

FORMATIVE APPROACH ON DEVELOPING THE MOTIVATION FOR LEARNING ENGLISH BY PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

Dana-Maria MOTFOLEA, drd.

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-7837-9974>

Doctoral School of Humanities and Pedagogical Sciences, Moldova State University

Abstract. In this article, we intend to carry out an analysis of the formative approach regarding the development of motivation for studying English in primary education and to present the role of a formative program in terms of motivation formation aspects and what this psychic process represents in primary classes. Motivating students in our research is addressed – first – from the perspective of interest in learning, and second – analysing the organization of learning content transposed into the formative curriculum part of the psycho-pedagogical model of developing motivation for learning English.

Keywords: motivation, English, formative syllabus, psycho-pedagogical model.

DEMERS FORMATIV PRIVIND DEZVOLTAREA MOTIVAȚIEI PENTRU ÎNVĂȚAREA LIMBII ENGLEZE DE CĂTRE ELEVII CLASELOR PRIMARE

Rezumat. Ne-am propus în cadrul acestui articol să realizăm o analiză a demersului formativ privind dezvoltarea motivației pentru studierea în învățământul primar a limbii engleze și să prezentăm rolul unei programei formative în ceea ce privește aspectele formării motivației și ce reprezintă acest proces psihic în clasele primare. Motivarea elevilor în cercetarea noastră este abordată – în primul rând – din perspectiva interesului pentru învățare, iar în al doilea rând – analizând organizarea conținutului învățării transpus în programa formativă parte a modelului psihopedagogic de dezvoltare a motivației pentru învățarea limbii engleze.

Cuvinte-cheie: motivație, limba engleză, programă formativă, model psihopedagogic.

Primary education is a defining stage in the social and educational development of children, in which intellectual and creative development is laid, and remarkable progress is observed in the initiation and foundation of a foreign language. Studies demonstrate that small schoolchildren integrated into an education system in which they benefit from the first years of school hours taught in an international language will acquire a superior ability to understand and learn a foreign language later in life. This is the period of learning born from the curiosity of knowing everything I see and hear, when the vocabulary gets rich, the pronunciation of words improves, and the time period in which I can be attentive depends on the interest aroused by the activity. This paper aims at the psycho-pedagogical conditions of motivation of learning in the formation of the communication competence in a foreign language and has an interdisciplinary, indicative, applicative, operational, observational and ameliorative character having as main field of didactic study, but more focused, the learning of English as a foreign language by primary education students in order to train communicational competence. However, motivation for learning is a

characteristic that ensures the internal organization of behaviour and is the stimulating factor of learning activity, favouring the achievement of good results in school work.

According to CEFR, the general purpose of the primary education student training process is to train specialists who can communicate, interact in the foreign language in a vast environment of professional and socio-cultural situations, to be able to properly use the linguistic resources specific to the communication situation. When talking about CEFR, it does not just look at how many words you know, learn, recognize or translate, but especially what you can do with that language in real life situations in different contexts and forms of oral or written verbalization.

Or, CEFR does not regard the foreign language speaker as a mere student who repeats rules, but as a social agent who must cope in the daily, in the real world emphasizing the term „user” to emphasize that one can be effective in communication even if one does not master the language perfectly, but rather as a social agent who must do so in the daily because the emphasis is on autonomy and what the speaker of a foreign language can do.

Tabelul 1. Levels of knowledge of the foreign language according to CEFR

[1, pp. 27-29]

Level	Level description
A1 – language usage at beginner level	Has the ability to understand basic words and phrases that relate to oneself, can read simple words and sentences, such as those on posters and billboards or on pages of publications. He can also formulate simple sentences about himself and his home, as well as write congratulatory messages and fill out forms with personal information.

The consistency of the common reference levels is given by an analysis of the functions, notions, grammar and vocabulary necessary for the performance of the communicative tasks described in the scales. It could be an integral part of the work on the development of new sets of communicative specifications.

Level A1 (introductory or discovery – Breakthrough) is the most basic level of language use with production elements, in which the student is able to participate in simple interactive activities; he can answer simple questions about himself, his place of life, the people he knows, the things he possesses and can formulate the same type of questions; it can intervene with simple statements in the areas that concern it or are known to it and answer these questions, without being limited to the simple reproduction of certain expressions and phrases type [Adapting after 2, p. 36].

Below we present some examples of lessons/teaching activities that specify: thematic unit, developed skills, stages of evolution, didactic approaches used in the development of communication competence, means, techniques, modern educational strategies integrated in the teaching process-learning-evaluation, the competences aimed to be formed by young students. In the graphic organizer below, we propose a classification of our formative approaches, harnessed in a pedagogical manner (consistent and thorough, in order to

accelerate the progress in verbal behaviour of students and in their responsible attitudes), which have significantly contributed to achieving a sensitive positive dynamics.

Tabelul 2. Teaching activities in the training of learning motivation communication competence in English part of the Formative Program

The subject of the lesson	Type of lesson	Innovative teaching strategies of learning-evaluation	Materials Digital-teaching resources Educational platforms	Inovative teaching products
Present Continuous	Lesson of language acquisition and vocabulary practise.	• gamification • pair/group work • individual work • guiding questions • role-play	• smartboard • digital book • video • projector • laptop • videos • audio materials • Kahoot! • Play&Create • Quizzes • Wordwall	1. Digital content by going beyond the textbook. 2. Educational games / quizzes.
What's the time?	Lesson of fixation of knowledge and of developing skills and abilities.	• interactive communication • pupil's interviews • project based learning • storytelling • storyboard	• smartboard • digital book • video • projector • laptop • videos • audio materials • Mentimeter	1. Say Hello to Mr. Zebra! 2. Artwork. 3. Comic books. 4. What time is it?
Planet Earth.	Combined/ Mixed lesson.	• think-pair-share • word map • peer teaching and collaboration • flipped classroom	• smartboard • digital book • video • projector • laptop • videos • audio materials • Wordwall • Liveworksheets	1. 3D Planets project 2. Present Simple 3. What are they doing?
Modular Revision & Assessment.	Lesson of systematization and revision of knowledge.	• replacement drills • Q&A drills • active listening	• smartboard • digital book • video • projector • laptop • videos • audio materials • Wordwall/Chat GPT	1. Assessment Test. 2. Make/Change the story / tale by the use of Chat GPT

Free-time activities. Present Simple.	Outdoor activities.	• active listening • creative/active writing • bold thinking • drill mimics • reading • playing games • competing in groups • having fun • while learning	• students • objects • paper & pens & pencils • worksheets • nature • fir cone/a stick • box • toy • scissors • colours	1. Hide and Seek 2. Eye Spy 3. Bring Me 4. Free Writing 5. Dress up Luca or Maria 6. I am – You are 7. Treasure Hunt 8. Identify Parts of a Plant or a Tree 9. Word Chain 10. Simon Says
--	---------------------	---	--	---

Thus, all these didactic activities are subsumed to the general meaning of the concept of motivation and refer to the totality of the factors/exercises/activities that mobilize the student to an activity designed to lead to the assimilation of some knowledge, to the formation of some skills and skills, in a word of the competence of communication in a foreign language. Also in this respect, the training of motivation following the completion of this formative pedagogical program for primary classes is based on the transition from passive memorization to the active and creative use of the foreign language within the didactic activity of the English teacher. The methods and techniques of teaching and learning English are based on direct communication and encouraging students to express themselves freely, without fear of making mistakes through open, digital educational models with a focus on the part of spoken language. From the vast range of modern interactive teaching methods/techniques, I chose to apply the following methodology within the training program:

The Communicative Method (Communicative language Method) – the main advantage of the communicative method, which is more of an approach, has emphasized real communication, is that it focuses on all language skills (reading, writing, speech, listening) not only on grammar (*Educational games/quizzes*);

Direct method (The Direct Method) – in this case the techniques used were: conversation, reading aloud, completing/continuing exercises, composing, rehearsing. The role of the teacher is to be a partner of the student. The interaction took place between the teacher and the pupils, but also between pupils and pupils (*Individual/Pair Handouts*);

The path of silence (The Silent Way) – all four dimensions of language teaching have been developed: oral expression ability, the ability to receive the oral message, the ability to receive the written message and the ability to express written (*Tell me what you like.!*);

Suggestopedia – here students have participated in various activities: read, interpret dialogues, practice various games, dramatizations. The highlights were: vocabulary, oral expression, the ability to receive the written message and the ability to express written (*Comic Books / Make or Change a story / yours by the use of Chat GPT*);

The total physical response method (The Total Physical Response Method) – this was aimed at reducing stress in learning a foreign language, and the initial part of the lesson consisted of modelling, the teacher giving commands, performing actions together with the students. In the second phase of the lesson, students demonstrated that they understood the commands (*3D Projects*).

Regarding the classical and modern language learning theories used in the formative syllabus, we can mention the following examples used in the classroom in the teaching activity:

Interaction Theory: Make/Change the Story/tale by the use of Chat GPT – through which the students developed or modified the classic story thus contributing their own vocabulary to rewriting the text, when they asked for the help of *Chat GPT* they saw that they were given the story briefly nothing else besides what they were not satisfied with from the point of view of the final product, the narrative.

The theory of affective variable: warm-up activities /ice breaking activities included in the lesson plan within the training program – *popup quiz / songs/ guessers/ poetry/ drawings/ different interactive objects, puppets.*

Language discovery learning theory: Comic Book – Comic Tape Drawn, outdoor activities – students created short texts with invented characters through which they saw their creative potential using the vocabulary already learned but at the same time adding a new one and in outdoor activities they discovered the answer to problems, deciphered the treasure map, mimicked the activities given by communicating together.

Acquisition and learning theory: Project based learning-3DProject – modelled the planets making a 3D map and thus spoke spontaneously about the Solar System in foreign language.

Controlled practice theory (rehearsal): Puppet Figurine – Mr. Zebra – with the help of dolls as a teacher, we taught students to converse, new words, tells them a story, gives it to them to interpret the story themselves. Thus, during the lesson, the language was taught–learned more easily. And here the educational activities in which we used AI represented a way of learning that comes to continue formal education, to complement it with learning experiences that generate internalized knowledge and reflection, in concrete life situations, in informal environments, specific to everyday life. This imperative emphasizes the need for complex learning to overcome knowing, transforming it into *knowing how to do*, and *knowing how to be*. Learning by experience or by discovery was the most authentic form of acquiring knowledge, due to the direct involvement of the educator in the process of knowledge, the shift of attention from the role of the teacher as the protagonist of the educational act to the student as the subject of learning.

Outdoor activities (out of-class activities) aimed to explore the possibilities of using the natural framework as a learning space, such as the school yard/garden and the formation

of skills to work thematically, using this space in an interdisciplinary/integrated way. Each activity had the role of bringing the child new experiences, putting him in the situation of finding solutions alone or bringing the child in the situation of working with the teammates to reach the desired result.

These activities have contributed to completing the learning process, developing the inclinations and skills of small schoolchildren, rational organization of activities of primary school pupils. Unlike traditional education, *outdoor activities* prefer open forms of work and activity so instead of sitting quietly and working passively-receptively, young school-age students are allowed to move and acquire knowledge having the opportunity to structure their own analysis, facing new and new situations and building new information on the already acquired knowledge.

This type of activity has often replaced books, chalkboards, and other illustrative materials by focusing on the development of the senses, movement, and actions with concrete materials from the specific environment. The outdoor activities involved working with other children in order to achieve educational goals of trial, achievement, explanation, cooperation, gesticulation, mimic and implicitly of the game. From a pedagogical point of view, *outdoor/outside activities* facilitate constructive learning and more efficient exploitation of temporal and personal resources and involve engagement, participation and activity from primary school pupils, all of which are a didactic added value of our formative approach.

The outdoor/outside lessons of English also included processes of: stimulation, ascertainment, association, as well as correction and development of language skills, because students have the possibility of continuous use of verbal/linguistic expressions for the purpose of asking questions, affirming conclusions and presenting the results of joint activities carried out within the group.

Just as *outdoor/outside activities* are performed according to the seasons, events or phenomena studied, for example in the case of this work in autumn and spring. They were planned at the beginning/during/end of the learning unit or at the assessment activities, as in the case of the *pedagogical curriculum for the formation of the motivation of learning English in primary school pupils*. Finally, one of the interactive and motivating methods for learning English by primary school students was the use of a puppet-puppet puppet at foreign language class, *a Puppet Figurine Mr. Zebra* – this visual/tactile and verbal interaction of children with the toy not only more accurately achieve educational goals; creates a recreational climate in the classroom, reduces emotional blockages, and banish apathy and boredom no matter what the type of lesson. Therefore, the whole game introduced in the teaching activity helped to maintain a vivid, fun and exciting learning. The use of interactive and novel methods and techniques in the classroom have shown us in the experiment that these pedagogical innovations make the educational process easier

to follow and understand by the receiver – the small schoolboy, training him in various activities within the lesson, turning everything into easy, but also exciting/beautiful as a play, a serious one, however and the teaching activity of the emitter – the teacher is student-centered and motivating, intended for learning also closely interconnected with the current digital age in which the internet is ubiquitous.

That is why our pedagogical innovations in the experiment included both communication skills development exercises and activities related to the training and development of motivation, at the same time: *gamification* – game and digital educational technology in the concept of e-learning (a method of online learning in which we used new multimedia technologies of classroom education: educational platforms and educational applications in English), this blended learning method is a more flexible part of training that is a combination of learning at your own pace and classical classroom training (face-to-face) designed to facilitate learning, stimulate creativity and competition, but also teamwork/group work and our experiment demonstrates the effectiveness and efficiency of the traditional training component that can be associated with the e-learning method in various ways and proportions depending on the type of lesson approached in the classroom.

As stated above, this formative syllabus is part of a psycho-pedagogical model of developing motivation for learning English in primary school students. The importance of a psycho-pedagogical model is fundamental, since it serves as a resistance structure for the entire subsequent development of the child, ensuring the transition from play to learning activity. At this age, pupils of young school age predominantly learn by imitation and observation, which is why a complete and effective psycho-pedagogical model directly influences their attitudes, values and self-confidence. The functionality of a psycho-pedagogical model in small classes refers not only to “what the child learns”, but to “how” is structured the learning experience of a foreign language to be motivating and continuous. It acts as a mechanism of regulation between child psychology and the requirements of the school curriculum that the teacher directs.

EU Recommendations on the need to learn a foreign language in contemporary society. Perhaps, more than ever, the knowledge of at least two foreign languages in addition to the mother tongue has proven to be an essential vector in ensuring the overall objective of the European Union, which is to open up education and training to the world [6]. From the *EU Recommendations* derives the following component of the – *Motivation model for learning a foreign language in primary classes*, which must be understood as a pedagogical intention to promote and implement in the educational practice in Romania, which has implemented this aspect for only a decade in the educational system. *Theoretical foundations of learning a foreign in primary classes* are based on the following statement: *Language learning* has become an absolute necessity in contemporary society, regardless of the methods and processes used in primary classes, learning a foreign language is

achieved through elements of play, practical listening exercises and repetition according to the model [4].

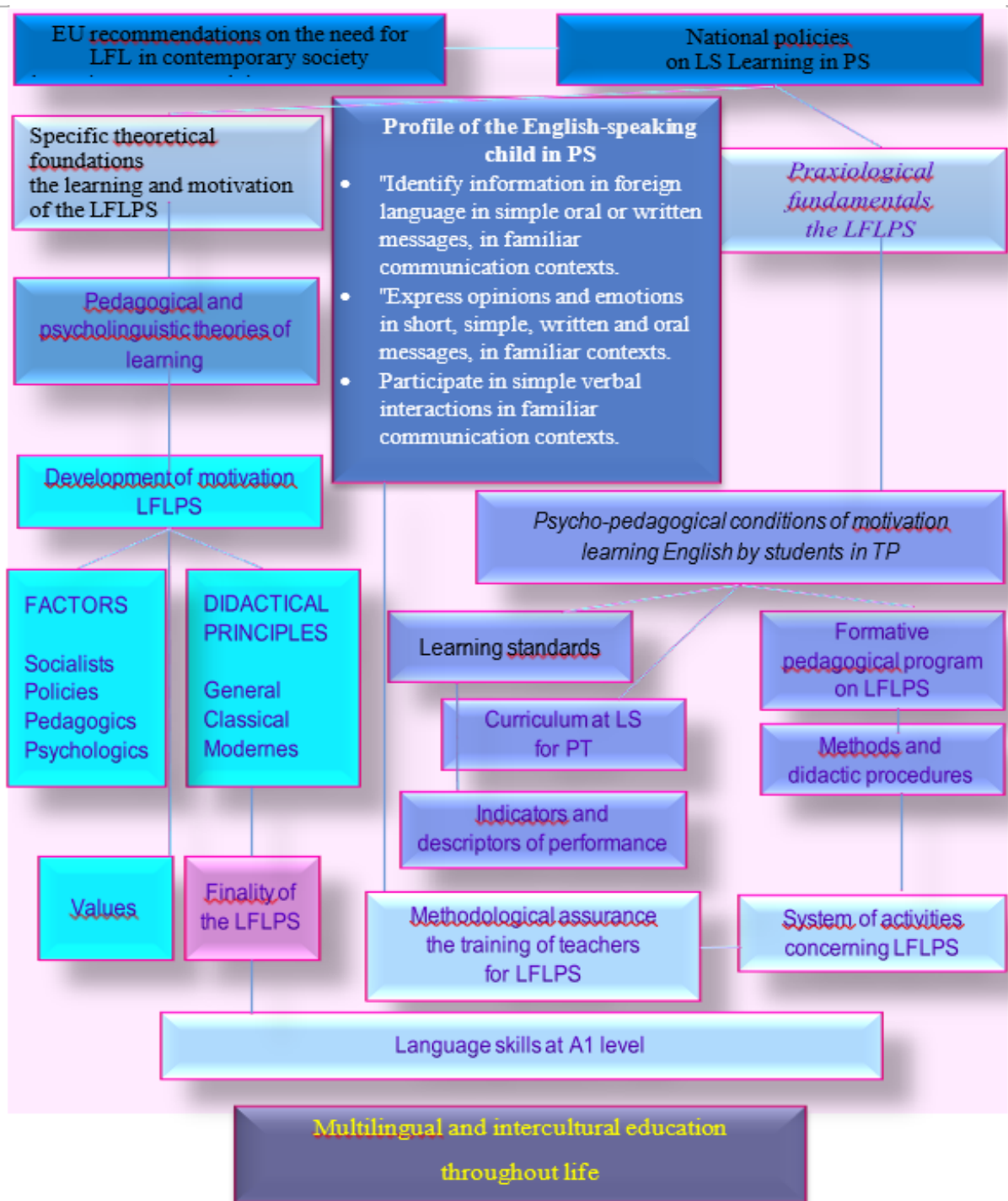


Figure 1. Psycho-pedagogical model of development of motivation for learning English in primary school students

Theoretical foundation of learning a foreign language in primary classes is represented in *the Model* by an integrative approach to pedagogical, psychological and psycholinguistic theories, reported at the age of 6 years to 10 years. Therefore, here in this chapter, we will list the components that make up the concept of developing the motivation of learning a foreign language in primary classes include: integrative motivation and

instrumental motivation. *Factors: social, political; pedagogical aspect aims to correlate them in the process of teaching and achieving learning foreign languages in primary classes. EU language policies aim to protect linguistic diversity and promote knowledge of languages for reasons of cultural identity, social integration, and because multilingual citizens are better placed to benefit from education and job opportunities in the single market* [3, 7, 8].

Thus, the exposed situation has generated the need to draw *general teaching principles*, which guide the teaching practice of teachers in the field of language learning from the age of 6 to 10 years when the primary classes end, through which the *educational goals of learning a foreign language at a young school age* can be achieved [5, p. 3]. *The aim of learning a primary language*: the acquisition of language skills at A1 level by young school-age children. There are six language levels and the cups are set by CEFR as follows: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 and C2. The *praxiological fundamentals* of the learning foreign language in primary classes, the second basic component of the learning foreign languages *psycho-pedagogical Model* of the young school-age student, reflecting what needs to be operated, designed, secured for the implementation of language learning activities.

The Pedagogical Conditions component of the *Psycho-pedagogical Model of primary school pupils* includes strategy specifications in order to ensure the process of implementation of the theoretical-praxiological fundamentals of learning a foreign language in primary classes. At the heart of *the Model* is located the *profile of the child of young school age, English-speaking*, as a subject and partner of effective learning of an *foreign language*. The image of a network of factors/conditions surrounding the child illustrates how complex the influences on effective learning are in primary language classes.

The latest component of *the Model, Multilingual and intercultural lifelong education*, supports the continuity of learning – individually and in groups. In conclusion, *Multilingual and intercultural education throughout life* is a continuous and complex activity, for which EU policies have formulated the following specific objectives: learning the mother tongue plus two other languages.

In conclusion, the results of the research have demonstrated that the psycho-pedagogical model of development of motivation for learning English in primary school students is a viable product, based on the nature, essence of the concepts, *the profile of the English-speaking child in the primary stage, the pedagogical and psycholinguistic theories of learning psychopedagogical conditions for motivating primary school pupils for learning English and, lastly, multilingual and intercultural education throughout life*. The psycho-pedagogical construct has demonstrated its validity not only from the perspective of the epistemological landmarks underlying it, but also from the one of the components of the applied methodology: system of specific teaching methods and techniques used,

development of creative capacities of students, development of competence of communication in a foreign language, critical thinking, evaluative etc.

Bibliography

Books with a single author

1. *Cadrul European Comun de Referință pentru Limbi. Diviziunea Politici Lingvistice.* Strasbourg: trad. din lb. fr. de Gheorghe Moldovanu. Chișinău: Tipografia Centrală, 2003, 204 p. ISBN: 9975-78259-0.
2. CHOMSKY, N. *New horizons in the study of language and mind.* Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 230 p. ISBN: 9780511811937.
3. PETRESCU, A. *Formarea profesorului de limbi străine din învățământul preșcolar și primar din România.* București: Editura Universității din București, 2012, 222 p. pp. 52-53. ISBN: 978-606-16-0193-6.

Internet resources

4. CIOLAN, I.L. Studiarea limbii engleze în ciclul primar. In: „*Revista Profesorului*”, Alba, 2018, ISSN 2602-0068, [accessed: 03.03.2024]. Available: <https://revistaprofesorului.ro/studiarea-limbii-engleze-in-ciclul-primar/>
5. AUTORITATEA NAȚIONALĂ PENTRU CALIFICĂRI. *Normativitate în procesul de învățământ. Sistemul principiilor didactice. Fundamente, relevanță pentru învățământul primar, practică, aplicații*, [accessed: 04.03.2024]. Available: https://www.anc.edu.ro/wpcontent/uploads/2021/04/NORMATIVITATE_IN_PROCESUL_DE_INVATAMANT.pdf
6. PLEȘEA, M.M. Limbile străine – o poartă deschisă către viitor. In: *Revista „Tribuna Învățământului”*. 12 noiembrie 2013. [accessed: 03.03.2024]. Available: <https://tribunainvatamantului.ro/limbile-straine-o-poarta-deschisa-catre-viitor/>
7. POPESCU, D. Predarea limbii engleze în învățământul primar. In: „*Analele Universității „Constantin Brâncuși”*,” Târgu Jiu, Seria Științe ale Educației, 2015, nr. 2, pp. 46-57, 48 p. [accessed: 10.01.2024]. Available: https://www.utgjiiu.ro/revista/dppd/pdf/201502/5_Daniela%20Popescu.pdf.
8. PORTOFOLIUL EUROPEAN AL LIMBILOR MODERNE | Ordin 5866/2012. [accessed: 03.03.2024]. Available: <https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gmztemrzge/portofoliul-european-al-limbilor-moderne-ordin-5866-2012?dp=gyztambsgq4ti>

Received / *Recepționat*: 21.05.2026

Accepted / *Acceptat*: 29.06.2026

Email: danamariamotfolea@gmail.com