# Educational Platforms and Their Effectiveness in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language

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**Abstract:** The study investigates the effectiveness of educational platforms in teaching Romanian as a foreign language, addressing a critical gap between technological availability and actual language acquisition. It aims to identify the conditions under which digital platforms genuinely support communicative, linguistic, and intercultural development. The research builds on established theories of second language acquisition and computer-assisted language learning, which emphasize comprehensible input, meaningful output, feedback, and contextualized use of language. It positions itself critically in relation to studies that equate technological use with pedagogical efficiency. The study employs a qualitative analytical approach based on a functional typology of educational platforms, combined with didactic analysis of learning tasks, platform functionalities, and observed learning outcomes in higher education contexts. The findings show that platforms are effective only when integrated into a coherent didactic strategy. Indicators of effectiveness include functional fluency, reduction of systemic errors, learner autonomy, and intercultural competence. Uncritical use of technology leads to an illusion of competence without real communicative transfer. The study offers guidance for teachers, researchers, and academic administrators on evidence-based integration of digital platforms into language instruction. The article proposes an original integrative model that reconceptualizes platforms as pedagogical environments mediated by the teacher and activated by the learner, demonstrating that effectiveness depends on didactic coherence, not technology alone.

**Keywords:** communicative competence; intercultural competence; learner autonomy; didactic effectiveness

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## 1. Introduction

Teaching Romanian as a foreign language takes place within a complex educational framework shaped by the interaction between the requirements of communicative competence development, the linguistic and cultural diversity of allophone learners, and the progressive integration of digital technologies in education. This convergence influences didactic strategies and redefines the role of technological environments in the teaching–learning process.

According to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, communicative competence in a foreign language is conceived as an integrated set of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences, activated contextually in real language-use situations (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 101–103). From this perspective, teaching Romanian as a foreign language goes beyond a descriptive-grammatical dimension and aims at developing the ability to use the language functionally and appropriately in specific social and cultural contexts.

In this context, digital educational platforms can no longer be regarded as mere auxiliary tools but as structured learning environments that organize linguistic input, facilitate interaction, and influence the pace and coherence of acquisition. For allophone learners with limited exposure to Romanian outside the institutional setting, the platform becomes a central space for language exposure and controlled practice.

Research in second language acquisition shows that linguistic progress does not result from the mechanical accumulation of exercises, but from meaning-oriented learning experiences. Ellis emphasizes that language acquisition is fostered by processing comprehensible input and by opportunities for contextualized language use (Ellis, 1997, pp. 42–44). Complementarily, Chapelle argues that the effectiveness of digital environments in language teaching depends on the communicative relevance of tasks and on learners' opportunities to produce meaningful output (Chapelle, 2001, pp. 55–60).

For Romanian as a foreign language, the pragmatic and intercultural dimensions are essential. Speech acts, forms of address, and politeness strategies involve not only grammatical knowledge but also an understanding of sociocultural norms. The CEFR specifies that communicative success depends on the articulation of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and pragmatic competences in concrete contexts (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 101–106).

A documented example from CALL literature is the use of LMS platforms in university courses for international students, integrating tasks such as academic email writing, participation in thematic forums, or simulations of administrative situations. These activities are described as facilitating the transfer of competences to real communication, in contrast to exclusively formal exercises that may produce artificial results in automated assessment.

Digitalization also leads to a redefinition of didactic roles. The teacher becomes a designer of learning experiences and a linguistic and intercultural mediator, while the learner is encouraged to take an active role in monitoring their own progress, in line with the principles of autonomy formulated by Little (Little, 2007, pp. 14–17).

In this context, evaluating the effectiveness of educational platforms used in teaching Romanian as a foreign language becomes a methodological and scientific necessity. Language is acquired through contextualized use and pragmatic adaptation, and platforms become relevant only when integrated into a coherent didactic strategy oriented toward authentic communication and interculturality.

## 2. Theoretical Frameworks on Effectiveness in Foreign Language Teaching

In foreign language didactics, effectiveness is not equated with the accumulation of declarative knowledge about the language system, but with the development of a functional competence capable of sustaining real communication in varied contexts. Research in second language acquisition shows that mastery of grammatical rules or isolated vocabulary does not guarantee coherent and appropriate language use (Ellis, 1997, pp. 3–12; Hulstijn, 2001, pp. 258–260). From this perspective, didactic effectiveness is measured through observable changes in learners' communicative behavior.

A first theoretical reference point is emergent linguistic competence (interlanguage), defined as the internal system of rules and hypotheses that learners progressively construct. This system does not represent a defective version of the norm, but a legitimate cognitive structure undergoing continuous reorganization (Ellis, 1997, pp. 33–38).

A platform that proposes contextualized narrative tasks (e.g., recounting a past academic event) for the use of Romanian past tenses allows learners to:

- formulate their own hypotheses;

- compare variants (perfect compus vs. imperfect);

- progressively restructure the emergent system through explanatory feedback.

Such tasks support interlanguage restructuring more effectively than multiple-choice exercises limited to formal recognition.

A second fundamental reference point is the use of language in authentic contexts, a core criterion of communicative competence. According to the CEFR, language users are conceived as social actors who mobilize linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural resources depending on the situation (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 9–13, 101–103).

Integrating simulations of administrative situations (e.g., writing an email to a university office, requesting a certificate) facilitates the transfer of competence to real communication. In contrast, platforms limited to formal exercises may generate discrepancies between digital performance and spontaneous language use.

A third reference point concerns the integration of implicit cultural norms. Effective communication presupposes sociocultural adequacy and pragmatic sensitivity, not merely grammatical correctness (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 118–121).

Comparative analysis of request strategies (Romanian vs. learners' first languages), conducted on the platform through case studies and guided discussions, contributes to linguistic behavior adjustment and the development of intercultural competence.

From a theoretical perspective, the effectiveness of educational platforms is measured by their capacity to facilitate:

- exposure to intelligible and contextualized input;

- active, meaning-oriented language production;

- formative corrective feedback supporting interlanguage restructuring;

- intercultural transfer in real situations.

Contributions by Krashen on comprehensible input and by Swain on the role of output emphasize the necessity of combining exposure, active production, and feedback (Krashen, 1985, pp. 2–4; Swain, 2005, pp. 471–474).

In synthesis, theoretical frameworks indicate that effectiveness in foreign language teaching cannot be evaluated through quantitative or exclusively technological criteria, but through the quality of transformations produced in learners'

communicative competence. For Romanian as a foreign language, platforms are effective only when they support emergent competence development, authentic language use, and cultural integration. In the absence of these conditions, technology creates only the appearance of progress, not real competence.

## 3. Typology of Educational Platforms Used in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language

In teaching Romanian as a foreign language (RFL), educational platforms do not constitute a homogeneous category but can be classified according to their dominant didactic function in developing communicative competence. A functional typology allows for a nuanced evaluation of effectiveness and avoids generalizations regarding the impact of technology on language acquisition.

### 3.1. Learning Management Systems (LMS)

LMS platforms (e.g., Moodle, Google Classroom) provide curricular structure, content and assessment management, and progress monitoring. From a didactic perspective, their value lies in sequential coherence and controlled recurrence of tasks.

CALL literature shows, however, that LMS platforms become administrative spaces rather than acquisition environments when used primarily for material distribution and formal testing. Effectiveness emerges only when the LMS hosts authentic communicative tasks, discourse-regulated forums, and collaborative projects.

A Moodle course limited to quizzes and PDFs yields limited progress. Integrating argumentative forums, reflective journals, and functional writing tasks (academic emails, administrative requests) transforms the LMS into a space of discursive construction aligned with CEFR descriptors of the language user as a social actor (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 101–103).

### 3.2. Interactive Language Learning Platforms

Interactive platforms (e.g., applications based on repetitive practice and immediate feedback) are effective for form automatization and frequent vocabulary expansion, especially at initial levels. Theoretically, they support emergent competence consolidation through systematic practice.

Their limitation lies in the development of pragmatic competence and complex discourse, as interaction is simulated and tasks are often decontextualized (Hulstijn, 2001, pp. 258–260).

A learner may achieve high scores on lexical and grammatical exercises while being unable to formulate a coherent formal request. Interactive platforms are effective as support tools, not as exclusive environments for communicative competence development.

### 3.3. Collaborative and Creative Platforms

Collaborative tools (Google Docs, Padlet) promote active production, meaning negotiation, and discourse competence development. They correspond to the action-oriented approach promoted by the Council of Europe, emphasizing social and collaborative activities (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 14–18).

A collaborative project on Romanian traditions, written in Google Docs, requires learners to negotiate formulations, explain cultural concepts, and adapt register to an imagined audience, integrating linguistic, pragmatic, and intercultural competences simultaneously.

### 3.4. AI-Assisted Platforms

AI-assisted platforms represent an emerging direction. Research indicates that technology is effective only when it supports cognitive processes rather than substituting didactic interaction (Hampel & Stickler, 2005, pp. 311–326).

Simulating an administrative conversation with an AI assistant may help practice forms of address and discourse structures. Without didactic mediation and cultural contextualization, however, there is a risk of reinforcing inadequate strategies, confirming the central role of the teacher as linguistic and intercultural mediator.

Typological analysis shows that no platform type is sufficient on its own for communicative competence formation in RFL. Effectiveness results from complementary articulation: LMS platforms provide structure, interactive platforms support automatization, collaborative tools develop discourse, and AI-assisted solutions foster personalization and guided exploration.

## 4. Indicators of the Effectiveness of Educational Platforms in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language

Evaluating the effectiveness of educational platforms in teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL) requires moving beyond technical or quantitative criteria (number of logins, completed items, automated scores) and focusing instead on functional indicators that reflect the quality of language acquisition and use. The specialized literature emphasizes that genuine progress is manifested through observable transformations in communicative competence, not through isolated performances in controlled environments (Ellis, 1997, p. 12; Chapelle, 2001, p. 57).

A first major indicator of effectiveness is the development of functional fluency, understood as the learner's ability to produce coherent messages appropriate to communicative purposes, with progressively reduced cognitive effort. Fluency should not be confused with speaking speed, but rather with the maintenance of an intelligible and relevant discourse flow.

Research in second language acquisition shows that fluency develops through repeated exposure to similar tasks that are nevertheless contextually varied, allowing the stabilization of discourse strategies (Ellis, 1997, pp. 74–76).

Within a collaborative platform, the weekly production of short video micro-presentations (2–3 minutes) on academic or everyday topics, followed by structured feedback, leads over time to:

- increased global coherence of the message;

- reduced non-functional pauses;

- more confident use of discourse connectors.

These transformations constitute direct indicators of platform effectiveness.

A second essential indicator is the reduction of persistent systemic errors, that is, incorrect structures that recur consistently and signal blockages in the reorganization of emergent linguistic competence. Platform effectiveness is not measured by the immediate elimination of errors, but by the capacity to prevent their fossilization.

Hulstijn highlights the decisive role of contextualized corrective feedback, oriented toward meaning and use, in restructuring the learner's linguistic system (Hulstijn, 2001, pp. 258–260).

An LMS platform that allows the teacher to add personalized comments directly to learners' written texts (explanations regarding agreement, verb government, or

preposition selection) contributes significantly to reducing recurrent errors, in contrast to exclusively automated feedback.

A central indicator of effectiveness is the learner's ability to understand and produce coherent oral and written discourse adapted to different text types and communicative situations. This level goes beyond sentence structure and concerns the global organization of the message.

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, discourse competence is an integral part of pragmatic competence and conditions communicative success (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 123–125).

Writing an argumentative text on an LMS platform, followed by successive revisions and guided peer discussions, enables learners to improve discourse structure, coherence of ideas, and stylistic adequacy—clear indicators of communicative progress.

Another fundamental indicator of platform effectiveness is the development of learner autonomy. David Little defines autonomy as the ability to assume responsibility for one's own learning process, not as the absence of pedagogical guidance (Little, 2007, pp. 14–17).

Effective platforms provide tools for self-assessment, reflection, and progress monitoring, thereby supporting awareness of learning processes.

The use of digital reflective journals, in which learners record encountered difficulties, employed strategies, and subsequent objectives, fosters the development of autonomy and increases individual responsibility for learning.

For Romanian as a Foreign Language, a distinctive indicator of effectiveness is the capacity for intercultural transfer, understood as the ability to use the language while respecting social and pragmatic norms across diverse cultural contexts. The CEFR explicitly integrates intercultural competence into the model of communicative competence (Council of Europe, 2001, pp. 118–121).

Analyzing authentic dialogues from Romanian contexts (administrative, academic) on a collaborative platform, followed by intercultural comparisons and guided reflection, leads to adjustments in communicative behavior and helps prevent pragmatic dysfunctions.

From both a theoretical and practical perspective, educational platforms that are effective in teaching RFL are characterized by:

- increased functional fluency;

- reduction of persistent systemic errors;

- consolidation of discourse competence;

- development of learner autonomy;

- achievement of intercultural transfer.

These indicators reflect not only platform-based performance but, more importantly, the learner's ability to use the language outside the instructional environment, which represents the essential criterion of effectiveness.


## 5. Advantages and Limitations of Using Educational Platforms in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language

Analyzing the effectiveness of educational platforms in teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL) requires a balanced approach that highlights both their formative potential and their structural limitations. The specialized literature consistently emphasizes that technology is not pedagogically neutral and that its impact depends on how it is integrated into a coherent instructional strategy oriented toward the acquisition of communicative competence (Ellis, 1997, pp. 3–12; Chapelle, 2001, pp. 55–60).

A first major advantage is the diversification of learning experiences. Platforms allow the integration of authentic texts, audio-video materials, interactive tasks, and multimodal activities, offering allolingual learners varied exposure to Romanian. This diversity partially compensates for the lack of natural exposure and facilitates adaptation to different discourse types.

A second relevant advantage is the adaptation of learning pace to individual needs. Platforms allow learners to revisit difficult content and manage their study time autonomously, an essential aspect in contexts involving heterogeneous groups of allolingual learners.

A learner experiencing difficulties in using verbal tenses can revisit explanations and applied tasks related to the compound past and imperfect without the pressure of the collective classroom pace, thus facilitating form stabilization and reducing systemic errors.

A third advantage is the support of continuous formative assessment. Platforms enable the systematic collection of written and oral productions and provide a framework for personalized feedback. Hulstijn emphasizes that contextualized feedback contributes to restructuring emergent linguistic competence and preventing fossilization (Hulstijn, 2001, pp. 258–260).

In addition, platforms support the development of learner autonomy. According to the Council of Europe's perspective, the learner is a social actor who progressively assumes control over their own learning (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 141). Self-assessment tools and digital reflective journals foster awareness of the acquisition process and individual responsibility.

Despite these advantages, the use of educational platforms involves limitations and didactic risks that must be critically managed. A first risk is the superficialization of learning when activities are reduced to mechanical recognition or completion exercises lacking contextual anchoring. In such cases, learners may achieve high scores without developing functional language use competence.

A second risk is the fragmentation of linguistic competence. Platforms that do not integrate complex discursive tasks may lead to isolated knowledge of structures without coherence at the discourse level.

A learner who correctly completes vocabulary and grammar exercises on a platform may encounter major difficulties in writing a coherent text or delivering an oral presentation, indicating a lack of transfer to real communication.

Another significant risk is excessive reliance on automated feedback. Although instant feedback is useful in early learning stages, the literature shows that maximum effectiveness is achieved through explanatory, level-adapted feedback provided by the teacher (Ellis, 1997, p. 130).

Platforms may also generate an illusion of competence through badges, levels, or scores that do not correspond to real communicative performance. This discrepancy becomes evident in authentic interactional situations, where learners struggle to formulate pragmatically appropriate messages.

From both a theoretical and practical perspective, the advantages of educational platforms can only be fully exploited when they are integrated into a balanced instructional framework that preserves the teacher's role as linguistic and intercultural mediator. Platforms cannot substitute human interaction and guided

reflection; rather, they can extend and support pedagogical action when used critically and responsibly.

In teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language, platform effectiveness does not derive from technological performance, but from pedagogical coherence in their use. Technology becomes a factor of progress only when it is subordinated to formative objectives and oriented toward the development of learners' real communicative competence.

## 6. An Integrative Model for the Effective Use of Educational Platforms in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language

The analysis of educational platform typologies, effectiveness indicators, and the advantages and limitations of their use leads to the need to formulate an integrative model capable of capitalizing on the potential of technology without compromising the fundamental principles of foreign language didactics. Specialized literature shows that fragmented use of technology may generate apparently positive outcomes, yet unstable from the perspective of real communicative competence.

The integrative model starts from the premise that no platform is effective in isolation, but only in relation to instructional objectives, the teacher's role, and the learner's profile. Platforms are therefore conceived as pedagogical tools subordinated to a coherent instructional design, not as ends in themselves.

Within the integrative model, the educational platform functions simultaneously as:

- a space for controlled exposure to Romanian;
- an environment for contextualized practice;
- a framework for metalinguistic and intercultural reflection.

This triple function corresponds to the view that effective learning requires the combination of comprehensible input, active production, and reflective feedback. Platforms become effective when they allow coherent task sequencing, revisiting of difficulties, and integration of formative feedback.

In a university course, the platform integrates an authentic text on academic life, followed by:

- lexical-discursive analysis activities;
- functional writing tasks (academic e-mail);

- comparative reflections on Romanian university norms.

In this way, the platform simultaneously supports language learning and understanding of the socio-cultural context of use.

A central element of the integrative model is the role of the teacher, which is not diminished by the use of platforms but rather redefined. The teacher becomes a linguistic mediator, task designer, and facilitator of reflection, responsible for orienting activities toward the development of communicative competence.

Chapelle emphasizes that the effectiveness of educational technology is closely linked to the quality of pedagogical mediation, not to the sophistication of the technical tool (Chapelle, 2001, pp. 62–64). The teacher contextualizes materials, interprets errors, and guides learners in adjusting their linguistic strategies.

The integrative model places the learner in an active, responsible, and reflective position. According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, the language user is a social actor who mobilizes linguistic and cultural resources to act in real contexts (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 12).

Effective educational platforms foster autonomy through self-assessment tools, progress monitoring, and guided reflection. Little shows that autonomy does not imply the absence of the teacher, but the learner's ability to assume responsibility for their own learning process (Little, 2007, p. 17).

The use of a reflective digital journal, in which learners record encountered difficulties and employed strategies, promotes the internalization of the learning process and increases long-term effectiveness.

An essential principle of the integrative model is the complementarity of platforms. The LMS provides structure and continuity, interactive platforms support the automation of forms, collaborative tools develop discourse, and artificial intelligence–assisted solutions can support personalization and guided exploration.

CALL literature highlights that effectiveness results from the pedagogical orchestration of resources, not from the exclusive use of a single type of platform (Chapelle, 2001, p. 82).

The integrative model for using educational platforms in teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language is based on:

- the platform as a functional learning environment, not an administrative one;

- the teacher as a linguistic and intercultural mediator;

- the learner as an active and reflective actor;

- the complementary articulation of digital resources.

Within this framework, technology does not teach the language, but creates optimal conditions for developing real communicative competence. Platforms become effective only when integrated into a coherent instructional strategy oriented toward meaning, communication, and interculturality.

The analysis of teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language in a digital context highlights that the effectiveness of educational platforms cannot be assessed through technical, quantitative, or popularity-based criteria, but exclusively through their impact on the development of learners' real communicative competence. Theoretical data from second language acquisition confirm that authentic progress does not result from the accumulation of exercises or isolated automation of linguistic forms, but from contextualized, functional, and reflective language use.

The study of educational platform typologies has shown that no single type of platform is sufficient on its own. LMS platforms provide structure and curricular coherence; interactive platforms support initial automation; collaborative tools foster discourse and meaning negotiation; and artificial intelligence–assisted solutions can support personalization and guided exploration. Didactic effectiveness emerges only through the complementary articulation of these resources within a coherent pedagogical design.

Functional indicators of effectiveness—functional fluency, reduction of systemic errors, development of discourse competence, autonomy, and intercultural transfer—confirm that platform performance does not equate to the ability to use the language in real contexts. Platforms may create an illusion of progress when evaluation is limited to automated scores or standardized feedback, without guided reflection and pedagogical mediation.

The analysis of advantages and limitations has shown that educational platforms become a factor of progress only when integrated critically and responsibly. Uncritical use may lead to superficial learning, fragmentation of linguistic competence, and excessive dependence on automated feedback—phenomena incompatible with the objectives of communicative training in Romanian as a Foreign Language.

The proposed integrative model confirms the central role of the teacher as linguistic and intercultural mediator, as well as the positioning of the learner as an active and reflective agent of their own acquisition, in line with the action-oriented approach promoted by the Council of Europe. Within this framework, technology does not teach the language, but creates conditions for exposure, practice, reflection, and intercultural transfer.

In conclusion, the effectiveness of educational platforms in teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language does not derive from technological performance, but from the pedagogical coherence of their use. Platforms are relevant only when subordinated to formative objectives and integrated into an instructional strategy oriented toward meaning, authentic communication, and interculturality. In the absence of this framework, technology remains a sophisticated administrative tool, but one incapable of generating real communicative competence.

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