

***Teaching Romani: Curriculum Framework
for Romani and European Language Portfolio***

Seminar for decision makers and practitioners

Council of Europe, 27–28 November 2008



Introduction to the seminar

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Overview

- Council of Europe policy
- The CEFR's action-oriented approach to the specification of second/foreign language proficiency
- Introduction to the Curriculum Framework for Romani and the European Language Portfolio
- Outline of the seminar programme

Council of Europe policy

- The Council of Europe was established to defend human rights, parliamentary democracy and the rule of law
- In pursuit of that goal it promotes awareness of a European identity that is based on shared values
- It also attaches great importance to language learning as a means of
 - preserving linguistic and cultural identity
 - improving communication and mutual understanding
 - combating intolerance and xenophobia

Council of Europe policy

- The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) was developed to support Council of Europe policy by providing
 - “a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe” (CEFR, p.1)
- The Curriculum Framework for Romani was developed in accordance with the same policy and is designed to perform the same function for Romani

The CEFR's action-oriented approach

- We use language to perform **communicative acts** which may be external and social (communicating with other people) or internal and private (communicating with ourselves)
- When we perform **communicative acts** we use **strategies** to make the most appropriate and effective use of our **linguistic resources**
- Language **learning** is, or should be, a kind of language **use**
- The action-oriented approach thus implies a **task-based approach** to language teaching and learning

The CEFR's action-oriented approach

- The CEFR defines language proficiency at six levels arranged in three bands:
 - A1 and A2 (basic user)
 - B1 and B2 (independent user)
 - C1 and C2 (proficient user)
- We can use these common reference levels as a starting point for
 - the elaboration of language syllabuses and curriculum guidelines
 - the design of learning materials and activities
 - the assessment of learning outcomes

The CEFR's action-oriented approach

- It is fundamental to the CEFR's action-oriented approach that we use language **to do things**
- Thus the successive proficiency levels are defined in terms of what learners **can do** in the second/foreign language(s) they know or are learning
- By defining proficiency levels for five different language activities (listening, reading, spoken interaction, spoken production, writing) the CEFR allows us to take account of partial competences and the fact that we are usually stronger in reception than production

The CEFR's action-oriented approach

- The common reference levels comprise more than scales of “can do” descriptors
- The behavioural description of second/foreign language proficiency is complemented by
 - scales of linguistic competence/language quality
 - strategic scales
- **But** as a first step the Curriculum Framework for Romani limits itself to scaled descriptions of communicative behaviour

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

- Uses the CEFR's action-oriented approach and common reference levels to develop a resource for
 - educational planners
 - curriculum/syllabus designers
 - textbook writers and materials developers
 - teachers and teacher trainers
 - examiners
- **But note:** The Curriculum Framework for Romani is not a teaching tool

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

Design considerations:

- The Framework should be user-friendly: not too long and largely self-explanatory
- It should be of immediate practical use to educational planners, syllabus designers, textbook writers, teachers and examiners
- It should be graded so that it reflects progression in learning
- It should be based on the first four levels of the CEFR: A1, A2, B1, B2
- It should include the skills of Listening, Reading, Spoken Interaction, Spoken Production and Writing

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

Design considerations (continued):

- Should address the needs of three categories of learner
 - Those for whom Romani is the medium of education
 - Those who may hear Romani at home but have not developed a productive proficiency
 - Those for whom Romani is not a language of the home
- Should cater for learners in three age groups
 - 3-6 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 10-14/15 years

Curriculum Framework for Romani

Uses the first four levels of the CEFR:

Level A1

- The first identifiable level of proficiency
- **Listening and reading:** Based on recognition of names, familiar words and basic phrases
- **Spoken interaction and spoken production:** Learners can use simple phrases or single words to respond to questions or can give basic information on very familiar topics
- **Writing:** Limited to very short text, labels on pictures and, for younger children, copying from a model provided by the teacher

Curriculum Framework for Romani

Level A2

- Learners can interact and react in a basic way to familiar everyday situations
- **Listening and reading:** Learners can understand phrases and sentences used in familiar and everyday contexts such as frequently heard stories and familiar types of text (e.g. a timetable)
- **Spoken interaction and spoken production:** Learners can exchange information in simple interactions and provide simple explanations
- **Writing:** Short simple notes, messages, letters

Curriculum Framework for Romani

Level B1

- Learners can interact in a range of different situations and can cope with more challenging though still routine situations
- **Listening and reading:** Learners can understand the main points in clear speech and written text that use high-frequency language
- **Spoken interaction and spoken production:** Learners can engage in unprepared conversations and give an account or tell a story
- **Writing:** Learners can write simple connected text on a familiar topic

Curriculum Framework for Romani

Level B2

- Learners are much more aware of language and have the confidence and ability to control communicative situations
- **Listening and reading:** Learners can understand extended speech and complex argument
- **Spoken interaction and spoken production:** Learners can engage actively in discussions and give clear detailed descriptions and arguments
- **Writing:** can write clear text on a wide range of topics providing description and argument, indicating personal attitude, etc.

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

The core

```
graph TD; A[The core] --> B[What people can do with language]; A --> C[Information gained from working with Roma colleagues];
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What people can do with language

Information gained from working with Roma colleagues

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

Based on 11 themes grouped in five categories:

- **Personal identity** (Myself and my family, The house/caravan and its activities etc.)
- **Relevance to daily life** (My community, At school, Food and clothes etc.)
- **Reflecting experiences** (Festivals and celebrations, Travel and transport etc.)
- **General / educational relevance** (Time, seasons, weather, Nature and animals etc.)
- **Heritage and culture** (Roma crafts and professions, Hobbies and the arts)

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

Romanipe is

- clearly more than a 'theme'
- relevant to all other themes
- essential to learning and understanding the code for living which is expressed, in part, through the Romani language

The descriptors for Romanipe

- provide a reference point for curriculum designers, materials developers and teachers
- should ensure that learning Romani includes learning the 'code for living'
- will help to remind/inform professionals who are distanced from the 'code', or who are not Roma themselves

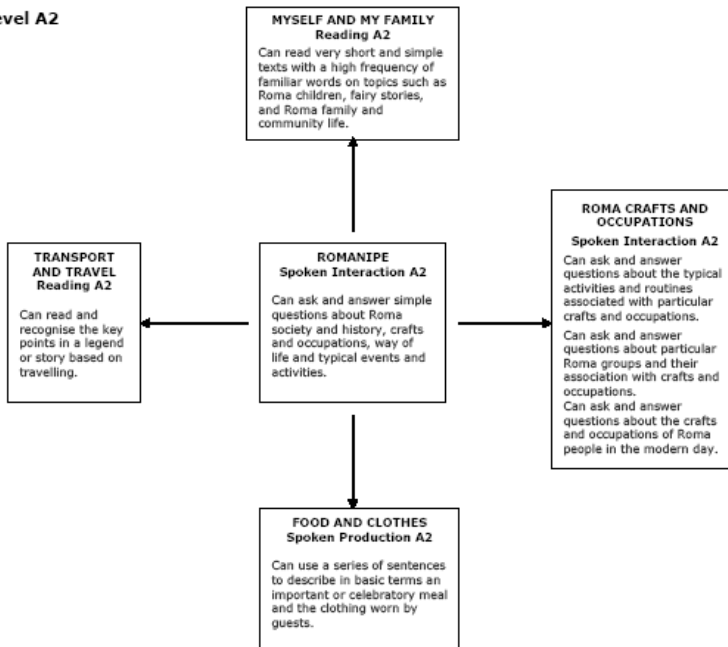
THE CENTRALITY OF ROMANIPE

Romanipe is not presented as a theme because it is present in all aspects of Roma life and tradition and should be a continuous strand throughout the process of teaching/learning the Romani language.

The grid *Romanipe* (see page **) is intended to be used as a reference by teachers to support them in identifying the important aspects of *Romanipe* and to confirm that they have included these aspects in their teaching.

This diagram illustrates how *Romanipe* features naturally in many of the Roma-specific descriptors throughout the framework.

Level A2



5

Romanipe

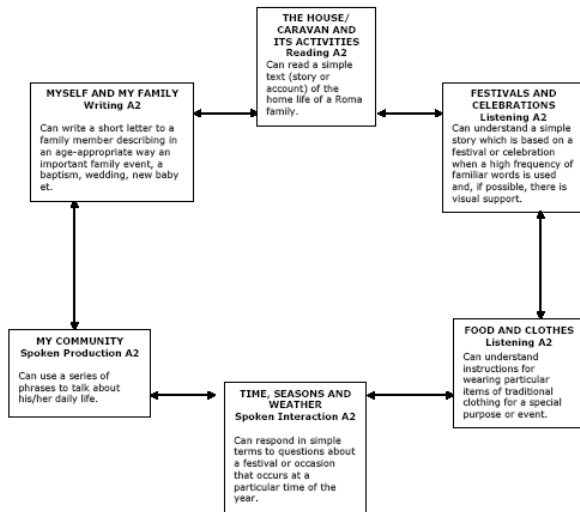
... is a continuous thread that is woven through the descriptors

... connects different themes

TRANSVERSALITY IN THE FRAMEWORK

In addition to the direct relationship between *Romanipe* and other thematic areas, there are also many interconnections between themes. For the teacher, this means that carrying out an activity under one thematic heading may include a full or partial activity from a different theme. As a result, progress in learning is not confined to a single theme at a time but may be seen across several thematic areas.

Example:



Suggestions for continuity from one theme to another are provided as cross references at the end of the introduction to each theme.

6

Transversality

There are many logical connections between themes

This allows materials designers and teachers to expand freely on themes

Example:

Myself →

The house/caravan →

Festivals and celebrations →

Food and clothes etc.

Festivals and celebrations

B1

Listening

Can understand the main points of classroom talk about festivals and celebrations, using visual supports (e.g., illustrations in text book) to check the teacher's explanation.

Can understand the main points of a video that shows typical activities during a local or national festival.

Can understand the main points in an account of festivals or celebrations particular to Roma communities.

Can understand the main points in a story or song related to a celebration, festival or commemoration.

All themes, except Roma Crafts and Occupations, have two sets of descriptors.

General Romani language learning needs

Language learning that is specific to Roma traditions, way of life, activities etc.

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

- The grid for each theme is followed by a checklist which is intended for use by the learner (and teacher)
- Checklists:
 - are organised by level and skill
 - describe classroom activities
 - are not divided into General and Roma specific descriptors
 - allow learners to record their progress in learning
 - may become part of a portfolio of language learning

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

- The checklists play a central role in the design of the two European Language Portfolios (ELPs) that are to be introduced at this seminar
- The ELP was conceived by the Council of Europe in parallel with the CEFR
- To date almost 100 ELPs have been developed in Council of Europe member states and accredited by the Council of Europe's ELP Validation Committee
- The ELP is a tool to support language learning, promote plurilingualism, and develop intercultural awareness and intercultural competence

The Curriculum Framework for Romani

The ELP has three obligatory components:

- The **language passport** provides an overview of the owner's communicative proficiency in second/foreign languages, including his/her summative self-assessment, at a given point in time
- The **language biography** facilitates the learner's involvement in planning, reflecting upon and assessing his/her learning process and progress; "I can" checklists play a central role
- The **dossier** offers the learner the opportunity to select materials to document and illustrate achievements or experiences recorded in the language biography

Outline of the seminar programme

- Reports on the piloting of the Curriculum Framework for Romani from
 - Bulgaria
 - Czech Republic
 - Sweden
- The ELP for learners of Romani aged 6–11: introduction and workshop
- The ELP for learners of Romani aged 11–16: introduction and general discussion
- Planning for the future