

QUAESTUS

NO. 21/ June 2022

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The QUAESTUS journal is published by the
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM AND COMMERCE
TIMIȘOARA
DIMITRIE CANTEMIR CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Quaestus Multidisciplinary Research Journal is indexed in



INDEX COPERNICUS

and



Address: Str. 1 Decembrie, nr. 93, Timișoara, cod 300566, România

Phone: 004/0725923071

Fax: +4/0256-29.35.98

E-mail: quaestus.ucdctm@gmail.com

<http://www.quaestus.ro/>ISSN 2285 – 424X

ISSN-L 2285 – 424X
ISSN online 2343-8134

Tiraj: 200 exemplare
Apare bianual

Editura Eurostampa
Timișoara, Bd. Revoluției din 1989 nr. 26
Tel./fax: 0256-204816
edituraeurostampa@gmail.com
www.eurostampa.ro
Tipărit la ***Eurostampa***

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FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING

TAXATION IN THE REAL SYSTEM VERSUS TAXATION AT THE INCOME NORM

Marius-Nicolae MICULESCU
Radu Dorin LENGHEL

***Abstract:** The paper aims to make an analysis of the taxation system for authorized persons in Romania in the current context. The last 5 years have seriously marked the entire economy because of the pandemic situation caused by COVID 19 and more now, because of the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis, a period in which small producers, traders and all the entrepreneurs of the liberal professions (especially those in tourism) tried to resist and maintain their businesses. The measures taken by them in the first part were to reduce their direct and then indirect expenses and to pay lower taxes to the state. In this paper we will focus on the taxation of individuals, and we will present the taxation system in the real system and the taxation at the income norm.*

***Keywords:** taxes and fees, taxation, trade, tourism, services, entrepreneurs, accounting, income norm, expense*

1. INTRODUCTION – the method of taxation of PFAs.

According to the dictionary, **an authorized individual person (PFA)** = is the person authorized to carry out any form of economic activity permitted by law (also called self-employment), mainly using his labor force¹. Persons who: i) have reached the age of 18 may carry out economic activities as a PFA; ii) have not committed acts sanctioned by the financial, customs laws and those concerning financial-fiscal discipline, of the kind that are included in the tax record; (iii) have a place of business; iv) declares on their own responsibility that they meet the operating conditions stipulated by the specific legislation in the field of sanitary, sanitary-veterinary, environmental protection and labor protection, the fulfilment of the conditions regarding the compliance with the operating requirements provided by the specific legislation in the field of sanitary, sanitary-

¹ (art. 2 lit. i) of O.U.G. no. 44/2008)

veterinary, environmental protection and labor protection.²

The last 5 years have seriously marked the entire economy because of the pandemic situation caused by COVID 19 and more current because of the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis, a period in which small producers, traders and all the entrepreneurs of the liberal professions (especially those in tourism) tried to resist. The measures taken by them in the first part were to reduce their direct and then indirect expenses and to pay lower taxes to the state in order to keep their income from self-employment at the same level. Unfortunately for the united, this could not be achieved even through the support from the government and as a result many businesses were restricted or even closed down. Some of them, however, have moved to a new form of organization and thus have gone from organizing in the form of companies to PFAs with a reduced number of staff.

Income **from self-employment**³ means income from activities of production, trade, provision of services and income from liberal professions, carried out individually and/or in a form of association, including from other activities. Income from liberal professions constitutes income obtained from the provision of services of other professional activities, according to the special normative acts regulating the organization and exercise of the profession.

The taxation of these incomes is regulated by law and there are 2 ways of taxing PFAs:

- Taxation in the real system
- Taxation at the income tax norm

It is very important to note that there is no difference in the tax count. The 10% tax applies to both variants. The difference between the two ways of taxation is given by how exactly the amount to which this 10% is applied, which represents the tax due is calculated.

Taxation in the real system

PFAs that are taxed in the real system pay tax of 10% of the net income. Net income is the difference between gross taxable income and deductible expenses. It is practically the most "correct" way of taxation, as it reflects 100% reality, that is, the real income earned by the PFA.

In order to determine the net income, the PFA has the obligation to keep a simple accounting record of all incomes and expenses related to the economic activity carried out.

² According to the fiscal code, the updated law no. 227/2015

³ According to the fiscal code, the updated law no. 227/2015

Taxation at the income tax norm

Taxation to the income norm involves applying the 10% percentage to a predetermined amount, called the "income norm", regardless of the income earned by the PFA in practice. These amounts (income norms) are established each year, for each object of activity considered eligible, according to the law. They differ depending on the county, or even the locality where the holder of the PFA has established his domicile.

Because the expenses in carrying out the activity no longer influence in any way the amount to which the amount of the 10% tax is applied, the accounting in the case of PFAs to the income norm is simpler. They are required to keep only records of revenue (except for activities such as wholesale or retail trade and output, which require more detailed accounting).

2. Taxation in the real system versus taxation at the income norm.

Most people who earn income from self-employment ask themselves the question: How to choose between the real system and the income norm and which option is more advantageous?

This depends strictly on the work they carry out and the net income they expect to have.

Not all activities existing in the CAEN code are eligible to be taxed at the income norm. Because of this, first of all you have to see if there is a possibility of choosing between the two ways, or if you are forced to tax yourself in the real system.⁴

If the activity you carry out is in the list of eligible CAEN codes, then the next step is to inquire what is the income norm applicable for your CAEN code in the county, and, where appropriate, in the locality you belong to.

Once you know what is the income norm you are referring to, you are going to estimate what real net income you will have during the year. Don't forget that net income means total income minus deductible expenses ($VN=VT - \text{Deductible expenses}$).

To make a decision the person can apply the following reasoning:

- If the estimated real net income is lower than the income norm in force for your CAEN code in your county, then choose the taxation in the real system. In that way, you're going to pay a lower tax.

⁴ CAEN code = codification of activities in the national economy

• If the estimated real net income is higher than the income norm in force for your CAEN code in your county, then choose taxation at the income norm. In that way, you're going to pay a lower tax.

3. Example taxation in real system vs. to the income norm

For example, let's assume that you carry out activities related to CAEN code 4776 Trade with medicinal plants seeds, flowers in Timisoara. Let's also say you estimate a total net annual income of 60. 000 lei. The income norm for 2022 for CAEN code 4776 in Timisoara is 44,000 lei (according to the Annex). Thus, the tax due for 2022 (for 12 months of activity), depending on the mode of taxation is:

- In real system: $10\% \times 60000 = 6.000$ lei
- At the income norm: $10\% \times 44000 = 4,400$ lei

In this case, taxation at the income norm is clearly more advantageous. If, however, the estimated net annual income had been only 30. 000 lei, this amount would have been lower than the income norm. Thus, you would have paid less in the real system.

ANEXA la Hotărârea CJT nr. 235/22.12.2021
PRIVIND PROPUNERILE PENTRU ANUL 2022
A NORMELOR DE VENIT PENTRU CONTRIBUABILII CARE
REALIZEAZĂ VENITURI COMERCIALE DEFINITE LA ART.69
ALINEATUL 2 DIN LEGEA NR.227/2015 PRIVIND CODUL FISCAL

Nr. Denumirea activităţii (ot. independente pentru care venitul net se poate determina pe baza normelor de venit)	Denumirea activităţii cod CAEN REV. 2	Norma de venit – lei/an		
		Municipii	În judeţele	Comune
1. Comerţ cu amănuntul în magazine specializate, cu vânzare predominantă de produse alimentare, băuturi şi tutun	4711	44000	39000	37000
3. Comerţ cu plante medicinale, seminţe de păune, fructe şi flori	4776	44000	31000	37000
4. Comerţ cu produse agricole	4779	44000	39000	37000
5. Comerţ cu colecţie de uz casnic şi uşor gospodăresc	4781	47000	44000	40000

Annex on the proposals for 2022 of the income norms for PFA in Timiş County.

In addition to the income tax, the tax pressure on a PFA is also given by the social security contributions it has to pay if certain limits are exceeded.

The law says that regardless of the mode of taxation chosen, if the total annual income on the basis of which the tax due is calculated is higher than the minimum wage in the economy multiplied by 12 months (or, for newly established PFAs, by the number of months of activity), then the PFA also owes pension and health contributions.

Thus, a PFA whose annual income is higher than 30,600 lei (2,550 lei the minimum wage in the economy x 12 months) also owes the above-mentioned contributions.

What is the amount of these contributions?

Pension contribution (CAS)

Pension contributions shall be calculated as follows:

- Either 25% of the minimum threshold of 30,600 lei (2,550 lei minimum wage on the economy x 12 months), i.e. 7,650 lei per year
- Be 25% of the amount of your choice, if you have a higher net income and want to contribute more for retirement
- If you get income below the minimum ceiling of 30,600 lei per year and you still want to pay CAS contributions, you can do so. In this case you will pay 25% of 30,600 lei, i.e. a total of 7,650 lei.

Contribution to health (CASS)

Health contributions are calculated as follows:

- 10% of the minimum threshold of 30,600 lei (2,550 lei minimum wage in the economy x 12 months), i.e. 3,060 lei per year
- There is no possibility to contribute more!
- If you get income below the minimum ceiling of 30,600 lei per year and you still want to be insured in the public health system, you can do so. In this case you will pay 10% of 15,300 (the minimum ceiling calculated at 6 months), i.e. a total of 1,530 lei.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we can say that the way of taxation that we choose in the real system or income norm, depends on its size and the geographical area in which the income is realized. The desire and purpose of any entrepreneur is to pay as low as possible taxes to the state, legally. Thus, following the above, if the estimated real net income is lower than the income norm in force for your NACE code in your county, the taxation in the real system is chosen. If the estimated real net income is higher than the income norm in force for your NACE code in your county, the tax is chosen at the income norm. In both cases, a lower tax will be paid.

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*** O.U.G. nr. 44/2008.

*** Legea 277/2015.

<https://legeaz.net/dictionar-juridic/persoana-fizica-autorizata-pfa>.

PFA = Persoana fizică autorizată să desfășoare activități independente

CAS = contribuția la pensie

CASS = contribuția la sănătate

NOTE ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Radu Dorin LENGHEL, doctor in economics, associate professor at the Department of Finance and Accounting, within the Faculty of Economic Sciences Cluj-Napoca. He is the author of numerous scientific papers and books in the field of accounting, control and financial audit. He is currently the holder of bachelor's and master's courses in the disciplines: Control and financial audit, Auditing financial statements, Control and internal audit, Accounting of public institutions, International auditing standards.

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THE PROCEDURE FOR INTERNAL CONTROL OF ACCOUNTING IN PRIVATE ENTITIES

Radu Dorin LENGHEL

***Abstract:** The main procedures of internal control are: internal control by inventory, control of receipt of goods, control of the way of completion and use of justifying documents, control of the correct organization and management of accountings, internal control of the verification balances, capitalization of the findings of internal control. Errors found as a result of the internal control of the accounts may relate either to the current financial year or to previous financial years.*

The correction of errors found during the internal control is made on the date of their finding. If the errors are related to the current financial year, their correction is made on behalf of the profit and loss account (class 6 / class 7). The correction of significant errors related to previous financial years is made on account of retained earnings (1174).

***Keywords:** internal control, internal control procedures, internal accounting control, , capitalization of internal control findings*

1. Control of the way of completing and using the supporting documents

The control of the way of completing and using the supporting documents has as an object to verify:

(a) all the entries in the accounts are based on legal documents, whether the printouts corresponding to the nature of the operations recorded in them are used.

Order of the Minister of Public Finance no. 2364/2015, includes a "Nomenclature on the models of the common standard registers and forms regarding the financial and accounting act". All entities are obliged to use these models of the accounting registers and of the common forms regarding the financial-accounting activity, to comply with the methodological norms regarding their use, and in case of using the IT equipment for the preparation of supporting documents and for the processing of data, the accounting registers and the common forms on the economy, they can be adapted

according to the needs of the users, but provided that the content of information of the model of forms approved by the Ministry of Public Finance.

In addition to the forms provided in this nomenclature, private entities may also use in their financial-accounting activity specific forms elaborated by ministries, departments, professional associations or patrimonial entity, depending on the needs.

b) the way of completing the documents

The internal control must monitor that they are drawn up in time and contain all the necessary elements, without artificial simplifications and omissions which may lead to or give rise to processing errors, fraud, forgery and which hinder control.

The supporting documents usually include the following main elements: the name of the documents; the name, address and particulars identifying the issuer; the document number and the date of drawing up; the content of the operation (sometimes also the legal basis, or the contract number); the quantitative and value parameters of the operation; the name, surname and signature of the persons who drew up, endorsed and approved the document and of those who participated in the performance of the respective operation or transaction, etc.; other particulars required by vat regulations.

c) if the legal rules on the correction of errors in documents are observed

For example, we specify that the correction of the information entered in the invoices is made in accordance with the requirements of the Tax Code, as follows:

- a. if the invoice has not been sent to the beneficiary, it shall be cancelled and a new invoice drawn up;
- b. if the invoice has been sent to the beneficiary, the correction can be made:
 - either by issuing a new invoice, in which the number and date of the corrected invoice are entered, and the value is passed with minus and at the same time the correct values are entered;
 - either two invoices are issued, in the first one the number and date of the corrected invoice are entered, and the values are written with a minus sign, and in the second the correct information and values are written.

If the taxable amount is changed, suppliers must issue invoices, in which the values are written with a minus sign or a plus sign, in the following situations:

- if the recipient refuses part or all of the quantity, quality or price of the goods or services invoiced;
- if price reductions (rebates, draws, scraps, discounts) are granted after the delivery of the goods or the provision of services;
- if after delivery, there is an increase in prices and tariffs;
- if the customer picks up the packaging, which has been invoiced, at the same time as the goods.

d) the documents in question are authentic.

In order to be able to establish whether the signatures on the documents belong to the authorized persons, the signatures on the respective documents shall be compared with those on the documents concerned, with those on other documents and those in the sheets of specimen signatures and, ultimately, the recognition and confirmation of the writing and signature by their authors shall be carried out.

The document in electronic form, to which an extended electronic signature has been attached, generated with the help of a secure device, is assimilated to documents in private form (Law no. 455/2001 on electronic signature, art. 5).

e) if the basis of the records are the centralizing documents.

It shall be verified that they cover only operations of the same nature and of the same management period.

f) if the numbering of documents allows the detection of missing documents or those registered more than once (completeness of the records).

This numbering shall ensure that the documents on the basis of which the recordings were made are easily located.

For forms numbered within the private entities that use them, it follows: if their numbering was still done or serially by compartments, so as to avoid the assignment of several similar documents with the same serial number (the forms in stock at the end of the year can still be used without another numbering) and if all copies of a document have the same serial number.

After completion, the forms shall become supporting documents and shall be kept, at the declared premises, in the order of the numbers, thereby ensuring a permanent control over them. The supporting documents can be stored by any method, including by electronic means, under the conditions required by the Fiscal Code. g) ***arithmetic verification of documents, also in terms of form, but also affecting the content, an arithmetic check is also carried out,*** aiming at the accuracy of the figures entered in the

documents, of the measurement units, of the calculations, being aware that sometimes they are intentionally wrong, with the purpose of temporarily hiding cases of poor management, fraud or other irregularities.

2. Control of the correct organization and management of accounting

In order to ensure the objectivity, accuracy and promptness of the information, the process of organization of the accounting information system in a private entity must be carried out under a strict control, on behalf of the Administration Council, the heads of departments and the executors.

The main tasks of the internal control related to the organization of accounting records are focused on the way in which the implemented accounting information system corresponds to the legal regulations and specific characteristics of the respective entity.

The control of the way of organizing the accounting must start with a documentary basis on the criteria, which must be respected by the informatic programs. The main criteria that a computer program must satisfy are:

- to ensure the processing of information in accordance with the provisions of accounting and tax regulations;
- to protect program products against unauthorized access by persons, with the purpose of "modifying" programs;
- ensure the confidentiality of the data. Access to these data must be restricted by various codes or other means;
- to ensure the archiving of data for a period of time required by the law of compatibility;
- ensure the listing of accounting records. These listings must be intemible and complete and must contain: the type of document listed, the name of the entity, the period to which it refers, the date of listing, the chronological pagination, the specification of the computer program and the version used.
- not to allow insertions, modifications or deletions of data, for the periods completed. Any errors or omissions found shall be corrected in the current period;
- to allow verification of the functioning of the programmes and of the correction of the accounting records.

At the same time, the software must not allow: opening two analytical accounts with the same symbol; change in the account symbol, after recordings have been made in it; the suppression of an account in which registrations have been made; listing (editing) several documents of the same type, with the same order number, but with different content, etc.

The internal control goes through the logical sequence, in which the accounting processes and instruments are used.

As a result, internal control over accounting involves tracking how to ensure:

- the recording of operations in documents and their entry in the accounting books;
- verification of the consistency between accounting information and reality by means of inventory;
- checking the correctness of the accounting records, with the help of verification balances;
- the synthesis and generalization of accounting information, with the help of financial statements.

With regard to the accounting system in the entity, internal control shall monitor the quality of information and in particular, whether the following criteria are met: completeness and integrity of records; the reality of the recordings; the accuracy of the records.

a. Completeness and integrity of records

This criterion requires that all transactions and operations, which take place in an entity, be reflected in appropriate supporting documents and be entered in the accounts without omissions and without repetition, in this respect, the internal control shall follow the reliability of the document numbering system (manual or automatic) practiced in the entity.

In order to ensure the full takeover of the supporting documents in the automatic data processing system, several procedures are used, among which we mention:

- by checking the records in the registers and journals, the internal control can detect situations, in which some documents have been omitted or have been recorded several times.
- analysis of the correlations between the turnovers and balances of some accounts, as well as of the abnormal balances. Thus, the internal control can analyze the correlations between customer accounts, sales revenue and collected VAT. Also, the debtor balance of the supplier account may be due to the failure to correctly register the supply invoices, confusions between the analytics of this account, the payment of invoices several times: through the cash register, through the bank or through different payment instruments.
- control of accounting records that are based on the manual processing of a sample of documents or on processing according to another informatic program and comparison of results.

b. Reality of the recordings

All information recorded in the accounts and summarised in the financial statements must be justifiable and verifiable on the basis of supporting documents. All patrimonial elements reflected in the accounting must be in accordance with the factual reality established by physical inventory, by confirmations received from third parties, by laboratory analysis or by other procedures. All revenue and expenses must be real (justifiable and verifiable), concern the period in question and the entity concerned.

c. Accuracy of records

The correct entry in the accounts and the correct presentation of the accounting information are verified in terms of: the correct period, the correct valuation, the correct imputation and the correct presentation, as follows:

- ***Correct period.*** The principle of accrual accounting requires that transactions and transactions be recorded during the period in which they took place, according to the requirements of a commitment accounting.

Internal control must consider how, in which the accruals accounting principle is respected and how the work on reconciliation and accounting rectification is carried out.

The independence of the year is controlled by several procedures, among which we mention the analysis of the first and last documents of a financial year, with the purpose of detecting unreal or illegal "carryovers" between the management periods.

- ***Correct assessment.*** Law on accounting no. 82/1991, amended and republished, establishes the evaluation rules: at the entry into the patrimony, on the occasion of the inventory, at the closing of the exercise and at the exit from the patrimony or at the release for consumption. Accounting regulations, approved by MFP Order no. No 1802/2014, supplements the rules for valuation at historical cost and the rules on depreciation and provisions, with other rules, called "alternative rules", which refer to the replacement value or fair value. This legal norm establishes the principle of separate valuation of assets and liabilities and the principle of valuation at acquisition cost or production cost.

- ***Correct imputation.*** Internal control must aim at recording transactions and transactions in the corresponding accounts, knowing that non-compliance with correspondence between accounts can contribute to the mass of fraud or other irregularities, to illegal compensation, to distortion of indicators, etc.

• ***The correct preparation of financial statements.*** The internal control must follow the correctness of the accounting records, based on the synthetic and analytical trial balances, on the basis of the confrontations between the accounting and the operative records (stock records, cash registers, management reports, etc.), on the basis of the work of reconciliation and rectification of the accounts, including, on the basis of the inventories and on the basis of the confrontations between the chronological records and the systematic records.

After carrying out these checks, the internal control shall aim at the correct centralization and retrieval of the information in the annual financial statements or in other reports and information.

Errors found as a result of the internal control of the accounts may relate either to the current financial year or to previous financial years.

The correction of errors found during the internal control is made on the date of their finding.

If the errors are related to the current financial year, their correction is made on behalf of the profit and loss account (class 6 / class 7).

The correction of significant errors related to previous financial years is made on account of retained earnings (1174).

Correction of insignificant errors for previous financial years shall also be corrected on account of retained earnings. However, according to the approved accounting policies, insignificant errors can be corrected on behalf of the profit and loss account.

In the notes to the financial statements, additional information on the errors found must be presented.

3. Internal control of accounting and tax rationales

Private entities submit accounting reports according to size criteria, annually or semi-annually.

The internal control department verifies with the accounting department at the beginning of each fiscal year, the classification in the size category according to the indicators in the balance sheet and establishes the manner of accounting and tax reports according to the legal provisions.

The internal control department at the due dates verifies the submission of reports by the accounting department.

At the end of each reporting period, the internal control department will analyze whether the chart of accounts used by private entities and the development of accounts on analytics is sufficiently comprehensive or on the contrary too complex, making it difficult to analyze the financial information.

At the end of each period, the internal control department will check together with the accounting department whether: the tax returns have been submitted according to the fiscal vector; the tax file was checked; the fees have been paid in accordance with the amounts declared.

4. Case studies on internal control of accounting

Example No. 1

At a company on the occasion of the closing works of the financial year 2022, the economic director finds the existence of material errors related to the current year, as follows:

1. nu an invoice for the purchase of a laptop worth 2,500 lei was registered;

214 = 404 2.500 lei

2. no invoice was registered for services provided to third parties, in the amount of 3,000 lei;

4111 = 704 3.000 lei

3. there was no electricity bill in the amount of 2,000 lei;

605 = 401 2.000 lei

4. the profit tax was not registered according to D 101, in the amount of 2,500 lei.

691 = 4411 2.500 lei

5. there were no increases compared to suppliers in the amount of 2,000 lei.

6581 = 401 2.000 lei

6. the salary of an employee in the amount of 4,000 lei was not registered;

641 = 421 4.000 lei

7. the annual depreciation of the cars was not registered, in the amount of 3,000 lei;

$$6811 = 2813 \quad 3.000 \text{ lei}$$

8. no prescribed debts in the amount of 4,500 lei were removed from the record;

$$401 = 7588 \quad 4.500 \text{ lei}$$

9. an invoice for the purchase of goods, worth 15,000 lei, was registered twice;

$$371 = 401 \quad - 15.000 \text{ lei}$$

10. the electricity related to the spaces rented to third parties, in the amount of 2,000 lei, was not re-invoiced;

$$4111 = 708 \quad 2.000 \text{ lei}$$

11. no late payment penalties were invoiced, related to unpaid rent invoices, in the amount of 3,000 lei;

$$4111 = 7581 \quad 3.000 \text{ lei}$$

12. the internet invoice worth 1,500 lei was not registered;

$$626 = 401 \quad 1.500 \text{ lei}$$

Example No. 2

At a company during the closing work of the financial year 2022, the economic director shall find that there are material errors for the previous year, as follows:

1. nu a phone purchase invoice worth 2,000 lei was registered:

$$303 = 401 \quad 2.000 \text{ lei}$$

2. there was no invoice for the sale of goods, in the amount of 3,000 lei:

$$4111 = 1174 \quad 3.000 \text{ lei}$$

3. there was no invoice for repairs of the company's car, in the amount of 2,000 lei:

$$1174 = 401 \quad 2.000 \text{ lei}$$

4. no income tax was registered according to D 100, in the amount of 1,500 lei:

$$1174 = 4418 \quad 1.500 \text{ lei}$$

5. there were no interest on late payment to the state, in the amount of 2,000 lei:

$$1174 = 4481 \quad 2.000 \text{ lei}$$

6. the salary of an employee in the amount of 3,500 lei was not registered:

$$1174 = 421 \quad 3.500 \text{ lei}$$

7. for the accommodation and daily allowance expenses at the time of the inspection, the travel statement was submitted, in the amount of 2,000 lei:

$$1174 = 542 \quad 2.000 \text{ lei}$$

8. the depreciation of computers in the amount of 4,000 lei was not recorded:

$$1174 = 2814 \quad 4.000 \text{ lei}$$

9. the lack of goods in the amount of 5,000 lei in the inventory was not recorded:

$$1174 = 371 \quad 5.000 \text{ lei}$$

10. no prescribed claims in the amount of 3,500 lei were removed from the record:

$$1174 = 4111 \quad 3.500 \text{ lei}$$

11. an invoice for the sale of goods worth 10,000 lei was registered, twice:

$$4111 = 1174 \quad -10.000$$

12. no rents related to the spaces rented to third parties, in the amount of 5,000 lei, were invoiced:

$$4111 = 1174 \quad 5.000 \text{ lei}$$

5. CONCLUSIONS

The main procedures of internal control are: internal control by inventory, control of receipt of goods, control of the way of completion and use of justifying documents, control of the correct organization and management of accounting, internal control of the verification balances, capitalization of the findings of internal control.

The main tasks of the internal control related to the organization of the accounting records are focused on the way in which the implemented accounting information system corresponds to the legal regulations and the specific characteristics of the respective entity

As a result, internal control over accounting involves tracking how to ensure:

- the recording of operations in documents and their entry in the accounting books;
- verification of the consistency between accounting information and reality by means of inventory;
- checking the correctness of the accounting records, with the help of verification balances;
- the synthesis and generalization of accounting information, with the help of financial statements.

With regard to the accounting system in the entity, internal control shall monitor the quality of information and in particular, whether the following criteria are met: completeness and integrity of records; the reality of the recordings; accuracy of records

Errors found as a result of the internal control of the accounts may relate either to the current financial year or to previous financial years.

The correction of errors found during the internal control is made on the date of their finding.

If the errors are related to the current financial year, their correction is made on behalf of the profit and loss account (class 6 / class 7).

The correction of significant errors related to previous financial years is made on account of retained earnings (1174).

Correction of insignificant errors for previous financial years shall also be corrected on account of retained earnings. However, according to the approved accounting policies, insignificant errors can be corrected on behalf of the profit and loss account.

In the notes to the financial statements, additional information on the errors found must be presented.

The internal control department verifies with the accounting department at the beginning of each fiscal year, the classification in the size category according to the indicators in the balance sheet and establishes the manner of accounting and tax reports according to the legal provisions.

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PROCEDURE OF INTERNAL CONTROL BY INVENTORY IN PRIVATE ENTITIES

Radu Dorin LENGHEL

***Abstract:** The main procedures of internal control are: internal control by inventory, control of receipt of goods, control of the way of completion and use of justifying documents, control of the correct organization and management of accounting, internal control of the verification balances, capitalization of the findings of internal control. Inventory control is the most effective internal control procedure, as it allows to know the reality, to discover possible shortcomings and other forms of waste, contributing to a large extent to the integrity of the patrimony of private entities.*

***Keywords:** internal control, internal control procedures, internal control by inventory, internal control of accounting, capitalization of internal control*

1. Procedure for internal control by inventory

Control by inventory is the most effective internal control procedure, since it allows to know the reality, to discover possible shortcomings and other forms of waste, contributing to a large extent to the integrity of the patrimony of private entities.

The inventory of the patrimony is a complex work, which involves going through several stages: the preparation of the inventory; the inventory itself; the establishment, regularization and recording in the accounts of the differences found at the inventory.

The determination of the amounts, which are imputed to the guilty persons, is made at the replacement value, which represents the acquisition cost of the goods at the date of finding the damage.

According to the legislation in force, the managers are fully liable to the private entities for the damages (lacks in management) that they have caused in the management.

When the manager has caused damage in management at the workplace and it is not fully covered within one month, the entity will be compensated from the cash guarantee provided.

In order to correctly solve the inventory gaps, the inventory commissions will take from the managers complete explanatory notes, showing the character of the gaps, losses, depreciations found and the circumstances of their occurrence.

Based on the explanations received and other documents and facts investigated, the inventory committees formulate conclusions and propose concrete measures to the attention of the management, which are to be adopted (compensations, perishables, imputations, decreases in management).

Basically, the differences found on the occasion of the general inventory of the patrimony are regularized by the following ways (see applications): direct registration of the pluses and minuses of the inventory; offsetting pluses with inventory minuses; combined granting of compensations and perishables; granting of perishables or permissible deductions.

2. Procedure for the direct registration of inventory pluses and minuses

In principle, for storable items, the pluses are recorded as inputs into the assets of the units (class 3 = class 6), and the minuses are passed on to the expenses (class 6 = class 3), as the case may be, minuses, which are to be imputed, if applicable $(4282/461) = 7588$

The taxable person must adjust, on the date of the change, the deductible tax related to goods of the nature of the stocks not in management $(635 = 4426)$.

The initial deduction of the fee shall not be adjusted in the case of:

- a) goods destroyed or lost as a result of natural disasters or causes of force majeure, provided that these situations are properly demonstrated or confirmed, as well as stolen goods legally proven by a final court decision;
- b) goods of the nature of qualitatively degraded stocks, which can no longer be capitalized, as well as scrapped fixed tangible assets, other than capital goods, under the conditions established by the norms;
- c) perishables, within the limits provided by law, as well as technological losses or, as the case may be, of other own consumptions.

Example No. 1

At the general inventory of the patrimony there is a lack of 100 pcs of goods, at a purchase cost of 10 lei / piece, which is imputed to the manager. It shall then withhold the damage from the security initially lodged by the manager.

Solution:

1. registration lack attributable to the manager $100 * 10 \text{ lei} / \text{pcs}$:

$$607 = 371 \qquad 1.000 \text{ lei}$$

2. adjustment of the VAT deducted at the time of purchase ($1000 * 19\% = 190 \text{ lei}$)

$$635 = 4426 \qquad 190 \text{ lei}$$

3. imputation of the absence to the manager in the amount of 1,190 lei (the imputed amounts are not considered as supplies of goods according to the fiscal code):

$$4282 = 7588 \qquad 1.190 \text{ lei}$$

4. forfeiture of damage from the security initially lodged by the manager:

$$4281 = 4282 \qquad 1.190 \text{ lei}$$

Example No. 2

At the general inventory of the patrimony, there is a lack of 10 pcs of goods at a purchase cost of 10 lei / piece not attributable.

Solution:

1. registration lack of power of the manager $10 * 10 \text{ lei} / \text{kg}$:

$$607 = 371 \qquad 100 \text{ lei}$$

2. adjustment of the VAT deducted at the time of purchase ($100 * 19\% \text{ lei} = 19 \text{ lei}$)

$$635 = 4426 \qquad 19 \text{ lei}$$

2. Procedure for compensating the pluses with the minuses found at the inventory

When determining the value of the debt, in cases where the deficiencies in management are not considered as offences, it is taken into account the possibility of compensating the gaps with the possible pluses found.

The compensation of the gaps with the pluses found at the inventory allows the correction of some errors in the handling of the goods due to the confusions between the assortments.

The danger of confusion is determined by the similarity between products, a danger that arises as a result of careless handling, when labels disappear from packaging, as well as due to the negligence of managers.

The power to approve compensations lies in all cases with the directors of private entities.

According to the rules on the organization and carrying out of the inventory of patrimony (approved by OMFP no. 2861/2009), the compensation of the pluses with the inventory minuses operates only if the following conditions are met:

- the existence of a likelihood of confusion between the same groups of material goods because of their similarity in terms of external appearance: colour, pattern, dimensions, packaging and other elements;
- the pluses and minuses must relate to the same management periods and the same management.

Lists of sorts of products, goods, packaging and other material values that meet the conditions of compensation shall be established annually by the administrators of private entities.

The following rules on compensation shall also be taken into account:

(a) the quantitative equality between pluses and minuses is obtained by removing from the calculation the quantities, which exceed this equality (pluses or minuses, as the case may be), starting with the assortments, which have the lowest unit price, in increasing order of prices (the managers are liable for the lesser damage);

(b) the differences in value, at equal quantities of pluses and minuses, shall be established between the total value of the assortments found in excess and the total value of the assortments found below, within the same group of material values;

(c) as a result of the compensation, unfavorable differences cannot result for the firm and if they still exist, they are recovered from the guilty ones (as a result of the compensation, the entity's patrimony cannot be reduced).

Example No. 3

Following the inventory of a warehouse of goods with confundable assortments, inventory differences were found, according to the table below.

Assortment	Acquisition cost	Quantitative differences	
		+	-
S 1	1		35
S 2	2	35	
S 3	3		35
S 4	4	35	
S 5	5		5

Source: own projection

Compensation will be made in the table below.

Assortment	Acquisition cost	Quantitative differences		Value differences	
		+	-	+	-
S 1	1		35		35
S 2	2	35		70	
S 3	3		35		105
S 4	4	35		140	
S5	5		5		25
Total inventory		70	75	210	165
Eliminations from compensation -5S1*1 = 5 lei, at the lowest price			5		5
Compensation		70	70	210	160

Analysis of the compensation process:

1. uncompensated absence: 5 lei;
2. total missing: 5 lei;
3. plus after compensation 50 lei
- 4.1 registration in accounting of the total lack of 5 lei, which is fully covered by perishability:

$$607 = 371 \quad 5 \text{ lei}$$

- 4.2. se ajustează tva-ului dedus la momentul achiziției, ajustarea tva-ului dedus la momentul achiziției ($5 * 9 \% = 0,45 \text{ lei}$)

$$635 = 4426 \quad 0,45 \text{ lei}$$

- 4.3. the imputation of the absence to the manager in the amount of 5.45 lei (the imputed amounts are not considered as supplies of goods according to the fiscal code):

$$4282 = 7588 \quad 5,45 \text{ lei}$$

4.4. forfeiture of damage from the security initially lodged by the manager:

$$4281 = 4282 \quad 5,45 \text{ lei}$$

5. registration of pluses following compensation

$$371 = 607 \quad 50 \text{ lei}$$

3. Procedure for the combined award of compensation and perishables

In the case of goods for which deductions are accepted, in the case of compensation for shortages with the pluses fixed for the inventory, the deductions shall be calculated only if the missing quantities are greater than the quantities ascertained in excess, and only within the limit of these differences.

Within each category, the order of granting perishability is that used to include the goods in compensation (starting with the missing assortment that has the highest unit price).

The deductions are granted, first of all, for the assortments, to which it was found that the lack was found, and if there are still quantitative differences in minus, they can be granted for the other assortments to which there were pluses.

Value gaps, which may be covered on account of perishables, shall consist of the value of the missing quantities, which exceed the quantities ascertained in addition, plus the negative differences in value resulting from the compensation of equal quantities.

Quantitative shortfalls removed from compensation remaining after the granting of quantitative perishables shall be charged, in the order in which they were eliminated from the compensation (starting with the lowest unit price).

The difference established in minus as a result of the compensation and application of all the deduction quotas, representing damage to the entity, shall be recovered from the guilty persons, in accordance with the legal provisions.

Example No. 4

Following the inventory of a warehouse of goods with confundable assortments, inventory differences were found, according to the table below. The VAT rate is 9%.

Establish the situation in the inventory knowing that the perishables allowed during storage are 0,05 %, of turnover.

	Acquisition cost ~ lei	Quantitative differences (Kg)		Turnovers of entries (Kg)
		+	-	
S 1	1		50	1.000
S 2	2	50		2.000
S 3	3		50	3.000
S 4	4	50		4.000
S 5	5		5	5.000

Source : own projection

Compensation will be made in the table below

Assortment	Acquisition cost	Quantitative differences		Value differences		Perishability		
		+	-	+	-	Calculate	Granted	Value
S 1	1		50		50	0,5	0,5	0,5
S 2	2	50		100		1	-	-
S 3	3		50		150	1,5	1,5	4,5
S 4	4	50		200		2	0,5	2
S5	5		5		25	2,5	2,5	12,5
Total inventory		100	105	300	225	7,5	5	<u>19,5</u>
Eliminations from compensation -5S1*1 = 5 LEI,			5		<u>5</u>			
Compensation		100	100	300	220			
Result of compensation		-	-	80				

The analysis of the compensation and granting of perishability process is:

1. uncompensated absence: 5 lei;
2. missing from compensation: 0 lei;
3. total missing: 0 lei;
4. perishability granted during storage: 19.5 lei;
5. imputable absence: 0 lei.

6. registration in the accounts of the total lack of 5 lei, which is fully covered by perishability:

$$607 = 371 \quad 5 \text{ lei}$$

7. does not adjust the VAT deducted at the time of purchase for the missing goods covered by perishables

8. registration of pluses following the compensation of 80 lei:

$$371 = 607 \quad 80 \text{ lei}$$

4. Procedure for granting perishability

Perishables means deductions which occur during the transport, handling, storage and disposal of goods as a result of natural transformations of goods leading to their weight loss or depreciation, including fermentation processes.

These normal quantitative losses are not the fault of the manager or other persons and must therefore be deducted from management as losses not attributable to them.

The power to approve the deduction quotas lies in all cases with the management of the entity.

Perishables shall be approved on the occasion of the inventory, only under the conditions of actual lack of inventory and only within the limits thereof.

These perishables diminish the patrimonial responsibility of the managers.

1. Perishability during storage shall be determined according to the turnover of entries recorded between two successive inventories, the most common method of calculation, etc.

2. Perishability during transport

It refers to the losses, which occur in the quantitative and sometimes qualitative volume of goods and is calculated, as a rule, by applying the percentage quotas of subtractions on the quantity or value of the goods transported.

For some categories of goods, the percentage rates may differ depending on the distances of the transport, the duration of the transport or the season in which the transport takes place and the means of transport used.

3. Perishability during unwrapping (handling) shall be calculated, as a rule, by applying the percentage quotas of deductions to the quantity sold between two successive inventories.

Example No. 5

Following the inventory of a warehouse of goods with unmistakable assortments, inventory differences were found, according to the table below.

Establish the situation in the inventory knowing that the perishables allowed during storage are 0,05 %, of turnover.

	Acquisition cost ~ lei	Quantitative differences (Kg)		Turnovers of entries (Kg)
		+	-	
S 1	1		25	1.000
S 2	2	25		2.000
S 3	3		25	3.000
S 4	4	25		4.000
S 5	5		5	5.000

Source: own projection

The granting of perishability will be made according to the table below:

	Acquisition cost ~ lei	Quantitative differences(Kg)		Turnovers of entries (Kg)	value	value
		+	-			
1	1		25	1.000		25
2	2	25		2.000	50	
3	3		25	3.000		75
4	4	25		4.000	100	
5	5		5	5.000		25

Entries in the accounts following the granting of perishables:

- the pluses are charged in management (50 kg in the total amount of 150 lei)

$$371 = 607 \quad 150 \text{ lei or}$$

$$607 = 371 \quad -150 \text{ lei}$$

- at shortages, quantitative perishables will be granted individually during storage, and the lack of perishability will be imputed to the manager.

- at S1
 - a. missing 25 kg * 1 lei = 25 lei
 - b. Pd = 1,000 kg * 0.05% = 0.5kg * 1 lei = 0.5 lei,
 - c. imputable lack (a-b) = 25 – 0.5 = 24.5 lei

- at S3
 - a. missing 25 kg * 3 lei = 75 lei
 - b. Pd = 3,000 kg * 0.05% = 1.5kg * 3 lei = 4.5 lei,
 - c. imputable missing (a-b) = 75 – 4.5 = 70.5 lei

- at S5
 - a. missing 5kg * 5 lei = 25 lei
 - b. Pd = 5,000 kg * 0.05% = 2.5kg * 5 lei = 12.5 lei,
 - c. imputable missing (a-b) = 25 – 12.5 = 12.5 lei

The main accounting records following the granting of perishables for perishable goods are:

1. registration of the lack covered by perishability (0.5+4.5+12.5 lei):
17.5

$$607 = 371 \quad 17,5 \text{ lei}$$

2. registration of the total imputable absence of (24.5 + 70.5 + 12.5 lei) = 107.5 lei, after the decrease of perishability: 5

$$607 = 371 \quad 107,5 \text{ lei}$$

3. adjustment of the VAT deducted at the time of purchase (107.5 * 9% lei = 9.68 lei)

$$635 = 4426 \quad 9,68 \text{ lei}$$

4. imputation to the manager totally missing:

$$4282 = 7588 \quad 117,18 \text{ lei}$$

5. imputation to the manager totally missing:

$$4281 = 4282 \quad 117,18 \text{ lei}$$

5. Conclusions

Control by inventory is the most effective internal control procedure, since it allows to know the reality, to discover possible shortcomings and other forms of waste, contributing to a large extent to the integrity of the patrimony of economic entities.

The inventory of the patrimony is a complex work, which involves going through several stages: the preparation of the inventory; the inventory itself; the establishment, regularization and recording in the accounts of the differences found at the inventory.

The determination of the amounts, which are imputed to the guilty persons, is made at the replacement value, which represents the acquisition cost of the goods at the date of finding the damage.

According to the legislation in force, the managers are fully liable to the private entities for the damages (lacks in management) that they have caused in the management.

In order to correctly solve the inventory gaps, the inventory commissions will take from the managers complete explanatory notes, showing the character of the gaps, losses, depreciations found and the circumstances of their occurrence.

Based on the explanations received and other documents and facts investigated, the inventory committees formulate conclusions and propose concrete measures to the attention of the management, which are to be adopted (compensations, perishables, imputations, decreases in management).

According to the legislation in force, the managers are fully liable to the private entities for the damages (lacks in management) that they have caused in the management.

In order to correctly solve the inventory gaps, the inventory commissions will take from the managers complete explanatory notes, showing the character of the gaps, losses, depreciations found and the circumstances of their occurrence.

Based on the explanations received and other documents and facts investigated, the inventory committees formulate conclusions and propose concrete measures to the attention of the management, which are to be adopted (compensations, perishables, imputations, decreases in management).

When determining the value of the debt, in cases where the deficiencies in management are not considered as offences, it is taken into account the possibility of compensating the gaps with the possible pluses found. The compensation of the gaps with the pluses found at the inventory allows the correction of some errors in the handling of the goods due to the confusions between the assortments.

In the case of goods for which deductions are accepted, in the case of compensation for shortages with the pluses fixed for the inventory, the deductions shall be calculated only if the missing quantities are greater than the quantities ascertained in excess, and only within the limit of these differences.

Perishables means deductions which occur during the transport, handling, storage and disposal of goods as a result of natural transformations of goods leading to their weight loss or depreciation, including fermentation processes. These normal quantitative losses are not the fault of the manager or other persons and must therefore be deducted from management as losses not attributable to them. The power to approve the deduction quotas lies in all cases with the management of the entity. Perishability is approved on the occasion of the inventory or reception of goods, only in the conditions of effective lack of inventory they have at the reception, and only within their limits.

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**MANAGERIAL STRATEGIES
AND
ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE**

NEW CHANGES IN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN THE CURRENT BUSINESS CONTEXT

Dina Maria LUȚ

***Abstract:** We are living in a VUCA world: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity. In this context, the managers are responsible for the lion's share of the decisions about the parameters that define how the organisation can operate. The increase in volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity means that to seek new orientations and take a fresh approach to management. Only then it can guarantee positive results in changed circumstances. The organizations are going through a series of structural, relational and existential transformations generated by multiple factors. This paper shows the main problems facing current organizations and also organizations' reactions to the challenges they face.*

***Keywords:** organisational culture, pandemic crisis, VUCA concept, hybrid work, labour market*

INTRODUCTION

More and more organizations are going through a series of structural, relational and existential transformations generated by multiple factors: the pandemic, profound changes in mentality and human needs or technological evolution. Regardless of the source of the change, it has a cascading effect on companies and individuals.

As the futurist Gerd Leonhard observed, we are living in a VUCA world: volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity¹. What does the VUCA concept² mean:

¹ <https://www.futuristgerd.com/2020/01/how-will-we-remain-useful-humans-a-longer-post-on-the-future-of-work-jobs-education-and-training>;

² VUCA is an acronym (artificial word), first used in 1987 and based on the leadership theories of Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus, and stands for Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. It was the response of the US Army War College to the collapse of the USSR in the early 1990s. Suddenly, there was no longer the only enemy, resulting in new ways of seeing and reacting.

- **VOLATILITY:** We live in a world that's constantly changing, becoming more unstable each day, where changes big and small are becoming more unpredictable – and they're getting more and more dramatic and happening faster and faster. As events unfold in completely unexpected ways, it's becoming impossible to determine cause and effect.
- **UNCERTAINTY:** It's becoming more difficult to anticipate events or predict how they'll unfold; historical forecasts and past experiences are losing their relevance and are rarely applicable as a basis for predicting the shape of things to come. It's becoming nearly impossible to plan for investment, development, and growth as it becomes increasingly uncertain where the route is heading.
- **COMPLEXITY:** Our modern world is more complex than ever. What are the reasons? What are the effects? – Problems and their repercussions are more multi-layered, harder to understand. The different layers intermingle, making it impossible to get an overview of how things are related. Decisions are reduced to a tangled mesh of reaction and counter-reaction – and choosing the single correct path is almost impossible.
- **AMBIGUITY:** “One size fits all” and “best practice” have been relegated to yesterday – in today's world it's rare for things to be completely clear or precisely determinable. Not everything is black and white – grey is also an option. The demands on modern organisations and management are more contradictory and paradoxical than ever, challenging our personal value systems to the core. In a world where the “what” takes a back seat to the “why?” and the “how?”, making decisions requires courage, awareness, and a willingness to make mistakes.

VUCA



(<https://www.microtool.de/en/knowledge-base/what-does-vuca-mean/>)

The VUCA concept is more current than ever. Neither an organisation's leadership nor its strategies are spared in today's VUCA world. Experiences, dogmas and paradigms must all come under scrutiny; it is no longer a case of finding the one way or the management tool: standards give way to individuality.

In this context, the managers are responsible for the lion's share of the decisions about the parameters that define how the organisation can operate. The increase in volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity means that to seek new orientations and take a fresh approach to management. Only then it can guarantee positive results in changed circumstances.

CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY ORGANIZATIONS

According to specialists, the main problems facing current organizations could be summarized as follows: inability to decode their culture, unrealistic expectations for the future, and the wrong choice of leadership profile that would lead to significant and healthy organizational change.³

The danger of these pitfalls is more threatening today than ever before, being more prone to emotional decisions and strongly influenced by the short-term outlook.

1. One of the biggest problems of most organizations today is *the inability to honestly and critically evaluate their organizational context*, inability to recognize and be aware of their culture and organizational climate, organizational confidence, level of involvement and loyalty of its employees.

Any organization that believes itself more than it really is becomes crushed by its own idea of its superiority in everything and everything, and in the end is doomed to failure. And, not coincidentally, fundamental organizational failure is nothing more than falling into the abyss of incompetence and mediocrity,

The myopia of many current organizations is a cultural model that promotes mediocrity and incompetence well hidden in the mechanisms of concealment and falsity, diseases that come directly from the "illusion of superiority." The common mistake is, in organizational practice, the confusion between the existing culture in reality and the culture that is intended as ideal.

³ Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, Clarke Murphy, „*When Leaders Are Hired for Talent but Fired for Not Fitting In*”, Harvard Business Review, June 14, 2017.

Today, most companies, through their managers, present themselves as customer-oriented, innovative, entrepreneurial, focused on productivity, valuing diversity of any kind, oriented towards their own employees, etc., but, in reality, most of the the people of these organizations, especially those at the operational level, perceive and describe them completely differently. Now is the time, in the current context, to understand that it is not the aspirations of top managers and their enthusiastic speeches that express the essence of organizational culture, but the beliefs, habits and experiences of their people.

From this rupture between the perspective of managers and that of employees are born many of the organizational pathological diseases, dominated by confusion, and the complete and final loss of contact with the reality of the market. But, most of the time, we are dealing with “normal”, mediocre organizational models, characterized by the inability to decipher oneself, the inability to learn and to improve oneself.

Naturally, all these organizations have great difficulty in choosing leaders to alleviate their suffering. This is because mediocrity and organizational incompetence are learned quickly, they reach even the highest positions, they are perpetuated at all hierarchical levels, grinding everything that is above them. The only antidote for these organizations is shock therapy, crisis, radical change, at least a substantial part of the leadership, etc., this change could make them open to a rigorous evaluation and coming from outside the organization.

2. The entire philosophy of the management of the organizations is oriented towards the projection of a future in which the company will occupy a superior position, a reference position, a leader of the field, industry, etc. This is also the main reason why the mission of leading organizations is to fight mediocrity and incompetence and to win. Of course, any for-profit company cannot neglect its present, its well-being or, in extreme cases, its own survival. But it goes without saying that an organization can assume certain periods without too much profit or even certain losses, investing in the future.

The principles of business philosophy are well established, within these limits. Any organization that loses confidence in its future is a declining organization that expects nothing good from the sun. And yet, ***a second big trap for countless organizations today is their own self-limiting, short-term perspective (often up to 12 months)***. This is where most of the fundamental organizational mistakes, which are chained together, come from.

Even if declaratively, almost all companies have a long-term strategy (3-5 years, 10 years or even extended over an entire generation), in reality,

very few act beyond the 12-month operational projection. And often this is not just about executive management, but about the priorities set by investors and / or the board of directors.

And if the prospect of change and development of the organization and business is not realistic, all the objectives and projects that should lead to the disciplined execution of the strategy and implementation plan are turned upside down: starting from what kind of organization and culture is desired as ideal (and regardless of what it is now), how to make the change (from top to bottom) and, of course, the speed with which things need to be done, the executive leadership profile that seems appropriate for all this, but without having a team with which to make the change etc. These are just some of the mistakes that can have a dramatic impact on your entire organization.

3. Practice shows that most organizations mistakenly choose their leaders⁴, obviously according to well-established classical criteria: to be charismatic and visionary, "providential heroes" who reshape the organizational structure and culture from top to bottom. And this must happen very quickly. And once they have made this decision, investors and boards think they have finished their role. It's just that it's not like that. The hardship is just beginning, their involvement and support for the implementation of the development strategy are not negligible in the equation of success, and the continuous definition and redefinition of realistic expectations from the executive management and the organization are mandatory.

Unfortunately, most of the time, all these things require consistent investments of time and money in the long run, and this is contrary to the interest of most investors: maximum profit in the short term. That's why, in most companies, the position of CEO has changed to that of COO (Chief Operating Officer). The life of a CEO is not easy. And yet, these are well-known things and additional reasons why all those in the executive position have the role of convincing the top forum about the development strategy (of the organization and the business): to build realistic expectations, to constantly show that the agreed direction is followed and what are the deviations and delays etc. It is easy to understand that these activities do not require "heroic" courage, but rather a well-established, mature management with a lot of patience...

Even if the CEO seems fit at first sight, visionary and charismatic, honest, competent, with the best intentions in the development of the organization and business, let's not forget that the remodeling process is very

⁴ <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance>

long-term (begins to -produces results after at least two to three years), often painful, with many setbacks, with a negative impact on employee morale and productivity. Of course, this requires a lot of patience, calm, self-control, rigor, analysis and calculated risk-taking from diplomacy, diplomacy.

But even with all these qualities, he alone will not succeed. The success of reshaping the organization will depend on building the leadership team to implement change at all levels of the organization. And this also requires a lot of time, meetings, meetings, projects and plans discussed in detail, attention to the rigorous execution of all activities, feedback and stimulation at the individual level, etc. In other words, a heroic, visionary and charismatic leader, competent and armed with the best intentions, has all the chances to, in a short time, come to the conclusion that he is fighting the windmills and exhausting his resources. motivational.

The prediction of the performance of the future executive, of the success of the remodeling of the organization, is, to a large extent, dependent on the new organizational context. Its coordinates are given by the perspective and expectations of shareholders, the structure and culture of the organization, the expertise, values and attitudes of the management team, the level of education, skills, performance, etc., the degree of involvement and motivation of employees at operational and functional level. The business model is essential in defining the context of performance and can be very difficult to decide on the right candidate. At the same time, we have some external coordinates that have a significant impact on the context of the future executive's performance: the economic state of the market (stagnation, growth, crisis), customer loyalty and perceptions, competition strategies, etc.

And, as is natural, there is no ideal candidate who meets all these criteria. The measure of matching a leader with the remodeling of the organizational context, with the development strategy of the company, results not only from his experience and expertise, but especially from his values and motivations, from his ideal and aspirations. Sharing the ideal, the values of the new cultural model and the correct motivations of the executive will bring him the necessary dose of authenticity, consistency and consistency in his efforts and will help him not to lose his enthusiasm in today's troubled times.

We can imagine what happens if an organization chooses a leader with values and motivations that are significantly different from those of the current organization and not exactly suited to the goals of organizational reshaping... Any change (replacement) of an executive leader is a situation of organizational crisis, being lived very intensely by the whole

organization, at all its levels. Crisis and change management are key to a successful transition. And any newly appointed CEO should know that, from day one, they need to create the right framework for change, to put the organization in a good position for future long-term construction.

The direction (orientation of the organization towards the future) and the principles on which it is based in this new construction are fundamental for a minimum consensus to which a significant part of the employees adhere. And without their involvement, the success of organizational change is suspended.

The trap of the short-term perspective is waiting, without patience, for its victims, many in number, all those who, willingly or unwillingly, transform their mission from CEO to COO. So let's not forget that the new leader's biggest mistake is not to change anything in the way the organization works and to fulfill its operational objectives. This means a serious deviation from its primary mission, the development of the current organizational capacity to make the most of the opportunities of the future.

But even if he is dedicated to his mission, he alone will not be able to define the new construction. It needs a management team with which to operate the structural changes, to stabilize the construction on unshakable pillars. And if investors and / or the board of directors opt for the operational results of the business over the strategic ones, because they value the short-term profit more than the growth and capitalization of the long-term business potential, the CEO's mission is "to fight with evil and to win "for the future organization to enjoy the midday sun. And the current organizational evil is generated precisely by the lack of a suitable context for future transformations, the lack of long-term perspective of the business, the lack of organizational coherence and consistency, the lack of trust and consensus among employees.

The top management of the organization has to assume and create such future expectations. And yet, countless organizations are trapped in their own immediate prospects and are stuck in their current project, proving helpless in redefining the "organization of the future," realistic expectations, the process, methods, and costs involved in making change. And, from this state of numbness induced by a certain success, he projects a leader profile that will satisfy their self-image inflated with heroic ideals.

ORGANIZATIONS 'REACTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES THEY FACE

The major goal of the organizations has been and will remain the same for a long time: to develop the organization as close as possible to its

maximum potential (including the creation of new capabilities) to achieve significant increases in business performance and profitability. And an organizational context (especially a healthy organizational structure and organizational culture) that capitalizes on the intellectual and emotional, creative and imaginative potential of employees is absolutely necessary.

As the future unfolds, more and more companies are interested in applying the principles of an agile and flexible organization, which has interesting ramifications. This model flattens the hierarchical pyramids by eliminating middle-management lines, streamlines decision-making processes, and empowers employees.

Therefore, we are witnessing the modification of hierarchical structures, in the sense of their flattening, and the hybrid work model is gaining ground in more and more fields.

The flattening of hierarchical structures means, most of the time, that the departments will increase their geographical area in which they will exercise their activity; for example, the human resources team of company X, which consisted of 15 members who all worked for the organization in Romania, will have 12 members, spread over 6 countries, who will serve the region in which Romania is included. There will be more international projects in which employees will be involved, who will thus develop professionally and will be better financially rewarded.

HR will need to shape the organization so that it becomes more flexible and in step with the new requirements. This modeling may involve: relocating employees to other positions, training them for newly created roles, developing retention or layoff programs, outsourcing services or activities, disseminating HR functions at the departmental level, etc.

CONCLUSIONS

The VUCA world challenges us to find our own way. We will need to understand the psycho-logic and develop empathic behaviour – in short, to be more concerned **with humans and their needs**. Meaning and purpose take a central role in business activities.

People determine the success of every company. This requires the right framework conditions under which each individual can and may contribute his or her skills and services in the sense of agreed – more qualitative and quantitative – results. This was valid at all times and becomes even more important in VUCA times.

In a VUCA world, the most important thing is to anticipate the future and to strengthen cooperation in companies with modern solutions.

Decisions and connections are success factors for shaping the common cause. The aim is to channel the energy used in any case into meaningful channels so that it can lead to value-adding approaches and measures.

The current times could be a good opportunity for many organizations to analyze, reshape their organizational system and rethink their strategy and tools to address the future.

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TRENDS AND CHALLENGES ON THE LABOR MARKET IN THE NEW POST-PANDEMIC CONTEXT

Dina Maria LUȚ

***Abstract:** Any crisis, even a sanitary one, means a moment of evolution. And evolution is not always equal to expansion, but also to recalibration, readjustment and reconsideration of priorities. Experts agree that the labour market has undergone the greatest transformation in recent generations, and the pace of change will not slow in 2022. The factors currently influencing the labour market are: the consequences of the pandemic, the fight for talent, the level of inflation that has already set in. It overshadows wage increases, continuous technological developments and the way they transform jobs, the growing focus on diversity, equity and job inclusion, and the uncertain political environment. This paper shows the main trends and challenges that will shape the labour market in the next period and also the changes and restructuring in HR policy within companies.*

***Keywords:** pandemic crisis, labour market, post-pandemic context. HR department, HR trends.*

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic was an unexpected event, which had ramifications in all areas of activity, majorly influencing not only the internal HR policies of companies, but also other policies and plans.

Any crisis, even a sanitary one, means a moment of evolution. And evolution is not always equal to expansion, but also to recalibration, readjustment and reconsideration of priorities.

The high degree of uncertainty and volatility has led to changes on several levels. First, it has led companies to rethink their workflows and adapt their organizational model to the constraints imposed by the pandemic.

2021 has shown us that when there is a lot of uncertainty in the game and it tends to become a constant, the only thing that drives you forward is courage. And we have seen this in full in the year that has ended, for both employees and employers: candidates who are more confident and more

courageous in not accepting less than they deserve from a job, from a team, from an employer; HR teams working continuously, at risk of burnout at times, only to be able to recruit key talent in record time.

TRENDS AND CHALLENGES THAT WILL SHAPE THE LABOR MARKET IN THE POSTPANDEMIC CONTEXT

Experts agree that the labor market has undergone the greatest transformation in recent generations, and the pace of change will not slow in 2022. The factors currently influencing the labor market are: the consequences of the pandemic, the fight for talent, the level of inflation that has already set in. It overshadows wage increases, continuous technological developments and the way they transform jobs, the growing focus on diversity, equity and job inclusion, and the uncertain political environment.

The main trends and challenges that will shape the labour market in the next period can be summarized as follows¹:

1. Accelerate the process of automation and digitization of the employment relationship, both in terms of management and administration of documents required by labour law, but also of employee relationship management by continuing to implement software and applications that facilitate the response of human resources departments to employee requests (chatbots, virtual assistants or applications through which employees can generate a series of documents to prove their status as employees). At the same time, in the sphere of the recruitment and evaluation processes of the candidates, the digitization tendencies will be accentuated by the implementation of new tools destined to the automation of their various stages.

Automation and Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools are impacting more and more processes and operational flows, regardless of the field of activity. Automated production lines with the help of industrial robots, self-service cash registers or virtual assistants that take the place of human operators are just a few examples. If we refer strictly to these situations, a consequence of the integration of these tools in the medium term will be the disappearance of jobs such as cashier or callcenter operator. On the other hand, with the automation of various routine processes, the role of human interaction will become increasingly important in many areas, and software skills and digital skills will be in high demand.

¹ <https://www.wall-street.ro/articol/Careers>

2. Work from home, hybrid or remote

Hybrid work will continue to be preferred by employees. According to the study “Normal Resetting: Defining the New Era of Work,”² conducted by Adecco between May 13 and June 4, 2021 at Overall, 53% of employees prefer a hybrid working model. This model opens up new opportunities and boundaries, gives equal opportunities to more employees, motivates and increases their confidence by giving them the flexibility and opportunity to manage their time and resources.

Therefore, the main trend that will dominate the labor market in 2022 will remain remote or hybrid work. In the case of telework, companies will continue to focus on employee adaptability and internal communication, which must be as transparent and efficient as possible, as a need to replace physical distance between employees. Also, the emotional health of the employee will be a major concern of organizations this year, in the context of remote work. If we talk about hybrid work, the main goals of employers will be much more attention to the physical health of employees who will go to the office a certain number of days a week, as well as finding an optimal mix between hours worked at home and those worked from the office.

In this context, we will witness the revision and flexibility of time and work schedule.

In the context of accelerating automation projects, we will most likely witness the reconfiguration of some positions. The implementation of automated processes will require reviewing the skills required for certain positions or even redefining them. More and more IT skills will be needed to operate various applications and automation tools.

3. Companies will invest more in employee training

We continue to see a dynamic labour market fuelled by rising labour demand. As an effect of the pandemic, companies will increasingly take on the role of trainer of candidates, investing in training and development programs for employees, partially complementing the skills they should have acquired during college.

4. More creative retention and engagement programs

The development of creative programs to retain and increase the degree of employee engagement will be emphasized against the background of changing employees' perceptions of the workplace. It is no longer perceived only as a source of income, but as part of the employee's life. Therefore, rewards or benefit packages will no longer be the only tools for employee retention, but will need to take into account a number of other variables such as the work

² <https://www.adeccogroup.com/future-of-work/latest-research/reset-norma>.

environment, the individual needs of employees, their expectations regarding the place of employment. work, development needs and work-life balance.

Thus, in 2022, we can talk about creating a new market for products to stimulate the involvement of employees (remote engagement) and to measure the performance of employees working from home.

5. Increasing staff turnover, a trend closely linked to another phenomenon we are currently facing and which we have encountered before the pandemic - staff shortages. Since the last quarter of 2021, after a period in which staff turnover has slowed down against the background of economic instability, employees began to become much more active in the labor market and eager to make a career change. This desire for change either existed before the pandemic, but due to the health situation could not be manifested, or it came with working in remote or hybrid mode, when employees became much more open to accepting interviews. This trend will be intensified by the ease with which candidates can make a career change, encouraged by this very hybrid way of working.

6. Salary on demand

Also in 2022, we estimate that a global trend will be felt on the Romanian labor market, namely salary on demand. The lack of labor force has led employers to resort to increasingly creative measures, designed to attract staff. Thus, this phenomenon has grown, which allows employees to access their salary at any time for the days already worked, without having to wait for the payday. This new trend in the labor market has clear advantages, such as flexibility in managing finances and less worries about unforeseen expenses. Probably more and more companies will be willing to approach this payroll system as a method of retaining employees in the company or at the same time, in order to attract new talent.

7. Increase the salary or decrease the work week

Wage increases over the past year have been overshadowed by inflation. In this context, we expect employers to look for solutions to stay competitive in the labour market and to diversify their range of benefits. There are already companies that have successfully implemented the 32-hour workweek, it remains to be seen whether their results will turn into sources of inspiration.

8. Work-Life Balance

Employees prefer to have flexibility, especially in terms of days and hours worked, ie how they manage their time spent at work, and now they manage to do it much better because they have gained experience. Employee productivity has increased and will continue to grow in 2022, as

digital skills have been greatly developed in recent years, and the ability to collaborate virtually and be close to a distance has become second nature. Lately, we have also seen improvements in maintaining the balance between personal life and work, a direction that needs to be maintained and further improved, respectively. According to the Adecco study, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the participants want to keep the flexibility they have gained regarding their own agenda and time management.

In 2022, employees will evaluate and re-evaluate, much more carefully than before, what work means to them. Stability, security, organizational culture, wellbeing, flexibility, autonomy and further development are becoming increasingly important. 8 out of 10 participants in the study want to maintain the balance between personal life and work in 2022. Therefore, a new job offer can only be more attractive if it has more advantages than before.

9. Wellbeing

The priority in 2022 will be to adapt to a hybrid way of working and to the wellbeing of employees. From this perspective, companies will be forced to change the way they manage core business activities to meet both the needs of their customers and the needs of their own employees.

Well-being, mental health, fulfilment and happiness at work are also directions highlighted by the Adecco Study. According to Adecco statistics, 4 out of 10 employees report suffering from burnout; burnout is and will remain one of the main concerns of leaders. The solution for 2022 is similar to the actions so far: involvement in as many wellbeing, support, coaching, mentoring, etc. actions as possible.

10. The role of Managers is changing, emphasizing human interaction, they remain the link between the organization and people without moving away from the area of operational management, but increasingly comprising a component of empathy, human interaction that directly influences the unity of the team. .

In 2022, leaders need to reconnect with employees and reinvent organizational cultures. 2 out of 5 respondents (according to the Adecco Study - “Normal Resetting: Defining the New Era of Work”) mentioned that they are considering changing jobs for an organization with more flexibility and a higher level of independence.

11. Diversity and inclusion

The labour market in such a hybrid work model has the opportunity to demonstrate that the diversity & inclusion policy is not just a statement present in the Internal Regulations but is a behaviour assumed and promoted by the entire organization. Mature employees, those who have already

experienced more jobs when choosing an employer, are more sensitive to the ratio "my time and knowledge" versus "my value for the company."

12. The shortage of candidates will increase the number a foreign employees. Foreign employees are already an obvious part of the population. The lack of labour force is obvious in Romania as well as the openness to "import" of workers.

CHANGES AND RESTRUCTURING IN HR POLICY WITHIN COMPANIES

The trends and challenges in the labour market presented above will lead to restructuring and changes in internal processes and HR policies within companies.

According to a study conducted by Gartner, on a sample of 550 leaders in HR, the top priorities in People Management for 2022 will include³:

- ***rethinking recruitment processes around skills rather than roles*** - 47% of respondents to a study conducted by a recruitment platform in Romania do not know what skills their employees have, while 40% said they cannot develop fast enough skill development solutions to meet the needs of the company;
- ***creating a context in which the changes are also positive*** - 55% noticed that their employees are exhausted due to the changes in recent years. Moreover, in another Gartner study, researchers found that small changes (new colleagues, new managers, new procedures) are more common and 2.5% more tiring for employees than large organizational changes;
- ***understanding and integrating the future of work*** - 49% say they have no concrete plans to adapt their strategy to the future of work, while a third say they only consider remote work. But the truth is that the pandemic has brought many more important changes in the way we work today and it is important to keep in mind trends in restructuring the People Management strategy.

Compared to previous years, when we were all taken aback, 2022 comes with an extra familiarity with the new normal. Psychologically, socially and professionally, we have adapted to our new life. Companies have rebuilt their internal policies and processes, there are back-up plans and succession to all sorts of possible scenarios, which makes things smoother.

³ <https://www.gartner.com/en/human-resources/trends/top-priorities-for-hr-leaders>;
Gartner surveyed more than 500 human resources leaders across 60 countries and all major industries to identify HR trends and assess HR priorities and expected challenges for 2022.

Organizations have long understood that they need to secure their management team with professionals with a high degree of endurance, reliable, quick in reaction and decision, but also close to the people in their teams. A crisis is not overcome individually, but together, through the strength and adaptability of the whole team.

Another trend is that companies are more open than ever in implementing organizational transformation programs that give them greater efficiency and flexibility.

The third trend is that the new conditions have accentuated the globalization of the search for candidates for a certain job. The companies can look for a candidate in Romania or Hungary, or Greece to deal with the marketing and sales policies of the Czech Republic or the regional logistics of that organization.

There will continue to be local employment, but companies are reorganizing regionally and organizations become parent companies, local teams become regional teams, and local-focused managers are replaced by project managers with regional responsibilities. It doesn't matter where a particular project is initiated, it matters the vision, the impact, the degree of technology and the allocation of human resources on an organizational chart rather flattened than hierarchical.

Technology has become an engine to which every activity must adapt - including HR. But it is not the only adaptation this department needs. It is necessary for Human Resources to be dispersed at the level of divisions and departments - it does not matter that we are talking about recruitment, coaching, assessment, succession programs, etc. It is more effective to train department managers in Human Resources matters than to train a Human Resources specialist for the activities of all departments in the company. E-learning, assessment, recruitment platforms have been created, employees can participate in virtual regional / global teams in the development of various projects in which they are co-opted. All these tools will gradually replace the functions of the classic Human Resources departments. Whether it will be better or not, we will see.

Human resources consulting firms are adapting the way they provide consulting services in the first place and then continue to offer the services in which they specialize or can take over from the activities outsourced by companies. A trend that is also observed among the services offered by recruitment agencies is the creation of platforms, ERPs dedicated to recruitment or evaluation processes that provide direct access to companies and candidates in completing projects.

An interesting effect of the pandemic was the acceleration of internal promotions to top management positions.

CONCLUSIONS

The pandemic has radically changed the way we work, and these changes will persist.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated changes in the way we work — and prompted a slew of HR trends to which the entire human resources function must respond in a coordinated way.

The top HR priorities for 2022 reflect an urgent response to these HR trends, which are forcing organizations to change their workforce and workplace strategies. This, in turn, means HR leaders are having to evolve the way they identify, attract and retain critical skills and redesign work to enhance the employee value proposition (EVP) and drive business performance.

This moment presents a unique opportunity for HR leaders to shape the future of work in ways not previously considered a possible win-win for both employees and employers. A few HR trends, in particular, create challenges and opportunities for all HR professionals in 2022. The psychology of people has changed, in the sense that most have realized that in addition to the job, no matter how interesting and generous it may be rewarded, they also need a time of their own to dedicate to family, loved ones, hobbies, so he prefers to continue working in the remote system. Others, on the other hand, consider that the time spent working online does not meet their professional and social needs, so they want to return to the office and the strict business environment.

Then, in the case of employees who wanted a change, they either postponed the moment and stayed in the same job, or relied on the idea of "all or nothing" and started working on their own business, and then embraced the new career. .

We suddenly switched to remote work in 2020, in areas of activity where this was possible. The remote form of work will be preserved and will generate new ways of working and new behaviours. In the future we will move to smart working, a trend in the HR area where the flexibility in terms of space and working time, together with technology is complemented by the trust and responsibility entrusted to people.

These trends, the expressed desire of employees to continue working from home, but also the fact that accelerating digitization offers the opportunity to attract talent that in the traditional model would be difficult

to achieve, are sufficient reasons to keep and adapt what we started in 2020. However, there is a need for a regulatory framework for this way of working that accommodates the needs of people and the company. Of course, it is important to maintain agility and flexibility in approach, both in the HR area and at the business level.

People are the most valuable resource of a company, but also the most vulnerable.

Such a strategy that puts the people and his talent in the spotlight always brings the best results. Companies must continue to have this approach and focus on agile, short-term plans, but also on technology, as a major driver in transforming human resource management practices and adapting to the new normal.

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EMPLOYMENT AT A BARANYA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL COMPANY

Brigitta ZSÓTÉR

***Abstract:** Analyzing the recruitment and selection practice in the case of the surveyed Baranya County agricultural company, it can be stated that the jobs are rarely advertised “publicly”, instead relying on acquaintances, current and former employees and investing little energy in finding the right workforce. When employing a larger workforce, they also use the services of a temporary employment agency. The company, like other agricultural companies in the country, tries to mechanize as many processes as possible in order to eliminate the shortage of agricultural labor and inadequate labor.*

***Keywords:** agricultural companies, recruitment and selection practice, employees*

1. INTRODUCTION

The subject of the investigation is a baranya county agricultural company, which has been operating since 1998. The Ltd., which consists of nearly 250 hectares of arable land and 89 cows and 35 pigs, employs a total of 32 permanent workers and, depending on the size of the work to be performed, occasionally 6-26 people. As in other areas of the labor market, many people and professionals have gone abroad and their shortages have left a large gap in the labor market. Due to the changed labor market situation, as in many other economies, efforts are being made to mechanize the business, which not only saves labor but also produces it more efficiently.

2. RECRUITMENT - THEORY, METHODS

Recruitment and selection is a critical point in human resource management, as only the right amount and composition of manpower can implement the strategies and plans developed by organizations. We can read

several corporate examples in Keczer's 2004 work. In case of a bad decision, not only that the task will not be performed satisfactorily or not at all, but also great damage can occur in the economy and the environment (Gál, Szabó 2017). By creating an appropriate set of employees, the company can assure itself that the tasks will be performed adequately. It is also worthwhile to contact universities, because graduates may also be interested in work (Kis et al., 2019) in agricultural enterprises or possibly in agricultural administration (Nagy et al. 2008).

Agricultural workers are not homogeneous, as they differ in their age, nationality, abilities, work habits, attitudes, personality, ambitions and performance. In the growing season of vegetable and fruit production and harvesting, the sector could absorb up to 50-80 thousand people for labor-intensive tasks. Examples of such areas are the cultivation and harvesting of tomatoes, cucumbers and especially some fruits such as apples, pears, peaches, strawberries and raspberries. Although no skills are required to do the job, recruiting is not easy as workers have the wrong attitude to work. Several studies have shown that the performance of the most productive employee is four times that of the least productive employee. In the same way, each farm unit is different in organization, management, and labor requirements. It can therefore be said that recruitment and selection in agriculture is a creative and planned task. Farms need a well-designed recruitment and selection process in order to reduce the use of inadequate labor.

Although each case is individual, following these steps will help you choose the right workforce for your economy:

- identify farming and workplace needs
- development of the circle of applicants
- evaluate potential employees
- select the right employees
- apply the new workforce.

The identification of needs (Step 1) should be based primarily on the reason for the vacancy, which may be:

- when employees leave the farm,
- as the economy grows - the increased work cannot be carried out by current employees or new units are formed on the farm,
- during temporary vacancy - diseases, childbirth
- As a result of seasonality, which is inherent in agriculture, and thus the size of farms "pulsates", ie it expands flexibly and then decreases, it slows down with the end of the seasonal task.

For the reasons mentioned above, it can be decided whether the farm needs a permanent, casual or part-time employee.

The next step is to analyze the job, which will provide an answer to the physical and intellectual requirements of the job for which the economy wants to employ a new workforce, ie what skills, knowledge and experience are needed and essential to do the job. Some jobs may require strong physical fitness and endurance, while others require the right expertise to perform professionally. All of these job characteristics need to be articulated in order to select the right workforce.

The main goal of recruitment is to attract a sufficient number of suitable candidates (Nagy 2019) from whom the economy will be able to select the right one, and this requires a good recruitment strategy. The economy has to decide whether it is necessary to employ new labor for the vacancy, or whether it can solve the task with existing labor, such as overtime. If a decision is made to hire someone from outside, a strategy for outsourcing should be chosen. A little market research can help to shape this, and after exploring and analyzing the recruitment strategies, recruitment strengths and weaknesses of other farms, you can better establish your own recruitment strategy for that group of workers. Furthermore, before determining the method of recruitment, the following factors that may affect the success of the recruitment should be considered: the type of work, the labor market situation, the remuneration system and the opinions about the farm (i.e. the image of the farm). For example, an economy with a bad reputation needs to make a much greater effort to attract applicants than an economy that is known to treat its employees well, meet its pay obligations on time, value and value good workers, and so on.

According to a research, the most successful recruitment tool in agriculture is the so-called word of mouth, i.e. the rumor and recommendation of existing / former employees. Both have advantages and disadvantages. In the case of rumors, the ad may not reach the most appropriate people, while in the case of referrals, employees can easily become “lawyers” for potential employees. Recruitment can be done with the help of current and former employees, employment agencies, schools and local newspapers, and radio and television should not be forgotten as potential media. Unfortunately, we often see in the newspapers an agricultural job advertisement that reads as much as "I'm looking for a farmer for goods, providing accommodation."

There are several problems with such advertisements, they lack the job description, the time and place of work. These job postings will certainly not be “tempting” for potential employees. A good job advertisement

should include the following elements: the name of the position, the tasks involved, the qualifications, experience, ability to do the job; the essential elements of the remuneration package and how to apply. There are also employment agencies that deal with the mediation or temporary employment of seasonal workers, so their help can be used.

Since for a long time, and even today, many people consider agricultural work to be an unpleasant and undesirable job, it must be made attractive. It lives up to the false myth that agricultural work cannot be as attractive as other non-agricultural work. Many people love these jobs because they can work with animals and see a more familiar and caring job on smaller farms. The various bonuses, competing pay all contribute to this. The so-called “wanderers” or “walkers-in” can also be excellent sources of potential employees who can look for a job at a time when the economy is not in need of new labor. The details of these people need to be recorded (or an application form filled in with them) as there is often an urgent need for staff, and in such cases those who applied when they were not needed can be contacted.

3. RESULTS OF OUR OWV RESEARCH

At the company I have chosen as the subject of my analysis, we can state that word of mouth and employee recommendations are preferred among the recruitment tools. It is interesting to note that in some cases, if they are looking for a permanent person for a more specialized field, or are suddenly looking for a lot of people for physical work, other methods are used, namely village TV and a temporary employment business. Temporary employment is a special form of seeking a way out of the constraints of a traditional employment relationship, where the classical employer rights associated with employment in a subordinate are separated from a portion of the obligations that fall on another party. The basic idea fits well with the process of “escape from the scope of labor law”, as the employment of another employer is used without establishing a direct employment relationship (Bankó, 2008.) In practice, this means that the company only needs basic needs, requires any training, expertise, etc.)

It should be noted that not all potential employees have the necessary knowledge about the work to be done on the farms, so they should be evaluated and ranked based on the expectations of the job description developed in the first step. The method of assessment depends on the profile of the work, so for example, in the case of more complex work that requires several skills, several methods must be used, Figure 1 shows these:

Table 1: Possible evaluation methods in agriculture

Skills / knowledge / abilities	Test	Interview	Deployment	Check recommendations
Operation of tractors	X		O	
Equipment control / calibration	X			
Equipment maintenance	X	O	X	
Use of tools (disc, plow)	X	O		
Control of weeds, pests, diseases	X	O		
Animal care	X	O		
Leadership skills, managing the work of others	O	X	O	X
Qualification of the workforce	O	X		

Source: My edit

Note: X denotes the primary methods, while O denotes the secondary methods for assessing skills, knowledge, abilities.

For periodic and seasonal work, deployment (testing while working) may be the most appropriate choice for the applicant to demonstrate their mechanical skills. The owner of the company uses a one- or two-week probationary period when evaluating the workforce, as it is during this time that it becomes clear whether or not the person is fit for the job. In the case of a managerial position, problem-solving skills and management skills can be assessed with the help of work simulation. In this case, for example, the following questions may be asked: “How would you identify powdery mildew on the plant and what would you do if it appeared?”; or “How long does it take between spraying and harvesting / watering?”. Many decisions have been written about managerial decision-making (Hampel 2009), (Méhes 2019). The owner of the company admits that for permanent jobs it is important to ask the previous employer how he saw his employee. Regardless of the answer - unless there is some ethical thing, theft, etc. due to being fired at his / her previous job - he / she always invites the candidate for an interview, but pays close attention or asks about the errors and problems that caused the interviewee to come from the previous job. However, in a personal interview, always ask the prospective employee at least three test questions.

Once all applicants have been evaluated, a decision must be made as to who will be selected. Of course, if none of the candidates meet the criteria, re-recruitment must be applied, or someone may be recruited on a temporary basis, letting them know that they are being recruited on a temporary basis until they decide, during the probationary period, whether they are suitable for the job. At the company, one of the most basic criteria is the behavior of the candidates during the selection process; I mean, to be reliable, not to be an alcoholic, and not to have a criminal record, I would like to add that this stems from the familial nature of the farms. The family usually lives in or near the place of work (especially in the case of animal husbandry), so it does not matter to the farms how moral a person is employed. Qualification is unfortunately the least important factor in making a decision in certain jobs. For example, when a company hires seasonal workers from a temporary employment agency, the company does not consider whether it has any special or secondary education at all, as in this case almost only the amount of “diligent, skillful” hands counts, such as at harvest.

It is advisable for the selected potential employee to submit the offer live or by telephone, which summarizes the conditions of employment. Once the employee has accepted the offer, the employment contract has yet to be concluded. In any form (oral or written), the agreement should include a description of work and pay, a work schedule, and other important information.

4. SUMMARY

Analyzing the recruitment and selection practices for a given company, it can be seen that jobs are rarely advertised “publicly”, instead relying on acquaintances, current and former employees, and investing little energy in finding the right workforce. When employing a larger workforce, they also use the services of a temporary employment agency. The enterprise tries to mechanize as many processes as possible in order to eliminate the shortage of agricultural labor and the inadequate labor force, just like other agricultural enterprises in the country (Kis, Gál 2012). The effects of this would be worth examining later (Keczer 2021). Thinking further, the impact of the coronavirus crisis could also be researched (Poór et al. 2020) not only in agriculture but also in tourism (Sava 2012a) and in relation to tourism developments (Sava 2012b).

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COMPARISON OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF MANAGEMENT - CULTURAL CONTEXT IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

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***Abstract:** In international business market different cultures, beliefs and values meet each other, so managers need to develop their competences and intercultural communication. The impact of culture on the business world is very significant because respect for cultural diversity leads to successful and long-term business. The paper discusses the impact of company culture on business processes within the global market and analyses the need to understand the complexity of the impact of national culture on shaping business behaviour, building organizational culture, and establishing intercultural relations in the global market. Intercultural communication enables managers to successfully communicate with members of different cultures. Possession of intercultural competencies leads to the adoption of intercultural attitudes, knowledge, and skills with the aim of better mastering diversity and respect for members of other cultures, which brings multiple benefits to the business. Intercultural competences are the key to success and as such they are necessary for successful business in the international market, thus it was a motive to explore more in this paper.*

***Keywords:** management, national culture, organizational culture, intercultural management, intercultural competencies, global market*

INTRODUCTION

In modern management, increasing attention has been given to research and understanding of different cultures, as a basic prerequisite for successful international business, with a special area of management in recent times developing multicultural/intercultural /Cross-cultural management. Depending on the literature, different terms have been used that approach the issue of cultural diversity in different ways as a special field of management: multicultural management (Katunarić, 2004), intercultural

management (Bahtijarević-Šiber et al., 2008), and Cross-Cultural Management (Zhu & Ulijn, 2005). Different authors interpret these terms from different points of view; some of them clearly emphasize the difference between the terms, supporting the fact that the field of intercultural management includes comparing cultures, while the field of intercultural management raises the question of how cultures interact in business concepts. Given the basic meaning of interculturalism as a dynamic process that implies a relationship, interaction, exchange, and perspective, which is characterized by encounters with culturally diverse individuals. All this is based on the plurality of relationships with a pronounced openness and social dimension of dialogue between cultures (Bedečković, 2010).

The paper is designed so that it consists of two parts after the introduction. In the first part, authors analyze intercultural management, with the notion of intercultural management being defined first. Further, in the same segment, the distinctions of intercultural competence and intercultural intelligence are explained. The next conceptual unit with the subheading “the importance of intercultural competence of managers in international business predominantly” includes intercultural communication in the international environment. A comparison in the cultural context of three selected countries was elaborated here: the USA, Japan, and Germany, as representatives of the European Union. As usual, concluding remarks are given at the end.

The paper can be useful to the professional and scientific public interested in the topic of the connection between management and culture in an international framework.

INTERCULTURAL MANAGEMENT

As a result of the need to strike a balance between cultural differences, the concept of interculturalism emerges. Originally conceived as a process of equal relationship and interaction, with others it represents an optimistic assumption about merging differences and getting closer through active interaction and building a philosophy of interconnection and respect regardless of cultural differences. Intercultural management extends to all areas of human activity, especially in the field of business relations in which management occupies a significant place. In short, culture refers to the “collective programming of consciousness that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from others” (Hofstede, 2011).

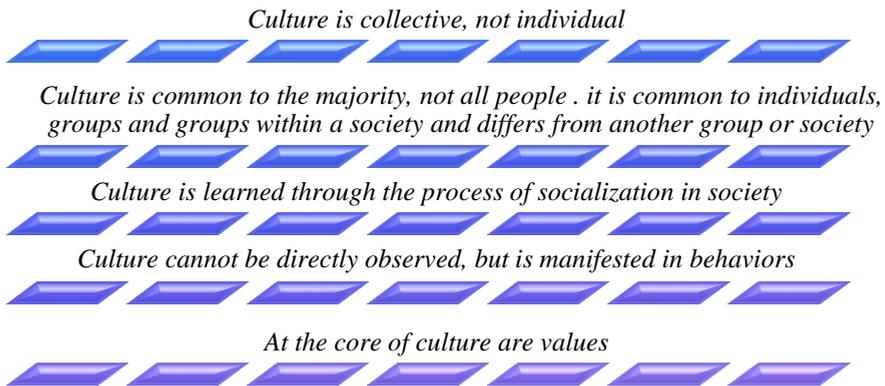


Figure 1. Characteristics of culture
 Source: modified according to Hofstede et al., (2010)

Although the term "international management" can often be seen in the literature, the term "intercultural management" is preferred. The reason for that lies in the fact that its content is more appropriate to the currents of the global economy. Although the main goal at the time of intercultural management was to get to know another nation better to increase the volume of business, it opened a far wider range of possibilities: the need to understand that all nations are different and that their cultural differences should be respected not only from a business point of view but also in everyday life (Zakić & Milutinović, 2013).

Hofstede is the creator of the most famous model that explores the cultural differences of different countries. It consists of six basic dimensions that form a kind of framework for defining the way of structuring organizations, influencing the motivation of employees, and solving various issues and problems faced by different organizations and people within different societies. These dimensions are (Hofstede et al., 2010; Tomljenović & Stilin, 2012):

- **Power Distance**, related to the different solutions to the basic problem of human inequality;
- **Uncertainty Avoidance**, related to the level of stress in a society in the face of an unknown future;
- **Individualism versus Collectivism**, related to the integration of individuals into primary groups;
- **Masculinity versus Femininity**, related to the division of emotional roles between women and men;

- **Long Term versus Short Term Orientation**, related to the choice of focus for people's efforts: the future or the present and past.
- **Indulgence versus Restraint**, related to the gratification versus control of basic human desires related to enjoying life.

For people involved in the intercultural process, the model of cultural dimensions is the basis for profiling the cultural environment of an organization or institution in different countries around the world. Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions is important for understanding the impact of cultural differences on the formation of organizational culture, management concept, and style, coordination of activities, behavior, and building of intercultural relations in the global market. Unquestionably, each of the cultural dimensions within Hofstede's model in a specific way affects the characteristics of management, and thus the formation of organizational culture within each national culture (Bedečković & Lukačević, 2011).

One of the important factors that enable us not only to learn and understand others different from us but also about ourselves is intercultural competence. Being interculturally competent means having knowledge and positive attitudes and being able to establish effective interaction with others and quality intercultural communication (Piršl, 2012). In the last ten years, cultural intelligence has been associated with the notion of intercultural competence.

Intercultural competence and cultural intelligence are studied by scientists from various fields, but they are often analysed and discussed by experts from the business world, cross-cultural management. Although they have many points of contact, they cannot be reduced to the same meaning: both intercultural competence and cultural intelligence depend on context. It is important to understand that intercultural competence can be developed, and cultural intelligence can be learned (Piršl, 2012).

When we talk about the connection between culture and communication, we can say that it is impossible to separate them. The way of accepting other people under the influence of the culture in which they grew up, the influence of non-verbal messages, and other elements such as language, and tradition. We can see the characteristics of culture important for intercultural communication in the following picture (Figure 2).

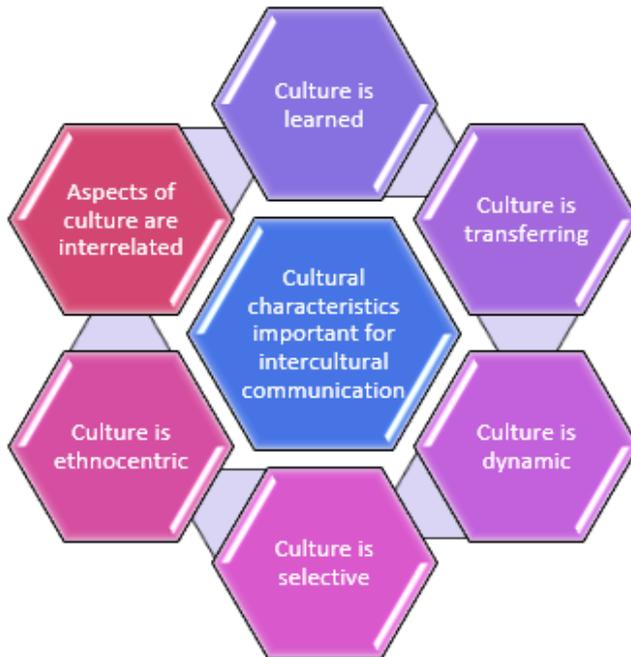


Figure 2. Culture important for intercultural communication
 Source: modified according to Benjak et al., (2005)

- ✓ *Culture is learned* - it means that culture is learned, it is transferable and it is not something that we are born with. The process of learning culture takes place mostly through mutual interactions, observations, and imitations.
- ✓ *Culture is transmitted* - excellent examples of non-verbal actions are shown as an example of a handshake in which we show affection to a certain person.
- ✓ *Culture is dynamic* - it reflects through the changes to which both communication and culture are subject.
- ✓ *Culture is selective* - one of the characteristics is selectivity, through numerous examples of human behavior we can see that each culture has a limited number of numerous models, which are primarily based on the assumptions and values of each culture.
- ✓ *Culture is ethnocentric* - An important characteristic of ethnocentrism is the subjective emphasis on one's own culture as a measure of the evaluation of other cultures, it also affects intercultural communication.

It can be seen that all the above elements are in a mutual relationship, and all together form a very complex system and that they are interconnected because they cannot do without each other.

Figure 3. is a diagrammatic disposition of linear-active, multi-active and reactive variations among major cultures, based on decades-long observation and thousands of assessments of cultural profiles with respondents of 68 nationalities. What it does indicate is the relative positioning of each culture in terms of TS linear active, multi-active, or reactive nature. Thus, the juxtaposition of Russia and Italy on the left side indicates they are linear-active / multi-active to a similar degree. It does not impute other cultural resemblances (core beliefs, religion, taboos, etc.). Spaniards and Arabs, though strikingly different in ideological and theological convictions, can benefit from their similar multi-active nature in communicating in an intensely personal and often compassionate manner. A Norwegian, though, is not on the same wavelength with either. As mentioned earlier, a senior multi-active Indian was able to combine his characteristics of warmth and people-orientation to achieve success in managing the entire South American division of his company.

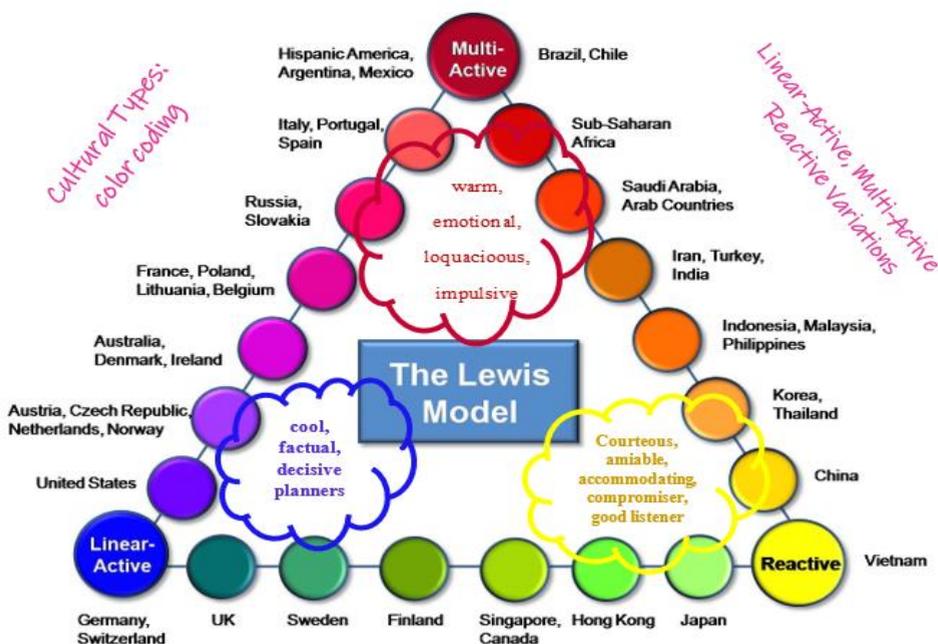


Figure 3. Cultural Types Model
Source: Modified according to Lewis (2006)

Lewis (2006) has developed the LMR (linear/multi/reactive) method of testing so that individuals can determine their cultural profiles. This classification or categorization of cultural groups is straightforward when compared with the somewhat diffuse instruments of the other cross-

culturalists, and it has consequently proven comprehensible and user-friendly to students in hundreds of universities, schools of business, multinationals in industry, banking, and commerce.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE OF MANAGERS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Intercultural competence is today considered one of the key competencies of a successful manager in the context of global business, where managers are required to have certain knowledge, attitudes, and skills. A manager who knows the characteristics of his and other cultures, rejects prejudices, respects the specifics of organizational structures, and adapts to verbal and nonverbal communication styles, can achieve long-term cooperation in international business. During international business, managers, in addition to the achieved business successes, gain new experiences, experiences derived from the specifics and customs of individual cultures.

Increasing globalization greatly affects the success of international cooperation, where managers are expected to have a higher level of intercultural competencies than ever before. The manager must be aware of the existence of many different cultures, which characterize different values, business cultures, and behaviors. Therefore, he must be ready to accept and adapt to diversity to achieve the desired business results.

The success of managers in the context of global business increasingly depends on their adaptability and openness to the values, behavior, opinions, and attitudes of culturally diverse business partners (Bedečković & Lukačević, 2011).

Intercultural competencies are a basic precondition for successful communication in international cooperation. Interculturality is a dynamic category that implies above all a relationship, and at the core of that relationship is communication. Intercultural communication refers to the understanding of members of different cultures, implies behavior that is appropriate to a particular place, or during intercultural interactions, and contains a combination of different abilities through which an individual can function in an environment of other cultures.

Communication between cultures must begin with an understanding of diversity, that is, that culture is not universal. Namely, what the culture of one country practices does not necessarily mean that the same is true for the rest of the world. To achieve successful communication between different cultures, it is necessary to understand the cultures of the countries visited

and with which one cooperates in business. Very often gestures and communication styles are experienced differently in certain countries where, for example, certain gestures are considered normal in one country and may be considered normal in another.

Aspects of intercultural communication competence were presented through the business of culture and communication competencies of American, Japanese, and German managers. Table 1 shows the characteristics of business culture and communication competencies of managers.

Table 1. Features of business culture and communication competencies

	<i>America</i>	<i>Japan</i>	<i>Germany</i>
<i>Intercultural competence</i>	They do not like to spend time meeting business partners Decisions: fast / Execution slow	Consistency - keep their way of acting without adjustment Loyalty to the company Decisions: slow / Execution: fast	Knowledge of the German language and business culture is the main prerequisite
<i>Business culture</i>	Respect for privacy Focus on money Individualism Increasing reputation Subjective decision making	Relationship orientation Preservation of reputation Collectivism Team decision making	Social responsibility and ethics Focus on product quality
<i>Communication competencies</i>	Language is the limiting factor in business Communication No importance is attached to body language Mobility between companies	Paying attention to non-verbal communication (holding, handling, facial expressions) Poor knowledge of English Internal rotations Trust	Communication Eye contact shows respect

Source: According to research by several internet sources

Based on the table, it is pointed out that each country is characterized by a specific business culture, customs, communication styles, and other aspects.

When we talk about *American business culture*, it is characteristic that it is based on individualism, and respect for privacy during business meetings. In the USA, contracts are long, because every conditionally unpredictable situation must be foreseen and elaborated in advance. Great

attention is paid to detail to avoid ambiguity. Managers in America do not leave the possibility to be guided by intuition but must have explicit written confirmations of the company's goals (Vukotić et al., 2017).

As a disadvantage, it can be stated that managers do not like to spend their time getting to know the customs and culture of their business partners, and the consequence is that they openly show their disagreement, which can cause inconvenience in other cultures and result in a bad business relationship. The limiting factor is also the language, even though in America English is the main and official language, business partners who come from other countries very often do not understand it. As a result, misunderstandings or misunderstandings usually occur during the meeting. The main characteristic is that they speak loudly and avoid silence.

In some cultures, silence is common during the conversation, while in others it requires discomfort, however, this difference is the core of intercultural competence, where the manager must be able to interpret the meaning of another culture in this regard.

It does not take much wisdom to understand that the common goal of all managers is to win the eternal game on the world market. In contrast, the paths leading to this goal are different, and there are no ready-made formulas for success (Vukotić, 2009: 201).

Japan's business culture is based on collectivism, which fosters good and long-term relationships with employees and the company. Namely, Japanese organizations are social organizations that provide employees with lifelong employment. Most Japanese workers spend their working lives in one company, where the main motive is to maintain harmonious relationships with colleagues at work. Many companies also encourage their employees to socialize after hours. Since American business culture is based on individualism, Japanese culture fosters collectivism and harmony at work.

Members of the nation that is considered to be the best students have formed a new segment - Japanese management. After the Second World War, the American-expansionist and Japanese-isolationist style of governing came closer, and the Japanese economy was greatly influenced by several American experts.

The fascinating results of Japanese progress are also related to Kaizen, which is considered to be the most powerful segment of their business culture. Kaizen is translated as improvement, and in the literal sense, it is a coin of two words: *kai*-change and *zen* - good.

The ten principles of the *Kaizen* concept are (Menadžer Delfin, 2004/104):

1. Customer focus,
2. Continuous improvement,
3. Public confrontation with problems,
4. Promoting openness,
5. Teamwork,
6. Inter-functional teams,
7. Importance and harmony of the process,
8. Self-discipline,
9. Informing employees,
10. Employee training.

Another characteristic of an interculturally competent manager is the ability to adapt to verbal and nonverbal communication styles. During intercultural interaction, it is important to know that the Japanese pay more attention to non-verbal communication, whereas during business meetings they rely more on facial expressions, posture, and hand movements. Japanese managers are also indirect communicators, which often frustrates American managers because they are known for their directness and openness. Also, the Japanese tend to avoid eye contact, which they consider insolent, so they look at their interlocutors during the conversation. In these respects, managers are expected to adapt and understand Japanese business specifics.

The German principle is based on respect for authority and legal restrictions. This represents a certain paradox between the authoritarian style of management and the numerous trade union organization of workers, who are indirectly involved in the management processes in corporations (Zečević & Simicević, 1992). Precision and seriousness are the dominant elements of this management. Decision-making is based on facts, and the risk is calculated in advance. In communication, Germans are honest, open, direct, and often loud. For them, the truth comes before diplomacy (Šijaković & Vukotić, 2018: 241). There are no elite schools that stand out for the education of top managers, which progress gradually, without lightning rises. They are more focused on job security than progress (Maksimović, 2004). German managers are more task-oriented than people-oriented. Emotions are hidden to the maximum, which is considered an important characteristic of professionalism (Petrović, 2006).

Based on the above characteristics of business culture and communication competencies of American, Japanese, and German managers, we can see the differences and similarities of individual features of business culture, hence the importance of having intercultural competencies in international business. Intercultural business cooperation cannot be achieved without knowing and getting to know the specifics of

other cultures, without adapting, as well as without awareness of the lack of universally acceptable patterns of behavior (Zakić & Milutinović, 2013). Based on all the above, it can be said that the possession of intercultural competencies is the key to success in international cooperation. It all starts with intercultural competence because without knowledge of other cultures or in the presence of prejudices, we cannot start or end successful international cooperation.

CONCLUSION

The expansion of business in the international market has expanded the notion of national and ethnic identity by opening space to new, intercultural identities. Establishing interaction and business cooperation between members of different cultures and achieving competitiveness in the global market presupposes the awareness of managers about the impact of specific dimensions of society's culture on organizational and business behavior.

Each country has its own specific culture, language, customs, and values that should be respected in all situations, including business meetings. The goal of business meetings, for example, is to achieve long-term cooperation. During business meetings, especially international ones, there are often differences in business culture, communication methods, and customs, which need to be successfully overcome.

Success in global business depends on the flexibility and appropriate response of managers to practices and values that differ significantly from the internal business environment. A positive attitude of managers towards the values of organizational culture that are different from those they are accustomed to in their business environment requires their openness to differences and values, as well as opinions and ideas arising from diversity.

By getting to know different business cultures, understanding, and intercultural communication, business cooperation is improved and only business on the international market is improved, with mutual respect and hidden explicit dominance.

Based on all the above, it can be said that one of the most important characteristics of global managers is the ability to communicate with members of different cultures, which in the conditions of culturally plural global business inevitably implies the attribute of intercultural. Its contribution depends, among other things, on the skill of finding final solutions and reaching a compromise aimed at accepting common solutions that are acceptable to members of different cultures involved in business relations in the global market.

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MCDM ANALYSIS OF FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION'S BUSINESS

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***Abstract:** In this paper, a multiple-criteria approach is applied in the evaluation and ranking of dimensions and factors that contribute to the improvement of the organization's business. The evaluation and prioritization of the mentioned dimensions and factors were performed with the help of **PI**vot **RE**lative **C**riteria **I**mportance **A**ssessment – **PIPRECIA** method. The main goal of this paper is to point out the usefulness of the application of Multiple-criteria decision-making (MCDM) methods in the implementation of this type of analysis.*

***Keywords:** Multiple-criteria decision-making, PIPRECIA method, analysis, business improvement, organizations, competitive advantage*

1. INTRODUCTION

In general, the achievement of goals in every area of human life could be considered a success. In business conditions, success reflects the difference between performance and results of capable and incapable management. There is no unique definition of that what business success is. Additionally, there exist a minimum of two significant dimensions for success: 1) financial vs. other success; and 2) short- vs. long-term success (Chittithawornnet al., 2011).

Achieving business success requires investing efforts in all considered fields that influence reaching the set of goals. In that sense, in today's environment, organizations are very sensitive to changes of different aspects that could improve or hinder their business performance and competitiveness. A lot of different dimensions and factors affect the success of an organization regardless of its type. So, managers need to consider,

acknowledge and take advantage of the particular influential dimensions and factors (Jasra et al., 2011). Given the fact that the improvement of the business of an organization is influenced by various factors, the application of Multiple-Criteria Decision-Making methods (MCDM) is perfectly justified. The key reason in favor of this statement is that MCDM methods can successfully help define which factors have the greatest impact on achieving better business results.

Multiple-criteria decision-making is very suitable for the realization of appropriate analyzes and drawing adequate conclusions. So far, a large number of different MCDM methods have been proposed, to name a few: AHP (Saaty, 1980), TOPSIS (Hwang and Yoon, 1981), PROMETHEE (Brans and Vincke, 1985), ELECTRE (Roy, 1991), ANP (Saaty, 1996) and VIKOR (Opricovic, 1998). Multiple-criteria decision-making methods have been applied in the analysis and solution of different types of problems (Yazdani et al., 2016; Zavadskas et al., 2018; Chowdhury and Paul, 2020; Goraya and Singh, 2021; Yalcin et al., 2022).

The main goal of this paper is to point out the applicability of MCDM methods in the case of performing an analysis to define the factors that have the greatest impact on improving the business of an organization. *PI*vote *Pairwise RE*lative *C*riteria *I*mportance *A*ssessment - PIPRECIA method, proposed by Stanujkic et al. (2017) was used for that purpose. The proposed method was applied to a hypothetical example that is not related to any particular organization. The analysis and ranking of four dimensions were performed, which were divided into five factors to obtain the most authoritative results. The evaluation process is entrusted to one competent decision-maker.

2. PIPRECIA METHOD

PIPRECIA method, developed by Stanujkic et al. (2017), represents an improved version of the SWARA method proposed by Keršulienė et al. (2010).

The calculation procedure of this method is shown by the following steps:

Step 1. Selection of criteria to be included in the evaluation process. Unlike the classic SWARA method, PIPRECIA does not require the mandatory sorting of criteria according to expected importance.

Step 2. Determine the relative importance of s_j , starting with the second criteria, as follows:

$$s_j = \begin{cases} > 1 & \text{when } C_j > C_{j-1} \\ 1 & \text{when } C_j = C_{j-1} \\ < 1 & \text{when } C_j < C_{j-1} \end{cases}. \quad (1)$$

Step 3. Determining the coefficient k_j in the following way:

$$k_j = \begin{cases} 1 & j = 1 \\ 2 - s_j & j > 1 \end{cases}. \quad (2)$$

Step 4. Determining the recalculated value of q_j , as follows:

$$q_j = \begin{cases} 1 & j = 1 \\ \frac{q_{j-1}}{k_j} & j > 1 \end{cases}. \quad (3)$$

Step 5. Determination of relative weights considered criteria as follows:

$$w_j = \frac{q_j}{\sum_{k=1}^n q_k}, \quad (4)$$

where w_j signifies the relative weight of the criteria j .

3. NUMERICAL EXAMPLE

From this point forward, the authors will make the evaluation and ranking of dimensions and factors that affect the organization's business improvement and achievement of the business success. This is a hypothetical example that is not related to any particular organization because the goal is to test the possibilities of the PIPRECIA method in the implementation of analyzes of this type. The presented dimensions on which the evaluation itself will be based have been broken down into an appropriate number of factors to obtain as realistic and authoritative results as possible. The list of dimensions and corresponding factors is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Overview of dimensions and factors important for improving the business of the organization

Dimensions		Factors	
C_1	Competition advantage	C_{11}	Length of business
		C_{12}	Good marketing
		C_{13}	Good management
		C_{14}	Stimulating environment
		C_{15}	Business innovation
C_2	Innovation	C_{21}	Financial support
		C_{22}	Creativity of employees
		C_{23}	Monitoring competitors
		C_{24}	Consumer requirements
		C_{25}	Movement in the industry
C_3	Conquering a new market	C_{31}	Good marketing plan
		C_{32}	Added value for consumers
		C_{33}	A well-designed business plan
		C_{34}	Competition
		C_{35}	Innovative products/services
C_4	Market performance	C_{41}	Product/service quality
		C_{42}	Commercials
		C_{43}	Innovative performance
		C_{44}	Price of product/service
		C_{45}	The image of the organization

Source: Author's research

Only one decision-maker is involved in the decision-making process because the paper aims to check and prove the applicability of MCDM methods in the analysis and solution of problems of this type. First, the importance of dimensions that have an impact on improving the organization's business will be determined. They will be evaluated using formulas (1) - (4). Table 2 shows the relative importance of the assessed dimensions.

Table 2. The relative importance of estimated dimensions

Dimensions	s_j	k_j	q_j	w_j
C_1		1	1	0.30
C_2	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.30
C_3	0.60	1.40	0.71	0.22
C_4	0.80	1.20	0.60	0.18
			3.31	1.00

Source: Author's research

The obtained results indicate that dimensions C_1 – *Competitive advantage* and C_2 – *Innovation* have the greatest significance from the perspective of the decision-maker. In second place is dimension C_3 – *Conquering a new market*, while the least important is dimension C_4 – *Market performance*.

As can be seen from Table 1, each dimension is broken down into an appropriate number of factors. In this regard, the local significance of each group of factors will now be determined separately. This time, the formulas (1) - (4) were also used. Table 3 shows the relative importance of factors belonging to dimension C_1 – *Competitive advantage*.

Table 3. The relative importance of assessed factors – *Competitive advantage*

Eligibility criteria	s_j	k_j	q_j	w_j
C_{11}		1	1	0.26
C_{12}	0.80	1.20	0.83	0.21
C_{13}	0.60	1.40	0.60	0.15
C_{14}	1.20	0.80	0.74	0.19
C_{15}	1.00	1.00	0.74	0.19
			3.92	1.00

Source: Author's research

Among the factors related to competitive advantage, the most significant factor was C_{11} – *Length of business*, while the least significant factor was C_{13} – *Good management*.

Table 4 contains the relative importance of factors belonging to dimension C_2 – *Innovation*.

Table 4. The relative importance of assessed factors – *Innovation*

Eligibility criteria	s_j	k_j	q_j	w_j
C_{21}		1	1	0.20
C_{22}	1.20	0.80	1.25	0.26
C_{23}	0.80	1.20	1.04	0.22
C_{24}	0.60	1.40	0.74	0.16
C_{25}	1.00	1.00	0.74	0.16
			4.78	1.00

Source: Author's research

The obtained results indicate that the most influential factor from the group *Innovation* is factor C_{22} – *The creativity of employees*. Factors that, according to the results obtained, are the least influential are factors C_{24} – *Consumer requirements* and C_{25} – *Movement in the industry*.

Finally, Table 6 shows the relative importance of factors related to dimension C_4 – *Market performance*.

Table 6. The relative importance of the assessed factors – *Market performance*

Eligibility criteria	s_j	k_j	q_j	w_j
C_{41}		1	1	0.21
C_{42}	1.10	0.90	1.11	0.23
C_{43}	1.00	1.00	1.11	0.23
C_{44}	0.80	1.20	0.93	0.19
C_{45}	0.60	1.40	0.66	0.14
			4.81	1.00

Source: Author's research

As can be seen in Table 6, the factors that stood out as the most influential are C_{42} - *Advertising* and C_{43} - *Innovative approach*.

Table 7 shows the importance of dimensions, the local importance of factors, and the global importance of factors based on which the final rank of factors is defined. More precisely, the order of factors according to their influence on the improvement of the business of an organization is defined.

Table 7. Final ranking of the evaluated factor

Dimensions	Importance dimension	Eligibility criteria	Local importance criteria	Global importance criteria	Rank
C_1 Competitive advantage	0.30	C_{11}	0.26	0.078	1
		C_{12}	0.21	0.063	3
		C_{13}	0.15	0.045	8
		C_{14}	0.19	0.057	6
		C_{15}	0.19	0.057	6
C_2 Innovation	0.30	C_{21}	0.20	0.06	4
		C_{22}	0.26	0.078	1
		C_{23}	0.22	0.066	2
		C_{24}	0.16	0.048	7
		C_{25}	0.16	0.048	7

C ₃	Conquest new markets	0.22	C ₃₁	0.27	0.059	5
			C ₃₂	0.19	0.041	10
			C ₃₃	0.16	0.035	13
			C ₃₄	0.20	0.044	9
			C ₃₅	0.18	0.040	11
C ₄	Performance on the market	0.18	C ₄₁	0.21	0.038	12
			C ₄₂	0.23	0.041	10
			C ₄₃	0.23	0.041	10
			C ₄₄	0.19	0.034	14
			C ₄₅	0.14	0.025	15

Source: Author's research

Based on the results shown in Table 7, we can see that individual factors are significant for the decision-makers. Undoubtedly all offered factors are exceptionally significant for the business improvement of organizations. However, in some cases, it is extremely important to identify the more influential ones, especially in situations when it is necessary to allocate resources for the implementation of appropriate activities.

4. CONCLUSION

In this paper, the ranking of dimensions and factors that affect the improvement of the organization's business is performed with the help of multicriteria decision-making methods. more precisely PIPRECIA methods. Four dimensions are ranked: *C₁ – Competitive advantage*, *C₂ – Innovation*, *C₃ – Conquering a new market*, and *C₄ – Market performance*. Each of these dimensions includes an appropriate number of factors. The conducted research aimed to point out the applicability of the PIPRECIA method, especially in cases where it is necessary to define which factors and, accordingly, which activities contribute to improving business performance.

The obtained results indicate that, in this considered case, the factors *C₁₁ – Length of business* and *C₂₂ – Creativity of employees* have the greatest weight and the greatest influence on the improvement of the organization's business. The factor *C₄₅ – Image of the organization* stood out as the least influential factor.

The key shortcoming of this paper is the fact that only one decision-maker is involved in the decision-making process, and thus the results obtained are highly subjectivized. In addition, it is a hypothetical example

that is not related to any particular company. There is a reasonable belief that depending on the type of business of the organization, as well as the respondents themselves, different dimensions would be perceived as significant and influential. In addition, the procedure itself is based on the application of integers that cannot adequately reflect the variability of the environment and uncertainty.

However, regardless of that, the usefulness and applicability of multicriteria decision-making methods in this area are completely adequate and justified. A recommendation for further research would include the application of the proposed method in defining key influencing factors on the business of a particular type of organization. In addition, the use of an extended model based on fuzzy, gray, or neutrosophic numbers is recommended.

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ONLINE MARKETING THE WRIGHT CHOISE

Ciprian PAVEL

***Abstract:** The Internet not only facilitates the creation of effective marketing strategies, but opens up a new dimension in this field. Online marketing, as part of Digital Marketing, turns the network into a channel for communication, promotion and loyalty to customers with great possibilities. The increasing penetration of the Internet in society, as well as improved connection speed and cheaper services make it increasingly easy for all entrepreneurs and professionals, whether or not they work in e-commerce, implement online marketing campaigns to sell products and/or services as well as conduct professional and personal branding campaigns. In this section we'll talk about trends as for online marketing strategies and we'll analyze y new news of the sector. We will also look at the tools and services coming to market for creating online marketing and digital marketing campaigns.*

***Keywords:** online marketing, digitisation, strategy*

***JEL Codes:** M31,M11*

Introduction

Today, the world of Internet communications is undergoing a revolution of increasing importance, with an ever more varied range of services meeting users' needs. Behind these newly emerging services are new technologies that offer the possibility of exchanging information and data at ever faster speeds, with the possibility of accessing information and not least new ways of using resources in existing communications infrastructures.

4.95 billion people around the world use the internet in January 2022 – equivalent to 62.5 percent of the world's total population.

What's more, there are now fewer than 3 billion people around the world who don't use the internet, marking another important milestone towards universal accessibility.

This number is still growing too, with latest data showing that 192 million new users came online over the past twelve months. Internet users

are currently growing at an annual rate of 4.0 percent, equating to an average of more than half a million new users each day.

However, the coronavirus pandemic has had a big impact on internet user research, so actual growth figures may be much higher than this rate suggests. And current economic trends are subject to the effects that financial, medical or social crises can bring¹.

Most internet users (92.1 percent) use mobile devices to go online at least some of the time, but computers also account for an important share of internet activity.

Roughly two-thirds of internet users in the world's larger economies go online via laptops and desktops for at least some of their connected activities².

Brands around the world understand that the internet can be an opportunity or a threat depending on the approach they choose and this has been proven over time naturally. In the days of today's economy, „we can say that a company is performing well when it produces finished products or provides highquality services at an affordable price”³ using the best distribution channel.

Moreover, digitisation has not only changed the way brands communicate and message, but has changed the preferences and dynamics of consumer needs. The new generation of consumers, who were born in the digital age and grew up surrounded by technology, are very active online and in many cases, it is possible to reach this target exclusively in a digital environment.

Research methodology, data, results and conclusions

Today, when approximately a large proportion of the world's population is connected to the internet, increasing connectivity has created important changes in many industries.

And this is not necessarily a bad thing as we are glad that our lives are made easier by new technological tools. Unlike the state of society three decades ago, today you can buy what you need in your home directly from your online shop, you have platforms that help you communicate quickly and in real time with anyone in the world, and you can find information about anything just a click away.

¹ Violeta Gianina Dragotă, Nicoleta Buzilă, Codruța-Daniela Pavel, Ciprian Pavel. The impact of the economic crisis on european retail.17. 2011, p. 380.

² <https://datareportal.com/global-digital-overview>

³ Codruța Daniela PAVEL. Accounting depreciation versus fiscal depreciation. Quaestus Multidisciplinary Research Journal, 15.2019, p. 59.

Consumers devour digital content, but it's an uphill battle for businesses to stay visible and sell in an already crowded space. Many are trying to uncover the key to consumers and unravel the algorithms of Google, the giant that dictates the tone in the digital space, and for this they need online marketing strategies.

1. What is online marketing?

In order to get a clearer picture in this sea of information we first need to understand what online marketing is. It is a set of tools and methods used to promote products and services through the internet, which gives us benefits such as

- Increased potential
- Competitive advantage
- Effective communication
- Better control
- Improved customer service.

What is the difference between online and traditional marketing?

We're probably thinking, well, what about traditional marketing? Are TV and radio promotions ineffective, or are print ads in newspapers and magazines far too outdated for current affairs? The answer can be found by comparing the two marketing models, which after all serve the same purpose. That of attracting customers, selling and building a brand image.

A different aspect is the cost, where of course online marketing is more efficient. On the one hand traditional marketing promotion channels cost a lot, while ads on websites, social media and YouTube videos etc. are affordable. You publish an ad in your local newspaper, but it is only available to your target audience on the day of publication. If you want a new connection, you have to run a new ad campaign. And in the case of flyers you have a unique exposure, compared to the website, that can bring your target audience in touch with your service or product and for years to come, at no additional cost.

Online marketing can also be free in some situations thanks to the many techniques available. Search engine optimization (SEO) provides the key to almost unlimited amounts of web traffic. The more you learn and understand SEO, this seemingly confusing and complex discipline, the more likely you are to appear organically in Google search results. And this organic search is important for online marketing. Given that most businesses don't have massive advertising budgets, online visibility is essential for long-term success.

Traditional marketing may have evolved over the last few decades, but the fundamentals have remained the same. The sales techniques we still use today rely heavily on the four Ps of marketing: product, price, place and promotion.

At first glance, online marketing may look different from traditional marketing because it uses the fourth P - promotion - more than anything else. However, digital marketing is highly effective because it does not ignore any of the four P's, but rather uses them in a unique way, and sometimes even better than traditional marketing.

In terms of results, which we certainly care about as much as costs, traditional marketing requires lead times that can take weeks or sometimes months to see improvements in the business. On the other hand, when you start using online marketing we can see significant increases in a short time.

Also, the results of a traditional marketing strategy cannot be easily measured. On the other hand, in online marketing it is simple to determine a return on investment (ROI) using Google analytics tools. You can quickly see which technique is performing and which is not through Google Analytics, as well as, for example, market trend, inbound traffic, conversion rate, interested visitors, bounce rate and profits. We can make real-time changes to our marketing strategy, we can add some keywords to better target our consumers and we can also use social media channels, which are free and almost everyone uses them, so they are more accessible. However, online marketing has a limitation in terms of direct interaction with the potential buyer.

So we have to remember that a traditional marketing strategy has some disadvantages:

- We can't time certain steps - For example, say we place an ad in a magazine to promote the latest widget. After that, we make a major update to it, which can have a significant impact on sales. Can we change the ad on the spot? Of course not. It will have to be replaced, which will add extra costs to your marketing budget.
- high costs.
- limited customisation options - This means that when we want to target a specific group in a specific industry we have very few techniques available to reach our audience. When we use online marketing, we not only have the ability to reach just the right type of customer, but also to provide them with offers tailored to their needs.
- you cannot display detailed prices of our products/services due to lack of space.
- low evaluation capacity.
- inefficient cost-effectiveness.

2. What are the advantages of online marketing?

Having highlighted the downside of traditional marketing, we also need to look at the benefits of online marketing and why it would be wise to choose it as a way to promote your business.

A key advantage of using online channels to market a service or product is the ability to measure the impact of any channel, as well as how acquired visitors interact with the site. For visitors who convert to paying customers, additional analysis can be done to help us know which channels are most effective for acquiring valuable customers.

Global access - Online marketing gives businesses a broad customer base for their services or products. All types of businesses, from multinationals to small and medium-sized businesses, have access to millions of potential customers. Advertisements are accessible to many audiences through the advertising tools we use. The more users who visit our site, the more sales we will make.

Low costs - In any marketing campaign, cost is a key factor to keep in mind as it affects your company's budget. Start-up businesses can avoid the high cost of a marketing campaign, which is often associated with traditional forms of advertising by using online marketing.

Ability to manage a large number of customers - One of the basic benefits of online marketing is its ability to manage millions of customers at the same time. As long as a site's infrastructure is efficient, numerous transactions can easily take place simultaneously. This high adaptability of internet marketing is an important benefit that businesses can take advantage of in order to offer their consumers the best shopping experience.

Data collection for personalisation purposes - Whenever a customer buys a product from our website, their data is collected and the business can use it in a variety of ways. Most analyze data to find out what products and/or services they frequently sell. What's more, the data collected can help segment customers so your business can send advertisements and other promotional materials based on their buying habits and interests. Through this advantage of online marketing, brands can serve millions of customers with various items and products based on their personal interests. Thus, shoppers can easily get their desired products without having to explore all the options available on the internet.

Speed of transaction - An online transaction is almost instantaneous. You can do this through a digital payment service, so no cash is needed to buy and sell products/services. This is possible thanks to payment processing solutions through third party companies such as PayPal.

24/7 marketing - With an online marketing campaign you can promote and sell your products at any time of the day. Plus, you won't have to worry about staff salaries or store hours. Plus, time zone variations won't affect us.

3. Mechanisms to consider in online marketing

Focus on the customer - your marketing strategy should revolve around the customer. The first step is knowing our customers' needs which can be a challenge in such a diverse environment. However, we will be able to create connections so that customers then receive proposals from us that are specific to their interests.

Think big - Develop a sustainable marketing strategy for our brand so that we don't just depend on small campaigns. Let's think about it all in a larger, long-term growth vision. We leverage the benefits so we can build a solid revenue stream.

Let's create our brand story - When people spend money, they think with both the rational and emotional side. The most effective marketing constructs appeal to both. Through storytelling, a powerful tool a company can use, helps us build connections with customers.

Build website traffic - There are situations where a company can afford to pay a marketing agency to handle the whole mechanism behind increasing online traffic, but what do we do if we don't have a budget available for this and need a few guidelines to implement ourselves.

Although it sounds complicated, we can take the online marketing campaign into our own hands, even if we are just starting out. Here are a few things to look out for:

Social Media Engagement - Social media is all about making connections. Don't shy away from jargon like "retweets" and "likes". Treat others the way you want to be treated, without being afraid to ask questions.

You can use tools like HootSuite or SproutSocial to schedule updates for all social platforms. We'll save time and make it look like we're constantly posting on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.

Developing a blog - We might be surprised by the quality of our writing. We already have an arsenal of topics to cover because we know our industry inside and out. Blogging has many benefits such as creating brand awareness, credibility and authority. It has also been shown to help increase conversion rates and even search engine rankings.

Important to understand that blogging is not the same as writing an essay in school. Let's use as simple, user-friendly language as possible that makes it easy to skim through the topics covered.

Deliver content your audience wants - Connecting with potential customers is easier when you deliver custom content they can actually use. Percentage-wise, most consumers are more likely to buy from a brand that delivers highly relevant content.

It's important to keep your audience's needs at the center of your content marketing strategy and develop articles, e-books, guides and blog posts that provide insights to your customers. We attract consumers around a particular product or marketing objective we have, then amplify it through social media.

Pay attention to Analytics - It's very clear: the channels that bring us the most traffic are the ones we need to keep. The ones that don't yield results should be eliminated.

So, it's good to set up the analytics platform to send us a weekly or monthly report so we can stay on top of how our marketing strategies are working. If, for example, guest post blog articles bring us a lot of traffic, we write more.

Making sure our emails reach the recipient - Despite all the other marketing tools we have at our fingertips, email is still a successful way to get in front of customers and get them to buy from us. And the better targeted these messages are, the more successful we'll be in sending people to our website.

So, let's give more time to the subject line; recipients open emails based on the subject line. A text of 10 or fewer characters can bring higher open rates, so let's keep it short and to the point.

Let's hone in on SEO - Let's make sure our website includes those keywords our target audience is searching for. Otherwise, we'll have a higher bounce rate and fewer conversions, not to mention placement in Google rankings.

If we have a local business, let's not overlook local search trends. That way, we'll be accessible to nearby audiences. In the case of a more remote location, a „form of commerce”, franchising can be used where the franchisee has better control over the specifics of the area⁴.

Produce video content - Consumers want more videos from brands. This is why most marketers produce video content online. Videos produce a massive increase in organic search traffic. What's more, consumers take action after watching a video ad.

Your company should have a YouTube channel where you upload videos regularly. It is not necessary to spend a fortune to produce video content. We can do it from wherever we are. A verified fact - People would rather watch a video about a product than read about it.

⁴ Codruța Daniela PAVEL. Franchising in the world of business. Quaestus Multidisciplinary Research Journal, 9.2016, p. 92.

Tap influencers - We can use this marketing strategy to build credibility. If our website is credible, we will be able to generate more traffic.

So we can look for collaborations with micro-influencers because they have higher interaction rates with their audience.

Conclusions

A digital marketing strategy is a plan that outlines how your business will achieve its marketing goals through online channels such as search and social media. Most strategy plans will summarize what online channels and digital marketing tactics you will use, plus how much you will invest in those channels and tactics.

Digital marketing is one of the best ways to reach new customers and achieve your business goals. Plus, it offers a variety of strategies, from video to email to social, to reach your unique goals. Whether you want to increase sales, revenue, awareness or loyalty, digital marketing is the solution.

However, the success of your digital marketing strategies depends on their development and execution.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

EVENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Loredana MOCEAN
Miranda Petronella VLAD

***Abstract:** This paper addresses the topic of event planning and conference room management with the help of an IT system designed to provide support to users who are having trouble keeping accurate records. Starting from the idea that computer systems become a reliable help to people in different fields, optimizing processes, increasing efficiency and reducing the time with the execution of certain activities, we considered it appropriate to develop a system to solve event planning and record them. The system is designed especially for the business environment by helping companies and their employees to get better planning and record of the meetings they hold and all the events organized.*

***Keywords:** management, system, technology*

Introduction and Background

We want to make a web application, easy to access from any device. Thus, the company's employees will benefit from a centralized situation of all the events that will take place, an increase in the efficiency of the planning processes and a reduction of the time lost with the discussions that took place, in the scheduling of these events.

The objectives of this system are the following:

- Development of a conference room management system that allows for meeting planning and scheduling details;
- Including a conference room management section (adding and editing of rooms);
- Includes a user management section (add and edit);
- Inclusion of a meeting planning section through an appropriate graphical interface;
- View schedules created from the user or administrator position;
- The section for viewing the occupied rooms and the participants in each meeting;

- Email notification when creating events as well as notifying users before they start.

The causes that led to the development of such a system are, among others, the following important:

- The need for efficient management of conference rooms and good meeting planning;
- The appearance of human errors;
- The need for process optimization;
- The need for automation;
- Resource saving;
- Lack of an overview.

The data flows will be composed of the input data provided by those who plan a meeting (time slot, date, hall, participants) and will receive a confirmation by email with the reservation created.

Users of this system are grouped into normal users (company employees) and Administrator. Users will have the right to schedule meetings, view their schedules and profile, invite new members if they are not added, and view room occupancy. In addition to these rights mentioned above, the administrator will be able to manage the rooms and users and will have the right to cancel a meeting created by another user.

All these processes can be done through a friendly and intuitive graphical interface through a web application (see Figure 1).

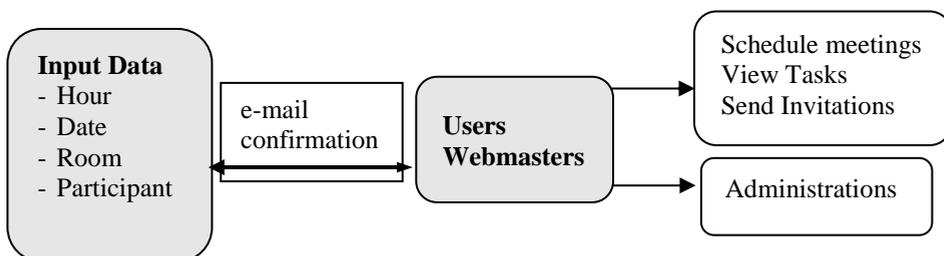


Figure 1. Web application Interface

Technology description

Developing a web application requires the use of components that include both the software and the hardware. The environment used to develop the application is Microsoft Visual Studio 2019 Community. This IDE (integrated development environment) from Microsoft is a creative tool through which we can edit, troubleshoot and write code for an application.

ASP.NET Core is a popular framework for building web applications on the .NET platform. It is the open-source version of ASP.NET, which runs on macOS, Linux and Windows. It is designed to enable the rapid evolution of components, APIs, compilers, and languages, while providing a stable and supported platform to keep applications running.

However, the used framework is ASP.NET Core MVC which is a rich framework for creating web applications and APIs using the Model-View-Controller design model, practically including here the type of system architecture (Freeman, Pro ASP.NET CORE MVC 2, 2017).

The programming language used mostly is C# of course used with other application development languages such as JavaScript and SQL, specific JavaScript libraries such as JQuery, Moment.js or libraries used for other functionalities such as qTIP or flatpickr.

Moment.js is a free, open source JavaScript library that eliminates the need to use the JavaScript data object directly.

qType is a jQuery plugin that provides features such as chat boxes or imagemaps, and has been helpful in displaying certain details about calendar events.

Flatpickr is a light and powerful data selector that does not depend on any library, being very useful especially for calendars, thus avoiding loading a large number of libraries, improving performance.

ASP.NET Core Identity is an API that supports the graphical interface for authentication functionality. With this API you can manage users, passwords, their profile, roles and more. (Marinko Spasojevic, 2019).

An important step in developing the application was to use a calendar from fullcalendar.io. This is a popular JavaScript-based calendar that has over 100 settings and what is important is that it is open source. Calendar customization was done through FullCalendar's API (Documentation, 2019). Bootstrap version 4 was used on the front end and SQL Sever was used to create and develop the database.

Presentation of technological concepts and products that are the subject of the proposed application

User authentication is based on a form, in which you will need to fill in the email address on which the account and password were created.

After logging in, the user is redirected to the main page where they can view all the events (meetings) that will take place within the company or plan new ones depending on the purpose of each user (see Figure 2).

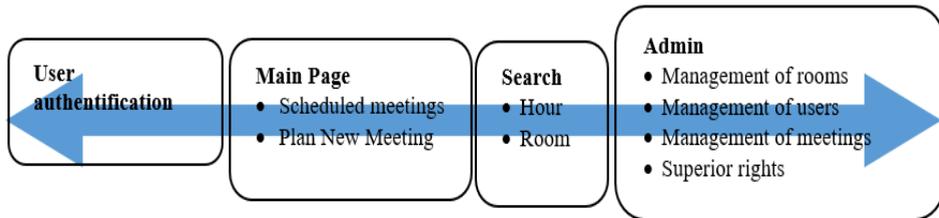


Figure 2.

You can view the created schedules, if you decide on the planning of a new event, then the conditions for checking the desired time slot, space (event room) and the respective day will be met. If the conditions are met, the reservation will be created and the meeting participants will be notified by an email notification, otherwise an error message will be displayed which will not allow the event to be booked until the conditions set out above are met.

The administrator will take care of the management part of the system, therefore he will be responsible for adding users to the computer system, adding the spaces where the events will take place and at the same time he will have superior rights to regular users, being able to modify or delete any event created by other users. The administrator will also be able to plan events and manage their profile. The whole process can be seen in Figure 9 (What is a Data Flow Diagram, 2020).

The Model-View-Controller architecture separates the application into three main groups of components: models, views, and controllers. Through this pattern we manage to separate the concepts. Thus the user's request is sent (routed) to a Controller who becomes responsible for communicating with the model to perform the user's action or to withdraw the results of a query. The controller chooses the view to display the result to the user and provides all the required model data.

Delimiting responsibilities helps us to extend the application in terms of complexity, because it is easier to write code, troubleshoot and test (a specific problem that is on a component). It is much more difficult to update, test, and troubleshoot code that has more domain dependencies than the three listed. Changing the user interface is much more common than changing the application logic, so it's important to separate this part so you don't have to change business logic every time we change the interface, as many errors can occur and require retesting the application from all points of view no matter how small the change. The MVC principle can be seen in the figure below:

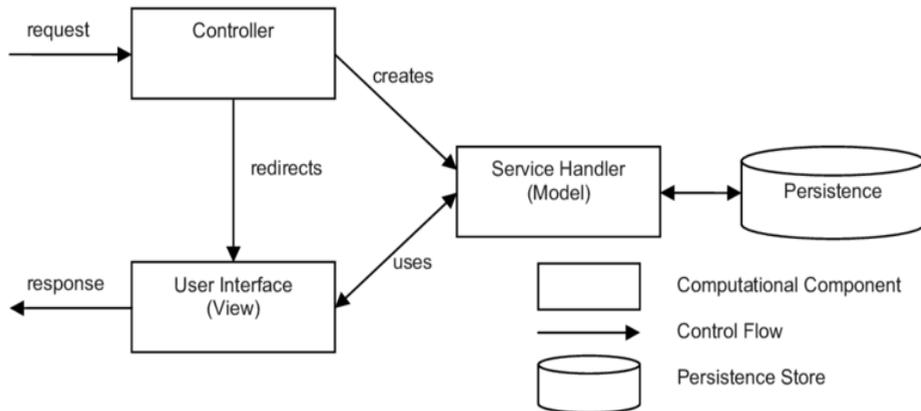


Figura 3. Model-View-Controller Architecture

Both the view and the controller depend on the model, but the model does not depend on either the view or the controller. This is one of the key advantages of separating the concepts, allowing the construction and testing of the model independent of the front-end part.

Activities and requirements necessary to achieve the objectives

Each system has been developed based on needs to solve a certain problem. Therefore, all these needs came from different sources from which the functional requirements were extracted and not only to determine how the system will work.

The obligatory conditions for the good interaction of the user with the system aim at a fast internet connection for fluidity, being a system that is dependent on an internet connection, a browser version as new as possible, the system being tested on Google Chrome and Microsoft browsers Edge, a device (desktop, laptop, or mobile) that supports all of these needs and has an account holder to use the web application in compliance with system requirements.

The functional specifications of the system can be found below:

- The users who will use the application are of two types: an administrator and users who have limited rights;
- Users will only be able to log in if they have an account, it will be provided to their email address;
- There is an email notification for meeting booking operations, their cancellation and a reminder before they start for users registered for the meeting;

Administrator will benefit from the following features:

- The administrator will be able to manage his profile with the right to update his data and reset his password;
- Accessing a dashboard with a record of conference rooms and participants in each meeting;
- View a calendar displayed on almost every page for event planning directly from the calendar;
- Accessing conference rooms with the following features:
 - Adding them with the related details;
 - Management: editing or deleting conference rooms;
- Cancellation of events made by other users;
- Employee management:
 - Adding an employee: last name, first name, email, password, password confirmation, etc .;
- Employee management: editing, updating and deleting
- Possibility to leave the account and close the current session (sign out).

User will have the following features:

- The right to manage the profile (update information, change the password, etc.);
- View a calendar displayed on almost any page with the possibility of adding events (meeting planning) directly from the calendar;
- Accessing conference rooms with the following features:
 - Reservation: time interval, date, name of the meeting, number and names of participants;
 - Cancel only user-planned events;
- Overview of the other rooms and participants;
- Accessing all planned events;
- Possibility to leave the account and close the current session (sign out).

Given the non-functional requirements that capture aspects of the operation of the system and not its behavior, they impose implementation or design constraints on functional requirements such as performance, security, or reliability.

The security of user data is ensured by specific Microsoft mechanisms, which provide certain tools to ensure that data is kept secure. Therefore, the confidentiality of the data is achieved, the administrator not having access to sensitive user data such as password in compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of

personal data and on the free movement of such data. personal data to other entities. At the same time, the integrity of the data is maintained, which can be modified using a correct and authorized manner depending on the role (administrator or user).

The system is reliable, ensuring a constant operation over a long period of time, its maintenance being achieved without affecting its use.

To ensure the efficient management and allocation of time and resources, the entire development process has been systematically planned for specific time periods, according to the GANTT chart below:

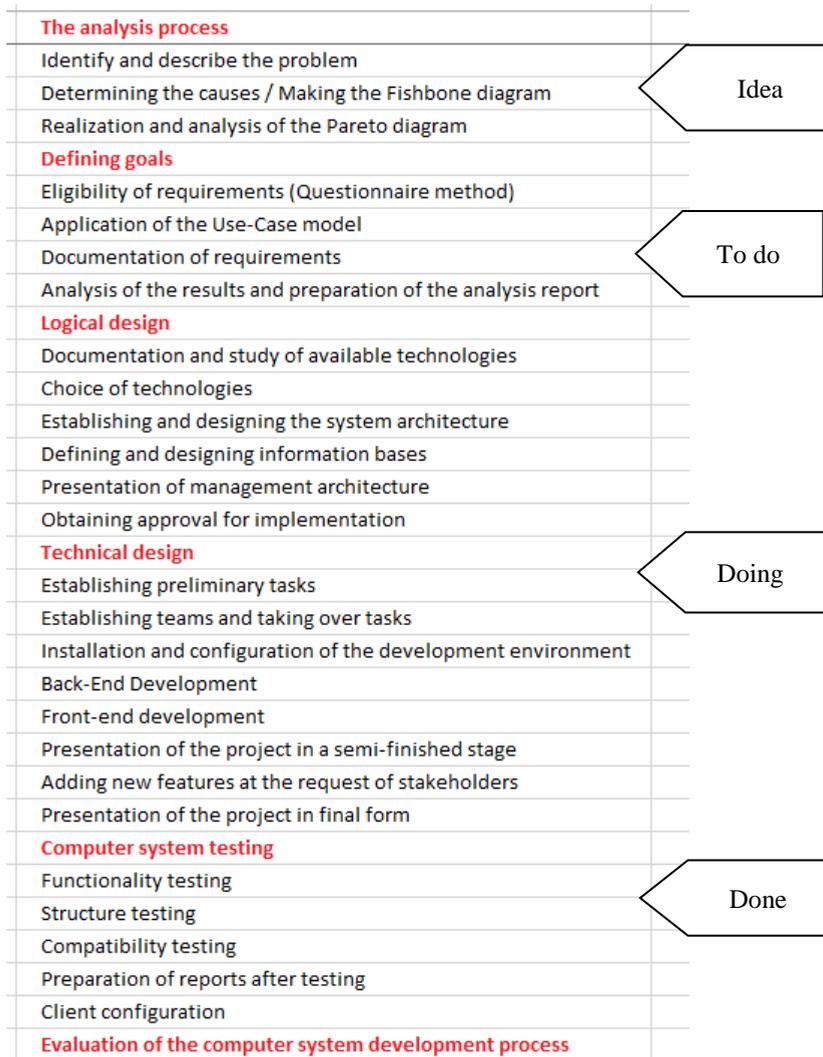


Figura 4. Graphical representation using the Gantt chart method

Technical design

For the data storage part we used Microsoft Visual Studio and Microsoft SQL Server. I chose to use a relational database with SQL language for several important reasons. One of them is that Visual Studio comes bundled with SQL Server and provides features that help you view, modify, and develop your database in an easy and user-friendly way.

Another important reason was the familiarity with relational databases and Structured Query Language (SQL) and the knowledge of the concepts of relationships between entities (tables), their cardinality, data types and well-known syntax.

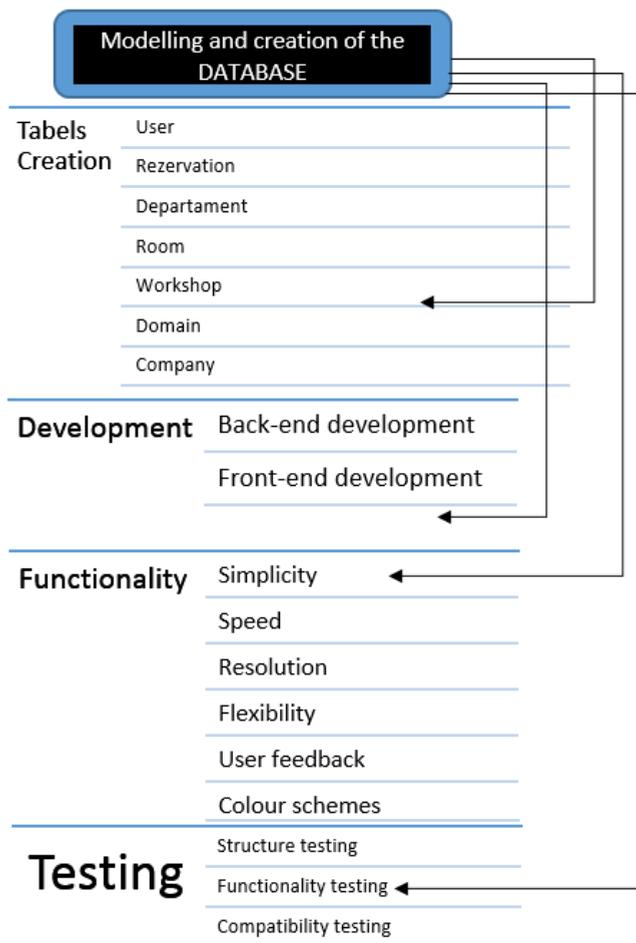


Figure 5. Technical Design

The SQL Server Data Tools component of Visual Studio gives us the ability to build the database, test it, and publish it later in our project. We can also edit scripts and SQL commands in the database thanks to IntelliSense providing a friendly way to check and identify errors.

Conclusions

Even though distributed management systems have grown rapidly with important advantages such as easier maintenance that does not require the interruption of the whole system, we still opted for a centralized system, because we considered that effective control over the use and development of software is more appropriate. currently ensuring data integrity.

The purpose of our application is to build a conference room management system along with meeting planning with two important actors, namely the users who will be represented by the company's employees and the administrator who will manage the components for the proper functioning of the system.

The importance of knowing the flow of data for the whole system is important to be able to understand the processes and how they are executed. Therefore, the data flow chart aims to show graphically how the processes take place and to which entity they belong.

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ORGANIZATIONAL LIBRARY

Loredana MOCEAN
Miranda Petronella VLAD

***Abstract:** This paper describes a web application for managing devices and books that are in a company's library, making the library accessible in digital format through the application.*

By using the tools provided, the company's employees have the opportunity to see the items that are made available to them for the loan, right from the office. They have a user account, which can be accessed from computer and tablet or phone. The loan process becomes safer and shorter, and communication more efficient, with the app providing real-time accurate stock status information as well as the loan period.

The real benefit to the company is primarily offered by the existence of a library that contains titles that fall within the scope of activity and smart devices designed to provide support in the testing phase of projects.

The application, being implemented locally, is designed to fit the design and functionality of the company's needs and profile. This customization, which takes over the user experience, is not possible by using an existing system on the internet.

***Keywords:** library, management, database, technology, web application*

Introduction

Many organizations that want to provide their employees with technical activity books or smart devices do not have a computerized system or at least not all of them. Because of this, they continue to pursue a manual approach to dealing with transactions and database management. The tasks that come with the need to maintain such a service performed manually, lead to a slow, tiring activity and prone to errors. The design of the application aims to reduce the time required to carry out the activity of the library within the companies that have one. It is useful both in terms of loan functionality and administration.

We find here two types of causes that have generated the need for such a system.

Main categories: human resources, data recording, professional development, communication and the need for digitization.

We can distinguish the following secondary causes, which derive from those mentioned above:

- Lack of loan management staff;
- Creating media for employee development
- Information on existing stocks;
- Employee time efficiency;
- The need for integration into the digital age and alignment with modern times;
- Statistics based on user history;
- Control over the loan process;
- Administration of books and devices;
- User account management.

General objectives of the application

The top-level objectives are as follows (see Figure 1):

- User authentication;
- Access to a gallery with available articles;
- Gallery search and filtering functionality;
- Account administration;
- Personal loan management;

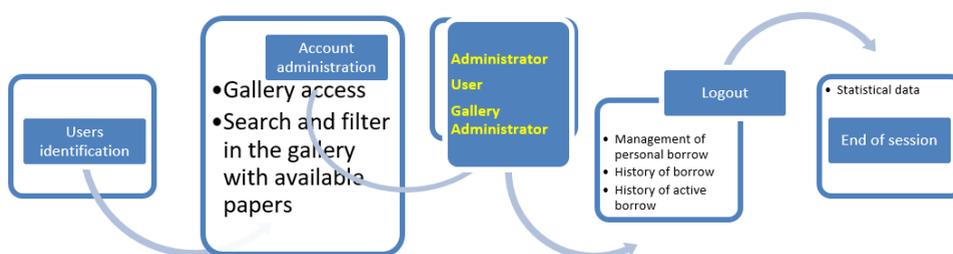


Fig. 1. General objectives of the application

From the objectives described above derive, following the principle of inheritance, the following:

- Distinction between administrator and user roles;
- Making the loan;
- Gallery administration;

- Editing the user profile;
- Editing active loans;
- View a loan history and statistics.

Defining a goal is the best way to extract system requirements. Thus, the success of the project depends on whether the objectives have been achieved or not.

Technological concepts

The web application aims to provide end users with a pleasant and easy experience in the process of borrowing an item available in the company's library. Thus, it becomes more secure and shorter, and communication more efficient, the application providing real-time accurate information about the status of the stock, as well as the loan period.

One of the most important conditions that must be met for a business to succeed is to motivate employees. Once a company makes an effort to meet this requirement, the chances of employees being more efficient and productive increase significantly. Another benefit to the company, observed in the long run, is the loyalty of employees by providing the necessary devices to facilitate their work. The idea of motivating employees also involves creating an attractive work environment. Among the tools used in this regard are tangible motivational factors, among which we find the material benefits.

At present, the Internet is full of library management systems. Although these software solutions offer a wide range of options, the costs are quite high and tend not to be borne by many of the institutions that would like to implement such software (for example, libraries or schools). A cheaper option is cloud-based or subscription-based systems. Another existing option is that of open-source systems that can provide free support for the entire period of use or for a limited period.

For personal use or in the context of a small number of users, mobile applications have also been developed that are used to manage articles in a library. The idea of the application started from a system of organizing books in a library, adapted to the needs of a company in which each employee has the opportunity to manage the loans of items from their own account. Thus, the administrator who uses the same application, has privileges on the loans made and on the management of books, devices and users.

The application, being implemented locally, is designed to represent the needs and profile of the company through design and functionality. This customization, which takes over the user experience, is not possible by using an existing system on the internet.

An application of this type in a company does not offer employees only a software product, but an experience. This experience aims to promote both personal and professional development, and encourages and supports the lending of books and smart devices.

Implementing such a system within a company becomes imperative in solving the problems raised. A web application that provides easy access to this service by reducing physical work, is the answer that comes after the needs of users. The design of the application aims to reduce the time required to carry out the activity, both in terms of loan functionality and on the administrative side. Thus, the increase in efficiency will have a positive impact on the interest shown by employees in the arranged library. We can say that it is a way to bring it closer to them and easier to access.

Computer system architecture

At the technological level, the computer system of the application consists of three components (see Figure 2):

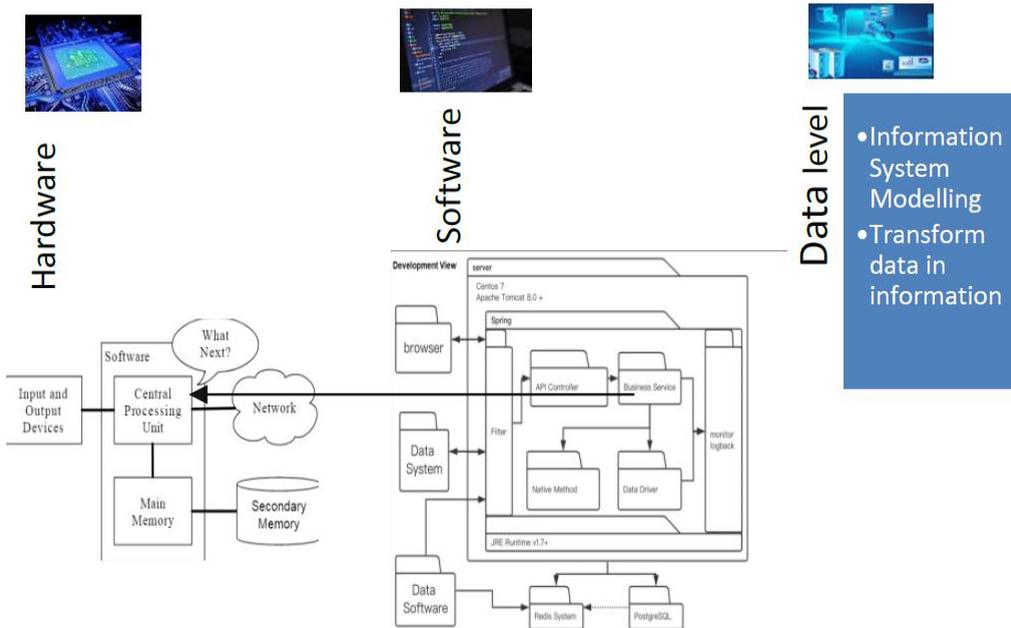


Fig. 2. Computer system components structured on three levels.

The data is integrated into a database. Thus, it can become a powerful tool in modeling an information system.

Among the advantages of implementing such a system we list:

- offers an elegant user experience,
- make quick updates possible,
- is more cost-effective and resource-efficient (such as memory and hardware),
- helps to significantly reduce the redundancy that can occur on data
- maximizes its' integrity.

Due to the fact that the data is stored in one place, the system offers a higher general degree of security and makes it easier to access and manipulate the database. The disadvantages of a centralized computer system are not a real impediment in this context. Its implementation for an average number of users and the nature of the information it is intended to provide make its negative parts unlikely.

Development model and technical design

As a methodology for developing a software product, we chose a method that falls under the scope of the Agile philosophy, namely Kanban. Kanban is a way to outline, manage and improve your workflow to achieve your goals. This system aims to achieve efficiency and agility in the production process of the software.

His approach helped to maintain transparency about the tasks to be performed, always having a vision of what needs to be done and what has already been done. The tool used to implement this strategy was a virtual board that allowed the encapsulation of tasks and the visualization of how they progress.

The first step in the actual development was to outline the entities, their attributes and the relationships between them, thus constituting the schema of the database. This step is identified as “data modeling and involves a system documentation technique according to Rădulescu (2015), so through this representation we obtained a high level of data abstraction”. (see figure 3).

We chose to approach a relational basis, because we needed a structuring of the data and the certainty that it will not take another form. At the same time, the motivation is based on the fact that we do not work with large data sets that exceed the capacity of such a database.

The main feature of relational databases is the rigid structure they have to follow. The data is organized into tables that represent the entities in the database, to which attributes are attached, which are the properties used to describe each entity.

Tables are linked by relationships that can be of several types. Each instance of the entities must be uniquely identified in one way or another. The primary keys are used for this purpose. Secondary keys are used to show the dependency of the tables.

In the case of this application, the data are based on the scheme of 6 entities that we have named suggestively, depending on what each one represents.

Probably the most common technique for building a physical database is starting from its diagram, which is called "forward engineering". The opposite method, the one I also approached, involves the creation of the diagram starting from the schema of the existing database, a process called in reverse terms "reverse engineering".

We started from an initial scheme, and by implementing it in the form of models we also normalized the database. Standardization involves the application of rules on the preliminary database to ensure the correct structure of the tables. Once we had the models corresponding to each table implemented and the database configured with its name and the port on which it runs, we performed the migration operation.

The last step is to create an additional SequelizeMeta table if it does not exist, which is used to record the rolled migrations, run the current migration, and create the related tables.

The structure of the database is as follows:

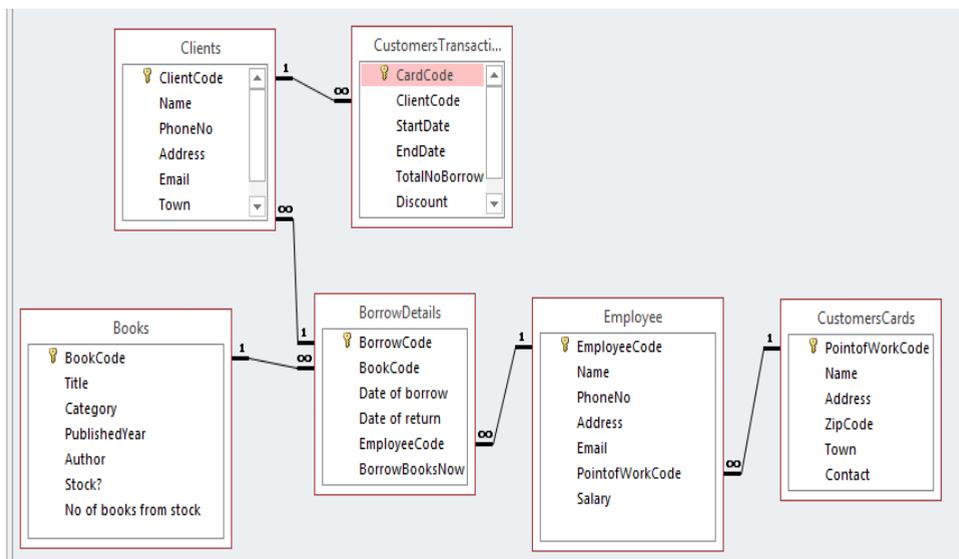


Fig. 3. Database relationships

Technology description

To write the source code needed to make this web application the JavaScript programming language subject to the ECMAScript standard (ES6) is used. According to studies conducted by Stackoverflow for 2019, it appears that the JavaScript programming language ranks 1st for the 7th year in a row in programming, scripting and markup languages. This is a very popular language for web development. Basically being a client-friendly language that helps create dynamic and interactive content, “integrated with Node.js technology, JS can also be used to implement server-side code, as stated in Brown (2014) ”.

A web application is an improved form of a website in that it provides various features that allow it to perform many tasks. This is also the purpose of this application. Its implementation aims to facilitate a user's access to a library, as well as to facilitate the work done by the administrator of the library in question.

In order to develop the frontend component we used the Vue.js framewrok. This is “a progressive technology according to Filipova (2016)”, suitable for the MVC architecture we have implemented. It is used to create the application interface. Released in 2014, it is in continuous development, offers HTML extension and is based on JS.

The unknown side of the consumer that benefits from the application is the server side, called the backend.

In order to make it possible to run the JS language on the server side, ie independent of the browser, the Node.js platform is used. The setup process is easier and more accurate. Another aspect to mention is that "it works in single thread system, using asynchronous programming, as explained in Brown (2014)", so the logic of the application becomes more simplified, but without sacrificing performance. Another compelling benefit is the independence of the platform, even if it is not the first or only technology of this kind, node.js can be configured on all major operating systems (Windows, OS X, Linux) and allows easy collaboration.

The programming environment used is the main tool in developing an application. Visual Studio Code is a suitable and capable editor for the JS language. It manages to combine simplicity with powerful tools in application development, such as IntelliSense, understanding and navigating code semantics, and refactoring it. It also allows the installation of various extensions that become necessary in optimizing the experience.

Filtering is a useful way to see the data we want to display in Access databases. We may use filters to display certain records in a form, report, query, or data sheet, or to print only certain records in a report, table, or

query. By applying a filter, we can limit the data in a view without changing the design of the object.

We will present some filters in the database. The proposed queries are described below.

1. Books borrowed by clients

The SQL Code is printed in the next caption.

```
SELECT Clients.Name, Clients.BorrowCode, BorrowDetails.BookCode, Books.Title
FROM Books INNER JOIN (BorrowDetails INNER JOIN Clients
ON BorrowDetails.[BorrowCode] = Clients.[BorrowCode]) ON Books.[BookCode] = BorrowDetails.[BookCode];
```

The results:

Name	BorrowCode	BookCode	Title
Maria	500	200	Pe aripile vantului
Ana	501	201	La rasarit de eden
Ioana	502	202	Rosu si negru
Diana	503	203	Fundatia si imperiul
Bianca	504	204	Singur pe lume
Alexandra	505	205	Zece negri mititei
*			

2. Clients who borrowed at least one book since now

```
SELECT BorrowDetails.BorrowBooksNow, Clients.Name
FROM BorrowDetails INNER JOIN Clients ON
BorrowDetails.[BorrowCode] = Clients.[BorrowCode]
WHERE ((BorrowDetails.BorrowBooksNow)<>0);
```

BorrowBook	Name
3	Ana
2	Ioana
1	Diana
1	Alexandra
*	

3. Clients who delayed in returning the books:

```
SELECT CustomersTransactions.Delay, Clients.Name
FROM Clients INNER JOIN CustomersTransactions ON
Clients.[ClientCode] =
CustomersTransactions.[ClientCode]
WHERE (((CustomersTransactions.Delay) = "Yes"));
```

The results are printed in the next caption.

Delay	Name
Da	Maria
Da	Diana
Da	Alexandra
*	

4. Customers who have a discount

```
SELECT CustomersTransactions.Discount,
Clients.Name
FROM Clients INNER JOIN CustomersTransactions ON
Clients [ClientCode] = CustomersTransactions
[ClientCode]
WHERE (((CustomersTransactions.Discount) <>
"0%"));
```

The results are printed in the next caption.

Discount	Name
15%	Ana
10%	Bianca
5%	Alexandra
*	

5. The client who borrowed the maximum number of books

```
SELECT Max
(CustomersTransactions.TotalNoBorrowBooks) AS [MaxOfNo
total borrowed books], Max (Clients.Name) AS MaxOfName
FROM Clients INNER JOIN CustomersTransactions ON
Clients [ClientCode] =
CustomersTransactions.[ClientCode];
```

The results are printed in the next caption.

MaxOfNr tot	MaxOfNum
245	Maria

6. The books edited until 1939

```
SELECT Books.PublishedYear, Books.Title
FROM Books WHERE ((Books.PublishedYear)<=1939));
```

PublishedYear	Title
1878	Singur pe lume
1939	Zece negri miti
1936	Pe aripile vantului
1830	Rosu si negru
*	0

7. The borrowed books filtered by clients

Name	BorrowCode	BookCode	Title
Maria	500	200	Pe aripile vantului
Ana	501	201	La rasarit de eden
Ioana	502	202	Rosu si negru
Diana	503	203	Fundatia si imper
Bianca	504	204	Singur pe lume
Alexandra	505	205	Zece negri mititei
*			

```
SELECT Clients.Name, Clients.BorrowCode,
BorrowDetails.BookCode, Books.Title
FROM Books INNER JOIN (BorrowDetails INNER JOIN
Clients ON BorrowDetails.[BorrowCode] =
Clients.[BorrowCode]) ON Books.[BookCode] =
BorrowDetails.[BookCode];
```

Name	BorrowBook
Ana	3
Ioana	2

8. Clients that borrowed at least two books

```
SELECT Clients.Name, BorrowDetails.BorrowBooksNow
FROM BorrowDetails INNER JOIN Clients ON
BorrowDetails.[BorrowCode] = Clients.[BorrowCode]
GROUP BY Clients.Name,
BorrowDetails.BorrowBooksNow
HAVING (((BorrowDetails.BorrowBooksNow) > = 2));
```

Delay	Name
Yes	Maria
Yes	Diana
Yes	Alexandra

9. Who are the customers who delayed the return of the books?

The code is presented in the next query.

```
SELECT CustomersTransactions.Delay, Clients.Name
FROM Clients INNER JOIN CustomersTransactions ON
Clients.[ClientCode] =
CustomersTransactions.[ClientCode]
WHERE (((CustomersTransactions.Delay)="Yes"));
```

Town	CountOfNur
Baia Mare	1
Brasov	2
Cluj Napoca	1
Constanta	1
Timisoara	1

10. The number of customers in each city. In the next query we filtered the data.

```
SELECT Clients.Town, Count(Clients.Name) AS  
CountOfName FROM Clients  
GROUP BY Clients.Town;
```

Conclusions

The classic method of manually managing the bookstore organized within a company proved to be inefficient, following the survey conducted based on employee experience. Thus, a transition in the online environment of their activity related to the library is a step towards integration in the digital age in which we live.

The objective of this project is to develop a system that, by including modern techniques, allows the control and management of the activities that the bookstore involves.

The aim is also to create a design, an interface with the user who wants the tasks to be performed easily and productively, thus generating his satisfaction.

The implemented system helps the integrated system manager to be able to follow the loan process and to have access to updated data in real time (about the state of the stock and users), as well as control over them.

Employees have access to the articles made available to them in an organized format, and they are also facilitated to use the services offered by the digital library.

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REACT NATIVE: A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO MODERN CROSS-PLATFORM MOBILE APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

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***Abstract:** React Native is a framework for building native iOS and Android applications using JavaScript. The React library is the key feature. React Native has the same design as React, allowing composing a rich mobile user interface from declarative components, but uses native components instead of web components to render a user interface. React Native has a powerful composition model and recommendation is to use composition instead of inheritance to reuse code between components. To build the content of a component, React Native provides props. Components are in a tree-like structure and data flow through components is unidirectional. In addition to props, components can also have an internal state. Each of the prop and state change triggers a complete re-render of the component. Two main Hooks enable managing a component internal state and component lifecycle. Global state management is provided by Redux and Context API. Context API is a React built-in functionality to share data across the application without having to pass through props. It is like a global value which can be accessed anywhere through the application component tree. Redux is a state management container used for handling all the application related data. All changes to the data happen through reducers and all data is maintained in a global store.*

***Keywords:** android, component, iOS, React Native, state management*

INTRODUCTION

React Native is a cross-platform framework used for the development of native mobile applications using JavaScript and React. It is based on an idea to allow developers to write high-quality native applications for iOS and

Android using familiar Web technologies. The beginning of this framework dates back to January of 2015. It was created and published by Meta Platforms, Inc. However, it did not originally support the development of mobile applications for the Android platform, until September 2015 (Dabit, 2019). Today, in addition to iOS and Android platforms, it is possible to develop applications utilising React Native for Windows, MacOS, Web, multiple TV platforms and devices, with the help of third-party libraries (Building for TV Devices; React Native for Windows + macOS).

BACKGROUND

JavaScript is a dynamic scripting language, which was developed to support the browser with the feature of asynchronous communication and for user interaction with the web page components. In other words, it instructs the browser to make changes to page elements after loading a web page. In JavaScript, data changes in memory and it is bound to a view in the user interfaces (UI). That means when data is modified in JavaScript, which is in memory, the data will be changed in the UI as well. In turn, when the data changes in the user interface, more precisely in the Document Object Model (DOM) by clicking a button or any other event, it is also updated in memory, keeping the two in sync. In complex and large applications with multiple views representing data in one of models and, as adding more models and more views, this two-way data binding ends up in an infinite event loop where one view updates a model, which in return updates a view. That is the huge disadvantage of JavaScript and that is why it is not suitable for creating large high-efficiency applications (Paul, Nalwaya, 2016).

React, also known as ReactJS, is an open-source JavaScript library originally created by Jordan Walke. It is backed and maintained by Meta Platforms, Inc (Team). It is used as the View (V) in the Model-View-Controller (MVC). React is designed for solving problems on the Web in a way that allows rendering complex UI with high performance. This library has become extremely popular since its introduction in 2013, with many established companies taking advantage of its quick rendering, maintainability, and declarative UI, among other things. It can be said that React is the backbone of creating powerful single page Web applications. The basic fundamental behind React is the concept of virtual DOM (Aggarwal et al, 2018).

Traditional Web applications are slow because they use the DOM and DOM manipulations are expensive. For the application to be fast and efficient, the usage of the DOM must be as little as possible, because the

time required to modify and redraw the DOM can be extremely long. The solution proposed by the React library is to keep a representation of the DOM in memory, called a virtual DOM, and make all changes there (Rawat, Mahajan, 2020). Like the actual DOM, the virtual DOM is a node tree that lists elements and their attributes and content as objects and properties. The virtual DOM renders subtrees of nodes based upon state changes and it can be rendered either at client side or server side and communicate back and forth (Aggarwal et al, 2018). Whenever a request for changing the page content is made, the changes are reflected to the memory residing virtual DOM first. After that a diff() algorithm compares the virtual DOM and the browser DOM, and then the required changes only are reflected to the browser DOM, instead of re-rendering the entire DOM. The goal is that when making changes to memory, React applies the minimum number of changes necessary to align the actual DOM with the virtual DOM. Furthermore, this mechanism provides a gigantic boost to the performance of applications. This characteristic of the virtual DOM is not only important, but the ultimate key feature of React library (Paul, Nalwaya, 2016).

REACT NATIVE ARCHITECTURE

The cross-platform capability of React Native is possible due to its unique architecture. Figure 1. presents several different segments of React Native architecture.

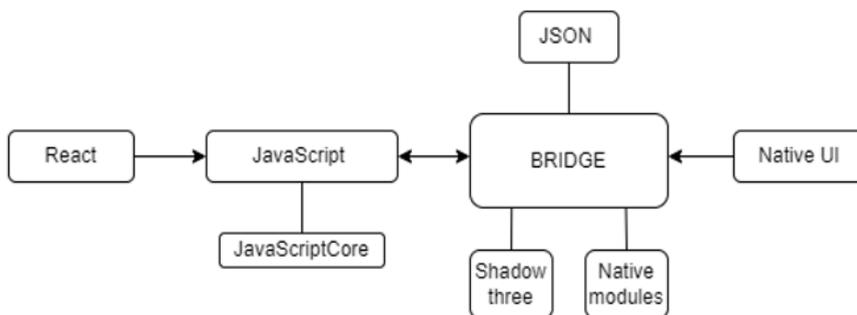


Figure 1. React Native Architecture Scheme
 Source: Matijević, 2021

The Native Module system exposes instances of native classes to JavaScript as JavaScript objects, thereby allowing to execute arbitrary native code from within JavaScript. In the case of iOS native modules are written in Objective C or Swift, while in the case of Android modules are

written in Java or Kotlin. React Native renders native components by invoking platform-specific APIs. For instance, to render UI components on iOS, React Native uses either Objective C or Swift APIs. As for Android mobile applications, it will be Java or Kotlin. But for writing React Native applications, a developer would hardly ever need to write native code. In fact, a developer doesn't need to know Objective C or Kotlin to create the React Native apps (Gaba, Ramachandran, 2019; Native Modules Intro).

The JavaScript Virtual Machine, also known as JavaScript Bundle, is the engine that runs all JavaScript code written in React Native apps. On both iOS and Android simulators and devices, React Native uses JavaScriptCore. JavaScriptCore is a framework that allows JavaScript code to be run on mobile devices, for instance. On iOS devices, this framework is directly provided by the OS. Android devices don't have JavaScriptCore, so React Native bundles it along with the application itself. This slightly increases the size of the application on Android devices. When the application runs on the device, JavaScriptCore is used to run the JavaScript code. However, in case of debugging the application, the JavaScript code will run inside Chrome. Chrome uses the V8 engine and uses WebSockets to communicate with the source code. It is important to note that the V8 engine and JavaScriptCore are different environments, and errors can occur only when the debugger is connected, but not when the application is running normally on a mobile device (Gaba, Ramachandran, 2019).

The core element of React Native architecture is the Bridge. React Native Bridge is written in C++/Java. The bridge transforms the JavaScript code into source, native code and vice versa. It translates JavaScript into platform-specific components. Simply put, the Bridge gets JavaScript call, then it leverages Objective C, Swift, Kotlin or Java APIs, which allows the original display of the application (Gaba, Ramachandran, 2019).

It is important to emphasise that React Native runs all layouts on separate threads. React Native uses three threads - JavaScript thread, Shadow thread and the Main thread.

The JavaScript thread is where the logic runs and will decide what must be rendered on the screen. This is where the application JavaScript code is executed and where API calls are made. The Shadow thread is a background thread which executes operations from the JavaScript thread. This is where the layout of the app is calculated and passed to the application's interface. The Main thread is also known as the UI thread since only this thread can make changes to the UI. The Bridge system uses the React library to display the application on the device. The process does not affect the user experience because these asynchronous calls take place separately from the

Main thread. Therefore, the Main thread is the one React Native application runs on and is used for native Android or iOS user interface rendering (Gaba, Ramachandran, 2019; Matijević, 2021).

The JavaScript thread and the Main thread do not communicate directly but work by sending asynchronous JSON messages. The exchange of asynchronous JSON messages is very efficient. In other words, these two threads depend on the Bridge. JavaScript thread also uses Bridge to transfer data to Shadow thread. The JavaScript thread achieves this by serialising data in JSON format and sending it as a string. This also happens when transferring data from the Shadow to the Main Thread (Matijević, 2021).

REACT NATIVE RE - ARCHITECTURE

Since 2018, Meta Platforms, Inc has been working on a new React Native architecture. It will become open source during this year. The new architecture design differs from the current one in many ways. As shown in Figure 2, it consists of the new Native Turbo Module system and the new Renderer Fabric (Corti, 2022).

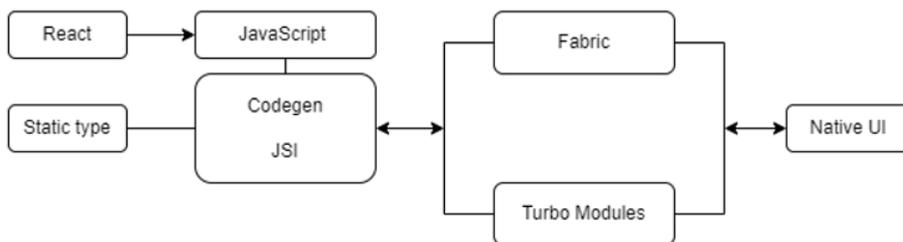


Figure 2. React Native Re-Architecture Scheme
 Source: Matijević, 2021

The absence of the Bridge is noticeable in the new architecture. Given the problems caused by the Bridge, such as the dependence of the Main and JavaScript threads on the Bridge, asynchronous operation that does not guarantee data transfer and significant delays in data transfer, it is not surprising that the Bridge has been replaced by a new component called JavaScript Interface (JSI). The main goal of this component is to enable JavaScript and Native parties to be able to communicate without an additional step in the form of a Bridge (Matijević, 2021).

The novelty brought by JSI is the fact that the JavaScript package no longer has to depend on JavaScriptCore. This means that in the future, the JavaScriptCore engine could be replaced by another JavaScript engine, such as the Chrome Engine V8. This further means that application development and debugging mode could be in the same environment. Moreover, by using JSI, JavaScript will be able to keep references to C++ Host objects and call methods on them, which in turn will allow JavaScript and Native components to recognize each other and communicate with each other directly (Matijević, 2021).

Turbo Modules are basically like current Native Modules, but are implemented to behave differently. The best feature of Turbo Modules is that they are lazy loaded, which means that JavaScript code will load each module only when needed and have a direct reference to it. This can significantly improve start-up times for applications with many source modules (Khoroshulia, 2020).

Fabric is a new React Native rendering system, a conceptual evolution of the outdated rendering system. The basic principles are the integration of higher rendering logic in C++, improving interoperability with host platforms and unlocking new features for React Native. One of the new features is that Fabric allows you to create a shadow tree directly in C++ with UI Manager, which improves the response of the user interface by eliminating the need to skip strings. With the new implementation of multi-platform display systems, each platform benefits from performance improvements that are inspired by the limitations of a single platform (Fabric; Matijević, 2021).

Further, instead of communicating with the JavaScript site via Bridge, Fabric uses JSI to expose the user interface functions of the JavaScript site, resulting in direct communication on both sides. Since React Native is single-threaded, which means that when one component is rendered, the others have to wait in line, this control will allow JavaScript to have priority rows for the user interface. This means that it can prioritise time-sensitive user interface tasks and execute them synchronously over all others (Khoroshulia, 2020; Matijević, 2021).

The features of Native modules, that require synchronous data access, cannot be fully exploited in the current React Native architecture. That's why another useful tool has been introduced into the new React Native architecture, and that is Codegen. The Codegen tool will automate compatibility between JavaScript threads and source threads and ensure that they are synchronised. In addition, Codegen will define the interface elements used by Turbo Modules and Fabric. All of this is expected to

eliminate the need to duplicate the code and allow data to be sent without uncertainty (Matijević, 2021).

REACT FUNDAMENTALS

React Native brings the power of React to mobile development. It is built on top of React, utilises the React library as dependency and it uses the same declarative approach to constructing user interfaces as React for the Web (React Fundamentals).

In the world of React, a component is the elementary building block of an application and represents a declarative description of a visual feature on a page. The declarative nature of components promotes the predictability of their output. They accept arbitrary entries, called props, and return React elements that describe what should appear on the screen. Conceptually, components are like JavaScript functions. Namely, they serve the same purpose as JavaScript functions, but they work individually to return JSX code as elements for UI (Components and Props). JSX stands for JavaScript XML. It is simply a syntax extension of JavaScript. It allows directly writing elements in React and React Native, within JavaScript code. The components are also considered to be independent bits of code that can be reused. The two types of components are class and functional components (Aggarwal et al, 2018; React Fundamentals).

In addition to solving some of the common problems faced when creating JavaScript applications, React components are modular and emphasise composition over inheritance, which makes code immensely reusable and testable. Strictly speaking, React has a powerful composition model (Composition vs Inheritance). In essence, it means complex or derivative components are built, instead of using the concept of object-oriented inheritance or something akin to object-oriented inheritance, using a composition to build up complexity from simple building blocks. That also means code reuse is primarily achieved through composition rather than inheritance. Composition has other uses besides making increasingly more complex components from smaller, simpler building blocks. Composition can also be used to make derivative components. Additionally, a React component often has rendering logic, markup declaration, and even styles in the same file, which promotes the portability of code and the ability to write shared libraries of components (Masiello, Friedmann, 2017).

State is a way to handle data in React and React Native components. The state contains data specific to the component that may change over time. The state is user-defined, and it should be a plain JavaScript object.

Updating state re-renders the UI of the component and any child component relying on this data as props. Props or properties are how data is passed down through the React or React Native application to child components. Updating props automatically updates any components receiving the same props. Props are similar to HTML attributes. Simply put, props are used for customising React components. Difference between state and props is that state is mutable while props are immutable. Mutable means changeable. On the contrary, if something is immutable, it can never be changed. This means that state can be updated in the future while props cannot be updated (Caspers, 2017; Dabit, 2019).

React lifecycle methods can be understood as a series of events that occur from the emergence of the React component to the end of its existence. There are three main stages in a React component lifecycle. Those are creation or mounting, updating, and deletion or unmounting. React lifecycle methods are available in a React component and are executed at specific points in the component's lifecycle. They control how the component functions and updates. Lifecycle methods differ in class and functional components. Each has its own set of lifecycle methods. Mounting methods are called when an instance of a component is being created and inserted into the DOM. An update can be caused by changes to props or state. These methods are called when a component is being re-rendered due to changed state or props. Unmounting method is called when a component is being removed from the DOM (Caspers, 2017; Dabit, 2019).

REACT NATIVE CORE COMPONENTS

With React Native, Android and iOS views can be invoked with JavaScript using the React component. At runtime, React Native creates the corresponding Android and iOS views for those components. Because React Native components are backed by the same views as Android and iOS, React Native apps look and perform like any other apps. These platform-backed components are called Native Components. React Native comes with a set of essential, ready-to-use Native Components known as Core Components. Core Components are considered as UI elements written within JSX. There are twelve basic React Native elements, and the most commonly used are shown in Table 1. below (Core Components and Native Components).

React Native UI Component	Android View	iOS View	Web Analog	Description
<View >	<ViewGroup>	<UIView>	<div> (non-scrolling)	A container that supports layout with flexbox, style, some touch handling, and accessibility controls.
<Text>	<TextView>	<UITextView>	<p>	Displays, styles, and nests strings of text and even handles touch events.
<Image>	<ImageView>	<UIImageView>		Displays different types of images
<ScrollView>	<ScrollView>	<UIScrollView>	<div>	A generic scrolling container that can contain multiple components and views.
<TextInput>	<editText>	<UITextField>	<input type='text' />	Allows the user to enter text.

Table 1. Frequently used Core Components and their Native and Web Analogs
Source: Core Components and Native Components

LOCAL STATE MANAGEMENT USING HOOKS

Initially, the state of a component could only be manipulated if it was a class component, using class-specific life cycle methods (State and Lifecycle). That has changed since the release of React 16.8 in October of 2018. Hooks are a new addition in this React version. They let you use state and other React features without writing a class. Hooks are basically functions that allow manipulation of the state and lifecycle methods from functional components. In other words, Hooks bring to functional components things that were once only possible with classes, such as the ability to work with React and React Native local state and effects through useState and useEffect. Since useState and useEffect Hooks are responsible for local state management, these two Hooks are considered as major ones (Introducing Hooks).

The major two Hooks rules that must always be followed are the following:

1. Never call Hooks from inside a loop, condition or nested function. Instead, always use Hooks at the top level of React function, before any early returns. By following this rule, it is ensured that the Hooks are called in the same order each time the component is rendered.

This is what allows React to properly preserve the state of the Hooks between multiple `useState` and `useEffect` calls.

2. Don't call Hooks from regular JavaScript functions. Instead, call Hooks from React function components or from custom Hooks. By following this rule, it is provided that all stateful logic in a component is clearly visible from its source code (Rules of Hooks).

The most important and often used Hook is `useState`. The purpose of this Hook is to handle state, whenever any of its data changes, React re-renders the UI. React will preserve this state between re-renders. The `useState` consists of three parts, namely the state variable, the function to set the state, and the initial value and it returns a pair, the current state value and a function that allows updating it (Using the State Hook).

The `useEffect` Hook is one of the tools used for managing the component's state and deals with the component's lifecycle. It allows implementation of all of the lifecycle Hooks from within a single API function, unlike class components which use three of their lifecycle methods for the same purpose. Just like the name implies, it carries out an effect each time there is a state change and adds the ability to perform side effects from a function component. By default, it runs after the first render and every time the state is updated. React Native performs the clean-up when the component unmounts and this Hook provides a mechanism for clean-ups, in addition to the update mechanism. It is important to point out that this is the optional clean-up mechanism for effects. Every effect may return a function that cleans up after it. This allows keeping the logic for adding and removing subscriptions close to each other (Hooks API Reference; Using the Effect Hook).

GLOBAL STATE MANAGEMENT USING REDUX

In MVC architectures, it is common for data to flow back and forth through the controller component. Data flows into the controller from views as the user interacts with the application, and data flows out of the controller to the view as the underlying data model is updated. On the contrary, React Native is featured with unidirectional data flow between the states and views in an application. This means data can flow in a single direction between the application states and views (Dabit, 2019).

State describes the condition of the application at a specific point in time and the React Native UI is rendered based on that state. Although component states and props can process data in simple React Native

applications, using Hooks tools, it is difficult to accurately handle data for more complex systems. It can be said that passing data through the component tree in React is quite complicated. In order to receive data in a low-level component, the data has to be transferred as props through many middle-level components unnecessarily. This process results in writing a bunch of extra code and adding unused properties to middle-level components. To solve this problem, there are many state management libraries (Caspers, 2017).

Among the very popular third-party libraries React Native uses is Redux. Redux is a pattern and implementation library for managing and updating application state, using events called actions. Redux helps manage the so-called global state, a state that is needed across many parts of React Native application (Dabit, 2019; Redux Overview and Concepts). In other words, by using Redux, the state of the application can be stored globally and divided among multiple components. Redux was inspired, for the most part, by Flux. Redux draws on the ideas of Flux and adds in immutability and the principles of functional programming in an attempt to bring sanity to frontend applications that are growing in complexity on a regular basis (Masiello, Friedmann, 2017). It serves as a centralised store for state that needs to be used across the entire application, with rules ensuring that the state can only be updated in a predictable fashion. Redux components are action, reducer and store (Garreau, Faurot, 2018).

An action is a plain object that describes the intention to cause change with a type property. It must have a type property which tells what type of action is being performed. An action object can have other fields with additional information about what happened. By convention, that information is in a field called payload. An action creator is a function that creates and returns an action object. The only way to change the state of an application is to dispatch an action, using reducer function (Garreau, Faurot, 2018; Redux Overview and Concepts).

A reducer is a function that receives the current state and an action object. Thus, actions and states are held together by a reducer. An action is dispatched with an intention to cause change. This change is performed by the reducer. Reducer is the only way to change states in Redux, makes decisions on how to update the state if necessary and returns the new state. Reducers must always follow some specific rules. First, they should only calculate the new state value based on the state and action arguments. Second rule of reducer is that they are not allowed to modify the existing state. Instead, they must make immutable updates, by copying the existing

state and making changes to the copied values. Reducer must not have side effects is the last rule (Caspers, 2017; Redux Overview and Concepts).

A store is a state container which holds the application state. Redux can have only a single store in an application. A store is an immutable object tree in Redux. The store is created by passing in a reducer. In order to create a store from reducer, Redux uses the utility `createStore`. This is a function that takes in a reducer and returns an object with several methods that allow interaction with the store. Since there is only a single store in Redux applications, the `createStore` function should only ever be called once in an application (Caspers, 2017; Redux Overview and Concepts).

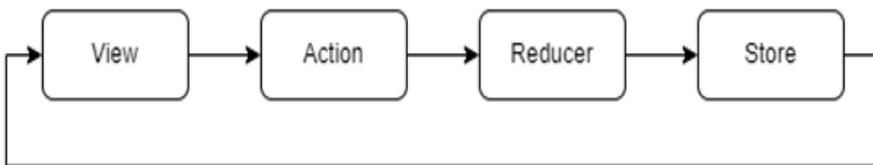


Figure 3. React Native – Redux data flow

Source: Garreau, Faurot, 2018

As presented in Figure 3. Redux unidirectional data flow includes 4 following steps:

1. Components together build up the View. The only purpose of the View is to display the data passed down by the store. By interacting with the application's View, the user triggers an action.
2. An action is sent or dispatched from the view which are payloads that can be read by reducer. Thus, the reducer function is called with the current state and the dispatched action. It reads the payloads from the actions and then updates the store.
3. The store notifies the View by executing their callback functions.
4. The View retrieves updated state and re-renders again (Garreau, Faurot, 2018).

Since Redux itself is synchronous, a Redux store doesn't know anything about async logic. It only knows how to synchronously dispatch actions, update the state by calling the root reducer function, and notify the UI that something has changed. Reducers must never contain side effects, but in case of async calls it is not possible to avoid them. Redux middlewares were designed to enable writing logic that has side effects. Commonly, middlewares are used to deal with asynchronous actions in applications. They function as a medium to interact with dispatched action before reaching the reducer (Async Logic and Data Fetching).

The first principle of Redux is that all application state is contained within a single store, which is most often a JavaScript object. Redux uses a single store and has reducer functions that are responsible for managing smaller parts of the global state. The second principle of Redux is that the application state is immutable. This means that the object representing the state, at no point, should be modified in any way by any component. Reducer functions are used to create a new state object when an action is dispatched, leaving the old state unmodified. The third and final principle of the Redux framework is that all functions that compute the new state must be pure functions. Pure functions are functions that produce no side-effects and are deterministic—for a given set of inputs, the output will always be the same. In Redux, pure functions are reducer functions (Masiello, Friedmann, 2017).

In general, Redux can integrate with any UI framework, and is most frequently used with React and React Native. React-Redux is the official package that lets both React and React Native components interact with a Redux store by reading pieces of state and dispatching actions to update the store (Caspers, 2017).

GLOBAL STATE MANAGEMENT USING CONTEXT API

In addition to props, there is another way parent elements can pass values down to the children elements in React Native. It is called Context, and it works in much the same way as props, except that it does not have to be explicitly passed down the component tree. Instead, if an element provides its children with Context, any child, no matter how far down the tree, can have access to it. Therefore, Context was introduced to overcome the problem of passing props down component tree, by providing a way to pass data through the component tree without having to pass props down manually at every level (Masiello, Friedmann, 2017).

Unlike Redux, which is known as a global state management technology independent of React, Context has been part of the React library since its 16.3 version, and has become a widely used global state management solution since release of the 16.8 version, thanks to the introduction of another important Hook (Context; Introducing Hooks). The useContext Hook is the one that allows working with React's Context API, which itself is a mechanism to allow us to share data within its component tree without passing through props (Hooks API Reference).

The usage of Context is based on its API. The Context API includes the `React.createContext`, `Context.Provider`, `Context.Consumer`, `Class.contextType` and `Context.displayName`. The last two are not frequently used (Context).

`React.createContext` creates a context object. When React Native renders a component which subscribes to this context object, it will read the current context value from the matching Provider in the component tree. When a component does not have a matching Provider in the component tree, it returns the `defaultValue` argument and only then is the `defaultValue` used (Context).

Every Context object has a component which allows consuming components to subscribe to context changes. When a consumer component asks for something, it finds it in the context and provides it to where it is needed. Simply put, it acts as a delivery service. In other words, the Provider component accepts a value prop to be passed to consuming components that are descendants of this Provider. One Provider can be connected to many consumers and can be nested to override values deeper within the component tree. All consumers that are descendants of a Provider will re-render whenever the Provider's value prop changes (Context).

`Context.Consumer` is a React Native component that subscribes to context changes. It is used to request data through the provider and manipulate the central data store when the Provider allows it and it requires the function as a component. The functional component receives the current context value and then returns a React node. The value argument, which is passed to the function, will be equal to the value prop of the closest Provider for this context in the component tree. If there is no Provider for this context, the value argument will be equal to the `defaultValue` which was previously passed to `createContext` function (Context).

In the end, there is another way for the functional component to connect to a Context. Each child functional component can access the Context by calling `useContext` Hook that requires a parameter to identify which Context to connect to. The solution provided by `useContext` Hook is a much prettier way to consume context than using `Context.Consumer` components. The `useContext` Hook is incredibly helpful when applying it to components consuming multiple contexts (Context; Hooks API Reference).

Overall, there are three mostly used steps to set up a global state management in React Native applications using Context. First step includes `createContext`. During the following second step Context Provider and global state are created. Final step involves a call to `useContext` Hook to get state from child components (Context; Hooks API Reference).

CONCLUSION

The best thing about working with React Native is that the application uses standard web technologies like JavaScript, yet is fully native. In other words, React Native applications are blazing fast and smooth and equivalent to any native application built using traditional Android and iOS technologies like Objective-C, Swift or Kotlin. However, React Native does not compromise in terms of performance and overall experience, like popular hybrid frameworks that use web technologies to build iOS and Android apps. This is also the reason why, since its release, React Native has been a widely accepted framework for mobile application development. Without the need to learn a fundamentally different set of technologies for each mobile platform, React Native approach called *Learn once, write anywhere* is completely justified.

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SETTING UP A MODEL FOR STUDYING THE BASICS OF PROGRAMMING AT UNIVERSITIES USING THE PYTHON PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE

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***Abstract:** In this paper, we present a simple model that should lead to easier mastering of programming among students. The model is based on the study of one programming language, which should directly develop all the necessary knowledge of students and thus enable easier continuation of independent learning and integration into other programming languages. Through, we have processed the behavior of the Python programming language with algorithms but also with other popular programming languages such as Java and C++. We only looked at the problem of programming through procedural and object-oriented programming using the Python programming language. The ultimate goal of the paper is to offer a new model that provides an effective approach to teaching students the basics of programming using a single programming language. The application of one programming language should lead to easier and deeper mastering of programming knowledge. In this paper, we recommend Python as an excellent choice for teaching object-oriented programming. Although often viewed as a "scripting" language, Python is a completely object-oriented language with a consistent object model and a rich set of built-in classes. Based on our experiences in teaching and working with students, we propose this model as a potential solution for faster and easier development of new skills in the field of programming.*

***Keywords:** basics of programming, Python, programming languages, C++i Java*

Introduction

Computer sciences integrate several different knowledge required in the field of data structures, algorithms, numerical analysis, programming methodology, simulations, etc. At the universities where experts of this

profile study, a number of programming languages are often used for education, including: C, C ++, C #, Java, PHP and Python. This model of programming learning can spend a lot of time constantly learning basic syntax instead of using every subject that is currently learning a new programming language to deepen and gain new knowledge and experience in the field of programming. If you compare this with learning foreign languages, which are usually one or two at most universities, then it is clear that this can be done with programming languages as well.

The professional public has accepted the Python programming language as a platform for learning programming since primary education because it provides a wide range of possibilities. The main advantage of this programming language is its simplicity in writing, and therefore in learning. Considering that most users have already encountered this programming language, then the knowledge acquired in this field can be improved at universities without a special need for new learning of syntax. New learning of syntax in various programming languages only helps the user to see new possibilities but not to raise them to a higher level when learning similar things throughout the semester as in other programming languages such as: variables, numbers, lists, loops, etc.

Python, on the other hand, has built-in data types that allow students to quickly create functional programs on their own. (Myers & Sethna, 2018)

Choosing a primary programming language would facilitate students' accelerated development, true in only one programming language but when one considers that logic, not just syntax knowledge, is primarily developed. It is characteristic of every programmer that he constantly develops and improves his knowledge on his own, for which he only initially needs help to penetrate as easily and deeply as possible into the core of the problem.

Many studies have highlighted the difficulties experienced by University students in learning programming. (Grandell et al., 2006) Some of these problems are encountered by the authors themselves in their work with students at the university and based on this knowledge they propose the following model that can facilitate learning and give greater competencies to students in further work after graduation.

About the Python programming language

Python is a powerful dynamic programming language used in a wide range of applications. (Python, 2022) Its high-level data structures and clear syntax make it an ideal first programming language (Downey, 2012) or a

language for easier merging of tools from different domains to solve complex problems. (Langtangen, 2006)

Python has a large number of standard libraries that can speed up the development of programs for various applications, which is why it is used by large global companies such as Google and Youtube. The programming language itself was developed as Open Source Software (OSS) and its source code is available to users for free use as well as for commercial use. It is also very well documented which makes it easier for users to further learn and improve. In addition to all of the above, Python is an interpreted programming language and as such allows students to analyze each individual command. (Kapanowski, 2010)

Python in education

In the last few years, there has been an increase in the use of (Radenski, 2006) Python in academic circles, which has led to a large number of textbooks in this field. (Gaddis, 2009)

The main culprit for this progress is its clean and simple syntax, which allows students to devote more time to learning the concept of program development, rather than the syntax itself.

In the meantime, in addition to educational institutions, Python has gained wide application in the industry itself, which separates it from programming languages such as: Pascal, Delphi, Visual Basic, which were previously used in education. Python programming language is a powerful and object-oriented programming (OOP) language, which makes it suitable for the development of serious programming solutions, but also for learning object-oriented paradigms. Some of the industries in which python is used are: robotics, multimedia, science, etc., which also have their use in education.

Influence of Python programming language on learning OOP paradigm

Our general reason for using Python is quite similar to those that use Python to teach procedural access: it allows for a greater emphasis on basic principles with less unwanted focusing on syntax. Our goal is steady progress in which each lesson is consistent with previous lessons. More effort is needed to make object awareness clear from the outset, rather than an unpleasant paradigm shift later in learning. With this we want to be able to use the same programming language for learning initial procedural programming as object-oriented in a simple and fast way. True, this is very

difficult to do in 15 weeks, as long as one semester lasts, so it would be good to separate these two paradigms, to learn the procedural first, and then object-oriented programming in two special subjects. Similar to the case of computer graphics, where it is recommended to study vector and raster graphics separately.

The first subject can be called the basics of programming and learn the dream elements of programming using the procedural paradigm. Another subject can be called Object Oriented Programming and it should deal with the object paradigm but using the same programming language in our case it is Python.

Python programming language and algorithms

Algorithms are one of the most important knowledge that an engineer should possess. They are used not only in writing care programs in all cases of solving engineering tasks. Precisely because of its use, this discipline is studied in all engineering and other fields at universities around the world.

Algorithms can be studied only by reading the literature and doing sets of tasks, this approach is not so popular among students, but the knowledge itself is smaller and less applicable. For that reason, it is common to learn algorithms with programming, which implements the acquired knowledge faster and easier into real projects.

In practice, there is a large amount of literature that uses algorithms to study programming languages such as Java, C ++ and C. It is often argued that these are programming languages that are familiar to students from work, so it is easier to master new materials. Unfortunately, experience has shown that algorithms are rarely studied with programming, but only the syntax of programming languages.

Algorithms themselves have several lines and are very easy to draw, while on the other hand in programming languages such as C or C ++ they are syntactically defined in many lines and thus difficult to follow. In the case of Python, which is very optimal with syntax code, it is easier to define in less lines and more complex algorithms, and thus easier to follow and learn. This ability makes it suitable and desirable for learning algorithms in the educational process. Second, Python provides basic data structures such as lists, torques, and dictionaries that algorithms can use directly. Even more complex data structures such as trees and graphs can also be expressed in Python in a concise, human-readable form, without the need to reinvent these data structures. (Chou, 2002)

Comparison of Python with Java and C ++ programming languages

In practice, programming languages such as Java and C ++ are very common in education. They are used from the ground up, advanced programming and as a testing ground for mastering the OOP paradigm. All that can be learned in education as a material for mastering programming can be done with the Python programming language in an easier and faster way. What makes the python even more attractive for the basics is that it enables transition to other languages due to small differences such as: marking block structures, primitive names, use of I / O, etc.

The different object models of Java and C ++ are new to students migrating from Python, while migrating from Python to Java could be easier. Python's models for identification, information transfer, and symmetry are assigned in accordance with Java's reference model for object types. Both languages rely on the collection of surpluses in terms of protecting programs from poor memory management. On the other hand, the transition from Python to C ++ is much more extreme due to the complexity of the C ++ programming language. In addition, the difference between static and dynamic memory allocation places more responsibility on C ++ programmers. (Goldwasser & Letscher, 2008)

Model proposal

This model is very simple and does not require major changes in administrative form. For this model, it is necessary to define two subjects, and if desired, the third.

- The first subject would be called Fundamentals of Programming and would study the basic building blocks of a programming language. In our model, that programming language for all three subjects would be Python. This course would be studied in the first semester of the first year and in this way students would be introduced to the basics of programming and pre-procedural programming.
- The second subject would be called Object Oriented Programming (OOP) and would deal with, as its name suggests, object programming also in the Python programming language, which would upgrade the acquired knowledge from the first year. This subject would be studied in the first semester of the second year or in the second semester of the first year, depending on the duration of studies (6 or 8 semesters)
- The third and recommended subject could be called the Practicum in Applied Programming, which would combine the acquired knowledge

of students from both previously mentioned subjects that they would apply in independent (mentoring) work. This course would be studied in the second year in the second semester or in the case of a study length of 6 semesters this course would be taught in the first semester of the second semester.

This would complete the learning of programming with practical work. This model avoids constant learning of new syntax and possibilities of various programming languages, but time would be wisely used to acquire new and deeper knowledge in programming.

Discussion

As you can already see from the paper, Python has many advantages for acquiring the basics. Applying this model gives you time to learn and better master programming, and not just a great variety of knowledge of programming languages. The model takes only the first two years, which leaves enough space for the third and possibly the fourth year to then do advanced programming in programming languages such as C ++ and Java. The third subject is recommended because it achieves greater involvement of students in software development, and thus their satisfaction with learning. Other models require a lot of work from students to constantly master the basics, and it is enough to learn everything in one programming language and then only upgrade knowledge from other programming languages if and when students need it. Our task in education is to teach students to think and encourage the use of their logic in solving certain problems, not learning syntax and solving math problems as standard batteries of tests to test their skills. It often happens that students master the material, and when it is necessary to apply it, they do not know how to apply that knowledge. Just as mathematicians practice tasks, and chess players various chess combinations, so programmers need to work on real projects that will make their knowledge more applicable. This approach would be more appreciated by the students themselves and by future employers.

Conclusion

The model based on the previous analysis has a great possibility of success if it is accepted by educational institutions. The task is to teach students to program and all the time that is available to professors in the

curriculum should be used for new learning and deepening knowledge. This model can be done with other mentioned programming languages, but Python has more advantages over other languages, and the learning effects are equal or greater when you consider the simplicity of Python.

Applied courses are rarely done at academic levels, so the third proposed course is a great opportunity for students to finally do an independent task in a real environment with acquired knowledge, and it is certain that during the process they will upgrade their knowledge depending on project needs. This achieves exactly what we talked about at the beginning of the paper, and that is that students need to learn to learn independently and upgrade their knowledge. For independent learning, students should use available literature, Internet sources as well as the commune gathered around the Python programming language, but also exchange knowledge with other students, assistants and professors. From the offered model, it is clear that students do not need ten programming languages to learn programming, but let's say in our model, one through three subjects. This is quite enough to learn programming and to get a job in the economy later, which is the ultimate goal of the educational process. The application of other programming languages is possible in accordance with the study program such as: internet programming, mobile programming, etc. These subjects study specific branches of programming application, and our model talks about acquiring knowledge about the basics of programming regardless of its application.

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**SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL
ENVIRONMENT**

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE APPLICATION OF RHETORIC IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Marijana VUKČEVIĆ

***Abstract:** Speech is a unique human trait that is extremely valuable. It reveals it on multiple levels. To a greater extent, speech identifies a person as a member of the human race. Speech is a sign of social solidarity at the meso level, because it identifies a person as a member of one nation. Speech impresses a person as an individual, his social, rank and profession at the micro level. The ability to speak and converse in a foreign language is an even more desirable personal trait because it demonstrates mastery of the cultural and linguistic aspects of the country. An individual must certainly have a certain degree of grammatical understanding and vocabulary in order to speak a foreign language. Knowledge of grammar rules and vocabulary, on the other hand, is not enough. The rhetoric of the twenty-first century is much more than the rules of speech and the basis of eloquence from ancient times - it is an extremely important component of all public appearances of modern times. This seminar paper deals with her role in the public appearance of English language teachers.*

***Keywords:** speech, lecturer rhetoric, motivation, foreign language, rhetorical strategies*

INTRODUCTION

English language teachers have long known that mastering speaking skills is important for many foreign language students; however, teaching this skill is problematic for many teachers due to the complexity of speech interaction and the lack of consensus on what principled approaches should be adopted for teaching speech. In recent years, however, the competence of oratory in teaching English has become more important in many educational systems. As the success of any activity largely depends on the readiness and will of the individual to make a certain degree of effort to achieve it, knowledge and mastery of a foreign language is in some way

conditioned by that determination, which is usually expressed in one word - motivation.

The level of motivation can be influenced by numerous factors, including the rhetorical abilities of the lecturer. Unfortunately, it often happens that despite the excellent knowledge of the language, lecturers do not know how to transfer knowledge to students in a good way. This is especially pronounced when teaching is focused on grammar, and less on conversation, especially in the traditional form of teaching. The lecturer is expected to encourage students to interact, especially in learning a foreign language, and teaching should not be one-way. In order to encourage students' motivation, the lecturer must take into account the way of teaching, and respect the individual characteristics of the student.

RHETORIC - THE ART OF SPEECH AND PUBLIC APPEARANCE

Oratory appeared with the emergence of social life and developed in step with it. Rhetoric can be defined as speaking skills, art and speech theory. It was created within the public life of ancient Greece, where competitions in speeches were regularly held in front of judicial, political and philosophical forums (Avramović, 1998: 183). The art of speech has certain points of contact with acting, because in both cases the use of the voice, the way of speaking affects the overall impression (Avramović, 2008: 323). There are also three types of oratory: political (advisory), judicial and occasional (epideictic). According to prof. Avramović, persuasiveness is achieved with a strong character, reputation, mood, prudence. There are three elements to which he attaches great importance: convincing and substantiated evidence, linguistic expression of evidence and the choice and order of words in speech (Avramović, 2008: 323).

He considers knowledge, wisdom and intelligence to be good qualities of a speaker. Rhetoric requires clarity, wit and appropriateness of purpose. The formation of a good conclusion is influenced by three factors concerning the speaker (Avramović, 1998: 183):

1. Ability to gain the listener's affection
2. The ability to increase or decrease the importance of the topic he is talking about
3. Ability to recapitulate a topic

Long ago, Aristotle expressed the opinion that persuading others can be achieved with the help of three methods, namely the use of the personality and character of the speaker (ethos), addressing reason with a sermon (logos), and the mood of the listeners, ie. addressing feelings

(pathos). Aristotle laid the foundations for all further studies on the effective organization and presentation of convincing arguments, after which his analyzes and Quintilian and Cicero used in dividing convincing discourse, and especially legal arguments, into logical arguments (logos), credibility (ethos) and emotional arguments (pathos) (Frost, 1994). He called this change of point of view persuasion. There are three different types of persuasion:

- Ethos (ethical) refers to the speaker and the character or reliability that results from it
- Pathos (emotional, pathetic) refers to the emotions of the audience and the possession of empathy
- Logos (logical) refers to selected words, quotes, facts.

At the core lies pathos or empathy. Empathy is the ability to recognize and understand the feelings, ideas and situations of other people (Bogdanić, 1996: 233). It is the ability to put oneself in the other person's position and the ability to empathize with what the other person is feeling a person. The original trust of Ethos refers to the sincerity of the individual (Bogdanić, 1996: 233). The most important thing is to instill trust in others. This will be achieved by showing how much we really care about people's feelings and by providing public support so that they can more easily reveal their thoughts, ideas and feelings to us. The basic material for successful persuasion is empathy and honesty.

EMPATHY + SINCERITY = BELIEF

Rhetorical speech unites will, reason and feelings, and its goal is to win a person over to an idea or action (Frost, 1994).



Figure 1. Three types of persuasion: Ethos, Pathos and Logos
Source: Bogdanić, 1996

Today, as in ancient Greece, the focus is on rhetoric. In schools, more attention is paid to writing, while learning about speech puts speech in the background. We can look at a certain speech as a role, because we play the everyday roles of friends, neighbors, workers. Even for the best "product", regardless of quality, without quality advertising, it will be difficult to find a buyer (Bogdanić, 199: 235). Speaking skills can be important for a successful professional and private life.

Rhetoric is a theory, a set of rules about beautiful speech, and oratory is the practice in which those rules are applied. The sophists already tried to convince the listeners with their speech, and then to pass on their experiences of how to speak successfully to others. Almost every one of them revealed certain rules about how the listeners are most effectively won over by the spoken word. From this came the first manuals of rhetoric - rhetorike techne. Sophists were the first to build rhetoric as a system of rules that they make it easier for the sermon to be successfully composed and maintained, while the product of these applied rules was the speech itself, that is, the sermon. Historically, oratory precedes rhetoric. First, oratory practice was developed, and only later, based on it, oratory rules and instructions were formed and built, rhetoric (Avramović, 1998: 185).

Aristotle also distinguished between rhetoric and oratory. He believed that rhetoric was concerned with finding the best means of persuasion: its basic task was not to persuade, but to "be able to theoretically find persuasive in any given case." Thus, oratory is the very art of persuasion, while rhetoric has the task of finding the most suitable means of persuading listeners and giving advice on how to achieve it. Cicero also implies the difference between oratory and rhetoric, so he speaks of rhetoric as a science, while oratory implies oratorical practice, ie. practical vocabulary (eloquentia)(Avramović, 2008: 325). The author of the most famous Roman textbook of rhetoric, Quintilian unequivocally says that rhetoric is "the science of good speech" - bene dicendi scientia. Jovan Sterija Popović, our comedian, professor of law, but also the writer of the first rhetoric in modern Serbia, believes that rhetoric is "a science that exposes the rules of eloquence and includes the ability to present ideas and thoughts correctly, clearly and in accordance with the goal." Even before him, Dositej Obradović wrote that rhetoric is "science to speak nicely, to win the hearts of many people and to bring and bring the whole nation to all that is good, praiseworthy and generally useful". Branislav Nušić's famous Rhetoric has a subtitle entitled The Science of Oratory. Rhetoric, therefore, represents the science of oratory, theoretically shaped rules and principles that will help maintain a successful speech,

The rhetoric classifies speeches according to various criteria. From antiquity to the present day, they are classified into informative speech (in the Roman division: *docere*), speech that convinces and moves to action (Roman *movere*) and entertaining speech (*delectare*). Since ancient times, the division into three basic types of oratory has been established - judicial, political and occasional (Avramović, 2008:326). This classification, which was especially affirmed by Aristotle (although it existed before him), has been maintained to this day. According to him, judicial oratory is any in which "we meet the accusation and defense", political is the one in which "something is encouraged or discouraged from something", and occasionally that which "praises or criticizes something" (Avramović, 1998:192). For these types of oratory, the terms forensic oratory (judicial), deliberative oratory (political) and epideictic (appropriate, which is often called praiseworthy or solemn) are also used. The Greek equivalents were *genos dikanikon* for court speech, *genos symbouleutikon* (literally: advisory, persuasive) for political discourse and *genos panegyrikon* for occasional - praise speech (Avramović, 1998, p. 192).

RHETORIC IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

Speech is complex because speakers are involved in a fast and dynamic process that involves "a high element of doing different things at the same time" (Johnson, 1996: 55). To be competent, they must combine various skills, knowledge and processes that take into account the production context and result in speech that is culturally and socially relevant, appropriate and understandable to their interlocutors, as well as managing micro-level reactions and responses to what they say. Competent speakers must be at the same time listeners who can take into account the interactive and unpredictable dynamics of speech (Ellis, 2014). As Bigate (2001:16) comments, "it all happens very quickly, and success depends on automation." Goh and Burns (2012) suggest that speech competence can be considered "combinatorial," which involves the use of linguistic knowledge.

Linguistic knowledge in foreign language teaching

Linguistic knowledge encompasses structure, meaning, and use (Canale & Swain, 1980; Canale, 1983) through four types of knowledge: phonological, grammatical, lexical, and discourse. Speakers must know how to produce language at the segmental (micro-consonants and vowels, accent) and supra-segment (macro-accent, rhythm, intonation) level of pronunciation and that the prices of communicative functions serve

characteristics such as prominence) and tone (fragmentation of sounds) (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2010). In recent years, attention has been drawn to the importance of raising students' awareness of suprasegmental characteristics in order to improve their abilities in global communication (Zhang, 2004). Grammatical knowledge is a basic condition for speaking any language. Speakers should have syntactic knowledge, for example,

Lexical knowledge refers to the number of words or the size of an individual vocabulary (estimated by Owens, 2001, to about 80,000 words for a native speaker by the end of high school) that the speaker knows. However, a distinction is usually made between productive (what students can produce) and receptive (what students can recognize but not produce) vocabulary. Learning fixed and idiomatic pronunciations - formulated "prefabricated" expressions (Wray, 2002:9) - are thought to improve students' productive performance, especially in the early stages, as well as students' awareness of semantic relationships among lexical sets (words related to the same topic) , function or form) and collocations (words that are semantically related) (Webb , Boers, 2020); in this regard, Nation (2011) points to the value of knowledge of high-frequency groups of multiple words (Shin, 2007) in enabling the production of spoken language. Ways of expressing modalities (lexical phrases denoting attitude, attitudes and levels of security) are also an important area for the development of pragmatic competence in spoken language (Bardovi-Harlig, 2003). Finally, discourse knowledge refers to understanding the functional purpose of different types of conversations and how different contextual factors affect the type of language resources used to organize and structure a piece of speech (e.g., narrative, narrative, lectured, optional conversations). Speakers must also be aware of pragmatic norms (eg three-part exchange in short conversations; Carter, 1998) and sociocultural practices and expectations in different societies, especially in an era where English is widely used in the world and intercultural pragmatic knowledge is becoming increasingly important. Ways of expressing modalities (lexical phrases denoting attitude, attitudes and levels of security) are also an important area for the development of pragmatic competence in spoken language (Bardovi-Harlig, 2003). Finally, discourse knowledge refers to understanding the functional purpose of different types of conversations and how different contextual factors affect the type of language resources used to organize and structure a piece of speech (e.g., narrative, narrative, lectured, optional conversations). Speakers must also be aware of pragmatic norms (eg three-part exchange in short conversations; Carter, 1998) and sociocultural practices and expectations in different societies, especially in an era where

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Basic speech skills

In many traditional English language classes, the emphasis is on teaching pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and discourse. However, as many students who have experienced this type of lecture have realized, such knowledge alone is not enough to enable them to become effective speakers. They must also learn how to process or "put into practice" such knowledge by using it in different contexts. Four broad categories of basic speech skills for proceduralization can be distinguished: pronunciation, speech function, interaction management (or discourse), and discourse organization skills. Pronunciation skills mean that students can articulate and incorporate the sounds of language, assign emphasis to words to create meaning, and use appropriate intonation patterns (Burns , Seidlhofer, 2010).

More recently, McKay and Brown (2015) argue that in light of the use of English as an international language, English teachers and students need to move away from native speaker norms and be sensitized to global and local standards of comprehensibility. Speech function skills (Cohen, 1996) enable students to perform a communicative function or speech act, such as seeking (permission), expressing (consenting), explaining (reasons), giving (instructions), offering (advice), or describing (adjusting) , while interaction management is related to the regulation of speech during interactions (e.g., starting a conversation or clarifying meaning). An important consideration regarding speech functions is that students must be aware of appropriate use in different cultural contexts.

In a spontaneous two-way process characterized by a lot of natural speech, interaction management is also an important skill. Although interaction skills overlap to some extent with speech function skills, they

have a specific regulatory purpose of enabling speakers to create, negotiate, and (re) direct interaction (Gass, Torres, 2005). These skills include recognizing what speakers are trying to achieve and reading nonverbal cues such as body language. Students need practice in skills such as acquiring, holding and offering turns, and managing topics to initiate, maintain, and negotiate interactions (Bygate, 1987). Discourse organization skills relate to the ability to manage the development of interaction, including the ability to predict how certain genres and subgenres are structured and shaped (Bygate, 1998) and knowledge of how to choose grammar and vocabulary to establish coherence and cohesion. Coherence (Gernsbacher, Givón, 1995) is created cognitively through domain-specific lexical knowledge, using devices such as noun-pronoun referencing, vocabulary repetition, and relexicalization by drawing related vocabulary and grammatical processing, both of which contribute to construction. local and global coherence. Cohesion (Halliday , Hasan, 1976/2013) refers to the construction of a text so that it ‘hangs together’; speakers create cohesion through semantic resources that connect the text with what has passed before.

Communication strategies

Communication strategies (e.g. Dörnyei, Scott, 1997) allow speakers to cope with the limitations of cognitive processing in a situation where face-to-face interaction is rapid, spontaneous, and unpredictable. Since speakers often cannot afford the time to prepare what they say in advance, they need strategies to deal with “the mismatch of their communicative intentions and their linguistic resources” (Váradi, 199:437). Cognitive communication strategies fulfill two broad purposes to enable continued interaction. First, reduction strategies can help the speaker avoid continuing to speak; they are a form of face protection device, but they also limit the continuity of interaction, as they involve avoiding the topic (moving away from or shifting the focus of the topic), abandoning the message (inability to continue the message) or meaning substitution or semantic avoidance (becoming less specific or unclear). On the other hand, achievement strategies are psycholinguistic strategies (Kellerman , Bialystock, 1997) that allow speakers to communicate with any resources they have: such strategies include lexical substitution, generalization (e.g. president for director), exemplification (e.g. cat, dog), a horse for animals), periphrasis (e.g. with big ears and a tail like a horse for a donkey), word building (e.g. a high hill for a mountain) or a literal translation (e.g. going to my house to return home). In addition to this type of cognitive strategy, metacognitive

strategies - or strategies for managing thinking and speech production - can be used during speech production.

Speakers can prepare what to say by planning ahead, self-control, noticing how they create and negotiate meaning as they speak, or self-assessing how and what is produced after the interaction. Interactive strategies are the following type of communication strategy that allows speakers to manage meaning negotiation: these types of strategies include confirmation checks (ask listeners if they understood), comprehension tests (paraphrasing to confirm understanding), repetition (repeating all or part of what is said.) and requests for repetition (asking someone to repeat), clarification (asking for further explanation) or complaints for help (asking for help with difficult expressions).

MOTIVATION IN TEACHING SPEECH SKILLS IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Understanding motivation is one of the key factors for learning a foreign language that was recognized in the late 1990s as an important issue in scientific research. Some of the important determinants of motivation are questions such as: what motivates a person to accomplish a certain task, action or to invest effort in performing certain tasks. So, motivation can give us answers to the questions why a person decided to do something, how long he will be persistent in it and how much effort he can put in to achieve a certain goal (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011). The key determinant in motivation according to Johnson (2000: 2) is in the phrase "do a good job", which is in contrast to "do a job". If we start from the etymological meaning of the term motivation, we can see that this word comes from the Latin verb *movere*, which means to move, so to motivate means to start.

From a psychological point of view, motivation can help us understand why people behave and think the way they do, while from a pedagogical point of view it can answer questions about how some students complete certain tasks despite obstacles while others give up at the first hurdle (Graham, Weiner, 1996:63). Within the study of motivation, three directions were singled out: behaviorist, cognitivist and constructivist.

Behavioral the approach is based on positive or negative support, ie on the expectation of a reward or punishment. In order to achieve positive empowerment, which is influenced by previous experiences in which there have been rewards for certain behaviors, it is necessary to act in accordance with the goal of re-rewards. According to this understanding, our behavior is driven by external factors (Brown, 2007:160). In order to understand the

motivation of students in different activities, it is necessary to carefully analyze the reinforcements and penalties that are applied, and in order to encourage students to a certain activity, external incentives, such as rewards, are applied. Applying consistent reinforcements and conditioning certain behaviors can create a habit or tendency toward appropriate behavior.

In school practice, it is shown that this approach is dominant, and that many findings and ideas from this approach are applicable in school practice, such as the effects of early conditioning, learning by conditioning, learning by trial and error and the like (Lalić-Vučetić, 2015:12).

Cognitivist the approach emphasizes the importance of the individual decision and refers to the choices the person will make, the experiences or goals they will choose or avoid, and the degree of effort they will make (Brown, 2007, p. 160). From this approach, six needs stand out that encourage motivation according to Osbel's (Ausbel, 1968:368) model:

- (1) The need to explore the unknown;
- (2) The need for motivation in the environment and causing change;
- (3) The need for physical and mental activity, movement and exercise;
- (4) The need for stimulation by the environment, other people or ideas, thoughts and feelings;
- (5) The need for knowledge, for processing and internalizing research results, manipulation, activity and stimulation in order to resolve contradictions, finding solutions to problems and self-consistent knowledge systems;
- (6) The need to improve the ego, self-acceptance and acceptance by others.

Cognitivist the approach to learning refers to the notion of reinforcement, but also the degree to which the student will be motivated by a certain reinforcement. Support depends on the student's current plans, goals, expectations, values and attributions. According to this approach, students do not respond directly to external stimuli and pressures in the body, but their response to these stimuli depends on their interpretation of stimuli and pressures in relation to their own plans, goals, attributions, interests. Therefore, it follows that the student will continue to be active not because he or she was previously supported in his or her support, but because it is now estimated or expected to be supported, provided that his or her support is important. If he estimates that the result is not worth the effort, there will be no motivation for that student.

Constructivist the approach relies on the social context, but also on the personal choices of the individual. Each person's motivation is different, which means that each person is unique, and therefore each person's

activities are different, depending on their environment (Williams, Burden, 1997:120).

When it comes to the relationship between social and individual context, psychologists have adopted two perspectives: the individualistic and social approach (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011:7).

In the individualist perspective, the emphasis is on the theory of social cognition, which refers to how individuals process and store information about other people and how these mental processes affect their interaction with them, and the complexity of social context sporadically occurs only in individual beliefs and values, while the social context is observed through the eyes of individuals (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011:7).

The social perspective is focused on broad social processes and macro-contextual factors such as sociocultural norms, intergroup relations, the process of assimilation and interethnic conflicts. From this perspective, individual behavior is determined by some stronger forces (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011:8).

What all these perspectives have in common is the concept of “need” in motivation. Meeting these needs is accompanied by rewards, choices and in many cases meeting needs requires interpretation in a social context. This can be explained by the example of children's motivation to read. They are motivated because they can see the value (reward) of reading, meet the needs for research, stimulation, knowledge, self-esteem, autonomy, in different ways and in the context of a society that values literacy. On the contrary, learning a foreign language can be demotivated because we can associate learning with superficial needs and can lead us to not see the reward (Brown, 2007:161).

In terms of motivation, there is a generally accepted division into extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, ie motivation that comes from outside and inside (Harmer, 2007:98).

Extrinsic motivation, ie external motivation, refers to external factors, such as the need to pass an exam or the desire for a financial reward. Students who are guided by this type of motivation generally choose simpler tasks, because the desire to achieve a certain task is imposed from the outside, usually to meet the expectations of parents or teachers. On the other hand, intrinsic motivation lies within the individual. For example, excitement during the learning process itself or a better inner feeling are factors that can motivate a person to learn. The characteristics of internal motivation are typical for those students who have a tendency towards challenges, have interest and curiosity and who evaluate their successes and failures on the basis of internal criteria.

External and internal motivations were initially completely opposed, but later research showed that neither of them occurs separately, but that they intertwine (Harmer, 2007: 100). Therefore, it is realized that external and internal motivation cannot be viewed separately, but that they interact with each other. The basic assumption from which to start is that there is a continuum of self-regulation vacations. The consequence of this assumption is the introduction of the concept of self-determination or self-determination, which is defined as a sense of freedom in performing activities that are interesting and vital to the individual, based on traditional empirical methods and emphasizing the importance of developed internal resources for personal development and self-regulatory behavior. The main focus of research on self-determination is human inseparable growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that form the basis for motivation and integration of personality, as well as the conditions that encourage these positive processes. Relying on the results of empirical research, three types of needs are identified: the need for competition, the need for connectivity, and the need for autonomy (Ryan, Deci, 2000:67).

Although many studies have focused on whether motivation is a "cause" or a "consequence" of learning, it can be said that motivation in most people is much more complex than understanding the cause-and-effect relationship. Motivation is a gradual mental process that includes initial planning and setting goals and objectives, as well as controlling action and evaluating outcomes, which may be related to different motives. Therefore, sustainable long-term activities, such as learning a foreign language, mean that motivation varies, and thus changes depending on various external and internal influences (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011:6).

Lack of motivation or amotivation occurs as a consequence of the lack of initiative to initiate action. Amotivated persons either do not initiate actions or do not do so consciously, so their behavior takes place automatically, by inertia. In this case, it could be said that the motivated person does not value and attach importance to the action, and that there is a feeling of lack of competence to do or change something, or there may be no expectation that the action will lead to the desired result (Dörnyei, Ushioda, 2011: 6).

Bearing in mind that communication is necessary for successful mastering of a foreign language, and that the skill of communicative abilities of lecturers largely depends on motivation, as well as the end result of student achievement, this paper will be dedicated to rhetorical abilities of lecturers. While earlier foreign language learning was based mainly on the "grammar-translation" method, where the emphasis was on the structural

aspects of the language, ie the grammatical system, today the need for a communicative approach is increasingly emphasized. communication, where students practice real-life situations, with the aim of training for the needs of real life (Knežević, 2012). If we take into account the understanding that one of the most important branches of education is the art of communication, ie sharing one's views, feelings and opinions with others, whether through written or oral words, then it is clear that rhetoric has a special place in the classroom, especially in learning a foreign language. Considering the relationship between the speaker, the sermon and the audience through the prism of teacher, language and student, we can see that there is a similarity between these two triads, where the center of the teacher's (speaker's) interest must be the student (audience), where the speaker must take into account students, since there are different individuals in the student, each of whom has certain needs. The teacher must take into account the individual characteristics of all students, and in addition to positive and humanistically oriented general characteristics, he must possess certain competencies, such as language, social, pedagogical and didactic-methodological (Durbaba, 2011), either through written or oral words, then it is clear that rhetoric has a special place in the classroom, especially in learning a foreign language. Considering the relationship between the speaker, the sermon and the audience through the prism of teacher, language and student, we can see that there is a similarity between these two triads, where the center of the teacher's (speaker's) interest must be the student (audience), where the speaker must take into account students, since there are different individuals in the student, each of whom has certain needs.

Each sermon is defined by the speaker's style of speech or the way he expresses his ideas. If casual speech takes place in a professional environment, it will sound radically different. There are several styles and guidelines in oratory that can be used for the effectiveness of a professor's speech during class. To begin with, it should be borne in mind that the spoken and written styles of each language are very different. Due to variations in speech and writing styles, it is not recommended to memorize or compose previously written speech in front of an audience. Precisely because of the differences that will be mentioned, that speech will sound unnatural, exaggerated and artificial. However, many ancient theorists, including Quintilian, believed that the same rules applied in both spoken and written style of expression, e.g. clarity, stylistic figures and picturesqueness in expression (Avramović, 2008:330).

However, just as there are people who are great at writing, but struggle to talk, there are also great speakers who try to express themselves in

writing, they can't do it. Written speech is rigid and focused on intellect, but spoken language is more fluid, personal and focuses on emotions. Speech style has an advantage because, unlike writing, it is both listened to and watched, and sincerity and simplicity can be imbued through it, even jargon. The disadvantage of the written style of expression is the impossibility for the characteristics of the speaker to come to the fore and leave an impression, and we have already explained how important the personality of the speaker is in the overall impression of the speech or speech. Avramović (2008:331) points out that, unlike the written word that is there to stay, the spoken speech no longer exists tomorrow, thus giving the freedom to be interpreted differently. Today, however,

Speech must be as clear and simple as possible, otherwise the listener will try to understand the meaning of one thought and lose the flow of the rest of the speech, and if the practice is repeated, he will lose interest. Too many words uttered at once, as well as the use of foreign words to give an idea of eloquence, do not describe a good style of speech, because they create a counter-effect, not to mention the abuse or pronunciation of foreign words, which can reduce the effort and impression of the speaker. In English language teaching, this segment is very important, primarily because the professor is absolutely trusted and such errors in pronunciation or meaning of words are unacceptable, and clarity in a particular subject such as legal English that characterizes the required vocabulary, style and form is an absolute imperative. The professor's speech, like any other kind of speech, should be varied;

For successful teaching of any subject, and especially a foreign language, it is not enough for a lecturer to use the subject well, but he must also possess other talents and abilities, which will encourage student motivation. Unfortunately, very often teaching a foreign language is reduced to teaching grammar with exercises, and the communicative method is bypassed. On the other hand, the class can be well designed, but if the lecturer does not have rhetorical skills, if his way of communication is not enthusiastic and creative enough, the interest of students will decrease. This means that the lecturer cannot be just a mere transmitter of knowledge and information, but must possess the skills of interpersonal communication and his behavior must encourage students to be creative and develop a certain level of skills. Since interpersonal relationships are not based solely on verbal, but also on non-verbal communication, the efficiency of foreign language teaching will largely depend on the posture, color of the voice, diction of the lecturer. That is why the rhetorical abilities of lecturers are extremely important, with which they will motivate their students not only to

be listeners, but also to actively participate in teaching and later to be able to actively apply the acquired knowledge (Vlahović, 2019:48).

This would mean that foreign language teachers must have strategic competencies, which relate to the fact that not only language and communicative competencies are sufficient for mastering a foreign language, but also some kind of ability and resourcefulness in the process of mastering a foreign language.

CONCLUSION

The use of a foreign language is one of the most complex activities. The speech apparatus must be capable of producing voice and prosody, because it does not exist in the mother tongue of the one who is learning a foreign language. Such a student must have a certain knowledge at the linguistic and socio-cultural level, as well as a certain memory capacity. In speaking situations, the student faces stress and fear, emotional tolerance and interaction with the person he is addressing. Visual contact with the person he is talking to eases this situation and thus allows him to control the volume, pitch and length of his voice. Through such contact, he can use and interpret gestures, facial expressions and body position of the person he is talking to (Durbaba, 2011: 203-204). Language skills represent different ways of using language in communication through understanding and expression. These language skills are oral and written comprehension and expression. Listening, speaking, reading, writing, interacting and mediating are language activities that make up oral and written comprehension and expression.

Elements of all teaching methods are used in the teaching process, from natural to communicative approach and action pedagogy. In order to learn a foreign language, our students go to the countries whose language they want to learn, in a natural environment, staying for a while in the families of native speakers, learning the language and attending language schools. Since native speakers work in these schools, our students are in a position to learn a foreign language according to the principles of one of the oldest methods of learning a foreign language, and that is the natural method. In the teaching process, we use all kinds of methods, but mostly methods of working with pictures and literary text. We believe that a literary text and an artistic image, due to prejudice as something abstract and incomprehensible, can be outside the interest of students.

Starting from the position that student motivation is one of the key tasks of teaching today, we believed that part of our research should be dedicated

to the role of motivation in achieving certain goals of the teaching process, primarily in the field of language education. Motivation in the school environment must be related to a special activity that is given in a certain context. To achieve that goal, we need to change the way we work, research, experiment, and choose what is good. Calculators believe that motivation is important, but not enough. They believe that one should be motivated to learn and be able to learn something, which means that it is necessary to have certain capacities in order to succeed in that process. Students learn in collaboration with their schoolmates and classroom teacher. That is why it is important that the curriculum concentrates on what is worth learning and that the teacher develops that content so that students will appreciate their importance and possibility of application. Some theorists believe that it is necessary to establish close cooperation relations between the families of the students, the students themselves and the school. According to their views, the school should be a place where students will feel comfortable, respected and safe. In that way, students establish positive emotional connections with teachers and friends, but also a positive attitude towards school in general. Students who are so motivated will also go to academic studies and upgrade their knowledge. Some theorists believe that it is necessary to establish close cooperation relations between the families of the students, the students themselves and the school. According to their views, the school should be a place where students will feel comfortable, respected and safe. In that way, students establish positive emotional connections with teachers and friends, but also a positive attitude towards school in general. Students who are so motivated will also go to academic studies and upgrade their knowledge. Some theorists believe that it is necessary to establish close cooperation relations between the families of the students, the students themselves and the school. According to their views, the school should be a place where students will feel comfortable, respected and safe. In that way, students establish positive emotional connections with teachers and friends, but also a positive attitude towards school in general. Students who are so motivated will also go to academic studies and upgrade their knowledge.

Rhetoric is not just empty words or fine political speeches. Rhetoric is the study and skill of good writing and public speaking, persuasiveness and knowledge of composing successful writing and presentations. Rhetoric teaches us the basic skills of advanced learning and higher education. In rhetoric classes, students learn to think logically, discover wrong or weak arguments, create a good case on a controversial topic, and overcome too frequent a fear of public speaking to be able to deliver sharp and well-

prepared speech. Rhetoric is a basic building block of good education, whether it is accompanied by studies of technical orientation, English or some other. Clear thinking, good argumentation and logical discussion are essential for the success of an academic student in any discipline and field.

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion. Used to describe persuasive writing or persuasive speech. It is not intended to deceive; it is used to present an argument in such a way that people can follow and logically come to the same conclusion as the speaker. Rhetoric does not rely on facts alone; it also relies on the speaker's attitude towards the audience. The speaker must at least sound credible in order to effectively convey the point of the speaker or writer. Because the facts are irrefutable, the best users of rhetoric also rely on the use of language in a way that will get an answer from the audience. This is best used by using language to make people react emotionally. Understanding the connotation is important because using another word can change the meaning of a sentence even though the words have a similar vocabulary definition. Rhetoric has always been important. Cicero and Aristotle were masters of rhetoric, and their works have been studied by law students for hundreds of years. Rhetoric is important to sway juries, as well as for politicians to get votes. Also, the role of rhetoric in teaching is very important, because all the rhetorical abilities of teachers come to the fore, and student motivation depends on it., As in foreign language teaching, in this case English.

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SEMANTIC VERB CLASSES IN ROMANIAN AND ENGLISH

Mihaela LAZOVIĆ

Abstract: One of the major problems in English and Romanian linguistic literature is that they offer very similar definitions of semantic verb classes, but the analysis and the classification of English and Romanian verbs is completely different, mainly because different parameters for classification are used. Detailed analysis of semantic verb classes in English and Romanian has revealed that linguistic traditions of the two languages are completely different. On the other hand, contemporary grammars prove that similarities do exist, which offers a basis for a more general analysis of semantic verb classes.

This research has shown that Romanian language offers a substantial number of verb classes, which can semantically be connected to English verbs classes. The research has also shown that despite the obvious differences there are similarities and general definitions which can encompass both English and Romanian verbs and offer a base for a further scientific research and comparison.

Key words: English, Romanian, semantic classification of verbs, Aktionsart

1. Introduction

Aktionsart is considered a lexical aspect which is connected with the meaning of verbs and semantic categories of verbs (Rothstein 2004:1). It is often referred to as a verbal category dealing with the way the action is realized (Evseev 1974:86), as well as the nature of the situation, thus representing its objective characteristics (Novakov 2005:26).

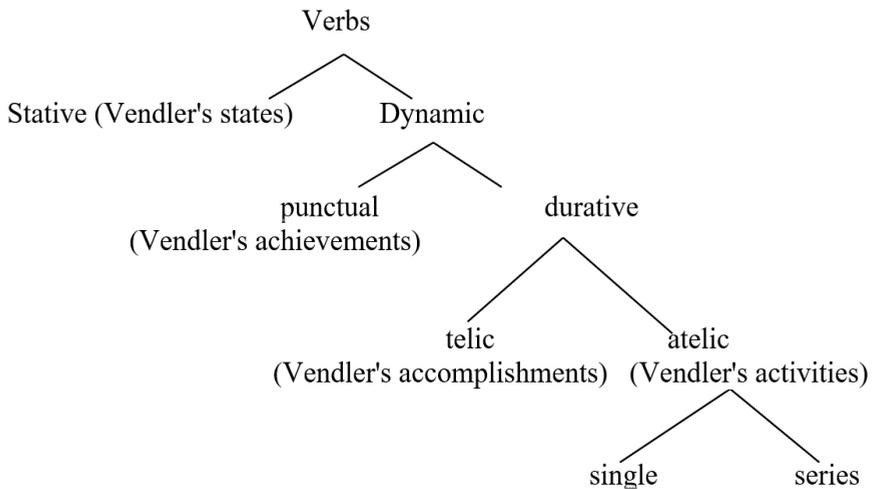
Vendler (1967:97-121) considers Aktionsart to be a lexical, i.e. semantic category according to which verbs can be classified into: activities, states, achievements and accomplishments.

Dahl (1987:26) classifies verbs based on the inherent aspectual meaning into: events, processes and states. Dahl also differentiates dynamic situations and states. Dynamic situations imply movement and change, while states do not (Dahl 1987:28). Dynamic situations can be further divided into bounded and unbounded situations. Bounded situations are

bounded by a goal, which means that the goal is always reached, while with unbounded the goal either does not exist, or it is not reached. Similar division of situations was offered by Declerck (1979:761-794).

Lambalgen and Hamm (2000:88) define Aktionsart as types of situations. They write about five types of situations: states, activities, accomplishments, achievements and points.

Furthermore, Brinton (1988:54) offers a more complete classification of verbs which is based on Vendler's classification. Brinton's types of verbs can be presented as follows:



2. Semantic verb classes in English

Vendler's classification (Vendler 1967: 97-121) into activities, states, achievements and accomplishments is more or less accepted in the relevant English linguistic literature. Namely, in order to classify situations it is important whether the situation implies a process or a development, whether it consists of different segments, and whether they are of equal quality or there is a segment which represents a terminal point or a goal after which the situation cannot be continued. It can be argued that verbs can be classified according to their semantic characteristics into four groups:

Activities (Activități)

Activities imply process and development, therefore can last in time. They have homogenous segments which means that any part of the process is of the same nature as the whole, in the sense that there is no terminal point

or goal to be reached. Thus, activities are atelic and dynamic, they consist of different stages and can occur in the progressive.

Activities are verbs such as: *run (a alerga)*, *swim (a înota)*, *walk (a se plimba)*...

For example:

(1) a. *He ran for 5 minutes.*

b. *A alergat 5 minute.*

Romanian linguistic literature (Brăescu et al. 2005:326) also mentions activity verbs (*verbe de acțiune*). For example: *a alerga (run)*, *a înota (swim)*, *a învăța (study)*, *a mânca (eat)*, *a repara (fix)*, *strânge (collect)*, *a trimite (send)* etc. Thus Romanian activities require a conscious agent and can imply a change which must not necessarily be a change of state. Romanian activity verbs are in fact Vendler's activities, achievements and accomplishments.

States (Stări)

States last in time, they cannot be divided into segments, they do not denote a process and development, and therefore they do not have a goal. States simply indicate that a characteristic or a situation exists. They are stative and homogeneous, which means that all parts of a state are of equal quality. Thus, states have only one stage, because they do not imply any change.

States are verbs such as: *know (a ști)*, *believe (a crede)*, *love (a iubi)*...

For example:

(2) a. *She loves him.*

b. *Ea îl iubește.*

States (*verbe de stare*) are also mentioned in Romanian relevant literature: *a iubi (love)*, *a se mira (to be amazed)*, *a durea (ache)*, itd. Romanian verbs of state do not imply a change nor a conscious agent (Brăescu et al. 2005:326).

Achievements (Împliniri)

Achievements are punctual and telic. The whole situation expressed by an achievement verb happens in one moment.

Achievements are verbs and phrases such as: *find (a afla)*, *lose (a pierde)*, *reach the summit (a se urca pe vârful muntelui)*, *win a race (a învinge în cursă / alergare)*...

Achievements are not homogeneous since they do not have an internal structure. They represent momentary changes of state which can be

preceded by a preparatory activity which is not a part of the meaning of the achievement.

Achievements rarely occur in the progressive since it is contradictory to talk about momentary situations which last in time. However, there are examples which prove otherwise:

- (3) a. *The train is arriving at the station.*
 b. *Trenul sosea în gară.*

Accomplishments (Înfăptuiri)

Accomplishments are telic durative situations. They are not homogenous in nature, because they involve a terminal point after which the situation naturally ends and cannot continue.

Accomplishments are verbs and phrases such as: *paint a picture (a picta o pictură)*, *run a mile (a fugi o milă)*, *draw a circle (a desena un cerc)*...

Some linguists (Rothstein 2004) consider accomplishments to be activities heading towards a goal. For example:

- (4) a. *Mary built a house.*
 b. *Mary a clădit o casă.*

The accomplishment in (10) consists of an activity event of *building the house* and of the reached goal *the built house*. Accomplishments must have a terminal point in order to indicate the quality of the whole situation.

Apart from activities and states, contemporary Romanian grammar (Brăescu et al. 2005:326) mentions events (*verbe de eveniment*). For example: *a se usca (dry)*, *a crește (grow)*, *a îmbătrâni (grow old)*, etc. Events imply a change of state, but without a conscious agent.

Romanian events are similar to English achievements and accomplishments which can imply a conscious agent as well.

Semelfactive situations

Some linguists (Rothstein 2004:28-29,183-187, Lambalgen and Hamm 2000:83, Smith 1991:21) write about the fifth type of verb situations called semelfactives. Such verbs are: *kick (a lovi cu piciorul)*, *jump (a sări)*, *wink (a face din ochi, clipi)*...

Semelfactives are mentioned in Romanian literature as well, but they have a different meaning. Namely, Romanian semelfactives are situations which happen only once. In English literature, however, semelfactive situations are momentary situations which can be telic or atelic. There are two accounts on the nature of semelfactive situations. Some linguists consider them achievements and other activities.

Rothstein (2004:29) defines semelfactive situations as minimal intervals of an activity. For example:

- (5) a. *John kicked the door for half an hour.*
 b. *John a lovit ușa cu piciorul jumătate de oră.*

They can occur in the progressive, which is also a characteristic of activities, not achievements:

- (6) a. *John was kicking the door.*
 b. *John lovea ușa cu piciorul.*

This is why Rothstein (2004:29) argues that semelfactive situations should not be considered a separate verb type, but a subgroup of activities.

On contrary, Smith (1991) defines semelfactive situations as atelic achievements. She points out that achievements represent dynamic, momentary, telic situations which have only one phase. While semelfactives also have only one phase, they are dynamic, but atelic.

However, Rothstein (2004:185) argues that semelfactives are not momentary situations, since they have an internal structure. For example, the verb *wink* consists of minimal elements which make the whole situation expressed by the verb. It implies that one must close the eye and open it again. Thus, semelfactives do not have the same structure as achievements, since they do not denote a change of state, or a goal. Therefore, semelfactive situations are similar to activities like *run / a alerga*, *swim / a inota*, because they consist of minimal elements which make the whole situation expressed by the verb.

3. Semantic verb classes in Romanian

In Romanian, Aktionsart is treated and defined as a lexical category which denotes the way the action is realized as well as the type of situation.

Romanian linguists agree that Aktionsart can be expressed at morphological, lexical and syntactic level. Furthermore, the meaning of the verb plays the most important role in classification of verbs.

The following types of verbal situation can be distinguished in Romanian language:

1. Durative situations (*Aktionsart durativ*)

Some linguists (Poghiric 1953:18) call these situations linear (*liniar*), because they denote a process which lasts in time, but there is no information about its beginning and end.

Luchian (2007:97-99) argues that Romanian durative verbs are in fact activities: *a ajuta* (*help*), *a alerga* (*run*), *a bea* (*drink*), *a zbura* (*fly*), *a vorbi*

(talk), states: *a avea* (have, possess), *a crede* (believe), *a iubi* (love), *a vrea* (want), *a (se) teme* (be afraid) or accomplishments: *a crea* (make, create), *a zidi* (build) *a popula* (populate), *a sorta* (sort, classify).

Romanian durative verbs are similar to English activities because in both languages such situations denote duration and do not tend towards a goal of any kind.

2. Momentary situations (*Aktionsart momentan*)

Momentary situations happen in one moment. Their beginning and end are rolled into one moment. Such verbs are: *a (se) abate* (come by), *a admite* (confess), *a afla* (find), *a aluneca* (slip), *a cădea* (fall), *a clipi* (blink), *a exploda* (explode), *a găsi* (find), *a (se) încrunta* (frown), *a (se) mira* (be surprised), *a simți* (feel), *a sparge* (break), *a (se) speria* (be startled), *a uita* (forget), *a (se) trezi* (wake up), *a tăia* (cut off), (Luchian 2007:101).

Since they have the same characteristics, Romanian momentary verbs can be connected to English achievements and momentary activities (which are called semelfactives by Rothstein 2004:28-29,183-187, Lambalgen and Hamm 2000:83, Smith 1991:21)

3. Inchoative and ingressive situations (*Aktionsart inchoativ și ingresiv*)

In Romanian, inchoative situations denote a gradual change of state. They are telic and momentary, since they denote that the beginning of the situation is completed. Such verbs are: *a aprinde* (light), *a iniția* (initiate), *a (se) imbarca* (come on board), *a (se) îndrăgosti* (fall in love), *răsări* (spring out) (Luchian 2007:104,105).

In traditional literature the term *inchoative* was often used synonymously with the term *ingressive*. Ingressive verbs denote momentary atelic situations (Nedioglu 1952:12), for example: *a cădea* (fall), *a sări* (jump), *a apăsa* (push), *a arunca* (throw). Such situations are similar to semelfactive situations or momentary activities mentioned by Rothstein (2004:28-29,183-187, Lambalgen and Hamm (2000:83), Smith (1991:21).

4. Terminative situations (*Aktionsart terminativ*)

Terminative verbs are: *a abandona* (abandon), *a acoperi* (cover up), *a convinge* (convince), *a demola* (demolish), *a dovedi* (prove), *a invita* (invite), *a imigra* (immigrate), *a obosi* (tire), *a (se) scufunda* (sink), *a trăda* (betray) (Luchian 2007:104,105).

Luchian (2007:86) argues that terminative verbs denote situations which have a result: *a cumpăra* (buy), *a telefona* (telephone), *a merge* (go), *a desena* (draw), etc. However, listed verbs neither denote a resultative situation nor imply an end point. They are activities. It is not until the direct object is added that they are completed. Thus, mentioned verbs must be used

together with their direct object in order to denote a terminal situation. It is the direct object, not the verb itself, which denotes the end point: *a cumpăra o casă* (buy a house), *a merge la munte* (go to the mountains), *a desena un peisaj* (draw a landscape), etc. This makes Romanian terminative verbs similar to English accomplishments.

On the other hand, one cannot argue that terminative verbs are the same as resultative verbs, because resultative verbs imply a result, while terminative do not, they just imply the situation came to an end.

On the other hand, there are verbs which semantically imply terminativity: *a termina* (finish), *a sfârși* (finish), *a isprăvi* (complete, end), *a găta* (finish), *a înceta* (stop). This makes Romanian terminative verbs similar to English achievements.

Within the group of Romanian terminative verbs we can distinguish a subgroup called *ingressive verbs* (Popescu 2000:63). They denote the end of a situation, for example *a se opri* (stop). Similarly, Savin-Zgardan (2001: 36) mentions *finitive situations* which denote situations which are interrupted or finished, for example: *a da de capăt* (finish, come to an end).

5. Iterative situations (*Aktionsart iterativ*)

Iterative situations denote repetition. Thus they show similarities with English iterative achievements.

Such situations are: *a pulsa* (pulse), *a pupăi* (chirp), *a realege* (reelect), *a reanaliza* (reanalyze), *a reface* (redo), *a bocăni* (hammer, knock), *a păși* (pace), *a pedala* (pedal) (Luchian 2007:107,108).

6. Semelfactive situations (*Aktionsart semelfactiv*)

The term *semelfactive* originates from Latin and means *once* or *one time*. Thus, semelfactive situations are those which happen only once, they are unique and momentary. Some linguists (Savin-Zgardan 2001: 36) argue that semelfactive situations are those which happen at once, instantly. For example: *a bufni râsul* (burst with laughter), *a fura cu ochiul* (sneak a peak), *a-i trece prin minte* (come to mind). Nevertheless, the examples show that semelfactive situations are not those which happen only once, but momentary atelic situations.

Savin-Zgardan (2001: 38) mentions a subgroup of semelfactive situations which she calls *monosequential* (*acțiune monosecvențială*), such situations happen in one swing: *a da o palmă* (slap), *a face un semn* (make a sign).

Semelfactive verbs in Romanian are: *a apăsa* (push), *a (se) apleca* (bow), *a arunca* (throw), *a găsi* (find), *a izbucni* (start), *a pocni* (burst), *a (se) scufunda* (sink), *a sparge* (break), *a uni* (unite), etc.

7. Intensified situations (*Aktionsart intensiv*)

Intensified situations are more intensive than normal situations. For example: *a se topi de fericire* (be extremely happy), *înnegri de amar* (be very angry).

8. Limitative situations (*Aktionsart limitativ*)

Limitative situations are temporally limited, i.e. last a certain period of time which is usually expressed by an adverbial: *un timp, câtva, o vreme* (for a while). For example: *a se odihni un timp* (rest for a while), *a locui o vreme* (live for a while), etc (Luchian 2007:92,93).

9. Multiplicative situations (*Aktionsart multiplicativ*)

Romanian multiplicative verbs are: *a balansa* (balance), *a ciripi* (chirp), *a pipăi* (touch), *a săpa* (dig), *a tremura* (tremour), *a străluci* (flicker), *a pulsa* (pulse), *a vibra* (vibrate), etc (Luchian 2007:109,110).

A multiplicative situation consists of segments which cannot be separated and whose beginning and end cannot be clearly distinguished and therefore do not have a structure.

Their characteristics are similar to English activities.

10. Progressive situations (*Aktionsart progresiv*)

Romanian progressive verbs are: *accelera* (speed up), *a albi* (become white), *a ameliora* (ameliorate), *a cufunda* (sink), *a (se) dezvolta* (develop), *a (se) învechi*, *a îmbătrâni* (become old), *a înainta* (progress), *a (se) îndepărta* (become distant), *a (se) întuneca* (darken), *a lungi* (lengthen), *a mări* (become bigger), *a rări* (become more rare), etc.

Progressive verbs are durative and telic, they imply a change of state. Therefore are similar to English accomplishments.

11. Transformative situations (*Aktionsart transformativ*)

Transformative situations denote a change of state (Avram et al. 2001:65-68). For example: *a slăbi* (lose weight, become thin), thus they are similar to English accomplishments.

12. Anticipative situations (*Aktionsart anticipativ*)

Anticipative situations denote anteriority (Evseev 1974:86-94). For example: *a predestina* (predestine), *a pregăti* (prepare), *a presimți* (have a presentiment).

13. Intensive situations (*Aktionsart intensiv*)

Such situations denote the intensity of a situation (Evseev 1974:93). For example: *supraaglomera* (overcrowd), *supraîncălzi* (overheat), *a striga* – *a țipa* (shout – scream), etc.

14. Reciprocal situations (*Aktionsart reciproc*)

Reciprocal situations require at least two subjects which are patients at the same time. For example: *a se săruta* (kiss – kiss one another), *coabita* (cohabit), *colabora* (collaborate), *conlucra* (work together), *a se întrevedea* (meet), etc.

15. Augmentative situations (*Aktionsart augmentativ*)

Augmentative situations denote processes which intensify: *a se intensifica* (intensify), *a se înfoca* (heat up).

It is evident that there are many verb types in Romanian language. The difference between some of them can hardly be distinguished (terminative, resultative, ingressive). Therefore, a simpler and clearer classification is needed, which can be based on a fewer number of semantic characteristics and which will consequently bring fewer verb types.

Contemporary Romanian literature (Brăescu et al. 2005:326) distinguishes three types of verb situations, which can be connected to Vendler's classification of English verbs. Romanian semantic classification is based upon two distinctive features of verbs [agentivity] and [change]. According to the mentioned characteristics Romanian verbs are classified into activities (*verbe de acțiune*), states (*verbe de stare*) and events (*verbe de eveniment*).

1. Activities (*verbe de acțiune*)

Romanian activity verbs are: *a alerga* (run), *a înota* (swim), *a învăța* (study), *a mânca* (eat), *a repara* (fix), *strânge* (collect), *a trimite* (send) etc.

Romanian activities require a conscious agent and can imply a change which must not necessarily be a change of state, it can be a change of a position. Romanian activity verbs are in fact Vendler's activities, achievements and accomplishments.

2. States (*verbe de stare*)

Romanian states are: *a iubi* (love), *a se mira* (to be amazed), *a durea* (ache), itd. Romanian verbs of state do not imply a change nor a conscious agent. This semantic category of verbs are equivalent to Vendler's states.

3. Events (*verbe de eveniment*)

Apart from activities and states, contemporary Romanian grammar (Brăescu et al. 2005:326) mentions events (*verbe de eveniment*). For example: *a se usca* (dry), *a crește* (grow), *a îmbătrâni* (grow old), etc. Events imply a change of state, but without a conscious agent: *Râul a secat*. (*The river dried.*)

Romanian events are similar to English achievements and accomplishments which can imply a conscious agent as well.

4. Conclusion

This research has shown that English and Romanian linguistic traditions differ in the approach and analysis of the category of Aktionsart. The research has also shown that despite the obvious differences there are similarities and general definitions which can encompass both English and Romanian verbs and offer a base for a further scientific research and comparison.

English and Romanian linguistic literature offer very similar definitions of Aktionsart, but the analysis and the classification of English and Romanian verbs is completely different mainly because different parameters for classification are used. The classification of English verbs is based on the distinctive features, while in Romanian the classification is based upon the meaning of verbs.

Detailed analysis of Aktionsart, i.e. semantic verb classes in English and Romanian has revealed that linguistic traditions of the two languages are completely different. On the other hand, contemporary grammars prove that similarities do exist, which offers a basis for a more general analysis of Aktionsart.

This research has shown that Romanian language offers a substantial number of verb classes, which can semantically be connected to English verbs classes.

For example, Romanian momentary situations are similar to English achievements due to the same semantic characteristics.

Similarly, Romanian inchoative verbs can be connected to English semelfactive situations or momentary activities if they do not denote a change of state, but if they do then they are similar to English achievements.

Romanian ingressive verbs are atelic and momentary, thus show some similarities with English achievements.

Romanian terminative verbs are similar to English accomplishments, since in both languages the terminative meaning is introduced by the direct object not by the verb itself.

Romanian iterative verbs denote repetition and as such can be connected to English iterative achievements.

Semelfactive situations exist in both languages they are momentary and can be telic or atelic. Atelic momentary situations are activities, while telic momentary situations are achievements.

Based on their semantic characteristics Romanian multiplicative verbs can be connected to English activities.

Romanian transformative verbs denote a change of state, thus they are similar to English accomplishments.

Romanian progressive verbs last in time and tend towards a goal, i.e. denote a change of state, thus they are similar to English accomplishments.

To sum up, Romanian semelfactive and multiplicative situations are similar to English activities, while English achievements can be connected to Romanian inchoative, ingressive, iterative and semelfactive situations. On the other hand, Romanian terminative, progressive and transformative situations have similar characteristics to English accomplishments.

On the other hand, contemporary linguistic research offers quite a different perspective.

Verbal classification (Aktionsart) and the semantic characteristics it is based on in Romanian language can be presented as follows:

	[+ change]	[+ agentivity]
States (Stări) (Vendler's states)	-	-
Events (Evenimente) (Vendler's achievements)	+	-
Activities (Activități) (Vendler's activities, achievements and accomplishments)	+	+

Verbal classification (Aktionsart) and the semantic characteristics it is based on in English language can be presented as follows:

	Stativity (stativitate)	Duration (durată)	Telicity (scop)	Stages (faze)
Activities (Activități)	-	+	-	+
States (Stări)	+	+	-	-
Achievements (Împliniri)	-	-	+	-
Accomplishments (Înfăptuiri)	-	+	+	+

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THE MAIN FEMALE TYPOLOGIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Christina-Andreea MIȚARIU

***Abstract:** The society of that long historical period contained in the Old Testament was certainly and unquestionably a patriarchal one, in which strong, brave, and God-chosen men would draw the lines of history. Even in the face of this prominent occupation by eminently male personalities, in the books of the Old Testament, women who enjoy great respect, such as Sarah, Rebekah, Leah, Rachel, at the dawn of holy history, the prophecies, shine through their conduct. Miriam (Moses' sister), Deborah, Jael, Hannah (Samuel's mother), Esther and Judith, the liberators of the Jewish people. These books do not lack the praises brought to the woman's fruitfulness (an essential aspect for a woman's appreciation), her worthiness, her faithfulness and devotion to her husband, the purity in marital relations, the mutual affection of spouses. Because of these unexpected qualities of the female, Wisdom herself would be portrayed as a woman in **the Song of Songs**, this wonderful hymn of love between a man and a woman. However, the reality has not ceased to be bitter for women in general.*

***Keywords:** the image of the woman, the Old Testament, Judaism, messianic prophecies*

In many Old Testament biblical episodes, as well as in post-biblical literature, women have often been marginalized, voiceless, isolated. By modern standards, most of the Jewish tradition could be characterized as misogynistic. On closer inspection, however, we can discover a multitude of active, vocal, strong, individualized and unique female figures. Many of them have their names revealed, which already gives them significant importance, even though they are named to a much lesser extent than men.

For those who are part of a “modern society”, the name usually has no special meaning, except that it is the choice of the parents and is sometimes passed down from generation to generation, sealing certain kinship ties. But in many cultures around the world, the name has a specific meaning, communicating to others something specific about the person wearing it.

This was true of the cultures of the peoples of the Old Testament. For example, the name of the first woman - "Eve" - means "mother of all living" and tells us something about her nature and her purpose. Basically, we can consider that in this name the identity given by God to the woman is captured. Most of the time, the names of the women were not specified, thus leaving a note of generality in their deeds and in their destiny.

In every case where a person is mentioned in the Scriptures, we can understand that he is given special attention and that his appearance in the Bible is not accidental.

We must start from the statement that the collective mentality of the ancient semitic societies and the laws that governed them imposed on the woman a submissive status, in a permanent dependence on a male representative of her family.

One of the perceptions of **Manu's Law** defines exactly the status of women in ancient Eastern society, in which

"a woman during her childhood depends on her father, during her youth on her husband, if her husband dies of her sons, if she has no sons, close relatives of the husband, because the woman must never behave as she pleases"¹.

Even so, some of the most striking female figures in the Old Testament happen to change the history of the Israelites on their own. We must not forget that two of the books of the Bible are named after women: Ruth and Esther.

Women who appear in the Old Testament can be classified in completely different typologies, by their age, appearance, social position, or the physical and mental traits they have. Not all of them occupy a privileged place in society, and not all of them are Israelites. In some of them, we find the structure of the mother of a family devoted to the sacrifice of her house, in others we catch a remarkable fighting or entrepreneurial spirit. They can be innovative or deeply traditional or both.

Without being able to fit into the Greek pattern: either goddess or heroine, or the medieval one: either saint or prostitute, biblical women are so different from each other that they cover an entire human spectrum. However, their common feature is that of "continuity agent". They are, after all, guarantors of the survival of families, tribes, peoples, faiths.

Most of them play a role in the economy of God's plan of salvation, as well as in the history of the "chosen people." In most of these female

¹ Ion Reșceanu, *Familia în Vechiul Testament*, Ed. Mitropolia Olteniei, Craiova, 2014, p. 57.

typologies one can notice a foreshadowing of some features found a few centuries later in the personality of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Eve is the antithetical figure of the Mother of God, the most obvious in similar and opposite features, the most interpreted from a theological point of view. In comparison with Christ, "the new Adam" (I Corinthians 15:45), the Mother of God will be called "the new Eve", an expression circulated by St. Irenaeus of Lyons († 202) and which will be repeated by the whole Byzantine hymnography. Just as "Old Eve" closed Heaven, so "New Eve" will reopen it. Also, the figure of Sarah, who through divine intervention gives birth to the biblical patriarch Abraham his son Isaac or other women remarkable for their courage and determination prepare us for the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy of the New Testament.

Even though women could almost never go beyond the background, their talent, courage, or intelligence can sometimes put them in the forefront of the action and be seen as protagonists or main decision-makers in some key episodes of biblical history. In other cases, even if the identity of the author is not explicitly revealed, all indications point to female personalities. This is the case with the greatest poem of all time - *the Song of Songs* - traditionally attributed to King Solomon, of which many fragments seem (according to modern exegetes) to have been written by a certain Avishag of Sunam, King David's alleged secret lover².

We cannot fail to mention the daughters of Jov, those born at the end of the book, named Yemima, Cheia, and Cheren-Hapuch. The fact that their name was mentioned not only ensured their perpetuity, but also indicated their status - that of heirs with equal rights as their brothers: "*And in all the land were no women so beautiful as the daughters of Jov, and their father made them partakers of the inheritance among their brethren*"³. The role of the legendary Jov seems to have been a major one in the ontological rise of women. In the apocryphal writing of Divra Jov - *The Testament of Jov* - the attitude of the old father is an ultra-valued one towards his own daughters, to whom he not only attributes the right of heiress of material ancestral wealth, but presents them to us as superior beings, endowed with the gift of it gives birth to a "new heart" in their bodies, to sing angelic hymns or to speak the "dialect of the heavenly rulers."

Let us not forget that four women gave birth to sons who would become the twelve tribes of Israel. It is about Sarah, Rebekah, Leah and Rachel, co-founders of Israel, along with their most famous husbands, Abraham, Isaac,

² cf. Amos Oz, Fania Oz-Salzberger, *Evreii și cuvintele*, Ed. Humanitas, București, 2012, pp. 82-83.

³ Iov, 42:15.

and Jacob. Even the subsequent distribution of the tribal territory of Canaan is made according to the identity of the mother.

Abraham's old wife - Sarah - will give birth to Isaac, through the miraculous intervention of the biblical patriarch, the promised son. The imminence of his sacrifice by his father, as an expression of his total love and obedience to God, foreshadows the birth of the One who would secure the salvation of the world. So in Sarah we can see the image of the Mother of God, and in Isaac the image of Christ.

Rebekah's story (revealed in **Genesis 24**) depicts a young woman who, even in those days, could enjoy independence. So when Abraham asks a servant to find a bride for Isaac in his brother's family, Rebekah somehow violates the customs of those times and decides for herself when she will leave to meet her future bridegroom. Moreover, she is the only "matriarchal figure" who enjoys the privilege of receiving information directly from Yahweh about the future of her twin sons Esau and Jacob (**Genesis 25: 22-23**).

Sisters Leah and Rachel come to complete the quartet of women who gave birth to the founders of the tribes of Israel. These were the daughters of Jacob's uncle, Laban, and their husbands' wives and cousins alike. Such kinship was common in Israelite society at that time, and marriages were generally designed to serve tribal needs and to keep the lineage as clean as possible. Jacob marries the two sisters as a result of treacherous ploys, not of his own free will. He had taken refuge in his uncle's house after depriving his brother, Esau, of the blessing of their father Isaac, who was on his deathbed. In order to atone for his sin and gain the goodwill of his uncle, Jacob would serve him for seven years. As a reward, little Rachel is promised. On the night of the wedding, however, he is cheated and is replaced by Leah. Scripture says that because Leah was not loved by her husband, the Lord endowed her with fertility as compensation, so that she would give birth to no less than six of Jacob's 12 sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, and Jacob's only daughter, Dinah. According to **Genesis 30: 17-21**, Leah gave birth to Issachar, Zebulun, and Dinah after she reached menopause.

Thus, she is not only an exemplary matriarchal figure of Israel, but has become a telling metaphor to illustrate how much fertility was appreciated in those days.

Then comes the wonderful "women's team" of the Exodus consisting of no less than six remarkable women who brought Moses into the world and secured his place in it. The first tandem includes mother Jochebed and sister Miriam, the so-called prophetess of the biblical text and who sings the

miracles of God after the people of Israel passed through the Red Sea (**Exodus 15:20**). The second consists of the relics of Shirah and Puah, who are said to have witnessed the birth of Moses, and who, by the power of their character, opposed the orders of Pharaoh, who demanded that every newborn Jew to be killed. They should also be given the credit they deserve: as midwives, they are the first women in the Bible to have a profession. The third tandem consists of the pharaoh's daughter and her maid, with whom, in the most ingenious and courageous way possible, she manages to save and raise a little boy who will become the savior of an entire people.

We also meet real women leaders, such as: Deborah - the prophetess and the queen Italia - the evil usurper, women who exercised all the power that sovereignty had given them. Interestingly, a formidable opponent appears every time. This is what happened in the case of Deborah, who defeated the Canaanites, but the retreating general is killed by another woman - Jael, the daughter of another people, the Chenites. In turn, the evil Italia managed to destroy "all the royal tribe", except for the baby Iaosh, hidden and saved by Princess Jehosheba.

Although women's voices have never been encouraged to be heard in Jewish culture, here are three remarkable women — Miriam, Deborah, and Anna — who manage to become “vocal,” because they knew how to use words in such a way. to such an extent that they succeeded in changing history by means of verbal acts. All three played an important role, whether for a son, for a brother, or for an entire people. Each of them sang songs of praise to God Almighty and at the same time made their own significant human contribution to the event evoked in their verses. Thus, Miriam sang during the crossing of the Red Sea, Deborah, after the defeat of Sisera's army, and Ana, after her personal victory against her own infertility.

Another exemplary figure of the woman-hero is that of Judith, who played a special role in rescuing the people of Israel, bravely entering the camp of the enemies and killing her leader, the famous Assyrian general Olofren.

Widowed after her husband, Manasseh, "died at the time of the barley harvest," Judith is portrayed as a serious woman in her place, who "walked around with a sack around her thighs and wore her widow's clothes" and who respects all the canons specific to the status. In addition to her beauty, she also enjoyed financial independence because her late husband — Manasseh — had left her gold and silver, slaves and maids, cattle and land. Rarely is there a woman in Scripture who spontaneously becomes a leader, but Judith does. So, when the leaders of Bethulia are about to decide to hand over the city to the Assyrians, Judith gives a well-argued speech that

persuades her people to wait and let her act according to a known plan. She gives up the sifted clothes of the widow and beautifies herself as she knows best, so that beauty may serve as a weapon against her enemies. We realize, however, that this would not be his most valuable weapon, but his intelligence. She manages to carry out her plan, precisely because she is smart and knows how to use words.

Courage is another quality of her, which she uses when she goes to the camp of the enemy Olofern, accompanied only by a maid. Using his seductive power, he lures Olofern into her nets and, by a cunning ploy, cuts off his head. When she returns to Betulia with the head of the enemy as a trophy, her compatriots understand that the fortress is saved and that their heroine, Judith, deserves to be respected until death. Judith enjoys independence for the rest of her life, up to the respectable age of 105, even though "many have asked her to marry him." Moreover, he frees his maid from bondage, an exceptional gesture in the context of those times. For her saving deed, she will be celebrated by all the people and called "the pride of Israel" (Jude 13:17; 15: 9-10).

Esther, a young Jew from Persia, the wife of King Ahasuerus, famous not only for her social standing but also for her beauty, saved by God from death, will be the one who will save the Jewish people from captivity. She is the prototype of the woman who enjoys full bodily and spiritual beauty: pleasing in face and modest in soul (2:15), wise (2: 9-17; 5: 1-3), obedient (2:10), humble (4:16), courageous (7: 6), loyal, and persevering (2:22; 8: 1-2; 7: 3-4). The book that bears his name describes an event that took place in the lives of millions of Jews left scattered throughout the lands of the empire⁴.

Along with the book of Ruth, Esther is the only book in the Bible that bears a woman's title. This heroine of her nation was first named Hadasa, but her Jewish name was changed for the benefit of the imperial court to "Esther," which translates to "the star of the rising." Two young women shake hands over the centuries in their love for the Jewish people: Ruth and Esther. The history of Esther is entirely rooted in beautiful oriental tales. The whole action revolves around three feasts: the feast given by Ahasuerus in honor of all his rulers and servants (chapters 1 and 2), the feast given by Esther (chapter 7) and the feast of Purim (chapter 9). The red thread of the whole action is clear: God knows how to protect His people in the midst of the most adverse conditions.

Esther's husband, King Ahasuerus, who ruled over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces from India to Ethiopia, valued the advice of his

⁴ <https://biblia.crestini.com/explicatia-cartii/estera/>

adviser, Prime Minister Haman, a proud man and a genuine anti-Semite. On the other hand, Mordecai, Esther's older cousin and the Jewish representative, asked Esther to use her influential position to speak to the king on their behalf.

According to the customs of the day, no one could address the emperor unless he called him. Otherwise, the punishment was death. Defying this danger, Esther decides to address her husband anyway, but first she prepares by praying and fasting for three days:

“On the third day Esther put on royal clothing and came to the inner court of the king's house ; the king was sitting in his royal seat, in the king's house, in front of the door of the house. And it came to pass, when the king saw the queen Esther standing in the court, that she passed through to him; and the king held out to Esther the golden scepter that was in his hand. Esther came near and struck the top of the staff” (Esther 5: 1-2)⁵.

Taking advantage of the king's benevolent attitude, Esther reveals her Jewish origins and shows him that Haman plans to destroy his people and, implicitly, her. Enlightened by his wife's words, King Ahasuerus prevailed and remedied the situation, ordering Haman to be hanged, *“for he had lifted up his hand against the Jews”* (Esther 8: 7)⁶.

By order of the king, Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in all the lands, ordering them to celebrate the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar every year, as days of victory for the Jews against those who wished to exterminate them.

The ten chapters of **the Book of Esther** tell a very old story, told in ancient times, but whose memory is still alive today, by celebrating it every year on the occasion of the feast of Purim.

In **Judges Book 16** we are told another story of a woman remarkable for her courage and intelligence. This time, she is part of the "opposing camp." It is about Delilah, a Philistine woman with whom the great King Samson had fallen in love. The Philistines commanded him to discover the source of his power, which he did, revealing that the hair was the "source" of his strength. Therefore, in order to put an end to the danger that Samson posed to them, his hair adornment had to be removed. Delilah is the one who carries out this mission, thus allowing the Philistine to capture him. Modern images of Delilah associate her with seduction as a typical

⁵ Livia și Sorin Rosen, *Meghilat Ester. Cartea Esterei pentru sărbătoarea de Purim*, FCER, București, 2004, p. 20.

⁶ idem, p. 27.

temptress. However, nothing in this story suggests that she was an easy woman. Her condemnation will be based on idolatry and association with Israel's greatest enemy, the Philistines.

In **I Kings 3: 16-28** we read the story of two women who complained to the king. They are not named, but are said to have been prostitutes. As such, they did not have a male partner mandated to speak on their behalf. Both women had recently given birth, but during the night one of the babies had been suffocated and died. Everyone claimed to be the mother of the surviving child. King Solomon, famous for his brilliant mind and ability to judge difficult cases, gave the following solution: "*Cut the living child in two and give half to one and half to the other.*" (I Kings 3:24)⁷. One of the women agreed, while the other protested in horror, saying that she would rather give up the child than see him die. Solomon ruled in her favor. This nameless woman has become a model of "true motherhood," while "Solomon's judgment" has also become a modern metaphor for the enlightened strategy addressed in court decisions.

We end the series of these Old Testament female figures with Lot's wife, who left the city of Sodom and was transformed into a pillar of salt because she looked back on her disastrous fate. There is not a hint of her name or identity other than that she was Lot's wife. The situation of this couple's daughters is similar. They are not named either, but are referred to only to report that they approached their father to give birth and secure offspring. The names of the children who were born from this incest are mentioned, but not that of the girls, a fact that emphasizes once again that women were often seen as mere means.

Despite the unfortunate status of women in the Old Testament, their role remains paramount. Over the millennia, their life stories send us various messages, such as that of Eve telling us that God is right, even when you fail, that of Sarah reminding us that God always keeps His promises, that of Rebekah by which we are encouraged that He always has a plan for our lives, that no one is forgotten and so on.

What makes all these women amazing? The fact that they loved God with passion, that they kept their eyes fixed on Him in the tumult of all the challenges in their lives, and that they submitted to His transforming Grace.

The great culmination of the merits of the "woman" comes with the fulfillment of the messianic prophecy and its elevation to the highest ontological level, made possible by the most honorable and most difficult mission entrusted to any mortal to date: the birth of the Son of God. Holy Virgin Mary.

⁷ <http://www.bibliaortodoxa.ro/carte.php?cap=3&id=68>

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FEMALE PROTOTYPES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Christina-Andreea MIȚARIU

Abstract: As in the Old and New Laws, women seem to have been repeatedly called to do God's will. Some of them manifested themselves as prophets, others as sinners converted after meeting the Savior, and others as true executors of the apostolic mission. But the most remarkable, noblest and holiest mission of all is fulfilled by the Blessed Virgin Mary, who would raise the human race to another level and restore to all mortals the chance of immortality.

Keywords: prophets, women-teachers, apostles, deaconesses, myrrh-bearers

An extremely important first aspect in elucidating the role that women play in the New Testament is related to the fact that Jesus Christ Himself was born of the Virgin Mary. The testimony of Holy Scripture anticipates the Blessed Virgin and her mission in the birth of the Son of God. Certainly, the central place in the spectrum of female typologies illustrated in the New Testament is occupied by the Blessed Virgin Mary - Mother of God. She embodies the sum of all the qualities that could be found in a woman, brought to the superlative.

The covenant by which the Old Testament was established had no other purpose than to prepare and raise a holy humanity in the person of the great-granddaughter of King David, worthy of the descent of the Spirit upon her on the day of the Annunciation¹. Through her contribution, the Blessed Virgin Mary would transform the earth into the throne of God's glory. In fact, all that was promised in the Old Testament concerning the coming of the Savior was fulfilled. The reason for this testimony, contained in the Gospels, is to prove that the Lord was born "of the house and of the seed of David." The phrase "son of David" in the Holy Gospels shows the connection of the Savior Jesus Christ with Israel and the beginning of the Kingdom. His descent from David was necessary to be through the Virgin

¹ <https://revistaortodoxa.ro/?p=1206>.

Mary, who is also *"of the house and tribe of David."* This foreshadowing led the exegetes of the biblical text to find in the ancient Scriptures of Israel prophecies and typologies about the foreshadowing of the Mother of God, about Eve, about the Wisdom of God, and about the Bride in *the Song of Songs*. The acquisition of these prefigurations by the Christian Church of the first ages was very important in knowing the truth about the conception and birth of the Savior Christ and about the veneration of the Mother of God².

The first of the Old Testament symbols that prophesied the Mother of God is the **"ladder of Jacob."**³ This ladder, at the head of which is shown to the patriarch Jacob, in a dream, the Lord God of Abraham himself, was understood by the Holy Fathers as having at least two meanings: the descent of God into the earth through His Incarnation and the person through whom He will descend or he will incarnate, that is, the person of the Mother of God⁴. In the first sense, the messianic one, the dream of Jacob was confirmed by the Savior Himself: *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."* In the second sense, it should be noted that through the Incarnation, heaven and earth were united again, as they were prophetically united by the ladder of Jacob, thanks to the Mother of God, who gave her free and assumed consent to the fulfillment of this prophecy.

In the person of the Blessed Virgin Mary we find many of the valuable models of the Old Testament, but also of the New Testament or successive generations of Christian women who have proven throughout history to be true followers of her.

Although in the New Testament women occupy a special category, the Eastern society of the beginning of the first millennium being a strong patriarchal one, we still distinguish some female typologies whose voice and activity have not gone unnoticed.

As noted in many Old Testament historical periods, God has endowed many women with the gift of prophecy, thus communicating important messages through them. Such cases are also mentioned in the New Testament, in which the voice of the woman is heard by all the people: men and women, both contemporaries and living of the ages to come.

² IPS dr. IRINEU POPA, *Maica Domnului în iconomia mântuirii și preacinstirea ei în Biserica Ortodoxă*, curs de Istoria Dogmelor pentru anul II Master, Facultatea de Teologie din Craiova, 2014, p. 1-2.

³ Genesis 28, 12.

⁴ Ev. af. John I, 51.

One of these is the prophetess Anna, who recognized the identity of the Savior when He was only a few days old. Moreover, she would proclaim the messianic work:

“And there was a prophetess, Hannah the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old and had lived with her husband seven years after her virginity. Remaining a widow and being eighty-four years old, Hannah was not far from the Temple, and she served him day and night. She also came at the same hour and began to praise God and to speak about Jesus to all who were waiting for the salvation of Jerusalem.”⁵

Another example of prophecy from a woman is found in St. Elizabeth, the mother of the last prophet, John the Baptist, who, when he meets the Blessed Virgin, addresses her:

“She cried out with a loud voice, Blessed are you! among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. How did the mother of my Lord come to me?”⁶

Through the mouth of the prophet Joel, God Himself promised that when He poured out the Grace of His Holy Spirit, both the sons and daughters of Israel would prophesy:

“After that I will pour out my Spirit on every creature; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions”⁷.

In Acts 21: 8-9, we are told that Philip the evangelist had four daughters who were prophets:

“The next day I left and went to Caesarea. I went into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, and lodged there. He had four virgin daughters who prophesied”⁸.

Even Paul - the Apostle of the Gentiles - wrote about women prophesying in church meetings, thus strengthening posterity's belief that the role of women was not neglected at all, but that they were given uplifting missions when necessary. The fact that they could prophesy to men in the

⁵ Luca 2, 36-38, <https://biblia.resursecrestine.ro/luca/2>.

⁶ Luca 1, 42-43, http://www.mesagerul-crestin.net/CB_NT/HTM/Luca_1_39_56.htm.

⁷ Ioel 2, 28, <https://biblia.resursecrestine.ro/ioel/2/28>.

⁸ Fapte 21, 8-9, <https://biblia.resursecrestine.ro/faptele-apostolilor/21>.

name of God contradicts the notion that the woman was somehow seen as a secondary creature, with no major duties other than family / household.

We wonder if they can perform other kinds of "works" outside the mission of prophecy (when called by God)? Paul mentions in **Romans 16** a series of women who served in the ministry for the sake of the Kingdom of God. One of them is Fivi, designated as "deaconess of the Church of Chencrea" and "a helper for many", including him. Another is Priscilla, who together with her husband Aquila was doing a work appreciated by all the churches among the Gentiles. When he praises those who served as exemplary in the noble cause of Christ's ministry, Paul mentions Mary, Andronicus, and Junias, whom he identifies as his relatives and fellow prisoners, "who are prominent among the apostles."

They gained their leading place, including chronological reasons, by devoting their lives to Christ, even before the Apostle Paul. The fact that Iunia is designated as a prominent person among the apostles leads us to conclude that she herself was an apostle.

Others, even if they did not enjoy such a high rank, are mentioned as "weary" in the holy work. Thus, St. Paul urges the faithful to pray for the health of Tryphena and Tryphos, the beloved Persia, Rufus and his mother, Philologist and Julia, Mereu and his sister⁹. From all this list of names, it is very clear that women can be spiritual "workers" as well as men.

Following the same line, we might wonder if women-teachers also somehow appear in the Holy Scriptures. Unfortunately, the New Testament does not explicitly mention any, but it is not out of the question for some of them to assist their husbands in the work of education. This could be the case of Priscilla, who could be the help of her husband Aquila, "in the church that gathers in their house."

But we cannot ignore the passage in which Paul tells women to be silent in the congregation and forbids them to teach men:

*"Let the women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but to be obedient, as the law saith. If they want to learn something, ask their husbands at home; for it is a shame for a woman to speak in the church."*¹⁰

The fact that this warning contradicts another of his statements in Galatians gives us food for thought: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there*

⁹ Romans 16, 8-15.

¹⁰ 1 Corinthians 14, 34-35 cf. <https://www.resursectine.ro/predici/39920/femeia-proorocia-si-rugaciunea-in-public>.

is neither slave nor free, neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"¹¹. The abolition of social, cultural and gender barriers is thus annulled, thus returning to the old differentiations.

But we must look at this "inconsistency" in the light of those times and those religious realities of the substratum. It is, in fact, about two Churches that St. Paul founded and in which he personally spent years as a pastor and teacher: Corinth and Ephesus. In both, there were temples dedicated to female deities (Aphrodite and Artemis), related to the cult of fertility, with hundreds of "priestesses" who were de facto some kind of prostitutes of the temple. Those who had carnal relations with them were believed to be fertile for fields, herds, and families. Thus, in these two cities, women played an essential part in the act of worship. The interference of Christian women in this cultic situation was delicate. One possible explanation could be that women's participation in the life of the Church could easily have become immoral.

But what totally contradicts this prohibition is that at the resurrection of the Savior, an angel delegated at least three women to teach the disciples of Jesus Christ, who were men. These women were instructed and commissioned to tell the apostles that Jesus Christ had risen and would meet them in Galilee. As a reinforcement of this assignment, Jesus Christ Himself appeared to some women and commanded them to tell the disciples to go to Galilee. It is certainly not accidental or unimportant that the Savior chose to appear first to women and only then to men. Second, if it had been wrong or immoral for women to bring the news of His Resurrection to the disciples — a matter of the utmost importance — they would not have resorted to it. We can conclude that the Son of God Himself, as the supreme authority, instructed women to teach men an essential truth and to give them some spiritual guidance in certain circumstances, so what could be more important?

Luke tells us about women who were healed of evil spirits and infirmities and who followed the Lord with the twelve disciples:

*“And there were also women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases: Mary, said Magdalene, from whom seven devils had come out, Joanna, Cuzah's wife, Herod's steward, Susanna, and many others, who helped him with what they had”*¹².

¹¹ Galatians 3, 28 cf <https://biblia.resursecrestine.ro/galatani/3>.

¹² Luca 8, 2-3, <https://biblia.resursecrestine.ro/luca/8>.

The fact that women were allowed to follow the Savior and to serve them both with the apostles clearly shows that they were encouraged to participate in the "great work" and were considered worthy of such service and able to perform it.

A differentiation of female typologies can also be noticed when Jesus Christ enters the house of Lazarus and his sisters in Bethany. One of the two women, namely Martha, received the Lord and served Him as a caring host, while her sister, Mary, saw a much more pronounced spiritual inclination than her sister, without participating in the organizational preparations for the visit. We are told that she stood at His feet and listened to His words.

We find the model of the sensitive and empathetic woman especially in the tragic moments that precede the Crucifixion of the Savior, during this painful process and after His death and the preparation for burial.

We mention here Saint Veronica, who was miraculously healed by the Savior of a female disease that had plagued her for twelve years. According to a Western tradition, she was the woman who wiped the sorrowful face of Jesus Christ with a grudge as he was taken to Golgotha.

The image of Christ would have remained imprinted on the towel, which was later considered *"the first icon not made by human hands"*¹³. The Lord's encounter with myrrh-bearing women is recounted by St. Luke the Evangelist: And Jesus turned, and said unto them,

*"Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for your children, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck"*¹⁴.

We see the same empathy here.

Among the women who accompanied the Blessed Virgin Mary were Mary Magdalene, Mary - the mother of James and Joseph - and the mother of the children of Zebedee and the other Mary, the wife of Cleopas. Another Myrrh-bearing Woman is Susanna, remembered by the Evangelist Luke, and who followed the way of the Cross, being with Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary of James (Luke 24:10). Women were in many ways more daring than men. They were not afraid to accompany the Lord to the end, nor to show compassion and solidarity with His Most Holy Mother.

As for the women who stood near the Cross and at the tomb of the Lord, Saint John Chrysostom says with his specific eloquence:

¹³ <https://www.crestinortodox.ro/sfinti/sfanta-veronica-125462.html>.

¹⁴ Luca 23, 28-29, <https://biblia.resursecrestine.ro/luca/23/27>.

“The women watched what was happening; the women who had suffered with Him, who had wept for Him. Look how great their perseverance is! They followed him in serving Him and were present in the midst of danger. That’s why they saw everything: how he shouted, how he gave his soul, how the stones and everything else split. And they were the first to see the resurrected Jesus; and this damned woman, this man, was the first to enjoy the sight of goodness; this female race showed manhood (andreaia); the disciples fled, but the women remained”¹⁵.

Let us not forget that on the Cross, Jesus Christ said to the beloved disciple, *“Behold, your mother.”* This is the testament that the Savior leaves at the last moment of earthly life. We see here His care as a son for his mother, but also the chance he gives to an ordinary mortal to enjoy the status of His brother.

Saint John Chrysostom proved to be a fine connoisseur of the *“feminine tagma”* found in the pages of Scripture. Of the New Testament female figures, he most loved the widow who threw her last two pennies into the temple gift box (Luke 21: 1-4); it is the perfect model that the Holy Father had in his heart - almsgiving and devotion to the earthly¹⁶.

Of the Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well, St. John Chrysostom states:

“See the righteous judgment of the woman (...), how is she led, slowly, to the highest teachings?”¹⁷

The Holy Father admires her reluctance:

“Of her own free will, without anyone commanding her, she lowers her vessel with water and, fluttering with joy, performs evangelical service.”¹⁸

By evoking all these feminine typologies, different and yet similar in certain features, we see the complexity of the woman and the fact that, beyond all her weaknesses, the woman is a being capable of spiritual ascension, of fulfilling missions of unsuspected magnitude.

It is not the desire to match the man that should concern the woman, but the desire to find her own way, to reach her maximum potential without

¹⁵ cf. David C. Ford, *Bărbatul și femeia în viziunea Sfântului Ioan Gură de Aur*, Ed. Sophia, București, 2004, p. 189.

¹⁶ *idem*, p. 186.

¹⁷ Commentary on the Gospel of John, Homily XXXII, PNP 1, XIV, p. 112.

¹⁸ Commentary on the Gospel of John, Homily XXXII, PNP 1, XIV, p. 118.

comparison. Probably not in competition with the man (a sterile and useless competition, by the way) should look for its purpose and the way to salvation, but with him, cooperating.

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CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN ROMANIAN MIDDLE SCHOOLS: AN OVERVIEW

Daniela-Florina FERCEA

Abstract: Our purpose in this study is to highlight children's literature as an available resource to both teachers and students that will aid them in studying various aspects of a foreign language, in this case English.

The study that I intend to conduct argues for integrating children's literature and literary theory-based discussions within the English classes in Romanian schools in order to enhance knowledge, creativity, motivation to learn, open-mindedness and understanding of other cultures and civilizations. Children's literature can be regarded as a study in and of itself, enforcing students to discover language that can be used in real life.

Firstly, I examine the functions of literature in the classroom, drawing attention towards a special category – children's literature. The latter will be examined taking into account definitions, general features, illustrative components and selective criteria.

Secondly, I draw a brief comparison between a selected pair of English textbooks prior and post 1989, in order to detect differences and similarities of a certain teaching approach, mainly based on learning about language through children's literature. In all, the emphasis falls most heavily on knowing and understanding the Romanian educational system under communist rule, the case of middle schools.

To be consistent with the purpose of the study, I concentrate on how different literature excerpts are being integrated in these textbooks as a method of enhancing appreciation and understanding of language beyond concern for proper usage.

Throughout the study, literary concepts are illustrated as a way of animating students' imagination and expand their knowledge, thus making possible linguistic progress and a continuous improvement on the English language.

Keywords: *children's literature; English classes; foreign language; textbooks; prior 1989*

Introduction

The present article provides a conceptual background and discusses selected theoretical data about the role of using children's literature with children and adolescents in foreign language classes and the effects of using

children's literature as far as language development is concerned. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach of teaching English based on children's literature texts would offer the students a proper education not only in the field of foreign languages but also in their long-life learning process.

The study that I intend to conduct argues for integrating children's literature and literary theory-based discussions within the English classes in order to enhance knowledge, creativity, motivation to learn, open-mindedness and understanding of other cultures and civilizations. Moreover, it focuses on how children's literature can be used to work on listening, speaking, reading and writing skills, thus becoming a way of promoting enjoyment in learning through interdisciplinarity.

The present-day knowledge society urges teachers to take an interdisciplinary approach to teaching a foreign language. Placing more emphasis on the students' study of a foreign language through an interdisciplinary approach of certain literary concepts, such as intertextuality or the creative recontextualization of the past generates motivation to make linguistic progress and a continuous brush up on the foreign language.

As the age at which young learners are introduced to English in elementary schools in Romania has decreased, there has been an increased focus on the teaching of English to young learners. My personal belief is that there is no better method with respect to this than the use of literature and its universal language (section 1.2).

Undoubtedly, there has been an increased interest in the potential of children's literature to contribute to language teaching. The present study also presents data which support the theory that including children's literature in children's and teenagers 'second/foreign language classroom not only enables them to appreciate and enjoy literature but also enhances the development of language skills by stimulating them to reach a more advanced level of English (section 1.3).

Moreover, most of Romanian teachers believe that children's literature in English has an important role to play in the language classroom, a belief that is reinforced by the fact that many private language schools in Romania make extensive use of literary texts in introducing young learners to English which was clearly not the case before 1989 (section 1.4).

Furthermore, although Romanian teachers often make claims about the value of children's literature in the language classroom, they appear very rarely to explain what they mean by children's literature and their attempts to provide empirical evidence for the claims that they make fail each time they get confronted with the reality of the national syllabus.

It is therefore important to consider the recommendations of educators in relation to the use of children's literature in the teaching of English in the context of a more broadly-based consideration of writing about children's literature in order to select the appropriate didactic materials (section 1.5).

According to John Dixon (1967, 81), "the *body of knowledge* in a syllabus or curriculum guide represents our hopes of what pupils will discover and build as discussion arises from day to day, not a package to be handed over". The need for a child-centred approach to teaching and learning English as a foreign language to young learners is more than essential, building a strong case for the importance of activities such as creative writing, talk and improvised drama. For this reason, his pedagogical perspective remained a constant educational resource in the context of a society that is constantly in flux, highly digitalised, with a decreasing readership.

Throughout this chapter, I underline different opinions that are held on a number of issues that lie at the heart of the English teaching, but I also aim at introducing my personal view which emphasises the relationship between language and learning in the individual child, and the role of literature in developing children's imaginative and aesthetic lives.

Literature in the classroom

First of all, literature is art! Art can be defined as communication between an artist and the audience. When an author writes, he creates all kinds of stories through words as a way of communication with the readers. An exquisite piece of art or a fine book have the same influence on the human perception: pleasing the eyes, delighting the soul, challenging the mind.

Literature is seen not only as an entertaining activity of spending the free time but also as an art of language (Zhen 2012, 35). As an art of language, teachers can use this as a powerful source in teaching English and the meaning of the language itself. Nonetheless, literature offers many opportunities for the students in developing their skills, vocabulary and linguistic competence as the whole process in English language acquisition.

Classic literature has been a part of our lives for many generations, and despite that it never seems to grow old. A practical explanation for this tendency lies in the numerous advantages of literature teaching: enjoyable to read, different styles of writing, vocabulary expansion, developing reading skills, personal development, arising cultural awareness.

As Penny Ur (1996, 201) underlines “literature also encourages empathetic, critical and creative thinking and contributes to world knowledge”. On the other side, the same scholar admits the existence of several disadvantages: a language too difficult for foreign language learners to read, some texts may be long and time-consuming to teach, the target-language culture on which the literature is based is alien to learners and may be difficult for them to relate to, learners’ enjoyment and appreciation of literature can be spoiled in the process, students with another field of specialization may find literature irrelevant to their needs.

In what follows, I examine the functions of literature in the classroom and its implications for the teacher. According to John Warren Stewig (1995, 387), “literature in the classroom has three distinct functions: to provide a literary experience, to impart information, and to provide a vehicle for developing language-related skills of memory, sequence, description, expression, comprehension, interpretation, analysis, synthesis and evaluation”.

The literary experience is the very heart of literature. Literature is the most valuable content for engaging young children with feelings concerning the past, present and future. This experience nurtures a desire to see, hear and understand the ideas of others. Only through a systematic knowledge of books can the teacher contribute effectively to children’s impressions of literature.

Jim Trelease (2013, 1) considers that “as lumber is the primary support for building a house, words are the primary structure for learning. There are really only two efficient ways to get words into a person’s brain: either by seeing them or by hearing them. Since it will be years before an infant uses his or her eyes for actual reading, the best source for vocabulary and brain building becomes the ear. What we send into that ear becomes the foundation for the child’s *brain house*”. His book provides specific suggestions about ways to share more than 300 great read-aloud books and why teachers must expose children to literary experiences, i.e., the absence of the necessary reading skills.

The impact of reading aloud on the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing is overwhelming, considering some of the key competences for lifelong learning: literacy, multilingual, personal, social and learning to learn. This listening enjoyment also motivates children to acquire reading skills once they see what literature has in store for them.

It is equally important for teachers in all grades to provide group literary experiences so that all students can enjoy the vicarious experiences written especially with their age group’s interests in mind. Glenna Davis

Sloan (1980, 132) claims in one of her articles that “Although literacy may be a right, unfortunately it can’t be bestowed like a gift. Like it or not, the level we attain is largely a measure of our own efforts” and that “Literacy is a state of becoming, not a point to be reached”. Literary texts can conduct to this *state* if they are properly inferred in classroom activities by teachers who are totally dedicated to their mission and understand students’ needs and expectations.

Taking into account Trelease’s and Sloan’s statements, my point of view is quite similar to theirs because time should be allocated each day in every classroom to providing literary experiences for pupils. It is a win-win situation for every participant in education, inducing an active behaviour, not a passive one.

In fact, the literary experience has as sole objective the enjoyment of a book. Words and ideas put together in the right combination bring characters to life, exciting readers to explore the deeper insights of their worlds, past, present and future.

The question that I intended to answer all along in this section is: “Why should teachers use children’s literature in the English classes? There are numerous answers and I review some of the theoreticians who have provided pertinent points of view.

For example, Judith Langer (1995, 5) states that “literature plays a critical role in our life, often without our notice and it helps us to explore both ourselves and others, to define and redefine who we are, who we might become, and how the world might be... In its best sense, literature is intellectually provocative as well as humanizing, allowing to use various angles of vision to examine thoughts, beliefs, and actions”. She continues by adding that stories provide us with something more significant than dry drill-teaching – they provide us with the meaning of our world and the world around us.

When students read literature, they not only learn new vocabulary or grammatical structures, but they also learn how to raise questions, recognize problems and search for causes and solutions, reflect on ideas, and make connections. As far as I am concerned, using children’s literature can stir motivation in second language acquisition and make all the difference during English classes. The other benefits mentioned by Langer simply add further value to this essential achievement.

Langer (1997, 613) also describes the traditional second language classroom in which literature is absent. In such classroom, learners do not have a chance to practice language through personal and meaningful engagement and are often limited to studying language in texts through low-

level literal questions. Learners “are often given short passages and fill in exercises meant to develop their English skills before being provided with context that permits them to use those skills in interesting and meaningful ways.”

The purpose of reading is to encourage positive lifetime, independent reading, apart from the focus on specific reading skills. One aspect should not exclude the other, but it will be wisely to consider it a wholesome experience, quite elevating for both teachers and students.

The information experience implies the difference between information books and fictional works, the author’s intention and the teacher’s way of selecting the right material, apart from the enjoyment criterion. Information experiences are needed whenever information has to be transmitted or is sought by individual children.

While the literary experience is the relationship between a child and a book, the information experience is often a relationship among the teacher, the child and a book. Teachers read or assign these books for specific purposes.

When the child looks for information for the sheer sake of seeking, the reading experience is on the fine line between being an information and a literary experience.

The language experience uses literature to develop specific language skills or knowledge about language. A teacher might read an accumulative story like *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, written by Mark Twain, and then ask children to recreate the exact sequence, or assess retention by asking children to recall different parts of the story. After reading *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde to a class, the teacher could ask children to recall all the errands that the kind-hearted prince gave to the swallow as to help the poor. The story could serve as a basis for an extended discussion of children’s related personal experiences.

The implications for the teacher are somehow confusing. The major problem is that teachers have not seen these aspects as three separate and distinct functions of literature and have not understood the purposes of each. A teacher may intend to provide a daily literature experience for children, but frequently, because of zeal for instruction, such an experience becomes an information experience or a language experience.

Unfortunately, too many teachers see their role as providing children with an experience in which the gain can be immediately measured. The literary experience is impressionable. It is measured years later by assessing the reading attitude and involvement that resulted from regular exposure to the best literature available.

The information experience is foundational, providing information that, when added to other information, builds a firm foundation for further learning. The language experience continues to focus on the skills of listening, expressing, thinking, and sequencing in such a way that they become overlearned and therefore help facilitate the intake and analysis of many experiences.

Children’s literature: definitions

It is not a simple matter to define literature. Since literature is not the most utilitarian field, its importance is revealed by those interested in educating themselves and each has a different point of view, more or less subjective.

Clearly, working with abstract concepts as ‘literature’ and ‘childhood’ makes it even harder to find a satisfying definition, but the vaster list of attempts had put the topic in the spotlight, emphasizing its relevant significance for a struggling society with a culture on the verge of extinction.

Some writers maintain that children’s literature differs from adult literature and that the word *literature* when used in the context of children’s literature cannot necessarily be related in any straightforward way to the word *literature* as used in other contexts (Peter 2018, 82). Langer (1995, 58) even indicates questions as "part of the literary experience" when she describes the effects of literary ambiguity and openness on the reader: "the literary experience involves the raising of questions; questions are necessary and normal when a person is exploring horizons of possibilities".

Tomlinson and Lynch-Brown (2002, 2) define children’s literature as “good quality tradebooks written especially for children from birth to adolescence, covering topics of relevance and interest to children through prose and poetry, fiction and nonfiction”.

McDowell (1973, 17) states that “children’s literature is applicable to books written for, and read by, that group referred to as children by any particular society”.

On one hand, Bottigheimer (1998, 190) argues that “children’s literature is an important system of its own”. On the other hand, Hillman (1999, 3) claims that “to be included in the category of children’s literature, writing must be of good quality, excluding from the category of children’s literature, writing that is stodgy, too predictable or too illogical”.

For a considerable number of scholars, children’s literature is narrative, an important characteristic of which is the provision of access to

understanding through empathy with the lives and experiences of others (Hollindale, 1997; Saxby, 1997). Saxby (1997, 14) claims that “the raw material of literature is experience, life itself”, while Hollindale (1997, 62) considers that “the experiences recorded can be nonfictional but might, for example, be based on the author’s memory of his or her childhood”.

For Huck et al. (1997, 5), children’s literature is “the imaginative shaping of life and thought into the forms and structures of language”. I must agree with their remarks because this type of literature is focused on the lives and experiences of children, encouraging the development of empathy through vicarious experience. Young people broaden their world view by engaging themselves in some sort of imaginary journey, seizing new experiences. When they proceed to the reading of a literary text, new stories unfold in front of them and they can identify with the characters, choosing between right and wrong. All this excitement induced by words and phrases recreate somehow the process of coming of age, a young person's transition from being a child to being an adult.

Ghosn (1997, 15) confines children’s literature to fiction, defining it as “fiction written for children to read for pleasure”, rather than for didactic purposes and explicitly excluding any type of material based around controlled vocabulary and sentence structures. I consider that, in excluding such material, many very popular books that have been written for children are being effectively excluded which would be a total loss. Furthermore, it is unclear what is the author’s intention by the use of the word *didactic* in this context. The word *didactic* can be applied to any material that is intended to convey information and instruction, not taking into account the presence or lack of entertainment.

These extremely vague criteria of definition leave much room for speculation and continuous debate. Personally, I consider that each scholar has inferred an essential piece of the big *puzzle*, but as Bland (2013, 3) puts it “children’s literature seems to be good preparation for reading literary texts as adults”, makes it all more understandable and connected to the realities of the educational agenda.

Children’s literature concept goes beyond the theoretical background, reaching the practical aspect; something plausible that can be measured and evaluated in terms of school progress or failure when it comes to the learning of English as a foreign language or even for the first language studies.

This type of literature prepares the road for extensive reading for future adults, creating a healthy habit of lecture and word enjoyment. Recent studies have shown that only those students exposed to literary material

from an early educational stage have developed a predilection for reading literature, enriching their vocabulary and using properly the grammar structures.

Therefore, writing for children is a rich and strong source of information and it deals with the cultural phenomenon, bringing its own contribution to society by improving the literacy competence.

Moreover, the long road from *childhood* to *adulthood* can be gently surpassed if teachers and parents, working alongside for the wellbeing of the child, creatively infer excerpts of children's literature on and off school domain: reading aloud bedtime stories, acting out a literary scene, role-playing games, constant exposure to authentic material during English classes, compositions, a thematic set of drawings in the format of a wordless book, keeping a reflexive journal, writing poems and the list can go on.

Furthermore, I would like to present the current situation in Romania concerning the topic in discussion. A very scarce selection of literary texts is used in coursebooks in the English language teaching context, the case of Romanian middle schools. In my teaching career, I addressed this problem in many different ways I took the floor on the subject in a teacher education course, arguing that literary texts can be used, not only at the elementary school level in this context but also in English language teaching (ELT) classes at any school level.

In the past few decades, the use of literary texts in ELT has become very much the order of the day in countries where English is the first language which is quite understandable and adequate for the entire educational process.

However, in Romania, only recently researchers have begun to tackle with this area of research. As a result, the use of literature in English language teaching has not been systematically adopted. So far, no consistent theoretical background for reading instruction has been agreed upon, nor there is common usage of terminology and definitions of reading subskills. This lack of coherency means that there are almost no formal courses or further teacher development in the use of literary texts in ELT.

In addition, the Romanian pedagogues declined to make a clear distinction between classic and children's literature, considering that anything written is literature. I find this extensive definition which covers all aspects of life obviously insufficient in order to render the complexity of this liberal art.

In Romania, children's literature began to expand with the memories of Ion Creangă, *Recollections from Childhood*, a very much appraised book even in the communist era, prior 1989. Abroad, the entire process of

recognition of children's literature as a distinctive field was undertaken a few years earlier, in 1865, when Charles Dodgson wrote a novel especially for children with the title *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*. Both writers designed children's literature in order to make children enjoy in reading a text because it related with their ages and life, their fears and dreams, their need for having fun.

Regardless of the multitude of theories, children's literature empowers a tremendous potential for children and students to enlarge their cultural awareness from the story and make them appreciate their own cultural heritage in a world that one can easily lose the sense of identity and enjoyment of simple pleasures in life.

All in all, the term children's *literature* is applicable to books written for the intended audience inferred in its entitling, namely children.

Children's literature: general features

In the academic environment, the word *genre* is used to refer to socially constructed categories that describe written and oral texts such as, for example, novels, short stories, poems, lectures, and academic articles.

Over the past decades, the demand for trade books has increased considerably, thus drawing attention to literary works addressed to children and young adults. Researchers began to deeply analyse the theories that led to an assertive outcome. Therefore, children's literature can broadly be classified into two genres (Baruah 2013, 20). They are traditional and modern children's literature.

Original or translated, they are divided at their turn into many subgenres. Traditional children's literature contains folktales, folksongs, riddles, folklore, etc. This genre can be further divided down into myths, fables, legends, fairy tales, tales of tricksters, folksongs, lullabies, etc. Modern children's literature includes fiction (fantasy, realistic fiction, science-fiction, historical fiction etc.), non-fiction, biography and autobiography, travelogue, poetry and verse, picture story book, comic strip, etc.

Many notable scholars (Lazar, 2010; McDowell, 1973; Norton, 1991) define children's literature as narrative fiction whose primary purpose is entertainment. This, however, restricts children's literature to one particular text-type (story) and one particular genre (narrative).

On the contrary, Lazar (2010, 14) argues that "the study of literature makes literature itself the content or subject of a language course, while the use of literature as a resource draws on literature as one source among many

different kinds of texts for promoting interesting language activities. Clearly, if it is the study of literature which is our aim then developing the *literary competence* of our students is crucial”.

Choosing a culturally suitable text may be quite complicated because there is a list of cultural aspects that should be taken into account when using literary texts with students. According to Burns and Siegel (2018, 143), the texts can be divided into two general groups, considering the linguistic aspects (proverbs, idioms and metaphors) and socio-cultural aspects (objects, social structures, customs and traditions, beliefs, values and superstitions, taboos and humour).

This paper focuses on both traditional and modern children’s literature subgenres, but it has a particular attachment to fairy tales and novels.

Fairy tale is a simple story which is set in the past without knowing the author and most often involves magical things or animals who can behave like human. Here are some examples of the most popular fairy tales throughout the ages: *Cinderella*, *Snow White and the seven dwarfs*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Puss in boots*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Rapunzel*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, *The Little Mermaid*, *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, etc.

According to Norton (1991), fairy tales has its own characteristics. First, a fairy tale is opened with the by now universal line *once upon a time*, being finished in the same note, using another famous phrase *and they all lived happily ever* after. Involving the conflict and action of good and evil in the plot of the story, applying a straightforward style and universal themes, fairy tales will create a meaningful time of reading literature for the students.

Other characteristics which make fairy tales to be easily recognizable are the following: supernatural adversaries (e.g. ogre, troll and giant) and helpers (e.g. fairies, fairy godmother, and jinny), magical objects (e.g. magical lamp or magical clock), power (e.g. granted wishes or humans with extraordinary power), and transformations (e.g. prince to beast or bird to human), the pattern of three (e.g. Three little pigs) and seven (e.g. Seven dwarfs), talking animals (e.g. Puss in boots).

Asides the supernatural motifs, fairy tales are consistently moral stories, trying to educate readers of all ages, grasping the right and wrong of human behaviour in order to convey the entire narration into one overwhelming lecture.

When it comes to novels, the general opinion is strongly divided. Some teachers find the novel far too complex to use in the English language teaching due to its high level of language, intricate style and themes, round

characters, conflictual plot, difficult grammar. Others argue for its necessity in the ELT classes so as to improve general knowledge of classic literature and to instil a progressive attitude towards study.

According to the principle *Less is more, but more is better*, Gareis et al. (2009) advocate for using novels in EFL classroom for the purpose of improving students' motivation in reading, developing their knowledge about cultures and civilizations. Since novel is one of the genres most renown in literature, novels can also become some excellent sources of plenty of comprehensible input.

It is a well-known fact that there is a strong correlation between the amount of reading individuals do and the size of their vocabulary. During novel reading, students become familiar with various linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings that are intended for native speakers.

The role of children's literature can be analysed from a linguistic point of view, literary texts containing the means to improve all language skills, develop grammar, enhance pronunciation and extend vocabulary, but also from the instructional point of view because they are motivating, encouraging students to exercise imagination and fantasy. Skills of sharing, predicting and anticipating are being constantly promoted, young learners go through emotional responses, reactions and interpretations, all in the pursuit of cross-curricular links.

Also important is the cultural aspect of literary texts, through their connection with the cultural, historical, social and language traditions of a particular nation or group. Literary texts can thus extend knowledge of various cultures and civilizations, helping readers to better appreciate literary texts from other cultures. Uncovering and understanding cultural meanings or ideas in literary texts can be very challenging and motivating at the same time, stirring cultural awareness. Readers may be encouraged to learn more by reading about cultural issues that were not familiar to them and discover the global message of literature.

According to Winch et al. (2004, 339), children's literature can play an important role in cognitive and linguistic development, nurturing the speaking and listening skills and giving them purpose and direction. They continue to add more significance to the topic by regarding the entire notion as a non-threatening way for children to encounter a considerable variety of perspectives on philosophical issues, worldviews, social ideas, and cultural practices. My personal belief related to this is that if any of these fundamental pedagogic elements are to be realized, teachers need to understand the structural and linguistic characteristics of different genres and text-types in taking the right decisions about their use of ELT materials.

Introducing children's literature in the ELT classes is more than beneficial for both teachers and students, aside parents, communities, economic and civil society structures. In a world where individuals are able to communicate efficiently and effectively, to develop a critical thinking and to take pleasure in all that is aesthetic, the common welfare is not that unreachable, thus becoming a desirable goal.

In a rationale that is reminiscent of the canonical approach to adult literature, often, children's literature is referred to as some sort of metaphorical writing, with a poetical touch, involving a significant truth expressed through memorable language.

In EFL classrooms, exploiting the astounding array of language structures in children's books can help students with the mechanics of English. For example, some books implement a call-and-response format that encourages students' choral responses. Others use a variety of past tenses, offering opportunities for lessons that compare and contrast grammatical structures. Language structures and vocabulary can be effectively supplemented with the right picture storybook.

Although the global spread of English has led to countless implications for the ELT classroom, more or less controversial, developments in corpus linguistics seem less problematic for language teachers, at least at first sight. There is no easy task in grasping the amount of children's literature, choosing whether to teach *genuine* or *artificial* language content in class, deciding if the corpus based language description is suitable for all students, answering to all their linguistic needs and expectations.

The *authenticity* and *real* language data regarding children's books are two aspects that support pedagogical effectiveness and appropriateness, surrounding the ELT textbooks and materials, thus entailing many implications for the teachers and their response to the norms of EFL and ESL teaching.

The extent to which classroom texts should be *authentic*, since they were originally written for non-teaching purposes, and how the tasks should replicate the *authentic communication* outside the classroom has been an everlasting dilemma, especially since, in the last years, one could observe an overcrowding tendency of children's publications on the book market.

Authentic texts and tasks draw upon more realistic models of language use and leave learners better prepared for life outside the classroom. Corpora studies show that the actual language of children's literature is quite similar to the language features recorded in standard grammars of English, and that there is no preference for the use of a naturally occurring spoken language which may include some unusual linguistic features.

Therefore, in terms of English language behaviour, the literary texts designed for children manage to capture a language that cannot be invented with that much ease since its simple format, wrapped in a charming lining of word associations and picturesque descriptions, conveys a great philosophical power, irresistible to any type of readership. I always wondered why the *Cinderella* story caught the interest of so many generations, turning into one inexhaustible source of inspiration and some claim to its popularity can be trusted to the presentation of an idealistic language model. Voices of the characters convince and appeal to readers. The plot entices them to turn the pages nonstop from beginning to end.

In fact, on a broadly assumption, deep cut words, which convey almost into slipping catchy phrases, containing expressive verbs that belong to an indefinite past, present and future, create and recreate the unrealistic atmosphere of childish stories and this aspect seems very appealing. The narrative of a good children's book flows with a steady rhythm that makes it an excellent read-aloud.

Once more, it is essential for a learner of English to learn from actual examples, examples that can be trusted because of their resemblance to real life instances of communication, taking into consideration the difficulty of inventing realistic examples from teachers' behalf and the considerable level of facilitation of the learning process for ELT classrooms when it comes to the use of *real* language through literary excerpts.

Using children's literature in English language teaching in Romanian Middle Schools

This section investigates the role of motivation in second language acquisition and discusses the benefits of using children's literature with children and adolescent learners. We will also draw a brief comparison between a selected range of English textbooks prior and post 1989, in order to spot out differences and similarities of a certain teaching approach, mainly based on learning about language through children's literature.

English education in Romania has largely depended on the teaching of literature. It has been regarded as a reminiscent pattern of how the mother tongue has been taught and studied during the communist regime and a clear consequence of Romanian people's preference for folk tales, myths and legends.

The relationship between literature and English language teaching has been rather difficult throughout all these years. In many situations, while English language teaching adopted a structural approach, literature was

taught as a separate subject. Nevertheless, current approaches have endeavoured to re-examine the value of literature and have begun to upgrade it once again. These approaches assert the value of literature teaching from several aspects, primarily, literature as an agent for language development and improvement.

Literature is a verbal art that leads readers to appreciate the beauty of language. Taking that into account, we will try to analyse how children's literature was used and displayed in the pages of the English coursebooks before and after 1989.

In communism, literature was steadily used in Romanian language teaching as a separate subject to broaden students' horizons by giving them a knowledge of the classics of literature, to improve cultural awareness, to stimulate students' creative and literary imagination and to develop their appreciation of literature. But what about English teaching?

We would try to give a proper answer by presenting the format of a sixth-grade English textbook, representative for the discussed period, published in 1982 by the state Didactical and Pedagogical Publishing House Bucharest. At first sight, the table of contents is divided into several revision parts: Revision A, Revision B, Revision One, Revision Two, Revision Three, Final Revision A, Final Revision B.

Each major revision section includes an indefinite number of lessons, a total of fourteen, approaching a variety of themes like: *Romania, My village, On the family plot, Travelling in Town and in the Country, The four seasons, Back from the holidays, Lunch, At the Bookshop, The parts of the body, Going shopping, My town, The eight of March, At the theatre, A visit to a factory.*

As one can observe, the topics are far away from literary texts, firmly organised under clear tasks that can help pupils to practice the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – in addition to exemplifying grammatical structures and presenting new vocabulary. For instance: *Repeat the words after your teacher. Then read them.; Listen to your teacher. Say one or two.; Look at the pictures and read.; Make sentences about these animals.;* etc, strongly connect with a skill-based instruction.

However, each lesson is built as to raise cultural awareness, especially British culture and civilisation. In this outlook, lesson number five called *The four seasons* includes at the very end a brief informative text *The weather in Britain* and the previous lesson has a final mention about *the London traffic*, in respect to means of transport, for a further vocabulary practice.

The actual coursebook contains in its last pages a theoretical guide: list of irregular verbs, an English – Romanian vocabulary with a particular entry – Lesson vocabulary that adds up all the new words from every lesson.

All things considered, we can notice that the guideline of an English textbook prior to 1989 is rather dried out of any literary context, with a peculiar focus on grammar and vocabulary. The only lively parts of the didactic material are the cultural spots, some short poems, one or two songs like the American chant *Clementine*, a few word games.

Throughout its table of contents, the only literary reference we could identify was an excerpt from *Robin Hood* by Walter Scott, placed in the Final Revision B under the subtitle School and Extra-School Activities. The only reasonable explanation for this inadequacy is the fact that the pedagogical approach of the period was rather narrow-minded and obstructed any form of creativity and imagination.

That being the case, literature was regarded as an after-school activity, somehow unnecessary and just in case the students would want to fill their spare time with a reading task. Teaching English through children's literature, in the case of Romanian middle schools, during the communist regime, was more of a challenge and a phantasmagoric notion which was almost imperceptible in the expansion of the school curriculum, not to mention its scarce appearance inside the covers of coursebooks.

Our analysis goes further with the presentation of another sixth-grade English textbook, published in 2000 by the European Institute Publishing House Iasi. In terms of comparison, this post 1989 edition enjoyed the outburst of a free book market, the so-called liberalisation process, available for all activity domains. The actual coursebook reveals a variety of colourful pages, crammed with suggestive pictures and symbols, some sort of kitch exposure, a design so much desired in all those communist years of plain, grey pages.

Although the book in question is a mixture of illustrations and teaching methods with no organised style and clear requirements like prior 1989 model, the table of contents is most appealing. Divided into units this time, more exactly seven, each unit is being presented by a group of four lessons, with the revision part replaced by a Look back 1 and 2 section.

The English-Romanian vocabulary and the list of irregular verbs are still in use, but the novelty is the Tape scripts part, a handy material for the listening exercises performed with the help of a cassette.

One particular chapter drew our attention, entitled *Readers make leaders*, from Unit 2, some sort of far-fetched literary guide presented aimlessly in the pages of four lessons: *A book for everyone*, *Mysteries*, *Book reviews*, *Round up*.

Even if the material is not well organised, the focus on literature has increased considerably in the post 1989 period, due, in part, to the democratic values and the adoption of the Western educational system.

Having the right to liberty of movement and freedom to choose, the Romanian scholars wanted to supply the middle school teaching with too much of everything in a small amount of time.

Far and foremost, the Unit 2 subject matter explores all types of literature: fairy tales (*The Sleeping Beauty*), adventure story (*Treasure Island*), thriller/mystery/detective story (*The 39 Steps*), science fiction (*The Planet of the Apes*), novel (*David Copperfield*), but there is a clear preference for children's literature. Its characters are widely used in the grammar and vocabulary exercises as to convey the requests into a more lenient experience, as can be seen in the following examples: *Snow White wants you to describe her physical appearance* or *Puss in Boots needs your help at answering the questions*.

Nevertheless, each lesson comes with a theoretical part, *Grammar Pill* or *Data Bank* and a practical one which is a succession of various exercises, a brief reinforcement of the previous knowledge, *Do you remember?* entertaining activities called *Time for fun!*, pretty much a little bit of everything as we already mentioned above.

This random jumble material is somehow focused on the needs of a sixth grade pupil because the entire concept is colourful and joyful to browse and to practice the main pillars of a conventional English lesson: new vocabulary and grammar structures. It seems that there is no pressure on learners as to undergo any type of memorization, retaining word for word entire topics, learning by heart long poems and songs as it was practised in the past, the well-known traditional teaching.

Conclusions

In short, literary texts offer a rich source of linguistic input and can help learners to practice the four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – in addition to exemplifying grammatical structures and presenting new vocabulary. Teachers that use literature in the classroom provide opportunities for multi-social classroom experiences and appeal to learners with different learning styles, providing qualitative instruction in a concentrated and didactically wholesome form.

With this in mind, we aimed to reveal to a lesser extent the general features of children's literature in terms of definition, illustrative behaviour, qualitative trait and principles of selection, all in the name of a sustainable literature-based instruction. In this section, the focus of the study was diligently directed to the overall perspective that children's literature can be regarded as a special form of literary text written for children to make them

interested in reading especially in English as foreign language because it provides simple words and colourful picture.

The research continued its analyse by underlining the status of children's literature in the English textbooks prior 1989, focusing on middle school education, sixth grade level more precisely. Our two coursebook examples – 1982 and 2000 editions – denote the enormous gap between two historical periods with different political regimes: communism and democracy.

In terms of comparison, the first didactical material seemed to be devoid of any lively written inserts, not to mention its dull and ashen format which give us the feeling of crossing through a waterless desert. The only literary mention we could find was an excerpt from *Robin Hood* and it was dismissed as an extracurricular activity.

At the opposite pole, the later version was considerably crammed with too much unselected information that it almost appeared to be like a land flowing with milk and honey, but it did have an entire unit concerning literary texts, especially fairy tales excerpts were firmly applied to this new method of teaching.

The only connection we could find between the two textbooks was the evident direction towards a children's literature exposure even if it was made to a greater or lesser extent and rather clumsy depicted in the teaching process.

On a final note, literature, particularly, children's literature has endured a long way to its worthy recognition as an indispensable instrument in the acquisition of a foreign language, in this case English, no matter the educational stage, despite the limitation of our study to the Romanian middle school system.

Contrary to the past, literature is beginning to be viewed as an appropriate mechanism for language learning and development since the attention is now on authentic language and authentic situations. This concise study has succeeded, therefore, to portray the importance of children's literature in general, through its contribution to students' literacy achievement, but also in particular, by affirming its position in the publishing headers of the English textbooks prior and post 1989, the case of Romanian middle schools.

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SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE EVOLUTION OF LUXURY

Luiza CARAIVAN

***Abstract:** Currently defined as the term used for everything that is expensive and difficult to obtain to have a sumptuous life, or everything that is not essential for the development of life, but aims to provide pleasure and comfort, luxury remains one of the concepts with a history that changes with the evolution of humanity. Along with other concepts such as beauty / ugliness, kitsch or decadence, luxury has standards that have changed over time, but have also intersected with the standards of each of the mentioned concepts. This article is a brief analysis of the links between luxury and beauty / ugliness and kitsch.*

***Keywords:** beauty, kitsch, luxury, ugliness*

Introduction

The definition that is most often provided for luxury nowadays refers to everything that is expensive and difficult to obtain to have a sumptuous life, or everything that is not essential for the development of life, but aims to provide pleasure and comfort, luxury remains one of the concepts with a history that changes with the evolution of humanity. Along with other concepts such as beauty / ugliness, kitsch or decadence, luxury has standards that have changed over time, but have also intersected with the standards of each of the mentioned concepts.

As Andrei Pleșu notes in the article "Transition and the avatars of luxury", luxury can be considered a "universal passion", as it exists in all people regardless of the period of time that we take into consideration and regardless of the type of societal organization. No matter how harsh or dictatorial the political regime might be, luxury appears in that social category that comes to experience the "uselessness of ornamentation", but also to appreciate the "usefulness of comfort" (Pleșu 2006), leaving to many the ordeal of satisfying daily needs.

A history of luxury certainly dates back to the beginnings of humankind: the primitive age has its ideal of beauty in women and men

adorned with colored pebbles, shells, small objects carved in wood, to attract attention, to satisfy an acute need to be different from others, a personal pleasure for difference and uniqueness.

As Stéphane Marchand (2001:8) points out in *The Wars of Luxury*, luxury is the fundamental refusal of the human being to limit his life to survival.

Whenever the ideal of feminine or masculine beauty has changed, the perception of luxury has changed as well: in the ancient world, along with body ornaments, gastronomic luxury appears, along with artistic and intellectual luxury, due to the fact that “stoic sobriety, despising the well-being, the refinement, the comforts of all kinds, ends [...] in the voidness of a monastery without religion” (Plesu 2006). Progress is, somehow, “bringing enormous parts of luxury into the territory of necessity” (Plesu 2006). And, indeed, modern society has fully demonstrated this: public baths are deeply despised by Western society, because running water is no longer a luxury but a necessary comfort; gas lamps are expensive antiques, as electricity is a necessity. Cars, for example, are one of the criteria for assessing the ideal of fe/male beauty, just as silicone implants in the fe/male body are used to positively assess the ideal of fe/male beauty.

The paradox of luxury is precisely the fact that everything used to bring comfort and pleasure is both a step towards progress and civilization (in the sense of alignment with the rules set by the Western world and compliance with certain standards), as well as a superfluous element and a sample of waste, without which humankind has managed to survive successfully for thousands of years, an example at hand being the inestimable types and brands of machinery and gadgets designed to make life easier in the comfort of our homes.

The spirit of luxury has radically changed throughout history, and the most recent change taking place in the middle of the twentieth century. Beau Brummel's nineteenth-century dandyism and early twentieth-century Chanel spirit have been replaced by a luxury industry that has led to a veritable war between economic giants. It remains to be discussed to what extent luxury is still an elitist attitude that turns the everyday life into an exceptional life or banality into rarity.

The luxury industry, analyzed by Stéphane Marchand, operates behind a façade discourse that aims at conveying sophistication, delicate affection, subtlety and nuances. As Denis Gombert remarks „le monde du luxe peut vous porter un jour aux nues et vous vouer le lendemain aux gémonies. Contrairement au phénix, l'esprit du luxe ne va pas renaître de ses cendres, il est tombé irrémédiablement dans la marmite diabolique du business.” (in Marchand 2001, 22) (The world of luxury can one day take you to heaven,

and the next day you may be in hell. Unlike the phoenix bird, the spirit of luxury will not be reborn from its own ashes, because it has fallen irretrievably into the pot of business).

The universality of luxury

As we have shown before, all analysts of this concept agree that luxury is a constituent element of any society that exceeds the minimum subsistence threshold, since the surplus of wealth is used for purposes other than purely functional.

Constantin Stamati-Ciurea (2011) states in an essay published in 1895 that „luxul este viciul cel mai atrăgător, cel mai molipsitor, din care se nasc toate calamitățile ce duc la pieire nu numai individualitatea omenirii, ci dărîmă și stinge națiuni întregi. Odată ce omul este molipsit de acest demon al ispitei, el contenește de a fi mulțumit cu aceea ce munca sa îi dă” (luxury is the most attractive, the most contagious vice, that bears all the calamities that lead to the destruction, and it destroys and extinguishes entire nations. Once people are infected by this demon of temptation, they are no longer satisfied with what work may offer). Ciurea only synthesizes the tendency of the nobility holding the monopoly of pleasure and comfort of the time, in the Romania to stigmatize anyone who would have tried to transform luxury objects into objects accessible and necessary for comfort. Thus, he draws attention to the fact that, once luxury products turn into products accessible to the masses, there will be no individuality or originality.

Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (2001) notes how Alexandru Moruzi, ruler of Muntenia, forbade the import of expensive carts, fabrics and headscarves from Vienna in 1796, and how Voda Caragea was summoned by the Ottomans, in 1815, to ban luxury products: “Looking at the daily waste of family fortunes and boyar houses caused by useless luxury and unjust expenses and painfully predicting the extent of the catastrophe, we were negatively impressed. (...) Your highness is to stop these disorders, improprieties, and prejudices by bringing decency, modesty, and temperance, truly saving virtues for the public good and the wealth of your subjects. all in good faith ... “. "The exorbitant luxury of the nobility often competed with the elegance of the ruling family, which was completely unacceptable", concludes Ionescu.

As Dan C. Mihailescu (2002) observes, luxury was seen as a “sign of irresponsible social and playful infantilism, as a blinding waste” that bears the risk of overturning social hierarchy and the good organization of society.

All these fears have been fully confirmed since the advent of mass production of goods in the so-called consumerist era. The luxury industry faces difficulties when delimiting its goods from the consumer goods industry, and these differences will be analyzed later in the article. The difficulty of recognizing the original luxury from the falsified one is the main issue.

The universality of luxury consists not only in the fact that it can be found in any society, regardless of the era, but also in the fact that it has become accessible, adding a question mark as far as the definitions of elitism are concerned.

Luxury between desire and marketing

In my opinion, luxury is characterized by differences from a given norm: there is no absolute luxury, but only a relative one, which responds to a double desire. The first type of desire is the self-projected one, a dream that people must fulfil in order to satisfy a personal ambition to be different. The second type of desire is the desire projected outside the self, towards the others, and it is the aspiration of integration into norms, to be the same with a certain social category that seems to select its members according to wealth and income. If the former type is based on ambition, the latter is based on fear of isolation. The first type can be characterized by the ambition for more, and the second by the fear of too little. The consumer society is based on this second type of desire, while the first type is the basis of the luxury industry.

Luxury brands have adopted the simplest form of marketing which involves the four basic pillars: price + product + distribution + communication. Nowadays, more and more luxury brands prefer to add in the above formula advertising + customer + competition, due to financial reasons being more than obvious. However, this addition may turn luxury products into mediocre consumer goods, because the high price is only one component of a luxury product. In the past, the consumer and the competition were not part of the mentioned formula, due to the fact that luxury products used to be part of the offer and not respond to customers' demands, thus providing the illusion of uniqueness.

Today, the consumer is the key point of the marketing formula for luxury products and services, because luxury means fulfilling a dream through a 'unique' personal experience, adding another factor to the definition of luxury: the expression of individuality.

Until the middle of the twentieth century, luxury was indeed based on the supply market, whereas in the twenty-first century there is undoubtedly

a demand for luxury products. Financially speaking, luxury brands have a low ratio between functional utility and price, whereas the ratio between intangible (emotional) utility and price is high. In other words, these brands possess a desirability that goes beyond their simple functionality and that offers the user, by appropriation, a special status. The same special status allows their owners to sell them at higher prices.

One of the most famous philosophers who expressed his views on commerce and luxury was David Hume who, in his essay *On Commerce* published in 1752, underlined the fact that there are moments when the “riches and luxury of individuals, instead of adding strength to the public, will serve only to thin its armies and diminish its authority among the neighboring nations [...] The ease and convenience of private persons require that these hands should be employed in their service. The one can never be satisfied but at the expense of the other. As the ambition of the sovereign must entrench on the luxury of individuals, so the luxury of individuals must diminish the force and check the ambition of the sovereign”. The individual, he says, can only be satisfied by sacrificing another individual, his expression being “at the expense of the other”. Discussing the connection between luxury and the well-being of a nation, Hume considers that the age of the development of luxury is the happiest time in the life of a people. Hume notes that trade preceded the refinement of household objects, and this led to the development of luxury. “It would then be advantageous, as in camps, to banish all arts and luxury, and by restrictions on equipage and tables make the provisions and forage last longer than if the army were loaded with a number of superfluous retainers. But as these principles are too disinterested and too difficult to support, it is requisite to govern men by other passions and animate them with a spirit of avarice and industry, art and luxury”. Thus, individuals begin to know the pleasure of luxury and crave for luxury goods for the profit they get from trade which ultimately leads to the development of their community.

Some attempts to classify luxury

From the many attempts to define types of luxury, I have chosen two examples one from Europe and another one from the U.S.A. Firstly, I have chosen in France, because the country is considered synonymous with luxury (the commenter I will quote below, considered the expression "French luxury" as a pleonasm); secondly I have chosen the U.S.A. because in the middle of the twentieth century, in the United States, luxury acquired a new facet, blending harmoniously with kitsch.

Marie Claude-Sicard, in her book *Luxe, mensonges marketing (Luxury, Lies and Marketing)* classifies luxury into three temporal categories:

First, classic luxury - 18th and 19th centuries throughout Europe but especially in France, dominated by the object and the obsession of personal possessions.

Second, modern luxury, the beginning of the twentieth century in Europe, dominated by the creative act and the artistic obsession.

Third, the luxury of the media, which appeared in the early 1970s in the United States and continues to this day in all civilized Western society (USA, Canada, Europe, Russia, developed Asian countries and some African communities), is marked by the obsession of individuality through public possession and recognition. The paradox of rarity applies to this period of luxury: brand owners seek to maximize profits but can never sell them in excess or standardize them because they must remain the subject of dreams and desires and not become ordinary commodities, consumer goods. According to Irina Rodina, “luxury brands must be desired wanted by everyone, but consumed by only a few”.

Media luxury is based on the way information is selected and transmitted, along with a strongly fragmented and individualized approach creating the illusion of a direct personal relationship with the customer-consumer.

American author Pamela Danziger analyzes in her book *Let Them Eat Cake: Marketing Luxury to the Masses* (an analysis that starts from the famous expression of Marie Antoinette with reference to the people who no longer had bread to eat) how the products luxury become common objects through daily use, how they lose the meaning they have at the first purchase. This significance is also lost due to the fact that the feeling of fulfilled desire transforms into a feeling of habit, after a certain period of using the objects.

Danziger believes that luxury has nothing to do with the material work itself or its price but depends entirely on how the product or service relates to the dreams, desires and passions of the luxury consumer. Everything can turn into a luxury product, because consumers are willing to accept new and unexpected definitions of this concept.

Danziger emphasizes the existence of three categories of luxury, each with its own subcategories. The first category is the luxury products (with the subcategories of furniture, antiques, works of art, etc.). The second category is personal luxury (with the subcategories of cars and clothing). The third category is experimental luxury (with the subcategories of luxury travel, beauty treatments, etc.)

The obvious differences between the two approaches to luxury are, in fact, the differences between the two cultures, French and American, the latter tending to treat this issue from the perspective of consumption of goods, while the former has a broader vision, focusing on consumers and their passions or even desires.

The seven dimensions of luxury

An important study on the issue of luxury was published in 2001, in an attempt to define the perception of luxury on a global scale. Dubois, Laurent and Czellar conducted qualitative and quantitative research based on consumer behavior in several regions of Western Europe, the United States and the Asia-Pacific region. In the conclusion of the study, a general definition of luxury was given as a combination of the following seven elements: price, quality, uniqueness or shortage, aesthetics, heritage, personal pleasure and superfluity.

Excellent quality is given by exceptional ingredients, the way the object was worked and the experience of those who produced it.

Price must be very high, although many scholars believe that price does not determine the luxury of an object.

Uniqueness is given by the rarity of the product, the limited number of copies and its restricted distribution to certain geographical areas (as few objects as possible in a certain area), in order to give the illusion of exclusivity.

The aesthetic dimension is given by the sensation produced by the object, or rather by its design, by the color and style that creates its beauty in the eyes of the consumer.

Personal history is given by the ancestral heritage, by tradition and by the passing of the object from one generation to another. Often, personal history is associated with famous brand names, especially in the fashion industry, but not only. The good reputation of a luxury product, transmitted orally, rather than through media advertising and promotional campaigns, makes the consumer feel at ease, due to the personal pleasure they get from it.

The superfluous character derives from its uselessness and non-functionality, but most luxury consumers either ignore it or are not aware of the superfluous size of luxury items. The fact that a consumer can be different, standing out through what is different, makes them choose luxury items rather than taking into account this dimension of uselessness, through the prism of an original image that is preferable to bring the admiration of others.

Personal pleasure created by the luxury item derives from the excellent quality that gives rise to comfort and harmony, in the consumer's view. This

facet of luxury should ideally teach people what good taste means and turn their inner and outer world into a refined one. However, personal pleasure often gives rise to kitsch.

These seven dimensions combine in different proportions, depending on the consumer, so as to satisfy luxury needs. Depending on the proportions obtained, luxury tends towards refinement or kitsch.

Conclusion

Luxury goods are consumed either for the social recognition or the status of the consumer who wants to create positive impressions in their communities, or for hedonistic purposes, in search of satisfying personal pleasures. The various definitions and classifications of luxury fall into these two extremes: social interaction and, respectively, the emotions and feelings generated by the consumption of luxury products.

Creating the illusion of rarity by controlling the dissemination of luxury information is the latest strategy to meet the consumer's need for uniqueness and exclusivity. The close connection between the purchase of the luxury object and the effect of its possession on the consumer's desire / dream represents the difference between luxury and necessity.

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HOW TO TEACH ECONOMIC SUBJECTS DURING THE PANDEMIC? A SHORT OVERVIEW

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***Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to present an overview of the efforts made in Romania to adapt the real school to the requirements of the online school. The digital transformation of the Romanian school required efforts both from the Romanian government and from the actors directly involved in the educational process - students, teachers, parents, the local community. The transition from the traditional classroom to the virtual classroom required the reconfiguration of the teaching, learning and assessment process, a process that depended on the digital skills of teachers and students. In order to use the open educational resources in the lessons, the didactic design was rethought and reorganized. At the same time, the paper presents the author's experience in using open educational resources in teaching economic subjects in high school, but also the issues related to their development and their contribution to changing the teaching process.*

***Keywords:** SMART-Edu, digital skills, digital education, educational platforms, open educational resources, online school*

I. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020, has accelerated the process of digitizing education, which began earlier. Thus, the didactic activity moved from the real space of the school to the virtual space, the school becoming “online school” and the education “digital”. This transformation was captured by the European Commission in the first Action Plan for digital education, developed for the period 2018-2020. The document then provided for three areas of action¹:

- Better use of digital technologies in the educational process.
- Development of digital skills and competences.

¹ Source: “Planul de acțiune pentru educația digitală (2021-2027)”, available at <https://education.ec.europa.eu/ro/planul-de-actiune-pentru-educatia-digitala-2021-2027>, accessed 17.03.2022

- Improving education through better data analysis and forward-looking vision.

The Second Action Plan for Digital Education has been developed for the period 2021-2027 and includes two priorities:

- Encourage the development of a high-performance digital education ecosystem.
- Development of digital skills and competences relevant to digital transformation.

In order to move to online and hybrid learning, a high-performance digital infrastructure is not enough. We also need quality educational content, accessible tools and secure educational platforms to have an education and training system ready for the digital age. Romania has made and continues to strive to comply with this trend, despite the difficulties in various areas of economic and social life, in order to integrate fully into the future "European Educational Area", which is supposed to be achieved until 2025.

II. A brief analysis of the online school in Romania

We conducted this analysis based on the data contained in the document entitled "Strategy on the digitization of education in Romania 2021-2027 - SMART-Edu", which was submitted for public consultation between December 18, 2020 - February 15, 2021. The document talks about a "Modern School, Accessible, based on Digital Resources and Technologies", i.e. SMART-Edu and radiographs the efforts made for the digitization of the Romanian school in the period before and during the pandemic, proposing several directions of action².

We structured the analysis on two levels: at the country level and at the level of the education field. At country level, the first issue is the European Competence Framework (DigComp). The European document was drafted in 2013 and updated in 2016, but has not been translated into Romanian, it is not promoted in any way and it is not applied uniformly or sufficiently in Romania's internal documents. With regard to the digital skills of the population, the situation is as follows:

- According to Eurostat data, in 2019, 43% of Romanian citizens aged between 16-74 years had reduced digital skills, and Romania ranked first in the European Union, followed by Bulgaria.

² Source: "Strategia privind digitalizarea educației din România 2021-2027", available at <https://www.smart.edu.ro/>, accessed 17.03.2022

- Only 10% of the country's population has superior digital skills (compared to 11% of Bulgaria's population), making Romania last in the E.U.
- Young people aged between 16-24 years have basic digital skills at or above 56%, compared to the European situation, where the percentage of young people in this age group is 80%.
- Because only 35% of Romanians have basic skills in using software, Romania is on the penultimate place in the European. Another issue is related to the digitization of the education and training system, which has become a priority since 2016, when the Presidential Administration launched the country project called "Educated Romania"³. Romania did not have a national strategy on the digitization of education until 2020, when this SMART-Edu document was developed. On the other hand, it is not known to what extent the country has fulfilled its commitments set out in the National Strategy for the Digital Agenda 2020, whether it has assessed the implementation of the strategy and whether it will ever report on its situation. In this context, it should be mentioned that Romania also has a poor performance in terms of digitalization of companies, digital public services and digital skills of citizens, due to the slow pace of progress and the turbulent evolution of the political situation. As a result, in the Digital Economy and Society Index (D.E.S.I.), the country ranks 26th out of the 28 E.U. member states at the level of 2020.

Regarding the use of the internet, the situation was not at all encouraging at the level of 2019, as it results from the following data:

- Only 28% of the population uses the Internet at least once a week, and Romania ranks second to last in the European Union.
- 17% of the population has never used the Internet, with Romania ranking 5th in the E.U.
- Digital public services are used by 50% of the citizens, compared to 70% of the European citizens, our country being on the last place in this chapter in the European Union.
- Romania ranks last in the E.U. to the online relationship between citizens and the public administration, with a percentage of 65% of the population, compared to over 90% of the European population.

³ Source: "Raport România Educată - 14 iulie 2021", available at <https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Raport%20Romania%20Educată%20-%202014%20iulie%202021.pdf>, accessed 24.03.2022

However, the Internet connection seems to be a strong point, as Romania ranks 11th in the European Union in terms of "Connectivity", i.e. the high use of very high speed broadband and the wide availability of very high capacity fixed networks, especially in urban areas. However, in 2018, 72.4% of households had access to the Internet at home. With only 49% of households subscribing to high-speed broadband services, Romania ranks 5th in the E.U.

In terms of education, we looked at the situation before and during the pandemic. At the level of 2018, before the beginning of the pandemic, the situation presented in the official documents was as follows:

- Teachers rarely used technology to teach lessons in the classroom.
- The use of technology was limited to video projectors.
- Most students did not have access to a computer until during I.C.T. and computer science.
- Most teachers did not encourage students to use the resources available on the Internet, nor did they systematically present reliable online resources (virtual libraries, educational platforms, online magazines).

Also in 2018, school principals reported that the educational process was affected by the following issues:

- Insufficient or inadequate digital equipment.
- Lack of teachers with teaching skills for students with special needs.
- Insufficient or inadequate learning spaces.
- Insufficient or inadequate teaching materials.

At the level of 2019-2020, the degree of coverage with computers connected to the Internet for pupils and students, teachers and the administration of educational institutions was different, but did not exceed 25% for any of the existing forms of education, as follows:

- Primary and secondary education: 6.7%.
- High school education: 17%.
- Post-secondary education and foremen: 4.5%.
- Higher education: 19%.

During the same school year, when the school moved online, teachers stated that they encountered the following barriers:

- They shared with other family members the equipment needed to carry out the teaching activity.
- Others did not own such equipment.
- The internet connection was poor.

Added to this are issues related to the digital competencies of students, teachers and parents, such as:

- 37% of teachers consider themselves advanced users of new technologies, and 53% consider themselves intermediate users.
- For some students, the insufficient level of digital skills was a serious impediment to participating in online schooling.
- For this reason, some students have not been able to use various educational tools and applications autonomously.
- Two-thirds of the students did well on their own in terms of online lessons and activities, while a quarter of the students needed help in the beginning.
- Difficulties in using information technology were greater for students in rural and small towns than in large cities.
- Equally, the digital skills of parents need to be developed, especially in rural areas, in disadvantaged communities and in the case of families with children with disabilities, in order to be able to support their children in online schooling.

Regarding distance learning activities, teachers reported the following issues:

- Lack of digital resources in the field of the subject taught (digital content).
- Lack of time to understand and use digital tools and resources properly.
- Lack of the exercise of using the technological environment for the design and development of complex teaching activities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced schools to move rapidly from traditional teaching to online teaching and has forced the digital education system to adapt. During the pandemic, information technology was used in education at the highest level. The audience of students, teachers, parents, the local community and the authorities was forced to become aware of the significant gaps and shortcomings related to digital skills, connectivity and the use of information technology in education. Moreover, he drew attention to the opportunities and risks involved in online teaching. It was found that, in addition to the teaching activity, the management and administration of schools must be digitized, respectively the communication and collaboration between school and family, local administration, companies and non-governmental organizations.

Fortunately, there are also positive aspects of the digitalization of education in Romania, namely:

- The national education system takes into account the European definition of the digital key competence, as well as the other European key competences.

- There is a graduate training profile, including for digital key competence, which has been developed on competence levels - elementary, functional and developed.
- Digital competence is included in the national curriculum as a separate subject, in two forms: optional subject for primary education and compulsory subject for secondary education (secondary, high school and vocational).
- Information and communication technology is a compulsory subject for all fields of study, profiles and specializations / professional qualifications.
- In terms of the number of hours, the highest number of hours is allocated to I.C.T. in high school and vocational school, and in the gymnasium, the number of hours is at the level of the European Union average.
- Vocational training standards for vocational school, high school and post-secondary school / masters have digital competence integrated in the units of results of general or specialized technical learning.
- Starting with 2010, in Romania the digital competencies of all high school graduates are evaluated and certified, by taking a compulsory test in the baccalaureate exam.
- The educational platforms used nationwide for the online school were G Suite for Education, Microsoft Teams, Adservio, Kinderpedia and Edu2⁴. The free use of foreign learning platforms was possible due to the partnerships agreed by the Romanian Government with Google and Microsoft.

III. Open educational resources (O.E.R.) in Romania

The creation of open educational resources was a strategic line of development, provided in the Digital Agenda of Romania 2020 and in the Partnership Agreement⁴ between Romania and the E.U. 2014-2020. In Romania, the legislative framework that allows the development and use of this type of resources consists of the National Education Law (law no. 1/2011) and law no. 8/1996 on copyright and related rights.

In the field of O.E.R. there have been several initiatives, including the following:

⁴ Source: "Strategia Națională privind Agenda Digitală pentru România 2020", available at <https://epale.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/strategia-nationala-agenda-digitala-pentru-romania-2020c-20-feb.2015.pdf>, accessed 24.03.2022.

- The initiative of the Ministry of National Education, formalized by the Note on open educational resources, sent to the county school inspectorates in November 2017, which refers to all forms of education.
- The C.R.E.D. project, which aimed at primary and secondary education.
- Digitaledu.ro platform.

The initiative of the line ministry was aimed at creating the O.E.R. collections, which would later be integrated into the Virtual School Library⁵. Due to the fact that the process was decentralized and uncoordinated at the higher level, many synopses were recorded. Addressing these collections by O.E.R. it belongs to each school inspectorate, which led to the installation of a certain chaos. At this point, it will be difficult for a teacher to search for a particular O.E.R., because there is no search engine nationwide, so he will be forced to search the web page of each school inspectorate. The tree structure of these pages, the organization by levels of education and classes, respectively by curricular areas and specialized disciplines / modules is far from simplifying things. On the other hand, the evaluation process and the selection of resources at the level of each inspectorate is bureaucratic and time consuming, both for those proposing O.E.R. and for evaluators. In November 2020, according to the document, 12214 open educational resources were posted on the websites of the inspectorates. Due to the faulty and decentralized way in which it was worked, only 1234 resources (i.e. 10% of the total) could be selected to be uploaded on the national platform, as the existing resources were found to be of little use.

The C.R.E.D. project, carried out with European funding in the period 2017-2020, represented a step forward in the process of integrating these resources in primary and secondary education⁶. A complex collection of O.E.R.s has been created within the project, published both on the project's website and on the EDUCRED YouTube channels, which can be accessed nationwide. Moreover, actions have been taken to disseminate good educational practices and to promote the resources created, with the aim of exploring and highlighting them by teachers.

The digitaledu.ro platform, developed by the University of Bucharest⁷, comes to solve the shortcomings found in the other two initiatives presented

⁵ Source: "Rețele de resurse educaționale deschise (R.E.D.), înființate la nivelul inspectoratelor școlare județene", Ministerul Educației Naționale, Comunicat de presă, București, 4 noiembrie 2017, available at <https://www.edu.ro/nota-ministerului-educa%C8%9Biei-na%C8%Bionate-privind-crearea-re%C8%9Belei-de-resurse-educa%C8%9Bionate-deschise-%C3%A> En accessed 15.10.2021

⁶ Source: <https://www.educared.ro>

⁷ Source: <https://digitaledu.ro/resurse-educationale-deschise/>

above. Thus, in the section "Open Educational Resources" there are resources designed for high school and post-secondary school, including specialized modules (technical and economic). On the other hand, certain resources were approved, even if the evaluation grid used was not published, as is the case of the operational procedure at the level of the county school inspectorates. The "Activity Ideas" section allows teachers to approach the lessons in a creative way, specific to the universal design of learning, integrating O.E.R. in the lesson⁸. We must keep in mind that the use of educational applications and educational platforms requires their knowledge by both teachers and students, which requires an acceptable level of digital knowledge and a certain methodology of teaching lessons with their help.

The experience gained from these initiatives has highlighted the following issues:

- There must be a vision and a unitary approach to identify, select and organize the educational resources open to the Virtual School Library.
- O.E.R. they must be reusable and contribute to changing the teaching process.

Looking for open educational resources to use in the classroom, I noticed that in our country there are the following categories of O.E.R.:

- Directories of learning objects - curricular auxiliaries available on the web page www.tvet.ro
- Digital handbooks, available on the clasadigitala.ro website.
- Handbooks in electronic format, available in pdf format and posted on the manual.edu.ro website.
- Educational platforms - Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Adservio, Softschool
- Edu Moodle Romania Network
- Open projects - C.R.E.D. (Open Curriculum, Education Relevant to All)
- The YouTube channel of the Ministry of Education, available at: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLxO8-C91Lp92xRiauh3jJUZx12e32QTsU>
- Software applications: Liveworksheets, LearningApps, Worldwall, Kahoot, Livresq, Testmoz, Quiziz, Socrative, Edpuzzle, Asq, EquatIQ, Kidibot, Canva etc.
- Online platforms at the level of the European Union, which have Romanian language versions: Tax Edu, Napo, "Our planet, our future", Living Democracy.

⁸ Source: <https://digitaledu.ro/activitati-de-invatare-digitala/>

- O.E.R. collections on various web pages:
 - <https://www.twinkl.ro>
 - <https://scoalapenet.ro>
 - <https://www.digialiada.ro>
 - <https://www.didactic.ro>.

IV. The evaluation of the O.E.R.

The open educational resources posted on the web pages of the county school inspectorates were evaluated according to evaluation sheets or evaluation grids in the structure of the operational procedure that refer to the creation of the network of open educational resources within the county school inspectorate. In the case of some inspectorates, this procedure has been reviewed two or three times, starting in 2017 and ending in 2021.

Initially, an evaluation form prepared in 2017 had the following structure⁹:

- Identification data for author and O.E.R.
- Quality criteria
- Data for identifying evaluators.

Among the quality criteria considered are:

- The scientific correctness of the content.
- Elaboration of the content from a methodological and terminological point of view.
- Compliance with applicable curricular or extracurricular requirements.
- Contribution to the training and development of the competencies provided by the school curriculum for the respective discipline and module.
- Encourages creative thinking and critical thinking.
- Facilitates the transfer of knowledge from theory to everyday life.
- Mention the sources of information used correctly.
- Originality of the resource.
- General drafting criteria.

Each criterion has a certain score, and the total score is 100 points. The score given by the evaluators is written on the evaluation sheet of the respective resource, being accompanied by the corresponding argumentation. The result of the evaluation is marked "admitted" or "rejected". If the evaluation result is negative, there is a part in the evaluation form for the recommendations made

⁹ Source: "Procedura RED-CL" available at <https://www.isj-cl.ro/index.php/resurse-educationale-deschise-red> accessed 29.11.2021

by the evaluators, so that the respective resource obtains the “admitted” rating. In the revised version, the document is called “Evaluation grid for Curricular Educational Resources used in the instructional-educational process”. The grid structure includes the following chapters:

- Identification data for the author and O.E.R., at which the type of educational resource and the date of evaluation were entered.
- Quality indicators, which include the following elements:
 - The concordance between the scientific information and the school curriculum in force or the standard of professional training.
 - Timeliness and correctness of the content of the resource.
 - Adapting the content to the level of study and to the particularities of the students.
 - How to present the content of the resource.
 - Typing requirements and expression rules.
 - Formative component (practical applications).
 - Creativity and originality.
 - How to design learning tasks and assessment items.
 - Capitalizing on students' life experience.
- Data for the identification of evaluators, which are three in number, compared to the initial situation, when their number was not specified.

For each indicator in the grid, the result of the partial evaluation is marked with "Yes" or "No". The result of the final evaluation is marked "admitted" or "rejected".

At university level, the specialists proposed another evaluation grid, which takes into account two aspects (Istrate, O., and Ștefănescu, D., 2021):

- Anchoring the resource elaborated in the pedagogical theory.
- The value of the respective resource for the improvement of the educational process.

The purpose of developing this grid was to promote quality open educational resources, which would allow the development of education with the help of digital technology. In order for such a resource to meet those requirements, it must have certain specific attributes:

- Multimedia integration
- Interaction with content
- Integration of educational games
- Possibility to be adapted, corrected, updated and completed.

The proposed grid has four sections, which include certain evaluation criteria, as follows:

- Prerequisites (20 points):
 - Description of the resource and its classification in a certain category.
 - The fact that it is not discriminatory.
 - Accessibility.
 - Indicate the sources used.
- Learning content (30 points):
 - Scientific correctness.
 - Relevance to learning.
 - Content organization.
- The didactic approach (30 points):
 - Expected learning outcomes.
 - Teaching strategy.
 - Motivation, attractiveness and didactic innovation.
 - Interactivity and collaboration.
 - Progress indicators.
 - Alternative or complementary routes.
- Functionalities, interface, appearance (20 points):
 - Use of the resource.
 - Reuse and integration in the lesson.
 - Visual design aspects.
 - Audio, video and graphics quality.

The interpretation that an evaluator gives to the criteria or indicators included in the evaluation grid depends on his / her teaching experience and the level of personal training, being a subjective factor. On the other hand, the identification of evaluation criteria relevant to O.E.R. it is quite difficult to achieve, for some reasons:

- Various possibilities - pedagogical, technical and functional, covered by an open educational resource.
- Variety of media used to create a resource (text, image, audio, video or mixed).
- The multitude of types of educational situations in which the respective resource can be used.
- Experience and training of the evaluator.

As a result, the pedagogical values of an open educational resource must be analyzed in a concrete use situations.

V. Case study

On the digitaledu.ro platform I found open educational resources for the discipline "Entrepreneurial Education", which is included in the curriculum for the 10th grade of high school. These resources are posted in two different sections of the platform, namely: "Open Educational Resources" (two resources) and "Activity Ideas" (nine resources). Of these, only the resources in the O.E.R. section are approved.

Compared to the existing chapters in the "Entrepreneurial Education" textbook for the 10th grade (authors: Lazăr. N. and Mitrache, M., Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, Bucharest, 2012), the open educational resources cover only a third of the topics. For the topic "Business plan and its implementation problems" there are three open resources, posted in two different sections: one resource (which is approved) in the section "Open Educational Resources" and two other resources in the section "Activity Ideas". For the topic "Obtaining the product", two open resources were posted, both in the "Activity Ideas" section. There are two resources that correspond to some sub-topics in the textbook and are posted in the "Activity Ideas" section, entitled "Starting and Running a Business. Establishing the object of activity", respectively "The process of setting up and running of the business". However, there are topics for which no open educational resources have been developed.

We analyzed the open educational resources listed above from the point of view of the O.E.R user, i.e. the type of activity for which the resource was created, the support used to make the resource, the existence of workload for students, the existence of a worksheet or a documentation sheets, expected learning outcomes, (probably) how to carry out the activity and the working time required. We have centralized the data obtained in the following table (see table 1).

The two approved resources, posted in the section "Open Educational Resources" are structured similarly: the lesson itself and the assessment part of the knowledge acquired by students in the lesson. Even if it is stated that the resources were designed for a one-hour lesson, their use in practice in the classroom means a longer time - one hour for the lesson itself and one hour for assessing students' knowledge. Resources should be modified accordingly so that they are within the set time limits. On the other hand, lessons abound in unstructured information. The teacher must make an intervention through the lesson plan to specify the stages of learning, otherwise students do not cope with the multitude of theoretical notions presented in the content of those resources.

Table 1. O.E.R. developed for the discipline "Entrepreneurial Education":

Nr. crt.	The name of O.E.R.	The type of activity	Support used	Workload for students	Worksheet / Documentation sheet	Expected results	How to carry out the activity	Working time	Remarks
1	Business plan	Activities suite	Video YouTube Text Images	Questionnaire Crossword puzzle	---	---	---	1 hour / week	Approved "O.E.R." Section
2	The qualities of the entrepreneur	Activities suite	Video YouTube Text Images	Questionnaire Skill test Application LearningApp	---	---	---	1 hour / week	Approved "O.E.R." Section
3	Business plan	Homework	Padlet Voki	Creating an avatar	Yes	Yes	Individual	2 weeks	"Activity Ideas" Section
4	The business plan and its implementation issues	Class activity	Voki Lino	Creating an avatar	---	---	Individual	---	"Activity Ideas" Section
5	Legislative conditions of entrepreneurial activities	Homework	Bubble	Concept map	---	Yes	Individual	---	"Activity Ideas" Section
6	Starting and running a business. Establishing the object of activity	Homework	WordArt Padlet	Cloud of words	---	Yes	Collaboration between students	1 week	"Activity Ideas" Section
7	Starting and running a business. Obtaining the product	Class activity	WordArt Video YouTube	Cloud of words Speech	---	Yes	Collaboration between students	---	"Activity Ideas" Section

Nr. crt.	The name of O.E.R.	The type of activity	Support used	Workload for students	Worksheet / Documentation sheet	Expected results	How to carry out the activity	Working time	Remarks
8	Obtaining the product	Class activity	Padlet	Virtual notice board	---	Yes	Collaboration between students	---	"Activity Ideas" Section
9	Product promotion	Class activity	WordArt Padlet	Virtual notice board Flyer	Yes	Yes	Collaboration between students	2 weeks	"Activity Ideas" Section
10	The process of setting up and running the business	Homework	GoConqr	Concept map	---	Yes	Individual	---	"Activity Ideas" Section
11	Risk and success in business	Class activity	Google Docs Padlet	Virtual notice board Essay	---	Yes	Collaboration between students	1 hour / week	"Activity Ideas" Section

As for the educational resources posted in the "Activity Ideas" section, they have a similar structure. The proposed work tasks for students are specific to the educational applications used to create the respective resource, e.g. virtual notice board, custom avatar, concept map, cloud of words. To accomplish these tasks it is necessary for the teacher to know the methods of critical thinking. Working time is not specified for each educational resource.

On the other hand, the use of educational applications (Padlet, Voki, Lino, WordArt, Bubble, GoConqr) and the Google Classroom platform requires their knowledge both by the teacher who teaches the class and by his students. Moreover, it is necessary to have a properly equipped computer lab with an internet connection, in order to be able to keep the lessons at a high level. Using YouTube videos requires students to practice their English language skills and knowledge because they are not translated into Romanian.

These open educational resources are an update on the content of the lessons and the methods of teaching, learning and assessment for the discipline "Entrepreneurial Education", proposed by a textbook that has not been republished in the last ten years.

VI. Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the digital transformation into education, in fact it forced the rethinking of education in the digital age. This transformation depends very much on the existence of digital skills of all actors involved in the educational process, on the widespread use of digital equipment, applications and educational platforms.

On the other hand, digital literacy, which is an important part of functional literacy, has proved its worth, as mastering digital technology is essential for both personal and professional life of people.

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