Enhancing language education in cross-border vocational education

Practical Example Romance language family: EuroComRom

About EuroComRom

EuroComRom systematically bundles the similarities within the Romance language family. Seven areas, the so-called "Seven Sieves", summarize where the comparison of the Romance languages is particularly worthwhile in a structured way — they share many common linguistic features that can be used in a learning-economic way to open up (supposedly) unknown languages. With these tools, a linguistic foundation is laid for reading comprehension in the entire language family.

To start, it is important to have advanced language skills in one Romance language, e.g. French, Spanish, Italian, or Portuguese. On this basis and with the help of the "Seven Sieves", texts in other Romance languages can be understood.

The Seven Sieves at a glance:

1. International Vocabulary (IV)
2. Pan-Romance Vocabulary (PV)
3. Sound Correspondences (SC)
4. Spelling and Pronunciation (SP)
5. Pan-Romance Syntactic Structures (PS)
6. Morphosyntactic Elements (ME)
7. Eurofixes (FX), (prefixes, suffixes,...)

We will not go into detail in our module, so for further reading:

- EuroComRom-website (www.eurocom.uni-saarland.de; will be launched soon, for the time being available in German)
- McCann W. J., Klein, H. G. and Stegmann T. D. (2002), E*uroComRom: The Seven Sieves – How to read all the Romance Languages right away*, Shaker, Aachen.
- Hemming E., Klein H. G. and Reissner C. (2011), *English – the Bridge to the Romance Languages*, Shaker, Aachen..

Let's start with a first example

When people face another language, they have to make a lot of guesses. Read the following short mystery texts. Keep an open mind, for sure you are able to answer the question at the end. You may read the text several times until you solve the mystery. Don't get frustrated, you will get there in the end!

> Calusians wingle.
> Wango is Calusian.
> Anyone who wingles semantles.
> **Does Wango semantle?**

or

> Les choufs sémantisent.
> Mirate est une chouve gouape.
> Qui sémantise, mouge.
> **Mirate mouge-t-elle?**

Reflection:

- Did you manage to answer the question? Try to describe the steps that you made.
- Was it easy, difficult or frustrating? Why?
- Can you find elements in the texts from a language you know? Which one(s)?
- Which of your language skills helped you to get to the answer?

Why was this example used?

The example shows that it is possible to answer the question without understanding the whole context or every word, simply referring to the logical structures. All language skills can help you to find words or segments that are familiar to you, e.g. 'is' is from English or 'une' is French. On that basis and with the help of hypotheses, the question can be answered. Hence, there are always language competences that you can build on and you have already more language skills than you may think.

In the following, you will make (first) experiences with how intercomprehension works and how the "Seven Sieves" of EuroComRom can help understand a text.

Practical example: Let's try to understand a text

Text understanding Part I

Please read the following headline. In which language is it written?

> Turismo: 1,2 milioni di posti di lavoro vacanti nella Ue, la maggioranza sono in Italia.

O   Italian
O   Portuguese
O   Dutch   Correct answer:
O   Romanian
                                             The correct answer is Italian

Text understanding Part II – Getting more into detail

What is the headline about? (more than 1 answer is correct)

O   The current job situation in the turism sector, especially in Italy.
O   New turism trends that rise, especially in Italy.
O   1.2 job positions vacant in the turism sector.   Correct answer:
O   1.2 million people spend their holidays in Italy.   Number one and three

Text understanding Part III – Similar nouns

Try to transfer four nouns, e.g. *milioni, turismo*, from the headline in at least one Romance language and English. Take notes on a blank sheet.

Text understanding Part IV – Further similarities

Try to transfer three elements, e.g. *di, nella, sono*, from the headline in at least one Romance language and English. Take notes on a blank sheet.

Reflection

Take a look at the headline and your notes again. Write a short reflection and ask yourself:
1) Which language(s) helped me to understand the headline?
2) Was it easy or difficult for me to understand the headline? Why?
3) Which similarities have I discovered?

Text understanding Part V – Let's discover more of the text in Spanish or Portuguese

After having understood the headline of the article, it's time to read more about the topic now. Please choose one of the texts (either (1) Spanish or (2) Portuguese) and try to understand as much as possible.

Strategies that may help you:

- Write down all the words that you can understand.
- Try to write your own 'translation' of the text - this text may be in different languages depending on the languages you use for understanding.
- Consider the context of the text.
- …

(1) *En 2022, Italia será el país más afectado por la escasez de personal en el sector turístico. Según un estudio del Consejo Mundial de Viajes y Turismo, este año faltarán 250.000 trabajadores: una de cada seis vacantes no se cubrirá. Los más afectados son el sector de la hostelería y las agencias de viajes.*

Source: https://es.euronews.com/2022/08/02/italia-pais-mas-afectado-por-la-escasez-de-personal-en-el-sector-del-turismo-en-la-ue

(2) *Em 2022, Itália será o país mais afetado por uma escassez de pessoal no setor do turismo. De acordo com um estudo do World Travel and Tourism Council, no país vão faltar 250 mil trabalhadores, o que significa que uma em cada seis vagas não será preenchida. O setor hoteleiro e as agências de viagens sãrão os setores mais afetados.*

Source: https://pt.euronews.com/2022/08/02/turismo-italiano-com-falta-de-pessoal

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Reflection

Have a look at the text that you have written. Write a short reflection and ask yourself:
1) Which languages helped me to understand the text?
2) What was easy/difficult? This may be words, sentences, …
3) Which steps have I taken to understand and 'translate' the text?....

The text is taken from the website: https://www.euronews.com/live. Euronews is a news channels that offers its contents (text, video, audio, live channels) in up to 12 different languages. Authentic texts to use in class can easily be found at the website and prepared in different languages.