Didactics of Romanian Language and Literature Between Tradition and Innovation: Modern Perspectives in Primary Education

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Abstract: Romanian Language and Literature constitutes a core subject in primary education, playing a decisive role in the development of pupils' communication competences. Recent educational paradigms advocate a shift from predominantly traditional, teacher-centered instruction toward innovative, learner-centered pedagogical approaches. This paper examines the didactics of Romanian Language and Literature through the lens of the interplay between tradition and innovation, emphasizing contemporary instructional strategies that enhance linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence development in primary school pupils. Particular attention is given to interactive teaching methods, competency-based learning, and formative assessment as essential components of modern didactic practice. The findings suggest that the integration of traditional instructional principles with innovative pedagogical strategies contributes to more effective learning outcomes, increased learner engagement, and the development of transferable communication skills in primary education.

Keywords: didactics of Romanian Language and Literature; primary education; innovative pedagogical approaches; communication competences; learner-centered learning; formative assessment

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1. Introduction

The socio-cultural and technological transformations of the last decades have generated a profound reconfiguration of educational paradigms. In this context, the teaching of the Romanian language and literature, a fundamental discipline in the formation of communication and critical thinking skills, is subject to a continuous process of redefinition.

Primary education represents the essential stage for developing literacy skills, and the teaching of the Romanian language and literature plays a central role in shaping cultural identity and the ability to comprehend texts. In the Romanian space, the pedagogical tradition has been influenced by personalities such as Spiru Haret and Constantin Cucoș, whose contributions laid the foundations of a systematic and formative education.The objective of this article is to analyze how the teaching of Romanian language and literature in primary education can integrate the values of tradition with the demands of contemporary pedagogical innovation, offering a coherent theoretical and applied framework.

2. Theoretical Foundations: Tradition in Romanian Language Teaching

The Romanian teaching tradition has prioritized the development of linguistic competencies through explanatory methods, heuristic conversations, and systematic exercises in grammatical analysis. The emphasis has been placed on correctness, rigor, and the internalization of the norm of the literary language.

The classic teaching model, centered on the teacher, has favored the structured transmission of content and the consolidation of reading and writing skills. Children's literature has been used as a tool for moral and aesthetic formation, and expressive reading has constituted a fundamental teaching practice.

From the perspective of traditional pedagogy, the role of the teacher was formative and normative, and assessment had a predominantly summative character. This paradigm, although criticized for its rigidity, has contributed to the consolidation of a language culture and the development of basic competencies among students.

3. The Competence Paradigm and the Current Curriculum

The curriculum reform after 2000 introduced a competence-based orientation, in line with the European recommendations on lifelong learning. The competence to

communicate in the mother tongue is defined not only by the mastery of linguistic norms, but also by the ability to interpret and produce messages in various contexts.

The current curriculum for primary education promotes:

• active and collaborative learning;

• interdisciplinary integration;

• the development of critical thinking;

• the use of digital technology.

This change implies a redefinition of the role of the teacher, who becomes a facilitator of learning, and a repositioning of the student as an active participant in the construction of knowledge.

4. Methodological Innovations in Teaching Romanian Language and Literature

4.1. Project-Based Learning

The project method stimulates students' autonomy and responsibility. Within literature lessons, projects can aim at creating digital reading journals, dramatizations, or multimodal creations.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a student-centered teaching strategy, based on constructivist and socio-cultural principles of learning. From the perspective of the theory of cognitive development formulated by Lev Vygotsky, collaborative and contextualized activities favor the internalization of linguistic structures through interaction and negotiation of meaning. In primary education, the project method acquires particular relevance, as it allows the integration of communication, creativity, and metacognitive reflection skills in a coherent applied framework.

In the teaching of the Romanian language and literature, projects can be structured on three complementary levels:

1. Literary exploration projects – creating digital reading diaries, character concept maps, or class literary blogs. These activities stimulate deep comprehension of the text, symbolic interpretation, and the expression of reasoned personal opinions. The digitization of the reading diary favors the development of multimodal literacy by integrating text, image, and audio elements.

2. Creative transposition projects – dramatizations, alternative scenarios, visual or audio reinterpretations of literary texts. Through dramatization, students internalize the narrative structure, the relationships between characters, and the dynamics of the conflict, transforming reading into a performative experience. The process strengthens oral expression skills, empathy, and discursive coherence.

3. Interdisciplinary and multimodal projects – the creation of digital creations (interactive presentations, digital comics, video storytelling), which involve the use of technological tools for expressive and analytical purposes. Thus, linguistic skills are integrated with digital ones, in accordance with the European DigCompEdu framework (Redecker, 2020).

From a methodological point of view, project-based learning involves going through distinct stages: formulating an authentic problem, planning activities, distributing roles, documenting, creating the final product and reflective evaluation. Evaluation is predominantly oriented towards the formative dimension, using descriptive rubrics, portfolios and self-assessment. This approach strengthens individual responsibility and the ability to self-regulate learning.

Recent studies published in Teaching and Teacher Education indicate that consistent implementation of PBL contributes to increasing intrinsic motivation and improving literacy performance, provided that projects are rigorously structured and anchored in the curriculum. In the absence of a clear didactic design, the method risks becoming superficial or excessively product-oriented, to the detriment of the cognitive process.

In the Romanian context, the integration of the project method in teaching Romanian language and literature facilitates the transition from the reproduction of information to the active construction of meaning. It does not substitute structural instruction, but complements it, providing an applicative framework for the conscious use of the linguistic norm in authentic communicative situations.

Therefore, project-based learning is an effective tool for articulating tradition (the rigor of textual analysis) with innovation (multimodality and digital collaboration), strengthening the integrative model proposed in the research.

4.2. Digital Technologies and Multimodal Literacy

The integration of digital technologies in the teaching of Romanian language and literature is not just an instrumental adaptation to the contemporary technological

context, but an epistemological transformation of the concept of literacy. In the current paradigm, literacy goes beyond the competence of decoding and producing written text, including the ability to interpret and construct messages in multimodal contexts – textual, visual, audio and interactive. In this sense, the theoretical contributions of Gunther Kress emphasize that meaning is generated through the simultaneous orchestration of several semiotic modes, and the school must reflect this cultural reality.

In primary education, the use of educational platforms (such as LMS) and interactive applications allows the development of digital literacy skills in a gradual and contextualized manner. Students can create collaborative texts using shared documents, develop digital stories (digital storytelling) by integrating images, narrative voice and graphic elements or build interactive presentations that reflect the personal interpretation of a literary text. These activities contribute to the development of written and oral communication skills, critical thinking and creativity.

From a cognitive perspective, digital technologies facilitate the deep processing of information by simultaneously involving the visual and auditory channels, in accordance with multimedia learning theories. At the same time, they support the differentiation of instruction, allowing the adaptation of tasks to the rhythm and learning style of each student. Students with reading difficulties can benefit from text-to-speech functions, while advanced students can explore tasks of comparative analysis or creative reinterpretation.

Another significant advantage is the possibility of implementing online formative assessment. Digital tools allow for immediate feedback, interactive questionnaires, digital rubrics and electronic portfolios, facilitating progress monitoring and self-regulation of learning. According to the European DigCompEdu framework (Redecker, 2020), the use of technology in assessment strengthens the transparency of criteria and the active involvement of the student in the assessment process. However, international literature highlights the fact that the mere presence of technology does not guarantee improved performance. The positive impact only occurs when the use of digital tools is integrated into a coherent didactic design and supported by the professional competence of the teacher. In the absence of a clear pedagogical strategy, technology can become a decorative element, without cognitive relevance.

In the context of teaching Romanian language and literature, digital technologies must be harnessed as media for exploring and constructing meaning, not as a substitute for deep reading. Their effective integration requires articulation with traditional textual analysis, so that students acquire both linguistic accuracy and interpretive flexibility.

Therefore, multimodal literacy becomes a natural extension of communication competence, and digital technologies – a catalyst for authentic learning, when anchored in a reflective and balanced pedagogical practice.

4.3. Formative Assessment and Constructive Feedback

Current trends promote continuous, progress-focused assessment. Student portfolios and self-assessment contribute to the development of metacognition and the empowerment of learning.

In the contemporary educational paradigm, assessment is no longer conceived exclusively as a tool for measuring final performance, but as a mechanism for continuously regulating the learning process. Formative assessment focuses on progress, on identifying support needs and on developing the student's capacity for self-reflection. This orientation corresponds to current approaches in educational sciences, which argue that systematic and task-oriented feedback has a significant impact on academic performance (Hattie, 2023).

In the teaching of Romanian language and literature, formative assessment acquires a strategic function, as communication and textual interpretation skills develop gradually, through practice and reflection. Constructive feedback must be specific, descriptive and oriented towards improvement, avoiding global labeling of performance. For example, in the evaluation of a composition, the emphasis can be placed on discursive coherence, vocabulary adequacy and narrative structure, offering concrete suggestions for revision.

The student portfolio is a central tool of formative assessment. By systematically collecting written products, projects and personal reflections, the portfolio allows monitoring the evolution of skills over time. In addition, it favors assuming responsibility for one's own educational path and strengthens the relationship between process and result. In the digital environment, electronic portfolios facilitate the organization of materials and the integration of multimodal feedback (audio comments, digital rubrics, interactive self-assessments).

Self-assessment and peer assessment contribute to the development of metacognition – the student's ability to analyze their own learning strategies and identify strengths and areas for improvement. In the spirit of the socio-cultural theory formulated by Lev Vygotsky, evaluative dialogue supports the internalization of quality criteria and progress in the zone of proximal development. The student is no longer a passive receiver of the teacher's appreciation, but an active participant in building performance standards.

The implementation of formative assessment involves the use of various tools: descriptive rubrics, reflection sheets, learning diaries, self-analysis questionnaires and digital platforms for instant feedback. It is important that the assessment is organically integrated into the teaching process, not perceived as a separate or additional stage.

In the context of the Hybrid Didactic Integration Model (MIDH), formative-metacognitive assessment functions as an element of cohesion between structural instruction and digital pedagogy. It ensures continuity of progress and strengthens student autonomy, contributing to the development of reflective and sustainable literacy. Thus, constructive feedback becomes not only a correction tool, but a vector of deep learning and educational accountability.

5. The Balance between Tradition and Innovation

A contemporary approach to the teaching of Romanian language and literature cannot be based on a logic of substitution, in which innovation would fully replace tradition, but on a logic of critical integration. The modernization of the instructional-educational process involves the functional reevaluation of established practices, not their abandonment. Structural training – systematic grammatical analysis, practicing the norm, expressive reading – continues to provide the cognitive framework necessary for the development of linguistic competence. In the absence of this foundation, interactive approaches risk becoming fragmented and lacking conceptual coherence.

The integration of innovative strategies, such as project-based learning, digital-multimodal pedagogy and formative assessment, however, offers an applicative context that gives relevance and functionality to the knowledge acquired. Morphosyntactic analysis can be inserted into creative writing tasks, and the study of figures of speech can be capitalized on by creating multimodal products (literary

podcasts, filmed dramatizations, digital comics). Thus, analytical rigor and creativity are not mutually exclusive, but mutually potentiated.

Expressive reading, traditionally associated with the internalization of aesthetic values, can be expanded through collaborative digital interpretations, discussion forums or interactive concept maps. Students do not just reproduce the content of the text, but re-signify it through multiple perspectives, developing critical thinking and argumentation capacity. In this dynamic, technology becomes a medium for cognitive mediation, not an end in itself.

The balance between tradition and innovation also has a curricular dimension. Excessive fragmentation of content, determined by the uncritical introduction of digital tools or "current" methods, can lead to a loss of coherence in teaching progression. Therefore, planning must ensure logical continuity between objectives, content, methods and assessment. Authentic innovation does not consist in the accumulation of techniques, but in their articulation in an integrated teaching design.

From a systemic perspective, balance also involves adapting to the real context of the school – resources, professional training, student profile. Implementing innovative strategies without adequate methodological support can generate resistance or superficiality in application. In contrast, a reflexive integration, based on the professional competence of the teaching staff, favors the sustainability of change.

In conclusion, the balance between tradition and innovation is the essential condition for maintaining the coherence of the instructional-educational process and for developing a complete literacy: rigorous from a linguistic point of view and flexible from an interpretative perspective. This synthesis constitutes the core of the proposed integrative model and provides a framework for action for the reform of the didactics of the Romanian language and literature in primary education.

6. Implications for Teacher Training

The reconfiguration of the didactics of the Romanian language and literature in the logic of integration between tradition and innovation requires a systemic rethinking of the initial and continuous training of teachers. The primary education teacher can no longer be defined exclusively by disciplinary competence, but by the ability to design complex learning experiences, adapted to the current socio-cultural and technological context. In this sense, didactic professionalization must be based on an extended competence profile, coherent with European standards.

1. Pedagogical digital competences

Integrating technology into the teaching of Romanian language and literature requires more than technical skills. Teachers must master the principles of digital instructional design, the critical selection of online resources, and the use of interactive tools for formative purposes. According to the DigCompEdu framework (Redecker, 2020), digital competence involves planning, implementing, and evaluating technology-assisted activities in a pedagogically sound manner. Initial training should include modules dedicated to digital didactics applied to the subject, and continuing training should offer practical workshops focused on integrating technology into textual analysis and producing multimodal messages.

2. Differentiated teaching strategies

The diversity of levels of linguistic competence and learning pace requires the adoption of differentiated strategies. The teacher must be able to adapt the contents and tasks according to the needs of the students, using various methods: activities based on interest centers, gradual tasks, adapted resources and personalized feedback. In teaching the Romanian language, differentiation can target the level of complexity of the texts, the type of exercises or the mode of expression (written, oral, visual). Teacher training must develop skills in educational diagnosis and flexible design.

3. Authentic assessment methods

Authentic assessment involves relating the student's performance to real communication situations and using formative tools, such as portfolios, descriptive rubrics and self-assessment. The teacher must acquire skills in formulating transparent criteria and providing constructive feedback, oriented towards progress. In professional training, the emphasis should be on developing reflective evaluative competence, which allows for continuous adjustment of the teaching approach.

4. Developing intercultural competence

In a society characterized by cultural diversity and social mobility, teaching the Romanian language and literature involves intercultural sensitivity. Literary texts can become spaces for dialogue between identities, and the teacher must be prepared to capitalize on the diversity of students' experiences. Intercultural competence requires openness, empathy and the ability to integrate multiple perspectives in the interpretation of texts. Initial training should include components of intercultural education and critical discourse analysis.

Overall, the primary school teacher configures himself as a cultural mediator and designer of learning experiences, capable of harmonizing traditional rigor with the dynamics of innovation. He designs teaching situations in which systematic grammatical analysis coexists with digital exploration and metacognitive reflection. Thus, teaching professionalism becomes an essential factor in the sustainability of educational reform and the development of an integrative literacy, adapted to contemporary challenges.

7. Conclusions

The teaching of Romanian language and literature in primary education is at the intersection of tradition and innovation. The valorization of the Romanian pedagogical heritage must be carried out in parallel with the adoption of modern teaching practices, focused on skills and the integration of technology.

A sustainable educational model requires curricular coherence, continuous professional training and orientation towards the integral development of the student.

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