

English for Migration Officials

**A Romanian Approach Inspired by
the Bucharest Office of the
International Organization for Migration**

MIHAELA ARSENE

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FOREWARD

This volume is the late fruit of the inspirational vision and the dedicated work relentlessly conducted by the Bucharest Office of the International Organization for Migration.

Long and passionate conversations with British Council consultant Jane Henry and with the director of the IOM Office in Bucharest - spanning close to two decades - have helped to shape this teaching tool designed for the professionals dealing with migrants and migration in Romania and beyond. What was originally intended as a textbook to be used in the language training programs offered for the benefit of migration officials has grown - thanks to the multiple discussions and insightful comments shared by British Council educational experts - into a self-study coursebook.

With its two sections - one dedicated to self-study skills and self-assessment and the second section focusing on migration issues such as causes of migration, historic survey of the process, migration's relationship to poverty and also to development and, finally, the role of the International Organization for Migration in managing the migration process and its myriad challenges - the volume illustrates the pedagogical approach of experiential learning and encourages a constant, day-by-day interaction with it: compact and easy to carry throughout the day's professional commitments and domestic chores, the volume would love to become the

migration officials' reliable companion that invites every day visits, no matter how briefly.

Open the book at any page, spend just a few minutes reading a section in a unit, and you'll be enriched. Each day will thus have its English joys and, in time, the specialist words and the grammar that goes with them will become your well-trusted friends. Give this volume a chance to help you grow professionally not only through its fine blend of challenge, support, and access, but also thanks to its balanced mix of migration terminology, humor, and ultimate celebration of our humanity !

SECTION I: SELF STUDY FOR MIGRATION OFFICIALS

UNIT I YOU, THE LANGUAGE LEARNER

I. Success Depends on You

1. The volume "**How to be a more successful language learner**"¹ opens with the following statements. Don't worry if you don't understand all the words, you will surely get the main idea.

"You, the language learner, are the most important factor in the language learning process. Success or failure will, in the end, be determined by what you yourself contribute. Many learners tend to blame teachers, circumstances, and teaching materials for their lack of success, when the most important reason for their lack of success can ultimately be found in themselves." (p. 3)

Do you really think that the learner is the key to success in language learning?

Think of a friend or a colleague who speaks a foreign language: who is responsible for their success, in your opinion?

¹ "How to be a more successful language learner" by Joan Rubin and Irene Thompson, published by Heinle and Heinle Publishers, second edition, 1994, Boston.

2. Some people consider that it is easy to learn foreign languages as a child, but very difficult as an adult. Do you share this opinion?

What makes language learning so difficult for adults? Write down 5 reasons.

For example: adults have many responsibilities
adults have little time for learning, etc.

II. Age and English Learning

Adult learners have many strong points in language learning. Don't feel sad about learning English at this age: age has its advantages! For example, adult learners have stronger motivation: they usually learn a foreign language because they need it for some specific reasons. What other advantages does age bring to the language learning process? Can you mention at least 3 of them?

The next activity will clarify this issue but DO NOT RUSH into it: think your own thoughts and you will be able to check your views in the next paragraph.

III. Surprise: Adult Learners Have Their Advantages!

Some words are missing from the text below. Pick the right words from the box.

"Adults have many ... (1) over children: better memories, more efficient ways of organizing ... (2), longer attention spans, better study ... (3), and greater ability to handle ... (4) mental tasks. Adults are often better motivated ... (5) children; they see learning a foreign language as necessary for their education or ... (6)"

"How to be a more successful language learner", p. 4

information	complex	career
advantages	habits	than

(Key: 1 - advantages; 2 - information; 3 - habits; 4 - complex; 5 - than; 6 - career.)

IV. Personality and Language Learning

Read the notes below which come from a student's notebook. Then listen to the speaker on CD and check if the notes are correct. If you can spot 7 differences between the text and the audio material, you are a very good listener and you can move to the next activity. If you spot 5, you may like to read and listen again. If you spot 4 or less, you certainly need to read and listen AGAIN.

- Line 1 "It's hard to talk about the ideal student for language learning. However, a couple of several features appear to be related to success. For example, sociable women who use every chance to talk to native
- Line 5 speakers may be more successful, because by initiating and maintaining contacts they have more chances to speak the new language.
Persons who have a flexible, open attitude towards the foreign language, who are not worried about mistakes
- Line 10 and are afraid to use it and make mistakes will learn more from their language experiences.

Line 15 And people who can tolerate ambiguity do not see everything as black or white and do not place language data in rigid compartments. They are willing to experiment with language and suffer for their mistakes."

Tapescript

Line 1 "It's hard to talk about the ideal personality for language learning. However, several features appear to be related to success. For example, sociable people who use every opportunity to talk to native speakers may be more
Line 5 successful, because by initiating and maintaining contacts they have more chances to hear and use the new language.

Line 10 Persons who have a flexible, open attitude towards the foreign language, who are not afraid to use it and make mistakes will learn more from their language experiences.

Line 10 And people who can tolerate ambiguity do not see everything as black or white and do not put language information in rigid compartments. They are willing to experiment with language and learn from their mistakes."

(Key:

Line 1: *student* in written text/personality in audio text;

Line 2: *a couple of features*/several features

Line 3: *women*/people

Line 4: *chance*/opportunity

Line 6: *to speak*/to hear and use

Line 9: *are not worried about mistakes/ are not afraid to use it and make mistakes*

Line 13: *place language data/ put language information*

Line 15: *suffer for their mistakes/ learn from their mistakes.*)

V. The Best Time to Learn Is NOW!

1. 4 key words are missing from the text below. They are all adjectives. Can you guess what letters are missing in them? One _ stands for a missing letter.

sm _ ll, l _ _ g, consist _ _ t, effect _ ve.

2. Decide where each of the words above goes in the text.

Language learning is a _____(1) process. In order to make the process _____(2), you will need to learn the language in _____(3) amounts but in a _____(4) manner.

(Key: 1 long, 2 effective, 3 small, 4 consistent)

3. Why do you think you need to learn regularly? And why learn the language in short sessions, that is in small bits?

How do the opinions above compare to your experience of language learning?

4. Listen again to the recorded speaker and decide if the following statements are true or false:

	True	False
1. Language learning takes longer that students expect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Language systems are different.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Learning a foreign language effectively requires using it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Long learning sessions are more effective than short ones.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. It is recommended to study a foreign language for 30 minutes every week.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Key: 1 True, 2 True, 3 True, 4 False, 5 False.)

Tapescript

"No matter what your goals are, language learning takes a long time, much longer than students anticipate. This is so because languages are complex systems of sounds, words, grammar and ways to express meaning. As each system is different, it requires reorganization of your thinking, lots of contact with the language, and a significant amount of practice. In order to make good progress, you will need to learn the language in small bits but in a consistent manner. It is more effective if you spend thirty minutes or so on your study every day than if you try to learn a lot in one long session. You need to be disciplined and study regularly in order to make the desired progress."²

² Based on "How to be a more successful language learner" by Rubin and Thompson, 1994, pp 3-9)

4. In order to do the true and false activity above, was it necessary to understand ALL the words? Were you able to continue listening and make sense of the message without understanding every word? If so, CONGRATULATIONS!

VI. Anyway

1. Learning something takes effort and time. But we learn it anyway. Language learning is no exception. But we need foreign languages for a better life and a better world. And we become richer in the process anyway.

The poem below mentions 8 rules that people need to follow. Two rules are missing. Read the poem and work them out.

Anyway

People are unreasonable, illogical and self-centred.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

.....

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest anyway.

People favour underdogs, but follow only top dogs.

Fight for some underdogs anyway.

What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.

Build anyway.

People really need help, but may attack you if you help them.

.....