From Italian to Russian with the Superpower of Intercomprehension
Inference in Graphical Decoding Across Different Alphabets

Anna Ilina
Universidad Complutense de Madrid, España

Abstract   Intercomprehension is the ability to understand a language that is related to an already familiar one. It is based on the activation of previous knowledge and cognitive strategies, such as inference. In this article, we claim that intercomprehensive reasoning can also be applied across European linguistic families. We argue that by creating didactic materials based on the fundamentals of the intercomprehensive approach, it is possible to leverage the students' natural ability for intercomprehension when approaching a completely unfamiliar language of Europe. In particular, we study if inference can be applied to graphical decoding of familiar and authentic words in an unfamiliar European language with a different alphabet. A small-scale empirical study conducted in Rome with Italian speakers shows that they were able to autonomously decipher the Russian alphabet through a specifically created task.

Keywords   Intercomprehension. Plurilingualism. Multilingualism. Inference. Graphical Decoding.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 1.1 Motivation for the Study. – 1.2 Definition of Intercomprehension. – 1.3 Previous Research in the Field of Cross-Border Intercomprehension. – 2 Theoretical Bases. – 2.1 The Underlying Principles of Intercomprehension and Its Value for SLA. – 2.2 The Challenge of the Cyrillic Alphabet and Inference in Graphical Decoding. – 3 Pilot Study. – 3.1 Hypothesis. – 3.2 Methodology. – 3.3 Study Participants. – 4 Pilot Study Results. – 4.1 Hypothesis Testing. – 4.2 Questionnaire Data Analysis. – 4.3 Additional Results not Expected at the Phase of Research Design. – 5 Discussion and Conclusion.

1 Introduction

1.1 Motivation for the Study

This study stems from a research question that arises from the personal experience of the author as a teacher of Russian to Italian speakers and a researcher focused on Romance intercomprehension. She had participated in an empirical study in Romance intercomprehension as a student, investigated it in her PhD and currently, teaches Romance intercomprehension at university level and Russian privately. Thanks to this experience, an empirical comparison between the 'traditional' isolated methods of language teaching and simultaneous intercomprehension becomes possible. It is a comparison in which intercomprehension has a lot of advantages.

Teachers of Russian frequently face the problem of their students perceiving Russian as a distant and difficult language, with the alphabet being the very first and serious psychological obstacle. It motivated us to ponder the possibility of creating materials that would draw on the learners' previous knowledge and show them that they can deal with this obstacle autonomously and overcome it by doing. Leaning by doing, learners' autonomy and drawing on the previous knowledge are also among the principles of the pluralistic approaches to languages learning (Candelier et al. 2012), with intercomprehension being one of them. This is the reason why we questioned if it is possible to leverage the intercomprehensive reasoning – mainly all kinds of inferences – to introduce to speakers of a European language (Italian) another European language but from a different linguistic family (Russian).

This paper argues that by creating adequate materials, even if not authentic, for the speakers of Romance languages it is possible to activate their intercomprehensive reasoning skills when dealing with Slavic languages. It should be easier if the IC skills have already been acquired after a full-scale training in intercomprehension within the mother tongue linguistic family. However, it should still be possible without previous training thanks to the brain's natural thirst for meaning making (Ausubel, Novak, Hanesian 1983; Rivas Navarro 2008; Skehan 1998).

If this is so, learners should be able to solve the experimental task basing only on their previous linguistic knowledge and inference. We clarify in advance that the study is *inspired* by the intercomprehensive approach to language learning and teaching, but it does *not* suggest that pure intercomprehension between Italian and Russian is possible.

1.2   Definition of Intercomprehension

Intercomprehension (hereinafter IC) refers to the ability of *comprehending* information *inter*-linguistically, that is to say, it implies understanding of information in an unfamiliar but related to a familiar one language. It may be an interaction or pure reception. An example of receptive intercomprehension may be reading of academic literature in Portuguese if one already knows Rumanian with the mere purpose of extracting information on an already familiar topic. Intercomprehension as interaction may be an imaginary episode in a café in Barcelona: An Italian client asks for a coffee in Italian, a Spanish-speaking waiter tells that to the barista who answers in Catalan.
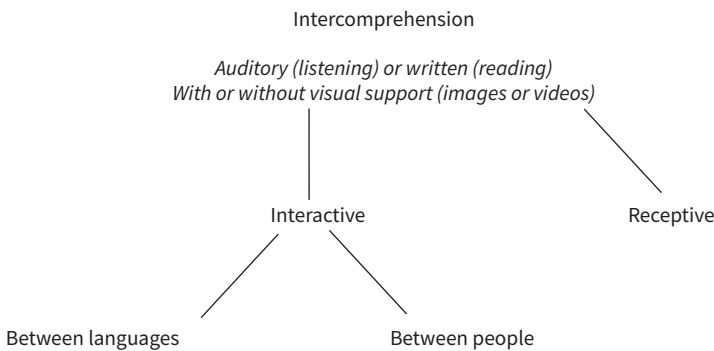
Intercomprehension

Auditory (listening) or written (reading)
With or without visual support (images or videos)

Interactive   Receptive

Between languages   Between people

Figure 1   The types of intercomprehension, own elaboration

In figure 1, the 'between languages' assumption implies that the level of intercomprehension two interlocutors may achieve depends mainly on the inherent properties of the languages involved. The 'between people' posture suggests that the level of intercomprehension two interlocutors achieve depends mainly on their attitudes, aptitudes and willingness to reach mutual understanding (Séré 2009).

The definition of intercomprehension has evolved in the recent years. Our research is based on the following understanding of this phenomenon: intercomprehension is an ability of an individual to extract information from a never formally studied language belonging to the same group that a language they already know by resorting to cognitive and metacognitive strategies. It is important to mention that:

- the base language for intercomprehension must not necessarily be a mother tongue, it may be another language that the individual knows well (see Meissner 2010a; 2011a).

- what makes comprehension possible in the absence of linguistic knowledge in the target language is the activation of intercomprehension strategies (Bonvino 2015).
- the languages used in intercomprehension must be unfamiliar to the individual (which implies no productive competence in them), otherwise the linguistic practice in question is not intercomprehension (Matesanz del Barrio 2017).

As we have mentioned in the definition of intercomprehension, it requires the use of cognitive strategies, which is laborious for the working memory (Skehan 1998). For this reason, if a lingua franca is available, speakers tend to resort to a single code by virtue of linguistic economy. In Europe, the pressure of the lingua franca (read: English) is significant (Matesanz del Barrio 2017). Therefore, the use of intercomprehension as a communicative practice is quite limited. The same may be true for reading: with the modern technical solutions for automated translation, a text in almost any linguistic variety of Europe can be translated instantly to another one by using a smartphone app with an OCR reader and AI translator.

However, intercomprehension can also be used as a didactic method (cf. Blanche-Benveniste, Valli 1997 on the emergence of the method). As a didactic method, it has an enormous potential and can assume various forms (see more in Capucho 2008; Jamet, Spita 2011). Receptive intercomprehension as a method means that learners just read texts in unfamiliar languages related to a language they already know and strive to comprehend them. Interactive intercomprehension as a method means that learners who speak different languages of the same linguistic family interact each other in their variety trying to understand that of the other with didactic purposes. In such a case, learners would also train their communicative strategies.

Intercomprehension can be leveraged in didactics in various forms: with or without audio-visual aides, on online platforms, by using learners' personal devices, at offline meetings or tandems, etc. Intercomprehension can be used to understand information in one or various unfamiliar languages at the same learning session. In summary, forms and ways of leveraging IC in didactics are truly multiple, but the purpose is always the same: build on the previous knowledge of a familiar language to develop comprehension abilities in an unfamiliar one.

Intercomprehension understood as a didactic method has a number of advantages: it is *par excellence* a form of *meaningful learning through discovery*, a notion introduced by Ausubel, Novak, Hanesian (1983). The didactics of intercomprehension is inductive, which stimulates the learners' autonomy (Doyé 2007). Intercomprehension also favors incidental acquisition of the working languages through inference (Bonvino, Jamet 2016a; Meissner 2011b; Séré 2009). Moreover, intercomprehension is a stimulating activity that at the same time

allows to keep the students' affective filter low. The latter is, first-ly, because the goal is not language learning or an accurate transla-tion, but an approximate understanding. Secondly, because the very process of deciphering an unfamiliar language is a motivating and enjoyable activity (Cortés Velásquez 2015).

Considering these benefits of intercomprehension, we wondered if this method could be somehow utilized at our classes of Russian to the speakers of Italian. The very idea that any unfamiliar Europe-an language can be approached from the stance of identifying sim-ilarities with the familiar languages to scaffold on them is totally contrary to the pillars on which the methods of isolated language teaching are grounded (one class – one language) (Cenoz 2019; Jen-kins 2015). It is exactly the idea of recycling the previous knowledge that attracts us the most in the intercomprehensive approach to lan-guage teaching. Previous research in intercomprehension suggests that the intercomprehensive reasoning can be applied to other Euro-pean languages, not necessarily the languages of the same group that the mother tongue. Hence, we attempted at investigating if the field research has already developed the theoretical bases necessary to apply intercomprehension in a Russian class to non-Slavic speakers.

1.3 Previous Research in the Field of Cross-Border Intercomprehension

Indeed, there have already been various attempts at crossing the borders of linguistic families in intercomprehension (Bonvino 2015; Capucho 2013b). Probably the most relevant example of a didactic proposal similar to the one that will be exposed in this paper is that of Labbé (2019). The author created a proposal that allows the learn-ers, speakers of French or English, to develop Slavic intercompre-hension skills in one year by building on the commonly known Slav-ic vocabulary and cultural references. We were unable to consult the whole proposal, but we use a similar approach in this study in what it concerns building on the previous commonly available knowledge to start off in the intercomprehension process.

The rest of the projects we have been able to find information on do not focus on developing specific didactic materials based on the intercomprehensive reasoning. On the contrary, most of them aim at leveraging the learners' natural skills of intercomprehension in solving tasks based on authentic materials. Below we will briefly re-view the *EU&I*, *Intercom*, *Intermar* and *ICE* projects that attempted at crossing the borders of linguistic families to support this claim.

The *EU&I* (2003–07), the first IC project focused on oral interac-tion, involved institutions in 14 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden and

Turkey with the corresponding languages used for intercomprehension (Santos Alves, Mendes 2006). The objectives of the projects were improving the language awareness in Europe and promoting plurilingualism among people working in the social field (Bonvino 2015). Learning materials in all these languages comprise texts, videos, songs, and TV programs, all dedicated to the travelling topic. The approach is mixed: receptive and interactive intercomprehension which implies communication between the members of the project after the receptive activities. The emphasis is made on communicative skills and receptive strategies within a sociolinguistic approach. In a similar vein, the *Intercom* project (2006-09), also hosted by Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, was focused on non-linguistic interactive comprehension strategies. However it was limited only to Portuguese, German, Bulgarian and Greek (Capucho 2016).

The *Intermar* project (2011–13) could be defined as intercomprehension for specific purposes since it was designed for the students of naval academies in several European countries (Bonvino 2015). In the study by Lungu (2014) dedicated to this project, the participants were 44, 1st and 2nd year students of the Naval Academy in Constanta, Romania. The tasks were designed in four Romance languages (Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and French), Greek and Russian. The activities were built on Wikipedia pages dedicated to travel destinations in the corresponding countries and aimed at teaching orientation skills in the port of destination. The students could choose the language of their preference, for which few students chose Greek, or Russian given their distance from the Romance family. A transliteration tool was used for the activities in these two languages, and the students were able to complete tasks such as finding specific objects in the city or buying specific goods in a shop. No attempt at creating didactic materials for teaching the working languages was part of the objective of the project. The purpose was building the students' awareness of their communicative skills and latent linguistic knowledge. According to Capucho (2013a) the broader project includes also Germanic and Baltic languages, however, the purpose remains improving the intercultural communication competence and mutual comprehension within international naval crew members.

The *ICE* ('InterCompréhension Européenne') project was run with the purpose of promoting the European plurilingualism, specifically with the objectives of enhancing the comprehension between the languages of the neighbouring countries and promoting the right of expression in the native language (Castagne 2004). The languages used in the project are German and Dutch, the L1 is French, and the bridge language is English. The methodology is an extension of the EuRom4 method, which is based on the retrospective inferences and the right for approximation. The project did not include Slavic languages or attempt at creating didactic materials for learning a language.

As we have seen, none of the projects reviewed had the objective of leveraging the ability for intercomprehensive reasoning when creating didactic materials for learning optimization. However, they all suggest that a certain level of intercomprehension can be reached even outside the borders of the linguistic families.

The innovation of this paper consists in the claim that by creating specific didactic materials, it should be possible to capitalize on the learners' natural ability for intercomprehension, mainly inference, in approaching a new language of Europe that does not belong to the linguistic family of any of the familiar to the learner languages, quite in line with the ideas of Meissner (2004, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b) and Labbé (2019).

2 Theoretical Bases

2.1 The Underlying Principles of Intercomprehension and Its Value for SLA

How L2 input processing functions in the brain with SLA purposes is well studied. Following the model of Gass, Behney, Plonsky (2013), the first step is the affective filter: if the filter has let the input in the memory system, its processing begins. Then, to deal with the L2 input, the learner's brain mobilizes all kinds of previous declarative and procedural knowledge. The declarative knowledge may be of linguistic character – the given L2 and other languages – and context/world knowledge. The procedural knowledge supplies skills for dealing with language. The means of dealing with language can be automatic (cognitive processes) and conscious (cognitive strategies) (O'Malley, Chamot 1990).

In the case of intercomprehension, the L2 knowledge is null, nothing is available automatically. Therefore, the intensity of prior knowledge activation is higher because the brain naturally looks for any kinds of hints to give meaning to the input (cf. Ausubel, Novak, Hanesian 1983; Rivas Navarro 2008). For this reason, the strategic component in the information processing expands drastically. The brain activates or *transfers* whatever useful linguistic knowledge it can find in the long-term memory, namely, other languages, to decipher an unfamiliar L2.

Consequently, what becomes operational is mainly:
• previous knowledge;
• transfer strategies;
• strategies of meaning making.

The latter highly depends on the type of intercomprehension: if it is interactive, meaning negotiation strategies become available, the interaction gives room for a bi-directional effort in meaning making. In receptive IC (reading a journal article), there is no online feedback from the 'interlocutor' (the author of the article that the learner is reading), the reader must rely on their own strategies and evaluation of comprehension success. In both cases the primary strategy of meaning making is inference (Bonvino, Fiorenza, Cortés Velásquez 2018).

The process of intercomprehension in short is the following (Bonvino, Cortés Velásquez 2016; López Alonso, Séré 2001a; Meissner 2004, 2011a, 2011b): the reader starts from analysing the paratextual information – images, text format, genre, etc. Then she approaches the text and notices the lexis that appears to be formally transparent thanks to the similarity between the related languages. This is a bottom-top inference through transfer from a familiar language. This transparent lexis enables the lexical access and activates the corresponding concepts, frames and scripts in the semantic memory. The frame or script activation allows the reader to get the gist of the general sense of the text. In order to maintain local and global coherence, she generates multiple top-down inferences (Bonvino, Fiorenza, Cortés Velásquez 2018; Kintsch, Rawson 2008; López Alonso, Séré 2001a). These inferences are accompanied by a process of plausibility control (Meissner 2004). Finally, the reader also generates morphosyntactic inferences mostly sourced from the base language of intercomprehension, the familiar one (López Alonso, Séré 2001b). So, we can observe that the intercomprehensive reading is heavily reliant on inferences: from bottom-top inferences during graphical decoding of cognate words and lexical access to top-down inferences necessary to decipher the parts of the text that do not appear to be formally transparent. Hence, the inference ability, necessary for SLA, can be not only exploited for comprehension purposes but also practiced with the help of intercomprehension. The depth of inferential semantic processing has a positive influence on the acquisition of lexis (Blanche-Benveniste 2008).

It is also reported in the literature that intercomprehension practice results in incidental language acquisition thanks to repetitive encounters with the most frequent linguistic constructions (Meissner 2004; Simone 1997). When working with languages continuously and regularly, learners process input in those languages and encounter some elements with high frequency. As we know from the theory of SLA, repetition, or frequency, of linguistic elements is quite a reliable predictor of the order in which they will be acquired (Ellis 1999). Other predictors are the saliency, contingency, and redundancy that also determine the *acquisibility* of a construction (Divjak 2019; Ellis 2006, 2019). When all these factors are favourable in a specific case, incidental acquisition of the given construction in intercomprehension occurs. So, intercomprehension can serve as a learning booster

or a powerful preparatory course before starting an in-depth learning of a given language.

2.2 The Challenge of the Cyrillic Alphabet and Inference in Graphical Decoding

When approaching languages through intercomprehension, learners can easily pass from the Romance to the Germanic languages. The widely known bridge languages, English and French, sometimes Spanish, which abound in formally transparent cognates, perfectly serve this purpose (Castagne 2002; Klein 2008; Meissner 2010a, 2011a; Robert 2011). However, the Slavic group is disadvantaged from this point of view, because accessing languages from a group with no familiar bridge language is hardly possible through intercomprehension. For intercomprehension to be successful, it is necessary that the zones of opacity should not exceed 30%, according to the estimation by Castagne (2004, cited in Meissner 2011b, 39).

However, the intercomprehensive reasoning, as we have already anticipated, can go beyond the borders of the same linguistic family. This is why the access to the Slavic group is still possible because of the shared European cultural background between the three major European linguistic families:

> The effects of the European koîné or res publica litterarum should not be ignored. The fact that Latin and to a lesser degree Greek and Hebrew were used during centuries as languages of the auctoritates and of erudition explains why Germanic and Slavonic vernaculars share large parts of their lexicon with Romance languages. (Meissner 2011a, 160)

To understand how intercomprehension works across families, it is worth studying an example given by Meissner (2011a, 170) in which he shows how a cover of a Polish book can be understood by means of the intercomprehensive reading. The author illustrates how the intercomprehension skills allow to partially access a Slavic language even without knowing a bridge language. He concludes: "If we would turn from Polish to Russian, other difficulties would appear, beginning with the Cyrillic alphabet" (Meissner 2011b, 43).

Our stance in the article is that the Cyrillic alphabet can also be addressed by applying the intercomprehensive reasoning, mainly the inference. We suggest that inference can also be activated at the very step of graphical decoding of familiar words written with an unfamiliar but related, European alphabet. The pure intercomprehension (within the same linguistic family) is possible to the fact that related languages abound with cognates, have similar syntactic

constructions and common cultural references. In the case of the Romance and Slavic groups, the morphosyntactic structure, although maybe similar from the grammatical point of view in many cases, definitely does not offer formal transparency, which makes the grammar of most Slavic languages inaccessible through intercomprehension to the speakers of Romance languages. However, there are lots of cognates that are mainly borrowings from the Latin language and common cultural references, which can be a good basis to start from when approaching a new language.

We assume that by leveraging the cognates, we can create materials that would induce our learners to activate the strategy of inference in graphical decoding and to guess the sounds that correspond to the letters of the Russian alphabet.

Our hypothesis is based on the following findings. First of all, we know that the brain has a specific sensitivity for pattern recognition (Willis 2008; Wolfe 2010). The brain uses patterns to save up time on information processing. We are able to recognize familiar patterns even in disguise:

> Pattern recognition works so well that you are able to recognize a letter whether it is printed B, *b*, or B. However, if you had never seen a b before and did not know what it represented, it would be meaningless no matter what it looked like because there would be no recognition or match. (Wolfe 2010, 113)

At the same time, we also know that the brain does not need precision in pattern recognition. When facing an apparently familiar pattern, the brain activates all the concepts that can possibly be related to the pattern encountered and calculates the probability with which each semantic candidate can suit the given context (Divjak 2019). If we see the letters 'contr-', we automatically start checking such candidates as 'control', 'contrary', 'contract', etc. Moreover, when reading, we don't proceed letter by letter, we recognize familiar sequences of letters and then we guess based on the calculated pragmatic probability of the adequacy of the meaning. This is why to understand a word we don't need it to be written correctly, not even do we need to see all the letters that compose it (Sainz 2004).

In the case of a text, this process is supported by the inferences drawn from the context. The more context is available the easier is the lexical access. This is also true for the recognition of single letters and letters in a word. The principle of word superiority suggests that readers recognize a partly masked letter easier in a word than standing alone (Sainz 2004). Therefore, based on all this background information we assume that Italian speakers should be able to infer the sounds of the Russian alphabet by recognizing cognate Russian words composed in a specific order. Such an order should exploit the

natural human ability for pattern recognition and inference. By leveraging the previous knowledge in acquiring new information, we follow the principles of meaningful learning (Ausubel, Novak, Hanesian 1983) and neurodidactics. These principles allow to optimize the learning and the leaners' resources of all kinds (from the time dedicated to learning to the cognitive resources).

3 Pilot Study

A small-scale empirical study we ran in Rome had the purpose of verifying if it is possible to create materials for Italian speakers to access a Slavic language inductively through inference in graphical decoding inspired by the intercomprehensive approach. This proposal was designed as a one-page Russian alphabet quest, or puzzle, for speakers of Italian. The quest contained a sequence of real common-use Russian words that have cognates in Italian. The task proposed to the participants was to read those words on the spot straight away without having any knowledge of the Cyrillic alphabet and try to decipher all its letters.

3.1 Hypothesis

It is possible to create a didactic proposal that will make the participants autonomously infer the sounds that correspond to the letters of the Russian alphabet basing on the ability for pattern recognition, activation of previous knowledge, and inference.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 Materials

To verify the hypothesis, we composed a sequence of separate Russian words that would allow our Italian speaking participants to gradually infer each sound of the Russian alphabet basing on formal transparency of the words and the natural ability of the brain for pattern recognition. Autonomous inferring of unknown information is a perfect example of meaningful learning through discovery (cf. Ausubel, Novak, Hanesian 1983). We invite the reader to try themselves to decipher the following Russian word: 'Мама'.

It could be easily deciphered as 'mama', from this word one can infer that 'А' is 'A' and 'M' is 'M'.

3.2.2 Original Sequence of Words

All the participants successfully deciphered all the letters included in the list.[1] Four letters were not included in the puzzle since two of them have no sound correspondence and the other two were explained given that they do not have analogues in Italian [fig. 2].

However, after the first several tests, some difficulties in 'deciphering' were identified:

1. The letter 'Ц' [t͡s] was not comprehensible from the word 'pizza' since the combination 'pi_ _ a' could correspond to too many various Italian words. Hence, the word 'pizza' was replaced by 'pizzaiolo' that due to a bigger number of letters reduced the number of plausible variants. In the final version, the word 'tsunami' was added.

2. In the first version the letter 'X' [h] created numerous doubts due to our inaccurate estimation of the participants' linguistic awareness and their psychological readiness to accept more differences between the Russian and the Italian cognates. The word 'хобби' ('hobby') would be deciphered correctly, with the sound [h]. However, the word 'архитектура' ('architecture') would make the participants doubt and *revise* the letter 'X' as the sound [k], inferred from the Italian correspondent 'architettura' [ʌrkɪtetturʌ]. The latter was eliminated from the final version of the puzzle. This case illustrates how our participants rely more on their previous knowledge of Italian than on the evidence from the input in making their inferences. Another difficulty caused by this letter had to do with the fact that in Italian, the sound [h] does not exist. For this reason, we were limited to the usage of internationalisms, such as 'Halloween' and 'Manhattan'. These words in Italian are pronounces as [ʌllouɪn] and [mʌn-ʌttn] respectively. The hypothesis that this letter stands for [h] was confirmed only thanks to the word 'hobby' interpreted unambiguously.

3. In the original version, the participants would stumble upon the letter 'Б' [b], appeared in the word 'футбол' ('football'). The problem was easily resolved by adding one more word, namely 'кабина' ('cabin').

4. The letter 'Й' [j] in the original variant was not identifiable due to the lack of suitable words. The participants tended to perceive it as an [ʌ]. For example: the word 'кафетерий'

---

1 The letters 'ь' and 'ъ' have been omitted since they do not correspond to sounds, they only affect the preceding consonant. The letters 'ы' and 'щ' have been omitted since they are too specific to the Russian phonetic system and cannot be deciphered through transfer from the Italian language.

USA QUESTE LETTERE PER FARE IPOTESI		LEGGI QUESTE PAROLE DI GETTO E SCOPRI CHE SUONI CORRISPONDONO ALLE LETTERE DELL'ALFABETO CIRILLICO		VARIANTE FINALE SUONI VERIFICATI
А	a	МАМА	_ _ _ _	А
Б		МАТЕМАТИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Б
В		МОМЕНТ	_ _ _ _ _ _	В
Г		ТЕАТР	_ _ _ _ _	Г
Д		КАРИКАТУРА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Д
Е		КОСМЕТИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Е
Ж		СУММА	_ _ _ _ _	Ж
З		КАФЕТЕРИЙ	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	З
И		ФИГУРА	_ _ _ _ _ _	И
Й		ПРОГРАММА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Й
К		ФИЗИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _	К
Л		ПАУЗА	_ _ _ _ _	Л
М	m	ПИЦЦА	_ _ _ _ _	М
Н		КЛАССИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Н
О		ФУТБОЛ	_ _ _ _ _ _	О
П		БАНАН	_ _ _ _ _	П
Р		ВИТАМИН	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Р
С		ВИНО	_ _ _ _	С
Т		ВОДКА	_ _ _ _ _	Т
У		ШОКОЛАД	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	У
Ф		ШАНС	_ _ _ _	Ф
Х		АРХИТЕКТУРА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Х
Ц		ХОББИ	_ _ _ _ _	Ц
Ч		ЧЕК-ИН, ЧЕК-АУТ	_ _ _ _-_, _ _ _ -_ _ _	Ч
Ш		МЕЛОДИЯ	_ _ _ _ _ _	Ш
Щ		ТЕОРИЯ	_ _ _ _ _ _	Щ = "Ш" SENZA VOCE
Ъ		БЮРОКРАТИЯ	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Ъ – RENDE DURA CONSONANTE PRECEDENTE
Ы		КОМПЬЮТЕР	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	Ы – "I" GUTTURALE
Ь		ПОЭЗИЯ	_ _ _ _ _ _	Ь – RENDE MORBID LA CONSONANT PRECEDENTE
Э		РЕЖИМ	_ _ _ _ _	Э
Ю		АФИОТАЖ	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	Ю
Я				Я

КОНГРАТУЛАЦИОНИ! ОРА САПЕТЕ ЛЕДЖЕРЕ ИН РУССО! МАНКА СОЛО ИМПАРАРЕ ЛА ЛИНГУА!

Figure 2 The original version of the experimental task, own elaboration

[kʌfetérɪj, m.] would be correctly identified as 'caffetteria', f., drawing the participant to think that 'Й' sounds as [ʌ], regardless of the fact that the letter 'Й' is graphically almost identical to 'И' deciphered earlier. Following this logic, the participants interpreted three different letters as corresponding to the sound [ʌ]: 'А', 'Я' and 'Й'. The existence of several [ʌ] sounds was explained by our participants with the difference in their position inside the word. The participants were more prone to accept that the sound depended on the position of the letter in the word (and therefore a familiar sound had to be written with three different letters), than to assume that there exist letters for sounds in other languages that in Italian do not exist. The problem was solved by adding the words 'йогурт' ('yogurt') and 'йога' ('yoga'). Again, it's worth mentioning that the previous knowledge that suggests that a letter can change its sound depending on its position in the word was a better predictor of the participants' inferences than the evidence from the input.

5. The letter 'Ш' [ʃ] appeared to be a serious challenge since most cognate words and internationalisms the two languages share, in Italian have the sound [sk] or [t͡ʃ] and not [ʃ]. For example, 'school' is 'scuola' [skuolʌ] in Italian and 'школа' [ʃkolʌ] in Russian. The challenge was to find those internationalisms that would have the same sound where the Russian letter 'Ш' appears.

3.2.3   Final Version of the Word Sequence

The reader of this paper, if familiar with Italian, can accept themselves the challenge of solving this quest. The rules to complete it are simple: read a Russian word on the spot without thinking too much as if you would read it in Italian. Transcribe what you have got with the Latin letters in the corresponding transcription column. Use the column on the left to fill in the letters that you are discovering when transcribing the words.

The order of the letters is alphabetic, it does not correlate with the order of the words. It means that the letter you discover in the second word is *not* in the second position in the alphabet. The 'Mama' sounds are already put for you in the left column as an example. Scroll it up and down to fill in the sound correspondences. When you finish the exercise, you will have the key to the Russian alphabet.

USA QUESTE LETTERE PER FARE **IPOTESI**	LEGGI QUESTE PAROLE **DI GETTO** E SCOPRI CHE SUONI CORRISPONDONO ALLE LETTERE DELL'ALFABETO CIRILLICO		VARIANTE FINALE **SUONI VERIFICATI**
L'alfabeto ipotetico		Inserisci qui la trascrizione	L'alfabeto finale
А a	МАМА	_ _ _ _	**А**
Б	МАТЕМАТИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**Б**
В	МОМЕНТ	_ _ _ _ _ _	**В**
Г	ТЕАТР	_ _ _ _ _	**Г**
Д	КАРИКАТУРА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**Д**
Е	КОСМЕТИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**Е**
Ж	КАФЕ	_ _ _ _	**Ж**
З	ФИГУРА	_ _ _ _ _ _	**З**
И	ФИЗИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _	**И**
Й	ПРОГРАММА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**Й**
К	ТЕОРИЯ	_ _ _ _ _ _	**К**
Л	ПОЭЗИЯ	_ _ _ _ _ _	**Л**
М m	ПАУЗА	_ _ _ _ _	**М**
Н	КАБИНА	_ _ _ _ _ _	**Н**
О	КЛАССИКА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**О**
П	ЙОГА	_ _ _ _	**П**
Р	ЙОГУРТ	_ _ _ _ _ _	**Р**
С	ФУТБОЛ	_ _ _ _ _ _	**С**
Т	БАНАН	_ _ _ _ _	**Т**
У	ВИТАМИН	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	**У**
Ф	ВИНО	_ _ _ _	**Ф**
Х	ВОДКА	_ _ _ _ _	**Х**
Ц	ГИРЛЯНДА	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**Ц**
Ч	ШАНС	_ _ _ _	**Ч**
Ш	ШАРАДА	_ _ _ _ _ _	**Ш**
Щ	ШАМАН	_ _ _ _ _	**Щ** = "Ш" SENZA VOCE
Ъ	ХОББИ	_ _ _ _ _	**Ъ** – RENDE DURA LA CONSONANTE PRECEDENTE
Ы	ХЭЛЛОУИН	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**Ы** – "I" GUTTURALE
Ь	МАНХЭТТЕН	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	**Ь** – RENDE MORBIDA LA CONSONANTE PRECEDENTE
Э	ЧЕК-ИН, ЧЕК-АУТ	_ _ _ ¯ _ , _ _ _ ¯ _ _ _	**Э**
Ю	ЧИЛИ	_ _ _ _	**Ю**
Я	ЦУНАМИ	_ _ _ _ _ _	**Я**
	ПИЦЦАЙОЛО	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	
	БЮРОКРАТИЯ	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	
	ШОКОЛАД	_ _ _ _ _ _ _	
	КОМПЬЮТЕР	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	
	ЖУРНАЛИСТ	_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _	
	РЕЖИМ	_ _ _ _ _	

КОНГРАТУЛАЦИОНИ! ОРА САПЕТЕ ЛЕДЖЕРЕ ИН РУССО! МАНКА СОЛО ИМПАРАРЕ ЛА ЛИНГУА!

Figure 3   The final version of the experimental task, own elaboration

3.2.4 Evaluation Tools

The evaluation in the study concerned the experimental task and the participants' profile. To evaluate the success of the participants at solving the task, two instruments were used. First, the participants had to transcribe all the sounds of the 'final version' alphabet column with Latin letters that represent the inferred sound. The second tool was the assessment phrase at the bottom of the text. The learners were expected to incidentally learn some letters of the alphabet. When a letter does not have formal transparency, the learner has to search for it in the column with the letters. By searching, she has to review over and over again the letter correspondences that have already been identified. This review process can lead to incidental memorization. If the learners manage to understand the test phrase at the bottom of the experimental task, it is be considered that the expected learning has taken place.

To understand the participants' profile a questionnaire was designed. The questions aimed at understanding the participants' linguistic biography, their attitudes towards the languages and the task. The first part of the questionnaire was distributed right before the task and the second immediately after. The fist questionnaire contained questions about the gender, age range, L1(s) and familiar L2s. They also contained a block of questions on knowledge about and attitudes towards the Russian language. Another block of questions was dedicated to the openness of the participant to other languages and cultures. The final questions aimed to verify if such an intercomprehensive approach to the Russian alphabet appealed to the participants. Most of the questions were presented in the form of a Likert scale with 7 alternatives (1-yes, 7-no)[2]. A descriptive analysis and a simple statistical analysis were performed in SPSS.

3.3 Study Participants

The total number of participants was 16, some of them collaborated only in testing the working versions of the quest. Nine random people agreed to do the task in its final version and to fill in the questionnaire, three women, six men. The participants were recruited by passing the call among friends and colleagues to take part in the study, no underlying auto-selection criterion was identified. The most frequent age range was between 28 and 35, minimum 23, maximum 45. None of them was monolingual, most were plurilingual to some degree.

---

2 In some SPSS tests the variables were recodified in the inverse order to reflect the growth logic.

None of them had received any formal instruction in a Cyrillic alphabet. One person had German and one Polish as the mother tongue.

Among additional languages participants declared:

- English (9 people)
- Spanish (5 people)
- French (1 person)
- Italian (2 people)

4 Pilot Study Results

4.1 Hypothesis Testing

It is possible to create a didactic proposal that will make the participants autonomously infer the sounds that correspond to the letters of the Russian alphabet basing on the ability for pattern recognition, activation of previous knowledge, and inference.

The result: 88,88% of the participants managed to decipher all the letters included in the puzzle autonomously. One person, who also managed to do it, requested assistance with the last part of the sequence. The participant was guided with inductive questions. All participants managed to read the test phrase at the bottom of the quest which implies that the expected for this activity incidental learning had occurred. The results suggest that the hypothesis have been successfully verified.

4.2 Questionnaire Data Analysis

4.2.1 Attitudes Towards and Knowledge About the Russian Language

Only 44,4% of all the participants consider Russian a European language. What we do not know is if they referred to it as to a language of the EU or as a language of Europe. As for the expected number of letters, 75% of the participants expected to meet between 25 and 30 letters and only 25% correctly indicated 30-35. We consider that this assumption may be based on their previous knowledge of other European languages they mentioned that indeed do not have more than 30 letters (except for Polish).

Table 1 The perception of the difficulty of Russian (1 = 'easy' or 'yes', 7 – 'difficult' or 'no')

Statistics		How difficult is the Russian alphabet?	I thought the alphabet was	I think it's enough to learn the alphabet to talk
N	Valid	9	9	9
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		2,78	4,00	5,22
Median		2,00	4,00	5,00
Mode		2	4	4[a]
Std. Deviation		1,641	1,118	1,394
a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown				

In table 1, the central tendency statistics may be between 1 (yes) and 7 (no). It appears that the participants expected the alphabet to be easy to learn, and the value 4 ('exactly as I expected') with a low SD in the post-test suggests they consider their expectations accurate. Most participants assumed after the quest that learning the alphabet is not enough to master the language, which means that the activity did not distort their perception of the linguistic distance.

The attempts at verifying if there is any correlation between the number of additional languages one knows and their perception of Russian as a European language brought no significant results. The small sample size does not allow us either to correlate the number of known languages with the expectation before the task that the Russian alphabet would be easy. However, these additional details were not the object of the study, they only serve the purpose of better contextualising the study, therefore the small sample size is of little importance in this pilot study.

4.2.2   Openness Towards the Different

The mean between 1 (a lot) and 7 (no) is close to 1 in all questions with a small SD, which suggests that all the participants showed themselves open to the foreign and different. This may constitute a latent factor of auto-selection. Perhaps, only open to the different people responded positively to the call to take part in a study about the Russian language.

Table 2 The openness towards the foreign and different (1 = 'yes', 7 = 'no')

		Statistics			
		When I travel I prefer to go to unfamiliar places	When I travel I learn how to say hi in the local language	When I travel I communicate with foreigners easily	Do you like to learn new languages?
N	Valid	9	9	9	9
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		1,56	1,67	1,67	1,67
Median		1,00	1,00	1,00	2,00
Mode		1	1	1	1ᵃ
Std. Deviation		1,014	,866	1,323	,707

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Sadly, 100% of the participants mentioned that to communicate abroad they use English and only one added that they also use a dictionary of the local language. This supports our claim in the introduction that the pressure of English as a means of intercultural communication in Europe is high.

4.2.3   Motivational Aspects

With respect to the motivation to learn the Russian language, interesting data were obtained. The mean result for the question 'would you like to learn Russian?' rose almost by 20% after having successfully solved the puzzle. However, it appeared that most participants had high motivation to learn Russian even before the test. It came out that the 20% mean growth is attributable to a change in only 3 participants, which makes a T-Test inappropriate. So, it made us review the data case by case in order to identify exceptional cases. One of the 3 participants changed their mind only by one point. Nevertheless, in the other two participants the change was significant: one person changed their motivation from 2 (close to 1-no) to 7 (yes), the other one from 4 (undecided) to 7 (yes).[3]

---

3 In this analysis the variable was recoded into 1-no and 7-yes to illustrate the growth logic.

Table 3 The willingness to learn Russian before and after doing the experimental task

Statistics		Before	After
N	Valid	8	9
	Missing	1	0
Mean		5,1250	6,1111
Median		5,5000	6,0000
Mode		4,00[a]	7,00
Std. Deviation		1,72689	,92796
Minimum		2,00	5,00
Maximum		7,00	7,00
a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown			

Interestingly, however, the attempt to correlate the motivational growth with the expectancy of the Cyrillic alphabet to be difficult yielded statistically significant results. The expectation was measured by a Likert scale, however, since the responses were averaged, the use of Pearson was considered adequate. Only those participants who had not qualified the Russian alphabet as more or less easy to learn before the task (which means 'uncertain' or 'difficult') demonstrated a motivational growth after the experimental task.

Table 4 The correlation between the expectation of the Russian alphabet to be difficult before the experimental task and the growth of motivation to learn the language after the task

Correlations		Motivation growth	How difficult is the Russian alphabet?
Motivation growth	Pearson Correlation	1	,916[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,001
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	24,889	21,222
	Covariance	3,111	2,653
	N	9	9
How difficult is the Russian alphabet?	Pearson Correlation	,916[**]	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,001	
	Sum of Squares and Cross-products	21,222	21,556
	Covariance	2,653	2,694
	N	9	9
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

As far as the change in motivation is concerned, it is important to mention, however, that we cannot know if it was the format of the task that changed the perception of the participants, or it was simply the first contact with the alphabet itself. From this point of view, we had not foreseen the necessity to test the experimental group against a control group that would get in contact with the Russian alphabet for the first time in a more traditional way. Therefore, regardless of a statistically significant change in motivation, we cannot claim that it occurred due to the task and not due to the very introduction to this language. It could be an interesting hypothesis, though, for a subsequent study.

At the same time, judging by the response to the activity in terms of attitude towards its format, we can assume that the format could indeed influence the motivational change. Most participants gave the most positive evaluation to the task format on a Likert scale from 1-yes to 7-no. The mean response to the question on whether the participants liked the ludic way of leaning the Russian alphabet, was 1,75 (SD =.95743), which is high enough (from 1-yes to 7-no). Most people found it efficient too, the mean was 1,5 (SD = 1).

Table 5 The attitudes towards the task format (1-positive, 7-negative)

Statistics		
I like this playful way of learning the Russian alphabet		
N	Valid	4
	Missing	5
Mean		1,75
Median		1,50
Mode		1
Std. Deviation		,957
Minimum		1
Maximum		3

4.3 Additional Results not Expected at the Phase of Research Design

An interesting phenomenon came out when the participants were asked to transcribe Italian texts with the Russian letters (we worked mostly with the participants' names). During the testing phase, some participants erroneously supposed that the letters 'G' and 'C' that in many European languages assume different sounds depending on the following consonant would behave the same way in Russian.

Example:

The Italian letter combination 'gi'[dʒ] in Russian should be transcribed with two letters: 'Д' [d] and 'Ж' [ʒ] respectively. The Italian letter combination 'gh' [ɟ] in Russian should be transcribed with the letter 'Г'.

Since in the first versions of the alphabet puzzle the letter 'Г' could be encountered only in the position in which in Italian it would have the sound [ɟ], the respondents wrongly interpreted this letter as a complete equivalent of the letter 'G'. Hence, they overgeneralized the rule of the Italian language in Russian to create the sound 'dʒ' before 'I' and 'E'. The word 'giorno' (['dʒorno'] – 'day') was transcribed as 'гиорно' [ɟiorno], while the correct transcription should be 'джорно' where the sounds [dʒ], that do not have a single Russian letter, are transcribed with the letters 'Д' [d] and 'Ж' [ʒ]. To address this challenge, the word 'гирлянда' ('ghirlanda' – 'garland') was introduced into the final version.

Another interesting observation can be made regarding the perception of differences between the languages.

Example:

Two cognates in the sequence differ phonetically between Italian and Russian: 'сумма' ([summa] – 'sum') and 'шоколад' ([ʃəkalad] – 'chocolate'). In Italian, respectively, 'somma' [somma] and 'cioccolata' [t͡ʃokkolata]. Not only do these words create doubts about sounds previously deciphered correctly through other words (the letters 'У' and 'Ш' get deciphered before, while these words are used as words of control), but also make some participants *suspect that there is an error in the list*. The conclusion we draw from this observation is that when facing an ambiguous situation, the participants tend to mistrust more or doubt about the evidence from the input in an unfamiliar L2 than their previous knowledge. This conclusion is also supported by the examples from the first version of the puzzle. In the examples with the letters 'Х' and 'Й', the previous knowledge of the participants also influences their inferences more than the evidence from the input.

5   Discussion and Conclusion

The main findings of this small-scale pilot study suggest that the pattern recognition ability indeed allows readers to go beyond a familiar alphabet in reading and to infer the sounds of an unfamiliar but related alphabet through inference in graphical decoding. This ability in competent readers is automated (Wolfe 2010). By recognizing familiar patterns, learners can make hypotheses about entire words. When the task gets more complicated and more and more letters don't have formal similarity anymore, the learners transcribe the Russian words with the Latin letters (in the third column of the task) and infer their meaning as if it was a crossword puzzle. It is possible thanks to the inherent knowledge of the frequencies of the letter combinations in the words of the mother tongue or a language they know well (Divjak 2019).

Indeed, the previous knowledge of the participants appeared to be a very important player in the process of Russian alphabet sound inference. They relied on the knowledge of all the languages in their repertoire (for examples, they would frequently mention the classes of Ancient Greek at school or French during the task execution). At the same time, the interpretative qualitative analysis shows that the participants seem to rely more on their previous knowledge, even if incorrect, than on the evidence from the input, even if quite unambiguous.

As we attempted to demonstrate, even if pure Slavic intercomprehension is not available to a person who has no Slavic language in their plurilingual repertoire, it is quite evident that by using intercomprehensive reasoning some sense can be extracted, like in the Polish example by Meissner, which proves that '[n]o language is totally unknown territory' (Doyé 2007, 91).

If the reader completed the alphabet, they can try intercomprehending the following phrase yourself:

> Екатерина работает профессором в Лингвистическом университете. Она даёт студентам лекции по итальянскому и испанскому языкам.

Those readers who draw on previous knowledge in Ancient or Modern Greek, or Slavic languages, clearly have an advantage. However, even if you do not possess such knowledge, deciphering the alphabet should be enough to get access to the lexis in the above sentence. You have probably identified the following content words: Ekaterina [...] professor [...] Linguistic university [...] students lections [...] Italian [...] Spanish.

So, even if the reader probably fails to infer the syntax and the semantic relations, they still can access the frame and build hypotheses about the meaning. Therefore, a gradual passage from the Romance

to Slavic intercomprehension is possible, even if for maintaining only 30% max. of opaque zones non-authentic materials would be necessary.

There are already teaching materials available, even if very few, that leverage the common origins of some pan-European lexis (cf. *5 Элементов*, Esmantova 2013). However, it is clearly a tiny step in this direction and surely not enough. The intercomprehensive approach is highly compatible with the pillars of neurodidactics: priming, inductive teaching, learner's autonomy, leveraging of previous knowledge, scaffolding, cognitive strategies, etc. Taking into consideration the learners' linguistic background allows to optimize learning, make it more efficient and more personalized. Using the same materials for leaners with different mother tongues is ineffective and unsustainable (unless in a context of second and not foreign language classes to mixed groups). When the whole group shares the same L1, it has to be used to scaffold on. At the same time, plurilingual approaches and building on the existing linguistic repertoire, even if composed by languages known only partially, opens the doors to more engaging and successful learning, But most importantly, it highly optimizes the process of development of the plurilingual repertoire.

In the XXI century, teaching a specific language is not a solution because future is unpredictable: no one knows where she or he will live and work tomorrow. A fully faceted expatriate life requires knowledge of the local language. Therefore, the purpose of linguistic education should be opening the linguistic horizons, and not trying to achieve a perfect knowledge of a single lingua franca (read: English). One never knows, maybe some learners will eventually embark on learning a Slavic language due to their life circumstances in this changeable 'Liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000). We suggest that intercomprehension could be the first step towards plurilingualism. For this to happen, new materials, teaching training and a whole new paradigm of language education must emerge. The present small-scale pilot study shows that it is possible to create materials for learners to successfully move from a Romance to a Slavic language with the intercomprehensive approach. It also shows that this inductive way of approaching a new language through inference based on previous knowledge appeared appealing to the participants. It is a challenge that disrupts the boredom frequently encountered in formal education.

However, much more research is needed for this breakthrough of intercomprehension into curricula to finally take place. This paper is a call for other researchers to design and conduct experimental research in IC. With optimizing cognitive strategies with intercomprehension and the order of introducing new languages as a function of the linguistic relatedness, plurilingualism will become not a utopia, but the auspicious reality.

Appendixes

Questionario 1. Opinioni sulla lingua russa

Genere: M/F   Età: 20-28, 28-35, 35-45   Madrelingua:

Lingue straniere conosciute*:
*a partire dal livello A1

1) Come potresti caratterizzare la lingua russa con tre parole (singoli aggettivi, tre caratteristiche):

2) Mi piacerebbe imparare la lingua russa:

```
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
1           2           3           4           5           6           7
sì!                                indifferente                         no!
```

3) Ritengo che l'alfabeto cirillico sia:

```
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
1           2           3           4           5           6           7
semplice                            non so                          molto
da imparare                                                         difficile
```

4) La lingua russa è europea: sì / no / non so

5) Dal mio punto di vista, nell'alfabeto russo ci sono ..... lettere:

    20 -25/25-30/30-35/35-40

6) Mi piace imparare le lingue straniere:

```
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
1           2           3           4           5           6           7
tanto                               indifferente                    per niente
```

7) Quando viaggio, preferisco andare nei paesi nuovi:

```
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
1           2           3           4           5           6           7
sì!                                 senza                           no!
                                    preferenze
```

Quando viaggio, cerco di memorizzare come si dice "ciao" nella lingua del paese della destinazione:

```
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
1           2           3           4           5           6           7
sì!                                 non so                          no!
```

8) Quando viaggio, riesco a comunicare facilmente con gli stranieri:

```
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
1           2           3           4           5           6           7
sì!                                 non so                          no!
```

9) Quando devo comunicare in un paese straniero, sono più bravo a spiegarmi (scelte multiple possibili):

    in inglese / con i gesti / cerco di usare il frasario della lingua del posto

Questionario 2. Opinioni sulla lingua russa

1)   Mi piacerebbe imparare la lingua russa:

```
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
sì!                              indifferente                           no!
```

2)   Credevo che l'alfabeto cirillico fosse:

```
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
più                              così come                            più
semplice                         mi aspettavo                         difficile
```

3)   Credo che imparare russo possa servire per (scelte multiple possibili):
comunicare con i parlanti nativi / come hobby culturale / come un'attività di apertura mentale / per affari (CV migliore)

4)   Credo che per riuscire a spiegarsi bene o male in russo (fino al livello A1) sia sufficiente imparare l'alfabeto e abituarsi alla pronuncia:

```
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
sì!                              non so                               no!
```

5)   Associo la lingua russa piuttosto a:
Dostoevsky
Tolstoy
Putin
Maria Sharapova
Nessuna persona in particolare
Un mio amico / una mia amica
Lenin /Stalin

6)   Le tre cose più stereotipiche sulla Russia (sui russi) che condivido sono:
   1)   ..
   2)   ..
   3)   ..

7)   Vorrei fare un viaggio in Russia:

```
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
1          2          3          4*         5*         6 *        7*
sì!                              indifferente                          no!
```

*Se hai risposto: 4 / 5 / 6 / 7:
8)   Non credo che ci andrei perché (scelte multiple possibili):
è caro / serve il visto / non mi interessa / per motivi personali / ci sono già stato/a / nessuna spiegazione

9)   Mi piace questo modo 'giocoso' di imparare l'alfabeto russo:

```
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
sì!                              non so                               no!
```

10)   Credo che sia efficace questo modo di imparare l'alfabeto russo:

```
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
1          2          3          4          5          6          7
sì!                              non so                               no!
```

Istruzioni per lo svolgimento del puzzle. Progetto MosQuest.

MA tesi finale di Anna Ilina.

- Tutte le parole che troverete nella lista sono russe di uso quotidiano.
- Se una parola non ha senso, se non la riuscite a capire, vuol dire che l'ipotesi sui suoni di cui essa è composta non è corretta.
- Ogni lettera nell'alfabeto russo fa un suono solo.
1. Leggere di getto la prima parola, individuare a che suoni ita-liani (inglesi/latini) corrispondono i segni grafici (le lettere cirilliche);
2. Inserire nella colonna sinistra di fronte alle lettere cirilliche i suoni italiani (inglesi/latini, proprio con lettere latine) a esse corrispondenti, come dimostrato sull'esempio dell'*a* e della *m* in мама;
3. Procedere alla parola successiva, mantenendo sempre lo stesso ordine di svolgimento del puzzle: ogni singola lettera 'deci-frata' deve essere trascritta a una a una con il suono italiano (inglese/latino) corrispettivo nella colonna sinistra;
4. Le strisce orizzontali sulla destra nella colonna con le parole si possono utilizzare per trascrivere le parole russe con le lette-re latine. Non è obbligatorio farlo, però potrebbe essere utile;
5. Nel caso in cui ci sono dei dubbi sul suono ipotetico, consi-gliamo di:
   a. Mettere nella colonna sinistra il suono corrispettivo ipotetico contrassegnato con un punto interrogativo;
   b. Andare a vedere una, massimo due parole più giù nel-la lista verificando con ciò l'ipotesi originale.

Bibliography

Ausubel, D.P.; Novak, J.D.; Hanesian, H. (1983). *Psicología educativa: Un punto de vista cognoscitivo*. 2a ed. Trillas: Ciudad de México.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Blanche-Benveniste, C. (2008). "Aspect lexical de la confrontation entre langues romanes. Existe-t-il un lexique européen?". Barni, M.; Troncarelli, D.; Bagna, C. (a cura di), *Lessico e apprendimenti*. Vol. 9, *Il ruolo del lessico nella linguistica educativa*. Milano: FrancoAngeli, 47-66.

Blanche-Benveniste, C.; Valli, A. (eds) (1997). "L'intercompréhension : le cas des langues romanes". *Le Français dans le monde. Recherches et applications*. Special issue.

Bonvino, E. (2015). "Intercomprehension Studies in Europe: History, Current Methodology, and Future Developments". Dolci, Tamburri 2015, 29-60.

Bonvino, E.; Cortés Velásquez, D. (2016). "Il lettore plurilingue". *Lend*, 4, 111-30.

Bonvino, E.; Fiorenza, E.; Cortés Velásquez, D. (2018). "Observing Strategies in Intercomprehension Reading. Some Clues for Assessment in Plurilingual Settings". *Frontiers in Communication*, 3. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2018.00029.

Bonvino, E.; Jamet, M.C. (2016a). "Storia, strategie e sfide di una disciplina in espansione: Introduzione". Bonvino, Jamet 2016b, 7-28.

Bonvino, E.; Jamet, M.C. (a cura di) (2016b). *Intercomprensione: lingue, processi e percorsi*. Venezia: Edizioni Ca' Foscari.

Candelier, M.; Camilleri-Grima, A.; Castellotti, V.; Pietro, J.F.; Lőrincz, I.; Meißner, F.J.; Noguerol, A.; Schröder-Sura, A. (2012). *FREPA: A framework of reference for pluralistic approaches to languages and culture; competences and resources*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing.

Capucho, F. (2008). "L'intercompréhension est-elle une mode ? Du linguiste citoyen au citoyen plurilingue". Pratiques (139-40), 238-50. https://doi.org/10.4000/pratiques.1252.

Capucho, F. (2013a). "Intercompreensão: Diálogos no presente e para o futuro". *Passages de Paris,* 8, 18-29.

Capucho, F. (2013b). "La intercomprensión. ¿Uno o varios enfoques?". Matesanz del Barrio, M. (ed.), *El plurilingüismo en la enseñanza en España*. Madrid: Editorial Complutense, S.A., 151-71.

Capucho, F. (2016). "L'intercompréhension : D'une approche multilingue à une approche plurilingue". Bonvino, Jamet 2016b, 43-56.

Castagne, E. (2002). "Comment accéder à l'intercompréhension européenne : quelques pistes inspirées de l'expérience EUROM4". Müller-Lancé, J.; Riehl, C.M. (Hrsgg), *Ein Kopf – viele Sprachen : Koexistenz, Interaktion und Vermittlung/Une tête– plusieurs langues : coexistence, interaction et enseignement*. Aachen: Editiones EuroCom, 99-107.

Castagne, E. (2004). "Inferences semantiques et construction de la comprehension en langues etrangeres europeennes". Castagne, E. (éd.), *Intercomprehension et inferences = Actes du colloque international EuroSem* (Reims 2003). Reims: Presses universitaires de Reims, 91-116.

Cenoz, J. (2019). "Translanguaging Pedagogies and English as a Lingua Franca". *Language Teaching*, 52(1), 71-85. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000246.

Cortés Velásquez, D. (2015). "Mona Lisa in the Classroom: An Educational Proposal for Integrated Training in Intercomprehension". Dolci, Tamburri 2015, 191-216.

Dolci, R.; Tamburri, A.J. (eds), *Transactions*. Vol. 3, *Intercomprehension and Plurilingualism: Assets for Italian Language in the USA*. New York: John D. Calandra Italian American Institute; Queens College; City University of New York.

Divjak, D. (2019). *Frequency in Language: Memory, Attention and Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Doyé, P. (2007). "General Educational Aspects of Intercomprehension". Capucho, A.; Martins, C.; Degache, C.; Tost, M. (eds), *Diálogos em intercompreensão = Actas de Colóquio* (Lisboa, Septembro de 2007). Lisboa: Universidade Catolica Editora, 487-96.

Ellis, N.C. (1999). "Cognitive Approaches to SLA". *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 19, 22-42. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190599190020.

Ellis, N.C. (2006b). "Cognitive perspectives on SLA: The Associative-Cognitive CREED". *AILA Review*, 19, 100-21.

Ellis, N.C. (2019). "Essentials of a Theory of Language Cognition". *The Modern Language Journal*, 103, 39-60. https://doi.org/10.1111/modl.12532.

Esmantova, T. (2013). РУССКИЙ ЯЗЫК: 5 ЭЛЕМЕНТОВ. San Pietroburgo: Златоуст (Zlatoust).

Gass, S.M.; Behney, J.; Plonsky, L. (2013). *Second language acquisition: An introductory course*. 4th ed. New York; London: Routledge.

Jamet, M.C.; Spita, D. (2011). "Points de vue sur l'intercompréhension : de féninitions éclatées à la constitution d'un terme fédérateur". *REDINTER-Intercompreensão*, 2, 9-28.

Jenkins, J. (2015). "Repositioning English and multilingualism in English as a Lingua Franca". *Englishes in Practice*, 2(3), 49-85. https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/382882/.

Kintsch, W.; Rawson, K.A. (2008). "12 Comprehension". Snowling, M.J.; Hulme, C. (eds), *Blackwell Handbooks of Developmental Psychology. The Science of Reading: A Handbook.* 1st ed. Malden; Oxford; Victoria: Wiley Blackwell, 209-26.

Klein, H.G. (2008). "L'anglais, base possible de l'intercompréhension romane ?". *Ela. Études De Linguistique Appliquée*, 1(149), 119-28.

Labbé, G. (2019). "Aborder les langues slaves par l'intercompréhension". Colloque International Intercompréhesion (Chair), IC2019 : *Au-delà des frontières - Más allá de las fronteras = Conference Proceedings*. (Lyon).

López Alonso, C.; Séré, A. (2001a). *La lectura en lengua extranjera: El caso de las lenguas románicas*. *Romanistik in Geschichte und Gegenwart Beiheft*. 6 Bde. Hamburg: Buske.

López Alonso, C.; Séré, A. (2001b). "Procesos cognitivos en la intercomprensión". *Revista De Filología Románica*, 18, 13-32.

Lungu, D.N. A. (2014). "Intercomprehension or How to Learn Languages in Tandem". *Frontiers of Language and Teaching*, 5, 155-9.

Matesanz del Barrio, M. (2017). "La intercomprensión tipológica en el enclave de las lenguas de los europeos". Martínez-Paricio, V.; Pruñonosa-Tomás, M. (eds), *Lynx. Intercomprensión románica*. Valencia: Universitat de Valéncia, 123-40.

Meissner, F.J. (2004). "Modelling Plurilingual Processing and Language Growth Between Intercomprehensive Languages: Towards the Analysis of Plurilingual Language Processing". Zybatow, L. (ed.), *Innsbrucker Ringvorlesungen zur Translationswissenschaft*. Vol. 2, *Translation in der globalen Welt und neue Wege in der Sprach- und Übersetzerausbildung*. Lang, 31-57.

Meissner, F.J. (2010a). "La didáctica de la intercomprensión y sus repercusiones en la enseñanza de lenguas: el ejemplo de alemán". *Synergies Chili*, 6, 59-70.

Meissner, F.J. (2010b). "Vers la mise en pratique de l'intercompréhension comme stratégie autonomisante en classe de langue". *Synergies Europe*, 5, 25-32.

Meissner, F.J. (2011a). "Intercomprehension between distant languages: language policy, learning and teaching, learner autonomy". *REDINTER-Intercompreensão*, 2, 157-86.

Meissner, F.J. (2011b). "Teaching and Learning Intercomprehension: A Way to Plurilingualism and Learner Autonomy". Florio-Hansen, I. de (Hrsg.), *Interkulturalität und Mehrsprachigkeit*. Vol. 3, *Towards Multilingualism and the Inclusion of Cultural Diversity*. Kassel: Kassel University Press, 37-58.

O'Malley, J.M.; Chamot, A.U. (1990). *Learning strategies in second language acquisition. Cambridge applied linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rivas Navarro, M. (2008). *Procesos cognitivos y aprendizaje significativo*. Madrid: Comunidad de Madrid Consejería de Educación. Inspección de Educación, Documentos de trabajo 19.

Robert, J.M. (2011). "L'inglese: un ponte verso le lingue romanze". De Carlo, M. (a cura di), *Lingue sempre meno straniere*. Vol. 6, *Intercomprensione e educazione al plurilinguismo*. Porto Sant'Epidio: Wizarts, 242-51.

Sainz, J. (2004). "Mecanismos atencionales en la lectura de palabras". *Boletin De AELFA*, 99-114.

Santos Alves, S.; Mendes, L. (2006). "Awareness and Practice of Plurilingualism and Intercomprehension in Europe". *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 6(3-4), 211-18. `https://doi.org/10.2167/laic248.0.`

Séré, A . (2009). "Une approche pragmatique du concept d'intercomprehension". Araújo e Sá, M.H.; Melo-Pfeifer, S. (eds), *Formação de Formadores para a Intercompreensão: princípios, práticas e reptos*. Aveiro: Universidad de Aveiro, 33-44.

Simone, R. (1997). "Langues romanes de toute l'Europe, unissez-vous !". Blanche-Benveniste, C.; Valli, A. (éds), *L'intercompréhension: le cas des langues romanes*. EDICEF, 25-32.

Skehan, P. (1998). *A Cognitive Approach to Language Learning. Oxford Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Willis, J. (2008). *Teaching the Brain to Read: Strategies for Improving Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension*. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wolfe, P. (2010). *Brain Matters: Translating Research into Classroom Practice*. 2nd ed. Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.