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LANGUAGE AND VERBAL COMMUNICATION METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS REGARDING ACQUISITION OF THE ROMANIAN LANGUAGE

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Summary: The process of accustoming students with orthography and punctuation is complex and long-lasting. Though Romanian is a phonetic language, it is not that easy to accustom pupils with correct orthography. The formation of orthographic skills is one of the main tasks of language study whose fulfilment must be followed perseveringly and firmly throughout the school years, by all teachers. A proper acquisition of the Romanian language involves being familiar with the writing code, namely orthography and punctuation. It is common knowledge that orthography consists of rules for correct writing in a language, playing an important part in the study and acquisition of a language. Teachers of the first responsible for developing these skills and they have to ensure a proper organization and development of the process of learning correct writing. This process involves elaborating categories of language, transformation of practical language elements into conscious language facts, namely a sort of automatization of activities dealing with language phenomena.

Key words: Romanian language, phonetic, language acquisition, orthography

JEZIK I VERBALNA KOMUNIKACIJA. METODOLOŠKI ASPEKTI U VEZI SA USVAJANJEM RUMUNSKOG JEZIKA

Rezime: Proces navikavanja učenika na pravopis i interpunkciju je složen i dugotrajan. Iako je rumunski fonetski jezik, nije lako naučiti učenike ispravnom pravopisu. Formiranje pravopisnih vještina je jedan od osnovnih zadataka učenja jezika i ono mora biti pažljivo i istrajno praćeno tokom školovanja od strane svih nastavnika. Ispravno usvajanje rumunskog jezika podrazumeva poznavanje pisanog koda, odnosno pravopisa i interpunkcije. Opšte je poznato da se pravopis sastoji od pravila za ispravno pisanje na nekom jeziku, što ima važnu ulogu u učenju i usvajanju jezika. Nastavnici su prvi koji su odgovorni za razvijanje ovih vještina i oni moraju da omoguće odgovarajuću organizaciju i razvoj procesa učenja ispravnog pisanja. Ovaj proces obuhvata razmatranje jezičkih kategorija, transformaciju praktičnih jezičkih elemenata u svesne jezičke činjenice,

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odnosno neku vrstu automatizacije aktivnosti koje se bave jezičkim fenomenima.

Ključne reči: Rumunski jezik, fonetika, usvajanje jezika, pravopis

1. EDUCATIONAL COMMUNICATION

The communication system that allows human beings to relate to each other has two important aspects:

1. A physical and biological system within communication takes place;
2. A system of signs within messages are formulated.

The systems of signs have three essential characteristics, namely:

1. A finite set of discrete (separate);
2. The referential function of signs;
3. The arbitrary quality of the system of signs – the decision upon the sign that will represent a certain state of being is (at least theoretically arbitrary).

The finite system of discrete signs of a language consists of sounds and sound arrangements that repeat themselves in message patterns of a language. These signs represent what could be called the expression sign of a language. They have a referential function, meaning that signs reveal correspondence or consequent relations with facts outside them – facts can come either from the objective reality or from the psychical state of mind of the individual, or from the message they occur in. The set of correspondences between the signs of a language and these state of facts can be called the content system of a language or the system of meanings of a language.

By reducing the area of the communication concept, we can say that it is a vital component of the learning process. The specific form of human communication – didactic communication means “*a complex, multiphase and through several information channels transfer between two entities (individuals or groups) that simultaneously assume the roles of transmitter and receptor, assigning meaning to desirable contents within instructional – educational context*”²

Didactic communication has the following features:

- ❑ It intentionally granted at the fulfilment of established objectives;
- ❑ It is a content communication assigned with training;
- ❑ It has a learning effect, aims at influencing, changing and settling individual and group behaviour;
- ❑ It generates learning, education and at the same time development, by student’s active involvement into the communicational act.

Speaking and listening skills, leaning grammar elements, (actually Romanian grammar), activities of creative writing (compositions) along with other components of the school subject, Romanian language, aim at developing linguistic and social communication abilities as “game between people”.

Man is the being that differentiates consumables from “*communicational matter: tools, sounds, figures*”³, as being not only meanings that s/he changes into messages but also

²Constantin Cucoş, (2002), *Pedagogie*, ediția a II-a, revizuită și adăugită, Editura Polirom, Iași, p.127.

³H.Wald, (1970<), *Homo Significatus*, Editura Enciclopedică, București, p. 7.

meaning assigners.

Several types of communication occur, depending on the means used:

1. communication by means of natural language that can be verbal, oral or written;
2. paralinguistic communication (by mimicry, pantomime, gestures, etc);
3. communication by means of artificial language (through symbols) and mathematic and physical formulas, traffic signs, military illuminated signs, signs belonging to the field of chemistry);
4. non-linguistic visual communication (through plastic arts, visual advertising, polygraphs, logos etc;
5. non-linguistic additive communication (through musical art for instance)⁴.

If we considered that language serves two main functions: 1) system of answers by means of which individuals communicate with each other and 2) system of answers that facilitates the individual's thinking and action, then we could talk about inter – individual and intra-individual communication. All types of communication can function individually (though seldom), and simultaneously, so as the exchange of information (messages) to be in accordance with the interlocutors' intentions.

A very special version of communication is the educational communication, in its verbal essence. The educational communication reports are *beneficiary – child* centred (in his/her mental abilities, on the interest, abilities, aspirations, individual potential, socio-group, age).

The learning process optimizes its functioning by a mutual communication. Messages “run” between teacher and students, the initiative of expressing own opinions is encouraged, and information are exchanged between those that communicate using the principle of reciprocity. The reciprocal type of communication responds to a democratic learning process within which the didactic frame isn't just a agent of formation and the pupil just an information assimilator. The communicational act is bilateral, determining the option that “*message is not only what is sent but also what is intercepted*”.⁵

2. THE SEMANTICS OF EXPRESSIVENESS

Intonation, as means of expressivity, is expressed in writing through marks that are called orthographic and punctuation signs. The process of accustoming students with orthography and punctuation is complex and long-lasting. Though Romanian is a phonetic language, it is not that easy to accustom pupils with correct orthography. That is the reason we have to accept “*the existence of real, varied and complex difficulties of nowadays orthography that explain the insufficient mastering of particular and individual rules of correct writing.*”⁶ An important, even fundamental role is assigned to exercises, performed on a regular basis, systematically in order to create drilled abilities.

The difficulty and particularity of learning orthography and punctuation by the speakers is determined by the fact that this process takes place in circumstances where appeal to language notions can not be made. Orthography and punctuation are not learned through didactic activities especially designed for this purpose but in all circumstances when pupils

⁴ A. Ilica, *Filosofia comunicării*, Editura Universității Aurel Vlaicu, Arad, 2007, p. 24.

⁵ Anton Ilica, (2006), *Filosofia comunicării*, Editura Universității „Aurel Vlaicu”, Arad, p.20.

⁶ L. Mișuț, *Corectitudine în vorbire și scriere*, Editura Dacia, Cluj-Napoca, 1999, p. 29.

have to express themselves in writing.

Rational knowledge of orthographic and punctuation norms is the last stage of orthography learning. The fulfilment of educational objectives within the Curriculum for Pre-University Education is connected to teacher's didactic qualities, to choosing the most appropriate didactic strategies with the aim of forming abilities of oral and written communication.

The formation of orthographic skills is one of the main tasks of language study whose fulfilment must be followed perseveringly and firmly throughout the school years, by all teachers. A proper acquisition of the Romanian language involves being familiar with the writing code, namely orthography and punctuation. It is common knowledge that orthography consists of rules for correct writing in a language, playing an important part in the study and acquisition of a language. Teachers of the first responsible for developing these skills and they have to ensure a proper organization and development of the process of learning correct writing. This process involves elaborating categories of language, transformation of practical language elements into conscious language facts, namely a sort of automatization of activities dealing with language phenomena.

3. DIDACTIC ASPECTS REGARDING WRITING

The basis of orthographic skills are set along with learning reading – writing and with the acquisition of first elementary theoretical knowledge and are improved and consolidated while acquiring notions of language. Knowledge and notions are the initial, fundamental theoretic point of those skills, most orthographic rules and skills deriving from knowledge of phonetics, morphology, punctuation even vocabulary. When studying orthography, an generally when studying Romanian, one has to follow normative, descriptive and productive objectives that mutually condition, intermingle and support each other.

Orthographic reading equally serves the development of reading skills and orthographic skills. On this occasion, pupils learn that the title is written centred, the beginning of a paragraph is indented, and the first word in a sentence is capitalized. Copying is a imitation of writing based on a hand written model.

The best results are obtained by cumulative and correlative usage in the same lesson of familiar methods, procedures and means, in order to stimulate active, direct and permanent pupils' involvement in the process of forming knowledge and orthographic skills, namely their interest in varied activities.

The study of orthography is strongly linked to the study of grammar, as theoretical basis for developing orthographic and punctuation skills. The development of orthographic skills is one of the main objectives in the study of Romanian. „*Orthography represents the total amount of rules for correct writing in a language*”⁷. Orthography has an important place in the study and proper acquisition of a language „*Orthography comprises norms of correct writing, norms of rules, of punctuation that condition other aspects of correctness in writing*”⁸.

⁷ G. Beldescu, *Ortografia actuală a limbii române, Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1984, București, p.5.*

⁸ *Ibidem, p.244.*

For teaching and acquiring orthography, the teacher relies on pupils' phonetics and morphology knowledge. A rich didactic material is compulsory for a conscious acquisition of orthography. Tables are widely spread. They are of more types:

1. some of them contain words with forms that have to be visually memorized: e.g. – tables with words written with k and x – kilogram, kilometru, Xenia, Alexandra, as well as their abbreviation: kg, km;
2. tables that facilitate the acquisition of writing words based on grammar rules: e.g.: the tables of verb conjugation; the table with stressed and non-stressed forms of the personal pronoun.

After studying the orthographic forms in a table, it remains on the wall until it is replaced by another table. Orthographic tables can contain only one orthographic rule, demanded by a certain grammar topic. One table can contain plural forms of masculine nouns:

copil – copii – copiii

școlar – școlari – școlarii

or tables with rules for splitting words into syllables.

By mingling the words: *înnoptarea, sclipesc, licurici, foșnesc, dealuri, stele, s-a coborât peste vârful, pupils can write a short paper. The teacher will correct any mistake, explaining when the pupil failed to understand the meaning of the word. For example, one can not say glow worms rustle, but leaves rustle. This way, pupils will know how to use and write them properly.*

Pictures and handouts used as didactic materials are very important in strengthening orthographic skills. While explaining different communication structures, the teacher can use pictures representing different activities. Under the teacher's guidance, using the method of conversation, one could obtain from students answers that raise certain orthographic problems.

Orthographic handouts are a good material for teaching orthography. They are used both before studying grammar and for the study itself. The aim of handouts used before studying grammar is to teach pupils copying without omission, inversion, and letter or syllable adding, based on phonetic analysis of words. The handouts are small cards with pictures of different objects or beings with incomplete name written below the picture.

Handouts containing words related to a certain subject are used in higher grades, in grammar study. Words are copied, pupils acquiring at the same time their orthographic form. The handouts can be made of texts, made out by teachers and relate to the grammar rules pupils learn. Pupils can exchange handouts while working. This way a rule is practiced through several examples.

The aim of teaching orthography is pupils' conscious acquisition of writing. Orthographic skills are considered solid only when pupils can correct themselves, when they can motivate the way each word is written. It is necessary that the primary school teacher uses a unitary system of measures, methods and procedures while teaching orthography. The methods and procedures of teaching orthography are identical with those used for teaching grammar, due to a strong connection between orthographic and grammar knowledge. Some general educational methods are used for teaching orthography:

conversation, exercise, etc. The explanation can be supported by the usage of certain models. For example: for writing with *nm* the graphic representation of the structure of words containing this double consonant is required:

<i>în + negru</i>	<i>înnegri</i>	<i>înnegrit</i>
<i>în + nămol</i>	<i>înnămoli</i>	<i>înnămolit</i>
<i>în + noapte</i>	<i>înnopta</i>	<i>înnoptat</i>
<i>în + nor</i>	<i>înnora</i>	<i>înnorat</i>

In higher grades, teaching writing based on conventional writing principle (abbreviations, foreign words) is fulfilled through explanation combined with graphic models. Some rules have to be memorized because their explanation involves an analysis that overcomes pupils' level of knowledge. In this category we include the rule stating that we use *ă* (not *e*) after *s* and *j* at the end of words like *cămașă*, *cireașă*, *vrajă* etc.

There are situations when orthographic rule is combined with specific activities. For instance, those that refer to the orthographic rule of writing the letter *m* before *p* and *b*, writing with *nm* etc. An important role is played by the conversation, especially in its heuristic form. Thus, the literary component of words requires a process of analysis, and phonetic and graphic synthesis that is fulfilled through heuristic conversation. Orthographic analysis is widely used for teaching orthographic knowledge, in the development of orthographic skills and for their control. *Orthographic analysis* is performed according to the orthographic system of Romanian. Its aim is to clarify the report of orthography to pronunciation, mentioning the cases of convergence but also divergence between spelling and pronunciation. It develops the understanding of situations when writing is oriented after pronunciation or when pronunciation can lead pupils to mistakes. Orthographic analysis can be performed orally or in writing based on a material extracted from a textbook or from other texts. Through the analysis pupils are required to motivate the spelling of words based on studied rules. Accustoming pupils to motivate orthographic forms, they consolidate their knowledge in the field of orthography. Thus, activities based on orthographic analysis are carried on in each type of lesson and are based on phonetic, morphology, even syntax knowledge.

A category of typical errors can occur in this stage as consequence of the confusion that pupils make between the letters *n* and *m* or between the sounds *t* and *d*. Therefore, some pupils write *ranuri* instead of *ramuri* due to inappropriate usage of a letter. They also write *cat* instead of *cad*, due to voiceless pronunciation of a final dental. Most frequent errors consist of elision or adding of a letter. Mistakes can occur due to special pronunciation of certain sounds; for example *î* followed by the nasal *n* is no longer perceived as a distinctive sound and therefore young pupils elide *î* in central position, writing *bătrn* instead of *bătrân*, and from the group *în* in front position they elide *n* writing *îtorc* instead of *întorc*. Other times, the cause can be the lack of correspondence between pronunciation and spelling. For instance, pupils write *calu*, *trăsnetu*, *cadru* instead of *trăsnetul*, *cadrul*, because in Romanian there is the tendency to pronounce the definite article for masculine, singular – *l*, although it has to be marked in writing. Due to the difference between pronunciation and spelling for adjectives and some verbal forms ending in – *ii* (*caii*, *dragii*, *tu știi*) they occur written with only one *i*, as pupils hear them. Finally, mistakes of adding letters, occur, for example, when pupils *viia* or *viea* instead of *via*; *ieu*, *iel* instead of *eu*, *el*.

Orthographic analysis is required in order to clarify the spelling of words in comparison to their phonetic structure; thus phonetic analysis will explain also the situation of *x*. The spelling of *x* is the graphic marking with only one letter of two sounds and this graphic marking stands for two different pronunciations: o voiceless one *cs* (*explozie*) and a voice one *gz* (*exemplu*).

4. EXERCISES FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF CORRECT WRITING

Only the knowledge of grammar orthography rules is not sufficient for a correct writing. Exercises, repeated practical applications are necessary to acquire orthographic skills. The following exercise can be used for acquiring the rules of writing non-stressed forms of the personal pronoun and the usage of hyphens when they are spelled together with other words because semivowels and consonants can not be used separately in speech and therefore find syllabic support in the vowel of preceding or following word: *nu-l, l-am, i-am, nu-i*.

The following text is written on the blackboard:

„ – Spune-mi, mi-ai adus atlasul? Știi că mi l-a cerut și Mihaela și i-am promis că i-l dau.

- Nu ți l-am adus, căci harta pe care am început-o nu am terminat-o încă. Ai uitat că te-am rugat să mi-l lași două zile?

Mâine ți-l aduc sigur.”

Pupils read the text on the blackboard. Then they are asked to identify the non-stressed forms of the personal pronoun and observe that some forms are linked to the neighbouring ones by hyphen. They are analysed and then it is observed that they are linked only when they are spoken in a syllable with the neighbouring words or with parts of them

5. CONCLUSION.

One thing is certain: correct writing from an orthographic point of view is a proof of intellectuality. Who writes with mistakes can be labelled as “stupid” or illiterate. Neglectance is not a justification. Therefore, correct writing is an extremely important acquisition for life and for communication. This is a good reason for people to learn correct writing, both handwriting and computer typing.

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