

ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE CURRICULA, AND NATIONAL EVALUATIONS

Mariana Norel, Ph.D.

Transilvania University of Braşov, Romania

mariana_norel@unitbv.ro

Abstract: *The aim of this article is to offer an image of the way Romanian language and literature are studied in primary and secondary school, both in schools teaching in Romanian language, and in schools teaching in minorities' languages. The change in the paradigm of creating and then applying the curricula brings the change in national evaluations. What is this change consisting of? Are there alterations necessary to the teaching process? These are the questions the article is trying to answer.*

Keywords: *school curriculum; continuity; competence; evaluation;*

1. Introduction

The new framework plans, by OMEN no. 3371/12.03.2013, for primary schools, and through OMEN no. 3590/05.04.2016, for secondary schools, as well as the new school curricula for primary school subjects - OMEN no. 3418/19.03.2013 (preparatory grade, 1st and 2nd grades) and through OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014 (3rd and 4th grades) – and for secondary school subjects (OMEN nr. 3393/28.02.2017), generated a gradual shift to the new model of curricular projection, focused on competences.

Introducing the *Communication in Romanian* school programs for the preparatory classes, 1st and 2nd, through OMEN 3371 / 12.03.2013, starting with the school year 2013-2014 (in the preparatory class and in the 1st grade), then gradually *Romanian language and literature* programs in grades 3rd-4th led to the modification of national evaluations for 2nd grades (starting with the national evaluation of 2015) and 4th grades (from 2017), respectively.

Starting September 2017, the *Romanian language and literature for the 5th grade* programs entered into force, and from September 2018 the school curricula for the 6th grade, elaborated on the basis of the framework educational plan approved by OMEN no. 3590 / 05.04.2016, which led to the rethinking / adaptation of the subjects for the 6th grade national assessments of 2019 to the requirements of the current programs.

2. Analysis of the new Romanian language and literature programs in force from the preparatory grades to the 6th grade

For the *Communication in Romanian*(preparatory to 2nd grade) and the *Romanian language and literature* (grades 3rd to 4th), different school curricula were developed: for the Romanian mother tongue, respectively for Romanian for pupils who are studying in schools and teaching sections in the languages of national minorities. Different school programs require, on the one hand, different school textbooks, on the other, different national assessments.

At the level of primary education, the Czech, German, Hungarian, Rromani, Serbian and Slovak minorities have developed separate programs of Romanian language, while at the level of secondary school education, only the Hungarian minority has a separate school curriculum of Romanian language and literature, and pupils belonging to other minorities

attend schools and teaching sections in the languages of national minorities, studying Romanian on the basis of the native Romanian language program.

The school curricula for the *Romanian language and literature* for 3rd and 4th grades were achieved "on the basis of the *Common Framework for the Development of Communication Skills in the Mother Tongue*, developed between June and August 2014, starting with the conclusions of the developed studies in the framework of the POSDRU project 35279 *A performance based education based on substantiated decisions - Strategies for capitalizing the international evaluations on the learning outcomes*" (*Presentation note in the School curriculum for the Romanian language and literature, 3rd and 4th grades*) Annex No 2 to the Order of the Minister of National Education No. 5003 /02.12.2014, Bucharest, 2014, p.2).

The documents underlying the realization of the Romanian language and literature school curricula for gymnasium were:

The background note for the framework plans for gymnasium education (2016);

- *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning — a European Reference Framework, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006*, in Official Journal of the EU, 30 dec. 2006;
- *LiFT-2 – Literary Framework for Teachers*;
- *The European Language Portfolio* (<https://www.coe.int/en/web/portfolio>).

Analyzing the curriculum framework, we find, according to Table 1, the following allocation of hours of *Communication in Romanian / Romanian language and literature* (mother tongue).

Table 1. Share of Romanian mother tongue and literature classes

Grade	Number of hours	Total amount of hours	Share %
Preparatory	5	19	26,32
1st	7	20	35,00
2nd	6	20	30,00
3rd	5	20	25,00
4th	5	21	23,81
5th	4	26	15,38
6th	4	26	15,38
7th	4	31	12,90
8th	4	31	12,90

The minimum number of hours per week was taken into account, which could be added, at the primary education level, to another hour in the *School curriculum (optional subjects)*, which has a 0-1 hourly schedule. As it can be seen, at the level of primary education, especially in the basic procurement cycle, the Romanian communication hours occupy, on average, one third of the total hours allocated per week. This demonstrates the importance of this discipline, which provides the basis for fair and effective communication for all other disciplines. The training of oral and written communication skills in Romanian provides the necessary support for the formation and development of the general and specific competencies established for the other school subjects.

In the case of schools / departments with tuition in the languages of national minorities, the situation is sharply different, the minimum number of hours being increased by

the hours allocated to mother tongue and literature, without neglecting communication in Romanian (Table 2).

Table 2. The share of mother tongue and Romanian language classes in schools and teaching sections in the languages of national minorities

Grade	Number of hours mother tongue language	Number of hours Romanian language	Total amount of hours	Mother tongue language share %	Romanian language share %
Preparatory	5	3	22	22,73	13,64
1st	7	4	24	29,17	16,67
2nd	6	4	24	25,00	16,67
3rd	5	4	24	20,83	16,67
4th	5	4	25	20,00	16,00
5th	4	4	28	14,29	14,29
6th	4	4	31	12,90	12,90
7th	4	4	34	11,76	11,76
8th	4	4	33	12,12	12,12

Analyzing Table 2, it can be seen that the number of hours allocated to the mother tongue of pupils belonging to national minorities is identical to that allocated to Romanian mother tongue (Table 1), and the number of hours allocated per week for Romanian is the same (4 hours per week), except for preparatory classes (3 hours per week). It is necessary to mention that writing in the Romanian language is only studied in the second grade, after the pupils became familiar with writing and reading in their mother tongue. Starting with the fifth grade, the number of native and Romanian language lessons is the same, but the share is lower than in the teaching classes in Romanian, for example 14.29% compared to 15.38% due to the higher number high hours per week in schools / sections with tuition in the languages of national minorities by adding mother tongue classes.

The analysis of Romanian language and literature curricula should start from a comparison of general and specific competencies, in order to establish the extent to which there is a progression of competences and observance of pupils' age and linguistic peculiarities (see Table 3).

Table 3. Correspondence of general competencies

Education level	General skills - Romanian language and literature	General skills - Romanian language and literature, in schools / departments with teaching in the languages of national minorities
Primary – preparatory to 2nd grades	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receiving oral messages in <i>familiar</i> communication contexts 2. Expression of oral messages in various communication situations 3. Receiving messages written in <i>familiar</i> communication contexts 4. Writing messages in various communication situations 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receiving oral messages in <i>familiar</i> communication contexts 2. Expression of oral messages in various communication situations 3. Receiving messages written in <i>familiar</i> communication contexts 4. Writing messages in various communication situations

Education level	General skills - Romanian language and literature	General skills - Romanian language and literature, in schools / departments with teaching in the languages of national minorities
Primary, 3rd to 4th grades	1. Receiving oral messages in <i>various</i> communication contexts 2. Expression of oral messages in various communication situations 3. Receiving messages written in <i>various</i> communication contexts 4. Writing messages in various communication situations	1. Receiving oral messages in <i>various</i> communication contexts 2. Expression of oral messages in various communication situations 3. Receiving messages written in <i>various</i> communication contexts 4. Writing messages in various communication situations
5th to 8th grades	1. Participating in verbal interactions in various communication situations, by receiving and producing the oral text 2. Receiving written text of various types 3. Writing written text of various types 4. Proper, adequate and effective language use in the process oral and written communication 5. Expression of linguistic and cultural identity in context national and international	1. Receiving oral text in various communication situations 2. Production of oral text in various communication situations 3. Receiving written text of various types 4. Writing written text of various types 5. Manifestation of multi- and intercultural sensitivity through the values promoted in various cultural and social contexts

The correspondence of the general competencies, indicated in Table 3, highlights identical general language formulations in Romanian, in primary education, differentiation being achieved only at the level of specific competencies. The table lays down the differences between the general competencies established for the three grades of the fundamental procurement cycle and the first two grades of the development cycle. One of the principles of effective learning - respecting age and individual peculiarities of students - is noticed.

In secondary school education, differentiation / nuance is also evident at the level of general competencies. Such a differentiated approach, specific to the study of another, non-mother tongue, is necessary because: "The *Romanian language and literature program for schools and teaching schools in Hungarian* fosters an inter- and transdisciplinary approach to learning, as provided for in the Law on Education, following:

- rational understanding of language facts and their structural coherence, based on the essential mechanisms of generating the message in oral and written communication;
- ensuring the conscious control of the use of linguistic communication in listening, speaking, reading and writing, in relation to the norm of the Romanian language in force;
- knowledge and understanding of the basic lexical and grammatical elements common to the Romanian language and other modern languages (romanic or other families), in a synchronous vision;
- acquiring cultural cognitive skills formed mainly by reading, as a life skill;
- the assumption of the ethical values and of the national humanistic ideals, defining the modern man, necessary for his own emotional and moral development, having as a

reference the contemporary socio-cultural model." (*Presentation note in the School programs for the discipline Romanian language and literature for schools and departments with teaching in the Hungarian language. 5th-8th grades. Approved by Order of the Minister No 3393 / 28.02.2017, page 2*)

While until 2017, secondary school students belonging to national minorities were studying on the basis of a unique Romanian language and literature program, only textbooks and school auxiliaries being adapted to the linguistic specificity of national minorities, the new Romanian language and literature program for secondary school promotes significant and relevant aspects for learning Romanian as a non-mother tongue (Norel, 2017b):

- emphasise the role of Romanian language as the second communication language for the Hungarian minority, as means of expressing thoughts, feelings, and personal experiences;
- substantiate the communicative-functional model, which targets the integrated study of the language, of the communication (oral or written), and of the literary/nonliterary text;
- covering, in an integrated manner, the three components: linguistic, interrelational, and esthetic and cultural;
- facilitate the learning approach from an inter- and trans-disciplinary perspective;
- promoting the personal development of the student in an enlarged socio-cultural environment.

The national assessment in the 6th grade will have as a starting point the evaluation of general competences 2, 3 and 4, cf. the *School program for the Romanian language and literature. 5th-8th grades* and general competences 3 and 4, cf. the *School program for the Romanian language and literature for Schools and Schools with Teaching in Hungarian. 5th-8th grades*. However, the development of these competences is only accomplished if the oral communication skills and those aimed at forming the mediation and intercultural understanding skills are developed.

The training of students for the 6th grade national evaluation in 2019 starts, in fact, from primary education, on the one hand, by the development of communication skills in Romanian language, on the other, by familiarizing with the specifics of national evaluations, in 2nd and 4th grades.

What will the novelty of the national assessment in the 6th grade be? In the formulation by the National Evaluation and Examination Center of different subjects for students who have studied Romanian mother tongue and literature and for pupils who have studied Romanian as a second language in capitalizing pupils' learning experiences in the adaptation of literary texts and informative, proposed for analysis / interpretation, to the age and individual peculiarities of the pupils.

Are changes in the teaching process necessary? Of course. They are required by changing the paradigm in the application of school curricula, student focusing and the development of oral and written communication skills of pupils. The 6th grade national assessment focuses on assessing students' written communication skills, but only the harmonious blending of the formation and development of oral and written communication skills, the permanent reporting to the student, the linguistic background from which he / she comes, the adaptation of the didactic approach age and individual peculiarities of pupils can lead to school performance.

3. Conclusions

The direct involvement in the elaboration of both the Romanian language and literature school curriculum for secondary school entitles us to write this article to highlight the importance of

Romanian language in the process of personal development of the student. Only by the joined effort, school curriculum designers, manual authors, appraisal specialists, and teachers can achieve a quality education that puts the students in the center of their concerns and evaluates the skills they have developed over the years of study, going from a quantitative assessment of knowledge to a qualitative assessment.

References

- *** *School program for Communication in Romanian language. Preparatory, 1st and 2nd grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 3418/19.03.2013.
 - *** *School program for Communication in Romanian language for schools with tuition in German language. Preparatory, 1st and 2nd grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 3418/19.03.2013.
 - *** *School program for Communication in Romanian language for schools with tuition in Hungarian language. Preparatory, 1st and 2nd grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 3418/19.03.2013.
 - *** *School program for Communication in Romanian language for schools with tuition in Rromani language. Preparatory, 1st and 2nd grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 3418/19.03.2013.
 - *** *School program for Communication in Romanian language for schools with tuition in Serbian language. Preparatory, 1st and 2nd grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 3418/19.03.2013.
 - *** *School program for Communication in Romanian language for schools with tuition in Slovak language. Preparatory, 1st and 2nd grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 3418/19.03.2013.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature. 3rd and 4th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature for schools with tuition in Czech language. 3rd and 4th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature for schools with tuition in German language. 3rd and 4th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature for schools with tuition in Hungarian language. 3rd and 4th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature for schools with tuition in Rromani language. 3rd and 4th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature for schools with tuition in Serbian language. 3rd and 4th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature for schools with tuition in Slovak language. 3rd and 4th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no. 5003/02.12.2014.
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature. 5th to 8th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no 3393/28.02.2017
 - *** *School program for Romanian language and literature for schools with tuition in Hungarian language. 5th to 8th grades.* Annex no. 2 la OMEN no 3393/28.02.2017
- Norel, M. (2017a). *The intercultural and integrated approach to the curriculum of Romanian language and literature*, în Tódor, Erika-Mária (editor). (2017). *Guide of the Romanian Language and Literature Teacher for Schools and Teaching Teachers in Hungarian*. Cluj-Napoca: Abel Publishing House
- Norel, M. (2017b). New perspectives in learning romanian language in schools and sections taught in hungarian language. *Journal Plus Education*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 280-287