



Learning a New Script: Romania's Alphabet Transition: A CORRIGE Project Case Study

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Abstract

This study explores the educational value of Romanian transitional texts within the European CORRIGE project (Tools to Detect and Mitigate Writing Errors in Secondary Schools). The project aims to provide secondary school students and teachers with informal digital tools to improve written language performance. The study investigates how engaging with historical writing can help secondary-school students' awareness of spelling, enable them to analyse errors, and improve their ability to revise their work. The article focuses on Romania's nineteenth-century shift from the Cyrillic to the Latin alphabet. This change was part of a wider cultural and political movement linked to national identity, literacy, modernisation, and European cultural belonging. The transitional alphabet, a form of pedagogical scaffolding, is especially relevant. Familiar Cyrillic signs, simplified forms, hybrid letters, and the gradual introduction of Latin characters helped readers move from an old writing system to a new one. The uneven nature of this process also shows that non-standard spellings should not be seen as failures, but temporary solutions through which writers tested sound-letter relationships, relied on previous knowledge, and adjusted to a changing system. Building on this historical example, the study proposes a short classroom pilot using selected texts in Romanian Cyrillic, mixed transitional script, and standard Latin script. Students complete activities involving historical context, letter recognition, guided conversion, comparison with modern spelling, and self-assessment. The experiment examines whether these exercises improve students' ability to notice graphic and orthographic features, identify spelling errors, develop correction strategies, and evaluate written language. Student reflections and teacher feedback provide the main data.

Keywords: orthography, transitional alphabet, error, student reflections

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

Writing is a complex cognitive, cultural, and communicative process through which we organise our thoughts, make sense of information, formulate arguments, demonstrate our knowledge, and interact with others. For young people, writing proficiency matters considerably at school, where much depends on written work. Persistent spelling mistakes make writing challenging to follow, its message less convincing, and its author unable to showcase their knowledge. In short, the quality of the writing can compromise the quality of the ideas.

The role of writing goes beyond the classroom, as written communication in diverse ways and conventions touches almost every part of young people's lives: applications for jobs, exchanges of messages, completion of forms, use of social media, etc. Digital tools and automatic spellcheckers can be useful, but they lack the accuracy to detect the subtleties of language. A thorough personal understanding of spelling and language is crucial. This knowledge empowers young people with enhanced confidence and independence in their interactions, enabling them to fully participate in education, career and community.

1.2 Corrigé Framework



These ideas lie at the heart of CORRIGE (Tools to Detect and Mitigate Writing Errors in Secondary Schools), an Erasmus+ project aimed at helping students improve their writing and equipping teachers with effective teaching resources [1]. The project starts from a simple idea: writing is an essential skill, not only for academic performance, but also for gaining confidence and preparing for further education or career opportunities. Yet writing challenges are not always easy to identify. Some students experience difficulties with spelling and written expression for years without adequate support, especially young people with limited contact with written culture, students with migration backgrounds, or those with dyslexia, dysgraphia, attention difficulties and other special educational needs. CORRIGE aims to enhance the visibility of these difficulties and, importantly, facilitate their management.

A fundamental concept of this project is that errors can provide valuable insights into how students learn. An error is not simply an incorrect answer that needs to be corrected. It may show a student's comprehension of a rule, their previous knowledge, or the strategy they have applied. Errors are not alike. They can have different causes requiring different forms of support. This is why CORRIGE goes beyond showing students the correct spelling. It encourages them to reflect on their mistakes, analyse the reasons behind them, consider possible solutions and try again. Thus, correction becomes an active part of learning, not a process in which students simply replace a wrong form with the right one.

The present study focuses mainly on the CORRIGE Atlas of Writing Errors. This project result has been developed as a shared resource, combining linguistic, cognitive, psychological and pedagogical views, while also highlighting the human and social dimensions of writing. It groups spelling difficulties into categories relating them to the history of writing, documents illustrating how literacy has developed, explanations of the processes involved in writing, and practical advice for overcoming difficulties. What makes the Atlas particularly useful is that it is more than a collection of examples of mistakes. It encourages teachers and students to explore the reasons behind them. A spelling error can be understood in relation to the learner's knowledge, the strategies used and even the historical development of written language. The Atlas allows us to understand the development of the writing systems over time and helps students cope with the challenges of writing today.

Another key element of the CORRIGE project is the Self-Assessment Tool for students. Students can examine their writing skills at their own pace without stress. There is no diagnosis or score. Instead, they are encouraged to notice their difficulties, reflect on their strategies, and consider how confident they felt when writing. They can then turn to the Atlas to understand particular errors and identify ways to sort them out. They are also invited to reread their first answers and determine whether a different strategy will lead them to a better result. The two resources are therefore closely related. Students observe their writing, identify possible causes of difficulty, correct and evaluate their progress. Learning becomes a process of testing, questioning, adjusting, and trying again.

1.3 Research Question and Objectives

When the writing system is known, reading is usually automatic. However, an unfamiliar script slows down this process, which makes the readers more conscious of letters and words. Romania's nineteenth-century transition from Cyrillic to Latin writing is an interesting case study of these processes. By examining successive stages of this transition, students can become more sensitive to letter forms, sound-symbol relationships, word structure, grammatical context, and spelling norms. Working with historical texts may also encourage students to reflect on and question their initial interpretations, recognise uncertainty, and revise their choices. These practices could, in turn, raise awareness of and support more deliberate self-correction in contemporary Romanian writing.

Our central research question is therefore: *Can engaging with historical writing strengthen students' metalinguistic awareness and help them better identify, explain, and correct errors in present-day Romanian?*

The experiment investigates whether historical-script exercises help students notice graphic and orthographic features, compare representations of Romanian sounds and words, identify spelling errors in modern Romanian, explain why a form is correct or incorrect, develop correction strategies, evaluate written language critically and reflect on their spelling choices and learning processes.

2. Historical and Sociolinguistic Background

2.1 Orthographic Reforms



Orthographic reforms, in both the ancient and modern world, are among the recurrent causes of written error. Whenever the conventions that govern how sounds are mapped onto signs are altered, writers who have internalised the previous system must reconstruct these correspondences, and the period of readjustment typically produces a measurable rise in spelling errors. The phenomenon is visible in antiquity; the successive adjustments of the early Latin writing system offer a well-documented case [2], and equally in the present day: the German orthographic reform (the Rechtschreibreform: agreed in 1996 and introduced in schools from 1998) generated adaptation errors across virtually all social classes and generations, as writers accustomed to the older norms adjusted to the new ones [3]. Romania's case is not, strictly speaking, an orthographic reform but an alphabet substitution; nonetheless, it changes the fundamental parameters of writing in the writing system itself, and can be approached, at a general level, within the same framework since any deliberate change to a writing convention temporarily disrupts users' automatic sound-to-sign routines.

Writing reached the Romanian-speaking lands comparatively late: the earliest surviving text in Romanian, Neacșu's letter, dates from 1521 and was written in Cyrillic, the script of Church Slavonic literacy in the Orthodox cultural sphere. This late entry of vernacular literacy can be framed within the anthropology of literacy developed by Jack Goody [4, 5, 6], who examined how the technology of writing reshapes memory, thought, and the organisation of knowledge. Goody's distinction between oral and literate cultures is a useful reminder that a highly developed culture need not coincide with a written language. An entire strand of linguistic and epigraphic research addresses the so-called 'silent', or scarcely attested, languages, as in ancient Liguria, Illyria, and the Celtic world, where a rich culture left little or no written trace [7,8]; cultural sophistication and writing do not advance in step, the oral composition of the Homeric poems and the living oral traditions of contemporary African theatre illustrate [9]. Ancient testimony on the deliberate avoidance of writing reinforces the point: Plato favoured oral transmission and, in the *Phaedrus*, warned that writing would weaken memory rather than sustain it; and Caesar, in the *De bello gallico*, reports that Druidic training excluded the learning of writing despite lasting many years expressly [8]. Against this background, the adoption of a writing system in a society appears not as a neutral technical event but as a cultural threshold.

A further relevant body of scholarship concerns graphematic adaptation, the way an alphabet is adjusted to fit the phonological inventory of a particular language. When a community adopts a script originally devised for another language, it must decide how to represent the sounds that the borrowed alphabet does not already encode: the experience of Ladino and of other minority languages shows how graphemes are selected, combined, or newly created to match the local system of sounds [10]. Adapting an alphabet therefore means fitting a finite set of signs to a specific phonemic inventory, a process that necessarily entails choices, compromises, and locally distinctive solutions.

Appendix A presents the principal correspondences between the Romanian Cyrillic graphemes and their modern Latin equivalents and their approximate phonetic values. It illustrates both the one-to-one matches and the divergence points, that is, the sounds specific to Romanian for which a dedicated solution had to be devised (the vowels /ə/ and /i/, and the consonants /ʃ/, /ts/, /tʃ/), and the Cyrillic signs that were ultimately dropped as superfluous [11, 12, 13, 14].

It is worth noting how a new alphabet, or writing system, is introduced into a society. It rarely occurs by decree alone; it typically depends on bilingual intermediaries, 'crossovers', individuals competent in both languages who mediate the passage of an alphabet to a new community. Scholarship on alphabet transmission in the ancient world describes this process as an adjustment of the alphabetic set, operating through three basic mechanisms: deleting redundant signs, modifying existing signs, and adding new ones. Reformers had to adapt the inherited set of signs to the phonological needs of their own language. The Romanian transition can be read through exactly this lens: reformers deleted the Cyrillic letters that were redundant for Romanian, modified or reassigned others, and introduced Latin characters and diacritics (ă, â/î, ș, ț) to represent the sounds specific to Romanian.

2.2 The Romanian Transition and Transitional Alphabets

In the nineteenth century, growing awareness of Romania's Latin heritage, modernisation and closer ties with Western Europe encouraged a gradual adoption of the Latin alphabet. Reformers first simplified the Cyrillic alphabet, partly to make reading and writing easier to learn, and then introduced Latin letters step by step. Some letters were modified to look more Latin, and writing often combined Cyrillic and Latin characters within the same word, facilitating readers' familiarity with the new script [11, 12, 13, 14, 15].



Recent digital humanities research on the Romanian novel offers valuable information on the gradual evolution of Romanian writing. The study relies on a corpus of 185 novels published between 1850 and 1939, compiled through national and European research projects. This illustrates four stages of orthographic development: 1. the transitional alphabet (1850–1862, 9 texts); 2. the establishment of literary institutions and adoption of official orthographic conventions (1863–1882, 35 texts); 3. the increasing implementation of the phonetic principle (1883–1904, 81 texts); and 4. orthographic modernisation and standardisation aligned with contemporary norms (1905–1939, 60 texts) [16, 17, 18, 19, 20]. These stages show that the transition from the Cyrillic to Latin alphabet was not an isolated reform but part of a long process of linguistic standardisation, impacted by educational policies, cultural identity, and publishing practices. The distribution of texts across the four periods reflects corpus availability and selection criteria, not the volume of literary production.

From the perspective of literacy acquisition and language learning, these historical texts offer valuable insights into how readers adapted to changing relationships between letters and sounds, as well as evolving spelling conventions. Comparing them opens up possibilities for classroom activities focused on script recognition, transliteration, orthographic variation, and error analysis, all of which connect with the aims of the European CORRIGE project. While computational research often requires historical texts to be normalised according to contemporary spelling conventions, their original forms are equally important. They reveal something that modernised versions cannot fully capture: the social, cultural, and educational challenges involved in moving from one writing system to another. In this context, the transitional alphabet may be understood as a form of literacy scaffolding. Rather than confronting readers with an entirely unfamiliar script, it allowed them to rely on what they already knew while gradually becoming accustomed to new letter forms and spelling practices. The transition, however, was neither uniform nor direct. Different conventions coexisted, reflecting authors', printers', and reformers' individual choices or cultural and political tensions. What may appear today as inconsistent or incorrect spelling was, at the time, part of an evolving writing system. These forms were not simply imperfect versions of modern Romanian, but practical responses to the challenges of introducing a new alphabet and making written texts accessible to readers. For this educational experiment, a spelling that differs from today's standard is not necessarily an error; it may reflect a different historical convention.

3. Method

3.1 Participants, Design and Materials

The study used a small-scale qualitative classroom experiment carried out within the CORRIGE project. It involved 110 students aged 14–16 from six classes in two secondary schools in Iași, Romania, in September 2026. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Students and their parents were informed about the purpose of the activities and the use of the collected responses, and informed consent was obtained before participation. The experiment received school authorisation. The students also participated in other CORRIGE activities. The study explored whether engaging with historical Romanian writing can enhance students' reflection on spelling, particularly on the strategies they use to identify, explain and correct errors in modern Romanian. Rather than measuring improvements in spelling performance, the experiment focused on students' reasoning, obstacles and strategies used for developing and revising their responses.

The activities involved two sets of materials. The first was a worksheet with a brief paragraph in contemporary Romanian, with spelling errors commonly found in students' writing, such as missing or incorrect diacritics, confusion between forms with two or three consecutive *i* letters, etc. The second consisted of historical words, phrases, and short passages illustrating different stages of the transition. They were taken from examples documented by Boerescu [11] and included simplified Romanian Cyrillic, mixed transitional writing, and texts in Latin script. Their goal was to familiarise students with new graphic forms while identifying Romanian letters they already knew. Students checked their interpretations and reconsidered their first choices using a key.

3.2 Procedure

The following activities were organised during classes in succession, from familiar spelling problems to the less-known task of reading historical texts.

Contemporary worksheet. Students worked individually, identifying spelling errors and, where possible, explaining them. The focus was on raising students' awareness of the strategies used.



Context. Students read Romanian texts in Cyrillic and explored why a Romance language was written in Cyrillic for centuries. The discussion showed that an alphabet is not synonymous with a language's origin, and that its choice depends on religion, culture and politics. In the Romanian case, Cyrillic was closely linked to Orthodox religious and administrative traditions.

Chronological ordering. Students ordered historical extracts chronologically, from simplified Cyrillic to mixed and predominantly Latin transitional writing to fully Latin writing. They examined the letter shapes and the proportion of Cyrillic and Latin characters and explained what strategies had prevailed in their decisions.

Decoding. Students decoded selected words, phrases and a short Cyrillic passage into contemporary Romanian.

Verification and correction. Students used the key, compared it with their readings, identified mistakes and revised their answers. They explained how they had reached their first conclusions, why some interpretations were wrong and what helped them find a better solution.

Reflection and discussion. The focus was on the strategies students used to complete the tasks. Students described how they had approached the task, where they had hesitated and what had helped them. Students discussed religious, cultural and political circumstances of the transition and present-day spelling problems.

3.3 Data Analysis and Data Collection

At the end of the workshops, students completed a reflective questionnaire, which asked them to revisit their first attempts, describe the strategies they had relied on and consider why certain letters or words had led to misunderstandings. They were also asked what had helped them recognise and correct their mistakes, and whether any of these strategies might be useful at school in future.

The worksheet was not scored for accuracy. Attention was given to the strategies students used and how they explained their choices; the errors were discussed with the whole class. Questionnaire responses were examined for recurring patterns in initial reading strategies, sources of uncertainty, self-correction and possible links with everyday spelling practice. Responses were grouped into categories and reported as frequencies and percentages of the full sample. Students could give more than one answer, so percentages do not sum to 100. Some categories are reported only qualitatively. The analysis was descriptive and exploratory, aiming to show how students experienced the tasks and what their reflections might reveal about spelling awareness and their strategies.

4. Results

4.1 Initial Strategies

In their first encounter with the unfamiliar script, students were less interested in systematic letter-by-letter decoding than in trying to identify the letters by finding something recognisable. Students looked for familiar shapes, connections with the Latin alphabet, or fragments of words or sentences which would have led to possible meanings. Thus, 29 students (26.4%) used a word-level technique, trying to identify or reconstruct entire words instead of decoding every character in sequence. Fourteen (12.7%) clearly indicated that they had used context (Figure 1). Only 7 students (6.4%) reported they had gone through an almost complete letter-by-letter analysis. The qualitative responses show the same pattern: students matched unfamiliar characters with known ones, looked for recurrent patterns, relied on familiar vocabulary and sometimes consciously related Cyrillic forms to the Latin alphabet. Their first strategy was not simply to 'decode' the script but to try to make it familiar. A recognisable shape or a plausible word generated a first hypothesis, which often led to mistakes. For example, some students read the Cyrillic P as p because it resembles the Latin P, although its value is r.

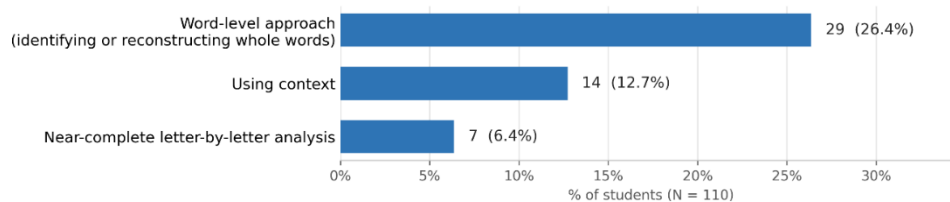


Fig. 1. Students' initial strategies (N = 110)



4.2 Why did I make My First Mistake?

This dependence on familiarity was useful but risky. The most common cause of mistakes was dependence on the visual shape of a character: 47 students (42.7%). Similarly, 42 students (38.2%) thought that an unfamiliar sign was equivalent to a familiar Latin letter. The text often became accessible thanks to visual correspondence, but it could also mislead students. Twenty-nine students (26.4%) showed impulsive and hasty whole-word guessing. Twenty-two (20.0%) realised that they had overlooked a small graphic difference between characters, 21 (19.1%) that they had neglected context, 16 (14.5%) that they had applied the same rule too broadly, and 14 (12.7%) that they had guessed from pronunciation (Figure 2). Lack of knowledge of the underlying code also appeared repeatedly. Students themselves observed that the errors were not random. Errors stemmed from understandable reading behaviour: detecting a similarity, generating a quick hypothesis and accepting it before gathering enough evidence. Other mistakes included skipping unfamiliar characters and guessing words from context without verifying each letter.

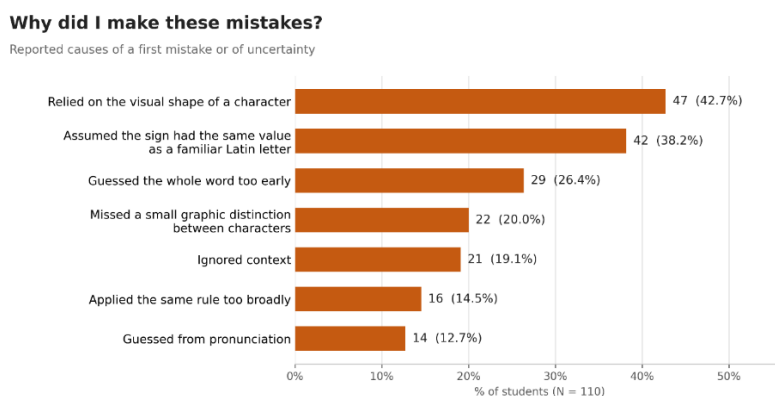


Fig. 2. Reported causes of a first mistake or of uncertainty (N = 110).

4.3 Students' Explanations of their Own Errors

When asked to explain why their mistake was not accidental, many students were able to identify the process that had created it. They complained about the confusion between apparently similar characters that appeared repeatedly and about the lack of or insufficient knowledge of the code. At least 14 students (12.7%) referred explicitly to confusion caused by similar-looking signs, and another set of responses described dependence on characters that looked like Latin ones. Fourteen students (12.7%) said they did not know the code or rules. Inattention and rushing were each mentioned by 7 students (6.4%), which also mentioned failure to check, impulsive reaction, unreliable intuition, random guessing and applying one strategy to several different words. Some students admitted that they had stopped analysing as soon as a plausible solution appeared. By the end of the activity, a mistake was beginning to be understood not as a wrong answer, but as the visible result of a decision: "I trusted the resemblance."; "I guessed too quickly."; "I did not check." "I used a rule that did not work here".

4.4 What Helped Me Correct Myself or Check My Answer?

The strategies used for self-correction were far more intentional. The decoding key was the most frequently identified support (37 students, 33.6%), followed closely by sentence context (32, 29.1%). Twenty-seven students (24.5%) checked their reading by using knowledge acquired during the experiment and finding another occurrence of the same sign, and 25 (22.7%) used a known word as a point of reference. A total of 17 students (15.5%) mentioned both word meaning and pronunciation (Figure 3). Students also referred to grammar, rereading, reflection and closer examination of word structure as reliable strategies when decoding the words and the text. At this stage of the experiment, the nature of the reasoning changed. In the first encounter, similarity frequently triggered an answer. In correction, similarity was no longer enough, and students looked for evidence and confirmation



elsewhere: another occurrence of the character, the meaning of the sentence, a familiar lexical pattern, pronunciation or an explicit rule. The first hypothesis had to survive a test. This movement from intuition towards verification is one of the clearest findings of the experiment.

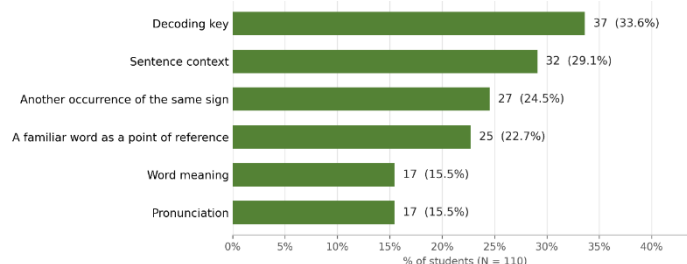


Fig. 3. Strategies students used to correct themselves or check an answer (N = 110).

4.5 Transferable Strategies

Finally, students' reflections on strategies revealed a connection between the decoding process and their writing in present-day Romanian (Figure 4). The most frequent transferable strategy was checking and verification (34 of 110 students; 30.9%). This was not a form of proofreading in a narrow sense: students spoke of rereading, revising and rewriting an initial choice, testing another strategy and taking extra time before accepting an answer. Fourteen students (12.7%) mentioned paying greater attention to diacritics (which had often been ignored in a previous stage of the project), and 12 (10.9%) looking for help from teachers, classmates, parents or others. Around 11 (10.0%) described a more word-centred strategy: looking at the whole word, its form, meaning, pronunciation or structure, deliberately eliminating the strategy of concentrating too quickly on one feature. Ten (9.1%) identified context as a strategy they intended to reuse. Other responses highlighted attention, connections between words, previous knowledge, dictionaries, the Internet, linguistic patterns, practice, and avoiding rushing. Reflections often expressed students' desire to address some present-day spelling problems such as diacritics, final -i forms, comma use, and other lexical or orthographic uncertainties.

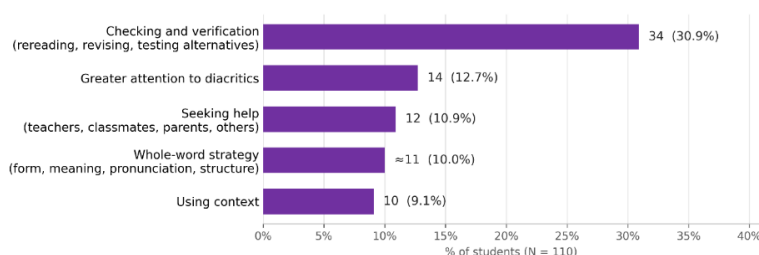


Fig. 4. Strategies students said they would reuse in their own writing (N = 110).

5. Discussion

5.1 Progressing from Resemblance to Confirmation

The responses imply a transformation in metalinguistic awareness. In the initial stages, most students tended to reduce the unfamiliarity of the historical script by relating it to known elements, which proved to be effective, though at times misleading. Errors highlighted the limits of these strategies. By reflecting on their failed solution, students suggested other strategies: validating, comparing, reviewing, considering context, and being open to giving up an initial decision. Thus, we assessed not only the accuracy of decoding but also students' proficiency to identify the source of an error, justify their reasoning, and revise an interpretation. An incorrect initial answer, accompanied by a considerate correction, may be as informative as a prompt accurate response. The unfamiliar script became a method to reflect on making and correcting mistakes in present-day Romanian. Even the most reticent students who claimed that the experiment was ineffective admitted that they refined their reading and writing techniques and would undoubtedly proofread their work before submission.

5.2 The Educational Experiment within the CORRIGE Framework



The proposed experiment contributes to three interconnected areas of the CORRIGE project, linking the historical study of Romanian writing with contemporary approaches to literacy education.

The Atlas of Writing Errors. Historical texts, together with the difficulties students encounter when decoding them, offer an opportunity to explore how writing conventions work and why certain errors occur. Students may come across characters that resemble familiar Latin letters but represent different sounds, or discover that the same sound can be written in several ways. Their initial interpretations, and particularly the reasoning behind their corrections, can reveal different reading strategies, from visual recognition and phonetic decoding to contextual inference and comparison with familiar words. These observations may help classify errors and develop corrective strategies within the Atlas.

Self-Assessment Tool. The activities encourage students to reflect on how they arrive at an answer, recognise when an initial interpretation proves misleading, and identify what helps them reach a more accurate reading. An unfamiliar script makes these processes particularly visible. Unable to rely entirely on automatic word recognition, students have to examine individual characters, consider possible sound correspondences, and test their interpretations against the wider context. The purpose is not to master a historical alphabet, but to become more aware of the decisions involved in reading, spelling, and correcting one's own writing. In this way, historical decoding becomes an exercise in metalinguistic awareness and self-assessment.

Teacher Training. Combining historical extracts with decoding exercises, contemporary spelling tasks, and guided reflection offers a practical teaching approach that could be adapted for CORRIGE's educational resources. Teachers do not need specialist knowledge of historical linguistics to use these activities. What matters is the opportunity to make students' thinking visible: how they recognise patterns, test hypotheses, explain mistakes, and revise their answers. Such an approach can help move spelling instruction beyond mechanical correction towards a more reflective understanding of how written language works.

5.3 Teachers' Feedback

The experiment included four teachers whose feedback was collected from discussions. The teachers saw the main benefit in students' metalinguistic awareness. Contemporary Romanian spelling is so familiar that students rarely question it. Cyrillic and transitional texts interrupted that familiarity. Students had to focus on letter shapes, sound–symbol relationships, word structure and context, so something they normally do automatically became a conscious process of observation, comparison and interpretation. In this sense, the unfamiliarity of historical writing helped students understand the system they use every day. Students also saw that the link between sounds and letters is neither fixed nor universal, but shaped by historical circumstances, cultural choices and institutional decisions.

Pedagogically, the teachers appreciated the new way of viewing errors as opportunities for discussion rather than a source of embarrassment. They also valued that the activities needed no prior knowledge of historical linguistics, so they could be adapted to ordinary language lessons.

Also, working with two scripts raised questions about writing as a social practice. Why does a language use a particular alphabet? Who decides which conventions become standard? What happens when a community adopts a different writing system? The questions link language to education, religion, cultural identity and political change. Romania's adoption of the Latin alphabet was more than a technical adjustment to the representation of sounds: it was part of a wider cultural and national reorientation. Seen this way, spelling becomes a shared, historically negotiated convention, and students come to see why it deserves care.

5.4. Limitations and Further Research

This exploratory study cannot establish whether working with historical scripts improves spelling accuracy. It involved no control group or pre- and post-testing, and the findings rely on students' self-reports. Nevertheless, students' responses offer insights into how they approached unfamiliar letters, dealt with uncertainty, and selected strategies to revise their answers. Their reflections also suggest that they enriched their strategies as the activities progressed. Further research, including comparative groups and measurable learning outcomes, could explore whether these experiences lead to improvements in spelling awareness and accuracy, in line with CORRIGE objectives.

6. Conclusion



Romania's transition from Cyrillic to Latin script was neither sudden nor straightforward. It unfolded gradually, through experimentation, competing conventions, and changing cultural priorities. Transitional alphabets were not imperfect versions of modern Romanian, but practical responses to the challenges of adopting a new writing system.

Bringing these historical forms into the classroom offers a way to make familiar reading processes visible. Faced with unfamiliar characters, students must look more closely at letters, sounds, word patterns, and spelling conventions. Their reflections suggest that the pilot encouraged them to recognise patterns, question initial interpretations, explain their choices, and become more aware of the strategies they use when reading and correcting written language.

The aim, therefore, is not to treat historical spelling as something to be corrected, but to use it as a means of exploring how writing works. This approach connects the history of Romanian orthography with CORRIGE's focus on literacy awareness and reflective learning. It also invites students to look beyond spelling rules and consider writing as a cultural and social practice, shaped by education, political decisions, and collective identity.

AI-use statement: The authors used an AI assistant (Claude, Anthropic) to support the refinement of the English text from Italian and Romanian working notes, prepare a preliminary Cyrillic–Latin correspondence table and produce the graphs from aggregated, anonymised questionnaire counts supplied by the authors. No identifiable student data were entered into the tool.. The table was subsequently checked against relevant sources. The authors take full responsibility for the scholarly content, references, and final wording.

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Appendix A. Romanian Cyrillic–Latin grapheme correspondences

Mechanism: direct match = same value, same letter shape in Latin; modification = Latin base letter plus a diacritic, a digraph or a context-dependent choice; addition = a Latin sign created or adopted that the Cyrillic stock did not supply; deletion = a Cyrillic sign with no Latin counterpart, merged into other letters or dropped. Sources: B = Boerescu [12]; C = Chițoran, [11] used for the IPA values; DOOM [21]

Cyrillic	Latin	IPA	Adaptation mechanism	Source
А а	a	/a/	direct match	B, C
Б б	b	/b/	direct match	B, C
В в	v	/v/	direct match	B, C
Г г	g	/g/ (/g/ before e, i written gh)	direct match/ modification when written before e or i	B, C
Д д	d	/d/	direct match/ replaced by d	B, C, DOOM
Е / Ё	e	/e/	direct match	B, C
Ж ж	j	/ʒ/	modification	B, C
З з	z	/z/	direct match	B, C
И / І	i	/i/	two signs → one letter	B, C
К к	c / k	/k/	direct match (c before a, o, u); modification (ch before e, i)	B, C
Л л	l	/l/	direct match	B, C
М м	m	/m/	direct match	B, C
Н н	n	/n/	direct match	B, C
О о / Ѡ ѡ	o	/o/	direct match/deletion (Ѡ is a duplicate of o)	B, C
П п	p	/p/	direct match	B, C
Р р	r	/r/	direct match	B, C
С с	s	/s/	direct match in terms of pronunciation/ replaced by s	B, C
Т т	t	/t/	direct match	B, C
У / Ѳ ѳ	u	/u/	replacement/deletion- various spellings of one sound	B, C
Ф ф	f	/f/	direct match in terms of pronunciation/ replaced by f	B, C
Х х	h	/h/	direct match/ direct match in terms of pronunciation/ replaced by h	B, C
Ц ц	ț	/ts/	addition (diacritic)	B, C
Ч ч	ce / ci / c	/tʃ/	Modification (Written c before e, i; vowel letters follow in cea, cia)	B, C, DOOM
Ш ш	ș	/ʃ/	addition (diacritic)	B, C
Ъ ъ	ă	/ə/	addition (diacritic)	B, C
Ѧ / ѧ	â / î	/i/	addition (diacritic); î initial and final; â inside the word (since 1953 reform; â again in 1993 only for român and derivatives)	B, C
Ь ь	— (dropped)	final soft sign	deletion	B, C
Ѣ ѣ (yat)	ea / e	/ɛa/	deletion / respelling Etymological in Cyrillic; no single rule, conflicting values in the sources	B
Ѥ, Ѧ, Ѧ, Ѧ	cs, ps, t, i...	Greek-derived	deletion (superfluous)	B

