

Research Article

Education and Writing as a Lifestyle, the Writing Process in Secondary and High Schools in Albania: The Case of Albanian Language and Literature

Dhurata Lamçja* 

Department of Education and English, Faculty of Social Science, Albanian University, Tirana, Albania

Abstract

A nation's most enduring asset is education which builds social structures while preserving cultural identity and enables people to develop intellectual and practical skills for progress. This research examines how Albanian language and literature supports cultural and social growth through an analysis of educational methods and classroom interactions that shape student communication skills and critical thinking abilities. According to Espinoza (2004) education quality surpasses natural resources in determining national wealth because it produces respectful daily interactions through greetings and expressions of gratitude. The teaching of Albanian language and literature functions as a foundational educational process which enables students to master their native language while developing critical and expressive abilities for literary text engagement. Modern curricula now focus on interactive approaches that use dialogic methods to promote interpretation and discussion and inquiry-based learning which transforms students into active creators of meaning. The educational approach mirrors international reform efforts which integrate language and literature throughout all educational levels to develop reading abilities and comprehension skills and interpretive competencies and creative expression while using interdisciplinary methods to place literature within broader cultural and intellectual frameworks. The present research investigates the obstacles teachers face when teaching linguistic and literary content in Albanian secondary education through a synchronic analysis. The research identifies specific barriers to propose effective solutions which will improve teaching methods and maintain literature education as an essential tool for developing modern communication skills and critical thinking and cultural understanding.

Keywords

Writing, Competence, Curriculum, Communication, Pedagogy

1. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology that combines literature review and critical analysis to explore the state of literature education in Albanian secondary schools. By examining existing educational frameworks, teaching methodologies, and curriculum structures, the re-

search aims to identify key challenges and propose practical improvements to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes.

*Corresponding author: dh.lamcja@albanianuniversity.edu.al (Dhurata Lamçja)

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1.1. Approach and Theoretical Framework

Our research begins with a comprehensive literature review, drawing from a wide range of academic sources, including scholarly articles, textbooks, educational policies, and theoretical perspectives on Albanian language and literature education. We first establish the foundational role of education in cultural and national identity formation, using philosophical insights—particularly those of A. Espinoza—to illustrate how education shapes communication, social interaction, and cultural development.

A central focus of our analysis is the “Language and Communication” curriculum within the Albanian Language and Literature (AML) program. By examining its objectives, teaching methods, and pedagogical approaches, we assess how effectively it supports student-centered learning. We also explore the role of hermeneutics, emphasizing its importance in helping students develop critical thinking, interpretative skills, and a deeper understanding of literary texts.

1.2. Identifying Challenges and Opportunities

Through an in-depth review of current literature on educational methods in Albanian schools, we identify major inconsistencies and methodological gaps that affect literature instruction. Some of the key challenges we explore include:

1. Unequal access to educational resources across different regions of Albania.
2. Variations in teaching methodologies, leading to inconsistencies in how literature is taught.
3. Barriers to adopting progressive pedagogical approaches, such as interdisciplinary learning and student-centered teaching strategies.

1.3. Proposing Solutions

Based on the insights gained from our literature review and analysis, we propose practical solutions to improve literature education in Albanian secondary schools. These recommendations include:

1. Reforming curriculum design to better integrate language and literature instruction.
2. Enhancing teacher professional development through targeted training initiatives.
3. Leveraging technology to create more engaging and interactive learning experiences.
4. Expanding the literary canon to include diverse works that resonate with contemporary students and reflect a wider range of cultural perspectives.

2. Research Objectives

1. General Objective:

To analyze and improve pedagogical approaches to teaching Albanian language and literature in secondary education,

identifying challenges and proposing solutions that enhance student learning and engagement.

2. Specific Objectives:

- 1) Assess the current state of Albanian language and literature education, identifying key challenges and inconsistencies.
- 2) Propose structured improvements that integrate language and literature instruction, with a focus on literary criticism and interdisciplinary methods.
- 3) Explore how technology can be used to improve literature education.
- 4) Advocate for the inclusion of diverse literary works in the Albanian curriculum and propose strategies to achieve this.

Research Questions:

- 1) What is the current state of Albanian language and literature education, and what are its main challenges?
- 2) How can we better integrate language and literature instruction, emphasizing literary criticism and interdisciplinary approaches?
- 3) What role can technology play in enhancing literature education in Albania?
- 4) Why is it important to diversify the literary curriculum, and how can this be effectively implemented?

By addressing these questions, this study aims to contribute to a more effective and engaging approach to literature education in Albania, ensuring that students gain not only linguistic competence but also critical thinking and interpretative skills essential for their personal and professional growth.

3. Literature Review

3.1. The Intersection of Cognitive Didactics and Literature

This study examines the pedagogical landscape of literature education in Albania, where the teaching of Albanian language and literature has historically been intertwined yet remains structurally fragmented. While the curriculum presents them as interconnected disciplines, they are often taught as separate subjects with distinct instructional goals. This lack of a cohesive didactic framework leads to inconsistencies, making sustained, structured learning difficult for students. Compounding this issue is the narrow selection of literary texts, which limits students' exposure to diverse and meaningful literature.

Current textbooks, such as *Letërsia 11* (Pegi and Filara editions), provide a chronological overview of literary movements—Romanticism, Realism, and late 19th-century literature—along with key figures and representative works (Ndoci Lama, [13]; Stringa [18]). While this approach ensures historical accuracy, it often reduces literature to a rigid timeline, focusing on factual descriptions rather than deep engagement with texts.

The treatment of literature within the Albanian Language and Literature (AML) curriculum follows several academic approaches:

1. Thematic Analysis (e.g., exploring the epic genre, novel development).
2. Anthropological and Historical Contexts (e.g., literary movements within societal change).
3. Stylistic and Rhetorical Analysis (e.g., identifying literary devices, explaining paradoxes).
4. Reflective and Interpretative Exercises (e.g., philosophical reflections based on literary aphorisms).

However, the inconsistencies in these methods create confusion for students. Instead of fostering a clear understanding of literature, students are often left uncertain about the purpose of each activity, struggling to differentiate between language analysis and literary interpretation. This fragmented approach dilutes the essence of literature, making it more of an intellectual exercise than a source of artistic, emotional, and critical engagement.

Additionally, contemporary AML programs and textbooks fail to clearly define the didactic approaches needed to study literature. They fluctuate between traditional methods—which emphasize national identity and historical context—and structuralist approaches, which focus on the linguistic and semiotic aspects of texts. This eclectic methodology hinders the evaluation of translated literature, reinforcing the notion that translated works lose their essence in comparison to originals.

3.2. The Role of Literary Criticism in Pedagogy

Teaching literature is not just about transmitting knowledge; it is about fostering a dynamic relationship between students and texts, especially in today's multicultural and interdisciplinary world [14-16]. The ability to analyze, interpret, and critique literature is essential for helping students develop their own perspectives. This requires a structured approach that incorporates literary commentary, text interpretation, and a broader understanding of cultural and historical contexts [2, 5, 10].

In many European educational systems, literature is taught as a dialogical process, where students engage in discussions, ask critical questions, and explore different perspectives. This approach is also reflected in Kosovo's AML curriculum, where literature and language are integrated to promote deeper textual engagement. Central to this methodology is the act of reading itself—not just as a means of acquiring information but as a way to interpret and internalize literature within a hermeneutic community [11, 8].

By focusing on thematic and genre-based approaches, literature can be better contextualized in civilization, mentality, customs, and cultural movements. This perspective shifts the purpose of literary education away from nationalistic motivations toward a more interpretative and analytical focus, ensuring that students engage with literature as an evolving

and diverse body of work.

However, one of the greatest challenges in Albanian literature education is the lack of a well-defined literary canon. Unlike other national literatures that have established “great works”, Albanian literature lacks a universally accepted list of essential texts. This absence has contributed to thematic and genre impoverishment in school curricula. Additionally, the study of foreign literature remains limited and outdated, often restricted to texts that have been part of the curriculum since the 1940s [10, 6, 8].

3.3. Integrating Technology in Literature Education

In today's digital age, technology is transforming education, offering new ways to teach and learn literature. Albanian schools are increasingly recognizing the potential of digital tools to enhance literature instruction, making texts more accessible and engaging [6, 7, 9].

Digital platforms such as e-books, online libraries, and multimedia resources allow students to explore a wide range of literary texts beyond traditional printed materials. These tools support:

1. Interactive reading experiences through annotations, summaries, and discussion forums.
2. Multimedia storytelling, where students create digital essays, podcasts, or video analyses.
3. Access to critical perspectives and historical contexts through online databases and digital archives.

However, integrating technology into literature education also presents challenges. Many schools in Albania still struggle with limited digital resources, unequal access to technology, and inconsistent internet infrastructure. Additionally, not all educators are fully trained in digital literacy, making it difficult to implement effective technology-driven teaching methods.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the shift to online learning, revealing both the benefits and limitations of digital education. When Albania's schools transitioned to remote learning in March 2020, many teachers and students faced difficulties due to:

1. Limited internet access and shared devices within households.
2. Reduced motivation and engagement due to the lack of face-to-face interaction.
3. Challenges in adapting traditional teaching materials for digital formats.

Despite these obstacles, the forced adoption of digital learning tools proved valuable. It allowed for greater flexibility in education, ensuring that students could continue their studies remotely while minimizing disruptions to the academic calendar [19, 17]. The experience highlighted the importance of resilience in education, emphasizing the need for:

1. Comprehensive digital literacy training for teachers to ensure effective online instruction.

2. Strategic policies for integrating technology into literature curricula.
3. A blended approach to education, combining traditional literary study with modern digital tools.

4. Conclusion

The current state of literature education in Albania reflects a complex interplay of traditional methods, inconsistent teaching frameworks, and evolving technological influences. While the curriculum provides a broad overview of literary history, it lacks a clear methodological direction, often leaving students disoriented and disengaged.

To improve literature education, a more structured, student-centered approach is needed—one that:

1. Clarifies the relationship between language and literature, ensuring that each discipline is taught with a distinct yet complementary methodology.
2. Expands the literary canon, incorporating diverse and contemporary texts that resonate with students.
3. Integrates digital tools thoughtfully, balancing traditional literary analysis with modern technological innovations.
4. Prioritizes literary criticism and interpretation, fostering critical thinking and deeper engagement with texts.

By addressing these challenges, Albanian secondary schools can cultivate a more enriching, inclusive, and engaging literature education experience, preparing students not only for academic success but also for lifelong appreciation and understanding of literature.

4.1. The Challenge of Literary Criteria

As we reflect on the state of Albanian Language and Literature (AML) education, it becomes clear that curriculum designers and textbook authors must embrace the role of literary criticism in shaping how literature is taught in schools, warns that when literature itself is in crisis, literary criticism follows suit. This, in turn, affects how literature is taught, ultimately risking its marginalization in education. To prevent this, literary criticism must be recognized in three key ways:

1. As an art, where interpretation, commentary, and historical understanding provide a strong foundation for learning.
2. As a bridge to interdisciplinary and dialogical learning, where literature becomes a space for discussion and multiple perspectives.
3. As a deeply personal experience, where reading a text is about understanding and interpretation, rather than simply describing it [1, 12].

At the dawn of the 21st century [3, 4, 13], posed a provocative question: Does literary education still matter? In a world without rigid national borders, where people move and interact across cultures more than ever, our approach to litera-

ture should be open and democratic. The priority today is to cultivate skilled Albanian speakers who can articulate thoughts at the highest level, something literature uniquely nurtures.

However, literature faces another challenge—shifting student preferences. From 2005 to 2014, the rise of private universities led to increased enrollments, but since then, demographic changes, interest in studying abroad, and new regulations have caused fluctuations. Many students now gravitate toward business, healthcare, and STEM fields, moving away from education, humanities, and social sciences.

Beyond domestic challenges, Albania has long struggled with brain drain. Since the early 1990s, waves of emigration have led many highly educated professionals—doctors, engineers, economists—to seek opportunities in Western Europe, particularly Germany. A survey by INSTAT and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) found that nearly 350,000 people emigrated between 2011 and 2019, with 47% of those holding higher education degrees now living abroad [18, 25]. Government initiatives like the Brain Gain program (2006-2010) and the Excellence Fund aimed to bring back talent, but the results have been mixed. Even today, around 40% of Albania's postgraduate degree holders and 25% of its researchers live abroad.

Meanwhile, higher education institutions in Albania struggle to build a strong research culture. Despite the introduction of policies like the National Strategies for Research and Innovation (2017-2022 and 2023-2030), research output remains low [15, 20]. Limited funding, a weak transition from basic to applied research, and a lack of specialized research centers have all contributed to this challenge. In 2019, Albania's investment in research and development (R&D) was just 0.2% of GDP—one of the lowest in the region [21].

Due to funding shortages, Albanian universities and researchers rely heavily on European programs. However, their success rate remains lower than that of neighboring countries. For example, during the Horizon 2020 funding period (2014-2017), Albania secured only 4% of available funds, compared to Serbia's 64% [22]. Data from Scopus and Web of Science show a modest increase in Albania's research publications, yet overall output remains limited. From 2010 to 2021, Albania published 5,621 journal articles, ranking 118th globally and 22nd out of 23 in Eastern Europe [23, 24]. The majority of publications are in medicine, environmental science, health sciences, and engineering, with fewer contributions in literature and humanities.

Since joining the Bologna Process in 2005, Albania has made significant strides in education reform, decentralizing school governance and introducing competency-based curricula. These changes have improved access to education and student performance in international assessments. However, many graduates still lack basic competencies, indicating a persistent gap between policy and practice.

4.2. Expected Limitations

As we explore the teaching of Albanian language and literature in secondary education, we anticipate two key challenges:

1. Unequal Access to Educational Resources – The availability and quality of textbooks, digital tools, and literary materials vary significantly across schools and regions. These disparities can undermine the consistency and effectiveness of literature education.
2. Implementation Hurdles – While interdisciplinary teaching and technology integration could improve literature education, infrastructure limitations, inadequate teacher training, and bureaucratic challenges may slow progress.

Addressing these issues requires not only educational reforms but also a broader societal commitment to valuing literature, critical thinking, and research. Investing in these areas will ensure that literature remains a vital part of education, fostering thoughtful, articulate, and engaged citizens.

Author Contributions

Dhurata Lamça is the sole author. The author read and approved the final manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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