

Albanian literacy at preuniversity Albanian students

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Abstract: This paper explores the assessment practices and educational frameworks surrounding Albanian language and literature education, particularly focusing on the National Exams Final Test in Albania. It critically examines how this examination evaluates students' communication skills and linguistic competencies, comparing these practices with those in Kosovo and across Europe. Emphasizing the integration of high-quality texts and cultural identity in educational assessments, the study advocates for enhancements in curriculum design and evaluation criteria. By proposing recommendations for refining the State Exams process, the paper aims to align educational standards with contemporary practices while reinforcing cultural identity within a multicultural context.

Keywords: Albanian language, Cultural, Educational, Literature, National exams.

1. Introduction

This research delves into the evaluation mechanisms of Albania's National Matura Final Test concerning students' communication skills in Albanian language and literature. This assessment is pivotal in shaping educational outcomes and fostering linguistic and cultural competencies among students.

A comparative analysis is undertaken, juxtaposing the evaluation criteria of Albania's Albanian language test with those of Kosovo, where Albanian is predominant, and with standards observed in various European countries. This approach aims to gauge how well Albanian educational practices align with broader European frameworks, particularly those articulated in the European Language Portfolio, which provides a structured methodology for assessing communicative proficiency.

The study also explores contemporary literature emphasizing the role of engaging with high-quality texts in one's mother tongue. Such texts not only enhance linguistic skills but also nurture national identity and cultural pride. The integration of these texts into the State Matura test is advocated to better prepare students for participation in a multicultural society.

Proposed recommendations aim to refine the State Matura process by addressing current challenges and enhancing the accuracy of assessing students' communication achievements. Strategies include raising awareness among educators, policymakers, and the community about the importance of linguistic proficiency and cultural heritage preservation. Furthermore, advocating for the inclusion of content reflecting Albania's cultural heritage aims to deepen the next generation's connection to their roots and promote diversity appreciation.

Through critical examination and advocacy, this research contributes to ongoing educational reform discussions in Albania, seeking to align assessment practices with contemporary standards while reinforcing the significance of cultural identity in a globalized world.

2. Methodology

This qualitative study investigates how the National Matura Final Exams in Albania assess students' communication skills in Albanian language and literature, comparing practices with Kosovo, North Macedonia and other European countries. The research begins with a literature review that emphasizes the significance of native language proficiency and cultural identity in education. Document

analysis of curriculum guidelines and exam frameworks provides insights into assessment standards. Qualitative metrics are employed to evaluate students' abilities in textual analysis and interpretation. Additionally, a critical analysis of the "Language and Communication" curriculum within Albanian Language and Literature (AML) examines methodological inconsistencies and educational objectives. This study's methodological approach is expected to reveal two primary insights. The examination will likely reveal discrepancies between achievements in the Albanian language subject and international language portfolio evaluation criteria. It is anticipated that the study will highlight the predominantly national orientation of achievements in Language and Literature, contrasting with broader international educational benchmarks. Using this methodological framework, the study aims to give a comprehensive knowledge of existing assessment processes in Albanian language education, as well as insights into possible areas for alignment with international educational standards.

3. Literature Review

3.1. *Paths to the Student's Communication Ability*

Multidisciplinary, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinary are today characteristic phenomena of development and scientific research [1]. This space also includes the applied knowledge to which reference knowledge belongs (scientific, theoretical basic knowledge). The difference between the two scientific contents is realized through the approach to the study object of each field. For the application of scientific knowledge (or reference [2] Maingueneau [3] defines two directions in the acquisition and exercise of scientific knowledge: the first realizes the acquisition of a pure, theorizing knowledge uninterested in the surrounding environment, and the second knowledge obtained from the application of science. Linguistics is no exception to this rule. In addition to linguistics that models verbal communication, there is also linguistics that functions as an aid in social life, i.e., applied linguistics. The two fields are not cut by a knife, as they interact. The application of scientific knowledge often refers to the need to develop or change theoretical knowledge. In the Albanian school, the selection of theoretical and didactic knowledge for learning the Albanian language is based on three types of grammar [4]: in school grammar (with mainly prescriptive approaches), in structural and generative grammar (with descriptive approaches) as well as in contextual (or external) linguistics.

Teaching Albanian language today in imparting knowledge does not solely address internal linguistics, as its two grammars are insufficient for teaching purposes. So, which knowledge should be explored more broadly and deeply, and moreover, through which methods? In a time when globalization has primarily encompassed communication and schools, as educational institutions, face challenges of the 21st century [5]. Modern teaching must employ a variety of tactics to expand the learning environment and offer diverse models to build appropriate curricula for all disciplines, fields of study, and levels. Teaching is a dynamic profession always evolving; its challenges are constant [6].

As educators, the quest for improvement becomes an integral part of the profession. Every day in class, teachers confront various scenarios and students' needs, pushing them to seek innovative teaching methods, strategies, and resources [7]. While guiding students in enhancing their diverse skills, teachers also enhance their own abilities. The world is constantly changing, and education must keep pace. Language and literature are crucial components of this rhythm. This necessity suggests an approach to studying and exploring Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), not only as a process but also as an instrument, in alignment with the need to:

- Assess its standards in relation to EU counterparts;
- Focus on evaluating and addressing the Curriculum in the field of language and communication, towards the global labor market.

Furthermore, we propose using a thesis focusing on national identity (in the Albanian context) to deepen cultural understanding and encourage self-identification.

3.2. *Possession of Linguistic and Literary Competences*

The mastery of language competencies and literary principles that finalize the linguistic formation of students can be summarized in the following points under the heading "*Mastery of Language Competencies*":

- In cognitive terms, this ability is closely linked to the development of other fundamental skills (classification, selection, spatial, temporal, causal connections, etc.).
- In emotional terms, it enriches self-awareness through confronting other experiences and the ability to express oneself, thus contributing to personal maturity.
- In social terms, it enables critical control and independent participation in social communication; one cannot be a good citizen without a thorough and competent command of the national language.
- In cultural terms, it is an essential condition for progress in studies, contributing to cultural and professional enrichment; all teachers in schools seek the development of linguistic education and promote it in their respective fields where language use is exercised.

These aims give absolute priority to the linguistic formation of students at every moment of their learning, closely tied to reflection on language and literary education. Mimoza Gjokutaj observes that *"Researchers in the field of didactics for teaching Albanian language in schools have been primarily concerned with issues related to spelling, norms, and language system, and to a lesser extent with new tendencies and didactic approaches leading to language acquisition, as a communication element, first in its complexity, that of knowledge and respect for language arts and their relationships (...). Teaching Albanian language is the goal of every school subject..."*, but, *"...in the current practice of Albanian schools, a fading of this goal is noticed. Teachers are more inclined towards the scientific aspect of their subjects and do little for the linguistic formation of students in their subjects. As a result, many students struggle visibly to interpret specialized subject matter in the appropriate language"* [8].

We will analyze the efficiency of the process and the gradation of student evaluation in the State Exams process, as a judge and evaluator of the student's linguistic and literary training, by comparing two important documents in the field:

- European Language Portfolio with updated 2018 descriptions [9].

State Exams, as a process that completes the cycle of higher secondary education studies of the student in the Republic of Albania, which serves as a normative act of assessment, constituted [10] by Order No. 78, dated 8.2.2006. Also, in our analysis we will also use the conclusions on the analysis of the Albanian Language and Literature course programs (2010-2017).

3.3. Curricular Criteria and The State Exam at Comparative Levels

The focal point between the goals of the three documents in question is the assessment of an individual's linguistic competence, how much he/she possesses the language in use and how much he/she is able to frame in situations where the language is the basic means of communication. In the cut between the two documents we listed, we will be guided by the levels of ability to use the language, measured according to competencies and converted into a norm by European Language Portfolio (ELP). *In this perspective, we will try to create argued parallels between the assessment of the student in the subject of Albanian language and literature in the State Exams, with the levels described by the European Language Portfolio (ELP). The term State Exams refers to the process of taking compulsory and optional exams at the end of high school. The creation of the state Exams, realizes the maturity exams at the end of the 4 and 5-year secondary education, through external evaluation. The state Exams should consist of: a) compulsory exams, b) optional exams. Secondary education is considered completed when the student achieves passing results in the compulsory exams* [11].

In this framework, the subject of Albanian Language and Literature is one of its compulsory exams, for all students graduating from high school. Considered as the result of three years of preparation, the State Exams in this subject is intended to be an assessment of the communicative, reasoning, interpretive and creative skills that the student has acquired during the treatment of the texts in the teaching cycle.

Since the State exam, which has already taken place, extends until 2017, it does not include the new curricula, which are still in process. The completed cycle gives us the opportunity to deduce the results of the student's language training over a decade. This cycle is based on texts, in which according to prof. dr. Mimoza Gjokutaj has been reconstructed *"even the methodical presentation of the knowledge that is given*

about the language in general, as well as the language system in particular. Thus, the tendency to teach students the language in an academic way is being fought and aimed at a greater acquisition and skill in the practical use of the language by the students" [12].

3.3.1. Objectives And Areas of Application of Knowledge in the State Exams

To assess students' levels of competence, the State Exams process is conceived as a crucial component, wherein the stages of assessing students' language and literary competencies are detailed through text analyses and essay writing. This test is developed based on the indicative curriculum, which aids students and teachers in preparing for the State exam. Moreover, it assists ISHA inspectors in monitoring teachers' activities aimed at organizing and enhancing students' knowledge. The indicative program for the Albanian Language and Literature State Exams is built upon a robust foundation of educational guidelines and standards. This program draws from several key sources, including the core curriculum for Albanian language and literature, the 2010 guidelines for the development of the new high school curriculum, and the 2012 standards of learning and achievements in this field. Additionally, it is shaped by the Ministry of Education's 2017 guidelines on the development of State Exams. [13]

Passing the Albanian Language and Literature examination in the State Exams is a significant milestone for candidates, as it grants them a diploma. This diploma serves as a testament to their achievement of the knowledge standards defined by the general school curriculum. The examination assesses students on a range of observable and measurable intellectual abilities that have been cultivated through their studies in Albanian Language and Literature.

At the most basic level, students are tested on their ability to identify and understand key concepts. Moving to an intermediate level, they must demonstrate their ability to analyze information and apply their knowledge effectively. At the most advanced level, the examination challenges students to evaluate, judge, and defend specific positions, showcasing their higher-order thinking skills. Through this comprehensive assessment, the program ensures that students are not only knowledgeable about the subject matter but also capable of critical thinking and intellectual engagement at various levels. This rigorous testing process ultimately prepares students to meet the high standards expected of them, both academically and in their future endeavors.

Through this testing, students must demonstrate proficiency in the objectives of the indicative curriculum, meaning they should be capable of showcasing their achievements across all types of texts. Similar to the three-year programs, the State Exams program verifies active acquisition of information, critical processing, and interpretation of information through:

- Concepts and processes, such as abilities to think, distinguish, reason, and evaluate in various linguistic, personal, social, professional, and cultural contexts.
- Knowledge and content, encompassing understanding of the nature and usage of language; diversity of functions and genres in which it operates. In this context, literary and non-literary texts used should be among the most significant in the corpus of Albanian and world literature.
- Skills, such as interpreting and constructing textual features (grammar, pronunciation, paragraphs...) in written and spoken language for expression and communication.
- Attitudes and effects, including:
 - Development of interest and pleasure in language use.
 - Respect for the potential of language to create meaning.
 - Appreciation for manifestations of diverse cultural expressions.

In a deeper study, this aim can be defined as mastery of linguistic performance and re-performance of linguistic acquisition in specific propositional situations. This linguistic acquisition or linguistic performance/re-performance is defined with the help of three criteria: statement (propositional situation), interaction, and usage, which respectively lead to personal, interpersonal, and non-interpersonal dimensions of any linguistic acquisition or linguistic performance act. The State Exams in Albanian Language and Literature assess students primarily in two key areas: reading and writing, which serve as the foundation for evaluating other related skills. In the reading component, students

engage with both literary and non-literary texts. This allows for the evaluation of several sub-skills, including the ability to construct meaning from different media forms, interpret visual and verbal messages, and extract information from various media sources. The writing component involves tasks such as composing paragraphs and essays, through which students demonstrate their grasp of the sub-skills developed in their speaking exercises. These sub-skills include the use of cohesive and coherent elements in discussions and the selection of appropriate words based on the test requirements. Together, these components ensure a comprehensive assessment of the students' abilities in both understanding and expressing complex ideas, drawing from a wide range of sources and forms of communication.

3.3.2. Principles of Evaluation in the State Exams

The evaluation of the student with a grade comes as a result of the collection of data on his achievements, and their comparison with the level required by the objectives of the program. To carry out this process, Bloom's Revised Taxonomy is very helpful [14]. Based on the scoring system used, students are evaluated on a scale from 5 to 10. Today, several scoring systems are used worldwide. In the State Exams, an analytic system is employed, which bases scoring on specific elements of the response. The requirements of this system include assigning points for each test question and establishing a scoring scheme that outlines criteria for distributing points based on a model answer for each test question. To achieve a top score of 10 in the Albanian Language and Literature State Exams, a student must demonstrate exceptional skills across several key areas, aligned with Bloom's Revised Taxonomy levels. The journey towards mastering these skills unfolds as follows:

- In the realm of reading, the student delves deeply into the contextual meanings of words, seamlessly interpreting and evaluating their figurative nuances. This nuanced understanding extends to a comprehensive grasp of textual structures, allowing the student to draw insightful comparisons between different texts.
- The analytical prowess of the student shines through in their ability to dissect stylistic elements within texts. They skillfully navigate semantic phenomena like polysemy, homonymy, synonymy, and antonymy, applying these concepts with finesse. Furthermore, the student excels in analyzing the use of figurative language, leveraging linguistic expressions across phonetic, morphological, lexicological, and syntactic levels to enhance their vocabulary and enrich their interpretations.
- Their textual analysis is meticulous, marked by a keen eye for identifying cohesive devices and evaluating the coherence of texts. They adeptly highlight connectors, weaving them into their analysis to underscore the intricate connections within the text.
- Beyond the technical aspects, the student brings a holistic approach to interpretation. They explore texts through various lenses—artistic, linguistic, philosophical, social, and psychological—infusing their analysis with depth and breadth. This multi-faceted interpretation showcases their ability to integrate diverse perspectives, culminating in a rich, well-rounded understanding of the literature.

Throughout the writing process, use elements of the assessment system, write multi-paragraph texts, employ precise language (specific details, descriptions, examples, definitions, analogies), argue convincingly, use emotional tones in Albanian writing, utilize word polysemy, employ accurate structures (chronology, sequence, headings, subheadings, etc.), write different types of texts (with ideas, structure, important information), and know and use the standard Albanian language accurately.

Assessment objectives of the State Exams test:

- Knowledge and understanding* - 40% or 20 test points
- Critical interpretation and assessment* - 40% or 20 test points
- Judgment and personal response* - 20% or 10 test points.

Evaluating what we summarized above, we come to the conclusion that in the results of the State Exams, the expectations on a student's linguistic and literary training, assess an Albanian speaker of several levels of mastery of linguistic and interpretive competence, being specified with a score converted to a grade, in accordance with the level of objectives set by the State Exams program.

3.3.3. Descriptive Overview of the European Language Portfolio

To have an accuracy of the levels of language use by an individual, the European Language Portfolio (ELP) helps us a lot in orientation [15], updated by the Common European Framework for Reference for Languages (CEFR). The European Language Portfolio (ELP) contains the principles and guidelines approved by the European Council (DGIV/LANG 2000) and defines three components of the ELP:

The Language Passport section provides an overview of the individual's mastery of different languages for a given period. The vision is defined on the basis of skills and common reference levels in the Common European Framework. The passport records formal qualification, describes language competences and important linguistic and intercultural experiences, includes data on special and partial competences, allows self-assessment, evaluation by the teacher and by educational institutions and examination boards; requires that the information contained in the Passport show the basis on which it was decided, as well as when and by whom the assessment is carried out. To facilitate European-wide recognition and movement, a standard presentation of the passport summary has been promoted by the Council of Europe for ELP for adults.

Common European Framework of Reference for Languages [16]

The Language Passport refers to the following skills: understanding (including reading and listening), speaking (including conversation and outcomes), and writing. Observing references to languages, CEFR uses six levels of language proficiency outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which are firmly rooted in Bloom's Taxonomy, as they correspond to levels of:

- Remembering [Expresses spontaneously, in a very fluent and accurate manner (C2); Shows only limited control over a few simple grammatical structures and sentence forms in a memorized repertoire (A2), etc.]
- Understanding [Is able to understand basic points of clear standard language messages about familiar topics regularly encountered in work, school, leisure time, etc. (B1); Is able to understand practically everything heard or read without strain (C2).]
- Analyzing [Can use a limited number of cohesive devices to link his/her sentences in a clear, coherent discourse/conversation, although there may be some "backtracking" in a long contribution (B2); Can select an appropriate phrase from a range of discourse functions available to preface his/her remarks to obtain or maintain a basic level and to link his/her contribution personally with those of other speakers (C2), etc.]
- Evaluating [Can produce clear, well-structured, and articulate texts on complex subjects, showing that he/she knows how to control discourse structures, connectors, and mechanisms of cohesion (C1); shows only limited control over a few simple grammatical structures and sentence forms in a memorized repertoire (A1), etc.]
- Creating [Can produce simple, coherent texts on subjects familiar to him/her or of interest. Is able to describe experiences or events, dreams, hopes, ambitions, to briefly explain reasons and give explanations of opinions and projects (B1); Can create a coherent and cohesive discussion, with full and accurate use of a variety of organizational models and a wide range of connectors and other cohesive tools (C2).]

4. Discussion

4.1. The Issues and Extremes of Textual Treatment in the National Exams Exam

As asserted, the core of the curriculum is the text. The concept of text is closely linked to: awareness that every linguistic act unfolds in a specific situation, among determining participants and with specific objectives.

The existence of text types (such as news, chronicle, narrative, academic lecture, email, etc.), whose typology results from agreements, institutions, and typical communication techniques at a particular time and phase of society.

Language and literary education aim for maximal mastery of both literary and non-literary texts, to achieve the highest levels of perception and awareness. The use of literary and non-literary texts is closely related to language and literary education, as it requires and promotes the development of communication skills. To assess the language and literary education level of students, the Albanian Language and Literature exam in the National Exams places students in interactive relationships with texts of various types. Through diverse typology of texts, the National Exams exam manages to identify and evaluate each key segment of the student's language and literary formation. In the National Exams, language and literary education are assessed by defining specific skills, without overlooking other goals, such as:

Forming and embedding the historical dimension, through knowledge of the most significant moments in cultural history.

- Ability to place texts in their historical context.
- Forming and embedding the dimension of polysemy, through knowledge of pluralism and nuanced meanings attributed to major works.
- Development of critical thinking through interpretive dialogue on texts.

Linguistic phenomena used in the National Exams include: words, vocabulary, paragraphs, text with its types and subtypes, context, semantic phenomena (polysemy, homonymy, synonymy, antonymy, idiomatic expressions), structure, meaning, discourse, cohesion, coherence, audience, writing and its types. The programs focus on linguistic analyses of texts in standard and dialectal languages. Cooperation is on interpretation with two levels of speech expression: direct language and figurative language. Literary phenomena guiding the programs are: characters, ideas, problem-solving, relations, author's style, theme, thematic, motif, character character, typical form of expression. Linguistic phenomena operated in the Albanian Language and Literature Programs in high school are: word, phrase, text and its types, meaning, repertoire of words and their types, expressiveness, vocabulary, cohesion and mechanisms, coherence, connectors and their types, cross-language interaction, structure, meanings direct and acquired, writing and its types. Analysis and interpretations in types of texts, in specific situations, in contexts of variability, in direct and implied language.

4.2. Cultural Empathic Approach: The Role of Focused Thesis Identity

The implementation of a thesis on Albanian language and literature, with a focus on Albanian texts, has tremendous potential to enrich students' cultural knowledge and understanding. By exploring literary works, historical texts, and language heritage from Albania's rich literary tradition, students can deepen their connection to their national culture. This thesis encourages them to engage critically with their heritage, fostering a sense of pride and appreciation for Albanian language and literature [17].

An empathic cultural approach to teaching Albanian language and literature plays a crucial role in strengthening national identity and promoting acceptance of someone's heritage. By including literature that reflects diverse perspectives and experiences, students can develop a broader understanding of their cultural identity and experiences of their compatriots. This empathic exploration nurtures a sense of unity and inclusion, breaking down barriers and stereotypes, and fostering collective appreciation for the rich Albanian culture [18]. Predicting an educational system that promotes sensitivity, appreciation, and love for the motherland culture includes transformative pedagogy and curriculum redesign. By embedding a curriculum around cultural understanding and language heritage, educators can install in students a deep respect for their roots. This approach goes beyond school texts and standardized tests, creating space for personal connections with Albanian language, literature, and history. By promoting sensitivity, the educational system nurtures individuals committed to preserving and enriching their cultural heritage [19].

The adoption of a culturally empathic approach, complemented by a thesis focused on Albanian education in Language and Literature, has the potential to create a transformative educational experience. Such an approach can empower students with a deeper understanding of their cultural heritage, encouraging a strong sense of national identity and promoting unity among different communities [20]. Envisioning an educational system that prioritizes sensitivity, appreciation, and love

for the motherland culture, we pave the way for a generation that values and appreciates the rich cultural heritage of Albania and actively contributes to its preservation and celebration.

4.3. *Exploration of the Essence of Albanian Language and Literature for a Strengthened National Identity.*

A thesis focused solely on Albanian language and literature, centered on texts written by Albanian authors, holds significant potential to transform teaching approaches and curricula [21]. By immersing students in their literary heritage, this approach can lead to a deeper and nuanced understanding of their national language, culture, and identity. A thesis focused on Albanian allows students to explore the richness of literary works produced by Albanian authors throughout history. From epic poems like *"Songs of the Frontier Warriors"* to modern novels and poetry, students delve into a diverse range of writings that capture the essence of Albanian culture, traditions, and historical experiences [22].

Through the study of Albanian texts, students can forge a strong cultural connection with their heritage. They delve into histories, themes, and languages that resonate with their lived experiences and those of their ancestors. This connection cultivates sensitivity as students gain a deeper understanding of their cultural roots and shared experiences with fellow Albanians. A focus on Albanian fosters a sense of pride and national identity. Students learn to appreciate the uniqueness and richness of their national culture, reinforcing their connection to the Albanian nation. This sense of identity is vital for nurturing a strong civic conscience and commitment to preserving and promoting Albanian cultural heritage [23].

Analysing Albanian texts provides students with the opportunity to deepen their language skills. They encounter vocabulary, grammar, and complex literary devices used by Albanian authors, enhancing their language abilities in reading, writing, and critical analysis. Enhanced language skills empower students to express their ideas accurately and eloquently. By focusing on Albanian texts, educators actively participate in preserving Albanian language and literature. This preservation is essential for maintaining the authenticity of the language and ensuring that future generations continue to value and appreciate their literary heritage [24].

Exposure to works by Albanian writers can ignite creativity and inspiration among students. As they explore different styles and themes in Albanian literature, some students may be encouraged to become future writers, poets, or scholars, contributing to the ongoing legacy of Albanian literature. The study of Albanian texts encourages students to embrace diversity and accept different perspectives within their culture. They encounter different voices and narratives that shape the collective Albanian identity, promoting inclusivity and understanding [25].

The centrality of text in the curriculum underscores the necessity of understanding linguistic acts within specific contexts. The diverse types of texts assessed in National Exams allow for a comprehensive evaluation of students' language and literary education, aiming for maximal mastery of both literary and non-literary texts. This focus on various text types not only evaluates students' skills but also embeds historical and critical dimensions into their learning, enhancing their overall communication abilities. Implementing a thesis centred on Albanian language and literature significantly enriches students' cultural understanding. By engaging with Albanian literary heritage, students deepen their connection to national culture, fostering pride and critical engagement with their identity. This empathic cultural approach promotes unity and appreciation for diverse experiences within the Albanian community, paving the way for a curriculum that nurtures respect for cultural roots and encourages active participation in cultural preservation. A focused curriculum on Albanian texts enhances students' understanding of their language and culture, instilling a strong sense of national identity. By studying diverse literary works, students not only develop critical language skills but also gain insights into their shared cultural experiences. This approach empowers them to appreciate and promote their heritage, fostering creativity and encouraging future contributions to Albanian literature. The integration of cultural, linguistic, and literary education through a focused thesis on Albanian language and literature holds significant potential for transforming educational practices. By prioritizing these elements, we can cultivate a generation that values their cultural heritage, enhances their communication skills, and actively engages with their national identity. This not only enriches

individual student experiences but also contributes to the broader societal goal of preserving and celebrating Albanian culture.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights two significant findings concerning Albanian language and literature education:

Firstly, the assessment of achievements in Albanian language, as measured by State Exams, deviates from international language portfolio standards like those in the European Language Portfolio. This discrepancy indicates a potential gap in preparing students to meet broader European language proficiency criteria.

Secondly, the evaluation of Language and Literature achievements reflects a distinctly national perspective, prioritizing cultural context and heritage within the assessment framework. This underscores the commitment to preserving and promoting Albanian language and literary traditions within the educational system.

These findings underscore the importance of balancing international educational benchmarks with the preservation of national cultural identity in language and literature education. Going forward, there is a need to explore strategies that effectively harmonize these perspectives, ensuring students gain not only linguistic competence but also a profound appreciation for their cultural heritage. This holistic approach aims to equip students to thrive both locally and globally in an increasingly interconnected world.

Moreover, this paper emphasizes the critical role of Albanian language and literature education in nurturing national identity and enhancing students' communication skills. By engaging with diverse types of texts and employing rigorous assessment methods such as State Exams, students' linguistic and literary competencies are comprehensively evaluated. Incorporating culturally empathetic approaches through studies on Albanian texts enriches students' understanding of their heritage and fosters pride in their cultural identity.

Looking ahead, future research could further enhance curriculum design, pedagogical strategies, and assessment methodologies to better meet the evolving educational needs of students in a globalized context. Additionally, exploring the broader impact of cultural education on educational outcomes and societal cohesion would offer valuable insights for educational policymakers and practitioners alike.

As a recommendation, including contemporary Albanian authors and contemporary works in the curriculum offers students a connection to modern social issues and cultural dynamics. This inclusion enhances the importance and encourages students to engage with current literary expressions, nourishing their understanding of the evolving Albanian cultural landscape.

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