

Curriculum for German as a first foreign language in Romania

Curriculum scenario for CLIL in the language classroom

Why is this scenario interesting?

The scenario describes the vertical transition of German as a first foreign language in Romania.

Furthermore, it highlights the transition towards tertiary education or work as a central motivation for pupils who study German as a first foreign language in Romania.

Short description:

Pupils in Romania learn English, German, French, Italian or Spanish as foreign languages. CLIL is only applied in language lessons, not in other subjects.

At a secondary-school level, CLIL may be used in language lessons (only locally, depending on interests). For example, at the Pedagogical National College "Queen Mary of Romania" Ploiești, there were two classes (5th G and 6th G, where the G stands for "German") in which Chemistry was taught in German. The Chemistry and German teachers worked together in foreign-language teaching and their materials were in German. In the case of those classes, which had German as a first foreign language, the subject was considered optional. This policy was implemented following the establishment of a partnership between the college and the Goethe-Institut in Bucharest.

At a high-school level, CLIL is used nationwide in regional and cultural studies, e.g. in classes that specialize in German as a first foreign language (5+1 hours per week). There are classes that specialize in English, Spanish or French as a first foreign language as well. CLIL was implemented in 2013, with the word itself, as well as its main principles, being explicitly mentioned in the school curriculum. The following excerpt on CLIL was taken from a subject called "History of German-speaking countries":

"... [CLIL] puts forward an integrative knowledge aiming to motivate the teachers who apply the program to reflect on classroom methodology, strategies and didactic approaches in an innovative manner. The CLIL methodology provides suggestions meant to orientate the didactic design resulting from this specificity. The program has two purposes: firstly, to enable pupils to acquire disciplinary knowledge and skills (which in this case are historical), and secondly, to allow pupils to acquire language skills. By immersing themselves in the study of a foreign language, pupils get to use their new language skills directly and in specific situations, thus being able to react to the pragmatic orientation of modern-language teaching. Simultaneously, the study of history in German is meant to increase pupils' interest and motivation for the discipline in general, thus expanding their cultural awareness and creating new opportunities for them to experience reality and have greater tolerance towards other people's views, which is a key element in the process of becoming a European citizen. [...] In addition, communication within the classroom is a central approach of the CLIL method, which teachers can foster by creating group tasks, discussions, debates or role-plays, in order to promote real learning and real interactivity." (<https://www.edu.ro/programe-bilingve>, own translation)

The following subjects are available in German and taught by expert German teachers:

grade 9: "Geography of German-speaking countries" (compulsory);

grade 10: "History of German-speaking countries" (compulsory);

grade 11/12: "Literature and Culture in German-speaking countries" (compulsory).

Context:

When do people study foreign languages in Romania?

Pre-school (kindergarten):

At this level, most of the children study English. German is seldom taught (mainly in private kindergartens);

Primary school (grade 1 to 4):

Most of the children study English, very few study German (depending on their parents' decision);

Secondary school (grade 5 to 8):

An option to specialize in German is provided, in the shape of classes that offer four hours of German per week. In order to join, pupils must pass an admission exam at the end of 4th grade;

German as a second foreign language (two hours per week) in mixed classes made up of pupils who studied German during primary school (usually from 2nd grade onwards) and pupils without any prior knowledge of German. No progression is envisaged here, seeing as all pupils start to study German from scratch.

High school (grade 9 to 12):

At this level, another option to specialize in German is provided, in the shape of classes that offer five hours of German + one hour of regional and cultural studies per week. Due to the fact that all pupils must take an exam the end of 8th grade, both pupils that previously had four hours of German per week, as well as those who only had two hours of German per week, can join this class.

How does the scenario support transitions?

The CLIL scenario describes the vertical transition of German as a first foreign language in Romania.

CLIL is connected to the transition to the labor market, which is a central motivation for students who learn German as a first foreign language. The option to specialize in German provides the following opportunities related to the transition to study or work:

- High-school pupils have the option to develop a project at the end of 12th grade. If the presentation of this project is successful, the document preserved will work as a language certificate/diploma, guaranteeing the future graduate the chance to work as a language teacher in kindergarten;
- For many pupils that wish to study abroad, there is an opportunity to do so by attending intensive German classes and obtaining the necessary B2-level certificate at the end of them;
- Pupils who decide to study German as a first foreign language in secondary school or high school may take part in competitions, study to obtain language certificates or take trips centered on foreign languages. Owing to the variety of their personal portfolios, pupils will have the upper hand when applying for international-mobility programs, e.g. Comenius, Erasmus+ and so forth. Moreover, high-school students that win prizes at national language competitions will be admitted at university (literary studies/linguistics) without the need to take an admission exam;
- By specializing in German, future graduates may find a job immediately after high school. Within the Romanian labor market, people who master German as a foreign language are very well paid. Therefore, students that speak German can work in fields related to it even during their university years. Multinational companies are always on the lookout for people who speak several languages (except English) and offer good wages. There are opportunities both at a national, as well as at an international level;
- Graduates that wish to become teachers or earn more in general, may continue their studies.

	Aims of language learning	Aims of content learning	Approaches/methods
Secondary 1 (ISCED 2)	<p>Pupils are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → easily understand routine conversations in clearly articulated, standard language; → understand the essence of short, clear messages and explanations; → write an elementary description of events, actions and personal experiences within their own environment; → read and understand texts containing frequently used vocabulary on concrete, everyday topics, and distinguish between principal and secondary information; → give short and simple reports on events, activities and personal experiences from their everyday lives, professions or education; → make short presentations on daily-life topics. 	<p>Pupils with German as a first foreign language, i.e. 4 hours per week, are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → point out essential aspects of German-speaking countries: capitals, main historical notions or geographical indications; <p>Such information appears in the textbook, but only in the form of short texts that function as curiosities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → mediation; → audiovisual materials; → cooperative learning; → role-play; → learning stations; → communicative didactics; → intercultural didactics; digital-media learning.
Secondary 2 (ISCED 3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Geography in German ● History in German 	<p>Pupils are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → speak fluent German and easily lead a conversation on any topic; → understand longer speeches and lectures using their "Listening" skills and also follow complex argumentation if the topic is reasonably familiar to them; 	<p>Pupils are able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → name German-speaking countries; → provide geographical facts and general information on German-speaking countries; → provide historical facts on German-speaking countries; 	<p>Here, secondary-education methods delve into deeper topics, with foreign-language teaching being based on the following essential principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Principle of Participation; → Principle of Action; → Autonomy; → Practical relevance;

<p>Literature and Culture in German</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → read and understand articles and reports on current issues using their "Reading" skills; → actively participate in a discussion in familiar contexts, as well as justify and defend their views; → present topics of personal interest in a clear and detailed manner, as well as explain their position on current issues, pointing out advantages and disadvantages; → write clear and detailed texts on topics of personal interest, reproduce information therein and present arguments/counter-arguments in regard to a particular point of view. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → name essential works of art from the canon of German-speaking countries; → comment on current texts dealing with economic, political or cultural issues in German-speaking countries, as well as express opinions on these issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Individual responsibility of the participants; → Digital-media learning.
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Short description how the curriculum scenario establishes links between CLIL and plurilingual education:

In practice, the [integrated didactic approach](#) is used to a certain degree (not explicitly described in the syllabus): German is spoken during lessons, except when pupils come across more difficult or unclear words or structures, which is when Romanian is employed for explanations. Occasionally, when there are German words that may resemble English words, the latter is used for explanations.

Suggestions for further development:

In Romania, CLIL is only used in language classes. In my opinion, it would be useful in the future to insert CLIL into the framework of other subjects, as well as introduce the [integrated didactic approach](#) to the curriculum.

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