

**volume 25, issue 2**

**International Journal  
of**

**MULTILINGUAL  
EDUCATION**

# INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL of MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

E ISSN 1512-3146 (ONLINE VERSION)

ISSN 1987-9601 (PRINT VERSION)

<https://multilinguaeducation.openjournals.ge>

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## **Publisher**

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## **Is the Linguistic Situation in Africa Relatively Stable?**

### **ABSTRACT**

The article explores the complex linguistic landscape of several African nations, focusing on the coexistence of indigenous languages and European languages in official contexts. Despite the rich linguistic diversity in Africa, where approximately 2,000 languages are spoken, only a few have official status, often alongside European languages. The study analyzes five regions: Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar, Central African Republic and South Africa, with an additional mention of Tanzania. Each region's language policies, the role of indigenous languages in education and governance, and the socio-economic factors influencing language use are examined. The findings reveal a trend of diminishing use of indigenous languages in favor of European languages, driven by socio-economic factors and historical contexts.

**Keywords:** *language diversity, indigenous languages, official languages, socio-economic factors, language policy, multilingual education, Africa*

### **Introduction**

The language diversity in Africa is quite impressive: from around 7,000 languages currently in use about 2 thousand is located in Africa (Nigeria alone has approximately 500 languages), and “[o]n the whole, language death appears to be less dramatic on the African continent than in other parts of the world” (Dimmendaal & Voelz, 2007, 598). This is all the more surprising because, partially due to historical reasons, only a few dozen of the indigenous African languages have official status, quite often besides “more developed” European ones, and in many countries, only European languages are in official use (Albaugh, 2014; Heugh, 2018; Odugu & Lemieux, 2019; Ogbonnaya & Els, 2024; Sibanda, 2019; Stoop, 2017).

How is it possible that the African continent keeps so many “living” languages? For example, the population of Europe is about two times smaller but the number of languages is (only) approximately 250, even despite many “language-protecting” measures. Obviously, many factors influence the language preferences of a community, but the goal of this article is to take a closer look into some African regions to analyze the highest and most visible spheres of language distribution (which languages are used in governments, job markets, linguistic landscape, general education) and try to foresee how the situation can change.

In the process of forming the sample for the study, I decided to limit myself to countries that meet the following criteria: a) more than one language has official status (no doubt, real usage is more important than statuses but, in many cases, wide usage of unofficial language is complicated), and these statuses have been established for at least ten years (otherwise, changes might not have fully influenced the situation, as, for instance, in Ethiopia); b) at least one of the official languages is “endemic” (to reduce external factors influencing its “popularity”); c) the corresponding “endemic” languages are not part of dialect continua, as otherwise, the difficulties in identifying the used language increase. It was also decided to leave sign languages out of the current study, as the spheres of their distribution are often somewhat more special.

After applying the above criteria, the sample included five regions:

1. Seychelles with “endemic” Seychellois Creole (French-based), alongside with English and French;
2. Comoros with “endemic” Comorian (Bantu family), alongside with French and Arabic;
3. Madagascar with “endemic” Malagasy (Austronesian family), alongside with French;
4. Central African Republic with “endemic” Sango (a creole language based on Niger-Congo Ngbandi), alongside with French;
5. South Africa with “endemic” Afrikaans (Indo-European family), alongside English as well as Venda, Zulu, Xhosa, Southern Ndebele, Swati, Northern Sotho, Sotho, Tswana, Tsonga (all of them are parts of dialect continua).

Moreover, although Tanzania was not included in the sample (Swahili also has official status in Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, but it is Tanzania that gives the greatest support to it), the language situation there is quite non-trivial and instructive, so I decided to analyze it as well.

My research questions are: What are the factors contributing to the preservation of indigenous languages in Africa despite the dominance of European languages? How do language policies in different African nations impact the use of indigenous languages in education and governance? What role do socio-economic factors play in the language choices of communities in the selected regions? How does the historical context of colonization influence current language dynamics in these regions?

The study reviews existing literature on language diversity in Africa, examining historical contexts, language policies, and socio-economic factors influencing language use in the selected regions. The research focuses on specific regions (Seychelles, Comoros, Madagascar, Central African Republic, South Africa, and Tanzania) to provide in-depth analysis of language dynamics in these

areas. Each case study explores the official status of languages, their use in education and governance, and the socio-economic implications. The article references census data and surveys to provide quantitative insights into language proficiency and usage among the populations in the selected regions. This data helps illustrate trends in language use over time. Moreover, the study examines the language policies in each region, including Constitutions and legal codes, to understand how these policies influence the practical use of languages in various spheres such as education, government and the labor market. By comparing the language situations across different regions, the research identifies common patterns and unique circumstances that influence language dynamics in each context. Overall, these methods combine qualitative and quantitative data to build a comprehensive understanding of the language landscape in the selected African regions.

### **Seychelles (officially – the Republic of Seychelles)**

France established the first permanent settlements on Seychelles in the 18th century and thereafter started to import slaves to these islands from Madagascar and East Africa. In 1794, the archipelago came under the control of the British Empire, which encouraged Indian immigration. In 1976, the Seychelles gained independence.

Population ~ 120 thousand people (2024), territory ~ 457 square kilometers, GDP per capita ~ 21 thousand dollars (2023).

The current (1993) Constitution states that the national languages are Seychellois, English and French, and that citizens can use any of them for any purpose. In addition, English is defined as the sole language of legal proceedings and law writing, except in specially stipulated cases.

The language of official documents is English, with the following exceptions: the Catholic Church issues baptismal and confirmation certificates in French, passports and immigration cards use not only English but also Seychellois, the public service Code of Ethics and the national cultural policy of the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture are written in both Seychellois and English (Zelime, 2022, 57).

The only ministry in which Seychellois is commonly used as a working language in its written form is the Ministry of Local Government and Community Affairs, but others (such as the Ministry of Health, Agriculture and the Environment) sometimes use it alongside English for public information. Oral official communication is dominated by English (in most ministries), Seychellois is used alongside English at lower levels of the administrative hierarchy, and Seychellois is also the primary spoken language in the National Assembly (Zelime, 2022, 57–58).

Despite the widespread use of Seychellois in everyday life, knowledge of it is not mandatory for

civil servants, which is why, for example, nurses often have to act as translators between patients and visiting doctors (Zelime, 2022, 59, 77).

In 1981, Seychellois became the language of instruction in the first four grades, but in 1996 the transition to English began already in the third year of study (Ivanov et al., 2015), and this was largely based on the opinions of teachers (Deutschmann & Zelime, 2022, 72). The National Curriculum Framework allows the use of Seychellois and French in addition to English as “support languages” (Zelime, 2022, 23).

Even though Seychellois is the most familiar language for the vast majority of students, not a single primary school teacher surveyed supported the idea of using it as the language of instruction in grades three and higher, and 96.5% supported introducing English even earlier (including in kindergartens), based on the greater market value of this language (Zelime & Deutschmann, 2018). Mathematics is already taught in English from grade one (Deutschmann & Zelime, 2022, 66).

Difficulties also arise with the use of Seychellois as a “support language”: 80% of inspection reports contain references to the frequent mixing of languages during the teaching process, and as a result, the Ministry of Education has ordered stricter adherence to the language policy envisaged in the curricula (Ministry of Education, 2014, 47).

According to the census data, in 2002, 91.8% of residents aged three years and over spoke Seychellois at home, 4.9% spoke English, 0.8% spoke French, and 2.5% spoke another language; in 2010, the figures were 90.4%, 5.1%, 0.7%, and 3.8%; in 2022, the figures were 85.1%, 8.0%, 0.5%, and 6.4%. The trends are clear.

### **Comoros (officially – the Union of the Comoros)**

France established control over these islands in the 19th century. In 1975, the Comorian State gained independence, but the island of Mayotte remains an overseas department of France.

Population ~ 1 million people (2024), territory ~ 2 thousand square kilometers, GDP per capita ~ 1.5 thousand dollars (2023).

The 1985 Constitution defined French and Arabic as the official languages. The 2001 Constitution established Comorian as the official and national language, French and Arabic as official languages, and, among other things, prescribed the obligation of candidates for deputies to be able to read, write and speak Comorian and French or Arabic.

Later laws defined language requirements for government officials in more detail: candidates for the Assembly of the Union of the Comoros (the country’s legislative body) must read and write in Comorian, French or Arabic perfectly; candidates for the positions of island councilors, mayors and

deputy mayors must read and write in at least two of the three official languages; village heads and district heads must read and write in the national language or one of the official languages. In practice, administrative business is conducted in French and, to a lesser extent, Arabic, although Comorian is also used in oral communication (Ahmed-Chamanga, 2022, 90, 95).

The 2001 Comoros Civil Code prescribes the use of French or Comorian in courts.

The 1984 Comoros Labor Code also contains several language requirements: internal regulations concerning safety and hygiene measures must be written in Comorian, in an official language or in one of the two; collective agreements must be drawn up in one of the official languages; contracts with trainees must be drawn up in one of the official languages and, if possible, in the language of the trainee (the latter requirement is duplicated in the 1988 Act on Trainees).

Of more specific remarks, for example, the Code of Marketing and Distribution of Breast-milk Substitutes allows inscriptions in at least one of the official languages or English, and the National Regulation Authority of Information and Communications Technology only accepts declarations in French. French and Arabic are used on Comorian banknotes and passports. Arabic is widely used in religious contexts (more than 95% of Comorians are Muslims), but its real knowledge is restricted to specialists (Full, 2006, 686).

The wider use of Comorian was further complicated by the controversy over a unified Latin orthography, which was generally agreed on only in 2008; before that, Comorian was mostly written – if at all – in Arabic script (Ahmed-Chamanga, 2022, 88; 90–93). Note also that Comorian is the language of the national anthem.

According to the Education Law of 1994, the language of instruction in primary, secondary, high school and university is French or Arabic (i.e., instruction in Comorian is permitted only in kindergartens). In practice, French continues to be the preferred language for teaching, while Arabic is used mainly in religious education (Ahmed-Chamanga, 2022, 86). The launch of Comorian-language and bilingual (Comorian-French) curricula was planned for 2014, but due to political upheavals, all such initiatives have remained at the experimental level, as of 2020 (Ahmed-Chamanga, 2022, 88–89, 93).

According to the 2003 census, among the population aged 15 and over, “almost everyone” spoke Comorian, 32.1% spoke French, and 7.1% spoke Arabic. Of the same respondents, 41.7% were literate, with 35.3% naming Comorian in Latin as their main written language, 30.6% French, 24.0% Comorian in Arabic, 7.2% Arabic, and 2.9% another.

According to the 2017 census, of the 758,316 residents, 677,246 (89.3%) spoke Comorian, 254,813 (33.6%) spoke French, and 50,117 (6.6%) spoke Arabic. Among the population aged 12 and



over, 55.7% were literate, with 51.7% able to read and write French, 49.6% Comorian in Arabic, 35.2% Comorian in Latin, and 16.5% Arabic.

The more recent census did not set any age limits for the number of speakers (and therefore included infants and those who, due to their age, had not yet fully faced the educational system), but it is possible to estimate that the share of those who speak French has increased somewhat, while the share of those speaking Comorian and Arabic has decreased. Regarding the literacy rate, it can be noted that Comorian in Latin remained at the same level, while the other variants have grown approximately twofold, which is probably mainly due to the educational situation.

Nevertheless, the position of the Comorian language remains relatively stable, which supposedly can be explained by the socio-economic factors: according to World Bank data for 2013, primary schools in Comoros were attended only by 81.4% of children of the corresponding age, and as for secondary schools, this figure amounted to 47.3%. It is also indicative that as of 2017, only 55.7% of residents aged 12 and older were literate.

### **Madagascar (officially – the Republic of Madagascar)**

In the 19th century, Madagascar came under French control. It became independent in 1960.

Population ~ 32 million (2024), territory ~ 593 thousand square kilometers, GDP per capita ~ 529 dollars (2023).

The 1958 Constitution named Malagasy and French as official languages. The 1992 Constitution does not mention official languages but defines Malagasy as the national language. The 2007 Constitution established Malagasy, French, and English as official languages. The current (2010) Constitution recognizes Malagasy as the national language, and Malagasy and French as official ones.

In practice, French dominates the official sphere and the labor market: almost every job advertisement requires a good command of written and spoken French (Dahl, 2011, 69, 71).

After independence, French remained the language of instruction until 1972, when primary and secondary education was transferred to Malagasy, but in 1992 there was a return to French. Since 2008, a system has been implemented according to which the first five grades are taught in Malagasy, the sixth and seventh grades are taught in Malagasy and French, and then the so-called scientific subjects (mathematics, sciences of life and soil, technology) are taught in French, and the other subjects (geography and history) in Malagasy (Dahl, 2011, 51, 62, 68).

At the same time, those who can afford it enroll their children in kindergartens and so-called *écoles d'expression française* as early as possible to benefit from immersion in French (Dahl, 2011, 67).

According to the 1993 census, of the 8,299,743 inhabitants aged ten years and older, 3,813,367 (45.9%) were literate; 2,401,439 (29.0%) were literate in Malagasy only, 1,348,304 (16.2%) were literate in Malagasy and another language, and 63,624 (0.8%) were literate in another language only. Thus, in 1993, 45.2% of the population aged ten years and older could read and write Malagasy, and for French this figure was no more than 17.0% (since “other language” may not always mean French).

According to the 2018 census, among the inhabitants aged three years and older, 99.9% speak Malagasy and 23.6% speak French; among residents aged eleven years and older, 77.0% are literate in Malagasy and 36.8% in French. While French is obviously on the rise, the positions of Malagasy are quite safe, but Madagascar’s economic situation is even worse than in Comoros, which can be one of the major factors preventing language shift.

### **Central African Republic**

The future Central African Republic came under French control at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. It gained independence in 1960.

Population ~ 5.5 million (2024), territory ~ 623 thousand square kilometers, GDP per capita ~ 539 dollars (2023).

In 1963, French became the official language, Sango – the national language, in 1991 Sango also received the official language status. The share of French in administrative services is about 80%, knowledge of written French is a prerequisite for career advancement (Beyom et al., 2014, 114).

Legislative attempts to make Sango the language of school education have been ongoing since 1997, but except for some experimental programs, as of 2021 this area uses only French (Couralet, 2022, 5–6).

It is difficult to find reliable statistics on language proficiency in the Central African Republic, but according to the survey led by Robert Beyom, 93% of residents speak Sango, 21% speak French, and 7% speak neither Sango nor French (Beyom et al., 2014, 114); with the caveat that, given the presence of French in various spheres, many people have at least a basic knowledge of it (Steien et al., 2016, 236).

However, the low presence of French outside the educational system and the high unemployment rate reduces the motivation to learn it (Beyom et al., 2014, 115–116). According to the 2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, just over 40% of young people aged 20 to 24 had completed primary education and only one in six had completed lower secondary education, while according to the 2018–2019 Early Grade Reading Assessment carried out in the Bangui School Inspectorate (the least disadvantaged one), 57% of grade 2 students, 41% of grade 3 students, and 20% in grade 4 students

could not read a single familiar word in one minute (Couralet, 2022, 3).

It is also worth noting that in recent decades, the country has been experiencing regular military actions. In such a context, many people probably do not encounter official language policies very often, and this situation is not very conducive to changing the language of communication.

### **South Africa (officially – the Republic of South Africa)**

The first Dutch colonists began arriving in the territory of the future South African Republic in the 17th century. In 1795, these lands came under British control; at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the desire of the Netherlands to maintain its influence led to the Anglo-Boer Wars. In 1961, the South African Republic gained independence.

Population ~ 62 million people (2022), territory ~ 1.2 million square kilometers, GDP per capita ~ 6 thousand dollars (2024).

After independence, English and Afrikaans were used as official languages. The 1996 Constitution added nine indigenous languages (Venda, Zulu, Xhosa, Southern Ndebele, Swati, Northern Sotho, Sesotho, Tswana, Tsonga) and gave government officials the option to use any of the final eleven in their work. In 2012, the Use of Official Languages Act was passed, which obliges government agencies and public organizations to use at least two official languages in their work.

Currently, the government documents and the linguistic landscape use different languages (depending on the language preferences in a particular region), and the Parliament and all nine provincial legislatures regularly use interpretation services (Hlengwa-Selepe, 2024, 714). However, English remains dominant in most areas, and in the absence of clear regulatory guidelines and accountability for non-compliance, other languages are often neglected (Hlengwa-Selepe, 2024, 720).

According to the National Income Dynamics Study, among men (of African descent) with employment in 2008, those who reported being able to read and write very well in English earned over 50 percent more, on average, than other men with similar characteristics but who provided lower self-reports of English language ability (Posel et al., 2022, 777). Moreover, while it is not impossible to be wealthy in South Africa without knowledge of the English language, it is safe to say that this constitutes an exception (Rudwick, 2022, 79).

Even though, according to the website of the National Department of Basic Education, starting from the fourth grade, English dominates as the language of education (in 2007, 79.1% of fourth-graders studied in English, with Afrikaans in second place at 12.3%), in primary school the dynamics for the “endemics” are generally favorable: in 2007, only 21.8% of first-graders, 23.8% of second-graders and 27.7% of third-graders studied in English (in 1998 – 31.7%, 35.3% and 40.9%,

respectively), while for Afrikaans these same figures looked like 9.5%, 9.6% and 9.9% (in 1998 – 5.1%, 5.7% and 6.7%). Code-switching in classes is also quite common (Taylor et al., 2014, 41).

However, many parents insist that English be used as the language of teaching (Coetzee-Van Rooy, 2022, 558; Guzula, 2022, 27), and if it's possible (financially), try to send their children to English-language schools (De Klerk, 2002; Bangeni & Kapp 2007; Hunter, 2019; du Plessis & du Plessis, 2023; Hlengwa-Selepe, 2024), even despite numerous reports of teachers' inadequate English skills (du Plessis & du Plessis, 2023, 114).

According to the censuses, in 1996, English was the language of home communication for 8.7% of respondents, in 2001 for 8.3%, in 2011 for 9.7%, in 2022 for 8.7%; Afrikaans – for 14.5%, 13.4%, 13.5% and 10.6%, respectively. Based on the situation described above, the decrease in the number of Afrikaans speakers is quite expected, but how is it possible to explain the “stability” of English, especially given the numerous mentions of the population's rejection of indigenous languages, in particular (Diko, 2023, 307; Seethal, 2023, 181–182; Hlengwa-Selepe, 2024, 717–718)?

One of the factors is changes in the racial composition of the population: for example, in 1996, 11.0% of South Africa's population was white, while in 2022 only 7.3%. Secondly, according to the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study, 78% of South African fourth graders have significant reading difficulties in any language (Thuketana & Makgabo, 2022, 81), and according to the 2022 census, 49.4% of respondents aged 20 and above had not completed secondary school.

Finally, according to the General Household Surveys, in 2017 and 2018, over 80% of South Africans most often spoke the same language outside the home as they did at home, meaning the population remains largely segregated (at least linguistically), and although overall English proficiency is increasing, for the time being, it is not sufficient for the mass ‘anglicization’ of families (Posel et al., 2022).

### **Tanzania (officially – the United Republic of Tanzania)**

In 1919, the future Tanzania came under British control. Tanganyika (the mainland of today's Tanzania) gained independence in 1961, Zanzibar – in 1963, and in 1964 they formed the United Republic of Tanzania.

Population ~ 67 million people (2024), territory ~ 947 thousand square kilometers, GDP per capita ~ 1 thousand dollars (2024).

In the 1962 Constitution, Swahili was named the national language, and Swahili and English named the official languages. In practice, Swahili dominates in the social and political spheres and is the main language in the labor market (Telli, 2014, 10; Wan, 2021, 157, 160, 164); most employment

opportunities for English speakers are provided in the private sector and in dealing with foreigners (Mapunda, 2022, 18).

Some more specific examples: during election campaigns, the use of Swahili is prescribed (if necessary, it's also possible to use an interpreter) (Tanzania, 2010); in parliament, Swahili is used as a spoken language, English is used for writing laws; in the courts, especially in the higher courts, English is the working language (Dzahene-Quarshie, 2011, 32). However, according to the data of recent years, Swahili has become dominant in the courts at all levels (Maganda, 2024, 60–61).

Swahili is the language of two preparatory classes and seven grades of primary school; from secondary school onwards, the language of instruction is English (The United, 1995, 12, 101–102). These regulations are quite strict (the use of Swahili can be punished in secondary schools in the same way as the use of local languages in primary schools), but the mixing of languages (especially Swahili and English) during the educational process for better understanding of the material is also quite common (Mpemba, 2007, 93–94; Muzale & Rugemalira, 2008, 69; Tibategeza, 2010, 235, 240; Swai, 2023, 37).

Despite numerous discussions about advantages of using Swahili at all levels of education (one of the reasons being poor knowledge of English by students and teachers (Tibategeza & du Plessis 2021, 159–160)), many researchers (Ulmer et al., 2023, 1385; Swai, 2023, 37, 40; Foster, 2023, 133–134; Maganda, 2024, 49, among others) note that teachers as well as parents and students support retention of English as the language of instruction for socio-economic reasons.

In terms of language proficiency, the following estimates were found: for 10% of Tanzanians, Swahili is their first language, for 90%, it is their second language (Webb & Kembo-Sure, 2000, 51); more than 90% of Tanzanians speak Swahili (Marah-Hanak, 2011, 78); approximately 90% of Tanzanians speak Swahili, less than 15% speak English (Petzell, 2012); Swahili is spoken by 90% to 99% of Tanzanians, while English is spoken by about 5% (Ulmer et al., 2023, 5); of the 47 million Tanzanians who speak Swahili, for 15 million it is their first language, for 32 million it is their second language, and 6 million Tanzanians speak English as a second language (USAID, 2020, 4).

It is also worth mentioning that the increase in the number of speakers of Swahili and, to a much lesser extent, English occurs at the expense of speakers of many (up to 150 (Tibategeza & du Plessis, 2021, 152–153)) other local languages (Simango, 2006, 1967; Brenzinger, 2007, 196), especially in the cities (Marten, 2006, 1026; Tibategeza & du Plessis, 2021, 153–154). In addition to the above factors, these languages are also under pressure in other areas: for example, the Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority only allows broadcasting in Swahili and English, except in specially permitted cases (Tanzania Communications Regulatory Authority, 2005, 7); it is extremely

difficult to obtain permission to publish newspapers in other local languages (Muzale & Rugemalira, 2008, 69); they are not represented in the linguistic landscape of the country (Mdukula, 2021, 80) and not used even to write the minutes of village meetings although people at such meetings generally use their home languages (Tibategeza & du Plessis, 2021, 154).

Nevertheless, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that at the moment Tanzania remains a relatively backward country, as evidenced at least by the fact that only 20% of primary school graduates continue their education in secondary school (Maganda, 2024, 49). If social well-being increases, access to English may also increase, with all the attendant consequences.

## **Conclusions**

The study highlights the intricate relationship between language, culture, and socio-economic circumstances in Africa. While indigenous languages remain integral to local identity, their usage is increasingly threatened by the dominance of European languages in official domains. The analysis underscores the need for more effective language policies that promote and protect indigenous languages in education and governance to foster cultural diversity and social cohesion in the face of globalization and economic pressures.

The results of the study show that Africa is not a strange exception to the global trends of declining linguistic diversity, but an important factor contributing to the relative functional preservation of African languages is the difficult socio-economic situation in many regions. Still, while positions of some official languages remain relatively stable, in other cases, dynamics can be much worse. Moreover, although the current level of the economy and the pace of development in many African countries remain low, some progress is nevertheless present, and even if this does not pose a direct threat to most languages at the moment, without protective measures in language policy, the situation is going to become less favorable.



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## **Affixes of nouns in Georgian Sign Language (GESL)**

### **ABSTRACT**

The Sign Languages mostly have simultaneous or synchronic morphology, which means that signs change their phonological features to display grammatical categories, although Georgian sign language (GESL) can be described as a language of a mixed morphology using both sequential and simultaneous means. The presented paper describes the derivational and flexional affixes of GESL nouns. It also gives the recommendations for teaching the nouns at Deaf schools in Georgia.

**Keywords:** *Georgian Sign Language, GESL, nouns, affix, sign languages, morphology.*

### **Introduction**

Georgian sign language (GESL) is a language of Deaf and hard of hearing people in Georgia. Their number is about 2500 in total. GESL is an understudied language and lacks teaching methodology. There are three Deaf schools in the country – in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi. These schools have many different kinds of problems in teaching GESL. The presented paper offers the systemic teaching frame for GESL nouns.

The presented paper introduces the revealed derivational and inflectional affixes of GESL (Makharoblidze, 2012, 2015, 2019, 2023), including the frequency of the revealed nominal affix positions.

The paper begins with ‘Introduction’ describing the structure of the paper, followed by the Chapter 2 – ‘Method’. The next part is Chapter 3 – ‘Theory’ and then comes Chapter 4 ‘GESL nominal affixes’ introducing the revealed nominal affixes. This chapter has three subchapters: Derivational affixes, Inflectional affixes and Nominal affixes in free narratives. The Chapter 5 is ‘Teaching GESL nouns’ where one can find the general frames for teaching GESL nouns at Georgian Deaf school. The last, Chapter 6 is ‘Conclusion’. At the end of the presented paper there is ‘Acknowledgements’ followed by ‘References’ as well.

## Method

The method of the research is analytical-descriptive and also didactic, as it concerns teaching GESL nouns at Deaf schools in Georgia.

Data-collecting methodology was performed with elicitation. I had five native signers, at least the third generation from the Deaf families, the members of Tbilisi Deaf community. I also used the free narrative data of GESL laboratory at Ilia State University. This data was collected during the different projects on GESL studies. I used random material to check the elicited data in free signing process.

Limitations of the research concerns the location limitations. The research is limited to Tbilisi community.

It worth noting, that the data-collection was carried out according to the standard of ethic norms of European Union. The Deaf GESL sources have signed informed consent forms granting us the rights to use the material for a variety of scholarly purposes.

## Theory

The Sign Languages mostly have simultaneous or synchronic morphology, which means that signs change their phonological features to display grammatical categories. Affixes pass the way of grammaticalization (Mier, 2012, Zeshan, 2004, Wilcox, 2007, etc). However, in some Sign languages, such as GESL, the share of sequential morphology is growing rapidly. One of the explanations of this circumstance can be the influence of spoken Georgian, but very often the sequential units of GESL do not match those of spoken Georgian (Makharoblidze, 2018). GESL can be described as a language of a mixed morphology using both sequential and simultaneous means (Makharoblidze, 2023).

Speaking of nouns, it should be noted that in sign languages, sometimes nouns and verbs may have common signs, and it is not always easy to distinguish which part of speech the sign belongs to, and nominal affixes can distinguish nouns from verbs. GESL shows very productive derivational affixes as well as inflectional affixes.

The processes of affixation in sign languages have been studied by number of linguists. Usually, Affixes pass the way of grammaticalization (Hopper and Traugott, 2003, Haspelmath, 2004, Bybee, 2003, Diwald, 2011, Brinton and Traugott, 2005, Janzen, 2012, Hopper, 1991). In my previous papers I described the criteria for morphological affix in sign languages:

- A sign must be delexicalized and grammaticalized as well, which means that lexical meaning is faded;
- A sign must be erosive, which means having changes in dynamics or maybe two-handed sign becomes one-handed;

- A sign must have a fixed position, which means being fixed before another sign or after another sign;
- A sign should have a clear morphosemantic meaning – adding this sign should add specific semantic to the word (Makharoblidze & Archvadze, 2022).

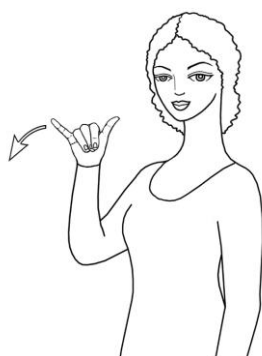
The nominal suffixes discussed in the presented paper meet the above-mentioned criteria – all affixal signs have clear semantics, all are delexicalized, most of them are erosive and have fixed positions.

### GESL nominal affixes

**Derivational affixes.** Very frequent are the affixes of negation in GESL. The nominal negation in this language usually appears with two negative particles: NO/NOT – *ara/ar* and NO/NOT *vera/ver* less categorical with modal flavor. The latter comes from spoken Georgian, and operates the same way as in spoken Georgian.



**Fig. 1.** Negative particle ARA/AR



**Fig. 2.** Negative particle VERA/VER

These above-mentioned negative affixes usually appear after nouns, while the nominal negative affixes EMPTY and WITHOUT may also appear before nouns:

**Fig. 3.** Colorless

Figure 3 shows the adjective COLORLESS. Its first part is WITHOUT, and the second part is a noun COLOR. This negative affix has a synonymic form:

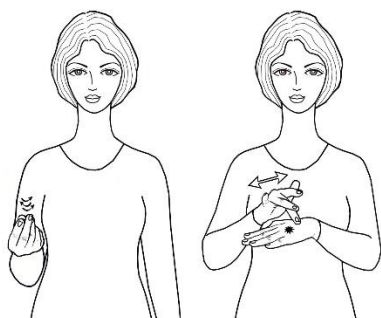
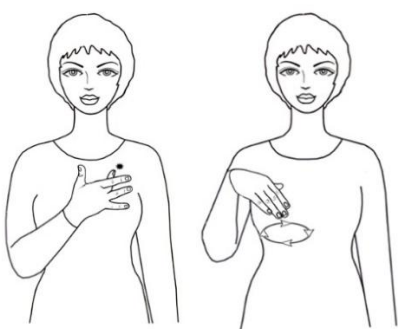
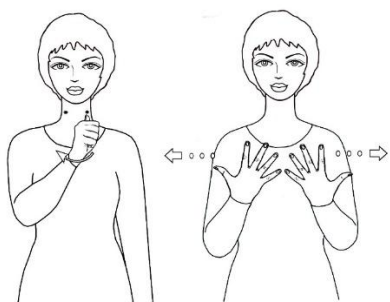
**Fig.4.** Penniles

Figure 4 presents a sign with two parts. Its first part is MONEY, the second part is WITHOUT. As we can see, in this example the negative affix follows the main lexical sign. This is more canonical, although the place-changing can happen, as GESL is not yet a standardized language.

**Fig. 5.** Heartless

The sign on Figure 5 consists of two parts: HEART and EMPTY. The negative affix here follows the main lexical sign.

The examples above produce negative adjectives from nouns, while the following examples show the derived nouns:



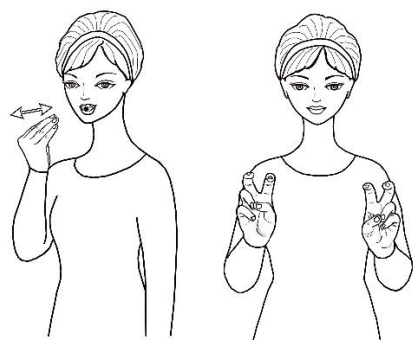
**Fig. 6.** Fruit

Figure 6 shows a sign with two parts. The first sign is FRUIT and the second sign is DIVERSITY. This latter is the nominal affix expressing the congregation/plurality/variability and/or diversity of a noun-form meaning. The next is the affix of destination on Figure 7:



**Fig. 7.** Agency

The first sign is the lexical AGENT and the second part is the affix of possessive-purpose destination/belonging (Makharoblidze & Archvadze, 2022). Literary it will sound as 'Agent for'. The next figure shows the same affix:



**Fig.8.** Food

Figure 8 displays the two signs. The lexical EAT is followed by the affix of destination.





**Fig. 9.** Poet

Figure 9 shows widely accepted word production frame in sign languages. The first sign is the lexical sign POETRY and the second sign is the sign for HUMAN. This latter is known as a classifier in sing languages. It is usually used to produce the nouns denoting the profession and/or craft. Interestingly, the same suffix appears for Ergative case in GESL marking only human-class subjects.

**Inflectional affixes.** The above-discussed affixes are affixes of dirvation. GESL also has the affixes of flexion, as we can see on Table 1:

Ergative	Dative	Genitive	Vocative

**Table 1.** Case markers in GESL

Ergative maker is fully influenced from spoken Georgian and only a very little number of Deaf signers in Tbilisi, use it. Unlike spoken Georgian, in GESL this marker appears rarely, and only with human-class subjects, as noted above.

Dative case marker is semantically influenced from spoken Georgian, but this is a diectic sign, and when the indirect object does not show malefactive or benefactive forms (Makharoblidze 2015), this diectic sign can appear after nouns refering to indirect object. Just like the Ergative case marker, the marker of dative can appear only with himan-class animate nouns.

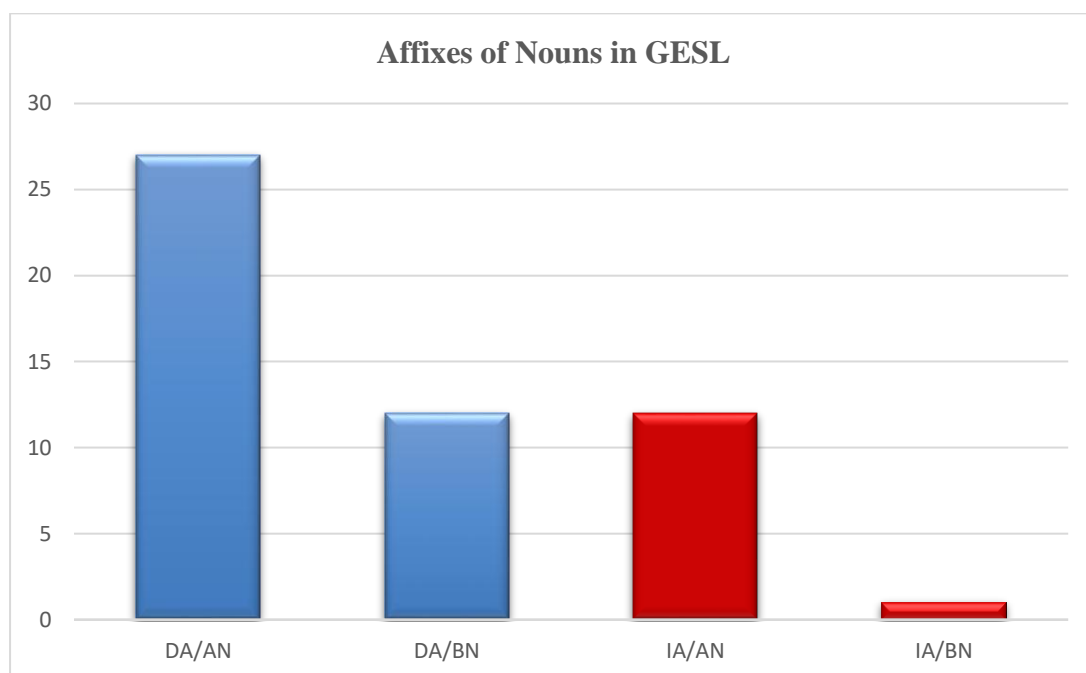
Genetive case marker is the original affix for GESL. It is not influenced from spoken Georgian. It usually appears after the possessor, although it is greatly depending on the class category of the noun

(see the upcoming paper of Makharoblidze, Pfau, Steibach).

Vocative is also original for GESL. However, many linguists argue that vocative cannot be considered as a case even in spoken languages.

Indirect object markers (of benefactive and malefactive) also can be interpreted as case markers, since they appear at the nouns functioning as indirect object (Makharoblidze, 2015).

**Nominal affixes in free narratives.** I checked the elicited results with free narrative data, i.e free signing process. I took random material from GESL laboratory data at Ilia State University. Random 10 minutes from the different videos were taken for analysis. This was 40 minutes of free signing process in total. Chart 1 below presents the frequency of usage of derivational (DA)<sup>1</sup> and inflectional affixes (IA) before (BN) and after (AN) the nouns:



**Chart 1.** Nominal affixes in GESL

In this data – random 40 minutes of GESL free signing process, derivational affixes after nouns DA/AN appeared 27 times, before nouns (DA/BN) I met the 12 cases. Inflectional affixes after nouns IA/AN were 10 examples and only one was an example of inflectional affix before the noun IA/BN.

<sup>1</sup> DA – Derivation affixes, IA – Inflexional affixes, BN – Before nouns, AN – After nouns

As we can see from Chart 1, the derivational affixes are more frequent compared with inflexional suffixes. The inflexional affixes mostly are used after nouns, while derivational affixes may appear before nouns as well.

### **Teaching GESL nouns**

As it is noted above, there are three Deaf schools in Georgia in Tbilisi, Kutaisi and Batumi. Teaching the GESL nouns is one of the most important issue in GESL teaching process. Nouns should be taught systemic, giving the full information about the derivational and inflexional affixes. This approach for teaching mixed-type morphology, can be considered the key to GESL nominal grammar. I recommend omitting the ergative case in teaching process, since it is very much influenced case from spoken Georgian. In order to reduce this influence, dative as diectic and partly influenced case, also can be omitted. Thus, the teaching paradigm of GESL noun cases will be the following:

Nominative – with zero marker

Genitive – with marker / GC

Vocative – with marker / VC

### **Conclusion**

Bilingual education is challenging, and it is very important to find the right points in teaching. In Deaf schools of Georgia the mixed-type morphology of GESL must be explained in detail with the proper examples in comparison with spoken Georgian system. Nouns in GESL should be explained in a systemic way, explaining the form and meaning of the above-discussed derivational and inflexional affixes in GESL. It should be also noted that implementing the GESL research results in the teaching process must be absolutely mandatory for Deaf schools in Georgia.

### **Acknowledgment**

This work was supported by Shota Rustaveli National Scientific Foundation of Georgia (SRNSFN) 0FR-22-254. The Georgian Sign language nominal morphology]

I would like to express my gratitude to the members of The Union of Deaf Tbilisi office, who helped me in this research.

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## **VP-Hypostasis in the Russian Green Man (ихтамнет)-Discourse**

### **ABSTRACT**

Abstract: This article analyzes the linguistic phenomenon of VP-hypostasis within the context of the Russian discourse surrounding *ixtamnet* (“they are not there”)—a phrase that emerged during the Ukraine conflict as a discursive tool to obscure the presence of Russian troops. VP-hypostases are syntactic constructions that morphologically resemble phrases but function discursively as self-contained units of meaning. The author demonstrates how *ixtamnet* serves as a discourse trigger, generating collective knowledge and legitimizing political narratives. Using corpus linguistic methods, particularly word and phrase embeddings, semantic networks are revealed that show the term’s discursive linkage to concepts such as “Donbass,” “Wagner Group,” and “mercenary.” The study highlights the performative and ironic character of such hypostases in political language and contrasts them with similar constructions in other languages. VP-hypostases are interpreted as discourse-focusing markers that encode complex social meanings within minimal linguistic form. Keywords: VP-hypostasis, discourse linguistics, corpus linguistics, word embeddings, discourse trigger, language ideology, phrase formation.

**Keywords:** *Concept, Stereotypes, National character, Multicultural aspects, Conceptual worldview*

### **Introduction**

The term “VP-Hypostasis” is used in this research project to describe certain forms of phrasal formations - phrasal composites - whose actual syntactic status does not correspond to their morphological structure. The sentence hypostases represent something different externally than their internal structure. In the present research project, “VP-Hypostasis” is understood as both an object and a process. As an object (result of a process), “VP-Hypostasis” can be defined as a finite phrase (i.e. contains V+fin obligatory) that can syntactically assume two of two possible positions in the NP: the position of the head noun (1) and the position of the subordinate member of the head noun (e.g. attribute) (2). As a process, “VP-Hypostasis” represents a process in which the syntactic status of a sentence is set aside and morphologically re-equipped in order to occupy the stated positions in the NP in a grammatically well-formed way.

The corresponding question clusters on the discuss functions of the VP-Hypostasis can be drawn up as follows:

- In what functional way do the sentence hypostases and discourses interlock?
- What requirements must the VP-Hypostasis fulfil in the role of a "discourse trigger"?
- How can you recognize the "discourse ability" of a VP-Hypostasis?
- What is the relationship between the sentence hypostases with and without the "discourse function"?

The methodological approach of this work is based on the conviction that the explanation of the functions of linguistic phenomena can only succeed if its manifestations are presented as fully as possible within the framework of an empirical description. Such a presentation of manifestations would make the second methodological step - comparison - possible in the first place. The *tertium comparationis* of the present study is formed by the phrasal composites, which necessarily indicate a finite coinage (verb tense) (VP-Hypostasis). The purpose of projecting the tertium onto different languages is not to find and describe corresponding (adequate) syntactic structures, but rather equivalent functional structures. When comparing the hands on the wrists of one and the same person, one does not compare the color, formal characteristics or number and position of the fingers, but the function of "catching" and/or "grasping", to which the hands owe their formal characteristics. Since the functions of the sentence hypostases are in the foreground, the description of them does not aim for abstract generalizations, but tries to include the specific interactional frameworks. When comparing sentence hypostases in different languages, attention is paid to the possible common communicative functions with a view to their socio-cultural backgrounds.

The methods for data acquisition form the foreground of the battery of methods. In the context of the "corpus linguistic turn" in linguistics, electronic language databases and the corresponding corpus linguistic methods of data search and analysis represent the main methodological tools of the work. These include the automated and algorithm-based possibilities of creating electronic language resources (e.g. web crawlers) and using existing databases (corpus tools in general). An essential corpus linguistic method in this work focuses on finding a possible connection between the discourse structures and the keyword capability of sentence hypostases. Since this goal requires reference to the semantics and the communicative meaning of the sentence hypostases, the word embedding method is the most suitable method for examination in the present study. The fact that the technical tools used do not cover all the languages relevant to this work means that their use must be limited accordingly, although efforts are made to ensure uniformity. Word embedding of the term *kudze ḱaci* as uni-gram [*kudze\_ḱaci*] in the vector-based Georgian-language web corpus reveals the several semantic similarities with the terms (Figure (1)):

საპროტესტოდ /saprotestod/ "to protest"

ბარიკადებზე /barikadebze/ "on the barricades"

განგაშის ზარები /gangašis zarebi/ "Alarm bells"

ერთიანი ფრონტი /ertiani pront'i/ "with the united front"



Figure (1). Word embedding /kudze\_kaci/ as WordCloud

The VP-Hypostasis *kudze kaci* *zaxili* "Everyone stand up! - Rufe" belongs to the discourse cluster "Mobilization" and "Counting the mobilized". The semantically and communicatively adequate interpretation of the phrase *kudze kaci!* only appears possible in connection with the cultural practice of its use. The consolidation and significance of this practice allows the lexical reduction and interpretation of the communicative meaning.

The structural analysis of VP hypostasis in Georgian is facilitated by the morphological feature of suffixal attachment of the case marker to the end of the whole phrase. The data set shows a tendency in the use of VP hypostases that corresponds to the underlying discursive status of the constructions: VP hypostases represent more or less established discourse in a language, and only this allows their use.

### VP-Hypostasis in the Russian Green Men (ихтамнет) discourse

The VP-Hypostasis from Russian shows a current example for the development of the corresponding linguistic discourse. The adequate interpretation of the meaning of the collapsed VP-Hypostasis in Russian needs to be clarified:

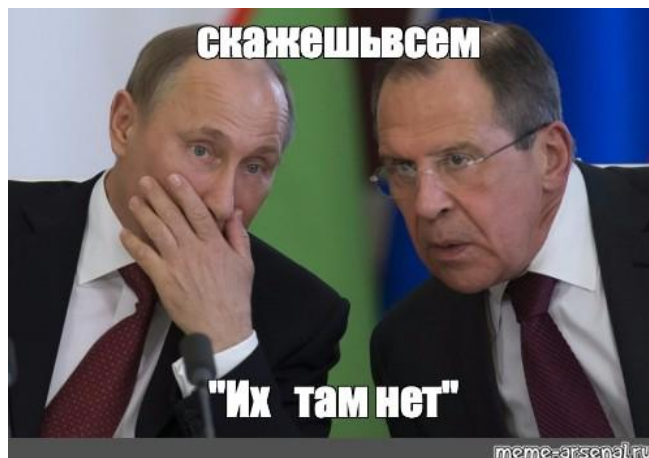
(1) (Russ)

*uxmamhem* /ixte'mnjet/ < *ux+mam+hem* /ix+/tam/+/njet/ they+(are)+there+not



*ихтамнет* /ixtamnjet/ is considered a neologism in Russian resulting from the constant rejection of Russia's military presence in the so-called hybrid wars against individual countries and especially during the intervention in Crimea and the war in the Donets Basin<sup>1</sup>. In the media, the term gained popularity and became the common name for Russian military personnel with no signs of recognition involved in an undeclared war against Ukraine.

For the first time, the concept of *ихтамнет* /ixtamnjet/ was formulated on March 5, 2014 by Russian President Vladimir Putin (Figure 2) at a press conference in response to questions



**Figure (2).** "You tell everyone "you're not there"".

Source: meme-arsenal.

about the affiliation of the military that annexed Crimea. He stated that there were no Russian soldiers there. One of many ways of expressing this meaning in Russian is *их там нет* "they+(are)+there+not". The explosive nature of this statement lay in the political events that later became known as the "Crimean crisis" and the "annexation of Crimea". As the Russian leadership was generally suspected of being behind the events, the first public opportunity was taken to ask them about the involvement of members of the Russian military units in the Crimean annexation. The involvement was publicly denied by the highest authorities. The various official and unofficial investigations exposed the statement as false information and provided counter-evidence online (Figure (3)).



**Figure (3):** Ихтамнет: волонтеры розсекретили кадровых російських військових на Донбасі<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The information is taken from the Ukaini-language Wikipedia.

<sup>2</sup> UNIAN. (2017, February 3). *Ихтамнет: Волонтеры розсекретили кадровых російських військових на Донбасі*.

(Ichtamnet: Volunteers have exposed members of the Russian military in Donbass)

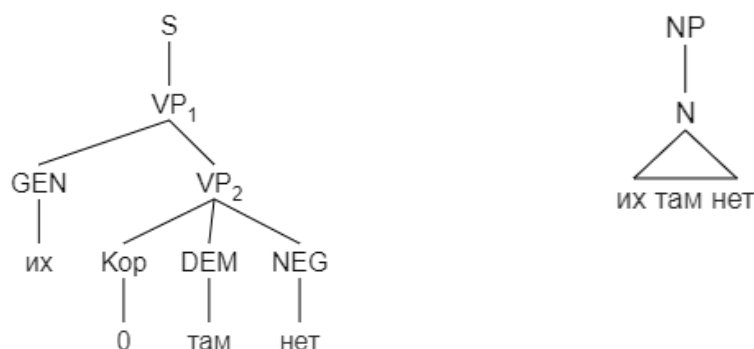
The VP-Hypostasis *их там нет* /ix tam njet/ "they+(are)+there+not" became part of the news language as a contracted construction, especially on the Ukrainian- and Russian-language Internet.

(2) *Убитые американцами в Сирии ихтамнеты принесли Российской Федерации ощутимую пользу.*

ubi'titʲə ɐmɨrɨk'ant̪ səmʲɪ f̌ sirɨn **ixtamnjetɨ** prɨmʲɪslʲi'ɨ rɐsʲɨjskəj fʲɪdʲɨr'at̪ sɨ  
ɐɕutɨmʲu'ɨmɔjə p'olʲɪzɔ.

The **ixtamnet**<sub>i(Nom.Pl)</sub> killed by the Americans in Syria gave the Russian Federation a tangible advantage.

The structural analysis of the VP-Hypostasis shows that we are dealing here with internal word formation, in which the verb phrase is reified into a noun:



**Figure (4).**

The VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет* /ixtamnjet/ "they are not there" contains zero copulas typical for Russian and can thus be described as a finite construction. In (2), however, it behaves like a noun with a nominal marker for plural *ихтамнет-ы*<sub>PL</sub> /ixtamnjet-i/<sub>PL</sub> and thus justifies the designation VP-Hypostasis.

		KWIC	
1.	<i>конечному потребителю, это</i>	ихтамнет,	<i>мамой клянусь.</i>
	for the end user it is a piece of paper	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	I swear on my mother.
2.	<i>Асад и Иран поучаствуют своими</i>	ихтамнетами.	
	<i>Al-Assad and Iran will continue with their</i>	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	<i>participate</i>
3.	<i>десантники на Донбассе, которые сначала</i>	ихтамнет	<i>а потом их закапывают</i>

Retrieved 03.04 2020, from <https://www.unian.ua/war/1709676-ichtamnet-volonteri-rozsekretili-kadrovih-rosijskih-viyskovih-na-donbasi-foto.html>.

	<i>Paratroopers in Donbass, who first</i>	<i>there-are-not</i>	<i>and then bury them.</i>
4.	<i>почему наши власти до упора будут твердить про</i>	ихтамнет	<i>а зеленых человечков</i>
	<i>why our authorities everywhere</i>	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	<i>and "green men" will talk</i>
5.	<i>Неужто достали</i>		<i>кого-то из бывших соседей?</i>
	<i>Have you read the Russian</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>from one of your former neighbors?</i>
6.	<i>Вот и вся солдатская правда.</i>		<i>утверждает, что Россия воюет в Украине</i>
	<i>This is the soldier's truth. The most important member of</i>	<i>they-are-there-not</i>	<i>claims that Russia is at war in Ukraine.</i>
7.	<i>известно,</i>		<i>работали в сирийском Курдистане с начала</i>
	<i>It is known that</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>have worked in Syrian Kurdistan from the very beginning</i>
8.	<i>карлики отправили</i>	ихтамнетиков	<i>полным снаряжением</i>
	<i>The dwarves sent their</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>in full gear</i>
9.	<i>И вида,</i>	"ихтамнет"	<i>не подашь.</i>
	<i>as</i>	<i>they-wouldn't-be- there</i>	<i>you don't look like that,</i>
10.	<i>в Сирии появилось заметное количество</i>	ихтамнетов	<i>виде наемников</i>
	<i>There are a considerable number of</i>	<i>they-are-there-not- s</i>	<i>in Syria in the form of mercenaries.</i>

**Table 1.** examples of concordances<sup>3</sup> with the search term <"ихтамнет.\*">

The Corpus Araneum Russicum III Maximum documents the VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет*

<sup>3</sup> Vít Benko, *Aranea: Yet another family of (warez) web corpora*, 2014. Retrieved from <http://unesco.uniba.sk/aranea/>

/ixtamnjet/ in a rare variety of forms and with a certain tendency towards wordplay. The examples show that this finite construction first becomes a noun and is coined as a noun part of speech, and in some rare cases appears again in the role of a predicate as a verb.


 leotank, 14.02.2018 14:28 (#)  
Доихтамнетились.  
Окончательное решение ихтамнетного вопроса.  
Многие из тех, кто окончательно ихтамнетнулся в мухафазе,  
начинали свой славный боевой ихтамнетный путь в Украине.  
Ихтамнет преобразился в Ихтамнебудет. Никогда.

Figure (5): From the forum on [grani-ru-org.appspot.com/Politics/World/Mideast].

(2) (Russ)

Доихтамнетились<sub>V[1]</sub>. Окончательное решение ихтамнетного<sub>ADJ[2]</sub> вопроса. Многие из тех, кто окончательно ихтамнетнулся<sub>V[3]</sub> в мухафазе, начинали свой славный боевой ихтамнетный<sub>ADJ[4]</sub> путь в Украине. Ихтамнет<sub>N[5]</sub> преобразился в Ихтамнебудет<sub>N[6]</sub>.

**Arrived**<sub>[1]</sub>. Final solution to the "**they-are-there-not**"<sub>[2]</sub> question. Many of those who finally became "**they-are-there-not**"<sub>[3]</sub> in Mukhafaza<sup>4</sup> began their glorious warpath of the "**they-are-there-not**"<sub>[4]</sub>-type in Ukraine. The "**they-are-not-there**"<sub>[5]</sub> became the "**they-will-not-give-there**"<sub>[6]</sub>.

Shapes	Analysis
[1]	Negating-final action type (финально-отрицательный СД)
	Formal indicators: Prefix / postfix до- + -ся
До-ихтамнетились	Intentional meaning: To carry out an action until negative consequences occur for the subject.
	до- /do-/ preverb with lexial-qualitative function for perfective / involuntary

<sup>4</sup> muḥāfaẓah (in Arabic: محافظة [mu'ħa:faðʕa]) is the name of the first level of administrative division in many Arab countries. Comparable to "province".

до- /do-/: to pursue the "ixtamnet" (also in the figurative sense) until unpleasant consequences occur (e.g. harvesting). The basic lexical meaning is retained, but До- /do-/ introduces a qualitative external limit and thus a different focus to the action.<sup>5</sup>

"getting the finishing touches as ain "ixtamnet"" / the final stage of being an "ixtamnet" /

до-эксперимент-ировались << -experiment-

Similar word до-фантаз-ировались << -fantasie-

formations in Russian до-митинг-овались << -meeting-

до-полит-коррект-нич-ались << -be politically correct-

- |     |                  |                                         |
|-----|------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| [2] | ихтамнетного     | ADJ / Masculine - Singular - Genitive   |
| [3] | ихтамнет(н)-улся | V / Indicative, perfect, 3Sg.           |
| [4] | ихтамнетный      | ADJ / Masculine - Singular - Nominative |
| [5] | ихтамнет         | N / Masculine - Singular - Nominative   |
| [6] | ихтамнебудет     | N / Masculine - Singular - Nominative   |

In the following example **ихтамнет** serves as a basic pattern for the further addition in the form of a complex hypostasis (a kind of asyndeton - *asyndetic VP-Hypostasis*):

(3) (Russ)

как тогда реагировать мировому сообществу на вечно русское  
**ихтамнета вы докажете?**

How else is the international community supposed to react to the eternal Russian "**they-are-there-not-proving-it**"?

- |      |                          |                                                    |
|------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| i.   | ихтамнета вы докажете    | ["Asyndeton" [Sentence hypo1[VP[Gen их]][Кор "0"]] |
| ii.  | их-там-нет-а-вы-докажете | [Dem там] [NEG нет]]] [Sentence hypo2[VP[(Part) а] |
| iii. | их там нет а вы докажете | [Nom вы] [v докажете]]                             |

<sup>5</sup> Hans Schlegel, *Formation, meaning and use of the Russian verbal aspect. Part 1: Theoretical foundations* (Munich: Verlag Otto Sagner, 2002), p. 67.

iv. *их там нет. а вы докажете.*

v. They are not there.

Prove it (after all).

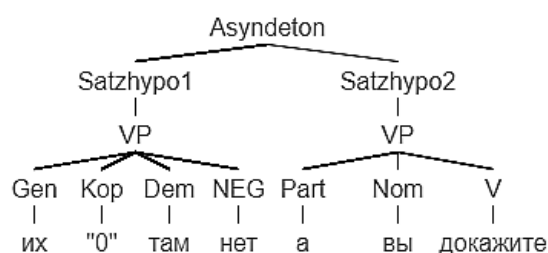


Figure (6)

The grammatical forms in which the VP-Hypostasis occurs are presented in the following list:

#### Derivation with "ихтамнет" nouns

<i>ихтамнет</i>	N.Nom.Sg.Masc	<i>ихтамнет-овск-ий</i>	N.Gen.Sg
<i>ихтамнет-а</i>	N.Gen.Sg	<i>ихтамнет-овск-ой</i>	N.Prep.Sp
<i>ихтамнет-ы</i>	N.Nom.Pl	<i>ихтамнет-овск-ого</i>	N.Gen.Sg
<i>ихтамнет-ов</i>	N.Gen.Pl	<i>ихтамнет-ски-е</i>	N.prep. sg. masc
	N.Inst.Sg	<i>ихтамнет-ск-ому</i>	N. Dat.Sg
<i>ихтамнет-ами</i>	N.Inst.Pl	<i>ихтамнет-ск-ая</i>	N.Nom.Sg.Fem
<i>ихтамнет-ах</i>	N.prep.pl	<i>ихтамнет-ов-ост</i>	N.Gen.Pl.Masc
		<i>ихтамнет-ов-ец</i>	
		<i>ихтамнет-ик-ов</i>	N.Gen.Pl
		<i>ихтамнет-ов-ича</i>	N.Gen.Sg

#### Adjectivization with "ихтамнет"

<i>ихтамнет-(н)ых</i>	Adj. prep. pl
<i>ихтамнет-ских</i>	Adj. prep. pl
<i>ихтамнет-ной</i>	Adj. prep. sp

#### Composition with "ихтамнет"

<i>ихтамнет-политика</i>	The policy of the "ixtamnet"
<i>ихтамнет-нормативы</i>	The "ixtamnet" standards
<i>ихтамнетов-узбеков</i>	The Uzbek "ixtamnet's"
<i>ихтамнетов-матросов</i>	The navy "ixtamnet's"
<i>ихтамнето-террористов</i>	The "ixtamnet" terrorists

Predicative formations with "ихтамнет"

<i>ixтамнетить</i>	To do, behave like "ixтамнет"
<i>доixтамнетились</i>	Becoming the "ixтамнет" for good
<i>ixтамнетнулся</i>	Transform into an "ixтамнет"

The total of approx. 900 corpus examples are distributed across the frequency list as follows

# Query: "ixтамнет.\*" 872

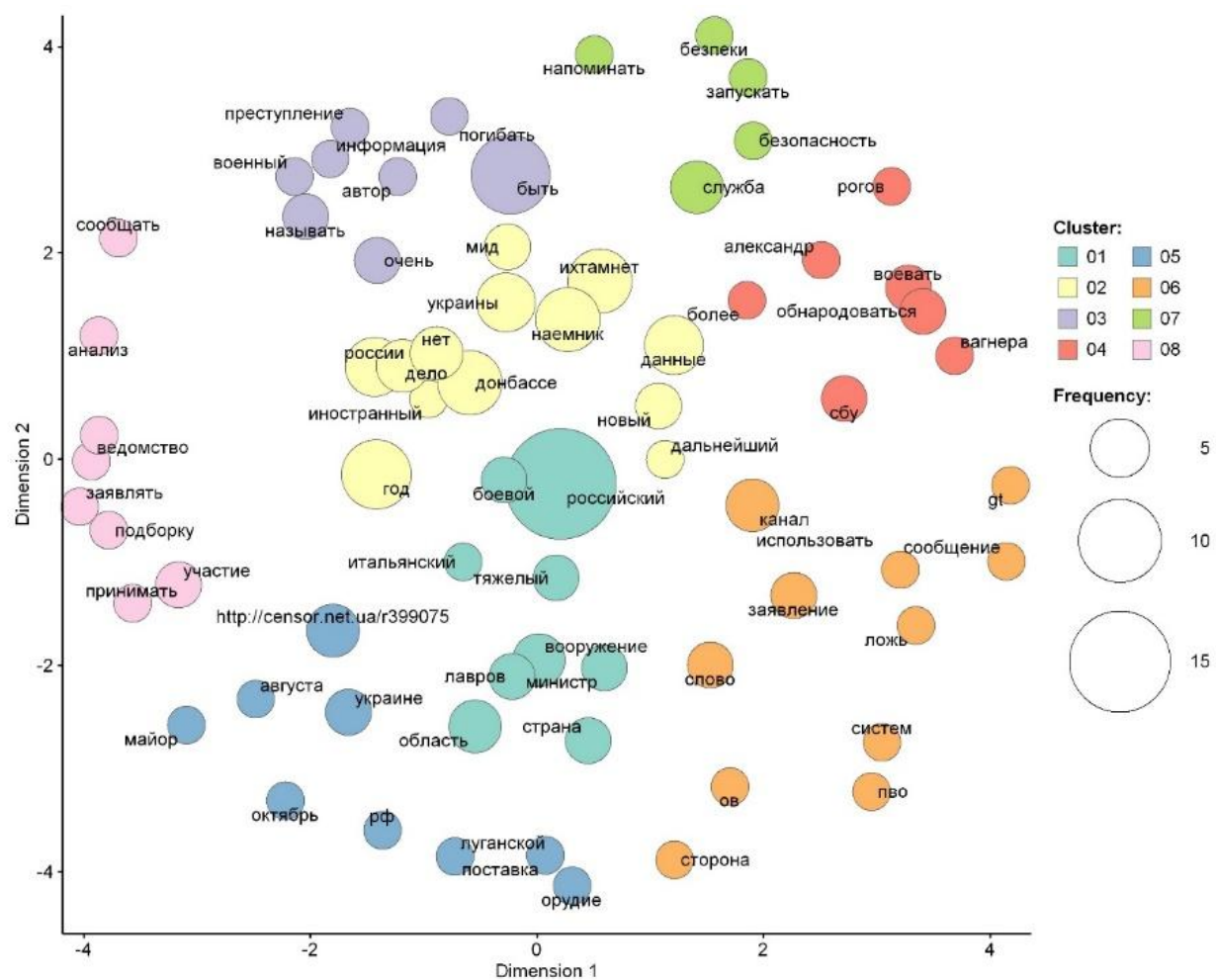
word	Freq	word	Freq
ixтамнетов	315	ixтамнетовича	1
ixтамнет	226	ixтамнетов	1
ixтамнеты	172	ixтамнетов-узбеков	1
ixтамнетами	51	ixтамнетов-матросов	1
ixтамнета	30	ixтамнетов-котолюбов	1
ixтамнетам	22	ixтамнето-террористов	1
ixтамнетах	10	ixтамнетных	1
ixтамнету	6	ixтамнетный	1
ixтамнетом	4	ixтамнетнулся	1
ixтамнетовской	2	ixтамнетной	1
ixтамнетовец	2	ixтамнетного	1
ixтамнетства	1	ixтамнетки	1
ixтамнетскому	1	ixтамнетия	1
ixтамнетской	1	ixтамнетить	1
ixтамнетских	1	ixтамнетиков	1
ixтамнетские	1	ixтамнетией	1
ixтамнетская	1	ixтамнетавыдокажите	1
ixтамнетовском	1	ixтамнетов	1
ixтамнетовского	1	ixтамнет-работал	1
ixтамнетовских	1	ixтамнет-политику	1
ixтамнетовости	1	ixтамнет-нормативы	1

Using the example of ixтамнет /ixтамnjet/ << /ix/+/tam/+/njet/ sie+(sind)+dort+nicht from Russian, I proceeded in exactly the opposite way to the "Zigarettenholen" section: The relevant discourse was pre-researched. To reduce it to a few Labels, the "ixтамнет" discourse is about so-called "hybrid warfare" in the context of the current Russian-Ukrainian conflict. The corpus linguistic tolls



are therefore used to verify the discourse already described.

The following multidimensional scaling of words results from a somewhat small "ixtamnet" web corpus with around 30T tokens: (Figure (7)).



**Figure (7).** Scaling

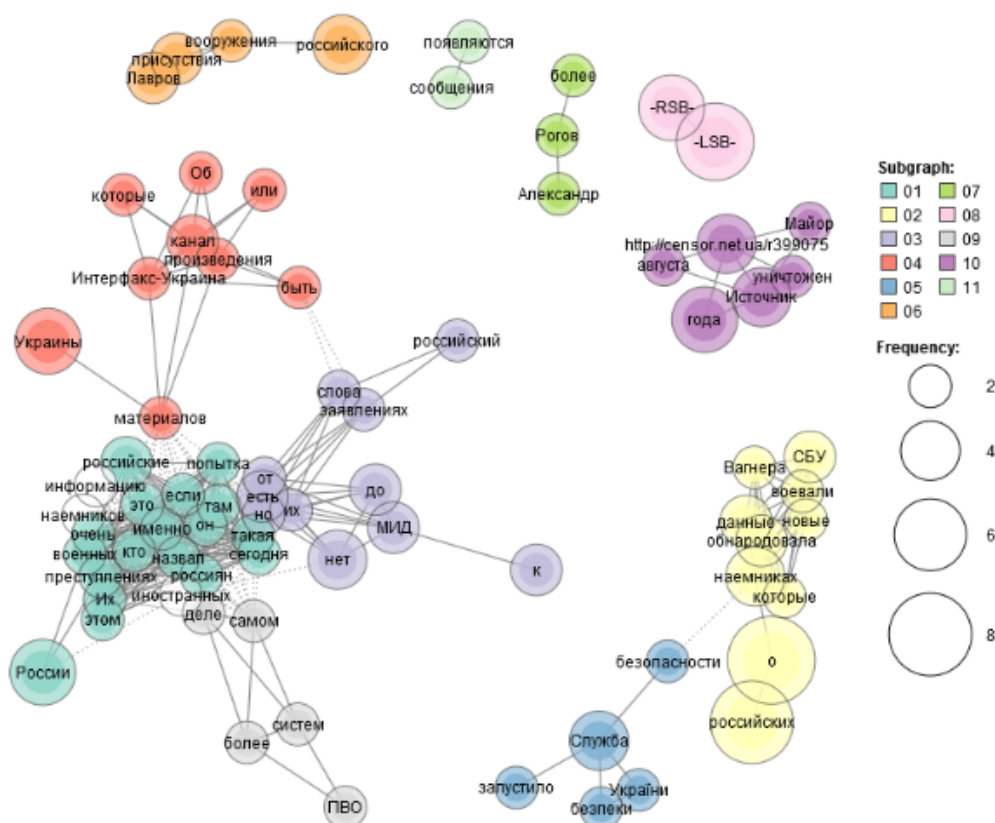
Among the 8 discourse-specific clusters, the keyword "ixtamnet" appears in the 2nd cluster together with the following cohorts:

Cluster 2.	Cohort	
"ixtamnet"	"украины"	Ukraine
	"россии"	Russia
	"донбассе"	Donbas
	"мид"	The Russian Foreign Ministry
	"наемник"	Soldner



"иностранный" foreign

The discursive connection between the VP-Hypostasis "ixtamnet" and the context "Foreign soldiers in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in Donbas" is confirmed.



**Figure (8).** Co-occurrence map

Cohort	Cluster 5	Cluster 2.	Cohort
Служба безпеки України Ukrainian secret service	"СБУ"		Служба безпеки України Ukrainian secret service
Soldner	"наемник"		Soldner
Security(s)	"безопасности"		
		"Вагнер"	Wagner Group. Russian private security and military company.
		"российских"	russian
Service	"служба"		

The co-occurrence map (Figure (8)) shows the connection between clusters 2 and 5 with corresponding boundary keywords {"СБУ" / "наемник" / "безопасности"}. In the discourse-specific cluster 2, the keyword *Вагнер* /vagner/ appears, which is probably the best lexical candidate for replacing the pronoun *их* /ix/ "they" in *ихтамнет* /ixtamnet/ "they are not there". According to media reports, members of the Wagner group were active in Crimea during the Russian takeover and later in eastern Ukraine, Syria and Central Africa<sup>6</sup>. Its units operate covertly. However, sources consistently report close links in strategy and operations with the Russian military intelligence service GRU<sup>7</sup>. It seems appropriate to paraphrase "they are not there" as "The fighters (soldiers) of the Wagner unit are not in Crimea / Eastern Ukraine / Syria / Central Africa". All the more so because the keywords *Вагнер* and *ихтамнет* as well as *наемник* "Soldner" form a common field in the Self-Organized Map (Figure (9)):



Figure (9). Self-Organized Map of Words

<sup>6</sup> Andreas Rüesch, "Russia's private armies operate in a legal vacuum," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, January 18, 2018, p. 5

<sup>7</sup> Willi Neumann and Steffen Dobbert, "Russia: Putin's mercenaries," *Die Zeit*, February 6, 2017.

A larger WebCorpus with around 1M tokens was generated for the word embedding process. The generated vertex data from Toke clusters together the concepts that appear semantically similar. (Figure (9)).

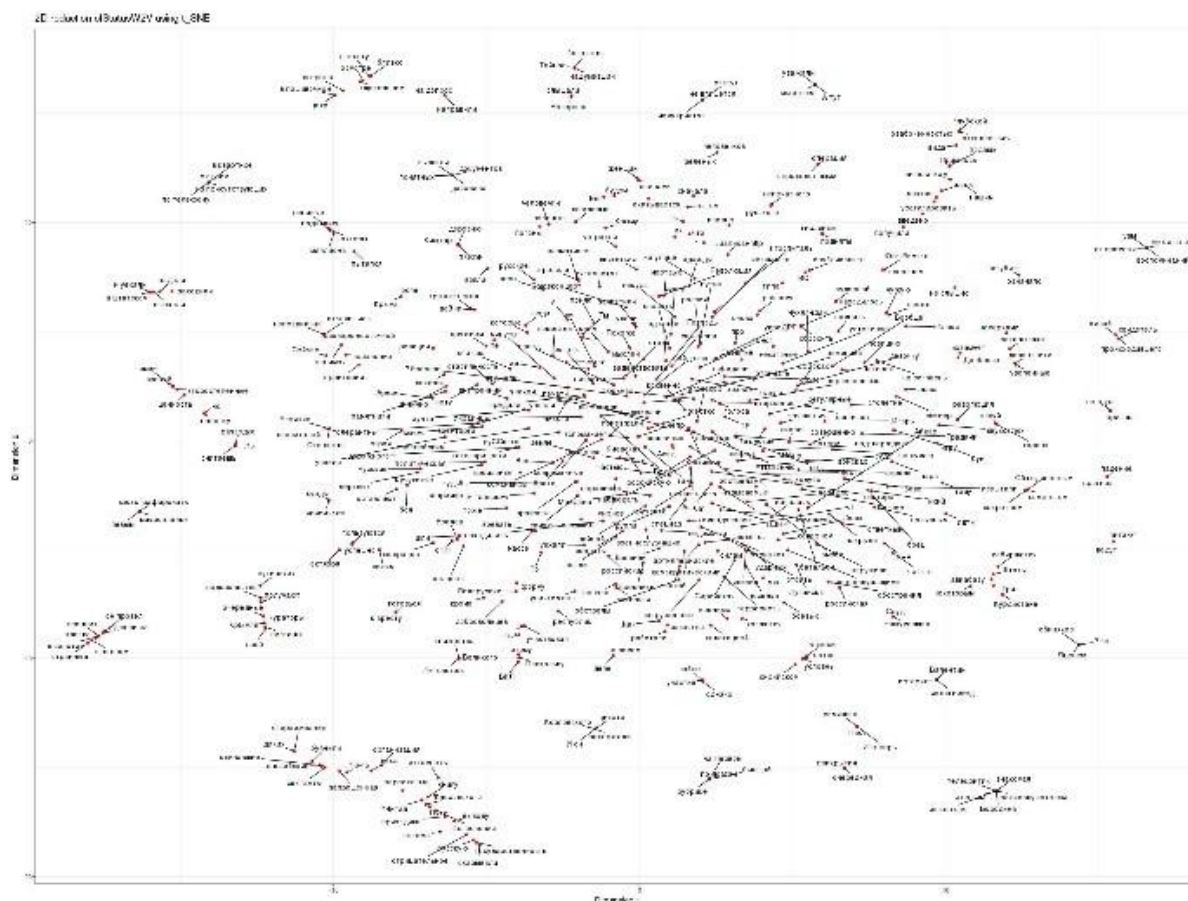


Figure (10).

The vector for *ихтамнет* lies in the significant proximity of the concepts "Donbass" (war zone in eastern Ukraine) / "desantniki" (special forces command of the Russian army) (Figure (10)).



Figure (11).

The VP-Hypostasis from Russian *ихтамнет* is a genuine neologism that generates the appropriate communative sense in thematically specific discourse. The type of formation can be described as a contraction and serves as an analogy for such formations as (*ихтамнет*) *авыдокажите* "(they-are-there-not) prove-you-it (however)". The formal brevity of the Russian VP-Hypostasis facilitates its perception as one unit, one word. In the contexts, despite the variety of forms, the original usage situation is activated and knowledge of Putin's answer to the question from the press conference in 2014 is assumed.

Once again, in comparison to "I'm going to get a quick cigarette" discourse, *ихтамнет* discourse is a thematically specific area that generates a correspondingly smaller communicative surface of meaning. The analyses in the corpus-linguistic method have above all made it possible to interpret the pronouns that occur in the VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет* ("they" and "there"):

<i>их</i>	<i>там</i>	<i>нет</i>
ix	tam	net
them	there	NEG
<i>наемник</i> "Soldner"	Donbas	
<i>Вагнер</i> - Russian private security and military company.	Crimea	
Special Forces Command of the Russian Army	Ukraine	

Through this lexical equivalence, the meaning of the VP-Hypostasis *ихтамнет* becomes clear and the corresponding discourse is restricted. The word *нипричёмши* /nepričjomiš/ << *Ни при чём* "to have nothing to do with it", which is directly linked to the name of the current Russian president Putin, has a somewhat larger communicative area. As a hyperonym for *ихтамнет россиянин* "The Russian" is noted.<sup>8</sup>



Figure (12). Source:

<https://ok.ru/niodnogoko/>

### A discourse-linguistic approach to the phenomenon described

The scientific analysis of linguistic phenomena, and of language in general, requires an

<sup>8</sup> Wiktionary contributors, "*ихтамнет*," Wiktionary, n.d., <https://ru.wiktionary.org/wiki/ихтамнет>

empirically exhaustive description based on significant and representative data. Such a description can then be used for generalization of various kinds, including the formation of theories of varying degrees of abstractness. Although the transition between empiricism and theory is not a methodological necessity for either of them, the direction of the relation plays a decisive role: using necessary empirical data to justify a theory (from theory to data) or using appropriate theoretical concepts to classify or explain empirical data (from data to theory). This certainly oversimplified "yin and yang" of scientific.

### ***Metadiscourse - discourse within discourse***

Just like the founder of knowledge-theoretical discourse analysis, Paul-Michel Foucault, as well as all the researchers who have developed their own rigid research methodology and concepts, are committed to the current discourse of their own specialist tradition and/or the social challenges of the given time. In this context, the thematic breadth of the research spectrum leads to frequently mentioned conceptual confusion and methodological inconsistency. The impression arises that what actually constitutes a "discourse" depends on the observer and his or her research objective. This situation is characteristic of all interdisciplinary borderline topics in the humanities. Meanwhile, scholarly discourse on "discourse" counts a list of references with almost 500 introductions and reference works, specialized lexicons and handbooks, theoretical foundations, methods as well as individual studies and anthologies.

The aim of the present section is to take up VP-Hypostasis as the pattern of language use in the discourse analytical sense and also to argue in favour of the corpus linguistic method as a complementary method. The selection of the academic texts under consideration is subordinated to this aim. A detailed reference to Foucault and his works is avoided insofar as the individual authors have already included the critical discussion of Foucault that is relevant to this study. It is intended to outline the methodology used in the study to explain the function of sentence hypostases and to clarify the conceptual position in the discourse on "discourse".

The other five authors discussed (Tereick, Spitzmüller, Warnke, Ulrich Bibenhofer) and their research serve to illustrate the explanatory power of discourse theory using concrete examples. In addition, the methodological flexibility of the discursive approach is emphasized.

### ***Tereick***

In her empirically characterized multimodal study of the climate change discourse, Tereick provides a terminological groundwork in which she derives her own working definition of the concept of discourse based on the Foucauldian tradition. According to Tereick, "discourse theory [...] enables



a new approach to philosophical, sociological and also linguistic investigations by reconstructing the constitution of facticity in language, but also in other sign systems." The author speaks of the distinction in the use of the term discourse: L-discourse (language in use, also known as lower-case discourse (little-d discourse)); F-discourse (discourse in Foucault's sense, also known as capitalized discourse (big-D discourse)) as well as discourse position (individual statement); discourse strand (set of related statements). Tereick regards the ambiguity of the use of the term as meaningful and as a mutually complementary continuum.

With language in use, the present work is clearly classified under L-discourse, which in no way means that the results of the investigation of the functions of individual linguistic forms (here VP-Hypostasis) cannot be used for an extensive F-discourse analysis without the overall social background. As positive evidence of such a process, Tereick gives the example of Halliday and Fairclough: using Halliday's description of the function of nominalization, Fairclough shows the impersonalization of discourse: The government raises taxes vs. (nominalization) raising taxes, which leads to the diminution of the agentive role of the government in the perception of the discourse community. The case-related definition of the term discourse is possible and necessary due to the increasing frequency and expansion of thematic coverage areas. Tereick demonstrates this with reference back to the Foucauldian tradition:

Discourse is "a set of statements and practices that determines what is true, correct, sayable and doable within a formation system. Different discourses compete with each other and contradictory discourses can coexist. In order to protect hegemonic discourses, a discourse community develops exclusion mechanisms and institutions that strengthen and maintain them. The discourse develops an independent power and thereby constitutes and consolidates certain power and domination relations. Resistance and subversive discourses emerge against these. Discourses can be analyzed according to the purpose for which they can be delimited by time, topic, medium, etc." The definition of the term discourse relevant to the present work is also based on the basic idea that a discourse is "a set of statements that belong to the same formation system". The "truth" is produced in the "discursive practice" of knowledge formation by the discourse community and the practice itself produces the discourse. Discourses are "to be treated as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak. Although these discourses consist of signs, they use these signs for more than just designating things." The dimension meant here includes the added value of discourse research for critical science.

With regard to sentence hypostases, this description can be applied insofar as a VP-Hypostasis forms the object of a discourse and represents it in the most focused way. The linguistic constructions used for this express the relations that go beyond the sign relation - they stand for

different communicative senses and evoke the characteristic properties of communicative practices of a discourse. The results of Tereick's study include the description of re-contextualization and parallelization of characteristics that lead to discourse-specific metaphorization and metonymization in climate change discourse and serve to "reduce distance to climate change and bring it from "far" to "near". Metaphors can also be used to focus on certain aspects of the discourse". They can be used to illustrate complex causalities (The Earth's atmosphere is a greenhouse), but also to make statements about responsibility (Humans receive the bill, footprint) and convey deontic meanings (Climate change is a disease)". A certain degree of metaphorization or the use of metaphors to construct the sentence hypostases also plays a role in the present study, although here it is not a question of a particular thematically defined discourse, but primarily of the sentence hypostases assuming a certain function in relation to the discourses. Tereick's reference to Foucault, which is largely adopted in this work, lies in the assumption of discursive knowledge formation. The sentence hypostases are formed and used in their function of arguing the "truthfulness" or "validity" of a certain position in the discourse.

### ***Spitzmüller and Warnke***

In Spitzmüller and Warnke's comprehensive introductory work on discourse linguistics, discourse linguistics is precisely positioned within the accompanying set of disciplines. The basic perspective adopted remains within the framework of classical descriptive linguistics. First of all, however, it must be justified and argued that a possible sub-discipline of language description - discourse linguistics - can make a unique contribution to the study of the phenomenon of discourse that is distinct from the contributions of philosophy, sociology, history and literary studies. The same applies to the positioning of discourse linguistics in relation to the sub-disciplines of linguistics (e.g. lexicology, semantics, text and sociolinguistics). One of the main strands of problem-solving runs along the challenge of the rigid linguistic definition of the term discourse. In their proposed definition of the linguistic concept of discourse, Spitzmüller and Warnke put forward a bottom-up construction in which they view discourse linguistics as an extension of text linguistics. Starting with the smallest meaning-bearing unit of language, the morpheme, continuing with the word and sentence and ending with the text and concluding with the discourse. The descriptive level above the text provides the free slot for the discourse and completes the continuum. The definitional added value of this building block-like construction lies in the establishment of a logical relationship between the concept of discourse and the remaining linguistically uncontroversial levels of linguistics such as text linguistics, syntax and morphology.

The schematic representation is also presented as an inclusion relationship in which the constituent



position of the discourse is clarified:

[discourse [ text [ sentence [ word [ morpheme [ phoneme/grapheme ] ] ] ] ]

Following Wichter, the construction is justified as follows: "[ ] the derivation of discourse from small linguistic units (ascendency) as well as the modelling of discourse as a structure of smaller elements or constituents (descendency) enables integration into the system of linguistics."

Apart from linguistically imprecise boundaries between morphs and words, the phenomenon of VP-Hypostasis intensifies the discussion about the demarcation between the word and the sentence. The levels of construction may be clear for the topic of "global warming", but in numerous cases, e.g. the so-called hashtag keyword sentences, which generate discourses in the "new media" (e.g. Twitter) on a daily basis in numbers that can no longer be surveyed, or act as a hook for them, it seems difficult to keep the levels of the discourse-specific morpheme, word and/or sentence apart. The authors themselves consider the concept of discourse to be highly ambiguous and "often vaguely used with different (and sometimes contradictory) conceptions and theories". The reason given for this is the "refusal" of discourse analysis to commit itself terminologically and categorically, which in turn is quite intentional and even programmatic in structure-oriented linguistics. In this context, the focus on the definition of the concept of discourse from the perspective of linguistic discourse analysis, at the center of which are largely culturally anchored and action-guiding linguistic patterns, seems particularly important: "the action-guiding and socially stratifying collective knowledge of certain cultures and collectives." The special feature of Spitzmüller/Warneke's introduction is the "methodological origo" to text: "We understand discourse linguistics [...] as an extension of the systematic interest in language and different languages beyond the boundaries of the sentence and text. This is why we speak of "transtextual language analysis"" and why the linguistic concept of discourse remains related to the linguistic concept of text. Another point to be emphasized in Spitzmüller/Warneke's introduction is the clarification of the discourse/corpus relation. If discourse is defined by transtextuality, then corpus, as a cross-textual collection, can be considered on the same level as discourse. The two terms are thought to be at least partially identical.

### ***Ulrich***

In a brief introduction and overview of discourse research, Ulrich gets to the heart of the connection between linguistic and social/power-political aspects of discourse theory: (The) "communication/language, i.e. the discourse (determines) people's definitions of reality and thus also power structures in society; the linguistically mediated approach is decisive." He emphasizes that discourse research is not focused on the content of texts. It is not possible to conduct discourse research

within a single text or individual statements. Rather, it is about the interlocking of the texts within a discourse, which are embedded in the communicative practices, and also about the relationship between the discourses, which cannot be assumed to be sharply demarcated. Ulrich's account establishes the idea that all discourse is a product of reconstruction, which is achieved through the qualitative and hermeneutic process. Ulrich's basic understanding of the phenomenon of discourse also goes back to Foucault and tends strongly towards a social-theoretical or critical approach: "Discourses are not simply speeches and discussions, but power-determined social processes that are understood as materially effective". Ulrich emphasizes the fact that a discourse cannot be related exclusively to the linguistically manifested content by claiming that the concept of discourse can also cover the non-thematized, the undesirable, the unthinkable and the unspeakable. With regard to the specific sentence hypostases that label the corresponding discourses, this point appears relevant insofar as the sentence hypostases mentioned once in the discourses, and even only partially (ellipsis), are avoided in further discourse or only indirectly referred to. The characteristic property of sentence hypostases - to function as "catchwords" in the discourse - is reflected in their frequency of use: the presupposed VP-Hypostasis is often regarded as the unspeakable in a discourse, which is latently referred to in the communicative practice of a particular discourse.

Ulrich visualizes the overlapping of different terms and different methods in a figure (2) and emphasizes that they are not mutually exclusive, but complement each other on a case-by-case basis. In the jungle of discourse research, the author establishes a helpful criterion: professional culture. It plays the primary role in the subordination of concepts and procedures. The illustration, which is intended to provide orientation, is divided into three partly overlapping parts: (left) research models based on linguistics and literary studies; (middle) concepts based on social science approaches in the Foucault tradition and so-called "framing theory"; (right) "pragmatic" approaches in discourse research.

A further perspective on the concepts depicted can be achieved by citing the micro-macro axis: "the macro level can therefore mean, for example, both a collective actor such as a social movement and society as a whole. Nevertheless, the claim of discourse theory according to Foucault generally aims at "higher", the production of socially legitimate knowledge (see above). So, for example: How does a society/discourse define madness and thereby exclude large groups of people, thoughts, ideas from the realm of the "normal" and "right"?"

Both the positioning of the VP-Hypostasis in the left "column" of the figure and the specific location at the point of overlap between metaphors, catch phrase/topuk marker and keywords: flag words/stigma words remain conditionally accurate, as the consideration of the sentence hypostases

under the labels argumentation pattern/story line and idea element appears no less justified. The problem of exact subordination does not arise in the present work insofar as it is close to the empirical data and uses the corpus-based discourse analysis method.

The basic idea put forward in this paper is based on the conviction that discourse can be calculated using the corpus linguistic method or corpus tools. The subtitle of Bubenhofer's 2008 article "Calculating discourse?" can currently be formulated without the question mark or the question can be answered with a clear yes. The algorithm-based operationalization of big data leaves virtually no other way than to automatically calculate discourse-related linguistic patterns ("patterned language use" or "language use patterns"). This means that the corpus linguistic method is used not only for the purpose of obtaining representative empirical data in a significant size, but also to analyse it with the help of algorithms due to its complexity. The results of such an analysis are then available for scientific conclusions or summaries. Bubenhofer's logical addition to a corpus-based perspective is the "corpus-driven" concept: "This approach is characterized [...] by the attempt to understand the corpus as a body of data in which structures are made visible using suitable methods, which are only classified afterwards".

### ***Bubenhofer***

The exponential growth of storage capacities in the last decade (and the end is far from in sight) puts Bubenhofer's comment from 2008 into a new, relative perspective: "for example, it is relatively easy to take a random sample of several thousand articles from ten years of a daily newspaper and process them corpus linguistically". From the current perspective of data storage technology, literally all articles of a newspaper or all articles of all newspapers that have ever appeared and are empirically accessible in any form can be used and processed corpus linguistically. In 1999, Wichter wrote the following: "[...] Discourses can neither be documented nor empirically analysed due to their sheer volume." This consideration is based on the following, admittedly facetious, calculation: "In computer discourse - according to my rough calculation based solely on orders of magnitude - around two or more dozen million texts are produced per day in the Federal Republic of Germany, including conversations and monologues. That's around 1000 encyclopaedias the size of the Meyer or two hundred bookshelves or five rooms or a third of a floor. One year fills a 100-storey tower block, although we could spread the volumes gently over two smaller tower blocks out of consideration for those who don't cheat. 10 years fills a campus." I defer the question of the meaning of such data collection at this point. The dominant perspective is based on the technical facilitation of data collection and not on the scientific or otherwise motivated process. The culmination of this perspective

manifests itself in the so-called paradigm shift in language research: linguists currently only have to formulate the "right" questions, namely about the answers that are already mapped in the corpora.

"1. it becomes possible to supplement the more content-based description of discourse with an analysis of discursive practice, i.e. to pose the question "of ways of using terms, the formations of texts and the routines of linguistic action". 2) The identification of formally determined patterns of language use is a task that is easier to operationalize algorithmically than the identification of concepts such as topos or metaphor, which can be formalized in very different ways on the surface of the text. This paves the way for discourse analysis with the help of corpus linguistics and large amounts of data".

In the present study, the corpus is not only the focus of data collection, but also the basis for the first creation of a social media corpus (within the framework of the word embedding tool for Georgian "sitqvamnergi") for the Georgian language with over 550 million tokens, as a representation of discourse with a peculiar dynamic and logic that differs from classical text corpora. The characteristic communicative timing of semi-spontaneous (largely unplanned) language in social media poses many questions to traditional linguistic research. The "Internet language" is increasingly becoming the focus of linguistics as a reason to revise traditional assumptions about the structure and rules of language. With regard to sentence hypostases, the corpus linguistic method is applied with reference to discourse analysis. The samples are understood as discourse indicators and made qualitatively and quantitatively accessible. In the corpus linguistic method used here, the unit "text" plays a subordinate role. In this context, Bubenhofer writes that "the unit of the text [in corpus-oriented discourse analyses] can be broken up and statements can be used as the smallest unit". Language corpora are increasingly becoming the basis for neural modelling of languages and allow the use of various analysis tools with "reading" or "induction" capabilities, such as word embeddings, which are based, among other things, on a vector representation for each word contained in the text corpus. In the present study, phrase embeddings are also used.

An extremely important point from Bubenhofer 2009, which examines discourse and cultural analysis from a corpus linguistic point of view, is also discussed here. According to the author, "it should be possible to draw some conclusions about the social organization of the world from observations of typical language use". In this context, "idiomatic expressions can be a particularly clear reflection of social institutions". The ethnomethodological routines of everyday life, which facilitate problem solving through recurring patterns, are part of the social organization of the world. Such behavioural patterns take up in particular the linguistic means to implement the social actions of everyday life. Idioms are characterized by a high frequency of form and cumulative indexing of

content, which makes them most suitable for mapping social institutions. Certain types of sentence hypostases with their structure and grammar can be considered on the same level as idioms from the perspective of discourse and cultural analysis. In a certain way, they function as culturemes, which are defined as "behaviours in the act of communication, realized through verbal, para-linguistic, non-verbal and extra-verbal behaviourmes". The types of VP-Hypostasis analyzed in this section serve as an orientation aid for the identification of the current discourse and communicative integration into it. This results in the basis for adequate social behaviour, which can be underpinned verbally.

Two of Bubenhofer's three hypotheses appear to be extremely relevant for the present work: "(1) Patterns of language use are indicators of discourse and (2) Methodologically, this offers the opportunity to analyse language data for their patterned nature and to derive inductive discourse descriptions from them". The following section of the paper serves to exemplify the derivation of discourse descriptions by identifying and making accessible the patterned use of sentence hypostases. Three empirical examples of sentence hypostases from three languages - German, Russian, Georgian - are taken up and the corresponding discourses are calculated within the framework of the corpus linguistic procedure. Prior to this analysis, the element relevant to the concept of discourse - communicative surface of meaning - is discussed.

Bubenhofer's most important question "Calculating discourse?" has so far had no influence on the question of the definition of "discourse" itself. On the one hand, this may be due to the fact that the current linguistic definition also copes with the aspect of computability within the framework of a corpus linguistic procedure, or that adaptation is not necessary, or that the empirical basis for calculating discourse does not currently have the necessary significance.

### **Functions of VP-Hypostasis**

In the conclusion to the current chapter, I discuss the linguistic functions of VP-Hypostasis. A distinction is made between discourse and non-discourse functions. The main distinguishing criterion is the empirical measurability (/calculability) of a discourse behind the use of VP-Hypostasis. At this point, the composite term "discourse function" refers to the discourse-triggering or communicative meaning-bearing function of a VP-Hypostasis. Discourse functions of sentence hypostases understood in this way require additional non-linguistic knowledge about the interaction (micro-dimension of communication) and the existence of shared presuppositions with regard to the socio-cultural circumstances (macro-dimension of communication). In the non-discourse functions of VP-

Hypostasis, the above-mentioned dimensions remain untouched and the use of sentence hypostases takes place on the basis of lexical knowledge.

Based on the examples in the previous section, the discourse functions are described and then non-discourse functions, which refer to the semantic and grammatical properties of the usage. It has been shown that the diverse and often freely interpreted definition of the concept of discourse requires an appropriate adaptation to the methodological approach of corpus linguistics in that discourse is fundamentally calculable (Bubenhofen). The main characteristic of the approach is the frequentist approach, which is a prerequisite for the qualitative analysis based on it. The methodological apparatus of the corpus linguistic procedure with regard to the calculation of discourse was largely adopted in the current chapter and used for a research-specific goal: the elicitation of a discourse corresponding to a specific VP-Hypostasis.

The connection between the VP-Hypostasis and the discourse shifts to two different linguistic and meta-linguistic levels. On the linguistic level, the sentence hypostases form semantic focus positions in the discourse. In the semantic network of meaning of a discourse, the VP-Hypostasis assumes the role of the discourse trigger and semantically summing indicator of the content. On the meta-linguistic level, the sentence hypostases function as simple solutions for naming or attributing concepts that can be derived from the linguistic surfaces of the interaction. The meta-linguistic level lays the foundation for the determination and realization of the discourse function of the sentence hypostases. This function initially lies in the more or less ad hoc solution to the naming problem. A person who constantly complains with the sentence "I'm bored" can be described as a "nagging person" or as an "I'm-bored-person". This is a relief in that, depending on the type and nature of the nagging, a selection of "grumbling", "complaining" and "grumbling" to "grumbling", "howling" and "grumbling" "person" is available. A direct takeover (quoting) appears to be more precise and therefore more effective in communication. In addition, there is the focusing function and the speaker's modality of expressing the focus of their own perception of the conversation.

In the linguistic analysis of the *ухтамнет* discourse, the negation of a fact plays the overriding role. This semantic operation denies the official participation of Russian Federation soldiers in the regional wars in Ukraine. The meta-linguistic function is based on this linguistic characteristic of the VP-Hypostasis: the negation is always ironized by positive verification. The mere fact that the name replacement *ухтамнет* refers to the specific persons proves the non-literal use of the sentence "They are not there". The irony implies the communicative genre of reproach towards all those who use the

sentence literally. In some contexts, ironization becomes a kind of hyperbole, as in "they are not there, but they will be killed and buried". Here the paradox of the expression reaches the absurd. Ukrainian and Russian-language content dominates the *ихтамнет* discourse. The VP-Hypostasis hardly ever used in German-language discourse. The following excerpt is one of the rare examples:

Here, the description formulated by the Russian president is equated with derbomic improvisation - burlesque. The resulting discourses take over the main functional strand and treat the *ихтамнет* context as a macabre joke in which the terrible is joked about.

## Conclusion

The text examines the role of VP hypostases as discourse triggers, especially in the Russian discourse around *Ихтамнет* (literally "they are not there"). VP hypostases are syntactic constructions that function morphologically like phrases but discursively as independent markers of meaning and communication. They can function as discourse triggers and generate specific communicative meanings in socio-cultural contexts. The focus is on the discursive function of VP hypostases in political and social debates. One example is the Russian hypostasis *ихтамнет*, which was used as a euphemism for "not officially present" Russian soldiers during the Ukraine conflict. The linguistic construction obscures the military presence and ironically creates a paradox, since the non-existence of the soldiers is discursively emphasized, while their presence is factually proven.

The analysis uses corpus linguistic methods such as word embedding to identify semantic networks and discourse clusters. For example, the occurrence of *ихтамнет* in connection with terms such as "Donbass", "mercenary" and "Wagner Group" shows the discursive link with the context of "hybrid war". The use of this VP hypostasis creates collective knowledge and legitimizes political narratives. The text also sheds light on the communicative practice of VP hypostases in comparison to other languages, such as the German construction "Ich gehe mal Zigaretten holen", which also serves as a discursive means of concealment. VP hypostases function here as keywords that encode complex social and cultural meanings in a minimal linguistic framework.



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## Metaphorical Representations of Russia in Georgian Political Discourse<sup>1</sup>

### ABSTRACT

A case of a cognitive process involving the transfer of knowledge from one conceptual domain to another is known as a metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Quinn, 1991; Kövecses, 2002; Kövecses, 2005). The study of metaphor is not limited to cognitive linguistics. Our cognition of the external world always occurs within the context of a specific culture and language. Considering these aspects, metaphor is also an ethnocultural phenomenon.

The concept of culture brings together many institutional components of human society, among which politics plays a significant role. Political metaphors in language are often based on political events as the source domain, and the meaning is transferred to the target domain through comparison, association, or analogy.

In the 20th century, during the Soviet occupation of Georgia, a number of expressions emerged in the Georgian language, rooted in political context and based on metaphorical generalizations of historical events. Considering the ongoing Russian occupation of Georgian territories, the use of these expressions remains as relevant as ever.

The study aims to analyze Russia-related metaphors in contemporary Georgian political discourse. It is structured in the following way: 1. Observation of the discourse and identification of metaphors; 2. Conceptual analysis of the metaphors; 3. Identification of historical-political factors and the determination of the etymology of specific metaphorical instances.

The study's findings indicate that the metaphors found in Georgian political discourse have two dimensions: semantic and pragmatic. One dimension is that these metaphors reflect political events, while the other is that they serve as important tools in the construction of cultural identity.

**Keywords:** *metaphor, Russia, Georgian language, political discourse.*

### Introduction

A case of a cognitive process involving the transfer of knowledge from one conceptual domain to another is known as a metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Quinn, 1991; Kövecses, 2002; Kövecses, 2005). The study of metaphor is not limited to cognitive linguistics. Our cognition of the external world always occurs within the context of a specific culture and language. Considering

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<sup>1</sup> This research [YS-24-546] has been supported by Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia.

these aspects, metaphor is also an ethnocultural phenomenon.

In addressing the notion of culture, American anthropologist Clifford Geertz cites German sociologist Max Weber, stating: “Man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun. I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning” (Geertz, 1973, p. 5). The seminal work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980), published shortly thereafter, introduced a new perspective on the study of metaphor: meanings originate from our cognitive experiences. Therefore, when discussing metaphors, we should focus on the connections between concepts rather than on lexical units.

The idea that words and expressions have meaning not in isolation, but within context, is grounded in the concept of semantic frames. Semantic frames are cognitive structures that shape our worldview, influence our decisions, guide our actions, and inform our sense of right and wrong. These frames also play a significant role in shaping social policies. According to Lakoff, such mental structures are part of the so-called cognitive subconscious, which can be observed through language. Words are defined in relation to conceptual frames, and when we hear a word, its frame(s) are activated in our brain (Lakoff, 2004, p. xv).

It is impossible to observe the process of metaphorical meaning formation without studying figurative language in relation to culture. Moreover, expressions of this type are so conventional and context-dependent that a certain level of metaphorical competence is required to understand them. According to Stern, metaphorical competence gives us the ability to interpret metaphors, which would be impossible without considering extralinguistic parameters and contexts (Stern, 2000, pp. 301-302).

The concept of culture brings together many institutional components of human society, among which politics plays a significant role. Political metaphors in language are often based on political events as the source domain, and the meaning is transferred to the target domain through comparison, association, or analogy.

Contemporary Georgian political discourse contains numerous metaphors related to Russia, which are rooted in historical events. The 70-year period of Soviet occupation in the 20th century left a lasting impact on the Georgian language. As a result, various metaphorical expressions related to the Soviet empire and its propagandists emerged. The names and surnames of numerous Soviet-era party officials and revolutionaries have also become sources of metaphorical expressions in the

language (Guchua, 2018). Given the current situation, in which Russia continues to occupy Georgian territories, the use of these expressions remains as relevant as ever.

## Methodology

The methodology of political discourse research is multifaceted and complex, requiring various theoretical and practical approaches to study specific speech events or texts. The aim of this study is to conceptually analyze metaphors related to Russia in contemporary Georgian political discourse and to demonstrate how specific linguistic elements (words, phrases) acquire social meaning, as well as how metaphors are formed and used to convey cultural values and political ideologies. The illustrative material is sourced from Georgian online publications, and the research is presented procedurally as follows: 1. Observation of the discourse and identification of metaphors; 2. Conceptual analysis of metaphors; 3. Identification of historical-political factors and determination of the etymology of specific metaphorical instances.

This study does not claim to have exhausted all metaphors related to Russia, but it will attempt to discuss a few of them below to illustrate the issue.

### "Russian Bear"

*"Moscow may believe that the West has abandoned Georgia, and the Russian rabid bear is likely to launch a decisive attack."* (Kviris palitra, 2024).

*"Until this country [Russia] breaks up, you will not be able to defeat it. You will always have a wounded bear on the border, which will immediately charge at you as soon as it regains its strength."* (Radio Liberty, 2023).

*"The world should lock the Russian bear in a cage so that we can all take a break from Russian aggression."* (Facebook, 2022).

Although the bear has never been an official symbol of Russia (the coat of arms depicts a double-headed eagle), it remains one of the most widely used metaphors associated with the country. Interestingly, during World War I, separate battles were fought on the pages of newspapers. Following national stereotypes, propaganda actively used animal metaphors. For example, in the German satirical press of this period, Russians were depicted as bears, the French as cats and roosters, the English as bulldogs, the Belgians as rabbits, the Moroccans as camels, and the Japanese as monkeys (Lazari et al., 2013, p. 56).

The political metaphor of the 'Russian bear' was used in 1915 by Hitler's predecessor, Field Marshal General Paul von Hindenburg, in his memoirs: "There was something unsatisfactory about

the final result of the operations and encounters of this year. The Russian bear had escaped our clutches, no doubt bleeding from more than one wound, but still not struck to death." (Hindenburg, 1920, p. 149). Even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the early 2000s, the bear was depicted on the flag of the ruling political party, "United Russia". The bear metaphor is also present in Russian political discourse itself. For example, in 2014, at a conference, President Putin described Russia's military actions as defensive and compared them to a bear protecting its forest, the taiga, from foreign interference.

The metaphorical interpretation of the bear varies across cultures. For example, a contextual analysis based on the Russian National Corpus shows that the zoonym 'bear' appears in Russian phraseologisms as a metaphor for large size and strength, while a similar analysis based on the British National Corpus indicates that in English speech units, the bear is portrayed as a hungry, dangerous, and aggressive animal, which is negatively marked in the language (Dybo & Nikulenko, 2019, pp. 89-90). The bear metaphor is ambivalent and combines both positive and negative meanings. In anti-Russian political discourse, the 'bear' is a metaphor loaded with negative connotations (stubbornness, aggressiveness, inability to progress, backwardness), whereas in pro-Russian political discourse, it is presented with positive connotations (strength, calmness, independence, courage).

In Georgian culture, the bear carries a negative connotation. According to Sakhokia, a 'bear' symbolizes a person with rude and unappealing manners, while a 'bear's forehead' refers to a dangerous, terrifying, and ferocious expression on someone's face (Sakhokia, 1979, pp. 128-129).

In Georgian political discourse regarding Russia, the saying 'If a bear attacks you, you should call it "dad"' is quite common. This metaphorically refers to a difficult and insurmountable situation in which the opponent is stronger than you, and confronting them exceeds your own capabilities. It is interesting that the mentioned metaphorical phrase is confirmed in the 'Materials of Folk Language' published by the Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR in 1957 (Songhulashvili, 1957, p. 23), while it is not confirmed in such fundamental works as Sakhokia's 'Georgian Idiomatic Words and Sayings' (Sakhokia, 1979) and Oniani's 'Georgian Idioms' (Oniani, 1966). It is also interesting that we have not found an exact equivalent of this expression in European languages.

As a metaphor for caution and restraint in English-language political discourse, the saying 'Don't Poke the Bear' is attested. 'Poke the Bear' means to intentionally anger someone more

powerful than you (see Cambridge Dictionary). Taegan Goddard's 'Political Dictionary' explicitly states that this expression spread after the Cold War as a warning not to anger the nuclear-armed Soviet Union (see 'Political Dictionary'). In the context of Russia's actions, this phrase is still frequently echoed in Western political discourse today.

The Georgian metaphorical saying 'If a bear attacks you, you should call it "dad"' was criticized by Akaki Bakradze, who noted that the phrase should not be old, 'at least from the time when cowardice was not respected among us' (Bakradze, 1995, p. 379).

### "Russian Boot"

*"The Georgian people firmly defend and will continue to defend their European future and will never accept living under the Russian boot."* (Radio Liberty, 2024).

*"How can you find common ground with an invader?! You either have to live under his boot or escape from him."* (Kviris palitra, 2024).

*"The Russian boot will leave Abkhazia, and a common state will be formed."* (Facebook, 2024).

The "Russian boot" is a political metaphor that refers to Russia's aggressive policies, particularly in the context of military interventions. The metaphor is linked to acts of violence, occupation, and control.

"Russian boot" is defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary as a knee-length leather shoe that was first used in 1781 (see Merriam-Webster dictionary). It is difficult to determine when the term began to acquire a metaphorical meaning. The *Ethnographic Dictionary of Georgian Material Culture* states that there are many different types of boots, such as the "Russian boot," which came to symbolize the imperial power of the Russian army (Nadiradze, 2013). Russian military pressure is referred to as the "Russian boot" in Georgian political discourse, both historically and in light of recent political events.

"Boot" is also used as a metaphor in military contexts among non-Georgian speech communities. For example, during a visit to Egypt in 2019, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo stated, "The U.S. will expel every last Iranian boot from Syria. In addition, the English language includes an idiom called "boots on the ground," which, according to the Cambridge Dictionary, refers to the deployment of ground troops in a foreign country and their involvement in a military operation (Cambridge Dictionary). "Boots on the ground" is a common metaphor in English-language political discourse and is often used by American presidents in their public speeches. For instance, since 2001, George W. Bush has used this metaphor in the context of the fight against



terrorism and national security. In 2014, while commenting on the political crises in Syria, Iraq, and the Islamic State, Barack Obama stated, "There will be no boots on the ground," to which Vice President Joe Biden later responded, "Local forces could destroy the Islamic State without U.S. boots on the ground."

Thus, "boots on the ground" is a figurative expression and a type of synecdoche, where a part ("boot") represents the whole ("soldier"). Unlike Western political discourse, Georgian political texts use the word "boot" as a symbol of brute military force, imperialist ambitions, and authoritarian power. The addition of the word "Russian" specifically associates it with Russia's geopolitical actions.

According to the conceptual theory of metaphors, the phrase "Russian boot" belongs to the general framework of metaphors: "POWER IS A PHYSICAL PRESENCE." The image of the "boot" symbolizes power and provides its visualization. It is interesting to observe how this metaphor shapes ideological constructs across different languages and cultures. While in international political discourse, the "Russian boot" emphasizes Russia's narrative of conquest, in the Russian domestic context, it is associated with strength and resilience. For example, the phrase "a Russian soldier will wash his boots in the Indian Ocean" is a well-known expression in Russian political discourse, popularized by Vladimir Zhirinovskiy in the early 1990s. The ultranationalist political leader used this metaphor in one of his public speeches to emphasize Russia's potential global influence in the strategic region.

### "Iron Curtain"

*"Moscow is returning to a new type of Soviet Union, and the Iron Curtain is gradually falling again."* (Tabula, 2022).

*"The European Union will either accept new member states from Eastern Europe and the Balkans, or a new Iron Curtain will be erected across the continent."* (Euronews Georgia, 2024).

*"On one side of the scale lies the choice of following behind the Iron Curtain and remaining with Russia, while on the other side lies the choice of defending our civilizational values."* (Facebook, 2024).

The term "Iron Curtain" was first used by Winston Churchill in a speech at Westminster College in Fulton, England, in 1946, as a metaphor for a political and ideological barrier. Churchill used this phrase to describe a divided Europe and the political reality in which the East (the Soviet Union and its satellite states) was isolated from Western Europe and Western democracy.

In the second half of the 20th century, the "Iron Curtain" on one hand symbolized ideological differences, marking the division between the communist Soviet Union and the capitalist West; on the other hand, it served as a propaganda tool. In the former Soviet republics and Eastern Bloc countries, the metaphor was used to justify isolation from Western influences, as if these influences could pose a threat to socialist values.

In modern political discourse, the "Iron Curtain" remains a relevant metaphor, but now it is used to describe forms of isolation, such as economic sanctions and barriers.

Although the term "Iron Curtain" became popular after Winston Churchill's famous words (*"From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent."*), the collocation of the two words, "iron" and "curtain," was used much earlier. For instance, in the 18th century, the Lyon theater created an iron curtain to prevent the spread of fire; in 1794, the London theater followed suit. Starting in 1864, Parisian theaters were legally required to have such curtains, and from 1889, German theaters were also required to install them. After the great fire at the Vienna Theater in 1881, many theaters across Europe began to lower fireproof curtains. The metaphorical use of the "Iron Curtain" is first attested in 1819, as evidenced by fiction from that period (Feuerlicht, 1955). The first use of the term in a political context is attributed to Alexander Campbell. In 1945, in his book *It's Your Empire*, he referred to the Iron Curtain of silence and censorship (ibid.).

"Iron" symbolizes strength, while "curtain" represents a temporary barrier. Together, the two words form a metaphor for isolation and darkness, from which escape is both difficult and painful. In modern political discourse, it is associated with dichotomies such as freedom versus authoritarianism and democracy versus communism.

## Conclusion

As a result of political metaphorization, neutral and non-ideologized lexical units acquire new political meanings and establish emotional and connotative connections. Consequently, lexical units that previously existed on the periphery of a language's lexical inventory are often updated. It is worth noting the dynamics of the semantic structure of such units and examining the historical-political events from which they originate, as well as their metaphorical interpretations. This approach offers a valuable opportunity to trace society's attitudes toward historical and political events of a given period.

The lexical and phraseological inventory of a language is directly influenced by extralinguistic events and the social processes within which the language operates. Metaphorical expressions formed in response to political events of the Soviet period have become so entrenched in the Georgian language that they are now regarded as phraseological units. Interestingly, these expressions are actively used by the post-Soviet generation—individuals born in independent Georgia, for whom Soviet political events are largely unfamiliar.

The study of metaphors in political discourse encompasses two dimensions: semantic and pragmatic. On the one hand, such metaphors reflect political events; on the other, they serve as important tools in the construction of cultural identity. For example, the metaphors examined in this study share two common features: a connection with Soviet/post-Soviet Russia and a distinctly negative context. In political discourse, such expressions are often employed to criticize the subject of discussion.

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### **Digital Dictionaries**

Cambridge Dictionary <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>

Merriam-Webster Dictionary <https://www.merriam-webster.com/>

Political Dictionary. <https://politicaldictionary.com/>

### **Online Media**

Euronews Georgia <https://euronewsgeorgia.com/>

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/>

Kviris Palitra <https://kvirispalitra.ge/>

Radio Liberty <https://www.radiotavisupleba.ge/>

Tabula <https://tabula.ge/ge>

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## **Developing Dictionary Skills in English Language Learners (Polysemy, Conversion)**

### **ABSTRACT**

The paper presents the results of a study, conducted at one of the public schools in Tbilisi which aimed to reveal the efficiency of specially tailored exercises for developing dictionary skills in students at schools. In particular, the experiment concentrated on two lexical issues, polysemy and conversion and tested the ability of students to recognize the contextual meaning of a polysemous word, as well as its part of speech meaning with the help of dictionaries. The research question was how these skills could be improved with the help of special exercises designed for this purpose. 50 students, participating in the study, were divided into 2 groups, group A and group B. Group A students had special training in polysemy and conversion with exercises, while the second group did not undergo such training. At the second stage of the experiment both groups were given the same tasks in order to test their ability in guessing the contextual meaning as well as the part of speech meaning of test words and the results of both groups were compared and evaluated.

**Keywords:** *experiment; dictionary skills; polysemy; conversion.*

### **Introduction**

Lexicography, as a field, has undergone a long and versatile evolution. Practical lexicography dates back to the earliest stages of human civilization, as people have long shown interest in the languages of neighboring communities and attempted to compile bilingual word lists. Theoretical lexicography, or metalexicography, emerged much later (Wiegand, 1984). According to Wiegand, metalexicography comprises the following components: 1. History of lexicography; 2. General theory of lexicography; 3. Research on dictionary use; 4. Review of dictionaries (1984).

Research on dictionary use, as one of the important directions of theoretical lexicography, was founded in the 1970s, and to date, more than 200 studies have been conducted in different countries around the world (Bejoint 2010; Kosem et al. 2019; Nied Curcio 2022). The goals of these studies are different, namely, what are language learners' attitudes towards dictionaries, what are dictionaries used for, what are the strategies for looking up information in dictionaries, which types of dictionaries are used predominantly, and in general, what is the attitude of a society towards this field.

On the basis of these studies, comments and wishes of dictionary users, the structure of dictionaries and the methods of presenting material in them have improved considerably, and modern

online dictionaries have become truly user-friendly resources. However, this process was not accompanied by the development of the other side of the relation between a dictionary and its users, namely by teaching dictionary use, developing dictionary skills in learners (Rundell 1999; Gouws 2022; Markus et al. 2023). “Users should be trained to be more skilled in using dictionaries and other lexicographic tools because no matter how user-friendly the source is, in order to successfully retrieve data, the user needs to know exactly what kind of data set is represented in different dictionary types. Knowing the layout and the basic properties of data structure is essential to accessing the right information” (Margalitadze and Markus, 2024, p. 762). Unfortunately, dictionary didactics has been ignored for years, which led to the loss of the dictionary culture in many countries, including Georgia (Nied Curcio, 2022; Gouws, 2022; Margalitadze and Meladze, 2023).

This situation has had a negative impact on the knowledge of both foreign and native languages in many countries. According to Georgian scholars the influence of English on modern Georgian, proliferation of Anglicisms and calques in it, can be partly explained by the loss of the dictionary culture (Margalitadze, 2020). As a school teacher of English, I am well aware of this problem and see its consequences in my daily interactions with students. I share the view that these circumstances affect negatively the Georgian language and that some measures need to be taken. I am also aware of the fact that school teachers of English need help, methodological guidelines, training in order to introduce and successfully implement teaching dictionary skills in the classroom. The experiment, which I conducted at a public school in Tbilisi, was designed to get a better insight into this problem. My study is the first attempt to explore the dictionary use issues at Georgian schools.

## **Literature Review**

As mentioned above, numerous studies have been conducted on dictionary use in many countries. Welker divides this type of research into six categories: 1. Survey, 2. Studies on actual dictionary use; 3. Studies on the effect of dictionary use; 4. Studies on specific dictionary features and on specific dictionaries; 5. Research on the use of electronic dictionaries, and 6. Research on the teaching of dictionary use (Welker, 2010).

Early studies primarily relied on questionnaires, which were either distributed in person or sent electronically. This method gained popularity due to its ability to collect data from a large number of participants efficiently. However, it faced criticism as a quantitative research tool, particularly because researchers had no direct observation of participants' responses. This limitation raised concerns about whether respondents fully understood and accurately interpreted the questions. As a result, greater emphasis was placed on qualitative research methods (Labov, 1972; Lew, 2002). In addition to

questionnaires, there are alternative methods for studying dictionary usage and dictionary users. One such method is direct observation, in which the researcher observes the participant's behavior in real-time and collects reliable data through firsthand observation (Hatherall, 1984). Among the various research methods mentioned above, one alternative approach is the think-aloud method, in which participants verbalize their thoughts while performing a given task (Wingate, 2002). Additionally, these methods can be combined to achieve more effective results.

Although these studies aimed to consider the opinions of dictionary users in order to improve the quality and structure of dictionaries, they also revealed that many language learners lack basic dictionary skills. They often struggle to find the contextual meaning of polysemous words, select the correct part of speech within a given context, and perform other essential dictionary-related tasks (Welker, 2010; Margalitadze and Meladze, 2023; Margalitadze and Markus, 2024). Among the various studies conducted, experiments on dictionary use skills were of particular interest to us. Nearly all studies confirm that language learners who receive instruction on dictionary use are significantly better at extracting relevant information, completing dictionary-related tasks, and understanding and retaining foreign language vocabulary (Rundell, 1999). The above-mentioned studies have also revealed that often teachers are not prepared to introduce the topic of dictionary use into the classroom. There are no methodological guidelines for teachers, no teaching materials that would help them conduct teaching dictionary use properly (Nied Curcio, 2022).

In many countries, representatives of the educational sphere, together with lexicographers, have begun to shoulder this problem and improve it. Online courses are being created, led by famous lexicographers, who explain to listeners issues related to lexicography and language (Rundell, 1999; Margalitadze and Meladze, 2023), special dictionaries are being created for early school education (Gavriilidou and Konstantinidou, 2022), and exercises are being created to develop dictionary skills in students (Thornbury, 2002; Leaney, 2007; Marchisio et al., 2019; Markus, 2022).

Teaching dictionary skills comprises various aspects, such as spelling, pronunciation, grammatical information, lexical issues – polysemy, homonymy, conversion, collocations, phrasal verbs, and idioms. In my study, I decided to concentrate on polysemy and conversion. This decision was dictated by the conducted surveys, which identified polysemy and conversion as the most problematic issues for students. They don't read the entire entry and choose the first dictionary meaning, which, in many cases, is not the contextual meaning of this polysemous word. The conducted experiments also revealed that students have difficulty guessing the correct part of speech of a word in context, which is why they look up the word in a wrong dictionary entry.

The English language is highly polysemous, with many words having multiple but related



meanings. These words frequently appear in English, often complicating communication between speakers and listeners and causing confusion in the classroom between teachers and students. However, many teachers tend to address such words only within a specific context, rather than exploring their broader semantic range. A more effective approach to vocabulary mastery would be to provide students with a deeper understanding of polysemy, demonstrate how to determine a word's correct meaning using a dictionary, and guide them in developing strategies for interpreting multiple meanings (Vardidze, 2020).

This problem is to be addressed by developing dictionary skills in students. Proceeding from these considerations, there arise the following questions:

- Should foreign language learners be explicitly taught dictionary skills during their school education to improve their ability to identify and understand polysemous words and other complex lexical items?
- How effective are targeted exercises in developing dictionary usage skills for dealing with polysemy, part-of-speech identification, and other aspects of English vocabulary in context?

To explore these questions, I conducted a study at a public school where I teach English. I selected tenth-grade students with an intermediate level of English as study participants.

## **The Experiment**

To answer the above questions, I planned and conducted an experiment in two stages during the spring of 2024, involving 50 tenth-grade students. The first stage was preparatory and involved providing and training one group of tenth-grade students (Group A) with pre-prepared materials and exercises designed to develop their dictionary skills in two areas: polysemy and conversion. The second group (Group B), which participated in the study's second stage, did not receive preliminary training. This stage, along with its exercises, was entirely original and designed by me. In the second part of the study, I used materials from an experiment carried out by Donna Farina, a professor at the University of New Jersey, and her Slovenian colleagues at the University of Ljubljana (Farina and Urbinc, 2019). This material includes contexts in which common, high-frequency English words are used figuratively rather than literally. In the second stage of the study, both groups were required to analyze these contexts and, using dictionaries, determine the part of speech of the words and their contextual meaning. With the written consent of the authors, I incorporated these contexts into the study, where, as mentioned, high-frequency English words familiar to students were presented with unexpected polysemous meanings. The study aimed to determine how effective could be working with students on English vocabulary through targeted exercises on various vocabulary aspects. Our study

focused specifically on polysemy and conversion, although the list of relevant topics is much broader, including homonyms, collocations, idioms, phrasal verbs, terminology, and more.

## The Research Process

### *The First Stage of the Research*

I worked in advance with the students from Group A, who are also my students. I explained to them that an English word can belong to different parts of speech and that determining the part of speech of a word is crucial for accurately understanding the text. I also explained that English words are polysemous and that recognizing their meanings is possible through context, which allows for a more accurate interpretation of these words. Additionally, I emphasized the importance of using dictionaries and demonstrated how to find a word or its meaning in a dictionary. Unfortunately, it should be noted that most of the students at school do not know how to use a dictionary properly, and many believe that a word has only one meaning. Therefore, I decided to include targeted exercises on polysemy for the students of Group A. Below, I present one example of such an exercise (see example 1):

#### (1) Exercise 1:

*Below are listed seven polysemous meanings of the English verb "to break," along with two sentences in which the verb is used. Identify the contextual meaning of "to break" in each sentence and circle the corresponding number in brackets.*

1. to separate into parts with suddenness or violence;
2. to fracture a bone;
3. to rip, to burst;
4. to weaken;
5. to ruin financially, to bankrupt;
6. to inform, to make known, to tell;
7. to violate, transgress (law, promise).

Tom broke the news of her husband's death to Mary

(1 2 3 4 5 6 7)

The money-lenders soon broke him  
(1 2 3 4 5 6 7).

In these types of exercises, I initially provided the meanings of polysemous words in Georgian and then, in other exercises, in English, as in the second stage of the research, the students were required to complete the task using Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary.

I also included exercises on conversion for the students in Group A. Below is an example of this type of exercise (see example 2):

## (2) Exercise 2

*Circle the correct part of speech:*

### TOP

1. She was standing at the **top** of the stairs.  
a. verb b. noun c. adverb d. adjective
2. My father was a **top** lawyer.  
a. verb b. noun c. adverb d. adjective
3. Fruit salad is **topped** with cream.  
a. verb b. noun c. adverb d. adjective

While working on the exercises, I found that the students had more difficulty identifying adjectives and adverbs than nouns and verbs. As a result, I dedicated more time to working on these two parts of speech.

I also worked with the students of Group A on mixed-type exercises, which combined conversion and polysemy. Specifically, the exercise required the students to first identify the part of speech of the target word and then find its correct meaning from the given English definitions (see example 3).

## (3) Exercise 3.

*Identify the part of speech of the highlighted word, and then circle the correct contextual meaning from the definitions given below.*

### THIN

1. Their arguments all sound a little **thin** for me.
2. The sauce was **thin** and tasteless.

*Definitions:*

- a. having a small distance between the top and bottom or front and back surfaces:
- b. of a liquid: flowing very easily: containing a lot of water
- c. not having a lot of extra flesh on the body: not fat
- d. not large or impressive
- e. not very convincing, weak.

The work with the Group A students continued for three weeks.

## The Second Stage of the Research

The second stage of the study involved presenting contexts to students of Groups A and B, in which the target words were highlighted. The students were required to identify the part of speech and the contextual meaning of these words using the Merriam-Webster Learner's Dictionary. I divided the study into two stages, conducting it with each group on different days. On the first day, I conducted the study with students who had not received any prior training and had not worked with the same types of exercises as the students in Group A. On the second day, the study was conducted with students who had previously completed various types of exercises. On both days, the study lasted for one lesson (45 minutes). The students worked individually in a quiet environment at their designated computers, where they searched for the part of speech and the meaning of the target word in the given context using the specified dictionary. During the experiment, I had the opportunity to observe the students' look up process, which allowed me to partially combine the quantitative method with the qualitative approach.

I selected six contexts and six test words from Donna Farina's material, which included two verbs, two nouns, and two adjectives: to fix (verb), to score (verb), plug (noun), ticket (noun), sharp (adjective), rich (adjective). Below are given some samples of these contexts (see example 4).

(4)

(4a) A man arrived at the police station here in 2011 with an unusual tip. He told the police that a Singaporean man was **fixing** matches with the local professional soccer team. The police were incredulous.

To fix (verb): primary meaning 'to make firm, stable, or stationary'

contextual meaning 'to influence the actions, outcome, or effect of by improper or illegal methods.'

(4b) He added that the party would be "working collaboratively with our county chairs over the coming weeks and months to put together the statewide **ticket**."

Ticket (noun): primary meaning 'a certificate or token showing that a fare or admission fee has been paid'

contextual meaning ‘a list of candidates for nomination or election.’

(4c) Her rock ‘n’ roll friends might have expected a hip ‘n’ cool outfit for her English country wedding. But it was her husband, Jamie Hince, the guitarist from The Kills, in his **sharp** blue Yves Saint Laurent suit, who brought a touch of music-world fantasy.

Sharp (adjective): primary meaning ‘having a thin keen edge or fine point’

contextual meaning ‘stylish, elegant, dressy.’

As can be seen from the 4a, 4b and 4c contexts, they include words, which are known to students of intermediate level - *ticket*, *fix*, *sharp*. On the other hand, they are used in unusual contexts where they have a completely different meaning from their primary meanings. These contexts enable a researcher to check the ability of students to retrieve necessary information successfully from a dictionary, in general, to check dictionary skills of students.

## Research Results

After completing the experiment, I assessed a total of 50 assignments. Each assignment included six test words, each presented within a specific context. Correct answers were awarded 5 points each, with a maximum possible score of 30 points. Based on the scores, I categorized the assignments into three performance levels: excellent (25–30 points), good (15–20 points), and poor (5–10 points). The scores were distributed as follows: In Group A, out of 25 participants, 20 students (80%) received an excellent score, out of which 15 students (60%) got 30 points and 5 students (20%) - 25 points. None of the participants in Group A received a good score, and the work of 5 students (20%) was evaluated as poor, with a score of 10 points.

Regarding the results for the participants in Group B, none of them received an excellent score. Seventeen students (70%) earned a good grade, with 5 students (20%) scoring 20 points and 12 students (50%) scoring 15 points. Eight students (30%) submitted poor work, with 5 students (20%) earning 5 points and 3 students (10%) earning 10 points (see Table 1 and Table 2).

Table 1

### Group A

Excellent	20 Students (80%)
Good	0 Students
Poor	5 Students (20%)

Table 2

Group B

Excellent	0 Students
Good	17 Students (70%)
Poor	8 Students (30%)

Regarding the identification of the parts of speech, 22 participants in Group A correctly identified all test words, except for one word. In Group B, 20 out of 25 participants made errors in identifying the parts of speech, particularly with the words *scoring* (incorrectly identified as a noun in the given context) and *plug* (incorrectly identified as a verb). Additionally, one student mistakenly classified *sharp* as a noun.

Students in Group B had the most difficulty recognizing the words *score*, *fix*, and *sharp*, as it was unusual for them to understand familiar words used in such different contexts. For example, the word *score* was used in that context in its slang meaning: ‘to buy or get illegal drugs’ (He couldn't score any drugs). Students failed to guess the correct meaning from the dictionary entry.

Regarding the word *sharp*, the 12th meaning listed in the dictionary entry was overlooked by Group B participants, as they were unfamiliar with the nuances of polysemous words. In contrast, they found the word *rich* relatively easy to interpret, as the dictionary entry included illustrative material that closely aligned with the test context (see example 5).

(5) Information in the Dictionary entry: ‘used to say that a person's comment or criticism is surprising or amusing because the same comment or criticism could be made about that person’.

Example: His remarks about the importance of saving money are pretty rich coming from a man who just bought another new car.

The test context: “She says we're working too slowly.” “Oh, that's rich. She's the one who keeps delaying things with all her meetings.”

## Analysis of Research Results

The study revealed that students who were familiar with the concept of polysemy, had worked with various types of exercises, and knew how to use a dictionary, performed better in the task. In contrast, students who lacked knowledge of polysemous words and dictionary usage struggled to complete the task effectively. The research made it evident that teaching polysemous words should not rely solely on theoretical, oral learning. Instead, it should incorporate practical training through the development of various types of exercises. Moreover, it is crucial to teach students how to use

dictionaries effectively. Observations of Group B participants showed that, during the word-search process, many students did not explore alternative meanings of words and paid little attention to identifying the part of speech of the test words. For example, when searching for the word *fix*, many students searched for it in its contextual form, *fixing*, which led to errors as they were searching for a noun instead of a verb.

At the end of the experiment, I spoke with five students from Group A who received poor marks in the assessment. It turned out that they had missed lessons due to illness, which led to their insufficient knowledge of how to search for or identify meanings of polysemous words in the dictionary.

## Conclusion

Research on dictionary use, one of the components of theoretical lexicography, was founded in the 1970s, and to date, more than 200 studies have been conducted in different countries around the world. On the basis of these studies, comments and wishes of dictionary users, the structure of dictionaries and the methods of presenting material in them have improved considerably, and modern online dictionaries have become truly user-friendly resources. However, these studies also revealed that many language learners lack basic dictionary skills. They often struggle to find the contextual meaning of polysemous words, select the correct part of speech within a given context, and perform other essential dictionary-related tasks. Moreover, disregard of teaching dictionary uses for years led to the loss of dictionary culture in many countries including Georgia. This situation has had a negative impact on the knowledge of both foreign and native languages in many countries. As a school teacher of English, I am well aware of this problem and see its consequences in my daily interactions with students. The experiment, which I conducted at a public school in Tbilisi was designed to explore these issues in more depth.

My research questions were the following:

- Should foreign language learners be explicitly taught dictionary skills during their school education to improve their ability to identify and understand polysemous words and other complex lexical items?
- How effective are targeted exercises in developing dictionary usage skills for dealing with polysemy, part-of-speech identification, and other aspects of English vocabulary in context?

The experiment clearly demonstrated the need for teaching dictionary skills. On the one hand, we saw that three weeks of work with students of Group A was sufficient to help them perform the vocabulary tasks better. On the other hand, observation of students in Group B, observing the process



of obtaining information from the dictionary by them, clearly showed the deficiency of dictionary skills and the necessity in their development. This result is consistent with research conducted in other countries, which highlights the need for teaching dictionary use, i.e. that users who have been taught how to search for information in a dictionary are better able to extract relevant and necessary information from it.

The experiment convinced me that it is necessary to create exercises for students that should cover all aspects of dictionary use, comprising spelling and pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary, polysemy and homonymy, conversion and collocations, idioms, and terminology. Before developing such exercises, it is necessary to conduct a large-scale survey in schools with the participation of both students and teachers. This survey will better identify the needs of both students and teachers at schools, and the creation of exercises, manuals, and methodological guidelines should be based on a more insightful understanding of these needs.

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## **The Integration of ChatGPT in Academic writing: Exploring perceptions and effectiveness of the students**

### **ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the integration of ChatGPT as a technological aid in the academic practices of BA and MA pharmacy students at the University of Tetovo (North Macedonia). The research also examines the perceived benefits, such as enhanced efficiency, improved linguistic accuracy, and access to diverse perspectives, alongside challenges like potential over-reliance, accuracy of content, and academic integrity concerns. By adopting a quantitative approach, a student survey, the study seeks to understand students' attitudes toward this AI tool, delving into their perspectives on its utility, and their experiences using ChatGPT for their academic purposes.

The findings reveal that students generally perceive ChatGPT as a valuable tool for enhancing academic practices, particularly in areas such as generating ideas, improving writing quality, and accessing quick information. However, concerns were also noted regarding the reliability of generated content and the risk of dependency on AI tools for critical thinking and problem-solving.

**Keywords:** *ChatGPT, pharmacy, academic writing, critical thinking*

### **Introduction**

The rapid advancements of technology especially artificial intelligence (AI), have significantly transformed education because AI- tools are increasingly being integrated into academic practices in all fields of studies. Among these tools, ChatGPT, an advanced language model developed by OpenAI, has emerged as a valuable resource for assisting students and educators across disciplines. Its ability to generate coherent, contextually relevant, and detailed text has made it particularly appealing for tasks such as report writing, brainstorming, and enhancing written communication skills. However, the adoption of AI tools like ChatGPT in higher education has sparked debates about their effectiveness, ethical implications, and potential impact on learning outcomes and ethical issues.

In the context of pharmacy education, where precision, critical thinking, and clear communication are crucial, the integration of ChatGPT offers several opportunities and challenges. Pharmacy students often engage in writing detailed reports that require a combination of technical knowledge and well-structured argumentation. The use of ChatGPT in this domain has the potential to streamline the report-writing process, providing students with support in organizing their thoughts, refining language, and ensuring clarity. However, concerns remain regarding the over-reliance on AI, the accuracy of the generated content, and its implications for the development of essential skills such as critical analysis

and independent thinking.

This study focuses on BA and MA pharmacy students at the University of Tetovo, North Macedonia investigating their perceptions of ChatGPT as a tool for writing pharmacy reports. By exploring their attitudes, experiences, and the perceived advantages and challenges, the research aims to shed light on the broader implications of integrating AI in specialized academic fields. Additionally, it examines the extent to which ChatGPT impacts students' academic performance and report-writing skills, aiming to provide insights into its effectiveness as a pedagogical tool. Ultimately, this study seeks to contribute to the ongoing dialogue about the role of AI in higher education, particularly in fostering a balance between leveraging technological innovations and maintaining academic rigor.

## **Literature review**

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, into academic contexts has gained significant attention in recent years. These tools offer innovative ways to enhance student learning experiences, particularly in disciplines where precision and clarity in communication are paramount, such as pharmacy. This literature review examines the broader use of AI in education and focuses on the implications of ChatGPT in academic writing, emphasizing its potential benefits and challenges.

What is more, AI tools have transformed educational practices, offering solutions for personalized learning, formative assessment, and academic support (Holmes et al., 2019). In academic writing, these tools assist with language proficiency, idea generation, and grammar improvement (Awasthi, 2019). For pharmacy students, who often grapple with specialized terminology and technical communication, AI tools like ChatGPT present an opportunity to enhance linguistic accuracy and efficiency in writing (Pinto et al., 2022). In addition to this, students often use AI for translation from one language to another. Translation exercises can enhance learners' abilities to work independently, fostering Life-Long Learning (LLL) (Tenieshvili, 2023).

ChatGPT, specifically, employs natural language processing to simulate human-like conversations and assist users in generating coherent text. Studies have noted that such tools can support students in brainstorming, summarizing, and refining their writing. For instance, Gao et al. (2023) found that students using ChatGPT reported increased confidence in their writing abilities and a reduction in time spent on assignments.

In general, research highlights several benefits of using ChatGPT in educational settings. Students perceive it as a reliable aid for improving grammar, vocabulary, and coherence in writing (Zheng et al., 2023). Pharmacy students, in particular, may benefit from the tool's ability to provide suggestions

for concise and precise language use, which is critical for scientific communication (Chen et al., 2021). Moreover, ChatGPT offers access to diverse perspectives by generating content informed by a wide range of sources, potentially broadening students' understanding of topics (Lee, 2023). “ It was expected that AI can greatly accelerate drug discovery and development to reduce lifecycle of pharmaceutical products. Therefore, introduction of AI into pharmacy holds great potential to accelerate the drug discovery and development process, reduce costs, and improve patient outcomes” (Zhu et.al.2023, p.1).

Despite its benefits, integrating ChatGPT into academic practices raises concerns. One major issue is the potential for over-reliance on AI tools, which could hinder the development of critical thinking and independent problem-solving skills (Baker et al., 2022). Additionally, the accuracy of the information provided by ChatGPT remains a challenge, as the tool may generate plausible but incorrect or outdated content (Marcus & Davis, 2023). Academic integrity is another critical concern, with some educators worried about students using AI tools to circumvent original thought and effort (Smith & Johnson, 2023). In pharmacy education, where precision and credibility are paramount, ChatGPT's integration must be carefully managed. Educators are encouraged to adopt strategies that combine AI tools with traditional learning approaches, ensuring that students benefit from technological advancements while maintaining academic rigor and ethical standards (Jones & Brown, 2022).

The integration of ChatGPT in academic writing presents both opportunities and challenges for pharmacy students. While it can enhance writing efficiency, linguistic accuracy, and conceptual clarity, it is essential to address concerns about over-reliance, content accuracy, and ethical use. Further research is needed to explore the long-term impact of AI tools on student learning outcomes and professional preparedness in specialized disciplines like pharmacy.

Several studies explored the use of ChatGPT in academic settings. Su, Lin, and Lai (2023) investigated the use of ChatGPT in enhancing argumentative writing among university students. The study highlighted improvements in students' ability to structure arguments and use diverse perspectives. However, challenges like over-reliance on AI and ethical concerns were noted. The results suggested that while ChatGPT is effective as a supportive tool, it must be paired with critical thinking exercises to ensure meaningful learning outcomes.

In addition, Yan (2023) explored the relationship between ChatGPT and academic writing self-efficacy among postgraduate students. The study found that students who used ChatGPT demonstrated increased confidence in tackling complex writing tasks. However, it also pointed to potential dependency on the tool, with students relying on AI-generated suggestions rather than developing their own ideas.

Finally, a study conducted by Govindarajan and Christuraj (2023) examined the opportunities and challenges of integrating ChatGPT into English Language Teaching (ELT) at a university in Oman. The research aims to assess the benefits and challenges of using ChatGPT in English teaching and its impact on educational practices and policy. By employing qualitative methods, including literature review and semi-structured interviews, the study found that while ChatGPT offers promising advantages, concerns regarding over-reliance and the need for proper teacher and student training remain. The study calls for further research to fully explore ChatGPT's potential in ELT and address its associated challenges.

## **Methods**

This study aims to explore the integration of ChatGPT in academic writing and its perceived effectiveness among BA and MA pharmacy students at the University of Tetovo. A survey method was utilized to gather data on students' attitudes, experiences, and perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT as a writing tool in their academic endeavors.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

### ***Research Questions:***

- How do pharmacy students perceive the usefulness of ChatGPT in enhancing their academic writing skills?
- What are the key benefits and challenges experienced by pharmacy students when using ChatGPT for academic writing?
- To what extent do pharmacy students rely on ChatGPT in their academic writing tasks?

## ***Participants***

The study sample consists of 50 pharmacy students, both undergraduate (BA) and postgraduate (MA) students from the University of Tetovo. Participants were selected using a purposive sampling method to ensure representation from both academic levels and diverse academic writing experiences.

## ***Data collection method***

Data was collected using a structured survey designed specifically for this study. The survey comprised three sections: Demographic Information which consists of the questions related to their academic level (BA or MA), gender, and age. Also, perceptions of ChatGPT using a 5-point Likert scale, this section assessed students' views on the usefulness, reliability, and relevance of ChatGPT in academic writing tasks. Finally, the third section is about students' experiences with ChatGPT which



explored how students utilized ChatGPT, the perceived benefits, challenges, and frequency of use. The survey was distributed to 50 students online via the university's learning management system and email. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consent was obtained before data collection.

## Results

This section presents a detailed analysis of the data collected from the survey, highlighting both the benefits and challenges associated with the use of ChatGPT in academic writing among pharmacy students at the University of Tetovo. The survey results provide valuable insights into how students perceive and utilize this AI tool in the context of their academic work. By examining both the positive outcomes and potential limitations, we aim to understand the broader implications of integrating AI technologies, such as ChatGPT, into higher education, particularly in the field of pharmacy.

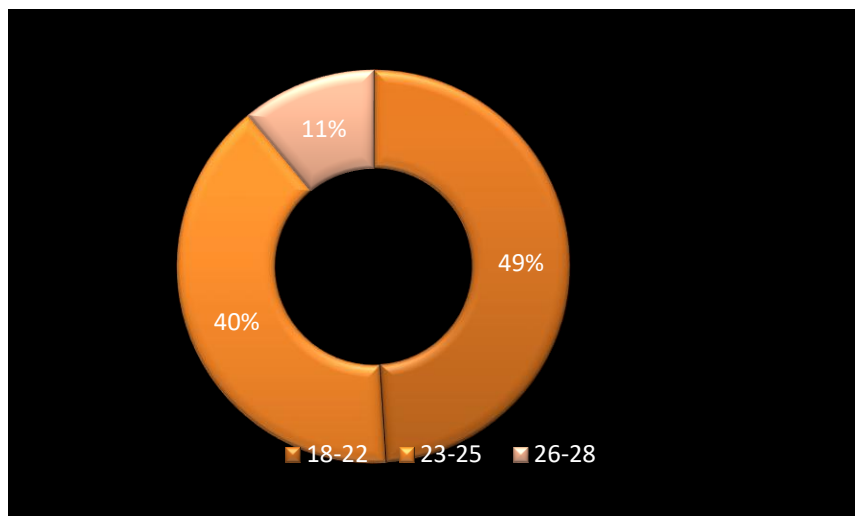
The benefits identified by the participants include increased efficiency in generating ideas, enhancing the writing process, and improving overall productivity. Many students reported that ChatGPT helped them overcome writer's block, provided alternative phrasing or vocabulary, and allowed for quicker drafting of assignments. Additionally, the tool was seen as a valuable resource for refining the structure and clarity of written content, contributing to better-organized academic papers.

On the other hand, several challenges emerged from the data, which shed light on areas where ChatGPT's integration into academic writing may require caution. Issues related to accuracy, plagiarism concerns, and over-reliance on AI-generated content were raised by a significant portion of the respondents. Some students expressed concerns that the tool may sometimes produce misleading or incorrect information, especially in complex topics related to pharmacy. Furthermore, the use of ChatGPT raised ethical questions, particularly around the potential for students to rely too heavily on AI-generated material, which might undermine the development of critical thinking and original writing skills.

Overall, the analysis highlights a nuanced perspective on the role of ChatGPT in academic writing, where its potential as a supportive tool is clear, but its limitations and ethical considerations must also be carefully addressed to ensure its responsible and effective use. This section will explore these findings in greater depth, providing recommendations for best practices in utilizing ChatGPT within the academic framework at the University of Tetovo.



**Figure 1**



The results presented in Figure 1, indicate that the age distribution of participants was primarily concentrated among young adults. A high proportion (49%) of participants were aged 18–22, while the second largest group, accounting for 40%, was aged 23–25, suggesting that the majority were in the early stages of graduate education in pharmacy. Additionally, 11% of participants fell into the 26–28 age range, likely reflecting individuals with more advanced experience or maturity.

**Figure 2**

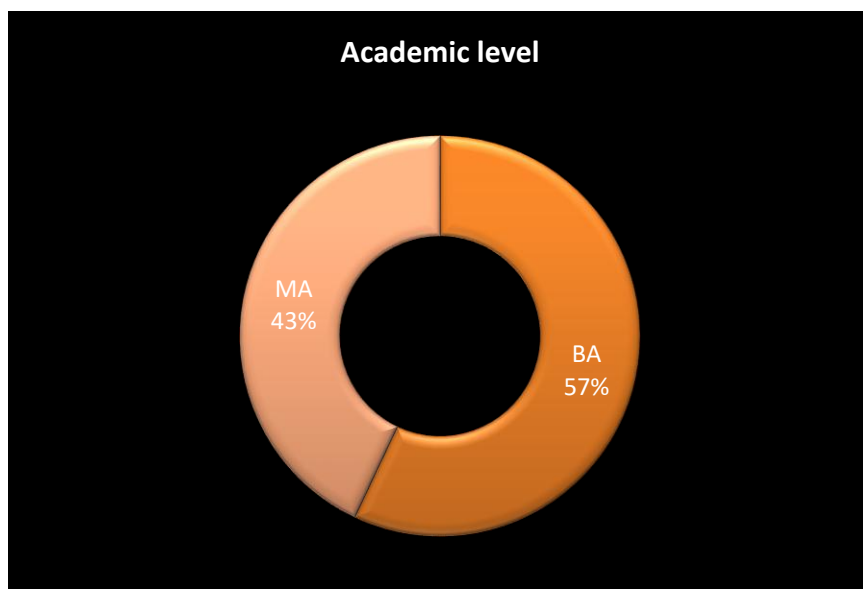


Figure 2 provides an overview of the academic levels of the participants in the pharmacy program. The data indicates that the majority, 57%, are pursuing a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree, while 43% are enrolled in Master of Arts (MA) studies. This distribution highlights a slightly larger proportion of undergraduate students compared to graduate-level participants.

**Figure 3**

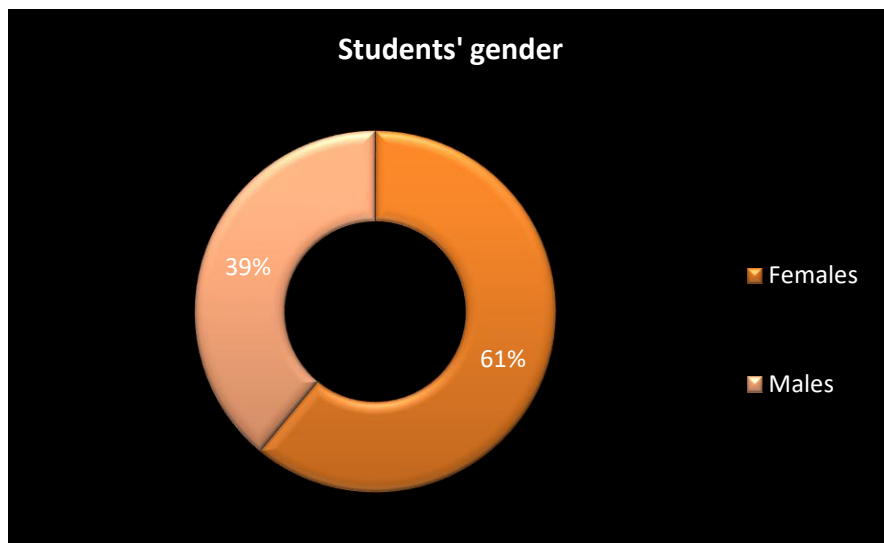


Figure 3 highlights the gender composition of students enrolled in the pharmacy program. The data reveals a notable gender disparity, with 61% of the cohort being female and 39% male. This distribution underscores the prominence of female students in the field, reflecting broader trends observed in many health-related disciplines.

**Figure 4**

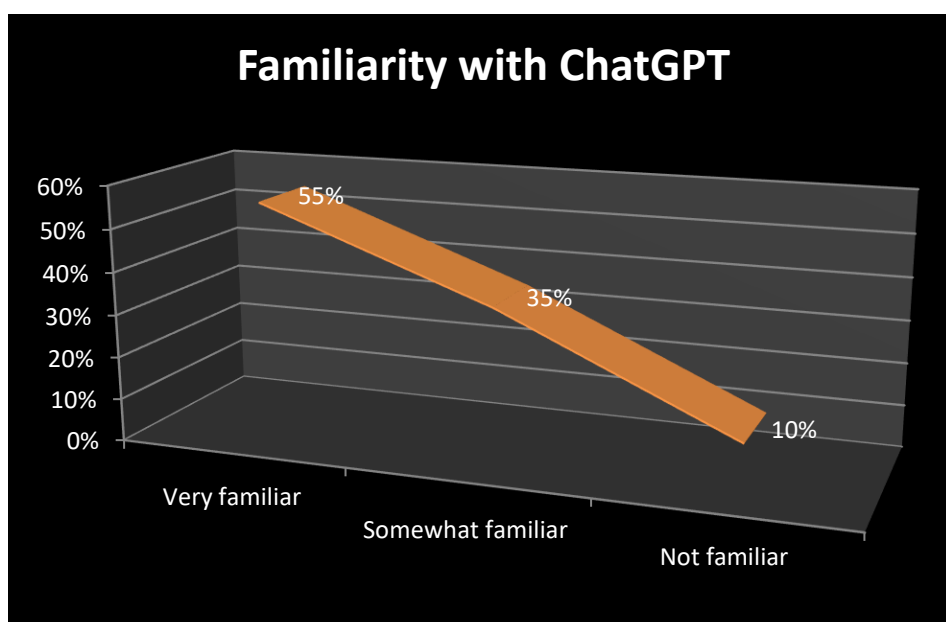


Figure 4 illustrates the varying degrees of familiarity students have with ChatGPT, a popular AI language model. The data reveals that a significant majority, 55%, categorize themselves as "very familiar" with the tool, indicating a strong awareness and potentially regular usage. Meanwhile, 35% of students describe themselves as "somewhat familiar". Lastly, 10% of students' report being "not familiar" with ChatGPT which could be due to accessibility gap or due to limited exposure.

**Figure 5**

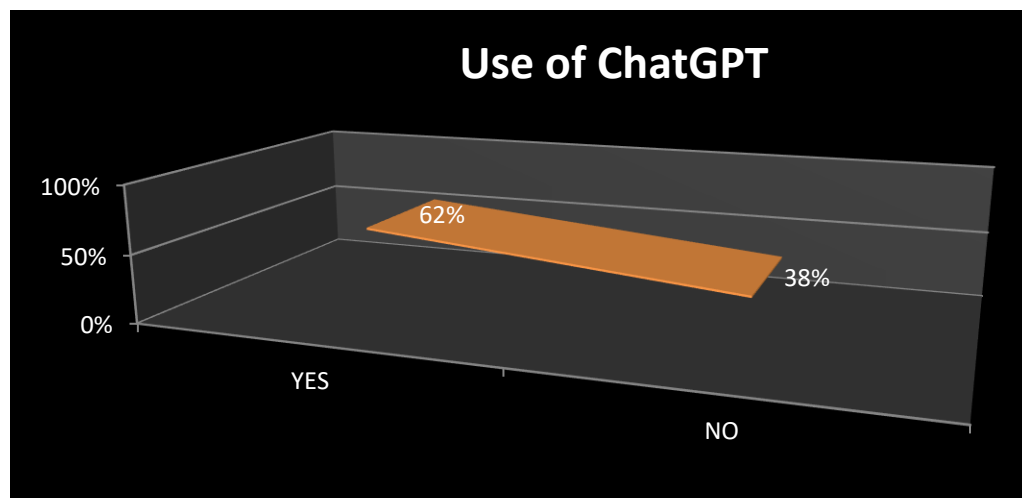


Figure 5 shows that 62% of students reported using ChatGPT for academic purposes, while 38% indicated they do not. This suggests that a majority recognize and utilize the tool's potential to support their academic activities, while a notable minority have yet to incorporate it into their learning practices.

**Figure 6**

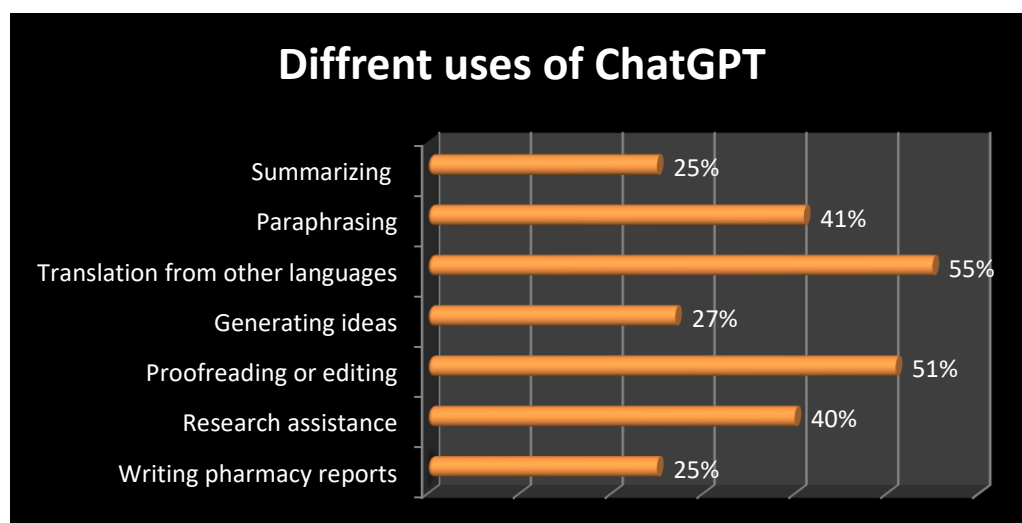
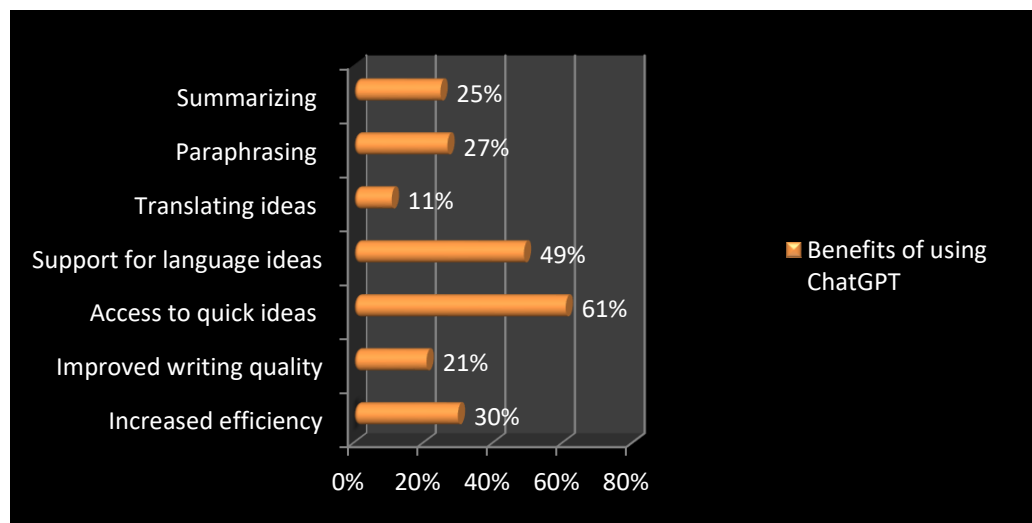


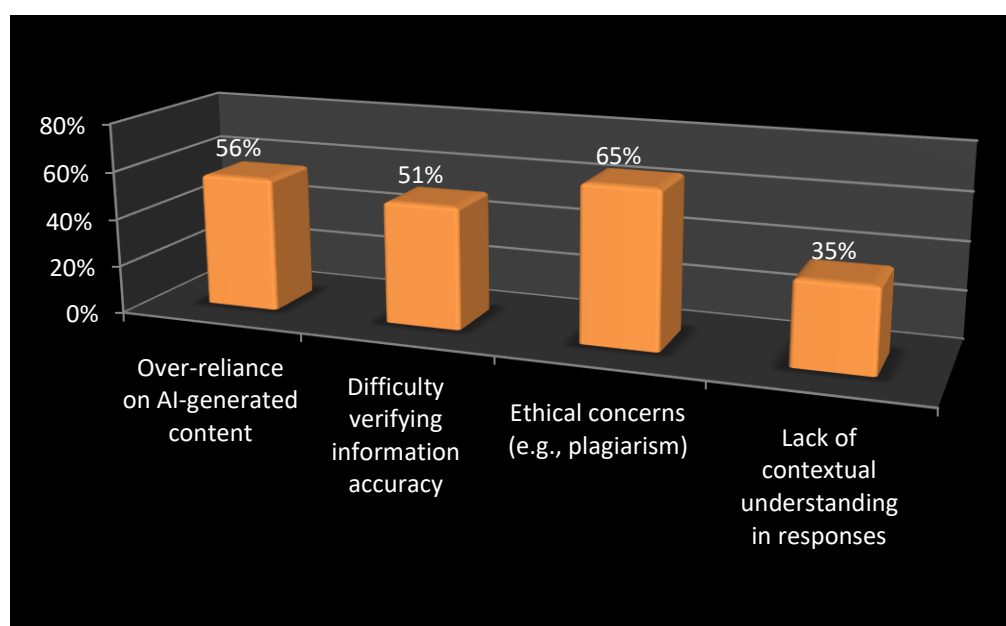
Figure 6 highlights the varied ways students leverage ChatGPT in their academic activities. The most prevalent use is for translation from other languages (55%), followed closely by proofreading and editing (51%). Paraphrasing (41%) and research assistance (40%) also rank highly, showcasing the tool's role in refining and generating academic content. Additionally, 27% of students use ChatGPT to generate ideas, and 25% for summarizing texts. A smaller yet significant proportion of students likely employ ChatGPT for tasks specific to their field, such as writing pharmacy reports (25%) or generating specialized content. These findings underscore the tool's versatility in addressing both general and domain-specific academic needs.

**Figure 7**



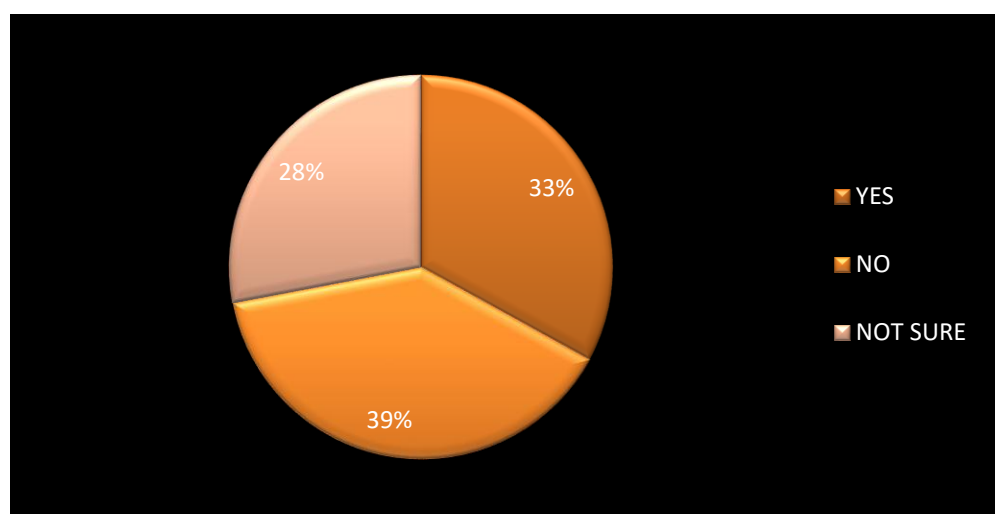
The findings in Figure 7 illustrate the multifaceted benefits of using ChatGPT. A significant proportion of users (61%) appreciate its role in providing quick access to ideas, showcasing its utility as a powerful tool for brainstorming and fostering creativity. Nearly half of the respondents (49%) highlight its effectiveness in language-related tasks, such as improving grammar and finding synonyms, underlining its contribution to enhancing linguistic skills. Additionally, 30% of users report improved efficiency, reflecting ChatGPT's capacity to streamline workflows and save time. Features like paraphrasing (27%) and summarizing (25%) are also valued for tasks involving restructuring or condensing content. Moreover, 21% of users note that ChatGPT enhances writing quality by refining tone, clarity, and coherence.

**Figure 8**



The results presented in Figure 8 reveal several key challenges faced by students when using ChatGPT. Over-reliance on AI emerged as a significant concern, with 56% of respondents acknowledging this issue. Additionally, 51% of participants found it challenging to verify the accuracy of the information provided by the tool. Ethical concerns were highlighted by 65% of students, underscoring apprehensions about potential misuse and academic integrity. Lastly, 35% of respondents noted the lack of contextual understanding in ChatGPT's responses, pointing to limitations in its ability to provide nuanced and contextually accurate answers. These findings highlight the need for cautious and informed use of AI tools in academic settings.

**Figure 9**



The results from Figure 9 reveal mixed opinions on the integration of ChatGPT into pharmacy curricula. Approximately 33% of respondents are in favor of incorporating ChatGPT into the curriculum, while 39% are opposed to its inclusion. Additionally, 28% of participants remain uncertain about its potential role in the curriculum. These findings suggest a division of opinion on the matter, highlighting the need for further exploration of its benefits and challenges in academic settings.

**Table 1**

Suggested improvements	%
Tools to facilitate group discussions using AI	20%
Accurate translation from different languages	5%
Guidance on academic integrity	49%
Direct links to credible pharmacy journals	39%
Accurate information on pharmacy products	33%
The ability to analyze real-world pharmacy studies	19%
Improved understanding of pharmacy concepts	55%

The results presented in Table 1 indicate several key areas where participants believe improvements could be made in the integration of AI, specifically ChatGPT, into pharmacy curricula. The most significant suggested improvement, with 55% of respondents, is a better understanding of pharmacy concepts. This highlights the desire for ChatGPT to assist students in grasping complex topics within pharmacy education.

Guidance on academic integrity is also a critical area, with 49% of participants suggesting this as an important enhancement. This points to the need for more structured support to ensure students adhere to ethical standards while using AI tools for academic tasks. Furthermore, 39% of respondents emphasize the importance of direct links to credible pharmaceutical journals, reflecting a desire for ChatGPT to help students access authoritative sources in their studies.

The ability to analyze real-world pharmacy studies was highlighted by 19% of participants, suggesting that ChatGPT could be a useful tool for fostering practical, real-world applications of pharmacy knowledge. However, only 20% of respondents pointed to tools for facilitating group discussions with AI assistance, indicating a relatively lower demand for this feature, though it may still be useful in collaborative learning environments. Additionally, accurate translation from different languages was identified as an improvement by only 5% of respondents, showing that this need is relatively minimal in the context of pharmacy education.

Overall, these results suggest that while there is recognition of the utility of ChatGPT in pharmacy education, improvements are needed in areas such as academic integrity, access to credible resources, and enhancing students' comprehension of pharmacy concepts to maximize its potential.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings of this study underscore both the potential and the challenges of integrating ChatGPT into academic writing practices among pharmacy students at the University of Tetovo. The results show that students recognize the utility of ChatGPT in enhancing their academic tasks, particularly in offering quick access to ideas, supporting language-related tasks, and improving efficiency in writing processes. However, the study also reveals several concerns, including over-reliance on AI, difficulty in verifying information accuracy, ethical considerations, and limitations in contextual understanding. These issues highlight the need for appropriate training and guidance for both students and instructors to ensure ChatGPT's responsible and effective use in educational settings.

Furthermore, the survey results indicate that students see value in ChatGPT's potential to improve their understanding of pharmacy concepts and academic writing quality, but they also suggest key areas for improvement. These include enhancing the tool's capability to provide more accurate

pharmaceutical information, links to credible journals, and guidance on academic integrity. While ChatGPT's integration into pharmacy curricula is viewed favorably by some, there remains a degree of uncertainty and resistance, which reflects the need for a more tailored approach to its implementation.

Overall, this research contributes to the growing discourse on AI tools in higher education, providing valuable insights into their integration into specialized disciplines like pharmacy. The findings suggest that further research and careful consideration are needed to fully realize the benefits of AI, ensuring it complements traditional educational methods while addressing potential drawbacks.

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## **Multilingual Education in Ethiopia**

### **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this article was to examine the perceived views of professors on challenges of multilingual education in the current political landscape of Ethiopia. The study was qualitative and it used interview and focus group discussion. The findings of the study revealed that the rise of ethnocentric mentality has brought enormous complexities in the process of giving recognition for the minority language groups. The most visible challenges of multilingual education in Ethiopia are the state of being monolingual in a multilingual society, the wrongly-held perception of ethnocentric elites on the lingua franca language of the nation and the language-based boundaries.

**Keywords:** *multilingual, Ethiopia, ethnic politics, lingua franca, monolingual*

### **Introduction**

Citing the US Census Bureau, Odugu (2011) indicated that the world's population of approximately 6.9 billion belongs to only 194 or so sovereign states but share about 6,909 languages. From 6909 languages, 445 of them exist in India, 521 in Nigeria and 36 different ethnic groups with more or less different languages in Bolivia (Odugu, 2011). In relation to this, Europe and the North America comprise only 7% of the total number of the world's identified languages whereas Asia and Africa which are the most linguistically and culturally enriched continents account for about 64% of the world's languages (Jong, 2011). Africa is the most linguistically diversified continent with over 2,086 languages (Chumbow, 2013). This indicates that most nations in Africa are multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual as a result of which multilingualism has become a reality in the vast continent.

Since the mid twenty century, multilingual societies that had never publicly recognized their multilingualism started to acknowledge their diversity (Garcia, 2007). That is, during the 1960s ethnic identity became a concern of many groups throughout the world (Fishman, 1981). This greater interest in ethnicity was fueled in part by the independence of many African nations, the increased vitality of indigenous groups all over Europe, Asia, and the Americas, the growth of civil rights, especially in the United States, and the dynamic movement of immigrants and refugees throughout the world (Garcia, 2007). In the changed national, regional and global contexts, indigenous knowledge system, linguistic and cultural heritages have got priority in education practices of nation-states all across the globe

(Singh et al., 2012).

Multilingualism, apart from opening doors for quicker and easy communication, has a number of importance. Nelde (2007) underlined that multilingualism, as well as second and third language acquisition, may be of use to peace and cooperation between nations. For Garcia (2007) bilingualism and multilingualism are important for both language majorities and minorities for cognitive, social, and psychological reasons. In a similar manner, Okal (2014) and Chumbow (2013) stated that multilingualism practices enhance intellectual flexibility and creativity. Recent studies have indicated that children who grow up in a supportive environment speaking more than one language from an early age are more perceptive and intellectually flexible than those who speak one language. For Hamel (2005) cited in Singh et al. (2012) noted that multilingualism is not only requisite for ecological sustainability, but it is also individual and collective asset; it is being seen as a source of wealth and strength. In addition to cognitive advantages, bilingualism and biliteracy can bring about greater understanding among groups and increased knowledge of each other (Garcia, 2007). Instruction in a language familiar to pupils improves immeasurably the quality of interaction between teacher and pupil. It also narrows the psychological gulf between home and school, integrates the school better into the local community and gives recognition to the language and culture the child brings to school with positive effects on the self-esteem of individuals and local communities (Ferguson, 2006). Furthermore, it is worthwhile to note that UNESCO declaration of 1953 proposed that “education is best carried on through the mother tongue of a pupil” (p. 6) by stating that the mother tongue plays a huge role in the defining of culture, identity, and learning new knowledge (Singh et al., 2012). Moreover, from the pedagogical point of view, the use of the child’s first language in education has been shown to enhance the academic, linguistic, and cognitive achievement of learners. Ferguson (2013) indicated that a substantial body of academic opinion asserts the view that primary education, particularly early primary education and early literacy, is most effectively conducted in a language familiar to the pupil. This is because the potential for the child’s cognitive development is strengthened during the early years of children. In a multilingual society, a platform of international declarations and conventions support the learning of at least two languages in education: a mother tongue and a language of the larger community, as well as access to international languages (Ball, 2011).

As a result, monolingual education was openly blamed for the exclusion of language minorities from society; thus, throughout the early 1960s, the use of the mother tongue, along with the majority language, especially in the initial years of schooling, became much sought (Garcia, 2007). But before the mid twenty century, the history of nation-building has traditionally involved the promotion of the official language and the repression of others, even liberal states and governments have explicitly or

implicitly assumed that the linguistic minorities should accommodate to the majority language (Archibugi, 2005). Since that time, there has been a myth that “national cohesion” is possible only through a single common language (Spolsky & Shohamy, 2000). This view is widespread in both Western and Eastern Europe (Michael, 2007; Jong: 2011) and it was an idea shared by the former Ethiopian governments.

Owing to this, the then national language Amharic served as a platform for social solidarity and the revised constitution of Ethiopia declared Amharic as the only national official language of the whole empire (Constitution, 1955, Article 125). The primary objective of having one national or official language was to secure the national unity of the country. In this regard, Cohen (2005) noted that the assumption of the Imperial regime’s language policy was to produce national unity; it was necessary to have one language, an assumption that was widely shared at the time. Moreover, the country could make it impossible to try to develop all languages at equal footing due to lack of resources although there was no lack of political willingness on the part of the Imperial regime. In the pursuit of having a common language for all its citizens, the linguistic rights of others were threatened and the Imperial regimes failed to appreciate the immense potentials of indigenous languages.

Despite the fact that multilingualism has a number of benefits, the implementation of the multilingual language policy in Ethiopia has shown a number of problems. For the existence of such problems, Daniel and Abebayehu (2006) noted that the current instructional language policy in Ethiopia is dictated by the ruling party in line with its political ideology rather than being based in genuine attention to student learning and, ultimately, in national economic advancement. Moreover, in Africa, some people view indigenous languages in education as problems to successful education (Herbert & Bailey, 2002 cited in Mose & Kaschula, 2019). This article tries to investigate challenges of multilingual education in Ethiopia.

## **Research Setting**

With the overthrow of Haile Selassie and the advent of the Marxist regime, the language policy was radically changed. Along with UNESCO declaration and international changes, the reinforcement of Ethiopian indigenous language use in school is more of a necessity rather than an option. Since the mid twenty century, preserving cultural identity through indigenous language education has not been a bone of contention. Taking this issue into account, the *Dergue* regime gave the necessary recognition to the various indigenous knowledge systems, cultural heritages and the century’s old linguistic diversities. For the preservation of distinct cultures, endangered languages and identities, the *Dergue* established an Institute called the ‘Institute for the Study of Ethiopian Nationalities’ (ISEN). The policy

was to recognize the linguistic, cultural and social rights of all nationalities. Article 5 of the 1974 National Democratic Revolution programme of Socialist Ethiopia States: each nationality has the right to determine its political, economic, and social life, and use its own language (Victoria, 2010).

After the downfall of the *Dergue* regime, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) established a federal structure in Ethiopia. During the regime of EPRDF, the country is divided into linguistic zones. The 'EPRDF's constitution' (1995) Article 47 (1) classifies the member states of the 'Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia' into nine regional states. According to Article 47, member States of the Federal Democratic Republic are: 1) The State of Tigray, 2) The State of Afar, 3) The State of Amhara, 4) The State of Oromia, 5) The State of Somalia, 6) The State of Benshangul/Gumuz, 7) The State of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples, 8) The State of the Gambela Peoples and 9) The State of the Harari People. Ethiopia is a multilingual country and various languages are spoken. In relation to language, Article 5(3) of the constitution states: Members of the Federation may by law determine their respective working languages. Of all the indigenous languages, Amharic, and Afan Oromo are widely spoken. Again for a substantial proportion of Ethiopians, Amharic is used as lingua franca. Furthermore, in the school setting, Amharic is given as a subject in primary education.

For a considerable number of Ethiopians, Amharic is used as lingua franca. But it has been observed that students (non-Amharic speakers) have hardly used Amharic as a communication tool while they reached higher learning institutions. Due to a highly decentralization policy of the country, students have never been abundantly exposed to the language of the wider communication while they were in primary and secondary schools. Owing to this, some scholars claimed that the existing multiethnic and multilingual situation is a challenge to the education system of Ethiopia (Seidel & Moritz, 2009). In a similar manner, Cohen (2010) questioned the level of equity shown in the process of introducing different languages. Daniel and Abebayehu (2011) stated that the introduction of other languages for instructional purposes in the name of multilingual education had been conceived as courting national disintegration. That is, the introduction of multilingual education in the country may not take into account the social, cultural and political background of the country. Few research works have been done in the area of language policy. Daniel and Abebayehu (2006) discussed language planning and changing whereas Küspert-Rakotondrainy (2014) analyzed language policy and social identity in the light of socio-political changes in Ethiopia. None of these studies made empirical analysis on challenges of multilingualism education in Ethiopia. In light of the above, this study has tried to fill in this gap and examine the views of scholars on issue in relation to challenges of

multilingual education. In this regard, this study tries to answer the major challenges of multilingual education in Ethiopia.

## **Research Design**

The current researcher has used qualitative approach, interview and focus group discussion. Six renowned professors teaching in various universities in Ethiopia were interviewed. The professors were drawn from Addis Ababa University, Kotebe University of Education, Addis Ababa Science and Technology University and Wollo University. In addition to this, focus group discussion was carried out. The number of professors taking part in the FGD was eight.

With regard to the reliability and validity of instruments, the researcher used various strategies. In order to maintain the reliability of the data, the researcher used inter-coder agreement. In doing so, I achieved a higher percentage of agreement upon codes. Concerning validity, Creswell (2007) forwarded eight validation strategies and recommended qualitative researchers engage in at least two of them in any given study. To this end, I used two most important validation strategies, triangulation and peer debriefings. In triangulation, I used corroborating evidences from different sources. That is, I looked for recurring patterns from the findings. For example, a finding obtained through interview was corroborated with the results obtained from FGD. Throughout the analysis, I did not discuss any finding which came out through one method alone. Peer debriefing is the second validation strategy used; the preliminary analysis of the study was given to two peers and they were asked to review the findings and the interpretations of the study. Both peers were experts in the area and they have had ample experience in teaching and research. Furthermore, various findings or theories were used to provide corroborating evidence.

With regard to ethical issues, all the participants were willing in taking part in the study. Another important issue in qualitative research has been protecting participants and maintaining the security of their views. Participants were given an assurance that everything discussed would be confidential. They were also told that I would mask their names from the analysis and from the data by assigning pseudo names. The qualitative data was transcribed and the verbatim accounts were thematically analyzed and throughout the analysis, eye-catching short quotations were used.

Both the FGD and interviews were audio recorded and transcribed using digital audio-recorder. Before the discussion, members were informed that they were being recorded. Participants were also informed about the purpose of the recording so that the discussion could be referred in the time of report writing. For both the FGD and the interview, I used interview and FGD protocols, pre designed

forms having few open-ended questions and ample space among the questions. The spaces allowed me to record some responses of the participants. In order to minimize losing eye-contact with the discussants, I was able to memorize the questions.

## Research Results and Discussions

A large proportion of professors' responses have had similar themes; professors often raised the same matter. Thus, some selected excerpts have been presented to exemplify the issue. With regard to the challenges of multilingualism, the most noticeable challenges of multilingualism in Ethiopia are the rise of ethnocentric mentality, state of being monolingual in a multilingual society, and the language-based boundaries. The following representative excerpts demonstrate the case.

### The rise of ethnocentric mentality

The participants of the study noted that the rise of ethnocentric mentality is a challenge for multilingual education. The responses of Azeb, Sara and Mulatu are representative sample from the data collected. In this regard, Azeb forwarded the following:

*People think that "If they speak others' language, they feel that they give the language speakers the chance to be superior; they do not think speaking their language helps them in different ways (FGD, 1).*

Sara has also the following to say

*The Amharic language has been regarded as a language of the former colonizer; thus, students did not learn and speak Amharic while they were in elementary and secondary schools (Int.3)*

In a similar manner, Mulatu has the following to say:

*Multilingualism is an opportunity for everybody but in Ethiopia, multilingualism is practiced at the expense of killing a language [Amharic] that has already developed. Political elites in the Oromia regional states have tried to diminish the role of Amharic by deterring the youths not to learn Amharic. In the official OPDO's report, the Oromo political elites stated that they have managed to make the Oromo people unable to speak Amharic. According to this report, forty percent of the Oromo youth are unable to speak Amharic. This was a success story for them; that was the plane; their plan has nothing to do with multilingualism. All the positive ideas that come from multilingualism are not practiced. The whole propose is to separate people along ethnic lines and disintegrate the society (Int.2).*

As it can be seen from the excerpts above, the lingua franca language, Amharic, was not met positively by some. The constitution states, in Article 5, that Amharic shall be the working language



of the Federal Government. Despite this assertion, the regional states focus on their own vernacular languages without considering the importance of the language of the wider communication. As per the responses of Azeb, ethnocentric people might develop a fallacious assumption that by speaking the language of others, they might make other language superior. As a matter of fact, mastering Amharic language that serves as a bridge should not be considered as surrendering the language of one's own ethnic group.

Before the coming of the present government, Amharic had served as an ideologically neutral unifying force for the multilingual societies of Ethiopia. But the EPRDF and the current Prosperity Party, for their political advantage, preached that Amharic has been the language of the former rulers as it was witnessed by the response of Sara. This finding was corroborated by the findings of Záhóřík & Wondwosen. Záhóřík and Wondwosen (2009) noted that the language issue became a central point of political debates and Amharic was presented as an imperial language. In addition, the findings of Küspert-Rakotondrainy (2014) also indicate that there is a huge political drive behind the language policy as well as an increased sense of ethnic and cultural identity.

There is a strong political will to promote Afan Oromo instead of Amharic language. This was confirmed by the response of Mulatu. The reply of Mulatu showed that the government tried to slim down the pragmatic value of Amharic language and replace it with Afan Oromo. This effort of the government could not gain momentum since the overwhelming majority of the population, more than eighty percent, has spoken Amharic as a first or second language. Despite the efforts of the ruling government to promote Afan Oromo, people do not want to learn the language by force. For example, parents in Addis Ababa objected to the use of Afan Oromo language in school by arguing that language should not be imposed. This is because Amharic as a second language (next to mother tongue for non-Amharic speakers) has become an accepted norm for many non-Amharic mother tongue speakers in Ethiopia (Cohen, 2005).

The language hegemony of Amharic was not welcomed by the EPRDF government as well as the Prosperity Party because the language was assumed to exemplify the exercise of power as well as economic and political domination. In connection to this, in criticizing the previous regimes, the government stated that Amharic was deliberately imposed throughout the country as the official medium of instruction in all primary schools as a tool to deepen and broaden the pattern of ethnic domination (MoE, 2002). The over politicization of ethnic federalism has been the reason for the inability of the youths not to speak Amharic language as a language of wider communication because they develop negative attitude towards the language. With regard to attitude, Michael (2007) noted that community attitudes may enforce, support, accept, tolerate, or reject multilingualism or give

special status to one or more than one languages. Moreover, Pinker (2000) cited in Mohd and Sultan(2013) believes that community attitudes toward the language being learned can also have a profound impact on SLA (Second Language Acquisition). Furthermore, Adegbija(1994) cited in Matsinhe (2013) noted that language attitudes are one of the main challenges facing the development, promotion and use of African languages, particularly in education. Where the community has a broadly negative view of the target language and its speakers, or a negative view of its relation to them, learning is typically much more difficult. On the other hand, if the community has a positive view of that language, the learning process will be much easier (Bialystock, 2001 cited in Azmi, 2013).

It was noted that Ethiopian language education policy falls broadly within the parameters of “best policy” in terms of multilingual developing countries (Berhanu, 2009). This was said because the architects of the political landscape in Ethiopia are quite known in accepting international declaration and mixing it with their own political agenda. By making minority languages the language of instruction without having a lingua franca, the country becomes in a state of disintegration. While the actors in favor of the policy of multilingualism were gripped with the promotion of multilingual cultures, ethnic rights and equality, the actors against the policy process emphasized its negative implications on the national integrity (Daniel & Abebayehu, 2006).

Ethnocentric elites who have had soft hearts for the current federal government have accused the imperial government of Ethiopia for using Amharic as the only official language of the country. But using one language policy that unified the country was being practiced in other parts of the world. In this regard, Batibo (2005) noted that English, French and Spanish were adopted monolingual policy in their respective countries at the expense of minority languages like Alsatian, Basque, Breton, Catalan, Cornish, Irish Gaelic, Lorrainian, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh and others. Even liberal states and governments have explicitly or implicitly assumed that the linguistic minorities should accommodate to the majority language (Archibugi, 2005). Since that time, there has been a myth that “national cohesion” is possible only through a single common language (Spolsky&Shohamy, 2000). This view is widespread in both Western and Eastern Europe (Michael, 2007; Jong, 2011) and it was an idea shared by the former Ethiopian governments. Owing to this, the then national language Amharic served as a platform for social solidarity and the revised constitution of Ethiopia declared Amharic as the only national official language of the whole empire (Constitution, 1955,Article 125). The primary objective of having one national or official language was to secure the national unity of the country. In this regard, Cohen (2006) noted that the assumption of the Imperial regime’s language policy was to produce national unity; it was necessary to have one language, an assumption that was widely shared at the time. Moreover, the country could not make it possible to try to develop all languages at equal

footing due to lack of resources although there was no lack of political willingness on the part of the Imperial regime.

The struggles for ethnic dominance deter Ethiopians not to have a common linguistic basis which is indispensable for national unity. Having a common language does not mean that students learn a lingua-franca at the cost of the mother tongue. Rather students can develop two or more languages without distracting the unity of the country which is one of Ethiopia's most valuable historical legacies. But due to the political indoctrination, students develop prejudice to the language of others and it was found out that politicians manipulated languages as tools for their political advantages.

### **Monolinguals in a multilingual society**

Despite the fact that Ethiopia is a multilingual country, citizens have recently become monolinguals due to the politicization of ethnic identity by egocentric elites. The following excerpts show the case clearly. Tseganesh added the points below:

*We only promote multilingualism at national level. We are not learning other languages after the government claims to implement multilingualism in the education system. At national level, the country is multilingual but people are monolinguals; we do not speak other's languages due to political indoctrination. For example, are we teaching Afan Oromo to Amhara children? Are we teaching Amharic to Oromo children? We do not (FGD).*

Mulatu forwarded the following:

*The political orientation has been negatively influencing the people not to use different languages and we are unable to communicate each other. We are becoming monolingual (Int.2).*

Tesfaye added the issue below:

*If you go to the Oromia Regional State, children are indoctrinated to develop profound hatred to Amharic language, the lingua franca. The political orientation has to be revised (FGD).*

As it can be seen from the responses of Tseganesh, Mulatu, and Tesfaye, there has been a politically-motivated intent along with the implementation of the policy of multilingualism. This finding was corroborated by the findings of Daniel and Abebayehu. That is, the measure taken by the government in recognizing the languages of minority is dictated by the political ideology of the ruling party; it does not take into account the interest of the country and the population. In view of the ethno-centric ideology of the government along with its indoctrination, people do not like to learn other's languages. The response of Tseganesh has been a good testament. People are not learning other languages after the government claims to implement multilingualism in the education system. Owing

to this, people do not want to learn each other's languages because the lingua franca language, Amharic, has been considered the language of the former colonizers. By so doing, each state promotes a monolingual education where the national official language (Amharic) is abandoned by the overwhelming majority of the new ethnic based states (Daniel & Abebayehu, 2011). The indivisibility of the Ethiopian nation which has been the result of thousands of years of interaction has been eroded and the stable ethnic composition has been disrupted by the introduction of ethnic federalism, so that Ethiopians are now at odds along ethnic lines (Bekalu, 2017). This indicated that multilingualism in Ethiopia is highly politicized and citizens are becoming monolinguals while the country remains to be a multilingual state.

Due to the wrong mix between multilingual policy and ethnic federalism, most youths in Oromia regional states do not speak the language of the wider communication. In this regard, Solomon has the following to say

*By the time, I was a department head, I received twenty seven students coming from Eastern Oromia. None of them could speak other language other than Afan Oromo. You know, the class instruction has to go in English, but the students did not listen English. Amharic is the federal language of the country but these students cannot speak and listen Amharic. So, by the end of the semester, many of the students scored below point seven. By the end of the second semester, most of them were dismissed for good (FGD)*

In a similar manner, Yalew added the following points:

*I was born in the Oromia regional state. I had a friend who had Oromo parents and he spoke both Afan Oromo and Amharic fluently while we were children. When I met him after twenty years, he did not want to use Amharic language. When I talked to him in Amharic, he gave me a response in Afan Oromo. I was really shocked. It is the political pressure that changed his thoughts (Int.3)*

Sharing his experiences at Wollo University, Bezabih noted the points below

*While I was teaching at Wollo University, some of my students coming from Oromia Regional State did not speak Amharic and English. They only know one language, Afan Oromo. They were unable to communicate with the people around. This makes students live only in one particular place. Thus, the misuse of multilingualism has brought a number of problems (Int.1).*

According to the excerpts above, youths coming from the Oromia regional state are becoming monolingual and they did not speak the lingua franca language. In a study conducted at Kotebe University of Education, Bekalu(2019) found out that students coming from Oromia regional state

were unable to use Amharic for communication purpose. In a similar manner, Tesfaye (2012) noted that instructors are facing difficulties of giving group work or projects since in some cases, significant number of the students from the same class have a very limited command over the Amharic Language.

Promoting the idea of ling-centric, political elites in the Oromia regional state established linguistic distinctiveness in the region. This is the result of Afan Oromo- only policy which alienates the youth from their fellow Ethiopians. The current political orientation and increase ethnocentric thought reduce the possibility of integration among the various ethnic/linguistic groups which is the major challenges for the implementation of multilingual education. Each regional state has only used its own vernacular and the absence of a common language brings challenges especially among the student population.

Students become vulnerable by the ideology of ethnocentric political elites and they are left uncared in the classroom. The response of Solomon indicated that most students were dismissed due to the fact that they became monolinguals that made them prevented from forming close ties with their fellow Ethiopians. Due to language barrier, students at higher learning institutions form friendship based on their own ethnic groups; there have been less forms of inter-ethnic interaction among student population. Without a language of wider communication, students could not build new relationship with classmates and teachers and this may threaten their academic performance because learning happens through interaction which is fostered by a climate of cooperative and social interaction. The absence of pleasant learning environment caused by language barrier could not yield equal opportunities among student populations. Therefore, in practice, using local languages for primary education in Ethiopia is unlikely to produce an equal quality of education for students (Cohen, 2006). This happened due to the fact that political decision was not made with professionals through conscious planning and consultation; moreover, there was no survey made to check whether the concerned people wanted the languages to be the medium of instructions (Getachew & Derib, 2006).

Despite the wrong political narration prevailing in the country, there was no any ethnic group who was excluded from the education and government administration in the history of Ethiopia. Respecting other ethnic groups' rights including language use is a homegrown practice in Ethiopia. As a matter of fact, multilingual administration was the norm in the ancient empires of the Persians, Ptolemies, and Carthaginians, the Roman Empire and the Imperial regimes in Ethiopia or the old Abyssinia; for example, the religious freedom given to the Muslim population when they were persecuted from the Arab world was a testament to that (May, 2017). However, the ethnic federal architects viewed themselves as savior of the minority groups and they propagate multilingual education as if the minority groups were oppressed. EPRDF had the desire to re-write the false narration about ethnic oppression in history from hearsay, rumor and gossip. These disinformation campaigns have been

bombarded daily by the mainstream media for the last three decades. The regional state media has taken the lion's share in spreading the disinformation and they are hardliners. Most youths in some regional states have taken the misinformation of the government at face value and they have developed profound hatred towards the language of the wider communication. As a result, they become monolingual and the potential positive impact of strengthening one national language for communication has not been recognized (Cohen, 2005). The struggles for ethnic dominance deter Ethiopians not to have a common linguistic basis which is indispensable for national unity.

Although education in mother tongue has been the order of the day and was also proposed by International organization like UNESCO, UNESCO has also recommended the use of national and official languages of wider communication, along with some global languages (UNESCO, 2003; Singh et al., 2012). In a similar manner, Fishman (1971) cited in Batibo (2013) calls the three national aspirations, namely identity, unity and modernity. That is, local language is used for identity whereas national language is for unity and foreign language for modernity. Similarly, Okal (2014) stated that multilingualism practice in education should embrace the indigenous, national/official and foreign languages as equal partners in the language policy development and education. But this is not the case in the Ethiopia; the federal language of the country, Amharic language, which could play the role of official or national language, has not been given the required status due to lack of political will.

### **Language-based boundaries**

The responses of Abay, Mulatu and Degu noted that the language-based boundaries might be a challenge for multilingualism. The responses are representative samples. Abay, in the interview session forwarded the following:

*Multilingualism has a lot of advantages; people should have been encouraged to learn other languages as much as possible but when you make it a policy to say this section of the country belongs to a certain language group. That is the problem (Int. 5).*

Similarly Mulatu has the following to say

*In the name of recognizing the right of other languages, the country is effectively divided into ethnic groups allowing them to own land, even connecting it to ownership of land. Land and ethnicity is connected. The Oromo have been told that this is your land, a very large chunk of the country was allocated to them and some of them benefited, telling other people to leave their land (Int.2).*

Degu in the FGD forwarded the following insights:

*Multilingualism is important to promote someone's culture, experience, tradition and beliefs. It*



*helps to preserve the culture of the society but language-based federalism is a challenge to apply multilingualism (FGD).*

As per the response of Abay and Mulatu, the present government has established mono-ethnic borders, making the societies be confined to ethnic boundaries and being monolingual which in turn weaken social cohesion. In connection to this, a similar finding was observed from Küspert-Rakotondrainy's rigorous analysis. Küspert-Rakotondrainy (2014) stated that people really identify more with their own group after the introduction of the policy, but at the same time they refuse to identify with the Amharic-speaking core ("*Habesha*"). Citing Teshome (1999) Küspert-Rakotondrainy (2014) further noted that the intention of the government is to promote increased polarization in order to prevent a unified opposition. When people are forced to be confined to certain areas and culture, they forget their common identity and when people lose their common identity, they gradually lose their national sentiment and become distinct states.

Due to the mono-ethnic borders, there is an increase ethnocentric thought that would reduce the rate of assimilation among the various ethnic/linguistic groups. Furthering the discussion, Cohen (2006) stated that the division of the country into regions defined by language is problematic because of the lack of unambiguous linguistic boundaries and the high degree of contact and mixing between the various peoples that inhabit the state.

The demarcation of regional boundaries along ethnic lines has brought major problems. There is no consensus on the boarder lines of regional states between Tigray and Amhara, Amhara and Oromo, Oromo and Somalia, Amhara and Benishangul-Gumuz, Oromo and Sidama and the like. The controversy existing among regional states has led to various conflicts in the country. In this regard, Bekalu (2017) noted that the federal structure which is based on ethnicity contributes to ethnic tensions and conflicts, widening the disparities among the ethnic groups. A further point of attention is the findings obtained from Mulatu. Mulatu clearly stated that, '*a very large chunk of the country was allocated to them and some of them benefited, telling other people to leave their land.*' The demarcation of the boundaries has been unlawful and unreasonable since a large portion of the country was generously given to certain ethnic groups. Moreover, the settlement pattern is mostly mixed and it did not consider the presence of other ethnic groups in the region. In general, the implementation of the current instructional language policy is crippled partly due to its failure to accommodate the nature of settlement in the country (Daniel & Abebayehu, 2006). These entire anomaly triggers a lot of problems in Ethiopia including ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity and genocide in the country. In this regard, Bekalu (2018) further noted that a key factor motivating the acts of ethnic cleansing is the ethnic federal structure introduced in the country and Amharic language speakers living as a minority group in other regional states are persecuted or endangered.



## Conclusion

The aim of this article is to examine the perceived views of professors on the challenges of multilingual education in the Ethiopia. The study was qualitative and it used interview and focus group discussion.

With regard to the challenges of multilingual education, the most visible challenges of multilingual education in Ethiopia are the state of being monolingual in a multilingual society, the wrongly-held perception of ethnocentric elites on the lingua franca language of the nation and the language-based boundaries. It was learnt that the ethnic-based federalism has a profound pressure on multilingual education. Due to the political influence brought by ethnocentric elites, some youths have become monolingual and developed unpleasant attitude towards the language of wider communication, Amharic.

Amharic is the most widely used and developed language in the country but ethnocentric elites could never comprehend the country-wide use of the language and they simply pointed their fingers on the former Imperial regime for using Amharic as a language of lingua franca. In a culturally and linguistically diverse country like Ethiopia, promoting Amharic as a means for national integration and social cohesion has been mandatory. Moreover, Amharic has been the only language in the country that has been developed and used its own scripts. Despite the allegation of the architects of ethnic federalism with regard to Amharic language hegemony, the history of nation-building has traditionally involved the promotion of the official language and the repression of others.

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Gebeyehu has the following to say:

*One challenge in multilingual nation is not to reach an agreement on the language of lingua franca (Int.4).*

All the challenges are exacerbated by the ethnic-based federalism system of the country.