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DEVELOPMENT”

FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE
ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON
ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE
- DOCTORAL DISERTATION –
SUMMARY

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ARGUMENT

“When complexity becomes a mystery, when it is made up of subtle elements, when opposite data are found together in the same context, then evaluation becomes necessary. Is a result of a new approach, of a new way of expression? Maybe. But it certainly shows a new way of solving problems. The need of evaluation becomes evident when the essential parts of a puzzle are recognized and the need of hard work replaces the unpleasant feeling of misunderstanding.” (Jean Vogler, *Evaluarea în învățământul preuniversitar*, p. 20)

In every child, no matter his origin, life gives a latent , living force... We have to take the best of it.” (G. Salicis, *apud Jean Vial, Histoire et actualité des méthodes pédagogiques*, 1982, p. 140)

The paper for the doctor’s degree **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE** aims to configure a theoretical and methodological framework of evaluation in teaching Romanian language and literature.

The importance of the subject of formative evaluation lies in its connection with contemporary curricular paradigm, of didactic differentiation and interaction, which aims to form competences and also in the fact that nowadays evaluation is still an exciting field more and more explored, but which has scientific aspects still unrevealed.

Moreover the curricular context reveals the characteristics of a favorable connection teaching – learning – evaluating. “The need of evaluation” is unanimously accepted nowadays for its various integrating educational aspects as part of a functional unit of the system. Thus the subject of formative evaluation is adequate to the theoretical and practical context of the Romanian pre-university school system and our paper comes in the line of research papers that aim to meet these expectations.

In the same way the subject of formative evaluation represents the point where the teaching of Romanian language and literature meets the innovative pedagogical policies which are more and more inciting and numerous. Thus evaluation represents not only a way to connect to the globalizing reality , but also a key to show the specific aspect of Romanian language and literature teaching in the curriculum area, by adapting the pedagogical innovation to the dynamic reality of every aim group and every individual.

The methods of teaching Romanian language and literature are changing nowadays; there are many controversial ways that can become possible sources for research and further studies. It is certain that the competence of argumentation stirs a special interest due to its paradoxical manifestation: its evaluative overestimation when testing the students' knowledge is in strong contrast with the importance given in the curriculum and the alternative Romanian textbooks for high school. Thus the role of formative evaluation of the written and oral argumentative competence of students' own opinions meets the necessity to reduce the controversies around the very problematic curricular content of Romanian language and literature which is not thoroughly studied in the literature from a theoretical and methodological point of view. In this respect our paper aims to meet the expectations of the high school teachers of Romanian by creating lessons meant to form and develop competence and also by facilitating its formative evaluation.

The paper **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE** is divided into four chapters, preceded by an ARGUMENT. The CONCLUSIONS, BIBLIOGRAPHY and THE 54 ANNEXES come at the end.

CHAPTER I, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF DIDACTIC EVALUATION presents the problems of evaluation starting from the difficulty to properly define the term which has become too inflexible to include all its possible meanings. Our theoretical attempt aims not only to impose a new philosophy of evaluation, but to contrast it from related terms examination, appreciation, checking, measuring. The diachronic research of evaluation ends with the paradigmatic connection of formative evaluation which is theoretically delimited in the field of world studies and recent Romanian studies as well. The investigative criterion is represented not by the theoretical contributions which are very coherent when considered separately or integrated in the competence paradigm, but by the practical dimension of the formative evaluation - a rich collection of instruments for evaluation in various forms with

certain valences which have impact on the student's personality by making him the actor of his own evolution, the center of the three-sided pedagogical model that includes teaching – learning – evaluating. CHAPTER I also defines the limits of formative evaluation to make them more visible in further challenges in research.

CHAPTER II, A NEW CONCEPTUAL NETWORK: EVALUATION – SELF-EVALUATION – INTER-EVALUATION – META-EVALUATION uses and evaluates a suggestion of the three-sided pedagogical model previously analysed, which refers to the idea that in active and interactive learning the student's status and role are not the only ones that are reconsidered. In the new model the teacher has a new role which can be sometimes contested but not annulled. From this point of view the paper presents action and interaction not as notions, but as situations in evaluation and inter-evaluation, which are complementary and interfluent in the suggested model a *partnership teacher – student*. First we redefined the term evaluation as anchor-notion in the educational system, with para-systemic and intra-systemic dimensions; then we presented traditional (classical) situations in evaluation, and those correlated to active pedagogy, self-evaluative and inter-evaluative situations. The competence of (self)evaluation, TO LEARN TO SEE, is also defined; without it the students could not gain access to active evaluative status defined in the competence paradigm. This competence enables every student to develop his autonomy, which is the highest form of self-creation.

The interactive situations of evaluation (primary inter-evaluation, co-evaluation, self-referential inter-evaluation, coordinated inter-evaluation) are presented as situations in communication where the teacher, never absent, reduces his evaluative power, by training his students to become more independent in evaluation, because those who study together have to evaluate themselves together.

The new relation between the teacher who evaluates and the student who is evaluated determines not only the search of stronger connections between teaching – learning – evaluating but also the creation of better evaluation procedures – meta-evaluation as the fourth element of the network which is presented in the paper. Didactic meta-evaluation reveals the implicit and explicit self-referential dimension of evaluation which gives meaning and consolidates its formative identity. As a means to evaluate evaluation, the didactic meta-evaluation reaches its goal through various instruments, evaluation syllabus, evaluation norms, specification matrix, marking table, teacher's notebook, meta-evaluation journal, questionnaires etc. After the four notions from the suggested conceptual network are made explicit, Chapter II gives a theoretical and practical substantiation of INTER-EVALUATION

– META-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK, a new way of evaluation, integrated in the network. The working of the two forms of evaluation, inter-evaluation and meta-evaluation is defined in a narrow sense (as a union of evaluation contexts based on actions and instruments where the two form of evaluation go together) and also in a broad sense (as a matrix that integrates these contexts in a system). Working together the two forms of evaluation consolidate the self-evaluation competence, intensifies the formative dimension of evaluation, makes the evaluation more efficient, objective and clear. The I-M framework in teaching becomes the independent variable of research-action.

CHAPTER III, ORGANIZING AND ACHIEVING RESEARCH – ACTION ON FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCES IN ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE THROUGH INTER-EVALUATION – META-EVALUATION CO-ACTION. APPLICATION ON THE COMPETENCE OF ARGUMENTATION describes an experiment made in the 2013 - 2014 school year. The test sample included 140 9-th grade students. The introductory part of Chapter III makes a critical examination of the curricular context where the school curriculum and alternative Romanian high school textbooks go together.

After the key concept was made operational, Framework I-M as independent variable, we stated the hypothesis of research-action: Ensurance of the coaction inter-evaluation – meta-evaluation in the study of Romanian language and literature in the 9-th grade has a positive influence on the 9-th-grade students’ competence of argumentation and on their ability to appreciate their own performances and to evaluate their colleagues’ competence.

The scenarios based on I-M Co-action are gradually inserted, from those evaluating the competence of oral argumentation towards those evaluating students’ competence in writing. They are influenced by the alternation written and oral, literary and non-literary, as well as by other general competences– text reception (argumentative), text production (argumentative), text production on a literary text (essay).

The second dependent variable, the competence of self-evaluation, is the center of other scenarios at the end of Chapter III, meant to make homework more attractive to our students. We suggest to gather in a portofolio the instruments of self-evaluation and inter-evaluation and also the meta-evaluation questionnaires filled in by the students. The analysis of the final test and the comparative interpretation of results at the experimental class and the control class is the last shot of Chapter III, dedicated to research-action.

CHAPTER IV, INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS, CHECKING THE VALIDITY OF I-M FRAMEWORK separates the research results, gives them theoretical, practical,

scientific and methodological meanings, and validates both the hypothesis and the independent variable, Framework I-M, as a way of formative evaluation. According to the hypothesis, **the independent variable, co-actions inter-evaluation – meta-evaluation**, made the process of formative evaluation of argumentation competence more efficient and also more accessible because it identified itself with the competence. And the student became more unbiased and more aware of his ability to self-appreciate his argumentative text and also to evaluate his colleague by fully understanding the role of school evaluation as a means of (self)control in learning.

The paper **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE** has **54 ANNEXES** which include instruments of formative evaluation which may prove useful. They can become suggestions, bench-marks, teaching support for teachers of Romanian interested in the formation and evaluation of their students' competence of argumentation. Many of them are taken from special studies, others are adapted from models and ideas of the specialists in the field, completed with our own original unpublished materials that we created during the research and used successfully. In conclusion, thus conceived, the paper **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE** underlines, through theoretical structure and pedagogical research, the importance of formative evaluation in active and interactive curricular context and rediscovers the lesson of evaluation of competences, applied to the competence of argumentation.

SUMMARY

In accordance with educational realities, **evaluation**, unlike any other concept, acquired several meanings, so today we have evaluation of students, of their knowledge and abilities, of textbooks, syllabuses, teachers, institutions, and, little by little, every element of the teaching process comes under debate.

In this context, attempts to analyse and systematize different aspects of evaluation become not only problematical but also inciting.

That is why, the paper **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE** presents in CHAPTER I, personal opinions and observations on different forms of evaluation, based on the idea of active evaluation as a new kind of partnership, *teacher – student, student – student*, and on a new approach of an obsolete concept - *the lesson of evaluation in the Romanian class in high school*. All the ideas take into consideration the simultaneous action and relation between self-evaluation, inter-evaluation and meta-evaluation. Since self-evaluation has been largely discussed in the literature and has brought no fundamental changes in the evaluation act and did not give the student the active role from the theoretical studies, inter-evaluation and meta-evaluation have to involve the students in the decisions they make on their educational evolution.

No matter how vague and unforeseeable these concepts are, they are analysed with specific instruments meant to develop *the (self)evaluation competence*, which is the first step in education. The art of **LEARNING TO SEE** - a phrase used by Fr. Nietzsche (2002, p. 8) - is important in education. Without it education is just another valuable but meaningless concept like many others. It is time the teacher “learned to surround the individual case, to see it from all sides”, to treat every student individually, and also it is time the teacher showed the student how to find his own way in his educational development and “taught him how to dance, using his feet, notions or words.”

The problem of competence and the relation between knowledge and competence is very important in the curriculum reforms in many countries. Oriented towards the education of adults, the competence paradigm seems well-inspired and dynamic, with the same noble mission as the traditional interpretation, to develop human intelligence. The new educational perspective does not reject contents, school subjects, the system of grades and lessons; it

places the emphasis on learning what can be *useful* in life. But does the change of attitude and the new vocabulary reflect a real change of paradigm, or, as so often, by questioning the goals of education we start a new crisis which hinders or delays the sedimentation of efficient measures?

The complex abilities are called "competences" by the school system which sees them as "acquisitions" or "knowledge" because it is easier to define, observe, develop and measure them. Even the Romanian school system sees that not everything can be defined in terms of competence, if one considers the semantic eclecticism of the term. Even so, competences are the main goal in education; they enable people to adapt, to find new jobs, to accustom themselves to the speedy development of society.

The forms of evaluation are nor very clearly defined in psycho-pedagogical books; they are referred to as *processes* or *products* and the chronological classification criterion (when applied to each form) is insufficient. However, **who evaluates . evaluation?** In an attempt to answer this question, and due to the necessity to diversify the terms of the larger and larger evaluation concept, we suggest four categories (with new names made with prefixes). Thus we see the four forms as: (a) traditional evaluation; (b) meta-evaluation; (c) self-evaluation; (d) inter-evaluation. In active and interactive scenarios, those who study together have to evaluate together. That is why we think that self-evaluation, inter-evaluation and meta-evaluation must go together in a coherent theoretical and practical system called ***Inter-evaluation – Meta-evaluation Framework or Matrix (I – M Framework)*** meant to give to both teacher and student a new status, in accordance with the theoretical models of active pedagogy concentrated on competences.

The I – M Framework is defined theoretically and practically and then integrated in the *Conceptual network of teaching evaluation*, as a new situation. These ideas are fully presented in CHAPTER II, where the term evaluation acquires new meanings and is introduced in the conceptual network, starting from the the place and meaning of evaluation nowadays, seen in the relation evaluator – evaluated person. In evaluation any situation requires three actions: to find information, to compare with a standard, a norm, a limit, a goal, and to appreciate the value. Naturally the evaluation algorithm continues in further meta-evaluation actions to validate the procedure. The two evaluation systems, traditional and modern, coexist and the evaluation procedures are either contested as difficult to apply (traditional evaluation) or considered too simple (innovative procedures).

The above mentioned stages coexist in self-evaluation and inter-evaluation, and in the context of long-life evaluation that stipulates the student's greater autonomy, evaluation made

exclusively by the teacher can become less important, almost meaningless if we consider the fact that "every evaluation made by the teacher makes the pupil carry out an activity of self-evaluation" (Allan, Bain, Perrenoud, 1993, p. 239). Starting from this desideratum, evaluation has to acquire at least two diverging levels: a para-system level (round and out of the educational system) and a system level (inside the educational system)

Evaluation appears in different forms in medicine, economics, management, law system, computers, bank system, mass-media, transport, sport, work market or administration. The criteria and instruments they use in these fields are completely different from those used in the educational system, they are more or less supervised by experts and observe the EU norms. In this way para-system evaluation tends to expand and homologize in most socio-professional fields.

Assessment in education becomes operational at macro-system and micro-system levels, its effect is inversely proportional: the lower the impact area of micro-system evaluation, the greater the usefulness and more functions at macro-educational level. Thus, experts, reviewers, trainers, school inspectors etc. evaluate educational policies, the educational system in general, syllabuses, projects and curriculums, institutions, school directors, school inspectors, teachers and non-teaching staff and also textbooks and school documents (plans, portfolios, lesson plans, activity reports) etc.

Micro-system evaluation in teaching is materialized in grades and levels of abilities and competences and can be classified as **summative** (centred on results), **criterion-based** (it compares results and objectives), **normative** (it measures the existing acquisitions and compares them to a predetermined success threshold) and **passive** (made with passive methods where the student's involvement is nil, seen as classical evaluation methods: oral evaluation, observation, practical tests, semester papers, mock exams, national exams, colloquiums, exams for competence certification).

Evaluation of this kind is **unilateral**; the evaluator/teacher evaluates the student's performances, integrated in a group, with an instrument of normative/summative evaluation. In the Romanian school system the results are recorded on a 10-point scale, on a rating scale: insufficient - sufficient – good – very good, or on levels : average – advanced – experienced. Evaluation is also done **in stages** (it does not consider intermediate phases or the process leading to the assessed acquisition), it is **regulatory** (the obtained data re-enter the system influencing it later), **semi-objective**, objective on certain segments (for example in the exams where they use scales and descriptor grids) and subjective on other segments (oral quizzes and current observation, if no evaluation instrument is used). In relation to macro-system

evaluation, the micro-system evaluation is **interdependent**, since it is subordinated to macro-system decisions and policies on one part, while, on the other, it influences them through the obtained data. Moreover, being normative (it measures acquisitions), it is also **selective** (it ranks and classifies individuals according to their performances) and **certifying** (it validates acquisitions). Traditional evaluation, where the teacher evaluates the student, is still used in the Romanian school system in summative and normative evaluation (semester written papers, mock exams, exams, oral examination, tests, etc). The methods that are frequently described in the literature are oral examination, current observation, practical tests, written tests.

Among all forms of evaluation, self-evaluation, is widely spread, although not generalized or largely credited. At first, it was considered another evaluation alternative which” involved students themselves in giving grades and ratings” or a procedure” to improve grading methods by comparing different valuations of the same school results” (Radu, 1981, p. 261). This perspective is still found in the literature, but for us, self-evaluation is a distinct form of evaluation, when we consider the relation evaluator – evaluated person, overlapping roles. We wonder whether the educational progress is real, or if we can talk about permanent education, when there is no real image of the self. We think that formative teaching implies that we need to form not an ability or a skill, but a new competence; we call it the **(self)evaluation competence** (Gîlcă, 2005, p. 49).

Since there is no formative dimension of teaching, without competences, the formative evaluation should aim to form specific competences, not only to simply evaluate other competences. The complexity of self-evaluation is shown in the *European Language Portfolio* (ELP) that ”aims to certify a person’s multilingual competences and linguistic experiences in a comprehensive, transparent and reliable manner” (Căpiță, 2011, p. 21). As ”self-management is the nucleus of active evaluation methods” (Vial, 1982, p. 133), self-evaluation must be the centre of *active evaluation*. The self-evaluation situation assigns many roles to both teacher and student. The teacher designs the self-assessment situation (objectives, strategy, resources), chooses the format of evaluation instrument, and decides how the results will be used in the student’s activity or his own activity. The student evaluates his knowledge, abilities, competences and thus, develops his self-evaluation competence. The student can also take part in the planning of a self-assessment situation (objectives, strategy, resources), the choice of design and self-assessment instrument, as well as the decision on how to use the results. The student observes, designs and could suggest evaluation criteria. He achieves self-evaluation explicitly, through specific instruments

(questionnaire, diary, report, scale, grid, control list, portofolio etc.) and also implicitly, continually, without self-evaluative instruments, suggesting and then adopting the adequate remedial methods.

An inter-evaluation situation is characterized by creativity, dynamism, communication, freedom, autonomy (Allal, Bain, Perrenoud, 1993, p. 239), pleasure to interact and communicate with one's peers, to reflect on one's own perfectible performances by reference to the other one, or to the standards or the teacher's authority, embodying "the norm". For some students the exchange of procedures and information is enough, whereas for others it is not, the suitable behaviour being obstructed by distorting factors. For example in a situation to **inter-evaluate the argumentation competence**, the interactive behaviours are: **to confirm the other person's answer**, through different explanations or similar opinions, **to contest the other person's answer**, with a counter-argument or a request for an explanation, **to justify one's own answer**, through an example, a rule or theoretical notions, etc. Assessment through theoretical appeal to a peer's opinion, comparison, homework, checking, analysis or game / competition can also be added.

Thus, in our opinion, the main forms of inter-evaluation are: **peer evaluation** (mutual), **co-evaluation** (control of self-evaluation), **self-referential inter-evaluation** (self-criterial), **doubly-referential inter-evaluation** (doubly-criterial or co-ordinated inter-evaluation). They are organized vertically, between student and teacher (in co-evaluation) or horizontally (the other situations where only students are involved). These are joint situations; the relations are similar, but **multi-referential** at group level.

Looking for stronger connections between teaching/learning and evaluation, and for scientifically-based evaluation procedures, the idea of quality assurance in evaluation becomes more obvious and considers a new approach to the relation between the assessor and the assessed.

Any evaluation algorithm should include some previous, successive and subsequent steps, whether we talk about design of theoretical, methodological and curricular framework of evaluation, or the creation and application of assessment tools, or the interpretation of results.

Extended in advance or *post-factum*, teaching evaluation has always a meta-evaluative, implicit self-referential dimension meant to consolidate its formative identity.

Specialists have always shown interest in the problem. What we lack today is a better theoretical presentation of the problem, hence their poor pragmatic contribution to teaching evaluation.

The term meta-evaluation was first mentioned in 1974 by Daniel Stufflebeam, as a **way to evaluate evaluation**. Thus, meta-evaluation is *the process of obtaining and managing information on evaluation*. Designed in two forms, proactive (it serves **decision taking** in evaluation) and retroactive (**assuming responsibility** in decision taking), meta-evaluation has three closely linked successive stages: *designing strategies, gathering information, using information*.

In order to go through the three stages, Daniel Stufflebeam makes five designs to underline the fact that meta-evaluation moves towards gathering information on evaluation as a whole: aims (design 1), planning (design 2), processes (design 3), results (design 4). Design 5 is integrating and retroactive and appreciates the whole effort of evaluation, while the other four are proactive and precede evaluation itself. The whole process of obtaining and managing information about evaluation is justified by the requirement **to make those involved in evaluation very responsible**.

Evaluation nowadays is used as a form of evaluation which identifies the tendencies and the quality level of programs according to their own standards in different areas of activity, such as humanitarian action in emergencies, prevention of negative phenomena (smoking, drug abuse, the school drop-out) by world organizations such as Red Cross, UNICEF, UNSAID, mentioned in ALNAP – *Review of Humanitarian Action* (2003) etc. In these areas, the term is synonymous with quality evaluation of the evaluator's work.

Gradually the discussions on how to *evaluate evaluation* come closer and closer to teaching.

Geneviève Meyer (2000, p. 158) speaks about evaluating teaching progress and checking its flexibility, that is, adapting it to each individual student. She considers meta-evaluation (the term is not used in the paper) as an internal part of evaluation, meaning to **involve the student and make him more responsible**. All the observation sheets (individual or collective observation), are drawn up to spot and negotiate, together with the students, "the criteria to evaluate a solution", both the difficult and possible "evaluation criteria". This stage is followed by an interactive one, a confrontation of ideas and "gathering together the elements of all the groups" as well as checking the list of criteria that can be improved any time. The students refer to the established criteria, whether they meet them or not, completing statements like "My solution will be correct if it includes the following elements..." or "To comply with this evaluation criterion I can ..." (Meyer, 2000, p. 158). The need for meta-evaluation is obvious when we see that the sheets "give no information on the test index of difficulty" (Meyer, p. 153).

These implicit meta-evaluative operations are integrated in self-evaluation in the first stage of the teaching scenario, when the student answers the questions in the evaluation grid. The teacher explicitly "**examines and evaluates these instruments**", so meta-evaluation is an external dimension of formative evaluation: "The student's response to the instruments of formative evaluation can be useful to the teacher in evaluating these instruments: did they produce the expected effects? Did they elicit the student's answers? If the teacher's answers are not affirmative, then his instruments must be improved" (Meyer, p. 153).

As L. Allal, Ph. Perrenoud și D. Bain mentioned (1993, p. 69), the evaluation act can be extended in a new stage of "**checking the validity of its content and design**". Thus, meta-evaluation could be defined as a **conscious and necessary examination** which **checks if the assessment is appropriate to the theoretical notions or the competences** mentioned in documents (syllabuses, guides etc) or the **timeliness** of the evaluation.

J. Vogler thinks meta-evaluation corresponds to the **overall view of evaluation**. However, special attention is given to the **professional ethics of evaluation practice**; the author published a code of conduct for school testing, which "illustrates a present tendency in evaluation, that of **thinking upon the practice**" (Vogler, coord., 2000, p. 237). His code of conduct follows four principles: *design and choose suitable tests, interpret results, ensure fairness, inform the assessed*.

They are addressed to those who design the tests and to those who use them. Following his model we can draw up a teacher-evaluator's code of conduct to be applied in the Romanian evaluation system. The authors, specialists of AERA (*American Educational Research Association*), APA (*American Psychological Association*) and NCME (*National Council on Measurement in Education*), encourage to widely use the code.

An important chapter of Vogler's book is dedicated to the study of the evaluation effects, an aspect "insufficiently studied" (2000, p. 243). The effects depend on how clear the objectives are, dissemination of results, their quality and validity.

In conclusion, the term meta-evaluation (*to evaluate evaluation*) acquires a different meaning in our paper, as part of teaching evaluation, ensuring student's activity, besides its regulatory character. Subjected to an evaluation process, the student gives an immediate feedback to the evaluators, and thus, the whole teaching evaluation process becomes clearer, more objective and formative. We can change the students' image of school evaluation by giving greater weight to formative evaluation in the Romanian literature class, by coherently linking the teaching steps in the *Inter-evaluation – Meta-evaluation Framework*. Working on a new conceptual basis, the existing and newly designed evaluation instruments prove their

efficiency in unveiling the weak and strong points of teaching evaluation, thus contributing to higher school performances and increasing the students' role in evaluation. Together, teacher and students learn not only to see, but to see one another.

Chapter III presents the teaching experiment, its structure and proceeding. The research – action *Formative evaluation of competences in the Romanian classes in the inter-evaluation – meta-evaluation co-action (I –M Framework). Application on argumentative competence* started from the idea of the student's active role in evaluation, seen as an extension of the student's learning. The aim of the research was to investigate the co-action between inter-evaluation and meta-evaluation in the process of formative evaluation of competences in the Romanian language and literature classes, mainly the argumentation competence.

Research hypothesis: The assurance of **inter-evaluation – meta-evaluation co-action in the study of Romanian language and literature**, have a positive influence on the 9-th–grade students' level of argumentation competence and on their **ability to self-evaluate not only their own argumentation performances, but also those of their peers.**

Independent variable: co-action (I – M Framework); **dependent variables:** argumentation competence level of the 9-th grade students, their abilities to self-evaluate their argumentation performances and to evaluate those of their peers.

The teaching experiment with independent variable was performed with the experimental group, S2 9-th grade students, from "Onisifor Ghibu" High School, Cluj-Napoca and the control group was S1 9-th grade students from the same school.

The tests (initial, progress, and final) were conceived gradually on three levels (assess knowledge – assess abilities – assess competences).

Analysis and interpretation of students' results in the final test (experimental class) appear in Chapter IV.

Test	Class average mark	Marks between					
		4-4,99	5-5,99	6-6,99	7-7,99	8-8,99	9-10
initial	6,80	2	4	6	11	4	0
progress	6,70	2	6	6	12	1	0
final	8,53	0	0	0	7	11	8

Table 60.III. Comparative situation (initial test – progress test – final test) of results of S2 9-th grade students, on range scale

From the above table we see that at the final test, 26.92% of the students from the experimental class succeeded in solving item 6 completely. This was the most difficult and complex item which evaluates the competence of written argumentation, that of writing an argumentative essay. Students' individual marks were higher and the average mark was 1.73-point higher than in the initial test.

In order to test the research hypothesis, we temporarily accept the null hypothesis: the differences in the results of the **25 students who passed the initial and final tests** is due to chance, near 0 value, like the average mark. The difference mean is $dm = 1.888$, different from zero. To see whether it is statistically significant, we calculated *t value*, and the result was $t = 7.73$. Thus, the null hypothesis was invalidated; the differences among the students' marks in the S2 9-th grade were statistically significant, and the introduction of the independent variable I –M Framework determined the higher level of students' performances (dependent variable).

Measuring the level of argumentative competence in Romanian, of the students from S2 9-th experimental class, we compared the final results with those in English and French, in order to check the positive influence of I –M Framework on the transdisciplinary evolution of the above-mentioned competence.

As limitations of I –M Framework, we can mention the low practicability in the teaching classes in minority languages (Hungarian, for example), due to the high level and the use of abstract concepts (*reasoning, hypothesis, pre-requisites, inter-evaluation, meta-evaluation*) and the use of specialized terms that require a thorough knowledge of Romanian. So on this segment of teaching Romanian in minority classes we need a simplified I – M Framework.

CONCLUSIONS

“(…) to find the method that enables the teacher to teach less and the student to learn more.” (Comenius, *apud Jean Vial, Histoire et actualité des méthodes pédagogiques*, 1982, p. 12)

“We still want, to read in the students’ marks, like in coffee grounds, the acquisition of a competence.” (J. C. Parisot, *apud Geneviève Meyer, De ce și cum evaluăm*, p. 51)

The paper for the doctor’s degree **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE** brings together two subjects that interest both scientists and teachers: the formative evaluation and the competence of argumentation.

Organized in four distinct chapters, **CHAPTER I, THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF DIDACTIC EVALUATION; CHAPTER II, A NEW CONCEPTUAL NETWORK: EVALUATION – SELF-EVALUATION – INTER-EVALUATION – META-EVALUATION; CHAPTER III, ORGANIZING AND ACHIEVING RESEARCH – ACTION ON FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCES IN ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE THROUGH INTER-EVALUATION – META-EVALUATION CO-ACTION. APPLICATION ON THE COMPETENCE OF ARGUMENTATION, CHAPTER IV, INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS, CHECKING THE VALIDITY OF I-M FRAMEWORK**, the paper is based both on research – action subordinated to the themes mentioned in the titles, and also on the theoretical scientific contributions with impact in the teaching of Romanian language and literature in high school.

First the paper explains the theoretical problem of argumentation, after the critical analysis of textbooks, school curriculums and teaching auxiliaries where this competence is unjustly left at the very end. Even in the succession of the four general competences included in the curriculum of Romanian language and literature for high school, the competence of oral and written argumentation of the students’ personal opinions is the last mentioned. Following their models, the alternative textbooks allot 1-2 lessons towards the end of the school year. Our paper gives it a special status, both in the revised school documents, and in the teaching scenarios.

The chapters on the argumentation theme start the theoretical steps with the definition of the term in different general dictionaries and dictionaries of special terms. The corollary of these ideas is then compared with the contents of the textbooks and we added our ideas, and suggestions on how to select them, to organize them according to students' age group (middle school – high school) and year of study and then we selected those for the 9-th grade ; basic notions, abilities, specific competences, values, attitudes involved. We also followed the idea of how to pass from the simple intention to convince (to speak persuasively) in everyday situations, to the competence of argumentation (to be able to bring arguments) and then to the competence of argumentation in social life (to bring arguments in certain situations in order to...). We established a minimum of acquisitions that become active when these competences take shape, *The minimum system of acquisitions*, that is included in the concept of argumentation competence. This is functional on three levels: knowledge, ability, specific competence. There are multiple practical implications and the evaluation requests to students are various. In our experiment the initial test, the progress test and the final test demonstrate that it takes a longer time to acquire this competence than the time allotted in the textbooks or the school curriculum.

Knowledge on argumentation has to be the fundamental background in the process of making the students acquire this competence. The tests we made are gradual and they reveal how complex it is to write an argumentative text; we wrote scenarios and teaching sequences that are gradual or in series in order to facilitate the teacher's immediate intervention and make the students work together. Argumentation, which assumes to demonstrate a truth in order to convince somebody, can be taught only in active and interactive situations, which, in their turn require active evaluation. These scenarios include worksheets, tests, evaluation norms, specification matrixes, remedial plans, planning, teaching-unit plans where we mentioned the lessons, control lists, self-evaluation and inter-evaluation marking schemes, checking methods (annotation method, column method). They all facilitate the teacher's activity and compensate for the shortcomings of many textbooks.

The system of lessons thus created, used and verified can be successfully implemented both vertically and horizontally in high school, in new lessons, and more difficult exercises and also by creating original instruments meant to develop the competences acquired in the 9-th grade, the competence of argumentation and (self)evaluation. The latter enables the student to permanently adjust his individual development, to become more and more aware of his own evolution.

The concept of a network of teaching-evaluation forms by connecting self-evaluation to inter-evaluation and meta-evaluation is a second notable theoretical contribution. The last term in the succession, meta-evaluation, is semantically correlated to all the stages in the evaluation process. The meta-evaluation situations include those of the one-sided traditional evaluation as well as those of self-evaluation and inter-evaluation in order to make the evaluation act more efficient. With no intention to impose meta-evaluation as a science in the theory and methodology of evaluation or to make evaluation an aim in itself, our paper suggests useful ways to improve the process of evaluation, to use the data obtained through evaluation in order to increase its formative power. The formative test, accompanied by short meta-evaluation questions, the meta-evaluation questionnaire and the interview are our models for the teachers and evaluators interested in new ways to evaluate their students' performance and also interested in enriching their methods of evaluation and the competences necessary to appreciate the powers of evaluation.

In the third place, as scientific innovation of our paper, we mention the I-M Framework, a newly-created evaluation situation, which is explained theoretically, applied practically and validated scientifically in our research work. By connecting the two forms, inter-evaluation and meta-evaluation, the I-M Framework joins together their power: consolidates the self-evaluation competence, intensifies the formative aspect of evaluation, makes the evaluation situations more efficient, makes evaluation more transparent and more objective and individualizes the regulating interventions. The student's role is thus better defined in evaluation, as teacher's partner and he acquires competences of evaluation and inter-evaluation similar to those of his teacher. In active and interactive pedagogy self-evaluation cannot be the only alternative for the student. The paper defines and makes operational the competence of (self)evaluation and offers many activities in the homework project TO LEARN TO SEE.

In the fourth place, the paper **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE** presents a research-action with impact on the teachers' work. The research-action **FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCES IN ROMANIAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE THROUGH INTER-EVALUATION – META-EVALUATION CO-ACTION (I-M). APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATION COMPETENCES** deals with the most complex competence in the school curriculum and took place in the context of great changes in the teaching perspectives with transition from objectives to competences, new contents and a reform in evaluation. According to our

hypothesis the independent variable, inter-evaluation – meta-evaluation coactions made the process of formative evaluation of argumentation competence more efficient and more accessible. Also the student became more unbiased and more aware of his own ability to appreciate his argumentative text and to evaluate his classmates, understanding the role of school evaluation as a means of (self)control of learning. Thus, **the hypothesis of the research was validated.**

Knowing that argumentation will always be a gist in the teaching of Romanian language and literature due to theoretical incoherence and trying to find the best course of action, we can state, after the experiment, that not only the students but also the teachers benefited from the student's role as partner. The level of school performance in argumentation increased, and the impact of the correlated intervention inter-evaluation - meta-evaluation materialized. The mark, in itself, does not help individual progress, unless it is placed in a larger context of self-reflection which has to belong to both students and teachers. We also noticed the student's tendency to use knowledge from other school subjects (Logic, Philosophy, Religion, Science) which they find necessary for their argumentation competence. Thus the students consciously understood the need to give unity to their interventions in any communication situation, like in an argumentative speech, by linking ideas and giving examples to sustain them, in any discussion, on any subject.

The paper FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE opens new ways for research, the most productive being that of teaching meta-evaluation. The meta-evaluation situations are varied and can be used and classified as evaluation procedures and the results of implicit and explicit evaluation have to be better formulated, expressed and measured. Thus every meta-evaluation procedure should be individually projected, organized and carried out and its results expressed in *standards, levels, grades, categories*, directed towards the evaluation process (organizing it, stating the aims, ensuring its efficiency, administrating the process, communicating the results, impact, costs, difficulties, etc.), towards evaluation instruments (their qualities, advantages, disadvantages etc.) and also towards the status of evaluator/expert in teaching evaluation. Thus without a proper institutionalizing of meta-evaluation it remains only an option of the teacher and manifests itself only implicitly.

Another reason to expand the research is given by the second variable of the teaching experiment which was more visible and quantized the progress by referring the marks given

by the students to the marks given by the teacher in order to measure the initial and final levels (the students evaluated an essay). We can find more adequate instruments through which the self-evaluation competence, a new innovating concept, can be developed through specific activities with every new school year, and also better quantized.

In conclusion by giving formative evaluation more weight in the Romanian class and by connecting the steps in teaching in a coherent way in the *Inter-evaluation – Meta-evaluation Framework*, we consider that the paper FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF COMPETENCE IN THE ROMANIAN CLASSES IN HIGH SCHOOL. APPLICATION ON ARGUMENTATIVE COMPETENCE places evaluation work on a new conceptual basis. Extant and newly created instruments proved efficient in showing the strong and weak points of teaching steps, contributing to increased school performances and emphasizing the student's role in validating the evaluation made by the teacher.

Together teacher and students learned not only to see but to see one another.

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