

AN ANALYSIS OF THE METHODS AND UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES OF THREE  
PROGRAMMES AIMED AT IMPARTING MULTIPLE LANGUAGE  
COMPREHENSION OF THE ROMANCE LANGUAGES

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ability to use Inferencing in multiple or simultaneous Romance language acquisition. Utilizing a semiotic approach, the notion or system of Inferencing as a component in the theoretical bases of the methodologies used in *EuRom4*, *Galatea*, and *EuroComRom* is analyzed. The system (in structuralist terms) to which Inferencing is attributed is identified as *the ability to use Inferencing in multiple Romance language acquisition*, is validated, and the structuralist presuppositions underlying the theories that lead to the methodologies are described as well as a commentary given of their gains and or shortcomings. The aim of the study is to ascertain to what extent each programme makes use of the process and the notions surrounding it as discussed in Carton's study *Inferencing: a process in using and learning language*, and to attempt an evaluation of their successes or failure in doing so. In Chapter I intercomprehension is defined and its origins and the reasoning behind recent interest in it are explained. We also examine in this chapter the theoretical bases of the programmes to be studied in the rest of our study as explained by Carton's paper on Inferencing. Chapter II analyses *EuRom4*, the first programme in this study that demonstrates some of Carton's theories. The founders of the programme are discussed and a description of the programmes is given, as is the target audience, methodology, theoretical bases, and empirical data relating to the attainment of the proposed objectives. This same format is followed for Chapters III and IV, with the other two programmes analysed, *Galatea* and *EuroComRom*. Chapter V analyses the theoretical bases of the methodologies used in all three programmes using a semiotic approach. The similarities and differences between the programmes are given, as is an evaluation of their effectiveness. This chapter suggests that perhaps a different approach be used, to accommodate what is missing and needs to be done in future regarding this type of pedagogy. The thesis concludes by querying what the future holds for intercomprehension, in which a positive response is suggested for an inevitable change in the status quo of traditional language pedagogy.

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### Dedication

I dedicate this work to Geoff Lyster whose resolute love, support, encouragement and enthusiasm provide an inexhaustible spring from which I continually draw strength.

## Introduction

My intentions in the present study are to discuss three different programmes aimed at imparting multiple or simultaneous comprehension of the Romance languages. The three programmes studied represent a paradigm shift in conventional language pedagogical approaches that traditionally have been centred upon the teacher/ pupil model of instruction epitomized by monitored memorization. This approach to language teaching assumes responsibility for dictating all aspects to be acquired by students, not at all considering the individual learner experience. However, findings in the field of psycholinguistics for several decades have revealed that perhaps there are other ways to achieve language teaching/learning other than by traditional means. Such findings have been incorporated in over a decade of research by various research groups in Europe and perhaps elsewhere and have been formalized in a family of pedagogical procedures to facilitate the concurrent acquisition of several or more languages belonging to the same group or family. Specifically, the role of the psycholinguistic process known as Inferencing has been studied in connection with the language acquisition process and sufficiently valuable results obtained to enable its integration into the pedagogical procedures mentioned above.

Consequently, this analysis intends to study the branch of the process of Inferencing dealt with in a paper on the subject by Aaron S. Carton. The paper by Carton has been chosen because of the overwhelming similarities of the notions he discusses in his study and the theories that comprise the pedagogical procedures or methodologies of the three programmes under discussion.

Over the last decade, several programmes whose aim is to impart multiple language comprehension have been developed, not only in the Romance language groups, but also in the Germanic and Slavonic groups. Indeed, some programmes seek to impart multiple language comprehension based on languages that are akin, while others have the same scope with neighbouring languages “grâce à la connaissance légère de l’une d’entre elles” (Castagné *Le programme* 13). In Europe a number of projects over the last ten years or so have undertaken this task, especially within the framework of the European programmes entitled Socrates-Lingua. They include EuroCom, IGLO projet, EuRom4, Galatea, Minerva, LALiTa, as well as the project “Itinéraires Romans” sponsored by the Union Latine, the majority of which concern the Romance languages (Degache, *Présentation* 6). We made add to this group the texts by Schmidely *De una a cuatro lenguas INTERCOMPRENSION ROMANICA: del español al portugués, al italiano y al francés*, as well the text by Reinheimer, *Pratique des langues romanes*.

Despite the economic and ideological motivation behind the creation, development, and implementation of such programmes, the scope of the present study is to examine their pedagogical effectiveness. As such, this thesis will endeavour exclusively to analyse three of these programmes whose aim it is to impart comprehension of the written text under the rubric of Romance languages. These programmes have been chosen quite simply because they are some of the larger and more widely diffused. They are as follows:

Blanche-Benveniste, Claire, et al. EuroRom4: Méthode d’enseignement simultané des langues romanes: portugais, espagnol, italienne, français. Firenze: Nuova Italia Editrice, 1997.

Dabène, Louise, et al. Galatea: CD-Roms d'entraînement à la compréhension des langues romanes. Programme Socrates-Lingua. Chambéry: Génération 5 multimédia. Université Grenoble 3, 2003.

McCann, William J., Horst G. Klein, and Tilbert D. Stegmann. EuroComRom-The Seven Sieves: How to read all the Romance languages right away. Aachen: Shaker, 2003.

The objective of this thesis is therefore to study the pedagogical effectiveness in using the process of Inferencing as discussed by Carton in the simultaneous acquisition of the Romance languages.

My reasoning for embarking upon this study is to gain greater understanding of precisely what has led to the methodologies of the three programmes listed above so that I may ultimately further the study of the simultaneous acquisition of the Romance languages in terms of the other abilities in the acquisition of a language that these programmes do not deal with that is, productive abilities of the written and spoken language.

The corpus to be studied includes much of the background work produced leading to the three programmes among which, the following three titles would be essential; to the interested reader:

Blanche-Benveniste, Claire, and André Valli, eds. *L'intercompréhension: Le cas des langues romanes*. Special issue of Le français dans le monde. Jan. (1997): 4-159.

Dabène, Louise, and Christian Degache, eds. Études de linguistique appliquée: Comprendre les langues voisines 104 (1996).

Kischel, Gerard ed. Eurocom – Mehrsprachiges Europa durch Interkomprehension in Sprachfamilien: Tagungsband des Internationalen Fachkongresses im Europäischen Jahr der Sprachen 2001. Hagen, 9.-10. November 2001. Aachen: Shaker, 2002.

The remaining corpus studied is taken from various disciplines including Romance linguistics, comparative grammar, applied linguistics, language teaching, second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, semiotics, language education policy, multilingualism, language transfer theory, as well as cognitive theory.

This analysis will be organized as follows:

In Chapter I intercomprehension is defined and its origins and the reasoning behind recent interest in it are explained. We also examine in this chapter the theoretical bases of the programmes, as explained by Carton's paper on Inferencing. Chapter II analyses *EuRom4*, the first programme in this study that demonstrates some of Carton's theories. The founders of the programme are discussed and a description of the programmes is given, as is the target audience, methodology, theoretical bases, and empirical data relating to the attainment of the proposed objectives. This same format is followed for Chapters III and IV, with the other two programmes analysed, *Galatea* and *EuroComRom*. Chapter V analyses the theoretical bases of the methodologies used in all three programmes, using a semiotic approach. The similarities and differences between the programmes are described, as is an evaluation of their effectiveness. This chapter suggests that perhaps a different approach be used to accommodate what is missing and needs to be done in future regarding this type of pedagogy. The thesis concludes by querying what the future holds for intercomprehension, in which a positive response is suggested for an inevitable change in the status quo of traditional language pedagogy.

## Chapter 1

Since the early 1990's there has been much renewed interest in the area of the comparative study of the Romance languages and their simultaneous comprehension and acquisition. Much of this interest is due to the unification of Europe and the need to foster cross-cultural understanding as well as commerce and trade for citizens who are able to move freely from one area of the continent to the other. However, the growing dominance of English as the *lingua franca* throughout the continent has also stimulated much of this interest, as the widespread use of English is regarded as a threat to the patrimony of individual member-states:

La question linguistique s'affirme plus que jamais comme un enjeu crucial (Coste, 1998), [et] il est perçu comme nécessaire de promouvoir d'autres solutions que le recours exclusif à la langue véhiculaire par excellence que constitue l'anglais (Degache, *Présentation* 5). Il est évident que l'anglais joue, de par son statut de *lingua franca* numéro un, un rôle éminent dans la communication européenne [et] ...le passage par une langue tierce seulement que cela élargisse la portée de notre communication- ne respecte pas assez nos propres langues et cultures; celles où nous vivons notre vie quotidienne et dans lesquelles naissent nos pensées et habitudes et où elles sont profondément enracinées. Cela crée en plus des inégalités aux niveaux économique et social. (Meissner et al. 9)

Consequently, research is not solely being done on the intercomprehension of Romance languages but also on the intercomprehension of the other major language families of Europe, namely the Slavonic as well as Germanic languages.

**What is it?**

Intercomprehension is the idea of basing the teaching of a language or languages on languages of the same parentage or lineage: for example, the ability to comprehend French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish which all have Latin as their predecessor. The belief is that because these languages share so many similarities at the lexical, syntactical, morphological, and phonological levels a native or near-native speaker of one of these languages can easily acquire passive comprehension of any or all of the other languages in this group. Passive in this context refers to the ability to only read and not necessarily to understand the spoken language, or speak, or write in the target language/s. This distinction is made because intercomprehension as a pedagogical endeavour is a recent development whose aim of teaching passive receptive abilities may quite possibly change to include ultimately other skills such as aural recognition, oral production, and written competencies.

**Where is it studied?**

Intercomprehension of the Romance languages as a study has its origins in Europe. It is currently studied in many parts of the continent and it may be argued that in many ways this discipline is in its infancy. In fact, it has been scarcely studied in a formal and organized manner for just over a decade or so. However, it is not solely regarded as being in its infancy on account of its chronological age but also because of the reasons alluded to above, in that much remains to be done in addressing all areas of acquiring a language and not just one out of a possible four.



### Why is it studied?

It is certainly true that the socio-political rationale behind this modern interest in the area of the comparative study of the Romance languages and their simultaneous comprehension and acquisition differs considerably from that of days gone by, as it is now seen to be more important than ever to challenge English as *la lingua franca* in order to ensure the preservation of a more European culture. While it is not the scope of this study to investigate the omni-presence of English, its current use and advancement in various walks of European life, maintaining European patrimony by resisting English is a ubiquitous theme in the research of this work (see among others: Biojout de Azar 87, Meissner, *Introduction* 9, Simone 32, Castagné, *Intercomprehension 2: Le programme* 6, Degache, *Présentation* 5, Dabène, *De Galatea* 24).

Avec la construction européenne...il n'est pas satisfaisant de faire le choix d'un idiome commun qui irait à l'encontre d'un des principes de base de l'UE dont le souhait est de respecter la revendication légitime des pays à la DIVERSITE LINGUISTIQUE en Europe, ou à l'encontre de l'identité européenne composée de pays avec des populations, des histoires et des cultures variées et anciennes. Il est absurde de penser qu'un Italien et un Français devraient utiliser le truchement de l'anglais pour communiquer. Il est tout aussi absurde d'imaginer un Allemand et un Français tenter de communiquer de manière plus au moins satisfaisante en anglais si l'Allemand comprend le français et le Français l'allemand. Il est regrettable d'avoir à utiliser un anglais approximatif, infantilisant les locuteurs, quand chacun pourrait se faire comprendre dans sa langue

maternelle (à défaut dans une autre langue bien maîtrisée, pas nécessairement l'anglais) et comprendre l'autre dans sa langue maternelle.

(Castagné, *Le programme* 14-16)

In addition to the preservation of language patrimony, the European Union is concerned with promoting intercultural understanding among its citizens who have more mobility than ever to work and study within this vast twenty-five-member state alliance boasting a population in excess of four hundred and fifty million (Eurostat).

In extending a viewpoint outside of a European context Ploquin adds:

La relative transparence qu'offrent entre elles les langues latines permettrait de généraliser ce principe de communication dans l'Europe du sud, la Roumanie, l'Amérique du Sud, l'Amérique centrale et le sud des Etats-Unis. Il se créerait là un bassin de 800 millions de locuteurs capables de se lire, de se comprendre et de communiquer entre eux sans fatigue. Pour ce qui est des collègues français, les heures actuellement attribuées au seul latin permettraient, utilisées autrement, d'aboutir à la compréhension satisfaisante de trois autres langues romanes.

(*Une innovation* 49-50)

Castagné provides us with several reasons why intercomprehension is studied and why plurilingualism should be promoted, among others:

Parce que, dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, c'est l'information (plus que sa circulation) qui est la véritable richesse: c'est elle qui mène à la connaissance. Mais pour ceux qui ont besoin d'accéder à cette richesse qui circule sur différents média sous différentes langues, il n'est pas

nécessaire de maîtriser toutes les compétences. Parler deux ou trois langues européennes, mais pouvoir en comprendre quatre ou cinq de plus en fonction de ses besoins, permet d'accéder à un immense réservoir d'informations et de connaissances. (*Le programme 14*)

### **Origins: The Aarhus Model:**

#### **The first comprehensive attempt to acquire Romance Language skills**

The study of intercomprehension in general, and in particular the intercomprehension of the Romance languages is based upon what has come to be known as the Aarhus model named after the university in Copenhagen where the project took place. It is seen as possibly the first comprehensive attempt to acquire Romance language skills simultaneously in Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish using French as a *langue dépôt*. The objective of this endeavour was to transfer phonetic-phonological as well as morphosyntactical bases of intercomprehension from the field of diachronic linguistics into purely synchronic representations. The project attempts to impart not only receptive but also productive competence – an aim that Klein feels is hard to realise in a learning environment that is distant from the area where the target language is used (*Current 36*).

The project was inspired by what is known as the *intercommunicabilité* of three Scandinavian languages: Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish. The Scandinavian languages, a continuation of Old Norse, the northern branch of the Germanic languages, are today divided up into two groups: Icelandic and Faeroese in one group and Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian (considered strictly Scandinavian) in the other. The two groups are not comprehensible among one another but a Dane, a Norwegian, and a Swede can directly

understand one another. When there are conversational exchanges between natives of these three countries, each person is able to speak their language in everyday situations and understand what the other is saying. It is commonly known what terms should be avoided and if need be, one speaks clearly and not too rapidly. This intercommunication is more easily achieved when speakers have an elevated cultural level, schooling etc., and progress within the media (radio, telephone, movies, television, email) can only serve to favour this phenomena.

Public policy in these three countries favours this intercommunication through more or less active educational practices, at least up until the recent past. In Scandinavian schools, for approximately the last one hundred years or so, one studies or used to study, some grammar and literary texts of the two other neighbouring Scandinavian languages. Generally the same is also true of the awareness of the neighbouring cultures. All this is done, not with the scope of teaching the Scandinavian languages per se, but rather allowing for their understanding linguistically and culturally (Schmitt Jensen, *L'expérience* 95-98, *Prefacio* 15).

In the preface to Schmidely's coordinated effort on the intercomprehensibility of the Romance languages, the project coordinator Jørgen Schmitt Jensen tells us that "el proyecto...es el producto de mi experiencia docente como profesor de lenguas románicas en la universidad danesa de Aarhus [y] la idea inicial nos vino sugerida por la situación lingüística de mi país" (15). His team became interested in knowing whether la *situation scandinave* could be applied to four of the Romance languages taught in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, that is, French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish. He and his team wanted to:

mettre en œuvre, une telle entreprise pour les langues romanes, qui, si elle réussit, aurait une importance décisive et permettrait, face à l'extension si importante de l'anglais, une sorte de renaissance des langues romanes.

Cela rendrait accessible le monde roman à tous ceux, dans la Romania, qui ne savent pas encore qu'ils arriveraient si facilement à communiquer dans les autres langues. Ce que nous voulons mettre en place, c'est, plus qu'un apprentissage complet et précis d'une langue, une pratique permettant une systématisation des relations entre ces langues, pour pouvoir effectuer le passage de l'une à l'autre en comprenant à la fois ce qu'elles ont en commun et ce en quoi elles diffèrent. (*L'expérience* 97)

### **Methodology:**

This *systématisation* utilizes a comparative linguistic approach based upon previous work by specialists in the field of Romance languages specifically, in the areas of phonetics, morphology, syntax and lexicon. Essentially, traditional diachronic Romance philology is summed up and presented synchronically in order to present the aforementioned areas of the individual languages contrastively (Schmitt Jensen 96-97).

Although initially there was some question as to whether or not such an endeavour would function because "las diferencias que separan a estas cuatro lenguas romances son probablemente mayores que las que constatamos en nuestras lenguas escandinavas", test results were favourable (Schmitt Jensen, *Prefacio* 15). Students who were instructed in one of the four Romance languages and who acquired the subject matter were able to achieve a reading knowledge of one of the other three languages. Generally a semester was sufficient to enable them to read rather elementary texts but

with continued study, comprehension of newspaper articles, literary texts and spoken language followed. Courses were therefore created based on these principles.

In this preface, Schmitt Jensen explains how, as result of these courses a new type of teaching had been put into practice, and he provides us with several examples.

Phonetic equivalents in the four languages can be exposed synchronically beginning with their actual use without requiring a student to have a prior knowledge of Latin. In Spanish we have the examples of *lleno* or *llover* to which correspond the Portuguese *cheio* or *chover*, the Italian *pieno* or *piovere*, and the French *plein* or *pleuvoir*. It is deduced then, that where Spanish has the initial group *ll-*, the other three languages may have *ch-*, *pi-*, and *pl-* respectively which allows for the association of words in the same series such as the Spanish *llano*, the Portuguese *chão*, the Italian *piano*, and the French *plain(e)*. There are countless other equivalencies among the four languages that concern not only phonetics, but also the organization of lexicon, morphology and syntax. The analysis of these equivalencies constitutes a type of new “gramática comparada” without having to resort to Latin. “De este modo se observa que la búsqueda de la “intercomprensión románica” no tiene solo un interés práctico: puede constituir por sí misma una disciplina de una gran riqueza y contribuir a la formación de una cultura auténtica y propia” (*Prefacio* 16).

### **Inferencing: the theoretical bases of methodologies used.**

The *systematisation* referred to previously relies heavily on the ability to identify similar features of a language using the process of Inference. The paper by Aaron S. Carton titled *Inferencing: a process in using and learning language* in *The Psychology of Second Language Learning: Papers from the second international congress of applied*

*linguistics* (eds. Paul Pimsleur and Terence Quinn) is an immensely important part of this research as it essentially forms the foundation (theoretical bases) of the methodologies subsequently developed in all three programmes studied in this thesis. In addition, some of Carton's views of language pedagogy are incorporated into the philosophies of the programmes analyzed. It is therefore elaborated upon in this thesis in a comprehensive manner. Carton defines inferencing as it applies to the language learner:

Inferencing is a term intended to refer to a process of identifying unfamiliar stimuli. In foreign language leaning inferencing is concerned with the acquisition of new morphemes and vocables in "natural" contexts. In inferencing, attributes and contexts that are familiar are utilized in recognizing what is *not* familiar. The inferencing language learner accepts levels of probability and uncertainty that are not likely to be permitted in making acceptable formal inferences. Inferencing is a much more rapid, haphazard and subjective process than logical inference.

(45-46)

Carton's paper is concerned first with inferencing as a psychological process. Then he offers us a sketch of the kinds of analyses of language and language learning situations that are connected to a foreign language pedagogy that would involve inferencing. He provides us with some illustrations of inferencing utilizing the method of "Cloze procedure" that is, a widely used psycholinguistic research technique in which words are deleted from text and respondents are required to attempt to replace them using the cues in the text which remain available to them, thus enabling them to perform the task. He tells us that sometimes the cues are completely linguistic when, for example, the

structure of the sentence and the morphemes surrounding the deletion suggest a vocable of a specific form class or even a specific function word. He tells us that on the other hand:

the respondent's familiarity with "the nature of things" and his comprehension of the available portions of the text may suggest to him one or several vocables that may reasonably be returned to the loci of the deletions. Most frequently both kinds of cues are available to solve those Cloze problems that can be solved. (46)

This familiarity with "the nature of things" is a recurrent theme not only in the paper by Carton but also in the programmes studied in this thesis. Essentially what Carton is implying is that a person's individual and general knowledge base, or personal experience, which may or may not include language learning exposure, aids in solving the Cloze problems and ultimately in acquiring new language skills. The use of one's general knowledge as a means to acquiring new language skill will be dealt with separately in the analysis for each individual programme; however, the preferred term used in more recent research is encyclopaedic knowledge. Carton emphasizes that the respondent to a Cloze test does not identify a new word but rather, merely illustrates the fact that context may provide cues to identify a new word. He offers a typical example of such a test, as demonstrated by Werner and Kaplan's Word-Context Test, in which respondents were required to define the artificial word *ashder* in the following six contexts:

- 1) A lazy man stops working when there is an *ashder*.
- 2) An *ashder* keeps you from doing what you want to do.



- 3) Mr. Brown said to Mr. Smith; "I don't think we should start this work because there are *ashders*."
- 4) The way is clear if there are no *ashders*.
- 5) Before finishing the task he had to get rid of a few *ashders*.
- 6) Jan had to turn back because there were *ashders* in her path.

In arriving at Werner and Kaplan's definition for *ashder* (which is obstacle), the reader might note that he merely identified a novel word for a concept that was already available to him. The fact that the example applies to the acquisition of a novel term – a novel fragment of language – and not to an unfamiliar concept makes it an instance of inferencing (48).

With regards to foreign language that is linguistically related to a language one already knows, there may be frequent cognates, derivatives, and loan words whose appearance (visual or auditory) is reminiscent of forms already familiar and therefore inferencing, as a process in foreign language acquisition, does not preclude attention to the novel term itself. In fact he asserts: "such novel terms may provide a special class of cues" (49).

Carton establishes a three-part taxonomy of cues to facilitate the exploration of the function of cues in Inferencing in foreign language learning. The cues are organized around the fact that in language study it is the nature of the target language, its relation to the background language (or other languages known to the learner), the "content" of messages, or linguistic material, under consideration that determine the possibilities for making inferences. This same taxonomy is utilized in the methodology of at least one of

the programmes to be analyzed. The cues are labelled *intra-lingual*, *inter-lingual*, and *extra-lingual*. The salient features of these cues are summarized here.

*Intra-lingual cues* are cues supplied by the target language. There is some knowledge of the language by the student and the cues can occur in the morphological and syntactic regularity of language. These cues are particularly useful in identifying the form class of a novel term: for example, specific pluralizing markers applicable only to nouns, tense markers applicable to verbs, or word order constraints of a given language as well as markers of grammatical gender. The cues are not exclusively grammatical or structural as in the English morphemes suggestive of agent, *-or*, *-er*, abstraction *-tion*, or having the property of *-ive*, etc. Carton tells us that knowledge of a group of suffixes such as these can narrow the semantic field in respect to the notions they suggest. Furthermore, such affixes appear connected to a stem students may have encountered elsewhere and that therefore, the specific meaning of a new vocable is completely suggested: for example, the English word *operative* to a student who already knows the meaning of *operator*, *operation* and *adjustive* (50-51).

*Inter-lingual cues* include all the possible derivations that may be made on the basis of loans between languages, the occurrence of cognates, and the occurrence of regularities of phonological transformations from one language to another. For this category to be useful there must be a historical relationship between the target language and the native language of the student. The same applies to his notion that the usefulness of this category is, of course, contingent upon historical relations and contacts between the target language and the native language of the student. Carton tells us that:

it would seem advisable in pedagogy to avoid presenting terms for inferencing in isolation. Since students are apparently able to utilize considerable diversity of cues for correct inferencing, the presentation of novel terms in cue-rich contexts apparently minimizes errors. Since there is a tendency for errors to persist, it is obviously wise to forestall their occurrence. It is probably wiser still to devote at least some pedagogic energies to enhance the flexibility of students to correct themselves, although it must be admitted that the techniques for such pedagogy (at least when this article was written) are not as yet in wide use in foreign language instruction. (54)

These last two notions namely the use of "cue-rich contexts" as well as "self-correction" are adapted in the methodologies and principles of all three programmes studied here and will be touched upon respectively.

*Extra-lingual*, or contextual, *cues* derive their usefulness essentially from the fact that an important function of language is to represent objects and events in the "real world." Regularities in the objective world we talk about make it possible for us to expect certain occurrences in it. If we can sometimes predict the occurrences of the real world, it follows that we can sometimes predict the words, or the meanings of the words, that represent these occurrences. This notion is reflected upon in the methodologies of the programmes to be studied in this paper that is, there is a great importance placed upon the type of corpus to be provided to students to analyze which is chosen specifically because it touches upon "real world" events that are often found in our globalized communities. Such events are reflected in international journal articles, newspapers,

satellite television, internet, etc. Today these events are related in many languages and using these common themes/*extra-lingual/contextual cues* is believed to aid in the acquisition process of language.

Carton concludes his paper with a view to the future as far as inferencing in language pedagogy is concerned, acknowledging that for many students the process is already part of their strategy for learning and using language and that the proposal to use this process extensively differs considerably from traditional approaches “which put exclusive emphasis on mimicry and memory and which leave little room for doubtfulness and temporary inaccuracies” (56).

He asserts that traditional strategies like monitored memorization imply to the student that all they need to know and learn is within their learning environment. It places responsibility on this environment rather than the student who would be prepared for independent study and may be expected to continue to extend his command over the subject matter after leaving formal instruction if emphasis were placed upon processes of acquisition (56). This idea of the “life-long learner” is also present in all the programmes studied in this thesis and shall be further explored at the time of investigation of each programme.

Carton’s overall argument is that:

it is precisely the perception of probabilistically contingent relations (both in language and in respect to the content of messages) that enhances and provides possibilities for the selection of appropriate linguistic units in production and the correct interpretation of these units in comprehension.

The research into language generated by an interest in inferencing is

concerned, therefore, with how linguistic units and the structures of sentences and paragraphs provide cues for the interpretation of other linguistic units. (57)

Carton invites others to pursue this view and perhaps embark upon a research program on inferencing which suggests that language production and perception are largely dependent on the psychological processing of probabilistically contingent cues implicit in the taxonomy of cues presented in his paper. The assertion that cues from various echelons and levels of discourse are made to function in concert is a major underpinning of the psycholinguistic theory from which such programme on inferencing might be derived. (see methodology for EuroComRom).

He assures us that:

language teaching that utilizes inferencing removes language from the domain of mere skills to a domain that is more closely akin to the regions of complex intellectual processes. Language study becomes a matter for a kind of problem-solving and the entire breadth of the student's experience and knowledge may be brought to bear on the processing of language. A distinction between language and thought – which is valuable for the analysis and study of how each develops – is abandoned, in dealing with students who can already both think and use language, in favour of a view that sees the processing of language as one of many forms of thought and which allows for the possibility that language processing and other forms of thinking may occur concurrently. A distinction between a linguistic level and a content level in messages - which is valuable for analyzing and

clarifying the nature of language – is abandoned in the context of language comprehension in favour of a view holding that, psychologically, comprehension may depend on the concurrent processing of cues from several echelons. (58)

### **Intercomprehension: Not exactly a new idea**

Although I have stated that it is since the early 1990s that there has been much renewed interest in the comparative study of the Romance languages and their simultaneous comprehension and acquisition, it does not in any way imply that intercomprehension is a novel concept.

Jean Rousseau in the prologue to his work entitled *Comparaison des langues et intercomprehension* tells of an interesting case of a young German man named August Ludwig Schlözer who in 1761 arrived in St. Petersburg to work as the assistant to G. F. Müller, academic and official historian of the Russian Empire. Within eight weeks of his arrival, this young scholar, who had no previous knowledge of Russian, “fut en mesure de presenter à son employeur stupéfait la traduction d’un premier oukase” (3).

In some autobiographical material, Schlözer indicates that at the time there was no grammar or manual aimed at teaching the Russian language to foreigners. He only made use of a 781 page dictionary that contained Russian words under their root and with their meaning in Latin, the root in bold type and the derivations in smaller characters.

Schlözer, “formé à la théologie et aux langues orientales...avant de passer quelques années en Suède” indicated that his objective was only to understand the written languages and not to write much less speak it. He noted how his previous knowledge seemed to condition his learning in three ways. First, that the more languages one knows,

the more easily one acquires new ones, especially when different languages share commonalities. Second, that one realizes that all languages are an organization, a system whose mastery is necessary to learn. Third, “il utilise . . . les rapports du même ordre ceux que les unissent, exploitant toutes les possibilités qu’offre leur comparaison” (4).

This example proves important in my thesis as it illustrates, historically speaking, a concept subsequently developed in the three programmes under scrutiny. Schlözer consciously used the benefits associated with the comparison of languages in order to accelerate the process leading to their passive comprehension thereby making him one of the first “acteurs de la recherche comparative” and “père fondateur...à évoquer quelques-unes de ses applications possibles pour faciliter la compréhension textuelle entre langues génétiquement apparentées” (6).

In her *Présentation*, Blanche-Benveniste explains that our modern sets of tools that ultimately aid and facilitate intercomprehension are the result of “une très vieille expérience européenne, du temps où l’on jugeait naturel de passer d’une langue à une autre, à condition d’être déjà bien à l’aise dans la sienne” (6) and provides the two-hundred year old example of 1790 when a professor named Nicolas Adam in a work entitled *La vraie manière d’apprendre une langue quelconque, vivante ou morte, par le moyen de la langue française* stated: “[Mon but est] non pas de former des Grammairiens profonds, mais de mettre les personnes studieuses en état de savoir assez sur leur langue, pour être capables d’en étudier une autre” (6). She concludes her presentation by stating that “compréhension multilingue” has always begun with one’s own language before moving toward that of others. Presumably, Blanche-Benveniste is referring to language as a system that once in place facilitates the acquisition of others. This last idea is

reminiscent of what Carton has already called “the nature of things” or what is referred to in this thesis as encyclopaedic knowledge (46).

Finally, two more instances that exemplify how intercomprehension amongst the Romance languages is not a novel idea and in fact, not a pedagogical movement at all, but rather a way of life in times gone by, are given by Simone:

Et je souhaite qu’elle [l’expérience de E4] fasse comprendre que notre avenir linguistique devrait être celui des couvents du bas Moyen Age (véritable creusets de culture européenne): chacun y parlait sa langue (en la reliant de manière plus ou moins fantasmagorique au latin) mais tous étaient en mesure, d’une manière ou d’une autre, de se comprendre. (32)

and by Bonvino who provides “un’analogia illustre” and informing us that intercomprehension “è quella di far rivivere quell’intercomprensione tra le lingue neolatine che è stata per secoli pratica corrente tra i commercianti e i naviganti del Mediterraneo, o nei conventi e nelle università del Medioevo” (116). She adds that this ability to understand and not necessarily speak another language is found even today amongst people who travel often or read and watch performances in their original languages (116).



## Chapter II

### Founder(s)

At the beginning of the 1990s a group of linguists from four European universities (Aix-en-Provence [coordinating university under the direction of Claire Blanche-Benveniste], Lisbon, Rome III, and Salamanca initiated a project on the simultaneous teaching of four Romance languages that is, French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish which resulted in the publication in 1997 of *EuRom4: Méthode d'enseignement simultané des langues romanes: portugais, espagnol, italienne, français* (Florence: Nuova Italia). The method appears in the form of a manual as well as CD-Rom and may be utilized for self-study, although a more formal environment incorporating the availability of a monitor who helps "guide" the student rather than teach per se would be preferable. The monitor does not necessarily provide specific answers to questions regarding the meaning of exact lexicon, but may act as a sounding board for students' observations and at times helps situate them during the translation exercise, prompting response to questions such as "Where/what is the subject, verb, object of the phrase?"

The method used was the object of experiments carried out over a three-year period in Portugal, Spain, Italy, and France the results of which confirmed the belief that researchers had at the onset, which was that acquiring a passive knowledge of two or three Romance languages in a short period of time would not be an onerous task if conditions were appropriate. Experiments also showed that participants often made more or less justified comparisons while attempting to understand neighbouring languages. Researchers therefore estimated that it would be useful to provide participants with a certain elementary background of comparison in the four languages in the form of a

quadrilingual appendix at the end of the manual as well as by furnishing the users with hypertext on the CD-Rom version which links them to this appendix. Annotations following each article aid students to overcome the principal differences at the lexical, syntactic, and morphological levels. This aid does not by any means intend to be a comprehensive comparative grammar study which uses traditionally learned linguistic terminology, something researches intentionally wanted to avoid. Also, it does not refer to Latin, except for a few essential explanations, again reinforcing the fact that the only requisite of this approach was native or near-native fluency in one of the Romance languages. These measures were taken to ensure that the programme have the broadest audience possible, not limited to Romance language specialists. In addition, the text of the articles has been recorded to aid aural comprehension.

The starting point for such a programme of intercomprehension was the belief that the actual intercomprehension that exists among the Romance languages could be developed through a systematic and consistent effort of comparison, with a view toward the "discovery" of the mutual resemblances and areas of disaccord which were necessary to recognize and surpass. This exercise would then increase the capacity of intercomprehension and render the languages mutually transparent. As mentioned in Chapter 1 (see Ch. 1 pg. 5-7), and as comprehensively discussed by Scmitt Jensen in his article "L'expérience danoise et les langues romanes", this actual intercomprehension "s'inspire des expériences pratiquées de l'intercommunicabilité des petites langues (danois, norvégien, suédois) (95) and based on successful experiments carried out at the University of Aarhus, we see "la puesta en escena de una nueva pedagogía" (*Prefacio* 16).

Léon Acosta tells us that:

Ce qui rend possible l'intercompréhension multilingue est, sans doute, la capacité de reconnaître et de savoir interpréter de façon adéquate les unités et les processus morpho-syntaxiques, lexicaux, pragmatiques, en passant par le décodage de l'orthographe (ou des processus phonologiques, dans le cas de la langue parlée). Ces activités, naturelles en langue maternelle, passent par un apprentissage dans cet autre contexte de multilinguisme, car la comparaison et l'établissement de rapports entre les différentes langues deviennent indispensables, compte tenu de l'objectif premier: apprendre à comprendre plusieurs langues apparentées entre elles. Il s'agit d'un parcours qui part d'une compréhension globale vers une compréhension plus fine des microstructures; au rythme de l'apprenant.

(265)

Therefore the method adopted to enable these types of "discoveries" was that of the approximate translation of texts. Researchers stressed however, that a translation was not an objective in itself, emphasising that rather than developing good translators, their intentions were to develop good readers: "L'obiettivo dello studente non è quello di diventare un buon traduttore, quanto piuttosto un buon lettore" (Bonvino 117).

#### **Who the programme is intended for**

Léon Acosta tell us that the target audience of this method is "celui des adultes intégrés dans la vie active" whose mother tongue is a Romance language or who has mastered at least one of these languages (263). He goes on to explain that the motivations behind this desire to learn may be multiple, citing among others the need to

read reports, from business or newspaper texts, to the need or desire to perform automatic translations at, for example, work meetings with Romance speaking partners, or the ability to follow a television programme in its original language etc (263).

### **Objectives**

Bonvino tells us that the project had a very specific goal: “Con *EuRom4* si vuole portare lo studente ad acquistare in breve tempo le abilità che gli permettano una competenza ricettiva (capire ascoltando, capire leggendo) delle lingue romanze (a partire dalla comprensione dello scritto)” (116).

### **Description of how the programme functions**

One of the major tenets of the researchers involved in the programme was to keep their objectives very well delimited and not too ambitious, as they were not trying to transform learners into Romance language specialists. In addition, the primary aim of the programme was not for learners to achieve total comprehension of each word in a text or even precise comprehension in word play or certain stylistic peculiarities of the various languages, but rather achieve a “compréhension modeste” (Léon Acosta). The objectives of the programme were then the following: first, overall comprehension of the contents of the text; second, progressive bettering of comprehension by means of the deductions students begin to make and by establishing analogies among the target languages.

Texts were chosen from newspaper articles (24 per language) from the major papers of the four countries involved because they are written in a semi-formal register, they utilize an international style of wording, and refer to subjects commonly known by the average citizen. Also, the contents of articles is quite often very similar. We see in Blanche-Benveniste, et al. “es importante disponer de textos cuya lengua sea bastante

estándar y documentos cuyo contenido, al referirse a una especie de “saber común”, no exijan una iniciación a la cultura y a la historia de los distintos países” (*EuRom4* 27). If we recall Carton’s taxonomy and specifically his definition of *extra-lingual cues* we see almost immediately the utility of *EuRom4*’s choice of texts to be translated (see Ch. 1 pg. 13-14).

### **Methodology**

The following methodology was established to facilitate the exploration of the individual articles. First the title is translated into the working language (“*langue de travail*”) or the language in which each student is most proficient. A brief summary of the article in the working language is provided which students peruse in order to achieve a general idea of what the text is about in the “unknown” language they are about to translate. Next, the text is dictated aloud to the student either, by listening to the CD-Rom or read by the monitor. Initially the sessions are relatively short, that is, between ten and twenty lines, then subsequently in later sessions, more than sixty. Next, the student undertakes the translation of a sentence section, by section making use of the comprehension tools judged necessary according to the level of difficulty experienced by the learner. These tools briefly mentioned earlier are; quadrilingual lexical tables, syntactic aids which refer back to morphological tables, and commentary relative to syntax at the end of the paper version of the programme. If unable to translate unknown words, the students are asked to replace them with the following: in Portuguese: *qualquer coisa*, Spanish: *algo* or *cosa*, Italian: *cosa* or *cosare*, and French: *machin* or *machiner*, then continue with the remainder of the sentence. Generally, once students have arrived at the end of a sentence they will have resolved various problems of “palabras

desconocidas” and be able to replace *algo* for “lexicon”. If there are still areas which remain “opaque,” the student is encouraged to move on to the next sentence working in the same manner. Once the piece is finished, students are asked to review the translation, considering as a whole the situation of the subject, verb, and object. In general the end result is significantly better than that of the first attempts (Blanche-Benveniste, et al.; Léon Acosta; Castagné *De l'expérience EuRom4*).

To summarize, the methodology rests upon the following four areas, which I will outline with examples taken from Castagné, *Intercompréhension et inférences: De l'expérience EuRom4 au projet ICE*.

### 1) “Transparent” zones

These are the areas beginners view as simple because of their vocabulary, because they have similar radicals, and because they follow a canonical syntax S.V.O. For example:

P: *A poligamia continua a dividir os sexos na Malásia*

S: *La poligamia continúa dividiendo los sexos en Malasia*

I: *La poligamia continua a dividere i sessi in Malasia*

F: *La polygamie continue à diviser les sexes en Malaisie*

Even if unknown, the grammatical words (in this case, the verb *continua*) can be easily identified. One needs only to hypothesize that *la poligamia* is the subject and *continua* is therefore the verb.

In more difficult sentences containing numerous sub-clauses, students essentially train themselves to understand by leaving these clauses aside and attempting to

understand the portion of the sentence whose syntactical structure is most *transparent* (Berman). Therefore in the example:

*As três semanas de negociações tensas – em que participaram 36 dos 38 países signatários do Tratado, na estância balnear de Vina del Mar, na costa chilena – quase terminaram num impasse*

a student would attempt to render it to the following:

*As três semanas de negociações tensas... quase terminaram num impasse*

The student will then utilize this information to begin translation of the sub-clauses:

*...em que participaram 36 dos 38 países signatários do Tratado, na estância balnear de Vina del Mar, na costa chilena...*

## **2) Inferencing**

The area *EuRom4* labels exclusively as *inferencing* in its methodology would perhaps be judged by Carton to be wanting, given the fact that all four areas forming its methodology demonstrate nuances of inferencing as comprehensively discussed in his paper, and not just the one category the programme labels as such. The programme indicates that, thanks to the following indices (that is, known thematic context, identified syntactic structure, and a strong proportion of lexical transparencies), users of the programme are able to “deviner” individual segments. The *EuRom4* programme divides inferencing situations into two types: semantic inferences and syntactic-semantic inferences. Both types of inferences are comprised of stereotypical lexical associations whose meaning can be easily deciphered upon the recognition of a least one term. Researchers developing the programme found that numerous texts, such as newspaper and technical articles were heavily comprised of these types of lexical associations.

These associations aid in determining the form class of unknown lexical items. For instance, in the context of verbal syntax, the meaning of a verb may be understood by the recognition of its complement as we shall see in the following extract from an Italian article about archeological discoveries:

*la loro costuzione **risale** a 1000 anni prima delle piramidi egiziane*

The verb *risale* is not considered transparent by the other Romance languages of the programme; nevertheless, taken in conjunction with its temporal complement, (P) *a 1000 anos antes das pirâmides egípcias* (S) *a 1000 años antes de las pirâmides egipcias* (F) *à 1000 ans avant les pyramides égyptiennes*, it draws out a verb that suggests “dates back to” *1000 years before the Egyptian pyramids*. The same is true of the Portuguese verb **deixar**, which is not transparent for francophone speakers, but when next to it its verbal complement *fumar* in an article about the effects of tobacco on women its meaning “to stop or to quit” is easily inferred.

*as mulheres inférteis devem portanto ser aconselhadas a **deixar** de fumar*

A francophone often associates **deixar** with “stopping” or “quitting” smoking. If it were necessary, the preceding verb *ser aconselhadas* would confirm the hypothesis formed about the verb **deixar** “to stop or to quit” to francophone students.

Another type of semantic inferencing is accomplished under the category of nominal syntax where the meaning of the noun is understood by the recognition of its determinant. For example:

*o **camada** de ozono que envolve a Terra sofreu este ano uma diminuição sem precedentes*



Once again *camada* is not transparent for a Francophone. However, in an article regarding the deterioration of the ozone layer whose title is translated into French as *Bombe à retardement dans la stratosphère*, it is to be expected that a Francophone would deal with this entry by translating it as “couche” (layer).

Syntactic-semantic inferences are based upon the fact that such structures are often similar in the same family of languages and that recognition of one of these terms allows for its deciphering. In the following example which does not follow the canonical S.V.O. word order that is, the subject is postponed, a francophone participant is nonetheless able to handle its translation the moment he determines the principal verb as *si sono confrontati* making it clear that *due punti di vista* is the subject.

*sinora si sono confrontati nel dibattito due punti di vista*

Presumably, if de does not determine what the principal verb is, he has the ability to use areas three and four of the methodology. If still unable to determine this he may refer to the “moniteur” whose questioning may prompt the correct response or ultimately he may search for the meaning of the entry using alternate sources. However, these final two options are seldom if ever utilized as there are an unlimited number of times the student may utilize the third and fourth areas of the methodology resulting in the eventual deciphering of the “opaque” area(s).

### **3) Regular referral to context**

This part of the programme also incorporates inferencing inasmuch as through that its objective or its practice, beginners are persuaded that they may use the general knowledge they have obtained since embarking on the translation of a text, including the brief summary in their working language, in order to interpret a significant part of it. For

instance, in the following example, we know even before reading the article that when an airplane is spoken about in a newspaper article it is often with the intention of relating a catastrophe that has taken place. In this case, the complement or preposition of place *nel quartiere di Bromme* confirms this hypothesis.

*Un aereo da turismo si è schiantato ieri mattina nel quartiere di Bromme, alla periferia di Stoccolma*

Later on in the same article we encounter

*Immediatamente, si sono sprigionate fiamme altissime.*

The verb *si sono sprigionate* is not transparent for a francophone. Nevertheless taking the context of a plane crash into consideration (regular referral to context), as well as the postponed subject *fiamme altissime* assists the student to understand the flames were “triggered” or *se sont déclenchées*.

#### **(4) Reading by successive attempts**

The last of the four areas of the methodology used in the *EuRom4* programme is the practice of reading by successive or consecutive attempts. This practice aids students overcome, among others, syntactic as well as lexical complexities. Noting that beginning students developed poor reading habits using a word by word approach when translating, often resulting in the miscomprehension of texts, developers of the programme sought to convince students that they could access the meaning of the text not solely by one, but by successive readings. In *Compréhension multilingue et connaissance de sa propre langue*, Blanche-Benveniste emphasizes that “il faut absolument avoir lu l’ensemble de la phrase et même avoir une idée général du texte. La compréhension ne peut pas du tout se faire mot par mot” citing the case study of Ricky, a young adolescent American in Hozenfeld

(1984) whose attempt at translating a Spanish text word for word, thus losing sight of the overall meaning of the phrase, resulted in a very poor translation. However, once this student received some guidance, not unlike that which the *EuRom4* monitor provides, he was successfully able to complete the translation (Blanche-Benveniste, et al. 73-75, 90). One variation of this practice is when students encounter lexical difficulties. As mentioned above, students were asked to replace the unknown lexicon with an “empty word” devoid of any function. Again, using the Italian text about pyramids:

*la loro costruzione risale a 1000 anni prima delle piramidi egiziane*

The two entries *loro* and *risale* were not transparent for students and the resulting translation for francophone students was as follows:

*la “machine” construction “machine” à mille ans avant les pyramides égyptiennes*

However, although the entries were not transparent for students, in general they were pointed out as being an adjective and verb respectively. This is significant because as Castagné points out in his article, “l’usage du mot vide permet ainsi de prendre connaissance de la structure syntaxique globale construite avec le verbe...” (*De l’expérience EuRom4*). In the earlier example using this same phrase, the meaning of a verb was understood by the recognition of its temporal complement, leaving us with:

*la “machine” construction remonte à mille ans avant les pyramides égyptiennes*

The identification of the verb in this case often unblocks the understanding of *loro* when one considers the place of the sentence within the context of the article:

*leur construction remonte à mille ans avant les pyramides égyptiennes*

Castagné notes that:

La lecture par “couches successives” peut parfois paraître assez laborieuse quand le texte mêle plusieurs difficultés dans un même énoncé. Mais cette approche s’est avérée malgré tout très payante, y compris quand nous avons été obligés de l’appliquer à un niveau macro... (*De l’expérience EuRom4*)

What Castagné is trying to emphasize here is that by breaking down a seemingly difficult paragraph containing numerous sub-clauses, the isolation of constituent parts with parentheses during the initial reading followed by successive attempts, allowed participants to “[revenir] à ce paragraphe avec beaucoup plus de réussite” (*De l’expérience EuRom4*).

### **Theoretical bases of methodology**

The theoretical bases of the methodology of the *EuRom4* programme consisting of the 1) Transparent zones 2) Inferencing 3) Regular referral to context and 4) Reading by successive attempts, are all notions included in Carton’s essay on inferencing as comprehensively discussed in Chapter 1. If we transfer his tri-partite taxonomy of cues to the *EuRom4* programme, each of these areas could be considered using the following nomenclature:

- 1) Transparent zones equal *intra and inter-lingual* cues.
- 2) Inferencing equals *intra-lingual* cues.
- 3) Regular referral equals *extra-lingual* or contextual cues
- 4) Reading by successive attempts equals *intra-lingual* and *extra-lingual* cues

Some clarification of how "Reading by successive attempts" incorporates *intra* as well as *extra-lingual* cues in tandem would seem appropriate here. In the previous example about the Italian pyramids it is clear that two types of activities are taking place. Indeed it is through the use of *intra-lingual* cues that we are able to determine the form class of *risale*, in this case a verb. However, Carton states that:

although a form class does not, in itself, constitute a complete recognition of a novel term, it may go a long way toward reducing the possible number of inferences that can be made. Identification of form classes increases the certainty of inferencing and it affects the complexity of the inference situation. Furthermore, the use of such cues makes it possible to generate searches for additional contextual material and it seems reasonable to hypothesize that they may stimulate and accelerate the student's further exploration of the text rather than allow the unfamiliar term to distract his attention from the text and hinder his progress with it.

(50-51)

This is precisely what occurs in this example, inasmuch as through the identification of the form class of the verb *risale*, the complexity of the inference situation stimulates even further the students' further exploration of the text. This results in the identification of another type of cue, in this case, an *extra-lingual* one in the form of our encyclopedic knowledge regarding the ancient Egyptians or the subject matter of the article which reaffirms our choice of lexicon that infers that the *construction* "dates back" or "*remonte*" à mille ans avant les pyramides égyptiennes.

### **Empirical data and attainment of proposed objectives**

Castagné tells us that by the end of the *EuRom4* sessions, participants in general say they have reached the stated objectives of the programme, with the added surprise for them of having done so with great pleasure (*De l'expérience EuRom4*). Léon Acosta notes that:

Les résultats obtenus avec les dizaines d'apprenants volontaires qui nous ont servi de "cobayes" pendant la phase expérimentale ont été très payants, ce qui confirme notre hypothèse de départ: si la méthode de travail exploite positivement les capacités naturelles des sujets parlants (induction, déduction, mémorisation, analogie, etc.), leur fond culturel commun et les zones de transparence interlinguistiques, le comparativisme devient très fructueux. (272)

It should be mentioned at this juncture that most, if not all empirical data on the results of the *EuRom4* programme appear analogous in their restating of the programme's objectives, i.e. that it only aims for a passive-receptive competence and that the programme does not allow for full competence in the studied languages. Bonvino tells us that "l'obiettivo principale è quello di ridare il gusto di scoprire le lingue anche fermandosi a una competenza parziale, 'imperfetta'. Il gusto per la scoperta di nuove lingue inoltre può costituire il trampolino di lancio per un approfondimento ulteriore, che vada oltre la competenza ricettiva" (119).

### Chapter III

#### Founder(s)

The programme began in 1992 at the Centre of Language Teaching at the University of Stendahl at Grenoble under the direction of Louise Dabène, “à qui l’on doit d’être à l’origine du déploiement de l’intercompréhension en langues romanes en tant que véritable stratégie d’enseignement et de développement du plurilingüisme,” (Degache, *Présentation* 10) in collaboration with several other partner universities namely, in Spain the Universidad Complutense de Madrid and The Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona; in Portugal, the Universidade of Aveiro and in Italy, The Università di Roma, the association DoRiF, as well as researchers from other French universities (Paris VIII and Lyon II). As Degache mentions, the starting point for such a programme of intercomprehension was the belief that researchers held that all “romanophones” possess, by virtue of the mastery of their native language, a “répertoire réceptif” that could be developed and enriched via certain didactic processes (*Les options*). Researchers wanted to avoid traditional maximalist principals of language acquisition which characterise the majority of typical pedagogical approaches, that is, simultaneous development of all possible languages skills: such as written, oral, and aural (Dabène *Et si vous*). The common goal of these researchers was the development of intercomprehension amongst Romance language speakers; first written and then spoken.

The programme resulted in a multi-media publication in 2002 that attempts to teach three Romance language either jointly or independently to Francophones, in the form of three individual discs which may be purchased together or separately that is, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish under the following title: *Galatea: entraînement à la*

*compréhension de l'espagnol, de l'italien, et du portugais* (Programme Socrates-Lingua. Chambéry: Génération 5 multimédia. Université Grenoble 3, 2002). It should be mentioned that this production only aims to impart reading ability in one or more of the three target languages. Degache emphasizes that the method is “un apprentissage ni simultané ni forcément consécutif” (*Les options didactiques* 247). He makes this distinction because other programmes aimed at intercomprehension are specifically simultaneous in their approach and indicates that *Galatea* opts for a “voie moyenne” for two reasons. The first is that the choice for which language to study using this methodology is the students’. They may choose to study one, two, or all three target languages. The second and more important is that Phase three of the programme (“Dispositif d’aides à la compréhension”) is French referenced so there is only one that *EuRom4* would designate as “langue de travail”. This means that, unlike the other two programmes studied in this paper which require only a native or near native fluency in one of the Romance languages dealt with in this type of programme, this version of *Galatea* is suitable for someone who is a native or near native speaker of French and therefore not as versatile as those who work with *EuRom4* and *EuroComRom*.

Researchers of the programme believed that it was possible to disassociate the abilities traditionally used in acquiring a language. One could learn to understand without having to produce or learn to read independently of oral comprehension. Researchers also held that contrary to traditional beliefs that the proximity of these languages was an impediment to learning, so often demonstrated by their “faux amis”, this proximity, when used advisedly was in fact “un puissant levier pour l’apprentissage” (Dabène *Et si vous*). Finally researchers believed that it was necessary to train learners to



rely on all of their knowledge in approaching the learning of a language, not just that obtained in the classroom, and also to invite and convince them of the necessity of tolerating semantic ambiguity (Degache *Les options didactique* 246).

Research for the programme was carried out in two distinct steps. The first stage included a pre-didactic analysis of the strategies used by speakers of the different Romance languages engaged in trying to extract meaning from texts written in one of the unknown languages, together with a comparative study of the target languages aimed at highlighting their similarities and differences. The second phase of the project consisted of implementing the research obtained in the first stage in the form of auto-didactic teaching materials using multimedia and hypertext as the central media (Dabène *Et si vous*). For a comprehensive analysis of the findings of the first phase of the programme see Dabène and Degache eds.: *Études de linguistique appliquée* 104 (1996). Klein tells us that “in many years of groundwork, decoding strategies in the closely-related Romance languages (rules of transfer, false cognates and hierarchies of inference between languages) have been researched and valuable results obtained for the study of intercomprehension in the Romance languages...to achieve an accelerated reading knowledge, i.e in the current press vocabulary” (*Current State* 37).

### **Who the programme is intended for**

Dabène tells us that the intended audience or target group of this method is “un public d’adultes étudiants ou engagés dans la vie professionnelle” (*Et si vous*). On the product cover itself we read: “elle s’adresse à un large public, à partir de 15 ans, qui souhaite découvrir ou redécouvrir une ou plusieurs de ces 3 langues” (Dabène et al.)

Although *Galatea* will ultimately provide pedagogical material from the perspective of a

native speaker of each of the aforementioned languages for purchase, at the time of this analysis only one completed programme that teaches the other three has hitherto been made available, namely for the francophone student interested in acquiring Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish.

### **Objectives**

To state precisely what has been alluded to above, the objective of *Galatea* is to develop passive comprehension competence in one, two, or three Romance languages and to allow “le débutant ou faux-débutant à raison d’une vingtaine d’heures par langue à un premier niveau de compétence en le mettant en situation de résoudre des problèmes de compréhension” (Degache *Developer*).

### **Description of how the programme functions**

The “Démarche pédagogique” of the programme, as stated on the *Galatea* CD-Rom, is as follows: After reading and hearing the texts, entertaining exercises motivate the search for meaning of the texts and encourage the user to individually discover the target language in an intuitive manner. An important comprehension-aid device, based on the linguistic kinship of the Romance languages, allows users to stimulate and appraise their previous knowledge. Little by little the student memorizes the different linguistic forms through contact with the foreign language texts and develops a personal strategy to understand the target language. Very concrete information in the form of grammar and conjugation rules is scattered along this linguistic route and allows the acquisition of a basic knowledge of the language being studied. A *bilan* allows the user to consult the details of his responses all along his journey. Cultural information

completes and enriches this learning process. Progression in the process is assured by the breakdown of activities into modules of increasing difficulty (Dabène et al.).

### Methodology

The following is the typical structure of a CD-Rom in the programme, except that the introductory module and the title and language of articles change according to the target language.

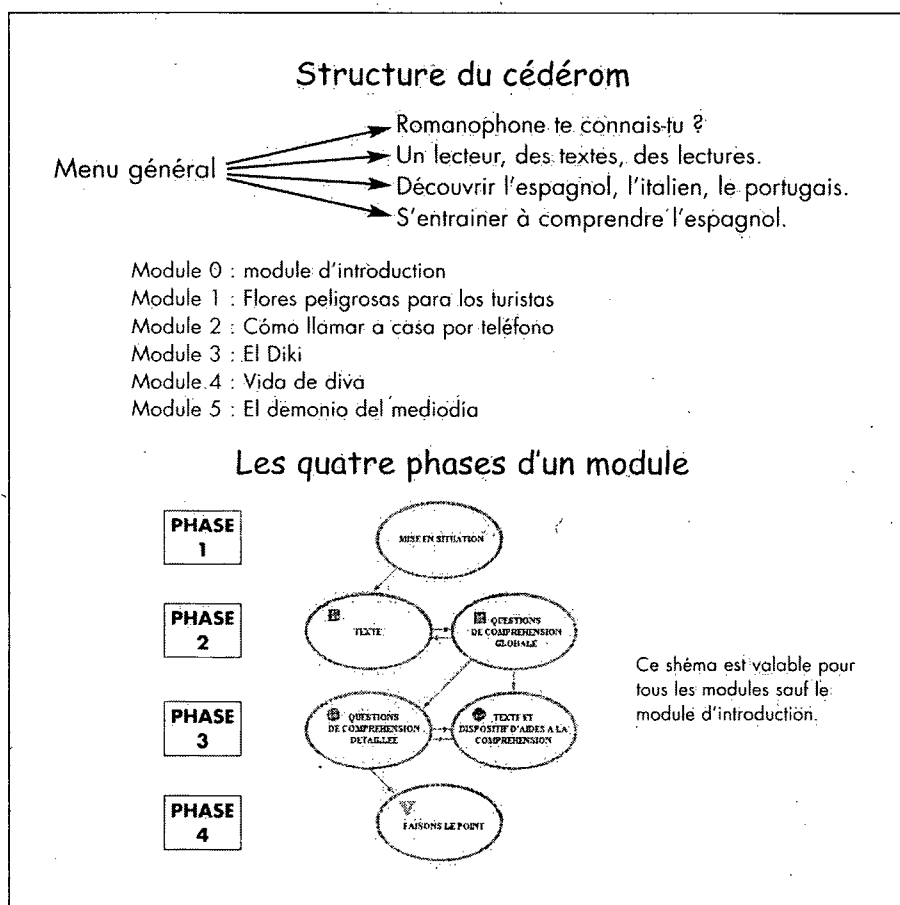


Diagram 1: Typical Structure of CD-Rom (*Galatea: Espagnol* Dabène et al.)

The methodology of *Galatea* which follows has at its core three didactic options that will be discussed in turn providing examples from Degache *Les options didactiques des cédéroms Galatea pour élargir le répertoire romanophone réceptif des apprenants/francophones*. The finer nuances of these didactic options will be discussed

subsequently and in a comprehensive manner in the section “**Theoretical bases of methodology**”.

The “Menu général” (see above) proposes four options: the first two are 1) an initiation into the “Romanophone” world (to be discussed shortly as the first didactic option of the programme in the Theoretical bases of the Methodology), and 2) an initiation into reading in a foreign language. The third option is a grouping of the three languages in order to introduce them individually that is, where they are spoken, their particular histories, and their particularities, followed by an initiation exercise which tests comprehension of material covered. Under the fourth option the student is brought to the six modules (0-5) of the target language. “0” is an introductory module that presents the chosen language, where it is spoken, its history and kinship with the other Romance languages. This module is also followed by short interactive exercises that test comprehension. The subsequent five modules (1-5) have the same structure which is illustrated by the bottom half of Diagram 1 “Les quatre phases d’un module”. Each module is organized around a text of approximately 250-350 words, articles widely available in the press (Dabène *Et si vous suivez*).

#### **The four phases of a module:**

**Phase 1** (see below) “Mise en situation” -In this phase, a film, slides, or drawings create the reading situation in the foreign language or an ambiance relative to the chosen text in order to prepare the reading. For example, the student reads in this first slide: “Vous êtes dans le train pour l’Espagne...Direction Barcelone”.

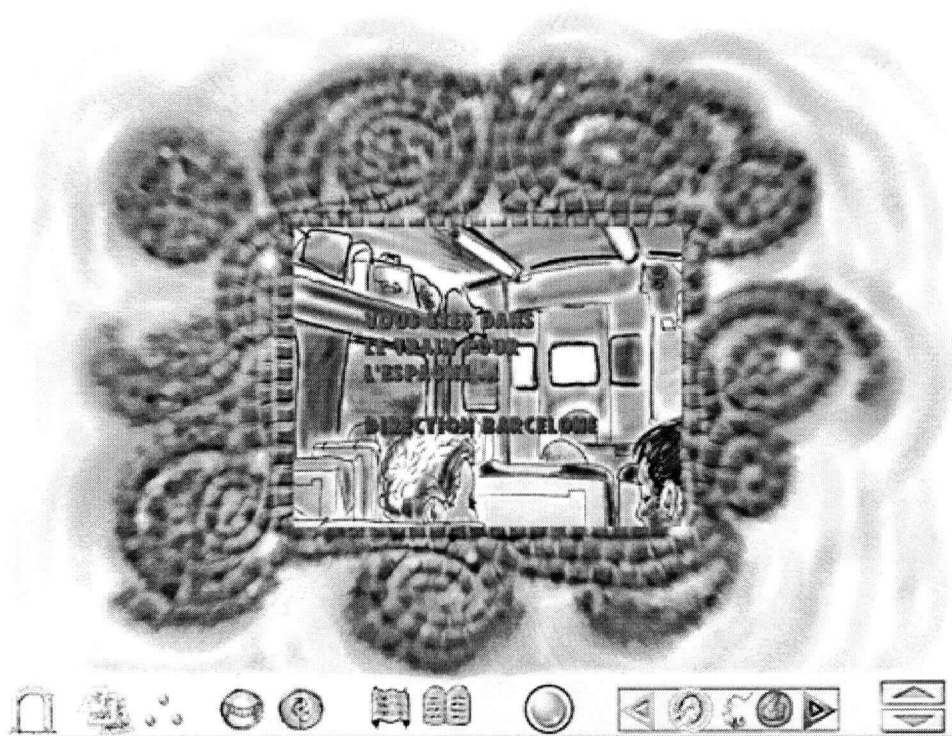


Diagram 2: "Mise en situation"

**Phase 2** (see below) "Texte et questions de compréhension globale" -In this phase the user discovers the text of the module. Students are provided instructions in French on the right side of the slide. As this is only a first approach to the text, the duration is controlled and it is advised not to delay in this area. By using the button "basculer" (the up or down arrow at the far right in the above diagram) the student may access the "compréhension globale" questions which take various forms such as: true/false, questions based on illustrations, and multiple choice questions.

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Lisez le texte dans son ensemble, cliquez sur le bouton bascule et testez votre compréhension.

Mettez à profit titre et sous-titre.

Mobilisez vos connaissances autour du thème évoqué.

Temps conseillé : 10 minutes

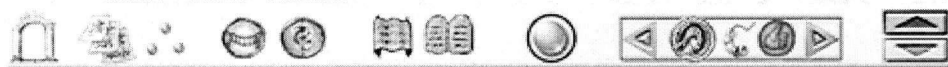


Diagram 3: "Texte et questions de compréhension globale"

**Phase 3(a)** (see below) "Questions de compréhension détaillée"-In this part of Phase 3, new activities around the text are proposed, this time, requiring a deepened comprehension. To resolve the difficulties encountered, the user may access, by returning to the text using the "bascule" (as mentioned above), a comprehension-aid device where the text is taken apart in more manageable segments. Phase 3 is considered to be the "noyau dur" by researchers of the programme because learners are brought to "conduire une réflexion métalangagière" (Dabène *Et si vous*).

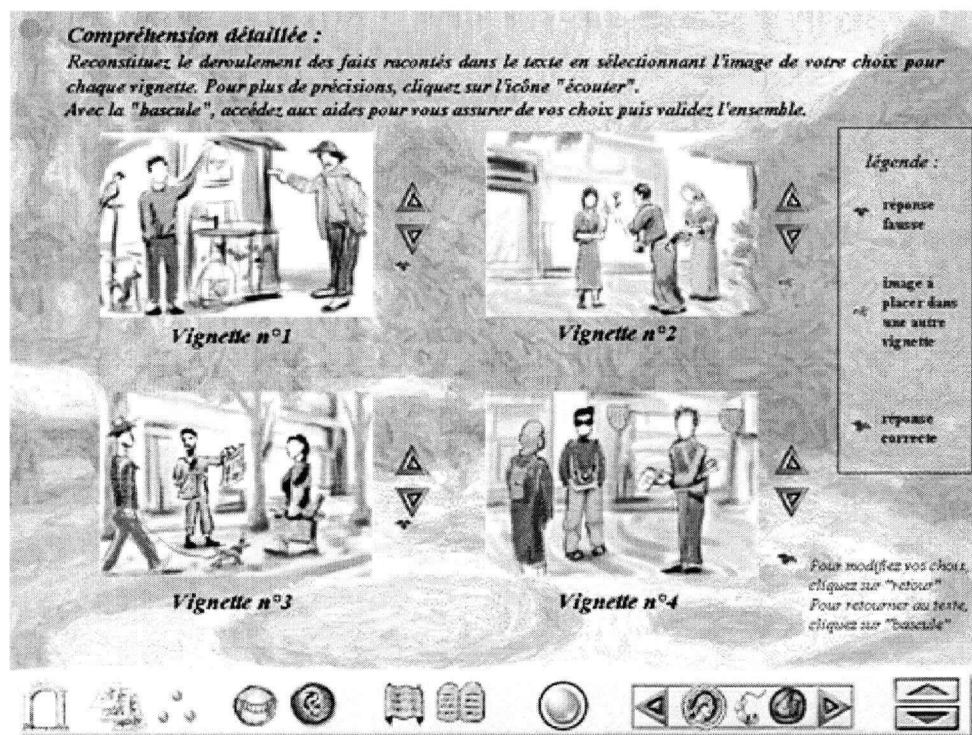


Diagram 4: "Questions de compréhension détaillée"

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Cliquez sur le texte pour obtenir des aides à la compréhension.

-La couleur verte renvoie aux aides sur les mots isolés.

-La couleur jaune renvoie aux aides sur des segments de texte.

Vous pouvez retourner à tout moment au jeu des vignettes au moyen de la bascule.

Diagram 5: "Texte et dispositif d'aide à la compréhension"

**Phase 3(b)** (above) The second part of Phase 3 is "Texte et dispositif d'aide à la compréhension approfondie." In this part of Phase 3 a click on the word or segment makes

the text react at two levels:

- 1) the clause in which the word is found is highlighted in yellow
- 2) the word clicked in the text which poses difficulty is superimposed and highlighted in green, simultaneously activating two aides which are then consultable at will and coded to the aforementioned colours.

The first aid is at the clause level of the text whose objective is “d’inciter l’apprenant à considérer les niveaux discursifs et textuels dans son activité de construction de sens, afin d’éviter qu’il s’égare dans le traitement des micro-unités” (Dabène *Et si vous*). This is accomplished by providing learners with short interactive exercises which make them aware of the characteristics of the genre of the text, of their original input, the structure of the text, or allowing them to resolve morpho-syntactic or lexical type questions which can be difficult to deal with at the word level for example, as is the case with connectors.

Therefore in phase three, not only may the student reread the text in more profound way for deeper comprehension, he also has a number of devices at his disposal as mentioned above. In addition to these devices, the icons found at the bottom of the pages of the various phases of the individual modules are an indispensable part of the methodology of the programme. The more important icons will be discussed proceeding from left to right. A definition of the function of the icon will be provided and some examples given using the target language (in this case Spanish) with explanation in the programmes reference “langue de travail” that is, French. Aid for the individual icons is activated again, as mentioned above, by clicking on the word and then clicking the icon desired to obtain its particular information.





### El Diki: un invento magistral para volver de la compra

Los programas de radio y la televisión nos bombardean continuamente con la palabra diseño, una excusa publicitaria de marca mayor. Pero en casos como el Diki, un asa para la compra, la sensatez de sus fabricantes hace que pueda catalogarse de invento magistral. Hasta se han propuesto romper con la publicidad convencional ya que, como único medio de promoción, sus fabricantes utilizan el "Diki's Rap".

La existencia de friconficos cada vez más potentes y con mayor capacidad, así como la incorporación de la mujer al trabajo fuera de casa y la eclosión de hipermercados llenos de escaparates tentadores, han generado hábitos sociales como la gran compra semanal, decenal o quincenal. El Diki se ha inventado para aliviar las manos y la columna vertebral de quien habitualmente transporta bolsas cargadas.

Una ranura en la parte superior del invento permite introducir en su interior las asas de las bolsas que hay que transportar, quedando bien sujetas a los pequeños **dientes de sierra** que tiene el Diki en su parte inferior. De cada uno de estos inventos pueden colgarse varias bolsas de diferente tamaño y peso, sin que la mano lo sienta. Los inventores de las asas Diki se han propuesto terminar con la incomodidad de transportar las bolsas sin equilibrar el peso y de que el contenido de éstas se desparece al ser colocadas en el suelo.

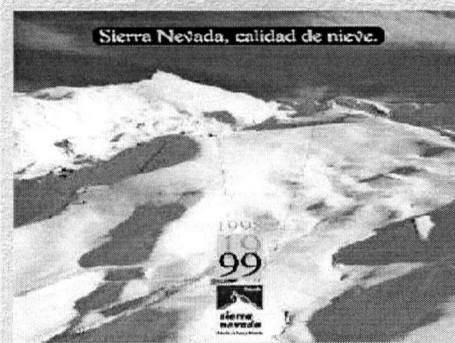
Culture

M. Pérez, El País semanal

#### el "Diki's Rap":

"Mi mamá siempre venía de la compra cada día con la espalda destrozada por las bolsas tan cargadas. Colgaban de sus manos cortándole los dedos paquetes por docenas ¡Dios mío, qué condenal! Pero con el Diki ahora Ya no tiene problema Se acabó su sufrimiento ¡Qué genial es el invento! Oye tú también de tu Diki colgarás muchos huevos y algo más, y tu madre podrá ir a la compra sin sufrir transportando del mercado la harina, el pescado, los garbanzos, los filetes, el jamón, los salmonetes, poco pan y bastante vino, que no es un desatino."

Vous connaissez déjà sans doute le mot **sierra**, par exemple dans **Sierra Nevada** :




Mais **sierra** signifie en fait autre chose que "Unidad del sistema montañoso de tamaño menor que una cordillera". **Sierra** est en effet une dénomination par analogie, des sommets d'une chaîne de montagne avec la partie tranchante d'un outil. Lequel ?

Remarquez que c'est encore plus facile si vous considérez le groupe de mots **dientes de sierra**...



Diagram 6: "Aid icons at bottom of screen"

The "Culture et civilisation" icon  (the Roman arch) gives information about terms regarding culture and civilisation. This information is considered extra-linguistic. In the above example we see the programme relating the words "dientes de sierra", as a term francophones have likely encountered previously.

The icon, "Déjà Vu" (three sheets of paper, one over the other) signals a lexical or grammatical unit encountered in a previous text: clicking on this icon reactivates the context. It serves predominantly as a mnemonic device.

The icon, "Multi-occurrences" (three dots in the form of a triangle) displays on the screen all the occurrences of similarly appearing words from the text, with the same lexical or grammatical form.


The icon, “Passerelles”  (a bridge within a sphere) (see below) is one of the most essential icons of the programme. This interlingual cue allows access to a certain amount of phonetic-lexical information, which is aimed at drawing the two languages concerned synchronically and diachronically. It allows, for example, obtaining information on the evolution of a word over time. In the example below, information is given regarding Spanish words beginning with “ex or es” for example as in “extranjero” followed by their typical rendering in French.

Diagram 7: “Passerelles”

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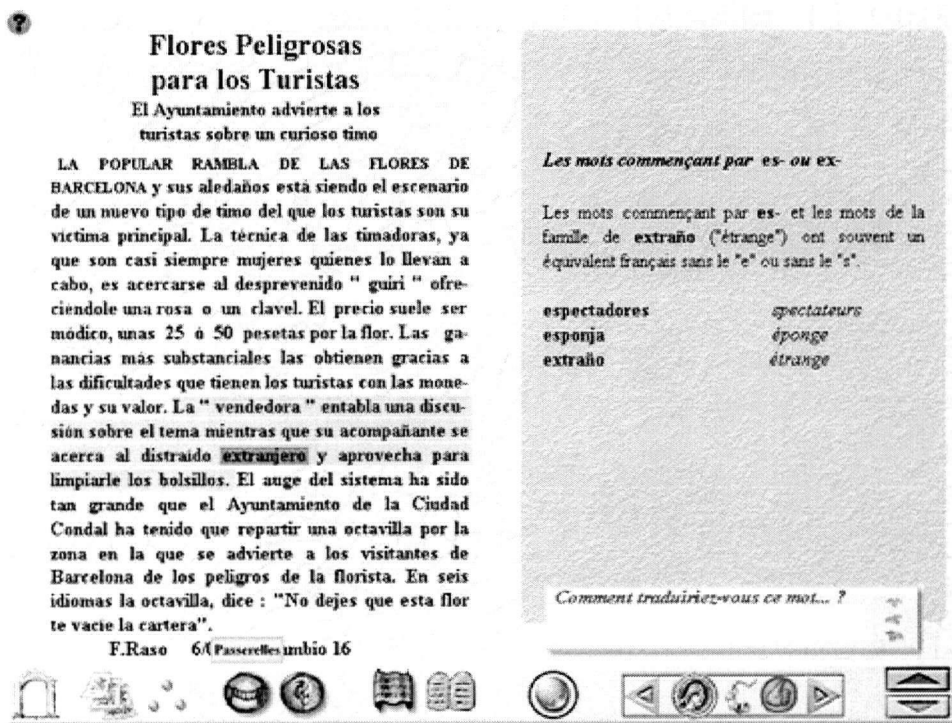
F.Raso 6/ Passerelles ambio 16

**Les mots commençant par es- ou ex-**

Les mots commençant par **es-** et les mots de la famille de **extraño** (“étrange”) ont souvent un équivalent français sans le “e” ou sans le “s”.

espectadores	spectateurs
esponja	éponge
extraño	étrange

Comment traduiriez-vous ce mot... ?





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### Des ricochets dans le texte

Vous avez intérêt à repérer dans le texte les différentes façons de reprendre un même élément. Entraînez-vous en repérant les segments (noms, pronoms, etc.) qui reprennent **los turistas** (ou **el turista**).


Cliquez dans le texte sur vos réponses et validez après chaque sélection.


Sigue así.

Cliquez dans le texte sur votre réponse et validez

extranjero

Diagram: 8 "Oreille"

The icon "oreille"  (the ear within a sphere) allows a segment of text to be heard.

The icon "parchemin",  (parchment) also an interlingual aid, allows access to semantic-lexical aids such cognates, affixes, semantic shifts, thematic as well as anaphoric patterns.

It provides exercises to pin point/select a given association. For example,

in the window above we see "Entraînez-vous en repérant les segments (noms, pronoms, etc.)

qui reprennent **los turistas** (ou **el turista**)". The answer as stated above: *extranjero*



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Grammaire

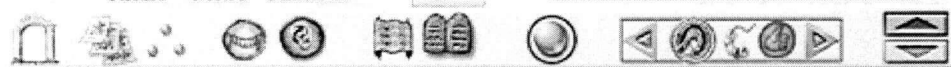


Diagram 9: "Table de la loi"


The icon "table de la loi"  (law tablets) allows access to grammatical help. For instance, above we have the explanation on the right side of the slide: "Des accents qui changent tout" followed by an example "esta" and "está".

Diagram 10: "Faisons le point"

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## Faisons le point...

Si vous souhaitez faire le point sur quelques aspects de la langue espagnole rencontrés dans ce module, cette phase facultative vous est particulièrement indiquée. Vous y retrouverez peut-être des exercices que vous avez déjà rencontrés sous une forme semblable en phase 3 pendant la "compréhension détaillée". A vous de juger s'il vous est utile de les revoir.

Cliquez sur une de ces rubriques :

- Les pronoms collés aux verbes
- Les connecteurs
- Les pronoms relatifs
- "être" et "avoir" en espagnol



**Phase 4** (see above) “Faisons le point...”-In this phase, linguistic aspects found throughout the module are revisited, independent of textual comprehension. The objective of this phase is formalize linguistic knowledge in an inductive and explicit manner through interactive exercises.

All examples from Degache *Les options* (PowerPoint).

### **Theoretical bases of methodology**

There are three principal didactic options that comprise what researchers of *Galatea* label “un apprentissage consécutif référencé” as extensively discussed by Degache in *Les options didactiques*. These options form the theoretical bases of the methodologies developed for the programme. The first is to stimulate active discovery of linguistic and cultural unknowns by mobilizing both acquired knowledge and the cognitive potential of the learner. The driving force of this option and the four modes comprising it is the desire to stimulate interactivity between the user and the programme. The first mode initiates the learner into the “romanophonie” in a separate module which has the following objectives:

- a) Mobilize previous knowledge of the target languages
- b) To allow the student to explore the “romanophonie” geographically and historically
- c) To establish a student’s confidence toward the linguistic kinship
- d) Provoke interlinguistic comparison in 6 languages (Catalan, Spanish, Italian, Occitan, Portuguese, and Romanian)

An example of a multi-media exercise in the programme which accomplishes these objectives is the one entitled “The Ant and the Cricket”, a famous fable known in

all six of the aforementioned languages. The title and text are translated into each of the languages as well as a recording of each provided. Several exercises are then made available to obtain the objectives listed above. For example, one is titled “Identification des langues” under the rubric Module: “Romanophone, te connais-tu?”

“Voici le titre d’une même histoire en six langues romane différentes. Pouvez-vous faire correspondre chaque langue à sa zone géographique?” followed by instructions on how to accomplish the task, that is, what to click on to proceed. Another exercise, under the same rubric called “Repérage de traits” allows for interlinguistic comparison of the six languages by asking questions such as “Quels sont les traits caractéristiques de ces six langues”, subsequently listing approximately 12 characteristics such as:

“Le nombre élevé des diphtongues IE, UE, l’article défini collé derrière le nom, la terminaison des noms en –ÇÃO, le H initial à la place de F latin etc.” and asking students to choose a language corresponding to each feature by clicking on it.

The second mode of Didactic Option 1, which pertains to the section “Un lecteur, des textes, des lecteurs” on the Menu Général, comes in the form of encouragement of self-observation (metacognitive aspects) of comprehension strategies employed by students along three axes:

- a) Allow for the discovery of other strategies of reading-comprehension and their potentialities, in particular by means of an initiation module about the topic that gives a metacognitive tone to the application
- b) Lay out the bases for the self-regulated development of receptive aptitudes

- c) Allow the comparison of the reader's profile in the foreign languages with that of the "interface-tuteur" which keeps track of the learners operations and which may be subsequently consulted

The third mode of Didactic option 1 is the prompting and exploiting of previous knowledge: world knowledge, linguistic knowledge (in particular lexical), knowledge of text type and discourse.

The fourth mode of Didactic option 1 is the proposal of a number of short search-for-meaning exercises at the word, discursive, or textual level owing to the breakdown of the text into clausal segments as mentioned in Phase 3 of the methodology.

The second didactic option of the programme is inductive conceptualization of the contrastivity of French as the Romance reference language. The following principles allow this option to function:

- i) Motivate connections by comprehension tasks and the contextualization of the activity.
- ii) Suggest possible connections before providing them.
- iii) Allow the learner to verify his connections by proposing a translation.
- iv) Offer a diversified range of strategies concerning the different linguistic levels.

An example of these principles demonstrated is the following, in which an assistance-word **recibo** suggests a direction, provides indications so as to elicit contrastive conceptualization, this under the contextualized rubric *Attaquez les mots à la racine*:

### *Attaquez les mots à la racine*

En raison de leur origine latine commune, bien des mots espagnols peuvent se reconnaître dans la racine des mots français de la même famille. Les altérations vocaliques ainsi que l'évolution des consonnes peuvent, cependant, "*brouiller les pistes*". N'oubliez pas de confirmer ces ressemblances avec d'autres indices : ici le champ sémantique autour des modes de paiement est précieux.

RECIPERE > **recepción**

> **recibir** (infinitif) > **recibo** (nom dérivé)

*Comment traduiriez-vous ce mot...?*

Vous avanceriez-vous maintenant à traduire **recibo**?

> **reçu**

(Degache *Les options didactiques* 250)

The third and final didactic option of the programme, utilized less often than the former, is the progressive approach to interlinguistic comparison. It is realized according to the following three principles:

- i) Increased plurilingual comparison while moving from one module to the next.
- ii) Reference to the 4 languages: French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian with Latin and sometimes with others (see first mode).
- iii) Consideration of different linguistic levels: phonetics (diachronic and synchronic according to the case), morphology, and syntax. For example in Module 3 Espagnol after clicking on the "icône passerelles" (as explained above in Methodology).

### *Les voyelles au fil du temps*

Au fil du temps, ce sont surtout les voyelles accentuées qui se sont modifiées en évoluant vers les différentes langues romanes. Elles ont souvent produit, surtout en français, des diphthongaisons :

Ex.	Latin	español	italien	français
	"légem"	ley	"legge"	"loi"

Toutefois, la plupart du temps, pour rétablir les analogies cachées, il suffira simplement que vous exploriez la famille de mots français à laquelle vous pouvez rattacher le terme espagnol :

**ley**... législation, légiférer... loi

**peso**... peser, pesant... ...?...

(Degache *Les options didactiques* 250)



The theoretical bases of the aforementioned didactic options which comprise the methodologies of this programme are concepts included in Carton's essay on inferencing as discussed in Chapter 1 and similarly mentioned for the *EuRom4* programme.

However, one may observe almost immediately that *Galatea* implements more of the notions and in a more comprehensive manner those which Carton discusses in his paper, than does the *EuRom4* programme. For example, extensive use of inter-lingual cues with a pedagogical scope rather than as a reference tool. Another observation of *Galatea's* didactic options is that if one looks closely, one may see Carton's notions on inferencing materialize in a much more interwoven manner than in *EuRom4* that is to say, one must truly explore *Galatea's* didactic options and component parts to see how ubiquitous the process of Inferencing is. A comparison of the degree to which the individual programmes make use of Inferencing, as well as the notions discussed by Carton, need not detain the reader at present, as an evaluation of this nature will be discussed in the final chapter of this paper. Additionally, attainment of the proposed three didactic options does not necessarily occur sequentially. If we transfer the tri-partite taxonomy of cues as well as some of Carton's observations on the process of Inferencing to the *Galatea* programme, specifically its didactic options and their component parts, we arrive at the following analysis.

Option 1: In stimulating the active discovery of linguistic and cultural unknowns by mobilizing both acquired knowledge and the cognitive potential of the learner, we see primarily the extensive use of extra-lingual cues as well as secondarily, the use of inter-lingual and intra-lingual cues. The reasoning behind this is, as Carton indicates, is that "the student of a foreign language...is very largely dependent on extra-lingual cues and

upon intra-lingual cues only after he has acquired some proficiency” and that the “the student of a divergent language is probably well advised to be a student of the culture of that language. If he is, much of his inferencing will be coupled with concept attainment” (55). This is precisely why *Galatea* places such importance on initiating the student into the world of the “romanophonie” with its geographic, historical, and cultural emphasis. It allows the student to establish confidence toward the linguistic kinship and provokes interlinguistic comparison (two of the sub-categories of the first mode of Didactic option 1).

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, researchers believed that it was necessary to train learners to rely on all of their knowledge in approaching the learning of a language and not just that obtained in the classroom and also to invite and convince them of the necessity of tolerating semantic ambiguity, a view previously posited by Carton: “The proposal to introduce extensive use of the process [of Inferencing] represents, however, a sharp departure from those views of language study which put exclusive emphasis on mimicry and memory and which leave little room for doubtfulness and temporary inaccuracies” (56).

Another important aspect of Didactic Option 1 is *Galatea*’s encouragement of a student’s self-observation or the metacognitive aspect of comprehension strategies along the three axes outlined above. It is also one more notion discussed by Carton in his paper. Parrott defines metacognitive as “planning and overall organization of the language learning experience. Making choices from a repertoire of options including choices about which other strategies to use in a particular situation and for a particular purpose, e.g. using a dictionary or to ignore unfamiliar language whose meaning is not

derivable from context” (*Learning Strategies*). Carton in essence, explains *Galatea*’s reasoning behind using these strategies by suggesting that they are more aligned with the process of inferencing than are traditional pedagogic strategies. Continuing the same line of thinking from his previous statement he tells us that:

Pedagogic strategies which put extensive emphasis on providing models for monitored memorization imply to the student that responsibility for all they will need to know has been assumed by the formal setting for learning. When emphasis is placed upon process of acquisition, the student is prepared for independent study and may be expected to continue to extend his command over the subject matter after leaving formal instruction. (56)

Option 2, the inductive conceptualization of the contrastivity of French, is essentially the exploration and exploitation of inter-lingual cues using French as LM as demonstrated in the above example *Attaquez les mots à la racine* using the principles outlined above.

Option 3, the progressive approach to interlinguistic comparison according to the principles outlined above also makes use of inter-lingual cues, however these cues are referenced to all four languages, not exclusively French, and at different linguistic levels with increasing frequency and complexity:

### **Empirical data and attainment of proposed objectives**

There is little existing in the way of available empirical data that is specific to the CD-ROM version of *Galatea* regarding the attainment of the proposed objectives.

Confirmation of this fact was obtained by the author of this study in very recent correspondence with the principal coordinator of the programme, Christian Degache

(Université Grenoble 3): “Los datos empíricos que seguimos recogiendo en el curso de preparación [*Galatea*] a las sesiones de intercomprensión en [www.galanet.be](http://www.galanet.be) todavía no han sido analizados” (March 27, 2006). However, it must be reiterated, as mentioned above by Klein, that the “valuable results obtained in [the] many years of groundwork [during] the pre-didactic analysis” warranted the implementation of the second phase of the programme that is, production of the CD-ROMs. In addition, Degache does indicate that in tests performed on some of the first modules of the programme aimed at validating “les choix didactiques” of the programme, two main findings were obtained. The first is the learner’s feeling of surprise when faced with this type of language awareness approach: one’s learning habits are jostled, yet the impact of the approach seems favorable and seems to yield a feeling of confidence and success. The second is that the cognitive challenge made up by the application of the programme is perceived as a journey that arouses interest and curiosity, while limiting deviation from that route (*Les options didactiques* 253).

The developers of *Galatea* do not see the production of the CD-ROMs as a means to an end but rather as a step on the journey of language acquisition with a broader scope that may include productive abilities in the target languages. Perhaps this is why they have not concerned themselves in furnishing the aforementioned empirical details. They have, however, begun what they view as the next step of the process toward this acquisition and launched a forum in which a student may practice the passive-receptive abilities obtained by using their programme (or a similar one). This platform is called *Galanet* and is accessible at the website mentioned above. The idea behind this action will be discussed in Chapter 5.

## Chapter IV

**Founder(s)**

Work for the programme began in the Department of Romance Studies at the University of Frankfurt and in 1996 Klein and Stegmann developed a method for German students to become “romanophone” based on one’s knowledge of German, English, and French entitled *EuroComRom*. However, French was eventually chosen as the starting point or “bridge language” of the Romance languages for these students because of its important role in the German scholastic system and its historic closeness (in its written form in any case) with the other Romance languages (Klein et Rutke).

Klein tells us that:

One essential feature of the EuroCom method is the *rejection of the maximist principle* of language learning and refraining from the simultaneous acquisition of all competencies. It concentrates on training the skills to efficiently develop an understanding of new languages on the basis of existing language-learning experience. It is served by the technique of *optimised deduction*. French seems to be the best source language (*langue dépôt*) for the Romance languages however, if the receptive competence to be achieved is restricted to reading comprehension, then any other Romance language can function as the *langue dépôt*. (*The EuroCom Strategy*)

Their efforts resulted in the publication of: *EuroComRom-Die sieben Siebe: Romanische sprachen sofort lessen können*. Editiones EuRuroCom, Bd. 1 Aachen: Shaker, 2000. (Klein, *Current State* 38)

The EuroCom research group consists of seven universities: The University of Frankfurt (Klein/Stegmann), The University Giessen, The Technical University of Darmstadt, The Open University of Hagen, The University of Education Erfurt, The University of Leipzig, and The University of Innsbruck (Klein *Current State* 45). Of particular note, this group includes Franz-Joseph Meissner (Giessen University) who first established the didactics of multilingualism as an independent discipline and who is leading the didactic component of all EuroCom projects (Klein *Current State* 36).

EuroCom has expanded their programme to include work on the other major language groups of Europe, namely the Slavic and Germanic languages under the rubrics EuroComSlav and EuroComGerm and is also researching into furthering the language acquisition process, for example, the shift from reading to listening comprehension. Additionally, the *EuroComRom* programme has subsequently been adapted to enable its operation by speakers of most varieties of Romance as well as other languages such as "English [and Greek who] with a basic knowledge of one Romance language, even if it is only school French or Spanish, [are as a result] well on the way to having the key to the whole system" (McCann 5).

#### **Who the programme is intended for**

McCann tells us that speakers of one Romance language are in the enviable position (by using this method) of being able to understand "a great deal of what is written or said in any of the other languages in the group" (5). As a textbook, the printed version of the programme analyzed in this paper "is suitable for use in universities, adult education establishments, and schools" and that "it should be seen as a complement to the vast range of teaching material that is available for each individual language, and which

each learner can use according to his individual needs and tastes" (11). The text may be used for self-study; however, McCann urges that one "should acquire some recorded material to get an impression of the correct pronunciation" (12).

### **Objectives**

The objective of *EuroComRom* is to allow the learner to be able to realize his own linguistic knowledge, employing his innate capacity to detect analogies and the faculty to deduce and guess the meaning of an integrated sentence in a text. In this way, one avoids relearning the things one already knows, often the case with traditional teaching methods (Klein/Rutke). This is accomplished through a series of seven filters using a processed called *Optimized Deduction*: the ability to discover the familiar in the unknown by activating the human ability to transfer previous experience and familiar meanings and structures into new contexts (McCann 9). Through a series of seven filters the ability of *Optimized Deduction* increases in working with texts in the Romance languages. At the same time, knowledge of the particularities of the member of the linguistic family is developed by cognition, that is, those particularities unable to pass through the filters (Klein/Rutke). McCann indicates "our aim when reading these texts is not to be a good translator, but someone who understands clearly" (16).

### **Description of how the programme functions**

The programme uses the *Optimised Deduction* technique, employing the aid of extensive linguistic transfer bases that have come to be known as *The Seven Sieves* as developed by Klein and Stegmann, for example, international and pan-Romance vocabularies, sound correspondences, relationships between orthography and pronunciation, pan-Romance syntactic and morpho-syntactic structures, as well as

prefixes and suffixes. Subsequent to employing the *sieves*, learners develop “a Romance language awareness” as they are provided a language *miniportrait* which covers such things as geographical distribution and number of speakers of the language, origin and historical development, dialectal variation, characteristics, and a *minilex* containing the most common vocabulary, verbs, and word structure (Klein *Current State* 37). The type of text *EuroComRom* has utilized to facilitate the use of the above-mentioned technique is newspaper articles that students traditionally find in their own language. These articles are similar in structure and content, for example, current international events which contain generally known information (McCann 15).

### **Methodology**

One of the ways in which the programme is able to establish an approach students may follow on their journey toward intercomprehension is by suggestions of the way to approach a text in an unknown language. A flow chart of how the aforementioned *modus operandi* of the *Optimised Deduction Technique* should proceed is then provided. On page 16 of the McCann edition of the programme under the heading “The way to read,” the students are prompted to the following:

- 1) to use titles of headings, if understood, to their advantage to ascertain the type of text written about;
- 2) to read the article quickly or its important parts for example, the beginning or end, or reading aloud or have someone, if present who knows the language, do so
- 3) to avoid during the first attempt reading every single word, detaining themselves, concerning themselves with grammatical difficulties, and researching potential difficulties;

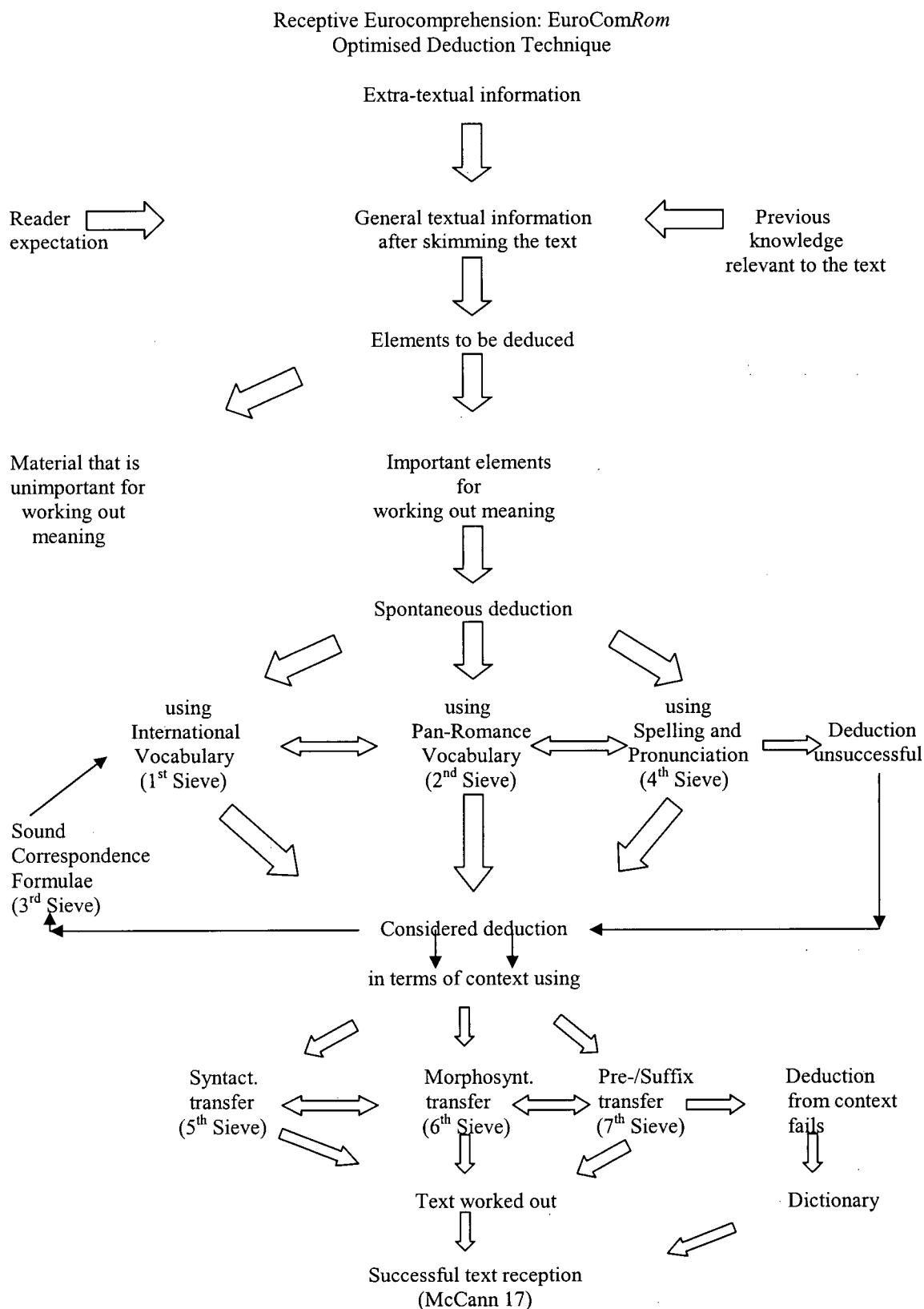


- 4) to then work out the general topic and main idea of the text as well as its scope that is, information, entertainment, persuasion;
- 5) Next all words known are translated;
- 6) During the subsequent stage the students attempt to fill in the gaps searching for the logic of the context and attempting to narrow down the possible content of gaps. Elements that are understood shed light on components yet unknown;
- 7) to reread the text again this time considering overall context enabling further comprehension of the text.

(McCann 16)

The following flow chart illustrates how this process works incorporating the previously-mentioned 7 *Sieves*.

Diagram 11: Optimized Deduction Technique



In the *First Sieve* learners extract words from the *International Vocabulary* [IV] of the text. This vocabulary is present in most modern European languages and derived principally from Latin or Romance. These 5000 or so easily recognisable words in conjunction with internationally known personal, institutional names and geographical concepts, are immediately understood when they are seen, for example, in a newspaper article which is heavily comprised of such entries.

Using the *Second Sieve*, learners sift out words common to a Romance lexis or *Pan-Romance Vocabulary* [PV]. Approximately 500 of these words from Latin are currently in use today. Therefore knowledge of only one Romance language is of great benefit.

In the *Third Sieve* we identify lexical relationships based on *Sound Correspondences* [SC] that demonstrate the phonological changes undergone by the individual Romance languages over the last 1500 years. The programme provides learners with specific formulae reflecting their current associations which may be applied systematically, for example, if Fr. *nuit* corresponds to Sp. *noche* and It. *notte*, then Sp. *leche* and It. *latte* correspond to Fr. *lait* (McCann 10).

The *Fourth Sieve, Spelling and Pronunciation* [SP], concentrates on the few different letters and spelling solutions amongst the Romance languages that can hinder recognition of relationships between words and meaning. These differences are distinguished as well as some of the conventions of pronunciation demonstrated to the learner. McCann tells us that "as a rule the Romance languages are very consistent and 'logical' in the way they reproduce sound in writing. It is really only in the case of palatalised consonants (i.e. with *c*, *g*, *l*, *n* before *e* and *i*) that they have chosen slightly

different solutions for representing the sounds graphically thus *gu* or *gh* for [g] before *e, i* or *ll, gl, lh* for [lj] and *gn, ñ, nh, ny* for [nj]" (89).

The *Fifth Sieve, Pan-Romance Syntactic Structures* or [PS] demonstrates for example, the fact all the Romance languages have only nine basic sentence types (position of article, noun, adjective, verb, conjunction etc.) and that knowledge of this fact and one's own Romance language aids the learner in quickly recognizing similar structures in akin languages. We see this impressive solidarity demonstrated in the following example in Klein and Rutke using only French and Italian to be concise:

P1: NP + V (to be) + NP (Nom)	Yvonne est étudiante. Yvonne è studentessa.
P2: NP + V (to be) + ADJ	Yvonne est sympathique. Yvonne è simpatica.
P3: NP + V + NP (Acc)	Yvonne aime la vie. Yvonne ama la vita.
P4: NP + V	Yvonne dort. Yvonne dorme.
P5: NP + V + PP	Yvonne dort dans le bureau. Yvonne dorme nell'ufficio.
P6: NP + V + NP (Acc) + PP	Yvonne lit un livre dans le bureau. Yvonne legge un libro nell'ufficio.
P7: NP + V + NP (Dat)	Yvonne s'adresse à un collègue. Yvonne si dirige a un collega.
P8: NP + V + NP (Acc) + NP (Dat)	Y. donne l'information à un collègue. Y. da l'informazione a un collega.
P9: NP + V + NP (Dat) + PP	Y. s'adresse à un collègue dans le bureau. Y. si dirige a un collega nell'ufficio.

NP=Nominal Phrase(sub,obj,nom,dat,acc), V=Verb, ADJ=Adjective, PP=Prepositional Phrase

In the *Sixth Sieve, Morpho-syntactic Elements* [ME] are the basic formulae documenting the development of grammatical change in each language for example, recognition of the third personal plural, comparison in each language, the definite article, plural marking in the noun system, masculine/feminine markings of adjectives, regular

adverb formation, combination of preposition and article, verbal endings etc. These clues make the grammatical structure of the text easily recognisable and because of this, they provide students with motivation to make additional discoveries of this nature.

In the *Seventh Sieve*, *Prefixes*, *Suffixes*, or *Eurofixes* [FX], compound words are deciphered by removing their affixes from root words. Memory of a limited number of Greek and Latin affixes helps decipher a great number of words.

In the second phase of the programme, the learner is provided with a *Minipportrait* of each of the six Romance Languages covered, namely, French, Italian, Catalan, Portuguese, Romanian, and Spanish. "These *miniporraits* systematise and expand on the linguistic knowledge gained with the help of the *sieves*" (McCann 11). In this section each language is distinguished from the other and its salient features underlined, for example, pronunciation, spelling and word-structure. This section is then followed by the a *Minilexicon* detailing the 400 most common lexical occurrences including: a mini grammar, numbers, articles, prepositions, most important nouns, adjectives, conjunctions, pronouns, adverbs of place, time, and quantity, as well as the twenty most common verbs and their (regular and irregular) forms. Within the *Minilexicon* of each language there appears a list of the words that show the fundamental elements of the structure of each language (most common words), which make up 50-60% of the vocabulary of a normal text. Not only does this list contain words that can be deduced by implementing the *Seven Sieves* but it also contains "profile words" that exist only in the individual language which cannot be worked out using the method and which therefore must be memorized. McCann tells us that that fortunately there is usually only a dozen or so of these words per language (9-11).

### Theoretical bases of methodologies

The *Optimised Deduction Technique* referred to in *EuroComRom*'s methodologies is simply Carton's definition of Inferencing as defined in Chapter 1 of this study. *EuroComRom* has systematised this definition and proposed and produced a learning methodology as demonstrated in the above flow chart. If we, transfer Carton's tri-partite taxonomy of cues as well as some of his observations on the process of Inferencing to *EuroComRom*'s seven filters or *sieves*, as well as the *Miniportraits* and *Minilexicon* we arrive at the following observations.

In phase 1 of the programme, the seven *sieves* can be categorized as either inter-lingual or intra-lingual cues. *Sieves* 1-4 *International Vocabulary* [IV], *Pan-Romance Vocabulary* [PV], *Sound Correspondences* [SC], and *Spelling and Pronunciation* [SP] are all inter-lingual according to Carton's definition because they make use of "easily recognisable" words common to a Romance lexis, loanwords or cognates (IV and PV), demonstrate the occurrence of regularities of phonological transformations from one language to another (SC), and demonstrate the resultant orthographic conventions (SP) (52).

*Sieves* 5-7: *Pan-Romance Syntactic Structures* [PS], *Morpho-syntactic Elements* [ME], *Prefixes, Suffixes, or Eurofixes* [FX], are entirely intra-lingual by definition. *Sieve* 5 helps demonstrate the "syntactic regularity [among] the language[s]" and "associated word order constraints of the [Romance] language" in question (50). *Sieves* 6 and 7 however, demonstrate the "morphological regularity [among] the language[s]". *Sieve* 6 is more grammatical in scope, for example, in form class recognition that is, a verb in the

third person, than is *Sieve 7* which deals with separating compound words into root word and affix. Carton tells of the benefit of such an endeavour.

In many languages semantic implications may be frequently suggested by derivational affixes and transparent stems functioning in concert.

Knowledge of a group of suffixes such as these can narrow the semantic field in respect to the notions they suggest. Furthermore, when such suffixes appear connected to a stem which the student may have encountered elsewhere, the specific meaning of a novel vocable is completely suggested. (51)

It is not only the 7 *Sieves* portion of the methodology that corresponds to Carton's paper on Inferencing, but also two other elements of the programme that do so, namely, the *Minitportrait*, and *Minilexicon*. In phase 2 of the programme some of the information provided in the *Miniportraits* and *Minilexicon* initially appears to be extra-lingual until absorbed by the student, at which time it becomes intra-lingual by definition. These cues which have their usefulness as describe by Carton in his paper can now be utilized to increase the Inferencing situation. An example of this is the extra-lingual information provided to students about one of languages being studied, such as its geography, dialectical information, most common vocabulary, pronunciation, spelling, word structure, historical development, etc. that can be used by them as intra-lingual cues to draw further conclusions in future dealings in the acquisition of the target language. In addition to what has already been said here regarding extra-lingual cues, we see that in the section of the Methodology of the programme titled "The way to read", there is emphasis placed on using 'real world' knowledge in order to ascertain the type of article

written about and to also work out the general topic and main idea of the text as well as its scope. Successful use of these extra-lingual cues can be taught and enhanced as Carton cites in his paper regarding an experiment aiming to do just this: "After practicing a few examples, a number of the pupils spontaneously noted that the more experience and knowledge one had, the more competent one was likely to be at inferencing; that the more one knew, the more was likely to learn" (55).

### **Empirical data and attainment of proposed objectives**

In Meissner et al. we see that recent experiences with Germanophone students (2004) have proven the *EuroComRom* method successful. He tells us that the experiences are numerous and they pertain to three learning contexts; the first is with university students in Romance philology as well as other varied disciplines; the second in "universités populaires", and the third with secondary students. He tells us that: "dans les universités de Francfort/M. et de Giessen, plusieurs séminaires ont prouvé que les étudiants (germanophones) en langues romanes progressent assez vite dans la construction d'une compétence de lecture dans les langues romanes" (50). However, all the Romance languages are not intercomprehensible to the same degree. For example, whereas these students understood rather easily Italian using French as a bridge language, Portuguese was not as intercomprehensible when students didn't know for example the rule of omission regarding intervocalic consonants and the locative contraction plus article (*em + aquela*) = *naquela*. Meissner tells of another experiment in which the objective was to make bilingual Germano-French students, ages 14 and 15, capable of reading Spanish and Italian texts. "Les résultats dépassant de loin les attentes car la plupart des participants ont atteint le niveau B2 du CeR (Le Cadre européen commun



*pour les langues*). L'enseignement « normal » a besoin de deux ans années scolaires pour y arriver (52). Meissner adds that next to the high degree of partial competence reached in such a short time, the experiences of Frankfurt “ont confirmé l'hypothèse que l'enseignement du plurilinguisme provoque un fort “éveil aux langues e à leur apprentissage” and that it is “cette conscientisation [qui] doit être regardée comme le résultat le plus précieux du projet parce qu'elle augmente de manière significative la qualité de l'apprentissage des LV en général et l'automatisation des apprenants” (52).

## Chapter V

### **Semiotic/Structural analysis of Inferencing**

The objective of the final chapter in this study is to analyse the theoretical bases of the methodologies used in all three programmes in light of Carton's paper on Inferencing. By means of a semiotic analysis, my intention is to examine the notion of Inferencing as a component in the theoretical bases of the methodologies used in *EuRom4*, *Galatea*, and *EuroComRom* and to identify as many structuralist presuppositions as possible underlying the theories that lead to the methodologies, describe them, and comment on their gains and or shortcomings. We are attempting to ascertain to what extent each programme makes use of the process and the notions surrounding the process as discussed in Carton's paper, and to attempt an evaluation of their successes or failure in doing so. For all intents and purposes this analysis is a study of a novel type of pedagogy.

The reason for the using this type of approach will be evident in the forthcoming analysis but briefly, in doing so, we are able to contextualize the system in operation that permits the ability to use Inferencing as a process in the intercomprehension of the Romance languages.

In using a semiotic approach to analyze the aforementioned theoretical bases the first order of business is to delimit the boundaries of the system we are analyzing. We can refer to this system as *the ability to use Inferencing in multiple Romance language acquisition*. According to Benveniste a system is characterized by 1) its mode of operation (how the sign is perceived), 2) its context of validity, 3) the nature and number of its signs, and 4) the way the signs relate to each other within a given system. Our

system: 1) operates visually through reading, 2) in the context of learning a foreign language, 3) Carton's tripartite taxonomy of cues (intra, inter, and extra-lingual) differentiated by type, and 4) types of cues may be identified individually or mutually and/or function individually or jointly to accomplish/facilitate the process of Inferencing. The use of Inferencing necessarily opposes a diachronic view of language. Hence we expose the binary opposition of synchrony/diachrony. The process of Inferencing and the taxonomy established in Carton's paper, and indeed the methodologies of the programmes studied in this analysis all pertain to the branch of linguistics Saussure labels as synchronic. If synchrony has only one perspective-that of language users-and its whole method consists of collecting evidence from them, then this analysis must consequently ignore a diachronic perspective by virtue of the difference between the two disciplines. "One is a relationship between simultaneous elements, and the other a substitution of one element for another in time, that is to say an event" (Saussure 89-90). Our focus is therefore concerned with the acquisition of language in its current state and not its development over time. This structuralist presupposition seems implicit, if not logical, as does the following posited by Garcia regarding the environment in which Inferencing is to occur. Here we observe the dyad of too much information versus not enough information if Inferencing is to occur. In Inferencing, "that understanding messages consists, typically, of jumping to a conclusion, will hardly be disputed. But from this fact there follows an important consequence in terms of the amount of information that will facilitate the jump". It is not surprising that too little information will hamper communication as a "variety of messages will be compatible with a minimum of meaning and the hearer[reader] is likely to 'jump' in the wrong direction".

However too much information will also hamper Inferencing, especially if presented all at once. Too much semantic matter compressed into too narrow temporal confines produces 'inferential indigestion', too much to be processed, thus preventing the hearer/reader from leaping to accustomed conclusions (43).

In addition to the appropriate information equilibrium required in order for Inferencing to occur, it is obvious is the fact that the message must be coherent. "It should be apparent that the first task of inference is to reject incoherence" (Garcia 48). The codes which underlie the ability to use Inferencing in successful multiple Romance language acquisition are similar to the codes which govern a spoken sentence in any natural language which is produced from a set of syntactic, semantic, and phonological rules. This ability must ultimately adhere to the same rules. Chandler tells us that "signs within texts can be seen as embodying cues to the codes which are appropriate for interpreting them" and that "with familiar codes we are rarely conscious of our acts of interpretation" such as is the case in our daily use of language. These codes are relegated to a commonsensical type of status in natural language as well as in the present study.

The structuralist view of language is that language is a system of structurally related elements for the transmission of meaning. These components are usually described as phonological, grammatical, lexical, morphological, and syntactical. The target of traditional language learning, in the structural view, is the mastery of elements in this system. The ability to use Inferencing in successful multiple Romance language acquisition is therefore attendant upon the mastery of similar elements. The chief difference, of course, is the means by which the mastery of these elements is achieved in language learning. The notion of Inferencing is predicated on relationships, so what

Saussure calls 'associative' in his *Course in General Linguistics* we call here paradigmatic, the term preferred by Jakobson. Jakobson, who built upon the Saussurean doctrine of the paradigmatic and syntagmatic axes of language, argued that the operations of selection and combination should be understood in terms of the rhetorical categories of metaphor and metonymy. It is his belief that language loss and language acquisition, which mirror each other, are thus related to the subject's ability to manage selection and combination, or similarity and contiguity (Makaryk 376). This same ability, although not specifically identified with a view toward a pedagogy involving Inferencing, is nonetheless present in the methods analyzed in this paper.

We now turn to our analysis of the cues presented in Carton's paper in light of Saussure's view regarding syntagmatic and associative or paradigmatic relations. Considering Saussure's definition of these two relations, one notices almost immediately how the description of the paradigmatic seems to lend itself to the ability to use Inferencing in learning a foreign language. Although both syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations correspond to two different forms of mental activity and are indispensable to the working of a language, it is the notion of familiarity or commonality that underlies both the paradigmatic relations and Inferencing as used in learning a foreign language.

The syntagmatic relations, which are based upon the linearity of a language and sequentially, are words strung together one after another in which units acquire their values in simple opposition to what precedes or follows them or both. However, Saussure indicates that "outside the context of discourse, words having something in common are associated together in the memory" and "in this way they form groups, the members of which may be related in various ways" (Saussure 121). It is precisely this

commonality that acts as a mnemonic device in the process of Inferencing. To reiterate, Inferencing exploits elements and situations that are familiar to recognize what is not familiar. Saussure provides several examples to demonstrate this idea, as we do here however, though employing Carton's cues in the context of the ability to use Inferencing in the multiple language acquisition of the Romance languages. To any native speaker of a Romance language, the meaning of the following example can be easily inferred.

**P** A mafia chinesa é a mais secreta e a mais misteriosa do mundo

**E** La mafia china es la más secreta y la más misteriosa del mundo

**I** La mafia cinese è la più segreta e la più misteriosa del mondo

**F** La mafia chinoise est la plus secrète et la plus mystérieuse du monde

This example essentially demonstrates most of the elements of the definition by Carton of intra-lingual cues. The vocabulary in all four sentences is common to all four languages. The grammatical units, even if not known, that is *é, es, è, est* can be easily inferred. One needs only to hypothesize that *a mafia chinesa* is the subject and the verb is *é*.

One might wonder if the intra-lingual cues demonstrate qualities of syntagmatic relations that obtain their value through opposition to other units in the same linear sequence. However, although both types of relations may be "indispensable to the working of a language" and that in the above example we observe the canonical syntagmatic structures of S.V.O., these structures in inferencing, rather than being regarded in serial relation, are regarded as "snapshots" and paradigmatic as they are denotative of similar structures that can replace one another, as is characteristic of these types of relations.

Another type of intra-lingual cue supplied by the target language is the following in which the verb is understood by its complement.

**P** A violência racista ultrapassou na Alemanha os limites

**E** La violencia racista ha superado en Alemania los límites

**I** La violenza razzista ha superato in Germania il limite

**F** La violence raciste a franchi en Allemagne les limites

The complement *il limite* helps the pupil infer that the verb implies *has exceeded* or *ha superado* (Blanche-Benveniste et al. *EuRom4* 32).

An example of inter-lingual cues based on loan words/cognates between languages is the following rather simplistic one:

**P** Gostaria de um prato de spaghetti com molho de tomate e uma pizza italiana

**E** Quisiera un plato de spaghetti con salsa de tomate e una pizza italiana.

**I** Vorrei un piatto di spaghetti al pomodoro e una pizza italiana

**F** Je voudrais une assiette de spaghetti à la tomate et une pizza italienne

Although there may be considerable variations in the pronunciation of some of the inter-lingual cues; for example, the Spanish pronunciation of spaghetti [*espaguéti*], these two words, *spaghetti* and *pizza* can both be found in all the languages mentioned above. This example, as is often the case when we identify one type of cue as mentioned in Carton's paper, demonstrates the use of several types of cues working in tandem. More precisely, the above example demonstrates how we can use not only inter-lingual cues, but also intra-lingual cues. This is revealed by the syntactic regularity of the four sentences, as well as the extra-lingual cues in that, from our knowledge of the "real world", we can infer that the sentences deal with nourishment as *spaghetti* with *tomato*

(sauce) and *Italian pizza* are cited. Even as English speakers we infer that this sentence has to do with food not solely because the same four lexical examples are present in our own language, but because we see cues in the above examples such as the entries preceding the word *spaghetti* namely *de, de, di, and de* and *prato, plato, piatto, assiette*. Based on historical relations between English and French and the many Gallicisms in English this *de* is present in many English adages and its meaning is not difficult to infer for example, *de rigueur, de trop, pièce de résistance*, connoting 'of, or having to do with'. In addition, it is usual to serve *spaghetti* on a *plate* bringing us back once again to the many associative cognitive processes Saussure refers to and one of the regularities in the objective world Carton defines extra-lingual cues with.

An example of extra-lingual or contextual cues which demonstrates that some knowledge of the "real world" aids at inferring meaning are the following from a newspaper article (as seen previously in Chapter 2):

**P** um avião de turismo despenhou-se ontem de manhã na periferia de Estocolmo

**E** un avión de turismo se estrelló ayer por la mañana en la periferia de Estocolmo

**I** un aereo da turismo si è schiantato ieri mattina alla periferia di Stoccolma

**F** un avion de tourisme s'est écrasé hier matin à la périphérie de Stockholm

Newspapers frequently report that an airplane full of tourists has undergone some sort of misfortune. The verb will be translated with a catastrophic equivalent in the remaining languages. In another article that speaks of an archaeological discovery (also taken from Chapter 2) the verb *risale* is unknown, but the context, with a temporal complement, imposes but one interpretation:



**P** a construção remonta a 1.000 anos

**E** la construcción se remonta a 1.000 años

**I** la costruzione risale a 1.000 anni

**F** la construction remonte à 1.000 ans

(Blanche-Benveniste et al., *EuRom4* 31-33)

Throughout his paper Carton establishes a number of oppositions many of which he goes on to clarify and place within the system of the process of using and learning language. Some are explicit while others, coincidentally, must be inferred. The most obvious and perhaps significant opposition he establishes is language pedagogy using Inferencing versus language pedagogy using traditional means. He ostensibly opts for the former thus establishing the system which he goes on to validate in the body of his paper. Under this primary opposition he designates numerous sub-oppositions which again, make explicit that which is happening beneath the surface of his paper, and how that affects the surface details connected to it.

A few such oppositions are:

<b>Inferencing language pedagogy</b>	<b>Traditional language pedagogy</b>
-natural context	unnatural context
-some knowledge of target language	no knowledge of target language
-necessary historical relation/contact	no necessary historical relation/contact
-knowledge of 'real world' necessary	no necessary knowledge of 'real world'
-uses perception of probabilistically contingent relations	uses mimicry and memory
-emphasis on process of acquisition	emphasis on monitored memorization

-responsibility of student	responsibility of system
-domain of complex intellectual processes	domain of mere skills
-breadth of student knowledge/experience	breadth of student knowledge/experience
necessary	not necessary

The meaning in the use of the cues he establishes is to rule out, to eliminate.

Garcia tells us that “given the operation of inference, the negative contribution of a sign (what it rules out) is much more certain than its positive contribution (what it can be said to assert directly)” (48). Therefore, in the above example concerning *spaghetti* and *pizza*, the preposition *de, de, de, di*, connoting ‘of, or having to do with’ rules out another preposition such as *para, para, per, pour* ‘for’ if in this case for no other reason that on the basis that these two food items are requested together. Through our knowledge of the ‘real world’ it is safe to infer that one would not necessarily order a spaghetti *dish* that is, a dish literally made for spaghetti and *e, (y) e, e, et uma, una, una, une pizza italiana, italiana, italiana, italienne*.

Carton proposes that a more holistic approach to language pedagogy is needed. Holistic as he sees it in the sense that a range of approaches from various disciplines such as psycholinguistics be integrated into pedagogical theory. Within his main argument lies the structuralist presupposition Jakobson posited decades earlier regarding the subject’s ability to manage selection and combination which displays characteristics of paradigmatic relations when he states:

It is argued here that it is precisely the perception of probabilistically contingent relations (both in language and in respect to the ‘content’ of messages) that enhances and provides possibilities for the *selection of*

*appropriate linguistic units in production* and the correct interpretation of these units in comprehension. (57)

By successfully adapting and incorporating in a significant way into their methodologies the process of Inferencing as defined in his tripartite taxonomy, *EuRom4*, *Galatea*, and *EuroComRom*, each to a varying degree, have validated the *raison d'être* of Carton's paper.

It would seem appropriate at this juncture to briefly mention once again that the process of Inferencing is not a self-sufficient means to learning a language in its entirety and also that it is not without shortcomings. From the beginning and indeed throughout this study we have indicated that the three programmes intend to impart *passive* multiple language acquisition largely achieved through the process of Inferencing. However, this achieves but one of the four areas mentioned at the beginning of this analysis. Aural, written, and oral capabilities may be enhanced by a programme on Inferencing, however there is little data yet available to show any direct correlation of the process of Inferencing on these abilities. In addition, the three programmes each state that their individual approaches intend in no way to replace traditional pedagogical methodologies. In fact, each expresses itself as a complement to such traditional pedagogical endeavours.

If asked: what is the purpose of teaching language? Carton's response and methodology would include a pragmatic and communicative component. His taxonomy of cues has provided a good foundation for the subsequent development of a pedagogy based on Inferencing as demonstrated in the methodologies analyzed in this paper. More important than the types of cues however, is the fact that cues exist and how they function within the above-mentioned system. These kinds of cues validate the ability to

use Inferencing in multiple Romance language acquisition because without these signs there would be nothing to hold such a system of Inferencing together.

### **Similarities/differences among programmes**

Having analysed Inferencing as a system, we now focus our attention on a comparative analysis of the three programmes studied. It goes without saying that because these programmes have as a common point of departure the same theoretical bases, they inevitably share many commonalities. However, the programmes differ in the degree or extent to which they implement some of these theoretical bases into their methodologies. We first mention some of the major similarities amongst the three programmes, paying attention to their underlying theories and methodologies and then do the same regarding the programmes' differences.

#### **Similarities**

First and foremost, as may be obvious, these programmes are aimed at students who have already mastered a language, be it L1 or L2 that is, "students who can already both think and use language" (Carton 58). The three programmes employ the process of Inferencing (whether it is called Inferencing, transparent zones, optimized deduction, etc.) as extensively discussed in the present study and could otherwise not function and therefore exist if it were not for this reality. Each programme sees the "processing of language as one of the many forms of thought that allows for the possibility that language processing and other forms of thinking...occur concurrently" (Carton 58). All three programmes have metacognitive nuances to them in that students are encouraged to think about and consider the learning taking place for example, in *Galatea* under the rubric "Un lecteur, des texts, des lectures" where students lay out the bases for the self-regulated

development of receptive aptitudes. Each programme attempts to impart written comprehension by the translation of articles whose content is of common knowledge.

Another important aspect that the three programmes share, which Carton recommends in his study, is that language teaching “devote at least some pedagogic energies to enhance the flexibility of students and their abilities to correct themselves” (54). All three programmes also:

- 1) use the idea of successive attempts at translation especially when encountering words whose meaning is initially not understood in the hopes that students become not good translators, but achieve a global comprehension of the text.
- 2) make use of the all the types of cues to varying degrees as discussed by Carton in his paper.
- 3) suggest passing over words or leaving gaps when specific entries are not understood, tolerating doubtfulness and temporary inaccuracies “representing a sharp departure from those views of language study which put exclusive emphasis on mimicry and memory” (Carton 56).
- 4) recommend using titles and subtitles when embarking upon the translation of articles in order to activate our existing knowledge of the subject matter.
- 5) believe that providing recordings to students of the texts is essential to aid in global comprehension.
- 6) can be studied autonomously although the aid of a language monitor or facilitator is encouraged.
- 6) see themselves “as a necessary complement to the language teaching provided in [traditional settings]” and intend “to make language learning much easier” (McCann 7).

### Differences

Unlike *Galatea's romanophonie* and *EuroComRom's miniportrait*, *EuRom4* does not require the student to be initiated into the culture or history of the distinct countries, something, as already mentioned, that Carton recommends in his study (55). The *Galatea* multimedia interactive CD-Rom is the only programme studied here that requires users to answer questions to test comprehension of texts. This should be regarded as an advantage as it stimulates deeper cognitive processes. It is also the only medium in this study that uses Macromedia Flash, - a multimedia application that renders cartoon-like images dynamic in real time- thus rendering it much more interactive than *EuRom4* and *EuroComRom*, which both have available recordings of the treated texts in the original target language. Also, *Galatea* offers the possibility of undertaking target languages individually, whereas *EuRom4* and *EuroComRom* intend to teach their target languages simultaneously. *EuroComRom* is the only programme studied in this analysis that demonstrates the differences among the individual languages as part of its teaching strategy rather than as a reference tool. That is, in the first phase of the programme one must understand each *sieve* in order to proceed to the next.

### Evaluation of their effectiveness and shortcomings

As mentioned above, without the process of Inferencing and the cues as defined by Carton in his paper, the three programmes analyzed in this study would not exist. Quantifying the success with which the individual programmes make use of the process is difficult because ultimately it is the learner who must detect and utilize these cues. In this respect all three programmes have been successful, as discussed in the attainment of the proposed objectives; *EuroComRom* evidencing the most quantitative data to this

effect. The types of cues employed ultimately show themselves in the methodologies of the individual programmes via the texts to be translated within the individual programmes.

Each programme is not devoid of difficulties. For example, *EuRom4* has numerous errors throughout the programme. These include spelling, translation, as well as software problems that make navigation into other areas such as the reference grammar cumbersome at times. Students must rely predominantly upon intra and extra-lingual cues as inter-lingual cues, rather than cognates, showing the occurrences of regularities of phonological transformations, which must be accessed separately either by reference to the end of the paper version, or by clicking upon hypertext. The programme has also been criticized: "from the point of view of teaching methodology, the work hardly achieves more than a schematic method for translating grammar (despite the use of computer soft-ware and texts for listening comprehension)" (Klein *Current State* 36-37). Despite this criticism, response to the outcome of the methodology from students often remains favourable as in the following extensive summary of a recent course offering of the programme at the University of British Columbia in April, 2006: (note: no changes have been made to the entry).

Antes de empezar EuRom4, nunca había tratado de leer en portugués ni en italiano, entonces no sabía verdaderamente que esperar. Lo que me sorprendió más era cómo, gracias a mis conocimientos del español y francés, ya poseía casi todas las herramientas necesarias (casi a un nivel instintivo) para aprender las dos otras lenguas. Era capaz casi instintivamente de reconocer los tiempos verbales por sus semejanzas con

lo que ya había visto en español y francés. Me fascinaba cada vez más como podía entender dos lenguas totalmente nuevas. Aunque me siento muy cómoda con la lectura de textos italianos y portugueses, el sistema EuRom4 no es una substitución completa para los métodos tradicionales de aprender nuevas lenguas. No sería capaz de expresarme espontáneamente o escribir un texto propio, ni mantener una conversación. Pero si decido de continuar mis estudios de estas dos lenguas, lo que he aprendido con EuRom4 será un excelente comienzo, me faltan un estudio más profundo de la gramática propia de cada lengua y sobre todo una inmersión en la lengua hablada para añadir dos lenguas mas a mi colección de las lenguas que hablo.

This citation summarizes what researches of the programme initially intended which was to initiate a “language awakening” within learners.

In *Les options didactiques des cédéroms Galatea*, Degache indicates some of the weaknesses of the programme:

- 1) Navigation of the programme is sometimes complex.
- 2) Available information is a little bit scattered and because of the open nature of the work on texts, a learner may pass by important elements.
- 3) There is some inconsistency regarding the contents of the help or aid available to students between soliciting meaning and that information which is actually provided. (253)

Despite these shortcomings and empirical data wanting, the programme, in development for the last 16 years, manages to achieve “valuable results for the study of



intercomprehension in the Romance languages” (Klein *Current State* 37). In fact, *Galatea* arguably contains the greatest portion of metacognitive strategies; the most easily accessible and diverse sound recordings of target languages and is the most interesting visually due to its use of Flash Media. Additionally there is a component of the programme that encourages and reassures students that what they are undertaking is nothing new and in fact, they have been exposed to the types of entries they will encounter in the programme already. This serves to reassure students and encourage them, as does achieving correct answers in the detailed comprehension question section of the programme.

The *EuroComRom* programme in its book format also contains some shortcoming as Klein indicates:

The book is only moderately suitable as a medium for the presentation of the morpho-syntactical structures and sound correspondences in the reference work. Only a multimedia presentation with the according Flash-animations can make the essence of these formulas optimally available for the creation of a mental grammar. This media didactical adaptation should enable us to create formulas that document graphic or morphological deviations. An animated media-didactic presentation has to be found, a presentations that makes it possible to provide the learner with and easy to remember overview of graphematic similarities and deviations. (Meissner *Current State* 39)

Added to this, the lack of sound, colour, and animation make it potentially less interesting from the students’ point of view. However, *EuroComRom* addresses several

questions not mentioned by the other programmes in this study. In the pages leading up to the exercises in the text, there is an introduction section of approximately 17 pages which addresses potential issues or concerns learners may have as well as an explanation of certain programme fundamentals. Among others in the introduction we encounter:

-*Barriers to multilingual competence* (psychological and motivational) (McCann 7).

-*No foreign language is totally unknown territory.*

-*Optimised Deduction* (explained and illustrated).

-*The 7 Sieves* (explained in detail).

-*I already know a lot.*

-*Language learning and motivation.*

-*The Five Fears* (of learning languages) such as: *I am too old: you can only learn languages as a child; I'm no good at languages; I'll get confused if I learn another similar language. I'm afraid of mixing them up; If I learn a new language, I won't be able to speak my other foreign language(s) any more; and I'm not confident enough to speak a language if I can't do it correctly.*

-*Its easy to get started*

-*Practical results from the very beginning.*

Addressing these issues “boosts confidence and provides motivation” even before the exercises have begun (McCann 13).

### **Suggestion on different approaches/combinations**

All three of the programmes have incorporated numerous aspects of Inferencing as discussed in Carton's paper “eventuat[ing] in a family of pedagogic procedures for nurturing the process and enhancing the skill that students might exhibit in applying it”

(Carton 57). Given the fact that the objective of all three programmes analyzed in this study is identical, that is, to achieve passive receptive comprehension of written articles in the Romance languages, and that each has achieved this objective with some success, it is our belief that a blending of only those programme aspects thus far seen be undertaken in order to achieve certain success and perhaps a more proficient methodology.

### **What is missing and what remains to be done?**

As has been mentioned throughout this entire study, the programmes treated in this investigation have only attempted to impart passive multiple language acquisition of Romance language written texts relying predominantly on the process of Inferencing as discussed by Carton in his treatise on the subject. Once more, this could scarcely be called language learning in a traditional sense which includes aural recognition and the active competencies of written and oral production. How does the process of Inferencing affect these areas? Does it at all? After the present study it does seem logical to conclude that the process does affect these areas to a certain degree. Researches of the programmes analysed in this study have begun working on some of these other competencies, specifically, passive aural comprehension of the Romance language. Little data is yet available. Additionally, researchers of the various programmes have realized that once students have completed the programmes studied above, they need to be able to practice in order solidify and enhance their knowledge and make the transition from, at the very least, passive comprehension of the written word to productive abilities in the form of writing skills. The internet is an invaluable tool in this area.

Researchers of *Galatea* have created *Galanet*. *Galanet* is an on-line forum at [www.galanet.be](http://www.galanet.be) where students of the programme, or any one of the programmes studied

here, may begin to practice and develop the intercomprehension of the Romance languages they have embarked upon. *EuroComRom* will also be providing on-line courses with a similar scope. As mentioned previously the EuroCom Group also does work on the other major language groups of Europe under the names *EuroComGerm* and *EuroComSlav*. These programmes use the same principles as *EuroComRom* to achieve similar objectives. A new addition of *EuRom4* is also currently underway.

Finally, research is needed to show if a process such as Inferencing can be ultimately used to impart active multiple Romance language (as well as Germanic, Slavic) oral productive abilities. Perhaps in due course technology will also aid in this area by the establishment of virtual forums where learners can practice such abilities from around the world in real time. One thing is certain; a new and stimulating type of language pedagogy is well on its way.

## Conclusion

### **What does the future hold for intercomprehension?**

As Carton stated in the introduction to his study that his paper was exploratory in the context of continuing research, so too should the programmes analysed in this thesis. The programmes offer very exciting prospects for language learning, but they are incomplete. In their current state they can be used in conjunction with traditional language learning techniques to supplement the learning process if proficiency in the four areas of language acquisition, aural and written comprehension as well as oral and written production is to be achieved. On their own, they offer only a glimpse of the languages. Researchers of all the programmes studied in this paper hope that this glimpse is sufficient to whet the appetite of the learner to further explore the target languages. This philosophy of the programmes cannot be overstated. Researchers of the programmes realize that learners are more motivated to further their studies as more positive results are achieved. These positive results are achieved by the connections made through the use of Inferencing. Meissner tells us:

It becomes clear that multilingual processing and the comparison of languages, results in the development of language awareness and language learning awareness. So it can be said that multilingual learner experience generates a systematical knowledge covering lingual correspondence and didactical transfer rules. At the same time, it contains foundations for the meta-cognitive learn- and acquisition control. Here, language and learning awareness arise (advantageous). This concerns in particular learning strategies, learning techniques and autonomous learning. From

the point of view of multilingual didactics, the 'one target language didactics' are way off the mark in their theories and methodological practices. This can be seen in the way they only look toward the 'yet to be developed' target language competence for each individual language without at all addressing the question of the safeguarding and cultivation of previously learned languages; let alone consider it seriously. (*Transfer in Didactics of Multilingualism* 5)

My reasoning in undertaking this analysis was to gain a greater understanding of precisely what has led to methodologies of the three programmes and to determine if they are pedagogically effective. Both objectives have been accomplished. It is however the second objective that will be the impetus for further study. While all three programmes are effective teaching instruments, they are so in a limited scope. There is a need to continue research to advance the language learning experience by means of Inferencing. Whether the use of Inferencing is a passing trend or a viable means to complete language acquisition for wide-spread implementation depends on this research and remains to be seen. However, given the fact that there is motivation to achieve a certain level of multilingualism in a Europe concerned with cultural preservation and with English becoming the *lingua franca*, the economy of effort involved in learning several languages at once and the promising results of the first step of this teaching approach make likely that there will be a change in the status quo of traditional language pedagogy.

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