New Method for Learning Multiple Languages:

An Effective Use of Similarity among European Languages

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Introduction

This is the first paper of a joint project. Our intention is to continue this project for a couple of years. The purpose of this project is to make a research for developing a practical and effective method of learning foreign languages. This project is also making a challenge to collaborate a joint work with members of different nationality and different background. This first paper introduces the overview of the joint research. The second and the succeeding papers will focus on each topic in more details.

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1　Purpose and Scope of the Research

In the department of marketing (TOYO university, Japan), the education of foreign languages is very important for global business communication. Every university student has been studying English for more than six years in junior high school and high school before entering a university. Nevertheless, most Japanese students have very limited capability of communication skill in English.
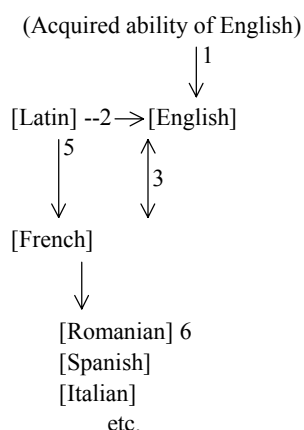
In theory, mastering junior high school level of English would be sufficient enough for us to use it for conversational purposes as required. While in junior high school, a student memorizes about 1000 basic words. Quite many students of Department of Marketing have forgotten many words they learned in junior high school. The professors at TOYO University set new key objectives of the university English education as show below.

1 To Learn English words in a different way from what they did in school.

2 To Develop a method applicable for learning both English and other languages

3 To Find and use synergy effects for learning multiple languages.

4 To Make the basic communication skills course very short. (Six hours for example)

Department of Marketing has developed and implemented new English curriculum in 2000. The major changes in the new curriculum are shown below

- Most of part time lecturers have MBA or long business stay experience abroad.

- Teachers are encouraged not to use text books. For example, pages on the Internet sites will be used as a text book.

- Students can select their study materials by themselves from the Internet sites, etc.

- Encourage more use of multimedia.

- Multiple languages and Latin are introduced.

The Department of Marketing has tried many experiments to discover the effectiveness of new education methods. In this paper, authors will try to generalize the result of our experiments and to formulate new education systems. Main structure of our project is shown below.

(Acquired ability of English)

|1
↓

[Latin] --2→ [English]

|5   ↑
             3
↓   ↓

[French]

↓

    [Romanian] 6
    [Spanish]
    [Italian]
       etc.

Part:

  MORI, Aki   1 3

  MATSUZAWA, Kiyoshi   1 2 5

  TANASA, Maria-Virginia   6

(MORI)

2 Similarity between English and French

In this section, the author intends to inspect the similarity between English and French. In order to prove that the similarity increases with the increase of the grade of the textbook, the author used following materials.

. A hundred obligatory words in junior high school

. Three English textbooks of junior high school[1]

. Two dictionaries

Method used for this study was by examining a pair of words by counting the number of common letters in spelling. The "similarity" was then judged numerically and mean value was calculated.

(1) Obligatory English Words

According to *2002 National Curriculum Standard* (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Japan), the obligatory English words during three yeas of junior high school education are only a hundred words[2]. Most of the hundred words are quite different from French words. Only four words (4%) has some similarity to French. Those are a (un), an (un), one (un) and at (à).

The most basic English words in the curriculum are completely different from French. From this reason, many teachers who teach French did not have an idea of using the knowledge of English language in teaching and learning French.

(2) 1st Grade Textbook in Junior High School

Number of the words, which appear in the 1st grade textbook, is 388. From these 388 words[3], 41 words[4] are selected for an analysis: begin with 'a' and 'b'. There are 10 words (24%) that have the similar French words.

(3) 2nd Grade Textbook in Junior High School

Same analysis was done. 35 words[5] are selected from 299 words. There are 4 words (12%) that have the similar French words.

(4) 3rd Grade Textbook in Junior High School

Same analysis was conducted. 20 words[6] are selected from 186 words. There are 10 words (50%) that have the similar French words.

(5) Dictionary English-French

One key question rose for our analysis is ' in general, how many English words are similar to French words'. The simplest method is to analyze sample pages of a dictionary[7]. This dictionary has over 100,000 words, phrases, and translations in 286 pages. Seven pages were selected as sample data.

From this analysis, about 39% of the English words have similar French words in total[8]. Words that begin with prefix (pro) shows quite high similarity. 61% of the words have similar French words.

(6) Dictionaire francais-japonais

A French-Japanese dictionary[9] with English translations. was also used. The editor of this dictionary strongly insists on the similarities and differences between English and French. This dictionary contains about 19,000 words in 391 pages. Seven pages were selected as sample data. From this analysis, about 43% of the French words have similar English words in total[10]. Words that begin with prefix (im, in, pro) show quite high similarity. 70% of the words have similar English words.

(7) Conclusion of This Section

The summary of the above analysis is shown below.

Basic 100 words   4%

1st grade textbook in junior high school   24%

2nd grade textbook in junior high school   12%

3rd grade textbook in junior high school   50%

English dictionary   39%

French dictionary   43%

The weighted mean value of the percentage of the degree of similarity[11] in junior high school Textbooks is 25%. In short, at the graduation, students may use one forth of English words to relate them to French words. In general, according to the analysis of the dictionaries, about 40 % of English words hold similar French words. From these facts, we can make an idea for studying French with less effort and with high productivity, if we use similarity between the languages.

<div align="right">(A. MORI)</div>

Notes
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[1] *New Horizon 1st grade,* Tokyo Shoseki, Japan, 2002.

   New Horizon 2nd grade, Tokyo Shoseki, Japan, 2002.

   New Horizon 3rd grade, Tokyo Shoseki, Japan, 2002.

[2] a hundred obligatory words

a(un)/about/across/after/all/am/among/an(un)/and/another/anyone/anything/are/as/at(à)/because/before/between/both/but/by/can/could/do/down/during/each/either/everyone/everything/for/from/has/have/he/her/hers/him/his/how/I/if/in/into/is/it/may/me/mine/must/my/near/nothing/of/off/on/one(un)/or/other/our/ours/over/shall/she/should/since/so/someone/something/than/that/the/their/them/then/these/they/this/those/through/to/under/until(till)up/us/we/what/when/where/which/who/whose/why/will/with/without/would/you/your/yours

source: http://www.v-net.jp/

[3] Proper noun and words beginning with capital letter are excluded.

[4] 1st grade

a(un)/about/after/afternoon/all/also/am/an(un)/and/animal(animal)/answer/any/are/around/at(a)/back/bag/ball(balle)/baseball(base-ball)/basketball(basket-ball)/be/beach/beautiful(beau)/bed/before/between/big/bike/bird/birthday/blue(bleu)/boat/book/border/breakfast/brother/bus(autobus)/busy/but/by/bye

[5] 2nd grade

abroad/advertize/again/against/ago/agree(agreer)/alarm(alarme)/alien/almost/alone/already/always/another/anyone/area/

arm/ask/away/baby(bébé)/bad/become/because/begin/best/better/boring/both/box(boîte)/boy/break/bright/bring/build/building/buy

6　3rd grade

across/action(action)/afraid(effrayé)/age(âge)/album(album)/among/anything/art(art)/bare/best-seller(best-seller)/black/body/bomb(bombe)/borrow/braille(braille)/branch(branche)/brand-new/breeze(brise)/bridge/burn

7　*The Oxford FRENCH Minidictionary (Third edition, revised),* OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2002.

8　Dictionary English French

page	words in a page	similar words	ratio	begin --- end
p.34	29	17	59%	calorie --- canoe
p.380	34	17	50%	dissident --- do
p.420	31	8	26%	gull --- half
p.460	35	17	49%	mantelpiece --- masonry
p.500	31	19	61%	privately --- programme
p.540	35	8	23%	somebody --- south-east
p.580	31	2	6%	waiter --- warp
total	226	88	39%	

9　SHIGENOBU and KIGOSHI, *DICTIONAIRE PAIR FRANCAIS-JAPONAIS JAPONAIS-FRANCAIS,* Renkin-sha, 1995.

10 Dictionary French Japanese

page	words in a page	similar words	ratio	begin --- end
p.50	50	12	24%	bombance --- borgne
p.100	48	16	33%	cracha --- créditeur
p.150	56	21	38%	ériger --- espadrille
p.200	49	37	76%	impunément --- incarcerer
p.250	47	19	40%	mouille --- mugissant
p.300	48	34	71%	progressivement --- pronostiqueur
p.350	47	8	17%	soulager --- sous-entendu
total	345	147	43%	

11 $(388 \times 0.24 + 299 \times 0.12 + 186 \times 0.50) / (388 + 299 + 186)$

(MORI)

3 High Degree of Similarity among Latin, French and English

In this section, the relationship between Latin, French and English words are examined. It has been found out that out of the top 20 Latin words of *The derivation of word ranking*[1], 1400 English words were made. Therefore it is assumed that to learn these basic Latin words is a very powerful method to increase English vocabulary. First, we will focus on the similarities between Latin, French and English using a couple of Latin

words.

(1) Relationship among Latin, French and English Verbs

The table 3-1 shows the verbs came from a Latin verb "venire". "venire" means "to come" in English and "venir" in French. This is a very basic Latin and French word. Teble 3-1 shows 12 prefixes and Latin, French and English words that were made by adding these prefixes. There is a very high degree of similarity among the three languages.

Prefix	Latin	French	English
ad-	advenire	advenir	adventure
circum-	circumvenire	circonvenir	circumvent
con-	convenire	convenir	convene
de-	devenire	devenir	-
e-	evenire	evenement	event
in-	invenire	inventer	invent
inter-	intervenire	intervenir	intervene
pre-	praevenire	prevenir	prevent
pro-	provenire	provenir	provenance
re-	revenire	revenir	revenue
sub-	subvenire	subvenir	subvene
super-	supervenire	survenir	supervene

Table 3-1 The verbs made from a Latin verb "venire".

Furthermore, about 45 English words and French words were made by adding suffixes to the words in table 3-1. The degree of similarity is very high between these English words and French words, 93% or 42/45 in this case.[2]

The table 3-2 shows the verbs made from a Latin verb "ferre"[3]. It means "to carry" or "to bring".

Prefix	Latin	French	English
ad-	adferre	~~adferer~~	~~adfer~~
con-	conferre	conferer	confer
de-	differre	differer	differ
de-	deferre	deferer	defer
e-	efferre	~~efferer~~	~~effer~~
in-	inferre	inferer	infer
of-	offerre	offrir	offer
pre--	praeferre	preferer	prefer
pro-	proferre	proferer	proffer
re-	referre	referer	refer
suf-	sufferre	souffrir	suffer
trans-	transferre	transferer	transfer

Table 3-2 The verbs made from a Latin verb "ferre"

Latin words already had prefix-root-suffix structure 2,500 years ago as shown in table 3-1 and table 3-2.

French and English words have the same structure if they came from Latin words. Similarity exists more in prefix and root. Suffix is different between the languages. Nouns, adjectives, adverbs were made by adding suffix to the verbs, thus creating about 50 English words from the Latin word "ferre" [4].

(2) Are English Vocabulary and French Vocabulary Different?

French and Latin are categorized as a Romance language. Most of the French words came from Latin words including the basic vocabulary used in daily conversation. English belongs to Germanic language family and not a Romance language family. This gives us an impression that the most of the English words came from Germanic language and only a few words came from Latin. In fact, quite many of English vocabularies came from Latin words. If an English word came from Latin, there is very high possibility that the English word has a matching French word. Table 3-1 and 3-2 shows the examples that quite a lot of English words that came from Latin have similar French words.

(3) Another Example

Table 3-3 shows the verbs made from a Latin word "tendere"[5]. It means "to stretch" or "to extend".

Prefix	Latin	French	English
at-	attendere	attendre	attend
con-	contendere	~~contendre~~	contend
dis-	distendere	distendre	distend
ex-	extendere	etendre	extend
in-	intendere	~~intendre~~	intend
os-	ostendere	~~ostendre~~	ostensible
por-	portendere	~~portendre~~	portend
pre-	praetendere	pretendre	pretend
-	tendere	tendre	tend

Table 3-3 The verbs made from Latin word "tendere"

There are also more than 50 English words[6] that were made from "tendere".[5]

(4) Most Popular 20 Latin Words.

Some Latin words created many English words (more than 50 English words) while other Latin words made only a few, or only one. Learning of the Latin words with greatest number of English words related to them would be the most effective way of increasing our English vocabulary. Below is the list of most *useful* 20 Latin words[6]. More than 1400 English words were made from these 20 Latin words. Learning these top 20 Latin words would provides us the extremely efficient method of learning many English words. The two Latin words shown above as examples are No.17 (Table 3-3 tendere) and No.20 (Table 3-2 ferre) in the list.

The most useful 20 Latin words for learning English

1	stare (to stand)	11	spectare (to look at)
2	facere (to make, to do)	12	tenere (to hold, to maintain)
3	capere (to catch, to take)	13	trahere (to draw)
4	plicare (to fold)	14	sedere (to sit down)
5	vertere (to turn)	15	generare (to produce, to generate)
6	videre (to see)	16	mittere (to send, to throw)
7	regere (to dule, to guide)	17	tendere (to extend, to stretch)
8	ponere (to put aside, to lay down)	18	pendere (to hang)
9	agere (to do, to drive)	19	curare (to take care of)
10	cedere (to go, to proceed)	20	ferre (to carry, to bring)

(5) Useful Method to Understand English Words

English words are made of prefix, root and suffix. If we learn the basics of English prefix and suffix, it becomes possible for us to understand an new English word if we also know the meaning of the root word. We will be able to guess the meaning of a new word. The knowledge of root word, prefix and suffix may also enable us to understand English words in the same way a native speaker does understand the meaning of the words. This knowledge is the key to understand English directly and to eliminate any biased understanding from the first language of the English learner.

(6) Conclusion of This Section

In this section of our first paper, three Latin verbs are examined in details to see the similarities between Latin, French and English. These examples show that many English words coming from Latin words have similar French words if the English words came from Latin words. Also the most useful 20 Latin words for learning English words are introduced.

The second paper and the successive papers will examine basic prefix and suffix along with the 20 Latin words more in details. The analysis of the students in the English class in the Department of Marketing (Toyo University, Japan) will also be carried out as these 20 Latin words have been introduced to them.

(MATSUZAWA)

Notes

[1] The derivation of word ranking:

Ranking listed in order of number of words derived from one Latin word.

http://www.alc.co.jp/eng/vocab/etm/etm_top20.html

[2] 45 English words made from Latin "venire" and matching French words

ENGLISH	FRENCH		
advent	avent/advenir	eventuality	éventualité
adventitious	adventice	eventually	éventuellement
adventive	adventif	eventuate	-
adventure	aventure	intervene	intervenir
adventurer	aventurier	intervention	intervention
adventurous	aventureux	invent	inventer
avenue	avenue	inventor	inventeur
circumvent	circonvenir	invention	invention
contravene	contrevenir	inventive	inventif
contravention	contravention	inventory	inventaire
convene	convenir	prevent	prévenir
convenience	convenance	prevention	prévention
inconvenience	inconvenient	preventive	préventif
convenient	convenable	provenance	provenance
inconvenient	inconvenient	revenant	revenant
convent	couvent	revenue	revenu
convention	convention	souvenir	souvenir
conventional	conventionnel	subvene	subvenir
covenant	convention	subvention	subvention
event	événement	supervene	survenir
eventful	éventuel	supervention	survenance
eventual	éventuel	venture	aventure
		venue	venue

[3] Latin verbs "adferre" and "efferre" do not have similar French and English verbs.   "Adferer" in French and "efferer" in English are not real words. I made these up as an example to show if French and English were made from Latin verbs "adferre" and "efferre". Latin word "adferre" means "carry to". English word "carry" and French word "porter" are used in place of "adferre". Latin word "efferre" means "take out" or "carry out".

[4] English words made from "ferre"

http://home.alc.co.jp/db/owa/etm_rsch?er_sn_in=169

[5] Three Latin verbs contendere, intendere and portendere are used in English but not used in French.

[6] http://home.alc.co.jp/db/owa/etm_rsch?er_sn_in=537

(MATSUZAWA)

4   Analysis of Similarity between Romanian and French

This section shows the similarities between Romanian and French. Before the analysis, the author intend to introduce Romania briefly; the history of Romania, cultural exchanges between Japan and Romania and merit of learning Romanian for Japanese students. The basic words for tourists, greetings, useful words and phrases, numbers, weekdays and foods are used for the study of similarity between the two languages.

Simple and basic conclusions will be presented.

1 There exist similarities between French and Romanian.

2 It may be possible to develop an easy way to learn Romanian for Japanese students.

(1) What is Romanian for Japanese Students

1) The relationships between Romania and Japan

The relationships between Romania[1] and Japan started in 1902[2]. In 1927, Romania opened an honorific consulate in Osaka. After the Romanian revolution in 1989[3] the relationships became even stronger[4]. Nowadays, more and more students have the opportunity to learn Japanese due to the latest relationships between several universities and foundations.

The year 2002 was an occasion to celebrate 100 years of mutual connections. Many events took place all over the country[5]. The most important event was the visit of Princess Sayako in Bucharest paving the way for even better future communication with Japan.

2) Cultural Exchanges

Cultural exchanges brought Romanian traditional works to Japan[6]. In exchange, the Romanians very much appreciate the Japanese traditional culture[7]. In the field of language education, Japanese is being taught at the University of Bucharest, which has a special section of Japanese studies. Japanese teachers also give a helping hand, and literature, culture and linguistics are majored during four years of study. In addition, private universities[8] offer good opportunity for learning Japanese.

3) Importance of learning Romanian for Japanese students

Romania is becoming more important country to Japan in many areas such as:

・Politics and Economy

Romania is looking forward to enter the EU and was already invited to join NATO. Romania will be a big market for Japan with the population of 22 millions after it becomes a member of EU.

・Tourism

Romania is also attractive for its tourism potential[9]. There are mountains, planes, lakes, sea, historical sites, traditional food, and hospitality. For Japanese, Romania is also the famous country where the legend of Dracula was born.

・Environment

Romania is an industrialized country, but not as much as the Western countries. Therefore, the air is healthier and natural waters are appreciated for their taste and curative properties. Romania maintains many important characteristics, which Western countries and Japan have lost in the process of industrialization.

(2) Steps to Acquire Romanian for Japanese Students

1) Similarity between French and Romanian Words

The aim of this project is to present an effective method to acquire basic communication ability in foreign language. For this purpose, learning basic words first is more useful than learning the grammar of the language. It is desirable to use the knowledge of English and French to learn one more language. In this section Romanian is examined. Romanian is one of Romance languages. Romanian has a high degree of similarity between French and English because Romance languages have strong influence from Latin. In this paper, the author intends to present only a part of the first step -learning basic words.

2) First Step is Words

Japanese students who have studied English and French can understand quickly that Romanian is easy to access. There are two main reasons.

・Romanian and French belong to the same language family. (Romance family).
・There is a high degree of similarity betwenn English and French.[10]

For the Japanese students, the most interesting, the simplest, and the most useful type of communication may be tourist communication. So, for the first approach, we use the tourist vocabulary[11] for our example. The knowledge of English and French words makes Romanian easier to understand. We can make comparison of the words for tourists in the three languages. To get the samples, we used the best seller Japanese guide book[12]. The book presents essential words and phrases for tourists.

(3) Examples of Similarity

Using the important words in the book, we can easily understand that there are many similarities among Romanian and French (also some in English).

1) Greetings

These are perhaps the most important words to start with. Similarities can be easily detected in the following example:

Bună seara.   Bon soir.   Good evening.

Bună ziua.   Bonjour.   Good day (Australia)

La revedere.   Au revoir.   Goodbye.

Mulțumesc   Merci.   Thank you.

2) Useful Words and Phrases

In the useful words in the guide book, we find many similar words[13]. Following words are the examples

toaleta   toilette   toilet

intrare   entrée   entrance

poliție   police   police

3) Numbers

eight out of ten are similar.

unu   un   one

doi   deux   two

trei   trois   three

patru   quatre   four

șase   six   six

șapte   sept   seven

opt   huit   eight

nouă   neuf   nine

4) Weekdays

In this particular case, the names of the days are similar in pronunciation between Romanian and French.

luni   lundi   Monday

marți   mardi   Tuesday

miercuri mercredi   Wednesday

joi   jeudi   Thursday

vineri	vendredi	Friday
sâmbătă	samedi	Saturday
duminică	dimanche	Sunday

5) Food

The words for food are very important. Romanian and French has many similar words in food.

vaca	boeuf	beef
porc	cochon	pork
pui	poulets	chicken
peşte	poisson	fish
apa	eau	water
cafea	café	coffee

(4) Conclusion of This Section

From these examples, we can understand that there exist similarities between French and Romanian. It means that if we know the rules of transforming words from French to Romanian, we will be able to acquire many words in a short time using the knowledge of French words.

(TANASA)

Notes
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[1] About Romania

Location: 45' parallel, 25' Eastern meridian

Climate: temperate climate.

Surface: about 240000km^2

Population: 22.7 million

Capital: Bucharest (population of 3,000,000 inhabitants)

Religion: Orthodox, (86.8%), Catholics, Muslims etc. (13.2%)

Official language: Romanian, Yet French, German, English are widely used.

Industries: wheat, sunflower, sugar, bred, beer, oil, wine, natural gas, fuel oil, paper, glass, etc.

[2] In the year 1902 when Japan and Britain entered a political alliance, the Japanese ambassador, Mr. Makino, met the Romanian ambassador in Vienna for the first time and they agreed to work for the establishment of diplomatic relations.

[3] The revolution in Romania in 1989 is the collapse of Chausesk Administration.

[4] Political relations: Official visits of the Romanian President and politicians in 1991, 1994, 1996, 1997 in Japan.

Japanese investments: tyres, energy, mobile phone technology. etc.

Organization for friendship: "Nipponica", "BOC" in Romania and "Japonia-Romania Society" in Japan.

[5] A photo exhibition presented by Kazuyoshi Miyoshi, the "Yuzuuru" opera directed by Koichi Inoue, the violin concert of Atsuko Temma, the fashion parade of Yumi Katsura, a kimono exhibition, shodo, ikebana and bunraku demonstrations etc.

[6] For example the national poet Mihai Eminescu and Nichita Stanescu can now be read in Japanese. Beside Porumbescu, Japanese people learned to appreciate Romanian music: Ciprian Porumbescu, George Enescu.

[7] Courses of ikebana, Origami, and martial arts especially Kendo are held all over the country;

[8] Spiru Haret University, Hyperion University etc.

[9] Within the borders of the country there are mountains (some with everlasting snow), plains, sea and many lakes. The rural area is famous for the old German houses. In the North, for the hand made costumes and for the local food (sarmale, mamaliga, papanasi). Great wineries can be visited to find out more about Romanian wine, medieval cities offer foreigners a view of old cities and their crafts.

[10] 『6 カ国語会話パスポート』三修社 (Translate: *Passport to six languages,* Sanshuusha)。

増田哲朗『GRAND TOUR英和・和英辞典』旺文社、1995年、pp.491-529. (Translate: MASUDA, Tetsuo, GRAND TOUR Japanese - English and English - Japanese Dictionary, Oubunsha, 1995, pp.491-59.)。

[11] If one does not know a certain Romanian word, one should better use English or French words instead, as in Romania English, French and German are widely used. It is not necessary to use complete and correct Romanian at first. It is often the case; Romanian and Japanese can understand each other only using some words.

[12] 『地球の歩き方』ダイヤモンド社、2001年、pp.256-257 (Chikyuh no Arukikata,diamond, 2001, pp.256-257.).

[13]
gara	gare	station
metrou	metro	subway or metro
taxi	taxi	taxi
banca	banque	bank
muzeu	musee	museum
doctor	docteur	doctor
bun	bon	good;

(TANASA)

Conclusion

This is the first paper of our joint work of a research to find effective learning

methods of multiple languages. This is a work of three members. The variety of members' background enables us to study the relationships between English, French, Romanian and Latin. The authors are trying to find the good use of similarities that exists between these languages.

The study of similarity between English and French will lead to a method of learning French from English knowledge. Once a Japanese student learns how to communicate in English he or she can learn how to communicate in French in less than half effort spent in learning English. We hope this research will encourage a

lot more students to learn the second foreign language effectively.

The study of Latin words that created a lot of English words will help English learner to master a lot of English words in a short time. This study will help Japanese students to know the English words by its original meanings. Otherwise they have to learn English words through Japanese translation. Japanese words and English words do not have exactly the same meaning and same function. The study also provides an ability to guess the meaning of new words. There are very high degree of similarity between the English words and French words coming form Latin words. This similarity helps to learn French from the knowledge of English or learn English from French.

Romanian study will lead us to know approach a relatively rare language for Japanese people by using the knowledge of English or French. Romanian is a language very similar to Latin and will provide interesting results from the series of our research.

One of our purposes is that the students see the advantage in our methods themselves. Therefore it was important to experiment carefully and prove the assumption with solid evidence. It is hoped that the method discovered by this research will become beneficial to the education of English language in Japan in the future.