

Dimensions of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in the study of literature

Ramona-Elena Tutunaru⁵⁵

Abstract: Designing teaching-learning activities from an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective brings new and interesting overgrowth, merging between fields of knowledge. This approach requires the presence of notions of collaboration, connection between scientific subjects (interdisciplinary perspective), integrated treatment (transdisciplinary perspective), the aim being to assist students in understanding reality in its pure complete form. Literature but also the other arts are products of the author's creation, but also of the reader's, viewer's experience. The relationship between literature and folklore, painting, music, theatre, film, places the teaching approach on new coordinates. Joining of the arts causes the production of novelty, generates suspense, curiosity, cultural enrichment. The use in Romanian language and literature classes of elements belonging to other spheres of art brings more knowledge, increases learning motivation, interest in reading, the involvement of the student in the educational process.

Keywords: transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary, literature, music, film.

1. Defining the concepts of transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary

According to C. Cucos (1996, p. 77), "interdisciplinary is a form of cooperation between different subjects on an issue whose complexity can be captured only through convergence and prudent combination of several points of view". Interdisciplinary implies "dialogue" between the independent content of several subjects, whether they belong to the same curricular area, or to different curricular areas. G. Văideanu (1988, p. 87) believes that interdisciplinarity "implies a certain degree of integration between different fields of knowledge and different approaches, as well as the use of a common language, enabling conceptual and methodological exchanges".

Interdisciplinarity can refer to a theme, a topic suitable to be approached from several perspectives, angles, opening research involving different areas of science, transfer of concepts, methods and processes, but also implies the presence of solid briefing, general and specialized knowledge, complex and integrative thinking. In today's society, both the interdisciplinary approach and the transdisciplinary one are a necessity, and the organization of the learning content from this perspective is a natural necessary fact. We believe that transdisciplinary teaching-learning is a prerequisite for the realization of the concept of modern education, and teachers who address the educational process from this perspective actually adapt to the demands of the moment, feel the pulse of reality, keep pace with society, contributing to the unity of the educational approach.

⁵⁵ Assistant Professor PhD West University of Timisoara, ramona.tutunaru@e-uvt.ro

Education focuses on man considered as a whole, as a unitary being to be developed in its entirety. This vision on education requires the presence of transdisciplinarity, which involves the transgression, cancellation of the borders of school subjects, unity being its fundamental principle.

The term "transdisciplinarity" was coined by Jean Piaget in 1970. "Transdisciplinarity concerns - as indicated by the prefix "trans" - what is at the same time across subjects, in the different subjects, and beyond all subjects. Its goal is understanding the present world, one of its imperatives being the unity of knowledge" (Nicolescu, 1999, p. 53).

In a world so complex transdisciplinarity can only be welcomed, its presence serving to positioning teaching on the coordinates of the reality to which it belongs.

2. Dimensions of interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity in studying literature

Călinescu is the one who used to say that "the arts are communicating vessels". They are beauty in all its forms of expression. Literature, painting, sculpture, music, dance, etc., they all have the same objective: the transmission of aesthetic emotion. Themes, motives and universal symbols represent a pool of all the arts, each with its own means of expression: literature uses words, language; painting "speaks" through colours; sculpture takes shape in stone, wood, bronze; music expresses itself through sounds; dance involves rhythmic movement. All artists, regardless of the field they express themselves, let themselves be inspired and challenged by reality, life, they themselves generating infinite replicas of the original model.

Given the fact that the arts, becoming school subjects, could have a common vision of teaching and learning, the presence of interdisciplinary, transdisciplinarity within the classes of Romanian language and literature is a topic we want to look into. Roland Barthes, in *Lesson* wrote: "If through I do not know what excess of socialism or barbarism, all subjects should be expelled from education with one exception, the literary subject should be saved since all sciences are present in the literary monument".

2.1. Literature and folklore. The folk ballad

From the perspective of literature, the ballad is defined as "species of civilized or folk epic poetry, often including lyrical-dramatic sequences, with heroic, fantastic, historic, legendary, family topic; characters with exceptional qualities; conflict between the forces of good and evil "(Cretu, 2007, p.44). It is also considered to be "a narrative poem on heroic, legendary, fantastic themes, present in folklore (*The Little Ewe, Master Manole*) and cultivated by poets like Vasile Alecsandri, George Coșbuc, Topîrceanu etc." (Petraș, 1992, p. 23). The definitions above contain the features of this literary genre whose connection with and origin from the folklore is undeniable, especially as the lyrics of the ballad are sung or recited sometimes with accompaniment, are anonymous and collective creations, their artistic content and structure introducing them in the scope of the universal legendary epic.

Analysing the structure of folk ballads, like in fairy tales, we find initial, middle and end formulae that define the poetic frame of the narrative, the trend of the folk bard being to set real limits to any fabulous motif. The median formulae mark the beginning of another episode or introduce another hero into the scene, generating a vivid episodic succession. The final formulae restore the natural order of nature or can be humorous formulae "because ballads

have a generally optimistic end, the singer ends with the image of the porch party or of the heroes' wedding (ibid, p.41).

Ballads, whether civilized or folk, communicate emotions, discreetly, but full of content, and this through an event that mediates the communication of feeling. The event is often a local one, presented as an approximation.

2.2. Interference between literature and painting

The literary description – the portrait

Ecaterina Cretu (2007, p. 31) defines the literary portrait as a "description in verse or prose showing the physical and moral characteristics of a real or fictional being. The portrait can be made by narrator, by other characters or it can be reconstructed from the actions, behaviours or words of the characters, or from the relationship between them". However, Ion Coteanu states that "expressive (literary) descriptions are based on personal impressions and opinions, they do not explain but strive to make us feel the beauty, greatness or, if necessary, the ugliness of what is described" (Coteanu 1990, p. 97).

Considering the involvement of the transmitter in painting the aspects revealed the description can be: *objective* - when providing information on objects, people, etc., and *subjective* - when the impressions of the one who describes are expressed directly or are just suggestions. On the other hand, the artistic processes, as particular ways of perceiving reality by the creator self, can be: of seeing, re-creating another universe with a certain affective value, of expressing own artistic visions, of sensitizing the receiver to what it is described. The portraits are made using solely figures of speech, which is a means of differentiating the character characterization from the portrait.

The portrait is a description depicting the physical and moral characteristics of a person, individualizing it. When a person appears in a literary work, it becomes a literary character. Thus, the portrait, from the literary point of view, is the image of a literary character and generally contains details concerning the physical appearance, clothing and characteristic traits of the character. These can be qualities or defects manifested through gestures or tics. The portrait also refers to the habits of the character described, which underline its personality. There are also portraits that can be real, ordinary, portrayed objectively and belonging to scientific works. Depending on the type of features highlighted, the portraits can be physical if they project the outward appearance of the character, the physical appearance, or they can be moral when relating to the character's moral traits.

Whatever the type of portrait is, the characters have the key role in the structure of the literary work, because authors create true human types, assigning them dominant traits. At the same time, the characters are the carriers of the message of the literary work, and, implicitly, of the author. Thus the author's attitude appears expressed differently from one character to another, closely related to the moral values the characters represent.

The literary description – the literary tableau

Description as a descriptive monologic speech corresponds to the mode of presenting in writing places, beings, aspects and phenomena of nature in an expositive manner, like painting. Although the term *tableau* brings to mind a work of art, a literary description representing a corner of nature, it is a literary picture, as Victor Drujinin states in his work, *Operational Concepts*: "the tableau is a form of description, as an exposure mode, which presents,

in verse or prose, a particular aspect of nature in broad suggestive lines, scenes or other aspects of social life” (Drujinin, 2007, 196). In a picture the relationship between man and nature can be suggested, and nature can be humanized by means of artistic expressiveness, focusing on the role of significant details with a particular message addressed to the reader. "In epic or lyric poetry, the term tableau – whose meaning is transferred from painting - indicates the revelation of images significant for a particular configuration of elements" (Cretu, 2007, p.30). Thus, the space described can be caught from the general elements to the particular elements or vice versa, suggesting the mood, structuring the space around the central idea, grading the background to the foreground or vice versa. Presenting suggestively and plastically the features characteristic to a corner of nature, the literary description enables the author to depict the aspects that impressed him/her, offering a personal view on the reality transfigured through the filter of their own imagination. Through this type of artwork, the author seeks to arouse strong aesthetic feelings and emotions in the reader's soul, making the reader join in the spectacle of nature.

2.3. Poetry and music

Music and literature have often been perceived as having an indissoluble mysterious unity, due to the common traits that the two arts share: rhythm, measure, emotion, lyricism. Poems contain a lot of music, and music incorporates poetry. Poetry comforts, upsets, lifts or drops, heats and sometimes cools, distresses but equally calms and appeases, intoxicates and awakens the human soul. There are states and feelings that music can express to the same extent by serious or high tones, acute, specific vibrato, alert or gentle rhythms. Sometimes through poetry one can identify a strong personal message, at other times, a general human one; it is for glorious or distressful times, with impact on all those who enjoy its essence.

Plato considered music to be a moral law with implications for thought, imagination, life itself. Poetry is music of the mind, and music is poetry of the soul, they complete and overlap each other, creating a unique indivisible symbiosis. Both poetry and music generate the harmonization of personal values in a socio-human model, a continuous individual process of spiritual self-perfection of personality through the many forms of contact between the two arts. Poetry through music is a way of reflecting through auditory images / sounds of the universe in which the individual manifests itself as a component. Therefore, the syncretic study of the two arts through teaching applications contributes to developing the proper attitude towards the artistic aesthetic values and to creating the aesthetic ideal, living high emotions before the beauty of the artwork.

2.4. Dramatization – the scenic representation of the epic text

To illustrate the interdisciplinary aspect of literature with theatre, we consider it appropriate to note that the dramatic show is the scenic representation of the theatre plays before the public. The theatrical performance involves a mix of arts: literature, stage design, architecture, the actors' acting.

About the dramatic genre, Florica Bodiştean (2006, p.213) states that it is a mixed genre, “probably subsequent to the lyrical and narrative, using both their subjective and objective means, the dramatic text was the type of speech that first stirred a theoretical interest. The dramatic work, thanks to the fact that it involves a potential translectural use, could be considered rather as a text belonging equally to two different systems: literary, covering

and exceeding all the specific discursive requirements, and theatrical, operating as a central element or rather as an initial one which is complemented by other semiotic systems and transposed from the written dimension into the oral one.” Regarded as a literary work, the dramatic text has the same basic components as the epic work: action, characters, time and space, conflict etc., only that the dramatic requires particular coding through a more synthetic, more illustrative and more generalizing image on humanness.

Therefore, dramatization involves converting an epic text into a theatre play with the following composition: *acts*, divisions in the plot; *scenes*, subdivisions of acts; *tableaux*, as forms of describing the space, characters or moments of the plot. The main exposure mode in the dramatic text is the dialogue alternating with the monologue, the narrative or description appearing in the stage directions, the directions given by the author of the dramatic text with a view to staging the plays.

The dramatization being applied in the Romanian language and literature classes, it contributes to improving students' reading techniques, stimulating their interest for the artwork, while helping them to express their personality. Based on dialogue, an interdisciplinary simulation game will be attempted, the students becoming characters, actors, playing the roles assigned to them, according to the perception they have on the characters' structure.

2.5. Narration and film

In 1895 the Lumiere brothers performed the first cinematographic show with an audience, and since then the film has had an incredible evolution, at present exceeding the other arts, if we speak of its success to the public. The relationship between film and literature relates to several coordinates. In its evolution, the film makes use of the innovations in narrative techniques, getting to influence literature itself.

If we note certain common coordinates, we mean: compliance with the plot succession in classic narratives and movies, but not in the modern ones; the character analysed from multiple perspectives or just from one perspective, that of the narrator or director; alternation of parallel scenes; the technique of suspense; linear, round construction; insertion of other literary texts or films in the work discussed, be it literary or cinematic; panoramic vision.

The film not only exceeded the other arts, from the point of view of the number of spectators, but it has gained increasing autonomy in its evolution. The new screenings differ more and more from the literary text, so that it has become a practice that the cinematographic work should not be faithful to the literary work it represents, becoming a work of art in itself, not just a tool of the literary work.

Regardless of fidelity to the literary text, the film or theatre show is a syncretic art. This, as opposed to the theatre, has as an object the instrumentalised image, which depends on certain techniques for encoding and decoding the message. The film is not just about the manifestation of the actors' act on a movie set by capturing frames and scenes and afterwards running them before the audience. It is much more than this. It's the result of titanic montage work, where the montage of scenes takes place to obtain the final cinematographic work, whilst achieving perfect symbiosis with sound and music, embodied in the soundtrack, acting, and text.

3. Research methodology

3.1 Objectives and hypotheses

The study involves a set of four lessons in Romanian language and literature, at secondary school classes, the concept of transdisciplinarity being integrated in their design and performance. Specifically, what is envisaged is the observation of the impact the presence of the film has on students, on the process of teaching and assimilation of knowledge, the screening being based on a literary work that the students have to study. Thus, in the Romanian language and literature lesson with the theme *The hatchet* by Mihail Sadoveanu, the teacher introduces watching the film of the same name, directed by Mircea Muresan, which took place in three 8-grade classes at “Andrei Saguna” Secondary School of Deva, while in other three 8-grade classes at “Andrei Muresanu” Secondary School of Deva the mentioned previously literary text is studied traditionally, i.e. without watching the film.

Establishing the research objectives

- the analysis of the effects of the syncretism of arts in the teaching-learning activity;
- the relationship between literature and other arts potentiates knowledge, captures students' attention and interest to a greater extent.

Setting the research hypotheses

1. The presence of other arts in the Romanian language and literature lessons has positive effects on students;
2. Using the screening of literary works in the teaching-learning activity, the presence of dramatization, increases students' interest in reading.

3.2. Research procedure

The lot investigated

It was made up of 69 8-graders aged 13 to 15 years old from “Andrei Saguna” Secondary School of Deva. Specifically, we have been working with three 8 grade classes considered experimental classes, and 63 students from “Andrei Muresanu” Secondary School of Deva, i.e. 3 control classes.

Research methods and tools

The method of systematic and independent observation was used, 2 formative assessment tests, the questionnaire method. The questionnaire included a total of 12 questions, formulated in accessible terms.

3.3. Data analysis and interpretation

We believe that the approach of the literary text from the transdisciplinary perspective is beneficial for developing perception skills of the literary text. This, in conjunction with the skills, abilities and competencies specific to other fields of art: literature, music, theatre, film would increase pupils' interest in reading.

Based on these considerations, we conducted the following teaching endeavour at the experimental classes. A first activity carried out was watching the movie *The Hatchet* directed by Mircea Muresan, and then we asked the students to imagine another outcome of the novel. Another activity was materialized in designing some short plays focusing on Vitoria's anxieties before deciding to set off in search of her missing husband. The family

discussions, the ones with the two children and Mitrea, the servant, with the priest and Maranda, the old lady, with David, the merchant were all pointed out, not only based on information provided by text, but the script was completed by the result of the students' creative spirit, through teamwork.

To check students' progress, periodic tests of formative assessment were applied, monitoring the level of knowledge acquired, of creative thinking. Another evaluation method applied was the systematic observation, as well as filling in the self-assessment questionnaire (classification scale).

At the end of the learning unit, we applied a self-assessment questionnaire to the pupils in the experimental and control classes, which was aimed at:

- students' interest in the Romanian language and literature;
- students' participation in activities during class;
- students' attitude towards the activities performed in class;
- students' involvement in activities outside the classroom designed to stimulate interest in reading;
- students' independence in solving tasks;
- students' progress made during the observation period.

We used an assessment scale, awarding:

- for low +;
- for average ++;
- for good +++;
- for very good ++++.

Table 1: Percentages obtained by experimental and control groups

Classes	<i>Very good</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Low</i>
EXPERIMENTAL	24 (34.78%)	18 (26.8%)	15 (21.73%)	12 (17.39%)
CONTROL	18 (28.57%)	12 (19.04%)	18 (28.57%)	15 (23.8%)

Comparing the results, we observe the following:

- 34.78% of the students in the experimental class and 28.57% of the students of the control class were rated *very good*;
- a percentage of 26.8% of the students in the experimental class and 19.04% of the students in the control class were awarded the grade *good*;
- average level: 21.73% - experimental class, 28.57% - control class;
- low level: 17.39% of the students in the experimental class and 23.8% of the control class.

Applying these means of assessing and quantifying the results allows immediate observation of errors, difficulties in receiving and interpreting, in expressing reflective thinking, in *personalizing* the text, in getting involved

in the act of reading. Also, according to the results, they are being improved step by step and the teaching endeavour is being adapted, as well as the quality of the methodology applied is being increased.

The summative assessment at the end of the unit *The novel* has demonstrated significant progress of the students in the experimental class, which, by comparison with the control class, was higher.

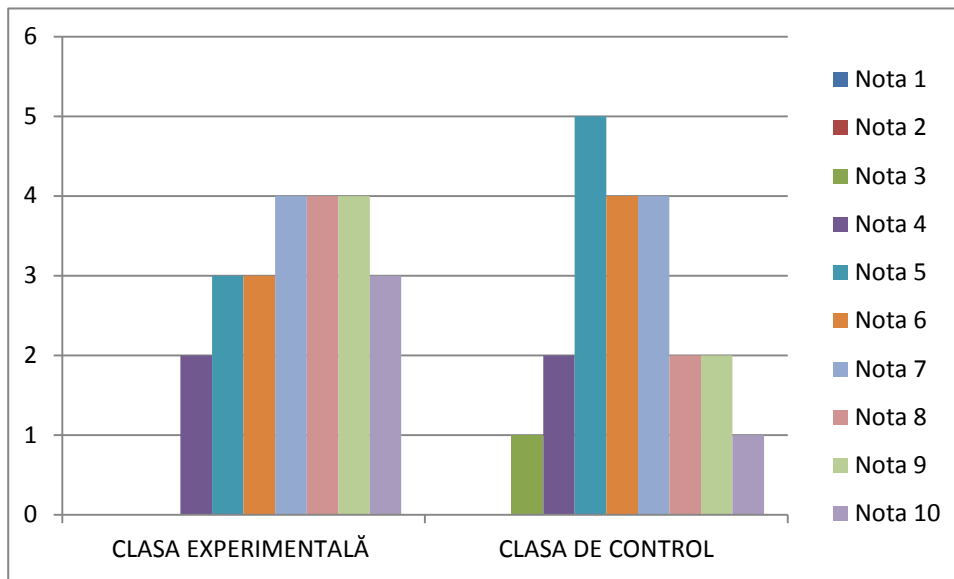


Figure 1: Comparison of frequency pyramids in experimental and control classes

Analysis of the results of the experimental research has led to the confirmation of the working hypotheses: the efficiency of the reflective reading moment, of the techniques of literary text interpretation and understanding, of the use of active-participatory methods. These have led to the optimization of the educational process by contributing to the students' personality development from several perspectives:

- From the *cognitive* point of view, it has enriched the cultural horizon of the students included in the sample studied, showing them events from the life of the universe and of human communities;
- From the *educational* point of view, it has given students examples of high moral conduct, presenting types of behaviours that urge them to reflect, to distinguish between good and evil and to follow the positive path;
- From the *formative* point of view, it has developed students' thinking, imagination, creativity and communication skills, their interest in reading; it has stimulated their desire to know the reality, enriching their spiritual life, cultivating their positive features at the same time.

4. Conclusions

To fulfil the educational goal, namely to foster the development of a free and creative personality, able to face the demands of contemporary society, it is desirable that the teacher of Romanian language and literature should adopt the most modern teaching methods to meet the fulfilment of short or long term objectives. Addressing the contents from a transdisciplinary vision is an effective means through which the teaching - learning - assessment activity creates an environment in which each student can develop their imagination, creativity and ability to work in teams or individually. The focus is switched to the idea communicated in theatre, film, music or painting, but also on

how these concepts are communicated. The Romanian language and literature teacher does not need to be a scientist specialized in all these areas, but they need to coordinate the work of the pupils and to put them in a position to identify the elements of language used in these arts and to discuss how these elements contribute to the receipt of messages. The teacher's role is to familiarize students with the different ways in which the world communicates and manifests itself.

From the methodical approach made, it was observed that the advantages of the transdisciplinary approach aim at a particular phenomenon, in a global perspective, in all its relations, in the perspective of lifelong learning, enabling the application of knowledge in various fields.

Therefore, the objective of this approach has covered the students' ability in perceiving different types of artistic communication, varying ways of knowing the world and the self in relation to different aspects of the reality presented, forming the aesthetic and analysis tastes towards the variety of means of artistic expression. In addition, reporting to the related fields of literature was done in terms of the literary text, after knowing it well, by highlighting the mechanisms of the literary work.

Regarding the experimental research - *stimulating reading in secondary school students* - a model to approach the narrative literary text was set, through which studying literary works in secondary schools is perceived as openness towards the creation of the communicative competence with oneself and with the others. Literature offers the possibility of exceeding the traditional way of acquiring knowledge, applying it in new sequences with the purpose of acquiring the skill of creating attitudes, feelings and emotions.

"Disciplinarity, multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are the four arrows of one and the same bow: knowledge" (Nicolescu, 1999, p.55-56).

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