DIDACTICA

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Didactica is edited by the Department for teaching staff training of the Banat Agricultural and Veterinary University in Timişoara, Romania. It comprises the work of professionals working in the fields of Educational Psychology, Pedagogy, Educational Sociology, Didactics, Organizational Management in Schools, Research Methodology, Educational Sciences, and Computer Assisted Education.

The journal addresses all those who are connected to the difficult, but noble, educational and training activity. By this we refer to higher education, but also to research and pre-university education. Thus, the journal addresses those who whish to take the teaching-learning activity, as an applied science, to a higher level, that of an art, which will contribute not only to improving their own skills and capabilities, but also the skills and capabilities of the trainees.

This is why we have also approached colleagues from other Romanian universities, but also colleagues from abroad, who, with their contributions or their reviewing activity, contribute to informational exchange and, implicitly, add more value to our review.

The journal will issue biannually and it will include papers in the fields corresponding to the educational process, such as: educational foundation, curricular theory and methodology, training theory and methodology, didactic communication, educational means, regulation of the educational process, evaluation theory and methodology, educational psychology, educational sociology or other branches etc.

If the journal succeeds in mirroring theoretical and practical issues in these fields, and succeed in configuring new domains and future tendencies of our specific educational undergoing, we believe that it will fulfil its mission.

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PEDAGOGICAL RELEVANCE
OF THE "SOFT NEWS COLUMN" IN WRITTEN MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper militates for the idea of press usage in education, generally speaking, and of the written press, particularly. This happens because the press represents a helping instrument in many matters, through permanent actualization of their information and through pupils' cultural and linguistic improvement Even if, at first sight, the soft new column can appear without any significance and its pedagogical value could seem insignificant, still its probing with pupils throughout interrogation and reflection, could lead us to some judgement of values formation or to moral, social or political dimension drawn from a soft news column.

Keywords: Soft news column; Press; Written media; Pedagogical dimension

1. INTRODUCTION

Soft news column is "a newspaper column which presents succinct occurrences and events which happened during the day" (DEX, s.v. *divers*).

Comparing the space reserved for the "Soft news" column in different publications, we noticed great differences among newspapers. The explanation: some newspapers avoid publishing "soft news" because they are afraid of losing their readers; others, on the contrary, wishing to please the reader, reproduce in details the "soft news", assuming the risk to encourage ill curiosity of some of the readers.

It seems that precisely this column, because of the importance given to it, allows publications to be classified in publications which want to inform and publications which want to entertain, to amuse.

Starting from the latter characteristic, soft news can appear sometimes as lacking any significance and that is why its pedagogical dimension is not to be included, at first sight, within the formative aspect of reading and studying the press. Despite all this and even if, at first sight, "it cannot be settled easily in the mental structural web" and it seems not to be elucidated through successive abstractions, soft news can be explored with pupils throughout an analysis based on interrogation and reflection upon its different dimensions.

The selection and arrangement proposed by the press makes the reader, including pupils, ask questions about his reactions, about judgement criteria, about passions, prejudices etc.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

Thus, when we are talking about the soft news, it is fit to bear this in mind: its theme, structure and style.

3. RESULTS

3.1 THEME

This heading is very interesting from a theme's point of view, because it gathers most of the events considered exceptional – even not important too, meaning events with political, economic or social repercussions – but pure and simple events which are being distinguished. A soft news distinguishes by other information through its predilection theme- working accident, road accident, the appearance of a monster, UFO appearance, policeman gossip, horrifying murder, plane embezzlement, a showbiz movie star divorce, thievery, political incident, remarkable longevity, black tide, kidnap, strange record, housebreaking, rape etc- which, even are extremely various, have common points. The soft news can be found under anonymous heading, in other headings or on many pages one after another. It changes its place in concordance with publication type (daily, or bimonthly, central publication or regional etc.). Certain newspapers don't have this heading, others present it on the first page. No matter the reason why press publishes the soft news – to inform, to amuse, to seduce or to educate – this is exploited differently depending on conjecture and on different press option. Thus, an unemployed suicidal is a little occurrence if is appearing at "Soft news" heading, but becomes an example of social problem if it appears under "Politics" or "Social" heading. Some soft news become novel subjects or movie subjects.

3.2 STRUCTURE

As a consecrated press article gender, the soft news is almost stereotypical from the point of view of the page layout. So, the importance given to the news is given by the following elements (which, in fact, are not specific only to soft news): article placement in the newspaper's hierarchic space (on the first page, on the top of the page, on the bottom of the page etc.), printing character choice, and article space. Generally, a soft news is made up from the following elements which are printing identifiable: Supra-title, Title, Sub-title, article, which is made up from three parts:
Introduction, an *a*bstract of the soft news (where the journalist expresses his opinion, easy to be identified because verbs are in present tense indicative;
Description of characters' spirit, of the behaviour before and after the event (in this case, verbs are in the past tense continuous indicative);
The story of the soft news itself (verbs are in the past tense indicative).
A soft news is organised based on the questions: Who?, What?, When?, Where? How? Why?

3.3 STYLE

The soft news is written in a tone, a style and a vocabulary which distinguish it from other types of press articles.

3.3.1 FACTS PRESENTATION

Presented like a serial story column-novel, like a drama or like a tragedy, more or less accentuated by the function of the newspaper, the soft news can be read as a literary text: it is proposed as a fiction, isolated by the social, unusual and inexplicable context. If the title always manages to raise one's curiosity, we cannot say the same about text. The journalist confers a certain rhythm to his "story", he prepares the excitement, dramatises, he stresses pathetic manipulatory figures of speech (hyperbola, antithesis etc.), verbal tenses alternation (past continuous indicative – past indicative) or protagonists' stylisation. Even if we notice the journalist's presence; his personality stays hidden, because the style and his vision must respect the publication line.

3.3.2 PHRASEOLOGY

The soft news is easily identifiable due to its specific phraseology: numerous stereotypes and a rich lexicon of circulation, traffic, crimes etc.

3.3.3 TITLE

The soft news rhetoric is a surprise rhetoric accomplished with the help of the passive diathesis, of the present tense indicative and noun formation. The soft news legitimises itself through the underlining of unusual aspects, exceptional etc., insisting on the following elements: *quantity*: Record. Lavinia Sandru celebrated the third wedding in a month. (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005), *contrast*: Sued for insult and calumny, ADA Vrancea chiefs sign in at General Parquet (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005), *discordance* between cause and effect: Nephew kills his uncle because he didn't bring him the promised prostitute (7P, nr. 84, June, 2005), *coincidence*: Two kids drown at the same time in the Scânteia pond – Iaşi (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005).

3.4 SO CALLED ARTICLE

The soft news, as narrative type, is made of the same elements and using the same techniques. Among the elements and text organisation proceedings common to a narrative, we can find: the apposition (substantives, adjectives, gerund verbs and past participle verbs), "with whose help they identified the protagonists, objects and crime places, "TVR chief, Valentin Nicolau, resigned" (L, nr. 4704, June 13, 2005), emphasis: "The most known Greek rhapsody composer will have a concert in Romania" (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005), Logical connectors: "Valentin Nicolau is leaving, finally, TVR leadership" (EZ, nr. 4120, June 13, 2005), Keywords and key expressions: "Nicoleta Luciu lives with her parents" (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005), noun formation: "Good for nothing fellows and nulls" (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005), Passive construction: "Inhabitants of a Ukrainian town, attacked by bats" (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005), Use of past verbal forms: "Journalists lain on the Round Office's couch" (7P, nr. 84, June 13, 2005).

3.5 PEDAGOGICAL ASPECTS

A comparison of the different way in which newspapers reflect soft news emphasizes interpretative variations from a newspaper to another, caused by the order in which

different elements of a soft news are disposed. These variations study is relevant and suggestive. Not only differs argumentation from one newspaper to the other, but it also varies as the event develops, as if each "discovery", each "turn" would necessitate a case reconstruction. But no one knows all the causes and consequences, all the facts of a story. There are always gaps, elements about which we didn't speak, unknown facts, which can be interpreted and completed by other people's words. This thing can be explored by pupils because as the interpretations that we give do not ever explain entirely a literary opera or a scientifically discovery, because there is always an irreducible grain of truth, in the same way the soft news expresses the impossibility to reduce to a single type of explanation the troubling event (for example in case of some unsolved crimes).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The diversity of the social, psychological, political, moral aspects, the questions that rise due to the identification or rejection phenomena which they arouse, represents a truly "Gordian knot" which cannot be easily untied. That is why in the activity with pupils, the teacher can use questions from a convergent "reproductive-cognitive" conversation frame, such as: Which ?, What ?, Who ?, When ?, but also questions from a divergent conversation frame, which engage pupils in finding out the truth, analysing the alternatives which rise from a problem-question, and in whose case many solutions are possible. These questions are "productive-cognitive", such as: Why?, What for?, How is it explained?, If we admit that, what is going to happen?. Solutions offered throughout successive analyses appeal to the mind's flexibility, to the pupil's curiosity, imagination, creativity etc. What we try to analyse being not exactly the "certainty", but the "possibility".

This approach can be used in the case of Romanian Language and Literature in order to exemplify verbal tenses, figures of speech, transformation of indirect speech into direct speech. Also, in the case of Civic Education, Ethics, Philosophy, in order to define the notions of good-bad, honest-dishonest, fair-unfair, just-unjust or for the discovery and understanding of a social, political or moral dimension of a significant soft news. In the same way, in Psychology classes, pupils can be helped in analysing the human personality structure (of the temperamental, character features or skills), also in affective and volitional state characterization (moods, emotions, feelings, affects, passions).

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DIDACTIC GAMES: EDUCATIONAL FEATURES

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we analyse the training aspects of didactic games as part of educational activities in primary school. Nowadays, game, with its great variety of types (content and evolution), is more and more valorised from a pedagogic point of view to make school activities more vivid and attracting. Learning as both process and activity can be done more easily when the student, involved in a relaxing atmosphere of good will is enhanced to become interested in the activities performed, to learn with pleasure and to be more confident in his abilities and strength. As a complex activity, didactic game is more and more the field in which there are large opportunities for the child to be educated and trained.

Keywords: *Didactic game; Primary school; Educational features; Training features*

1. INTRODUCTION

Didactic game as a teaching method based on action is part of the indirect training for the working activity, facilitating their multilateral education, developing psychic abilities, and turning reality into imaginary. Didactic games imitate and reproduce, at low scale, the specificity of the relationship between people and their activities, enhancing participants' creativeness; they provide students with lots of impressions that contribute to the enriching of their knowledge about world and life; they enhance their ability of understanding complex situations; they favour the pacing of physical and psychical efforts; they develop focus abilities and observance attitudes; they enhance the desire to win.

Didactic games should observe a didactic task and certain play rules. This is what distinguishes it from the game *largo sensu.*

It is through cues, gestures, mimics, and body movements that game partners achieve an explicit informational exchange which tells so much about the psychological state of mind of the game partner and about his/her relationships with the other partners.

From the *point of view of their content and objectives*, didactic (educational) games can be classified into the following:
- environmental observation games;
- speech development games;
- mathematical games;
- musical games;
- orientation games;
- sensitiveness games;
- applicative games;
- symbolic games;
- simple exercise games;

- movement games;
- sensorial games;
- ability games, etc.

From the *point of view of the material used*, there are:
- games involving teaching materials;
- games not involving teaching materials;
- oral games;
- quiz games;
- riddle games;
- cross-word games, etc.

Didactic games have different features and functions at different child ages, and their psycho-pedagogical effects need to analyse them as an activity conditioned by the psychical and physical development of those who practice them, in relation to their age.

2. MATERIALS AND METHOD

In our study carried out in the school year 2006-2007 on the use of didactic games with a view to optimise educational and training activities through student involvement in an active and pleasant way, we relied on students of the 3rd Grade (Şcoala cu clasele I-VIII nr. 16 in Timişoara). The sample was made up of 103 students, of which 46 girls and 57 boys.

We used as research methods the following:
- *experiment;*
- *observation* (of class activities);
- *conversation* with both teachers and students;
- *study of school documents*;
- *analysis of student activity products*.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

If well prepared and organised, didactic games can become the ideal way students get to know and get familiar with the environment since they rely on didactic tasks that contribute to the exercise of skills, to the consolidation of knowledge, to their valorisation in a creative way.

The introduction to the game was done depending on the *topic* of the lesson, i.e. the teacher explained the *goals* of the game, the main *rules* to be observed while playing the game, and the *conditions* in which the didactic game ends.

The best methods to get the students play the game were the *explanation* and the *demonstration*. In order to increase the interest in the game, the teacher introduced new rules and complicated the goals of the games.

The most used didactic games in the 3rd Grade were: *Magic words*, *My pair*, *The phone interview*, *Mime*, *False statements*, *On a desert island*, *The secret letter* (circumscribed to the study of the Romanian language); *Guess the number*, *Put the numbers in their places*, *Tell me what I am* (for the study of Mathematics); *He who knows, answers*, *What if …*, *Write my name* (for the study of Sciences); *Ask and guess*, *A story to please you* (for the study of Civic education); *The travelling ball*, *Ball through tunnel*, *Sleeping bear* (for Physical education).

During the class hours, focus diminished with fatigue after a while. Monotony produced by the stereotypic forms of the exercises, favoured boredom, which diminished the desire of

learning, the interest in the games, and the attention span of the students. When this became permanent, didactic games turned (rarely, but they did) into refusal of learning. To avoid that and to capture more of the students' attention, the teachers should have better prepared their didactic games.

It was through the didactic game that the students got into touch with their colleagues, learning to take into account the points of view of the partners involved in the game and turning into team players. The teachers got to better know those aspects of their students' personality, manifest in either positive or negative behaviours. Thus, shy students became more voluble, more courageous, showing self-confidence and tenacity in their answers.

Our research showed that game learning resulted in changes at the level of cognitive, affective, and behavioural acquisitions of 3rd Grade students. We could also note that memorising information was quicker, and that retention time doubled. Students got new beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. The games enhanced their creativeness, free speech, desire to know more and better, and relationships with their colleagues. Feeling accepted, students mobilised all their forces to achieve the tasks, without being too much affected by their physical and psychical efforts. In some situations, students freed themselves from the tensions they had previously accumulated.

During the educational activities involving didactic games we could notice that teachers involvement was higher: they made every effort to optimise the teaching-learning-evaluating process; to develop proper and efficient teaching materials; to develop students' critical thinking; to choose the best variants of lesson; to adapt their type of communication to the students' personality features; to quicken the working rate in order to eliminate all cool times; to develop a relaxing atmosphere of good time.

Our research showed it is possible to switch from a reserved attitude to a more relaxed, participative one, thus confirming the positive impact and the educational features of didactic games in primary school.

4. CONCLUSIONS

As an active factor of social progress, school should use the most efficient ways to ensure, ever since the first grades, a solid training and a complex development of students' personality. Didactic games organised on the ground of the requirements of the psychology of teaching are an active and efficient means of education and training of children.

Games are a means of education. Through games, we can influence students in a positive way. Each game, with its *content*, *didactic goal*, *rules* (orderly put), and *game action*, train the mind, the spirit of observation, self-control, discipline, imagination, creativeness, spontaneity, desire to know, and good will.

Didactic game efficacy largely depends on the way the teacher ensures a concordance between the following components: operational goals, game topic, and teaching material.

Combining traditional methods and procedures with modern ones increases the efficacy of the educational process, and the teacher is the one that turns intention to play a game into learning activities proper.

Didactic games can be successfully used in primary school, in the teaching of all the subjects, at any time of the class, where a learning situation can be turned into a playing pattern. Through games, we can monitor acquisition of knowledge, consolidation of knowledge already acquired, and assessment of the students' level of training.

Didactic game educational features make learning more flexible, delicate, and comfortable. We can say that games, activities that allow the children to be themselves, is the linking element between school and life. They are indispensable to both individuals and society, due to their important means of communication.

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POLEMIC DISCOURSES: ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Our interest in the polemic feature of academic discourse is the result of two divergent yet convergent approaches: the former approach, of practical dimension, is related to the development of a course of contemporary pedagogy; the latter, of theoretical dimension, concerns the pragmatic functioning of sentencing. It is well known that science results from controversies: new concepts are rather the fruit of polemic attitude than of cosy conformity. This is why scientific discourse should confirm and infirm at the same time.

Keywords: *Polemic discourse; Academic discourse; Polemic attitude; Scientific discourse*

1. INTRODUCTION

The one who assumes the discursive regime of this contradiction, the teacher, should provide his/her discourse with a double dimension: assertive (pedagogical and scientific) – through the operations of personal markers or at a meta-discourse level; and polemical – thus breaking, in a controlled manner, the discursive continuum. To do so, the teacher assembles statements that constitute raw scientific matter during the discursive process, to make allow a persuasive system function with the help of such discursive procedures as generalisation, polemisation, narrativisation, and referentialisation.

If we define, together with Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980: 24) the polemic discourse as a discourse that aims at an opposing discursive source which it integrates to, later, aggressively reject in more or less injurious terms, we should doubt the existence of what Bouacha (1984: 9-10) names "polemising procedures" when speaking of academic discourse.

Academic discourse is the discourse act through which a subject (the teacher) states a discourse already stated (by others and/or by him/herself), a discourse which he/she addresses to another subject (the student) with the goal to make the latter capable of reproducing in his/her turn.

Written academic discourses overtake from oral academic discourses only three of his/her own discursive instances: the traces of his/her daily discourse involving the existence of at least two subjects – a locutor and an interlocutor – and, in the former, the intent of having some type of impact on the latter are not to be found in a written academic discourse unless we identify it with a virtually dialogued monologue (Kerbrat-Orecchioni 1986: 10). More important than the discursive instance of the scientific discourse (through which the teacher ensures the permanence of a "discursive past" capable of maintaining "knowledge continuity" and "discourse uniqueness" (Greimas, in Bouacha, 1984: 58) is the instance of the pedagogic discourse: an academic course implies, from the teacher, the obligation of turning knowledge into discourse and then provide them to the students (which is only possible through what, in semiotic terms, is called "persuasive action") who accept, because of their status, the cognitive positions of the former.

2. PERSUASION AND ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

One should take into account four factors when approaching the issue of student (receiver) persuasion (Bautier 1981: 205-213).

1. The Emitter. The study of the relationships between the features of the emitter and the persuasive impact of his/her message generally focuses on two variables:
- *emitter's reliability*, which depends on the competence impression he/she produces and concerns the object and/or the message emitter, and the objectivity impression produced by the emitter who should seem disinterested if he/she wants to persuade (experimental research show that reasoning from neutral positions results in less errors from the receiver);
- *emitter's charisma*, which results from his/her attitude towards the receiver (individuals tend to agree with those who appreciate him/her) and/or "resemblance" of receiver and emitter.

2. Receiver. Several factors favour receiver's persuasion by the emitter:
- personal data: age (the younger, the easier to be persuaded); sex (females are easier to be persuaded than males); intelligence (the more intelligent, the more difficult to be persuaded);
- personality: aggressiveness, self-respect, etc. (which is more difficult to quantify in the case of a written academic course);
- receiver's attitude towards the position defended in the message;
- time flow and changes in opinion with the time;
- the danger of resisting persuasion intent.

3. Channel. Oral discourse is slightly superior to the written one, since face-to-face communication allows feed-back and results in more attention from the receiver.

4. Message. The following factors should be taken into account here:
- *content*: only rational arguments count here, emotional one being completely banned;
- *structure*: treating adverse arguments (which we could accept or, on the contrary, completely ignore); making up the conclusions (explicit or implicit); ordering elements, with the most important ones at the beginning of the message (priority effect), which allows a better understanding of the discourse, or at the end of the message (summary effect), which implies more attention from the receiver and diminishes the biased aspect of the discourse

(as for the arguments, there is no agreement on whether they should be presented from the weakest to the strongest or vice versa).

Developing an academic course implies emitter's proper for his/her reliability (his/her charisma plays here a secondary role, given the nature of the discourse that looses, in its passage from the oral to the written form, its persuasive power): the impression of competence produced by the emitter is a matter of both message object and message emitter, academic discourses representing, as institutionalise loci of cognitive intervention of a subject on another, "the discursive instance of an initiation ritual ensuring the permanence of a community grouped around a rational *cogitamus* (Bouacha, 1984: 225). Academic discourse is based on this discursive agreement – source and goal at the same time. As for the impression of objectivity, it is preferable to insert in the course the so-called "rejected statements" – statements that necessarily refer to a polemical situation (since their sentencing support relies on a sentence like "I say P is false").

As for the factor receiver, given the fact that individuals tend to accept discourses they agree with rather than adverse ones, avoiding confrontation with information that are against his/her beliefs (particularly when he/she feels insecure and risks to face a discourse difficult to reject rationally), he/she should be subjected to the principle of "selective exposure".

The most important element of a written academic discourse is not message content (which, given its nature, is – or, at least, should be – "something new" in form and/or content, and whose argument, even if rational, are not quickly accepted, because of their novelty), but its structure. Instead of refuting explicitly or implicitly adverse arguments with the help of denominative, indicative, or potential markers specific to disagreement, one could adopt a simpler and more efficient solution – doubting them rather than ignoring them.

The most important elements have no fixed place in a course: it varies depending on their nature and on the type of attitude expected in the receiver facing the novelty (the tendency to reject what is new and, therefore, not accessible).

As for the form and place of the conclusions, it is preferable to provide explicit conclusions (implicit conclusions need the receiver to be very interested in the message, which is not always the case with our students) and put at the end of each chapter to keep alive receiver's attention and to remove every biased shade from the discourse.

Questioning adverse arguments seems to be the best solution if the receiver is, at the beginning, on adverse positions, and if he/she is familiarised with the topic.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Academic discourses should only be implicitly polemical, if we want the receiver to accept it. Polemic can have a diachronic and/or synchronic character (placing it in an institutional network of the *High school – University* type).

Teachers should pay more attention to the persuasive function of communication in order to make students change their attitudes (e.g. accept another type of approach, other arguments, etc.) as a result of his/her academic discourse message.

During the development of their courses, teachers should take into account the fact that the persuasive impact of their courses increases with the attention granted to facilitating understanding and memorisation, due to the fact that individuals possess an ensemble of pre-conceived categories in which he/she is willing to accept, however, information, and that he/she can change if properly helped to do it.

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INTRODUCTORY CONVERSATION AS A MEANS OF TEACHING-LEARNING VOCABULARY IN A DIFFERENTIATED MANNER

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ABSTRACT

The present paper deals with the introductory conversation as an aid in teaching vocabulary during the foreign language class. As the schoolbooks have a large number of lexical items to be taught/learnt for each unit, the teacher has to be aware that a lot of the time in the structure of a class will be allocated to discussing the new words, or else the students will not be ready to pass on to the next level, namely dealing with the text from each lesson. Still, there is not too much time to spend on that. Hence the need for finding the best methods of introducing and discussing the new lexical items. These methods need to be adapted for the particularities of each class the teacher has to deal with, and at the same time for the psychical characteristics of each student, as much as possible. The paper also tackles the issue of correcting the mistakes, at the level of the introductory conversation, in what the pronunciation of new words is concerned.

Keywords: *Teaching vocabulary; Introductory conversation; Pronunciation; Differentiated teaching*

1. INTRODUCTION

The relatively large amount of information that has to be presented and explained in an English class takes a lot of time for the teacher and for the class implicitly. The schoolbooks have an average of 11-12 new lexical units per lesson. If one is to go with the schoolbook, in the sense that every lesson has to be explained, then the problem of correct acquisition of skills in a relatively short time cannot be solved but through reorganization of the lesson structure. If, in the case of other school subjects, the teacher has the liberty of deciding upon the essential items that have to be explained to the pupils in order to facilitate the process of exploring the theme to be studied, in the case of foreign languages the quantity of information to be explained has to be strictly respected. And explaining the new terms can take up to 20-25 minutes from the lesson.

Introducing new vocabulary items and making sure that the students have both understood and digested them during the lesson is one of the stages of the lesson that ensure quick and efficient teaching/learning of a foreign language. The introductory conversation is, in this context, a useful method that allows of presenting the new words,

while at the same time preparing grammar induction. It contributes to the formation of practical skills related to the studied foreign language in what understanding and speaking is concerned. Its goal is to eliminate the negative influence of the mother tongue and to overcome the embarrassment and unwillingness to speak which are usually present with students when speaking in a foreign language. This is especially true for the students who know they are not the best in the class.

Obeying the principles of introductory conversation and its stages facilitates obtaining good results, both in the direction of avoiding the passivity of good students (by demanding maximum attention and concentration) and in the sense of stimulating the students who are not so good (the model given by the teacher is first used by the good students and only after that by the ones who are not so good).

2. DISCUSSION

The introductory conversation as it is cannot be respected in absolute terms in the differentiated teaching/learning of a foreign language. The stages that are of maximum importance during this are the discussion with the class and the repetition of key-words and sentences. This repetition has to be done with the entire class at the same time, and also individually. The aim of these exercises is to make sure that the students have understood the words and that they can also pronounce them correctly. Writing the new words on the blackboard is another important stage in the introductory conversation, as it gives the students the possibility to associate the phonetic image with the graphical one.

While teaching/learning a foreign language, one has to take into consideration the fact that the formation of any new word is the result of a syntactic transformation and the expression of a certain type of syntactic relations, just as any syntactic function is expressed concretely through the lexical material of the language.

The means used in vocabulary learning vary according to the time when they are used. Thus, before reading the text, the introductory conversation is, together with the exposition, the fundamental method in teaching/learning vocabulary. However, it is worth noting that if the principles of selection and gradation have to be respected in all three stages of teaching/learning vocabulary (presentation, explanation, fixation), then the so-called introductory conversation can be used only in the first two.

What should one understand by "introductory conversation"? It is a way of presenting the new word, before the reading, by a set of short and clear questions. Obviously, these questions should not contain any other lexical difficulties. During the introductory conversation, the teacher presents especially the key-words (those words the meaning of which is absolutely necessary to understand if the students are to understand the text they are about to read). As a general rule, each word is presented in relation to the previous one and to the ones that have already been taught in previous lessons. Using unknown words is to be avoided, so that the student can concentrate on the meaning of the word to be taught. For the same reason, the introductory conversation should take place with the books closed.

Presenting the new lexical units targets at the same time both the expression and the meaning. In what the expression is concerned, the student must learn how to differentiate and reproduce the oral form of the words. Correct use of words requires their correct assimilation and implicitly a correct identification of sounds, words and sentences. This is where the great importance of this moment in the lesson comes from.

The "exploitation" of the new lexical units is made also by the introductory conversation: after the presentation, the students are asked to repeat what they hear. By a game of questions and answers, the teacher gets the students to use the new terms, which is the first step in the fixation of these terms into the students' minds.

Special attention must be paid here to mistake correction. This is a stage where a lot of work can be ruined if the teacher does not act promptly and accurately. Below are mentioned the four ways of correcting oral expression in the foreign language, presented in the order of their importance, according to our teaching experience. The teacher gives the student the impression he/she did not hear correctly what the student has just said, and he/she provides the correct pronunciation in an interrogative intonation: in 90% of the cases, the student will confirm the correct pronunciation, by repeating it. Another way is for the teacher to stop the student, pronounce correctly the word that was mispronounced, and then ask him to repeat and continue. Yet another way is to jot down the mistakes and to discuss them at the end of the introductory conversation, without interrupting it. This method is especially effective when dealing with shy students: if we do not stop them from talking, if we do not interrupt the conversation, but discuss about the mistakes afterwards, we can give the correct form and ask for it to be repeated without the risk of discouraging the students, as the conversation is already over, and they have already said what they wanted to say. The fourth way of correcting oral expression proposed here is to transform error correction into a structural exercise. For every mistake we propose a correct form and we ask for the model to be respected; then we build some similar sentences on the same structure, for better fixation.

How can teaching/learning vocabulary be differentiated? Mitzel (1982) proposes five types of individualizing teaching, according to the level of the student and to the student's work pace. Going through the matter to be studied in a determined rhythm, finely tuned with the student's psychical structure; the possibility for the student to work at certain moments in conditions that he personally prefers; the possibility of tackling a certain subject at a chosen time, according to the knowledge accumulated in previous classes, these are three of the methods proposed by the above-mentioned researcher. The other two are the possibility of introducing knowledge or skills that are easily identifiable, and making available for the student more means of instructions, for the student to have the possibility to choose whichever he finds more suitable for himself.

Even though these types of individualization cannot be applied to the same extent in teaching/learning new lexical items, they play a significant role in creating an atmosphere of reciprocal trust, and in raising awareness about the teacher/student relationship.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The teacher must determine the technique to explain new terms and to form new skills which is best suited for each and every lesson. For this purpose, the teacher will have in mind the formative value of the knowledge to be introduced and the students' level of training. Whatever these may be, the teacher must know in advance what exactly the students will write down in their notebooks. The students have to be told when and what to write down in their notebooks and this is especially true for the foreign language class. The teacher must make sure that the students have written correctly the new lexical units

Keeping in mind the fact that the process of getting to know the norms for learning or acquiring skills in what the intellectual work is concerned is moulded on the psychical

characteristics of each student (becoming the condition for these particularities to develop), the teacher must give the students as many logical or mnemotechnic rules as possible, and also many exercises needed for the formation of skills. For this purpose, the lessons in which the schoolbook or another means of information is used are extremely important. This is actually the essence of differentiation and individualization of the educational process, which remains the best way of preventing failure.

The student will find out, being implicated in the activity performed during the foreign language classes, which is his role in the structure of his class, and he will also be interested in discovering, transmitting and receiving information, he will feed useful and will have real satisfactions. For this, it is up to the teacher to discover the best methods to apply, according to the special characteristics of each class and of each individual.

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PRESENTATIONS IN ESL CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to analyse presentations as a communication method from the perspective of the affective-humanistic approach in the English as Second Language (ESL) classes. Presentations constitute a good way through which students can ferret out information, communicate in a foreign language, and overcome their emotions in class. Most students feel uncomfortable in front of the classroom, they fear making mistakes; thus they cannot concentrate on their presentation and often fail, lacking the necessary confidence to communicate in a foreign language which they do not fully master. On the whole, there is an all-pervasive anxiety factor that prevents students from being self confident when delivering a presentation. Consequently, in the atmosphere created in the class by the application of the affective-humanistic approach, presentations can reach full benefits.

Keywords: *Affective-humanistic approach; Role-playing; Round table discussions*

1. INTRODUCTION

The ***affective-humanistic approach*** deals with the emotional problems that prevent students from learning and tries to provide solutions in order to create a relaxing atmosphere in the classroom. It appeared as a reaction to the Audiolingualism and Cognitive methods which were deprived of any affective cognizance, and it revolves around the respect for the individual and for his/her feelings. Consequently, the major aim of the approach is to create a relaxing, balanced atmosphere in which both the students and the teacher can communicate without any stricture. Freire, in his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, asserts that this approach allows the teacher or instructor to choose between becoming a liberator or an oppressor, because the pace, the rhythm, and the atmosphere of the class are generally dictated by the authoritative person, the teacher. Consequently, the teacher becomes more of a facilitator of learning, a counsellor, somebody students can rely on, and less of an authority in the case of the affective-humanistic method. Another key concept of this method is that of learning as a self-realization experience. This leads to a certain self confidence and responsibility on behalf of the student. Moreover, the student has the freedom to choose what he would like to learn, thus he is even more motivated to participate and becomes more involved in the act of learning. He also becomes more responsible for his/her decisions, and the sheer right of choice should convey him confidence and prove him that his/her own considerations receive full support. Learning becomes appealing since it takes into account what the

students hope to gain and achieve. Freire states that this approach is antipodal to the "banking concept of education" because the content is entirely decided by the student. Moreover, the methods employed in the affective-humanistic based classes de-suggest any psychological barriers that might occur. Meaningful communication in the shape of peer interaction or work in pairs, groups, role-play and anything related to speaking skills, are some of the activities that can lead to zero resistance and low anxiety on behalf of the student. On balance, the affective-humanistic approach highlights, says Freire, "an intense faith in humankind, faith in the power to make and remake, to create and re-create, faith in their vocation to be more fully human".

2. DIFFICULTIES IN PRESENTATIONS

Presentations are tantamount to any other communication activities employed in the aforementioned type of class. However, if they are not integrated in an affective-humanistic type of class, in which the atmosphere encourages the speaker, they can have inimical consequences, generally materialized in a total failure of the student. *A priori* a failure, the student develops an anxiety and instinctively rejects this oral form of communication. Thus, the atmosphere becomes more important than the didactic material itself. The advantages of the presentations are that they permit the student to choose a particular topic, research on it, array ideas, bring any other material in order to be more convincing and display his/her speaking skills. Moreover, the other students practice their listening skills and acquire information from their colleagues. Expressing one's ideas orally entails certain sub-skills according to which the student should learn how to present his/her thoughts and give arguments to justify them, announce the structure of his/her presentation beforehand, reiterate his/her statements and arguments with data, present the counter arguments and refute them, be convincing in his/her presentation and in a potential debate if the case, but also accept defeat in a debate, and draw a conclusion at the end. The methods of delivering a prepared talk can be rendered in various ways. Before presenting, the student can write on the blackboard the possible unknown words or the keywords, guidewords of his/her presentation. Another variant would be that the student gives the presentation, and, subsequently, the others ask questions related to the concepts presented or the unknown words. What is more, the teacher can encourage debate by asking the presenter questions or just interfering in the discussions.

Another issue that arises, corollary to that of oral presentations, is the language impediment. Many students who learn English as a second language have difficulties in communicating, they abandon their ideas in mid-sentence, reject communication for fear they should make mistakes, in a nutshell, for lack of confidence. Moreover, they are frustrated by the "ideal" speaker, that is the native speaker, but they are not aware that any native may have difficulties in talking, may take longer pauses than normally and may produce mistakes on account of fatigue, inattention, lack of knowledge and even anxiety. The teacher can have a paramount importance in eradicating it.

3. DIDACTIC STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ORAL SKILLS

Students develop certain communication strategies in order to cope with any sort of discussion situations. Some of these strategies are: "*Avoidance* – these are risk-avoiding strategies, mostly used by the learner who fears making mistakes. Topic avoidance – the learner avoids certain topics for which he lacks vocabulary. Message abandonment – the

learner starts talking about a topic but abandons it because he is unable to continue. *Paraphrase* – the learner rewards his/her message to make himself understood. Approximation – the learner uses one vocabulary item to which he knows is not accurate, but which is similar in meaning. Word coinage – the learner makes up a word in the foreign language. Circumlocution – the learner describes an action or vocabulary item because he does not know the appropriate word. *Transfer* – the learner borrows from any language he knows. Literal translation – the learner translates word for word into the foreign language. This can occur on the lexical, phonological, or syntactical level. Language switch – the learner directly uses the native language without trying to translate it. *Appeal for assistance* – the learner seeks help from the person he is speaking to. *Mime* – the learner uses nonverbal signs to convey the desired meaning." (Saiz 1990: 23)

If the students employ the first strategy and avoid communication, then:

"[…] they will not receive any input to help them develop their English, they will not test any hypotheses about the foreign language and they will not grow in the continuum toward acquiring the target language. If they choose to adopt risk-taking strategies, they will not only succeed in communicating but will also improve their fluency and ultimately their linguistic skills." (idem)

Hence, presentations are a good way through which students can build up their second language system, mainly because they get to rehearse beforehand, they cannot avoid the communication process and they are compelled to use the language based on other communication strategies which act like aids, such as mimics, paraphrasing, in order to convey the message. The fact of the matter is that ESL researches have demonstrated that when the "affective filter" or mental barrier, is low, communication works out better.

The solutions that bring forth the eradication of the debilitating anxiety among students are most eloquently provided by an affective-humanistic approach class. The environment de-suggests students and encourages them to be themselves and vent freely irrespective of their level of second language. Moreover, teachers respect students as individuals and create opportunities for them to communicate and discover their potentialities of communication. A sine qua non for a class to be relaxing is the lack of tests. Test-papers create panic, anxiety and often trigger failure. Consequently, presentations constitute a good way to evaluate and assess the students in this type of class. One of the activities that contribute both to a relaxing atmosphere, but also to the self-confidence of the students to bring forth their ideas is the roundtable discussion. This method permits students to be more independent in displaying their ideas and immediately react and respond to the input they receive. Albeit the guidance offered by the teacher during a roundtable discussion, a lot of improvisation occurs due to the unexpected elements that may arise. Unlike a prepared talk, improvisation plays an important part in this type of activity preparing students to vent freely and contribute to building up their second language system, but also to their self-confidence. The teacher takes part in the roundtable discussion in the incipient stage; subsequently, he assumes the role of chairman and conductor, redirecting the pace if there are moments of pause, but also correcting the students` mistakes after the discussion is over. Should this activity receive positive reactions from the students, it can be further on developed, for example, the teacher only launches the topic and appoints the director from among the students.

Role-playing is another activity that helps inactive students to become more confident in their innate potentialities and participate at the communication classes. Agelasto (1991) proposes a play which the students should act without having to memorize their part.

Each group of students will have to act a different play so that the inactive persons should not feel threatened or intimidated in any way. The presentation will take the shape of a dialogue. The teacher must get involved in the play and be part of it as an active cast-member, otherwise his/her intervention will be perceived as a reprimand by the inactive students. Moreover, this way the teacher can redirect the dialogue towards the emotive actors and indirectly compel them to participate. The author of the article claims that role-playing is a means to approach and develop the conversational skills, which further on facilitates the prepared talk. This is challenging and entertaining for the students, and it helps the teacher spontaneously render the more reticent students into more active ones.

Another activity that can bring benefits to an affective-humanistic class is the improvisational acting learning. This method is very helpful with inactive students who require teacher-induced motivation, just like in the foregoing activity, before they are

> "[…] willing(able) to perform realistic movements and actions, and use the appropriate facial expressions and tones of the voice (especially negative and hostile ones)-before they are willing to 'be' someone else in front of their peers for a short time." (Burgess 1992: 20)

This activity is divided into several parts: the warm-up, in which students begin with physical exercises in order to become active, such as a brisk walk in the class; followed by an acting warm-up which consists of annihilating speaking entirely and concentrating only on the actions and facial expressions, such as handshakes, for example: "Each person you meet is a good friend" or "Each person you meet is your worst enemy". Students can also play *catch*: they are supposed to mime throwing a ball to each other and catching it. The next stages are solo miming followed by partner mime and small-group improvisational acting. Using mimics in a presentation can be rather important and a hostile student becomes more confident because the warm-up drama techniques are good ice-breakers that eradicate any emotional barrier. (Burgess 1992: 21)

4. CONCLUSION

All things considered, presentations are efficient and devoid of stress only in the context of a class based on the affective-humanistic approach. The environment of the classroom is decisive for the success of the negative, emotive students. However, if one considers all the solution activities provided in this paper, one can observe that there are many ways through which this type of environment can be achieved.

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ON INTERDISCIPLINARITY IN BIOLOGY CLASSES

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we analyse a few aspects concerning the importance of applying the principle of interdisciplinarity in educational activities. Promoting interdisciplinarity, a defining element in the progress of knowledge, is a must in our ever-changing world. Interdisciplinarity is a mean of co-operation between biology and other subjects circumscribed to the curricula Mathematics and Science, a branch based on their inner logics that are adapted to the specificity of the didactic laws and that help the student in the making up of a unitary vision of the world. We present a few suggestions concerning the approach of some topics studied in Animal biology classes taking into account the principle of interdisciplinarity.

Keywords: Interdisciplinarity; Animal biology; Educational activities

1. INTRODUCTION

Modern didactics requires more and more that education be done on an inter-disciplinary basis. The guiding lines in the modernising of the educational process is to intensely state a rather inter-disciplinary approach than a positivist one. According to the positivist approach, everything should be observed and described as detailed as possible, which leads to an exaggerated atomistic approach and, implicitly, to a neglect of causal and functional inter-connections. Unlike it, an inter-disciplinary approach implies over-running descriptivism and discovering the inner structure that could explain the genesis and behaviour of observable and measurable phenomena. What characterises the inner structure – the result of a large number of inter-dependencies – is that there are no frontiers between subjects.

Thus, *interdisciplinarity* asks not for the over-coming of some frontiers, for the removal of some rigid frames as exclusive subject domains, for the transfer of results from one subject to another for a deeper explanation of the phenomena, resulting in a co-ordination of the different points of view instead of the dominance of a single one.

From this perspective, Bontaş (1996: p. 93) defines interdisciplinarity (< L *inter* 'between') as *the coordination, at higher level, of two subjects within which meanings interact and complete each other, being thus able to reach a common content integrated under the form of border subjects such as chemistry – physics, biochemistry, socio-pedagogy, psycho-pedagogy, etc.*

The issue of interdisciplinarity has been a concern for philosophers and pedagogues since Ancient times: the Greek sophists, Plinius, Commenius, and Leibnitz, and the Romanians Spiru Haret, Iosif Gabrea, G. Găvănescu, and our contemporary pedagogue.

Interdisciplinarity contributes to the re-shaping of the old educational curricula that "[…] consisted only of a list of elements to be taught, circumscribed to a single subject

and circumscribed to a single educational level" (D'Hainaut 1981: 9). Pedagogic interdisciplinarity is at the basis of the educational curricula reformation that

> "[…] cannot be subjected to separated subjects in the tradition going back to Aristotle, and that no longer answers contemporary epistemological reality" (D'Hainaut 1981: 43-44)

or the needs for social and profession integration focussed on "important issues" (Cristea, 1998: p. 24).

There are, in the process of education, inter-disciplinary approaches at the level of minimal compulsory correlations that are suggested by the curricula or by the subjects themselves. If we need to practice a modern, training education, we need to turn interdisciplinarity into a main condition. Correlating the knowledge taught by different subjects has an important contribution to the achievement of students' education, to the moulding and developing of the thinking mobility, of their ability to turn theoretical knowledge into practical application; correlating knowledge also better establishes and systematises knowledge, since a subject can support other subjects to be better assimilated.

2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The *Science* curriculum is a starting point in the integrated teaching of the subjects circumscribed to the *Mathematics and Science* curricula. The former was designed in a cross-curriculum manner, starting from such domains as biology, physics, and chemistry, and from topics that are common to all of them (the functioning of levers – the functioning of the locomotor system; physical and chemical processes – the functioning of organic and inorganic components of organisms; eye image formation – the functioning of a photo camera, etc.). thus, Science curricula objectives are as follows:
- observing and interpreting natural processes taking place in the environment;
- understanding the impact of natural processes on human activity and that of human activities on the environment;
- investigating inter-dependences within and between physical, chemical, and biological systems;
- encouraging students to take upon themselves responsibilities and co-operation.

In the process of studying biology, student knowledge from different subjects can only be integrated from certain perspectives, which allows interdisciplinarity. Even if teachers teaching different subjects approach the same topics, it looks like they talk different "languages". It is difficult for the students to integrate alone the knowledge acquired from different subjects and to make up a global image of the objects, phenomena, and processes examined in class. Using inter-disciplinary links makes possible understanding the essence of the scientific conception of the world, its whole perception and the establishment of the causes of different connections existing in nature, studying the new items based on the old, known ones, enriching, and consolidating them. This also makes it possible to activate and enhance interest in acquiring new items of knowledge.

To conduct a series of lessons of biology in an inter-disciplinary manner, we need to take into account the following steps:
- *preparing the session*, which implies co-operation between the teachers with a view to point out that knowledge that can be used as inter-disciplinary at the educational level in discussion;

- *developing the questions and exercises* oriented towards the up-dating of the students knowledge;
- *selecting the graphic material* for the topic;
- *guiding the students* towards the understanding of the importance of phenomena studied: this is usually achieved by consecutive asking simple questions and solving exercises, thus contributing to the reaching of the educational goals.

Below are a few suggestions concerning the approach of some topics studied in animal biology classes based on the principles of interdisciplinarity:

- **Phylum *Protozoa***

Topic *Common Amoeba*: How does oxygen penetrate the amoeba's body? Common Amoeba, as well as other protozoans, breathes through its entire body area and oxygen penetrates the body through diffusion (*Diffusion*).

- **Phylum *Plathelminthes***

The functioning of suckers in flat worms is based on the difference in atmospheric pressure inside and outside them (*Liquid and gas pressure*).

Breathing is also based on diffusion (*Diffusion*).

- **Phylum *Annelida***

Mucus on the earthworm body surface eases its moving on the soil (*Friction force*).

- **Phylum *Arthropoda***

Class *Crustacea*

Crustaceans (as well as other organisms that move with the help of legs) function as lever systems (*Lever systems*, *Golden rule of mechanics*).

Class *Insecta*

The outer layer of wax of the chitin cover of insects protects their bodies from dehydration (*Evaporation*).

How can flies walk on the ceiling? They have suckers on their feet that function on the basis of the difference in atmospheric pressure (*Atmospheric pressure*).

Why is a mosquito's buzz higher than that of the fly? The sound we hear during a mosquito's flight is due to wing oscillations. A mosquito accomplishes 500-600 (some even 1000) wing movements per second, while a fly only makes 350. This is why a mosquito's flight is perceived as higher pitch by humans (*Sound waves*).

Bees distinguish several colours and shades: purple, yellow, blue, green-bluish, and dark red. Perceiving colour facilitates the spotting of nectar-producing plant species (*Colour spectrum*).

- **Phylum *Vertebrata***

Super-class *Pisces*

Fish have their bodies covered by mucus, which diminished friction during swimming in the water (*Friction*).

Class *Amphibia*

Why is frog egg inside temperature higher than environmental temperature? The embryo inside the frog egg is dark coloured while its surrounding medium is transparent and spherical, thus concentrating solar light (*Heat effects, Optics*).

Class *Aves*

Why do birds fly in a V-shaped flock? The strongest of the birds leads the flight, its body "cutting" the air, followed by the other birds that keep a sharp angle flight. This pattern corresponds to a minimal air resistance force (*Aero-dynamics, Bernoulli's Law*).

Penguins make underwater ultra-sounds with a frequency up to 80 kHz, because they are adapted to land life and have a poor sight underwater (*Ultra-sound*).

Class *Mammalia*

Dolphins are endowed with similar sonar, that looks very much like bat sonar. It seems that the organ receiving ultra-short sounds is the fat layer located between the mouth and the air vesicles. Echolocation is also present in whales and rats (*Eco-location*).

3. CONCLUSIONS

Approaching educational contents from an inter-disciplinary perspective allows us help students to broaden their horizon by applying their knowledge to other subjects too, preventing them from sticking to a single subject.

By understanding that in the study of any subject they can also refer to other subjects, students apply their knowledge in the solving of other problems too, in explaining phenomena, in perceiving the environment as a whole, as a functional system.

Inter-disciplinary teaching focuses on the multiple aspects of child's development: intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and aesthetic.

Interdisciplinarity ensures systematic and progressive accumulation of a communicative culture by the student in the learning process, for better inter-relations and for better, permanent learning.

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ABSTRAIT

Pour répondre à une question du type « Quel français enseigner en milieu universitaire et comment », il faut tenir compte du fait que les faits de langage (sens, expression et communication à la fois) sont décrits et prescrits en fonction des intentions du sujet parlant et des enjeux communicatifs qu'ils relèvent. Cela consiste à combiner grammaire traditionnelle (avec la nomenclature grammaticale déjà institutionnalisée) et explications sémantiques des différentes questions de grammaire. Dans cette perspective, l'enseignement du français – langue étrangère (FLE) à l'université suppose, en essence, une réorganisation de la matière selon des critères nouveaux aptes à rendre des problèmes plus intelligibles et à éliminer les confusions. Les auteurs proposent un modèle de structuration de la matière concernant le verbe et le groupe verbal tels qu'il conviendrait d'être enseignés dans la perspective des acquis des nouvelles théories du langage.

Mots-clé: *FLE ; Enseignement universitaire; Approche sémantique*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tout enseignant s'est, au moins une fois, posé la question : *Quel français enseigner et comment ?* Comme l'homme parle pour communiquer avec les autres, et en construisant du sens, il en résulte que la grammaire d'une langue devrait s'intéresser aux *faits de langage* (qui est, à la fois, *sens*, *expression* et *communication*), qu'elle décrive et prescrive en fonction des *intentions du sujet parlant* et des *enjeux communicatifs* qu'ils relèvent, sans pour autant négliger les *effets discursifs* qu'ils peuvent produire.

Au-delà des différences des points de vue quant à la description des langues, la tradition semble avoir abouti à un consensus qu'on pourrait étiqueter *d'approche sémantique*. Ce type d'approche, qui s'efforce de donner des *explications sémantiques* aux différentes questions de grammaire, n'implique nullement l'abandon des acquis de la grammaire traditionnelle – du moins en ce qui concerne la *nomenclature grammaticale*

déjà institutionnalisée, mais tâche d'éclaircir, dans la mesure du possible, des coins obscurs de la grammaire.

L'enseignement du français – langue étrangère (FLE) à l'université suppose, dans cette perspective, en essence, une réorganisation de la matière selon des critères nouveaux aptes à rendre des problèmes plus intelligibles et à éliminer les confusions.

2. MATÉRIEL ET MÉTHODE

Dans ce qui suit, nous essayerons d'esquisser un modèle de structuration de la matière concernant le verbe et le groupe verbal tels qu'il conviendrait d'être enseignés dans la perspective des acquis des nouvelles théories du langage.

3. RÉSULTATS

3.1. LA PREMIÈRE SECTION

Ainsi, ***une première section*** serait dédiée au signe linguistique comme concept et forme et traiterait, tour à tour :

- du *signe linguistique*, d'abord comme concept (donc comme résultat d'une triple conceptualisation – référentielle, structurelle et situationnelle) ensuite comme forme (sous aspects matériel – *signifiant* – et morphologique – *signifié*) ;
- de la *construction du signe*, cadre dans lequel il convient d'étudier les relations signe – trait sémantique, signe – corrélations oppositives et combinatoires (paradigmatiques et syntagmatiques), signe – *domaines d'expérience*, *signe – sens* (dénotation et connotation) ;
- des *catégories formelles* (mots grammaticaux et mots lexicaux).

3.2. LA DEUXIÈME SECTION

Une ***deuxième section*** serait centrée sur les *fonctions du verbe*. Dans cette perspective, le *verbe* (en sa qualité de *catégorie formelle de mots*) sert non seulement à *nommer des processus*, mais aussi à *qualifier des êtres et des faires*.

- Pour ce qui est de sa première fonction (nommer des processus), nous faisons avec Charaudeau (1992), la distinction entre *faits* et *actions*, pour passer ensuite à la présentation des caractéristiques sémantiques (*traits sémantiques* permettant de caractériser le processus comme [± Action], [± Durée], [± Accomplissement], [+ Déplacement], [+ Orientation] et [+ Résultat]) et des *caractéristiques formelles* des verbes (relevant des interlocuteurs uniques et des interlocuteurs multiples).
- En ce qui concerne la deuxième fonction du verbe (*qualifier des êtres et des faires*), en ce que l'expression des propriétés ne possède pas de formes grammaticales propres pour s'exprimer, mais se configure à l'aide des mots du lexique s'inscrivant dans des procédés en *mise en dépendance* déterminés par la *catégorie grammaticale d'appartenance du mot* (adjectif, nom, verbe) et par le *type de connexion* qui unit élément qualifié et élément qualifiant (jointe/disjointe). Ainsi, l'adjectif et le nom qualifiant sont rattachés au nom qualifié soit directement, soit indirectement, par l'intermédiaire du verbe *être* ou d'un de ses synonymes (ce sont des verbes d'action, causatifs, inchoatifs, de jugement, de perception et de persistance dans un état), verbes dits « auxiliaires » ou

« copulatifs ». De même, le verbe seul ou inclus dans un énoncé peut également jouer le rôle de qualifiant, à la condition de s'intégrer dans un type de construction qui lui fasse perdre son autonomie et le rendre dépendant d'un élément qualifié (nom ou verbe). Les procédures de mise en dépendance les plus courants sont, pour qualifier les *êtres*, la *construction relative* (qui utilise les mots grammaticaux traditionnellement appelés *adjectifs* ou *pronoms relatifs* – les *relateurs qui*, *que*, *quoi*, *lequel* et ses variantes, *dont* et *où*) et la *construction participe* (qui utilise des formes particulières du verbe – le *participe présent* et le *participe passé*) et, pour qualifier les *faires*, le *gérondif* ou l'*infinitif*.

3.3. LA TROISIÈME SECTION

Une ***troisième section*** est consacrée aux *actants* et aux *relations actantielles* :
- les *actants directement et indirectement liés à l'action* (Agent, Patient et Destinataire) ;
- les *relations actantielles* : le *fait* (description de l'activité d'un être [±Humain]), l'*action* (*action* tout simplement, *action sur quelqu'un*, *action sur quelque chose*, *action à destination de quelqu'un*, *action avec*, *action malgré*), les *circonstants de l'action* (espace, temps, cause, finalité) ;
- la *configuration linguistique des processus*, permet une reconsidération de la *catégorie grammaticale de la voix*, à partir du *point de vue actantiel* et de la *sélection actantielle*, quatre types de configurations linguistiques étant ainsi distingués (celle *de l'Agent*, *du Patient*, *de l'Auxiliaire* et *du processus*).

3.4. LA QUATRIÈME SECTION

Une ***pénultième section*** est réservée à la relation *processus – temps linguistique*, les différentes *visions du processus* étant prises en compte :
- *accomplissement* (début, déroulement, fin et répétition) ;
- *extension temporelle* (durative et ponctuelle) ;
- *situation temporelle* (coïncidence ou simultanéité, antériorité et postériorité) ;
- *identification temporelle* (date, situation, position, référence) ;
- *corrélation temporelle* (des *modes* et des *temps*).

3.1. LA CINQUIÈME SECTION

La ***dernière section*** est centrée sur le *groupe verbal*, résultat des possibilités combinatoires du verbe en fonction de ses traits sémantiques. Sont analysés les *traits contextuels* suivants : [± Détérminé] (V + COD, V + C Prép, V + COD//COI/C Prép) [± Coverbe], [± Opérateur de phrase]).

4. DISCUSSION

Arrivés à ce point, on peut se poser une autre question : *Quels seraient les avantages de ce type de structuration de la matière à enseigner ?*

A part les éclaircissements de nature terminologique (métalangage), ce type de structuration permet d'envisager de façon plus logique des concepts tels *être*, *processus*, *propriété*, etc., concepts autrefois négligés ou, du moins, improprement approchés.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Ce passage à vol d'oiseau par-dessus la grammaire et la façon de l'enseigner nous permet de tirer les conclusions suivantes :

- la présentation du verbe comme signe linguistique doué d'un sens et d'une forme permet une meilleure compréhension du fonctionnement du verbe en tant que synthèse de traits sémantiques ;
- une bonne analyse des traits sémantiques permet de mieux comprendre l'action des restrictions sélectives ;
- l'étude des actants et des relations actantielles permet de résoudre le problème des trois, quatre ou cinq voix admises jusqu'à présent (active, passive, pronominale, factitive et impersonnelle) ;
- l'approche du verbe en termes de relation processus – temps linguistique est faite à partir des acquis précédents (traits sémantiques et actants) ;
- ce parcours nous détermine à ne garder que trois des huit traits contextuels généralement admis dans la littérature de spécialité (Cristea 1979).

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L'ENSEIGNEMENT DE L'ORTHOGRAPHE : MÉTHODES ET PRATIQUES

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ABSTRACT

Enseigner l'orthographe de la langue française à des étudiants des facultés non philologiques pose des problèmes particuliers parce que l'objectif primordial dans ce cas est de « faire parler » les apprenants et ensuite de les faire rédiger un texte. L'explication grammaticale est-elle nécessaire pendant les cours de langue française de ces facultés étant donné le fait que la maîtrise d'une langue étrangère consiste tout d'abord dans l'acquisition d'un comportement langagier (qui n'impose pas l'explication) ? Nous nous sommes proposé de présenter dans ce travail les difficultés rencontrées par les étudiants roumains dans l'apprentissage de l'orthographe du français et les méthodes que nous considérons les plus efficaces dans cet apprentissage.

Mots-clé: *Orthographe ; Problématisation ; Méthode ; Graphème*

1. INTRODUCTION

La définition du mot *orthographe* (Latin *orthographia* < Grec *orthos* 'droit' + *graphein* 'écrire') donnée par les dictionnaires est bien simple : « manière d'écrire un mot qui est considérée comme la seule correcte » (Robert 2007 : 1763). Mais pour les Français, l'orthographe est « un code et ce code orthographique il faut le connaître » (Catach 1991 : 8). Le code écrit n'est pas une simple transcription de l'oral. Il se compose de plusieurs parties ; pour acquérir ce langage « artificiel », il faut un apprentissage spécifique. Les Français adorent leur langue, mais ils sont fâchés avec l'écrit ! Les uns parce qu'ils n'y comprennent rien, les autres parce que le texte incorrect les agresse, les scandalise. Beaucoup de Français souhaitent une modernisation de l'orthographe, une simplification, dans l'intérêt et pour le progrès de leurs enfants. Mais d'autres considèrent l'orthographe comme « une valeur historique et culturelle essentielle » (idem : 22). Si l'on considère toutes les langues du monde, on pense en général qu'il y a d'un côté des systèmes à dominante idéographique (qui notent les sons), de l'autre des systèmes à dominante alphabétique (qui notent les sons), et que le français est de ce côté. Le français a une orthographe étymologique, c'est pourquoi les Roumains rencontrent beaucoup de difficultés à l'apprendre (le roumain a une orthographe phonétique, donc moins difficile à apprendre).

Parmi ces difficultés nous mentionnons, pour ne rappeler que les plus fréquentes :
- les accents, l'apostrophe, la cédille, le tréma (qui n'existent pas dans l'orthographe roumaine, sauf l'apostrophe utilisé rarement) ;
- les graphies avec majuscules ou minuscules qui différencient les sens des mots (*état / Etat*) ;
- les terminaisons muettes dans la conjugaison des verbes (*-e, -es, -ent*) ;

-   les marques du pluriel dans la catégorie du nom et de ses déterminants (-*s*, -*x*) qui ne se prononcent pas ;
-   les consonnes doubles, etc.

2. MÉTHODES ET PRATIQUES

2.1. LA DICTÉE

C'est une pratique ancienne qui a perdu beaucoup de terrain. Elle était tenue pour un exercice « barbare et cruel » (Grevisse 1989 : 5) en accumulant des difficultés imaginées par les grammairiens. Ecrire sans fautes des textes truffés de mots rares et de difficultés grammaticales parfois exceptionnelles suppose une mémoire hors du commun.

La dictée a retrouvé son prestige par les championnats organisés chaque année en Belgique depuis 1972. Bernard Pivot a lancé en 1985 les championnats d'orthographe de France. Et viennent ensuite les « Dictées des Amériques » organisées au Canada. La dictée concours a pour objet de vérifier la compétence d'un candidat normal ; cela se fait de préférence d'après un texte courant, tiré d'un livre ou d'un périodique d'aujourd'hui.

La dictée vérification ou exercice a une autre fonction : il s'agit d'améliorer la performance des usagers, en leur faisant apprendre ou en leur rappelant des mots ou des règles qu'ils ignorent ou connaissent mal. Il s'agit, en effet, d'inculquer aux élèves une bonne orthographe d'usage et une bonne orthographe de règle, c'est-à-dire de graver dans leur mémoire l'image correcte des mots et de leur faire appliquer les règles grammaticales. Il semble que la meilleure méthode pour graver dans l'esprit des élèves l'image des mots soit de faire concourir à ce résultat leur mémoire visuelle, leur mémoire auditive et leur mémoire motrice. Quant à l'orthographe de règle, elle est affaire de jugement et de raisonnement : il s'agit ici de bien savoir ses règles et de les appliquer avec discernement.

2.2. LA PROBLÉMATISATION

L'une des méthodes qui peuvent être appliqués dans l'enseignement explicite de la grammaire est la problématisation. Elle est définie comme un ensemble de procédés qui a comme but de créer des situations-problème qui offrent aux élèves la possibilité de surprendre diverses relations entre objets et phénomènes de la réalité, entre les connaissances acquises antérieurement et les nouvelles connaissances, par des solutions élaborées par eux-mêmes sous la direction du professeur.

Sans se confondre avec la résolution des problèmes au sens classique (résoudre des problèmes en appliquant des règles, des théorèmes, etc.), la problématisation suppose trois conditions pour pouvoir se constituer en méthode d'enseignement :
-   l'existence d'une difficulté ;
-   elle est surmontée par le propre effort de l'étudiant ;
-   l'acquisition (après l'avoir surmontée) d'une « règle d'ordre supérieur ».

Dans l'enseignement des langues étrangères réaliser des objectifs formatifs (qui visent des habiletés et des habitudes qu'il faut consolider chez les étudiants) suppose l'apprentissage correct du système grammatical de la langue cible. L'utilisation de la problématisation dans l'enseignement de la grammaire présente les avantages suivants :
-   c'est une méthode formative parce qu'elle permet de réaliser des objectifs formatifs ;

- c'est une méthode participative (ou active) parce qu'elle est centrée sur l'apprenant en lui sollicitant intensément la pensée, l'imagination, la volonté, l'expérience, la capacité de communication.

Pour utiliser cette méthode il est nécessaire d'accomplir certaines conditions :
- le dosage des difficultés ;
- le choix du meilleur moment pour poser le problème ;
- une certaine homogénéité du groupe d'étude.

La problématisation suppose la création de situations-problème qui sollicitent de la part des étudiants l'utilisation, la restructuration et l'enrichissement des connaissances antérieures en vue de la résolution de ces situations en se basant sur l'expérience et l'effort personnel. Par une situation-problème on comprend toute tâche offerte à l'étudiant, à caractère de nouveauté et par la résolution de laquelle (curiosité, mobilisation au travail) on acquiert de nouvelles connaissances.

Toute situation-problème prétend un minimum d'information (qui indique à l'étudiant de quoi il s'agit) et une question problème (qui lui dévoile la difficulté et lui montre la direction à prendre par la capacité de réfléchir)

Dans l'apprentissage de l'orthographe française l'objectif des exercices est d'établir la graphie d'une séquence minimum en fonction de la variante de message possible. On utilise des messages à ambiguïté créée artificiellement et dont l'interprétation mène à des situations d'orthographe différente. Elles peuvent être utilisées pour former la perception du langage en général, ayant des rapports avec l'orthographe. Les situations-problème sont nombreuses en français grâce au nombre d'oppositions fonctionnelles qui sont neutralisées au niveau du contenu ou de l'expression (cas d'homonymie et paronymie).

Dans le cas des *homonymes* on distingue :
- les *homographes* (mots qui se prononcent et s'écrivent de la même manière) et qui sont, en fait, les mêmes substantifs à genres différents ; seulement le contexte peut désambiguïser ce type d'homonymes :
  Le page Cupidon / la page 4
  la Tour Eiffel / le tour de France
- les *homophones* (mots ayant la même prononciation mais une orthographe différente) ; c'est toujours le contexte qui les désambiguïse :
  Un ver vert s'avançait vers un verre vert.

Dans le cas des *paronymes* le sens et l'orthographe sont toujours distincts *:*
  maire – mère – mer

Une importante source de fautes d'orthographe est constituée par l'existence d'une série de séquences qui, bien qu'elles ne soient pas homonymes ou paronymes, présentent des caractéristiques semblables, les différences étant non seulement d'ordre sémantique mais aussi grammatical. Ces séquences appartiennent à des catégories grammaticales les plus diverses. C'est le cas des séries de deux ou plusieurs termes à prononciation identique mais à orthographe différente. Leur présence dans le contexte est pleine de conséquences sémantiques et syntaxiques :
- [sδ / sõ] ***Ce sont** tes amis : ils **se sont** promenés au bord de la mer*
- [mεm] *Ma mère **m'aime** énormément. **Même** à cet âge elle se tourmente pour moi.*
- [sa] *Il prit **sa** pipe et alla au jardin : **ça** et là il y avait des mauvaises herbes. Il se dit : « Je n'aime pas **ça** ».*
- [dwa] *J'ai mal au **doigt**. Ça **doit** être grave.*
- [ty] ***Tu** leur as dit de se taire et alors il se **tût**. Elle s'était déjà **tue**.*

Devant un texte qui contient toute la série *a, à, as* la consigne est de remarquer les éléments en discussion et d'établir les différences existantes, puis de compléter un exercice « à trous ».

Les oppositions phonétiques peuvent constituer la source d'une situation-problème intéressante à exploiter de ce point de vue ; en voici deux exemples :
- l'opposition [e] / [ɛ]: *mes // mai / mais / m'est / mets ; ces / ses // c'est / sais / sait / s'est ; l'ai / les // lait / l'est ; ai / et // ait/ es/ est ; des / de // des / dais ; tes / the // t'es* ;
- l'opposition [a] / [ɑ] : *la / la // l'a / las ; ma / m'as // m'a / mas / mât.*

Il faut mentionner aussi le cas des unités lexicales différenciées :
- graphiquement (par un accent) : *a – à, la – là, ou – où, du – dû, mur – mûr, etc.* ;
- graphiquement (par un accent) et phonétiquement (par la prononciation) : *jeune – jeûne, notre – nôtre, votre – vôtre, etc.*

Pour former et consolider les habiletés de prononciation, lecture et écriture correctes, les situations mentionnées ci-dessus ont une importance particulière ; l'apprenant se trouve vraiment devant une situation-problème : il devra choisir la forme correcte et le choix implique une base solide de connaissances.

3. CONCLUSION

Nous croyons que la problématisation, en tant que méthode utilisée dans l'enseignement de l'orthographe française, favorise l'aspect formatif de l'apprentissage grâce à la participation effective de l'apprenant, au développement de l'intérêt pour l'acquisition des connaissances ; elle développe aussi l'esprit actif et indépendant de l'apprenant. En appliquant cette méthode, nous avons eu comme but l'entraînement effectif des étudiants dans l'activité proposée, de manière qu'il leur semble à avoir découvert eux-mêmes de nouvelles choses. Leur satisfaction a été d'autant plus grande.

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DISCRIMINATION AND PRONUNCIATION
IN THE PROCESS OF TEACHING-LEARNING ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

The present paper tackles the issue of teaching pronunciation during the English class. Taking into consideration that there are phonemes in English that do not exist in Romanian, Romanian students are faced with at least two problems: identifying the sounds in the foreign language and pronouncing them. The paper proposes some ways of helping them cope with that.

Keywords: *Auditory discrimination; Minimal pairs; Pronunciation; Utterance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Auditory and articulatory difficulties are characteristic to the process of teaching and learning English. As a result, it is very important to re-train the ear. Our didactic experience has led to the conclusion that mistaken pronunciation in English is due mainly to an inaccurate auditory perception, which is favoured:
- by the existence of some phonemes that are specific to the English language, and
- by the difference between phonemes that are not differentiated in Romanian.

The books on teaching English recommend the absence of any written material in the oral introductory stage, as the interferences between writing, listening and speaking can compromise all plans of the language. The new elements are first listened to, and then repeated by the whole class at once, based on visual support.

The formation of listening skills is a complex process: listening must be doubled by comprehension. As the uttering skills are conditioned by the auditory ones, the students must first learn to discriminate among the sounds of the English language. We find inexact the statement that the students trained by exercises of auditory discrimination, without the practice of repeating (uttering) the respective sounds, have a better pronunciation than the ones who imitate the model without discrimination exercises. Both activities need to take place one after the other if the student is to learn correct pronunciation in English.

2. DISCUSSION

The teaching guide for the teaching of English as a second language (Gălăţeanu & Comişel 1975: 24-25) tells us a few important things about teaching English to Romanian students:

The teacher does not describe the sound, but rather he demonstrates its production.

In teaching phonetics, detailed explanations are to be avoided, the teacher being expected to only give short indications on the position of the phonatory apparatus while practicing certain sounds which prove to be more difficult. This is the case of the vowel /æ/, which is most often pronounced /e/ or /je/ by Romanian students, no matter the part of the country.

It is important for the students to understand what they are repeating, because together with the phenomena in the language they also acquire a large number of fundamental lexical and grammatical structures, which can thus be used in the teaching process. This observation is only partially valid. It is true that the visual – whether iconic or written – support makes the relation between the signifier and the signified, but its realization can be delayed, as the presence of the visual material can turn the students' attention away from the auditory aspect to the visual one. In the case of the pronunciation exercises for the sound /θ/, it would be pointless (and also impossible, given the difficulty of illustrating some verbal forms at this stage in studying English, for example) to present the sounds /s/, /t/ and /θ/ with visual support. Our objective at this stage is to make clear for the students the difference among the three sounds which are so often mistaken one for the other by the people trying to learn English. It is our belief that, for the formation of discrimination and pronunciation skills in what the sound /θ/ is concerned, the phonetic exercise based on the three sounds mentioned above is enough (see Table 1). It is here that we can make good use of minimal pairs. *Minimal pairs* are pairs of words whose pronunciation differs at only one segment, such as *sheep* and *ship* or *lice* and *rice*. They are often used in listening tests and pronunciation exercises. Theoretically, it is the existence of minimal pairs which enables linguists (and, luckily, teachers of English too) to build up the phoneme inventory for a language or dialect, though the process is not without difficulty.

Table 1. Minimal pairs for the learning of the sounds /s/, /t/ and /θ/

/t/	/s/	/θ/
tank	sank	thank
taught	sought	thought
tin	sin	thin
tinker	sinker	thinker

Hearing skills are formed with the help of exercises of sound identification, which are meant to familiarize the students with the sounds that are specific for the English language: the teacher utters pairs of words that differ by only one sound, and then he/she asks the students to decide whether they are identical or not. In regard to exercising minimal pairs, we would suggest the following scheme, which modifies to a great extent what is suggested in the above-mentioned *Teacher's Guidelines*:
- first, the teacher utters the word column corresponding to the /i/ sound (*pit, sit,* etc.), then the column corresponding to the /i:/ sound (*peat, seat*, etc.), and then he utters pairs of words corresponding to both sounds (*pit – peat*, *sit – seat,* etc.);
- then, the teacher asks the students to do the same, repeating what the teacher says, and finally they pass on to discrimination exercises;

- after a couple of hours of such exercises, we recommend the introduction of the visual (iconic) support, in order to give the students the possibility of realising the fact that what they have learnt to discriminate and utter bears a meaning;
- after some more classes, the written visual support is to be introduced, but only in a context and only in relation with concrete nouns (for the time being).

Each of the four stages presented above must be practiced until the formation of correct skills.

There are tens of such lists of minimal pairs useful in the teaching – learning of English by both native and non-native students, but at some point it is no longer possible to illustrate them with just drawings or pictures. It is a true challenge for the teacher of English to imagine proper illustrations for such minimal pairs whose words differ in one segment, allowing that segment to be widely different in terms of articulation, or whose which differ by only one feature, as the following ones: *Alexandra – Alexandria, aural – oriel, Beryl – burial, beryls – burials, boarder – bawdier, boner – bonier, boozer – boozier, bumper – bumpier, Carron – carrion, catcher – catchier, cedar – seedier, chatter – chattier, choler – collier, cholers – colliers, chopper – choppier, clamour – clammier, cocker – cockier, corner – cornier, corners – corneas, creeper – creepier, curler – curlier, dreamer – dreamier, dresser – dressier, dumper – dumpier, duster – dustier, falter – faultier, fatter – fattier, fisher – fishier, freezers – freesias, gallon – galleon, gallons – galleons, genus – genius, greaser – greasier, groover – groovier, harder – hardier, header – headier, jumper – jumpier, laser – lazier, lodgers – loggias, lunar – loonier, lustre – lustier, manger – mangier, meter – meatier, meters – meteors, mirrored – myriad, mister – mistier, mitre – mightier, moulder – mouldier, mugger – muggier, muster – mustier, natter – nattier, nipper – nippier, oiler – oilier, orals – oriels, pallor – pallier, palmer – palmier, Peter – peatier, plumber – plumier, plusher – plushier, poker – pokier, potter – pottier, Psalter – saltier, racer – racier, ratter – rattier, reader – reedier, redder – readier, rocker – rockier, roomer – roomier, rudder – ruddier, runner – runnier, salvers – salvias, sapper – sappier, saucer – saucier, saver – saviour, savers – saviours, scatter – scattier, serous – serious, shaker – shakier, sirrah – Syria, sketcher – sketchier, sleeper – sleepier, smoker – smokier, snorter – snortier, sofa – Sofia, sponger – spongier, spotter – spottier, squeaker – squeakiers, teamer – steamier, sticker – stickier, straggler – stragglier, stumper – stumpier, sweater – sweatier, taster – tastier, tatter – tattier, terror – terrier, terrors – terriers, twister – twistier, venal – venial, waiter – weightier, waiver – wavier, warier – wearer, whisper – wispier,* and *wobbler – wobblier.*

3. CONCLUSIONS

In order to ensure the optimal development of each and every student, in what the formation of correct skills of listening comprehension is concerned, it is necessary for the teacher to know his students and their characteristics (hearing accuracy, the phonatory apparatus).

The exercises have a double function, as they refer both to prophylaxy and to recuperation.

Taking into account the fact that the introductory oral stage cannot be given too much time due to the fact that the schoolbooks are loaded with information, it is critical that oral exercises be practiced not only in the first year of study, but also in the following years, appearing in every stage of the lesson.

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READING AND STUDYING MODERN LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

The paper explores several aspects of the link between reading as a method of education and its role in learning of maternal and foreign language and literature. Based on the diachronic analysis of school programs, in our work we try to emphasize reading valences through modern techniques in the time of the information boom; reading helps students in the formation of skills and habits of intellectual work, it facilitates the use of other books besides the manual as sources of information, of gaining knowledge and its systematization.

Keyword*s: Reading; Individual Reading; Skills and habits of intellectual work*

1. INTRODUCTION

The study of modern foreign languages offers the possibility, at an interdisciplinary level, of associations from historical, culture, literary perspective, as well as other perspectives. In the years of high school, students can use the new system of communication as a means of widening their knowledge and opportunities for appreciation of literature, human sciences, history, and geography etc. That is why we consider it possible (and useful, at the same time) to treat two areas of knowledge interdisciplinary: individual reading and learning a modern foreign language.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

In the following we will try to answer a series of questions that are more and more recurrent in the specialty literature. How can you be a reader in the mass-media and ICT era? Is teaching literature really condemned to failure? What should I do for young people to learn / to continue to read in their mother / foreign language? How can reading contribute to the development of reading habits and reading experience of students?

Individual reading (independent, private) is part of the extracurricular activities with individual character, activities whose beneficiary is the student and whose final educational objective is the plenary structure of the student's personality at all levels of its development. At first, this is done under the impulse of methods used by teachers and has as a result, when properly guided and controlled, the formation of the student's reading habit and, therefore, its integration in the student's daily program.

During our analysis, we bared in mind the fact that teaching literature changes cognitive and behavioural characteristics, it forms attitudes, beliefs, ideals and interests and it sends impulses.

That is why, given the fact that it is almost impossible to identify the influence of literary figures upon the way of thinking, the feelings and behaviour of the reader, when analyzing the specific influences of teaching literature, one should focus, primarily, on

the content of literature itself, thereby acquiring information about the way in which certain types of behaviour are considered from a moral and / or aesthetic viewpoint. We will, therefore, continue to observe, how the students' work is guided in the two areas in question.

3. RESULTS

Thus, when studying the Romanian language and literature, students must be able to appreciate the values of Romanian literature in the context of universal literature, to develop an intellectual work, both efficient and qualitative, based on the need for reading and on their capacity to observe complex human experiences and analyse them through the filter of literary works; to understand a complex and objective reality, based on enriching and shading emotional life and of the intellectual, aesthetic, moral and social-political value system.

Regarding the interaction between the Romanian literature and the universal one through, for example, the 9th grade literature bibliography, of eight authors, two were French: Molière with "The Miser" and La Fontaine with "Fables". Regarding the 10th grade, from ten authors, four were French: V. Hugo with "The Wretched", H. de Balzac with "Old Goriot", A. Dumas' father with the "The Three Musketeers" and E. Zola with "Germinal". As for the 11th grade, from nine authors, only two were French: Rabelais with "Gargantua and Pantagruel" and A. Camus with "The Plague". Finally, with the 12th grade, from seven authors, two were French: Ch. Baudelaire with "The Flowers of Evil" and P. Verlaine with "Poems". So, 10 authors from 34 were representatives of French literature, the best represented foreign literature.

French high school textbooks, left aside the chronological presentation of French literature, and kept solely the illustrative authors of the nineteenth century: H. de Balzac with "Eugénie Grandet", A. Daudet with "Tartarin of Tarascon", V. Hugo with "The Wretched" and E. Zola with "The Attack of the Mill", or for the 20th century: A. Camus with "The Plague", G. Duhamel with "The Chronicle of the Pasquiers", P. Eluard with "Good Justice", A. France with "The Book of My Friend" and "The crime of Sylvestre Bonnard", R. M. du Gard with "The Thibaults", A. Maurois with "An Open Letter to a Young Man", M. Pagnol with "Remembrances from Childhood", J. Prévert with "A Page of Written Paper", R. Rolland with "Jean-Christophe", A de Saint-Exupéry with "The Little Prince" and "Land of Humans" and A. Salacrou with "Nights of Anger".

A case is the novel writer Russo A, who has written his capital opera "Cântarea României" ("Song of Romania") in French, a fragment of which can be found in the French manual for the 9th grade.

From the point of literary genre, best represented is the press (18 fragments), followed by poems and theatre with an equal number of appearances (2 each).

Only 4 of the 22 texts have not been "adapted": "Good Justice" by P. Eluard and "A Page of Written Paper" by J. Prévert and the fragments extracted from "The Crime of Sylvestre Bonnard" by A France ("Along the Seine") and from "Eugénie Grandet" by H. de Balzac ("Good Business").

In school practice, a number of problems hinder or prevent the realization of productive intellectual operations of the students, supported by the already mentioned texts. We will not insist on the lack of educational strategies, which should make students act, reflect and discuss on given topics. Following the pathway we have opened, we will focus on the following issues:

- Lack of interest of the majority of the texts dealt with (short texts, of "selected works" type), texts very different from the reading preferences of the students. If texts adapted from A. Daudet's "Tartarin of Tarascon", A de Saint-Exupéry's "The Little Prince" or M. Pagnol's "Remembrances from Childhood" are reviving the students' interest for reading, through humorous parts and through the sensitivity they display, texts like "Good Justice" by P. Eluard, "An Open Letter to a Young Man" by A. Maurois, "The True France" by R. Rolland, "Along the Seine" by A. France are not fit for the understanding of the students at this age, maybe because of a lack of coherence of the text adapted.
- Differences between texts which are presented in class and the ones which are read after school, differences noticed in two directions: firstly, students read preferably adventure books, love novels, journey books etc., genres which they do not find in the French manual nor in the universal literature booklist;
- Distance between the strategies of reading practiced in class (with analytic character, due to the short texts) and the ones practiced outside school (with global character). If we leave out poetry, the other two major literary genres are represented only fragmentary (it could not be otherwise). The global approach of the texts is difficult because, on the one hand, reading the whole work would require too much time and is not a solution, and on the other hand, the translations are old and thus hard to find.

Taking into consideration these real problems which teachers must face in their department work, correlated with a thorough knowledge of the students (habits, skills, experiences of reading, etc.), objectives centring on student activities especially on productive operations, the practice of pluralistic readings, that correspond to the polyvalent and pluralistic nature of literary texts, the alternation of analytical readings (short texts) and global ones (works) could help increase interest in reading and, implicitly, it could help increase the students' interest in studying modern foreign languages.

During high school the desire to read as well as to find out more about what we read can be stimulated by the presentation of pictures, books, volumes etc. before reading a fragment or a literary book, by guiding of students towards libraries, and by presenting, at the beginning and at the end of the school year, the new books, by offering, as prizes, whenever possible, the books listed in the bibliography, by supplying the library of the cabinet of modern languages with books recommended in the literature, displaying a list of recommended books for each year of study (according to the authors occurring in the manual).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Teaching of modern foreign languages (and implicitly, the introduction to literature in the foreign language), must take into account several pedagogical elements of reading, because of the following reasons:
- Reading is an improvable act even for a man well equipped from intellectual point of view, since educating quality and skills of reading is more than a phase in initiation: it is an aspect of the process of education and continuing self-education;
- Since reading is a substantial component of the complex contemporaneous human experience, its situation and optimal dosage within the time limits affected to the

numerous demanding and professional needs, as well as informational and entertainment needs, must be done with maximum caution.
- Modern man reading is a means not a goal in itself.
- Reading is a way of outrunning oneself and an act of human solidarity in time and space.
- Reading is an education factor for young readers; it is, primarily, a contact with the great creators, and a repeated contact with their great works.

The suggestions brought forth earlier also bear in mind avoiding the following reading risks: evil reading, escapist reading, chaotic reading, drug-reading, xenophile and snob reading, sporadic and desultory reading, apparent reading, reading in physical harmful conditions. Let's nor forget that in Latin *legere* means *to read*, but also *to harvest* …

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PHYSICAL EXERCISE IN THE PROPHYLACTICS AND RECUPERATION OF PHYSICAL DEFICIENCIES: STATISTICAL APPROACH OF RECUPERATION SHARE AND COSTS

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ABSTRACT

Postural deficiency and physical deficiency cases have increased in an alarming way in recent years, particularly among young people. The main goal of physical education is a harmonious physical development: education through movement is the main means of primary prophylactics. In recuperation practices, we offered kinetics treatments to a number of about 650 people in the year 2004 alone. It is important to emphasise the large number of young patients with vertebral static conditions (33%). Recuperation costs with the kinetic treatment of these physical deficiencies are considerable. We consider that it is extremely important to allot more time to physical education in schools and to develop a better awareness about the role and place of physical exercise, with primary prophylactics of physical development deficiencies.

Keywords: *Physical education; Physical deficiencies; Statistical approach; Recuperation costs*

1. INTRODUCTION

Movement is a phenomenon of life, one of its essential functions together with water, air, and sun. Movement consists of a complex of motrical actions triggered by neuromuscular impulses. Physical exercise is a motrical act systematically and consciously repeated with a view to achieve the goals of physical education and sports. Physical exercise has an impact at both biological and spiritual levels. Practicing physical exercises needs physical effort to be done by muscle contraction and by the great somatic functions. Physical exercise and activities practiced systematically under the incidence of natural and environmental factors prove to be valuable therapeutic agents in the promotion of health and harmonious physical development. The main objective of physical education is 'a harmonious development', education through movement representing the main means of primary prophylactics.

As a member of the great family of European nations, Romania joined the European initiative '2004 – European year of education through sport' and declared '2005 – Year of education through sport' aiming at the following:

- raising educational institution and sports organisation awareness of the necessity

for cooperation with a view to developing education through sports;
- promoting sport values to develop the knowledge and competences that allow youths to develop their physical abilities, predisposition for the effort, as well as social skills such as team work, solidarity, and fair play in a multicultural environment;
- enhancing the educational value of mobility and school exchanges in a multicultural environment through sport and cultural activities;
- developing balance between intellectual and physical activities by implementing physical education in schools.

With this paper, the authors wish to draw the public's attention to the fact that, though the number of physical deficiencies has increased alarmingly lately, the prophylactic element – physical exercise within physical education classes in schools – is decreasing steadily.

Physical development deficiencies concern *any abnormality of the aspect and functions of the body that hinder normal growth and harmonious development, that change its outlook, that diminishes its physical skills and its physical and even intellectual strength, as well as working skills.*

The main means of primary prophylactics and of treating these deficiencies is physical exercise such as practiced within physical education classes in schools. Physical development deficiencies should be identified as such during the physical education class and at the lowest age possible, since timing identification and treatment can diminish costs and implications.

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2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The analysis below is based on the data collected in 2004 by the Eccentric Physiotherapy and Medical Recuperation Centre in Timişoara. Reference prices are the prices offered by the Timiş County Health Insurance House (CJAST): here we should mention that real costs are much higher since the latter only allots funds for 10 recuperation sessions which, in our opinion, is pretty little compared to what is needed for the recuperation of a physical deficiency.

We do not approach here severe deficiencies, whose diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment differ considerably from the deficiencies that can be at least improved if not completely removed by practicing some form of constant and coordinated physical activities.

We should however mention that, unfortunately, severe deficiencies were, at the beginning, vicious postures consolidated in time, deficiencies which, because of neglect, lack of involvement, and sedentary lifestyle, have turned into extreme conditions that lead, in time, to invalidity (e.g. scoliosis with bone changes inducing respiratory deficit

because of the thorax compression and subsequent diminution of effort capacity and of efficient oxygen input).

Our calculus show that, if we want to efficiently recuperate a light physical deficiency (habitual or light kyphosis, scoliosis, kypho-scoliosis, flat feet, etc.), we need 30 sessions. But, even after these 30 sessions, we absolutely need some kind of physical activities that preserve the gains: it is time here speak of the extraordinary role physical education can play as a means of secondary prophylactics.

The age interval we dealt with was 5-20, since this is the interval within which we can find people with deficiency debut or predisposed to one or several of these physical deficiencies, as well as those who show the tendency to get deficit postures with increased severity risk and with severe implications on their health state.

3. RESULTS

In 2004, we treated an approximate number of 650 people (only patients benefiting from therapy with or without supplementary services such as massage, physiotherapy, etc. are taken into account here), of which 250 men and 400 women.

As far as physical deficiency or static condition were concerned, we included in the programme 80 male (Figure 1) and 130 female (Figure 2) patients. Within the 5-20 years segment, the share of static condition share was 50 in male patients and 75 in female patients, while the share of vertebral static conditions was 30 in male patients and 50 in female patients.
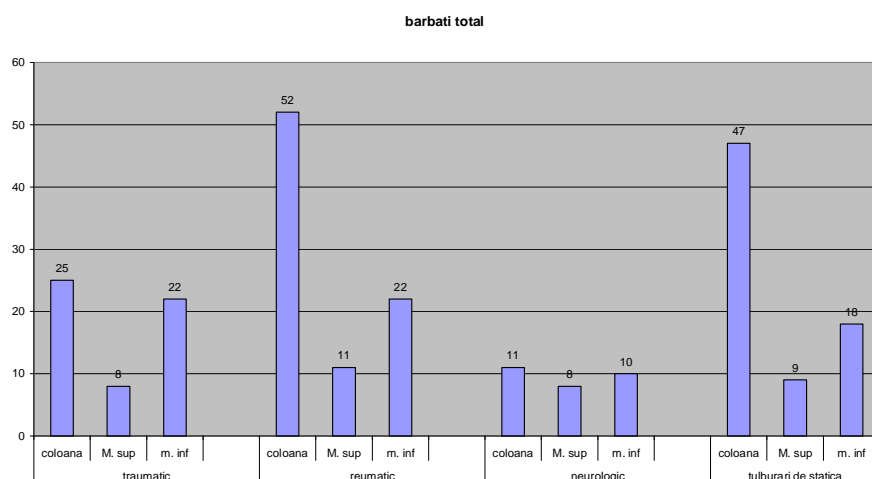
Figure 1. Male patients

It is very important to draw the public's attention on the very large share of vertebral static deficiency with a huge impact on later development of the patients, and with high risk of developing extremely severe complications at the level of the peripheral nervous system (Figure 3).

4. DISCUSSION

As for the costs, here are the data supplied by the CJAST, costs that are, in our opinion, minimal for an efficient recovery:

- Initial medical advice: 86,000 ROL;
- Control medical advice: 57,000 ROL;
- Joint balance: 80,500 ROL;
- Muscle balance: 86,000 ROL;
- Recuperation plan design: 63,000 ROL;
- Individual therapy: 58,000 ROL;
- Apparatus therapy: 26,000 ROL;
- Regional massage: 30,000 ROL;
- Vertebral manipulation: 52,000 ROL.
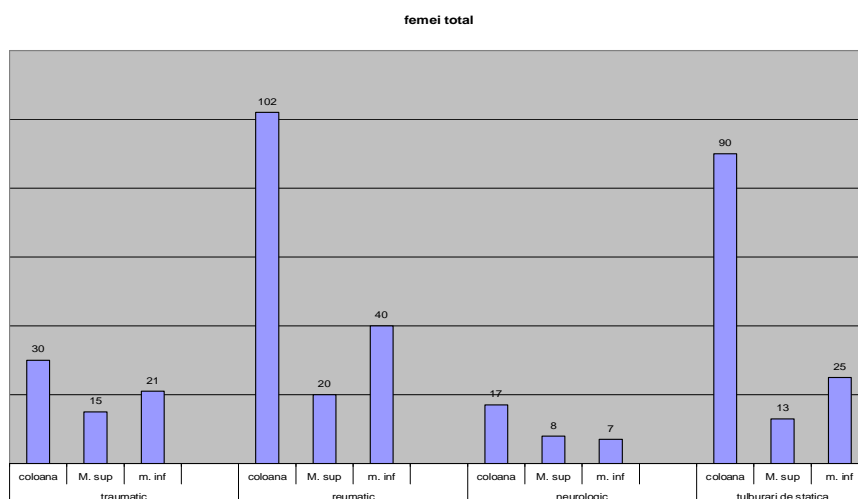
Figure 2. Female patients
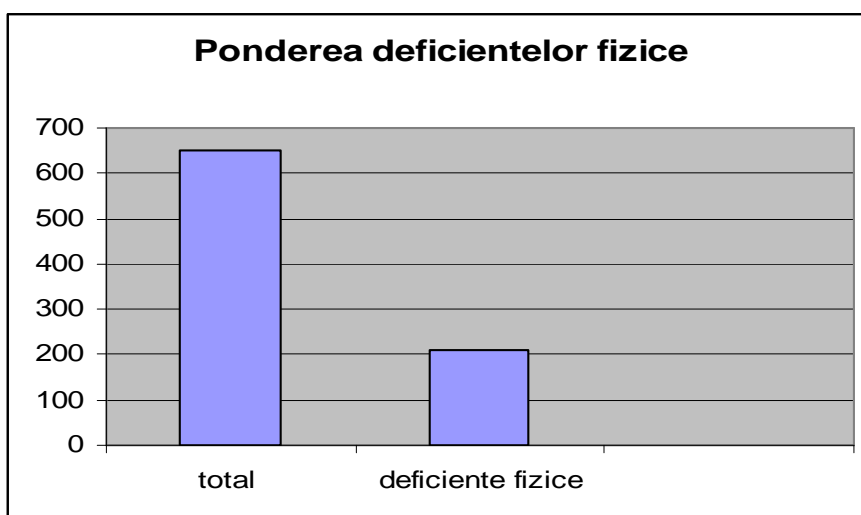
Figure 3. Share of physical deficiencies

Based on this price list and taking into account that a patient needs on the average 30 sessions, we can estimate that the costs of a single recuperation session reaches about 150,000 ROL, with a total of 4,500,000 ROL per patient.

Besides the cost *stricto sensu* of the recuperation procedures, we should also take into account the following costs:
- Initial medical advice: 86,000 ROL;
- Treatment plan design: 63,000 ROL;
- Periodical control medical advice (after 10 sessions): 56,000 ROL (168,000 ROL for 3 medical advice);
- Joint balance: 46,000 ROL (138,000 ROL for 3 joint balances).

The total costs thus reach about 5,000,000 ROL per patient for a series of 30 recuperation sessions.

As a result of this study, we can see that the share of physical development deficiencies reaches 33% of the total number of patients, i.e. a large share taking into account that the patients were divided according to their pathology (traumatic, rheumatic, neurological, and static condition.

Without insisting too much on the causes determining the somatic behaviour of the different types of physical deficiency, we should nevertheless emphasise the fact that there is an increasing trend among the 10 to 16 year old people (i.e. children and teenagers). Within this interval, the human skeleton develops at a higher rate than the muscles do. Lack of physical training of a muscle volume inferior in share compared to the real bio-mechanical necessities of the human body leads to deficit posture which, in time, develops into severe deficits. The final step is the changing of anatomical elements involved in each of the deficiencies. Thus, from a simple posture that can be corrected by getting the patient aware of it and through consistent programmes of physical training whose costs are minor compared to the costs involved by therapy, people can develop severe conditions asking for costly surgery with risk of invalidation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

We therefore consider that it is extremely important to educate first of all teachers of physical education with a view to early identification and treatment of different vicious postures and to applying programmes meant to prevent such conditions. We need to emphasise this since the teacher of physical education is the only person that has the chance to see the students in situations that ask for proper body posture, the only one that can relate to certain movement parameters that involve symmetry, harmony, and static or dynamic coordination. Thus, the teacher of physical education plays the most important role in the early identification of static conditions. At the same time, we need to emphasise the role physical education should play in schools at both primary and secondary levels, since it is at this time that pupils can start loving movement and contribute to their own harmonious physical and psychical development. On the other hand, we need to point out the fact that the fund supplied for recuperation are important but not necessary if primary and/or secondary prophylactics are efficient, which would allow the redirection of these funds towards other fields. Last but not least, we would like to remind that, if we take into consideration an entire year, the amount of 5,000,000 ROL per recuperation programme (for about 3 months with 3 sessions per week) represents almost the double of the school allotted amount for the entire year which reaches about 2,700,000 ROL.

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LANGUAGE AND LITERACY
LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

English as an Additional Language (EAL) programmes have set out a number of areas for development of work to support bilingual learners: training and support for mainstream staff, training and support for EAL specialist staff, assessment and meeting the needs of more advanced bilingual learners (those who have had considerable exposure to an educational environment within which English is the first language and thus are no longer in the early stages of English language acquisition). Moreover, special attention is given to children who, apart from their learning difficulties (e.g. spelling), are EAL learners with specific learning difficulties that restrict language acquisition and development. This paper provides a few solutions for the improvement of English teaching strategies in special cases, as good practice in raising the achievement of minority ethnic pupils.

Keywords: *Language learning; Literacy learning; English as an Additional Language; Minority ethnic pupils*

1. INTRODUCTION

The field of literacy has been invaded in the last decades by a large number of sigles concerning the learning of English by different categories of people. Specialists in the teaching of English distinguish, thus, between the following (sometimes) overlapping "types of taught English":

- *EAL – English as an Additional Language*, generally indicating provision for children whose first language is not English;
- *EFL – English as a Foreign Language*, usually indicating the use of English in a non-English-speaking region;
- *ESL – English as a Second Language*;
- *ESOL – English for Speakers of Other Languages*, referring to provision for adults whose first language is not English, within the Skills for Life adult basic skills strategy, and within an English-speaking region In the adult literacy sector;
- *TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language*.

This is a result of the fact that, in England alone, 686,000 pupils are currently recorded as having a mother tongue other than English, with more than 200 languages being spoken in the homes of children attending school.

Therefore, in approaching the issue of Literacy for *English as an Additional Language (EAL)*, we should first try and answer the following question:

How does the learning experience differ for the learner who is an EAL learner from that of an English native learner developing his/her literacy skills?

The best solution to get an answer, in our opinion, is to design special sessions in which to work on literacy with a group of EAL learners, based on a lesson plan, learning materials, a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the session, and expected learner feedback.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

We developed a session in which we worked on literacy with a group of EAL learners. In the development of our EAL session, we included our lesson plan, some learning materials, a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the session, and some expected learner feedback.

3. RESULTS

3.1. LITERACY FOR ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

A native learner acquires the English language from a very early age, whereas an English as an Additional Language (EAL) learner needs to learn the language. Hawkins (1984), in contrasting mother tongue learning during infancy and foreign language learning during school, argues that the motivation for mother tongue learning is greater than for foreign language learning because there is more in the way of discovery, excitement and associated rewards. Amongst EAL learners, Wallace (1988: 4-5) outlines the difference between those "who are learning English as a foreign rather than a second language, and have come to Britain usually specifically to improve their English" and those from "linguistic minorities who have settled in Britain" and who "are likely to have to function in daily life, work and education primarily through the medium of English".

The ability of an EAL adult learner to develop his/her literacy skills will depend on a variety of factors including his/her native language literacy skills (which in turn is a reflection of their educational background), personal circumstances and degree of motivation, i.e. to what degree the learners need English in their daily lives, e.g. work-related reasons, integration into the community, functional reasons (going to the doctor etc.) and the amount of exposure they get to the English language in their daily lives. Wallace (1988: 3) explains that, for teachers of adult literacy, functional literacy should be the goal for their learners, i.e. to be aware that it's "part of everyday life in a personal and social sense". However, she also argues that the degree to which EAL learners, who have a different first language and culture to that of the indigenous population, need and view literacy in their everyday lives depends on their social role within their community, and backs this up by giving examples of the varying literacy expectations on an Indian housewife and a Pakistani Moslem boy.

In comparing and contrasting the issues faced by native and non-native speakers in learning to read, Wallace (1988:64) argues out that since native speakers use the English language in their daily lives and have an "intuitive knowledge about their own language", then "reading is not an alien code", whereas for non-native speakers, they have to use "[…] what they know of English to predict the structure and vocabulary of written English" and as such may have, depending on their English competence, "difficulty in anticipating certain structures in written texts".

Furthermore, Carrell (1987: 43) points out that amongst adults, research has shown that:

"[…] when a reader and writer share cultural assumptions and knowledge about social systems and rituals, there is a much higher level of interaction of the reader with the text than occurs when such assumptions and knowledge are not shared."

Bearing in mind that those native speakers will include standard and non-standard speakers of English, it should be considered that non-standard speakers too may have language-related difficulties in developing their reading and writing skills on the basis that:

"While the English writing system does not directly represent speech […], the grammar of most varieties of written English is more closely related to Standard English than to non-standard varieties of spoken English." (Wallace 1988: 67)

However, Wallace (idem) also argued that "This kind of dialectal mismatch does not appear to be, in itself, a major problem […]", whilst others, including Entwhisle (1978) and Bernstein (1964), argued that those who speak non-standard English fail to benefit to the same degree as standard English speakers from formal education where standard English is the norm.

An EAL learner's native language literacy skills will also affect their English reading skills in that if they have, for example, a poor comprehension of punctuation, or a sound knowledge of punctuation conventions in the first language which are not the same as those of English then this will serve as an additional barrier in reading to the understanding of text to that served by understanding of vocabulary and pronunciation of words – and similarly for writing, poor handwriting skills and/or a poor comprehension of punctuation, grammar and spelling rules in the EAL learners own language will compound a learner's difficulties in writing in another language.

Native learners who wish to develop their literacy skills, however, are less likely to be concerned with English language usage, but more concerned with developing their reading and writing skills. The literacy skills which need to be developed, will naturally relate (as with EAL learners) to the level of literacy skills which the native learner already has. Those skills will, in turn, relate to the learners' own educational experiences and socio-economic background, abilities and interest. The incentives for the native learner to improve their literacy skills will naturally relate to their own motivation and personal and work-related circumstances.

EAL learners are less likely to be aware of the range of non-standard English dialects that exist in the United Kingdom than a native learner, and as such, would need to be exposed during learning sessions to a range of dialects. Native learners on the other hand, who use non-standard dialects may not be aware of grammatical errors that they make in their spoken English (e.g. use of *you was, *it were, *I done, *we haven't got no etc. are all quite common in non-standard dialects) and how this may impact on their written English. Also, it should be considered that there will be many EAL learners who, due to the areas they live in, may be equally, or more likely, to accept the non-standard colloquialisms around them as standard (e.g. *innit*?).

In the early stages of literacy where a sound-letter correspondence is being taught, care should be taken to ensure that the learner has an opportunity to hear the sound. Materials intended for native speakers often assume a knowledge of vocabulary (e.g. a picture of an igloo next to the letter I), but this knowledge cannot be assumed for EAL learners. When teaching vocabulary, the meaning, spoken form of the word, and written form of the word should all be emphasised with an EAL learner. If lessons are tailored to

the needs of native learners, there is a possibility of neglecting one or other of the first two. Generally speaking, EAL learners will have a smaller vocabulary, and less of an instinctive knowledge of collocation (words that go with other words), e.g. *traffic jam*, *traffic lights*, *draconian measures*. A strategy employed by successful readers – guessing from context – cannot be employed by them unless the teacher ensures that there are not too many gaps in the text, i.e. limits the vocabulary load. Writing frames, prepared for a range of levels, can be a useful strategy for developing writing skills in both EAL and native learners. Examples of writing frames (writing letters, applying for courses, etc.) can be found in **Writing Works** (2001). Both EAL and native learners could benefit from the support of pictures.

EAL learners will want to advance their knowledge of the English language alongside their literacy skills (acquiring new vocabulary and structures). In supporting general English acquisition through the written and spoken word, teachers should avoid the danger of overloading the text with unknowns and thus sabotaging the developing literacy skills. It should also be bourn in mind that EAL learners who have advanced literacy skills in their own language may feel insulted by the simplicity of the content of beginner's texts. Similar sensitivity is required with adult native speakers too, as they tend not to want to read childish texts. Furthermore, EAL learners who do read well in their other language(s) should be explicitly taught how to use a bilingual dictionary.

3.2. WORKING WITH LEARNERS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND LEARNING DIFFICULTIES THAT RESTRICT LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

Jenny is an EAL learner with specific learning difficulties and with learning difficulties (spelling) that restrict language acquisition and development. This is how we diagnosed and treated her difficulties.

What indicators are there that Jenny might have a specific learning difficulty, apart from her difficulty with spelling? Jenny had a very disruptive school life. She was absent much of the time as she was in and out of hospital. She finds it difficult to follow what is going on at meetings when people are either talking at the same time or speaking too quickly, and she is unable to take notes on the basis that she can not read her own handwriting. She also finds it hard to work in a group at meetings because she needs more time than the other group members to think things through, and as a result, she comes across comes across to others as someone who is disorganised and lacking in concentration. This all contributes to Jenny lacking confidence and having low self-esteem.

We used the Spelling Error Analysis Chart to identify Jenny's spelling errors (at least 25 errors) (Table 1).

We analysed the predominant difficulties Jenny may have, using the completed chart and the case study, and commented on other issues that we observed. Looking at the completed spelling error analysis chart for Jenny's script, it is clear that out of the five columns, the majority of errors appear in column E, with 12 out of the 28 errors identified. This type of error indicates that the learner's predominant difficulties are in motor processing which, according to Klein (2003: 51), "may take the form of

handwriting errors, repetition or omission of letters, telescoping or perseverating." Examples of telescoping (indicated by the omission of syllables or repeated letters) in Jenny's script include *rember for remember and *sundly for suddenly. Examples of omission of letters in the script include *thrty for thirty and *loked for looked. An example of perseverating (which is indicated by the repetition of a letter pattern in the script) is *frightenened for frightened. It can also be seen from the spelling analysis chart that, out of the 28 spelling errors, six appear in column C and 6 appear in column D. The spelling errors in column C indicate, according to Klein (2003: 51), "a lack of awareness of spelling rules or […] unacceptable phonetic alternatives." Examples include *lukked for looked and *skool for school. The spelling errors in column D indicate, according to Klein (2003: 53), that the learner "shows difficulty in matching sounds with appropriate letters". Examples include *drott for brought and *becum for became. With regard to the other 2 columns; in column A (indicating errors that are logical phonetic alternatives), there are 3 errors, and in column B (which indicates visual sequential errors), there are just 2 errors, which suggest that these are not significant issues for the learner.

Table 1. Spelling Error Analysis Chart of Jenny's spelling errors

	Script	Errors	Type of error (see error key below)				
			A	B	C	D	E
1	a lot	i					x
2	again	againe					x
3	became	becum				x	
4	brought	drott				x	
5	children	child					x
6	even	evn			x		
7	family	fambely				x	
8	first	furst	x				
9	frightened	frightenened					x
10	handed	hanbed		x			?
11	know	kno			x		
12	looked	lukked			x		
13	looked	loked					x
14	one	wone			x		
15	operations	opratshions				x	
16	painful	painfull	x				
17	qualifications	cwalficashons			x		
18	quite	quiet		x			
19	remember	rember					x
20	school	schule	x		?		
21	school	skool			x		
22	seemed	seemeed					x
23	soon	soone					x
24	suddenly	sundly					x
25	teacher	tescher				x	
26	thirty	thrty					x
27	though	thugh				x	?
28	though	thogh					x

We listed three key strategies we could suggest to Jenny to help her develop her spelling. On the basis that many of the errors that Jenny makes relate to motor processing difficulties, which may, according to Klein (2003: 51), indicate that the learner has "eye-to-hand co-ordination problems" and is consequently "not able to keep track of the whole word while writing", a strategy we would suggest to Jenny to help her develop her spelling would be that she practises joined-up writing using pens that cause some degree of friction between it and the paper. This would help to improve control of her handwriting and motor-memory and in so doing, reduce the amount of spelling errors in her writing caused by telescoping and perseverating as discussed in part 3. In addition, we would suggest that, where possible, she uses a word processor for her writing, as it has been argued by Klein & Krupska (1995: 35) that learners who experience motor processing difficulties can improve "their written expression" when "the effort of forming letters is removed".

Bearing in mind that Jenny's errors may also relate to her having a lack of awareness of acceptable letter combinations (as indicated by errors in column C) and auditory processing difficulties (as indicated by errors in column D), as well as motor processing difficulties, a strategy we would suggest to Jenny to help her develop her spelling would be *the Look, Cover, Say, Write and Check method* which adopts a multi sensory approach. This method begins with drawing 4 or 5 columns on a piece of paper and writing the correct spelling of the words chosen to be learnt in the first column. Then, the learner:
- looks at a word (focussing on any possible area of difficulty);
- says the word out loud;
- covers the word (while at the same time trying to visualise it with their eyes closed);
- says the word out loud again;
- writes the word in the second column (saying the word again as they write it);
- checks that the word is correct.

If the word is not correct, then the correct spelling of the whole word should be written nearby or in a separate exercise book. The learner should then repeat the exercise the following day, writing the word in the next column, and again some days later putting the word in the next column along (Klein & Millar 2002). It is important to initially discuss and decide with the learner which words or groups of words are to be learnt, on the basis that the words should be relevant to the learner and ones that they wish to learn, and to ensure that not too many words are chosen in any one spelling session (say up to 10). It is also a good idea to ensure that the words chosen are from a group (or family) of words that can be related by meaning or form, e.g. all the words could be food types, share the same spelling characteristics (e.g. *gate*, *hate*, *mate*, etc) or be derived from the same root (e.g. *threat*, *threaten*, *threatening*, *unthreatened*, etc).

A strategy that I would suggest to Jenny in order to help her develop her spelling of multi-syllabic words is "chunking", i.e. whereby the words are broken down "into visually and lexically memorable units, e.g. *br ill i ant*" (Klein & Krupska 1995: 84) or, where possible, broken down into words within words (e.g. *sat is fact ion*) and the spelling of the word remembered as the sum of those units or words. As with the above strategy, a small group of words relevant to the learner's needs could be chosen to be learnt, written in a column on paper and broken down into appropriate units. If, whilst practising spellings of the words, it transpires that the learner consistently makes an error with the spelling of a certain unit, e.g. the first or second unit (or missed out altogether)

then that unit could be highlighted in order to give visual emphasis to that part of the word.

On the basis that a symptom of Jenny's learning disability may be overloading of the short term memory during learning, we would advocate reinforcement of the above strategies in order to assist the transfer of information from her short-term memory to her long term memory.

Strategies to help Jenny with her note taking and working in small groups at meetings.

Note taking. On the basis that Jenny may have auditory processing difficulties, to help her with her note taking we would suggest to her that during meetings she should try and sit where she'll be able to hear best, e.g. towards the back of the room where she will not be distracted by people sitting behind her.

We would suggest to Jenny that in the long run she looks at ways she can address the motor processing difficulties which probably cause her to produce illegible handwriting. We would encourage her to use joined up writing using a fountain pen that would drag on paper more than a ball point pen, and so help in the control of her writing. We would also suggest the use of mind maps as a way of organising her notes since, after practice, they could provide more coherent notes with fewer words than with linear note taking. We would also encourage her to try where possible, to make personal connections with what is being said, and to get into the habit of reading through her notes as soon as possible after each class and if necessary clarifying them and making any amendments while the information is still fresh in her mind.

Working in small groups at meetings. Jenny finds it difficult to follow what people are saying at meetings when they speak too fast, or at the same time. This is because her learning difficulty is such that she needs more time than most to process information and make connections with what she already knows. We would suggest to her that she tries to get familiar with what's going to be discussed at the meetings by going through the agenda or studying any relevant handouts in advance. We would also advocate that Jenny considers using a dictaphone during her meetings in order that she can listen again and go over what was said at the meetings in her own time. Furthermore, on the basis that Jenny does not mind her friends knowing she has difficulties with writing and spelling, we would suggest to her that she has a friend or "buddy" to support her in the meetings.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Amongst EAL learners, naturally the range of initial levels of acquisition can be quite vast, i.e. from someone who has little or no knowledge of the English language and little experience of its usage, to someone who is nearly fluent. Furthermore, there will be a wide ability range in terms of the learners' potential to develop their English literacy skills within such a range of learners.

Common learning difficulties which EAL learners experience at whatever their starting point relate to the degree to which the phonological system and grammatical structure of their own language differ from the English language.

Common errors in spoken English amongst EAL learners relate to learners translating directly from their own language into English (mother tongue interference), using their native language's grammatical structures.

However, the EAL learner may have strong literacy skills in their other language(s) and these are transferable but less so if the other languages use a different phonological system, and are written in scripts other than the Latin. If the first language is written in a non alphabetic script, even less so.

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EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE AMONG PUPILS IN THE RURAL AREA

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we present a few aspects of educational and professional guidance in rural schools; we start from the premise that a good educational and professional guidance is a fundamental requirement of an efficient use of human resources. The study is based on a sociological research on 8th grades students in four rural schools in the Timiş county (Recaş, Gătaia, Periam, Biled). The conclusions we draw point out the small role of school among the factors influencing educational and professional guidance of pupils. This allowed us to develop some possible recommendations and suggestions meant to increase the role of institutional educational factors in the rural area.

Keywords: *Educational guidance; Professional guidance; Educational and professional options; Factors of educational and professional guidance*

1. INTRODUCTION

Professions dynamics in present conditions, the appearance of new professions, the diversification or concentration of some other professions and even the technical disappearance of professions make young people face more and more difficulties in choosing a trade or profession. In these terms the role of Educational and Professional Guidance (EPG) is even greater. EPG represents a dynamic and coherent system of principles, actions and measures by the help of which an individual or a group are guided to choose a certain school and, at a time start a certain profession offered by a certain school in concordance with their inclinations. These two components of EPG are accomplished, both sequential and in interaction. In our educational system the EPG articulation with secondary schools represents a top necessity. It is recommendable that the accent on EPG actions to be put in pre-terminal grades, so that most of the pupils should be able to benefit of a competent EPG advice in that period and to be able to do a correct self-guidance. In terminal grades EPG preoccupations might be intensified both

by pupils and their parents counting on a much more organised collaboration. An EPG approach from a formative perspective refers to the fact that young people must be effectively helped to accomplish what they desire, to develop their personality in consensus with their aspirations, to assimilate knowledge and to be able to form abilities and skills which can help them transfer their educational and professional option in the real life.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

2.1 RESEARCH GOAL

The research goal is to capture and analyse a few aspects of EPG among pupils from the 8th grade attending the rural schools mentioned above.

2.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives we aimed at in this research were as follows: analysing pupils' options concerning professional guidance; analysing the factors that contribute to the choice of a school and of a profession; analysing the perception of the pupils concerning the professions considered to be great, prestigious or materially advantageous. In comparison with the goal, these objectives are more anchored in the present, trying to surprise a certain moment, the "actual pulse" with regards to EPG.

2.3 RESEARCH METHODS

We used the following research methods: a questionnaire applied to the pupils and an interview guide applied to the principals and form masters of the grades under study.

A *questionnaire* is an investigation method of a community intermediated by a set of items containing questions, solutions by choice, etc. allowing an insight in the individual's personality while seeking for interests, preferences, motives, attitudes, and option revelations. Our questionnaire was applied in identical conditions to all our subjects (at the same time, same suitable hour, in a familiar environment – the classroom) without the presence of any disturbing factors. It contains mixed questions (close and open) referring to fact data and interests, opinions, attitudes, motivations and judgement.

The *interview guide* allowed us to obtain the information concerning the school's profile, the number of classes, of pupils, the school endowment, school preoccupations concerning EPG guidance in the case of form classes development, other classes, discussions with the parents, support offered by County School Inspectorate, school difficulties concerning EPG and others (observations of the ones who made the investigation concerning school cooperation, pupils' cooperation etc.).

3. RESULTS

3.1.STUDIED POPULATION

Research population was made up of 207 pupils from the 8th grade (108 girls and 99 boys). The research was carried out in the years 2006 and 2007, this paper presenting the results obtained at the end of 2007.

The answers of the pupils are presented in the tables and figures presented in the order of the questions, and the interpretation is presented after each table and figure.

3.2. ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The structure of researched population. Depending on gender, this sample is illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1 Structure of the subjects after gender

Specification	Number	%
Total	207	100
Boys	99	47.82
Girls	108	52.18

We can observe that the number of girls is higher – 108 (52.18%) and the number of boys is smaller – 99 (47.18%).

Table 2. Structure of the subjects considering their maternal language

Specification	Total		Of which with maternal language:					
			Romanian		Hungarian		German	
	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%	Nr.	%
Total	207	100	188	90.82	1	0.50	18	8.69
Boys	99	100	88	88.88	1	1.02	10	10.10
Girls	108	100	100	92.60	-	-	8	7.40

In the case of the pupils from the 8th grade, 90.82% have Romanian as maternal language, 8.6% German and only 0.50% Hungarian language (Table 2).

Considering their gender, more girls have Romanian as maternal language (92.54%) instead of 88.88% of the boys, but as concerning the German language it is met in a higher proportion in case of the boys (10.10%) than of 7.40% in the girls' case. A single boy from our sample has Hungarian as maternal language.

Beside maternal languages, other known languages (or spoken) by 8th grade pupils in the rural area are: English (78.74%), French (65.03%) German (38.64%), other languages (beside the mentioned ones) are spoken by a number of 45 pupils, who represent 21.73%.

Beside the gender we can observe equality between girls and boys when referring to their knowledge of English, which by the way, is placed on the first place, but differences appear as concerns the knowledge of German language, which is spoken by girls in a higher proportion (44.44%) as compared to boys (19.64%); in return the French language is "approved " more by boys (28.96%) and less by girls (13.53%); instead, girls are speaking other foreign languages having a four times larger percentage than boys.

As for the average grade, the same hierarchical structure of the spoken languages is kept as on the entire sample.

The educational level of the pupils parents from the sample is structured as follows: 172 (41.54%) are high-school graduates, displaying an almost equal proportion for

mothers and fathers, 8th grade graduates - 139 (33.58%), but with maternal predominance 37.68%; 49 (11.84%) from the parents graduated a post-high-school course, with fathers sharing a greater proportion - 14.98%; 12 (2.89%) of the parents have graduated from a faculty, in this case fathers displaying the same superiority. Only 9 (2.17%) of the parents have graduated a primary school (table 4).

Table 3. Subject's structure concerning other studied languages (beside the maternal language)

| | | Total | | Of which are speaking: | | | | | | | |
| | | | | English | | German | | French | | Other language | |
		Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Total		207	100	163	78.74	80	38.64	106	65.03	45	21.73
Boys		99	100	80	83.71	36	19.64	53	28.96	14	7.65
Girls		108	100	83	83.83	44	44.44	53	13.53	31	31.31
Average	below 7.0	41	100	30	73.17	17	41.46	17	20.48	10	24.39
	7.1-8.50	83	100	70	84.33	32	38.55	53	63.85	19	22.89
	8.51-10.00	83	100	63	75.90	31	38.55	36	43.37	26	31.32

Table 4. Subjects structure considering the parents training level

		Father	Mother	Total
1-4 grades	Nr	3	6	9
	%	1.45	2.89	2.17
5-8 grades	Nr	61	78	139
	%	29.46	37.68	33.58
Technical school	Nr	18	15	33
	%	8.69	7.25	7.97
High-school	Nr	87	85	173
	%	42.03	41.07	41.54
Post high-school courses	Nr	31	18	49
	%	14.98	8.69	11.84
Faculty	Nr	7	5	12
	%	3.39	2.42	2.89
Total	Nr	207	207	414
	%	100	100	100

As for the monthly income of the parents we can observe a predominance of small incomes: between 1.5-2.5 million lei (29.46% of the family total), 27.29% of the families are without income; with incomes between 2.5-4 million lei (21.49%); 6.53% of the parents which are earning a general income between 4-6 million lei; only 0.73% between 6-10 million lei and only 0.255 over 10 million lei (Table 5).

Table 5. Structure of the sample after monthly income of the parents

		Father	Mother	Together
Without income	Nr.	28	85	113
	%	15.35	41.06	27.29
Below 1.5	Nr.	30	29	59
	%	14.49	14.00	14.25
1.5-2.5	Nr.	66	56	122
	%	31.88	27.05	29.46
2.5-4	Nr.	58	31	89
	%	28.02	14.98	21.49
4-6	Nr.	22	5	27
	%	10.63	2.41	6.53
6-10	Nr.	3	-	3
	%	1.45	-	0.73
Above 10	Nr.	-	1	1
	%	-	0.5	0.25
Total	Nr.	207	207	414
	%	100	100	100

In this case, maybe because of the small age of the children, these numbers cannot be considerate real, because in the majority of the cases children do not know precisely the parents' financial situation.

3.3. EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL OPTIONS PROFILE

The basic questions of the questionnaire referring to educational and professional options of the pupils are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that among future 8th grade graduates from the rural area 142 (68.59%) wish to go to college, 29 (14.00%) wish to go to a post-high-school courses; 7 of them (3.39%) do not wish to go on studying and a relatively large number – 29 (14.00%) are still considering. The desire to go to high-school is bigger in the case of the girls – 76 (70.38%), a larger number of boys choosing post-high-school courses – 19 (19.19%), compared to the girls – 10 (9.26%); among the pupils still considering the highest percentage belongs to the girls – 19 (17.59%). Those whose average bellow 7, the option for a post-high-school course (31.71%) is placed on the first rank, while the ones who have the average over 7 wish to go on to a high-school, the percentages being as follows: 66.26% with averages between 7.01 – 8.50 and 90.36% with averages between 8.51 – 10.00. We noticed that, in the case of pupils with very good averages, they all wish to go to school, but only one (1.21%) is going to a post-high-school course and only 7 (8.43%) compared to 11 of the first two categories of marks, are still considering.

From this table analysis a relatively realist perception of the educational options came out, still leaving us to discuss, being an important problem for a terminal grade, the problem of those still considering. It is among those pupils that EPG actions must be intensified. At school, at the parents' or even at their own request, pupils, who are still considering and are unstable regarding their options, can be examined periodically, and be given psycho-pedagogy assistance.

Table 6. Subjects structure depending on educational options

		Total		Of which:							
				Will not go on studying		Technical school		High-school		Still considering	
		Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Total		207	100	7	3.39	29	14.01	142	68.59	29	14.01
Boys		99	100	4	4.05	19	19.19	66	66.66	10	10.10
Girls		108	100	3	2.77	10	9.26	76	70.38	19	17.59
Average	below 7.0	41	100	5	12.09	13	31.71	12	29.27	11	26.82
	7.01-8.50	83	100	2	2.40	15	18.08	55	66.26	11	13.26
	8.51-10.00	83	100	-	-	1	1.21	75	90.36	7	8.43

Table 7. The list concerning high-school and post-high-school choices

School type	Pupils number	%	School type	Pupils number	%
HIGH-SCHOOLS	142	100.0	TECHNICAL SCHOOL	29	100.0
Theoretic	26	18.30	Automobile mechanic	10	34.49
Sports	21	14.78	Tailoring	8	27.58
Agricultural	17	11.98	Pastry	6	20.68
Informatics	16	11.26	Constructions	5	17.25
Pedagogical	16	11.26			
Automobile	16	11.26			
Military	15	10.57			
Sanitary	15	10.57			

We noticed that the majority of the pupils in 8th grades wish to go to a theoretical high-school, the second place being occupied by sport high-school and, a most pleasing fact, on the third place we could spot the agricultural high-school; with a smaller frequency, other high-schools such as informatics, pedagogy or mechanical auto are also displayed. The accomplishment of these options it is not exempt by miss functionalities, which are present ever since they enter the system (admission), Problems occur every year, EPG being transformed from guidance into some kind of centralizing system which, even with the help provided by modern technical resources, is still encountering difficulties.

Difficulties appear also upon exiting the system, because future graduates of some high-schools (or faculties later) do not find stability within their professional route, which they abandon, seeking out other domains in which they do not possess the necessary knowledge, while the domains they are preparing for remain critical.

Post-high-school course offers, which pupils wish to go for, are reduced as compared to high-school ones; only 4 occurrences are mentioned in this case. On the first place there are post-high-school courses which are preparing for auto mechanics, followed by the ones that are preparing workers in tailoring, the pastry field and then the construction

field. Still we can note the desire of some children from rural areas to work in trades which are in need of labour force: such as tailoring or constructions.

Table 8. Structure of subjects depending on professional options

| Specification | | Total | | Of which: | | | | | |
| | | | | Profession 1 Options | | Profession 2 options | | Undecided | |
		Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%	Nr	%
Total		207	100	149	71.98	39	18.84	58	28.02
Boys		99	100	74	74.74	16	16.16	25	25.25
Girls		108	100	75	69.44	23	21.29	33	30.55
Average	below 7.0	41	100	11	25.82	10	24.39	30	73.18
	7.01-8.50	83	100	66	79.51	20	24.09	17	20.49
	8.51-10.00	83	100	72	86.74	17	20.48	11	13.26

Boys and girls professional options from the researched sample structure the answers as table 8 shows: 23 (71.98%) have first option, 18.84% have also a second option, a larger number, 28.01%, are still considering. Among those, girls' predominance is obvious (30.55%); of the boys 74.74% have a first option and only 16.16% have a second option as well. The list with professional options is given in Table 9.

On the first rank when referring to 8th form pupils professional options, their desire is to become teachers, after which into a sort of random association, there is the option for trades such as: auto mechanic, sportsmen, accountant, salesmen or hairdresser.

Even though the professional options list is relatively large, it must be noted that only two trades which are specific for the rural area, to agriculture, are specified: agricultural engineering and veterinary surgeon. In return, other trades occur, which define other sectors of the economical life and which are not seen frequently in the rural area: model, stylist, sociologist, musician and others.

As a matter of fact the evolution of professions (present in many countries of the world) has a regress tendency as concerning the interest for the agricultural sector, a saturation one in the case of the industrial sector and an increase of the interest for the third sector. Specialists are talking about the fourth sector (of research) interest stimulation, but in the same time they try to find the answer to a question about how this sector can be stimulated given the fact that society is not materially supporting this interest?

In order to control the evolution of professions, there must be a guided professional qualifications evolution. EPG could impose qualification tendencies on ''professional spheres'' or ''professional way'', in whose frame the difference between profession and occupation may be attenuated. That way the problem between scholastic politics and economical politics could be solved, so that the same school may prepare young people in order to cover a larger scope of socio-economical needs.

The second option is to restructure the pupils' desires to embrace a trade, here the first two places being occupied by trades which are involving abilities and skills.

Table 9. Profession choice and choice reasons

Nr	Option I	%	Option II	%	Option I reasons	Option II reasons
1	Teacher	12.08	Automobile mechanic	25.50	I enjoy working with people	For pleasure
2	Automobile mechanic	10.06	Cook	10.25	For money	
3	Sportsman	10.06	Educator	7.69		
4	Accountant	9.39	Accountant	7.69	It suites me	
5	Hairdresser	8.72	Worker in constructions	7.69		Other persons influence
6	Salesman	8.72	Lawyer	5.10		For prestige
7	Cook	4.69	Doctor	5.10		Other persons influence
8	Pastry cook	4.69	PC operator	5.10		
9	Police officer	4.02	Farmer	4.56	To catch the thieves	
10	Driver	4.02	Translator	2.56		
11	Constructor	4.02	Police officer	2.56	For money	
12	Agricultural engineer	3.35	Confectioner	2.56		
13	Model	3.35	Engineer	2.56		Others influence
14	Stylist	3.35	Archaeologist	2.56		Nice trade
15	Confectioner	3.35	Freezing technician	2.56		
16	Doctor	2.68	Dental technician	2.56	I like it and it brings money	
17	Economist	2.01	Teacher	2.56		I like kids
18	House painter		Driver	2.56		
19	Social assistant	1.42	Teacher	1.58	To help the people	
20	Sociologist					
21	Forester				Love for nature	
22	Veterinary surgeon				Love for animals	

The EPG process includes a few factors which act upon the young people, offering motivation cardinal points. Among these, an important role is played by the family, the school (teachers), the relatives, the friends, the culture, etc.

Mills (1975) asserts that family is the one who proposes cultural norms from a generation to another, but it ends up transmitting the civilization of a class, of a social category, therefore of some part of the society.

That is why, in our research based on questionnaire, we confer a special importance to the family's cultural climate, its importance in the EPG process. In this respect we added to the research indicators the parent's studies as well, their training level and also their incomes.

Beside family and school, the education system plays an important part in educational and professional guidance. Starting with primary school and continuing to higher education, school must contribute to the permanent humanization of the *human being*, to his real socialization, through humanistic tradition cultivation. The concern for educational process optimization, quite characteristic to our society, includes both sides of human formation, training and education.

Piaget (1963), referring to this problem, shows that education is the one that determines individuals to socialize, society having an essentially educational character. This happens because the individual is not born as a social being; he becomes social in a progressive way. What makes of him a social man is precisely the socialization process or *"society integration"* process of the child, achieved through educational, intellectual, affective mechanisms and studied by what we call "individual socialization", which constitutes the central formative process of the human society.

Parents are the ones who offer their children a cultural dowry, consisting of skills, habits, maternal language, values and moral principles etc., which make the frame of the human relations context possible. This "culture" transmission through education received at small age, is so important, that Stahl calls it "social birth", by which he understands the transformation of the living being in a social being.

Beside this cultural dowry, by means of abilities and behaviour practical models description, the society organises the proper education, throughout which pupils are prepared for their professional and citizen duties. The teachers, educators, pedagogues, instructors have an important role in the EPG activity, they being the ones who know or should know better the pupils' preferences and aptitudes, connected to their emotional structure, affective availabilities and character features, inclinations and skills, real effort capacity, life ideals, pupils' expectations, etc. That is why, we start from the premise which offers the school a central position within the cultural factors context, as the main modelling and formation element for the real life, during which convictions, attitudes and behaviours are formed, also some will and character features which can be put together into an active personality, animated by ideals and humanistic wishes, capable of constructive efforts, a hypothesis which was not confirmed in our research. Thus, as we can see in the table bellow (table 10), school, through the teacher's influence, is placed on the last rank in the answers hierarchy to the questions:" Which are the influential factors in choosing school and profession?"

Among the influence factors in school choosing, on the first place there is the parents' influence, displaying a percentage of 53.14%, " nobody"- 29.46%, friends and relatives with 20.28%, and school has an influence in guidance in a percentage of only 15.45%, almost three times and a half smaller than the parents influence (Table 10).

Regarding the profession choice (Table 11), another influences pecking order can be observed: their own choice is located on the first place (40.09%), on the second place the parents' influence (34.78%), followed by friend's influence (16.42%), relatives, and siblings (14.49%) and again, on the last place, school influence (13.52%).

We can specify here (even more that in the case of 12th grade pupils) that pupils might not be full aware about some school influences concerning EPG and they might still be manifested in one way or another. Notably, some 8th grade pupils desire to embrace some

trades considered to be prestigious or materially advantageous (lawyer, doctor) or to chose others from the top (PC operator).

Table 10. Influences concerning school choice

		Boys	Girls	Total
Friends	Nr	20	22	42
	%	10.20	20.37	20.28
Nobody	Nr	31	30	61
	%	31.31	27.77	29.46
Parents	Nr	55	55	110
	%	55.55	50.92	53.14
School	Nr	18	14	32
	%	18.18	12.96	15.45
Siblings,	Nr	15	27	42
Relatives	%	15.15	25.00	20.28
Total	Nr	99	108	207
	%	100	100	100

Table 11. Influences concerning profession choice

		Boys	Girls	Total
Friends	Nr	15	19	34
	%	15.15	17.59	16.42
Nobody	Nr	40	43	83
	%	40.40	39.81	40.09
Parents	Nr	30	34	72
	%	30.30	31.48	34.78
School	Nr	16	12	28
	%	16.16	11.11	13.52
Siblings,	Nr	14	16	30
Relatives	%	14.14	14.81	14.49
Total	Nr	99	108	207
	%	100	100	100

The motivation of choosing these professions is placed on a relatively small area, still, as a gladdening fact, it must be shown that on the first place, both in case of the first and the second option, there is the pupils pleasure for these trades and on the second place, at a large number of points distance from the first rank, the fact that that trade is profitable. One of the questions in the questionnaire asked the students to enumerate 1 to 3 professions they thought were:
   a) beautiful and attractive;
   b) materially advantageous;
   c) socially prestigious.
The answers concerning those requests are presented in table 12 in the order of their frequency.

Table 12. The list of trades considered to be beautiful, advantageous and prestigious

BEAUTIFUL, ATTRACTIVE	Frequency %	MATERIALLY ADVANTAGEOUS	Frequency %	SOCIALLY PRESTIGIOUS	Frequency %
Teacher	34.31	Lawyer	36.40	Teacher	30.12
Artist	18.15	Doctor	30.12	Lawyer	28.56
Sportsman	17.14	IT engineer	18.15	Doctor	24.40
Hairdresser	14.11	Judge	17.14	Artist	12
Doctor	13.10	Teacher	12.90	Priest	10
Mechanic	12.90	Politician	11.70	Engineer	7
IT engineer	11.70	Artist	8.50	Manager	6
Lawyer	11.70	Sportsman	8.50		
Medical Assistant	8.50	Mechanic	7.40	Police officer	5
Cook	8.50	Owner	7.40	"Minister"	5
Salesman	8.50	Driver	6.30	IT engineer	5
Driver	7.40	Mason	6.30	"Mayor"	4
Painter	6.30	Hairdresser	6.30	Economist	2
Tailor	6.30	Priest	6.30	Driver	2
"Mayor"	6.30	Electrician	5.20	Sportsman	2
Mason	6.30	Secretary	5.20	Guide	2
Carpenter	5.20	Translator	2	Mechanic	2
Mathematician	5.20	Accountant	5.20	Model	2
Guide	5.20	Architect	4.10	Prosecutor	2
Farmer	4.10	Police officer	4.10	Electrician	2
Journalist	4.10	Tailor	2.05	Designer	2
Pilot	4.10	Forester	2.05	Hairdresser	1
Veterinary Surgeon	4.10	Farmer	2.05	Pharmaceutical chemist	1

Regarding the three classification criteria of the trades offered in the questionnaire (nice, materially advantageous, and socially prestigious) the subjects answers were structured considering their expectations (table 12); thus, in first case as nice trades appear the ones of teacher, artist or sportsman; in the second case, as we guess, first choices are occupied by trades as: lawyer, doctor, IT engineer, considered to be profitable, and among the prestigious ones, on the first places appear a combination of the ones formerly announced: teaching staff, lawyer, doctor, artist. It is notable that none of the trades specific to agriculture appear, only some of them which are connected to this branch, for example "*veterinary surgeon*". That is why we consider that EPG activity must not neglect to underline the changes happening in our social system, at every level,

changes that happen also in our villages or our agriculture, news and possibilities offered to them in the practice of some trades once disregarded or supposed to be specific only to the town or to the urban environment.

But the prospective aspect which must characterise our education does not take into account only the EPG problems, but also the increase of the adaptation capacity of the future "professionals" to permanent novelty, in order to discern the type of the out coming events.

Thus, the school's mission is to select spiritual goods, replacing the ruined ones, highlighting the ones of universal value, functional value, to evaluate attentively cultural goods, especially the ones which allow to the young generation an optimal adaptation and integration which will be lived out when they will enter society and which also represent supporting points for new spiritual creations, especially for behaviour modelling on social level.

We can infer that youth EPG accomplishment in a conscious way, through the stimulation of everyone own aptitudes, through interest awakening for an activity or another, is the instrument by which society acts upon the process of internalization of norms and values of the work, professional conscience formation of the ones which are representing future workforce.

Multiplication and diversification of the informational middles upon professions, professional monographs, the mass-media role in information dissemination upon each social activity specific characteristics, difficulties and advantages represent elements of the information system organization at national level.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Any young person who followed certain scholar stages (gymnasium, high-school, superior education) must benefit from the EPG activity services.

The educational system must take upon itself the duty to guide the future citizens. If this does not materialize or if it becomes rigid, the consequences will be concretised in school, professional and social failure.

EPG can be realised through repeated interventions (psychological tests, counselling) at different age levels of the pupils and, later, of the graduates, or by offering at certain steps of individual evolution, some possible choices, the offers being made depending on the present economical-social requests of the society.

Starting from analysing the pupil's potential and aspirations, school has the role to "discover" real values and to help them grow in concordance with different activities exigencies, also with life necessities.

Acting upon life's requests is conditioned by the share in which the EPG coordinating factor (school) succeeds, through an adequate educational work, assimilation by parents and pupils of these demands as being values, which, in turn, can determine their attitude, expressed in wishes, interests, ideals, as psychical variables which stay at the base of options formation.

EPG malfunctioning can also be manifested because guidance factors, mainly the teachers, may not have benefited from the necessary training and material conditions. Many times the form master makes up a pupil's chart with no psychological, sociological, or pedagogical observations, and his opinions can be subjective. Such a chart made up by a team (made up if a psychologist, a doctor, a pedagogue, etc) should be analytic and supply a developing attitude of the student, his school record. They should also

emphasize self-knowledge in pupils, which is more important than highlighting his school record at a certain time. It is only in this way that school, together with other specialized institutions from outside the school (mass-media, for example) could persuade the parents that the label of their child is the proper one.

Optimising EPG functionality can be done if all the factors are involved (family, school, companies, cultural institutions, mass media, etc.).

Another conclusion is that school should also valorise all the forms of educational activity (classes, educational classes, visits, practical works, etc.) with relevance to EPG and establish the methodology necessary to valorise it in accordance with the objectives.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

On the ground of these considerations, we would like to make a few suggestions and recommendations for a successful EPG in schools, including rural schools:
- Delimitation in each school of the EPG specific activity frame, the development of working conditions (EPG cabinets, bibliographies-professional monographs, EPG classes, etc.);
- Involving all factors in this activity (chiefs of EPG commissions, parents committee, economical enterprises, different institutions, schools, mass-media influence and also the interaction between these factors);
- A much closer link between school and specialised institutions (EPG laboratories, county psychological assistance centres, plus other mass-media factors);
- Adopting a unitary system of EPG measures proper to the school and to the region;
- Keeping a record of the ascension of the graduates from high-schools and of their results after graduation;
- Monitoring the evolution of the ratio between pupils professional options and the necessary personnel in different fields of activity;
- To discover talented children with special aptitudes in different domains ;
- Collaboration improvement between form master teachers, family, school psychologists and school doctors with sociologists and psychologists, so that a team work is possible;
- Support from specialised institutions for teachers and form masters consisting in materials on EPG problem (suggesting themes for form master classes, psychological charts models, lesson plans in case of some disciplines through which EPG is realised, models and class plans in case of form master classes which include EPG);
- Accomplishing common activities with the primary school teachers, as a way to pre-guide pupils ever since primary school;
- Organising exchanges between schools;
- Initiation of some common researches between didactical collectives;
- Capitalization and popularization of some positive experiences obtained in scholar units;
- Monitoring of some continuity accomplishment in youth preparing action for EPG, for the entire educational system;
- Evaluation of EPG activity efficiency and formalism and dogmatism avoidance;
- Organising periodical EPG courses for all the teaching staff and of some lectures for the parents, as well as informing them with the aid of the media;

- Putting to good use all forms of educational activities (classes, educational classes, practical works) with a view on EPG;
- Getting to know school and college networks in the area, college profiles, the number of places, and necessary trained people in different sectors of the economy or culture.

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EVOLUTION OF THE MAIN DEMOGRAPHIC PHENOMENA IN ROMANIA (2006)

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ABSTRACT

Mutations in the social-economic structure of the country have led to a dynamic territorial mobility of the population; at the same time, they have had direct consequences upon the socio-demographic structure of the population. In the past years, demographic migration has become a common fact. The young and mature population migrates from the rural to the urban environment, motivated by the living and working conditions in the urban centres. Economic effects of the demographic evolution will be seen in time and will bring about changes in the various subpopulations (school children, fertile population, inhabitants able to work).

Keywords: Demographics; Birth rate; Death rate; Migration

1. INTRODUCTION

Romania is Europe's twelfth country in point of size. It covers an area of 238.391 km^2 and lies in S-E Central Europe. The country's population decreased from 22.41 million inhabitants in 2001 to 21.58 million inhabitants in 2006. The average density also decreased, from 94.0 inhabitants/km^2 in 2001, to 90.5 inhabitants/km^2 in 2006.

Romania's territory is divided into hamlets, villages, towns, municipalities and counties. In each county, local authorities are represented by county, local, municipal, town, and village councils (Table 1).

Eight development regions were set as territorial units, each made up of 4-7 counties by the voluntary association of the county councils. These regions represent the framework for the development, implementation and evaluation of regional development policy and economic and social cohesion programmes through which it is carried out:

- Region 1 – N-E - the largest region, covering 36.850 km^2 (15.46% of the total country's area), is made of Bacău, Botoşani, Neamţ, Iaşi, Suceava, and Vaslui counties;

- Region 2 – S-E – covers 35.762 km² or 15% of the country area and is the second region in size; it consists of the following counties: Brăila, Buzău, Constanţa, Galaţi, Tulcea, and Vrancea;

- Region 3 - S-Muntenia has an area of 34.453 km^2 (14.45% of the country's area); it is situated in the SE, and includes Argeş, Călăraşi, Dâmboviţa, Giurgiu, Ialomiţa, Prahova, and Teleorman counties;

- Region 4 – S-W – covers 29.212 km^2 and consists of five counties: Dolj, Olt, Vâlcea, Mehedinţi, and Gorj; generally speaking, it coincides with the old historical region Oltenia;

- Region 5 - W - lies over 32.034 km^2 (13.4% of the country's area) and is made of Arad, Caraş-Severin, Hunedoara, and Timiş counties; it is part of the Danube-Criş-Mureş-Tisa Euroregion (DCMT);

Table 1. Romania's administrative-territorial organization

Development regions	Total surface (km²)	Number of inhabitants	Number of towns and municipalities	Of which municipalities	Number of villages	Number of hamlets
North-East	36.850	3.738.601	46	17	505	2.414
South-East	35.762	2.850.318	35	11	354	1.447
South-Muntenia	34.453	3.342.042	48	16	519	2.019
South-West	29.212	2.317.636	40	11	408	2.066
West	32.034	1.939.514	42	12	278	1.327
North-West	34.159	2.738.461	43	15	401	1.799
Centre	34.100	2.539.160	57	20	357	1.788
Bucharest-Ilfov	1.821	2.207.596	9	1	32	91
Romania	**238.391**	**21.584.365**	**320**	**17**	**2.854**	**12.951**

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

- Region 6 – N-W covers 34.159 km², represents 14.3% of the country's area, and six counties: Bihor, Bistriţa-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureş, Satu Mare, and Sălaj; it has a strategic geographic position, as it is the gate to Romania for the European Union and Ukraine;

- Region 7- Centre, total area 34.100 km² (14.31% of the Romanian territory), includes Alba, Braşov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureş, and Sibiu counties;

- Region 8 - Bucharest-Ilfov, is made of Bucharest (the capital of the country) and Ilfov County; it lies in the centre of the Romanian Plain, covers 1.821 km², of which 13.1% is the administrative territory of Bucharest and 86.9% belongs to Ilfov County.

Demographically, the main factors that influence the size and structure of the population are birth rate, death rate, and migration. Birth rate is the number of new-borns/1000 inhabitants in a year. Death rate is the number of the deceased of all age categories/1000 inhabitants in a year. Natural growth is the difference between the two in a year. Migration represents the changes in the population's domicile.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present paper provides information about the current state of the population and the demographic evolution in Romania, as these two elements have a great influence on the economic and social development of the country. The trends of the main demographic phenomena provide useful information about the future evolution of the number and age structure of Romania's population. Consequently, the remaining rural inhabitants are mostly old-aged. The aging of the rural population is also caused by a series of demographic and social-economic factors.

3. RESULTS

The economic and social changes that have taken place in Romania since the 1990's have led to major changes in the demographic phenomena, and the number and the structure of the population. The constant decrease in Romania's population has several causes, such as low birth rate, high death rate, and internal and intense external migration. In 2006, Romania had 21,584,365 inhabitants, 88,963 less than in 2004. The population has decreased in all the development regions of the country (Table 2).

Table 2. Romania's population and density in 2006

Development regions	Total population	Density (inhabitants/km^2)
Romania	**21.584.365**	**90.5**
North-East	3.732.583	101.3
South-East	2.837.834	79.4
South-Muntenia	3.312.342	96.1
South-West	2.293.895	78.5
West	1.927.229	60.2
North-West	2.730.132	79.9
Centre	2.530.818	742
Bucharest-Ilfov	2.219532	1.218.9

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

On July 1, 2006, the North-East was the first of the eight regions from the point of view of the population, with 3,732,558 inhabitants (17.29% of the total population) and a density of 101.3 inhabitants/km^2, which is more than the national average. The West Region ranged last with 1,927,229 inhabitants and 60.2 inhabitants/km^2, far below the national average of 90.5 inhabitants/km^2. As far as the structure of population per sexes is concerned, on July 1, 2006, the male share of the population was smaller than the female one, a situation common to all development regions. In the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, both male and female population increased (Table 3).

Table 3. Population structure per sexes in 2006

Development regions	Total (number of persons)			Share of male population (%)
	Both sexes	Male	Female	
North-East	3.732.583	1.845.864	1.886.719	49.45
South-East	2.837.834	1.392.153	1.445.681	49.06
South-Muntenia	3.312.342	1.616.406	1.695.936	48.80
South-West	2.293.895	1.125.161	1.168.734	49.05
West	1.927.229	929.877	997.352	48.24
North-West	2.730.132	1.331.983	1.398.149	48.79
Centre	2.530.818	1.240.041	1.290.777	49.00
Bucharest-Ilfov	2.219.532	1.039.704	1.179.828	46.84
Romania	**21.584.365**	**10.521.189**	**11.063.176**	**48.74**

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

As for the distribution over residential areas, significant differences were noticed among the eight regions in 2006. In the South-East, West, North-West, Central, and Bucharest-Ilfov regions, most of the population lived in urban areas, whereas in the North-East, South-Muntenia and South-West regions the population was mainly rural. In all regions, the share of the male urban population was higher than that of the female urban population. Female population is predominant both in rural areas and the whole country (Table 4).

Table 5 presents the difference between urban population (55.20%) and rural one (44.80%) at national level in 2006. Urban population is increasing, while rural one is decreasing: South-East – urban population 55.45%, rural population – 44.55%, West –

urban population – 63.50%, rural population – 36.50%, Central – urban population – 59.81%, rural population – 40.19%, Bucharest-Ilfov – urban population – 92.46%, rural population – 7.54%.

Table 4. Population per sexes and residential areas in 2006

Development regions	Urban (number of persons)			Rural (number of persons)		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
Romania	**11.913.938**	**5.704.872**	**6.209.066**	**9.670.427**	**4.816.317**	**4.854.110**
North-East	1.629.250	784.991	844.259	2.103.333	1.060.873	1.042.460
South-East	1.573.520	758.251	815.269	1.264.314	633.902	630.412
South-Muntenia	1.379.073	662.689	716.384	1.933.269	953.717	979.552
South-West	1.092.922	529.591	563.331	1.200.973	595.570	605.403
West	1.223.730	584.553	639.177	703.499	345.324	358.175
North-West	1.449.635	696.026	753.609	1.280.497	635.957	644.540
Centre	1.513.670	730.602	783.068	1.017.148	509.439	507.709
Bucharest-Ilfov	2.052.138	958.169	1.093.969	167.394	81.535	85.859

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

Table 5. Population of regions per sexes and residential areas in 2006

Development regions	Total (number of persons)	Sex (%)		Residential areas (%)	
		Male	Female	Urban	Rural
North-East	3,732,583	49.45	50.55	43.65	56.35
South-East	2,837,834	49.06	50.94	55.45	44.55
South-Muntenia	3,312,342	48.80	51.20	41.63	58.37
South-West	2,293,895	49.05	50.95	47.64	52.36
West	1,927,229	48.25	51.75	63.50	36.50
North-West	2,730,132	48.79	51.21	53.10	46.90
Centre	2,530,818	49.00	51.00	59.81	40.19
Bucharest-Ilfov	2,219,532	46.84	53.16	92.46	7.54
Romania	**21,584,365**	**48.74**	**51.26**	**55.20**	**44.80**

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

Low birth rate in our country has certain features. The main factors that have reduced it are economic and social. The structure of the employment population has changed considerably and this has led to a greater territorial and professional mobility and a longer instruction period.

The issue of providing the necessary income, the situation on the labour market, the difficulty in finding a house are serious obstacles for many couples in starting a family. Most young couples do not have children or postpone having them. This decision is determined by the cultural and psychological background and by the economic and social life of the family. In 2006, 219,483 children were born, 95,263 less than in 1990, but 3,222 more than in 2004. In 2006, birth rate was 10.2 new-borns per 1000 inhabitants, lower than in 1990 (3.6‰) and 2004 (10.0‰). In 2006, 258,094 people died, 796 less than in 2004 and 11,008 more than in 1990. The general death rate was 12.0 deaths per 1000 inhabitants. In 2004, it was 11.9‰ and in 1990 it was 6‰ (Table 6).

Table 6. Natural migration/movement of population in Romania in 2006

Development regions	Rates per 1,000 people					Still births	Deceased before 1 year of age
	Live birth	Deaths	Natural increase	Marriages	Divorces		
Romania	**10.2**	**12.0**	**-1.8**	**6.8**	**1.51**	**5.2**	**13.9**
North-East	11.6	10.8	0.8	6.5	1.54	4.3	15.3
South-East	9.9	11.3	-1.4	6.5	1.82	6.5	13.9
South-Muntenia	9.5	13.1	-3.6	6.1	1.56	5.7	15.7
South-West	8.6	13.0	-4.4	6.4	1.17	4.0	16.1
West	9.5	12.9	-3.4	7.3	1.73	6.4	12.4
North-West	10.5	12.2	-1.7	6.8	1.39	5.3	14.1
Centre	10.7	11.4	-0.7	6.2	1.49	5.9	12.6
Bucharest-Ilfov	10.2	11.5	-1.3	9.3	1.35	3.5	9.3

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

In 2006, natural growth was –1.8 per 1000 inhabitants. It had a positive value only in the N-E region: 0.8/1000 inhabitants. Low birth rate is the result of economic conditions in general and the lack of medical services in particular, mainly in the rural areas.

In 2006, the highest infant death rate was in the South-West Region: 16.1 deaths (infants less than one year old) per thousand inhabitants, compared to the national average of 13.9. This may be explained by the high level of poverty mainly in the rural areas and the poor education about health and minimum hygiene. The difference of the death rates between sexes has been the same in the past years, a fact best reflected in life expectancy. It has been noticed that both at national level and in residential areas, life expectancy is seven years longer for the female population (Table 7).

Table 7. Average life span per sexes and residential areas in 2004-2006 (years)

Development regions	Per sexes			Per residential areas					
				Urban			Rural		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
North-East	72.39	68.86	76.11	73.12	69.71	76.53	71.68	68.09	75.69
South-East	72.35	68.78	76.10	72.95	69.43	76.49	71.42	67.80	75.47
South-Muntenia	72.07	68.45	75.85	72.72	69.31	76.11	71.48	67.72	75.57
South-West	72.00	68.85	75.27	72.97	70.03	75.94	70.91	67.64	74.49
West	71.46	68.17	74.76	71.69	68.42	74.91	71.04	67.73	74.53
North-West	71.38	68.01	74.86	72.15	68.78	75.51	70.50	67.11	74.18
Centre	72.48	68.88	76.24	73.26	69.62	76.90	71.34	67.78	75.33
Bucharest-Ilfov	73.98	70.42	77.28	74.24	70.73	77.44	71.35	67.35	75.59
Romania	**72.22**	**68.74**	**75.80**	**72.98**	**69.56**	**76.34**	**71.23**	**67.69**	**75.13**

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006, 2007

In Romania, in 2004-2006, life expectancy was 72.22 years. In these years, life expectancy for women was 75.80, while for men it was only 68.74. Life expectancy is higher in the urban areas than in the rural ones: 72.98 – 71.23.

The mutations in the social-economic structure of the country have led to a dynamic

territorial mobility of the population. This has direct consequences upon the number and social-demographic structure of the population. In the domestic migration, the urban-rural flow (28.12%) is higher than the rural-urban one (22.54%), but lower than the urban-urban flow (30.18%). In 2006, although the national migration balance was zero, the West (+4,196), North-West (+730) and Bucharest-Ilfov (+10,269) regions were the only regions with a positive migration balance. Together with domestic migration, external migration is a very important factor for the population structure. The changes in the Romanian political and social system have made it possible for the population to immigrate in the EU states, USA, and Canada. The national statistics indicate the most legal emigrants have had a high education and qualification level, thus proving the selective character of the immigration policy in the destination countries.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The decrease of the population in the past twelve years has been caused mainly by the negative natural growth, a consequence of the higher death rate, the smaller birth rate and the migration to other parts of the country or abroad. Although in the last years there has been some concern regarding health improvement and providing health care services, the trends of the death rate are not encouraging at all.

Urban population is concentrated in the developed urban centres. The migration from cities to villages is the result of the people's necessity to provide for their basic needs, not only because the industrial sector in which they worked (situated mainly in the urban areas) is now undergoing a massive reorganisation process, but also because the farmland is being restored, as stipulated by law. In the past years, demographic migration has become a common fact. The young and mature population migrates from the rural to the urban environment, motivated by the living and working conditions in the urban centres. Consequently, the remaining rural inhabitants are mostly old-aged. The aging of the rural population is also caused by a series of demographic and social-economic factors.

The most important factor that has caused a reduction of the rural population is migration, a complex demographic, social and economic phenomenon with major implications in the evolution of the number of rural inhabitants and the rural demographic structure. Another demographic factor with a major impact on the dynamics of the rural population and communities in the region was the negative natural growth. The economic effects of the demographic evolution will be seen in time and will bring about changes in the various subpopulations (school children, fertile population, inhabitants able to work).

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CULTURE, EDUCATION AND SCHOOL
IN THE RURAL AREA

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ABSTRACT

The paper presents a few aspects of the "rural cultural area", regarding the dialectics of new and old, modern and traditional. Having in mind the harmonization of the two aspects, while trying to preserve their authenticity, their traditional values and their integration in the new rural development, an important role is assumed by school, education and culture in general. Their mission is on one side to form specialised workforce prepared to face E.U. demands and standards, and on the other side to capitalize the moral-educational rural patrimony, values and ethical norms specific to village communities.

Keywords: *Rural community; Rural modernization; Rural cultural space; Moral-educational patrimony*

1. INTRODUCTION

Rural community, considered to be the oldest, the most alive and powerful life form, in which people live their life, from birth to death, is undergoing today a changing process of development and modernization, just as the entire Romanian society. However, aside from being different from the urban area, the rural space is original and specific in time. Obviously, we can no longer talk about villages with their hearths, where nothing happens, in which only tradition is dominant and innovation it is not present. It is known that industrialization and urbanization influenced changes of the rural environment.

2. MATERIAL AND METHODS

The problem which rises is the one of interference, interaction, complementarities, and their analysis must be of structural, systemic nature, which can refer to a multitude of biosocial conditions.

The rural "re-building" process, its modernization, can be adapted to its specific landscape, to its economical elements nature and technological particularities. Given today's scientific and technological era, electric lights, side walks, paved streets, current water, warmth, a quick informational system etc. are goods which can be found in the rural space as well, but when adopting them, this specific area can adapt them to its specific conditions and nature, while still remaining a "socioeconomic and habitation system" on its own. This way it can preserve the characteristics of an area in which man can capitalize his creative forces (economical, spiritual, social, biological etc.) and it can offer that natural comfort which is so necessary to contemporaneous man.

3. RESULTS

3.1. NEW AND OLD IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

New and old are the two poles towards which the human existence is gravitating, more or less aware of the fact, as an individual, part of a group or community, with strong temporal connotations, but also with spatial connotations. The modern correlates itself with the present and the future, and the traditional with the past, with its own necessary and positive roots.

Discussing about village as a community, Cobianu-Băcanu sheds light upon its "modern and traditional" characteristics, following the material and spiritual culture "geography" which is determined by one of the features (2003: 2).

Time and space are balanced as a whole in rural life, providing either a more "modern" or a more "traditional" image, in concordance with the inhabitants' intentions and projects, translated in the way they are building and decorating their houses, the way in which they dress and work.

Human "geography" of the village is the expression of the human mark upon natural geography; villagers being the most authentic ecologists, because they did not destroy nature, they listened to it instead, lived with her in harmony. They built their houses using natural materials: earth, stone, wood on horizontal and not on vertical level.

Songs and dance, specific way of dressing, and habits, words and gestures, are expressing all the natural, organic bond, between the villager and the environment in which he was formed. From generation to generation, constant tradition enrichment is transmitted orally. But, no tradition remains identical with its own features, from generation to generation. In form or in continuity, it suffers changes, alterations during the transmission process.

One of the great openings released by the transition period is the opening towards contemporaneous world values, but unfortunately, also towards its non-values.

Modernization as a process that helps community to be projected into the future, take place at an individual, group or societal scale. At the first level, modernization is a character feature, but also a life philosophy, a mentality and a way to act.

At rural communities scale, the new changes the old, it also changes the way people act and think, and transforms them by conferring them a new, urban look.

A rural modern community it is not similar to the archaic, traditional village anymore, with smoke coming up the chimneys, and the smell of fire. Still, modernization is not general, but selective, unequal, being more visible in certain more accessible areas, with large human concentrations, with future development capacities (Ibidem).

Modernization leads to the beautification of the surrounding environment. It opens new alternatives of the citizen's individual development; it makes it easier to form "alliances" or "unions" between people and localities from other meridians of the world. TWINNING projects inspired by the E.U are bringing people of different cultures closer, enriching their knowledge and friendship.

Besides the well-known modernization and constituting factors of the rural environment, such as the type of production, the way of thinking and behaving, the tradition, custom and value systems, the symbolism - nowadays an innovative and substantial contribution comes from scientific, technical and cultural development, ecological attitude generated by ecological conscience concerning dangers which are threatening the planet and life on it. Rural culture, rural civilization with a more accentuated inertia, are submissive to a double modernization process, given by the pressure and attraction of the new; the *pressure of the new*- signifying phenomena and processes which are pushing the village towards civilization, and the *attraction of the new*- the stimulation capacity which non-rural modern world exercises upon the rural.

3.2. CULTURAL RURAL SPACE

The integrated development of the rural and urban areas has an important cultural component.

Cultural services offered by the school, the club, the library, by the Cultural House are coming to supplement the series of other services, offering the comfort of spiritual and intellectual wellbeing, necessary for the accomplishment of the human personality (this may be achieved also with cultural tourism development).

If the cultural services are not yet representing a stimulant of retention or attraction of the rural space, rural lifestyle and agricultural work products are representing motives of real satisfaction for the ones who want to live closer to nature and to enjoy its activities.

We saw that similarity, closeness, does not mean standardization, transforming the rural into the urban. Rural people can manifest themselves according to their tradition and their new working and living conditions, in different ways. They will represent a new synthesis, positive between the two cultures- rural and urban- between cultural models of the rural and the urban.

In the rural multifunctional integrated development perspective, referring to its harmonious convergence with the urban, the cultural phenomenon fulfils an essential role in governing the entire social rural life. To a certain degree, in understanding the village's culture, its humanizing function upon villager communities determines its future physiognomy, through out modernization and urbanization, even the rural space itself.

Preserving rural specific characteristics and ennobling them with urban civilization acquisitions leads to program built of a rural with multiple natural and social valences, with positive effects upon the increase oh people's life quality. The rural universe preserved in modern form, supposes, first of all, traditions, customs, rural life specific capitalization and their unification in a subtle dialectics with modern techniques and culture, with science and up-to-date information.

Preserving the specific character of the rural area can lead to a cultural management project at central and local level, which will take all factors into consideration. Villager's culture is much older and that is why it has a greater stability and consistency in time. Villager's culture preservation was accomplished by using cultural models, which are built up by each generation in everyday life, and which function as connection agents

between people and time. Changeable cultural models express the dynamic moment in which the old yields to the new, without its complete parish. Not everything which is old must be rejected. The equilibrium between old and new, modern and traditional is what gives consistency to culture in general, to rural culture especially, in order to assure continuity and progress.

Field investigations on cultural problems confirm the thesis that mentality changes, changes in behaviour are more difficult, more complex, more mediated and thus occur later. Positive changes from everyday material life are not leading us directly to positive changes in individual and collective human subjectivity. The need for material goods, the need for wealth, mirrored in physical acquisitions, does not coincide with the cultural need and intellectual aspiration. For many transition beneficiaries there is a rupture.

3.3 ASPECTS CONCERNING CULTURE, EDUCATION AND SCHOOL ROLE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

The transition facilitated modernization cultural models in dressing style, decoration, but also models of poorness, inflation and unemployment. Human communication of the city with the village was limited, because of the high price of communication and transportation.

The globalization of some cultural, musical, entertainment phenomena makes that rural community, thanks to the help of the youth, join the positive or negative phenomena flux which characterise our contemporaneous world. Common clothing needs, the language, common music makes youth understand each other better than adults.

Labour market development, investments, specialised and prepared workforce needs increase in villages, and can change the village's and villager's image.

Within this process education, school, will have an important role, and their objectives on the E.U adherence point of view are:

- Elementary education assurance for all, with a special accent upon the reintegration of those who give up their studies and of vulnerable groups, especially of the persons with special needs.

- Education development in rural areas, in view of equal access assurance to superior educational levels

- Pre-scholar education development

- Informational technologies utilization promotion and internet access assurance in Pre-university education

- A coherent system giving birth for the permanent preparation of education's principals and for pre-university education didactic personnel.

The European Union representatives consider it necessary to elicit some supplementary progresses in domains which concern:

- Creating a national frame for mutual recognition of professional qualifications (between Romania and E.U. member states).

- Creating a structured training system for adults

- Cooperation reinforcement between responsibility factors of human resources domain development (education, work and social partners) for the enrichment of the relation between education and labour market requests.

We can infer that with regards to the educational system, we are facing an important moment as well, a moment when the rural communities have to participate to its overall accomplishment.

The lack of working places in rural areas determined young and medium workforce emigration across the borders. Young women, in good health, are going in Italy, Spain, Israel, Germany, as housekeepers, agriculture workers or medical assistants, seeking higher retribution, which in return provides a solution for their family money problems. Men, who are working with or without a labour contract, sometimes in degrading activities, in order to assure their family living, are in the same situation. So, the cohesion, the traditional union of rural families is tearing apart, due to those departures. These dismember affects not only the family group cohesion, but also cultural traditions preservation, specific for the families and rural communities. That is why, in order to assure cultural tradition continuity, there must be a valuable education in the spirit and cult of perennial values, such as: good, truth, beauty, which will be achieved by the entire educational community: family, school, church, cultural institutions, mass-media, and the public opinion.

Cultural model borrowings can be, at times, damaging, if it leads to the renunciation of cultural traditions. Rural life researchers supporting this idea, agree on the fact that foreign model borrowings could be harmonious if combined with our adults and youngsters creative spirit, and also with our ancestors' cultural traditions, in order to achieve some positive premises of the development of some family cultural models, which will correspond to the national specific and to the world we are living in.

Family axiology, as well as its culture, in a sense of ideology, mentalities, flux of ideas and information, was refreshed by a number of political values, such as: liberty, solidarity, democracy, free verbal expression, free behaviour expression, but it was in the same time "offended" by negative phenomena, due to non-values which dominate the social and political life, such as: dissolute behaviour, corruption, thievery, parasitism, misunderstanding democracy, etc.

The confidence and conviction of many family representatives in its regenerating force would determine a positive evolution, in concordance with progress and better aspirations of its members and supporters.

3.4 CONSERVATION OF THE MORAL AND EDUCATIONAL PATRIMONY OF THE RURAL SPACE

The national educational patrimony system is centred on the rural moral-educational patrimony, the essence of folk culture, developed from ancestral times [98: 165-166]. It gathers moral values and norms, cultural models specific to the village regarding work and holidays, feelings concerning children, neighbours and the country, their moods related to living events, but also, popular pedagogy of the villager family, having as a nucleus, good, beauty, truth, self respect and respect for each other.

Making a selection from hundreds of culture significations, and choosing the one which refers to lifestyle, to a specific way of working and living, of thinking and feeling, we must protect them against time aggression (violence often gathered with pornography, obscenity, instincts exaggeration). Television has a negative role in this direction, which makes popular TV shows of bad cultural, moral and esthetical structure, with ill-fated consequences upon children and the youth.

The huge development of modern technology (telephone, fax, Internet, computer games, satellite TV) leads to diminishing the amount of time spent with other people, to communications difficulties, thus resulting pseudo communication, and also to isolation and loneliness. The "technological ideal" of this kind of society, following a tendency to

impose itself on people, ruined all anterior cultural acquisition, through the so called technical "non-culture". The result may be "something" paradoxical, damaging, consumed by major conflicts: unemployment, inflation, a population ageing process, negative birth rates, crimes, paedophilia, prostitution, drugs, debts, nationalism, jingoism, beggars, homeless children (R *aurolaci* 'children inhaling varnish vapours'), resulting a truly "historical and cultural kitsch" and a truly originality crisis.

Margaret Mead notices that in less developed societies culturally speaking, especially among the young, there is an originality crisis.

In present society, fear of being overrated, of looking "old-fashioned", generates a constant run in order to reach modernity. Lacking the necessary means in order to create a "real valuable modernity", in the sense of new, novelty, and progress, this whole process probably leaves the impression of an old coat, accessorized with cheap, sparkling accessories, applied only to fool you and to make old seem new. The epithet "modern" became superiority, a grandeur symbol; that is why there is no question about it that especially young people are trying to impose themselves, to be socially recognized, to find their identity, to adhere at any kind of manifestation of the modern. This generates in the end, the simulation tendency, of being someone who you aren't in reality and of being the promoter of that you do not understand, that you do not own.

From modernization simulation we jump to the notion of modern nebulosity (in art, clothes, behaviour, concepts). On social level it appears as though numerous manifestations deform the meaning of this concept, modern being associated with strident manifestations, which leave a bad impression, shocking and scandalous. Those manifestation gamma is large: conveniences contempt, lack of politeness, moral libertinage (literature and porn films, erotic HOT/LINE, sex-clubs, sex-shops, etc.), language (vulgar, innovated by new linguistic terms like R *marfă de marfă* (E *cool stuff*), R *băieți de băieți* (E *cool guys*), R *fete de fete* (E *cool chicks*), etc.), all kind of exhibitionism (from revealing clothes, tattoos, piercing up to their behaviour), the appearance of "gang elitism" (R *băieți de cartier* > E *neighbourhood guys*), the "Nikita" phenomenon – Bucharest blonde girl who knocks everybody's head, terrorizing the neighbourhood and keeping tuff opponents at a distance, favourite music and dances, aggressiveness and violence (derived from anxiety and the incapacity of acting), delinquency, drugs, rape, paedophilia, prostitution, etc.

To adhere to false modernity, seems to became a necessity; the necessity to be accepted (into a certain group) or to survive.

Truly *modern* means something which is not passing, but something which is susceptible to become classic, something authentic, and intrinsic, in contrast with *modernist*, identified with something which means artificially, conventional, false, without authentic value, expressing only the functional need at social level.

Even though the novelty element is occupying an important place in the modernization process, not everything which is new is also modern. In order to be modern, new must represent a doubtless value, to be integrated in a given social value system, to enrich this society's ideals.

But which is our social value system?

These are rather imported, imitated.

Modernism attraction, adhering to it by hook or by crook, could very easily take us to losing our originality, obtaining unwanted effects. Many times originality is mixed up with certain behaviour effects, which is not a way to be, but rather extravagance, desire to enrapture, immodesty and lack of common sense, even saucy behaviour.

In a world without manners, evil is promoted to the rank of an ideal, and the ideal is degraded to a hobby's level. We remember the influence and echo of the "B and B" style/model, meaning Beavis and Butthead, cartoon characters, teenagers who don't believe in anyone and anything, besides hard rock music, semi-illiterates, irresponsible, inevitable attracted by everything which is negative, being "cool" according to definition, with a vulgar and violent language (too soon assumed by our teenagers); these soon became models (even "pseudo" ideals) for teenagers without them taking into account the fact that because of their absolute negativity, their living experiences, they could also be considerate as lucidity, rationality and delimitation appeals.

Or, from ancient times, peasants came with a moral centred on common sense, shame, measure, respect, etc. Kids from rural areas behaved with much more respect towards their parents and old-aged people they were using the Romanian addressing formulas "*dumneata*" or "*dumneavoastra*" (formulas which denote politeness and respect for the other, lacking an English equivalent). If they were making thoughtless gestures they were admonished by their parents, by "village's mouth", by the priest, etc.

Unfortunately these elements of peasant folk pedagogy start to be abandoned in favour of *modernity*, many times indecency, which lacks common sense, shame and respect, as we did show earlier.

The actual moral picture of the village does not resemble the traditional one anymore and here is where the educational system, the parents, the church, the village intellectuals must intervene, here is where a revival of the role of the cultural house is asked for, if this one still exists, in order to reinstate a moral and healthy life in rural community.

The introduction of ethics as a school subject, besides religion, could contribute to the youth's healthy and harmonious education.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Rural cultural patrimony protection must include a fundamental component, the one of custom's, tradition's, songs and popular dances, costumes and vernacular, of popular folklore. Education in the spirit of local culture cherish, of love and respect for our ancestors' creation, for the family's and village's material civilization, must become a constitutive part of the socialization process achieved in school and within the family.

In order to be effective and to display some real chances of success, the educational process must start with parents and teachers. Parents are the first educators and, according to the anthropological principle of "early learning" - the one which we call the 6/7 years "from home"-, personality bases are formed in the first years of life, within the family. Also, education sciences specialists, reconsidering the periods of acquiring knowledge, state that a normal child achieves almost 10% of his individual intellectual potential until three years of age, 40% between three and 6/7 years, 30% between 6/7 years and 9/10 years, the rest being completed until adolescence (Ungureanu 2000: 28). That is why, the family role is considered to be very important, as a true informal school. The 6/7 years "from home" are very important and school cannot do much in terms in which almost half of the intellectual potential of the one who is educated is already structurally and even functionally configured. That is why we can say that in rural areas too, parents are supposed to implement the respect for the village's culture, for folk costumes and dancing, so the first step in cultivating respect for our national culture constitutes basically the respect for local, village's culture. We cannot achieve the larger national culture just with the help of mass-media, but only by a systematic effort, by individual

study, and lecture, and by the help of a tenacious educational work in family, school, church and cultural institutions. The glow of the national culture is brought forth by the authentic and unrivalled beauty of local culture.

By maintaining and developing the rural moral-educational patrimony we protect our identity, love for beauty, goodness, hospitality, tolerance, moral values created over years through hard work, suffering and patience.

Another important aspect of rural culture is the peasant work culture and its work worship. *Work culture* signifies all the knowledge, skills and abilities concerning work in agriculture and in people's households, the attitude and feeling about the land, tools, animals, which are treated with equal love as the one for children, his concern for his household, his common sense, which helps him manage his financial state, his goods, an economic sprit coming to life when work relations and trade occur.

Work worship, the pleasure to work the land, to increase its fruits is specific to the ones who still feel as peasants and keep the old way of life, to the ones who are working from morning until after sunset, disregarding rain, cold or heat, because land and animals will not wait.

The free market economy should capitalize these features, amplifying their opportunities and social, economic and cultural effects and facilitating social and professional mobility.

Rural communities must involve themselves in European adhering processes as well. These processes will be possible if rural communities will capitalize nature and their human valences through an increased protection, if they keep promoting rural activities diversification, multiplying life alternatives, using the entire and integral rural human potential which it possesses- young, adults, women- if they will promote advanced techniques and cultural development, if they are constantly preoccupied with permanent education, seeking to attract all socio-professional categories in activities leading to the fulfilment of the objectives and demands of the entire collective.

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INDEX OF AUTHOR NAMES