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**Elene (Lena) Jajanidze**

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## **A Study on the Growing Tendency of Students Involved in the Submersion Program in Georgian Schools and the Effectiveness of Its Implementation**

### **ABSTRACT**

The article presents a brief overview of the introduction of bilingual education in Georgian schools. The main focus of the paper is to study the issue of implementation and effectiveness of submersion classrooms. As a result of the qualitative research, the following main issues have been explored within this article: 1) What are the challenges, and how can Georgian language schools and sectors manage school language diversity? 2) What are the different approaches and challenges in Georgian language sectors in schools where the majority of students are non-Georgian or completely non-Georgian? The study examines the effectiveness and challenges of submersion classes from the perspective of teachers in target schools. The results of the qualitative research method are presented in the form of findings and tendencies, which gives us a clear picture of the challenges of submersion education for more in-depth on the example of Georgian public schools.

**Keywords:** *submersion education, affirmative action policy, bilingual education, teachers, minority students.*

There are different models/programs in the field of bilingual education. Programs are divided into weak and strong, depending on whether the linguistic and educational goals are language preservation and bilingualism or language loss and monolingualism (Baker 2006). The aim of implementing strong bilingual models of education is to master the majority language and bilingualism while preserving the mother tongue. Whereas, the goal of weak bilingual programs is linguistic assimilation and monolingualism. Submersion is a weak bilingual education program because a reducing context and monolingualism characterize it according to the principle of classifying bilingual education (Baker, 2006). Submersion is a form of education in which minority students attend schools where the majority language is used as the language of instruction and the minority language student studies with the majority students (Baker, 2006). The goal of submersion is to force immigrant or linguistic minority students to learn the majority language as quickly as possible (Baker, 2006). This goal is also

related to the political goal since linguistic assimilation is more beneficial to the state with inhabitants with different linguistic backgrounds. For example, linguistic diversity was often perceived as a threat to the unity of a country in the United States. In this sense, one language is associated with a single system of values, attitudes, or goals (Baker, 2006). In addition, one of the most critical determinants of submersion education can be considered the motivation of parents to force their children to quickly learn the language of the majority. This motivation originates from the belief of immigrant parents that quality education can only be obtained in the language of the majority and is therefore associated with career advancement and social integration (Tago & Ots, 2010).

It should be noted that the submersion education program does not provide any type of special educational support for language minority students in the teaching process, as it does for students with special educational needs, and the implementation of this program is accompanied by various challenges (Baker, 2006). In this sense, one of the most important issues in implementing a submersion program is parental involvement. Parental support is crucial to a student's academic achievement and plays a significant positive role, as evidenced by numerous studies (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003). Parental involvement is particularly important in supporting minority students' academic achievement when they are educated with a majority of students in a language that is different from their native language (Tago & Ots, 2010). Overall, increasing parental involvement in educational immersion is mainly problematic due to their unfamiliarity with the majority language or low level of language proficiency (Baker, 2006).

The issue of bilingual education in accordance with the ethnic and linguistic diversity of the population in Georgia is currently very relevant. The present article aims to study the dynamics, needs, and challenges characteristic of Georgia's submersion bilingual education program. To understand the issue, it is important to review the measures taken by the state of Georgia in terms of promoting the social integration of ethnic minorities.

It should be noted that Georgia is characterized by ethnic, religious, and linguistic diversity (Tolerance Centre of Ombudsman's Office of Georgia, 2008). According to the 2014 census of Georgia, about 12% of the population are minority ethnic groups, the most numerous being the Armenian- and Azerbaijani-speaking population (Census, 2014). The State of Georgia considers access to education as one of the crucial mechanisms for the protection of the rights of ethnic minorities and their integration into society, preserving the existing cultural and linguistic diversity and, at the same time, supporting the learning of the state language (National

Concept of Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2009; Law on General Education, 2005). In accordance with the existing ethnic and linguistic diversity in Georgia, one of the main directions of the national concept of state tolerance and civic integration is to promote the integration of ethnic minorities through education (National Concept of Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2009). This includes preschool, school, and higher education levels to learn the state language and preserve the mother tongue and culture (National Concept on Tolerance and Civic Integration, 2009). Various events have been held in Georgia since 2004 to support the teaching of the state language to ethnic minorities (Mekhuzla & Roche, 2009). Moreover, the legal framework for bilingual education has been amended, and various bilingual/multilingual education programs have been introduced in pilot schools (Mekhuzla and Roche, 2009). Despite the amendments, however, the problem of knowing the state language in Georgia remains acute among ethnic minority youth as well as among the generation of parents. Most parents of non-Georgian speaking students do not speak the state language well enough to provide academic support to the child in the learning process. The information provided by the Department of Statistics of Georgia on the language proficiency of Georgian citizens allows us to express this assumption, which indicates that 91.7% of the 3,713,804 citizens of Georgia speak Georgian fluently, while the remaining 8.3% do not speak Georgian at all, or do not indicate it at all. The majority (about 95%) of the population who speak Georgian fluently indicate Georgian as their mother tongue (Census 2014). In light of the evidence, it is likely that parents of ethnic minority students are less able to participate and help their children in the learning process.

### **Cultural diversity and intercultural sensitivity in submersion education**

In addition to parental involvement in the teaching process in a diverse classroom environment, including in the implementation of submersion education, one of the most important factors is the readiness of teachers in terms of identifying and developing subject and methodological knowledge as well as intercultural sensitivity (Valdes, 2004). Education researcher Guadalupe Valdes, who studies the process of teaching a second language in schools points out that teachers' intercultural competencies and expectations largely affect students' expectations in terms of their own abilities, which often determines the effectiveness of their learning (Valdes, 2004).

Also, education researcher Scutnab- Kanjas emphasizes the importance of intercultural competencies in the implementation of submersion education, noting that models of reductive

bilingual education, as submersion model, use minority culture as a handicap adjusted by assimilation (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1989). Skutnabb-Kangas points out that it is important for a student's "native language, culture and social background" to be perceived by the school as a positive starting point (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1989). Skutnabb-Kangas also emphasizes that it may cost the country a great deal of money to integrate minorities; although the costs incurred are fully covered by the benefits and wealth that society derives from cultural diversity (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995).

In accordance with the national goals of education in Georgia, it is important for the school to develop the skills and competencies defined by the national curriculum.

According to the national curriculum, "During the teaching of subjects, school projects, sports, arts and club activities (involving students, teachers, parents) the school should promote: a) establishing respect, tolerance, and equality between students, parents, and teachers regardless their social, ethnic, religious, linguistic and worldview affiliation" (National Curriculum, Article 18). According to this document, the teacher should support the process of integration of students in the school space (National Curriculum, Article 18). And for teaching in a diverse environment, the teacher himself needs to have a high intercultural sensitivity, which is mandatory for all categories of teachers according to the teacher professional standard (Teacher Professional Standard, 2008).

The survey was conducted in Georgia in 2014 to assess teachers' intercultural sensitivity, skills, and readiness to work in a diverse classroom environment. The survey showed that teachers viewed various issues in the classroom primarily from their own cultural perspective and showed low levels of respect for different cultures (Tabatadze, 2015a).

To measure intercultural sensitivity in schools and to understand its characteristics, we can consider 'Bennett's model for developing intercultural sensitivity. Bennett classifies six levels in the development of intercultural sensitivity, divided into two main phases: I. Ethnocentric phase, which includes 1. Denial 2. Defense 3. Minimization II. Ethnorelative phase, which includes 4. Acceptance 5. Adaptation 6. Integration (Bennett & Bennett, 2001). A person in the first phase of the Bennett model is characterized by low intercultural sensitivity, while a person in the ethnorelative phase is characterized by a high receptivity ability. According to the analysis of this model, the higher level a person belongs to, the more intensive is his intercultural sensitivity, which is especially important for coexistence and cooperation in a diverse environment (Bennett & Bennett, 2001) In Georgia, in 2014, the Center for Civic Integration and Interethnic Relations conducted another research in this field, which studied the

intercultural aspects of teacher education programs in higher education institutions. In the framework of the study, a survey was conducted with both undergraduate and graduate students and compared their results. Overall, the study found that undergraduate education program students have higher levels of intercultural sensitivity than undergraduate students in the same program. However, the highest step observed according to the research results is the acceptance of differences, the fourth step of the Bennett model (Gorgadze & Tabatadze, 2014; Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2018). As the reviewed studies show, teachers' intercultural readiness is essential for teaching in a diverse classroom environment. In this article, too, one of the important focuses will be to study the willingness of teachers to teach an audience of students represented in ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity in submersion classrooms.

Development of bilingual education in Georgia Earlier in this article, I discussed the needs and context of bilingual education in Georgia; however, to understand the issue, it is crucial to consider the stages of development of bilingual education in Georgia, which will be briefly presented in this subsection.

Currently, there are 208 non-Georgian public schools out of 2,085 public schools in Georgia according to the information provided by MoeS. Georgian citizens allowed to receive full general education in their native language. The state funds the education in minority languages. Armenian and Azerbaijani minority groups receive general education in their native language.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, the state language issue has become a very urgent problem in Georgia. At the same time, several important ethnic issues became the subject of discussion. Russian was the language of communication for all ethnic groups living in Georgia during the Soviet period (Tabatadze, 2010). Consequently, knowledge of Georgian language was not a priority for the representatives of national minorities. School education was conducted in the mother tongue of ethnic minorities, and in higher education institutions, the language of instruction was Georgian, although there were Russian-speaking sectors, therefore, lack of knowledge of Georgian was not an obstacle to career growth for ethnic minorities. For this reason, ethnic minorities spoke Georgian only at a low level or could not speak it at all (Mekhuzla & Roche, 2009). After gaining independence, Georgia adopted a liberal approach to ethnic groups and granted Georgian citizenship to all. Following this decision, promoting the integration of ethnic minorities has become an essential task for the state of Georgia (Tabatadze, 2010).

The education system and the existence of appropriate approaches play an important role



in the integrational process of national minorities into the Georgian-speaking community. The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia (MoES) considers learning the state language as a necessary and important factor for integrating national minorities while maintaining their own linguistic and cultural identity (CIPDD, 2009). MoES names multilingual education as the primary tool to achieve this goal, which includes the introduction of approaches and models of education that will enhance the motivation and learning of the state language, as well as support the preservation and protection of national minority languages and cultures (CIPDD, 2009).

The basis for implementing bilingual/multilingual education is the Law of Georgia on General Education. According to Article 4 (3) of the Law on General Education of Georgia, "the language of instruction in general education institutions is Georgian, and in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia - Georgian and Abkhazian", but according to the third paragraph of the same article, "Georgian citizens for whom the Georgian language is not a native language have the right to receive a full general education in their native language, in accordance with the National Curriculum, in accordance with the rules established by law." This law protects the rights of national minorities to receive general education in their mother tongue and thus helps to preserve their language and culture. However, at the same time, the state status of the Georgian language has been strengthened. For example, according to Article 98 of the Law on Public Service, insufficient knowledge of the state language may be the reason for the dismissal of a civil servant. In addition, in any public institution, proceedings and court processes in Georgia are conducted in the state language (Law on Public Service, 2015). In addition, Georgian as a state language is taught as a subject in public schools, as an important intervention for the integration and professional success of national minorities in society (CIPDD, 2009).

In 2005, the European Framework Convention was ratified by the Parliament of Georgia. This Framework Convention guarantees the protection of national minorities and their full integration by providing the right to education in minority languages and education systems (CIPDD, 2009).

In 2008, with the financial support of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, a policy document entitled "Integration of National Minorities through Multilingual Education" was developed. A strategy for implementing this document was planned for 2009-2014. Based on this action plan, in 2009 the Government of Georgia developed the "National Concept of Tolerance and Civic Integration". The document focused on the following areas for improving the education of national minorities: preschool education, general education, higher

education, raising the level of knowledge of the state language among minorities, and ensuring access to vocational education (Mekhuzla & Roche, 2009).

In August 2010, the MoES approved the Regulation of the Multilingual Education Programs. This regulation is an essential base for access to quality education for minorities and for implementing bilingual education. The document allowed non-Georgian language schools in Georgia to develop local needs-oriented multilingual education programs and submit them for approval. Schools started developing programs with the support of various NGOs and developed several types of multilingual education programs. The school's multilingual education program included using two or more languages for classroom instruction and the acquisition of relevant topics in two languages (Armenian / Azerbaijani and Georgian) (Grigule, 2010).

The implementation of the above-mentioned legislative changes and important initiatives and the combination of measures taken by various international and local non-governmental organizations have enabled the MoES to implement bilingual education programs in non-Georgian schools since 2010. The MoES allowed schools to choose / or design the appropriate educational program for them, as well as presented several bilingual programs, which could be selected and implemented by non-Georgian language schools within the program. These programs are Native Language Support Multilingual Education Program, Transitive Multilingual Education Program, Developing Multilingual Education Program, State Language Support Multilingual Education Program, Dual Language Immersion Multilingual Education Program, Mixed Multilingual Education Program (Tabatadze, 2015b). The selection and implementation of these programs was more or less efficient, which was reflected in further research (Tabatadze 2015b). Currently, non-Georgian language schools have a Georgian language support program, which involves teaching Georgian as a second language with five weekly lesson hours (Minister of Education and Science of Georgia, 2021).

In 2011, the MoES launched more effective measurements to implement bilingual education, which was reflected in implementing the program "Georgian Language for Future Success" ([www.mes.gov.ge](http://www.mes.gov.ge)). The program aimed to promote the process of learning Georgian language.

Moreover, in 2012, amendments to the General Education Law of Georgia defined and established the professional standard for multilingual primary school teachers (Article 21/3), which created the basis for establishing a multilingual teacher preparatory bachelor program. This program was implemented for the first time in 2015 at the Faculty of Psychology and

Education of Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University. The goal of the Multilingual Education Teacher Preparatory Program is to train highly qualified staff for the elementary school level following the Multilingual Teacher Professional Standard (Multilingual Education Program, 2015).

One of the most successful initiatives of the above-mentioned legislative initiatives, changes, and practical measures related to multilingual education was also the affirmative action policy/quota system introduced in 2010, which determines the quota for non-Georgian students enrolled in the universities. This means passing only one exam on the Unified National Examination, the General Skills Exam. This exam is conducted in the native language (Azerbaijani or Armenian) of students. Students enrolled in universities within the framework of the affirmative action policy study the Georgian language intensively for one year. After the completion of the One Year Georgian Language Program, students are given the opportunity to continue their studies in the desired bachelor's program according to their choice. Affirmative action policy research confirms that the number of enrolled students in the Georgian Language One Year Program has been increasing from 2010 to the year (Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia, 2020).

Implementing the affirmative action policy for non-Georgian-speaking population and the opportunity to continue their education in Georgian HEIs has aroused more interest in learning the state language. This interest was reflected in the significant number of students wishing to continue their studies in Georgian HEIs (2010 - 247 ethnic minority students, 2019 - 1329 students) (Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia, 2020). In addition, according to the statistics of 2017-2019, the dynamics of the transition of students from non-Georgian schools to Georgian schools is clearly observed (Gorgadze, 2019). More specifically, according to the Education Management Information Center in 2017- 2019, 791 students transferred from non- Georgian language schools and sectors (Gorgadze, 2019). Most students transferred from Russian schools and sectors (417 students in total). The reason for this is the country's current political attitudes, and the MoES initiative, which is related to the change in the procedure for dividing the state grants for higher education (Gorgadze, 2019). According to this change, from 2017, the elective subjects for the Unified National Examinations will no longer be conducted in Russian, which puts Russian school/sector graduates at a disadvantage situation (Gorgadze, 2019). The rate of transfer of students from Armenian schools and sectors to Georgian schools is very low. However, the transfer rate of students from Azerbaijani schools to Georgian schools is also high in the lower grades. It decreases at the upper level of education due to the high

motivation to receive education in Georgian, which is considered an important prospect for integration into Georgian society (Gorgadze, 2019). As can be seen from the reviewed studies and the overview of the historical context of bilingual education, observing the dynamics of the implementation of submersion education and studying its effectiveness is an important issue for the field of education. Therefore, I decided to look deeper into this issue and plan relevant research. While working on the article, I requested information from the MoES and Educational Resource Centers about schools, the language of instruction, and distribution of students in Georgia and data provided by the National Department of Statistics.

### **Research Methodology**

For research planning and relevant sampling of target schools, it is important to review the context of state language proficiency by Georgian ethnic minorities and their interests to learn the state language.

According to the 2014 census, 91.7% of Georgia's population is fluent in Georgian, for the majority of them (95.4%) Georgian is also their native language, only 1.3% who are fluent in Georgian are native Azerbaijanis (6, 7% of the population is ethnically Azeri) and 1.7% are Armenian speakers (out of 4.5% of the total population). The remaining percentage according to language proficiency is distributed among the representatives of Abkhazian, Russian, Ossetian, and other languages). There are several ethnic minority villages and regional centers in Kvemo Kartli, Samtskhe-Javakheti, and partially in the regions of Kakheti, which are densely populated by ethnic minorities. In line with ethnic settlement, non-Georgian- language schools and sectors can be found in these regions alongside Georgian-language schools. Most non-Georgian-speaking students have the opportunity to receive a full general education conducted in their native language in a school located nearby. However, according to the information provided by the MoES and resource centers, the number of students in Georgian schools and sectors for whom Georgian is not a native language is highest in Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions. Because of this fact, we have selected the two regions mentioned above as the target areas of our research, as it is important to identify the motivating factors, why ethnic minorities choose Georgian-language school or Georgian sector, while they have access in nearby schools to full general education in the native language. As part of the research for this article, we also examined information provided by the Educational Resource Centers and the Ministry of Education on the distribution of students in schools in the Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions by native language. It should also be noted that we do not take responsibility for the validity of

the data collection methodology on students' linguistic affiliation and rely entirely on the information provided by the educational resource centers. According to the general data of the students of Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti schools, the picture of non-Georgian students enrolled in the Georgian sector or in the Georgian schools is shown in the table below.

| <b>Number of Regions</b> | <b>Number of Municipalities</b> | <b>Number of Georgian language schools/sectors where non-Georgian language students also study</b> | <b>Percentage of non-Georgian speaking students / 2016-2017 academic year</b> | <b>Percentage of non-Georgian speaking students /2020-2021 academic year</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|--|
| 2                        | 12                              | 119  | 38,48%  | 41,17%   |

*Table 1. Reflects the distribution of Georgian and non-Georgian students in Georgian schools and Georgian sectors in the Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions. Source: Educational Resource Centers*

It should be noted that from 2016-2017 academic year, the number of non-Georgian students in Georgian sectors / schools did not increase much compared to the data of the 2020-2021 academic year, the data increased by only 2.69%, but for both regions, the general number of non-Georgian students wishing to study Georgian in Georgian schools is relatively high (41,17%). It should be noted that from the 2016-2017 academic year, the number of non-Georgian students in Georgian sectors/schools did not increase much compared to the data of the 2020-2021 academic year, the data increased by only 2.69%, but for both regions, the general number of non-Georgian students wishing to study Georgian in Georgian schools is relatively high (41,17%). Furthermore, the analysis of statistical data of each school from the target regions identified specific schools in which the number of non-Georgian-speaking students wishing to receive education in the Georgian language is increasing year by year. For example, we can name the case of Kvemo Kartli region, Marneuli municipality. In particular, Marneuli municipality has the highest percentage of non-Georgian-speaking students in Georgian schools and sectors. The number of non-Georgian language students in Georgian schools was 66% in 2016, and by 2021 this number increased to 68%. The table below shows a picture of the distribution of non-Georgian and Georgian-speaking students in Georgian-language schools and sectors in the Marneuli region.

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Georgian language schools / Georgian sector, where non-Georgian language students also study</b> | <b>Total number of students</b> | <b>Non-Georgian speaking students Percentage</b> | <b>Georgian speaking students Percentage</b> |
|-------------|---|---------------------------------|--|--|
| 2016        | 7   | 3119                            | 66%  | 34 %   |
| 2020        | 7   | 3693                            | 68%  | 32 %   |

*Table N2. Shows the number of students in Georgian-language schools/sectors in Marneuli Municipality in 2016-2020 by differentiating students' native language. Source: Marneuli Educational Resource Center*

The example of Marneuli municipality is similar to the situation in all municipalities of Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti regions. However, the exception is two Georgian schools in the Kakheti region (Badiauri and Gombori schools) that have both Georgian and non-Georgian students. The tendency to admit non-Georgian students has decreased from 2016 to 2021 in these two schools. This decrease differs from the growing tendencies in the target regions (In 2016, the total number of non-Georgian language students in both schools was 62.2%, and by 2020 the total number in both schools has decreased to a total of 55%). It would be interesting to study such different tendencies and drastic changes from the region on the example of specific schools, especially when there is an increased number of students entering Georgian schools in Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli regions.

Due to the increased demand for enrollment of non-Georgian language students in Georgian schools in the target regions, questions arise about the quality of education in non-Georgian language schools. As I mentioned above, in non-Georgian schools, students learn Georgian as a subject "Georgian as a second language", which is devoted to 5 contact hours per week in addition to receiving education in their mother tongue (hourly schedule, Ministry of Education 2018-2019), however many students and parents still choose the Georgian school or sector, which makes it very important to study the effectiveness of submersion education in the target regions. Accordingly, a qualitative study was planned and conducted to research the issue in depth.

For the study, I selected two schools in Marneuli Municipality (Saimerlo Public School and Marneuli 2end Public School) and two in Gardabani Municipality (Gardabani First Kesalo Public School). The sampling is based on data from the National Department of Statistics, and these municipalities are characterized by densely populated ethnic non-Georgians. In particular,

one Georgian-language school was selected from two schools in Marneuli, where the number of non-Georgian students exceeded a quarter (25%) of the number of students, and the second target school was a school with a Georgian sector mostly with non-Georgian students only. According to the same principle, one Georgian-language school was selected from two schools in Gardabani district, where the number of non-Georgian-speaking students exceeded a quarter (25%), and the second target school was a school with a Georgian language sector, with non-Georgian-speaking students only. A qualitative research method was chosen for the research, as the aim was to explore the issue deeper and find ways to solve the problem. Accordingly, focus groups were held with school teachers, a total of 4 focus groups, the number of participants in each focus group was seven teachers. Focus groups were conducted with teachers of elementary and basic grades (grades 1-9). Participants were selected on a random sampling basis. Gender balance was not maintained at the time of sampling, with mostly female teachers participating in focus groups. The research tool was a pre-designed protocol for the focus group.

In the framework of the research, I analyzed the effectiveness of the submersion education program in Georgia and the challenges in the teaching process, the motivation of students to learn the Georgian language, and the involvement of parents in the learning process. The research hypothesis was as follows: The effectiveness of the ongoing submersion program in Georgian language schools in ethnic minority areas (Kvemo Kartli and Kakheti region) is low. The research aims to study the efficiency, challenges, and learning needs of Georgian and non-Georgian students in submersion classrooms. According to the purpose of the research, I will answer the following research questions within the article: 1) What are the challenges and how can Georgian language schools and sectors manage school language diversity? 2) What are the different approaches and challenges in Georgian language sectors in schools where the majority of students are non-Georgian or completely non-Georgian?

### **Analysis of qualitative research results and findings**

The following tendencies were identified through the teacher focus group, which I will review more detailed below:

1. Teachers use less modern teaching approaches in the teaching process, develop a labeling attitude towards non-Georgian language students, they 'don't possess management skills of diverse classroom and show low intercultural competencies;
2. The degree of social integration of non-Georgian language students in Georgian schools is relatively low, which is different in the case of students in Georgian sectors;

In Georgian schools, the motivation of non-Georgian-speaking students to learn the state language for further study is low. Unlike the Georgian sectors, Georgian schools are currently unprepared for the growing number of non-Georgian speaking students wishing to study in Georgian.

**1) Teachers use less modern teaching approaches in the teaching process, develop a labeling attitude towards non-Georgian language students, they 'don't possess management skills of diverse classroom and show low intercultural competencies** - The study showed that the teachers of the target school rarely and non-intensively apply modern teaching methods adapted to the diverse classroom environment in the teaching process. In the teaching process, teachers mainly use the following methods, approaches, or strategies: lecture method, working in pairs (pairing a Georgian-speaking student with a non-Georgian-speaking one), visualizing (mostly drawing on the board a subject that a non-Georgian-speaking student cannot understand). It is important to appreciate the fact that most of the teachers from the surveyed schools are trying to mobilize additional resources for non-Georgian-speaking students to make it easier for them to overcome the language barrier while mastering the subject. In particular, teachers often draw on the board, make visual cards and try to use them to explain new words to children. Most of the teachers produce a dictionary for non-Georgian students, where Georgian lexical items (mostly everyday words) are translated into the language of ethnic minorities. Teachers noted that they let help students who understand both languages relatively well in the process of translation. Students who understand the Georgian language relatively well are also actively involved in working in pairs and try to translate the instructions for non-Georgian students who have difficulty understanding Georgian. It should be noted that the explanation of subject terminology and its translation remains a rather difficult and unresolved problem for the teaching process, because the meaning of terminology in even "supporter/translator" students do not know in both languages. It is also important to emphasize the fact that teachers also fail to verify the authenticity of the vocabulary translated with the help of students.

It should be noted that a few teachers pointed out the practice of using films as an additional resource in the learning process, but, as it was revealed during the focus group interview, teachers only recommend that students watch films or cartoons that they chose and provide; although the practice of watching and reviewing films together rarely takes place. Teachers point out that they have to do complicated and time-consuming curriculum activities, as well as logistical problems, so they cannot implement the practice of discussing movies/videos



together. Teachers point out the lack of technical support as well as a lack of visual material, such as posters, cards, three-dimensional models, and others, as the most important impediments to the teaching process. Due to the fact that the perception of students at the lower stage of education is specific, it is very important to explain the concepts along with the introduction of significant (Gamkrelidze, 2008).

Consequently, equipping classrooms with such visual resources is an important obstacle, especially in submersion classrooms, when teachers need more visibility in the process of subject and language teaching. In addition to textbooks, the main resource available in small numbers in schools is simple, thematic posters, most of which are created by the teachers themselves.

Research has shown that in addition to posters, teachers themselves create midterm quizzes, assessment rubrics, and various questionnaires for students. The practice of creating such materials is also an important positive approach on the part of teachers.

According to the focus group participants, they have been trained in modern teaching approaches, but in some cases, the technique/approach described by the teacher may not be used purposefully and effectively. For example, as mentioned above, teachers use the method of working in pairs at the lesson; however, the method described by most of them, does not differ much from the method of the independent working process of the student, because teacher involvement in this process is minimal, they did not monitor and manage the work of paired Georgian and non-Georgian students. The teacher is not able to effectively manage the class in this process and it remains unclear to him/her how equally students involve in the process of working in pairs. Furthermore, some teachers say that they use this method only to somehow involve non-Georgian students in learning activities.

The interviewed teachers agree on the benefits of using group work techniques in a diverse classroom, although they indicate that they do not apply it often, as group work causes noise in the classroom, and also fails to involve Georgian and non-Georgian students equally. This attitude of teachers once again indicates the inefficiency of diverse classroom management. The focus groups also showed that teachers find it difficult to maintain balance and work on the principle of differentiated teaching so that, on the one hand, the lesson does not become too simple and boring for Georgian students, and, on the other hand, they need to devote much more time for non-Georgian students to explain topics.

Questions related to diverse classroom management during the focus group revealed teachers' preconceived notions about low expectations from non-Georgian students (labeling). It should be noted that this attitude is common to most Georgian school teachers, although

similar attitudes are almost never shown with Georgian sector teachers. Presumably, this is due to the linguistically homogeneous composition of students in the Georgian sector (most of them are non-Georgian). In line with low expectations, some teachers from Georgian schools are in favor of dividing the class into "strong" and "weak" groups in all subjects according to 'students' academic achievements and think that this approach will lead to more success with successful students and they will no longer be "oppressed" and with "weak students" they will be able to teach them with simplified learning materials, adapted to their needs.

The teachers noted that from the new academic year (2021-2022) they are involved in the implementation process of the "new school" model and suggest that learning with this model will be difficult to overcome for non-Georgian students. During the research, it was clearly revealed that the main reason for not using diverse, modern teaching approaches in the teaching process in Georgian schools, is the attitudes of teachers toward the non-Georgian students emphasizing their different levels of Georgian language proficiency.

"If they do not know Georgian, it is a problem that needs to be solved. We cannot solve this. That's why we cannot accomplish many educational activities", says one of the teachers.

As mentioned above, research has shown that teachers are unfamiliar with the principles of diverse classroom management and therefore they do not perceive diversity in the classroom as a resource; Moreover, class diversity (cultural, linguistic, or religious) is often overlooked. This tendency was observed in the attitudes of almost all teachers in the target schools.

"No one discriminates them. We do not talk about their differences at all, we do not point it out whether you are Georgian, Azerbaijani, Muslim or Christian "-says a teacher. Teachers often misunderstand cultural and ethnic differences and the importance of managing classroom diversity and try their best to avoid talking about the issues related to ethnic, religious, and cultural differences or discussing historical facts and situations related to the historical homeland of Georgia's ethnic minorities.

"I find it very difficult to explain history. What can I do with the facts? sometimes I simply skip these historical facts, sometimes I don't go deeper, so that somehow not to offend non-Georgian students" (history teacher).

It is truly noteworthy that the teachers of all four target schools during the focus groups explained that they had no training or workshop on teaching in a diverse classroom environment and on intercultural education approaches. Only the teachers of the school subject "Civic Education" were named to have attended such target training organized by the Ministry of Education or the Teachers' House.

**2) The degree of social integration of non-Georgian language students in Georgian schools is relatively low, which is different in the case of students in Georgian sectors -**

A focus group conducted with teachers showed that the degree of social integration of non-Georgian students in Georgian schools is quite low, especially at lower stages of education. Teachers point out that the growing number of non-Georgian-speaking students in primary classes has led to their group gatherings during breaks communicating in their mother tongue and showing a low interest in interacting with Georgian students. This fact further hinders their linguistic/academic advancement and social integration at the elementary level. It should be noted that no additional measures are taken by the school/teachers for their social integration. However, as the teachers point out, the issue of their integration with Georgian-speaking students at the upper grades (basic level) is more or less improving, as non-Georgian students already have some communicative skills in Georgian and no longer find it difficult to speak to Georgian classmates. It should be noted that this process itself takes place without special intervention from the school representatives, which is generally typical for a submersion education program. Also, the research showed that only a small part of Georgian-speaking students try to get acquainted with the language and culture of their non-Georgian-speaking classmates. Teachers noted that only a few number Georgian students have learned the minority language at the communication level.

Moreover, interviews with teachers revealed that teaching materials, additional resources, or learning activities do not reflect ethnic and cultural differences in the classroom and are not aimed at increasing the social integration of all students in the classroom. Teachers do not see the need and do not encourage students to present their own religious and cultural customs. It should be noted that in the target schools, along with Georgian students learn ethnic Azerbaijani mostly. Teachers point to the sharing information of the Azerbaijani national holiday, Nowruz Bayram. Most of the teachers emphasize that they congratulate the Azerbaijani students Nowruz Bayram, just as the Georgian students congratulate them on this holiday. However, the teacher of the subjects "civic education" and "art" point out that students are given the opportunity to prepare a presentation on Azerbaijani culture and their religion and according to the teachers this approach encouraged non-Georgian speaking students to introduce their culture and their identity enthusiastically. This approach showed that Georgian-speaking students were also involved in the lesson with great interest, asking questions about the culture and traditions of non-Georgian-speaking classmates, and the lesson was really interactive. However, despite this positive approach and its effectiveness, similar types of approaches are

rare in Georgian target schools.

The exchange of information on cultures for 'students' social integration is a more proven experience for the Georgian sector, unlike the Georgian submersion schools. They more often focus on sharing information about the culture and religious traditions of non-Georgian students, but the teachers themselves note that this is due to the more or less linguistically and ethnically homogeneous composition of the students in the Georgian sector.

Overall, research has shown that each school allows ethnically non-Georgian students to engage in school activities and events, but the participation in extracurricular, educational activities demonstrates mostly sharing of the dominant culture. Teachers point out that they do not restrict to introduce the culture of minorities, however, they rarely name specific examples or cases when organizing and encouraging cultural diversity activities.

**3) Different levels of language proficiency in the Georgian schools hinder both Georgian and Georgian language students from achieving academic success** - All the teachers participating in the research note that the low or zero level of language proficiency in Georgian minority students is the biggest obstacle in the teaching process for both ethnically non-Georgian students and Georgian students. In the course of the study, teachers identified their special challenge while teaching: teaching the students transferred from non-Georgian schools in Georgian schools and/or sectors at the upper level of school. The students enter the Georgian school only at the basic level of the Georgian language. Teachers point out that it is not good that the school does not have the right to refuse to admit students who do not have a good level of Georgian language proficiency at the upper level of the school.

During the focus group interviews, the teachers noted that the students enter the Georgian school from the very first grade learn the language much easier and, consequently, they understand and learn the subjects too. However, according to the teachers, such students are only a few. Research has shown that in Georgian submersion schools students are admitted to both primary and upper grades without prior assessment of instructional language competence.

The teachers noted that non-Georgian students find it very difficult the comprehension of the reading or to complete the tasks in accordance with the given condition, and they try to simplify the content of the lesson as much as possible so that the non-Georgian student understands the issue. It should be noted that such a simplification process becomes quite boring for Georgian-speaking students and often leads to a decrease in their involvement and interest during the lesson. The fact once again indicates that teachers are not able to balance the

activities of the lesson process in such a way that it is interesting and useful for both Georgian and non-Georgian students, therefore, they are not ready for differentiated teaching. This issue is especially sharply expressed in Georgian schools, in contrast to the Georgian sectors.

**4) In Georgian schools, the motivation of non-Georgian-speaking students to learn the state language for further study is low** - The interviews revealed a tendency in Georgian schools that non-Georgian-speaking students are not highly motivated to continue their education in higher educational institutions or vocational schools. Teachers indicate that each student is more or less motivated to learn Georgian, although their motivation does not go beyond their daily communicational needs. Students mostly drop out of school after completing a basic level course. According to information provided by teachers, only a few of them try to get vocational education. The main motivation of non-Georgian language students to learn in a Georgian school is based on the desire to learn the state language at a communicative level. They need language skills to communicate with the Georgian-speaking community and to establish business-type relationships. It is noteworthy that teachers see the motivation of students to learn in Georgian schools from their own, experience-based perspective, but further research can be based to assess the motivation and effectiveness of learning in Georgian schools from the perspective of students.

When asked why the non-Georgian population chooses to learn in a Georgian school only for the purpose of learning language at the communication level when they can receive education in their native language at a nearby school and at the same time learn Georgian, teachers name two main reasons: 1) The quality of teaching the Georgian language in non-Georgian language schools is low and the student cannot speak Georgian well after graduation. 2) Parents choose a Georgian school to create a "Georgian environment", just learning the language at the lesson is not enough for them, they want the children to be completely in a Georgian-speaking environment, to have more closed relationships with Georgian children.

The assumptions made by teachers regarding the choice of Georgian-language school or sector by students and parents indicate the motivation of them to integrate more into Georgian society, although as discussed above, the degree of social integration of non-Georgian-speaking students in school is still low.

The study participants emphasized that the low level of motivation to learn is due to the low level of parental involvement in the educational process and their low expectations, which also do not exceed the requirements for learning the state language. However, the situation is

different in the Georgian sectors. For example, the teachers of the second public school in Marneuli noted the high motivation of students to continue their education in Georgian HEIs (The exact statistics of students enrolled in HEIs from this school are not available at this stage). However, as part of my research, I found that these students still enjoy the benefits of the affirmative action policy of Georgia. This policy envisages that ethnic minority students should pass only one entrance exam ("The General Skills Exam") in their native language and then they should be additionally studied in the one-year Georgian language Preparatory program at the university. The situation is about the same in the Georgian sector of the Kesalo public school in Gardabani, where teaching is only at the basic level, while in the 10th-grade students return to the Azerbaijani sectors or move to one of the Georgian schools in the central Gardabani district. Teachers at Kesalo School also note that most of their students choose the offer of affirmative action policy to get a higher education, as they do not have enough language and subject knowledge to pass university entrance exams on a competitive basis with Georgian-speaking students. This fact points out that ethnic minorities in the Georgian school or Georgian sectors cannot learn the state language well enough to pass the exams in the subjects required for the Unified National Examinations. This indicates that the human and financial resources provided by the state-funded public school have not been utilized effectively, and the application of affirmative action policy further increases the financial costs to the state for financing the Georgian Language Preparatory programs at several universities.

**5) Parental involvement of non-Georgian speaking students in the learning process and their expectations of their children are low** - Most of the teachers participating in the study agree on the common and one of the most important challenges for students related to submersion education and related to the low degree of parental involvement in the learning process. Research has shown that attitudes of the parents and the minimum level of their involvement in the learning process have a direct impact on the motivation of students to learn. Lack of knowledge of state language is mentioned as the reason for the low degree of parental involvement. Teachers of Georgian-language schools compare the involvement of Georgian-speaking and non-Georgian-speaking parents in the learning process. Teachers directly link the higher degree of involvement of ethnic Georgian parents to the success of their children. They also point out that those rare exceptions, a non-Georgian successful student are always supported by the parent. Non-Georgian-speaking parents use a variety of support mechanisms to help their child in the learning process and have high expectations, but the number of those

parents and students is very low. The children of such parents are distinguished by higher academic success than other non-Georgian speaking children whose parents are almost not involved in the learning process. While discussing the issue of parental involvement, also another problematic issue was identified, which is characteristic of submersion education, and we talked about it above in the context of lesson inefficiency for Georgian students. According to the teachers, the annual increase in the number of non-Georgian- speaking students in the classroom forces the Georgian parents to take the child to another, more distant Georgian schools, where most of the students are Georgian, or to apply for additional educational support, such as lessons with subject tutors. This supportive mechanism of education is an even greater financial expense for the parents. According to the study, no special efforts and support were made by teachers and school administrations to increase the degree of parental involvement of students. Teachers point out that they find it difficult to communicate with parents because of both the language factor as well as the interests of the parents and their low expectations of the children.

**6) The Georgian schools are currently unprepared for the growing number of non-Georgian speaking students wishing to study in Georgian** - During the interviews, teachers of Georgian-language schools confirmed that the tendency to admit non-Georgian-speaking students to submersion classrooms has increased significantly. As the school teachers point out, the school is unprepared for this in terms of lack of teaching experience in submersion classrooms, as well as material resources or other additional learning support. In addition, teachers point out that the total number of students admitted to the school is mostly filled by non- Georgian-speaking students, while Georgian- speaking students living near the school can no longer register at their school and have to travel long distances to other schools. At the same time, non-Georgian language students also go to the Georgian school from a distance, even if there is an Azerbaijani language school near their place of residence. Teachers point out that despite organizing many sessions of training in different areas, which are offered by the Teacher Professional Development Center and by the Ministry of Education, they cannot cope with the current problems of the submersion classroom. They have difficulty managing classroom diversity and fail to achieve the goal set for each lesson perfectly. According to the interviewed teachers, they need systemic support in case they have to work with non-Georgian and Georgian- speaking students in the same classroom environment on a daily basis. If supported appropriately, they include providing teaching resources, mobilizing

teaching assistants, and organizing appropriate training sessions for all teachers. This issue is not so problematic and is distinctive for students and teachers in the Georgian sectors as the language composition of their students is more or less homogeneous and they are at somewhat the same level.

## **Conclusion**

The findings of the study can be interesting for education researchers and decision-makers, although the results of the study cannot be generalized to the entire population due to sampling limits. The difficulties and challenges identified in the article should be taken into account to improve the quality of teaching in submersion schools. It is important that each posed problem should be explored in more depth and in a representative selection to plan strategies for solving these problems purposefully.

One of the problems identified is the lack of teacher preparation for teaching a diverse classroom, which is one of the significant barriers to implementing a submersion program. Low intercultural sensitivity of the teachers, manifested in the form of preconceived negative expectations of students and minimization of cultural differences, contradicts the national curriculum and teacher professional standard, requiring teachers to be supportive of the school integration process and highly intercultural. It is important to take effective measures in this direction.

According to the research and literature review, student parental involvement and low educational expectations for their children are also serious barriers to learning, directly affecting the quality of academic success of students. When it comes to Georgia, as in the case of submersion education in general, the low level of parental involvement in the educational process is due to their lack of knowledge of the state language, which is a significant factor. Thus, it is important to plan activities to improve parental knowledge in this area and to provide relevant information in a language they understand.

The findings of the study discussed in the article allow us to say that in the submersion schools can the non-Georgian students neither achieve academic success nor learn Georgian fluently. At the same time, the quality of education of their Georgian-speaking classmates also decreases significantly, due to the fact that the simplified curriculum for non-Georgian-speaking students leads to low interest and less involvement in the learning process. The mentioned reasons lead to mutual loss: 1) At the end of the study we get a non-Georgian graduate with low competence in the Georgian language and other subjects, who still need to



enjoy the benefits of the quota system/affirmative action policy announced by the state and cannot compete with the Georgian language graduates. These students at the same time lost the chance to significantly develop language competencies in their native language and to receive an appropriate education; 2) We shall also get the Georgian-speaking students with low academic achievement who need support with additional human and financial resources to receive a comprehensive general education.

The hypothesis developed herein, saying that quality of education in submersion classes in Georgian public schools is low was confirmed in light of the results presented in the article. This issue needs to be further explored in order to plan effective responses to the findings, changes, and trends, taking into account the needs and motivations of ethnic minorities who teach their children Georgian as the state language, as well as the needs of the Georgian-speaking population and ensuring a quality school education for all citizens.

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## **Pluricentricity, Multilingualism and Heterogeneity of the Learners' Groups**

### **ABSTRACT**

Multilingualism, superdiversity, and the abundance of language contacts place new demands on language teachers, who must consider each student's linguistic biography, family language policies, and cultural practices in order to keep up with their growth in a specific school vs. university subject. Many more languages are becoming pluricentric as they continue to be used in migrating populations. So, they decline or flourish in diaspora and introduce heritage language learners as people with special needs into regular classrooms. Using Russian as an example, the paper suggests methods for organizing language instruction of varied speakers and learners in a heterogeneous integrated university classroom.

***Keywords:** language learning in higher education, heterogeneous classroom, heritage language speaker, Russian as a pluricentric language, Russian language learners*

### **Superdiversity**

The massive character of multilingualism has led to a superdiversity and to unique constellations of languages that have never before been documented on such a scale (Arnaut et al. 2016, Creese & Blackledge, 2010, Duarte & Gogolin, 2013, Toivanen & Saarikivi, 2016). While most people still speak with a distinct regional flavor, the new mobility of speakers in recently industrialized and postindustrial cultures, as well as the efflorescence of communication technology, cannot be overlooked, including multilingual education issues (Auer & Schmidt, 2010; Liang, 2015; Liddicoat & Taylor-Leech, 2015). This has prompted a rethinking of the relationship between geographical place and cultural space, along with the essential connection between language and a spatially restricted region.

Until now, researchers have found that the factors affecting the knowledge of languages include socio-economic status of all family members in various generations (their education, knowledge of languages, occupations, quantity of the family members and generations living together), length of exposure to any language, age in which the exposure started, quantity and quality of exposure, identities (e.g., cultural, ethnic, religious views) and attitudes towards multilingualism and language use (e.g., Eisenclas & Schalley, 2020, Rokita-Jaśkow & Ellis, 2014). As Lee Isaac Chung, the director of the ground-breaking film “Minari” about the Korean immigration in the U.S.A. puts it in an interview for “Time”, he didn’t like Korean food growing up, and his sister threw away lunches that their mother made for her because other children laughed at her, but nowadays, the only food he eats is Korean, somehow tied to his identity: “I do feel as though this is the food that nourished my ancestors and made this body” (Chow, 2021). Another story is told by Viet Thanh Nguyen who was born in Vietnam, raised in America, and whose self-consciousness has been shaped by three wars: one against France, one civil war, and one against the United States. For him, asking the child if he has eaten rice today means far more in Vietnamese than in English, because there is a tradition behind them that tells about the true love that parents have for their children. Thanksgiving dinner is the only time they eat non-Vietnamese food purchased from a supermarket, and he still speaks Vietnamese, which, while imperfect, links him to the Vietnamese diaspora all around the world. These are examples of how language, attitudes, and culture are intertwined (Nguyen, 2018).

Russian-speaking individuals on the territory of the Russian Federation with only a slight knowledge of an Indigenous language (only a few tag words) sometimes still refer to the Indigenous language as their mother tongue because of their ethnic background or for economic reasons (e.g., in Russia, some Indigenous peoples, like the Nanai people, are given the right to catch certain kinds of fish normally forbidden to others). Thus, ethnicity, the home language, and the order of acquisition often contradict the reality. These are complex processes related to identity, socio-political, and economic factors, among others, and are not always directly related to one’s language proficiency.

Language attitudes and beliefs pervade people's everyday lives in what concerns their competency, intelligence, friendliness, trustworthiness, social position, group memberships, and other characteristics which depend on how they communicate (Garrett, 2010). Peterson outlines how ideas of what makes "excellent" vs. "poor" language have been established, demonstrating that these principles are founded on social considerations rather than linguistic ones that have some real-world ramifications of these perceptions (Peterson, 2020). It is usually presupposed that the first language is acquired easily, yet the prerequisites are many: multifaceted purposes and a high frequency of use, a large spectrum of speakers and functions, a habit to receive information about the world through and in the language (the primary socialization and verbally mediated cognitive development), shaping of behavior through this means of communication. Other languages may come through technically mediated resources as well. Thus, teachers cannot always be aware of their language ideologies, which underlie their language views and school practices and ignore their pupils' bilingualism (Gkaintartzi et al. 2015, Newman & Trenchs-Parera, 2015, Young, 2014).

Nevertheless, under the influence of environment, the immigrant languages change, and after two or three generations most languages are lost. This process starts with child's refuse to speak a non-dominant language or to study literacy in this language. The fast shift to the dominant language is enhanced by the state, school, and the family language policy. In general, large immigrant communities may support bilingualism or impede the integration into the majority. The language itself might not play an important role in the life of the immigrants, it is so to say a natural means of communication. Yet, the discussion around the language maintenance happens all the time. The role and prestige of the country where the language is spoken remain significant, this is a sort of competition between a sense of belonging and a feeling of detachment. Some diasporans demand faithfulness and allegiance to their previous homeland, while others want to assert double loyalty and fidelity, and a third group declares rejection of previous connections. Increasingly, countries have adopted measures to ease the transition to the dominant language (like in Estonia, Latvia, Turkmenistan for the local populations and many countries for the new immigrants),

whereas many countries (like Croatia, Finland, Lithuania, and Turkey) provide language support to emigrants and residents abroad. Countries can adopt measures to ease the transition to the national dominant language and at the same time, provide support for the heritage language. An example: Portugal as a host country favors the learning of Portuguese for the incoming migrants and simultaneously fosters the learning of Portuguese as a heritage language for the Portuguese abroad.

The efforts undertaken by countries with high socioeconomic statuses do not necessarily produce better integration results as the efforts by smaller countries with low socioeconomic statuses to influence the adherence to the ethnic and cultural heritage. Usually, individuals decide and/ or continuously negotiate their own ethnic, political, and linguistic identities, but this process requires time and can reverse. The power of the dominant language may be supported by its status, as is the case with English, but this is not true in all cases. E.g., the value of Armenian, even on symbolic level, is so high that it is taught in Georgia, Russia, and in the U.S.A. as a heritage language. The analogical processes happen throughout the world, independent of the language's status worldwide.

### **Pluricentricity and the Heritage Language Speakers**

The conception of the pluricentricity (also polycentricity or pluriareality) of languages as reformulated by Michael G. Clyne (1992, 1995) and later by Muhr (Muhr et al. 2015; Muhr & Thomas, 2020) provides theoretical background for many sociolinguistic studies of variation. First, most work in the field has been largely concerned with the description of linguistic structural variations, such as phonological, morphological, or lexical diversity between varieties, and this is increasingly being supplemented by other views, such as pragmatics and interaction (e.g., Norrby et al. 2020, Schneider & Barron, 2008; Walsh, 2020). Today, Russian develops as a pluricentric language with multiple centres of contact with languages of environment all over the world. There are different lines of textbooks available, those for learners of the L1 (for monolingual mother tongue speakers in the countries where they live and for the bilingual speakers abroad), L2 (minorities and immigrants in Russia) and for the foreign language learners (starting at

different levels). There are textbooks published in Russia and abroad. The communities of the speakers of Russian outside Russia may include all types of speakers or be organized for one type only. In the countries with large Russian-speaking communities, there are media and educational institutions in Russian, because as the research shows the speakers of Russian value the education in Russian and maintain the Russian culture on material (food, shops, books, etc.) and spiritual levels (Mustajoki et al. 2021, Protassova & Yelenevskaya, 2020, Protassova & Yelenevskaya, 2021, Yelenevskaya & Protassova, 2021).

Due to specific history of the Russian-speaking expansion and emigration, every country having a community of the Russian speakers has formed its policy toward this language and culture. Usually, such communities are heterogenous and embrace ethnically diverse population of all waves of emigration, initially from Old Believers, comprising White émigrés, displaced persons (after the WWII), spouses, dissidents of the Soviet time, repatriates, in the latest times – those coming to work, to study or to spend money earned in Russia. Russian is one of the world languages having hundreds of millions of speakers, and the representation of the Russian World abroad is also formally conducted through the structures sponsored by the Russian government. For the oldest and the newest waves, the religion may be important tie within the community and / or with Russia (because there are also such confessional groups whose religion is prohibited in Russia) (Kureev, 2015).

The political incongruencies among the members of the community do negatively affect the attitudes towards language maintenance and do not allow to join efforts. Conversely, having different centres of codification and normalization for various countries and regions, not only in Moscow and St. Petersburg, although the main teaching follows the old school rules, a reader would normally assume that perhaps the Moscow Academy would be the sole centre of codification that says what is ‘correct’ Russian. The current policy of Russia is to centralise and regulate the sphere of the language, whereas authorities in other countries often impose their own agendas. Pluricentricity presupposes that any country can develop its own distinctive orthography, grammar, and lexis for a language used on its territory. Often, in the view of the autochthon (originating from this place) native speakers, those who speak a different variety speak a ‘wrong’ language. Speakers are sensitive to critique; they rarely want to hear that they make mistakes or show that they



are not fully competent. In the case of the Russian diaspora, some pronunciation styles become more prestigious than others, which is why parents sometimes do not want their children to be taught by teachers with a 'wrong' pronunciation. This intolerance toward language variants and errors impedes language acquisition in the next generations of speakers. Therefore, this kind of purism should be abandoned. Fortunately, other centers or authorities with such power are emerging in the post-Soviet space. In these cases, a commission decides what kind of particularities discern 'our' Russian from 'their' Russian.

Some voices arise who argue that every country should have its own variety of the Russian language, which must be taught as such on the local level. In such case, a commission should decide what kind of particularities discern 'our' Russian from 'their' Russian. The policy of Russia is to centralize and to regulate in the sphere of language, whereas the authorities in other countries try to ignore or to impose their own agenda. The pluricentricity presupposes that any country might develop special orthography, grammar and lexis for a language used on its territory. Often, in the view of the autochthon native speakers, those who speak a different variety, speak a wrong language. Speakers are sensitive to critique; they usually do not want to hear that they make mistakes or to show that they are not fully competent (Giles & Watson, 2013). In the situation of diaspora, speakers of Russian are subject to two types of variation: the one – imported from the place they are coming from (dialect, regional variety), the second – the result of the local influence (standard and substandard varieties). E.g., some of pronunciation styles are more prestigious than others, that is why parents sometimes do not want to have teachers with a 'wrong' style of pronunciation for their children. The intolerance toward variants and errors impedes the language acquisition in the next generations of speakers. This purism should be abandoned. The additional curriculum in the first / heritage language should acknowledge the co-existence of the two languages in the speaker, and flexibility of the teacher's attitude and translanguaging are present in the classroom.

To maintain and develop a language, a synergy of many people is needed. The results overcome the barely linguistic scope: they outreach the community, the global diversity tendencies, rightist and leftist political movements. The home contexts are completed by the community encounters, the influence of the environment, as well as compulsory and

private educational systems' efforts. These formal and informal use of the language stimulates listening to different speakers of language, repetition with variation, combination and application of language units and linguistic means. The research shows that the acquisition of this maybe abridged language variety follows the same stages as the learning of a language in a monolingual environment. A comparison of the contexts of the heritage language acquisition might reveal the true nature of language nurture: what helps elaborate a fully-fledged linguistic competence (cf. Meir and Polinsky, 2021). On the other hand, the age of the children and the exposure to the language determinate the volume of acquired language.

The quality of the home language may vary, but the heritage speakers may expose such a level of linguistic competence, which is never or just rarely met by the learners with a non-native background (Doerr, 2009, Gazzola & Wickström, 2017, Slavkov et al. 2021). Still, the heritage speakers have some gaps in the acquisition because it is often impossible to reproduce the whole situation and structure of the first language acquisition. The fact that a language was learned first should signify that its quality is that of a native speaker. Nevertheless, this criterion is evidently not sufficient. The term 'heritage language' was previously used to determine the language that was present in the legacy, e.g., the one of multiple ethnicities immanent to any personality like that of maternal or paternal ancestors. It was opposed to the 'home language' really used in the family. The home language differing from that of the environment can be an immigrant, an expat, a minority, a foreign or any other acquired or learned language. Nowadays, the term 'heritage language' is usually applied to name the language first applied in the family and later fossilized, attired or forgotten by the person although it was still used at home. Usually, the research does not discern between children growing up in bilingual or monolingual homes, it means that the fact of having one, two or more first languages is not important when dealing with bilingual outcomes. However, this is the central question for the essence of bilingual abilities, especially when acknowledging the issues of identity and self-representation. In the literature dealing with heritage languages many questions concern the linguistic skills in the firstly acquired language (Kagan et al. 2017, Minkov et al. 2019).

It is almost unbelievable how easily the first language can be lost if the person loses ties to its speakers, especially if the person is still a child and has not studied literacy. The researchers claim that it can be mentally dangerous to cease to communicate in the first language, but the cases of adopted children witness that it is not always the case. It can be even more sad for the previous generations, for parents and grandparents that they cannot transmit their intellectual treasures to the children. It can be valuable to understand what indeed happens when the language remains more or less safe and corresponds to the developmental level of the agemates in the monolingual environments. The answer may be found in the family language policy. It is widely known that the volume of the first language in some monolingual speakers may be several times bigger than in others. This means that anyway, some bilinguals may have larger linguistic inventory than some monolinguals. The difference between monolingual and bilingual proficiency is still in the process of exploration. Some parents invest a lot of energy and time into the development of the home language proficiency, others wish that the shift to the dominant language happens as quickly as possible. This determines the variety of the first language proficiency (Trifonas & Aravossitas, 2018).

Although most Russian speakers abroad, starting from the second generation, integrate into the dominant society, some families have maintained their language for centuries, like the Pogrebov family in Finland, whose ancestors settled here down at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. The Russian language is heavily related to the historical and contemporary political context (Lähteenmäki & Pöyhönen, 2014, Mustajoki & Protassova, 2015, Viimaranta et al. 2017).

Communities of Russian speakers outside Russia can either include all types of speakers or be organized by one type only. The Russian language abroad does not form a monolith, is not in a stable situation of some sort, but changes under multiple influences. Nevertheless, it must not be lost in a diasporic society. In countries with large Russian-speaking communities, the existing infrastructure supports the use of language. The family context forms via in-group encounters, the influence of the environment, as well as efforts by compulsory and private educational systems. Both formal and informal use of the

language develops by listening to different speakers of the language and through repetition with variation, combination and application of language units, and linguistic means.

Parents often discuss whether it is better to teach languages separately, in different institutions outside school hours, or in a bilingual pre-primary and primary school. Both directions have their partisans. Under such conditions, bilingual proficiency can become salient and celebrated. If the language is taught, it may be assessed, but in absence of the respective linguistic environment, when the language does not dominate, the learners should be assessed differently according to their individual paths into the language. Many second and third generation bilinguals would like to maintain their Russian, which offers them more mobility opportunities in education, job searches, and professional choices, but they frequently fail to do so. Children who arrived in the U.S. at an advanced age tend to be more connected to their L1 and actively use it; those who arrived before six years of age are less motivated. Less than half of those students intended to study or work in Russia, and about half planned to read Russian classics in Russian. One-third liked the Russian way of life. These results were obtained in Colorado and differed from those in California (Kagan, 2005). In a later publication, Kagan noted that most of the survey respondents reported having double identities (Kagan, 2014), while others reported triple identities or more complicated cases. In a study by Isurin, Russian-speaking immigrants reported suffering from labelling and having strong feelings associated with their self-esteem (Isurin, 2014). Gapova found that Russian women who came to the U.S. during the latest wave of immigration (with their husbands with IT jobs) consider language transmission a primary goal (Gapova, 2004).

Meng and Protassova performed a 25-year case study of family integration, self-designations, and community consciousness within four generations of Russian-German immigrants to Germany, with particular emphasis on the younger representatives (Protassova, 2009, Protassova, 2013, Protassova, 2016). Protassova introduced the differences in the identities of Russian speakers belonging to varying ethnolinguistic backgrounds (Protassova, 2017). Koneva and Tikhomirova completed a survey with Russian speakers in Germany, which concluded that, in this ethnically heterogeneous group, the common Russian cultural, linguistic, and historical roots remain strong; they

still need “harmonization of identity” within their new country of residence. They concluded that German and European mass media informational channels in Russian would significantly contribute to the formation of a new identity (Koneva & Tikhomirova, 2016).

To be economically successful and socially integrated, one has to learn the language of the country. According to Remennick (2004), the overall advanced age of the Russian immigrants at the time of emigration to Israel led to a high level of ethnolinguistic retention, and the Russian community lives somewhat autonomously with their own services, networks, and labour market. Children are usually vehicles of their parents' integration into Israeli society via involvement in local events and cultural products. Young and mobile immigrants have better Hebrew skills and tend toward additive bilingualism and reshaping the identity and formation of the Russian Israeli. As they spend more time in their host country, more communicative areas may necessitate Hebrew, although Russian remains the language at home (Remennick, 2004).

The research in heritage languages shows that these bilingual speakers are competent to a certain degree in the language of environment (that of the formal education) and in the home language (which can also be a language of formal education). In the modern world, the oral proficiency is usually doubled with the written language proficiency. Yet not all parents are aware of the fact that oral language should be necessary supported by the literacy. In this case, divergency of the current variety from the so-called norm grows. The role of the parents is crucial. The knowledge of the essence of bilingualism must be transferred to them. The levels of the so-called native speakers might be inadequate for them. Self-assessment, internal and external assessment of the heritage speakers can show different results. Their learning trajectory does not coincide in time with that of the ‘monolinguals’ who frequent the school in the country where this language is a majority language.

### **Heterogeneity**

In the present study, we analyze different backgrounds of the learners of Russian in a heterogeneous classroom (cf. Bergmann & Böhmer 2020, Lucero & Scalante-Morales 2018).

Cultural sensitivity and social network are the strongest determinants of L2 growth, whereas additional markers include personality, intercultural sensitivity, amount of second language use, gender, and age (Baker-Smemoe et al. 2014). Ingenuity and resources provided by the teachers are critical to students' satisfaction with their results, as well as several flexible strategies for autonomous learning for a variety of languages (Popesku et al. 2020, Richards & Rodgers, 2014, Protassova, 2021). A live communication is especially useful when allowing for intercultural communication frameworks (Cranmer 2017) and other interactive activities (Davitti & Braun 2020), e.g., translating and interpreting (Pöchhacker & Liu, 2014). Any methodology should take into account at least learner needs, program analysis, syllabus design, teaching materials, criteria, and tasks positioned (Long, 2015). The descriptors of the assessment vary in the United States (ACTFL, 2012) and in Europe (CEFR, 2011), but they do not have specific methods for assessing bilinguals or heritage speakers.

One of the factors distinguishing the first language from the second language is the way the language is introduced, in the family or outside of the home. The foreign language is usually taught / learned in the class in pre-primary or primary education, or even later. A second language may be acquired, like the first one, or learned in the classroom setting, like a foreign language. An individual can have more than one first, second, or foreign language. Every language is acquired through the process of communication; for the first language, it is the basis of, and sometimes the only way to achieve, linguistic proficiency. The second and foreign languages may not have this trajectory. Yet, all languages are often taught using a textbook, and these textbooks for first, second, and foreign languages are usually organised differently. This is another factor that differentiates heritage speakers from first-language speakers. A second language can be acquired like the first language, at home, or learned in a classroom setting like a foreign language.

The complexity of some language structures makes them more challenging than the baseline language. It depends on the previous linguistic repertoires of the speakers/learners. Muysken claims that transfer does take place and that the bilingual acquisition shows better results (Muysken, 2020) than the research reported in Polinsky and Scontras (Polinsky & Scontras, 2020). In such cases, the child's language diverges from the so-called norm, and

the parents are not aware of it, and they lose the opportunity to obtain a high, native-speaker language level, maybe they are not interested in it. In assessing their language skills, the purpose of the assessment dictates its tools, scope, and results. Heritage speakers should be tested integratively, every skill evaluated separately, although students assured that their listening and reading were sufficiently good. Kagan and Kudyma surmised that, like with all learners, although curriculums can be built upon existing proficiencies, heritage speakers must be trained in all skills, and they need an individual approach (Kagan & Kudyma, 2012, Kagan & Kudyma, 2019). For example, their level of understanding is not sufficient, although it is usually claimed that this capability is developed higher than in the foreign language learners.

Today, we meet heritage learners who were fluent speakers of Russian but learned to properly read and write at a later age, if at all. Their peers learning Russian as a foreign language commit less errors in the written Russian, but never could attain the level of their oral expression. When assessing such learners, the goals can be different, from socio- and psycholinguistic to very practical. The purpose of assessment dictates the tools and the scope of assessment. Here, I offer some of the life stories of the heterogeneous Russian learners in a diverse university classroom in Finland. These self-reflection stories aid comprehension of the various levels of their proficiency.

*Ex. 1. I've always been interested in different languages. I exclusively talked Russian with my mother and Finnish with my father when I was a child. My mother stopped speaking Russian after my brothers and sisters were born, and as a result, I don't remember many words. When I started first grade, I was enrolled in a Russian language class for children from Russia. It was unquestionably too difficult for me, and I soon became bored with Russian. I began learning French in the second grade and English in the fourth. When I started high school, I opted to learn Russian again, as well as Spanish and a little Arabic. We had a school tour to Moscow, and it was also my first trip to Russia. I enjoyed the city, particularly the metro and the school where we were staying with the group. I am overjoyed and pleased to have been admitted to the university. I'm terrified to speak Russian right now, and I don't think I'll ever be able to speak, write, or read it well, but I'm hoping to ameliorate that soon!*

Ex. 2. *I've studied a variety of languages throughout my life, but my favorites are Russian and Swedish. Aside from my mother tongue Finnish, I am fluent in Swedish, and my relatives speak Swedish as their first language. I've been learning Swedish for almost 15 years. I'm now studying it at university, along with Russian. I consider myself to be nearly bilingual. I enjoy reading Swedish mystery books and occasionally speak Swedish at work. I probably like Swedish because I've been hearing it since I was a toddler. It's tough to say if it's difficult or easy. When it comes to the Russian language, I never utilize it at the moment. Of course, I'd like to see this change. I occasionally read/watch Russian news. Almost everything in Russian is difficult. Funny, but I don't think Russian grammar is all that difficult. I visited St. Petersburg, Russia, a couple of times. This city appeals to me greatly. I'd like to take the train to Vladivostok. I've traveled extensively with my Russian friend, and it appears to me that there are always individuals who speak Russian in every country.*

Ex. 3. *English was my first foreign language, which I began learning in third grade, but I was not really interested in it at the time. I knew English rather well, but I didn't put it to use very much. Everything changed when I came to Helsinki approximately six years ago and began speaking more English with friends and at work, and I can honestly claim that I learnt English by speaking. English, of course, proved to be extremely beneficial when traveling abroad. In general, I enjoy speaking English. I also began learning Swedish in school in the seventh grade. I suppose I did well enough, but I didn't utilize Swedish enough in normal life, so I forgot it. I practically never speak Swedish anymore. About four years ago, I fell in love with the Russian language. It is, in my opinion, the most beautiful language in the world. Then, before my first trip to Russia, I wanted to study Russian. Then I met the coolest folks in St. Petersburg and realized I needed to learn their language even better. I began learning Russian distantly every day and hired a private tutor. I now use Russian on a daily basis, and I write and communicate with my friends in Russian. I also do a lot of studying. I visited St. Petersburg several times when it was possible to travel to Russia. Everywhere there was a fantastic opportunity to practice. I was overjoyed.*

Ex. 4. *Languages have a minor impact on my life until now. However, Russian was spoken around me as a child because my father's uncle was married to the sweetest Russian*



woman. I recall lovely treks in the woods gathering mushrooms and her most delectable cabbage pies from this period. Russian was meant to be a long language in school, and I attended an ordinary Soviet school while living in Moscow in the 1980s, while my father worked there. I did well in mathematics, but everything else was too difficult for me. I did not learn Russian after high school. You could say I was served Russian on a silver platter, but I chose not to eat it. I'm almost 60 years old now, and knowing Finnish is sufficient for my job. I passively listen to television in English and Swedish and read something for work.

Ex. 5. *It is critical to be fluent in several languages. My mother tongue is Finnish. English is also quite good. I am also fluent in Russian and Swedish. And as a tourist, I can get by in a variety of languages. Language skills are useful when traveling, reading intriguing books and articles, and communicating with friends from other countries. Because my relatives speak Russian and a variety of other languages, I am also interested in languages. It was simple for me to acquire and understand a few words and phrases in each nation I visited and to understand what they were saying to me.*

Ex. 6. *Meeting people and making acquaintances have always piqued my curiosity since I was a child. I knew there were other languages besides Russian when I was approximately five years old. I grew obsessed with English and pretended to other kids that I could speak and comprehend it. We relocated to Sweden when I started school. It was challenging for me at first because I didn't speak a word of this language. But after a while, I noticed that I was starting to understand, and it was becoming simpler for me. Because I was the only one who spoke Swedish, I rapidly began to communicate and assist my family. We moved a lot and met folks from all over the world, I learnt to find a common language and, if necessary, explain using gestures. In addition to Finnish, I studied Swedish, English, and German in Finland. I am proud of my education, which has allowed me to meet interesting individuals and cultures.*

Ex. 7. *I began studying Russian when I was six years old. I started by doing it on my own via the Internet, and then continued in high school. I use it to communicate with my pals, listen to Russian music, and occasionally watch movies. Russian appeals to me because of its richness, sound, and culture. Grammar is the most difficult aspect of Russian for me. I have yet to visit Russia, but I am eager to do so. I have been studying English since third*

*grade, as have nearly all Finns, so the language learning is second nature to me and speaking flows easy. Every day, I use it on social media, watch English-language TV shows, and play English-language video games. I visited England twice and enjoyed it both times. I opted to go to Bulgaria for a student exchange while I was in the high school. I lived there for a year and learnt their language well, because I went to a regular gymnasium. Currently, I try to speak a little Bulgarian every day so that I don't forget it. I also read Balkan newspapers on a regular basis. Understanding of different Slavic languages is gained through knowledge of one Slavic language. I have visited these countries several times and can confidently claim that the Balkans are my favorite area on the planet. These languages are particularly appealing to me because of their melodies. I studied Swedish, French, Italian, and Latin in school. I only speak Swedish because we had to learn it in school. In other words, I'm not very interested in it. I also studied French, Italian, and Latin in school and would like to resume studying them eventually when I have more time.*

Teaching such a class necessitates knowledge of multiple languages and cultures, patience for errors and blunders (which I have not indicated here) and meeting the requirements of each learner, whose motivation and proficiency vary a lot. This process is interesting and appealing, and the diverse materials used should be adapted to the needs of learners without accentuating it.

## **Conclusion**

Researchers investigate whether it is possible to revitalize and build upon the initially or previously acquired knowledge and what factors influence this process (including cross-language transfer). No studies thus far have considered the language skills of monolingual speakers to be invariably higher than those of bilingual speakers. The ultimate attainment among the first-language-speakers varies across any nation. Many of the questions raised concern the linguistic skills of the person's 'first language.' It is valuable to understand what happens when the language remains, more or less, 'safe' and corresponds to the developmental level of one's peers in monolingual environments. When something is grammatically incorrect from the point of view of the parents or educators, it maybe

represents another variety, a heritage speaking variety which is different from what is considered standard language.

The process of the language loss or the language shift starts with the child's refusal to speak the non-dominant language or to study literacy in their home language. The state, school, and the family's language policies propel a fast shift to the dominant language. The political incongruities among the members of the community do negatively affect the attitudes toward language maintenance and, therefore, disallow efforts to become a consolidated group of Russian language speakers. The power of the dominant language may be supported by its prestige, but not only. The analogical processes happen throughout the world independently of the status of languages on the world scale. Number of speakers, political structures, access to the technologies among other factors influence the linguistic vitality.

As we see from empirical studies, average L2 learners are better than heritage speakers (that is, if they can read and write) in some areas, but they lag behind those heritage speakers who are closer to native speakers in pragmatics, phraseology, and lexis. Yet, heritage speakers' skills are often imperfect, vague, or diffuse if compared to those of native speakers, but the native speakers should not be the milestone of bilingual skills. Not all of them can improve their proficiency. Teachers should differentiate the speakers of Russian as L1 or L2 and not ignore them completely. They should combine differentiated approach with understanding that translanguaging exists in their classrooms.

## Notes

1. [yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/novosti/russkaya\\_finlyandiya\\_100\\_let\\_\\_100\\_sudeb\\_\\_ot\\_sama\\_vanni\\_do\\_rostislava\\_goltgoera/9961739](https://yle.fi/uutiset/osasto/novosti/russkaya_finlyandiya_100_let__100_sudeb__ot_sama_vanni_do_rostislava_goltgoera/9961739)

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## **Reconsidering Monolingual Strategies of Bilingual Education through Translanguaging and Plurilingual Educational Approaches. Are We Moving Back or Forward?**

### **ABSTRACT**

This study explores monolingual and multilingual strategies in bilingual education by investigating translanguaging practices in the Georgian monolingual Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). Two research questions guided this research: (1) What Translanguaging practices do teachers use in the CLIL Natural Science program with a monolingual approach? (2) What is the rationale for teachers' translanguaging pedagogical approaches in monolingual Natural Science lessons in the CLIL? The study utilized a classroom observation qualitative research method to answer the designed research questions. The findings reveal that the planned and implemented curricula differ considerably. The translanguaging approach is more emergent instruction rather than a well-planned and organized process. Second, teachers use translanguaging in scaffolding to support students and explain new teaching materials to be comprehensible. Third, translanguaging makes the instruction more student-centred. when switching to translanguaging, students become more active and more actively engaged in the learning process Fourth, translanguaging in the Georgian separated CLIL model is a more spontaneous strategy derived from classroom dynamics than planned to support learners' linguistic repertoire. Accordingly, it can be characterized as one of the pedagogical practice of translanguaging, codeswitching, rather than translanguaging itself. Finally, translanguaging is an instrument for teachers' empowerment. \

**Keywords:** *Translanguaging, Bilingual Education, Georgia, Monolingual and Multilingual Approaches*

### **Conceptualizing Translanguaging/The Evaluation of Term of Translanguaging**

The term translanguaging appeared first in the scientific literature by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and evolved significantly. The following descriptions have appeared in the scientific literature: (a) Translanguaging as a pedagogical approach (Williams, 1996; (García and

Otheguy, 2020; Baker, 2001, 2006; Cenoz & Gorter, 2011); (b) Translanguaging as an individual's language repertoire (García, 2009a; Canagarajah, 2011; García & Li Wei, 2014); (c) Translanguaging as semiotics and a pedagogical approach for communication (García & Li Wei, 2014; Otheguy, García & Reid, 2015); (d) Translanguaging in society and social function of languages (García, 2009b; Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021).

The term translanguaging was used in Welsh by teacher Cen Williams in 1994 as a pedagogical approach that allowed students to use Welsh and English language in the classroom in different situations to develop receptive and productive skills (García & Otheguy, 2020). The term first was used as a pedagogical approach, and subsequent authors defined it. For example, Cenoz & Gorter (2011) referred to translanguaging as the “combination of two or more languages in a systematic way within the same learning activity” (Cenoz & Gorter, 2011, 359). Similarly, Baker (2011) defined translanguaging as “the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, understandings, and knowledge through two languages. Both languages are integrated and coherent to organize and mediate mental processes in learning” (Baker, 2011, 288). The definition was transformed evolved from teaching strategy to the social function of languages.

García (2009a) expanded the pedagogical term of translanguaging, describing it as “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (p.45). This definition portrays multilingual practices from the perspective of users rather than the language itself (García 2009a). Similarly, Canagarajah (2011) regarded translanguaging as “the ability of multilingual speakers to shuttle between languages, treating the diverse languages that form their repertoire as an integrated system (García, 2009a, 401). These definitions switched from linguistic understanding of translanguaging to the language resource as an integrated repertoire possessed by multilingual speakers. The primary focus became multilingual speakers and their language repertoire (García & Li Wei, 2014).

The term evolved further, and multimodal semiotics as a resource for communication was articulated (García & Li Wei, 2014). According to Otheguy, García, & Reid (2015), translanguaging refers to the “deployment of a speaker's full linguistic repertoire without regard for watchful adherence to the socially and politically defined boundaries of named (and usually national and state) languages” (García, & Reid, 2015, 281). From this perspective, language is an essential tool for communication with its full representation. As a pedagogical approach, Li Wei (2018) defined it as transsemiotic practices “that involve flexible use of named languages and language varieties as well as other semiotic resources” (Li Wei, 2018, 14). The pedagogical practice of translanguaging is most frequently implemented through

code-switching and translation methods; however, scholars underline the difference between these strategies and translanguaging itself. Code-switching and translation methods are monolingual approaches to multilingualism, while the understanding of translanguaging is the holistic multilingual vision of multilingualism (Cummins, 2021; García & Lin, 2017). Still, these leading classroom practices occur during the translanguaging pedagogical approach (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021).

The most comprehensive understanding of translanguaging lies in the social function of languages. Ferguson (1959) used the term diglossia to describe the context where “two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play” (Ferguson (1959)325). Fishman (1967) extended the term and described the context of diglossia, where not two varieties of one language but two different languages function with different roles. Baker (2003) described diglossia in which distinct and separate functions are allocated to different languages. García (2009b) criticized the term diglossia, arguing that diglossia strictly separates languages in social function, and it is a more monoglossic view of languages rather than diglossic, that “sees bilingualism as the sum of two separate languages” (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021, 3). Scholars supporting the idea of translanguaging began advocating for the heteroglossic view of languages and viewed the term translanguaging through a heteroglossic lens. García (2009b) stressed the difference between diglossia and heteroglossia: “Languages are not compartmentalized in a diglossic situation, but rather they overlap, intersect, and interconnect” (as cited in Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021, 6).

### **Monolingual Strategies of Bilingual Education**

Translanguaging became the leading direction of bilingual education research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Cummins, 2021). The practical and theoretical popularity of translanguaging is well reflected in new books, international scientific papers, and annual academic conferences (Poza, 2017). Prominent scholars, including Jim Cummins, Ofelia García, Canagarajah, Otheguy, Li Wei, Lin, and many others, actively support the translanguaging pedagogical approach (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013; Cummins, 2007, 2017, 2021; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009a, 2009b, 2017, 2019, 2020; Li Wei, 2018a, 2018b; Lin, 2019). As Li Wei emphasizes:

*The term Translanguaging seems to have captured people’s imagination. It has been applied to pedagogy, everyday social interaction, cross-modal and multimodal communication, linguistic landscape, visual arts, music, and transgender discourse. The growing body of work gives the impression that any practice that is slightly non-conventional could be described in terms of Translanguaging (Li Wei, 2018a, 9).*

Other scholars share a somewhat critical vision of translanguaging (Edwards, 2012, Grin, 2018, Jaspers, 2018). As Jaspers (2018) notes, “There is considerable confusion as to whether Translanguaging could be an all-encompassing term for diverse multilingual and multimodal practices, replacing terms such as code-switching, code-mixing, code-meshing, and crossing. (Li Wei 2018, p. 9). Further, Jaspers (2018) argues,

*Translanguaging is likely to be less transformative and socially critical than is suggested, because translanguaging research has more in common with the monolingual authorities it criticizes than it may seem, because it trades on causality effects that cannot be taken for granted, and because translanguaging, in some of its representations, is becoming a dominating rather than a liberating force (Jaspers 2018, p. 1).*

Despite these critics, translanguaging is an important direction in the scientific field of bilingual education, and applied linguistics “is now a household name in international conferences, symposia, and summer schools, and the central topic of highly cited publications (Jaspers 2018, p. 1).

### **Bilingual Education Approaches in Historical Context**

The four essential directions of bilingualism and bilingual education can be identified in the historical development context. The first, *rejecting bilingualism*, was perceived as detrimental from the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. This assumption was based on intelligence test results, where monolinguals outperformed bilinguals (Baker, 2006); however, the results were derived from an improper research methodology (Baker, 2006). Rejecting bilingualism in favor of practice and ideology related to only-language instruction dominated educational systems worldwide.

Second, the more positive view of balanced bilingualism emerged through the *additive context of bilingual education* and with separated monolingual strategy. This approach appeared primarily in the United States and Canada in the mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century. Specifically, dual bilingual educational programs were implemented in the United States (Baker, 2006) and French language immersion programs in Canada (Cummins & Swain, 2014). Both programs had significant positive results in acquiring two languages, mastering different subjects, and achieving high academic performance (Baker, 2006; Cummins & Swain, 2014). This approach has also been widely used in other continents (Jaspaert & Ramaut, 2000; Kroon & Sturm, 2000; Pérez-Cañado, 2012). The approach was widely used in the former Soviet Union after its collapse (Dvorjaninova & Alas, 2018; Mehisto & Asser, 2007). From this perspective, *multilingualism* is seen from a monolingual point of view as language separation and was an

essential strategy in these programs. The language separation approach emerged in many scholars' writings. Heller (1999) used the term parallel monolingualism, in which "each variety must conform to certain prescriptive norms" (Heller, 1999, 271). Swain (1983) called this context "bilingualism through monolingualism" (p. 4); Creese & Blackledge (2008) used the term "separate bilingualism," and Cummins (2008) used the term "two solitudes."

Third, *the subtractive context of bilingualism for minority students* with a monolingual approach to multilingual education emerged together with additive bilingual education models. The same monolingual approach was used in both additive and subtractive programs of bilingual education; however, these subtractive programs could not achieve bilingualism, and their students were monolingual at the end (Baker, 2006). For minority students in many countries, acquiring two languages was unrealistic as the context was subtractive (Baker, 2006 - about the United States; Ferguson, 2003; García, 2009; Moodley, 2007 - about Africa).

Finally, *translanguaging* viewed bilingualism and bilingual education from multilingual lenses, acknowledging the importance of multilingual approaches for multilingual education (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013; Cummins, 2007, 2017, 2021; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; García, 2009a, 2009b, 2017, 2019, 2020, García & Otheguy, 2020; Li Wei, 2018a, 2018b; Lin, 2019).

### **Bilingual Education approaches in Georgia**

Monolingual education is dominant in the Georgian education system; however, bilingualism with monolingual strategies is also implemented in additive and subtractive contexts in Georgia. Out of 2085 public schools, 1879 use the Georgian language exclusively for instruction, and English is taught as a foreign language. Although the English language was introduced, it is not considered a tool for achieving bilingualism. A clear example of this is the competencies of students in English. Even the minimum competencies for the English language are not achieved in most school graduates (Tabatadze, 2017; Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2017; Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2018a). The English language is an important obstacle at university entrance exams for rural and town school graduates (Chankseliani, Gorgadze, Janashia & Kurakbayev, 2020). Other examples of single-language instruction include 79 Azerbaijani language schools and 117 Armenian-language schools. These schools prepare monolingual graduates who are fluent only in their mother tongue (Tabatadze, 2015; Tabatadze, 2019).

Another approach of only one language instruction is language sectors in schools. Language sectors are specific for the Georgian context. Language sectors indicate only one language approach as two or three language sectors operate in public schools instead of implementing bilingual educational programs. There are 95 Armenian, Azerbaijani, Russian,

and Georgian language sectors in the Georgian public schools (Tabatadze & Chachkhiani, 2021). Table 1 depicts the number of sectors for specific languages.

**Table 1**

*Number of Language Sectors by Language of Instruction*

| <b>Sector</b>                | <b>Language Sectors</b> |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Azerbaijani-Russian          | 2                       |
| Georgian-Azerbaijani         | 36                      |
| Russian-Armenian             | 1                       |
| Georgian-Azerbaijani-Russian | 1                       |
| Georgian-Russian             | 42                      |
| Armenian-Russian             |                         |
| Georgian-Armenian            | 10                      |
| Georgian-Armenian-Russian    | 1                       |
| Total                        | 95                      |

Eleven public schools with the Russian language of instruction can be considered as a subtractive bilingual education in Georgia. The Russian schools in Georgia are attended by students with a mother tongue other than Russian. For 70% of Russian language school students, Russian is not a native language but a second language (Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2021). Accordingly, students in these schools develop Russian language competencies while losing their native language. This situation can be regarded as the subtractive context of bilingualism. Some scholars refer this approach to monolingual approach to bilingual education and consider this approach a “Prestigious-immigrational” monolingual approach to bilingual education (Tabatadze, 2010).

The additive bilingualism and enriching bilingual education programs with monolingual approaches are also available in the Georgian education system; This approach is widely utilized in international private schools of Georgia. These schools develop bilingualism through Georgian and English or French, German, Russian, and Turkish monolingual teaching. These schools are primarily available for students from high socioeconomic backgrounds (Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2014; Tabatadze & Gorgadze, 2018b). Accordingly, this additive bilingualism can be classified as elite bilingualism for students with high socioeconomic backgrounds.

The monolingual vision of multilingual education is rooted in bilingual education programs implemented by the Center for Civic Integration and Inter-ethnic Relations in 2017-2020 in 20 pilot public schools of Georgia. The project envisaged teaching Natural Science in

grades three through six only in the Georgian language. In contrast, other subjects are taught in minority languages. The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach was applied to teach Natural Science in the target Georgian language. The strict separation of languages and, accordingly, monolingual approach to multilingual education is evident in Georgia's 20 pilot public schools. The same approach is used in a new Ministry of Education and Science project, implemented in 25 public schools. Natural Science, Civics, and Arts are also taught in the Georgian language based on strict separation of languages.

### **Research Methodology**

This study explored the issues of monolingual and multilingual strategies in bilingual education. The study aimed to research translanguaging practices in the Georgian monolingual CLIL program used by teachers. The following research questions were designed: What Translanguaging practices are used by CLIL teachers in teaching Natural Science with a monolingual approach? What rationale is behind using the teachers' translanguaging pedagogical approach in monolingual CLIL lessons of Natural Science? The study utilized a classroom observation qualitative research method to answer the designed research questions.

This research study is part of the project "Integration of Society through Multilingual Education" funded by Osce High Commissioner on National Minorities and implemented by the Centre for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations. The project was implemented from 2017 to 2020. Twenty non-Georgian language schools implemented pilot bilingual education programs in the framework of the project. The pilot programs use a monolingual approach to bilingualism, and the classes of Natural Sciences in grades 3-6 were conducted only in the Georgian language with Georgian language teaching and learning materials. The current study analyzed 20 monitoring visits carried out in the target schools. The monitoring group visited lessons of science (nature) for grades three and four in 2019. The monitoring visit aimed to understand the bilingual lesson practices and identify those strong and weak sides, which the teachers have concerning the bilingual instruction.

A unique observation checklist was developed, which served as an effective tool for the detailed review of the lessons and identifying multiple components of effective instruction. Out of 20 lessons, 8 lessons of the grade 4 and 12 of grade 3 were observed. The observation covered the following components of the lesson: (1) materials used during the lesson; (2) language medium of the lesson; (3) instructional strategies and approaches concerning the language; (4) instructional strategies and approaches concerning the subject content; (5) the



general pedagogical approaches and focus on child-centered instruction; (6) students learning and feedback; and (7) assessment strategies.

For this study, the two components of the lesson observation checklist are analyzed: the language medium of the lesson and instructional strategies and approaches concerning the language. To learn the trends and tendencies of the lessons deeply, the observational checklist was constructed so that four phases of the lesson (introduction/ entry/ activation of prior knowledge (unfold/explanation) enforcement of knowledge – assessment of understanding) were well defined and outlined. Besides, the usage of particular instruction could be evaluated by its intensity from 1 (weakly observable) to 3 (strongly observable). The desired instructional approaches and students' learning responses were listed so that the person attending the class could mark the observable approach/strategy and assess it by the subsequent score.

### **Research Findings**

Based on the specially developed observational tool, classroom observation showed some interesting trends in monolingual and bilingual strategies in bilingual education. The findings can substantially impact developing the academic and scientific field and implications for pedagogical practice.

### **Emergent Curriculum and Instruction**

As already mentioned, the teachers had an unequivocal instruction within the existing pilot project to use only the target Georgian language in the teaching. The teaching and learning materials were also in the Georgian language. The classroom observations showed that the planned curriculum and the implemented curriculum are very different from each other. Only four cases out of 20 observations were used only without the inclusion of the native language. The daily practice changes the conventional approaches. In 16 cases, teachers replaced monolingual approaches with translanguaging approaches, which they did not plan. Translanguaging seems to be a more naturalistic process of teaching that consistently influences the planned process, and planned monolingual strategies are often transformed into multilingual ones, especially when the target language is not a non-native language of students.

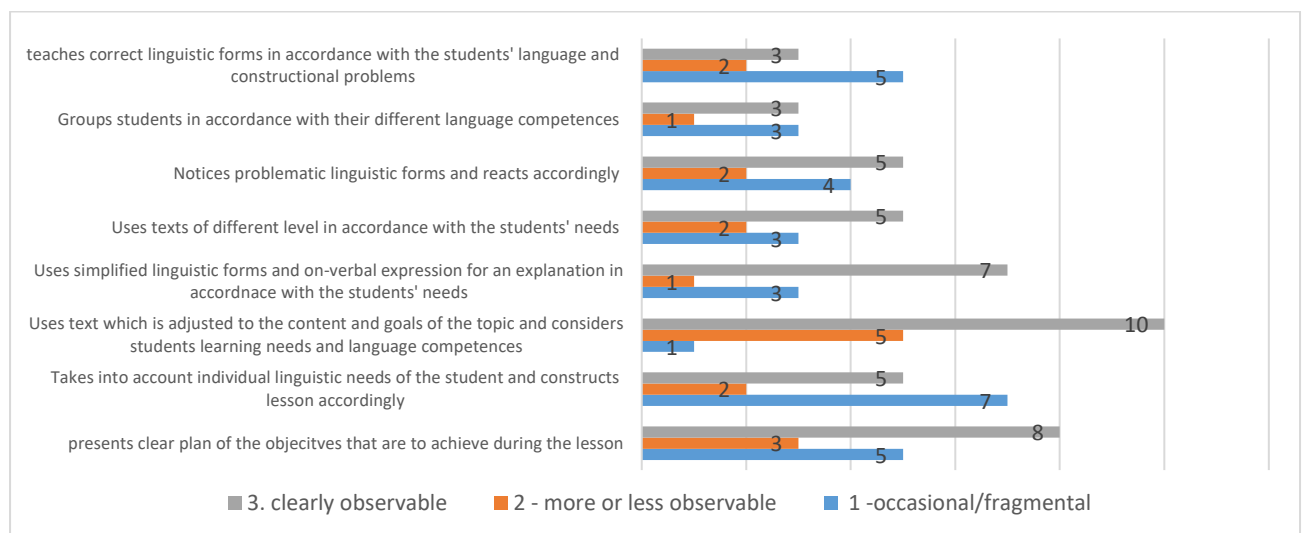
The translanguaging approach is more emergent instruction rather than a well-planned and organized process. As already mentioned, the observation was carried out within the program's framework, which envisaged the principle of separation of languages, and teachers planned the lesson according to the principle of separation of languages. Consequently, it was clear from the observation that the planned lesson was based on a monolingual separated approach.

However, it was realized with translanguaging elements, which emerged within natural classroom dynamics. Emerging pedagogy and instruction are essential directions in terms of minority student education (Hyun, 2006). Future research can be conducted with an emphasis on translanguaging as an emergent curriculum and its effects on minority students' academic achievement and well-being.

### Translanguaging as Scaffolding

The study showed that the translanguaging approach was used mainly by the teachers in the explanatory phase. Teachers found it challenging to provide material to the students in the non-native language. After checking for understanding, it was evident that students could not comprehend the materials, and they were passive participants in the teaching process. Students needs and interests are triggers for switching to mother-tongue instruction. Figure 1 below shows usage of the native and second languages by the observed teachers during the lessons. The figure shows that the observed teachers used the second language medium instruction more frequently and intensively than the native language. However, translanguaging is observable, and students' usage of the native language is frequent if all lesson stages are based on students' needs.

**Figure 1. Translanguage and language use strategies in natural science classes**



*Note. Figure is taken from Narrative Report of Centre for Civil Integration and Inter-Ethnic Relations submitted to OSCE HCNM*

It is noteworthy that classroom observation revealed that translanguaging is used for scaffolding purposes by teachers. There are monolingual Georgian language teachers who

participated in the pilot project, and they speak only one language and have minimal lexical knowledge of students' mother tongues. Even this minor lexical knowledge was used by teachers when needed, especially to familiarize students with new lexical terms. Accordingly, both code-switching and translation approaches were used to assist students. These approaches are considered part of the translanguaging pedagogical approach (Cummins 2017; García & Lin 2017).

### **Student-Centered Instruction**

Classroom observation showed that a separated one language approach makes the teacher more active during the instruction process. When switching to translanguaging, students become more active and more actively engaged in the learning process. Our observation revealed that separated language instruction in minority students with the lack of language competencies in the target language makes the instruction teachers-centered. At the same time, translanguaging transforms it into student-centered instruction.

### **Codeswitching Rather than Translanguaging**

Classroom observation revealed that translanguaging did not aim to support the multilingual repertoire of learners in a classroom setting. Instead of a complex pedagogical approach—a spontaneous strategy driven by classroom dynamics is used. Strategies based on classroom dynamics and practical needs may be more productive than imposed translanguaging approach to develop learners' multilingual repertoire. Based on classroom observation, it is reasonable to conclude that the strategy used by the teachers can be more considered under the term code-switching rather than translanguaging, as translanguaging refers to “pedagogical and language practices in classrooms that support teaching and learning and affirm students' multilingual identities (Goodman & Tastanbek, 2021, p .2). As already mentioned, scholars underline the difference between the pedagogical strategies of translanguaging and translanguaging itself. Code-switching method is perceived by these scholars as a monolingual approach to multilingualism, while the understanding of translanguaging lies in the holistic multilingual vision of multilingualism (Cummins, 2021; García & Lin, 2017).

### **A Pedagogical Approach that Empowers Teachers**

Translanguaging as an approach was also an instrument for teachers' empowerment. The pilot schools, where classroom observations took place, involved bilingual teachers in the

teaching process. For these bilingual teachers, the target teaching language was not their mother tongue and, therefore, their language competence in the target language was relatively low. These teachers had higher competence in the students' native language. Consequently, these teachers often used translanguaging approaches and switched from the target language to the student's native language. Switching enabled the teachers to explain new content in teachers own native language. Conversely, through translanguaging, teachers concealed the problem of their language competencies as they lack the knowledge of target language. Translanguaging enabled teachers to keep their authority and not to uncover the lack of competencies in strate i.e. target language and at the same time they managed to teach the students in the native language. This approach echoes the results of research that translanguaging is vital for teachers as it "focuses the process of teaching and learning on meaning-making, enhancing experience and developing identity"(Li Wei, 2018, p.15).

## **Conclusion**

The research showed that, in Georgia, *one language-only instruction* prevails. The approach is used in Georgian as well as minority language schools. Other approaches include the prestigious immigrational approach that prevailed in Russian language schools as a *subtractive context of bilingual education* with monolingual strategy and elite bilingualism in international schools attended by students with high socioeconomic status as form of *additive bilingualism with monolingual approach*. The pilot bilingual programs are implemented in 25 non-Georgian language schools with a separated language approach, which falls under the monolingual strategies of multilingual education.

This research study revealed some interesting trends in the use of bilingual strategies in bilingual education. Specifically, the findings can have a substantial impact on the development of the academic and scientific field, as well as implications for pedagogical practice. First, the translanguaging strategy implemented in separated monolingual classrooms showed that the planned and implemented curricula differed. Tranlanguaging seems to be a more naturalistic process of teaching that permanently influences the planned process. The translanguaging approach is more emergent instruction rather than a well-planned and organized process.

Second, translanguaging is used for scaffolding purposes by teachers to support students' learning and explain new teaching materials in a comprehensible way. Third, translanguaging makes the instruction more student-centred. when switching to translanguaging, students become more active and more actively engaged in the learning process. Fourth,

translanguaging in the Georgian-separated CLIL model is a more spontaneous strategy derived from classroom dynamics than planned to support learners' linguistic repertoire. Accordingly, it can be characterized as codeswitching rather than translanguaging. Moving from code-switching to translanguaging can be an essential destination for utilizing multilingual approaches in the multilingual education reform of Georgia. Finally, translanguaging as an approach was an instrument for teachers' empowerment. All findings, however, are essential for designing and implementing bilingual education with multilingual strategies to improve the learning process in Georgian classrooms.

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## **Pseudo incorrect use of “singulare tantum” forms in social media Georgian**

### **ABSTRACT**

In language teaching, the standard language is the basis of the teaching content and offers learners a limited perspective of use in communication. The semi-spontaneous use of language in the web, on the other hand, generates grammatically unconventional forms that are simply declared wrong from the perspective of standard language. Dealing with such forms in second language teaching requires a linguistically based description of quasi "wrong" morphological forms and the consideration of a scientific explanation of such phenomena. The focus in the following is on the use of singular tantum (proper nouns) in the plural. Regular expressions can be used to search for the proper nouns in plural form in Georgian reference corpus in a focused way. In the Internet language, the use of place names (toponyms) in the plural form is increasing, which is simply grammatically incorrect from the perspective of standard language. If the authors of this incorrect use are considered, then it is very probable that there is an intention behind the incorrectness. That is the reason why there is a pseudo incorrectness here. The semi-spontaneous language on the internet creates a specific pragmatic environment in which the expressivity of language is additionally pushed out. Presumably, this increasing expressivity in most cases also affects proper names, more precisely - place names. This intentional grammatical error suggests a pragmatically based justification for the apparent mistakes. This deliberate grammatical error points to a pragmatically based justification of the apparent mistakes. The speakers put the place names in the plural in order to focus them and intensify the relevance of the meaning. This is a quasi-modal use with the help of the plural. The described pragmatic aspects of the phenomenon give reason to include it in language teaching and to point out that rigid grammatical rules can weaken in certain socio-cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** *Standard Language, Social Media Language, “singulare tantum”, Superlative, Second Language learning.*

### **Introduction**

In language teaching, the standard language is the basis of the teaching content and offers learners a limited perspective of use in communication. The semi-spontaneous use of language in the web, on the other hand, generates grammatically unconventional forms that are simply declared wrong from the perspective of standard language. Dealing with such forms in second language teaching requires a linguistically based description of quasi "wrong" morphological forms and the consideration of a scientific explanation of such phenomena.

The focus in the following is on the use of singular tantum (proper nouns) in the plural. The definition of “Singular tantum” by language can be narrow. Thus, “Singular tantum” is defined as those nouns that occur only in the singular and cannot form a plural. They are predominantly represented among the continuatives (substance names of the type *snow, milk*), abstracts (*education, rest*) and collectives (*foliage, branches*). Apart from such determinations, there are some Natural Entities exist in the natural way either always in mono or in poly. To the unique phenomena belong, for example, the celestial bodies. Also for this reason, the planets and star names are used as a rule in singular. However, there is the possibility to circumvent this rule and to establish a linguistic construction, in which the naturally singular entities are represented as plural. The reasons for this are manifold and include stylistic as well as semantic and pragmatic aspects.

In the following article, the morphological properties of the plural usage of "Singular tantum" in Georgian are shown, which forms a basis for semantic analysis. On the basis of this analysis, the considerations on the pragmatic determination of the use of such forms are made. The corresponding linguistic data are taken from the Georgian Reference Corpus and from the Georgian-language Social media.

### **The plural form as collective term**

It is not uncommon, that when a person represents a particular character quality in a particularly striking way, his proper name becomes a kind of collective designation for all persons displaying the same quality. For stylistic reasons, such linguistic figures are used in literature, but also in reporting.

In example (1), the well-known biblical story of the transformation of Saul into the apostle Paul is presupposed. Based on the presupposition, the transformation described in the Bible is taken up as a frame and transferred to the current situation, in which the politicians are depicted as "Sauls" who will not reach the status of "Pauls".

(1)<sup>1</sup>

*ეჭვი მეპარება, რომ სავლეები პავლეებად გადაიქცნენ.*

[eçvi      mepareba,      rom      savleebi      pavleebad      gadaikcnen.]  
doubt      have1Sg.Pr      Rel      SaulPl.Nom      PaulPl.Adv      transformingPass.Opt3Pl

*I doubt it that the Sauls will become Pauls.*

This example already shows the stylistic power of proper names in the plural: the biblical story is not discussed in detail, but a discourse is triggered in the first step with the help of the names "Paul"/"Saul". In the second step, the presupposed story is projected onto the current

case, thus including all such or similar cases. A plurality of prototypical cases arises and exactly this plurality is expressed by the plurality of proper names "Paul"/"Saul".

In the Second Example, the proper name of the main protagonist from Mikheil Javakhishvili's novel (1925) “Jaqo's Dispossessed” (ჯაყოს ხიზნები) is rendered in plural. Here it is also pragmatically assumed, that the communicating participants have a common knowledge of the history around Jaqo.

(2)

*ჯაყოები ამ კლანჭებით და კბილებით უძლურ ჭიაყელებს დაიპყრობენ.*

[*žaqo-eb-I am klančebit da kbilebit uzlur čiaqeleks daiṗqroben.*]

|          |         |               |    |               |           |            |           |
|----------|---------|---------------|----|---------------|-----------|------------|-----------|
| Prop.Pl- | DemPron | Claw.Pl.Instr | Cj | TeethPl.Instr | powerless | wormPl.Dat | V Act Fut |
| Nom      |         |               |    |               |           |            | Pv SV     |
|          |         |               |    |               |           |            | S:3Pl     |
|          |         |               |    |               |           |            | DO:3      |

*The žaqo-s will capture the powerless worms with these claws and teeth.*

The “žaqo-eb-I” in this context stands for all persons who bear the same characteristics as the protagonist in the novel: Deceitful, Unscrupulous, Shameless, Aggressive and Unprincipled. In both examples a kind of indirectness arises, which is justified by the fact that the knowledge of the corresponding backgrounds is presupposed. It should be noted that it cannot be excluded that first names are used in the plural, without the collective semantics being involved. In such cases, the semantic generalization remains absent and the designation actually refers to a multiple appearance of persons with the same name.

The use of language typical of social media has expanded the field of the use of plural forms. The toponyms referring to the singular facts (a city, a village, a continent etc.) are represented as plurals.

### **Toponyms in plural**

In the internet language, the use of place names (toponyms) in the plural form is increasing, which is simply grammatically incorrect from the perspective of standard language. The reason for the prescriptive rule in grammar results from the natural fact that places and their names are in the majority of cases unique. There is a Paris, a Boston, an Ottava and a Munich.

(3)

ვინც ადრე მოსკოვსა და ლენინგრადს ეტანებოდა, ვითომ სასწავლებლად და  
სამოღვაწეოდ, [...] მიუნჰენებსა და პარიზებს, ბოსტონებსა და ოტავეებს უსინჯავს  
კბილს–ენაცვალოთ დედები– მშვიდობით, მშვიდობით, მშვიდობით.

[vinc adre moskovsa da leningrads etaneboda, vitom sascavleblad da samoğvaceod, [...]  
axla **miunhenebsa** da **parizebs**, **boštonebsa** da **otavebs** usinžavs kbils – enacvalot dedebi  
– mšvidobit, mšvidobit, mšvidobit.]

*those who were once attracted to Moscow and Leningrad ostensibly for study or work are  
currently trying to find pleasure in **Munich<sub>PL</sub>** and **Paris<sub>PL</sub>**, **Boston<sub>PL</sub>** and **Ottawa<sub>PL</sub>**.*

In this example (3) from social media, the toponyms can be divided into two groups: (1) those in the singular (Moscow and Leningrad) and (2) those in the plural (Munich<sub>PL</sub> and Paris<sub>PL</sub>, Boston<sub>PL</sub> and Ottawa<sub>PL</sub>). The contextual meaning of the example can also be interpreted as the juxtaposition or contrast of the two groups (1) vs. (2). The question is what the contrasting is based on. The toponyms from group (1) can be interpreted as neutral referring to places, whereas the toponyms from group (2) represent an additional function besides the place reference, namely the intensification by "erroneous" plural form. The semi-spontaneous language on the internet creates a specific pragmatic environment in which the expressivity of language is additionally pushed out. Presumably, this increasing expressivity in most cases also affects proper names, more precisely - place names.

In example (4), all toponyms are shown in plural form.

(4)

კაროჩე მოკოვებში ვარ...ვაიმეე! რაის მოსკოვები ირმა ვარ ინაშვილი? ხოდა  
მოსკოვებში კი არა ლონდონებში ვარ ასე ვზივარ სახში ლუისთან ერთად კინოს  
ვუყურებთ. აკრობატებზეა.

[karoče **moḡovebši** var...vaimee! rais **mosḡovebi** irma var inaşvili? xoda **mosḡovebši** ki ara  
**londonebši** var ase vzivar saxši luistan ertad ḡinos vuḡ urebt. aḡrobatebzea.]

*I'm in **Moscow<sub>PL</sub>**... What **Moscow<sub>PL</sub>**, I'm Irma Inashvili? and I'm not in **Moscow<sub>PL</sub>**, I'm in  
**London<sub>PL</sub>**, sitting at home with Luis, shying away from a film. It's about acrobatics.*

The contextual meanings reveal another detail of the semantic significance behind the plural form of toponyms. The lists are dominated by the well-known metropolises of the world, which represent preferred travel destinations. Therefore, it is not just any place anywhere in

the world, but the prestigious names. The prestigiousness is increased by plural form and thus conotes all the benefits that these cities can ask the visitors (highlife, etc.).

The other example from the social media are (5), (6) and (7).

(5)

აშშ-ში მცხოვრები იუნა შაფათავა სოციალურ ქსელში წერს:

"და კიდევ ერთი, არაქალების ბრბოვ ("ელიტას" ვგულისხმობთ, თქვენ რომ თვითმარქვე ხართ): რატომ არის ის კაცი "ხიხო"?

რომ არ გადაგ\*\*ნათ იმ იმპოტენტივით, ქოხები ლონდონებში არ გიყიდათ და პარიზებში არ დაგაბინავათ და არ წველით, თქვენი გოიმი უტ\*\*ო იმპოტენტი საყვარლებივით, წრენ რიგრიგობით ლოკავთ და blow jobs უკეთებთ?

[ašš-ši mcxovrebi iuna šapatava socialur kselši çers:

"da kidev erti, arakalebis brbov ("eliṭas" vgülisxmob, tkven rom tvitmarkvia eliṭa xart):

raṭom aris is ḳaci "xixo"? rom ar gadag\*\*nat im imṭoṭentiṭivit, koxebi **londonebši** ar

giḳidat da **parizebši**: manhetenze ar dagabinavat da ar çvelit. tkveni goimuri imṭoṭenti

saqvarlebivi, çreze rom rigrigibit loḳavt da blow jobs uḳetebt?]

*In the USA living Iuna Shapatava writes in social media:*

*"and one more thing, a pack of bitches, (I mean the "elite", you guys are a would like to be "elite") why is this Man a hillbilly?*

*Because he didn't f\*\*ck you like this impotent, (and) in **LondonPl** and **ParisPl** didn't buy you shacks: didn't bunk you on Manhattan and can't pull off like your stupid impotent lovers you lick in circles one by one and do a blow job? "*

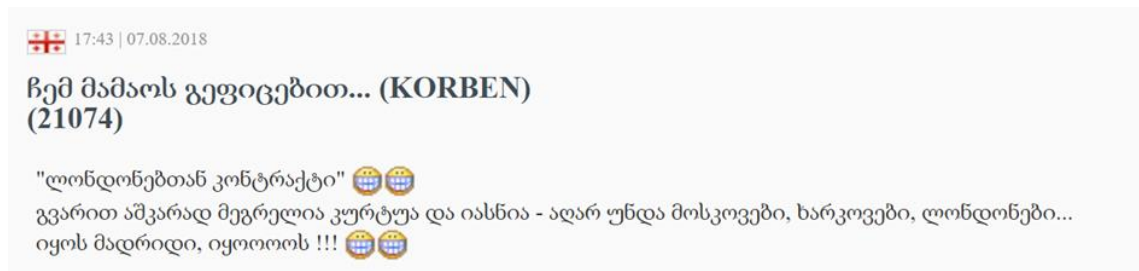
Curiously, the microtoponym "Manhattan" in this example is in the singular. It is clear that Manhattan here has nothing to do with Paris or London. It can be assumed that the microtoponym Manhattan is established as a kind of *pars pro toto* for the macrotoponym New York and is used here as a proxy.

In example (6) Kharkiv appears for the first time next to the world capitals. However, considering that in the general context it is about "soccer", it seems that the city belongs next to the major football capitals of the world.

The Spanish capital Madrid is still in singular form. The reason may be the same as in example (3): the singular form of "Madrid" is supposed to express low intensity compared to Moscow, Kharkiv and London, at least it would be assumed that the contract in Madrid is less

desirable. However, it must be emphasized that the whole expression forms the sarcastic frame and it is apparently not meant seriously.

(6)



[čemi mamaos pegicebit

"**londonebtan** ონტრაქტი"

gvarit aškarad megreliā kurtua da iasnīa - ađar unda **moskovebi**, **xarqovebi**, **londonebi**...  
iđos madridi, iđoooooos!!!]

*I swear on my priest*

*A contract with **LondonPl***

*Judging by the names, he must be a Megrelier Kurtua and it is clear he does not want a **MoskowPl**, **CharkivPl**, **LondonPl** more.... Madrid it should beeeee!!!*

The example (7) shows that the author of the post comes from the academic field. It can be excluded that the knowledge of correct grammatical rules in relation to the numerus form of toponyms is not present.

(7)



**lublianebši** ro davdiodit. ორპუსისტა და  
ლექსიკოგრაფთა ვარსკვლავთცვენაზე.

The time when we had traveled in the **LjubljanaPl**... with the such luminaries of corpus linguistics and lexicography.

Considering all the originators of these incorrect uses, it is very likely that there is an intent behind the incorrectness. That is the reason why there is a pseudo incorrectness here.

## Conclusions

This intentional grammatical error suggests a pragmatically based justification for the apparent mistakes. This deliberate grammatical error points to a pragmatically based



justification of the apparent mistakes. The speakers put the place names in the plural in order to focus them and intensify the relevance of the meaning. This is a quasi-modal use with the help of the plural. The described pragmatic aspects of the phenomenon give reason to include it in language teaching and to point out that rigid grammatical rules can weaken in certain socio-cultural contexts.

Pragmatic analysis of such usage requires consideration of the speaker. Here, it can be asserted with a higher degree of certainty that the speakers know the grammatical rules, but intentionally do not follow them. The possible explanation of such motivation is the increase of content expressivity by plural "singular tantum". The apparent (pseudo) ungrammatical forms serve as a means of attracting the listener's (or reader's) attention.

The relatively high frequency of such forms especially in social media language justifies the consideration that a modal function is currently being established in Georgian to generate the superlative modes of proper nouns.

## NOTES

1. Regular expressions can be used to search for the proper nouns in plural form in Georgian reference corpus in a focused way, ([features = ("N" "Pl" "Prop"))].

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## **Implications on applying the Web 2.0 software to teach a Chinese L2 learner online**

### **ABSTRACT**

The rise of information and communication technologies has increased people's access to educational resources and stormed the process of E-learners in the past decades. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic forced more people to stay at home to do things via online. Of course, education is no exception. While numerous distance Chinese learning tools or websites are booming, not all these tools or websites are suitable because of E-learners' variations in Chinese language proficiency, computer literacy, or the complexity of the tools. Hence, being able to choose effective Chinese E-learning tools for Chinese learners is crucial for Teachers of Chinese to Speakers for Other Languages (TCSOL) as it affects not only learners' motivation and overall success as well as teachers' teaching pedagogy and performance. The present study analyzed a series of user-friendly, free Web2.0 digital tools for distance Chinese learners to study along with a textbook, Practical Audio-Visual Chinese 2, designed and carried out experimental teaching courses for Japanese participants with elementary Chinese proficiency. Lastly, it concluded with ST2D implications for TCSOL based the feedback from users.

**Keywords:** *Distance Chinese learning, digital tools, E-learning, modular teaching*

### **Introduction**

Students of Chinese language learning programs mainly consist of non-native citizens and overseas Chinese. Early Teachers of Chinese to Speakers for Other Languages (TCSOL) had to travel abroad due to the reason that the majority of their students were across from the globe. However, in the age of rapid technological progress, education is no longer bound by the physical confines of classrooms; in fact, the online education has gained its popularity, and its accessibility has grown accordingly. Despite being miles apart from each other, instructors and learners are still able to attend classes online through the use of Chinese E-learning tools, effectively realizing the concept of transnational education. As to modern distant education, it can be broadly categorized into synchronous and asynchronous learning (Lin & Lien, 2010).

Synchronous learning refers to the online learning model that instructors and students interact in a specific virtual environment while asynchronous learning takes place while learners and instructors have no real-time interaction. However, the issue related to which digital tools are more advantageous to supplement Chinese language learning for TCSOL is rarely assessed and entails further investigation.

The present study aimed to explore the synchronous distance learning approach by employing digital tools to aid Chinese language teaching and further investigate which of these tools could maintain students' high level of motivation and achieve favorable results within a limited one to two hour of class period. The study participant was a full-time Japanese employee with intermediate English proficiency and elementary Chinese skills. With her previous experiences in distance Chinese learning programs prior to participating in this study, it could reduce the time spent on such technical preparations as configuring headsets, microphones, video and audio levels and allow the lesson to commence with haste. This study utilized Skype and its PowerPoint integration as the primary platform for instruction, coupled with Studystack's mini-games to raise the student's learning interest and Dropbox as an online storage for both homework and course materials. Finally, the study organized a suitable combination of digital tools to aid in distance Chinese learning for elementary level learners, further hoping to help not only the learners with their strive for knowledge, but also give inspiration for future TCSOL's course design in distance Chinese language teaching.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Distance Learning***

Wang and Chen (2003) state that distance learning is a teaching process that bypasses physical barriers using media to deliver systematically designed teaching materials to learners. According to Hsin (2002), interactionism is the most suitable linguistic teaching philosophy in terms of distance learning through video conferences, followed by functionalism and the least appropriate structuralism. As for educators of distance learning, Lin and Lien (2010) illustrated a necessity for educators to be equipped with basic abilities such as multimedia operation and typing. Huang (2010) found that the most significant feature of synchronous distance learning is the learning opportunities provided by the accessibility of personal computers. Huang (2010) also points out that the fundamentals of synchronous distance learning using video conference are speaking interactions and appropriate integration of videos and worksheets. Based on the foregoing literature, the following features in distance learning are summarized below:

1. Educational activities that bypass time and physical barriers.
2. Real-time interactivity.
3. Course design is centered around aural/oral education with internet learning resources.
4. Educators must have sufficient computer skills.
5. Learners can save time that would otherwise be spent on traveling.

### ***The trend of applying technology in Chinese language learning***

The advances in internet technology in recent years saw an increased amount of digital tools being integrated into language teaching. Many scholars have begun researching computer-assisted language education due to the machine's ability to provide both independent and cooperative learning models while making study opportunities seem omnipresent (Lan, 2009). Hence, using technological integration to assist Chinese language learners in their metamorphosis from interlanguage to mastery is a fundamental skill for TCSOL educators of the new era. Although technological integration in Chinese language learning might be an inevitable trend, teachers are still irreplaceable in terms of instructing. While designing a course, TCSOL must not focus on the integration of digital tools itself, but the necessity and suitability of these multimedia tools in teaching while asking themselves these questions (Chen, 2011):

1. What language functions should the student perform? Will the course design or technological application suffice in helping student perform the said function?
2. What are the instructional and learning goals? Will the course design or technological application suffice in helping student achieve those goals?
3. How should the students display their language skills to echo the course design? Can digital tools assist in this case?
4. What kinds of evidence can be used to prove or measure the student's performance? Can digital tools assist in this aspect?

Shuh (2005) also states that integrating technology into Chinese language learning is not simply replacing existing teaching materials with digital ones. Educators not only need to adapt their course to new teaching philosophies and systems, but also themselves in order to solve pedagogical problems using the most appropriate resources at hand.

The study summarizes the following points from reviewing the statements above regarding applying technology in Chinese language learning.

1. Consider the audience

2. Adapt digital tools to the needs of the students
3. Educators should evaluate which digital tools can help students achieve the highest efficiency
4. Whether the learners be able to accept these tools and utilize them in after class practices.

### Introduction to digital tools for distance Chinese learning

A common question many distance learning educators found asking themselves is “which digital tools can minimize the students’ learning difficulties and maximize efficiency?” The biggest difference between traditional and distance learning is the ability for educators to solve students’ problems face to face, and such problem is especially pronounced in teaching basic level students whose vocabulary are limited. Teachers usually have to build context and use repetitive exercises to help basic level students achieve better learning efficiency. Under this premise, the study has organized a list of digital tools based on researchers’ teaching experiences and students’ feedbacks.

| Name              | Description  | Pros  | Cons  |
|-------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Skype</b>      | Skype is a communications software widely used across the globe. It has more features, such as multi-person conference calls and screen-sharing, than MSN. Teachers can instruct multiple students at once while sharing course materials on their screen. | 1. Supports up to 4-person conference call.<br>2. Screen-sharing feature.                                 | Bad connection can impact teaching quality.   |
| <b>IDroo</b>      | IDroo is a plugin for Skype that provides a digital whiteboard for users to draw or write on. Anyone can see and interact with the whiteboard as long as they are invited to the call.   | 1. Digital whiteboard provides a space to write and draw.<br>2. Can insert texts and images on the board. | Bad connection can impact teaching quality.   |
| <b>Go Animate</b> | Go animate is a website for creating animations. Teachers can create short clips based on textbook model conversations using pre-existing assets, giving students an opportunity   | 1. Easy to use.<br>2. Teachers can voice characters on their own.   | 1. Free version has less characters, background assets and a limited word count.<br>2. Clips are only |

|                                   |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|--|
|                                   | to practice listening skills before commencing the lesson.   |  | available for use on the site.   |
| <b>Toondoo</b>                    | Toondoo is a website for creating comics. Students can practice oral language skills with teachers using custom-made comics.   | 1. Free.<br>2. Plenty of assets to use.  | None at the moment.  |
| <b>Studystack</b>                 | 1. Can create vocabulary cards.<br>2. Offers many mini-game templates.   | 1. Free.<br>2. Easy to use.  | Only available online.   |
| <b>Dropbox</b>                    | Dropbox is cloud-based online service for file storage, offering students a space to download teaching materials uploaded by the teacher. Free version offers 2GB space upon registration while the paid version can provide up to 100 GB. | 1. Easy to use.<br>2. Files can be shared with specific users.<br>3. Real-time file updates. | Real-time updates only apply when the Dropbox app is installed on the computer.    |
| <b>Freez Screen Video Capture</b> | <i>Freez Screen Video Capture can be used to record course materials that are otherwise unavailable for download, such as videos or stroke sequence animations.</i>  | 1. Easy to use.<br>2. Free to download.  | 1. Videos downloaded are only available for personal uses due to copyright issues. |
| <b>Voki</b>                       | Voki's main feature lies within its ability to create a virtual avatar that supports voice recording and comes with various designs, making distance learning more intriguing.   | 1. Easy to use.<br>2. Varied character designs.  | 1. Only supports one-way interactions.<br>2. No feedback options for students.     |
| <b>Audacity</b>                   | Teachers can use Audacity to record pronunciations of the words students have the most trouble with into files and send them to the students for after class practice.   | 1. Easy to use.<br>2. Free to download.  | None at the moment.  |
| <b>Picpick</b>                    | Picpick is a screen capture software that is similar to the functions of the Print Screen key, albeit with higher image resolution and greater ease of use.  | 1. Easy to operate.<br>2. Screenshots can be edited in-app.<br>3. Free to download.          | None at the moment.  |

### Course Design with distance Chinese E-learning tools

Due to the student’s desire in improving her aural and oral skills, the courses were designed to reflect said request. Clocking at 60 minutes per period, this course was based on *Practical Audio- Visual Chinese 2*, Lesson 1 with the incorporation of above-mentioned digital tools.

| Lesson Plan   |             |  |                                      |                    |   |
|---|-------------|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------|---|
| Teaching goals: Teach the student how to describe common symptoms of sicknesses, share her experiences of being ill in Chinese, and enable her to perform the tasks while she needs to seek medical care in Chinese-speaking countries. |             |  |                                      |                    |   |
| Period  |             | Activities   | Target Language skills to be Trained | Duration (minutes) | User Guide for Teaching Tools   |
| First Period  | Preparation | Have the student install IDroo and make sure her headset and microphone are in working condition.  | Listening & Speaking                 | 10                 | 1. Skype Make sure the student’s audio and video feeds are clear.<br>2. IDroo Have the student install said app and login. Both parties can use the whiteboard. |
|   | Warm up     | 1. Ask the student to share her experience being sick.<br>2. Have the student practice saying words regarding common sicknesses<br>3. Have the student watch a short animated video. | Listening & Speaking                 | 10                 | 1. Skype Make sure the student’s video feed is on so that the teacher can pay attention to her mouth shapes in order to check pronunciations.<br>2. Go animate  |

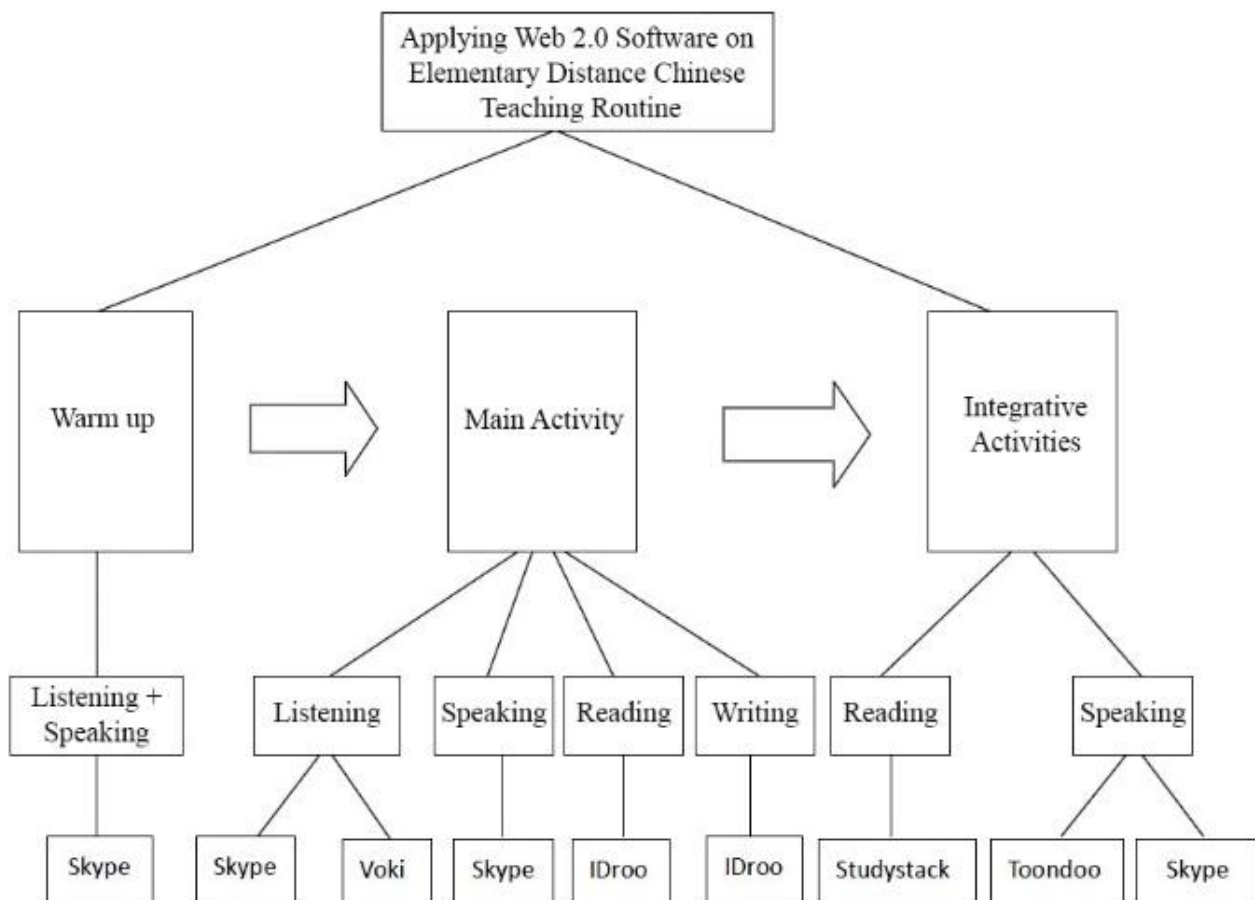
|  |               |  |   |    |  |
|--|---------------|--|---|----|--|
|  |               |  |   |    | Create short animation bas-ed on the text.   |
|  | Main activity | Teach such Chinese words of common symptoms as coughing, runny nose, fever, diarrhea, and the like. Each word should be introduced along with pictures and example sentences. Explaining the words in English is discouraged unless necessary. Ask the student to write down the words on her notebooks with each vocabulary taught. | Listening, Speaking, Reading & Writing. | 20 | <p>1. Skype Show Power-Point materials to the student via screen-share.</p> <p>2. IDroo Teachers can write down the Pinyin of the words that the student has trouble pronouncing.</p> <p>3.Voki After teaching a word for the first time, ask the student to repeat after Voki's teacher avatar for more exercises.</p> <p>4. Picpick The student can use Pic-pick to screen-shot and send any problem she might have in operating software to the teacher.</p> <p>5. Freez Screen Video Capture The teacher can pre-record the stroke sequ-</p> |



|  |                        |   |         |    |   |
|--|------------------------|---|---------|----|---|
|  |                        |   |         |    | <i>ences of harder Chinese characters into clips, providing references for the student should the need arise.</i>   |
|  | Integrative activities | <p>1. Use vocabulary cards to review the words taught today and quiz the student on the pinyin of individual words.</p> <p>2. Break the example sentences used in class into small phrases, randomize them and ask the student to restructure them. This exercise focuses on sharpening the student's language fluency</p> <p>3. Ask the student to present a short story using the words taught in class and the 4-panel comic provided to them.</p> | Reading | 20 | <p>1. Studystack Make word cards and sentence reconstruction games for after class practices.</p> <p>2. Skype Keep in touch with the student and provide help on the learning matter ASAP.</p> <p>3.Toondoo Create a 4-panel comic for the student's oral practice.</p> |

|                              |   |   |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| <p>Take-home Assignments</p> | <p>1. The teacher will send the pronunciation recordings of the words taught in class while asking the student to practice and record her pronunciations as homework.<br/>2. Have the student download, finish, and upload the worksheets of the lesson taught today.</p> | <p>1. Audacity Ask the student to record and upload her word pronunciations for later feed-back.<br/>1. Dropbox Provides an online storage space for up-loading homework and sharing files.</p> |
|------------------------------|---|---|

The foregoing lesson plan and the application timings of multimedia tools is modularized and plotted into the following flowchart:



## **Conclusion and Implications**

The present study has been adapting the class period from 1 to 2 hours per week in accordance with the student's request since September, 2011 till present. Starting the class from Lesson 7 of *Practical Audio-Visual Chinese 2*, the study has been customizing the lessons around the student's performance while integrating the various abovementioned multimedia tools into the curriculum. Thus, the study concluded the lesson plan introduced in this study could be applied to elementary Chinese learners who wished to enhance their oral skills. Through the video call and digital whiteboard feature of Skype+Idroo, teachers could immediately correct learners' pronunciation errors and explain the problems they might have. Studystack, on the other hand, was mainly used for previewing and reviewing the lessons. It could also help create flashcards and language mini games to make student's learning venture more interesting. Additionally, the user interface of the website was written entirely in English, which made using it after class much easier for non-native students of Chinese.

Based on users' feedback, some pedagogical implications are concluded as the following.

### ***1. Similar tools overlap in functions***

Although a plethora of multimedia tools exist on the internet, many of their functions overlap with each other. Take Voki and Audacity as examples, the two both focuses on recording audio except that Voki comes with an extra feature to play sound files with virtual avatars of the user's choosing. With every new tool introduced in class, students will need to dedicate extra time in familiarizing themselves with said tool, which is extremely inconvenient. Although starting the lessons with a wide selection of tools is acceptable, it is advised to narrow down the software used in class based on the students' affinities towards each in order to streamline the learning process.

### ***2. The timings of using online animations***

Using Go animate as a warm up session is well received by the student, remarking its benefit of aural skill training. However, the loading time for the animation is quite lengthy and the video itself is bandwidth-intensive, which can sometimes disconnect Skype's ongoing video calls. The student even proposed a solution to have the video link shared via Dropbox, so that she can practice on her own after class. It is generally advised not to play the animations unless the connection stability permits doing so.

### **3. Diversifying language mini-games**

Although being an adult, the student still has a high acceptance for games. The language games used in class are mainly “connect phrases” and “sentence reconstructions”. Despite finding them interesting, the student also noted the lack of variety in the games and inquired the study on the possibility of designing more language games for her as after-class practices.

### **4. Do not over-rely on multimedia tools. Instead, teachers are the true leaders of the course**

Although the myriad forms of multimedia tools are sure to draw the student’s attention, the primary component of teaching still lies within human interaction. Despite acknowledging the integration of multimedia tools and their aid in maintaining learning motivation, student A still mentioned the desire for more face to face interaction with the teacher, specifically the exchange of thought-provoking questions and answers. It is evident that teachers are still irreplaceable to students, and that is what every aspiring TCSOL should keep in mind.

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## **On the Issue of Reading Multimodal Texts**

### **ABSTRACT**

Most of our reading practices have moved from print-based to online texts, which integrate not only linguistic expression but various images, sounds, other meaning making elements, therefore the reader's engagement with the text has changed as well. While reading multimodal texts, the reader has to construct the meaning out of different modes of representation. The complexity of such texts and the way the second language learners read and construct their meaning are important for educators. Thus, the article aims at revealing the readers' viewpoints of reading multimodal texts by evaluating language users' practices of reading print and online texts and determining their own participation and self-expression on social websites. The survey results demonstrated that readers mostly get news from online sources on the Internet, they also listen to the radio, and read the print version of news too. The research results confirmed that the text layout causes changes in reading habits and may raise difficulties in getting the main idea, grasping the meaning of images. While reading multimodal texts, the research participants prefer to stay passive and as social media users they remain not very active as well.

**Keywords:** *print, online, multimodal texts, reading, lexical density.*

### **Introduction**

It is no longer possible to think of reading as only one's engagement with the printed text. Most of our texts have become a part of a multimodal ensemble of speech, sounds, images and moving elements on the screen, therefore while reading one has to make sense of various modes of meaning representation. As observed by G. Kress (as cited in Boshraadi & Biria, 2014, p. 368), for a postmodern reader to be able to understand and make meaning out of a text one needs not only to be able to read and interpret the traditional print-based texts, but also to be capable “of making meaning out of a variety of texts across traditional and new technologies.” Looking from the perspective of critical discourse analysis G. Bouvier and D.

Machin observe that content of texts disseminated on social media take new forms and move away from longer texts to shorter chunks that are integrated with forms of design, images, and data. Apart from adding more pictures, or changing the colouring of letters, creators of texts can challenge the reader's eyes by simply putting a text in a different order than one may expect. Additional feature of multimodal online texts are hyperlinks enabling a reader to move from one source to another within several seconds, thus turning reading into totally different experience (Bouvier & Machin, 2018, p. 178).

The research carried out by P. Abraham, M. Farías into multimodality and reading proves "how crucial it is to change our approach to reading so that it truly moves beyond the linguistic mode to include visual and other modes of constructing meaning" (Abraham & Farías, 2017, p.67). A similar approach to understanding reading is expressed by F. Serafini who claims that the text does not come to a reader in a ready-made mode, and the reader has to explore all the semiotic potential of the text and establish its relations with the text in order to interpret the meaning (Serafini, 2012, p.158). Besides, it should be noticed that people read texts differently. Some are likely to engage with the written elements of a text first, while others with the visual ones. It depends on readers' interests, preferences, habits, and especially the context or social purpose of reading, an educational task to be performed by the reader as well.

The complexity of multimodal texts and the way the second language learners read and construct their meaning are important for educators. As P. Abraham, M. Farías argue, teachers not only have to incorporate multimodal text reading into second language classrooms, but also to enhance learners' ability to critically evaluate those texts. The researchers encourage teachers to make a full use of the visuals accompanying texts and together with their students interrogate their function and the meaning they contribute to understanding of the multimodal texts (Abraham & Farías, 2017, pp. 60-61). Other scholars (Januarty & Nima, 2018) express a similar view by claiming that teachers themselves have to learn more about the elements of multimodal texts and reflect upon the ways it can influence the teaching learning process.

Thus, it is important for educators to have a broader understanding not only of the complexity, meaning making and critical evaluation of multimodal texts, but also the learners' views of multimodal text reading. This knowledge would be helpful for teachers to plan their curricular, to choose suitable reading strategies in order to enhance their learners critical appraisal of multimodal texts. Therefore, the *aim* of this paper is to identify language users and learners' viewpoints of multimodal text reading. To specify the aim, the following *objectives* have been raised:

1. To establish multimodal features of texts.
2. To find out their viewpoints of multimodal texts by evaluating language users' practices of reading print and online texts, and determining their own participation and self-expression on social websites.

## **1. Literature Review**

### ***1.1. Characteristics of a Multimodal Text***

The term *multimodal* is presented in *Dictionary of Media Studies* (2006) with the definition of “using several different channels to access the same information, for example, cinema listings which are available in the press, by phone and on the Internet”. Multimodal texts are those texts having more than one ‘mode’, in this way meaning is shared through a “synchronisation of modes” (Walsh, 2006, p. 24). Modes can be realized in various ways, including written or spoken language, moving or still images, music and sound. Simultaneously, text designs can be arranged in different ways, for instance, it may be produced on electronic screen or on paper. At the same time, M. Anstey & G. Bull (2010) suggest a slightly different interpretation of what multimodal text is. As they argue, a multimodal text is such type of a text that combines two or more semiotic systems from five systems in total. Those systems, according to Anstey's and Bull, are:

1. Linguistic, that comprises the grammar of written or oral language, vocabulary, and generic structure;
2. Audio, including sound effects, volume, rhythm of music, and pitch;
3. Spatial, that consists of direction, position of layout, proximity;
4. Visual, comprising vectors, colour, and viewpoint in moving and still images;
5. Gestural, that includes speed and stillness in body language and facial expressions.

They also provide instances of multimodal texts, that include: a webpage, a picture book, and a live ballet performance. So multimodal texts can have specific vocabulary used, information presented in different font, as moving images on a webpage or various sound effects could be included, while in a ballet the main elements are space, music, and gesture through which the meaning is presented (Anstey & Bull, 2010, p.1). Another author, F. Serafini, argues that multimodal texts communicate meanings through the use of two sign systems; it is visual image and written language (Serafini, 2010, p. 85). Students these days encounter different types of multimodal texts provided in their educational environment that are provided in print and non-print forms. Multimodal texts in a print form include information



books, magazines, newspapers and picture books, while texts in a non-print form encompass videos, films, music and those texts through the electronic screen and combining graphic designs, like the internet, email, or hypertext. Also non-print multimodal texts involve digital media, for example, DVDs or CD-ROMs.

One more interpretation of multimodal texts is suggested by D. Barton and C. Lee, who claim that modes, which are also known as semiotic or communicative modes, in general, “refer to systems or resources that people draw upon for meaning making”. By saying that, they mean written language, image, gesture, sound, spoken language, etc. What they also add is that practices of applying different modes to create coherent and meaningful texts are not new, since multimodality has been a crucial strategy of meaning-making during the whole history of written language (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 29).

In understanding how different modes work together while forming texts, it could be discovered that images and texts are being combined in unique ways. According to L. Unsworth (as cited in Serafini, 2010, p. 86), “this shift from a linguistic focus to a multimodal one requires readers to navigate, design, interpret and analyse texts in new and more interactive ways”. As the result of change from the single mode of written language to multimodal texts, readers in today’s world must have new strategies and skills in order to construct a meaning in relation to multimodal texts.

In order to interpret meanings of graphic elements or visual images included in multimodal texts with success, readers have, as Serafini (2010, p. 87) states, to employ two elements: *visual literacy* and *perception*. *Visual literacy* is presented as “the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate information in any variety of form that engages the cognitive processing of a visual image” (Chauvin, 2003, as cited in Serafini, 2010, p. 87). It is a combination of psychological theories of perception together with the critical and socio-cultural aspects of social semiotics, visual design, and media studies. This means that before an image is interpreted in social contexts of its production, acceptance and, finally, dissemination, characteristics of the image have to be comprehended, handled and categorized by each individual personally. Moreover, Serafini proposes that in order to interpret the meaning of multimodal texts successfully the reader will need to refer to three interconnected perspectives, which include: perceptual, structural, and ideological. As he continues (Serafini 2010, pp. 88-92), perceptual analytical perspective focuses on “the literal or denotative contents of an image or series of images in a multimodal text, the elements of design, for example borders and front, and other visual and textual elements of these texts.” Meaning or interpretation of multimodal

texts is constructed in relation to the perception of the textual and visual elements existing in these texts. Before readers start interpreting the meaning of a text, they create a list of literal elements of an image or series of images used in a picturebook and apply this list to get the meaning. Structural analytical perspective deals with recognition of different relationships among various grammars or visual structures and with the meanings that are associated to them in an analysed culture. As to be able to read a multimodal text, there is a necessity to develop a metalanguage, or “language that describes language, such as the language of linguistics” according to *Dictionary of Media Studies* (Dictionary of Media Studies, 2006, p. 145). This language is used to notice, consider and interpret visual images. Finally, there is an ideological analytical perspective that follows this pattern of image analysis: in order to understand the design elements and images invented in multimodal texts readers have to consider not only aspects of production and reception, but also take into consideration the aspects of the image and the text itself (Serafini, 2010, p. 98). The analysis of an image consists of: interpretation of images through the recognition of conventions and the codes applied in the production of visual images, and consideration of socio-cultural contexts of production and reception together with examination of the image itself.

Luginbühl asserts that analysis of multimodal texts concentrates less on language online, but on such aspects as colouring, typography, or even bars or colour patches also are significant elements “as far as verbal texts are concerned” (Luginbühl, 2015, p. 17). From the perspective of Serafini, broadening our knowledge by the methods and perspectives related to the interpretation of multimodal texts enhances the reader’s visual and literary experience as well as it challenges the reader to discover personal interpretation of messages presented in multimodal texts or visual images (Serafini, 2010). Reading as such is no longer causing the reader’s interest in analysing verbal material, as he/she expects to learn more about the other modes of representation and communication that are available on the screen. This could be explained by the results of J. Coiro and E. Dobler’ research (as cited in Boshrabadi & Biria, 2014, p. 368) that has shown that despite being necessary for meaning making, reading processes of print-based text is not sufficient to interpret texts complemented by graphic elements, sound effects or visual images. What it makes reading of a multimodal text so appealing to those who are becoming dependent on the Internet, could be noticed by comparing it with the reading process of print-based texts.

## 1.2. Comparison Between Print-based and Multimodal Texts

Reading print-based texts, according to Walsh, “involves different levels of decoding, responding and comprehending at affective and cognitive levels, critiquing and analysing” (Walsh, 2006, p. 25). The process of reading is not fixed, it is a regular interaction between the reader and the text. As Walsh indicates, the process of interaction is possible to occur within several contexts at the same time: it is the socio-cultural context of text production, the cultural or social context of the individual reader, the genre or purpose of text itself or even the purpose and interest of the reader that have impact. This interaction does not occur without the decoding process that involves the usage of different strategies of pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, and word recognition, together with the recognition of phonemic, morphemic and graphic patterns (Walsh, 2006, p. 25). A reader, as the researcher Walsh claims, has to identify different discourses used in text, visualise, imagine the meaning carried, and understand what ideologies are presented by the author, as from the words of a text a person will not find answers to all questions (Walsh, 2006, p. 25).. Walsh goes on further arguing that while critical approach to reading is applied in the analysis of print texts, a reader of the multimodal texts, such as information book or a picture book, also needs to interpret the message carried through the text in the words, pictures, graphics and images (Walsh, 2006, p. 26). According to Kress and T. van Leeuwen, “written text is only one part of the message, and no longer the dominant part.” Kress and T. van Leeuwen (1996, 2001, as cited in Walsh, 2006, p. 26). The growing dominance of multimodal texts and digital technology requires different ways of thinking, forming ideas in one’s mind and making meaning out of a text.

Walsh observes that, for instance, in a multimodal text, in comparison with print-based texts, the reader will use different senses, like hearing, tactile, or sight, to respond to other modes in meaning making process (Walsh, 2006, p. 34). Barton and Lee argue, that in print-based materials, for instance, newspapers, advertisements, and magazines, the way the viewers interpret the verbal message is shaped by the design of the visual, or it can be the other way round (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 29-30). For instance, a text that is printed in "bookman old style" is considered to be more formal than a text printed in "Comic sans ms", the use of different colours could also change the way the verbal context is interpreted. In general, how meaning from traditional printing will be taken by the reader could be affected by the layout of different items on a page.

The reading of words and images could be also compared by looking at differences as presented by Walsh:

| <i>Reading a print-based text</i>   | <i>Reading a picture</i>  |
|---|---|
| The reader has to ‘decode the words’ and get the meaning of a text from the printed material  | In order to interpret meaning from images readers have to be able to ‘break the visual codes’, it means to identify where the producer of the image is using shape, angle, colour, position and other means for the construction of meaning                                 |
| There is an interpersonal exchange noticeable between the narrator and the reader, and it is conveyed through the use of the dialogue and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd person narrator  | Interaction between the reader and a text is different, due to the usage of images and the ways images communicate with words. Normally, an image just fills the page and is there at once, if readers understand everything or notice all the details remains as questions |
| The author of fiction may often use intertextual references, either referring to other author’s ideas, searching meanings of words in other context, or looking for different reference, such as looking at mythology | No intertextual meanings are used   |
| All the meaning of a text is communicated through the grammar of the text, or the choice of words and different ways in which words are arranged  | Responses of the meaning occurs to the reader by the effects of visual codes, including framing, lines, perspective, colours, in other words it is known as the ‘visual grammar’  |
| The reader, in order to fully appreciate the meaning, has to be reading in different levels, including symbolic, social and interpersonal   | The effects that images produce are different from the effects a word produces. Mainly, ‘reading’ a picture requires to apply aesthetic, imaginative, and affective levels of interpretation  |

Walsh, 2006, p. 26-35.

In general, an essential aspect of reading multimodal texts is the capacity to integrate information from different modes of presentation. Although the process of meaning-making itself may take place in similar ways for printed-based and multimodal texts, the ‘processing’ of modes is different. Readers have to apply distinctive coding system or levels of

interpretation, pay attention to the grammar or to the effects in order to get the meaning when examining the print or multimodal texts.

## 2. Research Design: instrument and sample of the research

A survey was conducted to evaluate language users' practices of reading printed and online texts, to find out their viewpoints of multimodal text and to investigate their own participation and self-expression in social websites. The research tool was an original *questionnaire* that consisted of *four main* parts containing 15 questions. The questionnaire was created online by using drafts for polls published in [www.pollmill.com](http://www.pollmill.com). *The first part* of the survey contained *demographic questions* to evaluate research participants' profiles. It should be mentioned, however, that there was one limitation observed. Although 103 people in general participated in this survey, the results of 85 interviewees were overviewed as their level of the English language was B2, C1 or C2, as this survey's aim was to discover how native or advanced English language speakers value their participation in the processes of reading, understanding, interpreting and producing multimodal texts. The level of the English language was estimated by the research participants themselves according to Common European Framework for Languages ([https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework\\_EN.pdf](https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf)). *The second part* of the questionnaire included three questions about *reading preferences of language users*, what source they choose to be updated with news, what, online or printed version, they prefer more. A *qualitative research method* was implemented as the survey included an open question to provide reasons why reading either a printed or an online text is more preferable. It should be pointed out that even though language users of B2, C1 or C2 English language level were being scrutinised, their answers were provided in the original without any corrections being made. *The third part* of the questionnaire consisted of 5 questions about *multimodal texts*, for instance, what attracts readers' attention while looking at a multimodal text, if the layout has any impact on interpreting the meaning of a text or no and other issues. In *the last part* of the survey the readers' *social behaviour* was evaluated, looking at how often and by what means they express themselves in social websites. *Quantitative and qualitative research methods* were applied analysing the survey results.

The research instrument, i.e. the questionnaire was based on Barton and Lee's work on technology related with changes in communication and in technological affordances with information being placed from page to screen, the interpretation of verbal messages being formed by visual means, reading and ways of creation of a text in Web 2.0 spaces (Barton &

Lee, 2013). Reference was also made to a research carried out by Z. Mažuolienė and R. Kriaučiūnienė that introduced changes in reading practices of students of the New Generation, factors of distracting the reader's attention while reading online texts, and the insights into the ways specific professional texts should be analysed in order to get the main idea (Mažuolienė & Kriaučiūnienė, 2016). When describing research participants' answers about their interpretation of the given images, a reference was made to Serafini's ideas about the interpretation and description of the meaning of multimodal texts (Serafini, 2010).

In order to discover what language users read more often, how they value multimodal practices and what choices for expressing themselves they make a questionnaire of 15 items was offered in an online mode on social media Facebook platform. This study is limited to the number of participants who were willing to participate in the research. There were 85 participants who managed to fully answer all the survey questions and their answers were considered to be valid for further analysis. Out of 85 research participants 22 were males, and 63 females. The majority of the respondents who took part in the research were students (50), the second group of the interviewees were university graduates (3 years and more after the completion of their studies) (19), and the minority of the respondents (11) were recent graduates and a few (5) who did not have a university degree at all.

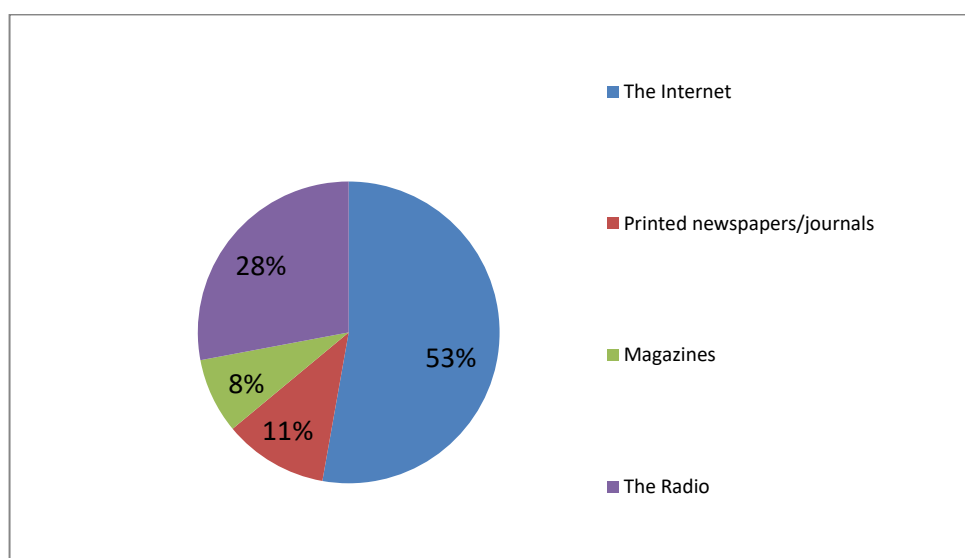
### **3. Empirical Research Data Analysis:**

#### ***3.1. Evaluation of multimodal texts from the readers' perspective***

This section presents the results of the survey of readers viewpoints of printed and online texts, since in the multimodal environment of new technologies the process of reading is totally reshaped. Kress (as cited in Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 2) observes technology-related changes in contemporary life and recognizes four simultaneous change processes, including: communicational changes, where a shift from writing to image, as the dominant way of communication, is noticeable, when image modifies the logic of communicative practices; changes in social power relations, when existing settled hierarchies are being abolished and new ones are being remade; changes in technological affordances, with a transformation in media from verbal information on page to screen; and changing economic structure, when writing is taking up distinctive roles in an economy, in which information plays an important role. Not only is the process of reading being transformed by new technologies, but also the creation of a text has been reformed. Barton and Lee argue that many print-based media channels (including websites) contain multimodal texts that are rather static and are mainly

produced by a single author (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 30). By contrast, in Web 2.0 media users are able to co-create and constantly edit multimodal content with multiple other users at the same time. Web 2.0, according to Barton and Lee, is “web-based applications that allow users to create and publish their own content online” (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 9). The researchers draw attention to the fact that the concurrence of writing spaces in new social media (like Facebook and Twitter) provide users with the opportunities to connect with each other by creating, posting, and sharing of multimodal content, for instance, to share a video from YouTube and post it on Facebook together with a self-generated written description about it (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 30). In spite of all the possibilities that user-generated multimodal resources provide, Barton and Lee argue that “the written word still plays a central role in meaning make on these new sites” (Barton & Lee argue, 2013, p. 30), as even photographs are being discussed by people through written comments. In general, public opinions about communication online are being formed by viewing multimodal content.

As it has been mentioned, the research aimed at finding out what language users’ preferences of reading are. Figure 1 below shows the research participants' answers where they get the news from.



*Figure 1. News sources the respondents get information from.*

It can be noticed that getting news from the Internet distinctly prevails, since all the respondents (85) have chosen this option. As Mažuolienė and Kriaučiūnienė claim, because of the increasing number of digital texts, students of the New Generation read mainly screen-based texts (Mažuolienė & Kriaučiūnienė claim, 2016, p. 2). This could be presumably applied not only to students, but to everyone using the Internet, since rapid development of information

technology influenced language users' reading preferences. The choice to read news online rather than in printed version could be explained by "the decrease in time in which the text is read" (Mažuolienė & Kriauciūnienė, 2016, p. 2), that is caused by people's tendency to search for key words in the text so as to get the main idea faster. Also, loop-reading manner is becoming more popular, when it is possible to move from one page to another, so in case a person is willing to get more information just after finishing to read some article, he/she can easily google it and find more websites providing news-related articles. It could be presumed that selective reading makes it easier for the reader to manage with the immense amount of information available online. The survey revealed that listening to news on the radio is another popular trend nowadays as nearly a half of the research participants (45) acknowledge that they listen to news when they are driving a car, so in case there is no time to read news, a person can be updated on the current affairs while being on the road.

Although printed material seems to be not such a popular source for news (with 18 people reading news from printed newspapers/journals and 13 people reading magazines respectively), another question about reading preferences has revealed different tendencies. The respondents were asked whether they prefer to read a text online or to read printed material in general. The research results found were similar to I. Darginavičienė and A. Janulienė's observation that even though the popularity of digital texts for the studies is increasing, students prefer studying from printed material more rather than reading information online (Darginavičienė & A. Janulienė, 2015, pp. 252-253). Almost a third of the respondents (31) prefer analysing a printed text instead of scrolling the text and reading quickly and less deeply the material on the screen. The most common reasons of this choice were presented in the next question, including:

- "My eyes get tired after reading online for a while";
- "For me, it is more comfortable to read printed texts because I can easily mark something or take it with me wherever I want to";
- "I prefer reading printed text because my eyes don't get tired as quickly while reading online and sometimes it is better to concentrate while reading printed text".

The analysis of the research results revealed that 30 respondents were undecided about their reading preferences by choosing the option "doesn't matter". For instance, there were some reasons provided when the respondents tend to choose one or another type of reading:

- "Printed text is easier for my eyes while reading and it feels nice to hold a paper book in general, but online text is better when I'm on move or have to search for particular info in the text quickly";



- “It depends. If it’s a book, then reading printed text, but if it’s some sort of article, then definitely online - it’s easier to find similar articles and read more on that issue“;
- “Printed text is better for my eyes but text online is easier to carry with me all the time“.

The respondents' answers suggest that reading printed texts requires more time, it is a much safer method of reading for eyes and provides a possibility to make notes close to the text, so for the learning process using this method is more beneficial, as learners can also study the material given without being distracted. Despite these reasons, reading the same text online is more convenient when you are on the move. As 24 interviewees maintain the view that this reading method is more easily accessible, it is a cheaper and faster way for staying updated. Although over a third of the respondents (41) provided reasons explaining their choice of preference, nearly the same number of people did not provide any additional comments (44 respondents).

The other objective of the survey was to establish how the respondents value multimodal practices. Firstly, the research participants were provided with two sentences that differed in font size and were asked to choose which of the two looked more formal visually:

- 1) **Russia intervened in the US presidential election to help Donald Trump, according to CIA officials who briefed American newspapers last night.**
- 2) `Russia intervened in the US presidential election to help Donald Trump, according to CIA officials who briefed American newspapers last night.`

By this question, Barton and Lee’s theory was checked in practice. As the authors argue, the verbal message in newspapers could be interpreted differently because of the design of the visuals or it can be that verbal context affects how visual representation of a text should be interpreted (Barton & Lee. 2013, pp. 29-30). The respondents’ answers to this question revealed that the theory was proved, since the majority of the respondents (79) chose the second sentence that is printed in “bookman old style“ and is considered to be more formal, while the minority (6 respondents) decided that the first sentence, printed in “Comic sans ms“, should be more formal. In general, as T. Slavin explains “Comic sans” font is “non-threatening and their presentation, sign, or document also is meant to be non-threatening, less formal, and not cold”, whereas “bookman old style” is one of the examples of professional font types

(Slavin, 2015). Blogger C. Brandt notices that “Comic sans” uses “a single-story lower-case *a* and simple lower-case *g* rather than letter-press versions of these letters, in theory allowing early readers to decode text more easily” (Brandt, 2013).

By the next question the readers' recognition of important information in the text by more graphic patterns was overviewed. These included: modifications of font (*italics*, **boldface**) and changes in font size. The respondents were asked what attracted their attention in the sentence below, with a given possibility to choose several answers: "*Donald Trump*, the president-**elect**, meets leaders of the intelligence community for an update regarding allegations of Russian hacking of the US presidential election." The results of the respondents answers are provided in Figure 2 below.

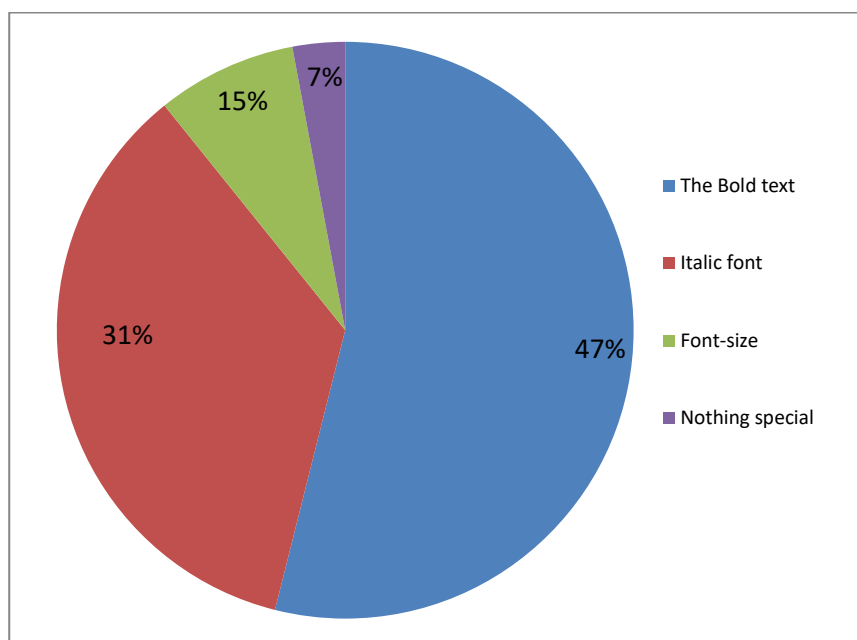
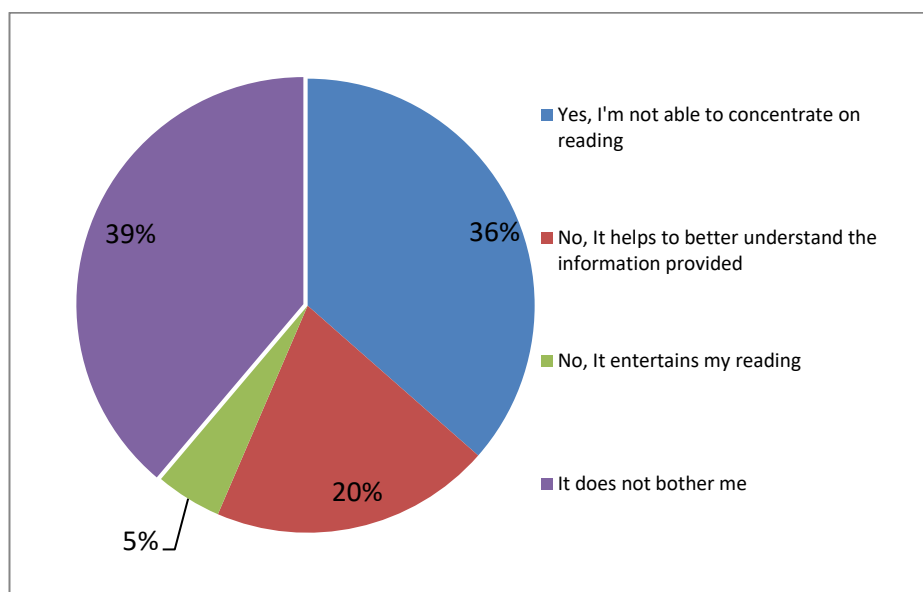


Figure 2. Respondents' recognition of techniques of introducing important details in political articles.

The results of the respondents' answers presented above permit to claim that the most attractive methods for the emphasis of some information reading front-page news seemed to be different font styles- boldface and italics. Bold letters, the option chosen by the majority (55 of the respondents), stand out from a regular text and are usually applied to highlighted keywords that are important to the text content. As it is explained by L. Trask in his Guide to Punctuation online, boldface letters are “used to provide very strong emphasis, as an alternative to italics” (Trask, 1997). Another way to introduce important details is by the use of letters in italics font that was chosen by 36 respondents. Slanted letters, according to Trask, are used for representing contrast or emphasis and do not have much effect on changes in text colours. Font-

size was the least popular means for a text to seem attractive to be analysed (chosen by 8 respondents).

Not only it is important to analyze what details of multimodal text attract the reader's attention, but also to determine whether those details help to understand the text better or otherwise it diverts people's attention away from getting the main idea. The respondents were provided with a question to see whether they find themselves distracted by additional elements in the text, like hyperlinks, video clips or links to similar articles appearing close to the text, or not. The respondents' answers to this question are provided in Figure 3 below.



*Figure 3. The respondents' answers to the question if they find themselves distracted by additional details and hyperlinks while reading*

This question was directed towards analysing online versions of texts. In general, as Mažuolienė and Kriaučiūnienė noticed, “readers spend more time searching and browsing than actually reading deeply and with the necessary attention” (Mažuolienė & Kriaučiūnienė, 2016, p. 2). This is caused by a wide-ranging network of articles and other topics that are offered to read while reading something online (S. Birkerts, 1996, as cited in Mažuolienė & Kriaučiūnienė, 2016, p. 2). Almost a third of the research participants (31 respondents) replied that additional information added to the main text distracts their attention and they cannot concentrate to finish reading the first source. Nearly the same number (33 of the respondents) claimed quite the opposite - additional details to the text do not bother them. 17 respondents see additional details as being helpful to better understand the information provided and the minority (4 respondents) find hyperlinks entertaining their reading.

The respondents' viewpoints of a better realization of a text was also analysed from the perspective of the text layout. The research participants were asked whether the way in which information is arranged on a page could affect how they interpret the main idea of a text or not. Figure 4 below demonstrates the respondents' answers.

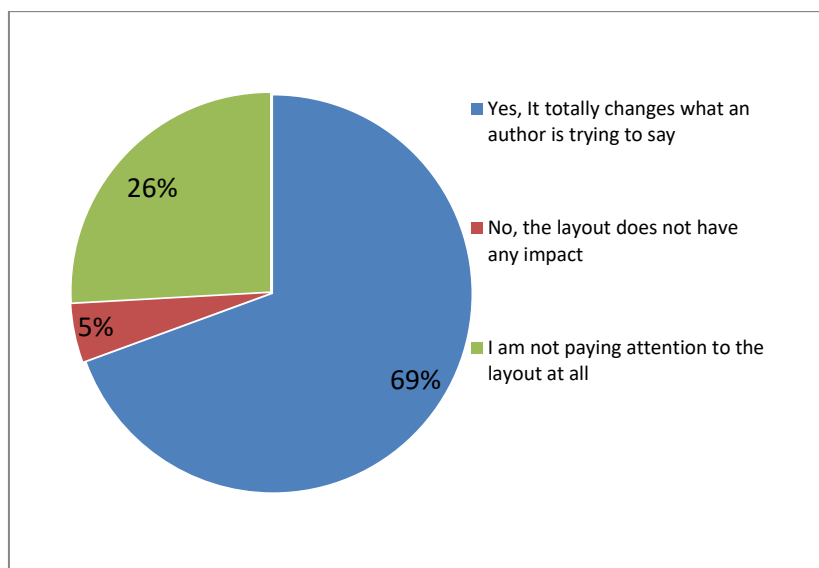


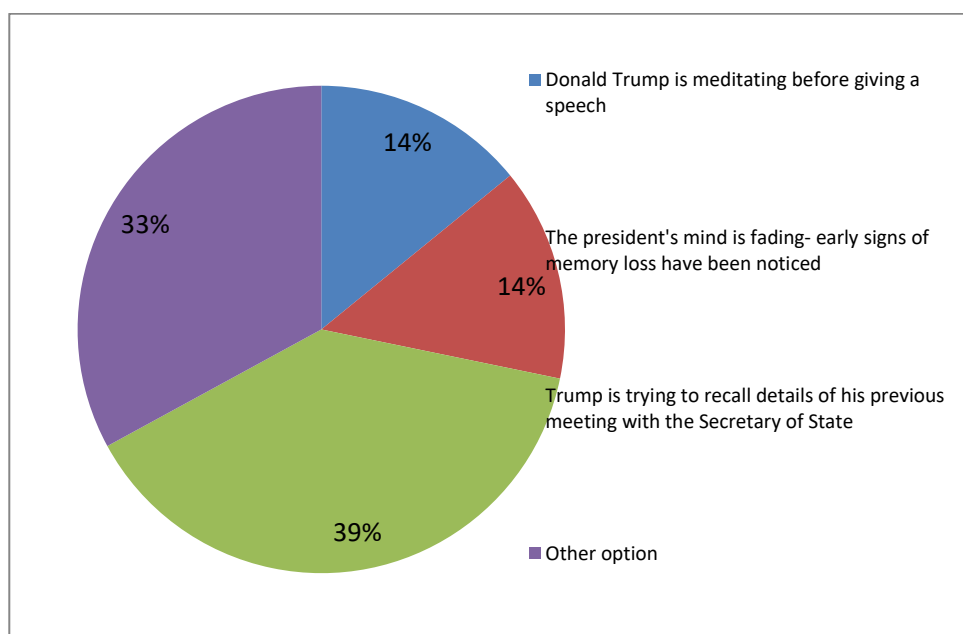
Figure 4. The respondents' views on the effect of the layout of texts on the reading process.

From the data presented in Figure 4 above it seems obvious that for the majority of the respondents (59) text layout creates difficulties to get the idea the author is trying to convey by the text but here another issue could be also raised. It is about the starting point of reading. As Barton and Lee observe about online versions of texts (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 30), "although the layout of different writing spaces is often predetermined by the site designer (online writer), when reading through a web page, different viewers can have different starting points." For instance, in a video-sharing website Youtube someone might choose firstly to watch a video, while at the same time other users might be willing to read comments first before watching the video. The same practice could be applied while reading an article online, as for one reader a text may be more important, but for another may be looking for comments' section first as to read others' opinion about the issue discussed in the text would be a priority. Following these different and at the same time individual reading paths, readers may interpret the meaning of the text differently. There is also another group of the respondents (22) who do not pay attention to the presentation of ideas and they simply read the given information. Very few respondents (4) think that the layout of the text does not have any impact on how they perceive the material while reading.

To successfully interact with and make sense of pictures included in multimodal texts, G. Aiello believes that “it is necessary to account not only for their cultural norms, but also for their perceptual qualities” (G. Aiello, 2006, pp. 89-90, as cited in Serafini, 2010, p. 86). How background of an image changes its interpretation is demonstrated by the respondents’ answers to the next question. The respondents were provided with the picture of the president Donald Trump, taken from an article explaining the issue in greater details, and were asked to choose from 3 opinions of the interpretation of a picture below or write their own answer explaining the main idea that an author is trying to convey.



*Figure 5. “Donald Trump attained a perfect score on a test designed to detect cognitive impairment”, The Sunday Times, January 18 2018.*

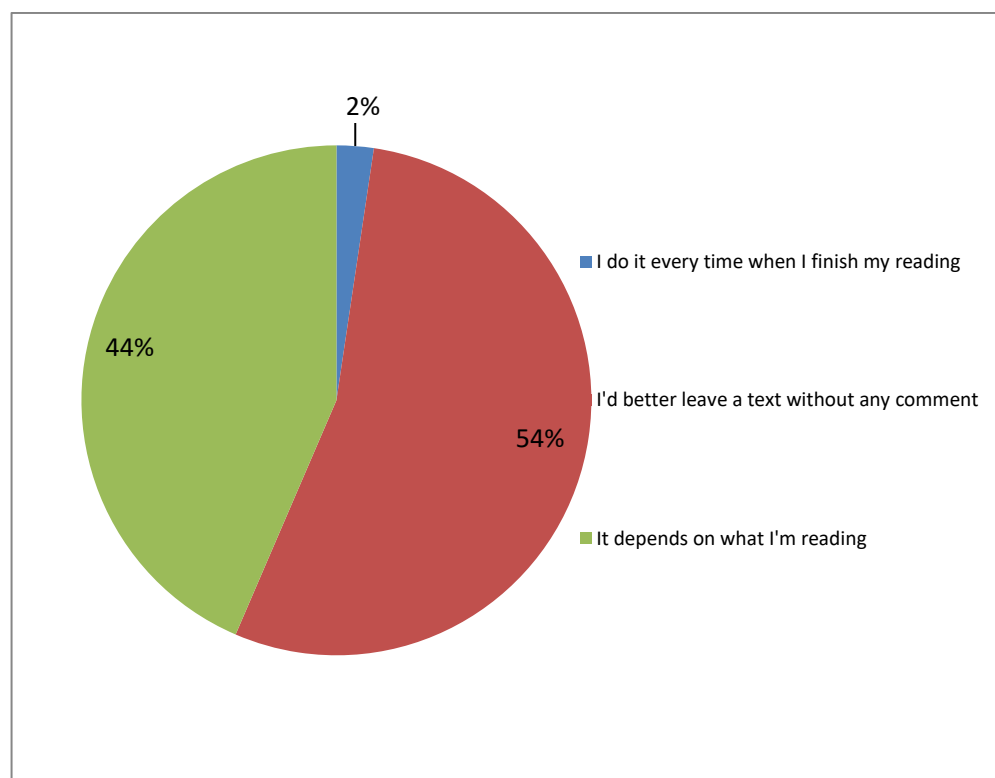


*Figure 6. The respondents views on getting the main idea of the picture.*

The picture above is taken from the article describing Donald Trump’s cognitive test results. As it is introduced in the article online (<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/are-donald->

trumps-test-results-fake-news-xxzgm6zxf), although president of the United States passed the test designed to detect cognitive impairments and to reveal early signs of memory loss, a group of U.S. psychiatrists feels unsure about the president's mental health. This answer was chosen by the minority of the research participants (12 respondents) and was the least popular answer together with another idea that in this picture Donald Trump is meditating before his speech that was selected by another 12 respondents. In this picture the meaning is being conducted by facial expression of the president looking a bit worried but at the same time being away from the outside environment to focus his mind in silence with his eyes closed, also by his fingers' position, as he touches his temples. It could be agreed that his fingers' position caused the most popular answer among the respondents that it was Donald Trump's intentions to recall details of his previous meeting with the colleague from the U.S. state government (chosen by over the third of interviewees (33). Moreover, 28 research participants expressed their own answer about this picture. These answers included, for instance: <Trump is trying to pick up a conversation from across the street. To no avail unfortunately>; <playing tricks with cameramen and electors, pretending how hard he is thinking/working>; <Donald Trump is scratching itchy skin>; <Donald Trump is rubbing his face>; <President is enjoying his presence>. As it can be seen from individual answers, Donald Trump's finger position plays an important role forming the main idea of this picture. This time an assumption could be made that the readers decide to count visual details more rather than analysing social context of the picture in order to understand it.

The last group of questions was related with readers' behaviour in social networks. To see how the research participants express themselves while reading a multimodal text, they were asked if they only read a text or if they take part in writing comments. The majority of the respondents (72) found themselves to be passive readers who simply do some reading and close it afterwards with no further comment. Contrary to the expectations that a multimodal text acts as an alternative for language users to become more socially active and be able to participate in the news' creation process, only 8 acknowledged to leave a comment after some reading, or engage in a discussion, or share the same article in their social media account together with a self-generated description about it. The answers to the next question presented in Figure 7 below show how often the respondents read and/or write comments.



*Figure 7. The respondents' views on writing and/or reading comments of while reading a text online.*

According to Barton & Lee, Web 2.0 spaces share one more important feature, that is commenting systems. It could be found, for example, on *Youtube*, where people interact with each other by leaving comments with one's personal opinion after each other's uploaded content. As the authors agree (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 10), "Commenting is an important act of positioning oneself and others." From the data presented in Figure 7 it seems evident that more than half of the research participants (46 respondents) find themselves to be passive readers not interested in sharing their opinion after reading online. However, over the third (37 respondents) believe that their attitude towards participation in the commentary changes depending on the topic of an article. Usually the research participants are willing to join in the discussion about the topic they care about to know more details from different perspectives. Very few of them (2 respondents) take part in the discussion every time when they finish reading some online articles.

After analysing whether language users are socially active or passive readers and how often they engage in discussions online, the last question was given to see what means are used by the respondents to express themselves in social media.

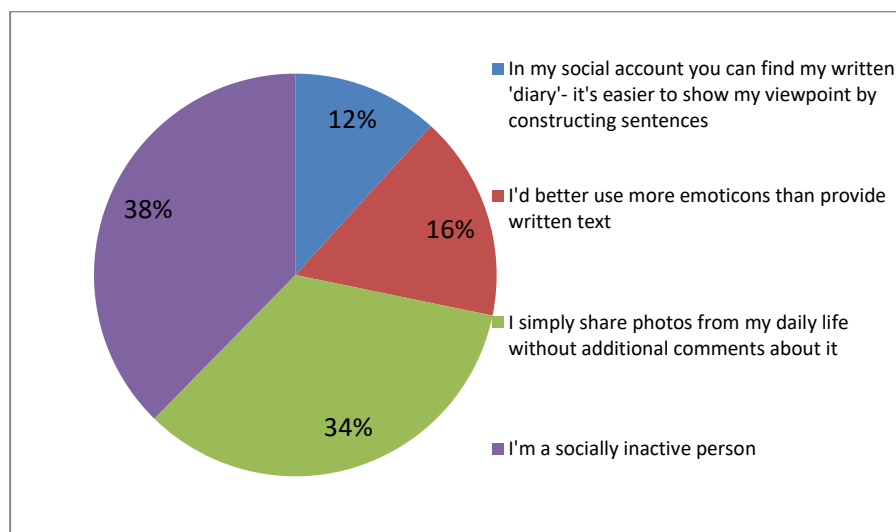


Figure 8. The way the respondents express themselves in their social media accounts.

On the whole, the empirical research data presented in Figure 8 demonstrate that the respondents are quite active but in different ways: they read a text online without leaving any comment showing their opinion about it, neither they are interested to make themselves public by sharing moments from their daily life with others. Although there are 32 respondents who are more passive in social media, this number is close to one group of social media users whose social behaviour is determined by their photos (29 respondents). However, this sharing of pictures goes without verbal information about it, as they prefer modern methods of instantaneous communication. Another example of momentary communication online includes the usage of emoticons chosen by 14 respondents that are becoming more popular not only among youngsters, but also among older people too, as they find it to be an attractive way of showing their feelings. The least popular answer was provided by 10 people who chose to express themselves online by writing posts.

## Conclusions

A questionnaire of 15 items was offered to 85 people to discover the tendencies of language users' reading habits, their evaluation of multimodal practices and how they express themselves online. The analysis of the empirical research into reading preferences revealed that language users mostly get news from the online sources on the Internet as it is faster, easier, also because of Web information being presented in a more attractive way, and in different forms, such as videos or photographs. Apart from the Internet, listening to news on the radio is also one of the predominant choices. Although printed material seems to be a less popular source for news, but, in general, a nearly a third of the respondents prefer reading printed texts



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(31). Reading a printed text is safer for eyes, a reader can also make notes close to a text; whereas online reading is more convenient while travelling. Answers to the questions about multimodal texts have shown that the design of visuals may change the way verbal material is interpreted; also verbal texts have an impact on the readers' evaluation of visuals. To get the reader's attention different font styles are the most effective, especially letters written in a **bold** style. Apart from the visual side, multimodal texts are known for additional links included in the text. For the third of the respondents (33 people) they do not have any influence on their reading. Since this part of questions overviews the realization of the text from multimodal perspective, it has been confirmed that the text layout causes changes in reading habits and difficulties in getting the main idea, to grasp the meaning of images, there is a necessity to pay attention not only to the presentation of objects, but also to the socio-cultural context of the image. The last group of questions about social behaviour revealed that the respondents of this survey are more socially inactive people who determine themselves as passive readers since they simply read a text online without leaving any comment showing their opinion about it, neither they are interested to make themselves public by sharing moments from their daily life with others. If social media users are willing to be active, the best way for showing themselves is to share photos but without verbal information about it, as these days modern methods of instantaneous communication are becoming more popular.

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