe twice a week, around 2 hours
- for the most the student has no individual contact with the teacher, at the class
- the teacher has his/her audience, 1-2 hours a week (long queues are often an impediment…)
- the student has no chance of getting a direct feed-back at different items
- attending the exams is a big problem – rigid forms of booking time, the exams take place at a certain date without conciliation…. The student may often have exams at several disciplines at the same time!? – this is a problem.

7. Conclusion

On the IT-based course the teacher and the student reach each other, independently of geographic and time factors. They speak to each other, they see each other, they can work with each other – even in writing, by means of the "white"board. The student can practice by means of the exercise-keys or the audio-files (that is with the teacher's feed-back), at an individual level, throughout the week, throughout the term. The teacher is steadily there, "beside" the student. There is no distance!

Maybe *the Romanian case* is the start of a new educational thinking, a new pedagogical mentality in language-education for a modern society?! (Ditvall, 2006-2).

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E-learning et l'intéraction

Nous avons essayé, dans cet ouvrage, d'insister sur un aspect important en e-learning: "l'intéraction" – celle « indirecte, passive » ainsi que celle « directe, active ».

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Les phraséologismes français avec des *Npr* et les matrices de figement

Dana-Marina DUMITRIU, Ancuța GUȚĂ

Dans son ouvrage sur les expressions françaises, Pierre Guiraud[1] attirait l'attention sur la particularité de certains verbes (*aller* en premier lieu) de réaliser des expressions avec des noms propres (*Npr*).

Dans un article consacré au statut des *Npr*[2], nous avons fait une distinction entre vrais toponymes et anthroponymes, d'un côté, et pseudo (ou faux) toponymes et anthroponymes de l'autre, en constatant que les premiers ont un rôle évocateur dans les phraséologismes dont ils font partie, tandis que les derniers se justifient par des jeux euphoniques. Dans *Ça tombe comme à Gravelotte* "il pleut à seaux", le *Npr* évoque la bataille sanglante qui a eu lieu en 1870 dans cette localité entre les Français et les Allemands et qui a généré une comparaison entre les gouttes de la pluie et les balles qui tombaient "à verse". Dans *aller chez Briffe*, le *Npr* n'a pas de rôle évocateu: c'est un nom inventé du verbe *briffer* "bouffer". Le même *Npr* peut être employé dans un phraséologisme avec rôle évocateur et dans un autre phraséologisme par calambour[3]. C'est le cas de *Rouen*: toponyme dans *être vieux comme le pont de Rouen* (puisqu'il évoque l'ancienneté du pont de Rouen) et faux toponyme dans *aller à Rouen* (résultat de l'attraction paronymique exercée par *roue* et/ ou *ruine*).

Dans ce qui suit nous essayons de trouver un lien entre le rôle des *Npr* dans les phraséologismes français et la structure de ces agencements figés. A ces fins nous étudions les structures des phraséologismes avec des *Npr* réalisées par trois verbes de mouvement (*aller – envoyer* [faire aller] – *arriver*) et par un verbe d'état très productif (*être*).

Une distinction que nous faisons et qui semble être importante pour notre discussion est entre structures comparatives et structures non comparatives. Pour le verbe *être* une distinction supplémentaire s'avère nécessaire: entre structures avec figement du sujet (*C'est*) et structures avec sujet libre (N_0 *être*).

[1] P. Guiraud, *Les Locutions françaises,* col. *Que sais-je?*, Nr. 903, PUF, 1973.

[2] D.M. Dumitriu, *Sur le nom propre dans les phraséologismes français*, AUC, Seria Stiinte filologice.Lingvistica, Craiova, 2004.

[3] Pour les procédés de formation de pseudo toponymes et anthroponymes, voir Dumitriu, *Ça tombe comme à Gravelotte*, p. 14-21.

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Aller

1. Structures non comparatives

- **N_0 *aller* GPrép (Prép $N_{pr\ [(faux)\ toponyme]}$)**; Prép: *à, en*

aller à Argenton "recevoir de l'argent"
aller en Cornouailles "porter des cornes"

- **N_0 *aller* GPrép (Prép $N_{pr\ [(faux)\ anthroponyme]}$)**; Prép: *chez*

aller chez Briffe "bouffer"

2. Structures comparatives

- **N_0 *aller* GPrép (Prép $N_{pr\ [(faux)\ toponyme]}$)**; Prép: *comme*

aller comme le Pont Neuf "être en pleine santé"

Arriver

1. Structures non comparatives

- **N_0 *arriver* GPrép (Prép N_{pr})**; Prép: *à*

arriver au Magnificat "arriver trop tard"

- **N_0 *arriver* GPrép$_1$ (Prép$_1$ N_{com}) GPrép$_2$ (Prép$_2$ $N_{pr\ [toponyme]}$)**;

Prép$_1$: *avec*; Prép$_2$: *de*
arriver avec les pompiers de Nanterre "arriver trop tard"

2. Structures comparatives

- **N_0 *arriver* GPrép$_1$(Prép$_1$ N_{com}) GPrép$_2$(Prép$_2$ N_{pr})**; Prép$_1$: *comme*; Prép$_2$: *en*

arriver comme marée/ mars en Carême "arriver inévitablement; tomber à pic"

Envoyer

- **N_0 *envoyer* $N_{1[+Humain]}$ GPrép (Prép $N_{pr\ [(faux)\ toponyme]}$)**; Prép: *à*, *en*

envoyer qqn. à Pampelune "envoyer au diable"
envoyer qqn. en Cornouailles "mettre des cornes"

- **N_0 *envoyer* $N_{1[-Humain]}$ GPrép (Prép $N_{pr\ [toponyme]}$)**; Prép: *à*, *en*

envoyer qch. en Pays Bas "manger"

- **N_0 *envoyer* $N_{1[+Humain]}$ GPrép (Prép $N_{pr\ [toponyme]}$) W^4** ; Prép: *à*

envoyer qqn. à Cancale pêcher des huîtres "envoyer au diable"

- **N_0 *envoyer* $N_{1[+Humain]}$ GPrép (Prép $N_{pr[(faux)\ anthroponyme]}$)**; Prép: *chez*

envoyer qqn. chez Plumeau "envoyer dans l'autre monde"

[4] Le symbole W désigne une séquence à structure aléatoire.

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