



# **EFL and the Key Competence-Based Curriculum in Romania. Do Children in Primary School Effectively Learn English?**

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# Overview

- Curriculum and primary education in RO
- Key-competence based assessment
- Sampling, test design and test administration
- Results - What these say about EFL learning



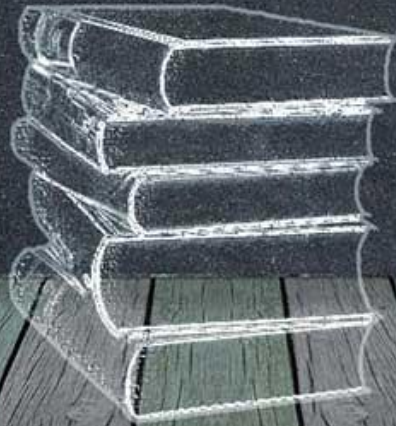


# Curriculum and Primary Education in Romania

**Key competences-based framework of reference:**

- Descriptors derived from the European statements for each level of education (progression within the key competences acquisition in school)
- The descriptors orient curriculum development for each subject in the curriculum as well as recommended methodology

- A foreign language is a compulsory subject starting with the first year of schooling
- About 200 hrs at the end of primary education and A1 curricular provision





# A framework for assessment

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What is the level of performance for the key competences at the end of primary education?

- What could be assessed in a PBA?
  - Categories of processes derived from the descriptors for primary education
  - Contexts of assessment
- **Could the rest be assessed by classroom observation?**
- Pilot project
  - tests in RO and ENG
  - Observation grid
- Main survey – only test (pandemic prevented classroom observation)







# Sampling & test design and administration

- Representative national sample
  - variety of educational factors, i.e. urban/rural; school status (coordinating school/ subordinate structure), type of school (primary/primary&middle school/ primary&middle&high school), single/multi-grade schools.
    - 1-2 classes for each of the selected schools depending on the size of the school
    - 166 schools (39 are multi-grade!)/ 3572 students
- 6 Romanian modules (3 information texts; 3 imaginative texts) & 3 English modules – combined in pairs in 15 booklets
- Spiral-based distribution
  - According to the booklet algorithm, the English modules were solved by 1422 students from all the sampled schools.
  - Each module was administered to 475 participants, with a selection error of 4.5% for each

## English test

- Simple information text with illustrations (2 modules)
- Simple functional text (a poster – 1 module)
- Questions – reading&written expression level A1, cultural awareness and expression (CAE) and learning to learn (LL) – the last 2 are present in the RO modules as well

**DOGS**

Read the following text and answer the questions below.

*Dogs are friendly animals.  
Many dogs run in the park.  
They like to play.  
They are cute and smiley.*

1. Match the images with the text. (Image **a** is an example.)

2. How many dogs are there in picture **a**?

A. two  
B. three  
C. four  
D. five

3. What is the small green object in picture **b**, on the left?

4. Write at least two colours you can see in picture **c**.

5. Who are there in picture **d**?

6. Where do dogs run, according to the text?

8

**BEARS**

Read the following text and answer the questions below.

*Bears are big animals. Polar bears are 3 meters long!  
Bears like water. They can swim well!  
Little bears are very cute and playful.  
Attention! Bears are not teddy bears!  
Please, respect bears. Learn about bears!*

1. Match the images with the text. (Image **d** is an example.)

2. How many teddy bears are there in picture **a**?

A. two  
B. three  
C. four  
D. zero

3. Who are there in picture **d**?

4. What do bears like, according to the text?

5. Write two colours you can see in picture **e**.

6. Check your answers 1-5. Are they correct?

yes no

The following picture is a poster for the summer holidays.  
Read the poster and answer the questions:

**COME TO DAISY HOLIDAY HOTEL!**

Open every summer!

Children can play: basketball, volleyball, tennis and football!

We organize:

- a bicycle race every Thursday!
- swimming lessons from 9-12 on Monday, Tuesday, Friday
- The Theater Competition every Sunday

**HAVE A SUPER HAPPY SUMMER HOLIDAY!**

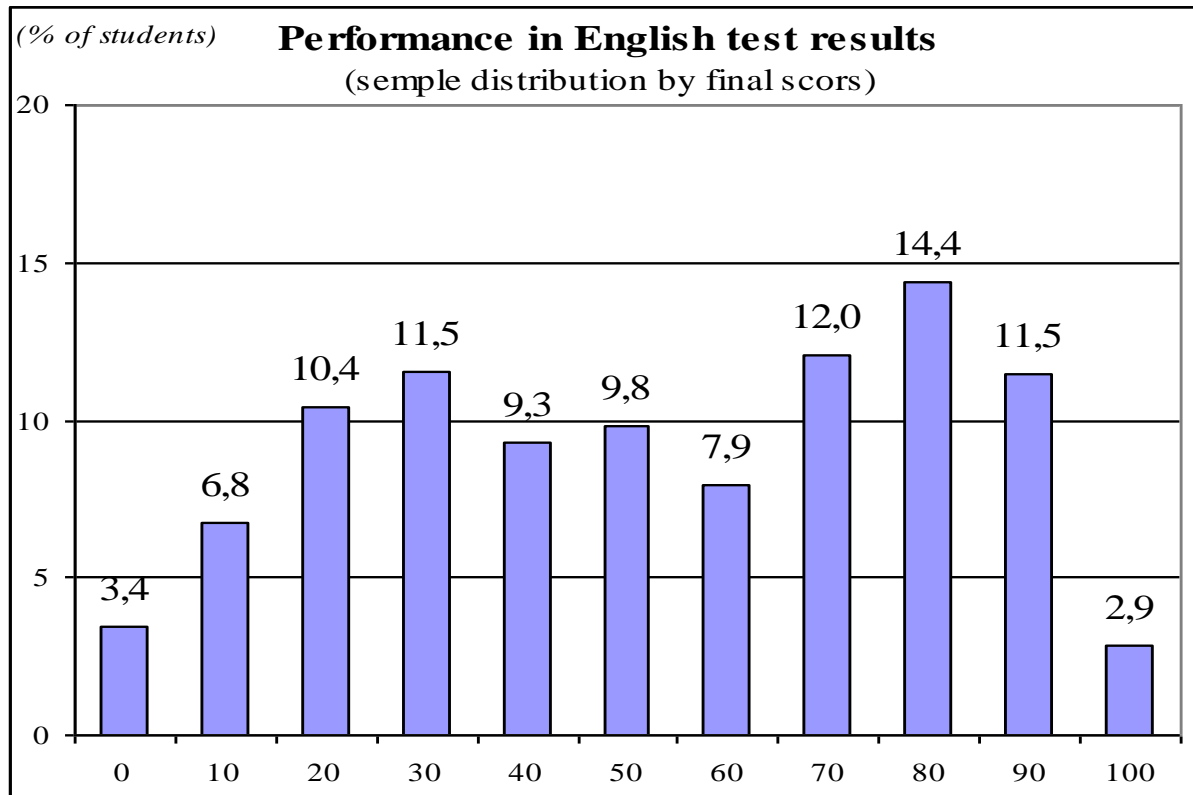
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# Findings according to the curricular framework of reference



- express ideas, opinions, emotions in a foreign language in short simple messages in familiar situations (communication in a foreign language – CFL)
- identify simple information in short simple texts in familiar contexts (CFL)
- self-assessment in simple tasks (learning to learn – LL)
- actively look for sources of information (LL)
- explore creative aptitudes in simple designs (cultural awareness and expression – CAE)

## The overall results in terms of sample distribution



No average performance: a group of low achievers and one of high achievers.

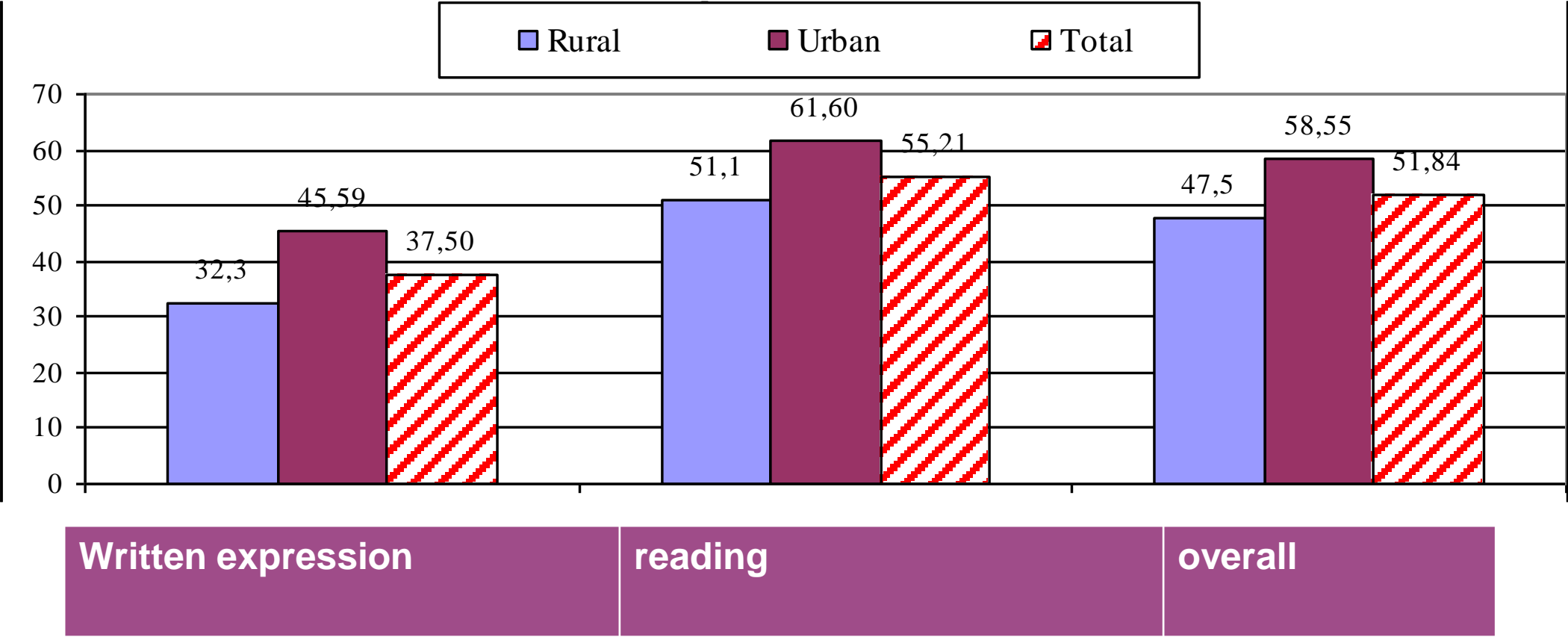






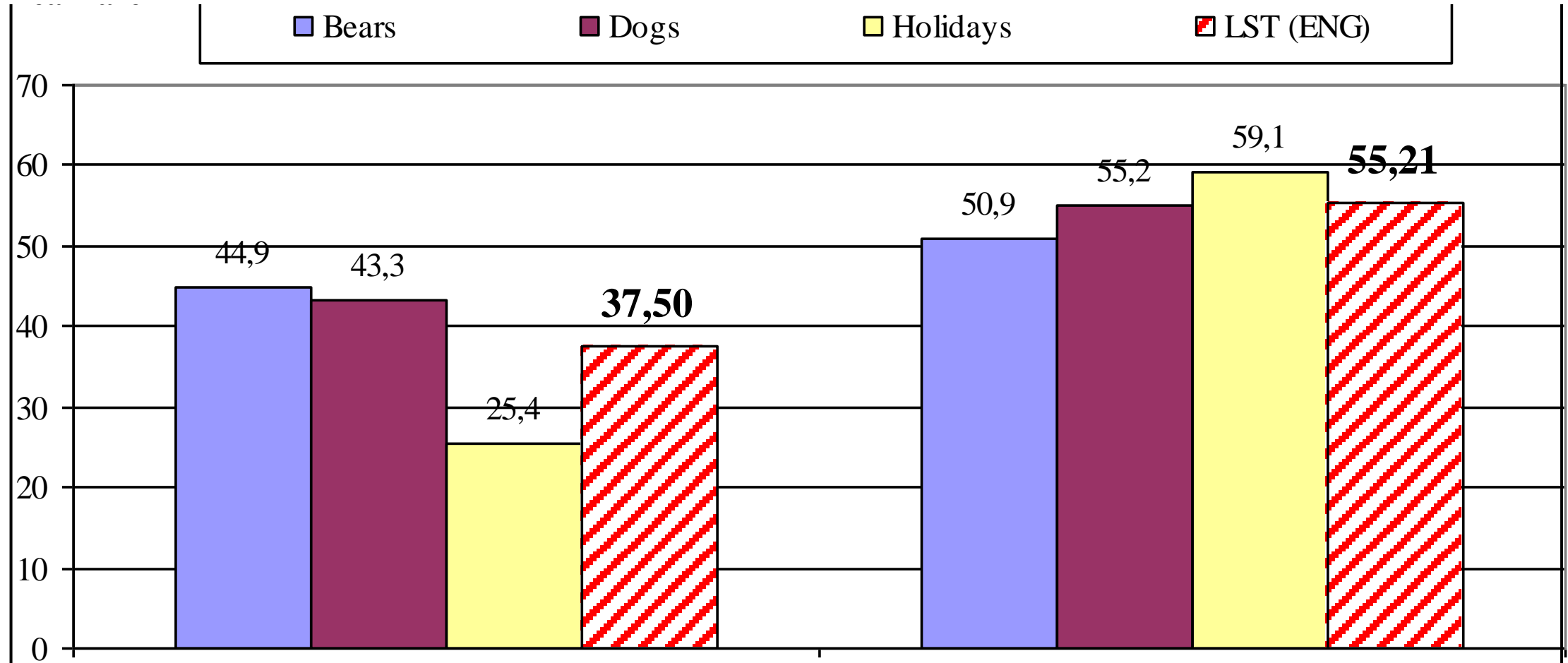
# Rural/urban gap

13% in written expression  
10% in reading comprehension



## Performances across the 3 modules

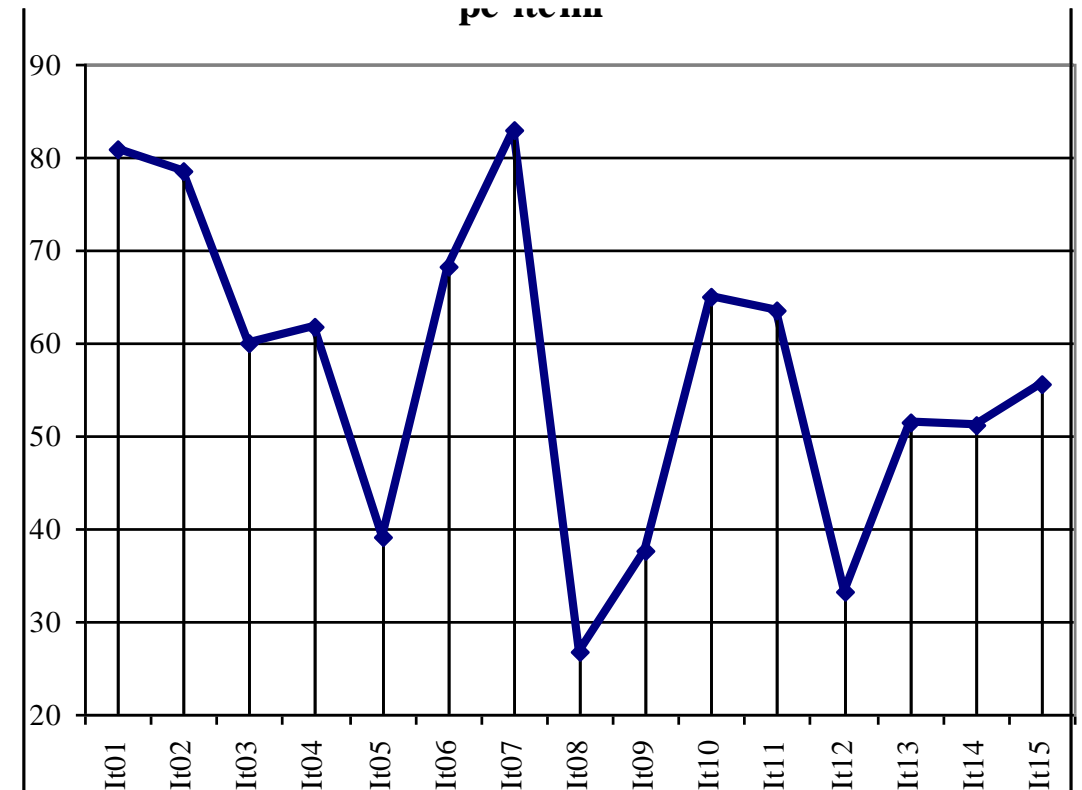
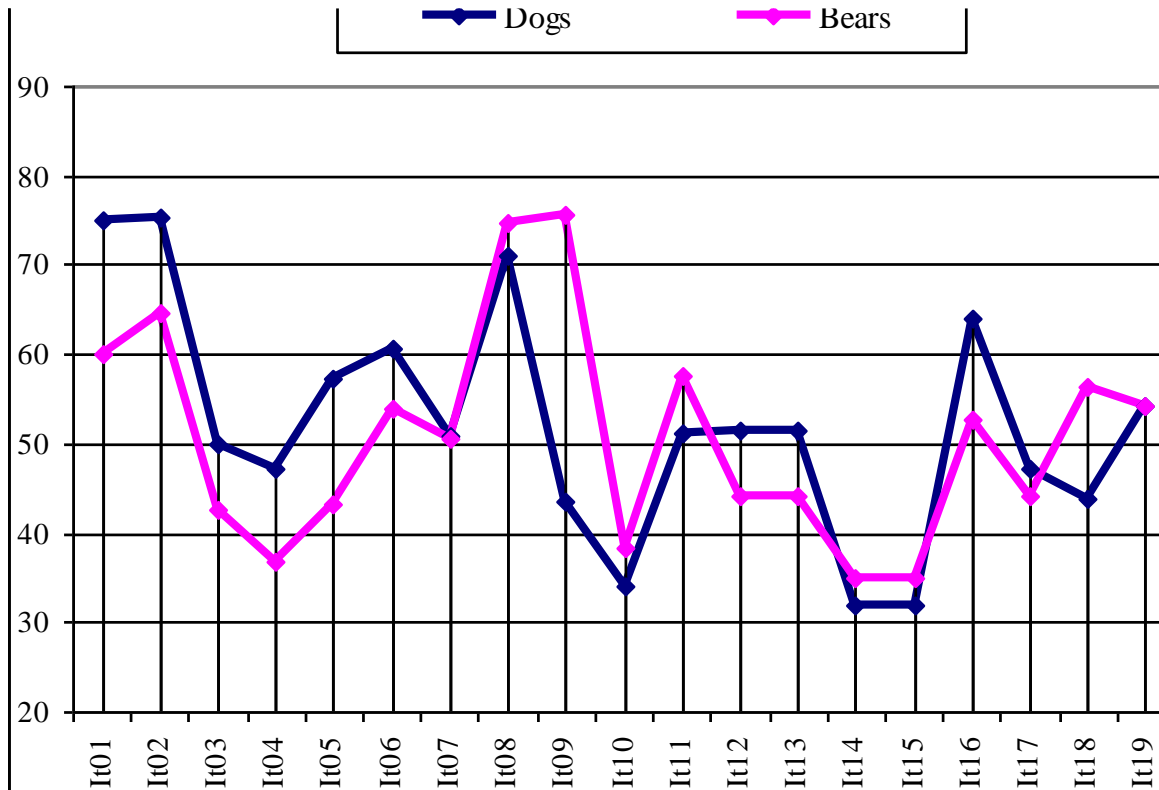
- Written expression – best results based on the classical short illustrated text (familiar)
- Reading comprehension – best results in the functional text (non-familiar format)





## Results item by item

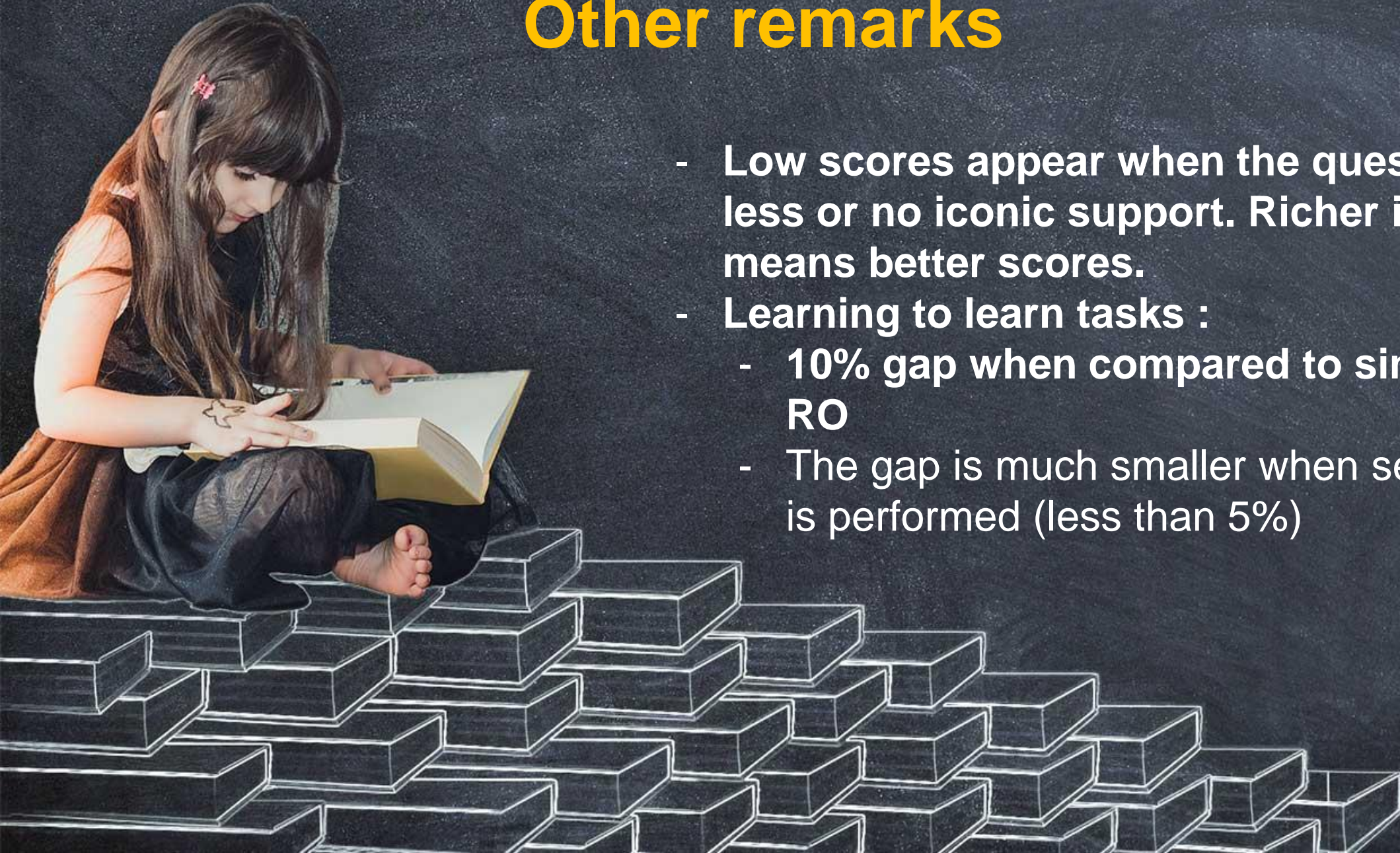
- Similar scores in the mirror modules (same format, same sequence of questions)
- The shape is slightly different in the module based on the poster
- Multiple choice items are easier than the constructed response
- Reading comprehension easier than written expression (teachers tend to expedite written tasks for home assignment – with little if any preparation for written expression)



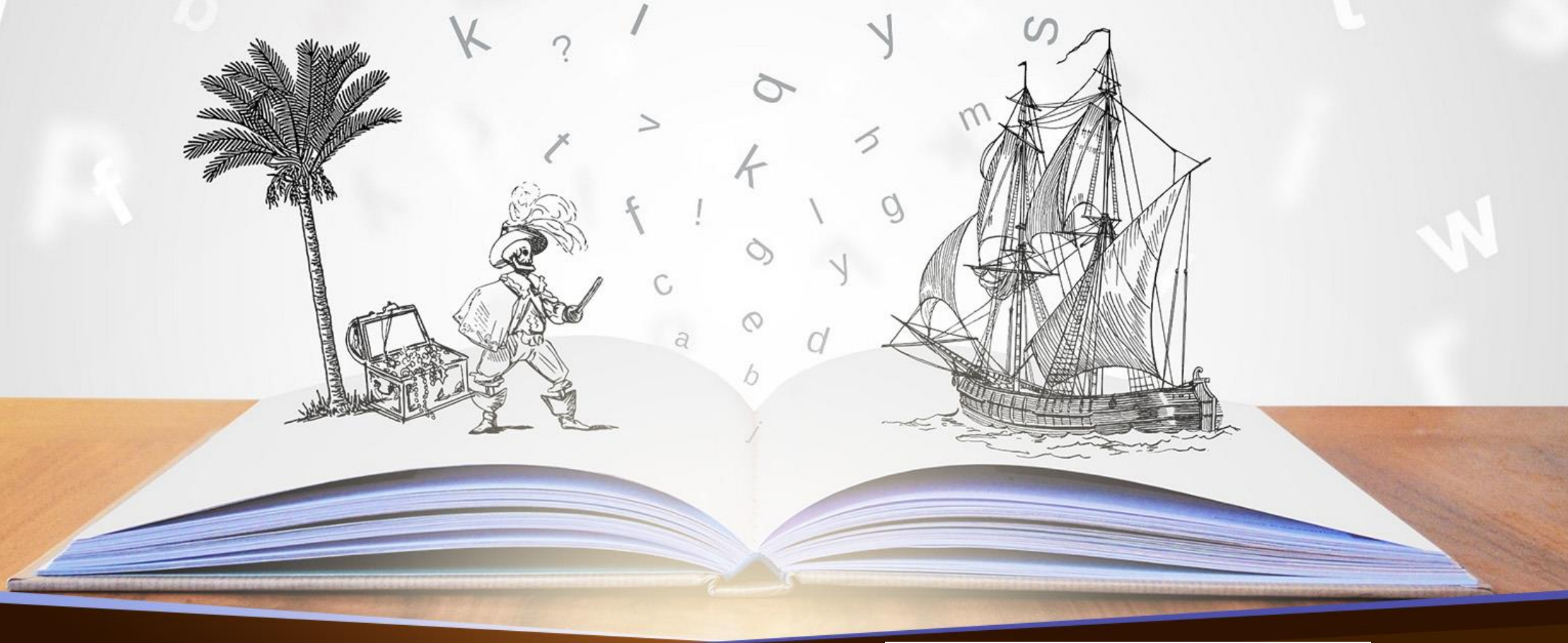


## Other remarks

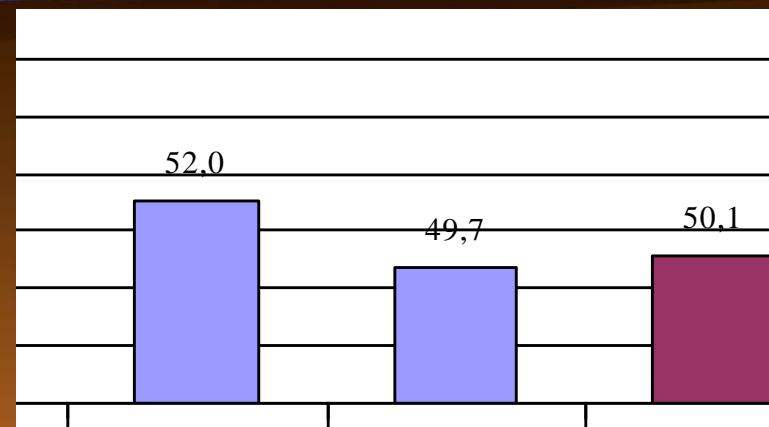
- Low scores appear when the questions have less or no iconic support. Richer illustration means better scores.
- Learning to learn tasks :
  - 10% gap when compared to similar task in RO
  - The gap is much smaller when self assessment is performed (less than 5%)







In CAE tasks focusing simple designs :  
the students achievement is the same  
irrespective of the language that set the  
context.







Thank you 🤗