IS EUROPE OPEN TO A STUDENT-ORIENTED FRAMEWORK FOR LITERATURE?

A comparative analysis of the formal literature curriculum in six European countries

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Abstract
This study is a comparative analysis of literary curricula in six European countries and is part of the LiFT-2 project, funded by the Comenius Life Long Learning Programme of the European Commission. The result of this project was a European literary framework for secondary education which can be described as a developmental competence-based taxonomy for teachers (www.literaryframework.eu). In this article we chart the paradigmatic tendencies of the literature teaching curricula between grades 7 and 12 of five countries (Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania) and three German states (Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Thuringia). The aim of this study was to discover the degree to which these tendencies corresponded to the developmental European Literary Framework we have conceived on the basis of the shared pedagogical content knowledge of teachers and experts in six countries. The conclusion is that most of the analysed literary curricula are open to a developmental competence-based framework, but additional research is needed to determine whether Europe as a whole is ready for such a framework.

Keywords: literature curriculum, curriculum comparison, literary development, European literary framework for teachers (LiFT), paradigms of teaching literature, student oriented

1.   INTRODUCTION

Europe is a culturally varied continent with very different educational traditions and systems that are sometimes difficult to compare with each other. These differences complicate communication between the member states, including the forging of a European cultural identity, which is an important topic in EU policies and policy documents of the Council of Europe as Recommendations 1883 (2008) and 1884 (2009) show (Pieper 2011). Regarding intercultural communication in Europe, there is an increasing need for common frameworks, including taxonomies, such as the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). A particularly interesting and useful feature of this framework is that it not only defines the final aim of the curriculum, but also describes different stages in the developmental process. It enables teachers to identify different levels in their classrooms and attune their teaching activities to the needs of these groups. This is important because research shows that differentiation places high demands on teachers (Hattie, 2009; Kyrakides, Creemers & Antoniou, 2009). All PISA reports (2000, 2003, 2006, 2009) have shown that many teachers fall short when it comes to matching their didactical interventions to weak and very good students in their classes. Teachers do not seem to have an adequate mental frame of reference for observing and classifying differences between students, let alone being able to identify and label the different stages of development (Hattie, 2009; Schunk, 2000; Witte, 2008).

Against this background, and within the context of the Comenius Life Long Learning Programme of the European Commission, in 2009 six member states launched a project to develop a European Literary Framework for Teachers in secondary education (LiFT-2). Six European countries participate in this project: The Netherlands (Nl), the initiator of the project, The Czech Republic (Cz), Germany (D), Finland (Fi), Portugal (Pt) and Romania (Ro).[1] The general aim of this project was to create a frame of reference for the development of literary competence within the context of literature teaching in secondary education (grades 7-12; ages 12-18). Such a frame of reference could help European teachers to identify differences between the reading levels of their students more easily and to match these levels with appropriate literary texts and interventions in the 'zone of proximal development' (Vygotsky, 1978). The underlying aim is to ensure a smooth literary development for all students in every grade, including weak, mean and strong readers in

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each grade, so that every student can develop further as readers of literature even after they have left school. In the context of a multicultural and multilingual Europe, the LiFT project also aims to promote intercultural dialogue between European teachers and experts in literature education about the levels of literary competence of students and books that match these levels, and about teaching approaches and activities that stimulate students to read books and reach a higher level of literary competence. The question is to what extent a culturally varied Europe is open to this student-oriented framework for literature. In this article we try to give an answer to this question on the basis of a comparison between the framework and the curricula for teaching literature of the six participating countries. We had two points of reference for discussing and analysing the curricula,: (a) a cumulative model of the paradigms of studying literature, assuming a developmental perspective in the literary competence, and (b) three aspects important to the structure of the LiFT project: students, books and didactics.

2.   THE CONTEXT OF THE PRESENT STUDY: A LITERARY FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN TEACHERS

Compiling common reading levels for six countries was a major ambition of the LiFT project, and was worked on from start to finish, i.e. from 2010–2012. The levels are designed to describe an ascending scale of literary competence, from limited competence in grade 7 to an extended level of literary competence for the best students in grade 12.

2.1 Considerations

Literary development in school should be interpreted as a socialization process in which personal factors and environmental factors interact (Pieper, 2011; Witte, 2008). From a personal perspective, we assume that students between the ages of 12 and 18 have a lot in common. Young people in Europe, thanks to mass media and social media and to increased mobility, have common cultural reference points in books, movies, music, games, fashion, et cetera. We also know from a developmental point of view that adolescence is a characteristic period of development in which significant development processes take place. In a biological, socio-emotional and cognitive way adolescents undergo similar developmental processes (see Kohlberg, 1969; Loevinger, 1976; Piaget, 1952). Moreover, these developmental processes dovetail with their aesthetic development (Gardner, 1990; Parsons, 1987) and the development of their literary competence (Appleyard, 1994; Thomson, 1987; Witte, 2008; Witte, Rijlaarsdam & Schram, 2012). This knowledge supports our belief that a student-centred, competence-based approach provides adequate starting points for developing a common framework. We also perceive in Europe a tendency to build a more student-oriented curriculum under the influence of reception theory (see Iser 1978; Rosenblatt 1978) and pedagogical reforms,

like cognitivism and constructivism (Bandura, 2001; Bruner, 1961; Nystrand, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978).

We also want to ensure that teachers can adapt the framework easily. An important prerequisite for the successful implementation of educational research results is that the outcomes should be recognizable for teachers and respond to their concerns (Kennedy 1997; National Research Council 2002). In the Netherlands Witte developed a research method which resulted in six reliably defined levels of literary competence (Witte, 2008; Witte et al., 2012). An important feature of this method is the exploration of the *pedagogical content knowledge* (Shulman, 1986) of teachers so that the results are consistent with the cognitions of teachers (Verloop, Van Driel & Meijer, 2001). The members decided to replicate Witte's method and take the knowledge of expert teachers as the source for theory development (see Hník & Klumparová, 2012).

2.2 The literary framework

Following the 'classical' three-way interaction model of Beach and Marshall (1991), we distinguish three dimensions in our framework: 1. student (competences), 2. text (books) and 3. teacher (didactics). For this phase of the project we decided to start with narrative texts, because prose is a prevailing genre in the reading practices inside and outside school. Seventy European teachers and experts from the participating countries were involved in the process of defining levels of literary competence, which resulted in six levels. Each level describes literary competence from two perspectives: the perspective of the student (*reading experience, interests, general knowledge, literary knowledge*) and the perspective of the text (*style, character, action, chronology, storyline, perspective, meaning*). Each level can be characterized as a certain kind of reading: level 1 *Experiencing reading*, level 2 *Engaging reading*, level 3 *Exploring reading*, level 4 *Interpreting reading*, level 5 *Contextualizing reading* and level 6 *Academic & pre-academic reading* (see appendix A). For each country we compiled four booklist levels for lower secondary school (ages 12-15) and six for upper secondary school (ages 15-19). The teachers were asked to rate the levels of the books and to make suggestions for other books at each level. The third dimension of our framework centres around the question of how students at a certain level can be stimulated to gain the next level of literary competence. For this purpose, a European team of experts designed a set of 16 transitional goals for lower and upper secondary. All the results (competences, books, didactics) and procedures are published on the internet (http://www.literaryframework.eu).

In the philosophy of our framework, it is important that students' literary competence grows from one level to another. Together with changes in the students' attitude towards reading and interests, and their knowledge of the world and of the literary domain, the difficulty of the texts and the complexity of the didactic approaches grow more challenging for the students.

3.   COMPARING LITERATURE CURRICULA

We stated above that literary development depends not only on personal factors, but also on environmental factors. In the literary socialization process, Pieper (2010) distinguishes two critical development stages – primary and secondary literary initiation. Primary literary initiation occurs within the family, and secondary literary initiation takes place mainly in upper secondary education. This means that European adolescents may share different reading experiences and various cultural representations as a result of different educational contexts. Are these curricula comparable?

3.1 Comparing curricula

Comparing the different literature curricula is an attempt to find dominant paradigms of teaching literature in European countries and to examine how they relate to our development-oriented framework. One of the toughest problems in the comparison of curricula is the question of what we mean by curriculum and what we need to compare. For most people, a curriculum is a course or a body of courses, offered by an educational institution. However, in theory a curriculum is a multidimensional concept (McNeil, 1996) that comprises all the learning experiences of students throughout their educational careers.

Teaching the mother tongue and especially literature is often driven by political intentions. Literature's status can vary from being integrated with language and communication to constituting a separate, autonomous subject (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2007). The International Mother-tongue Education Network (IMEN) has a long tradition of comparative studies (Herrlitz & Van de Ven, 2007). When comparing curricula they use the model of Goodlad, Klein & Tye (1979). Goodlad and his team developed a conceptual system for curriculum inquiry and came up with five curriculum domains: ideological, formal, perceived, operational and experiential. All of these domains involve some kind of product, tangible or of the mind (Goodlad et al.: 58-65). They argue that it should be possible to compare how each commonplace, for example a goal, is dealt with at the level of prescribed policy (the *formal* curriculum), with what various interested persons perceive to be the goals (the *perceived* curriculum), how each goal is operationalized in the textbook (the *ideological* curriculum) and in the classroom (the *operational* curriculum), and dealt with in what students experience (the *experiential* curriculum). Our analysis will focus only on the *formal* curriculum, and will be an analysis of documents because the written curriculum is the common basis for each country and these documents are available in all countries. We are aware that the perspective of formal curriculum can differ to a certain extent from what teachers actually do in the classroom, the operational curriculum, to say nothing of what students experience or actually perform in the classroom. But analyzing the operational and experiential curricula would have needed a different type of research and certainly another project.

3.2 Paradigms of teaching literature

In order to identify the tendencies of European curricula for literature today we compared the formal curricula of the six participating countries, bearing in mind the four paradigms of teaching literature developed in the last hundred years in Europe: cultural, linguistic, social and personal growth (cf. Ongstad, Van de Ven & Buchberger, 2004; Rijlaarsdam & Janssen, 1996; Witte, Janssen & Rijlaarsdam, 2006; Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2007). These studies on literature in mother-tongue education describe the four paradigms in general. They can also be associated with the four perspectives McNeil (1996) distinguished in curricula in Western countries: 'academic', 'technological', 'social' and 'humanistic' respectively. We shall give only some contextual information about their evolution in Figure 1, as well as an overview of the notable pedagogical-didactic features.

The *cultural model* was developed from the traditions of the Latin School and became dominant in the second half of the 19th century. It aimed at enlarging students' cultural knowledge and was meant for elitist groups in upper secondary. After the Second World War, when education became a more inclusive system, with students from different social and cultural backgrounds, this elitist model was no longer effective. Thus, other models were born under the influence of new research in different fields associated with education and literature education. The *linguistic model* was influenced by New Criticism and structuralism after the 1940s and its main feature is the aesthetic perspective on literature, focusing on the structure of literary texts through stylistic and structural analysis and hermeneutic reading. The *social model* appeared in the 1970s and introduced a sociological perspective on literature. Literature is understood as part of reality and also as a model of building reality. Following this paradigm, students are supposed to explore social reality through a variety of texts (literary and nonliterary) and learn to approach them critically. The exclusivity of literary canons is abolished and classroom discussions and debates stimulate student participation. In the last decades of the 20th century, a new paradigm appeared. This is the model of *personal growth* and it was influenced by pedagogical reform that shifted the perspective of education from subject content to the learner. It is a paradigm that 'helps students to get to know themselves and others better, and to attain personal growth' (Witte et al., 2006: 1).

The four models are necessarily abstractions, and in practice we very often see overlaps (Carter & Long, 1997; Janssen, 1998; Verboord, 2005). Sometimes they can hardly be distinguished. Today, in the postmodern era, we can see that these four paradigms coexist and that in educational practice various combinations occur (Witte, 2008). As shown in Figure 1 below, our own framework is an example of such a 'fusion' of paradigms, by putting them in a developmental perspective. We have summarized the features of the four paradigms in Table 1, emphasizing the important differences between them, but also clustering them according to their didactic orientation: the cultural and linguistic models are more content-oriented,

and the social and personal models are more student-oriented (Verboord, 2005). In our analysis of European curricula we kept in mind the characteristics of the four models that are illustrated synthetically in Table 1.

Table 1. Curricular aspects of four paradigms of teaching literature

Paradigms	Cultural	Linguistic	Social	Personal growth
Aspects				
Aim of literature teaching	cultural literacy	aesthetic awareness	social awareness	personal development
Content	literary history, literary movements, (other arts)	literary theory, style, text structure and meaning (other arts)	ethical, social, political issues, reader response, student perceptions	personal experience, student perceptions, reader responses (other arts)
Approach to texts	literary context (biography, epochs)	formal aspects of texts	non-literary context, reader responses	reader responses
Text selection criteria	national canon	acknowledged aesthetic values	topics relevant for age group	student preferences and interests
Class management	listening to lecture	whole-class discussion, writing	whole-class discussion, peer discussion	peer discussion
Teacher role	expert, transmitter	expert, modelling literary analysis	discussion leader	guide, facilitator, stimulator
Evaluation	reproduction of knowledge	skills in literary analysis	knowledge of social context of literature, formulating response	formulating response, evaluate literary texts and express their judgements, literary competence development
	Content-oriented		*Student-oriented*	

Adapted from Ongstad et al.(2004), Verboord (2005), Rijlaarsdam & Janssen (1996), Sawyer & Van de Ven (2007) and Witte et al. (2006).

3.3 The European literary framework and national curricula

The literary framework concentrates on reading literary narratives and follows a line of developing literary competences from the model of personal growth to the cultural paradigm (see Appendix A). Obviously, given the structure of our developmental framework, teachers and experts on our panels were aware of the importance of students at the beginning of the literary socialization process engaging in the process of reading books and giving personal responses to texts, as well as discussing and sharing opinions with their peers. This does not exclude the presence of other models. What matters is the dominance of the paradigm at a certain stage in the framework. The linguistic model becomes more powerful during lower secondary. It enables students to use adequate instruments and concepts for the analysis and interpretation of the text. The cultural model is present all along, but its dominance is appropriate only in upper secondary.

Our framework is based on the idea of the continuity and accumulation of paradigms, with shifting dominants, starting from a naive dependent reader (low literary competence) who can become, at the end of the road, a sophisticated autonomous reader (high literary competence). The sense of this developmental model is presented in Figure 1.
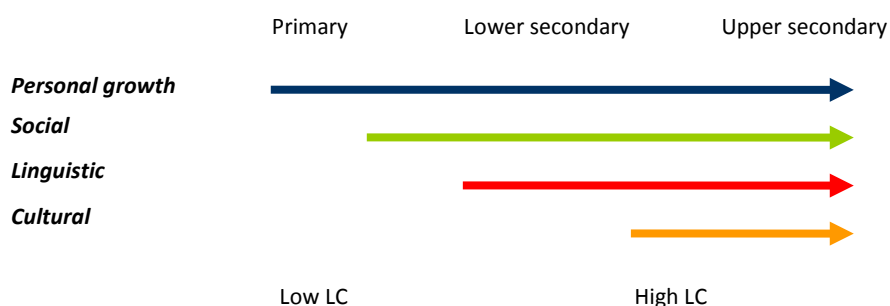
	Primary	Lower secondary	Upper secondary
Personal growth			
Social			
Linguistic			
Cultural			
	Low LC	High LC	

Figure 1. The cumulative paradigms of teaching literature in the literary framework

It is worth mentioning that the European literary framework assumes that teachers may encounter readers with a low literary competence not only in primary, but also in lower secondary or even in upper secondary. The framework challenges teachers to identify the levels of literary competence of their students in order to choose adequate approaches for helping them to make progress in the domain of reading. In order to succeed, teachers need to know how to switch the dominance of one paradigm over another at a certain stage and with different students.

In this article we compare this cumulative model of literary paradigms with the line of evolution in the formal curricula of the six countries. We will try to answer the following questions:

1) What are the dominant paradigms in teaching literature in Europe, bearing in mind students, books and didactics?
2) How do the curricula relate to the development-oriented framework?

4. METHODOLOGY

Our study is a descriptive one, and followed three steps: collection of data regarding the documents of formal curricula for literature in each country; preparing this data for comparison; presenting and evaluating the results.

Each representative of the six countries in the LiFT project group provided a document concerning their formal curriculum. We chose to analyse only two grades, 7 and 12, because they correspond with the beginning and the end of our framework (ages 12 and 18, respectively). A comparison between these grades could open up the possibility of also presenting a longitudinal, developmental perspective.

The collection of formal curricula of all school types for students between the ages of 12 and 18 in our six countries provided a kaleidoscope of curricular descriptions and requirements (see European Encyclopedia on National Educational Systems, Eurypedia, 2012). Germany should be mentioned specially as it has no national curriculum; rather each state has its own curriculum. Our German colleagues presented the curricula for three states they considered representative of the diversity of curricular options for teaching literature: Bavaria, Lower Saxony and Thuringia. For the comparison of literature curricula, it is not necessary to take into consideration all the school types in this study. The corpus of curricular documents we finally used is presented in Table 2.

According to the 'classical' three-way interaction model of Beach and Marshall (1991), which forms the basic structure of our framework, the data provided by each country focused on three dimensions: students, books and didactics.

The first dimension refers to the expected learning outcomes for students and to the developmental line between grades 7 and 12. We noticed that the understanding of curricular concepts like 'goals', 'aims', 'attainment targets' and 'competences' is different in the curricula we compared. As we are working in a European context we prefer to make use of the umbrella term 'competences' as defined in The European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning: 'a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the context' (European Commission, 2007: 3). We registered almost all[2] competences per country and linked them to one or more of the four paradigms in Table 1. The classification of the

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2 There are a few competences we could not classify because they were not clear or relevant for our literary perspective. They can be found in the Appendix.

competences is presented in appendices B1 and B2. The results of our analysis were validated by the experts of each of the countries in our team.

Table 2. The corpus of curricular documents investigated

	Formal curricula for lower secondary	*Formal curricula for upper secondary*
Czech Republic (Cz)	Lower secondary general education	Upper secondary general education
Finland (Fi)	Lower secondary	Higher secondary education (age 15-18)
Germany, Bavaria (Bav)	*Gymnasium*	*Gymnasium*
Germany, Lower Saxony (LS)	*Gymnasium*	*Gymnasium*
Germany, Thuringia (Th)	*Gymnasium*	*Gymnasium*
Netherlands (Nl)	Common curriculum for all school types	Gymnasium/VWO (Pre-university education)
Portugal (Pt)	Lower secondary general education	Upper secondary
Romania (Ro)	Lower secondary general education	Upper secondary for the theoretical strand

The second dimension concerns the type of books/texts to be studied – mentioned in the recommendations of the formal curriculum and triggered from the criteria of text selection. When speaking about books in the curriculum, past and actual debates on the importance of canons in literary education come to mind (see Fleming, 2010; Pieper, 2006; Sâmihăian, 2007). Each country has a view about when to introduce the canon and what is worth being studied in the classroom. Each country also has regular discussions about the books that every resident should read. To reflect this, our analysis also included the perspective on the literary canon in the curricula compared. In the LIFT-2 project, books and book selection are viewed as key elements for improving students' literary competences. It is not so difficult for curriculum designers and researchers to decide on the aim of and competences for studying literature, but as teachers draw closer to more concrete choices, they have to answer questions such as, What kind of texts, with what literary characteristics? What genres? Do we need a canon of authors or a canon of literary texts? From national literature or from both national literature and world literature? What about the literature of minorities/migrants? (Sâmihăian, 2006). In order to discuss the books that are studied according to the curriculum, we used the curricular aspects regarding text selection criteria and content from Table 1. The results were also validated by the members and are presented in appendices C1 and C2.

The third dimension concerns didactics. Although the formal curricula are not prescriptive in this respect, they offer very few suggestions. The members of our team had to infer the guidelines, which we compared with the results of our previous analysis (competences and books). To this end we used the last four curricular aspects in Table 1: approach, class management, teacher role, evaluation. See appendix D.

5.   RESULTS OF LITERARY CURRICULUM COMPARISON

Comparing the different literature curricula is not the same as evaluating a national or regional curriculum. Here, the differences are not regarded as 'eccentric' issues, but valued as distinct particular characteristics of each country, which have their reasons and their motivations. Our purpose is to describe (1) the dominant paradigms of teaching literature in six European countries regarding students, books and didactics, and (2) how they are related to a development-oriented framework like LiFT-2.

5.1 Students' literary competences

The complexity and the formative potential of teaching literature is the basis for imagining what teachers expect from their students after a certain educational stage. Students are entitled to build specific knowledge, to develop literary skills, to develop existential competence or to develop the ability to learn through studying literature (Aase, 2006). In order to analyse students' literary competence in the six countries, we compared the expected outcomes for the teaching and learning of literature. We identified the dominant paradigm according to what students could do with/about literature at the same age/grade (latitudinal perspective). We also tried to outline literary competence development (longitudinal perspective) by comparing the curricula for two different grades in each country, 7 and 12.

The distribution of the competences for grade 7 according to the four paradigms (see Appendix B1) is based on the features presented in Table 1. We associated each competence to one or more models. We are aware that using numbers of competences to express their relative dominance in a curriculum can result in some complications. Nevertheless, we chose this way because we assume that the number of competences associated with a model is an indication of the dominance of a certain model. The results of this classification are presented in Table 3.

The comparative analysis of the literary competences shows interesting results about the presence of the four models in the formal curriculum for grade 7. The first aspect of note is that all curricula are poly-paradigmatic, and we can see a combination of content-oriented and student-oriented paradigms. When we look at the paradigms individually, we can see clear differences between the eight European curricula for grade 7: the cultural model is relatively powerful in the curricula of Cz and D-Bav, the linguistic model reaches its highest percentage in the D-Th

curriculum, but is also clearly present in the curricula of Cz and Ro. The social model is more powerful in D-Th and Fi than in the other European curricula, and the personal growth model has its strongest position in the Nl curriculum, at considerable distance ahead of D-LS and Ro, where this paradigm has also a strong position.

Table 3. Literary competences in six European countries associated with the four models of studying literature, grade 7 (between brackets, number of competences)

Paradigm / Country	Cultural	Linguistic	Social	Personal growth	Country paradigm dominance
Czech Republic (Cz)	23% (3)	46% (6)	-	31% (4)	linguistic
Finland (Fi)	-	36% (4)	28% (3)	36% (4)	linguistic, personal
Germany – Bavaria (D-Bav)	22% (2)	34% (3)	22% (2)	22% (2)	linguistic
Germany – Lower Saxony (D– LS)	14% (1)	29% (2)	14% (1)	43% (3)	personal
Germany – Thuringia (D–Th]	-	56% (5)	33% (3)	11% (1)	linguistic
Netherlands (Nl)	-	22% (2)	-	78% (7)	personal
Portugal (Pt)	12% (3)	36% (9)	24% (6)	28% (7)	linguistic
Romania (Ro)	-	43% (3)	14% (1)	43% (3)	linguistic, personal
Overall paradigm dominance	10%	38%	18%	34%	

At a European level, the linguistic paradigm is dominant in grade 7, occupying first place in the curricula of Cz, Fi, Bav, Th, Pt and Ro (6 of the 8 curricula examined). Second place is taken quite closely by the personal growth paradigm that is powerful in Nl, Fi, LS and Ro. Third place is occupied by the social model, and last place is taken by the cultural paradigm, as expected for this level of schooling.

The distribution of the competences for grade 12 according to the four paradigms (see Appendix B2) is also based on the features presented in Table 1. A summary of the results is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Literary competences in six European countries associated with the four models of studying literature, grade 12 (between brackets, number of competences)

Paradigm Country	Cultural	Linguistic	Social	Personal growth	Country paradigm dominance
Czech Republic (Cz)	23% (4)	53% (9)	12% (2)	12% (2)	Linguistic
Finland (Fi)	58% (4)	14% (1)	14% (1)	14% (1)	Cultural
Germany – Bavaria (D-Bav)	50% (1)	50% (1)	-	-	Cultural, Linguistic
Germany – Lower Saxony (D– LS)	36% (4)	36% (4)	19% (2)	9% (1)	Cultural, Linguistic
Germany – Thuringia (D–Th]	44% (10)	26% (6)	17% (4)	13% (3)	Cultural
Netherlands (Nl)	19% (3)	31% (5)	25% (4)	25% (4)	Linguistic
Portugal (Pt)	7% (1)	50% (7)	-	43% (6)	Linguistic
Romania (Ro	49% (4)	13% (1)	25% (2)	13% (1)	Cultural
Overall paradigm dominance	32%	35%	15%	18%	

The comparative analysis of the literary competences for grade 12 in Table 4 shows also poly-paradigmatic curricula where the content-oriented paradigms tip the scale. When we look at the paradigms individually, we can see relevant differences between the eight European curricula for grade 12, but they are less than for grade 7. Comparing the position of each model in all the examined curricula, we notice that the cultural paradigm has the highest percentage in the curriculum of Fi, but it has also a strong position in D-Bav, D-Th and Ro. The linguistic paradigm is dominant the formal curriculum of Cz, with the highest percentage at European level also. In D-Bav, D-LS, Nl and Pt, the linguistic paradigm shares its powerful position with other paradigms. The social model is most clearly visible in the curricula of Nl and Ro. The personal model, finally, has a remarkable position in Pt only.

From a European point of view, the influence of the four models of teaching literature in grade 12 has a different image this time. The cultural and the linguistic paradigms dominate the majority of the curricula investigated, and the result is that they are practically equally powerful at the end of secondary literature curricula. With the exception of the Pt curriculum, and to some extent also the curricula of Nl and Ro, the personal and social paradigms seem to play a minor role in grade 12.

In Figure 2 we compare grades 7 and 12 so that we can see what effect the dominance of paradigms in the curricula has on the idea of cumulative or shifting paradigms in a longitudinal, developmental way, as presented in Figure 1.
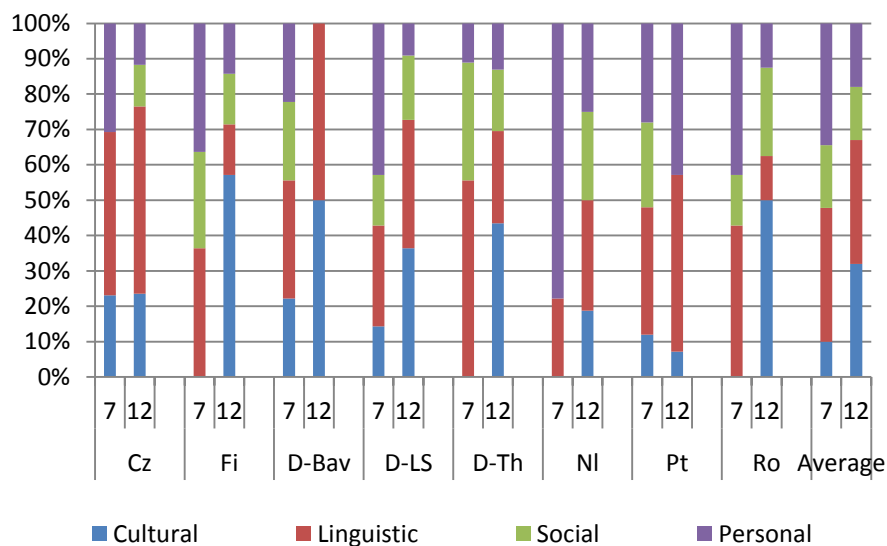
Figure 2. Comparative overview of the literary paradigms in grades 7 and 12.

In all curricula in grade 12, we see that the importance of content-oriented litera-ture education has increased (48% to 67%), and the cultural domain especially has more influence in upper secondary (9% to 32%). This is at the expense of the per-sonal domain, which greatly declined in importance (34% to 18%). The social do-main in grade 7 holds a modest position and this remains so in grade 12 (18% to 15%). However, the linguistic domain holds a dominant position in grade 7 and maintains that position in grade 12 (38% to 35%). So, we can say that in the formal curricula of the secondary literary education (grades 7 to 12), the linguistic para-digm dominates the curricula of the countries discussed here.

These results show that the majority (5 of 8 countries/states) of the analysed curricula follow the developmental line of the paradigms presented in Figure 1, evolving from a more student-centred (personal/social) curriculum in grade 7 to a more content-centred one (linguistical/cultural) in grade 12. The clearest examples of such developmental curricula are those in Nl and Fi.

5.2 Book selection

For our analysis it was important to identify what different curricula suggest or rec-ommend for text selection. Almost every country has specific guidelines in their formal curricula about what students should read. These guidelines concern criteria for text selection and content elements in grades 7 and 12, Appendices C 1 and C 2, respectively. Analysing these guidelines, we also noticed different ways of ap-

proaching the national and universal canons. This may have consequences for the usefulness of the international, European booklists of the LiFT framework. This is the reason why we decided to study what the guidelines mention about the national canon and about the world literature.

We noticed that the guidelines for book selection in the eight curricula were quite different and are therefore difficult to compare. Some curricula refer to authors or titles, others to periods or literary genres; others mention themes or a minimum number of texts to be read. In some curricula the criteria for text selection are not clearly defined, but they are implicit. They take into consideration either the books' characteristics or a guiding principle for selecting the books, like the accessibility for youngsters. In one case (Pt) some titles are compulsory.

We processed the information about books in line with Table 1, especially the text selection criteria and content aspects. The results presented in the following table can be read as follows: the dominant paradigm is marked ++, and any other paradigms, present to a lesser extent, are marked +. The question of whether there are explicit instructions regarding the national canon and world literature is answered with a simple yes (y) or no (n).

Table 6. Criteria for text selection associated with the four paradigms of teaching literature (Cultural = C, Linguistic = L, Social = S, Personal growth = P) and the presence of further instructions in case of the national canon (nc) and world literature (wl).

	Grade 7						Grade 12					
	C	L	S	P	nc	wl	C	L	S	P	nc	wl
Czech Republic (Cz)	++	+			y	y	++	+			y	y
Finland (Fi)				++	n	y	++		+		y	y
Germany – Bavaria (D-Bav)	+	+	+	++	n	y	++	++	+	++	n	y
Germany – Lower Saxony (D–LS)	+	++	+	++	n	y	++	++	+	++	n	y
Germany – Thuringia (D–Th]	+	+	+	++	n	y	++	++	++	++	n	y
Netherlands (Nl)				++	n	y	++	++			y	n
Portugal (Pt)	++	++	+	+	y	y	++	+	+		y	n
Romania (Ro)		+		++	n	y	++	+	+		y	y

These (general) results reveal that the books recommended by the curricula for grade 7 fit the personal paradigm. Only Cz and Pt diverge. There, the curricula give mainly cultural and linguistic guidelines for the choice of books. The three German states follow mixed guidelines. For grade 7 it is interesting to note the distribution of classic and contemporary texts. The general tendency is to have a balance between them or even to favour contemporary texts that are more accessible at this age.

The results are even clearer for grade 12: all curricula give strong cultural and, with the exception of Fi, also linguistic guidelines for the choice of books. This means that in upper secondary curricula, aesthetic and cultural criteria dominate the choice of books. It is interesting to note that some curricula give more analytic or normative guidelines, thus implying an obligatory literary canon in upper secondary, by mentioning names of authors (Ro) or even titles of literary works (Pt) to be studied. Others specify only the period or the type of literature (in terms of genres, cultural movements, concepts of literary theory etc.). In the three German states we can see that alongside the cultural and linguistic criteria, personal criteria and to a slightly lesser extent social criteria play a role in the choice of books. This indicates that the formal curricula of the German states are based on a rather open, non-normative attitude towards literary texts. For example, literature of the Middle Ages is included in Bavaria's curriculum, together with literature on adventure, and literature on adolescence yesterday and today, here and elsewhere.

With regard to the question of the extent to which criteria are provided for teaching the national canon we can see a rather homogenous picture. The lower secondary curricula recommend books by foreign authors. With the exception of Pt and Cz, these curricula also are liberal to the use of canonical works in grade 7. In the guidelines for grade 12 we can see that the German states are open to world literature and give no explicit directions for the selection of books from the national canon. Leaving Germany aside, the other curricula all include explicit guidelines for choosing texts from the national canon. Finally, it is worth noting that at grade 12 Pt and Nl explicitly confine the choice of books to national literature.

These results can be considered representative for European tendencies in teaching literature and they validate our perspective regarding the line of cumulative paradigms presented in Figure 1. It seems that the canonic texts or authors are generally placed towards the end of secondary education, mainly in the last two grades. In the lower grades there is a tendency to focus more on the accessibility of a book (on students' background, interests and reading abilities), choosing popular genres for adolescents in order to help them discover the pleasures of reading. Towards the end of secondary school, students are supposed to read some representative, canonical literary works from national literature and from universal literature too.

5.3 Didactics

Didactics seems to be the most liberal part of the literary curricula we analysed: there are no prescriptive or very few descriptive indications in the formal curricula about approaches, classroom activities, teacher role or evaluation. Thus they were mainly inferred by the project members (who are experts in the field of literary didactics in their countries) who described the curricular documents for the LiFT project. From their reports, we used the part referring to what we called 'approaches', 'main activities' and 'evaluation'. In Appendix D we associate these di-

dactical aspects with the four paradigms of teaching literature, in line with the curricular characteristics in Table 1, especially those referring to approach, class management and evaluation. Table 8 provides a synthetic overview of the results for grades 7 and 12. The dominant paradigm is marked ++, and any other paradigms, present to a lesser extent, are marked +.

Table 8. Aspects of teaching literature associated to the four paradigms of teaching literature (Cultural = C, Linguistic = L, Social = S, Personal growth = P)

	Grade 7				Grade 12			
Paradigm	*C*	*L*	*S*	*P*	*C*	*L*	*S*	*P*
Country								
Czech Republic (Cz)	++	++		++	++	+		+
Finland (Fi)				++	++			
Germany – Bavaria (D-Bav)	+	+	+	++		++	++	
Germany – Lower Saxony (D– LS)	+	++	++	++	+	++	++	++
Germany – Thuringia (D–Th]	+	+	++	+	++	+	+	+
Netherlands (Nl)			+	++	++	++	+	++
Portugal (Pt)	++	++	+	+	+	++	+	+
Romania (Ro)		++	++	++	++	++	++	

On a global European perspective, we discovered that in lower secondary the dominant paradigm in the field of didactics is personal growth (6 curricula), followed by linguistic model (dominant in 4 curricula). In upper secondary, the cultural and the linguistic models are equally dominant (5 curricula). These findings also confirm our cumulative model of the literary teaching paradigms and are consistent with the results presented for the other two dimensions, student competences and books.

6. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study has charted the paradigmatic tendencies of the literature teaching curricula of five countries (Czech Republic, Finland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Romania) and three German states (Bavaria, Lower Saxony, Thuringia). The aim was to discover the degree to which these tendencies corresponded to the developmental European Literary Framework we have developed together with colleagues from the LiFT project within the context of a Comenius project. We discovered that it is difficult to chart the different criteria for secondary education (grades 7-12) and compare them because the educational systems in Europe are rather different, and even within a country several curricula for literature teaching can coexist. Given these circumstances, we decided to derive the data for our study from the for-

mal curricula for literature. However, the formal curriculum can differ significantly from what actually happens in a classroom and what students gain from the teaching, the operational and experienced curricula, respectively (Goodlad et al., 1979). This means that our conclusions must primarily be interpreted within the framework of educational policy and curriculum development.

We first designed an instrument to differentiate between the different paradigms for literature teaching, i.e. the cultural, linguistic, social and personal paradigms (Table 1). This instrument was used to investigate the formal curricula for grades 7 and 12 of the five countries and three states. In line with the structure of the European Literary Framework, we analysed the curricula from three directions: (1) aims and competences, (2) criteria for choice of text, and (3) didactics. The data for the competences and choice of text turned out to be sufficiently present in the documents we investigated. However, none of these documents contained concrete didactic tips or suggestions. It appears that governments are reticent about recommending how teachers are to achieve certain goals. In order to gain information about the didactic aspect, the didactic experts from the LiFT project reported to us on the dominant approaches, working forms and evaluation methods in their countries.

The data we collected from the three lines of approach were then analysed, revealing a rather consistent picture of the dominant paradigms in the curricula investigated. We can thus conclude that in lower secondary (grade 7), it is mainly the personal and linguistic paradigms that dominate, and in upper secondary (grade 12) the cultural and linguistic paradigms. The social paradigm plays a rather minor role in both grade 7 and grade 12. It is interesting to notice that literature seems to be understood in all the analysed curricula more as a means to cultural access and not as a cultural ideal. This means that the canonical texts can be approached as 'having the potential to develop the cognitive, aesthetic, social, political and emotional capacities of readers' (Beach, Appleman, Hynds & Wilhelm, 2011: 81). Another important conclusion is that virtually all national curricula are open to the reading of foreign literature. This means that the European reading list we included in the framework can in principle be used by most member states and thus can contribute to the formation of a European cultural identity.

What interested us the most was the extent to which the analysed curricula are congruent with the construction of the literary competences in the literary framework (Appendix A). Within this framework, students evolve from dependent, naïve and sometimes unmotivated readers of rather simple books to enthusiastic, autonomous and sophisticated readers of demanding literary works. In other words, from the perspective of the four paradigms, from personal involvement with the text and discussing it with others in grade 7, towards a more detached perspective based on analytical skills (the linguistic model), and synthetic capacities (the cultural model) in grade 12 (see Figure 1). Five of the eight curricula investigated turned out to mirror this developmental line, with the Dutch and Finnish curricula as the clearest representatives. On the other hand, the formal curricula of the Czech Re-

public, Portugal and Bavaria (Germany) diverged the most from this developmental line because they devote special attention to cultural literacy not just in grade 12 but from grade 7. These countries encourage development towards cultural reading from the start. It is possible that these differences reflect the limit of the Roman tradition, which even now is seen as the cultural watershed between North and South Europe (Hofstede, 2001). However, given the limited ecological validity of a formal curriculum and the participation of only six European countries, we can only sketch some lines and not draw any strong conclusions. For a more generally valid answer to the question, we must investigate the curricula of more European countries than those that are 'coincidentally' involved in the LiFT project.

The analyses show that the curricula of most of the countries are poly-paradigmatic (Sawyer & Van de Ven, 2007). This indicates that most policymakers and curriculum designers give schools the space to make their own choices about the aims and content of the literary curriculum. The diversity that results from this is an indication that literature teaching can be counted among the 'ill-structured knowledge domains' (Spiro, Feltovich, Jacobson & Coulson, 1991; Witte et al., 2012). This means that within one and the same curriculum there are widely diverging approaches to the design, aims, content and teaching methods, and that students cannot systematically broaden and deepen their knowledge skills within such a domain. The result is that students cannot consciously and deliberately develop their literary competence and the knowledge they gain is fragmentary and does not stick (Witte, 2008). We hope that the European Literary Framework will change this. The framework can help teachers to identify the level of the literary competence of students and also give them some didactic tools to realize the desired progress of students with different levels of literary competence. It can also help policymakers and curriculum designers to think critically about the literature curriculum in their country. This is particularly important because the framework is based on shared pedagogical content knowledge of more than a hundred teachers and experts from different European countries.

Within the context of a multicultural and multilingual Europe, the LiFT project also aims to promote intercultural dialogue between European teachers and experts in literature education about the levels of literary competence of students and books that match these levels, and about teaching approaches and activities that stimulate students to read books and reach a higher level of literary competence. During the many discussions in our multicultural and multilingual project group, we noticed that the framework clarified and inspired the discussions about goals, reading tasks and didactics. However, in discussions with teachers, we noticed that there is a fear of improper use of the framework. A rigid pedagogical application of the framework in practice, as is still the case with the classical Lexile measures, would be entirely wrong in our view. It is not designed to prescribe what teachers should do in their classrooms. Quite the contrary, the literary framework has primarily a heuristic function. Teachers who can work with this frame of refer-

ence 'see and know more' in their classrooms and can therefore deliver appropriate instruction to students with different starting competences (Witte et al, 2012).

Finally, we would like to draw attention to an issue that concerns us greatly. The analyses have clearly revealed that the linguistic paradigm dominates the curricula of both lower and upper secondary school in virtually all countries. Research has revealed that a dominant structural approach to texts is often at the cost of the reading pleasure and motivation of young readers (see Appleyard, 1994; Van Schooten & De Glopper, 2003; Verboord, 2005; Witte, 2008). In a time when it is becoming harder and harder to get young people to read, we have to watch out for the possible negative influence of certain teaching methods on reading behaviour. This is underlined by a great deal of research showing that language proficiency development and related social success are closely related to reading books in your spare time (Mol & Bus, 2011). Todorov (2006) wrote a book suggestively entitled La Littérature en péril (Literature in danger), where he claims that the analysis of literary texts in school should not aim to illustrate certain literary concepts, but rather help students to construct meaning by themselves – because in this way they can grasp a knowledge of humanity that is the ultimate purpose of reading literature. We totally agree with him and hope that the European Literary Framework will be able to give literature teaching in Europe a new boost and stimulate young people to further develop their literary competences, including after they leave school.

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