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Preface

The fifth issue of Pro Edu. The International Journal of Education Sciences (June 2021) presents a series of scientific articles, with a wide range of issues, starting from the study of foreign languages in the post-pandemic society, and continuing with studies that address: the philosophy of interdisciplinarity, the impact of physical activities on children's quality of life, continuous teachers' training during the pandemic, leadership style, psychological stress profile of the aggressive driver and coaching activities carried out through web platforms. The volume concludes with a review of the academic work CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND MISSION, written by His Eminence Prof. Dr. NIFON Mihăiță, Archbishop and Metropolitan.

The first study included in this volume is one very consistent: HOW CAN WE TEACH FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THIS POST-PANDEMIC DIGITALIZED AND GLOBALIZED WORLD? Its author, Prof. Dr. Jacques COULARDEAU (from Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) wants to examine, in the post-pandemic context, the changes caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, associated with the phenomenon of migration and demographic changes, in terms of teaching foreign languages, to all European populations. The next study, PHILOSOPHY OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY belongs to Cecilia CURIS. The purpose of this article is to bring to the fore several essential aspects related to the advantages and the risks of the interdisciplinary approach in science and philosophy. PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS PART OF THE QUALITY MODEL OF CHILDREN'S LIFE is the title of the third study, written by Monica STĂNESCU and Luican HOINY. The authors analyze the multidimensional nature of children's quality of life in an attempt to identify the place of physical activity in the quality of life (QoL) model. In the context of the study entitled CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN ROMANIA ON THE PANDEMIC. SUCCESS FACTORS, the authors (Roxana Constanța Enache, Ana-Maria Aurelia Petrescu, and Mihaela Predoi) highlight the important issues regarding the teachers' training in pre-university education and the criteria they follow when selecting a course or a continuing education program. Another study, THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON THE EVOLUTION OF ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE, written by Roxana Constanța ENACHE and Grațiela MARIN aims to identify psychological mechanisms that improve the effectiveness of teamwork, specific aspects of communication between coach and athlete and try to determine the need for adapting the leadership style to the particularities of athletes. The next study belongs to Claudia VLAICU and Felicia HAIDU, aiming to profile the aggressive Romanian driver and to identify answers to the question related to differences according to demographic variables - gender, age, area of residence, marital status, religion, socio-economic status, and level of education. The last work in this volume, entitled DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL WEB PLATFORM FOR COACHING ACTIVITIES IN UNIVERSITIES, written by Elena-Ancuța SANTI, Gabriel GORGHIU, and Mihai BÎZOI, aims to summarize the current theoretical perspectives concerning online coaching in higher education, as a support strategy for students who experience difficulties to prevent early school leaving, highlighting the characteristics and effective methodological approach related to this process.

In the end, Lect. Ph.D. Cosmin SANTI made a well-documented review of a remarkable book - TEOLOGIE ȘI MISIUNE CREȘTINĂ [CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND MISSION] -, autor: His Eminence Prof. Dr. NIFON Mihăiță, Archbishop and Metropolitan. It is an anniversary volume, published 20 years after the service of His Holiness in the archbishopric of Targoviste, which includes a series of theological and missionary studies, designed to promote national culture and history, the education of young generations in the spirit of Christian values.

June 2021,

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HOW CAN WE TEACH FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN THIS POST-PANDEMIC DIGITALIZED AND GLOBALIZED WORLD?

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ABSTRACT

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Keywords: Virtual Reality; COVID-19; Foreign Languages; School Education; Further Education; Distant Learning;

INTRODUCTION

It seems to me that it would be good to raise the problem of languages in today's Europe both as languages of Europe, present in Europe for thousands of years for the most part, and languages in Europe which have only been present in Europe since the migration movements which concern the arrival of non originally European populations for at least a century (since the First World War). The problems are partly the same, languages of identification and languages of daily exchanges within diverse communities. But as much as the languages of Europe are recognized in domains such as education, everyday communication, local, national, or European administration, the languages in Europe are not recognized at these various levels and thus are a background of frustration, even of demands if not of rebellion, accumulates and builds up most of the time at the local or regional level.

It seems to me that it would be good to raise the problem of languages in today's Europe both as **languages of Europe**, present in Europe for thousands of years for the most part, and **languages in Europe** which have only been present in Europe since the migration movements which concern the arrival of non originally European populations for at least a century (since the First World War). The problems are partly the same, languages of identification and languages of daily exchanges within diverse communities. But as much as the languages of Europe are recognized in domains such as education, everyday communication, local, national, or European administration, the languages in Europe are not recognized at these various levels and thus are a background of frustration, even of demands if not of rebellion, accumulates and builds up most of the time at the local or regional level.

The languages in Europe that are not of European origin bring up a much greater problem. The languages of Europe are all Indo-European languages (spreading in Europe after 10,000 BCE in the Magdalenian), except of course the agglutinative languages such as Hungarian (an inner European migration before the 10th century since the earliest known written Hungarian words are to be found in a Latin document, the *Foundation Charter of the Abbey of Tihany*, 1054), Finnish, Estonian, Lappic, and Basque, plus a few others in the north of Russia, in the Urals, in the Caucasus, and of course in Siberia (all arrived long before the peak of the Ice Age, somewhere around 50,000 BCE, at least), but Siberia is clearly outside Europe. Note that some of the immigrant languages are of the same two families: Turkish is agglutinative, and Kurdish is Indo-European. But most of the languages of immigrants since 1920 are languages of very different linguistic families. Semitic or Afro-Asiatic languages, especially Arabic, Kabyle/Berber, and some others from North Africa and the Middle East. Various African languages. Various Asian languages. All languages carry within them a frame of thinking and culture. The frame of thinking is absolutely unconscious for the speakers of these languages. They think the way they speak, and sometimes write. On the other hand, the cultures that these languages carry are most of the time conscious, claimed, and identifying. The lack of consideration for these languages and the cultures they carry in too many instances of our societies, and in the first place, education, and administration, is the most important cause of a malaise that leads here and there to crises, sometimes violent crises, or criminal initiatives.

The only answer to these situations is the recognition of the plurilingualism of all the languages of Europe and in Europe, and the acceptance of all the cultures that all these languages carry, and this poses the problem of our understanding of the frames of thinking that the languages carry within their own syntaxes and lexicons, and how these psycho-linguistic operations are articulated on the cultures of the very communities that speak the concerned languages. It must be very clear that these migrant populations must master at least three languages to find their way in our world: their first language (and sometimes this implies two languages: Arabic and Kabyle, or two African languages, due to the original mass bilingualism of these migrant populations); the vernacular language of communication of the country where they are; and English most often as the international language of the increasing professional necessity in the various industries and economic activities of our countries. This is much more complex than the simple multilingualism of the original Europeans and their European languages.

And this is not recent. I knew a young Algerian Kabyle woman in Roubaix (Kabyle like the majority of Algerians in Roubaix) who was able to switch from Kabyle to Arabic, then from French to Roubaisian Picard, and adding some English from her secondary education. She always tried to address people in their first language, and this posed problems for communication in equally multilingual groups, as for the multiplicity of their first languages and not necessarily their command of this multilingualism. In this direction, there is an important work to be done on the psycholinguistics that underlies these situations and this can only be done in an applied way, avoiding the mistakes made in the past, such as in Normandy some time ago where an initiative of teaching Turkish was set up for an immigrant population from Turkey, without wondering if the first language of these immigrants was Turkish or Kurdish. And it was Kurdish, hence a total failure of the initiative. And what about the case of Aisha in first grade who was able, in the neighborhood committee's extracurricular support group, to read – even with her book closed – the page of reading studied during the day and to work on for the next day. She had memorized the page, and when she was asked to go back to the previous page or even a little further back to what she had worked on over the previous days, she was unable to read, even with her book closed. Imagine the frustration of this little girl who was convinced she could read. Imagine the drama a few years later when her parents would take her along to read for them various forms or notices in some administrative procedure.

When these young people reach the age when they want to say no to such situations, they realize that they are not heard, that they are not listened to, that they are not understood. What is left for them to do in order to be heard? And in return, how can we make ourselves heard by them if we do not speak the same language, the same psycho-language because language is much more than just words, or even sentences. It would be in our interest to put the most advanced approaches of psycholinguistics, psychomechanics, and cognitive linguistics back on the desk, on the worktable, on the workbench itself. This is a whole program to be developed at the level of the applied experiential, and existential practices of the local communities concerned. And what about the national or European communities?

The problem I want to examine here is the teaching of foreign languages to all our European populations that can only imagine, so far, they can prosper if they only stick to one language that they generally call their mother tongue. This problem is vastly amplified by, first of all, the globalization of the world, and second, by the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic that both boost the necessity to consider all problems at the level of the whole planet since viruses do not know borders, on one hand, and these viruses may widen the scope of migrations both in geographical reach and in numbers to escape the non-vaccinated areas and to reach the zones where the vaccines are vastly present, on the other hand. And they are actually spreading the virus and its variants when doing that. And we have to keep in mind war zones, poverty zones, underdeveloped countries are wide open to the virus and its variants, and they are also out of reach because they cannot afford the vaccines and the local conditions make vaccination difficult, at times impossible. This will bring large demographic movements, and the need to possess several languages, both for the migrating populations and for the populations of the countries targeted by them, hence for us, Europe, particularly western and central Europe, and be sure Brexit will be no protection at all. How can we cope with this need for at least bilingualism if not multilingualism? And that's where COVID-19 is a tremendous incentive to innovate. I am going to explore some of the avenues of this possible innovation.

2. FAST PRELIMINARY TOPICS

1- What are foreign languages? First language, second language, Bilingualism.

The first preliminary question is about the definition of languages in a multilingual society. The term "mother tongue" is definitely no longer true. Too many people live in bilingual or multilingual environments. The language or languages the child heard in his mother's womb after the 24th week of pregnancy is of course the language of the mother but also the language or languages of the people speaking to the mother, and the mother might be bilingual herself. When the child is born, he will hear the language of his or her mother, or eventually the two languages the mother might speak, plus the language of the maternity personnel and later the creche personnel, and this language might be one of the languages he had heard before being born. It is then fair enough to speak of the first language and the second language for a bilingual child. The first language might be the language of the mother or the language of the father or even the language of the surrounding community, like the personnel of the creche, then kindergarten, then grade school. A child in a Kabyle family in Roubaix is confronted with Kabyle as the dominant language of the family, but also Arabic since the religion of this family is Islam, hence is in Arabic. The family is bilingual as for these two languages, but in Roubaix, the dominant language outside this family is French, and/or some creolized form of either Picard which is the old urban popular language of the city still spoken in various creolized levels, or some creolized form of French that includes some Picard (words, pronunciation, syntax). The Picard language has a special verb for this practice of trying to speak proper French though the result is a creolized form of Picard and French. The verb is "s'aparler" meaning that someone is trying to speak the dominant language but fails and produces some kind of mashed-up language which is for the speaker proper French, though it is not and the speaker most of the time does not know it is not, except when some people around him make fun of his "dialect" or "patois" meaning "bastardized" French, and it is derogatory. A bilingual child or person is a person who can shift from one language to another freely and fluently according to the situation around them. Normally there is not a first or second language for a bilingual person: the two languages are equal.

2- Foreign language and the learner's age

The second question is the learning situation of a foreign language for a person according to their age. A foreign language is normally not one of the two languages of a bilingual child. For him or her a foreign language is a third language. A bilingual child taking classes in one of the two languages they already control is cheating with the concept of foreign. It might be a foreign language for the concerned society or country, but it is not for the bilingual child. When you have a bilingual child in a foreign language class that teaches one of the two languages of the bilingual child, the child has to be used intelligently, hence as someone who knows the language and can become a tutor for his classmates. This is not that complicated, and any foreign language teacher should be able to use the bilingual child, except if this teacher feels insecure if not endangered by the bilingual child who might know more than he/she does. An English teacher in Ambert, France, High School once had a bilingual child just coming back from the USA, aged 17, and she said something wrong. The student corrected her. She sent him to the library with another student to make sure he went there, and he actually checked the word he criticized. And I should say, <u>of course</u>, the bilingual student was right. He came back to the class with his accompanying chaperon, and both told the bad news. The bilingual student was right, and the teacher was wrong.

Before 6 years of age, a child can easily learn a foreign language through simple imitation (and the earlier the better). The best way then is to use stories and nursery rhymes that are repeated by the children in a way or another. Songs are ideal and the children will easily follow, including taking part in a vocal or singing confrontation of two or three groups representing different characters and taking part in the exchange that becomes some kind of challenge, competition. This is very easy in kindergartens and when they reach the age of five, they can even become creative, assume personae that become real characters. We all know Rossini's "Duetto para dos Gatos – Duet for Two Cats" (check what it can become at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJDtCw0MTNU) and you can easily make young children under six play with words and have duets or even more than two voices and make them sing and play with simple nursery rhymes like *The Farmer in the Dell*:

The farmer in the dell (2x)
Hi-ho, the derry-o…
The farmer in the dell

The farmer takes the wife (2×)
Hi-ho, the derry-o…
The farmer takes the wife

The wife takes the child (2×)
Hi-ho, the derry-o…
The wife takes the child

The child takes the nurse (2×)
Hi-ho, the derry-o…
The child takes the nurse […]

Imagine what it could become if the children were encouraged to compose their own songs like "My mother in the yard…" or "My brother in the street…" or "My sister in the car…" or "My father on the roof…" And imagine the students in a "zoom-like situations with all the faces on a screen and each student being able to see them all, face-to-face, including himself, while he is singing in and to a mosaic of twelve or more faces doing the same. This requires some psycholinguistic and pure psychological exploration and research. In this mirror-like situation Lacan's mirror stage is multiplied by the number of faces around that of each particular child and his knowledge that he is being scrutinized by all these other singers. The children are acting singers, and at the same time the director of it all watching the performance. Each child is a conscious acting singer, the member of an acting and singing group, and the meta-spectator watching himself surrounded by the others. This type of learning technique can be used systematically with children under six, but it can also be used with older children, though as some kind of "entertainment" in the class. I remember making seventeen-year-old children sing for fun a humorous version of "God Save The Queen" for Halloween with a real eviscerated pumpkin on the desk with a candle inside.

God Save Our Dear Pumpkin
God Save Our Dear Pumpkin
God Save Pumpkin, etc.

No disrespect in it since the music is by Jean-Baptiste Lully on words by the headmistress, Madame de Brinon, of the Royal Girls School of Saint Cyr, written as a prayer when Louis XIV had to go through a surgical intervention by Charles-Francois Felix de Tassy, the barber-surgeon of the court in Versailles in 1686. It was sung for the first time in London in 1745. This version of the story can be questioned and there are older popular versions before the one for Louis XIV.

After the age of six things can change because between six and twelve children develop their conceptualizing power with simple things, objects, and notions, but also with the discovery of the first levels of mathematics and physics, or even other experimental sciences, not to forget the surrounding environment of the children that can be either urban or rural or at times both. If the students have never been in real active and operational contact with a second or third language, they might find it difficult to enter the pronunciation or syntax of the new language, but before puberty language is less important as an identifying characteristic, though it may be for children coming from an immigrating population, but it is most of the time a mistake to go on only using games and songs, and other playful techniques. We must keep in mind that only about an estimated 10% of all people can naturally learn any foreign language by pure imitation and direct fast assimilation. This is an estimation. But children who are classified (I do not say diagnosed) Asperger children, one form of autism, the savant autistic personality, can learn in such a mimetic way at a very fast speed and we have not studied it enough to know the mental processes of these children. (Check Daniel Tammet, *Born on a Blue Day: Inside the Extraordinary Mind of an Autistic Savant*, Free Press, October 16, 2007). Some stricter drills can be introduced after six, though these drills can remain playful or entertaining. But the main objective might be descriptive. Descriptive of videos in English with the strong objective of transcribing, orally with questions and answers, the dialogue of these videos. Films like cartoons can be one easy approach because the pictures provide a lot of understanding that helps the capture of the words. Imagine what it could be in a Virtual Reality situation or world. Let's take a stroll in London and let's discover and describe the buildings, the people, etc. The teacher is essential to make the children speak English and not their first language in such a situation. The group should be limited. Of course, we can even inject an Artificial Intelligent guide that can ask the questions and even answer some questions knowing that this virtual guide can only understand and speak one language, English.

Today with facial recognition cameras we can follow each student in this virtual reality London and identify what attracts their vision and what their emotions might be, and the Artificial Intelligent guide can be guided in his interchanges with the students by this data. You could maybe make the visit more attractive with – if intellectual property rights permit it – meeting the Queen in Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace. Or what about discovering Shakespeare, Newton, and many others in Westminster Abbey. Children can learn how to swim naturally by jumping into the water because it is natural if the children have not been subconsciously informed with some kind of fear of water. If the children are not subconsciously hostile to the foreign language, they will naturally learn from their environment, even a virtual environment.

Jumping over the limit of twelve years of age into puberty and middle school, we have to deal with the fast-developing minds of fast-growing teenagers. That's when the children start developing some identity anxiety that makes them very reluctant to do things that may question their deeper reality that they would never express though it is, at worst, subconscious, but it is often absolutely conscious. All sorts of fears and appeals can develop in them. That's when it becomes crucial to make the students the masters of their studying environment and their academic topics, including the day-to-day work and pedagogical choices. They have to choose what is going to be done in the class, and they have to choose the videos, the topics they are going to work on. The limits might be on the teacher's side, limits coming from the law, from the school institutions, from the teacher's own convictions or impulses, not to speak of parents and colleagues, etc. As soon as twelve, the children must become their own pedagogical masters. Before they were only following what entertained them. Now they want to approve or disapprove, discuss, question, confront or reject what comes in front of them. And luckily, a group can never be homogeneous. My experience is that most kids accept the clearly expressed decisions of the group, not those of the teacher. Yet some might remain aloof. It is then suggested that subgroups be constituted in the class and these groups can be composed of students who have the same interests. No topic has no interest, and you can always build some rich exploration even of the most uninteresting films, videos, topics, books, or whatever. I have only been confronted in many years with one case of one Junior Highschool class asking to stop working on a film, *Cool Runnings*, they had chosen after only a couple of sessions because it became innocuous and boring very fast. But I never had any problem with films like *Seven* or *American History X* or *Romeo + Juliet*, and every sequence brought up new elements of culture and topics of discussion. What I say here is practically valid till the end of high school, though senior classes might jump into the next phase.

When reaching eighteen, the students start, and at times very strongly because it has been brewing for two or three years with some students, to wonder what use the foreign language is going to be in their life. They start wondering if it is worth investing energy and work in such a subject. That's where immersion becomes essential. They have to be immersed in a professional situation and context to be interested. They have to do it for their own professional future and not for some kind of touristic interest that becomes at least secondary if not marginal. The great chance we have after this COVID-19 epidemic is that it is enabling us to realize that new techniques can be used. The way Virtual Reality is used to teach future pilots how to fly transcontinental liners, we can have the same kind of Virtual Reality to learn a language and we just have to alternate and diversify the situations and the objectives. But the students will always ask for things that are professionally oriented. Today, let's learn how to drive a bus with Mr. Driver X as the coach or accompanying tutor. Tomorrow let's be immersed in a traumatic situation of a bus the student, impersonating Mr. Driver X, is driving, and it falls into a serious accident with twenty people in the bus and their reactions to the accident, etc. On the following day let's just enjoy a bus trip from Bordeaux to Toulouse with four stops along the way and four different visits: (1) a vineyard in Langon, (2) an industrial tomato-growing farm in Marmande, (3) a stop in Agen and a prune drying factory, (4) a fourth stop in Montauban and a visit to a candy and chocolate maker like Les Délices Guy Pécou.

There are so many possibilities along such lines. And the interesting thing is that groups of twenty-five learners working together in a classroom are no longer the norm. The forty-five-year-old industrial executive who had negotiated with his employer a promotion provided he got the special graduate studies Intellectual Property Certification from Université Paris 2 Assas Panthéon was motivated to learn English, but we were only dealing with copyright laws and other documents on the subject of Intellectual Property (and I can speak from practice on such a subject being a vastly published author and an authors' union cadre). In the same class, the Chinese student from Peking University in Beijing did not know much French and was very average in English, but she had been sent to Paris to follow this graduate studies course by Mrs. Hu who was at the time responsible in Beijing for the development of the Internet. She was motivated to learn the copyright laws of the USA and other topics on this very subject. The unemployed adults, some over forty who had been fired from the textile industry in Roubaix and had been proposed some further education classes to get a two-year college certification were motivated to learn English, some of them from scratch because they wanted to get back to work. Only one way here, be concrete and professionally oriented. My training as a TOEIC instructor was quite useful. Actually, I used this qualification in a Junior High School class. They loved taking an authentic TOEIC test though they were Science and Mathematics students. But the professional dimension was for them the interest, the appeal, along with the use of recorded audio documents.

Nowadays, this professional dimension is becoming dominant and the new techniques I will discuss later in more detail are fundamental.

3- Halliday, Notional Functional, and the EU

As an appetizer here is an excerpt of the M.A.K. Halliday entry of the Encyclopedia Britannica (my highlighting in yellow and my red bold font).

"Drawing on Firth's work, Halliday came to see language as a social construction and, crucially, the mechanism by which society is reproduced and, occasionally, transformed. That insight, combined with his commitment to improving social conditions, left Halliday searching for a new way of teaching language to improve literacy rates and give ordinary people greater opportunities.

This socially focused approach put Halliday at odds with established figures on the 'nature' side of the 'nature or nurture' debate. They included Noam Chomsky and his followers, who believed the human [competence] for language was innate rather than acquired during life.

Halliday argued the key to language development lay in **how children attribute "meaning" to elements in their environment**. In contrast to Chomsky and his followers, who advocated an inherent universal human grammar, Halliday developed a theory of language based on a system of choices. The results were Halliday's models of systemic functional grammar and systemic functional linguistics."

We could question the sentences and phrases highlighted in yellow and particularly the one in bold red font because it implies children have the meaning of things before the names for them. They obviously have first the experience of things to which they attribute names that mostly come from their environment and that builds the mental meaning of the word and its reference. But here I would like to concentrate on the pedagogy that is derived from this particular cognitive linguistics. It is this pedagogy that was vastly implemented in the 1960s when Prime Minister Harold Wilson (Prime Minister from 1964 to 1970 and again from 1974 to 1976) accepted to consider the British passports that had been given to millions of people in Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh during the colonial era, gave these people the right to travel to Britain and register there as British citizens. The urgency that characterized the situation of these people in this massive migration was such that the pedagogy derived from M.A.K. Halliday's books was highly successful, maybe not always in the quality of the English acquired in such conditions, but as for the quantifiable amount of competence in social services, educational services, and all other community services these migrants had to integrate in a very short time. The effectiveness of this massive learning of English as an integrating requirement was quite admirable.

But I would like to give some details about this method from one book published later on in his life: M.A.K. Halliday's *Introduction to Functional Grammar, Fourth Edition*[1]. We could also refer to MAK Halliday, Angus McIntosh & Peter Strevens, *The Linguistic Sciences, and Language Teaching*, 1964.

First of all, we have to really qualify M.A.K. Halliday as a linguist. His theory could be defined as **applied discursive sociolinguistics**. It is sociolinguistics because the theory is centered on the uses, and functions of language in the various social situations any language is turned into text, meaning in which a linguistic message is produced. This linguistic theory is a social science studying the linguistic behaviors of individuals in all sorts of social environments and communicational requests. It is a discursive theory because it only takes into account the discursive production of these messages. In fact, the "langue" (Ferdinand de Saussure's or Gustave Guillaume's concept as opposed to "parole" or "discourse" respectively) of the language concerned here, English, and of each individual speaker is never taken into account in its phylogeny and its psychological dimension. And it is applied because he only considers the analysis of actual messages and produced clauses or texts in their discursive existence. He only tries to identify the "effets de sens" ("effective meaning") of these finalized texts and how this "effective meaning" may change if the order of words changes, if intonation is added, if body language is also used. He does speak of notions as the targeted entities that are supposed to be cast in the texts that correspond to the functions of these texts in real discursive practice and situations. For Saussure, that's "parole" (speech). For Guillaume, that's "discours" (discourse).

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[1] M.A.K. Halliday, Revised by Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen, *Halliday's Introduction to Functional Grammar* Fourth edition, Third edition published in 2004 by Hodder Education, a Hachette UK company. This fourth edition published in 2014 by Routledge 2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN. Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada by Routledge 711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business © 1985, 1994, 2004, 2014 M.A.K. Halliday and Christian M.I.M. Matthiessen

But we are missing the “langue” of Saussure and Guillaume (the abstract system of abstract systems that operates as a processing and producing machine or apparatus in the mind of the subject, even before he utters the slightest discursive word). We are missing Guillaume’s “visée de sens” (“targeted meaning,” and “notions” are too vague to satisfy this targeting that makes the speaker the real master of his speech) and we only have “effets de sens” (“effective meaning” with no explanation how the abstract system of abstract systems this langue is, produces these “effets de sens”). We thus end up with an exploded, scattered, multifarious of independent functions and values in these functions for the words used to evoke the notions. The figure used here speaks on its own (op cit, p. 37).

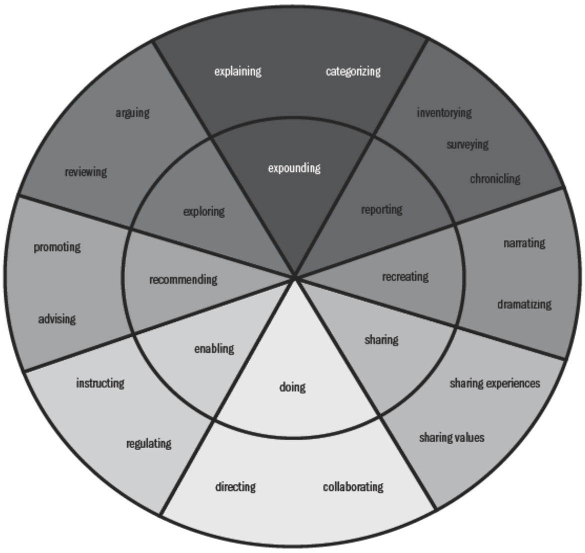


Fig. 1-13 Field – socio-semiotic process (activity) represented as a topology

And that’s exactly what the teaching method is when you start from one notion, capability, and you implement it in all those situational functions and the only learning you have to do is rote learning of the particular texts you will produce to embody this particular notion in these particular functions. The abstract relations do not specify the syntactic functions of the elements these abstract relations bring together. It only specifies the “effets de sens,” hence the discursive values.

Fig. 5-3 The grammar of experience: types of process in English

And he goes one step further in this absence of “langue” and absence of “syntax” or “syntactic functions.”

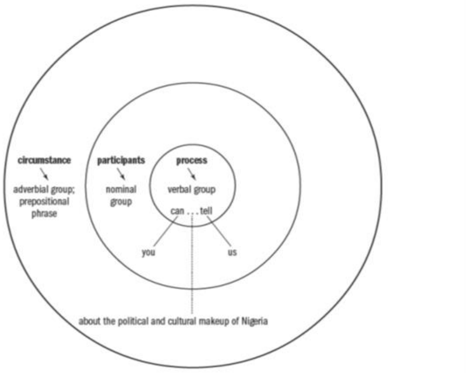


Fig. 5-5 Central and peripheral elements in the experiential structure of the clause

We never get the syntactic structure of the sentence which, by the way, is a question: "Can you tell us about the political and cultural makeup of Nigeria. He only proposes the following Figure:

Can	you	tell	us	about the political and cultural makeup of Nigeria
pro-	participant	-cess	participant	circumstance
verbal ...	nominal group	... group	nominal group	prepositional phrase

Fig. 5-6 Clause as process, participants and circumstances

This experiential approach does not provide us with the syntactic functions that could enable the learner to produce a similar sentence or to play on the syntactic structure. It does not explain the originality of the question that can be considered either as a yes/no question or as an open question requiring a full answer "about the political and cultural makeup of Nigeria." "You" is the addressee/utteree of "us" who is the addresser/utterer of the question. The action "utter" is not mentioned, only implied ("we say" or "we ask"). The uttering is the whole sentence, here a question. The functional thematic structure is:

"you" (location) – can – "tell…" (theme)

"you" (agent, source) – tell – "us" (goal) – "about…" (theme)

Instead of the stratified approach in which each and all stratum/strata has/have no phylogenetic relationships with the other strata, I prefer Ray Jackendoff's hierarchical syntactic tiered approach centered on the "temporal "elements" that express the processes in the sentence (generally considered as verbal elements in Indo-European and Turkic languages) because it establishes a certain number of analyses of one sentence, each one centered on one "verbal" element. That provides the learner with a unified approach of each utterance, though hierarchically tiered. My difference in this approach with Ray Jackendoff's is that he centers his analyses on the spatial "theme" element, the element that suffers or endures the "verbal" process, the element that is the basic "nominal" ergative element in an ergative language. I center my approach on the "verbal" elements considering that in a complex "verbal" phrase (that includes only "verbal" elements and no "nominal" predicative complements), each "verbal" element, be they auxiliaries, modals or simple verbs, has a syntactic thematic structure in the whole sentence. To call, in the previous example, the theme of the telling plain circumstances is unrealistic. It is not. It is the core of the telling, the matter the telling is about. The theme (nothing to do with the couple theme-rheme, but here it is the syntactic function put forward by Ray Jackendoff) is what is directly passively (what has to be told) – or rather non-actively (the matter that is going to be transferred from "you" to "us" if we consider "tell" is a verb of transfer) – concerned by the verbal process.

To complicate – for him to explore – further the situation, he proposes a stratified vision that captures these situations along three parameters (my emphasizing bold black and blue fonts): **“field – what’s going on in the situation**: (i) the nature of the **social and semiotic activity**; and (ii) the domain of experience this activity relates to (the ‘subject matter’ or ‘topic’)
tenor – who is taking part in the situation: (i) the roles played by those taking part in the **socio-semiotic activity** – (1) **institutional roles**, (2) **status roles** (power, either equal or unequal), (3) **contact roles** (familiarity, ranging from strangers to intimates) and (4) **sociometric roles** (affect, either neutral or charged, positively or negatively); and (ii) the values that the interactants imbue the domain with (either neutral or loaded, positively or negatively)
mode – what role is being played by language and other semiotic systems in the situation: (i) the **division of labor between semiotic activities and social ones** (ranging from semiotic activities as constitutive of the situation to semiotic activities as facilitating); (ii) **the division of labor between linguistic activities and other semiotic activities**; (iii) **rhetorical mode**: the orientation of the text towards field (e.g. informative, didactic, explanatory, explicatory) or tenor (e.g. persuasive, exhortatory, hortatory, polemic); (iv) **turn**: dialogic or monologic; (v) medium: written or spoken; (vi) **channel**: phonic or graphic.” (op cit., p. 33-34)

And that leads to semantically subcategorizing the discursive situations.
“So, we will make a basic distinction between activities of ‘doing’ and of ‘meaning’, and then further distinctions within ‘meaning’:
• ‘**doing**’: the situation is constituted in some form of social behavior, involving one or more persons. Language or other semiotic systems such as gesture, gaze, and facial expression may be engaged to facilitate the performance of the activity, as when language is used to coordinate a team
• ‘**meaning**’: the situation is constituted in some process of meaning. There are seven primary types:
○ ‘**expounding**’: expounding knowledge about the world – about general classes of phenomena, categorizing them or explaining them
○ ‘**reporting**’: reporting particular phenomena, chronicling the flow of events, surveying places, or inventorying entities
○ ‘**recreating**’: recreating any aspect of prototypically human life imaginatively by dramatizing or narrating events
○ ‘**sharing**’: sharing personal experiences and values, prototypically in private
○ ‘**enabling**’: enabling some course of activity, either enabling the activity by instructing people on how to undertake it or regulating the activity by controlling people’s actions
○ ‘**recommending**’: recommending some course of activity, either for the sake of the speaker through the promotion of some commodity or for the sake of the addressee through advice
○ ‘**exploring**’: exploring societal values and positions, prototypically in the public arena.” (op cit., p. 35-36)

In Figure 5.3 already provided, he put down three abstract relations (“being,” “doing,” “sensing,” and here he gives two different ones, “doing,” and “meaning.” This piling up of different analyses, all seen from the end product “text” in a “stratified” vision does not consider the relations between these strata, or even the hierarchy between them. It leads to the subcategorization of words within discourse. No phylogeny that would imply that each level is in phylogenetic relations with the others just the way consonants and vowels unite to produce roots that are then categorized into spatial and temporal stems, that are in their turn specified in functional values, syntactic functions for the spatial elements and tenses and moods for the temporal elements to produce fronds in both cases. My metaphor root-stem-frond implies a phylogenetic connection from one to the next, and that phylogenetic dimension applies in the emergence of articulated language 300,000 years ago as well as with newborns learning the language or languages of their environment, as well as the production of discourse by the speaking individuals who can always pick a final sentence and turn it into a root and then a stem and then a frond, like in:

X to Y: All you say is always some sophisticated BS.

Y to X: You may be "sophisticated-BS-ing" me as much as you like, but I will be "blunt-BS-ing" you in return.

His approach just provides us with socio-semiotic discursive elements (op cit., p. 75).

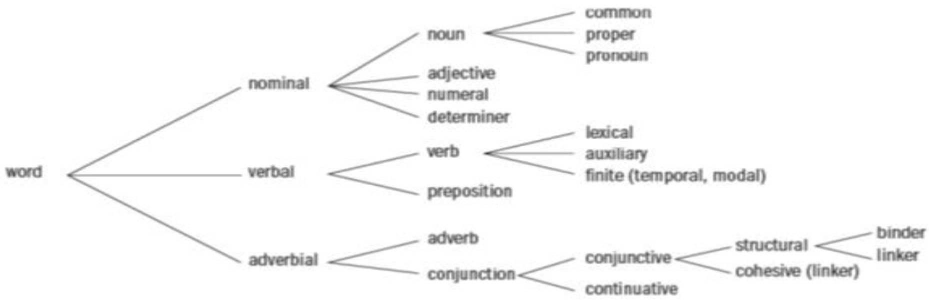


Fig. 2-8 Word classes recognized in a functional grammar of English

We could of course question the three basic types of words divided in "nominal," "verbal," and "adverbial," not so much in the three categories themselves as in the fact that there is no phylogeny producing these categories and no real architecture linking them together, and first of all what is "nominal" or "verbal" or "adverbial"? No characterization of what is in Indo-European-centered linguistics called a noun to the spatial dimension of human vision and linguistic conceptualization as opposed to the temporal dimension that is behind the "verbal" category that is derived from and thus reduced to an Indo-European-centered vision. The third one is problematic since it is some kind of modal intervention of the utterer – or the situation – into the process he/she/they describe and it can be applied to the qualifying or classifying adjuncts of the spatial (nominal) fronds, to the temporal (verbal) fronds, or to the utterance as a whole or the situation that carries this utterance, including the utterer himself/herself/themselves. The absence of these two spatial and temporal dimensions has tremendous consequences, particularly dealing with time from universe-time (which is only the human quantification of universe duration) to operational time (the mental time necessary to produce a text) via inner-process time (a temporal element being seen in various moments of its completion or non-completion) and outer-process time (the connection between the outer-process time and the outside-universe time, generally seen as "tenses" in Indo-European languages). His reduction to past-present-future and his further remark about the reduction of this triple time to double times like past-non-past, present-non-present, future-non-future, etc., make it even more difficult to speak of the temporal dimension of language which becomes exploded by and into the discursive "effets de sens." He does not even reach the level he could have reached with Semitic languages that work on the double-time-capture in inner-time process: "completed" and "in progress."

This leads him to his basic example "The duke gave my aunt this teapot." He piles up successive analysis of the discursive realizations of the basic notional sentence by moving around the words or the emphasis (theme versus rheme) in the basic structure particularly playing on three concepts of "subject: "psychological subject," "grammatical subject," and "logical subject." The subject of course is discursive hence superficial, circumstantial, and never in the Figures

2.11 to 2.14 (op cit., p. 80-81) that include the passive sentence derived from the original active sentence, can we find the simple structure of the property-transfer verb "give" in a sentence with three nominal actants, thus building an architecture with four elements:

[**the duke**, Agent and Source] – [**gave**, Relation: property-transfer]
– [**my aunt**, Goal] – [**this teapot**, Theme]

I here use Ray Jackendoff's concepts. It is this structure that bars as normal a sentence like "My dog gave my cat US$100." And yet it is not non-grammatical, as Chomsky would say even if it is non-sensical if we consider it as poetical, or metaphorical, or symbolical.

I will neglect Halliday's further trinity or triad, "textual," "interpersonal," and "experiential":

Table 2-7 Three lines of meaning in the clause

Metafunction	Clause as ...	System	Structure
textual	message	THEME	Theme ^ Rheme
interpersonal	exchange	MOOD	Mood [Subject + Finite] + Residue [Predicator (+ Complement) (+ Adjunct)]
experiential	representation	TRANSITIVITY	process + participant(s) (+ circumstances), e.g. Process + Actor + Goal

We can look as much as we want but there is no psychological dimension, no phylogenetic dimension in the production of a text seen or described by Halliday. And this is obvious when we look for the concept of "mind." You cannot find it. For him, language only takes place in the brain (a common point with Chomsky despite Encyclopedia Britannica). But we all know it does not. At best the brain is the material regulator of the sensorimotor activity of the speaking or writing individual. He seems to totally ignore Bertrand Russell and his lectures delivered in London and Beijing published in 1921[2]. The human brain as a brain is similar to that of most mammals, and maybe even all animals that have a brain. The sensors in the body send sensations via the nervous system to the brain that processes these sensations into perceptions and the brain discriminates in these perceptions some patterns it identifies in brain machine code to remember them and recognize them later.

Your dog has done all that and it recognizes you, even the sound of your voice on the telephone, and he will show in a way or another that he recognizes you. But Homo Sapiens developed a triple-articulated language from the mutations brought into his physiology and brain to become the long-distance fast bipedal runner he became something like 300,000 years ago. The human brain used its discriminatory capability to join these items in the brain's memory with newly developed words from the rotation of vowels and consonants. And this lexicon enabled Homo Sapiens to experiment on things and words, to speculate on the same with other members of their communities, and eventually to conceptualize these speculations.

In fact, but I am afraid Halliday did not see the humor of one of his formulas, the mind appears in the phrase in bold font in this sentence: "A language is a series of redundancies by which we link our eco-social environment to non-random disturbances in the air (soundwaves). Each step is, of course, **masterminded by the brain**." (op cit., page 25) In fact, the sensorimotor apparatus of the brain is masterminded by the mind, and the mind came into existence in the brain as a virtual construct because human language also developed as a virtual construct in the mind. The two develop simultaneously and reciprocally. If we understand this essential

[2] Bertrand Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*, 1921, London and Beijing, https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2529/2529-h/2529-h.htm

phylogenetic dimension of the human species, we can then look at the discursive use of language in a totally different way and in a unifying way. Instead of multiplying the functions, we can state only one: the communicational situation, and we can start to build this complex communicational situation, and mind you, one can entertain constant or episodic communicational exchanges with oneself in dreams, in delusions, in simple thinking in silence or aloud for the sole benefit of oneself. That's basically what the Buddhists call meditation, and it can be done in silence or aloud, sitting on a meditating chair, or walking on a meditating track, or lying in a meditating cell. Freud used to say that when he had a mixed couple in front of him, he always considers he is confronted by four people since each individual has a masculine side and a feminine side. It is well known that any well-balanced individual is a triad of people: "me, myself, and I," as a popular saying goes and if we opened up this individual to his environment it would be a quartet: "me, myself, I, and mine."

What I think here is that Halliday proposes a completely scattered array of "effets de sens," hence of discursive final values of texts instead of unifying the communicational situation that has produced Homo Sapiens's articulated language by forcing this communication onto the newborn to simply survive, and onto the Homo Sapiens communities from the very start, partly inherited from anterior Hominins, in order for these communities to survive and expand. See below my graph of the communicational situation in its very complex reciprocal and even symmetrical analysis. We must also state that MAK Halliday got a lot of his inspiration from William Francis Mackey's book, *Language Teaching Analysis*, 1965.

But this notional-functional pedagogy was selected in the early 1970s by the European Union as ***THE*** pedagogy for foreign languages. Under the guidance of Denis Girard, General Inspector of National Education in France, responsible for English, this pedagogy was systematically railroaded into the teaching of English but a lot less in other languages due to some resistance. The result is a total catastrophe, but it is necessary to get into some detail. This is not going to be a full in-depth study of the European policy as for foreign languages. We must keep in mind though the European Union, its Commission in Brussels, or its Parliament in Strasbourg do not decide on the foreign language teaching policy of all the EU countries. It only produces various documents, studies, and suggestions, at times called resources or directives that the various countries in the EU can adopt or adapt to their context.

The basic idea is that the EU has defined six levels of proficiency in foreign languages. These levels are used for general studies or reports on foreign-language proficiency in Europe and the various countries of Europe. They are clearly defined as follows in the first chart below.

The ordering of the levels is surprising since it goes against the alphabetical and numerical order of the identification in the second column. It also goes against what many would consider normal, that is to say, a progressing order from weaker to stronger. They chose a "pyramidal" presentation which is anti-alphabetical and anti-numerical. They apply in this classification the same principle used for resumes that are ordered in an anti-chronological hierarchy. I highlighted in yellow the simple hearing, listening, and understanding specifications of this chart. Behind them, we can see that the first requirement is about understanding what is produced by others (implying native speakers).

Then comes proficiency at producing some information in the concerned foreign language. This chart is a first step in order to understand the policy that is behind it. Proficiency is systematically concerned by the functions the speaker can fulfill with the foreign language. We are in what was called after M.A.K. Halliday a notional-functional approach: The speaker has some notions (semantic meanings) in mind, and he is able to transpose these meanings into a foreign language within a situation that is functionally defined. This chart only contains one, and only one, reference to the professional field, highlighted in green.

This chart does not target professional proficiency but some more diffused social or everyday uses of a foreign language. What I said before goes against this minorization of the professional dimension of foreign languages and the strong desire of numerous learners to improve their professional competence and performance with the use of a foreign language and they know very early that they will need foreign languages to enhance their professional skills at all levels of their professional experience. If they don't know this, they should be corrected.

PROFICIENT USER	C2	**Can understand with ease virtually everything heard or read. Can summarise information from different spoken and written sources, reconstructing arguments and accounts in a coherent presentation.** Can express him/herself spontaneously, very fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in more complex situations.
	C1	**Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts, and recognise implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions.** Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes. Can produce clear, well-structured, detailed text on complex subjects, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
INDEPENDENT USER	B2	**Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party.** Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.
	B1	**Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken.** Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. Can describe experiences and events, dreams, hopes & ambitions and briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans.
BASIC USER	A2	**Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment).** Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters. Can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and matters in areas of immediate need.
	A1	**Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type.** Can introduce him/herself and others and can ask and answer questions about personal details such as where he/she lives, people he/she knows and things he/she has. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly and is prepared to help.

The six proficiency levels according to EU descriptions

But the European Union produced another chart in which they cross the six levels, this time in alphabetical and numerical order from left to right with three basic competencies, understanding, speaking, and writing as follows in the second and third charts below. The full chart is available at https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168045bb52. These three competencies are further subclassified as "understanding: listening and reading," "speaking: spoken interaction and spoken production," and "writing" as itself. These subclassifications are going from the most superficial to the deepest competence in language reception and production from top to bottom, once again then in logical order from the simplest to the most complex.

		A1	A2	B1
UNDERSTANDING	Listening	I can recognise familiar words and very basic phrases concerning myself, my family and immediate concrete surroundings when people speak slowly and clearly.	I can understand phrases and the highest frequency vocabulary related to areas of most immediate personal relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local area, employment). I can catch the main point in short, clear, simple messages and announcements.	I can understand the main points of clear standard speech on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. I can understand the main point of many radio or TV programmes on current affairs or topics of personal or professional interest when the delivery is relatively slow and clear.
	Reading	I can understand familiar names, words and very simple sentences, for example on notices and posters or in catalogues.	I can read very short, simple texts. I can find specific, predictable information in simple everyday material such as advertisements, prospectuses, menus and timetables and I can understand short simple personal letters.	I can understand texts that consist mainly of high frequency everyday or job-related language. I can understand the description of events, feelings and wishes in personal letters.
SPEAKING	Spoken Interaction	I can interact in a simple way provided the other person is prepared to repeat or rephrase things at a slower rate of speech and help me formulate what I'm trying to say. I can ask and answer simple questions in areas of immediate need or on very familiar topics.	I can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar topics and activities. I can handle very short social exchanges, even though I can't usually understand enough to keep the conversation going myself.	I can deal with most situations likely to arise whilst travelling in an area where the language is spoken. I can enter unprepared into conversation on topics that are familiar, of personal interest or pertinent to everyday life (e.g. family, hobbies, work, travel and current events).
	Spoken Production	I can use simple phrases and sentences to describe where I live and people I know.	I can use a series of phrases and sentences to describe in simple terms my family and other people, living conditions, my educational background and my present or most recent job.	I can connect phrases in a simple way in order to describe experiences and events, my dreams, hopes and ambitions. I can briefly give reasons and explanations for opinions and plans. I can narrate a story or relate the plot of a book or film and describe my reactions.
WRITING	Writing	I can write a short, simple postcard, for example sending holiday greetings. I can fill in forms with personal details, for example entering my name, nationality and address on a hotel registration form.	I can write short, simple notes and messages relating to matters in areas of immediate needs. I can write a very simple personal letter, for example thanking someone for something.	I can write simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest. I can write personal letters describing experiences and impressions.

European Assessment Grid English 1 (A1-B1)

A1 and A2 are definitely not for professional use, at best inquiries in a job center to get a job. The professional dimension appears in B1 understanding/listening, but it is immediately reduced to little by the mention "the delivery has to be relatively slow and clear." This is difficult to find in any professional field as soon as there is some stress or pressure in the professional situation. This professional reference disappears in B2. It could be said that most of the competencies listed in B2 could be valid within a professional situation. But it is not specified as such, and it reveals the professional dimension of language competence is not at all dominant in the very process of acquiring the simple or simpler competencies within a learning procedure from scratch to fluency. The professional dimension reappears in C1/Understanding/Listening: "I can understand specialized articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field." Then the rest of the C1 competencies are general. They could apply to the professional field but even when instructions are mentioned it is not specified that in any professional field perfect understanding of instructions is necessary for the civil responsibility or accountability of the worker, and of his employer who must make sure the employee perfectly understands the instructions he receives, lest he becomes a liability in the company he is working for. C2 is even more disquieting for a professional mind because it remains general, and the professional dimension is only mentioned in writing: "I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works." And you can see the professional dimension of this writing competence is equalized with literature. Once again, the civil responsibility or accountability of a worker at his workplace is not mentioned though it should be if this teaching foreign languages is targeting professional people who have to deal with foreign countries or move to foreign countries to work. This accountability could lead to some situations that could be considered criminal. Think of the Boeing 737 MAX and it mostly concerned the proper training of the pilots in English which is not the first language of most pilots in the world. The defects or shortcomings in the software and hardware of the plane were not the only liability in the case of the two concerned crashes.

		B2	C1	C2
UNDERSTANDING	Listening	I can understand extended speech and lectures and follow even complex lines of argument provided the topic is reasonably familiar. I can understand most TV news and current affairs programmes. I can understand the majority of films in standard dialect.	I can understand extended speech even when it is not clearly structured and when relationships are only implied and not signalled explicitly. I can understand television programmes and films without too much effort.	I have no difficulty in understanding any kind of spoken language, whether live or broadcast, even when delivered at fast native speed, provided I have some time to get familiar with the accent.
	Reading	I can read articles and reports concerned with contemporary problems in which the writers adopt particular attitudes or viewpoints. I can understand contemporary literary prose.	I can understand long and complex factual and literary texts, appreciating distinctions of style. I can understand specialised articles and longer technical instructions, even when they do not relate to my field.	I can read with ease virtually all forms of the written language, including abstract, structurally or linguistically complex texts such as manuals, specialised articles and literary works.
SPEAKING	Spoken Interaction	I can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible. I can take an active part in discussion in familiar contexts, accounting for and sustaining my views.	I can express myself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. I can use language flexibly and effectively for social and professional purposes. I can formulate ideas and opinions with precision and relate my contribution skilfully to those of other speakers.	I can take part effortlessly in any conversation or discussion and have a good familiarity with idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms. I can express myself fluently and convey finer shades of meaning precisely. If I do have a problem I can backtrack and restructure around the difficulty so smoothly that other people are hardly aware of it.
	Spoken Production	I can present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest. I can explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.	I can present clear, detailed descriptions of complex subjects integrating sub-themes, developing particular points and rounding off with an appropriate conclusion.	I can present a clear, smoothly-flowing description or argument in a style appropriate to the context and with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
WRITING	Writing	I can write clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects related to my interests. I can write an essay or report, passing on information or giving reasons in support of or against a particular point of view. I can write letters highlighting the personal significance of events and experiences.	I can express myself in clear, well-structured text, expressing points of view at some length. I can write about complex subjects in a letter, an essay or a report, underlining what I consider to be the salient issues. I can select style appropriate to the reader in mind.	I can write clear, smoothly-flowing text in an appropriate style. I can write complex letters, reports or articles which present a case with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points. I can write summaries and reviews of professional or literary works.

European Assessment Grid English 2 (B2-C2)

To give a full picture of this notional-functional approach in Brussels, I would like to provide two more charts below giving then the qualitative aspects of spoken language use. The full chart is available at https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/table-3-cefr-3.3-common-reference-levels-qualitative-aspects-of-spoken-language-use. We go back to the vertical anti-alphabetical and anti-numerical order, and horizontally five qualities are assessed for each level: range, accuracy, fluency, interaction, coherence. The mention of the professional use of language only appears once in a series of notional-functional elements in C1/Range: "a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics." It is the third, the last but one notional-functional domain. The objections I have already made stand completely here too. The absence of the short-term (college and university) and long-term professional objectives and motivations is damaging the motivation of the students since they might be confronted with professional English late in their young life instead of straight away from the start. And what's more, for migrating populations within Europe and from outside Europe, the professional dimension is probably first competing with the social dimension, meaning welfare, health, and social security. It is quite obvious that the "general" and "academic" uses are not very useful in a professional situation or a social urgency situation.

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
C2	Shows great flexibility reformulating ideas in differing linguistic forms to convey finer shades of meaning precisely, to give emphasis, to differentiate and to eliminate ambiguity. Also has a good command of idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms	Maintains consistent grammatical control of complex language, even while attention is otherwise engaged (e.g. in forward planning, in monitoring others' reactions).	Can express him/herself spontaneously at length with a natural colloquial flow, avoiding or backtracking around any difficulty so smoothly that the interlocutor is hardly aware of it.	Can interact with ease and skill, picking up and using non-verbal and intonational cues apparently effortlessly. Can interweave his/her contribution into the joint discourse with fully natural turntaking, referencing, allusion making etc.	Can create coherent and cohesive discourse making full and appropriate use of a variety of organisational patterns and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive devices.
C1	Has a good command of a broad range of language allowing him/her to select a formulation to express him/ herself clearly in an appropriate style on a wide range of general, academic, professional or leisure topics without having to restrict what he/she wants to say.	Consistently maintains a high degree of grammatical accuracy; errors are rare, difficult to spot and generally corrected when they do occur.	Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.	Can select a suitable phrase from a readily available range of discourse functions to preface his remarks in order to get or to keep the floor and to relate his/her own contributions skilfully to those of other speakers.	Can produce clear, smoothly-flowing, well-structured speech, showing controlled use of organisational patterns, connectors and cohesive devices.
B2	Has a sufficient range of language to be able to give clear descriptions, express viewpoints on most general topics, without much conspicuous searching for words, using some complex sentence forms to do so.	Shows a relatively high degree of grammatical control. Does not make errors which cause misunderstanding, and can correct most of his/her mistakes.	Can produce stretches of language with a fairly even tempo; although he/she can be hesitant as he or she searches for patterns and expressions, there are few noticeably long pauses.	Can initiate discourse, take his/her turn when appropriate and end conversation when he / she needs to, though he /she may not always do this elegantly. Can help the discussion along on familiar ground confirming comprehension, inviting others in, etc.	Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her utterances into clear, coherent discourse, though there may be some "jumpiness" in a long contribution.

Qualitative aspects of spoken language use (C2-C1-B2)

	RANGE	ACCURACY	FLUENCY	INTERACTION	COHERENCE
B1	Has enough language to get by, with sufficient vocabulary to express him/herself with some hesitation and circum-locutions on topics such as family, hobbies and interests, work, travel, and current events.	Uses reasonably accurately a repertoire of frequently used "routines" and patterns associated with more predictable situations.	Can keep going comprehensibly, even though pausing for grammatical and lexical planning and repair is very evident, especially in longer stretches of free production.	Can initiate, maintain and close simple face-to-face conversation on topics that are familiar or of personal interest. Can repeat back part of what someone has said to confirm mutual understanding.	Can link a series of shorter, discrete simple elements into a connected, linear sequence of points.
A2	Uses basic sentence patterns with memorised phrases, groups of a few words and formulae in order to communicate limited information in simple everyday situations.	Uses some simple structures correctly, but still systematically makes basic mistakes.	Can make him/herself understood in very short utterances, even though pauses, false starts and reformulation are very evident.	Can answer questions and respond to simple statements. Can indicate when he/she is following but is rarely able to understand enough to keep conversation going of his/her own accord.	Can link groups of words with simple connectors like "and, "but" and "because".
A1	Has a very basic repertoire of words and simple phrases related to personal details and particular concrete situations.	Shows only limited control of a few simple grammatical structures and sentence patterns in a memorised repertoire.	Can manage very short, isolated, mainly pre-packaged utterances, with much pausing to search for expressions, to articulate less familiar words, and to repair communication.	Can ask and answer questions about personal details. Can interact in a simple way but communication is totally dependent on repetition, rephrasing and repair.	Can link words or groups of words with very basic linear connectors like "and" or "then".

Qualitative aspects of spoken language use (B1-A2-A1)

The results of the teaching of foreign languages in Europe are catastrophic, or at least very disquieting for a policy that has been going on for more than fifty years. It is obvious in the following charts below available at
https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Foreign_language_skills_statistics,

In the first chart, I will not consider all countries but only France. In the 25-64-year-old population from 2007 to 2016 the percentage of people having no foreign language shifted from 41.2% to 39.9%, 4 percentile points higher than the EU average. In the same population, the proportion of people having one foreign language (all proficiency levels together and with no specification if the first language of immigrants is taken into account) shifted from 35.9% to 35.4% which is close to the EU average. The proportion of the same population having two foreign languages (all proficiency levels together and with no specification, if the first language of immigrants is taken into account) shifted from 18.4% to 20.1% one percentile point under the EU average in 2011 and 2016. Finally, those having three foreign languages shifted from 4.5% to 4.6% and these figures were three percentile points under the EU average, despite the great number of immigrants whose languages could be considered as foreign languages in France. It may reveal most students, and a vast proportion of migrants just drop their original languages, at least as for the school system, though I think they are not properly counted since it may reveal ethnicity which is banned from French statistics, and some of them might even pretend they do not speak their original languages at all, or not anymore, to look less foreign.

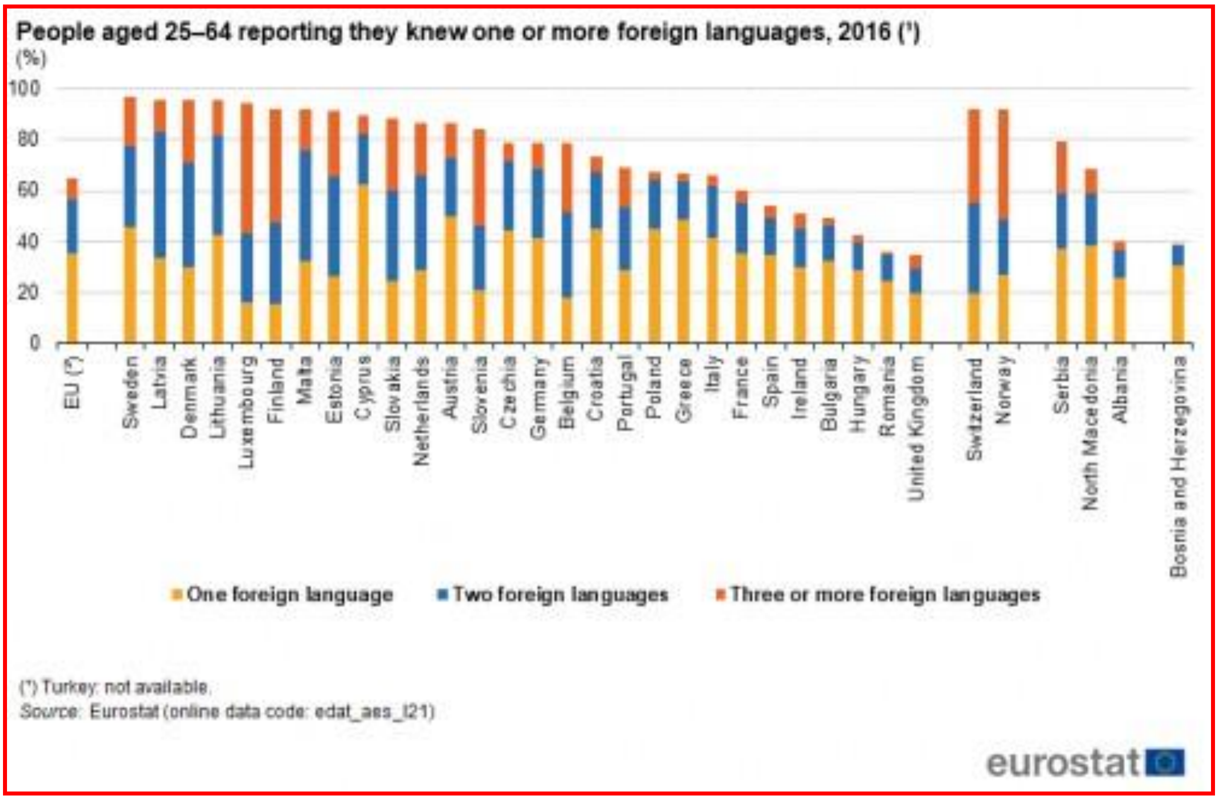
In the second chart that gives a global vision of France's position in Europe, France is twenty-second out of twenty-eight countries 4 or 5 points under the EU average. Now we have looked at the European situation without any commentary about it, we can shift to France to explain why the situation is so bad for the whole 25-64-year-old population with only 60% of the people having some knowledge of one, two, or three foreign languages (with the ambiguity that the original languages of migrant populations may not have been counted properly), meaning that 40% of this population does not have any knowledge of any foreign language. If we speak in education terms, that means languages recognized as possible options in secondary education and the Baccalauréat (high school diploma) and the number of languages is limited by the presence or non-presence of teachers in the various schools.

Distribution of people aged 25–64 by knowledge of foreign languages, 2007, 2011 and 2016
(%)

	No foreign language			One foreign language			Two foreign languages			Three or more foreign		
	2007	2011	2016	2007	2011	2016	2007	2011	2016	2007	2011	2016
EU	37.0	34.3	35.4	38.4	35.4	35.2	17.7	21.3	21.0	7.0	9.1	8.4
Belgium (1)	32.1	42.1	21.5	16.3	13.8	18.2	26.1	23.5	33.5	25.4	20.6	26.9
Bulgaria (1)	44.1	61.1	50.5	30.0	24.4	32.5	21.2	11.7	13.7	4.7	2.8	3.3
Czechia	31.9	30.9	21.0	34.6	39.6	44.7	24.7	22.4	26.9	8.8	7.1	7.4
Denmark	12.0	5.9	4.2	35.8	26.3	29.9	38.5	43.1	41.2	13.6	24.7	24.6
Germany	28.6	21.5	21.3	41.3	41.9	41.7	21.5	26.3	26.6	8.7	10.3	10.4
Estonia	13.6	14.5	8.8	30.4	24.1	26.4	35.3	35.1	39.1	20.6	26.3	25.7
Ireland (3)	:	72.7	49.2	:	20.8	29.9	:	5.2	15.4	:	1.3	5.6
Greece	43.4	41.9	33.5	44.8	43.0	48.5	9.9	12.2	15.3	2.0	3.0	2.7
Spain	46.6	48.9	45.8	35.4	34.0	34.8	13.6	12.6	14.3	4.3	4.5	5.2
France (1)	41.2	41.2	39.9	35.9	34.9	35.4	18.4	19.2	20.1	4.5	4.6	4.6
Croatia	31.4	:	26.8	39.7	:	45.2	21.3	:	21.8	7.6	:	6.2
Italy	38.6	40.1	34.0	33.8	39.6	41.6	20.9	16.6	20.1	6.7	3.7	4.4
Cyprus	14.6	16.1	10.5	59.3	56.7	62.2	17.9	19.2	20.3	8.1	8.0	7.0
Latvia	5.1	5.1	4.2	40.0	35.7	33.7	42.9	46.1	49.3	12.0	13.1	12.7
Lithuania	2.5	2.7	4.5	31.5	40.7	42.9	45.8	44.7	39.0	20.3	11.9	13.7
Luxembourg (1)(2)	:	1.1	5.5	:	5.0	16.2	:	22.0	27.1	:	72.0	51.2
Hungary (1)	74.8	63.2	57.6	17.6	25.9	28.6	6.3	9.2	11.1	1.3	1.7	2.7
Malta	8.3	10.9	8.2	26.0	24.7	32.4	42.8	45.7	43.2	22.8	18.6	16.2
Netherlands	:	13.9	13.7	:	25.2	28.7	:	37.1	37.1	:	23.7	20.6
Austria	20.3	21.9	13.8	50.4	50.5	49.6	20.2	18.9	23.3	9.1	8.8	13.4
Poland	37.3	38.1	32.9	39.0	38.7	45.0	19.6	19.2	19.2	4.1	4.0	2.8
Portugal	51.3	41.5	31.0	22.3	26.6	28.9	17.5	20.5	24.8	8.9	11.5	15.3
Romania	69.6	:	64.2	19.2	:	24.7	9.9	:	10.2	1.3	:	0.9
Slovenia	7.7	7.6	15.9	20.5	15.0	20.7	37.2	32.6	25.7	34.6	44.9	37.7
Slovakia	7.6	14.7	11.8	24.4	30.2	24.5	35.4	33.5	35.7	32.6	21.6	28.0
Finland	16.1	8.2	8.0	16.0	13.1	15.6	29.9	29.5	31.6	38.0	49.2	44.9
Sweden (3)	5.0	8.2	3.4	44.6	31.6	45.9	31.0	29.7	31.7	19.4	30.5	19.0
United Kingdom (3)	35.1	:	65.4	64.9	:	20.0	:	:	9.6	:	:	5.0
Norway	2.9	4.4	7.9	22.4	24.7	26.9	28.6	23.9	21.5	46.1	46.9	43.7
Switzerland	:	12.1	8.3	:	20.9	19.7	:	34.2	35.5	:	32.9	36.5
North Macedonia	:	:	31.7	:	:	38.6	:	:	20.0	:	:	9.7
Albania	:	:	59.9	:	:	25.9	:	:	10.9	:	:	3.2
Serbia	:	37.4	20.7	:	47.4	37.2	:	12.3	21.6	:	2.9	20.5
Turkey	75.5	81.8	:	21.6	15.9	:	2.6	2.3	:	0.3	:	:
Bosnia and Herzegovina	:	:	61.0	:	:	30.8	:	:	7.5	:	:	0.7

(1) 2011: breaks in series.
(2) No foreign language, 2011: low reliability.
(3) 2016: breaks in series.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: edat_aes_l21)

eurostat



Let's consider the case of Arabic:

The teaching of Arabic in France has been a centuries-old prestigious tradition since the creation of the first chair of Arabic in 1530 by François I. Today, this language and culture are taught in the public service, from primary to secondary schools, but also at the university level, in the Grandes Écoles and the Institutes of Political Studies, a sign of its importance for the future. France is the only Western country that teaches Arabic at all levels with permanent teachers. But our education system is not adapting its offer to the growing demand.

The public teaching of Arabic in 2017-2018 concerns 11,174 students in France and about 2,900 in the DOM-TOM. In addition, there are about 1,000 distance learning students who make up for the shortcomings of the language school map, and nearly 700 students in preparatory classes for the Grandes Écoles, most of whom have a Baccalauréat from an Arab country.

These figures do not correspond to the country's educational needs. In higher education, 5,000 to 6,000 students are enrolled in Arabic degrees, while the number of students taking Arabic for the Baccalauréat is much lower.

The number of Arabic teachers in middle and high schools has fallen from 300 a decade ago to about 200 today. In 2018, there were three positions for the agrégation and four for the Capes in Arabic. As a very first step, these numbers should be doubled.[3]

[3] L'enseignement de l'arabe en France est issu d'une tradition séculaire et prestigieuse, depuis la création de la première chaire d'arabe en 1530 par François Ier. Cette langue-culture est aujourd'hui enseignée dans le service public du primaire aux collèges et lycées, mais aussi à l'université, dans les grandes écoles et les instituts d'études politiques, signe de son importance pour l'avenir. La France est le seul pays occidental à enseigner l'arabe à tous les niveaux avec des enseignants titulaires. Mais notre système éducatif n'adapte pas son offre à une demande en pleine croissance.

L'enseignement public de l'arabe en 2017-2018 concerne 11 174 élèves dans l'Hexagone et 2 900 environ dans les DOM-TOM. Il s'y ajoute un millier d'élèves de l'enseignement à distance qui pallie les carences de la carte scolaire

The case is clear, and we are speaking of millions of young people who speak or understand Arabic as their first language.

When we get down to the French level, and France is under the European average as for competence in foreign languages, we get to a direct implementation of the notional-functional pedagogy that was advocated by M.A.K. Halliday (1925-2018) for all sorts of migrating people finding themselves in very urgent situations in which they had to master the local languages as fast as possible to simply be able to survive. Denis Girard who imposed this method for the teaching of English in France just forgot some simple elements. Let me list some of these forgotten or overlooked elements.

1- **Students in a classroom are confronted with no urgency at all**, and all the more so when you go down the grades of any grade school or even kindergarten.

2- **The only urgency they may encounter is not within the school situation but within their family situation**, their community situation where they may be confronted with more than one language, but quite often for migrant people within Europe or from outside Europe very rarely the local language itself.

3- **Even at school the migrant population may encounter some urgency to use their first language or languages** to speak with other students or pupils who are from the same migrating culture and language. Note that up to 1971 in Valenciennes, students were punished if they used, in class or in the playground, the local "patois" which was, in fact, the Rouchi dialect of Picard. And punished meant then physical punishment not to mention some possible corporal punishments. Imagine that this spirit is still at work in many minds, and what it can produce at school, in everyday life, in shops and supermarkets, not to mention municipal, regional, or national social services, including post offices or family grant services, not to mention all social security health services. That means some urgency for adults and the parents use their own children as translators when necessary, and this is some kind of urgency for the children if they want to help their parents? But that does not necessarily produce a thankful behavior since it is obviously frustrating linguistic segregation.

4- **The French school system is massively understood as having to be French-homogenizing using the French language, French culture, French history, French geography, etc.** to achieve this objective. Cohabitation and coexistence are hardly targeted, not to speak of exchanges and mutual enrichment. Imagine a teacher in middle school asking the students who may object (meaning either Muslim or Arab, since such references are banned, meaning not to be mentioned, or referred to, and certainly not recorded anywhere) to step out of the classroom in the corridor under no surveillance because he, the teacher, intends to show a caricature of the Prophet Mahomet within a class dedicated to the freedom of expression. There

des langues, et près de 700 élèves de classes préparatoires aux grandes écoles, majoritairement titulaires d'un baccalauréat en pays arabe.
Ces chiffres ne correspondent pas aux besoins scolaires du pays. Dans l'enseignement supérieur 5 000 à 6 000 étudiants sont inscrits à des diplômes d'arabe, alors que le nombre d'élèves qui présentent l'arabe au baccalauréat est nettement inférieur.
Le nombre d'enseignants d'arabe dans les collèges et lycées est tombé de 300 il y a une dizaine d'années, à 200 environ aujourd'hui. Il y avait en 2018, trois postes à l'agrégation et quatre au Capes. Il faudrait dans un tout premier temps doubler ces chiffres.
Joseph Dichy, « L'enseignement de l'arabe est issu d'une tradition séculaire et prestigieuse », *Le Parisien*, 16 septembre 2018, https://www.leparisien.fr/societe/l-enseignement-de-l-arabe-est-issu-d-une-tradition-seculaire-et-prestigieuse-16-09-2018-7890279.php#:~:text=Le%20nombre%20d'enseignants%20d,agr%C3%A9gation%20et%20quatre%20au%20Capes.

are many words for that exclusion ranging from creating distress, to abandoning someone in a distressed situation, and many others, not to mention discrimination.

5- **The French school system may say they are employment and vocational minded but** the secondary schools that do prepare for employment in industrial and commercial fields only start at sophomore high school level and they are systematically downgraded for promotion among teachers who most of them only target the modern or classical highschools.

6- This last point reveals that **secondary education teachers consider their careers have to follow the pyramidal hierarchical academic ladder from middle schools to top classical and modern high schools** (characterized by the presence there of the famous prep-classes that drill the top students to go through selective tests and exams to enter all sorts of higher education schools (commercial, engineering, political, and administrative schools). The fact that President Macron closed the most (in-)famous of them in the political arena, ENA (École Nationale d'Administration), just shifts this political selection of future top politicians back to universities where double-major streams in history and political science, or any other first major associated to the second political science major, will prosper, flourish and thrive, and their standard practice is based on selecting the students who had the top results in Baccalauréat, or who had gone through one or two years in some prep-classes for commercial, scientific, or engineering higher education schools. I taught in such a first-year double-major stream in Sorbonne. I tested the students on the first class with the same test as all other first-year higher education classes. The concerned students' scores were 20-25% higher than average first-year single-major students' scores.

We can now consider some of Denis Girard's ideas. I will concentrate on his last testament-like book, *Enseigner les langues: méthodes et pratiques*, Bordas, Paris, 1995, six years after his retirement from the General Inspection of the French National Education and three years after his stepping down from most other responsibilities in 1992. The book is interesting but completely marginal about the situation in 2021 in France, though the pedagogy he managed to impose in French for English teaching that survived him for many years and is still active for many teachers of English, is directly responsible for the catastrophe France is experiencing in the teaching of foreign languages, and first of all English. Strangely enough, he rejects most of what he had believed in, at least for some time now and then in his professional life. He rejects linguistics, applied linguistics, and even psycholinguistics and applied psycholinguistics as irrelevant for what he calls the didactics of foreign languages. He rejects generative semantics and Antoine Culioli's (1924-2018) formal enunciation theory. He supported, though he is not mentioned in the bibliography, Henri Adamczewski (1929-2005) and his pragmatic enunciation approach. What's left then in this cemetery of old forsworn good intentions is three things.

1- **the reference to André Martinet** (1908-1999) to whom he attributes the idea that "The essential function of this instrument that a language is, is that of communication."[4] Immediately associated to Roman Jakobson, and the rather simplistic approach of a communicational situation is as follows in Girard's terms

[4] "La fonction essentielle de cet instrument qu'est une langue est celle de communication." (Éléments de linguistique générale, 1960)

In French

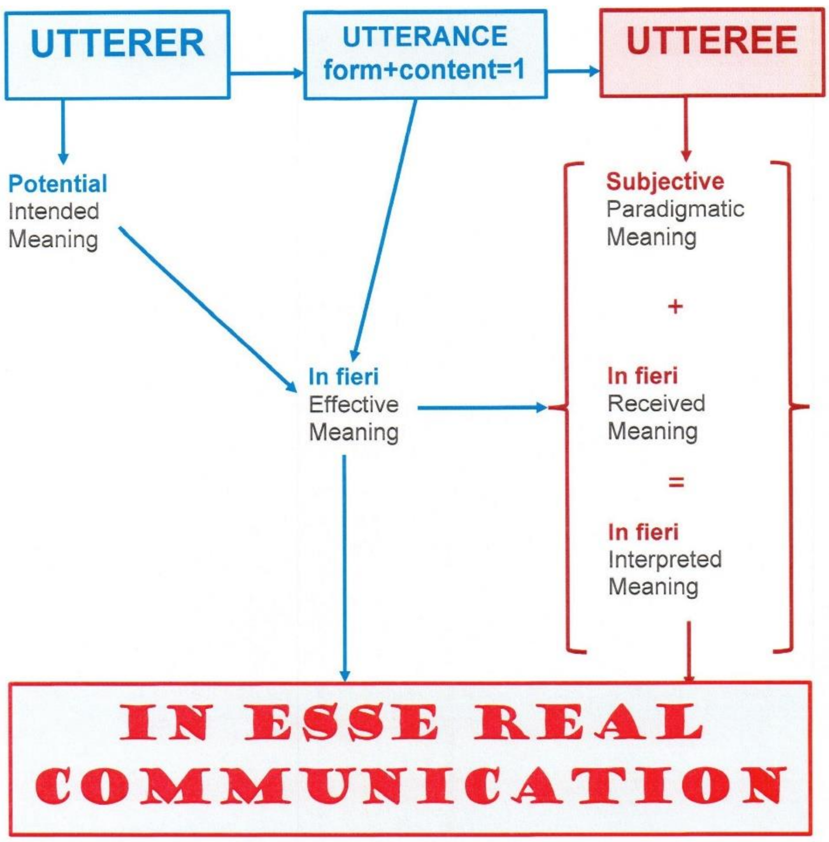
ÉMETTEUR	→	INFORMATION	→	RÉCEPTEUR
ENCODAGE	→	CODE	→	DÉCODAGE

(Denis Girard, op cit, page 43)

In English

TRANSMITTER	→	INFORMATION	→	RECEIVER
ENCODING	→	CODE	→	DECODING

Note how the French concept of "émetteur" that states the concerned person is the source of the message is translated in English as "transmitter" which implies this person is only an intermediary for but not the source of the message that comes from another level. That other level is not really envisaged by Denis Girard. But we should go a lot farther and enter applied psycholinguistics or applied psychomechanics that both center the process on the action itself that is an utterance, both the action of uttering and the "message" carried by this uttering.



2- That's where we find the second essential idea. **Denis Girard is known as the person who adopted the notional-functional approach of the European Commission on foreign language teaching inspired by Michael Halliday**, and he was severely criticized for this. here he tries to slightly widen his approach. The main criticism is that the standard class of English is in no way an environment that sets the students in a survival urgency. Denis Girard uses a strange comparison: make the students communicate just the way an old popular saying suggests: "comme on devenait forgeron en forgeant" (the way one became a blacksmith by forging). No student is in such a dire situation in which an apprentice blacksmith has to forge (a complex sequence of actions) to learn the trade, and he has to learn the trade to earn (English is a strange poetic language with this auditory link between "learn" and "earn") a living in a society that was not characterized by the existence of a large middle class and a lot of gentrification. To work in those days was to survive by earning a living to pay for one's food and one's family's food. The ellipse of the comparison implies that any student who does not get a grade over 80% will have no food till he or she, they anyway, gets or get to this level. So, learning how to communicate cannot be reduced to communicating. (apprendre "à communiquer en communiquant"). Communication is not natural. It is the result of the necessity for a newborn to learn how to attract the attention of their environment to bring a nurturer to them in order to nurture or take care of the nurturee's needs. And we come to that essential triad that Girard states in this final testament of his. Borrowed in this first mention from J. Trim & al (*Systèmes d'apprentissage des langues vivantes par les adultes*, *Systems for adult learning of modern languages*, 1973) and others, on the background of what he calls "the experts of the European Council," the triad is as follows:

"– Communication **NEEDS**
– Communication **FUNCTIONS**
– General and specific **NOTIONS** of semantico-grammatical categories."[5]

And you should note the fact that the reference to J. Trim & al concerns the teaching of foreign languages to adults, hence either to workers of any level in further education for adults precisely, or to migrant adults (and eventually children). In both cases, the urgency of their needs is obvious: to survive, to get a new job, to get a promotion, etc. None of these can be found in a plain primary or secondary classroom, though we could consider the case of vocational secondary education or technical secondary education (all sorts of engineering). The book mentions the first case only once with no in-depth exploration. He considers these to have long-term motivations with no further in-depth exploration and he limits himself to short-term motivation which is found in class work.

But in the book apart from a couple of mentions of this triad without real comprehensive exploration, he always comes back to the artificial situation of the classroom, and he knows about it being artificial but overlooks the handicap.

"In the artificial situation of the foreign language classroom, the "community" speaking that language is more often limited to the teacher alone, possibly assisted by an assistant... Natural communicative situations in the classroom are limited in number... For the most part, [a] student is placed in simulated communicative situations based on common situations in the outside world."[6]

But in fact, and de facto because of his locking himself up onto the classroom and the school including the library, he remains within the artificiality of his starting block:

"Foreign language practice can only be individualized if the emphasis is placed, from the beginning, on a form of 'real communication,' as opposed to 'pseudo-communication,' following the distinction made by Wilga Rivers."[7]

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[5] "BESOINS de communication – FONCTIONS de communication – NOTIONS générales et spécifiques de catégories sémantico-grammaticales."

[6] Denis Girard, op cit, p. 48-49, "Dans la situation artificielle de la classe de langue étrangère, "la communauté" parlant cette langue est plus souvent limitée au seul professeur, éventuellement secondé par un assistant…Les situations naturelles de communication dans la classe sont en nombre limité… Pour l'essentiel, [un] élève se trouve placé dans des situations de communication simulées à partir de situations courantes du monde extérieur."

[7] "La pratique de la langue étrangère ne peut être individualisée que si l'accent est mis, dès le début, sur une forme de 'vraie communication", opposée à la "pseudo-communication", suivant la distinction faite par Wilga Rivers." (*Teaching Foreign Language Skills*, 1968)

To speak of real communication in a classroom is illusionary. The communication is always fake, pseudo, and prompted by the sole teacher. It is rare – extremely rare, and not envisaged by Denis Girard – that a student may ask a pertinent though also impertinent, meaning provocative, question.

Then Denis Girard ends up aligning series of elements of many natures. "Learn how to communicate with a written: text: 1- careful consideration of the title; 2- rapid reading; 3- more attentive and precise reading. [this last one specified in three bullets]"[8] "Triple objective: 1- communicational; 2- linguistic reflection; 3- cultural."[9] Group work is specified as follows: "Documentation plays a capital role in independent work since this one is conceived as the creation of an original document starting from the documentation which will have to be chosen, classified, analyzed. ([Note the three actions] Communication to the class or report of group results: 1- A debate in the form of questions developed by the class... 2- Posting on a board in the classroom... 3- Mimeographing the results of the research... 4- Recording an audiotape... 5- Making an audio-visual montage. [...] Independent work in modern languages should be reserved for good high-school classes."[10]

Of course, today we are in another world with the internet, smartphones (recording videos, taking pictures, recording soundtracks, etc.), phenomenal tools to process any document. But I gave the suggestions about reporting results of group work to show the tremendous hiatus with his conclusion which is selective and rejects foreign language students from primary school to at least sophomore high school classes (from 6 to 16) and think of the modern world that was already coming in 1995 and has nowadays exploded because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He protests against those who say that learning processing is the same for everyone, and he is right in his protest. The point is that he suggests selective procedures dealing with what we have just said about independent group work, and with what he says on bilingual classes with a very strong emphasis on the proper selection of the minority students who will be privileged to have bilingual education. My point is that the best pedagogical action has to be for everyone and not only for the best or most advanced students.

The next stop is the five As: First, Anticipation; second, Apprehension of the text; third, Refinement; fourth Appreciation; fifth, Acceleration. (page 94) The words are transparent except for the third one which is "affinement" in French. And at once on the next page, he reduces them to four by bringing together the second and the third. The text by Laurie Lee that illustrates this quintuple approach is hardly exploited and only on the tenses dealing with the past and the future, and yet for the future, only the verbs used in another tense than the future itself and thus the present tense used to project the subject of the verb into the future. In fact, the three real futures of the text are not even mentioned: "**I shall probably stay** here for the rest of my life… **I still cannot think** for myself as a Londoner, **nor ever will**, **nor ever want to**… The boys I went to school with…, and **they would probably <u>have to</u> give** a very long look before **they recognized** me **if I turned there again**…" (Denis Girard, op cit, p. 95-96, NB: my highlighting of all verbal modalizations and in red the future forms in the present of the speaker and in the

[8] "Apprendre à communiquer avec un texte écrit… 1- attention accordée au titre… 2- lecture rapide… 3- lecture plus attentive et plus précise…" (Denis Girard, op cit, p.52-53)
[9] "Triple objectif : 1- communicationnel… 2- réflexion sur la langue… 3- culturel…" (Denis Girard, op cit, page56)
[10] "La documentation joue un rôle capital dans le travail indépendant puisque celui-ci est conçue comme création d'un document original à partir d'une documentation qu'il aura fallu choisir, classer, analyser. [remarquez les trois actions] Communication à la classe ou rapport des résultats du travail en groupe. 1- un débat sous forme de questions mises au point par la classe… 2- affichage sur un panneau dans la classe… 3- ronéotyper le résultat des recherches… 4- Enregistrer une bande magnétique… 5- Effectuer un montage audio-visuel. […] Le travail indépendant en langues vivantes soir être réservé aux bonnes classes de 2ème cycle." (Denis Girard, op cit, p. 79-81)

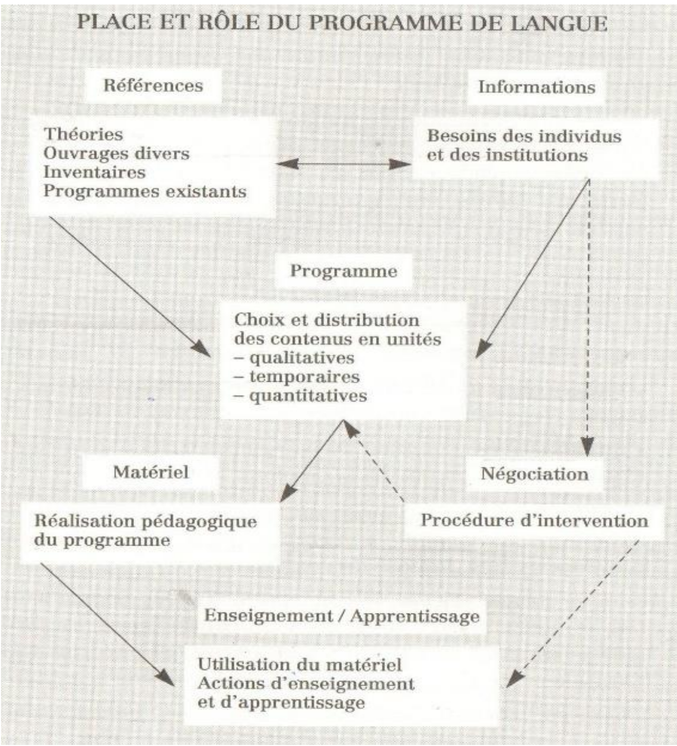
modal past of a hypothesis). In fact, the text would be a lot more pregnant to study the very rich and varied modalization of actions from real to virtual, with all sorts of modals or modalizing verbal constructions. The opposition between the use of “shall” and “will,” both in first person singular would require some real explanation to come up with a reason, hence a difference in meaning. A notional-functional approach is not enough. The notion is “future,” but the two forms are used in a text that has only one function “declarative personal.” Yet the two forms have different meanings that cannot be justified by the function itself. In fact, the use of either form creates two “effets de sens” that are different. Why can this happen? What is so special about “shall” and “will”? We have to get deeper and consider psycholinguistic or psychomechanic facts and dynamics.

But he goes back to the linguistic needs of the students, though it is rather the needs of the lesson by the teacher. Basing himself on the European Council’s reflection he comes to six imperatives:

"1- identification of needs.
2- definition of notional-functional objectives.
3- analysis of linguistic contents.
4- elaboration of a methodology and pedagogical materials.
5- pedagogical implementation in the classroom, through various activities favoring interaction.
6- evaluation integrated into the approach and allowing for its inflection."[11]

It is obvious the students or learners have no say in what is happening in the class. The teacher is a puppet master who artificially makes the student-puppets converse in English, but it is the same as in a puppet theater: the puppet master masters the multiple voices of the puppets. In such a prefabricated and predigested pedagogy, only the very good students will be able to remain autonomous and independent. All others will follow if they can, the flow of the master’s voice of this puppet show. That always reminds me of the remark of an inspector one day in the early 1990s or so who arrived late of course in my class, and during the question-answer discussion of the document studied on that day, one of the Maghreban students, Moussa with whom I had a complete empathetic relationship, made a mistake in his answer. I only clicked my fingers and Moussa corrected his mistake. The inspector asked me: “How do you do that?” I answer: “It is magic, isn’t it?” The secret occurred a few months before when Moussa came to my class one morning (a class with one good third of Maghreban students) unshaved. I was wearing at the time a full and wild beard like some kind of fervent Islamic faithful. I told him in French: “Ts. Ts. Moussa, you don’t shave to come to my class? Next time I will bring my “mousse à raser” (shaving foam).” The class laughed, Moussa laughed, and he was my most attentive student ever all year long. Empathy is a lot more than what Denis Girard says later on about psychology (see further on). That leads Denis Girard to his chart page 112 on the place and the role of the program of foreign language teaching elaborated by the General Inspection, hence by Denis Girard himself and his colleagues.

[11] “1- identification des besoins ; 2- définition d’objectifs notionnels-fonctionnels ;3- analyse des contenus linguistiques ; 4- élaboration d’une méthodologie et de matériaux pédagogiques ; 5- mise-en-œuvre pédagogique en classe, à travers diverses activités privilégiant l’interaction ; 6- évaluation intégrée à la démarche et permettant de l’infléchir.” Denis Girard, op cit, page 105



And the program he is alluding to is the national program for all classes in France and part of what is called "official instructions" that come from the top of the hierarchy, hence from Denis Girard for quite some time last century, and you can be fired from your teaching job if you dare not abide by them. Where is the student in all that, where are, in these official instructions, the multifarious students who are all different in their needs and abilities, motivations, and achievements as Denis Girard says a couple of times? And sure enough, he comes to the question of the motivation of these students and various (four) factors in the students' motivations:

"1- the socio-linguistic context…

2- the natural aptitude to learn languages…

3- the teaching method…

4- the teacher. And for me, this last one is the most important."[12]

I will skip the two approaches of what a good English teacher is. Since in the second you just ask the 1,000 students to classify in importance the twenty descriptions you actually provide the students with, the question is, at least leading, and what's more we are never given the said twenty descriptions and we are only given the first ten. That is good old scholastic work. Autonomy is not the real guide of this book, as for the reader. How could the reader be autonomous if he is not given the information, the data? And what's more Denis Girard synthesizes these ten best descriptions in three types of qualities. And the third one is "he must above all be 'un bon psychologue'" In other words, he must demonstrate a good level of psychology. But there is absolutely no definition of this quality anywhere in the book, and I must say the French phrase means absolutely nothing because it may mean hundreds of things for the teacher, from demonstrating he/she is a good psychologist to he/she is sympathetic to the students, or even just attentive to the pedagogical difficulties of the students.

[12] 1- le contexte sociolinguistique… 2- l'aptitude naturelle à l'apprentissage des langues… la méthode d'enseignement… l'enseignant. C'est pour moi le plus important. » (Denis Girard, op cit, page 114)

We then come to an important point coming from Europe, what he calls the "five methodological themes":
"1- The use of mass media and new technologies (or communication technologies).
2- Bilingual education.
3- Pedagogy of exchanges.
4- Learning how to learn foreign languages.
5- Evaluation of communicational competence."[13]

The first point today has to take into account all distant teaching and learning means revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The second point is highly selective for Denis Girard and only concerns a minority of students, hence an elite. The third point is interesting but the possibilities in middle schools and even high schools are very limited and what's more expensive for both the community and the families, this last point meaning it is most of the time socially unequal. I organized an exchange between audio-visual-technology students in Roubaix (college-level BTS) and Bradford three times. It took a tremendous amount of time and on the Roubaix side I was obliged to negotiate a special municipal scholarship for all selected students to be able to take part: two students going on a one-month-and-a-half placement at the National Science and Media Museum, at the time *National Museum of Photography, Film, and Television*, twice, and the full BTS class (24 students) and the same number of students from Bradford College once. The fourth point goes against the mythical "natural aptitude to learn languages" that Denis Girard endorses. And the fifth point is just a lure since it is only in a real communicational situation that the communicational competence of someone can be assessed. But I would like to come back to the "bilingual objective."

First of all, teaching French and teaching foreign languages in France, not to mention Latin and ancient Greek, are definitely not the same thing if we follow the simplest socio-linguistic approach. Page 147-148 Denis Girard studies the responses of three teachers as for the impact of their linguistic training on their teaching. The first teacher is a teaching assistant ("adjoint d'enseignement") who has taught French for 15 years. Irrelevant if we assume he is teaching French to a French-speaking class. It may have some value if he is teaching French to a mostly foreign-language-speaking class (immigrants) since he might have to use FLE (Français Langue Étrangère, French as a Foreign Language) techniques. But even so, the motivations of learning French for immigrants have nothing to do with learning a foreign language for a French-speaking student. The second person in Denis Girard's approach is a not-yet certified teacher of French in secondary education ("certifié stagiaire") who is teaching French, but in secondary schools, the main objective is cultural and literary. Nothing to do with teaching a foreign language, even if the class has many immigrants. The third person mentioned is a certified teacher of German ("professeur certifié"). This one is valid for our discussion here, but since Denis Girard does not specify the details of the training in linguistics of the said person, we cannot really evaluate the pertinence of any statement from this teacher. But we have to be very precise on the socio-linguistic situation in French schools, knowing that it is "forbidden" to collect any statistics on the ethnic origins of students, and the first language or languages spoken by the students may give a good hint about such ethnic origins. Officially we do not have any statistics on the first language or languages of secondary school students, and as for that, of primary school students.

[13] "1- Utilisation des mass media et des nouvelles technologies (ou technologies de la communication). 2- Éducation bilingue. 3- Pédagogie des échanges. 4- Apprendre à apprendre des langues étrangères. 5- Évaluation de la compétence de communication." (Denis Girard, op cit, p. 131-132)

Let me be clear. Students can be in the following cases and my listing here is not exhaustive.

1- Student whose first language is French, or at least a dialect of French creolized from Breton, Basque, Picard, various Occitan languages, Alsatian and other Germanic languages in the Northeast, and probably some more in the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Riviera from Italian to Catalan and Savoyard.

2- Students whose first language is not French:

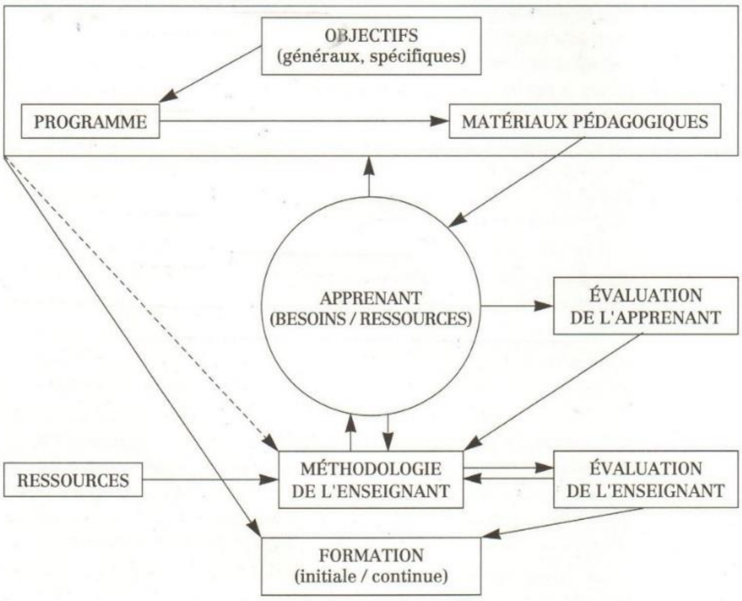
2a- Students whose first language is a European language (special case with agglutinative languages).

2b- Students whose first language is a non-European language.

And each particular language should be taken into account because each language conveys more than simple semantic lexical values (the notions), in fact, a mental frame of thinking, mostly unconscious, and a whole culture mostly conscious. And that's just the point. How can we deal with these cultural elements that are daily present in the reality of each student outside the school? There is only one way to do it and it is to accept that the various cultures find their expression, communication in the classroom, in the class itself, among the students and I am sure that setting groups to study some elements connected to their cultures would be motivating for these students and interesting if not fascinating for the others. And there should be no limits. Denis Girard speaks of "negotiation" in his book. This domain is a field for vast and difficult negotiation for all students to become interested in – and tolerant for – the cultures of their classmates. And of course, religions are part of the cultural field. My last payroll-technician class (third-year college level) had students from the four corners (even maybe five) of the world and mostly not European, four religions, and many other differences. They had to prepare, from one issue of Time Magazine, a fifteen-minute exposé on whatever subject they could find of interest in their particular issues, and they could exchange theirs with those of their classmates. My distribution of one per student plus three or four extras was not an obligation to stay on the one received from me. The class itself was grading the various exposés and their average grading for each student was equal to my own grade which I registered on the spot without telling the class what it was. I got some exposés about the trip of the Pope in Central Africa, some subjects having to do with Muslims in the world, a few on the fate of Black people here and there, mostly in the US and Africa, etc. And there was no real problem in the class.

If we speak of culture, must we discuss the Black Lives Matter movement, or avoid it? Must we speak of the genocidal elimination of Indian culture among Indian children forced to live for years in boarding schools, next to which we are in the process of discovering in Canada and the USA mass graves or "cemeteries" with hundreds of unmarked graves of children? Must we refrain from such subjects in the name of the shock it may represent for some students who are unaware of such realities? Must we do the same as in some states in the USA that are in the process of banning by state-law the subjects of slavery and racism? With my vastly Maghreban classes in industrial engineering studies, I had no problem getting the pros and cons of racism, though an inspector told me one day "There are no arguments in favor of racism." Who is blind? And that's the very point here: Denis Girard never gets down to such questions that are central for our societies and our young people. If you want a discussion in a class, just get them on one of these cultural subjects. Meditate the charts given by Denis Girard where the learner is in the center but completely besieged with all sorts of dominant elements, and institutions, and people, and thus, having very little real initiative or control.[14]

[14] Denis Girard, op cit, page 154.



To conclude, I will go to Comenius (1592-1670), the same way as Denis Girard does, but for me Comenius has little to tell us because he was working for a society in which an extremely small minority could go into real studies and learn foreign languages, the first one being Latin which was still the lingua franca in Europe in the 17th century. This educated elite became politicians, top military officers, top administrators, top clerical personnel, intellectuals who became university professors for this very elite, etc. Comenius brings up a few interesting ideas but provided we uproot them from their sociocultural context to graft them on our own socio-cultural context. He cannot be a master for our 21st century, especially his project of a perfect language crowning his vision of linguistic reality: Here is Denis Girard's summary of his vision:
"1- to ensure the development of all the languages in the world...
2- to limit this development and diffusion to a limited number of "primary languages"...
3- choose a single language that would become the language of the international community.
[4-] to invent a new language which is the most perfect in the world... universality... simplicity... efficiency..."[15]

Strikingly hierarchical and elitist. And page 168, Denis Girard in his summary of the verbal system of this perfect artificial language says:
"- a single final letter will distinguish the present, the past, the future.
- persons do not have to be distinguished by different endings: a single prefixed letter will suffice."[16]

And just 22 lines lower he gives the following example:
"One example will suffice to show in a concrete way the originality and elegance of the universal language imagined by Comenius: the conjugation of the verb 'to be' (BAN) in the three persons of the singular and plural, and in the three tenses only:

[15] "1- assurer le développement de toutes les langues du monde…
2- limiter ce développement et cette diffusion à un nombre réduit de "langues principales"…
3- choisir *une seule langue* qui deviendrait la langue de la communauté internationale.
[4-] inventer une nouvelle langue qui sera la plus parfaite du monde: l'universalité… la simplicité… l'efficacité…" (Denis Girard, op cit, 166-167)
[16] "- une seule lettre finale distinguera le présent, le passé, le futur ; - les personnes n'ont pas à être distinguées par des terminaisons différente : une seule lettre préfixée suffira." (Denis Giard, op cit, page 168)

Present	Past	Future
bana	pabana	fabana
bane	pabane	fabane
bani	pabani	fabani
baná	pabaná	fabaná
bané	pabané	fabané
baní	pabaní	fabaní

It's definitely simpler than I am, you are, he/she is, we are, you are, they are, etc.!"[17]

It is quite obvious that tenses (and time periods) are indicated by the three prefixes Ø – pa – ba, highlighted in red by me, and the person, singular and plural, is indicated by the final letters. This is in total contradiction with what he had said before.[18]

We can then move to this 21st century of ours.

4- How can we create urgency for foreign languages in a school environment?

a- The top best: Virtual Reality.

We are speaking at the global level, and I am just going to outline one possible project. But the necessary software for this project could easily be adapted to other places. I am going to outline a trip of a group of three students to London (and it could be New York, Beijing, or Madrid, with different languages according to the targeted city. The students (groups of three,

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[17] "Un seul exemple suffira pour montrer de façon concrète l'originalité et l'élégance de la langue universelle imaginée par Coménius : la conjugaison du verbe être (BAN) aux trois personnes du singulier et du pluriel, et dans les trois seuls temps :

Present	Past	Future
bana	pabana	fabana
bane	pabane	fabane
bani	pabani	fabani
baná	pabaná	fabaná
bané	pabané	fabané
baní	pabaní	fabaní

C'est tout de même plus simple que : je suis, tu es, il/elle est, nous sommes, vous êtes, ils/elles sont, etc.!"

[18] **GIRARD (Denis, Julien)**, Honorary General Inspector of French National Education.
Born on January 28, 1925, in Charleval (Bouches-du-Rhône).
Son of Fernand Girard, Farmer,
and of Mrs., née Marie-Louise Imbert.
Married on January 21, 1950, to Miss Geneviève Bonsergent (4 children: Christian, Isabelle, Pierre-Marie, Jean-Philippe)
Studies : Lycées Mignet in Aix-en-Provence, Thiers in Marseille, Lycée de Toulouse, Literature and Languages Department of Universities of Toulouse and Paris, Ecole Normale Supérieure in Saint-Cloud.
Diplomas: Agrégé (top qualification degree for teaching) of the University
Career: Agrégé teacher of English at the Secondary schools of Beauvais, Fontainebleau and then at the Elsatian school in Paris (1951-1956), Cultural Attaché to the French Embassy in London (1956-1960), Principal Inspector of English in Morocco (1960-1963), Deputy Director and then Director of the Agency for the Study and Coordination of French Teaching in the World (1963-1967), Regional Pedagogical Inspector of Paris Academy (Administrative managing authority in one French departmental territorial unit,1967-1976), Inspector General of National Education (1976-89), Honorary President of the National Association of Regional Pedagogical Inspectors, Member of the French Association of Applied Linguistics and the Linguistic Society of Paris, President of the Modern Languages Group of the Council of Europe (1985-92), Honorary President of the International Association of Teachers of English (IATEFL) (1989-92).
Works: *Poems* by Jacques Prévert (1961), Cassell's *New French Dictionary* (in coll., 1961), Co-director of the collections *Passport to English* and *It's up to you*, Pédagogie de l'anglais (collective, 1972), *Applied Linguistics and Language Didactics* (1972), *Modern Languages* (1974), *Grammaire raisonnée de l'anglais* (1978), *Dictionnaire de l'anglais d'aujourd'hui* (collective, 1982), *Guide de l'anglais précoce* (in coll., 1992), *Dictionnaire de poche-anglais* (in coll., 1994), *Enseigner les langues: méthodes et Pratiques* (1995).
Awards: Officer of the Legion of Honor, Knight of the National Order of Merit, Commander of the Academic Palms, Volunteer Resistance Combatant Medal

mixed – genders, religions, cultures, ethnic origins, etc. – to make things slightly more complicated, meaning human) concerned must prepare their trip to London whose Virtual Reality software could be based on Google's satellite-3D maps. We assume the software exists. What do the three students have to do before getting into VR London? They have to organize their trip from where they are to London, preferably by Eurostar, at least in the last lap of the voyage. They have to look for some accommodation, a bed and breakfast hotel, and there are many in London. They have to make sure they can navigate public transportation, including bicycles for hire, and can get the proper tickets. They need to understand that VR London works like real London, even if it is with virtual monetary means. The program will have a cost to be negotiated within a global project for the identity, image, and various services to be enabled virtually in this VR London. Then the students have to determine the targets of their visit and its length. The software must have the opportunity to be stopped at one moment, and to be saved with what has been done by the three students so that they can come back later on and get started again where they had stopped in the previous session.

The students have thus determined what they want to visit and do in London. They will only be able to visit places that have a Virtual-Visit program. The students must make sure it is the case with the places they want to visit. They must make sure these Virtual Visits have an AI-guide that/who can answer questions and take the students to some of the things they want to see. The students must make sure their budget is clear so that they can be credited with the virtual money they will need. All that has to be done in English. Even in France, Google Chrome is able to speak English, and a blocked option for pedagogical uses has to be developed if it does not exist yet. The students have to prepare their trip's program in writ with as much information as possible and in English of course. They can include a restaurant or a theater show if some restaurants and theaters could provide a virtual dinner or lunch, or a show. Why not an opera if Covent Garden and the English National Opera have such virtual programs. Same thing with the National Theatre (https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/paradise, still a long way to go) if it has a virtual program of the type. If not, it is high time the project is developed. And you can also think of the Tower of London, Westminster Abbey, the Palace of Westminster, Buckingham Palace, the National Gallery, the Albert Hall, the Tate Britain, the Tate Images, and the Tate Modern, Madame Tussaud's, etc., who should enter such a global program: allow everyone in the world to visit your collections, your shows, and whatever you can offer to a vast international public. Note in this project, the virtual visits will have to be exclusively in English.

The finally rebuilt Palace of Berlin with the TV tower, built by the GDR, in the background (https://www.humboldtforum.org/en/visit/virtual-visit/)

I am not dreaming. Some of these institutions have to have such virtual visits since they want and should compete with Le Louvre in Paris that has a virtual visit available (*Enjoy the Louvre at home*, https://www.louvre.fr/en/online-tours). For theaters it is rather simple to work on a virtual show that was recorded live and, in whose house, a certain number of seats can be reserved to the virtual visitors, for example, no more than three, four, or five. Since it is virtual the show can be played thousands of times simultaneously with three, four, or five real visitors sitting in the front row or in very good seats. Check the brand-new museum in Berlin, the Humboldt Forum and you will have a glimpse at tomorrow's world, sorry at today's post-pandemic world.

Such a project requires very good software with a very large database in the cloud so that the real visitors of this virtual reality setting can download the program they want in real-time with the possibility to stop when necessary and to go back to this very same point to go on with the program. We are speaking of 5G here and we must remember that the Chinese are already experimenting in real situations the next generation they call very conventionally 6G. That's the answer to Girard and the European Union's notional-functional tradition. Here you can have real communicational opportunities in a virtual-real environment. The communicational situation is real in its very virtuality. From people who have tested such products, I heard that the situation is so real that the body may react in a simple way: vertigo, VR-sickness comparable to airsickness, seasickness, carsickness, bus-sickness, etc. That's what we must target. What's more, the teacher can go along, or at least a virtual avatar that could be absolutely realistic and true-to-life, so that the teacher could be in twenty VR visits of London at the same time.

The only problem I can see is the question of the protection of the personal data of the students, or the teacher, the protection of their privacy. But that can be solved even if we are far from being able to guarantee the full security and protection of personal data and privacy. Another problem is the fact the visitors have to behave like normal real people. There is a fascination with such virtual situations for some individuals to forget they are human, and they have to respect some codes of behavior, language, and human decency (all meanings possible for this word). Of course, the students will not be really in this environment. Only their own "real" avatars under their "real" names will be in VR London, but the real students, and the teacher, have to keep their avatars under control. That's a real problem. Just as a foreign-language student who was diagnosed with dyslexia at the age of five or six, who went through a correcting routine to solve the problem in his first language, and has been declared "healed," sees his dyslexia coming back when he starts learning a foreign language, the best-behaved person in real life can see his/her real avatar (himself or herself) behave as if he/she had lost this educated behavior of his or hers. A student of mine who is 28, was diagnosed dyslexic at the age of 8 and duly treated for it and declared healed in French. Today at his advanced age, he demonstrates, in both oral and written expression, signs of survived dys-temporal and dys-local mistakes like mixing up systematically "before" and "after," "behind" and "in front of," etc. We have to keep in mind in Virtual Reality that what has been repressed (or "healed") deep in one's unconscious or subconscious, at times many years ago, may, and I will even say will come out in a VR situation. All the more so with children and teenagers.

That's where Girard's "un bon psychologue" (meaning "being a benevolent and responsive person") is slightly short. It takes good preparation for psychological crisis situations and a tremendous empathetic power to cope with such crisis situations. My experience is physical contact might be the necessary response, but what physical contact? And it is a good solution. In Mende, France, one night in a nightclub with some of my students, I noticed a couple was going through some disturbing circumstances. I went out and the young woman followed me, and I had to lend her a shoulder and a hug for her crying. Her young partner (or boyfriend, though he was not a boy anymore) came out shortly after, and the two of them found the proper terms for reconciliation. Any teacher with some empathy has been through such situations. Teachers have to be prepared for it, even trained for it.

b- Chatbot and Artificial Intelligence.

This pair or couple of computer science inventions, the chatbot and artificial intelligence could transform our teaching practices. This time there is no important investment necessary to set up the action; Each school would have to have a special computer room where the machines are dedicated to hosting a chatbot, hence is a chatroom to which each student, individual or in pairs could get connected and meet a chatbot with an Artificial Intelligence. This chatbot should be able to entertain a conversation with the students, in foreign languages of course, on topics chosen by the students. “Today let’s speak about Queen Elizabeth 1st.”

The chatbot should have at his disposal a vast database on the topic and thus be able to entertain the students, answer their questions, and ask them some questions. The students should have in front of them a tablet or a portable computer that could enable them to search the Internet at the same type, hence a pair would be better than a single student so that they could share the search on one side and the chatbot on the other side. The chatbot should accept being interrupted with a question, some criticism, or even some refusal of an argument or a fact. Such chatbots are used on smartphones by companies providing medical patients with long chronic diseases with daily contact and discussions about their diseases and the chatbots may make decisions about contacting the medical service dealing with the patient, a nurse, a doctor, and even set up an emergency procedure if it (the chatbot) deems it necessary. I am told by a student working in such a company that some strange but foreseeable reactions from the patient can occur. The chatbot is only a chatbot and it is limited to one particular disease concerning one particular patient. Yet the patient, apparently more frequently when young, tries to engage in a personal conversation with the chatbot who is not prepared for it. And we would think it should.

Here we are dealing with teaching and learning English. For teenagers, the game is a game and as such fascinating and captivating, in one word habit-forming if not addictive. Teenagers are able to enter such situations as if they were real. If on the subject requested by the students (a pair of students) the chatbot has a good database behind its robotic face, and this face can be perfectly human since it is nothing but an avatar, and the students should be able to change the look of this avatar if they prefer a man or a woman, why not Elizabeth 1st herself, then the conversation becomes real. The communicational situation is real even if it is between two students and a robot. We must understand that such a chatbot is valid for the whole world, for all students in the world who want to learn English and have a real conversation in English with such a chatbot. The investment is thus extremely profitable, even in the short term because of its possible use by millions of people. It could even be made available to independent private people who would like to have such a learning and teaching conversation.

It could be sold as a pedagogical game like any other game, and we know the game industry is immensely profitable. The real problem, if we consider it as a game, is that it has to have a surrounding environment, like a withdrawing room in Windsor Castle or any other stable room or space, with the possibility to inject from-time-to-time images from the database connected to the subject and what is being said. It could easily include excerpts from Shakespeare’s, or Marlowe’s, or Ben Jonson’s plays actually produced in the reconstructed Globe theater in London. Think of the parallel between Queen Elizabeth 1st and Lady Macbeth, with an obvious rhyming ending, even if according to normal versification rules in English it is a mediocre rhyme since the initial consonant of the rhyming syllable “-beth” is the same in the two names. It should have been “-meth” or “-peth” or any other rotating initial consonant. Including Ø, “fifti-Øeth.”

c- Telephone, Smartphone, and videoconference.

I vastly used this technique in the 1990s for further education in a school or a company. In the first case, the school was providing me with two connected telephones on the inner telephone network (hence at no cost), one for me and one for the student. The two telephones were in two rooms so that it was real. The student could not see the teacher. In a company, the student had received on Wednesday a short technical document and I called him, from my school at his workplace, at his workstation on a set day at a set time. He had fifteen minutes to explain what the document was about and answer my questions. When I started this with a class of twenty further education students inside their company, they hesitated. But after two or three volunteers, they understood the great value of this one-on-one at their workstation. Their colleagues respected them, maybe even admired them because it takes courage to have a fifteen-minute telephone call in English with an invisible entity, the teacher who is both invisible and unheard by the audience of the student's colleagues. At the time the telephone calls were paid by the school as pedagogical expenses. Today we have smartphones, and these smartphones provide us with total freedom as for the length of calls since the subscription is generally a flat rate for such calls and texts. The smartphone can even provide the callers with the picture of the persons concerned if the camera is on with Skype for example. Such calls can be with Microsoft Team or Google Meet or Zoom and it is visual as well as audio. But I favor the blind telephone because of the psychological effect of this blindness. The caller has to completely let him/herself go into the call with no help from any image. This requires concentration and this concentration is good for the English received and produced in such conditions.

I vastly practice this blind telephone or Microsoft Team calls for full one-hour sessions with adult further education. It is very interesting and effective. Note it is possible to record the sessions so that the student can listen to them again and pick the various mistakes he/she made. The teacher could do the same in order to grade the said recording. The live conversation can be graded as for reactivity, the creativity of answers or responses, tone and clarity, etc. Further work on the recordings could concentrate on the sole linguistic qualities or mistakes of the student's performance in English.

d- Balancing act.

That is where things become both tricky and absolutely mesmerizing. Imagine the VR visit to London, and imagine the teacher from his office at the school calling the students who are in the Virtual Reality visit of London and asking them questions about what they had done, what they are doing, how the people around them are, friendly or not, etc. That means the students or rather their real avatars in the VR visit have their cellphones or smartphones in their pockets, available and open to calls. That's adding telephone communication to VR-visit. It multiplies exponentially the depth and involvement of the students' participation in the experiment that becomes an experience.

Then the students can be requested to present a summary of their experience to the whole class, those who have had a similar experience and those who still haven't had such an experience. Imagine the questions. That is a real, in no way virtual, communicational situation. We are here dealing with a completely new way of looking at teaching or learning a foreign language. The teacher is a new being in this situation. The teacher is a guide, is an empathetic character in reality and Virtual Reality, able to lend his shoulder or hand to those who need it, to encourage or reward or pacify those students according to their needs from "being pushed" a little bit, to "being refrained" a little bit, to "finding solace" or "encouragement" or "understanding and ethical guidance."

"Understanding" is the first and foremost quality of the teacher of today and tomorrow: to understand the emotions, the difficulties, the requests, the enthusiasm, the daring desires of the students. That requires a lot of "empathy." But it also requires some "ethical awareness." The teacher may think he is a new-era guru for the students. That would be a mistake. The teacher is a new-era ethical guide who keeps the student within ethical limits that are not supposed to be seen or felt as restrictions, alienation, or even obligations, but as deep cultural human power. I do not use the word "humane" which implies the "humane person" is superior to the people he/she is humane with. We are speaking of humans, equal humans, humans who are supposed to deal with one another on absolutely equal terms. And that implies all elements that could lead to some kind of differentiation (positive) or segregation (negative), such as sex, gender, race, ethnic origin, national origin, religion, etc. This ethical guidance also implies that the students, as well as the teachers, are modest in all the possible meanings of this word in English, as Merriam-Webster defines it:

Modest, adjective
1a: placing a moderate estimate on one's abilities or worth
1b: neither bold nor self-assertive: tending toward diffidence
2: arising from or characteristic of a modest nature
3: observing the proprieties of dress and behavior: DECENT
4a: limited in size, amount, or scope, *a family of modest means*
4b: UNPRETENTIOUS, *a modest home.*

We have to understand that in this perspective all available means are to be used: all the machines I have spoken of, plus all the software I have alluded to. But also, all Artificial intelligence available and the databases they need in order to be what they are supposed to be, encyclopedic resource centers at the tip of the fingers of the students, the teacher, and the AI chatbot. It also requires the use of facial recognition cameras and software to know "who is who," "where is who," "when is who," and what "feelings" or "emotions" this who is going through. Body and facial language are often speaking volumes that cannot be captured in simple words. Such VR experiments and experiences bring up in the students – and the teacher – impulses, feelings, emotions, desires, all of them, negative as well as positive, that have often been buried in the unconscious or subconscious. The BBC series "Waking the Dead" is essentially based on such levels of human personalities and people considered as normal, friendly, and even amorous, who are revealed to host monsters in their deeper layers. The best example is Jack the Ripper who was never identified because in normal life he probably was a person, a man who was normal, banal, respected, etc. Confront such a person to a VR experience and experiment, and the monster will come out.

e- Executive Summary.

All along we have to understand that the learners have to be encouraged to speak of what they like or dislike or whatever, and the teacher must be able to follow and respond to the provocation or the frustration and inhibitions of the students. That's where the class unit is important. Regularly, there should be one teacher-class session where the students report on what they have done, have learned, have missed, have not understood in the freest possible confrontation that has to remain civil of course. We are speaking of each pair or trio confronting their own experiences and lessons learned to all the other pairs or trios who will do the same in due course. Confrontation, discussion, and improvement.

There is a question of age: under 16 or 18, there might be some limitations to respect, or the students have to learn how to deal with these beyond-limits subjects or attitudes with which they may be confronted. If London is inhabited in the VR-version of it, with normal people, all of them being avatars of real people somewhere, these inhabitants might confront the visitors with aggressive or even alluring and inviting attitudes. We often think we have to teach girls how to defend themselves against enterprising or tantalizing individuals generally defined as men. We forget first these enterprising and tantalizing people may be women, and we also forget that boys can be the targets of the same type of people, be they, women or men. Before releasing students in such a VR experience, we do have to make sure they can cope with such situations. And that's where the smartphones in the pockets of each student in the experiment have to remain active to eventually prevent some dire consequences. The role of the teacher then is a lot more complicated. We must keep in mind the students are accountable for what they do in this Virtual Reality universe they are visiting, and the teacher is accountable for the harm that may fall upon the students, even if this harm is only psychological or mental since we are in a Virtual Reality universe.

5- Beyond the pandemic: PRELIMINARY CONCLUSION

The mistake to go back to what IT (whatever "it" is) was before is just a mistake. We are neglecting the psychological, mental, and social consequences of the pandemic and the confinements onto the people. We must understand for example that many hundred thousand children of any age have become orphans when their parents were taken away by the pandemic.

Coronavirus Cases:
192,974,202
Deaths:
4,145,502
Recovered:
175,459,388

With this level of death, we can consider quite a few million children were left behind. How can we turn what is coming after this pandemic into an opportunity? The way some countries have turned some severe episodes of their history into "lessons learned" reconciliation, like the end of the civil or anti-terrorist war in Sri Lanka, like the reconciliation after the freeing of Nelson Mandela and the end of apartheid in South Africa.

In our field here, the teaching and learning of foreign languages, we can do it only if we consider teaching foreign languages is not a Public responsibility only but has to be dealt with as a Private-Public-Partnership bringing together the education system (both public and private), the various industrial partners we will need to conceive and design the Virtual Reality programs, the hardware and software necessary, and many other partners organized in various ways like parents, intellectuals, researchers, politicians, etc. We have also to deal with the project at the global level of the planet, and thus to bring into the project UNESCO, UNICEF, the United Nations Organization, the International Labor Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Trade Organization, the World Intellectual Property Organization, and probably some more like the European Union and other regional political or economic organizations, alliances of many types. I also think it would be absolutely vain if we did not associate to this project, representatives of the various religions, whose role will have to be negotiated. But beyond all these partners we have to also associate all the world's economic companies that can work on the conception, design, and production of all the various machines, hardware, and software needed for such a project, and with the widest possible open attitude, refusing to limit ourselves to the companies from this or that country. We need the concerned companies from absolutely all countries that have such companies within their borders.

Let's have a final thought to the victims of this ^pandemic, hoping the several hundred million vaccinations that have not been performed on as many children will be caught up and will have no nasty consequence like a sudden pandemic of polio or tetanus, or diphtheria.

COVID-19 Cases · Last updated: 30 mins ago, July 22, 2021, circa 12.00

Total Worldwide

Location	Cases	Recovered	Deaths
United States	34.2M 34,200,000 +60,838	-	610K 610,000 +397
India	31.3M 31,300,000 +41,383	30.4M 30,400,000 +38,652	419K 419,000 +507
Brazil	19.5M 19,500,000 +54,517	17.4M 17,400,000 +33,430	546K 546,000 +1,424
Russia	5.96M 5,960,000 +23,164	5.34M 5,340,000 +22,221	148K 148,000 +772
France	5.91M 5,910,000 +21,539	-	112K 112,000 +22
United Kingdom	5.56M 5,560,000 +43,404	-	129K 129,000 +73
Turkey	5.55M 5,550,000	5.4M 5,400,000	50,650 50,650
Argentina	4.8M 4,800,000 +14,632	4.43M 4,430,000 +10,876	103K 103,000 +437
Colombia	4.68M 4,680,000 +11,244	4.44M 4,440,000 +12,684	117K 117,000 +351
Italy	4.3M 4,300,000 +4,254	4.12M 4,120,000 +2,235	128K 128,000 +21

Location	Cases	Recovered	Deaths
Spain	4.22M 4,220,000 +30,587	150K 150,000	81,166 81,166 +18
Germany	3.76M 3,760,000 +1,651	3.64M 3,640,000 +830	91,466 91,466 +43
Iran	3.6M 3,600,000 +27,379	3.19M 3,190,000 +17,112	87,837 87,837 +213
Indonesia	2.98M 2,980,000 +33,772	2.36M 2,360,000 +32,887	77,583 77,583 +1,383
Poland	2.88M 2,880,000 +124	2.65M 2,650,000 +31	75,222 75,222 +3
Mexico	2.69M 2,690,000 +15,198	2.11M 2,110,000 +8,517	237K 237,000 +397
South Africa	2.33M 2,330,000 +16,240	2.1M 2,100,000 +13,699	68,192 68,192 +516
Ukraine	2.32M 2,320,000 +1,195	2.25M 2,250,000 +940	55,245 55,245 +24
Peru	1.98M 1,980,000	1.94M 1,940,000	187K 187,000
Netherlands	1.82M 1,820,000 +6,897	-	17,786 17,786 +3
Czechia	1.67M 1,670,000 +313	1.64M 1,640,000 +332	30,342 30,342 +1

Who could have said in 2019 the world would have changed so fast in just two years?

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PHILOSOPHY OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

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ABSTRACT

The interdisciplinary approach in science is becoming more widespread today. It is gratifying that in the age of applied sciences, in which technology prevails, philosophy as the core of the humanities is restored to its status. Starting from the definition of philosophy that includes notions such as knowledge, values, reason, existence, mind, language, it is not surprising the attitude of modern man in relation to the rational approach of including this fundamental discipline in scientific research in any field. This reconceptualization is absolutely necessary for the progress of humanity starting from the assumption that no field of scientific research can exist without a series of methodological principles. Consequently, we can consider philosophy, the theoretical foundation of any science and more than that, a science applied, per se with resonance in everyday existence. What can be more important for the human being than explaining the meaning of life, the relationship with peers and the psychological motivation of its existence in this world? Thus, philosophy can be the promoter of the active attitude of the individual in any social field. It is important to consider the model of the individual who from a moral point of view is interested, participatory, has a purpose and correctly defines his duties towards himself and society. These coordinates define the pattern of the human being capable of participating in the progress of humanity.

Keywords: interdisciplinarity; philosophy; science; humanity; progress;

1. INTRODUCTION

An analysis of the unprecedented evolution in science and art reveals us at a first view, without a doubt the fact that the interdisciplinary approach was the basis of this progress. It is obvious that a paradigm shift was needed to provide a favorable framework for making connections between border sciences or seemingly unrelated.

This article was born from the personal experience gained during the over 20 years of medical practice and in the field of psychology, as well as the almost 15 years of practice in education. The interdisciplinary approach has been a necessity from the beginning. Even though it was initially intuitively realized, over the years scientific knowledge in several fields has become an imperative in terms of professional development from the perspective of a person with academic training.

The purpose of this article is not to clarify the ontological or epistemological theoretical aspects of interdisciplinarity, but only to bring to the fore a number of essential aspects related to the advantages and why not, and of the risks of the interdisciplinary approach in science and philosophy, without he claimed to have found answers to resolve theoretical disputes at the academic level (Hofmann HG, Schmidt DC, 2011). In essence, it may in fact be the most vivid proof of the need for interdisciplinary knowledge.

2. THE FRAME OF REFERENCE AND THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Beyond the theoretical disputes related to the epistemological aspects of interdisciplinarity, (Danermark B., 2019, Welch J. IV, 2012), scientific policy currently credits interdisciplinary research through the existence of funding programs such as Horizon 2020 that aim to stimulate interdisciplinary research(Boon M., van Baalen, 2019). It is difficult to locate in time the notion of interdisciplinarity. Or maybe it's enough to look at the past. A review from a historical perspective of the philosophical evolution of science reveals that interdisciplinarity is not an attribute of our age, its origins being found in antiquity. A reference to the evolution of humanity could lead to the conclusion that interdisciplinarity has its origin even earlier, springing from a practical, existential necessity of the human being. Thus, since the dawn of humanity, individuals have intuited the existence in a primitive form of what we now call interdisciplinarity, as a possibility to facilitate survival in conditions where in a hostile world, knowledge gained individually was transferred and used together for the human's evolution. In an anthropological context, Antiquity represents a defining period for the manifestation of interdisciplinarity at individual level. The important representatives of this era are: Aristotle, Pythagoras, Democritus and Leucippus, thus mentioning only some of the pillars of ancient philosophy. Foreshadowing the concept of individualinterdisciplinarity and supraspecialisation Aristotle states: "First of all, we believe that the sage must know all things as far as possible, but without knowing them in detail" (Aristotle, Metaphysics, I, after Gomez Pin V., 2020)

Moving on to the modern age, it is imperative to remember Decartes, the Parent of modern philosophy. His contribution to the evolution of the philosophy of science and implicitly of interdisciplinarity is essential. Thus, Decartes can be considered to be the first to try to establish a bridge between science and philosophy by establishing the boundaries of the new science of knowledge. This was possible due to the bidirectional contribution between science and philosophy. It would not be wrong to consider that in this way Decartes contributed to the unification of the theory of knowledge, establishing in a recognized way a bridge between what later was the basis for the birth of interdisciplinarity in the current sense. Moreover, it thus lays the foundation for the transition of interdisciplinarity from the individual to the collective level.

We cannot ignore the fact that in modern times the transition stage to what we call today an interdisciplinary approach was represented through the concept of integrative approach. At this point, it is necessary to mention what Erich Jantsch brings into discussion when referring to the notion of interdisciplinarity in relation to the integrative approach. Thus, interdisciplinarity also means the transfer of problems that can be solved through the problem-solving capacity of interdisciplinarity (Scmidt CJ, 2008), constituting a fruitful way to connect separate disciplines and in essence to achieve exactly what we call interdisciplinarity. (Thore´n H., Persson P., 2013)

Thus we arrive at another concept, namely, that of overspecialization, without which we cannot speak at present about interdisciplinarity. Thus it arrives at much discussed and disputed aspect namely that of the benefits and risks deriving from overspecialization in relation to interdisciplinarity. Studies show that “abandoning specialization in the face of moderate degrees of background interdisciplinarity impairs performance, but scientists who approach the notions of interdisciplinarity outperform those who specialize in all stages of their careers. An argument in favor of interdisciplinarity would be that the collaborative, interdisciplinary attitude favors the dissemination, a superior absorption of knowledge, their integration, as well as the synergistic creation of new knowledge. (Bonaventura M., Latora V., Nicosia V., Panzarasa P., 2017). Interdisciplinarity was used as a working tool in the quantification that was the basis for a classification that divides interdisciplinary researchers into four categories, with an impact in terms of the practice of interdisciplinarity. (Aram D.J., 2004).

3. BRIEF HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF INTERDISCIPLINARITY

Given the current urgent need to redefine human knowledge, it is necessary to use the so-called "metacognitive scaffolding" to be used as working tool for analyzing and reconstructing the way knowledge is constructed and how these disciplines achieve this in a different. In interdisciplinary research, metacognitive scaffolding helps interdisciplinary communication in order to analyze and articulate how the discipline constructs knowledge ". (Boon M., van Baalen, 2019).

Philosophy - "the love of wisdom" - has not been limited since its inception to theoretical notions. Thus, natural philosophy included astronomy, medicine, and physics, and Newton's treatise, "The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy", printed in 1687, was framed as a book in the field of science, as belonging, of physic's domain.

Going to the present times, we discover that the philosophy of science studies hypotheses, foundations, methods, implications of science going to the pragmatic aspect, namely the use of scientific discoveries.

Analyzing the history of the evolution of philosophy and science, we notice that practical needs have determined the transition from theoretical notions or concepts to their practical application. This trend is increasingly visible in today's society whose pragmatism is defining. However, it is not possible to give up the theoretical aspects that give the conceptual framework, in any field. What must be emphasized is that it was absolutely necessary to maintain an evolutionary simultaneity between interdisciplinarity per se and the evolution of science and the arts. A synthesis of this harmonization, with the inherent dysfunctions, is exposed in an article that brings together in a historical-evolutionary way philosophical, scientific and artistic aspects representative for the approached subject. Thus, the problem of the limits of interdisciplinarity is also brought to attention: "Perhaps disciplines do not so much elevate and refine and complete themselves through interdisciplinary encounters. Perhaps instead they only temper and chasten one another, highlighting and making manifest their limits, their difference, their shortcomings, their places among a plurality, and even their relative blindnesses, simply because through interdisciplinary work they reveal themselves as "only" perspectives. (Fosl S.P., 2016)

To exemplify the need to return at this time to the philosophical roots of thinking in a current way, we can use an interdisciplinary approach that combines philosophy, psychology and neuroscience, called neurophilosophy (Smith Churchland P., 2020). It is obvious that the great gain of interdisciplinarity was found exactly in the bidirectional transfer of approaches in scientific research, essentially representing a path to its progress. It is recognized and accepted today that some philosophers of science use current scientific discoveries to enrich philosophical knowledge. This is as logical as possible, otherwise we should accept that philosophy is limited only to classical philosophical currents without knowing a current evolution. Undoubtedly, "the philosophy of science is currently one of the most dynamic sectors of philosophy" (Moulines C.U., 2021).

The literature provides examples of academic disputes on this subject. Thus, "although scientists often contribute to the field, many prominent scientists have felt that the practical effect on their work is limited; a popular quote attributed to physicist Richard Feynman goes, "Philosophy of science is about as useful to scientists as ornithology is to birds." In response, some philosophers (e.g. Craig Callender) have suggested that ornithological knowledge would be of great benefit to birds, were it possible for them to possess it. "(https://web.stanford.edu) The existing reservations regarding the philosophy of science arise from the non-existence of common possibilities of standardization, of some conceptual and approach differences and of the scientifically validated working tools for which the needle is currently represented by the philosophy of science. Let us not forget, however, that progress is born of the contradiction of ideas and accept that interdisciplinarity can provide a bridge even between philosophy and science, apparent fields without any connection. For this reason, an approach that transcends information interpenetration is required. Only in this way can the paradigm shift be justified.

At this point, it is impossible to approach the subject of the philosophy of interdisciplinarity without referring to the notions of modernism and postmodernism. In his work Modernism, Postmodernism, and Interdisciplinarity, Szostak clearly defines the connection between interdisciplinarity and the two philosophical currents, stating: "The key element of interdisciplinarity for the purposes of this paper, on general discussions of postmodernism and modernism." rather than detailed examination of primary work ”] is that it reflects a belief that enhanced understanding of particular problems, issues, and themes is possible by integrating insights from different perspectives. " (Szostak R., 2007).

An aspect of interest of the approached topic is related to the perspectives of contemporary science and its management possibilities. It is suggested in this sense the way to resort to meta-analysis of existing data but also the use of methods validated and used in current research (interviews, experimental techniques, observational method, along with interventionist methods of approach) (Maki U., 2016)

A controversial issue regarding the allocation of funds in interdisciplinary research in the context of scientific policies (see Horizon 2020) is related to the benefits of interdisciplinarity compared to traditional disciplinary research. In the absence of evidence supported by studies, the relationship between interdisciplinarity and research performance remains uncertain, questionable and contested. (Mazzocchi F., 2019) Paradoxically, we are at the point where a method of practical approach already widely used is a subject of study from a conceptual and scientific point of view for which validation methods are sought in order to fit into the category of scientific methods based on evidence. (Okamura K., 2019).

4. CONCLUSIONS

The future will certainly offer us many situations in which solving complex problems will make the difference between survival and extinction, between well-being and regression. Ensuring a sustainable future requires training in multiple fields, a path that in the sense of those previously exposed falls within the pattern of interdisciplinarity. Until the validation specific through studies, we are in the situation where we can continue or abandon the interdisciplinary approach. Beyond the palpable evidence, the results obtained so far, undoubtedly support the need to acquire knowledge in several fields and to make the connection between them. Of course, it is difficult to us provide evidence on the sustainability of an approach free of scientific controversy.

In order to help solve complex problems for a sustainable future, it is not enough for researchers to be well trained in their areas of expertise. They also need to understand the perspectives of experts in other disciplines. It is difficult to find arguments for sustainability that are free of scientific controversy. And yet, a look at the beginnings of knowledge can be an argument to continue.

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AS A PART OF CHILDREN'S QUALITY OF LIFE MODEL

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ABSTRACT

Research on children's quality of life is largely attributed to adults' needs or perceptions of children's quality of life. Child well-being was initially assessed in terms of objective reality: mortality rates, malnutrition, immunisation, disease, with little reliability in measuring their subjective well-being. Subjective quality of life refers to perceptions, aspirations, assessment of one's own living conditions. A holistic model of children's quality of life involves measuring the economic, social, physical, psychological and cognitive dimensions using instruments that reveal the subjective view of their quality of life. The aim of this paper is to examine the multidimensional nature of children's quality of life and to identify the place of physical activity in the quality of life (QoL) model. Physical activity is associated with higher quality of life. Research on children's quality of life through interventions that use physical activity primarily reflects an intervention-based model for disease prevention or mitigation. A QoL model using physical activity interventions may also have some limitations, unless it assumes the measurement of other domains that may influence it. Children's quality of life is a relatively new topic in the literature. Although many models of children's quality of life are proposed, a unified model has not been agreed upon by experts. Measuring it requires the use of instruments for each dimension of which it is composed. Physical activity as a method of intervention on children's quality of life is associated with children's physical as well as psychological well-being.

Keywords: *children's quality of life; physical activity; subjective well-being*;

1. INTRODUCTION

Quality of life (QoL) is a multidimensional concept consisting of general well-being, which encompasses objective factors as well as subjective assessments of physical, material, social and emotional well-being. Children's quality of life was initially studied in objective terms such as mortality rates, immunisation, malnutrition, disease. Research in the field of quality of life has led to the differentiation between children's and adults' quality of life. Children think differently, act differently, their perceptions of life satisfaction are different, and these issues have resulted in the development of indicators, measures and assessments of QoL in line with the child's developmental level.

Although the positive effects of regular physical activity are well known and physical activity is associated with improved psychological well-being, the physical dimension, a component of quality of life, is associated and studied in terms of health or disease prevention.

Research purpose

This paper aims to examine the multidimensionality of children's quality of life, establishing the place of physical activity in the children' quality of life model.

2. TOPIC ADDRESSED

The concept of quality of life

The concept of quality of life emerged in the late 1960s (Noll, 2002) as an alternative to society's goal of increasing material standards at that time. In addition to the material conditions that make up society's well-being, the concept also encompasses the immaterial conditions of life such as health, social relations and environmental quality.

From a European perspective, according to Eurostat (European Union, 2015), quality of life refers to the well-being of people in society, including material conditions, health, housing, work, family life, work-life balance, subjective well-being and the relationship of the individual with the society in which they live.

The World Health Organization defines quality of life as "individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" (The WHOQOL Group, 1995, p. 1403). It is a broad concept that affects physical and mental health, personal beliefs, social relations and the relationship with the environment in a complex way.

Multidimensional aspects of quality of life

Quality of life has been conceptualised as: multidimensional (being influenced by personal and environmental factors and their interactions); having the same components for all people; consisting of subjective and objective components; being enhanced by self-determination, resources, purpose in life and a sense of belongingness (Cummins, 2005).

Objective living conditions include living standards, working conditions or health status, while subjective well-being includes cognitive and affective components. The typology of welfare positions proposes four groups of objective living conditions and subjective well-being. The relationship between good living conditions and positive subjective perception is called well-being. The relationship between good living conditions and negative subjective well-being is perceived as dissonance. Poor living conditions in cohesion with a low level of subjective well-being is seen as deprivation. Poor living conditions in cohesion with high subjective well-being is described as adaptation. (Zapf, 1984, cited by Noll, 2002; Noll, 2013)

Scientific analysis of subjective well-being refers to how people assess their lives – both at the moment and for longer periods, for example, the previous year. Such assessments include people's emotional reactions to events, their moods and judgments about life satisfaction. (Diener et al., 2003)

Cummins (2005) describes five essential characteristics of quality of life. The author highlights as a first characteristic two different forms of QoL: objective, which can be observed and measured within the public domain, and subjective, which exists only in the consciousness of each individual and is verified only through repeated responses provided by the individual. A second characteristic involves measuring the quality of life in any overall determination from objective and subjective perspectives, given that both are valid indicators of quality of life. The third characteristic refers to the basic components of the concept, which should be the same for all people, with variations according to the components valued by the individual due to cultural and socioeconomic differences. A common core with basic elements of quality of life for all people suggests the idea that a QoL measure can be created and validly used for any human group regardless of culture, socioeconomic level, status or disability. The fourth characteristic involves defining QoL in terms of needs; low levels of need are indicators of deprivation. Quality of life should not be seen in terms of opportunity. The fifth characteristic supports the idea that opportunities can also be viewed negatively by a person and that the experience of opportunity for QoL is more likely a causal variable, not the end state or outcome.

The concept of quality of life included the absence of negative aspects of life as well as positive aspects (Cummins 1995, 1998, 2000, cited by Casas, 2011). Quality of life addressed the traditional concepts of positive social change to which psychosocial factors, especially personal well-being, were added.

The QoL study supported the idea that we should only intervene when things were not going well. If there were no problems, people thought they should not intervene to change anything. The concept of prevention (Caplan, 1964 cited by Casas, 2011) has raised a question mark, supporting the reasoning that there is a possibility that things may be going in the wrong direction and that intervention should take place before a problem arises.

This concept has led to a new way of thinking about how the intervention would take place to improve social conditions even if they seem unlikely to deteriorate. The intervention considered good for everyone can also take place before a problematic situation occurs. This new logic of thinking has resulted in the emergence of health promotion programmes, followed by welfare and quality of life promotion programmes. All of this has shifted the focus from facing and overcoming social problems to promoting quality of life.

Addressing quality of life

The approach to health-related quality of life involves aspects such as perceived well-being in the physical, mental and social domains or how well a person functions in life. Functioning refers to an individual's ability to perform some predefined activities, while well-being refers to an individual's subjective perceptions.

Another approach to health-related quality of life includes only those factors that are part of an individual's health domain. Some aspects of quality of life, for example, economic and political circumstances, are not included in this perspective. Defining quality of life through the lens of health focuses on those aspects of quality of life that are affected by health, for instance, those aspects of well-being that are related to or affected by the presence of disease or treatment.

Children's quality of life

Research on children's quality of life is largely attributed to adults' needs or perceptions of children's quality of life. This approach (Casas, 2007) overlooks the basic definition of the concept: people's own perceptions, assessments and aspirations regarding their subjective well-being. Research on children's quality of life is not really about their quality of life but about other people's opinions or perceptions of their lives.

Young people and adults see themselves as members of different social groups or categories. Young people give importance to new and fun experiences, discovering their limits or taking risks, while for adults, safety is much more important, which can lead to the perception that adults want to control young people's lives and limit their freedom.

Child well-being was initially assessed in terms of objective reality: mortality rates, malnutrition, immunisation, disease, etc. In addressing children's quality of life, one should take into account aspects such as: children's living conditions; their perceptions, assessments and aspirations regarding their own lives – including subjective well-being; the perceptions, assessments and aspirations of other relevant social agents regarding children's lives and living conditions, i.e., those of parents, teachers, paediatricians, educators, social professionals.

A review of the 1991-1999 literature on child welfare (Pollard & Lee, 2002) identifies five domains of well-being: physical, psychological, cognitive, social and economic. The social domain includes only social aspects. The psychological domain includes indicators that relate to emotions, mental health or mental illness. The cognitive domain refers to intellectual or school-related aspects. The indicators for each domain are divided into positive and negative clusters. The physical, economic, cognitive and social domains tend to measure positive aspects of well-being, while the psychological domain is oriented towards measuring the current deficit in well-being.

Measures of children's objective well-being range from analysis of school data, medical history, national statistics on delinquency to the use of banned substances. Subjective assessment includes indicators such as self-esteem or depression, which leads to some limitations because well-being manifests itself in several dimensions; therefore, assessing only one dimension of well-being does not reveal the other domains that may influence it. In the review by Pollard and Lee (2002), it has been found that most researchers measure only one domain of children's well-being and that only 2.3% of the articles studied by the two authors measure cognitive, physical, psychological and social well-being.

For each domain, instruments were used to measure psychological well-being (self-esteem, depression, anxiety, general well-being). The social level was assessed by measuring indicators such as family, friends, emotional support, personal resources, communication skills, social role models. The cognitive domain was assessed by academic levels and intelligence tests as well as creativity, behaviour at school, children's own perspective on their satisfaction with the academic environment; the cognitive domain also included assessments made by parents and teachers about their perception of children's school performance. The economic domain was assessed using indicators such as family resources or parental income. The physical domain was assessed by physical health. All these measures included tests to assess physical fitness, participation in physical activity as well as knowledge about physical condition (fitness) and nutrition. Negative variables that pose a health risk, such as smoking or use of banned substances, were also included.

Quality of life indicators for children aged 8-13 and 11-19 by domain are expressed in positive and negative terms (Pollard & Lee, 2002):

- cognitive (negative) academic, concentration, developmental delays, school problems;
- cognitive (positive) school success, cognitive skills, quality of school life, school integration, attitudes in the school environment, self-concept of academic skills;
- economic (negative) social assistance (child support);
- economic (positive) social assistance (child support);
- physical (negative) health-compromising behaviour, physical abuse, physical manifestations of stress, physical manifestations of illness, substance abuse, use of prohibited substances;
- physical (positive) exercise, health-promoting behaviour, nutrition, personal hygiene, physical appearance, physical health, attitude to safety, well-being;
- psychological (negative) adjustment problems, aggression, anger, anxiety, behavioural problems, delinquency, depression, hopelessness, deviant behaviour, distress, nutritional problems, emotional problems, fear, fear for the future, general psychological distress, health-compromising behaviour, hopelessness, hyperactivity, impaired concentration, inattention, irritability, loneliness, maladjustment, negative affect, neuroticism, nervousness, nightmares, panic, psychiatric symptoms, psychological health symptoms, recurrent memories of self-harm, egocentricity, self-harm, malice, stress, suicidal intent, etc.;
- psychological (positive) adaptation, attachment, autonomy, behavioural skills, ability to love, cheerfulness, ability to cope with different situations, emotional support, emotional regulation, expansiveness, success-oriented thinking, fulfilment, general satisfaction, happiness, hope, initiative, satisfaction with life, mental health, positive school attitude, positive attitude

towards self, purpose in life, positive states, self-concept, self-esteem, self-identified strengths, self-confidence, self-worth, socio-emotional regulation, well-being, stress management;

- social (negative) anti-social, negative life events, problems relating to others, poverty, problems in family life;
- social (positive) relationship between family members, participation in cultural events, social values, social behaviour, quality of life, relationship with family, school, other members of society, social acceptance, social skills, social support, socioeconomic status, well-being.

In determining holistic child well-being after a critical review of international models, Marjanen et al. (2017) selected four models that they considered the most cited or referred to when discussing child well-being and its measurement. Following the selection of models, namely The State of the World's Children 2014 (UNICEF, 2014), The Child Development Index (CDI, 2012), Doing Better for Children (OECD, 2009) and The Holistic Early Childhood Development Index (HECDI, 2014), the authors presented key international indicators used to measure child well-being.

Marjanen et al. (2017) believe that the UNICEF child well-being model (2014) is comprehensive and addresses many necessary issues; however, the authors are unsure whether categories such as subjective well-being, risk behaviours, family relationships, civic participation and inequality are sufficiently addressed through this model. The indicators used in the child well-being model (2014) are broad, such as women, adolescents, child protection and rate of progress, but the specific indicators reflected within these categories are somewhat limited and imply a strong deficit, vulnerability and a development-oriented approach. The organisation was criticised for neglecting to include indicators on children's subjective well-being in its data.

The Child Development Index (2012) focuses exclusively on three broad indicators: health, nutrition and education. This model is considered by Marjanen et al. (2017) to be limited in terms of indicators and therefore does not reflect a holistic approach to well-being; besides, it does not sufficiently allow for an understanding of a child's will, in other words, its subjective measurement.

The OECD report (2009) differs from the previous two models in that, while focusing primarily on political economy approaches, it incorporates elements such as reflections on the quality of school life, indicators of bullying in schools, children's school satisfaction levels and political and social spending on families and children. They also included indicators on risk behaviours as a separate category to be measured (e.g., smoking, teenage births) in determining child vulnerability and well-being. As Marjanen et al. (2017) said in the review of the literature, the first two models omitted the inclusion of subjective measures.

The Holistic Early Childhood Development Index (2014), despite its progress in measuring holistic child well-being, is seen as being mainly based on economic and statistical measures, with limited subjective indicators to determine holistic child well-being.

Analysing existing models of children's quality of life in international research, Petelewicz (2015) proposes a model that includes: Living Conditions, Family Relationships, Friendship Relationships, School, Health, Subjective Well-being.

Analysed models (Petelewicz, 2015): Innocenti Research Centre (UNICEF) model, Child Well-Being Index (CWI) (Land et al., 2007), EU-25 Child Well-Being Index (Bradshaw et al., 2007), The State of London's Children (SOLC) reports (Hood, 2007), Comprehensive Quality of Life Scale – School Version (Cummins, 1997), The Multidimensional Life Satisfaction Scale (Cummins, 1997).

Cummins et al. (2005) developed a framework of subjective well-being consisting of nine domains: standard of living, health, life achievement, relationships, safety, community connectedness, security, religion/spirituality, school.

Physical activity and quality of life

The positive effects of regular physical activity are widely recognised and highlighted in numerous scientific studies. Physical inactivity or inactivity is a risk factor for cardiovascular and other chronic conditions, including diabetes, cancer (colon and breast), obesity, high blood pressure, bone and joint diseases (osteoporosis and osteoarthritis). Physical activity is also associated with improved psychological well-being (e.g., by reducing stress, anxiety and depression). A number of studies have shown that exercise can play a therapeutic role in addressing a number of psychological disorders (Mountjoy et al., 2011; Biddle et al., 2019; Kirkcaldy et al., 2002). Evidence of the health benefits of physical activity mainly focuses on physiological, cognitive and affective benefits, which do not exclude social and interpersonal benefits Physical activity is associated with improved quality of life. The clear relationship between them can be expressed in the health benefits of physical activity. The IOC (International Olympic Committee) brought together a group of experts (2007-2011) to discuss the role and benefits of physical activity, sport and physical education for the health of young people. The expert group conducted a critical assessment of the scientific evidence as a basis for policy makers to identify potential solutions for collaboration between the sport sector and existing programmes and to review research gaps in this area. The paper also provides recommendations on physical activities for young people and other stakeholders in the sector (NGOs, research, governments, etc.).

Following a review of the literature, Mountjoy et al. (2011) identified several health consequences of the lack of physical activity, physical education or sport. The review of the papers concluded that a 30-minute intervention carried out three times a week, at a sufficient intensity to develop aerobic capacity, could reduce blood pressure in young people with hypertension. Studies (Bell et al., 2007; Janssen & LeBlanc, 2010) on blood lipid levels demonstrate that interventions including aerobic training, resistance training and circuit training performed for a minimum of 40 minutes per day, five days per week and lasting at least 4 months can lead to improvements in lipid and lipoprotein levels. The literature suggests that low levels of physical activity in young people are associated with higher levels of obesity, hypertension and cardiovascular risk factors. The bone mass of participants in weight-bearing physical activity is increased compared to non-athletes (Vicente-Rodriguez et al., 2003). Racquet sports players who started training at the onset of puberty have significantly stronger bones on their playing arm (Kannus et al., 1995) compared to the other arm, and the benefits persist over time. During puberty, bones are still forming, which allows their strengthening. However, the bone response to exercise depends on the young person’s gender and maturity level, the measured anatomical site, the duration and intensity of the intervention.

Physical activity and sport during growth and development are associated with numerous health benefits, including low levels of overweight and obesity and reduced risk of obesity in adulthood. Although much research suggests young people’s participation in organised or leisure sports, physical activity has declined in recent decades. A balanced diet and exercise are important factors that contribute to maintaining weight and body composition.

Mountjoy et al. (2011) found little evidence from a review of existing research on the beneficial effects of physical activity on reducing depression and anxiety. Depression, anxiety, self-esteem and cognitive performance in children are most commonly studied when talking about mental health and its improvement through physical activity. An updated review (Biddle et al., 2019) of studies on physical activity and mental health in children and adolescents found that their effects on reducing anxiety ranged from moderate (for youth with ADHD) to high (for youth without health or mental health problems). Therefore, the effects of physical activity on reducing depression are small, and the reason could be, as Biddle et al. (2019) say, the lack of adequate measurements or study of its effects on a healthy population. Self-esteem is a complex field, and defining it requires the inclusion of the subdomains of which it is composed, such as physical and social self-perception (Biddle et al., 2019).

In this ambiguous context of defining self-esteem by authors in their research, Biddle et al. (2019) have concluded that the association between physical activity and self-esteem in young people is not causal. Physical activity in various forms has positive effects on the cognitive domain (Biddle et al., 2019), which can relate to cognitive function, academic achievement, brain structure and function. The authors have found sufficient evidence to suggest and support the view that physical activity is beneficial for cognitive function and performance in young people, with references to executive functioning and memory, including the neural networks that support executive functioning (initiation, adaptation, regulation, monitoring and control of information processes and behaviour).

The approach to quality of life in conceptualisation and measurement attempts can be categorised by the first of three distinct approaches: health-related quality of life, social indicators and subjective well-being. The concept of quality of life expressed in terms of health was developed to capture aspects of an individual's subjective experience related to both illness, disability, disorders and the effects of medical treatment. (Wallander & Koot, 2016)

Purely objective measures are used to assess social indicators. An example of an objective measure of children's quality of life is infant mortality, which might be reduced but this would require very high medical expense as well as a higher number of surviving children with severe disabilities (Diener & Suh, 1997).

Other examples of objective indicators: standard of living, immunisation, access to health services, etc. Purely objective measures do not provide adequate information about children's quality of life; defining quality of life involves assessing subjective experience, taking into account children's views on their quality of life.

Subjective quality of life measures allows the assessment of quality of life from children's perspective taking into consideration individual values and preferences. They can provide information about individuals and groups of people, which is important for policy makers and the general public.

Few studies have paid specific attention to the link between quality of life and children's participation in physical activity. Interventions on children's quality of life are measured in terms of health and associated with improved quality of life. A study (Vella et al., 2014) that examined the relationships between one or more specific characteristics of sport participation and quality of life in terms of children's health found that children performing team sports or team sports and individual sports had a more favourable quality of life compared to children participating only in individual sports and children not participating in sports.

Moeijes et al. (2019) showed that sports club membership as well as highly active children compared to children less involved in sports activities had significantly better quality of life, with prominent differences in the physical and social domains but to a lesser extent in the psychological domain. The above authors did not observe any significant differences between highly active and moderately active children in terms of sport. No significant differences were noticed between moderately active and less active children, except for the dimensions of physical well-being and social acceptance, with moderately active children having a better quality of life. Also, few significant differences in health-related quality of life were observed between children playing individual sports, children playing team sports and children playing both individual and team sports. Participation in outdoor sports was significantly associated with improved quality of life compared to participation in indoor sports.

3. CONCLUSION

Children’s quality of life is a relatively new topic in the literature. Although many models of children’s quality of life are proposed, a unified model has not been agreed upon by experts. Measuring it requires the use of instruments for each dimension of which it is composed. Physical activity as a method of intervention on children’s quality of life is associated with children’s physical as well as psychological well-being.

This review provides information about existing evidence of the benefits of physical activity for children’s quality of life. Quality of life is a complex field characterised by multidimensionality; therefore, further investigation is needed to identify quantitative and qualitative evidence in order to consolidate the link between physical activity and its influence on children’s quality of life.

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CONTINUOUS TRAINING OF TEACHERS IN ROMANIAN PRE-UNIVERSITY EDUCATION DURING THE PANDEMIC. SUCCESS FACTORS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the issue of continuous teacher training in pre-university education in the context of online school, as dictated by the current pandemic. Through this study, we wanted to highlight the importance of training and refresher courses for teachers with a view to online teaching during the pandemic, as well as to identify the success factors of continuous training programs in the perception of Romanian teacher. This research is carried out on a sample of 70 teachers in Romanian pre-university education, from rural and urban areas, using the questionnaire as a research tool. As a result of this research, we concluded the following:

- *Teachers do not feel very well prepared for online teaching;*
- *Teachers need IT skills and time management skills when teaching online;*
- *53% of the respondents have attended a training course to acquire online teaching skills, the rest managed to assimilate these skills with the help of other sources;*
- *More than half of the respondents consider the experience of trainers in continuous training courses very important;*
- *A disadvantage highlighted by most respondents is the amount of the participation fee.*

This study has highlighted important issues concerning the preparation of teachers in pre-university education and the criteria they follow when choosing a course or continuous training programme. At the same time, the study led to the identification of some success factors associated with continuous training programmes, in relation to: training of trainers, teaching strategies - methods, means, forms of organisation used.

Keywords: *continuous teacher training; pandemic context; pre-university education in Romania; success factors*;

INTRODUCTION

Teacher training reflects on the teacher's career as well as on the beneficiaries of education. There is no one right field in which a teacher needs to improve, as they need information from a wide range of fields and need training on several levels. Each continuous training programme will empower teachers and give them more inspiration in the design of instructional activities. (https://gov.ro/fisiere/programe_fisiere/stratform.pdf)

The profile of the competent teacher must include research and innovation skills required by educational reform and demanded by today's society. In this respect, we include the following skills: appropriate use of methods and techniques for researching educational phenomena, identifying the new in experimental situations, developing research objectives, ways to test a hypothesis, selecting and using working tools, team work, identifying solutions, using research results, etc. (Şerbănescu, Bocoş, Joja, 2020, p.30).

In other words, a teacher is open-minded, reflective, resilient, enthusiastic, showing perseverance, courage, originality, respect for others, open to new things, observant, critical, a team player and well-balanced throughout the teaching process.

In the modern conception of continuous training, the teacher is seen as a member of a defined organisational structure, such as a school, and a member of a community, and plays an important role in both environments. The teacher is expected to be reflective, open, empathetic, pragmatic and creative both within the training system and in their daily work. (Forest Divonne, 2019, p.27)

With the evolution of society and technology, changes are also occurring in the educational sciences, especially in the instructional process carried out by teachers. All these changes and problems that teachers encounter especially in the classroom and in the school organisational environment in general, are being recognised and lead to a 'problem-solving' approach. (Reghintovschi, 2021, p.31)

Self-improvement is the teachers' concern for their own development, based on their motivation, aspiration and subjective condition.

The whole change and evolution of the school is closely linked to the continuous training of teachers. The level of teachers' competence and the degree of their involvement in the teaching and learning process are significant factors that are certainly leading to educational reform. (Iucu, 2004, p.15)

1. MODELS OF CONTINUOUS TRAINING FOR THE TEACHING CAREER

In order to improve European education, there has been much controversy about the advantages and disadvantages of continuous teacher training. There have been many changes in European education over the last three decades. These changes are in the structure, duration and content of the training programme to meet the needs of society and the individual.

In all European countries, the aim is to provide teachers with both in-depth specialist knowledge and new professional skills. The whole educational process must be analysed in a relevant way so as to meet the different educational needs of pupils. (Călin, Pistritu, 2015, p.11)

Twenty years ago, PISA surveyed teachers to track their participation in continuous training programmes, resulting in an average of 40% of teachers participating. (http://publications.europa.eu/resource/cellar/d7834ad0-ddac-11e9-9c4e-01aa75ed71a1.0011.01/DOC_1)

In 2006, the ETUCE also showed in a survey that about half of the participants in continuous training programmes considered the conditions for continuous professional development unsatisfactory. This is mostly due to the lack of remuneration employees get from the organisation. In half of the countries surveyed merit awards were given to teachers. (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/ro/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017DC0248)

This is a sensitive topic in 2021, as participation in teacher training courses and programmes is not adequately remunerated.

The ETUCE survey also tracked teachers' satisfaction with in-service training courses, with teachers dissatisfied with the quality, quantity and subjects offered. (Şerbănescu, Bocoş, Joja, 2020, p.12). In a complex society, which is in a state of continuous development based very much on technological progress, and which is concerned with the professionalisation of all fields of action, the teacher is seen as an essential element in the development of all the above-mentioned elements. This is why education systems have put teacher training first. For a long time now, teachers have not been seen simply as transmitters of information and knowledge, but as the people who encourage pupils to learn through discovery, to develop personally and to be creative and innovative. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/301823079_Formarea_profesionala_a_cadrelor_didactice_-_repere_pentru_managementul_carierei)

Throughout their professional career, teachers must improve themselves, acquire interdisciplinary and professional skills in order to adapt to the new demands of today's society. Generations of pupils change from year to year, the determining factor being today's changing society and the environment in which pupils live. Teachers must therefore keep up with their pupils, update their information and skills in order to achieve educational performance.(https://concursurilecomper.ro/rip/2014/februarie2014/17-PanaitAlina Politici_educationale.pdf)

Teaching staff in Romania can improve their skills through individual study, participation in various actions at the level of the educational institution such as conferences and methodological clubs, committees, enrolment in symposia, conferences, attending training courses outside the educational institution, obtaining teaching degrees, completing training modules offered by the Teacher Training Departments and pursuing university and post-graduate studies. (https://legeaz.net/legea-educatiei-nationale-1-2011/art-245)

2. RESEARCH METHIODOLOGY

The research was based primarily on the questionnaire survey method, applied to a sample of 70 pre-university teachers.

The questionnaire, administered with the help of Google Forms, was structured on 10 items, one of which was open-ended and the other 9 were closed, predetermined answers. The research instrument was designed in such a way as to help us identify the most frequent but also impactful success factors of continuous training programmes for teachers in Romanian pre-university education during the pandemic period.

The hypothesis underlying this study was the following: If the training program is organized by a well-known, experienced training provider, with trainers who have psycho-pedagogical training using attractive, participatory, modern teaching strategies, with an affordable participation fee, interesting, varied and necessary contents for teachers facing problematic situations in the fields of educational marketing, postmodern strategies, inclusive education, project management, then the success of the proposed courses is high and with a significant impact on the professional development of the participating teachers.

The research sample is made up of 70 respondents, teachers in Romanian pre-university education who have undergone online continuous training programs during the pandemic, the majority of whom are female (93%), most of them with more than 20 years of teaching experience, from urban and rural areas, from preschool, primary, secondary, high school and vocational education, with various specializations.

In order to identify the reasons for the choice of the continuous training programmes and to rank them, the respondents ranked as the most important ones in item 1: the accumulation of professional credits and the gaining of professional experience, even the sharing of good practices; the least important were deemed to be the acquisition of psycho-pedagogical and methodological knowledge and the training of professional skills.

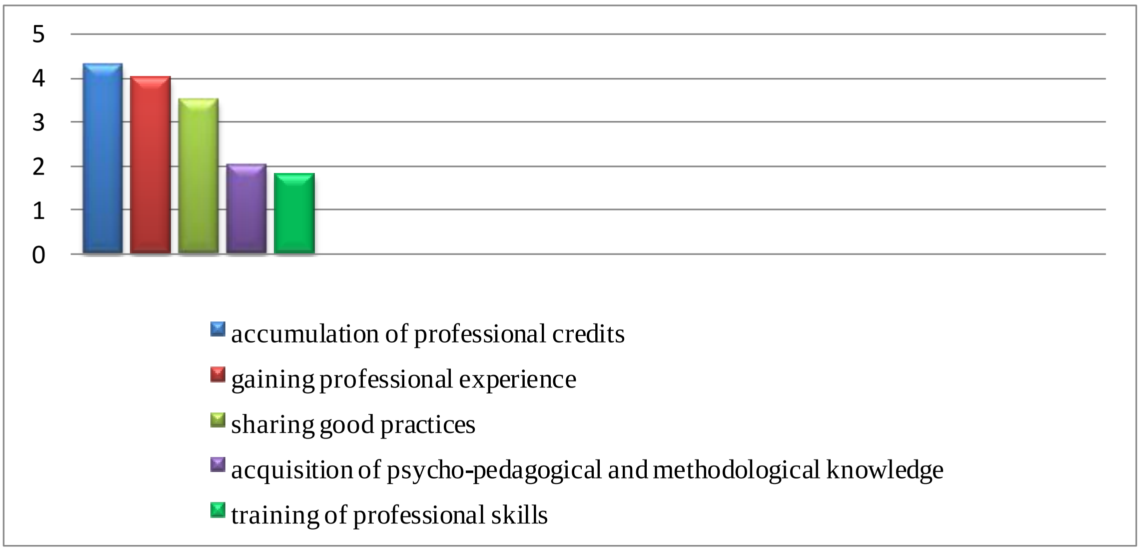

Figure no. 1 *Teachers' perceptions of the reasons for choosing a continuous training programme*

In the next item respondents were asked to refer to their last training programme and identify what they felt it had contributed to their professional development. Among the most frequent answers we list:

- *Training professional skills, developing self-esteem and rediscovering more interactive methods; I learned marketing techniques, it was one of the most interesting and "different" courses I have done!*
- *The ideas and information provided by the trainers helped me a lot, but I was also inspired by the opinions of my classmates, understanding the constructivist approach in Romanian education; I understood Educational Marketing better.*
- *I understood the mistakes I was making in conducting a SWOT analysis, I learned new things about educational platforms, I exchanged best practices with my classmates and listened very carefully to the trainers who conducted interesting interactive activities, I learned how important it is to promote the school in the local, county, national community, improving the constructivist style in my professional development.*
- *I understood that it is important to become a flexible teacher, to relate more to the affective dimension of the relationship with students, I learned to design the lesson focusing on the behavioural involvement of students, on learning through discovery, on valuing the creativity and originality of students, to assess not only knowledge but also other values: behaviours, competencies formed, skills, strategies used.*
- *We received concrete examples of best practice, an adaptation to the new, a restructuring of knowledge, a new approach to the lesson.*
- *The Educational Marketing training program developed my skills to promote the school I come from, implicitly to promote my own image, in conditions of increasing competition on the educational market, I learned to create advertising materials.*

The teachers' perception about the frequency of participating in training courses is that this experience should be annual (73%) and less than 5% of the respondents said that it should be once every 5 years, as the current legislation in Romanian education provides, which indicates a very high level of responsibility, desire to update information, techniques, tools and working strategies, involvement, professional development among teachers in Romanian pre-university education.

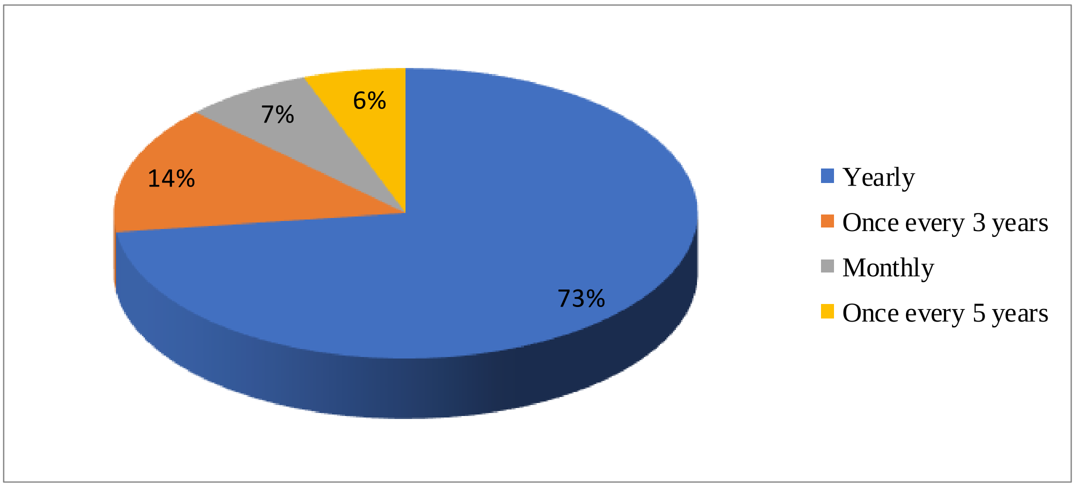

Figure no. 2 *Teachers' perception about the frequency of participating in training courses*

Respondents also consider courses, workshops and professional coaching activities to be the most effective ways of organising training programmes because they involve the exchange of best practices, the sharing of personal experiences with advantages and disadvantages, the active participation of learners while reducing the trainer's involvement, and focus on practical aspects and less on theoretical aspects, which teachers rarely encounter in their educational practice.

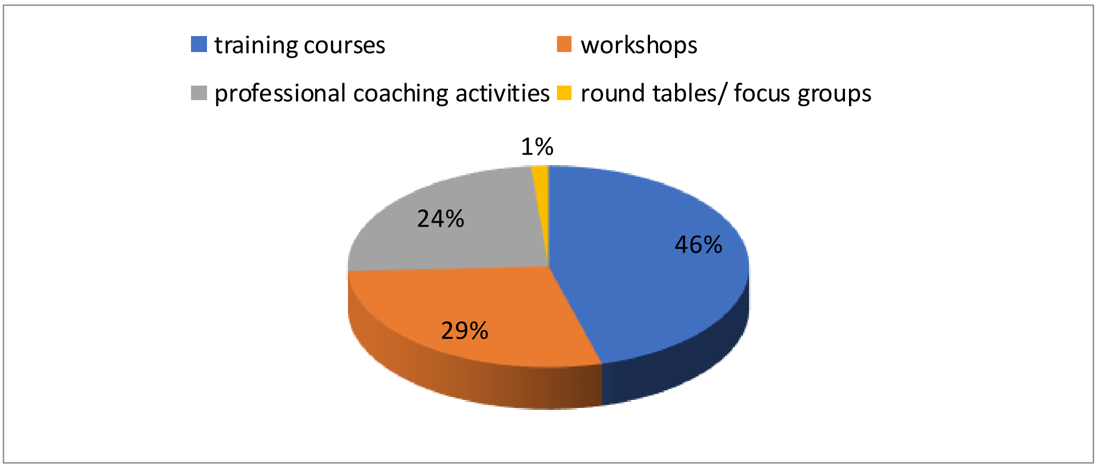

Figure no. 3 *The most effective ways of organising training programmes as perceived by respondents*

According to the respondents, the most important consequences of the training activities were the following: innovation/optimisation of the educational approach, optimisation of the relationship/communication with students and development of research skills, while personal and school promotion were mentioned as less important. In order to get closer to identifying the success factors in continuing training programmes, respondents rated most highly the following aspects of their last training course, as illustrated in the figure below: the subject matter covered and the strategies used, then the experiences of colleagues, and least highly the management of time and the expertise and professional competence of the trainers.

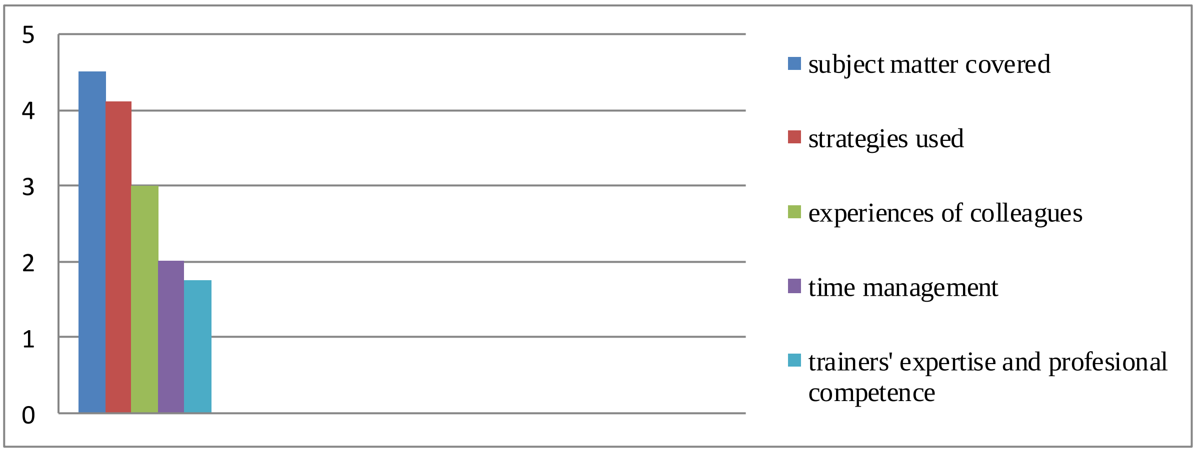

Figure no. 4 *Respondents' perception of the success factors of continuing training programmes*

Directly related to the competences of the training team, in terms of the success of a training programme, the respondents particularly appreciated the communication, evaluation competences, followed by the methodological and organisational competences, which indicates that these areas are of priority in the success of a course. Verbal, non-verbal and paraverbal communication skills, even in the online environment, remain the most important because they are reflected in participants' needs to understand and transfer what they learn in these continuing training programmes into their educational practice. Less importance is given to planning skills.

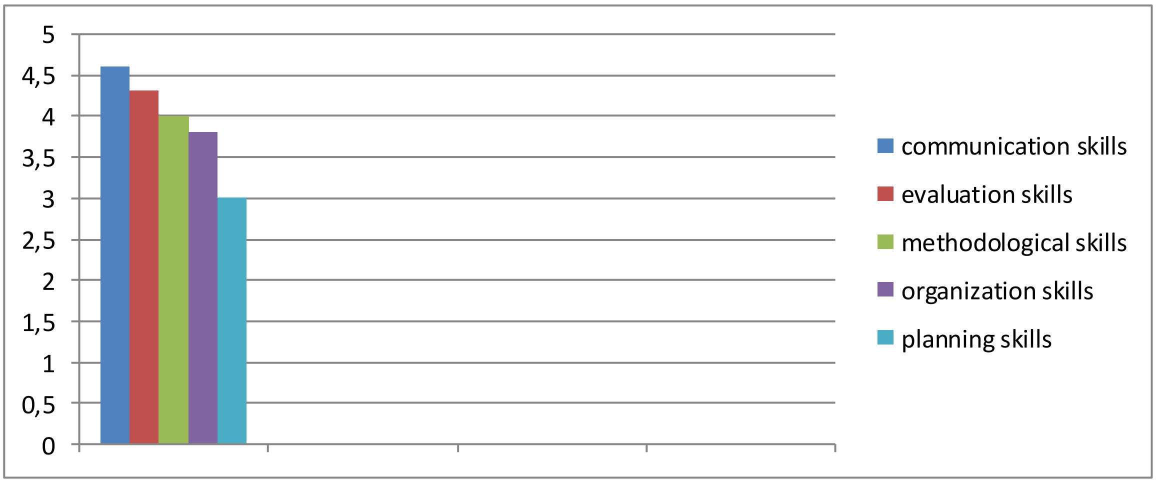

Figure no. 5 *Respondents' perceptions of the skills of the training team.*

As for the qualities most appreciated by respondents in the training team, they were: punctuality, originality and empathy, followed closely by adaptability and fairness. The ratings are justified by the fact that all of them should fit into the portrait of a competent trainer.

Figure no. 6 *Respondents' perceptions of the qualities of the training team*

The majority of respondents (46%) noted that the trainer's qualifications were key to the success of the training programme they attended, followed by the subject matter, teaching materials used and methods, which in our opinion means that in the online environment success is ensured by the selection of methods and materials appropriate to the subject matter, relevant to educational practice and with significant content for the development of professional and transversal skills, given that the participants of the training courses have diverse specialties.

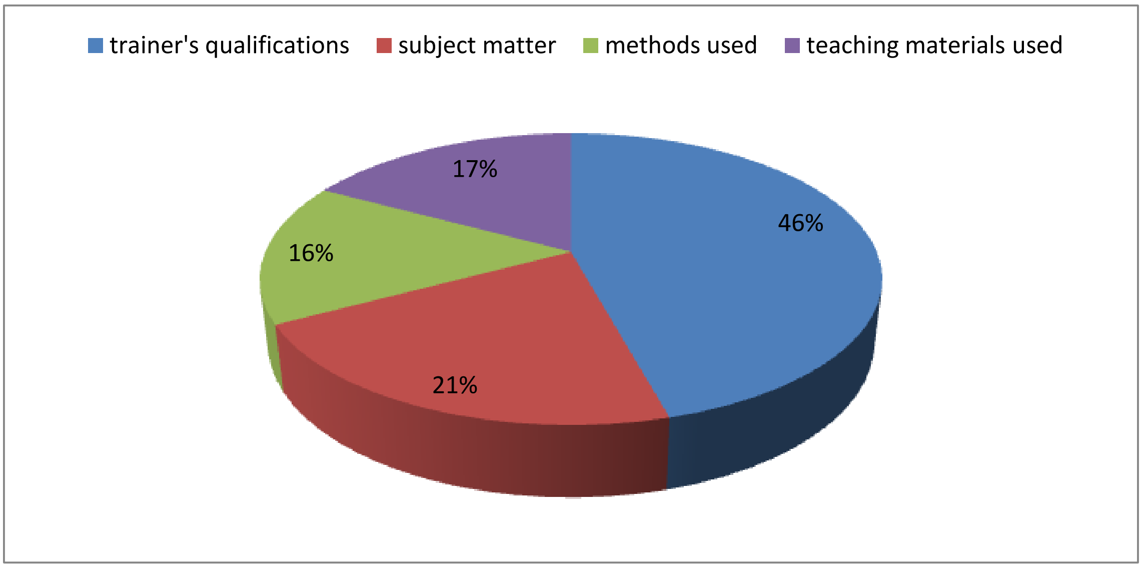

Figure no. 7 *Respondents' perception of the success factors of an online training programme*

Because many of the skills and qualities of the training team, as well as the subject matter and teaching strategies used in the training courses, were among the common priorities, preferences and experiences of the teachers participating in the training courses where the questionnaires were administered, 73% of the respondents expressed a desire to participate in a similar training experience to a very great extent, 21% to a great extent, 4% to a moderate extent and only 2% to a small extent.

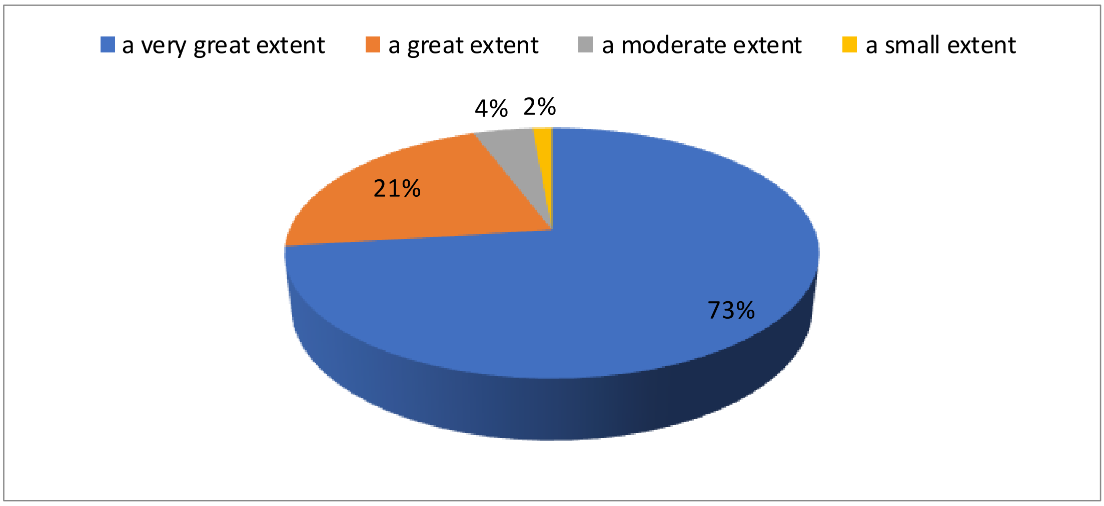

Figure no. 8 *The extent to which respondents would still like to participate in a similar training experience*

Following the analysis of these responses, we can conclude that the teaching staff in Romanian pre-university education wants to develop professional skills in a relatively short time, they particularly appreciate, at the level of continuous training programs, the video materials made available and the training of trainers. Teachers also want to be encouraged by the trainers during the course, showing that the advent of online schooling has somewhat shaken their confidence in their own strengths. At the same time, they appreciate the interaction with other colleagues during continuous training, the fact that they have gained some experience and have been able to reflect on ways of self-improvement, sharing experiences and personal practices.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the motivation and perceptions of teachers in Romanian pre-university education in the midst of the pandemic and at the time online teaching became the norm, in terms of identifying the key to successful continuous training programmes.

Interpreting the results of the questionnaire applied to a number of 70 Romanian pre-university teachers working in both rural and urban areas, we find that they are motivated mainly by the subject matter of the courses and the training of the trainers, by the communication and organisational teaching strategies, but also by originality, adaptability, and the way the continuous training programmes are organised, preferring those focusing on workshops and professional coaching activities.

In order to acquire the necessary skills for teaching in the online environment, teachers attach great importance to continuous training courses, sharing of personal educational experiences, communication skills and value the trainer for their psycho-pedagogical skills (communication, organization, selection of teaching strategies). The major disadvantage of the training programmes is the unfamiliarity with the platforms on which they are organised, which is why at the end respondents indicated that they would emphasise the in-depth exploration of the platform at the beginning of the course if they were trainers. Other limitations of our research would be related to the relatively small number of respondents, which does not allow generalization of the results, and the fact that the reporting was mainly done at the level of the last training course they attended and not at the level of all continuing training activities carried out during the pandemic.

In conclusion, we would like to point out that the hypothesis developed at the beginning of this research has been validated because after analysing and interpreting the results, we obtained the following information:

- Teachers need continuous training more frequently than is required by law, as well as support for the participation fee from the institution’s budget, as shown by the answers to *item 3*.
- Almost half the teachers interviewed consider that they prefer training courses, followed by workshops and professional coaching, as shown by the answers to *item 4*.
- The key to success was identified as trainer training, as indicated by respondents’ answers to *item 9*. Therefore, in the questionnaire, teachers indicated that they would repeat the training experience with the trainer who gained their trust.

Teachers in pre-university education have a much greater need for professional development in the context of the pandemic, where the educational environment has been represented in particular by online schooling, IT skills being absolutely necessary for performance. With this, teachers will build on their communication and organisational skills and improve in their area of expertise, in order to be valued in turn as trainers for their own students or even colleagues.

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THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLES ON THE EVOLUTION OF ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

In this research we aim: To identify the psychological mechanisms that enhance the effectiveness of teamwork (i.e., the work coaches, psychologists, sports specialists etc. do with the athletes); To identify the aspects of communication and coach-sportsperson relationships that determine athletic performance; To determine the need to adopt a managerial style, on the part of the coach, that is tailored to the needs of the athletes so that performance is more effective. We combined several research methods in order to accurately identify the needs of the coach, but also those of the athletes, so we applied questionnaires to managers, coaches and athletes, we designed grids to observe behaviours relevant to the performance of athletes, and we applied evaluation grids selecting cardiometabolic and biochemical tests that directly correlate with sporting performance. By assessing the motivational trainability of athletes, using tests including the determination of biochemical phenomena and the optimization of athletes' nutrition, and using individualized motivational techniques and tools, we were able to validate hypotheses such as: if the leadership style is appropriate to the athlete and/or group, then the athletes' performance will be superior; if we apply scientific methods in real time, biochemical testing and cardiometabolic testing, then we provide a higher chance for performance in swimming at European and world level; if the leader finds appropriate motivational methods for each athlete, then evolution of performance will be on an upward trend.

Keywords: *athletic performance; communication in coaching; leadership style, motivation*;

INTRODUCTION. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The present micro-research aimed to identify the continuing training needs of sports managers, regardless of where they work: clubs, federations, county directorates. Athletic performance cannot be achieved individually, it requires a team of specialists and cohesion among its members. (FAMOSE, J.-P., 1993)

In this context, the present research has proposed the following objectives: to identify the psychological, motivational, coach-sportsperson communication means in order to achieve maximum performance, to optimize the leadership style in order to achieve maximum athletic performance, to increase the efficiency of sports activity in terms of team effort by both specialists and athletes.

Many specialists believe that it is enough to master notions of management, without taking into account the organisational specifics of each sports structure, or the influence of the internal and external environment in which they operate. (EPURAN, M., HOLDEVICI, I., TONITA, F., 2001) Only in structures where there is a dedicated and trained manager, there can be sporting performance.

1. RESEARCH PURPOSE

The goal of the research is to optimise managerial processes focused on motivating coaches and athletes.

The overall objective of the micro-research is to implement the concept of scientific leadership in the sport management process, focused on team motivation.

The premise is that, by exploiting the strengths of the club in close connection with the opportunities of the external environment, we can more easily optimise management processes while increasing athletic performance. Promoting managerial thinking in the formal structural organisation, anticipating and leading organisational change can be tools of particular significance in making better use of managerial resources and in increasing goal-oriented efficiency. Working hypotheses and experimenting with them as micro research forecasts.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Analysis, systematization and synthesis of theoretical and methodological knowledge from the literature on:

Assessing the motivational trainability of athletes

Utilizing tests including determination of biochemical phenomena and optimization of athletes' nutrition

Emphasising the use of motivational methods.

Research Hypothesis

Working hypotheses and experimenting with them as predictors of micro-research.

In order to solve the tasks of this micro-research, the following working hypotheses were used:

General Hypothesis

If the leadership style suits the athlete and/or the group, then the athletes' performance will be superior.

Specific Hypothesis #1

If we apply real-time scientific methods, biochemical testing and cardiometabolic testing, then we are giving a better chance to perform in swimming at European and world level.

Specific Hypothesis #2

If the leader finds the right motivational methods for each athlete, then their performance will be on an upward trend.

3. DESCRIPTION OF THE TARGET GROUP AND RESEARCH STAGES

Case study conducted on 6 performance athletes in a group of 26 athletes. The micro-research was carried out between November 2020 and April 2021, on athletes in the group but also on athletes from other sports clubs.

1. PBM - aged 24, lives in an urban environment and has been training for 18 months in France in preparation for the 2021 Olympic Games. He is a sports graduate with a master's degree in organisation and management. His parents had a painful divorce when he was 10, he was raised by his father from the age of 14. He is currently experiencing health problems and going through a difficult emotional period after his father's death in November 2020. He has no solid financial support which is burdening him emotionally. Emotional and economic needs are most important. First of all, he needs to improve his health in order to be able to continue his athletic training for the final qualifying tournament. A qualification can ensure both emotional and financial stability. Interventions are being carried out, but they are time-limited. Those who act are actively involved and their main aim is to restore self-confidence and a state of physical

and mental health that is optimal for performance. The coordination of collaborative sports activity started at the age of 11. He has a predominantly sanguine temperament.

2. ȘȘ - aged 16, lives in Ploiesti, trains in urban areas and is looking for promotion to the top junior team. He is a high school student, his mental strength declined during the pandemic, he went through the virus that stopped the world in its tracks and after a break, to recover physically from the virus, he resumed his activity eager to achieve his goals. He has 3 older brothers, father works abroad. He has a predominantly melancholic temperament. We have been coordinating his athletic training for 3 years.

3. UOF - aged 14, living and training in an urban environment, understood that her native talent could not bring him success in sport without proper involvement. His father works abroad, his mother in Bucharest and he is cared for by his grandmother. He has a predominantly phlegmatic temperament. I've been training him for 2 years.

4. LC - 14 years old, lives in the countryside, commutes to play competitive sports. He has been in the group for a year now, his temperament is mainly phlegmatic.

5. NA - 14 years old, lives in an urban environment, practices competitive sports at the urging of his grandfather, a former contact sports coach. We believe that she does not want to practice a competitive activity and progress comes very slowly, because the involvement in training is very low. She has been in the group for 2 years. She has a predominantly melancholic temperament.

6. CA - 13 years old, lives in an urban environment, came to the group 2 years old. The pandemic also had a positive aspect, as her mother and grandmother no longer have access to training and competitions and the sportswoman released stress from inappropriate observations and in this way managed to achieve significant progress in a short period of time. She has a predominantly sanguine temperament.

There are other talented athletes in the group, but all the tests were done without the support of the club, and only because of the desire and financial support of the coach and parents. After paying more attention to the athletes actively involved in micro-research, the other athletes have also become more attentive and participate with greater interest in the sports activity.

4. DESCRIPTION OF RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS AND TARGET GROUP

We used the case study method to track the performance of the 6 athletes.

The Questionnaire Research Survey method is a technique, an investigative tool consisting of a set of written, logically ordered questions which, when applied, elicits from research participants responses that are recorded and analysed in the research of a subject. The questionnaires were applied to 11 managers, 11 coaches, 33 athletes from state and private sports clubs in Romania.

Observation method: Observation Sheet - we developed 8 behaviours that we observed in the 26 athletes we worked with during the micro-research.

The evaluation grid (initial and final) of the athlete's behaviour with the observed behaviours helped us through its regulatory role both in the athletes' training activity and in the improvement of sport strategies.

Testing method: Biochemical testing - the identification of biochemical phenomena that occur during physical exercise is of particular importance in the process of scientific physical exercise practice. Sporting activity involves physical exertion of varying intensities, which include "a higher energy consumption than the energy consumption required during normal vital processes". Basal metabolism, which is also called resting energy metabolism, represents the energy balance of a resting body.

The testing method: Cardiometabolic testing on nutrition optimization in swimming - during effort, it will establish the elaborated determination of effort thresholds and certain nutritional modifications may be required, such as the satisfaction of energy requirements and the establishment of a starting point for the elaboration of dietary plans in relation to sports effort.

5. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The first item in the questionnaire reveals that the majority (73%) of managers consider that they use the democratic style and only 9% consider that they use the authoritarian style. From the discussions with the participants who were asked to explain the reasons for their answers, we believe that depending on the people involved in the performance process, the two management styles are used - democratic for those 100% involved, and authoritarian for the athletes who need to be constantly pushed.

At the beginning of an athlete's activity, a coach must use a predominantly democratic teaching style in order to attract the student athlete towards competitive activity. The majority (9 out of 11) of the respondents indicated in item 2 that the leadership style adopted in leading the groups they have to coach is very important.

In item 3 where we asked respondents to choose a skill that sets a manager apart from other managers in terms of performance, 45% of respondents felt that transparency in decision making is important in management and only 18% felt that the ability to handle situations correctly would set them apart from other managers. The sports management system is seen as suffering from a lack of transparency. What is right for an individual or a group cannot be decided by the manager alone.

In item 4 the respondents had to rank the 3 most important components of sports training in their personal opinion, and the majority of the respondents believe that sports nutrition plays a very important role in achieving sports performance and only next in importance are sports training and mental training, with biochemical testing being less valued by managers/coaches in achieving top level performance. Cardiometabolic testing is less appreciated because it is also less familiar.

Asked to list what improvements they would bring to the sports club, the respondents (managers) believe that an efficient sports base would encourage more children to play sports. All of them would like to see a bigger budget but also collaboration with teams of specialists to guide the managerial process in sports coaching. At the same time, the budget should be allocated according to performance.

Asked to identify the most important element that brings athletic performance to world level, they also mentioned the development of a strategy to achieve performance objectives and the contribution of a technical team of specialists to performance. In the strategy for achieving world-class performance, an 8-year plan with individualised objectives should be developed. A lower percentage is given in the respondents' opinion to the coordination of the group focusing on performance.

In item 9, the respondents consider it very important to motivate coaches and athletes through material stimuli, but also stimuli aimed at appreciation, confidence and active participation in a long and difficult process until performance is achieved.

In item 10 the role of public relations is rated as very important and is carried out through the sports advisor who supports and facilitates the performance activity.

And in item 11, most respondents do not give us any encouraging feedback. The answers show a situation that puts the educational process at a standstill because the majority of them consider that the local authorities are not interested in solving the problems of the sports club, which clearly reflects the reality.

For item 2 in the coaches' questionnaires, respondents' perceptions ranked first the coach's competence, the material base and, on a par, the training methods and the budget allocated to the team of athletes, when asked to list the three most important components of sports training to achieve performance.

In item 4, in the selection of technical team members the coach obviously comes first in the technical team. At international level, athletes cannot achieve top performance without the advice of a psychologist. A coach cannot do it all alone, each specialist has their role in achieving an athletic result.

More than 90% of respondents rated practical experience in coaches as more important than overall specialist knowledge. Also, 10 out of 11 respondents felt that managerial style influences athletic performance.

Item 7 addressed to the coaches deals with the disadvantages they have noticed in the club where they work and the most frequent were - lack of coaching staff, lack of community interest and investment, lack of a selection system, family support, etc. In Romania, sports facilities leave something to be desired or they are altogether missing. Clubs cannot have a team of coaches and only very few coaches and athletes reach senior level, so that the competent bodies could invest in them. The selection system is almost non-existent. Without the support of the athlete's family, they cannot participate in training. Parents play an important motivational role during an athletic performance.

In item 8, respondents consider that the positive influence of managers plays a lesser role in achieving performance, the most important being the material base and the budget. The bio-physical profile of the athlete is important.

Item 9 addresses the respondents' opinion on the role of extrinsic motivation in setting an upward trend in performance, and the majority of coaches surveyed considered extrinsic motivation to be paramount. I believe that intrinsic motivation is more important, as a result must be achieved first and then extrinsic benefits follow.

Athletes, as respondents in the third category, consider in item 2 that they are motivated to participate in training, and are willing to go through a difficult training process as a way to perform. Athletic results grant one a special status in one's environment.

The majority of respondents considered the role that the coach plays in their lives to be very important, beneficial, useful and decisive. The percentage rating of the role the coach plays in the athlete's life is encouraging and at the same time empowering for the coach who receives such praise. It is very important for the athlete to find the sport and the coach that will propel them to great performance. The coach is a guide, a trainer, a mentor but also a moral support.

In terms of the top 2 most appreciated qualities in a coach, the majority of respondents chose commitment, confidence, passion, motivation. After parents, the coach is the most important person in the athlete's life and the more they are appreciated the more they are dedicated, confident, passionate, a motivating factor. The majority of respondents felt that the joy, support and encouragement of the coach was a characteristic of their training. When respondents were asked to select 2 options of changes in their athletic activity, they frequently chose no change, then time of training, frequency of training, and athletic challenge. A very small percentage chose coach, team, other. We believe that either habit or the similarity of the coaches' qualities to those of the athletes led the respondents to consider that the coach was not among the aspects that should be radically changed.

In item 7, respondents consider intrinsic motivation to be an important aspect in the coach's planning that teaches them to overcome their physical and mental limitations by overcoming the pain threshold brought about by training.

Item 8 deals with the athletes' opinion on whether they prefer intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Respondents felt that intrinsic motivation comes first and the coach has the ability to deal with it appropriately.

In item 9, athletes rated the importance given by coaches to biochemical and cardiometabolic testing, with the majority considering it to be very important and given great importance by coaches. Before and during training, fatigue and exertion adaptation can be determined with a device that measures lactic acid. There can be no performance without mentioning the importance of testing.

When asked to rank the top 4 elements in achieving successful sport performance respondents rated the coach, then mental training, sport training, sport nutrition, family support, specific training, coach's communication style etc.

Item 11 asks for the respondents' appreciation of the coach's style and over 63% believe that the democratic style is the most commonly applied by coaches, and the majority of athletes consider very important or important the role of this style in achieving athletic performance. Respondents believe that the coach's managerial style is important because they are role models and one cannot participate joyfully in training if the coach's influence is lacking, if there is no spark of enthusiasm.

Applying the observation sheet (5 initially observed behaviours: active participation in training, physical engagement in effort, mental engagement during effort, psychomotor concentration to elements of technique, psychomotor endurance to volume and intensity) on 26 athletes in November 2020, we looked for behaviours that we intended to refine during training, thus also improving athletic performance for the first competitions. We tracked behaviours for 60 minutes and applied motivational formulas to both the athletes involved in the micro research and the other athletes. We applied the same sheet at the end of the micro-research, after 4 months in which we applied motivational formulas to all the athletes in the group and biochemical and cardiometabolic tests to the other athletes, and we had remarkably good results both in the athletes' attitude to training and in the results obtained in competitions.

Sports Behaviour Rating Grid structured on 8 behaviours: Performs the activity at a slow pace but with sufficient accuracy; Tendency to overestimate self and underestimate task; Tendency to overestimate task but underestimate self; Does not give up in case of failure, persists resumes the task or activity from the beginning, encourages self, completes the task; In case of failure loses self, needs encouragement to resume; Remains indifferent to success, merely attempts a smile; Quits when failures accumulate; Emotional lapses under the pressure of the competition.

CONCLUSION

- ➢ A number of management theorists do not accept the argument that the key factor in the success of an organisation, club, athlete, or student, is its leadership.
- ➢ Leading people is a dynamic group process whereby one person manages to influence other members of the group to willingly commit to the group's objectives over a period of time and in a particular organisational context, as in the case of our micro-research.
- ➢ I assumed that if the leadership style is suitable for the athlete/group, then the athletic performance will be superior. (MARTENS, R., 1999)

➢ This general hypothesis is confirmed, since during the micro-research we applied motivational formulas and methods on the whole team and the results were remarkable both in terms of working attitude towards training difficulties and of the results obtained.

➢ The specific hypotheses are also confirmed, we applied cardiometabolic tests on 6 athletes and biochemical tests on one athlete, and they achieved superior performances, firstly because they were given attention and secondly because they learned how important the scientific management of training is. They understood that by applying the same stimulus to several individuals, the responses are different because we are different.

➢ Specific hypothesis #2 is also confirmed, by applying motivation methods appropriate to each athlete, the evolution of performance is on an upward trend.

LIMITS OF THE MICRO-RESEARCH

➢ All cardiometabolic, biochemical, psychological, nutritional tests are very expensive and until they reach the national team, only the parents or the coach will have to support the performance and the expenses required to obtain it.

➢ In state-owned clubs we are not allowed to have a psychologist, to have a physical trainer, to hire other specialists who can help coordinate the training process.

➢ The financial situation of many athletes is precarious and the coach is unable to support this passion financially.

➢ Sports performance costs money.

ADVANTAGES OF THE MICRO-RESEARCH

➢ This study can also be applied after the termination of the micro-research carried out in this paper.

➢ Motivating team members increases the chances of achieving exceptional results. (GLYN, C. R., 1992)

➢ As we are talking about education, albeit through sport, we increase young people's chances of becoming adults we can rely on.

➢ Every aspiring athlete achieves their goal if they are enthusiastic, if they carry out their work with pleasure and joy.

➢ Somewhat surprisingly, the material factors of sporting success are not at the top of the respondents' answers, rather human factors such as the value of the athletes and the competence of the coach/manager.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

➢ Sport aims to develop the individual's skills in an organised system of selection, training and competition, with the aim of improving sporting results, achieving personal and national records and winning. It is a large-scale phenomenon, capable of unleashing human energies and mobilising material and financial resources that can hardly be compared with those in other areas of social life, and its development has turned it into a complex industry with economic and social impact on the human community.

➢ Sport requires a careful selection, a special scientific training and the achievement of maximum individual performances in competitions, it helps to form and perpetuate values such as fair play, hard work, effort, sacrifice, loyalty, discipline, influence.

➢ A management style based on people development is stronger in managers who have a longer training and educational background.

- The leadership style is not fixed on certain situations, it is applied predominantly to one extent or another. It depends on the situation. (Enache, 2021)
- It is not the style of leadership, authoritarian or democratic, that leads to exceptional performance, but the impact that one action or other leaves on the influenced group. Each individual should understand that the manager/coach is not looking to lead, but build a partnership that will bring high performance to everyone.
- Regardless of the leadership style applied, communication plays a very important role in interpersonal relationships. Where there is communication, enthusiasm, and dedication, the results are noticeable.

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THE PROFILE OF THE ROMANIAN AGGRESSIVE DRIVER

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ABSTRACT

Various studies have documented that aggressive driving is indeed a real problem. In each country there are various aspects of dangerous driving of empirical and practical concern and there are also individual differences to be explored. The present study aims at profiling the Romanian aggressive driver and questioning whether there are differences according to demographic variables such as: gender, age, area of living, marital status, religion, socio-economic status and level of instruction. An educational purpose may be nevertheless included. If psychologist may be provided with the profile of psychological driver and the predisposition of some to risky drivind according to age, marital status, religion, area of living and other demographic variables, they may shorten the time spent for evaluation and recommend counseling sessions for anger management for those identified with risky driving behavior. Nevetheless, other sound measures of dangerous driving are needed to understand differences and commonalties between aggression, negative cognitive/emotional driving, and risky driving. The study presents the DDDI results that might help psychologist in evaluating some variables that are part of the profile of the aggressive driver in Romania; we used it as a psychometric screening tool to select individuals who are prone to dangerous driving styles and who could benefit from sketching a cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT)-type therapeutic intervention, at least in Romania. The educational implication of this study are that such types of interventions as cognitive-behavioral interventions (e.g., relaxation, cognitive restructuring, and behavioral skill building) may be suggested after testing the drivers in order to reduce and maintain reductions of driving anger, aggressive anger expression, aggression, risky behavior, and general anger.

Keywords: *aggressiveness; drivers; demographic variables; profile;*

1. INTRODUCTION

Aggressive driving has become a concern in recent decades. This paper aims at capturing the demographic variables involved in aggressive driving: whether there are differences in gender, religion, age, marital status, socio-economic status etc.

Research suggests that young men are most likely to perpetuate road rage. Environmental factors such as busy roads can stimulate anger while driving. Certain psychological factors, including displaced anger and high level of dayly stress, are also linked to road rage. The present study regards the Romanian drivers and tries to capture a profile and variables that may help Romanian psychologists find appropriate measures and programmes to reduse aggressiveness; therefore, the educational implication of this study is that understanding which are the demographic variables that predispose drivers to displaying anger when drivind may hep both preventing dangerous behavior and helping drivers by psychologal interventions reduce it.

2. PROFILE OF AGGRESSIVE DRIVER

In studies of anger and aggressive driving, psychologist Jerry Deffenbacher of Colorado State University found that people who identified as high-anger drivers differed from low-anger drivers in five key ways:

- *They engage in hostile, aggressive thinking.* They're more likely to insult other drivers or express disbelief about the way others drive. Their thoughts also turn more often to revenge, which sometimes means physical harm.
- *They take more risks on the road.* High-anger drivers are more likely to go 10 to 20 mph over the speed limit, rapidly switch lanes, tailgate and enter an intersection when the light turns red.
- *High anger drivers get angry faster and behave more aggressively*. They're more likely to swear or name-call, to yell at other drivers, to honk in anger. And they're more likely to be angry not just behind the wheel, but throughout the day.
- *High-anger drivers had twice as many car accidents in driving simulations.* They also report more near-accidents and get more tickets for speeding.
- *Short-fused drivers experience more trait anger, anxiety and impulsiveness.* Perhaps from work or home stress, high-anger drivers are more likely to get in the car angry; they also tend to express their anger outward and act impulsively. (American Psychological Association, February 2014)

While driving, high anger drivers experience more anger triggers, frequent and intense anger, hostile thinking, aggression, risky behavior, and some crash-related conditions than low anger drivers. For us, the psychologists, such findings are very important as we may suggest in Romania types of interventions such as cognitive-behavioral interventions (e.g., relaxation, cognitive restructuring, and behavioral skill building) to reduce and maintain reductions of driving anger, aggressive anger expression, aggression, risky behavior, and general anger.

Mihai Copăceanu divides aggressive drivers into several categories:

1. *The author who is aggressive also in everyday life*

This category includes those people who are aggressive not only in traffic, but also on the street or at home, and if you enter even a small contradiction with them, you risk being at least apostrophized. These people, when exposed to unpleasant road events, can even come into physical conflict with other road users. In these people, aggression is present both as a state and as a personality trait. Research on the etiology of medical disorders, both the expression and control of anger have been shown to be important variables, which must be differentiated from the simple manifestation of feelings of anger. Therefore, the differentiated development of scales to estimate anger as a state and anger as a trait, as well as scales focused on specific aspects of anger expression, would be appropriate.

2. We then have the driver who, once behind the wheel, *realizes that he is not arriving at his destination in time*. At that moment, the stress level increases and they try to reach the destination regardless of whether there is snow or police in the area. We are talking about drivers who are normally responsible (Copăceanu, M., 2016). From the reports of some drivers in this situation of frustration or stress, we can find out that some of them were on the verge of having a minor accident, serious or very serious, but they realized this only when the danger passed and the level of adrenaline and acetylcholine dropped considerably. Being on the verge of stepping on a pedestrian crossing illegally or turning red seems to be perceived only when the driver is filming the day, when asked to recall the act or conduct of aggression by either the injured party or any member of the family. Most admit that on an ordinary day they would not resort to such conduct, but we are talking here about days when he either goes to the hospital to give birth to his

wife or has an important presentation, so we are talking about a very high activation of the person. before getting behind the wheel, which intensifies as he realizes that the traffic jam accentuates even more the frustration and anxiety he already feels.

3. The third type of driver identified by a psychologist *is the driver who feels stronger behind the wheel*. "There is even a study that shows that those who have massive cars drive more risky. They have higher speed, they make sudden movements.

4. Then we have the category of taxi drivers, *who think they are different from other drivers*. They consider themselves professional drivers and believe they are as important as firefighters, police or rescue and they claim some illegal rights and status ", the psychologist added. The fines would make the drivers responsible. Regarding the last category of identified drivers, the very prudent ones, they are a minority in traffic, ie they account for a percentage of only 7%. Mihai Copăceanu also shows that one reason why drivers do not respect the law is the fact that it does not apply everywhere. "If the fines were harsher, it would be something else, it would discourage crime. At the moment, you are encouraged to consider that the street is yours, as long as you know you can break the law, but you are not properly penalized, as is the case abroad. It also has to do with education, and from this point of view, Romanian drivers are less educated than Europeans", the specialist concluded.

According to a report by the European Union, with a rate of 91 deaths per million inhabitants, our country ranks second in the European bloc in terms of the number of deaths in road accidents. The differences between Romanian and European drivers are like from heaven to earth, says psychologist Mihai Copaceanu. He points out that among the most responsible and prudent in traffic are the Swiss, who are also permissive with those who sometimes do not follow all the rules in traffic. The same cannot be said about Italians who, as a driving style, resemble Romanians.

Is it possible, however, to draw a robot portrait of the aggressive driver? Psychologist Ionel Simionca answers in an interview as follows: There are dominant profiles of risk behavior, but we refer to young people with little experience who tend to be brave in traffic. He is the man who wants an identity that he does not have and then, through the car he has, he creates a new one. However, these profiles are not as stable as they seem. More precisely, the same driver in Bucharest behaves in one way and in Vienna in another way. What is the explanation? Because it relates to other values. There I know that they have to suffer certain consequences, while here they prefer to show strength because I know they have this possibility. In their minds they imagine that if they do something stupid in traffic they can negotiate with the policeman. But that stupidity unfortunately costs the lives of those who entered the sidewalk. A responsible driver who respects traffic rules and knows his limits will behave in a preventive manner. In traffic, the risk means two seconds. In other words, a decision made in two seconds can cost people's lives.(Ionel Simionca, 2016)

3. RESEARCH TOOLS

3.1. DDDI: The Dula Drangerous Driving Index

Sullman and colleagues (2007) documented an increase in driving anger research, noting that while evidence for an actual increase in driving anger is inconclusive, studying driving anger is important because it is common and angry drivers engage in more dangerous behaviours including losing vehicular control, near hits, losing concentration, and crashing in simulators. While not necessarily leading to actual aggressive behavior, anger, irritation, frustration, and related rumination, may well increase one's risk of becoming involved in a crash, and are thus dangerous in and of themselves (Sullman et al., 2007). In theory, we might ask drivers to describe their typical driving style and conclude that their answers indicate more or less stable patterns, ready to manifest at any time. In practice, The Dula Dangerous Driving Index shows that drivers tend to be motivated to give answers that make them appear safer, more cautious and less at risk than they really are to avoid embarrassment or financial penalties.

Genuine aggression requires that the intention to harm be present among the subject's motivations and most of the time the behaviors included by researchers in the definitions of aggressive driving did not meet this criterion or it was less clearly imposed in situations used as stimuli. The scientific literature related to aggression has a long history, is very extensive and includes animal and human modeling and theories. This literature is very clear in the following respect: aggression is the result of the intention to do harm, regardless of the degree to which this intention manifests itself or the intensity of the harm that is intended to be caused. Despite this consensus, the traffic safety literature has failed to make this crucial distinction until much more recently.

Another category worth considering is cognitively or emotionally negatively charged driving. We are talking about an angry or angry driver in a certain situation, caused by the behavior of other drivers or other people in a vehicle. The mental state of such a driver makes part of his cognitive resources to be involved in other actions and to destabilize attention, the ability to concentrate, which can become potential contributors to the degree of danger. That's why we chose DDDI as one of the methods for measuring driver aggression, as it measures the three main types of dangerous driving, covering at least some potentially risky drivers, meaning those sour drivers are prone to dangerous driving styles. As described by Havârneanu the Dula Dangerous Driving Index (DDDI) is another questionnaire that can be used to measure the aggressive tendency in driving.

The tool was created by clinical psychologist Chris Dula (East Tennessee State University, USA) to measure Aggressive driving and road rage, along with Negative Cognitive / Emotional Driving, and risky driving. (Risky driving). Some validity studies have suggested a four-factor structure, in which driving under the influence of alcohol (Drunk driving) forms a factor independent of risky driving (Willemsen et al., 2008). Also, the high correlations between factors suggest that DDDI subscales could actually be used as a one-dimensional measure of hazardous driving using the total score. Although following several validity studies, the factorial structure of DDDI remains somewhat unclear, the instrument may provide an overall assessment of the trend towards aggressive and risky behaviors in traffic. The Romanian version of DDDI (Dula, Iliescu and Ionescu, 2009) contains 28 items divided into three subscales: Aggressiveness, Cognitions / Negative Emotions and Risk. Although it was originally created to measure a construct that in the literature of the time was called aggressive driving (1998), its author, along with other colleagues quickly realized that these constructs are inconsistent and provide a poor definition in literature.

Even if driving aggression presents a real risk, this is just one of the many areas of driving that are dangerous (DDDI, Introduction, section 1). Dula and Geller (2004) suggested, in harmony with Dula and Ballard (2003), this concept of dangerous driving can be used as a primary concept in research and that this umbrella category can be divided into subdivisions that may or may not be interrelated. DDDI was divided into three subscales which are now called Aggressive Driving, Cognitive | Emotional Driving, Risky Driving. Recently = it was confirmed by factorial analysis works (Willem, Dula, Duclercq, & Verhaeghe, 2007) that driving and the influence of certain substances, such as alcohol or groceries, is also captured in DDDI, but in the present form of the questionnaire there are only two items that evaluate this area.

DDDI can also be used as a psychometric screening tool to select individuals who are prone to dangerous driving styles and who could benefit from sketching a CBT-type therapeutic intervention, at least in Romania. In this paper we try take the fist step in identifying the potential aggressive drivers; the category will furher be submitted for a type of intervention either at the entrance to the driving school or while attending it.

Another important aspect is that DDDI can also be used as a tool to measure the effects of a psychological counseling or developmental intervention, which was performed on the behaviors or attitudes of a person as a psychologist.

This research was attended by drivers who present themselves at the periodic annual evaluation (periodic control), on which occasion we administered this test. They were informed that the data would be used in a study, that the data would not influence the outcome of the regular check-up and, for greater credibility of the psychologist and to increase confidence in the examiner. DDDI was administered after granting the favorable check related to the annual check. On the one hand, the subjects who answered the questionnaire are drivers who have been choosing our psychological office for years, so there was no need to collect other normative data from the groups of drivers, as they were present in our database.

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS, RESULTS AND INTEPRETATION

We stated that there were differences in dangerous driving depending on demographic variables. We used the DDDI to test this on Romanian drivers.

We further present the DDDI results that help us in evaluating some variables that are part of the profile of the aggressive driver in Romania; we used it as a psychometric screening tool to select individuals who are prone to dangerous driving styles and who could benefit from sketching a CBT-type therapeutic intervention, at least in Romania.

4. 1. NEGATIVE EMOTIONS / COGNITIONS SUBSCALE

4.1.1. Gender differences

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Negative Emotions / Cognitions subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution, both in men (z = .164, p <.001) and in women (z =. 222, p = .001). Therefore, to test whether there are significant differences between men and women in terms of negative emotions / cognitions, we used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test by gender.

Men scored slightly higher on the cognitive cognition / emotions subscale (average of 103.05) compared to women (average of 98.87), but these differences are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Gender	N	Median	Mean*	SD	Mean ranks	Mann-Whitney U	*Z*	*p*
Masculine	177	12.00	13.14	3.71	103.05	2291.5	-0.346	.730
Feminine	27	11.00	12.85	3.47	98.87			
SD = standard deviation								

4.1.2. Age differences

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the assessment of normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Negative Emotions / Cognitions subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution, for all age stages:

• For respondents aged 20-35 years (N = 49) we obtained z = .160, p = .003;
• For respondents aged 35-40 years (N = 42) we obtained z = .167, p = .005;
• For respondents aged 40-55 years (N = 86) we obtained z = .200, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (mean ranks) show that adult men aged 35-40 tend to have lower levels of negative emotions and cognitions compared to other age groups, but these differences are not statistically significant, as the p value for the Kruskal test -Wallis H is greater than 0.05.

Age stages	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Kruskal-Wallis H	*df*	*p*
20-35 years	49	13	13.25	3.30	93.29	1.501	2	.472
35-40 years	42	12.00	12.50	3.49	80.86			
40-55 years	86	12.00	13.38	4.02	90.53			

4.1.3. Differences depending on the area of living(rural/urban)

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the assessment of normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Negative Emotions / Cognitions subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution, both in the case of men from rural areas (z = .170, p = .002) and in the case of men cve come from urban areas (z = .176, p <.001).

Rural men scored slightly higher on the cognitive cognition / emotions subscale (average of 93.47) compared to urban men (average of 86.74), but these differences are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Area of living	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean Ranks	Mann-Whitney U	*Z*	*p*
Rural	46	12.50	13.35	3.54	93.47	2761.5	-0.775	.438
Urban	130	12.00	13.05	3.79	86.74			

4.1.3. Differences depending on socio-economic status

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Negative Emotions / Cognitions subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution in both men with a socioeconomic status below the average level in the economy (z = .197, p <.001) , as well as in the case of men with a socio-economic status above the average in the economy (z = .180, p <..001).

Socio-economic status	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Mann-Whitney U	*Z*	*p*
Under medium level	52	13.00	13.31	3.66	91.28	3131.50	-0.384	.701
Over medium level	125	12.00	13.06	3.74	88.05			

4.1.4. Differences depending on religion

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Negative Emotions / Cognitions subscale deviate from a Gaussian distribution in the case of men who declare themselves Orthodox (z = .164, p <.001), but not in the case of men who it is declared to have a different religious orientation (z = .197, p = .200).

Orthodox men scored lower on the negative cognition / emotions subscale (average of 88.47 ranks) compared to men of other religions (average of 101.93 ranks), but these differences are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Religion	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Mann-Whitney U	*Z*	*p*
Orthodox	170	12.00	13.10	3.70	88.47	504.50	-0.686	.493
Other	7	14.00	14.00	4.08	101.93			

4.1.5 .Differences depending on the level of instruction

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Negative Emotions / Cognitions subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution for all levels of training:

• For men with 10 grades or vocational school (N = 22) we obtained z = .228, p = .004;

• For men with high school or post-secondary school (N = 79) we obtained z = .194, p <.001;

• For men with university or postgraduate studies (N = 76) we obtained z = .155, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (average ranks) show that men with a university or postgraduate degree tend to have lower levels of negative emotions and cognitions compared to other categories of men, but these differences are not statistically significant, as the p value for the Kruskal-Wallis H test is greater than 0.05.

Level of instruction	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean rank	Kruskal-Wallis H	*df*	*p*
10 grades or professional school	22	11.50	13.41	4.01	91.50	0.882	2	.643
Highschool or secondary highschool	79	12.00	13.23	3.52	92.28			
Bachelor or postgraduate	76	12.00	12.96	3.85	84.87			

4.1.6. Differences depending on marital status

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Negative Emotions / Cognitions subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution for all categories of marital status:

• For married men (N = 115) we obtained z = .173, p <.001;

• For unmarried men (N = 49) we obtained z = .164, p = .002;

• For divorced men (N = 11) we obtained z = .280, p = .016.

Descriptive statistics (mean ranks) show that divorced men tend to have lower levels of negative emotions and cognitions compared to married or unmarried men, but these differences are not statistically significant, as the p value for the Kruskal-Wallis H test is higher than 0.05.

Marital status	**N**	**Median**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean ranks**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	***df***	***p***
married	115	12.00	13.20	3.78	89.37	3.294	2	.193
unmarried	49	12.00	13.245	3.57	90.76			
divorced	11	10.00	11.64	3.78	61.45			

4.2. AGRESSIVE DRIVING SUBSCALE

4.2.1. Gender differences

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that Aggressive Driving subscale scores deviate from a Gaussian distribution, both in men (z = .350, p <.001) and in women (z = .317, p <.001). Therefore, to support the hypothesis that I confirm that there are significant differences between men and women in terms of aggressive driving, we used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test. Men scored slightly higher on the aggressive subscale (average of 102.75) compared to women (average of 100.89), but these differences are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Gender	**N**	**Median**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean ranks**	**Mann-Whitney U**	***Z***	***p***
Masculine	177	7.00	8.08	2.80	102.75	2346.00	-0.177	.860
Feminine	27	7.00	7.82	1.71	100.89			

4.2.2. Age differences

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the assessment of normality of distributions indicates that the scores on Aggressive Driving subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution, for all age stages:

- For respondents aged 20-35 years (N = 49) we obtained z = .302, p <.001;
- For respondents aged 35-40 years (N = 42) we obtained z = .389, p <.001;
- For respondents aged 40-55 years (N = 86) we obtained z = .374, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (mean ranks) show that adult men aged 35-40 tend to have lower levels of dangerous driving compared to other age groups, but these differences are not statistically significant, as the p value for the Kruskal-Wallis test H is greater than 0.05.

	Age stages	**N**	**Median**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean ranks**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	***df***	***p***
	20-35	49	7.00	8.27	2.26	97.59	2.624	2	.269
	35-40	42	7.00	7.76	1.46	84.40			
	40-55	86	7.00	8.13	3.50	86.35			

4.2.3. Differences depending on the area of living

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that Aggressive Driving subscale scores deviate from a Gaussian distribution, both in the case of men from rural areas (z = .339, p <.001) and in the case of men come from the urban environment (z = .352, p <.001). Therefore, to test the hypothesis I confirm that there are significant differences in terms of aggressive driving depending on the environment of origin.

Rural men scored slightly higher on the aggressive driving subscale (average ranks 97.80) compared to urban men (average ranks 88.75), but these differences are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Mediu de proveniență	**N**	**Mediana**	**Media**	**SD**	**Media rangurilor**	**Mann-Whitney U**	***Z***	***p***
Rural	46	7.00	8.00	2.41	97.80	2958.0	-0.125	.901
Urban	130	7.00	8.12	2.94	88.75			

4.2.4. Differences depending on the socio-economic status

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that Aggressive Driving subscale scores deviate from a Gaussian distribution in both men with a socioeconomic status below the average level in the economy (z = .312, p <.001) and and in the case of men with a socio-economic status above the average in the economy (z = .362, p <..001). Therefore, to test the confirm hypothesis that there are significant differences in aggressive driving depending on socioeconomic status, we used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test.

Men with a socio-economic level below the average obtained slightly higher scores at the aggressive driving subscale (average of 96.28 ranks) compared to men with a socio-economic level above the average (average of the ranks 85.97), but these differences are not statistically significant as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Socio-economic status	**N**	**Median**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean ranks**	**Mann-Whitney U**	***Z***	***p***
Under medium level	52	7.00	8.14	2.31	96.28	2871.5	-1.415	.157
Above medium level	125	7.00	8.06	2.99	85.97			

4.2.5. Differences depending on religion

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that Aggressive Driving subscale scores deviate from a Gaussian distribution for men who declare themselves Orthodox (z = .356, p <.001), but not for men who declare themselves as having a different religious orientation (z = .248, p = .200). Because for one of the categories of this variable the data do not show a normal distribution, we used the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test.

Religion	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Mann-Whitney U	*Z*	*p*
Orthodox	170	7.00	8.01	2.74	87.99	421.50	-1.516	.129
Other	7	8.00	9.71	3.99	113.79			

4.2.6. Differences depending on marital status

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that Aggressive Driving subscale scores deviate from a Gaussian distribution for all categories of marital status:

• For married men (N = 115) we obtained z = .362, p <.001;
• For unmarried men (N = 49) we obtained z = .308, p <.001;
• For divorced men (N = 11) we obtained z = .492, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (average ranks) show that divorced men tend to have slightly lower levels of aggressive driving compared to married or unmarried men, but these differences are not statistically significant, as the p value for the Kruskal-Wallis H test is greater than 0.05 .

Marital status	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Kruskal-Wallis H	*df*	*p*
married	115	7.00	8.12	3.19	86.81	2.008	2	.366
unmaried	49	7.00	8.06	2.02	93.82			
divorced	11	7.00	7.55	1.22	74.55			

4.2.6. **Differences depending on the level of training**

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that scores on aggressive Sofat subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution for all levels of training:

• For men with 10 grades or vocational school (N = 22) we obtained z = .352, p <.001;
• For men with high school or post-secondary school (N = 79) we obtained z = .380, p <.001;
• For men with university or postgraduate studies (N = 76) we obtained z = .346, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (average ranks) show that men tend to have similar levels of aggressive driving regardless of their level of training. This is also indicated by the statistical test, for which we obtained a p value greater than 0.05.

Level of instruction	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Kruskal-Wallis H	*df*	*p*
10 grades or professional school	22	7.00	8.27	3.25	88.57	0.882	2	.643
Highschool or secondary highschool	79	7.00	7.99	3.24	88.37			
Bachelor or postgraduate	76	7.00	8.12	2.12	89.78			

4.3. *RISKY DRIVING* SUBSCALE

4.3.1.Gender differences

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the assessment of normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Risky Driving subscale deviate from a Gaussian distribution, both for men (z = .317, p <.001) and for women (z = .325, p <.001).

Men scored slightly higher on the risky sub-scale (average of 102.83) compared to women (average of 100.35), but these differences are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Age differences

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the assessment of normality of distributions indicates that the scores on the Risky Driving subscale deviate from a Gaussian distribution, for all age stages:

• For respondents aged 20-35 years (N = 49) we obtained z = .234, p <.001;
• For respondents aged 35-40 years (N = 42) we obtained z = .331, p <.001;
• For respondents aged 40-55 years (N = 86) we obtained z = .335, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (mean ranks) show that adult men aged 35-40 tend to have lower levels of risky driving compared to other age groups, but these differences are not statistically significant, as the p value for the Kruskal-Wallis test H is greater than 0.05.

Gender	**N**	**Median**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean ranks**	**Mann-Whitney U**	***Z***	***p***
Masculine	177	12.00	13.53	3.22	102.83	2331.50	-0.229	.819
Feminine	27	12.00	13.04	1.68	100.35			

4.3.2. Differences depending on the environment of origin

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the assessment of normality of distributions indicates that the scores on Risky Driving subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution, both in the case of men from rural areas (z = .311, p <.001) and in the case of men. come from the urban environment (z = .325, p <.001).

Rural men obtained scores similar to those in urban areas at the risky driving subscale, a conclusion also supported by the Mann-Whitney U test, for which we obtained a p> 0.05.

Area of living	**N**	**Median**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean ranks**	**Mann-Whitney U**	***Z***	***p***
Rural	46	12.00	13.63	3.07	88.29	2980.0	-0.036	.971
Urban	130	12.00	13.49	3.30	88.57			

4.3.3. Differences depending on socio-economic status

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that scores on Risky Driving subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution in both men with a socioeconomic status below the average level in the economy (z = .378, p <.001) and in the case of men with a socio-economic status above the average in the economy (z = .336, p <..001). Men with a socio-economic level below the average obtained slightly higher scores at the risky driving subscale (average of 96.80 ranks) compared to men with a socio-economic level above the average (average of the ranks 85.76), but these differences are not statistically significant. , as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Socio-economic status	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Mann-Whitney U	*Z*	*p*
Under medium level	52	12.00	13.98	3.33	96.80	2844.5	-1.471	.141
Above medium level	125	12.00	13.34	3.17	85.76			

4.3.4. Differences depending on religion

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for the assessment of normality of distributions indicates that the scores on Risky Driving subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution, both in the case of men who declare themselves Orthodox (z = .320, p <.001) and in the case of men who declares to have a different religious orientation (z = .315, p = .034).

Orthodox men scored lower on the risky driving subscale compared to men of other religions, but these differences are not statistically significant, as indicated by the Mann-Whitney U test (p> 0.05).

Religion	N	Median	Mean	SD	Mean ranks	Mann-Whitney U	*Z*	*p*
Orthodox	170	12.00	13.51	3.24	88.71	545.5	-0.424	.672
Other	7	12.00	14.00	3.056	96.14			

4.3.5 Differences depending on marital status

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that Aggressive Driving subscale scores deviate from a Gaussian distribution for all categories of marital status:

- For married men (N = 115) we obtained z = .330, p <.001;
- For unmarried men (N = 49) we obtained z = .283, p <.001;
- For divorced men (N = 11) we obtained z = .351, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (mean ranks) show that divorced and married men tend to have slightly lower levels of risky driving compared to unmarried men, but these differences are not statistically significant, as the p value for the Kruskal-Wallis H test is greater than 0.05 .

Marital status	N	Mediana	Mean	SD	Media rangurilor	Kruskal-Wallis H	*df*	*p*
married	115	12.00	13.57	3.58	85.77	1.252	2	.535
unmaried	49	12.00	13.49	2.59	94.05			
divorced	11	12.00	13.09	1.92	84.41			

4.3.6. Differences depending on the level of training

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for assessing the normality of distributions indicates that scores on risky Driving subscales deviate from a Gaussian distribution for all levels of training:

• For men with 10 grades or vocational school (N = 22) we obtained z = .284, p <.001;

• For men with high school or post-secondary school (N = 79) we obtained z = .352, p <.001;

• For men with university or postgraduate studies (N = 76) we obtained z = .308, p <.001.

Descriptive statistics (average ranks) show that men with high school / vocational school and those with university / postgraduate studies tend to have lower levels of risky driving compared to men with 10 grades or school, but these differences are not statistically significant is indicated and by the statistical test, as the p value for the Kruskal-Wallis H test is greater than 0.05.

Level of instruction	**N**	**Median**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean ranks**	**Kruskal-Wallis H**	***df***	***p***
10 grades or professional school	22	13.00	14.50	3.69	104.00	3.035	2	.219
Highschool or secondary highschool	79	12.00	13.42	3.73	84.89			
Bachelor or postgraduate	76	12.00	13.37	2.40	88.93			

5. CONCLUSIONS AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

The results indicate that:

✓ Divorced men tend to have lower levels of negative emotions and cognitions compared to married or unmarried men, but these differences are not statistically significant.

✓ Men with university or postgraduate studies tend to have lower levels of negative emotions and cognitions compared to other categories of men, but these differences are not statistically significant; divorced men tend to have slightly lower levels of aggressive driving compared to married or unmarried men, but these differences are not statistically significant.

✓ Men tend to have similar levels of aggressive driving regardless of their level of training

✓ Rural men obtained scores similar to those in urban areas at the risky driving subscale

Therefore the hypothesis is not confirmed and the level of aggressiveness does not seems to be correlated age, gender, religion, marital status, socio-economic status or level of instruction. Further attention should be thus given rather to anger as an internal trait regardless of these external variables. Nevertheless such results may be considered useful as a possible overcoming of the possible misjudgements and stereotypes that may arise encompassing these differences between people.

The present study aims at profiling the Romanian aggressive driver also for educational purpose. If psychologist may be provided with the profile of psychological driver and the predisposition of some to risky drivind according to age, marital status, religion, area of living and other demographic variables, they may shorten the time spent for evaluation and recommend counseling sessions for anger management for those identified with risky driving behavior. Nevetheless, other sound measures of dangerous driving are needed to understand differences and commonalties between aggression, negative cognitive/emotional driving, and risky driving. The study presents the DDDI results that might help psychologist in evaluating some variables that are part of the profile of the aggressive driver in Romania; we used it as a psychometric screening tool to select individuals who are prone to dangerous driving styles and who could benefit from cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT)-type therapeutic intervention, at least in Romania. The educational implication of this study are that such types of interventions such as cognitive-behavioral interventions (e.g., relaxation, cognitive restructuring, and behavioral skill building) may be suggested after testing the drivers in order to reduce and maintain reductions of driving anger, aggressive anger expression, aggression, risky behavior, and general anger.

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DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL WEB PLATFORM FOR COACHING ACTIVITIES IN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

The classic educational process organized in universities becomes quite rigid in the current pandemic context, which claims especially online activities, with students who increasingly feel the need to be guided and helped. In this respect, the students have to be supported through tutoring and mentoring activities, dedicated mainly to 1st-year students with a high risk of dropout. The tutoring, coaching, and mentoring activities take time and the related effort for the tutor is quite high. On the other hand, the need to benefit from such activities is certain, requiring the identification of proper ways for students to have access to counseling activities, in which the effort of the counselors is not overwhelming. A viable environment would be the setting-up and the maintaining of a dedicated web platform, specially designed for such purposes. This platform facilitates coaching activities for a larger number of users, compared to face-to-face meetings. Also, the students can be counseled on topics that do not directly involve the educational process but are associated with it. This paper aims to summarize the current theoretical perspectives concerning online coaching in higher education, as a support strategy for students who experience difficulties, to prevent early school leaving, highlighting the characteristics and effective methodological approach related to this process.

Keywords: *academic coaching, online coaching, web-platform, mentoring, counseling, open schooling project*;

INTRODUCTION

Education represents a complex and dynamic process that reflects the rapid changes in the social, economic, cultural environment, which undergoes permanent transformations and adaptations in an attempt to form competent individuals, with harmoniously developed personalities, able to successfully face the challenges of the future.

In the actual society, education can no longer be conceived without the benefits offered by the integration of new technology into the didactic demarches. The pandemic generated unanticipated educational models and solutions, in a short time, teachers and specialists in education exploring multiple solutions for achieving the best results in the educational process, some of them becoming effective in the context of teaching and learning exclusively online. The analysis, design, and implementation of online learning and related supporting tools are essential for any academic community focused on students' cognitive, social and emotional needs.

Among the most common problems encountered by students (mainly in the first year of study) - which can lead to demotivation, failure or even dropping out of school -, there can be mentioned: the difficulties of adaptation to the specificity of higher education, in terms of the pace of teaching-learning and information management (Sava et al., 2015), dissatisfaction related to motives and expectations, marginalization, emotional preparation and poor academic skills, inability to manage the workload, independent study and responsibility for one's own learning (Raftu, 2018), stress, anxiety, learning difficulties, problems concerning communication and relationships with colleagues, feelings of isolation, rejection, bullying and others; thus, the intervention of teachers (tutoring, mentoring), but also the involvement of the older students (volunteering) or the existence of academic counseling services, represent solutions that can reduce or prevent multiple problems in universities. As an example, at "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University of Iași, a counseling service was set up based on the involvement of teachers and volunteer students (https://www.fssp.uaic.ro/studenti/anunturi/probleme-la-facultate-sau-acasa).

In the face-to-face or online format, such support initiatives, carried out at the institutional level, may mediate the communication process between students or student-teachers, facilitating the transition from one educational context to another, with a high level of difficulty. Orientation, familiarization of students with the academic services, proper immersion in the university environment (organizational, administrative, library etc.) or in the educational activities (teaching, learning, assessment, methods and techniques of intellectual work specific to higher education, selection of courses etc.) require coherent institutional support (Sava et al., 2015).

A recommended solution is offered by a web platform for online coaching, as a tool that generates social impact, in order to develop a virtual community of students to help each other on topics with a high level of expertise, but also to share common problems and optimal solutions, to benefit from advice and guidelines from tutors, coaches or mentors.

The student's identity and status gradually crystallize when he/she feels that belongs to a learning community when each person is appreciated, valued, and in addition, the quality of interactions with others generates satisfaction, fulfillment, and self-esteem (Maher & Macallister, 2013).

1. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND RELATED LITERATURE

According to Cambridge Dictionary, coaching represents "*the job or activity of providing training for people or helping to prepare them for something*", even, in a general sense, the coaching describes "*the process used to transport people from where they are, to where they want to be*" (Hartnady, 2011, p.1). On the other hand, there are multiple definitions of the coaching concept. By example, the *Association for Coaching* states that coaching is "*a collaborative, solution-focused, result-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and person growth of the coachee* (*client*)".

Although being associated with sports, in recent years, the area of coaching has covered various fields, so today we meet *life coaching*, *sports coaching*, *health coaching*, *financial coaching*, and *career coaching* (Team FME, 2013).

The roots of coaching can be found in antiquity, in Socrates' dialectic method of inquiry - *the Socratic method* (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018), while modern coaching appeared in the '70s, as a continuation of the ideas promoted by *the Human Potential Movement*.

The first work on coaching was directed by Timothy Gallwey (*The Inner Game of Tennis*) and summarizes the working principles of the sports coaches, as well as how those principles can be transferred from sports to other sectors of life, to facilitate the achieving of goals (International Mentoring Group, 2020).

The process of personal coaching is based on the principles of *positive psychology* and *humanistic psychology*, which start from the premise that people are inherently good and able to direct their lives towards self-fulfillment and creativity, driven by the tendency to self-fulfillment or self-realization (Ben-Yehuda, 2015).

The coaching process helps clients define and achieve their professional and personal goals faster and easier. Coaching differs from other types of counseling methods: it uses elements of management, counseling, monitoring, mentoring, psychology, and training programs. It involves working between coach and coachee for creating changes.

A. Opre (2020) argues that a coach fulfills the following roles:

• Facilitates the exploration of the client needs, motivations, skills, and cognitive abilities;
• Facilitates real, lasting, and positive changes;
• Observes, listens, questions;
• Uses questions to identify solutions;
• Supports and facilitates goal setting and evaluation;
• Encourages the commitment toward action;
• Maintains a positive, supportive climate based on unconditional acceptance.

In education, coaching was introduced about three decades ago, as a strategy/method that met the needs to shape the teacher-student relationship in a positive way, such as that between a trainer and his/her players (De Meulenaere, 2013 apud Opre (coord.), 2020).

In *Academic Coaching Manual* (Learning Assistance Tomas Rivera Center, 2016), *academic coaching* is defined as "*the one-on-one process of helping a student identify his or her study strengths and needs and assisting them in building general, transferrable skills for use throughout their academic career and beyond*". The coaches offer support to students concerning time management and the achievement of educational goals, based on an individualized action/intervention plan.

The concept of *academic coaching* refers to a proactive and receptive relationship between teachers and students, which aims to achieve visions, desires, or educational goals, for the achievement of success in learning. In this relationship, the teacher fulfills less the role of formal instruction and more the role of coach (Barkley, 2010). The foundation of academic coaching is represented by the attitudes and methods that teachers *take* from the models approached by coaches. Traditional practices are thus combined with elements of social assistance, developmental psychology, sports, educational psychology, and even neurosciences, for building an authentic connection between student and coach. Academic coaches need to understand the student's experiences and feelings, to provide the clearest guidance, the most appropriate strategies (individualized), and related methods to meet their needs. The main skills that a coach must have are oriented on communication, ability to focus on goals, active listening, ability to ask meaningful questions, provide *non-judgmental* feedback, empathy, fine intuition.

Cormier & Hackney (1993 apud *Academic Coaching Manual*, 2016) resume the skills necessary for a good coach:

• self-awareness and understanding;
• good psychological health;
• open-mindedness;
• objectivity;
• competence;

• trustworthiness;
• interpersonal attractiveness.

In schools or universities, the coach role can be performed by teachers or even students, in certain situations, but also by school counselors (Snyder et al., 2015). In academic coaching, the person who performs coaching activities does not offer solutions to mental or emotional problems (Opre (coord.), 2020). Academic coaching starts from the following assumption: the levels of success and retention are reduced and could be improved through appropriate intervention and changes in the teaching style. The better a teacher knows his/her students, the better he/she can respond to their educational and academic needs. Academic coaching has demonstrated positive relationships with college students' academic engagement and performance (Martinez, 2015; Snyder et al., 2015). Student retention and lower early dropout rates are a common goal of policymakers and university teachers (Barkley, 2010).

The academic coaching can be organized face-to-face, but also in the online format. According to Stenbom (2015, p. 4), *online coaching* is "*an inquiry-based learning activity where a person gets support on a specific subject from a more knowledgeable person, using the Internet*".

During the pandemic, online academic coaching was used in many educational institutions, through *online* (*web*) *platforms* specifically designed for this purpose, as a way to support students to overcome barriers related to learning performance, amplified by the pandemic context. Guetzoian (2021) presents - in an implementation guide for higher education -, suggestions related to who can serve as an academic coach, aspects concerning training and coaching topics, logistical considerations for the online environment, but also a series of recommendations for future research on online academic coaching. Lee et al. (2020) show that, following the application of an online coaching program, there have been significant improvements in the academic performance of students as beneficiaries, and an increasing number of individuals who proactively use the resources of the coaching program, with the view to optimize the learning process.

2. COACHING VERSUS MENTORING

In many contexts, *coaching* and *mentoring* are seen as similar processes, or as interchangeable concepts, because the border between both activities is not particular delimited, their value being obvious. According to Lofthouse et al. (2010), mentoring is "*a structured, sustained process for supporting professional learners through significant career transitions*". At the same time, specialist coaching "*is a structured, sustained process for enabling the development of a specific aspect of a professional learner's practice*". The differences between those processes are synthesized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Comparison between coaching and mentoring (Lofthouse et al., 2010)*

Coaching	Mentoring
aching is usually focused on professional logue designed to aid the coachee in eloping specific professional skills to ance their teaching repertoire.	ntoring usually takes place at significant eer events, such as to support induction or ing on new professional roles.
teachers, it often supports experimentation h new classroom strategies.	
aches are not normally in positions of line	has an element of „gatekeeping", and the

nagement concerning their coachee.	ntor is almost always someone more senior in organization.
aching for enhancing teaching and learning is normally explicitly linked to a career nsition.	ere is often an organizational motive for the cess; for example, succession planning.
e focus of the coaching is usually selected by coachee and the process provides portunities for reflection and problem solving both coach and coachee.	some cases, there is a requirement that the ntor provides documentary evidence of the ntoring process and its outcomes; for an mple demonstrating that the participant in ntoring has met certain competencies.

In the *Principles of Coaching. Coaching Skills* (2013), a distinction is made between *coach*, *trainer*, *mentor*, and *counselor*, and the activities subsumed to each role. It is also necessary to make a delimitation between coaching and counseling - processes that in many respects, are similar, but with particular aspects that distinguish them. Thus, in both cases, a person (coach or counselor) actively and empathetically listens to the client, involving one-to-one interaction, confidentiality, and meaningful conversations (Van Nieuwerburgh & Allaho, 2018). The role of the coach involves full support in setting the goals and plans for the future, while the counselor provides support in solving complex psychological problems that appeared in the (recent) past. So, one is focusing on the future, the other is focusing on the past.

3. COACHING PRINCIPLES

Coaching, as a process that follows the evolution of the individual and the activation of human potential, is constantly evolving and is expanding in more and more areas of life. Like any activity having a clear purpose, coaching involves a series of key principles that guide the entire process to achieve the expected results. Those principles have proved to be necessary and useful over time, intrinsically regulating the whole activity. In this respect, the coaching principles target three main directions (figure 1):

- coach's role;
- coachee's role;
- coaching environment.

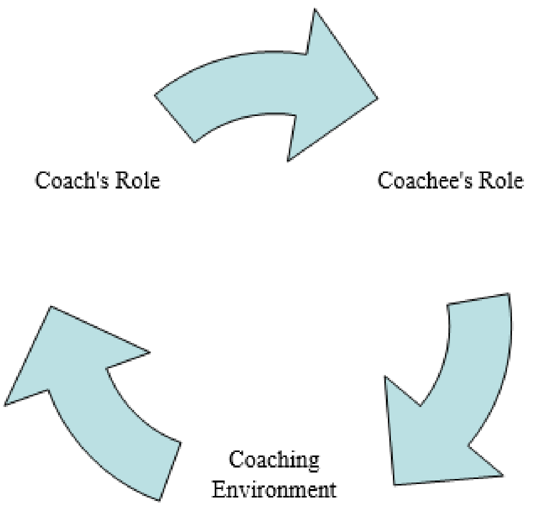

Figure 1. *Directions targeted by the coaching principles*
(source: http://fbia-academy.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/fme-coaching-skills-models-1-1.pdf)

The coaching principles are summarized by Hemphill (2012) in Table 2.

Table 2. *Principles of coaching (Hemphill, 2012)*

ple-Manhattan's Four ars of Coaching	n Whitmore's Nature Coaching	ıra Whitworth's Four rnerstones	ıly Martin's Coaching fined
The coach is non-ectional	*Building the client's areness*	*Client is naturally ative and whole*	*Should be focused irely on results*
The coach is non-gmental	*Building the client's ponsibility (for their ughts and actions)*	*Agenda comes from nt*	*nvolves resolving flict between desires l values/beliefs*
The client has the wer	*Building the client's f-belief*	*Coach dances at the ment*	*About empowering the nt to act*
nvolves intuition by coach		*Addresses the client's ole life*	

According to *Principles of Coaching. Coaching Skills* (2013), for the coach is recommended to follow the following principles:
• Believe the coachee is capable;
• Non-judgmental attitude and behavior;
• Commit to ongoing support.

The role of the beneficiary (coachee) is oriented on setting his/her agenda and personal goals that he/she wants to achieve and related priorities; the coachee must also be actively engaged, and take responsibility for all the steps undertaken in the coaching process.

The principles related to the coaching environment are:
• Behave at all times as equals;
• Coachee is seen as a *whole person*;
• Relation is open, based on truth and trust.

Simmons et al. (2017) summarize the values that guide the academic coaching process in the format of recommendations:

• Encourage students to be self-reflective and to explore their strengths, skills, challenges, and goals;
• To believe that every student can succeed;
• Treat each student with respect and care;
• Help students increase their well-being and academic performance;
• Help students develop their basic academic skills;
• Assist students in planning the process of achieving goals;
• Develop students' confidence in their abilities (self-efficacy), to achieve academic success;
• Help students maintain the motivation needed to take the steps that lead to the targeted results.

4. METHODS AND TECHNIQUES FOR ONLINE ACADEMIC COACHING

As a general process, coaching is an approach that involves the following steps (Wasik, 1984 apud Opre (coord.), 2020):

• Problem identification - *What is the aspect I intend to change?*
• Goal Selection - *What do I want?*
• Generating alternatives - *What can I do?*
• Consequence analysis - *What could happen?*
• Decision making - *What is my decision?*
• Decision implementation
• Decision evaluation - *Did it work?*

The *Academic Coaching Manual* (2016) presents a series of coaching methods and techniques, structured on topics specific to client needs:

• successful general learning strategies;
• goal-setting strategies;
• strategies and techniques designed for improving concentration and memory;
• note-taking methods and strategies;
• stress and anxiety management;
• test and exams preparation strategies & study techniques;
• textbook reading methods & strategies;
• time management & procrastination;
• motivation development strategies.

In the coaching activity, one of the most known and used tools is represented by the *G.R.O.W. technique* (Whitmore, 2002), which means:

• *Goal* - the purpose of the session - short, medium or long term;
• *Reality* - the perspective on reality, current situation;
• *Options* - strategies and alternatives for action;
• *What* - what will be done, when, by whom, and with whom?

Opre et al. (2020) propose a *model* for setting the goals in coaching (Table 3).

Table 3. *Model for goals set in the coaching process (Opre et al., 2020)*

objective is...	
at exactly do I want?	
ere and with whom do I want to achieve my goal?	
en do I want to fulfill it? What will be different after illing it? How I will feel then?	
w will I realize that I have achieved my goal?	
at resources are needed to achieve the goal?	
o can help me for achieving my goal?	
at have I learned from previous experiences that I can on and help?	
at were the resources I needed then (time, rpersonal relationships etc.)?	
at steps are needed for achieving my goal?	

5. DESIGNING THE FACILITIES AND BASIC FEATURES OF AN ONLINE COACHING PLATFORM

In order to facilitate the student's access to academic coaching activities in the pandemic context (but not only), the setting-up of an online coaching platform appears as an opportune solution, having multiple advantages. Depending on the purpose for which the students request coaching sessions, the platform has to allow the selection of the area of interest, so that the student can be quickly directed to the topic or topics that are the object of his/her concerns (e.g. for discovering their learning style or how to learn effectively, how to take notes during the courses etc.).

The platform must be intuitive, easy to be used also by students who do not have highly developed digital skills or exploration skills. It must be attractive, stimulate the interest, curiosity, and satisfaction of the coachees. Another condition refers to the efficiency of the platform, and from this perspective, it must provide the main basic functions that mediate the coach-coachee connection:

• *before* the coaching session: scheduling the meeting, choosing a coach, selecting the issue for which the coaching session is requested, selecting the duration, choosing a meeting option (face-to-face or online) etc.;

• *during* the online coaching session: offering access to various resources, materials, facilitating the application of real-time methods, techniques, and tools (questionnaires, interviews etc.);

• *after* the coaching session: scheduling for the next meeting, providing feedback, recommendations, suggestions, useful links with other online platforms or resources, personalized post-test analysis, planning activities, individualized action/intervention plan etc.

In addition, the platform must allow the facilitating of communication in groups, with other students (community, sharing opinions, ideas, forum), the access to various information resources or various announcements etc.

The platform must be secure, must guarantee data protection and confidentiality of the whole approach so that students can trust in a professional and correct approach, for his/her benefit.

In order to have a coaching approach with positive results, the conditions related to the setting-up of the platform, high-quality standards must be met, respecting the specific principles of the coaching activity and the norms of ethics and academic professional deontology. At the same time, the coaches must be carefully selected, based on the criteria of competence and responsible assumption of specific roles.

CONCLUSION

The advantages of a coaching approach in universities derive from the fact that the entire process is focused on the person: the student and his/her needs, through building a secure and trustful relationship, in which the personal development can occur naturally and in a positive climate, characterized by sincerity, unconditional acceptance, congruence, empathy (Opre et al., 2020).

Recent studies on the effectiveness of coaching in higher education, as additional support and strategy to improve engagement and academic performance (Robinson & Gahagan, 2010), show benefits in terms of student retention and school dropout prevention, but also at the level of the process of management and control of scientific knowledge. Academic coaching allows students to manage their learning process, through effective planning, achievement, and feedback provided by the coach, when the coach’s questions require reflection and active discussion (Webberman, 2011).

The academic coaching - even organized in an online format - is connected to how teachers can proactively build healthy working relationships with students and, at the same time, student-volunteers, who can also take the role of the coach, and can share authentic values, attitudes, beliefs and important experiences to coachees. In this sense, a powerful basis is set to the creation of an academic community that generates performance, with students who become adaptable, autonomous, competent, confident, able to anticipate and solve problems. In addition, the process of online coaching is motivational and helps students to find and implement solutions, and more, to understand life and what is happening around us.

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BOOK REVIEW

TEOLOGIE ȘI MISIUNE CREȘTINĂ [CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND MISSION]

Bibliotheca Publishing House, Târgoviște, 2019, 536 pages
Author: His Eminence Prof. Dr. NIFON Mihăiță, Archbishop and Metropolitan

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The volume *Teologie și misiune creștină* [Christian Theology and Mission] (2019, 536 p.), edited by Bibliotheca Publishing House/Valahia University Press (Târgoviște), is the result of the academic labor and effort of His Eminence Metropolitan Dr. Nifon, Archbishop of Târgoviște, in his quality of university professor at the Faculty of Orthodox Theology and Educational Sciences, *Valahia* University of Târgoviște, but also in his quality of Patriarchal Exarch for the relations of the Romanian Patriarchate with international Christian institutions and European institutions.

This anniversary volume, edited at 20 years of service of His Eminence in the archiepiscopal see of Târgoviște, includes a series of theological and missiological studies, meant to promote the national culture and history, but also the young generations' education under the aureole of Christian values and treasury of Orthodox culture and spirituality. Realized in a scientific, rigorous, realistic manner and approaching each topic complexly, the studies and research work integrated in this volume present pertinent solutions to sensitive challenges of today's world context: ecological crisis, effects of globalization, economic crisis and sustainable development, spiritual theological grounds related to the concept of democracy, issues concerning migration in Europe, Christian values in politics, the role of young generations in the Church mission etc., offering an objective theological and spiritual answer. Consequently, the works integrated in the volume become true formative and educative beacons for today's society, contributing to the understanding of changes, challenges, limits, but also of opportunities that emerged along with the political, economic, and social changes that take place worldwide through the contemporary process of globalization, by overcoming the cultural and national differences, that inevitably lead to important effects on the medium and long term.

In the first chapter of the volume, entitled "*Theological Beacons for Today*", the specific of the Church mission is presented in the light of the present changes and challenges at the level of human society, globalization being seen as a new missionary paradigm: "*The missionary work has to do with the enculturation process, better said to its continual or dynamic aspect, which* *aims to permanently adapt the Church mission to obtain a maximal receptiveness from those to whom is announced the Evangel of salvation" (p. 9), because, "(...) the Church mission, today, in the context of globalization, is dynamic, adaptive, visionary, open to new and integrative*" (p. 18).

In this complex framework is defined the role of the "*Orthodoxy in the contemporary European context*", as having the mission and power to renew and transfigure the entire existence, offering new perspectives of the dialogue between religion and science, regarding the knowledge of the truth, in a pluralistic culture. After a detailed and profound presentation of the concepts of truth and knowledge, from scientifically and theologically perspectives, the author concludes that "*truth and knowledge are important realities of human existence, serving the aim of life, revealing to everybody a sense, and offering a means of referring to himself/herself as life ultimate realities. (...) Theology founds its truth on the divine Revelation, and the effort of searching for the truth is the person's endeavor to relate with God, the Creator, to understand Him, and to do His will, as a sense of life and means of perfection. For science, the search of the truth means, especially, the examination of God's creation, the observation of its beauty and harmony, the deciphering of its mysterious and hidden meanings, existing in the world*" (p. 46).

In tune with the latest trends, next, the author approaches the topic of "*Christian eco-theology*", affirming "*the need to protect the environment, as part of each of our responsibility, as being created in God's likeness, in solidarity with the creation and turning it to good value as theophanic space*" (p. 65). So, the world (as creation) is the "*only biotopes of salvation*" (p. 66), with "*inestimable value in the accomplishment of the human destiny*" (p. 65). In this respect, there are presented: the biblical foundations of the relationship between individuals and nature, the Holy Fathers' vision regarding the person and the creation, the Christian perspective on ecology, but also the contemporary ecological challenges, concluding that "*Christian ecology offers a profound perspective on the interaction between each person and the world, as space of the divine presence and of deepening of communion among people, but also as the unique environment of the existence of the human being, without which life itself is impossible*".

Other studies included in the first chapter refer to "*Prayer - as a state of normality of the human soul and bridge to God*", to "*The icon - as a pastoral-missionary means specific of Orthodoxy*", but also other "*Orthodox theological, missionary and ecumenical aspects*". The first chapter ends with the work: "*The mission of the Church in the contemporary world in the light of the decisions of the Great and Holy Synod (Crete, June 2016)*".

The second chapter of the volume "*Christian Theology and Mission*" brings together topics having as a central point the idea of ecclesial unity by "*Testimony and service in the inter-Christian dialogue*": the ecumenical dialogue, contemporary priorities of the Orthodox mission, where the author has permanently in view the actual social realities and needs (active involvement of the laity in the ecclesial activity, permanent dialogue with the space of culture and science, amplification of the mission in the urban area, women's implication in the Church life, positive mediatic presence etc.).

His Eminence's capacity of reflection and profound manner of understanding life is highlighted in several topics as: "*the age of the existential void*" (p. 193), "*dilemma of urban society*" (p. 200), culture as a "*reflection of man's deep aspirations*" (p. 267), those being analyzed from the complexity of the philosophical ideas expressed throughout the work, in a style kindling the reader's interest and exhorting him intrinsically for the awakening of conscience, self-analysis, actualization, and accomplishment of the ontological potential.

The topic debated in Chapter Three - "*The joy of announcing Christ's Evangel, source of hope, trust and light for our life and world*" - offers a theological and missionary perspective on poverty; the economic crisis is associated with a crisis of values, and the economy is viewed as a space and opportunity of solidarity and spiritualization for each person: "*The relation between salvation and economic activity is founded, in the Orthodoxy, on an ethical system, based on the theology of our fellow*" (p. 292). The author exhorts to "*change together for a just, sustainable and intelligent economy*" (p. 305): "*The moral and economic crisis characterizing the contemporary society must and can be overcome by truly valuing the human being, by (...) respecting a rigorous and solid ethical and moral discipline, in all domains, and by the creation of an efficient system of responsibilities of decisional factors correlated to the real needs of our society*" (p. 303). "*This perspective puts the person in the center of preoccupations and the care for the person, not the profit or anything like that*" (p. 306). In the same chapter, there are debated topics related to the issue of migrants, diaspora, human dignity and respect, Christian values in politics, and also the role of spirituality in promoting democracy and the culture of prosperity etc.

Chapter Four reunites under the title "*The Church Mission reflected in our national culture and history*", articles on the ample cultural work of the Romanian voivodes and printing activity recorded in the area of Târgoviște, during the 16^{th}-18^{th} centuries.

The last chapter of the volume is dedicated to the religious education of young people, as a pastoral-missionary priority, being highlighted the role of the Church in the Christian training of new generations, the importance of the partnership *school-Church-family,* and the educational challenges addressed to youngers in the contemporary times. "*The educational mission of the Romanian Orthodoxy emphasizes the education of the youngers because spirituality, culture, and education are means by which each person can perfect his/her existence*", His Eminence concludes.

The work is valuable not just for the specialists in the area of Theology, but also for scientists and interested people, as it provides a clear, academic, and applied perspective on nowadays' problems of interest, managing to draw the attention to the authentic Christian values: dialogue and inter-human communion, care for the environment, spirituality and relation with God, training, and education of young generations etc.

From his rich expertise and activity in the service of the Romanian Orthodox Church and theological education, His Eminence Professor Dr. Nifon, Archbishop and Metropolitan, a remarkable personality of the national and international life and culture, shares ideas, reflections, and solutions constituting valuable beacons in education, culture and spiritual training of young people, offering alternative models to the negative transformations of today's world.

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