Innovative Didactic Approaches in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL)

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Abstract: Teaching Romanian as a foreign language (RFL) faces specific challenges generated by the diversity of learners' linguistic and cultural profiles, as well as the need to align with European standards on language competences. The article analyzes the main innovative didactic approaches applicable to teaching RFL, including the communicative-actional paradigm, the integration of digital technologies, the intercultural approach and the use of multimodal resources. The methodological implications and advantages of these directions in the development of communication, autonomy and language transfer skills are highlighted. The study supports the need for an integrative model, focused on competences and the cultural contextualization of the Romanian language.

Keywords: RFL; communicative approach; interculturality; digital pedagogy; linguistic competences; didactic innovation

1. Introduction

Globalization, academic mobility and international migration have led to a significant increase in interest in learning Romanian as a foreign language (RFL). Romania is integrated into the European education space, and teaching Romanian to foreign students, migrant workers or members of international communities requires

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adaptation to the standards of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).

RFL teaching involves not only transmitting the grammatical and lexical system, but also facilitating cultural integration and developing pragmatic skills. In this context, traditional methods, focused on explanation and repetitive exercise, are insufficient to meet current needs. It is necessary to adopt some innovative approaches, focused on communication, interaction and authenticity.

2. Communicative-Actional Paradigm

The communicative-actional paradigm represents the dominant methodological foundation in foreign language teaching in the contemporary European context and constitutes an essential landmark in the didactic design of Romanian as a foreign language (RFL). This orientation combines the principles of the communicative approach with the action perspective formulated in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which defines the language user as a "social actor" involved in carrying out tasks in a given context.

2.1. From Linguistic Competence to Action Competence

The communicative approach emerged as a reaction to structural and audiolingual methods, focused on repetition and grammatical automation. It shifted the emphasis from formal correctness to the ability to use language functionally in real communication situations. Subsequently, the action perspective expanded this vision, stating that language learning involves the achievement of authentic social tasks, which involve the integrated mobilization of linguistic, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences.

In teaching RFL, this means that the objective is not only the mastery of grammatical rules, but the learner's ability to act effectively in a Romanian context: to request administrative information, participate in an informal conversation, write a professional email or give a presentation.

2.2. Fundamental Principles of the Communicative-Actional Paradigm

The application of this paradigm in teaching Romanian as a foreign language requires compliance with clear methodological principles:

Focus on meaning and functionality – teaching activities aim at transmitting and negotiating meaning, not just formal correctness.

Use of authentic tasks – learners solve problems or perform activities similar to those encountered in real life.

Interaction as a learning environment – dialogue, collaboration and exchange of ideas become central instruments of linguistic progress.

Integration of skills – oral comprehension, oral expression, reading and writing are developed simultaneously.

Active role of the learner – he becomes an active and responsible participant in the learning process.

2.3. Typology of Communicative Tasks in RFL

Within the communicative-actional paradigm, the task represents the central unit of didactic organization. An authentic task implies a clear goal, a realistic context and a concrete result.

Examples of tasks applicable in RFL teaching:

• simulating a shopping situation in a Romanian store;

• organizing an excursion using information from real sources;

• writing a CV and a cover letter in Romanian;

• conducting an interview with a native speaker.

These activities require the integrated use of vocabulary, grammatical structures and pragmatic skills, favoring transfer to real contexts.

2.4. The Role of the Teacher and the Learner

In the communicative-actional paradigm, the role of the teacher is significantly transformed. He becomes a facilitator, organizer of communicative contexts and

mediator of interaction, not a simple provider of information. The teacher creates authentic situations and supports learners in managing linguistic difficulties.

The learner, in turn, is perceived as an active participant, involved in negotiating meaning and collaborating with others. The emphasis is on autonomy, reflection and responsibility for one's own progress.

2.5. Advantages and Limitations

The communicative-actional paradigm presents multiple advantages in teaching RFL:

• increasing motivation through the relevance of activities;

• developing fluency and pragmatic competence;

• reducing language anxiety through natural interaction;

• facilitating socio-cultural integration.

However, its implementation requires careful planning and methodological competence. There is a risk of minimizing the structural dimension of the language, if the emphasis on communication is not balanced by systematic grammatical reinforcement.

2.6. Integration in the RFL Context

In teaching Romanian as a foreign language, the communicative-actional paradigm must be adapted to the particularities of the language (rich morphology, complex verbal system, phonetic alternations). Communicative tasks must be accompanied by explicit moments of structural clarification, in order to ensure the correctness and stability of acquisitions.

Thus, an effective RFL teaching model combines:

• authentic communicative tasks;

• reflection on form;

• constructive corrective feedback;

• integration of the intercultural dimension.

In conclusion, the communicative-actional paradigm offers a coherent and modern framework for teaching Romanian as a foreign language. It transforms language learning into a dynamic process, oriented towards social action and cultural integration, contributing to the formation of competent and autonomous users of the Romanian language.

3. Integration of digital Technologies in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL)

The integration of digital technologies in teaching Romanian as a foreign language represents one of the most dynamic directions of methodological innovation in recent decades. In the context of globalization and academic mobility, the digital environment is becoming a privileged space for exposure to authentic language, intercultural interaction and the development of communicative skills in a flexible and personalized framework.

Technology should not be perceived as a substitute for traditional didactic interaction, but as a medium for expanding and diversifying learning experiences. In teaching RFL, digital integration involves the coherent articulation of multimedia resources, collaborative platforms, and online assessment tools in a competency-centered instructional design.

3.1. Exposure to Authentic Input through Multimedia Resources

A major advantage of technology is access to authentic materials: news, interviews, vlogs, podcasts, films or fragments of Romanian broadcasts. These resources allow learners to come into contact with real varieties of the language, with natural speech rhythms and with specific idiomatic expressions.

In RFL, the use of authentic audio-video materials contributes to the development of oral comprehension skills and familiarization with the socio-cultural context. The teacher can build graded activities: identifying main ideas, completing worksheets, discussing communicative intention or analyzing register differences.

This exposure supports the process of internalizing the language and reduces the distance between the classroom and communicative reality.

3.2. Interactive Platforms and Immediate Feedback

Educational platforms and interactive applications allow for the practice of language structure in a dynamic and adaptive way. Quiz-type exercises, completion, association or grammatical transformation provide automatic feedback, facilitating rapid consolidation of acquisitions.

In teaching the Romanian language, where the morphological system is complex (declensions, conjugations, agreements), digital tools can support systematic and individualized repetition. Learners can practice at their own pace, returning to difficulties without the pressure of public assessment.

However, it is essential that these activities are integrated into a communicative framework and do not become simple mechanical exercises. Technology must support the competence of use, not just the recognition of forms.

3.3. Collaborative Online Learning

Shared documents, discussion forums and videoconferencing platforms facilitate collaboration between learners, including in international contexts. Collective writing activities, online debates or group projects develop discursive and pragmatic skills.

In RFL, online collaboration can include:

• writing an article about Romanian culture;

• creating a digital diary of linguistic experience;

• preparing a presentation about a city in Romania;

• organizing a virtual meeting with native speakers.

Through these activities, the Romanian language becomes a tool for authentic cooperation and interaction.

3.4. Digital Storytelling and Multimodal Resources

Digital storytelling is an innovative method of integrating verbal language with visual and audio elements. Learners can create illustrated stories, narrative presentations or short videos, using studied grammatical and lexical structures.

This approach promotes affective involvement and stimulates creativity. At the same time, it allows the consolidation of linguistic skills in a meaningful context. For beginner levels, images can support comprehension, and for advanced levels, multimodal projects can become tools for intercultural reflection.

3.5. Digital Assessment in RFL

Technology also facilitates continuous assessment through online tests, electronic portfolios and self-assessment tools. Learners can monitor their progress against CEFR descriptors and receive rapid feedback on their performance.

The digital portfolio allows for the collection of written work, audio recordings and multimedia projects, providing an integrated picture of competence development. In addition, online assessment can support distance learning, which is relevant for international university programmes.

3.6. Challenges of Digital Integration

Despite the obvious advantages, the integration of technology in RFL requires overcoming some difficulties:

• differences in digital competence between learners;

• unequal access to technological resources;

• the risk of cognitive overload through the excessive use of multimedia materials;

• the need for continuous training of teachers.

To avoid these limitations, technology must be integrated in a balanced way and in accordance with linguistic and cultural objectives.

The integration of digital technologies in the teaching of Romanian as a foreign language is an essential factor in the modernization of the didactic approach. By accessing authentic input, facilitating collaboration and supporting formative assessment, the digital environment expands learning possibilities and contributes to the development of communicative skills.

However, the efficiency of this integration depends on the coherence of the didactic design and the professional competence of the teacher, who must use technology as a pedagogical tool, not as an end in itself.

4. Assessment in Teaching Romanian as a Foreign Language (RFL)

Assessment in teaching Romanian as a foreign language must be congruent with the communicative-actional paradigm and with the competence-oriented approach promoted by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). In this context, assessment cannot remain focused exclusively on grammatical accuracy or on the reproduction of knowledge, but must reflect the learner's ability to use Romanian in real communication situations.

The emphasis shifts from the isolated verification of linguistic structures to the assessment of integrated communicative performance. Assessment thus becomes a complex process, which aims at fluency, pragmatic adequacy, discursive coherence and communication efficiency.

4.1. Performance-Based Assessment

Performance-based assessment is one of the most appropriate forms of assessment in RFL. It involves the completion of authentic tasks, similar to real situations in which the learner will use Romanian.

Examples of performance assessment:

• participating in a simulated conversation (interview, formal/informal dialogue);

• giving an oral presentation on a cultural topic;

• writing an official e-mail;

• completing an administrative form;

• solving a problem-situation through verbal negotiation.

This type of assessment allows the integration of the skills of receiving and producing the message, as well as the assessment of sociolinguistic adequacy. The criteria must be explicit and include dimensions such as clarity of expression, coherence of discourse, linguistic correctness and communicative efficiency.

4.2. Language Portfolio

The language portfolio is a longitudinal assessment tool that documents the learner's progress over time. Inspired by the European Language Portfolio model, it includes:

written works; audio or video recordings of oral performances; personal reflections on progress; self-assessments related to the CEFR descriptors.

The portfolio facilitates the development of metacognition and responsibility for the learning process. The learner becomes aware of his/her level of competence and the steps needed to progress.

In teaching RFL, the portfolio can also include intercultural projects, which highlight the integration of the cultural dimension in language use.

4.3. Self-Assessment According to CEFR Descriptors

Self-assessment is an essential tool for the development of autonomy. CEFR provides competence descriptors for levels A1–C2, which can be used as clear benchmarks in assessment. This reporting to standardized descriptors contributes to the awareness of progress and the establishment of realistic learning objectives.

4.4. Continuous Assessment through Communicative Tasks

Assessment in RFL must be continuous and integrated into daily activities. Communicative tasks, frequently used in lessons, can also have an evaluative role. The teacher can observe: interaction capacity; use of compensatory strategies; adaptation of speech to the interlocutor; the evolution of fluency.

This informal but systematic assessment allows for the adjustment of teaching intervention and supports individual progress.

4.5. Focus on Progress and Functional use

A fundamental principle of assessment in RFL is the orientation towards progress and functional use. Comparing learners with each other must be replaced by reporting on one's own previous level. Individual development becomes the main indicator of success.

At the same time, assessment must privilege the ability to use the language in real contexts: social interactions, academic or professional situations. Formal correctness is important, but cannot be the only criterion. The adequacy and efficiency of communication become priorities.

Assessment in teaching Romanian as a foreign language must reflect the communicative and action-oriented nature of language learning. By integrating performance assessment, the linguistic portfolio, self-assessment according to the CEFR and continuous communicative tasks, the assessment process becomes an instrument for supporting progress and developing autonomy.

Thus, assessment is not just a verification stage, but a mechanism for consolidating communicative competence and facilitating the cultural and social integration of RFL learners.

5. Conclusions

Innovative teaching approaches in teaching Romanian as a foreign language involve the integration of the communicative-actional paradigm, digital technologies and the intercultural dimension into a coherent, competence-centered model.

Effective RFL teaching is not limited to the transmission of grammatical rules, but involves facilitating authentic interaction and cultural integration. Modernizing the teaching approach is an essential condition for increasing the relevance of the Romanian language in the international educational space.

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