Language Group: Romanian
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Thousands of languages, dialects, creoles and pidgins are spoken worldwide. Some people, endowed by either an integrative or extrinsic motivation, want to be bilingual, trilingual or multilingual. So, the interlanguage interference becomes unavoidable. Those bilingual individuals are omnipresent in the State of Rhode Island. As prospective ESL teachers, our job requirement is to help them to achieve English proficiency. Knowing the interference problems attributable to their native language is the sine qua non precondition to helping them. However, you may have trouble understanding Romanian native speakers due to communication barriers here in the State of Rhode Island. The nature of our research is to use a Contrastive Analysis Approach to the Romanian language, so we can inquire about their predicted errors. In the following PowerPoint presentation, we will put emphasis specifically on phonology, grammar, communication style, and semantic problems.
Romanian History

1. Before 106 AD, the Dacians lived in Romanian territory. They spoke Thracian tongue.

2. 106 AD, the defeat of the Dacians, (an indo-European people), led to a period of intense Romanization. A vulgar Latin became the language of commerce and administration. Thracian and Latin combined gave birth to Romanian Language.

3. 3rd century, Romans were forced to withdraw from Dacia in 271, leaving it to the Goths; and first Romance Language split from Latin.

4. 7th through 9th centuries: influence of Slavic languages. The Dacians adopted slavonism but the Slavs learned Latin. Balkan and Slavic elements contributed to rounding off the individuality of Romanian as a Romance language (Niculescu 48).

5. 19th century: the re-latinization of the Romanian language. Books from the west by authors such as Racine, Moliere and Lamartine were translated into Romanian. Romanian language was considered as a cloth that has been corrupted with coarse and ugly threads (Negruzzi).

6. Modern Romanian, Romanian continue to change even now. Many French, Italian words are included in the Romanian language. On a Given Friday a Romanian could wish you a “week-end bun” meaning, “good weekend.”

7. From the core of Dacian words to the latinization and the Slavic influence, the Romanian language tells the story of a nation of survivors.
The Bastion of Romanian

- Spoken in Southeastern, Central and Eastern Europe by around 24 to 28 million people primary in Romania and Moldova.
- First language for 24 million, second language for 4 million.
- It has official status in Romania, Republic of Moldova.
- Romanian speakers are scattered across many other countries, notably Italy, Spain, Russia, Ukraine, Israel, Portugal, United Kingdom and the US. Those speakers represent the Diaspora.

(http://www.answers.com/, 2012)
Phonological Problems of Romanian ESL Students

- Dental fricatives in English: Words like “there” and “dare” can become homophones.
- Pronouncing the English high taxed vowels as “fill” and “feel” and “put” and “poot.”
- “CH” has the sound of k in Romanian at the beginning of the word while the sound is different in English.
Phonological Problems of Romanian ESL Students

- Some Romanian consonant like “ș”, “ț” don’t exist in English. The ț is pronounced like ts.
- The English letter p in “peak” and “speak” is aspirated while it is not in Romanian.
- (t) (d) (n) (s) (z) are dental in Romanian and alveolar in English.

Semantic Problems of Romanian ESL Students

- False friends or false cognates can represent the most important and dangerous mistakes. Here is a list of false friends:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Romanian, Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grave,</td>
<td>Grav, the true meaning is Mormânt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual,</td>
<td>Cazual, the true meaning is Obișnuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant,</td>
<td>Pregnant, the true meaning is Gravidă</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazine,</td>
<td>Magazin, the true meaning is Revistă</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
English dynamics Problems

- English is stress-timed because the syllables are pronounced at a lower or higher rate so as to achieve a roughly equal time interval between stressed syllables; but Romanian is one of the syllable-timed language.

Ex: *Mama pune masa* – Mom sets the table

*Mulți puști blonzi plâng prin curți* – Many blond kids cry in the courtyards.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/romanian_phonology
Grammatical problems for Romanian ESL Students

1- **Definite Article** - Romanian speakers use a proclitic definite article, but in English they must endeavour to use to enclitic one.

2- **place of the Definite Article** - it is amazingly attached to the end of the nouns. They will think about “eyethe” instead of the eye, due to the declension of the nouns according to the cases in Romanian.

The eye = **ochiul ochi+ul**.

3- **The formation of the plural**: They must learn to put an *s*, instead of “I” or “e” etc.

Un păpa, doi popi = one priest, two priests.

4- **The possessive case**: it is absent in Romanian cognitive linguistic structure. They will rather say: the book of my teacher.

*My professor’s book* = cărtile cele noi ale profesorului.

Cojocaru Romanian Grammar
Grammatical Problems for Romanian ESL Students

4-Adjective. Romanian speakers will have the tendency to say beautifulă as a feminine adjective and so on, because adjective is either feminine or masculine or neuter.

5-Superlative of superiority. Romanian speakers will have tendency to say the book most interesting instead of “the most interesting book.”

Cartea cea mai interesantă
6- **The direct form**: Romanian speakers use the accusative case of the personal pronouns with two forms. They will say: *you I love for you* instead of “*I love you.*”

Te iubesc per tine = I love you.

7- **Direct Object**. Romanian speakers will place the direct object before the verb. They will say: *them I will pick up* instead of: *I will pick them up.*

Le aştept la aeroport = I will pick them up at the airport.
8-If in English we say: not to sing in Romanian it will be to not sing = a nu vedea, therefore Romanian need a new cognitive structure in learning English.

9-The use of auxiliary “do”. This formal expression of the interrogative is absent in Romanian. Romanian won’t use it. They will use a declarative sentence instead.

Voi aveți o casă în București. Voi aveți o casă în București?= Do you have a house in Bucharest?
1. Meeting and greeting are formal and reserved: a handshake, direct eye contact, and the appropriate greeting for the first time.

2. People in authority will speak first

3. Foreign men are not expected to kiss a Romanian woman’s hand.

4. Close friends may kiss and hug each other, but when kissing, expect to kiss twice, once on each cheek starting with the left cheek.
Romanian friendship

Respect and friendship combined

1. Touching is a sign of trust and friendship.
2. Touching is done by close friends and family members.
3. Pointing out can have double interpretation but still accepted.
4. People are addressed by their honorific title (“Domnul” for Mr. and “Doamna” for Mrs).
5. Friends and family members used the first name.

(http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/, 2010)

Acceptability of touching
Conclusion

In the aggregate, we realize that Romanian mother tongue interference affects the English communicative competence in grammar, syntax, and phonology. The fossilization will remain even after years and years of learning English as a second language. That Contrastive Analysis approach will help us to reversely develop the auditory discrimination to decipher what the Romanian native speakers want to communicate. We can’t help our students without knowing their linguistic difficulties. Since we acknowledge the predicted errors, now we can help them advance, excel and succeed in the American environment.
Bibliography

Books


Internet Sites & Images


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