SEARCHING FOR A BETTER EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: LANGUAGE PLANNING IN COMPETENCY-BASED SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Rozana Rushiti¹
Anila Kananaj²

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The new European school curriculum focuses on innovation, competency-based learning and the integration of technology as ways to increase the quality of education and better prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. This study investigates the effects of implementation of this curriculum, highlighting its benefits and potential challenges, especially in relation to the standard language.

Theoretical Framework: The new European pre-university curriculum is explored in interdisciplinary approach, integrating the latest theories in teaching methodology with language planning and technology. Synthesizing the existing literature serves as a prerequisite for the analysis performed on the empirical research.

Methodology: The impact of the implementation of the competence-based curriculum in Albanian school education are analyzed theoretically and empirically, emphasizing the advantages and shortcomings compared to the previous curriculum.

Findings: The increase in the quality of school education is evident with the implementation of the new European curriculum, which prioritizes student-centered learning by incorporating technology into different learning scenarios. As shown by international evaluations such as Pisa, slow steps have been made in the national curriculum, which calls for further reforms by the educational authorities.

Research Practical and Social Implication: The new national curriculum improves student outcomes and aligns with wider educational goals within the EU, influencing national identity and global social cohesion, which are important research areas.

Originality/Value: This study values the competency-based curriculum as a necessity for preparing European students for a globally competitive world, pointing out some areas for improvements.

Keywords: Pre-University Education, Curriculum, Competences, Technology, Language Planning.

EM BUSCA DE UM MELHOR SISTEMA EDUCACIONAL: PLANEJAMENTO LINGUÍSTICO NO CURRÍCULO ESCOLAR BASEADO EM COMPETÊNCIAS

RESUMO

Objectivo: O novo currículo escolar europeu centra-se na inovação, na aprendizagem baseada em competências e na integração da tecnologia como formas de aumentar a qualidade da educação e preparar melhor os alunos para os desafios do século XXI. Este estudo investiga os efeitos da implementação deste currículo, destacando seus benefícios e potenciais desafios, especialmente em relação ao idioma padrão.

Enquadramento Teórico: O novo currículo pré-universitário europeu é explorado numa abordagem interdisciplinar, integrando as mais recentes teorias em metodologia de ensino com planeamento linguístico e tecnologia. A síntese da literatura existente serve como pré-requisito para a análise realizada na pesquisa empírica.

¹ University of Tirana, Faculty of History and Philology, Tirana, Albania. E-mail: rozana.rushiti@unitir.edu.al Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3974-9371
² Academy of Sciences of Albania, Institute of Linguistics and Literature, Tirana, Albania. E-mail: anila.kananaj@asa.edu.al Orcid: https://orcid.org/0009-0008-7285-5768
Metodología: O impacto da implementação do currículo baseado em competências na educação escolar albanesa é analisado teoricamente e empiricamente, enfatizando as vantagens e deficiências em comparação com o currículo anterior.

Constatações: O aumento da qualidade da educação escolar é evidente com a implementação do novo currículo europeu, que prioriza a aprendizagem centrada no aluno, incorporando a tecnologia em diferentes cenários de aprendizagem. Como mostram avaliações internacionais como o Pisa, foram dados passos lentos no currículo nacional, o que exige novas reformas por parte das autoridades educativas.

Implicações práticas e sociais da investigação: O novo currículo nacional melhora os resultados dos alunos e alinha-se com objetivos educativos mais amplos na UE, influenciando a identidade nacional e a coesão social global, que são importantes áreas de investigação.

Originalidade/Valor: Este estudo valoriza o currículo baseado em competências como uma necessidade para preparar os estudantes europeus para um mundo globalmente competitivo, apontando algumas áreas para melhorias.

Palavras-chave: Educação Pré-Universitária, Currículo, Competências, Tecnologia, Planejamento Lingüístico.
1 INTRODUCTION

Education-related language planning typically focuses on creating the greatest possible educational system for the people living in a particular community. The normative language attitudes and the conviction that the community's language is a valuable tool for communication and a cultural asset serve as the foundation for work in this sector. There are various paths one might take in their quest for an improved educational system. Translation of current educational systems and materials into a specific community's language is one of them. In postcolonial contexts, this is the method used to translate systems that were imported into European languages into equivalent systems that are created using the newly adopted official language. Examining and changing the current educational system is an additional strategy.

In environments with long-standing national education systems, this is frequently the case. It might also involve the creation of new vocabulary for use in the language as well as the development of terminology, approaches, and procedures related to the application element. This is typically carried out when new concepts or problems from the global context are incorporated into the educational framework.

Science defines planning as the process of making predictions about future behavior. It entails establishing objectives and creating the plans necessary to meet them. One kind of this broad idea that pertains to the growth and development of a language is language planning. A language policy that is intended to discourage the usage of certain codes or variations inside the educational system is implemented by governing institutions. A strong way to boost a variety's functions, disseminate knowledge about it, and give it status is through an efficient educational system, which also speeds up the variety's adoption and acquisition. (Smith & Johnson 2017; Johnson 2018; Smith 2019; Martínez & Pérez 2019).

The ongoing preservation and acquisition of the Albanian standard in order to satisfy and address societal demands is one of the goals of language planning. The school is crucial to achieving this goal, as it is one of each subject's primary objectives and has a significant demand. While the media, various publications, and other factors that interact with the standard language must be acknowledged and supported by the school, they also have their own missions related to the so-called "language education" of the new generation, or its ideo-cultural formation.

The Albanian language curriculum is compared to other programs to determine which one best demonstrates the use of the standard language and what issues pupils have with it. This curriculum is intended to be thorough, according to European standards from preschool all the
way through university. To guarantee a uniform educational experience across national boundaries, it is critical that all European schools adhere to the same curriculum (European Commission).

In this regard, the linguist's contribution is significant both at the macro level of language planning efforts and at the micro level of codification. Linguists participate in coordinated efforts to disseminate the standardized variation, accelerating its rate of spread, in addition to corpus planning and status or prestige planning. This type of work is also known as "learning planning." It is often referred to as language-in-education planning since the most popular strategy for fostering language acquisition is the utilization of the educational system (Holmes 2015).

In general, these attempts to impede language acquisition are referred to as "learning planning." In general, these attempts to impede language acquisition are referred to as "learning planning." One can approach language planners for guidance on a variety of topics, like: What actions should an organization take to promote language usage, acceptance, and knowledge? Which techniques for teaching languages work the best? Which resources ought to be utilized, and how ought the programs to be assessed? Which curriculum would work better, etc.

Methodists (Gjokutaj 2017) state that this modeling, which combines all the elements—communicative habits of speaking, reading, and writing as well as language knowledge—has been accepted. This is in contrast to other principles, like the one with linear order or the one based on the principle concentric, which when combined greatly enhances the structure and content of programs for native speakers.

According to Gjokutaj's (2007) record of Albanian language programs from the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, phonetics and lexicology were the first topics covered, followed by morphology and syntax in grades VII and VIII. The concentric principle, which calls for presenting the content in a fashion that would allow it to be revisited later in the school year or in higher grades, but at a more advanced scientific level and with more didactic emphasis, was combined with the linear principle in the 1975 syllabus. The recapitulation stands out in these years' texts as a criterion that influences students' habits and knowledge acquisition. The exercises, assignments, and other written works pertaining to the subjects of Albanian language, reading, and literature at school were enhanced by the texts and programs of those years, which gave greater space to the applied side of the topic.

The structure of language programs nowadays is based on a pattern identified in the way lines and sublines relate to one another (González & Fernández 2018; Rodríguez & García 2020; López & Pérez 2021; Garsia 2022). In order to fulfill the objective of language in
education, learning grammar through texts written in Albanian creates a cyclical loop that is established by speaking, writing, spelling, reading, and grammar in relation to one another. Through the understanding of inter- and intra-subject integration, language learning has advanced to the point where students studying Albanian are able to practice their grammar skills through spoken and written sections, in addition to learning the language's lexicology, morphology, syntax, and phonetics. It is true that there is discussion about a better model and clear advancements, but it is also necessary to acknowledge that the pupils' language development falls short of expectations.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

After decades of Danish dominance, language planning, or "language planning" as it is known in English, was first used by Einar Haugen in 1959 (Beci 2002) to denote the state's participation in the standardization of Swedish through spelling regulations and other means, with the goal of forging a national identity. Among the principal linguists who employed this phrase consistently and set the groundwork for the current theory of language planning are Haugen (1959; 1966) and Kloss (1969). Haugen outlined the fundamental steps involved in developing a standard in a traditional (monolingual) society, including choosing the code to be created, codifying, and processing it for usage in various contexts, winning over the community to the standard, and elevating its status.

In contrast, status planning and the linguistic corpus are more for theoretical ease of perception, even though in practice they are interconnected and have numerous effects on one another. Kloss, using this term or concept, established two significant divisions that still exist today (Derhemi 2022). Dedicated to the language issues of emerging nations, Fishman, Ferguson, and Das Gupta's collaborative work "Language problems of Developing Nations" was released in 1968. According to J. Fishman, language planning consists solely of putting a language policy into practice. While they are connected and have multiple consequences on each other in practice, status planning and the linguistic corpus are primarily for theoretical ease of perception. By employing this phrase or idea, Kloss created two important divisions that endure to this day (Derhemi 2022). Fishman, Ferguson, and Das Gupta's joint book "Language problems of Developing Nations" was published in 1968 and was devoted to the linguistic challenges of emerging nations. J. Fishman claims that language planning is limited to implementing a language policy.
The prevailing view of today is that these two ideas are dependent on one other. Ismajli (1998) asserts that the little differences in meaning between these two ideas, which are frequently employed interchangeably, set them apart. Cavlet (1988) is cited to bolster the notion that "language planning represents the research and implementation of the necessary tools for the effectuation of a certain language policy, whereas language policy is the totality of choices in terms of language and national life" (Ismajli 1998: 19). It turns out that language planning is tied to the standards in perspective for a common language sufficient for communication of a community recognized as a nation, whereas language policy is more diverse since it encompasses a nation's culture and traditions.

Milorad Radovanović (Ibrahim 2019) links language planning to "action on language," in accordance with the two notions' identical meanings, while he links "action on language" to language policy (Radovanović 2004) of a nation-state. From what we have provided, it is clear that language planning plays an interesting combination of linguistic, political, and social factors in the formation of the language standard (Holmes 2015: 129). Terms like "language in education planning" (LEP) (Obaidul & Maksud 2022), which is a subtype of "language policy and planning" (LPP), are used to define the relationship between language planning and education. LPP has become especially significant even though its use is restricted because of its connection to education alone. This is because LPP is typically used to implement more expansive social language policies.

The study of the Albanian language is a major component of curricula at educational institutions. This subject (ASCAP 2015) is included in the field "Languages and communication" in the current curriculum, along with First Foreign Language and Second Foreign Language. Its goal is to foster linguistic and literary development, which is the cornerstone of students' intellectual, social, and aesthetic development as well as their emotional development. Students in this discipline can utilize language to meet the expectations of society and the work market, as well as to communicate and pursue personal interests. Many years later, the Albanian language is taught as a stand-alone subject in the "Languages and Communication" field in Albania's higher secondary education. It develops over the course of three years in Lower Secondary Education, where grammar, spelling, and punctuation rules are integrated with the study of various narrative, descriptive, argumentative, instructive, and informative texts (PGJSH 10).

The curriculum for the Albanian language is traditionally built around two main areas of study: communicative habits, which makes up 65% of the curriculum and includes the sub-areas of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and language knowledge, which makes up...
35% of the curriculum. This ratio has been flipped since, prior to 2000, language knowledge—as opposed to oral and written communicative knowledge, etc.—accounted for a higher portion of the scheduled teaching hours in the previous programs. In today's programs, oral and written language development is handled separately. It seeks to meet certain objectives and specifications pertaining to students' oral and writing language proficiency. Students practice speaking in accordance with the communicative context of their interlocutors and the nature of their interaction with them from the second to the ninth grade, and then in secondary education. In actuality, students learn and gain language information (mostly grammatical knowledge) for the purpose of communicating, speaking in a particular setting or regarding a certain topic, writing to someone, describing something, demonstrating, or engaging in proper and right debate. Additionally, this curriculum attempts to educate pupils for a global economy that is competitive and is based on the European curriculum.

But there are issues with this curriculum as well. With regard to the structure of the Albanian language, we must naturally inquire: Does the student need to learn the language and then apply it in accordance with the communicative context and stylistic elements? Given that the communication habits line in the program is the most densely packed, is the program's percentage of grammatical knowledge enough in relation to the primary line of this curriculum?

In order to raise the level of acquisition of the standard language, this paper aims to present not only how these grammatical knowledges are spread and distributed within the framework of language planning in the textbook programs of the 9-year cycle and the secondary cycle, but also how linguistic knowledge—especially those related to grammar—is treated generally in these programs.

**3 METHODS**

This paper's methodology is based on an examination of the competence-based European pre-university curriculum, which has been adopted in Albania and modified to meet the requirements of the pre-university education system there. It is also contrasted with the earlier curriculum that was used in the nation's educational system.

There are parallels drawn within the new curriculum itself between how it is being implemented in Albania, the Balkans, and other European or American nations. Examining the new European pre-university curriculum, it is clear that it is strongly aligned with the most recent theories of technology, language planning, and teaching practice.
The theoretical framework is based on the body of previously published research in this area, which acts as a guide and foundation for the thorough examination and interpretation of the subject, particularly with regard to the conclusions and suggestions made at the conclusion of the work. A theoretical and empirical analysis is conducted to examine the consequences of the new curriculum's implementation in Albania's pre-university education system. The merits and disadvantages of the new curriculum are noted, along with its differences from the previous curriculum and those of other nations in the Balkans, Europe, and the USA.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the data gathered, reading seems to be one of the core subjects covered in the mother tongue curriculum and takes up a considerable amount of teaching time. Students who read regularly will develop the information, routines, attitudes, and values necessary for success in both school and life. According to Holloway (1999), having good reading habits is essential for both being relevant in life and succeeding academically inside an educational institution. According to Elwert (2001), reading is essential to modern society's institutions and is significant for each person as well as the nation's economy.

4.1 LANGUAGE PLANNING AND ALBANIAN SCHOOL CURRICULUM

It is clear from the program breakdown, which includes the lines and sub-lines for grades II–IX, that the development of communication skills takes up 905 teaching hours, of which 592 are devoted to reading, 171 to writing, and 142 to speaking and listening. 460 teaching hours, or 27.3% of the total teaching time, are devoted to linguistic information, of which 63% are devoted to morphological and syntactic knowledge (or 33.9% to morphology and 30% to syntax, respectively).
It is acknowledged that learning one's mother tongue is about using the language, not about mastering it as a system. However, issues like: Have we succeeded in achieving it? What is the current state of affairs?

What can be done to help the student absorb and assimilate this information as effectively as possible?

Is there enough room in the curriculum of today to accomplish the necessary goals?

The Albanian Ministry of Education and Sports (MAS 2014) reorganized the language curriculum in particular as well as the school curriculum overall in 2014, emphasizing the importance of providing students with a range of global competencies, from digital skills to communication abilities. The European school curriculum brought about a dramatic revolution, with a new focus on innovation, competence-based learning, and the integration of technology. Legal modifications were made to the curriculum framework, based on this curriculum. This shift from teaching with objectives to competency-based and student-centered teaching signifies a fundamental reassessment of how education may better prepare students for the possibilities and challenges of the twenty-first century. The curriculum offers a variety of learning opportunities to help students develop their social, cultural, intellectual, and civic skills. It does this by moving the emphasis from teacher-centered instruction of subject matter to student-centered learning environments.

The primary objective of the current curricular framework, which serves as the primary guide for developing and implementing the pre-university education curriculum in Albania, is

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Table 1

*Organization of the mother tongue curriculum*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lines/grades</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Development of communicative skills</em></td>
<td>180 h</td>
<td>130 h</td>
<td>78 h</td>
<td>95 h</td>
<td>100 h</td>
<td>105 h</td>
<td>102 h</td>
<td>115 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening and Speaking</td>
<td>30 h</td>
<td>15 h</td>
<td>26 h</td>
<td>15 h</td>
<td>14 h</td>
<td>14 h</td>
<td>15 h</td>
<td>13 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>120 h</td>
<td>90 h</td>
<td>26 h</td>
<td>65 h</td>
<td>70 h</td>
<td>75 h</td>
<td>66 h</td>
<td>80 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>30 h</td>
<td>25 h</td>
<td>26 h</td>
<td>15 h</td>
<td>16 h</td>
<td>16 h</td>
<td>21 h</td>
<td>22 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Linguistic knowledges</em></td>
<td>82 h</td>
<td>60 h</td>
<td>45 h</td>
<td>55 h</td>
<td>65 h</td>
<td>60 h</td>
<td>43 h</td>
<td>50 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>26 h</td>
<td>2 h</td>
<td>11 h</td>
<td>19 h</td>
<td>22 h</td>
<td>21 h</td>
<td>11 h</td>
<td>18 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphology</td>
<td>35 h</td>
<td>20 h</td>
<td>11 h</td>
<td>19 h</td>
<td>22 h</td>
<td>21 h</td>
<td>11 h</td>
<td>17 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexicology</td>
<td>5 h</td>
<td>5 h</td>
<td>5 h</td>
<td>8 h</td>
<td>6 h</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>5 h</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthography</td>
<td>15 h</td>
<td>15 h</td>
<td>14 h</td>
<td>10 h</td>
<td>10 h</td>
<td>9 h</td>
<td>13 h</td>
<td>10 h</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language culture</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>2 h</td>
<td>3 h</td>
<td>3 h</td>
<td>4 h</td>
<td>3 h</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note no. 1.* Data in Table 1 were retrieved from: https://www.ascap.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Korniza-Kurrikulare-31.07.2014.pdf.
for students to acquire critical abilities. The goal of this new curriculum approach is to provide students with a solid foundation of knowledge that will serve them well throughout their lives. This includes teaching them digital competences as well as thinking, communication, and expression skills. Through the creation and development of its sector-specific competencies—listening to texts, speaking to communicate and learn, reading various texts, writing for personal use, and fair and functional language use—the "Languages and Communication" field achieves this goal.

From kindergarten through grade IX, all curricular levels include instruction in Albanian. The structure of the mother tongue curriculum for grades III and IV is shown here.

Table 2
Organization of the mother tongue curriculum according to the competency-based curriculum, Lower Secondary Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competences/Grades</th>
<th>Listening to different texts</th>
<th>Speaking to communicate and learn</th>
<th>Reading literary and non-literary texts</th>
<th>Writing for personal and functional purposes</th>
<th>Correct use of language</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sixth grade</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh grade</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level III</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth grade</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth grade</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level IV</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note no. 2. Data in Table 2 were retrieved from: https://www.ascap.edu.al/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Korniza-Kurrikulare-31.07.2014.pdf.

In the third and fourth grades, students listen, read, and comprehend a variety of texts, draw conclusions, and evaluate these texts (oral or written); they also express their opinions in discussions and group projects in a clear and accurate manner, depending on the context; discover information from the media and the Internet, evaluate it critically, and use it correctly; understand the various text kinds and their functions, as well as how to create and display various texts; study works of literature from all genres and use them to expand your emotional world; recognize the importance of literature in both national and international cultures; comprehend, interpret, and evaluate literary works as a way to learn about various narratives, interpersonal connections, emotions, values, etc.; employ basic grammatical principles and the standard language both inside and outside of the classroom. Recognize the significance of the Albanian language as a component of the country's culture. In grade III (grades VI, VII), the percentage of students who correctly use language with the necessary understanding in
Searching for A Better Educational System: Language Planning in Competency-Based School Curriculum

morphology, syntax, lexicology and semantics, spelling, phonetics, and phonology is 34.2%; in grade IV (grades VIII, IX), this percentage significantly drops to 31.4%.

The majority of this curriculum's nine years are spent reading texts, both literary and nonliterary. That being said, it is entirely appropriate for the curriculum to emphasize the development of reading skills. Reading benefits the economy as a whole in addition to the individual.

We are able to make trustworthy deductions on the connection between economic growth and human capital thanks to observations like Pisa, Pirls, and others. Reading is now again classified as a distinct subject or area, even in nations like Kosovo as well as England, Finland, Canada, Ireland, Australia, and Scotland that have lately changed their curricula. What is meant by reading is defined in these countries' mother tongue programs. How much of the nine-year curriculum is dedicated to reading instruction, in comparison to other European nations?

Some comparative data between Albania and other European nations, as well as other countries, are provided below.

Table 3

Comparative data between Albania and other European countries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>States/lines</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Linguistic knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Speaking and listening</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Interaction</td>
<td>Reading and writing</td>
<td>Literature and language</td>
<td>Text Understanding</td>
<td>Information management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>Oral communication</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>Speaking</td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Grammar and lexicon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3 indicates that a considerable amount of hours are dedicated to teaching reading in nearly every country. Since these curricula are integrated and carry roughly equal weight throughout the mother tongue development process, they often do not go into detail about the
hourly divides based on lines. Thus, in the mother tongue curriculum, as we saw in the figures above, the reading line takes up 36.7% of the teaching time, or more than 1/3 of it, in contrast to the curricula of other nations, in which the hours for the reading lines are not set.

**Table 4**

*Distribution of reading in today's curriculum*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of hours to read</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total no. of hours</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of hours read</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Reading's significance is further evidenced by the European Commission's definition of communication in the mother tongue, which comprises speaking, listening, reading, and writing, as the first of eight essential skills required of every person for employment, social inclusion, active citizenship, and personal qualification (Educational Council 2006). Throughout the nine-year education curriculum and, for a few years, in the education medium as well, language knowledge is built after the line of reading in our curriculum, in contrast to how it is treated or how many hours it is taught in curricula in other countries.

Additionally, students still struggle with using the language for practical and functional purposes even after the Albanian language subject has been reorganized, improved, and reconceived according to new linguistic and didactic principles. This is true even after the curriculum has been organized in all of its component parts. Functional illiterates fall into this category because they exhibit deficiencies not only in their ability to communicate and convey basic ideas through reading and speaking but also in their critical and analytical language use.

This is even more evident in the discourse that is spoken outside of school auditoriums in the family and social context. In these settings, students are "freed" from responsibilities and rules governing their regular written communication (such as messages sent via phone or social media), and they are more likely to use non-standardized writing styles devoid of habit and free from structural and spelling errors. The degree of language proficiency among pupils, the writing and speaking habits of both them and a significant portion of the Albanian speaking population, is concerning since the acquisition of language knowledge has not developed into a consistent habit of use.
4.2 THE PLACE OF GRAMMAR AND GRAMMATICAL KNOWLEDGE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING

In applied linguistics, the role of grammar in language instruction and learning has generated debate. Language theories lead to differing perspectives. As a crucial component of the language education curriculum in schools, grammar instruction should not be seen as a goal unto itself. Rather, it must be taught alongside proper speaking and writing. Students employ a variety of language learning techniques based on their unique requirements, preferences, and language gaps as well as the program's and curriculum's particular goals (Sánchez & Gaona 2020).

Grammatical knowledge is addressed throughout the entire structure and content of the current Albanian language programs at all levels of study, from the lowest cycle (grade II) to the most advanced above, in Lower Secondary Education, because it plays such a significant role in students' linguistic formation. For students in grades II through IX, morphological and word-formation knowledge makes up the majority of language knowledge, which is then followed by syntax, spelling, lexical information, and language culture. This expansion links the mental growth of this age group to the age development of pupils and their learning opportunities. Although it takes up more time after the reading we discussed before, grammatical knowledge is intimately tied to writing and speaking. A student in grades II through VIII spends 460 hours learning grammar, which he uses in 176 hours of writing and 142 hours of speaking.

The ratio of language knowledge from grades II–IX to general knowledge is as follows:

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades</th>
<th>% of hours for language use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>47.6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>55.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>48.5 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>54.2 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>51.4 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>47.7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>48.6 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It's critical to understand and apply grammar. But, we stress that the issue lies in more than just how much of an emphasis this grammatical information has in a curriculum. Since these programs are based on the idea of the mutual interweaving of lines and sub-lines with each other—that is, the intra- and inter-subject integration principle—which has been in place...
since 2005, we are convinced that the issue also has to do with how and to what extent these linguistic and, more specifically, grammatical knowledge, are taught together, starting in the second grade.

In today's curriculum, not only the recovery but also the other previously mentioned criteria have been concretized and widely implemented. The knowledge that is introduced in the second grade is gradually recovered at a higher level until the theoretical and practical circle of problems is completed through exercises that are essential for each topic or learning concept and are planned as learning standards.

Consequently, the second grade encompasses a comprehensive introduction to the grammar of Albanian, during which the student gains familiarity with nearly all morphology and syntax concepts covered in the previous classes. These concepts include text and sentence, sentence and paragraph, the smallest sentence, affirmative and negative, demonstrative and interrogative sentences, exclamatory sentences, groups of subjects and predicates, and various parts of speech, including nouns, verbs, pronouns, etc., which have been briefly covered and will be revisited in grades III, IV, V, and so forth.

We believe that kids of this age find it challenging to assimilate and learn knowledge because there is so much information presented at once, not to mention that it is integrated both inside and outside of the subject. Furthermore, the 45-minute lessons allocated to them in the classroom provide such a brief amount of time for instruction that it appears as though this knowledge is merely retained year after year and is not adequately addressed both conceptually and practically through exercises.

The construction of programs, the measurement of knowledge, and the extension of all grammatical knowledge in time are what need to be reviewed in light of this phenomenon. After class, the same knowledge is repeated and new knowledge is not given the attention and time it deserves.

We must admit that the methods and techniques of imparting knowledge in texts are fairly moderated in this curriculum. This also holds true for the exercise part, where there are typically 5-7 exercises for each lesson topic. While these exercises have a smaller percentage than in prior texts, it should be noted that these student textbooks also come with workbooks or practice books. There are repetitions even in this portion; frequently, the same needs from previous classes are repeated, like in the exercises for compound sentences in grades VI and VII texts that demand coordination and subordination. We believe that more suitable conditions for drawing in as much attention from kids as possible should be included to this column. One example of this would be the "game" activities that are absent from texts for grades VI and up.
The most recent models of Albanian language programs, those created after the year 2000, exhibit a tendency to emphasize grammar study, approaching it from the functional perspective of standard language learning, beginning with the fundamental syntactic unit—the sentence—which is viewed as a foundation for various grammar topics. How to guarantee the mutual link between syntax and morphology is still a matter of concern, though.

Grammar is evident in the services it provides for language use, but we believe that teaching grammatical knowledge from function to form increases difficulty because students are first exposed to the function of the word—staying focused on the word itself, not its limbs—and are then taught the word's form within the framework of intra-subject to inter-subject integration. This can be observed in the texts of grades II, III, and V, where the morphological categories are treated after the syntactic ones, or in some cases even in the explanation and treatment of them. These texts demonstrate the use of "integrated, intra-subject" concepts, such as the group of the subject and the group verb (in grades VI, VII), the object's dependence on the verb, or even the grade VI texts where the opposite verb names the subject's actions.

Every grammar term in the primary cycle is taught to students so that they can acquire an intuitive understanding of language in relation to reading, writing, and speaking. However, starting in grades II–IX, it is observed that certain terms—such as prefix, determiner, adverbial, auxiliary verb, and subordinating conjunction—are used prematurely in grades II–V (indicative, purposeful, causal, temporal, local, comparative, modal, conditional, derivative, direct and indirect discourse, etc. While it is noted that the amount of terminology increases steadily throughout grades VI through IX, even at the conclusion of this cycle, the student is familiar with a certain set of terms. We believe that there is an excess of terminology even in Lower Secondary Education (VI–IX), particularly in the eighth grade.

It is also noted throughout the textbook review process that certain topics are not covered in accordance with the approved curriculum. Word groups are introduced in one of the grade II texts, even though the program does not specifically address them. However, program topics like number recognition or even ambiguous definitions and formulations—like the adjective "that shows what people, animals, things, places, etc. are like"—are covered in the grade V text more easily understood than in the previous grades.

The preposition is introduced as a term of the oblique opposition with the preposition in grade IV and is treated as part of the lecture in grade V, where personal pronouns are also treated for the first time, despite program. However, the explanation for the group of movable and stable words in the sentence is unclear. In the meantime, different terminology is used for
the same category in different grades, deviating from the norm and making it more challenging to understand these ideas.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The methodical process of raising a language's standard is known as language planning. The usage of a variety is guided by governing institutions through language policies, which are implemented in the educational system and made tangible through the curriculum.

There is a chance that the pre-university education system will be of higher quality thanks to the new European curriculum. The best way to prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century is to restructure the school curriculum overall and the language curriculum in particular, emphasizing the importance of providing students with a range of global competencies, from digital skills to communication.

In every nation, linguistic instruction for kids ought to take precedence over science and technology in the educational system. The curriculum and the texts, which are the students' primary sources of knowledge and are also essential to the success of the native language course, are two aspects that impact how the students develop their language skills.

Because of this, language proficiency should be given the proper weight in the curriculum and should be integrated with the kinds of texts that are defined in the program at an age-appropriate level. This will help the program meet its current obligations as well as those of the future.

The disregard for the linguistic skills of speaking, listening, and reading has also contributed to the issues with pupils' language development.

When it comes to the acquisition of grammatical knowledge, student-centered education has an impact on the assessment and measurement of the foundational knowledge that students possess, which is where the new grammatical concept originates. By teaching grammar, students can link their lifelong learning of discourse and sociolinguistics with their newly acquired grammatical competence. Fluent and correct communication is achieved through the curriculum's integration of grammar and communicative methods in a variety of scenarios.

According to the Council of Europe's recommendations, educational policies aim to give future generations a rational, creative education that is founded on the growth of critical thinking, proper language usage, and consistent application of its standards. Educational institutions must to put more effort into enhancing and modifying the mother tongue
curriculum, with a focus on helping students acquire the writing and speaking abilities that come from using the language—more especially, grammatical understanding.

Though the reforms for its improvement have not been absent from the responsible institutions, the assessment of achievements in the use of the language standard, also measured by international tests such as PISA, has shown that curricula in this subject have moved slowly. According to the PISA statistics, which evaluate students' performance in reading, arithmetic, and science at the age of 15, Albanian pupils' scores are far below the average for the continent.

It is advised to: a) Review the significance of grammatical knowledge in teaching time in all pre-university education, starting from the primary cycle, with the reduction and simplification of grammatical knowledge, replacing it with more topics that serve communicative habits that are also acquired through topics fun and entertaining. This recommendation is based on the implemented curriculum as well as the content of the Albanian language texts. b) Rearranging the way language and literature are integrated, arguing that since Albanian is a language with its unique context, it makes no sense to emulate other languages in this regard and that doing so would be a fruitless experiment (Memushaj 2019). Grammatical competence is lacking as a result of the common text, where language knowledge is unduly stunted in lower secondary education texts. c) Not to impart "dry" grammatical knowledge, divorced from their use in discourse, on the basis of unsuitable elaboration principles—for instance, erroneously applying the idea of concentric sequences. The success of this approach to language distribution and instruction is demonstrated by its integration with the linear principle. d) To enhance the topic curricula and texts in the student's native tongue, guaranteeing a cogent progression of the subject in line with the degree of complexity of the knowledge imparted, the students' age, their prior experience, and the modern European curriculum. e) To add more exercises that focus on the dynamic use of language, getting rid of extraneous vocabulary, improving students' ability to use concrete circumstances, and enhancing their communication competence. f) To raise the standard of teacher preparation and ongoing certification. The degree of instruction and the scientific and professional preparation of the instructor have a significant impact on the students' ability to successfully absorb the information presented in the text.

The mother tongue curriculum must always be in line with the subjects' curricula in European nations as well as any modifications made to these curricula. Naturally, these suggestions are not unfounded. They are derived from nearly a century of empirical research in applied linguistics conducted worldwide, including Albanian studies.
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