

TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR TEACHERS OF ROMANI

Introduction

The Project QUALIROM (Quality Education in Romani for Europe, 511678-2010-LLP-AT-KA2-KA2MP) implemented and tested the Curriculum Framework for Romani (CFR) and the corresponding European Language Portfolio Models (ELPs) which were developed by the Council of Europe and based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.

The project aimed for the introduction of high quality Romani teaching at primary, secondary and tertiary level as well as in lifelong learning, including the preparation of well-qualified teachers of Romani. Within the QUALIROM project, teachers of Romani (mostly native speakers of Romani with varied pedagogic education and experience) from five European countries developed teaching materials for different varieties of Romani and proficiency (and age) levels according to the guidelines of the CFR (A1-B2; primary – tertiary). These teaching materials are now available online on the project webpage (<http://qualirom.uni-graz.at/>) to be applied in further teaching as well as in teacher training processes.

In addition to this, Romani teachers who took part in the QUALIROM project and material preparation were also trained in six teacher training seminars organised and carried out by experts of the Council of Europe, covering a wide range of topics such as: the use of CFR and ELP in teaching Romani, different approaches to language teaching, evaluation of the teaching process and learning outcomes, teaching in heterogeneous situations, an introduction to Romani dialectology, etc. In the final phase of the project, the teaching materials were tested by several of the trained teachers in practice – which generated not only corrections for the finalisation of the teaching materials, but also important experience gained in teaching situations that were further reflected in the design of the following teacher training curriculum.

Based on the experiences reported by the teachers during the seminars, teacher training modules were developed with the aim to design a curriculum for educating highly professional teachers of Romani. During the seminars it was shown quite clearly that Romani teachers face problems being recognised as qualified teachers due to a lack of pedagogic training. Two main problems were identified: interested Roma teachers very often do not fulfil the criteria for entering universities (such as having a high school diploma), and on the other hand, universities and, more precisely, teacher training faculties or departments, do not offer any classes of Romani as a subject, or classes in applied linguistics and teaching methods aimed at future teachers of Romani. Consequently, it is very difficult to find adequate opportunities to become a trained teacher of Romani. This curriculum should offer the possibility to prospective teachers of Romani to be trained in ac-

cordance with the highest current standards of teacher training education, while at the same time taking into account differences in their previous education in pedagogy as well as their proficiency in (different dialects of) Romani as key factors. The curriculum should also be seen as a possibility to standardise the education of Romani teachers within one country and across countries. So far, this type of measurable and comparable teacher training has been missing in many European countries.

The curriculum aims to set a basis for comparable and high quality education for teachers of Romani in order to initiate primarily a qualitative (as well as quantitative) change in Romani teaching and, inter alia, to improve the quality of education and the educational situation of Romani children by raising respect for the teachers and the language itself. The existence of such a curriculum and its content should motivate and support public educational authorities in the respective countries to initiate its implementation at their responsible institutions to train the required well-qualified teachers of Romani. By using this curriculum the education of Romani teachers becomes not only up-to-date with the current trends in teaching languages, but also measureable and comparable to other existing education programmes for language teachers. It should also be highlighted that the curriculum as well as the teaching materials for Romani as produced during the QUALIROM project support the use and teaching of local dialects of Romani, thus respecting and taking advantage of the existing linguistic plurality to promote mutual respect and tolerance (starting but also expanding from the purely linguistic field). The content and the individual modules should be easily adaptable to the local background of the teachers of Romani.

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Structure and content of the curriculum

The curriculum aims to integrate academic study and practical experience of language teaching. The curriculum is divided into five core modules and three optional modules. The core modules cover topics such as: language acquisition theory, methodological and didactic approaches to language teaching according to the guidelines of the Council of Europe, lesson/course planning and evaluation of learning and teaching processes, theoretical introduction to and practical work with the CFR and the ELP as well as an introduction to the grammatical structures of Romani, its sociolinguistic situation and dialectology and an introduction to the topic of minority language protection. It is expected that prospective teachers pass all of the five designed modules, fulfilling all requirements, including all individual and practical tasks.

In addition to the core curriculum, three elective modules have been designed which deal with topics considered relevant for Romani language teaching. Elective modules are offered to the teachers and selected by them in accordance with their educational background and needs.

Core modules:

1. **Theoretical approaches to Romani: grammatical structures, dialectology, sociolinguistic situation**
(detailed description on page 5)
2. **Language acquisition - pedagogic and didactic skills for language teaching**
(detailed description on page 6)
3. **Teaching materials, course design and evaluation**
(detailed description on page 7)
4. **Minority languages – rights and protection**
(detailed description on page 8)
5. **Special challenges**
(detailed description on page 9)

Optional modules:

1. **Assistance, mediation and conflict management**
(detailed description on page 10)
2. **Intercultural competence, plurilingualism and language teaching**
(detailed description on page 11)
3. **Romani language course**
(detailed description on page 12)

General criteria

Target group: Roma and non-Roma interested in becoming teachers of Romani

Prerequisites for admission: Knowledge of Romani at the B2 level is required to attend the teacher-training course. Language proficiency in Romani is tested by placement tests prior to entering the module. A course on Romani may be offered as an elective module.

Assessment: Written assignments, oral interviews and final exams with passing grades are required in order to complete each module.

Teaching practice: It is recommended that prospective teachers be offered a teaching internship in an institution within the formal educational system while they attend the courses. Their teaching experiences and their reflection on observation of language classes will be the basis for some of the modules. It would be ideal if the students could participate in and observe language classes in Romani. If this is not possible they can observe any other language class in an institution within the formal educational system (adult education centre, school, etc.). Students should be assigned mentors who will guide them during the teaching practice. This particular part of the curriculum can be implemented in different ways in accordance with the specific requirements of different teaching institutions in the given country.

Duration: Each module is meant to last two days, ideally at weekends. The module on language acquisition theory and language teaching (Module 2) should be divided into two two-day sessions as it is one of the key modules of the course.

Core modules of the Curriculum

MODULE 1

Theoretical approaches to Romani:
grammatical structures, dialectology, sociolinguistic situation

Native speakers of Romani have seldom had the opportunity to become acquainted with the basic grammatical structure of their own language as well as with other information on the language, such as the information on the Romani dialects and their current (varied) sociolinguistic situation including language attitudes of the (non-/semi-) speakers of the language, which are important determinants for the classroom setup. Based on this observation, the entrance language examinations test only the actual practical competencies of the prospective teachers entering the course.

A special course focused on developing underdeveloped skills in Romani (extension of Romani outside traditional oral/private domains) is offered as an optional module (see below).

Module one aims to supply the teachers with all necessary information on the language required by them not only as teachers of the language for the students but possibly also as advocates of the teaching of Romani for the parents.

Module one introduces the following aspects to the teachers: the grammatical structure of Romani with an emphasis on analytic skills needed for teaching, focusing on the Romani dialect(s) relevant for the given country or region; the basic particularities of historical development of Romani; an overview of Romani dialectology, stressing the need to develop the respect and tolerance towards other dialects of Romani (questions of standardisation and codification are also discussed) through Romani teaching; and the variation in sociolinguistic situations of different Romani dialects which heavily influences the teaching situation itself (i.e. mixed competence and mixed dialect groups). Special attention is paid to the discussion of different attitudes towards Romani on the side of (semi-/non-) speakers of the language in order to highlight the need to approach the issue of Romani teaching sensitively.

MODULE 1	Theoretical approaches to Romani: grammatical structures, dialectology, sociolinguistic situation.
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers have sufficient knowledge of the structure of Romani with an emphasis on analytic skills needed for teaching. • They are aware of the sociolinguistic situations of Romani. • They have an overview of different dialects of Romani.
<i>Aim/goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient theoretical knowledge on Romani from different spheres of linguistics, with an emphasis on their practical implications for the teaching situation and process.
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the grammatical structures of Romani with an emphasis on dialect(s) relevant for the given country/group of teachers. • Introduction to Romani dialectology (an overview of Romani dialects, questions of codification and standardisation). • Sociolinguistic situation(s) of Romani and their influence on teaching situations, including the attitudes towards Romani (teaching). • Overview of the experiences in teaching Romani and its possible challenges and outcomes.
<i>Skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to describe the grammatical structure of a given dialect in Romani and to use the theoretical knowledge in teaching practice. • Has an overview of Romani dialect groups and general knowledge of basic types of distinguishing features. • Has a general picture of the different sociolinguistic situations Romani dialects find themselves in and good knowledge of the sociolinguistic situation of given relevant dialect(s) and its repercussions for the teaching situation in the given region. • Is aware of different attitudes towards Romani and teaching Romani. • Knows about the situation in Romani teaching in different countries across Europe, including possible positive outcomes as well as past problematic experiences.
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures, individual, small and large group work, project or tasks • Individual/group work
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam on the course content • Written/oral analysis of Romani text(s) • Individual assignment: basic mapping of language attitudes towards Romani inside a familiar community

MODULE 2 Language acquisition: pedagogic and didactic skills for language teaching

The overall aim of this module is to provide a very brief overview of language acquisition theories. Upon the completion of this module, students should be able to provide definitions of first/second and foreign language acquisition. The approach to language teaching and learning is based on the recommendations of the Council of Europe, it is action-oriented and applies task-based language teaching, including intercultural learning and emphasis on learner autonomy through the application of the ELP. Students' experience should be taken into consideration and used as a basis for introducing theories and terminology of first/second and foreign language teaching and learning. One possibility of raising the awareness concerning these terms is to discuss the individual language biographies of the students.

One special challenge that many Romani teachers face is that Romani is sometimes their students' first language and sometimes a second or a foreign language. Issues related to first/second/foreign language acquisition are emphasised in accordance with this particular target group of prospective teachers.

Different approaches towards language teaching and learning are discussed. Based on the students' previous experience, different approaches of language teaching methodology are discussed. Reflecting upon their own learning process and pedagogic practice students should develop new competences and get used to innovative methods of language teaching.

Teachers learn about the influence of different literacy practices/early childhood literacy and their influence on learning skills and school success in order to better accommodate the possible problems their students are faced with while learning a language.

MODULE 2	Language acquisition – pedagogic and didactic skills for language teaching
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospective teachers have basic knowledge of the state of the art of research on language acquisition; know the relevant basic terminology; know the recommendation of the Council of Europe for teaching and learning a language (task-based approach, language learning and intercultural learning).
<i>Aim/goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basic knowledge of the state of the art of current relevant pedagogic theories.
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First/second/foreign language acquisition Stages of language acquisition Domain-specific use of language Natural and schooled language acquisition Language didactics and teaching methodology (task-based language learning, skills of language learning, ...) Early childhood literacy and its influence on school success
<i>Skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the process of language learning and teaching in and outside the classroom. Knows about the advantages/disadvantages of different methodologies. Knows about the influence of early childhood literacy on learning skills.
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lectures, individual, small and large group work, project or tasks Individual/group work
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written exam on the course content Written report: language biography of the student

MODULE 3

Teaching materials, course design and evaluation

Based on the previous pedagogic module, students learn how to navigate themselves and make full use of the Council of Europe tools for teaching Romani – the CFR and ELP for Romani. They become acquainted in great detail with the teaching materials created during the QUALIROM project and are trained to use them adequately. Taking QUALIROM teaching materials as an example, teachers learn how to create their own teaching materials and to include authentic materials as important elements of any modern interactive communicative language course in the class as well as to present Romani as a language that is part of the contemporary world. Teachers are encouraged to gather and use other existing sources of teaching material and make the best use of them. Teachers are also trained to assess and evaluate the teaching process and, in cooperation with the students, also the learning progress by using evaluation and self-assessment tools relevant for the used CoE teaching approaches.

MODULE 3	Teaching materials, course design and evaluation
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers know how to use the CFR (CEFR) and the ELP and use these tools not only to plan their courses and teach accordingly but also to evaluate the teaching and learning process. • The teachers know the sources of Romani teaching materials. They can adapt existing materials to their needs.
<i>Aim/goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, exploitation and reflection of language lessons. • Describe the aims/goals of teaching activities. • Develop a plan for a whole school year. • Differentiate students according to language levels (A1 – B2) and according to the age of the learner and according to the previous knowledge of the learner. • Describe the different didactic approaches.
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content/structure of the CFR/CEFR/ELP • Observation of language classes • Reflection and reporting of the observation • Collecting, discussion of different materials and useful media
<i>Skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can plan and design lessons and cycles of learning. • Can describe the aims of different activities. • Can develop exercises and learning material. • Can assess the language skills and background of the learners. • Can evaluate the teaching and learning process.
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation in language classes – discussion with tutors • Lectures • Group discussion • Individual work
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed preparation of a lesson plan. • Six classes taught by the prospective teacher, with a written report reflecting on the teaching process. • Interview with an experienced teacher (a tutor) on the teaching process (if possible).

MODULE 4

Minority languages - rights and protection

Prospective teachers learn about the legal context of minority languages in Europe with special emphasis on Romani. Prospective teachers learn about language rights, human language rights and about the importance of the presence of the mother tongue in formal education. They learn about legal norms and programmes for protecting minority languages. This module should provide prospective teachers with sufficient theoretical knowledge and communicative strategies they can apply in discussions with school authorities (and parents) about the need to introduce and value Romani teaching.

MODULE 4	Minority languages - rights and protection
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospective teachers know about legal regulations on minority languages and their protection with special emphasis on Romani in Europe. They know about the value of mother tongue education.
<i>Aim/goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospective teachers have an overview of legal norms and mechanisms set in Europe for the protection of minority languages, including Romani. Prospective teachers have knowledge of the discussion of the value of the use of the mother tongue in education, including legal provisions on the issue.
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal norms on minority rights
<i>Skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know about the legal norms on the protection and support of minority languages in Europe.
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual activities, small and large group activities, lectures
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written exam on module content

MODULE 5

Special challenges

Module five covers topics related to specific challenges of Romani teaching, related to the situation and status of Roma and Romani in the European matrix societies.

The issue of heterogeneity inside Romani language classes (subdialectal/subethnic due to historic as well as current migration; differences in the competence in Romani in different domains and motivation to learn it and expand the current knowledge due to the sociolinguistic situation of the different dialects and individual family approaches to the use of Romani, etc.) will be highlighted and strategies on how to work with heterogeneous groups in the teaching process will be discussed so that the teachers can make the best use of challenging settings. Prospective

teachers will be instructed how to meet the needs of each individual pupil in the most effective way, taking into account the pupils' individual linguistic, cultural and cognitive abilities.

The relation between language and identity and related issues, including the mechanisms of stigmatisation and denial, will also be brought to the forefront. The prospective teachers will learn to describe a plurilingual and pluricultural identity and how to support students to develop their own personality and identity in a plurilingual and pluricultural environment and value the languages that are connected with this environment.

MODULE 5	Special challenges
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers know about the heterogeneity present in Romani classrooms and how to work with it in the teaching process. • They are sensitive to the issues of identity formation and language use in plurilingual and pluricultural contexts.
<i>Aim/goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers are able to describe the heterogeneity of the students. • Prospective teachers are able to teach a heterogeneous group.
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition and aspects of heterogeneity • Sociolinguistic factors of language use • Politics, society and language use – power of language regulation • Positive and negative attitudes towards language use
<i>Skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers can describe the heterogeneity of learner groups and know how to work with them and include the heterogeneity into the lessons. • They can describe the power of language politics in one country.
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures • Individual/group work • Exercises
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of an activity that covers the needs of a heterogeneous group. • Conduct one interview with a Roma speaker on his/her language biography, language use, attitude towards language – transcription and analysis of the interview.

OPTIONAL MODULE 1

Assistance, mediation and conflict management

Experience in Romani teaching shows that the teachers of Romani often become informal mediators for Romani pupils who approach them with their other school problems, especially in cases where there are no Romani mediators/teaching assistants or other Romani teachers already employed at the school. Simultaneously, the teachers of Romani might find it important to cooperate more closely with the other teachers especially in the case of younger pupils, in order to prepare their Romani lessons so as to support their pupils in Romani classes with the development of learning and cognitive skills or to discuss pieces of knowledge and information transferable to other classes. While the teachers of Romani should become a substitute neither for a proper Romani school mediator nor for a proper teaching assistant, they should have the knowledge and skills

to support their pupils to feel comfortable and safe in the school environment as well as to support them in their learning progress and school performance. They should also have a good overview of the position and tasks of school mediators and teachers' assistants (or other country-specific positions used to support the education of Romani children from disadvantaged communities).

This module should equip the prospective teachers with know-how related to conflict situations and allow them to gain basic training as social mediators. Problem-solving strategies that help teachers and pupils to cope with difficulties or conflicts that may arise among members of different groups and to overcome obstacles in communication and interaction are presented. Strategies on how to act as an autonomous person and assume responsibility for finding solutions using one's own initiative are discussed. Prospective teachers are trained to understand the dynamics of marginalisation, discrimination and prejudice. They gain a good overview of the position and tasks of school mediators and teachers' assistants (or other country-specific positions used to support the education of Romani children from disadvantaged communities).

OPTIONAL MODULE 1	Assistance, mediation and conflict management
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers know how to mediate a conflict situation in the classroom or school environment. • Prospective teachers have competencies to communicate with other teachers to develop joint strategies to support the learning progress of their pupils. • Prospective teachers have an overview of the position and tasks of school mediators and teachers' assistants (or other country specific positions used to support the education of Romani children from disadvantaged communities).
<i>Aim/goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To know and discuss the state of the art in methodology and terminology. • To acquire competencies for successful intervention in conflict situations in the school environment. • To get an overview of transferable skills and transversal topics included in the general school curriculum. • To acquire competencies to negotiate a joint strategy with the other relevant teachers to foster the learning progress of individual pupils.
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict description, diagnoses, strategies of conflict management • Mediation in school environment • Assistance to pupils with special needs • Transversal topics and transferable skills: identification and inclusion in learning activities
<i>Skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers are able to act in conflict situations in the classroom/ the school. • Prospective teachers are able to identify topics and skills transferable to other classes and include them in their Romani classes. • Prospective teachers can communicate and mediate in problematic situations.
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises, role play, lectures
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom participation, interview with a tutor

OPTIONAL MODULE 2

Intercultural competence, plurilingualism and language teaching

European concepts of plurilingualism and intercultural competence are based on the concept of critical pedagogy and educational development of individuals fully competent for engaging, maintaining and improving relations with people from other ethnolinguistic groups they come in contact with. This is even more important when it comes to contacts between marginalised groups, such as Romani communities across Europe and majority groups in different European countries. In this module, concepts of intercultural competence and plurilingualism are discussed with an emphasis on plurilingual and intercultural education. Strategies for interpersonal communication, which aims at establishing a good relationship based on a capacity to communicate efficiently with no or minimal loss of meaning and understanding and capacity to get support and provide support in order to establish and maintain cooperation among members of different ethnolinguistic groups, are discussed.

OPTIONAL MODULE 2	Intercultural competence, plurilingualism and language teaching
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prospective teachers acquire theoretical and practical knowledge about plurilingual education and intercultural competence.
<i>Aim/goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be able to establish, maintain and support intercultural and plurilingual communication.
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Theoretical concepts and practical exercises geared toward the development of critical thinking and the capacity for implementing the concepts of interculturality and plurilingualism in real-life teaching/learning situations.
<i>Skills and knowledge</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is capable of solving real-life teaching/learning problems which deal with interculturality.
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exercises, role play, lectures
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom participation, written and spoken assignments, final exam

OPTIONAL MODULE THREE

Romani language course (special focus on competencies in new domains of use)

It is expected that a large number of those individuals interested in teaching Romani will be Romani native speakers. The specific situation of Roma and Romani in Europe as a marginalised and stigmatised minority and a functionally limited minority language used traditionally only in some domains (although expanding heavily in the past decades into new domains) has some repercussions on the competence of Romani native speakers in their own language in certain spheres, especially those connected with public and written use of Romani, or the use of Romani as

a language of instruction (the more so in language classes). This module is focused on the development of underdeveloped language skills on B2 level (esp. written but possibly also oral in specific domains and topics related to language teaching).

OPTIONAL MODULE 3	Romani language course
<i>Competences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective teachers acquire the necessary written and oral language skills in Romani (B2)
<i>Aim/goal:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To acquire language skills at B2 level
<i>Content</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language classes focused on developing specific underdeveloped language skills on B2 level
<i>Skills and knowledge:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is able to use the language at level B1/B2 in all domains
<i>Teaching process</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises, role play, lectures
<i>Assessment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom participation, written and spoken assignments, final exam