



Modern Evaluative Practices in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the analysis of pedagogical paradigm shifts in the field of language skills assessment, using the teaching of Romanian as a foreign language as a focal point. Strategies as formative assessment, which provides immediate and constructive feedback, and self-assessment – designed to stimulate the foreign student's autonomy in monitoring their own progress according to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages are analyzed. The article describes the stages of the evaluation process, with emphasis on the importance of each component: descriptors, evaluation criteria, self-assessment. The research methods used are observation and case study. It shares efficient assessment practices applied in the groups of beginners. The modernization of assessment techniques in teaching Romanian as a foreign language represents a redefinition of the relationship between teacher and student; the teaching process becomes transparent, predictable, and focused on the real progress of the student. The article has significant academic and practical value, especially in the current context of globalization and the increase in the number of foreign students in the Republic of Moldova.

Keywords: Romanian as a foreign language; assessment; descriptor; feedback; self-assessment

1. Introduction

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The assessment represents an important stage of the study process, distinguished by a complex and multidimensional characteristic that requires the selection and appreciation of specific strategies such as: continuous streamlining of curricular products; revision of educational objectives; formation of ideas, conclusions; analysis and improvement of pertinent evaluative criteria. The defining aspect of the evaluation process is its cyclical nature, representing a response to teaching and an incentive for further learning.

The problem of evaluation has always been on specialists' radar in the field, this being an essential component of the study process. It is worth mentioning reference works, such as *The theory and the methodology of assessment* (Cucoş, 2008) that offers an exhaustive perspective on the phenomenon, but also newer studies that insist on the modernization of the evaluation process, with the emphasis on the importance of formative evaluation. Several notable scholars merit mention in this context, including Bocos (2003), Popa (2015), Barbaneagra (2018), and Trinca (2024). Interest in evaluation remains constant throughout the teaching process, with efforts to identify effective methods pursued both in the classroom and through academic research (Vintu, 2022).

Specialized literature in the field of foreign language didactics highlights the importance of formative and continuous assessment, especially at beginner levels, where constant monitoring of progress contributes to the consolidation of learning outcomes and to the prevention of persistent errors. Tools such as systematic observation, authentic communicative tasks, applied exercises, tests with simple items, and guided self-assessment enable a refined analysis of linguistic competences within a flexible and motivating assessment framework.

Refining assessment practices in teaching Romanian as a foreign language at the A1 and A2 levels aligns with current research directions in language didactics, aiming to optimize the teaching–learning process and to promote coherent, equitable, and competence-oriented assessment.

2. Strategies for Language Assessment

Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL) at the A1 and A2 levels focuses on developing the essential communicative competences required for handling simple, predictable everyday situations. At this foundational stage, assessment is more than a tool for measuring linguistic acquisition; it plays a crucial role in scaffolding learner progress and in adjusting the instructional approach.

Evaluation at these levels primarily targets the ability to comprehend and produce basic oral and written messages, to use core grammatical structures, and deploy high-frequency vocabulary in familiar contexts. The basic teaching support used is the textbook “Manual de limba română ca limbă străină” (Platon, 2012), a comprehensive work rich in interactive activities that facilitate the effective assessment of acquisition of linguistic skills. So, the problem analyzed in the current paper is to prove that the assessment practices should be adapted to the characteristics of non-native learners to foster communicative growth while mitigating assessment-related anxiety. An assessment based on transparency that would determine the common recognition of the six levels of competence stipulated in the CEFR remains important and current in achieving the objectives of European language policy.

The applied methodology must correspond to the objectives of the course; among which motivating and supporting the study process have a primary position. The option for a particular evaluation method is the result of several factors. Questioning, describing and reconstructing information, completing dialogues, exposure with visual support are indispensable methods for assessing the degree of comprehension of the text and assimilation of the thematic vocabulary. Following the level of mastery of the studied subject, the teacher offers situations that require students to prove their skills in describing actions, events, phenomena; expressing their opinion and building dialogues. Namely, the strategies used by the teacher to ensure a dynamic and interactive instructional process will also determine a flexible and interactive evaluation.

The key competence on which the attention of teachers is focused, being addressed in the curriculum, study plan, textbooks, is communication. The assessment tests proposed within Romanian as a foreign language course, regardless of level, are directed towards assessing oral or written communication skills according to the rigors provided in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

A modern trend is balanced assessment that can cover all the language aspects:

Competence	Examples of evaluative practices
Oral comprehension	Listening to announcements, news or dialogues and completing multiple choice grids or tables.
Written comprehension	Reading authentic texts (menus, articles, emails) and extracting specific information.
Oral production	A sustained monologue or semi-directed dialogue on a given topic; description of an image.
Written production	Writing functional texts: letters, essays, social media posts.

Depending on the competence to be acquired by students with A1/A2 level of Romanian language proficiency, the following items may be proposed:

Competence	Items
Oral comprehension	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Select the image that refers to the message you heard. 2. Check <i>True/False</i> or Check only the true statements according to the message you heard. 3. Associate the person and the information about them (activity, age, appearance, etc.). 4. Fill in the blanks according to the information you heard. 5. Answer the questions briefly.
Written comprehension	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tick <i>True/False</i> or <i>Don't say</i>. 2. Choose the correct answer according to the text you read. 3. Write a heading for the given paragraph. 4. Complete the statements with information from the text. 5. Order the words in the given statement. 6. Order the paragraphs in the text. 7. Complete the statements with the missing words.
Oral production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Personal introduction. 2. Answer simple questions about daily routine. 3. Describe a picture. 4. Make a short, functional dialogue (at the store, at the restaurant, on the street). 5. Likes/ Dislikes (compare different things and give a simple reason). 6. Speak about plans for weekend or yesterday's activities using verbs in past and future tenses.
Written production	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce yourself in 3-5 sentences. 2. Fill out a simple form (name, age, hobby). 3. Write a short message (A2).

3. Descriptors for Romanian Language A1-A2

Considering the provisions of the CEFR¹, but also the previously mentioned competences, the following descriptors will be formulated:

- understanding common words and expressions related to family, occupations, living environment, shopping, health, simple instructions that refer especially to familiar contexts;

¹ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/>

- identifying familiar words in short contexts;
- perceiving simple messages;
- formulating simple questions regarding personal data and providing short answers;
- describing personal experiences, the environment or future plans.

The descriptor must be clear, precise and easy to evaluate. A model of a descriptive scale is:

Very good	Good	In progress
• Aligns perfectly with the criteria.	Aligns with the majority of standards.	Partially responsive.
• Uses vocabulary correctly.	Adequate vocabulary, with few hesitations.	Limited vocabulary.
• Clear oral and written expression.	Maintains overall clarity in expression.	Needs support.

Demonstrating the aforementioned, we bring the example of some activities used to assess the level of assimilation of the verb in the present tense and of the vocabulary regarding the topic: *Activități pentru timpul liber* (Platon, 2012, p.63)

- *Write the correct verbs for each picture.*
- *Select the correct place for each activity.*
- *Look at the pictures and say where each person is and what they are doing.*
- *Interview a colleague. Find out what activities they usually do.*
- *Describe orally the given pictures and write by a sentence for each one.*

Regardless the applied form of assessment (initial, formative or final), the student must be informed about the criteria they will consider in order to avoid unpredictable situations, reduce the feeling of anxiety, have the opportunity to focus on more important aspects and manage their time correctly.

To ensure an efficient evaluation process in the Romanian as a foreign language course:

- Understanding the requirements – the student's response does not deviate from the received requirement.
- Using thematic vocabulary – builds contexts with the lexemes studied in class.
- Oral expression – formulates clear, intelligible statements.

- Written expression – writes simple, correct sentences.
- Involvement – actively participates in the proposed activities.

At the same time, having the evaluation criteria, the student can assess his own work or answer. It is a strategic tool that transforms the student from a passive receiver into an active participant in the learning process. In the study of a foreign language, where progress can sometimes seem slow or abstract, self-assessment brings clarity and structure. One of the advantages of the process is the development of responsibility, as the student has the opportunity to track his progress and to identify the gaps.

An important stage of the evaluation process is the teacher's feedback, which must be clear, constructive, timely and balanced. Analyzing the results of the assessment, the teacher will encourage the use of complete statements, will reformulate correctly without penalizing, will highlight progress, not mistakes.

4. Conclusions

- International standards alignment. Modern assessment must be aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. This ensures the objectivity of results.
- Assessment is a continuous process. The modernization of the assessment process involves shifting the emphasis final exam to formative assessment. The latter provides constant feedback, giving the teacher the opportunity to adjust the teaching strategy in real time and the student the opportunity to correct their learning path.
- An effective assessment process is focused on competencies. Modern practices promote the assessment of the ability to use the Romanian language in authentic communication situations. The aim is no longer just to achieve abstract grammatical correctness, but also the student's ability to cope in real socio-professional contexts.
- Developing autonomy through self-assessment. By actively involving the student in the grading process, he becomes more aware of his own shortcomings and more responsible for his own progress, developing critical thinking about the learning process.

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