

A. SUMMARY OF THE HABILITATION THESIS

The habilitation thesis entitled *Language Acquisition and Intercultural Communication* consists of two main parts: the first part (B-i) comprises my scientific achievements in the two research domains that are of interest to me, namely *child language acquisition* (Chapter 1) and *intercultural communication* (Chapter 2). Here I also offer an outline of my teaching-related work and other academic activities. The second part (B-ii) covers the plans for my main future research areas and academic career.

The first section of Chapter 1 is a brief presentation of my doctoral thesis entitled *Relating Events in Narrative: A Case Study of Romanian*, a pioneering work in the field of Romanian child language acquisition, aimed at showing the way in which Romanian-speaking children of different ages manage to construct a narrative on the basis of a wordless picture book (M. Mayer, 1969: *Frog, where are you?*). Creating a narrative presupposes the acquisition and mastery of the verbal categories of *tense* and *aspect*, as well as the ability to link clauses into a cohesive discourse by means of *connectors*. This doctoral thesis came to fill a gap in the field of Romanian linguistics at the beginning of the 21st century and, at the same time, to contribute with Romanian data to cross-linguistic studies in the field of child language acquisition.

After getting my PhD degree, my research activity focussed mainly on the acquisition of Romanian. Thus, section 2 of chapter 1 presents my contributions to this domain, starting with the acquisition of phonology, moving on to the acquisition of vocabulary and various aspects of grammar, and finishing with the development of the narrative skills of the Romanian-speaking children. If the acquisition of Romanian syntax is extensively covered by colleague linguists from Bucharest University, there has been extremely little research concerning the acquisition of phonetics and phonology (the only scholars to investigate this field being Professor Andrei Avram and, more recently, his son, Professor Andrei A. Avram). This gave me the chance to discover whether Romanian children follow the same stages and are confronted with the same problems in acquiring the sounds of their mother tongue like the majority of children learning other languages, such as English, French, Hebrew, Turkish, etc. With respect to the acquisition of vocabulary, of interest for me was the way in which the prototype theory (introduced by Eleanor Rosch in 1973) can explain the errors produced by the Romanian children in using certain words (such as *noapte* ‘night’ in lieu of *întuneric* ‘darkness’). As far as the narrative skills are concerned, I have continued and extended the research carried out in my doctoral paper by investigating the manner in which young

Romanian speakers introduce a referent, maintain reference or switch it throughout the narrative/story. At the same time, of interest was also the way events are conflated. My research findings were disseminated at various national and international workshops and conferences; most of my articles have been updated and gathered in a volume entitled *The Acquisition of Romanian*, which was published by *Transilvania University Publishing House* in 2017. Also worth mentioning is that some of these articles appear in various data bases.

Chapter 2 contains the research articles I have authored or co-authored in the field of *intercultural communication*, a domain I came to embrace after starting teaching a course on *Cultural Differences in Nonverbal Communication* in 2004 to the master students. Until 2010, I did not feel I had enough expertise to pursue research in this field. I started being more interested when the phenomenon of globalization became increasingly obvious bringing about lots of intercultural encounters. Insight into the cultural differences among peoples can be obtained by approaching culture from various perspectives, using as analysis data literature, music, movies or from personal intercultural experiences. Thus, in some of my papers I investigated cultural differences in terms of nonverbal communication, by comparing the English, Persian, and Indian cultures, bringing to light similarities, but more importantly differences between them, as the latter can cause embarrassment, feelings of frustrations or could lead to stereotyping in intercultural encounters. In other papers, I have approached cultural differences from the vantage point of the 6 cultural dimensions put forward by Hofstede (1980) and Hofstede *et al.* (2010): power distance, individualism vs collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint. At the same time, I also extended the range of investigation to South Korea, a country whose culture is less known by Romanians.

Chapter 3 is a presentation of my teaching activity, which is an extremely important part of any university teacher's life. The Erasmus exchange programs enabled me to improve my teaching activity by observing what foreign professors do in class to motivate their students. At the same time, I also had the chance of identifying new topics or trends and methods in the subjects I teach, and I have updated my course materials accordingly. Moreover, I also try to adapt the courses I teach to the demands of the work market.

The second section of this chapter pinpoints other academic activities, such as organizing the international linguistics conference *Structure, Use, and Meaning*, which reached its fourth edition in 2018, editing the volume of proceedings of this conference, and research dissemination and recognition.

Part two (B-ii) of the habilitation thesis is devoted to my plans for the professional, scientific, and academic activities. With respect to the teaching-related activity, I will continue to upgrade my courses and to adapt them to the newest trends in the domain and, at the same time, I intend to propose new courses. I will also try to diversify and improve my teaching methods, in agreement with my students' needs. Maintaining a good relationship with my students and helping them in both their academic and research activities is another objective of mine. Last but not least, I intend to continue my cooperation with colleagues from other native and foreign universities with the aim of establishing a professional community.

As for the research-related activities, they will be continued in the domains I am currently investigating, my intention being to extend the range of topics of research, to approach the domains in an interdisciplinary manner, as well as to motivate young researchers to collaborate with me and then to do research on their own. Moreover, I intend to pursue research in a new field, namely bilingual acquisition, which has been underinvestigated in our country. The multi-ethnic character of the Romanian population and also the large waves of migrants invading Europe may provide interesting research data in this respect.

My short-term aim is to improve an older research project on the acquisition of Romanian phonology and to submit it in a grant competition, but also to participate as a member in research projects initiated by other researchers. And because the study of phonetics and phonology is very dear to me, my long-term objective is to publish a short book on the phonological models that have emerged in time.

The last part of the thesis (B-iii) contains a selection of the sources cited in the first two parts (B-i and B-ii).