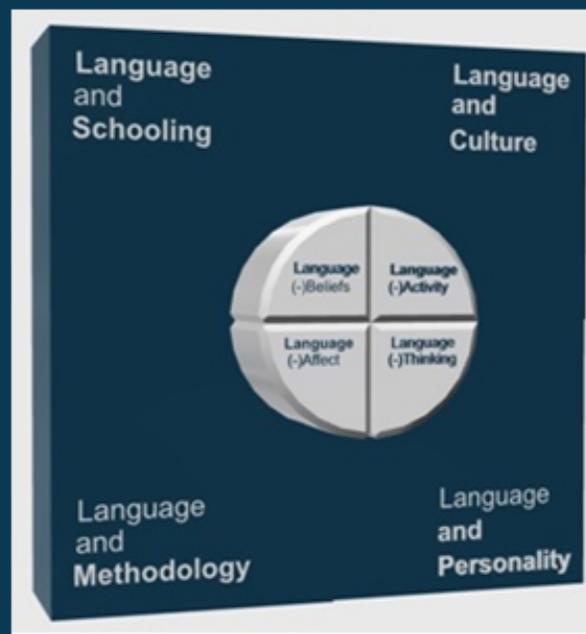


# *EDUCATIONAL ROLE OF LANGUAGE JOURNAL*

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## **(RE-)SHAPING ONE'S IDENTITY WITH LANGUAGE**

Volume Editors: Michał Daszkiewicz, Dragana Božić Lenard



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## INTRODUCTION

### On the reciprocity between one's language and identity

Language learning is a life-changing event with far-reaching individual, social, and cultural consequences. Along with advancing linguistic abilities comes enhanced awareness of one's identity and development of a (renewed) language self. On the more general level, it determines one's identification with particular social groups and impacts on educational, social, economic, and cultural processes such as inclusion, acceptance, recognition, and integration. On a narrower scale, becoming familiar with even a single linguistic item opens up new perspectives and thus enriches one's everyday life experience. In either case, the expansion of one's identity via language is inevitably a **holistic and comprehensive individual experience**, cutting across one's views, actions, emotions, and conceptualisations of the world.

The very existence of linguistic varieties (identities) poses a significant challenge to be addressed by modern educational systems, which – in order to remain relevant and consequently practical, too – need to adopt novel, transdisciplinary approaches and methods of teaching and learning. Such is the case with (Django and Paris's) concept of **culturally sustaining pedagogy (CSP)**, the emergence of which we have recently observed as a respectful and productive critique of previous formulations of asset pedagogies. As one of the proposals admitting linguistic identities into education, it exemplifies concepts which point out the salience of language not only for one's multi-faceted development, but also the advancement of education and society as a whole. It is through this admission of linguistic identities that the diversity of linguistic capital is recognised, which is of paramount importance in light of the fact that the linguistic dimension of learners' and teachers' identities proves to determine their status, success, and quality of life.

Accordingly, the focus of this volume is on the individual facet, which can be argued to be most directly observable and relevant regardless of one's cultural and linguistic background. How any language user situates themselves on the level of language underlies how s/he positions herself/himself in the world as a whole, regardless of whether this interdependence is realized by an individual or not. Such an approach to language as shaping one's identity and one's self-positioning characterises the **interpretative paradigm**, whereby individuals interpret reality in their own ways and assign meanings to what they encounter by applying highly personalised systems of concepts, with regard to which they hold their own beliefs, undertake self-imposed actions, and cherish emotions generated through their learning (and/or teaching) trajectories.

Hence the title of this volume – ***(RE-)SHAPING ONE'S IDENTITY WITH LANGUAGE***, pertaining to processes undergoing on several levels. To reflect the overarching character of linguistic experience and its lasting impact on one's identity, the volume addresses the eponymous issue through the prism of interdisciplinarity, cross-cultural encounters, linguistic quality, and cross-domain intersections. As opposed to the three earlier volumes, the research papers are included in the volume in subsequent parts together with reviews and a report (on the first ERL online Session) to better reflect the volume's

complementarity also on the level of text formats and the experiencing of empirical data or academic readings and activities. Following the two opening volumes of ERL Journal devoted to *boosting the educational experiencing of language* (2019-1(1)) and *enhancing multiculturalism in language education* (2019-2(2)), this volume is the second one centred around the concept of **identity**, with the *examination of linguistic dimension* having been the focus of the previous volume (2020-1(3)). All the four volumes published so far need to be seen as following from one another and thus to provide a comprehensive picture, which in the volumes to come is to be further developed and addressed from the perspective of hard times, affected by the global pandemic and other phenomena via which our linguistic identity remains continuously reshaped.

*M. Daszkiewicz*

# Language shaping identity or identity shaping language – a study on sensory sound-symbolism among native Macedonian speakers

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## **Abstract**

*A number of different theories exist concerning the origin of words. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of the phýsis and the nómos/thesis theories about the origin of words, arguments debated even in one of Plato's dialogues - Cratylus. It goes without saying that words show different relations between their form and their meaning. This paper takes a closer look at linguists' divided opinions, presenting and comparing them, setting out from the notion that the forms of the words bear only an arbitrary association with their meaning, and goes on to discuss the notions of onomatopoeia, sound-symbolism and iconicity. Furthermore, this paper presents several studies covering the experimental approaches to sound-symbolism, with special attention devoted to sensory sound-symbolism. The summary of these studies suggests what potential elements of the form of the word might be responsible for the form-meaning relationship in a word. In addition, a small-scale online survey was conducted with the aim to investigate potential sensory sound-symbolism in Macedonian based on the above-mentioned studies, in order to see what similarities and differences exist. Evidence of patterns of non-arbitrariness present in language is analysed through a discussion of the relation between the form, particularly the sounds and the meaning of words.*

**Keywords:** *arbitrariness, sound-symbolism, iconicity, form-meaning relations, ideophones*

## **Introduction**

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages either through verbal or non-verbal means. Basically, it can be considered an everyday need to share information among people.

Language is the basic tool for communication among people, which can take many forms. As a conscious means of communication, language is exclusive only to humans, and to encompass all of its different forms one can say that language is expressed through *signs*, defined as *combinations of forms and meanings*.

What aroused our interest was the question of how words or signs originated - whether the combination of sounds or letters comprising a word came naturally, by association to a property of the thing described, or whether it was the result of a community deciding how to name certain things. This dilemma is, in fact, the reason behind this paper on the sound-meaning associations in words, as well as to explore further whether an actual link exists between some aspects of the sounds of words and their meanings, or whether it is convention, after all, that is responsible for the meanings of words as we know them.

## **Theoretical background**

Even before the existence of linguistics as a discipline, philosophers were theorizing about the nature of the meaning of words. In *Cratylus*, Plato discusses the origin of language and word-meaning relations through a discussion about the methods and purposes of assigning correct names to things using the voices of Socrates, Hermogenes, and Cratylus (Plato, trans. 1997). Hermogenes speaks in favour of the conventional argument, stating that names of things originate through the process of custom and

common acceptance by a group of people who choose to attribute a particular name to a particular thing. In these lines, Plato proposes a later widely-accepted theory referred to as the *arbitrariness of words*.

Contrarily, Cratylus takes the naturalist point of view and states that the names of things are naturally assigned, and that conventions are not sufficient to give meaning to them. Thus, “the correctness of a name” relies on the fact that names reveal in themselves something about the nature of their bearers, either by encoding descriptions of them in their forms, or resembling them in their pronunciation.

As linguistics developed, linguists had divided views on this topic. At first it seemed as though more linguists supported the conventional argument on the origins of words, which states that the relation between the form and the meaning of the word is conventional, and the forms of the words, which people use to refer to things, are not naturally connected to the things they refer to, but are arbitrarily chosen by custom and common acceptance.

Among the supporters were Aristotle, John Locke and many others, but the conventional theory is probably made most famous by the theory referred to as the *arbitrariness of the linguistic sign*, elaborated by the father of modern linguistics, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure. In *A Course in General Linguistics*, he argues that the relation between the form of the word, or what he calls the *linguistic sign*, and its meaning is conventional and arbitrary. He states that “the linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image” (De Saussure 1966: 66). He describes the concept as *signified*, which he considers an abstract notion, while the sound-image is described as *signifier*, for which he does not have in mind the material sound, but rather the “psychological imprint of the sound, the impression it makes on our senses” (De Saussure 1966: 66). The linguistic sign unites the concept (the *signified*) with an acoustic image in the speakers’ mind (the *signifier*). Therefore, the link would be arbitrary because the exact concept can be connected with various different acoustic images depending on the language in which the concept is evoked. The basic premises on which his theory is based are agreement, consistency, and common acceptance.

As the study of linguistics developed, new findings made linguists suspicious of this whole idea, and many began to investigate the so-called *phýsis* argument about the origins of words, and the possible word form-meaning relation. This argument leans on the notions of onomatopoeia and sound-symbolism.

The term *onomatopoeia* comes from the Greek word *onoma*, meaning ‘name’, and *poiein*, meaning ‘to make’. Onomatopoeia is the process of forming words by including sounds that are similar, or refer to the thing that the words describe. *Onomatopoeic words* are words formed by imitating the sound of nature, or words whose sounds or pronunciation suggest the thing itself, such as *splash*, *bang*, *meow*, *buzz*.

De Saussure (1966: 69) disregards these words, stating that they are marginal, limited in number, and possibly arbitrary in nature as, although the dog barks the same everywhere, people use different onomatopoeic words to describe the barking worldwide.

Nevertheless, a group of linguists with opposing opinions, including John Wallis, Charles de Brosses, Charles Nodier, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Otto Jespersen, Dwight Bolinger, Roman Jakobson, among others, decided to investigate the possible relationship between the pronunciation, or the individual sounds, and the meaning of words, and discovered that some words displayed a connection between their form and their meaning. Contradicting the principle of arbitrariness, this entails a possibility that linguistic sounds, such as phonemes, syllables, or tones, can carry meaning in themselves, or be *sound-symbolic*.

*Sound-symbolism* is a part of the natural argument which indicates that the relation between the form and the meaning of words is not based on convention, but it is, rather, natural, and the meaning of words is suggested by their pronunciation, or the sounds that compose them.

During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance many linguists looked at this issue more closely. John Wallis published a list of English phonesthemes in his book *Grammatica linguae Anglicanae*. His belief is that several combinations of particular sounds indicate their own meaning when used together, which proves to be repetitive in each word containing them; for example, *br-* is suggestive of a violent involuntary crack, as in *breach, break, brook* (Wallis 1653, as cited in Magnus 2013).

In 1836 Wilhelm von Humboldt published his work *On Language: The Diversity of Human Language-Structure and Its Influence on the Mental Development of Mankind*, in which he distinguishes three different types of sound-meaning relations in language: 1) based on acoustics rather than on articulation; 2) based on the imitation of semantic essence by the actual articulation of the phoneme; and 3) based on the linguistic process of clustering.

Dwight Bolinger, author of *The Sign is Not Arbitrary* and *Rime, Assonance and Morpheme Analysis*, argues that a given form is physiologically tied to a given meaning, reflecting on the evidence that frequently similar forms tend to move in the direction of similar meanings (Bolinger 1949).

Sound-symbolism as a term indicates that the mere sound used in the pronunciation of the word carries information about the meaning of the word. The term does not refer only to the meaning of the individual sound and nothing else, but it can also apply to the phonological features of the word, such as the phonemes used, the tone with which the word is pronounced, its syllables, or complex sound structures that activate a range of association in a repeated manner and in that way are related to aspects of meaning. As defined by Hinton et al. (1994), it is the “direct linkage between sound and meaning”. In fact, sound-symbolism is classified into four types based on the degree of linkage between the sound and the meaning of the word: corporeal, imitative, conventional, and synesthetic, also observed by Sapir (1928), and Ramachandran and Hubbard (2001), and later defined as *sensory* by Cuskley and Kirby (2013). Lockwood and Dingemans (2015) regard *sensory sound-symbolism* as a natural connection by which the form of the word imitates aspects of the referent within or across modalities.

The most widely used term to describe sound-symbolic words is *ideophone*, first introduced by Doke – a scholar of Bantu languages. According to him, ideophones are words with an iconic function, which are not limited only to sound-imitation. He describes them as “radical - a word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate or qualificative in respect to manner, colour, sound, state or action” (Doke 1935, as cited in Magnus 2013: 22). Doke distinguished these words from adverbs, since he felt that adverbs describe something only in respect to manner, place, or time.

Often, these words are described as words that bring to mind a vivid impression of an idea, sensation or sensory perception, which frequently, but not necessarily, is evoked through sound. This impression, as previously stated by Doke, can also be conveyed through other modalities, such as colour, smell, movement, shape, action, etc. These words provide a link between language and sensory perception through their characteristic sound patterns, peculiar grammar properties, and sensory meaning.

Dingemans (2012) describes ideophones as marked words, which are actually depictions. Accordingly, ideophones stand out from other words and portray a depiction, that is, they signify their referent in their own special ways. They describe sensory imagery, which helps the reader or listener to create a mental picture of the thing described through the senses. Both internal and external perceptions can be included, such as inner feelings, balance, perceptions of the environment, and anything that can be experienced through the senses.

Sound-symbolism is not limited only to ideophones. Research on the topic also includes relations between individual sounds, and certain combinations of sounds and sensory meaning. John Rupert Firth

coined the term *phonestheme* to describe a sound sequence and a meaning with which that particular sound sequence is commonly associated, such as the association of *gl-* in *glance*, *glimpse*, *glint*, with the meaning of indirect use of the eye (Firth 1930, as cited in Magnus 2013).

Bergen (2004) defined phonesthemes as “frequently recurring sound-meaning pairings that are not clearly contrastive morphemes” as *sn-* in English words such as *snore*, *snarl*, *sniff*, *sneeze*, with a meaning associated with the ‘nose, mouth’.

## **Methodology**

Numerous studies have been conducted in the field of sound-symbolism, which have also investigated the effect that specific sounds have on size, shape, light, motion, which depict sensory sound-symbolism. Examples of such studies will be presented in the following paragraphs as they were taken as the starting point for the small-scale survey that was conducted among native Macedonian speakers.

### **Sound - size associations**

Edward Sapir (1928) is one of the first linguists who demonstrated that there is a real association between sound and meaning. He tested native speakers’ intuition with pseudo-words. The participants were given combinations of sounds, such as ‘mal’ and ‘mil’, and were asked to say if those two words meant ‘table’ in a certain language, which one would have been bigger. His findings showed that out of the 500 participants of all ages who took part in the study, 83% of the children and 96% of the adults persistently noted /i/ to be smaller, and /a/ to be bigger.

Ohtake and Haryu (2013) tried to analyze vowel-size association by conducting sets of studies with the aim to investigate the influence of the acoustic features of the vowel and the kinesthetic experience of the pronunciation (the articulation of the sound) on the meaning of a word. They conducted two studies testing both factors. The first involved asking the participants to determine the sizes of two disks as quickly as possible. While the participants were doing this speed classification task, they were informed that a task-irrelevant sound might be heard at times. That sound was either the vowel /a/ or /i/. The results showed that the /a/ elicited bigger images, while the /i/ elicited smaller images, as the participants responded more slowly in the incongruent condition than in the congruent or control conditions.

In their second study they tried to see whether these bigger-smaller associations of the vowels could be elicited only with the imitation of the articulation of the vowels /a/ and /i/, that is, by the proprioception of the size of the oral cavity when pronouncing the vowels /a/ and /i/, but without the actual pronunciation of any vowel sound. The participants were asked to do a speeded classification task with the same visual stimuli, but this time while holding objects in their teeth that imitate the size of the oral cavity as when actually pronouncing the vowels /a/ and /i/. They chose an egg-shaped object which imitated the lip shape and resonance space during the production of /a/ – mouth wide open, and tongue placed low in the oral cavity, and a board-shaped object, which, when held, imitated the articulation of /i/ – mouth slightly open along the vertical axis, lips pulled sideways, and tongue positioned high in the oral cavity. This time the participants were not presented with any kind of auditory stimuli. The results indicated that there was no significant correspondence between the size of the disk and the controlled condition of the size of the oral cavity. This means that the proprioception of the size of the oral cavity on its own may not contribute to vowel-size associations. The conclusion of this study is that this effect of associating vowels with object size relies on the acoustic properties of the vowels rather than on their articulation.

### Sound - shape associations

Köhler (1947: 224-225) conducted a study in which he tried to classify human experiences, and find the link between the objective experiences and the senses. He investigated the association of sound-symbolism with shapes. The participants in his study were presented with two shapes: spiky or angled, and round (see Figure 1), and two pseudo-words: *takete* and *maluma*, and were asked to associate the shapes with the given words. As Köhler reported, “most people answered without any hesitation”, and the participants, in general, associated *takete* with the spiky form, and *maluma* with the round form.

**Figure 1:** A screenshot of the original shapes used in the *takete-maluma* study (1947).



Ramachandran and Hubbard (2001), in search for the origins of the evolution of language, adapted Köhler’s study using the pseudo-words *kiki* and *bouba*. The results showed that when people were asked to associate the spiky and round forms (see Figure 2) presented with the words given, 95% of them associated *kiki* with the spiky form, and *bouba* with the round form. As a reason for this association they provided the explanation that “the sharp changes in visual direction of the lines in the spiky figure mimics the sharp phonemic inflections of the sound *kiki*, as well as the sharp inflection of the tongue on the palate.”

**Figure 2:** A screenshot of the original shapes used in the *kiki-bouba* study (2001).



Bremner et al. (2013) investigated whether sound - shape associations previously noted in Westerners are also present in the remote population Himba, a tribe in Namibia, with little exposure to Western culture. Himba have no written language, which made this study the first of its kind, because it helped to remove the orthographic effects and association with the cultural environment of written language in the early life of the participants. Having no written language, these participants were not able to base their decisions by associating the roundness of the shape with the roundness of the letter O, and vice versa for K. Despite that, the majority of the participants still associated *kiki* with the spiky shape, and *bouba* with the round. As such, Bremner et al. (2013) managed to prove that a remote society without a written language also exhibits this effect.

The main conclusion from these studies is that people tend to link sonorants to round shapes, that is, to curviness, while plosives tend to be associated with spikiness.

### Sound - colour associations

In 2014 Moos et al. examined the associations between vowel sounds and colours in synesthetes and control participants. *Synesthesia* can be defined as the automatic and involuntary experience of a perception in a modality different from the one stimulated, i.e. a perceptual phenomenon in which stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway leads to involuntary experiences in a second sensory or

cognitive pathway such as seeing colours when listening to speech sounds. In their paper, Moos et al. investigated whether the acoustic properties of vowels influence colour perception. The participants were presented with a vowel sound and they had to associate it with the corresponding colour and grey-shade. Their findings suggested that increased F2 (formants)<sup>1</sup> in front vowels like /i/ were associated with the colours yellow and green, while vowels with increased F1, such as the open vowel /a/, were associated with the colour red. Both of these groups chose lighter shades for open (high F1) and front (high F2) vowels.

This indicates that lightness is associated with higher musical pitch and “clearer” timbre (pitch-lightness association). The results applied to both synesthetes and non-synesthetes, but synesthetes behaved more consistently, with the exception in the grey-shade task where the contrast between the consistent behaviour of the synesthetes’ and the controls’ performance was reduced.

This study showed that colour associations were influenced by vowel acoustics, and that front vowels with a high F2 were associated with lighter shades than back vowels. Moos et al. (2014) proved that although synesthetes usually associate letters with colour, they also show systematic influence from the acoustic-phonetic structure of vowel sounds. In the end, they suggest that grapheme-colour synesthesia may also be influenced by the acoustic-phonetic properties of the sounds.

Asano and Yokosawa (2011) conducted an experiment with synesthetes and the hiragana and katakana Japanese writing systems. Their results suggested that both consonants and vowels influence the perception of colours, and that the effect was not due to visual form. The results indicated a tendency to associate back vowels and voiced consonants with darker colours, while front vowels and voiceless consonants were usually associated with brighter colours.

### **Sound - motion associations**

Cuskley (2013) examined the relationship between sounds and motion by using an animated bouncing ball and specifically-designed pseudo-words, which varied in terms of reduplication, voicing, and vowel quality with the motion of a bouncing ball. Participants were exposed to auditory stimuli of these sounds and were asked to alter the speed of a simple animated bouncing ball in order to match the words with the motion, which allowed them to make gradable associations, as well. The words were carefully designed by taking seven voiced/voiceless consonant pairs and combining them with either the front vowel /i/ or the back vowel /u/. They created the words in the following manner: only the voiced consonant sound could vary, not the place or manner of articulation in a word. Following, *kigu* was a valid word, while *kivu* was not, because /k/ and /v/ vary in terms of both their place (*k*: *velar* and *v*: *labial*), and manner (*k*: *plosive* and *v*: *fricative*) of articulation. Mixed voicing was rated as slower than entirely voiced and voiceless words, between which there was no significant difference. Reduplicated consonants were rated the fastest. No significant difference was found between high and mixed vowels, which means that high vowels were not specifically rated as fast, but back vowels were considered particularly slow. In general, it was shown that the reduplication of consonants, together with the alternation of vowels led participants to move the ball faster. However, the study was limited to one particular type of motion, that is, the speed of a bouncing ball (visual motion), a type of bi-directional motion. Participants made the ball go more slowly in response to back vowels, while in response to front vowels and syllable reduplication with vowel alternation, the ball was made to go more quickly.

### **Study conducted with ideophones**

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<sup>1</sup> *Formants* are peaks of the sound spectrum. Basically, they are accumulations of acoustic energy at certain frequencies. Vowels are usually distinguished by their first two formants, F1 and F2.

Japanese is one language with a wide use of sound-symbolic words, and it is reported to have an extensive set of ideophones commonly used in natural speech. Therefore, Japanese ideophones were used in numerous studies in order to test sound-symbolism, which helped, in a way, to exclude the specifically-designed maximal differences of the pseudo-words.

Iwasaki et al. (2007), in their studies, used Japanese ideophones (referred to as *mimetics* in Japanese), and they tested whether, and to what extent, English speakers with no prior knowledge of Japanese might sense and appreciate certain dimensions of previously unfamiliar Japanese ideophones. They used ideophones for laughing, i.e. words that mimic voices and are considered most iconic, and ideophones for walking, i.e. words that mimic manner, which are close to being least iconic on the iconicity continuum.

Japanese and English participants were given a list of semantic dimensions and were asked to rate each semantic dimension. Then, the ratings were analysed and compared. There were significant correlations between the ratings for half of the ideophones for laughing between the two groups, and the most highly correlated was *kusu-kusu*, which was rated by both Japanese and English speakers as quiet, restrained, non-resonant laughter produced by a female adult with her mouth shut. The semantic dimension of impressions of the beauty and grace of the ideophones for laughing received the lowest ratings, as the English speakers attributed the opposite meaning of the Japanese speakers. For the ideophones for walking, the Japanese and English participants exhibited fewer correlations, as only seven words out of 28 showed significant correlation between the two groups, and the most highly correlated word was *toko-toko*, rated by both groups as a small person wearing hard-soled shoes, walking quickly and energetically with small strides on a hard, dry surface in an informal manner.

On one hand, the results indicate that there are universalities, or at least some similarity of sound-symbolism to which both English and Japanese speakers are sensitive, and that ideophones for laughing are more iconic than ideophones for walking.

On the other hand, the existence of language-specific sound-symbolism in Japanese is obvious, and this might be attributed to the language itself, as well as the cultural experience. The semantic dimensions of *beautiful voice* and *graceful* were rated completely opposite by the English and Japanese speakers, as the Japanese speakers associated the vowel /e/ with vulgar laughing, while the vowel /u/ was associated with *beautiful voice*, *graceful* and *formal laughter*, which appears to be specific to the Japanese language and culture. Also, the Japanese participants rated words that contained /q/ as less continuous, and words that start with vowels as more *beautifully voiced*, *feminine* and *formal*. The vowel /a/ showed distinctive commonalities by both groups and was rated as *amused*, *cheerful*, *energetic*, *excited*, *good*, *loud*, *nice*, *pleasant voice*, *resonant voice* and *mouth-wide-open*.

The ideophones for walking did not show any common sound-symbolism between the English and Japanese speakers, as only two dimensions, *hard-soled* and *wet surface*, received similar ratings by both groups. The Japanese speakers exhibited several language-specific sound-meaning associations, as they rated words containing /a/ as the most *graceful* and *high-self-image*, and words containing /o/ as the least *graceful* and *high-self-image*.

The results also showed a contrast between voiced and voiceless consonants, as the voiced consonants were related to *big-stride* and *noisy*, and the voiceless consonants to *even-paced*, *feminine*, *formal*, *good*, *graceful* and *high-self-image*.

The findings confirmed the existence of sound-symbolism in Japanese ideophones to which both English and Japanese speakers are sensitive, and also established that sound-symbolism is more evident in words that are high on the iconicity continuum, such as the words for laughing, as opposed to words low on the continuum, i.e. the words for walking. This also indicates that not all ideophones are completely intuitive to speakers of other languages and, according to Iwasaki et al. (2007), it depends on the specific-semantic context in the study, as well as prior exposure to the language and culture.

## Results and discussion on the sensory symbolism survey amongst Macedonian native speakers

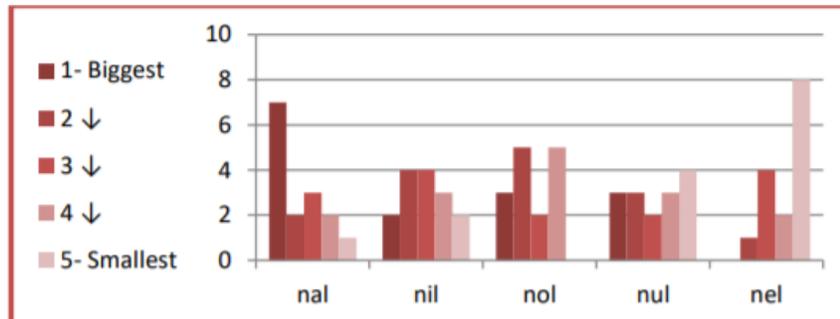
In an attempt to investigate sound-symbolism, we created an online survey<sup>2</sup> (see Appendix 1) to examine sensory symbolism, i.e. the association of letters/sounds present in Macedonian, with physical size, shape, colour, and motion. We decided to reduplicate the study carried out by Iwasaki et al. (2007) by choosing several of the ideophones used in their study and translating the semantic dimensions into Macedonian to test whether, and to what extent, Macedonian speakers might sense certain dimensions of Japanese ideophones. The participants were also asked to explain their responses.

Concerning the methodology that was employed - the survey consisted of 14 questions, and was conducted online and anonymously. The survey was open, and there were no limits in terms of who could participate. There were 15 participants that responded, all recruited through social media. All of the participants are native Macedonian speakers. The findings will be discussed separately in the following paragraphs. The questions about the explanations of the participants' choices will be discussed together with the corresponding questions. Also, the findings will be compared to the previously-mentioned findings, in the section presenting the various studies.

### Sound - size associations

This question consisted of five pseudo-words designed with the five vowels in Macedonian /a, i, o, u, e/ (/a, u, o, y, e/): *nal*, *nil*, *noI*, *nul*, *nel*. The participants were asked to imagine that all of these words meant *chair*, and the classroom model of *chair* was taken for comparison, as all of the participants were familiar with its size. The participants were asked to sort these words by size, from biggest (1) to smallest (5):

**Graph 1:** A graphic representation of sound-size associations in Macedonian.



The findings indicate that there are two notable associations of sounds with physical size. The pseudo-word *nal* was rated as the biggest in physical size by seven of the participants, while the pseudo-word *nel* was rated as the smallest in physical size by eight of the participants.

The participants explained that their choices were mostly based on associations, such as drawing parallels between the similarity in pronunciation and orthography with the English language, i.e. *nal* - *small*, and *nil* - *big*, or employing direct associations based on instinct, as participants mentioned that *noI* reminded them of something big, while *nel* of something small. Similarly, the vowels /o/ and /u/ sounded big, while /a/ and /i/ small, according to some participants. One respondent employed association based on similarity in pronunciation with already-existing words and names. Consequently, they rated *nil* as the biggest, because they associated it with the river Nile due to the similarity in pronunciation in Macedonian, while *nal* and *noI* were perceived as more closed during pronunciation,

<sup>2</sup>[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1\\_5p4hcvl8UIDtRtR\\_CLzN7PhV6IIOpGQW\\_HkfoNYP4/edit?fbclid=IwAR0cjPOhJPUjur24\\_e2TkZ0j3GAjXjD2HrgNj5gmoi42q-Zk2B8oZ8fdwRo](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1_5p4hcvl8UIDtRtR_CLzN7PhV6IIOpGQW_HkfoNYP4/edit?fbclid=IwAR0cjPOhJPUjur24_e2TkZ0j3GAjXjD2HrgNj5gmoi42q-Zk2B8oZ8fdwRo)

and, therefore, smaller; *nul* reminded them of the Macedonian word for zero - *nula*, which is of no value, and *nel* was associated with something even smaller than zero.

Others said their decisions were based on the order of the vowels in the alphabet, the openness of the mouth and lip position, as well as the vowel length during pronunciation – for example, they considered /a/ as the most open, as the lips are not touching or near, and, therefore, they said it implies something bigger, while /u/ was perceived as the most close and round vowel, as the lips are the most close to each other as compared to other vowels, and, thus, it was associated with something smaller. Personal opinions on softness, tenderness and balance among the vowels also influenced the participants in their decisions.

In comparison to previous research carried out by Sapir (1928), and Ohtake and Haryu (2013), we may say that, on one hand, some findings correlate with the previous findings indicating that /a/ was rated as having something to do with bigger objects in physical size. On the other hand, in the previous research /i/ was associated with smaller objects, while in Macedonian we can see that /e/ was perceived as having something to do with small physical size.

### Sound - shape associations

Two questions examined possible associations between sounds and shapes. Namely, participants were asked to associate the shapes and the words used in Köhler's study (1947), and the ones used in Ramachandran and Hubbard's study (2001), i.e. the angular, spiky shape and the curvy, round shape with the words *takete* and *maluma*, and *kiki* and *bouba*, respectively, all of which were transcribed in Macedonian.

The findings indicate that all 15 participants associated the word *takete* with the angular, spiky shape, and, consequently, *maluma* was unanimously associated with the curvy, round shape. The findings involving the words *kiki* and *bouba* indicate that three of the participants associated the angular, spiky shape with the word *bouba*, while 12 of them with the word *kiki*, and vice versa.

The participants' explanations of their choices for these questions were very similar, and they will be discussed together. Most of the participants explained that the pronunciation of these words and the written shapes of the letters influenced them in the process of making the association. Also, they said they were guided by the same instinct and employed the same logic when they responded to these questions, i.e. correspondence of the appearances of the shapes and the pronunciation of the words, according to which *takete* and *kiki* sounded and looked more angular, spiky, and sharp. One of the participants said that *takete* reminded them of a Chinese word, which has something to do with the Chinese<sup>3</sup> art of paper folding referred to as *origami*, and, therefore, they associated it with the angular, spiky shape. On the other hand, *maluma* and *bouba* looked and sounded to the participants as corresponding to something curvy, round, soft, and were even compared to a balloon by two participants, and a tulip by one - shapes that, according to them, subconsciously helped them associate it with the curvy and round shape. Other means they based their choices on were coincidence and elimination.

The remaining three participants, who responded in the opposite manner, stated that the word *bouba* sounded sharper and more complicated to them, and, as a result, they associated it with the angular shape, which they also considered more complicated, while the word *kiki* looked and sounded simpler, and, based on its simplicity, they associated it with the form without any sharp angles.

The results are in line with the previous research carried out by Köhler (1947), and Ramachandran and Hubbard (2001), whose findings also suggest that most of the participants associated the words *takete* and *kiki* with the angular, spiky form, and *maluma* and *bouba* with the curvy, round form.

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<sup>3</sup> Note: in fact, it is not a Chinese art, but rather a Japanese one.

### Sound - colour associations

In order to investigate whether some colour can be associated with a particular letter or sound, the following question required the participants to associate the vowels in Macedonian /a, i, e, u, o/ (/a, u, e, y, o/) with a particular colour or shade of colour. Furthermore, three pairs of voiced-voiceless consonants: /b-p; g-k; z-s/ were included. The results are presented in the pie charts that follow:

**Pie chart 1:** Sound-colour associations for /a/



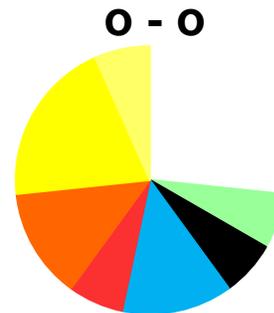
**Pie chart 2:** Sound-colour associations for /i/



**Pie chart 3:** Sound-colour associations for /u/



**Pie chart 4:** Sound-colour associations for /o/



**Pie chart 5:** Sound-colour associations for /e/



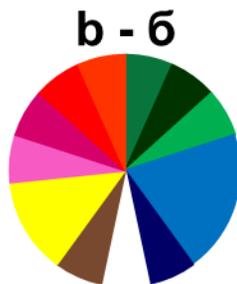
The participants associated vowels with different colours based on their perception and previous experience. Including the different shades of the same colour, we may say that seven of the participants associated the vowel /a/ with the colour red, whereas five associated /i/ with it; /o/ received the same rating for white and yellow by four of them, /u/ was associated with the colour green by five of the participants, and /e/ was associated with yellow, green and blue by four participants respectively.

Previous research indicates that open vowels such as /a/ were rated as containing a high proportion of red, which is in line with the result from the association of the Macedonian vowel /a/, in which seven of the participants associated it with red. The findings from the survey also indicate that five of the participants associated the colour red with the front vowel /i/, while in the study carried out by Moos et al. (2014), it was rated as containing a high proportion of green, a colour which in our survey received rates by only three people. The research carried out by Moos et al. (2014) stated that front vowels are usually associated with yellow or white, which, when compared with the findings from our survey, indicates that only the front vowel /e/ in Macedonian shows some association with yellow by four of the participants, while only one of them associated it with white.

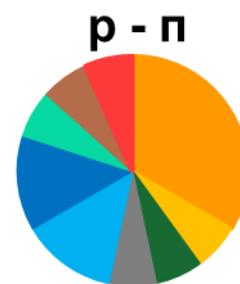
Unfortunately, the findings from this question are fairly inconclusive as the participants were given liberty to choose whatever colour they thought could be associated with the certain vowel, and limitations were not set in their choices.

The following pie charts contain results of sound-colour association for three voiced-voiceless pairs /b-p, g-k, z-s/:

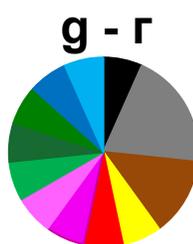
**Pie chart 6:** Sound-colour associations for /b/



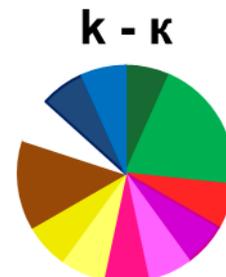
**Pie chart 7:** Sound-colour associations for /p/



**Pie chart 8:** Sound-colour associations for /g/



**Pie chart 9:** Sound-colour associations for /k/



**Pie chart 10:** Sound-colour associations for /z/



**Pie chart 11:** Sound-colour associations for /s/



Three pairs of consonants were chosen based on their voicing, voiced versus voiceless, /b-p/, /g-k/ and /z-s/. The voiced consonant /b/ was rated blue by four of the participants, while its voiceless counterpart /p/ was associated with orange by six of the participants. The voiced consonant /g/ was rated green by three, while the voiceless consonant /k/ was also rated green by four of the participants. The voiced consonant /z/ was rated blue by four of the participants, while its voiceless counterpart /s/ was associated with yellow by five of the participants.

According to Asano and Yokosawa's study (2011), voiced consonants were associated with darker colours, while voiceless consonants with brighter colours, which is in line with the findings presented in the pie charts, as the voiced consonants received lower ratings for lighter shades of colours than the voiceless consonants.

The reasons behind the participants' choices concerning vowel/consonant associations with colours will be discussed together, as they showed great similarity. Most of the participants explained that their decisions were based on the pronunciation of the sounds. This means that the letter/sound itself reminded them of a certain colour. However, some of them said they chose a colour corresponding to a certain sound by means of association and correlation with already-existing concepts and previous memories. This means that a particular sound reminded them, personally, of a particular word or a memory with a particular meaning, which had some significance in their lives. The meaning of that particular word or memory influenced them in choosing the colour associated with the sound, which means they were influenced by that word, and not by the letters/sounds themselves. One respondent explained how they based their decision on association and the importance of the meaning of the word before they associated it with a particular colour. The examples they provided were the following: /e/ - light = the colour white, and also energy and a nice sunny day = yellow; /a/ - a fallen leaf during the fall = yellow; /i/ - a smile and nature = light green, /z/ - snake = black; /s/ - crescent = yellow; /k/ - whip and violence = light yellow; /g/ - based on memories of the game called *hangman*, whose form is the same as *g* in Cyrillic (Г), and which was always played with a blue pen = blue; /p/ - the cry of a little child = grey; /b/ - based on association of an old well with moss around it = blackish-green.

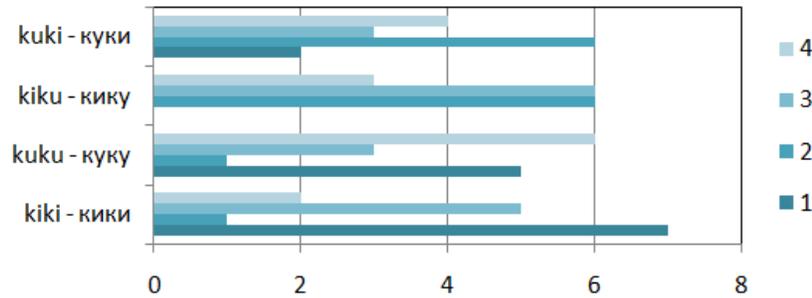
Some of these associations were obviously made in Macedonian, as when the words are translated, the initial letter of the word is the same with the sound, such as /e/ – energy (energija), /z/ –snake (zmija), /s/ – crescent (half-moon/in the shape of a crescent), whose colour is usually presented as yellow, /k/ – whip (kamshik), whose colour is usually yellowish, /p/ – cry (plach), the colour grey might be due to the fact that crying is usually associated with sadness, /b/ – an old well with moss around it; moss would probably associate a blackish-green colour.

### Sound - motion associations

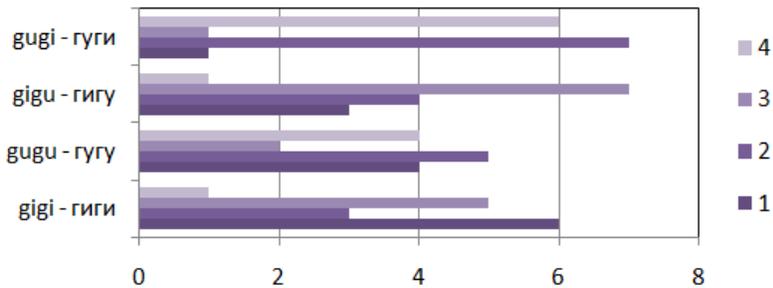
Associations between sound and motion were explored in Cuskley's study (2013). Here, the participants were asked to imagine that the pseudo-words used in the survey mean *motion of a car*. As

such, 16 pseudo-words were transcribed in Macedonian, as they met the criteria established in Cuskley's study (2013), according to which only the voicing of the consonants could vary. The voiced-voiceless consonant pair /g/-/k/ (plosives, velar) were used, combined with the vowel /i/ (front, high, rounded) and /u/ (back, high, rounded). The task involved rating the speed of a car presented by those 16 words on a scale from 1 to 4, where 1 = the fastest and 4 = the slowest motion of the car.

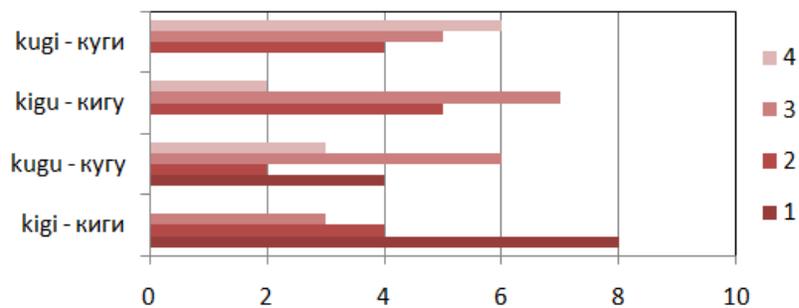
**Graph 2:** A representation of the findings from the sound-motion associations for the pseudo-words with a reduplicated consonant /g/.



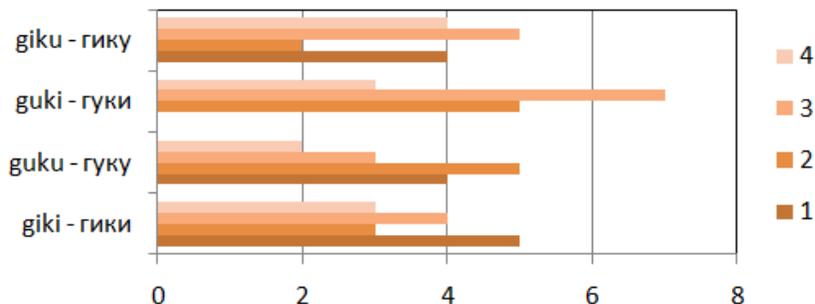
**Graph 3:** A representation of the findings from the sound-motion associations for the pseudo-words with a reduplicated consonant /k/.



**Graph 4:** A representation of the findings from the sound-motion associations for the pseudo-words with the mixed voiceless-voiced consonants /k/-/g/.



**Graph 5:** A representation of the findings from the sound-motion associations for the pseudo-words with the mixed voiced-voiceless consonants /g/-/k/.



Mixed voicing (k/g) and the reduplication of the vowel /i/ (*kigi*) was rated the fastest by eight of the participants, voiceless consonant reduplication (k/k), together with the reduplication of the vowel /i/ (*kiki*) was rated the fastest by seven, voiced consonant reduplication with the reduplication of the vowel /i/ (*gigi*) was rated the fastest by six, and, finally, mixed voicing (g/k) with the reduplication of the vowel /i/ (*giki*) was rated the fastest by five, as was voiceless consonant reduplication with the reduplication of the vowel /u/ (*kugu*).

In general, the reduplication of the vowel /i/ was rated faster than the reduplication of the vowel /u/, which was still rated fast, but not as fast as the words with /i/. Voiced consonant reduplication was rated the fastest if we consider 1 and 2 as fast dimensions in the survey, then voiceless consonant reduplication, and mixed voicing (g/k) were rated equally fast, and mixed voicing (k/g) was generally rated the slowest. Mixed vowels in the order /u, i/ were rated the slowest, both when combined with reduplicated consonants and with mixed consonants.

Most of the participants said they based their ratings on the sounds of the words when pronounced. Some of them said that the vowel /i/ sounded faster, while the vowel /u/ sounded a bit slower to them, and, also, the voiceless consonant /k/ sounded faster to them than the voiced consonant /g/. Furthermore, the participants said that the words containing reduplication of vowels sounded faster than those containing mixed vowels. One respondent said they rated them based on a personal balance of the vowels in regards to louder or quieter combinations, as well as intuition. Another respondent stated that they were influenced by the openness of the lips during the pronunciation of the vowels, according to which the lips are close and nearly touching for the vowel /u/, which made them rate it slower, while the lips are not touching or near for the vowel /i/ in comparison, which made them rate it faster. Among the participants, one respondent said that they imagined the sounds that a car made as being produced by the pseudo-words and based their opinion on sounds, i.e. the ones that sounded faster were rated faster, and vice versa.

In comparison to previous research conducted by Cuskey (2013), we can say that mixed voicing was rated faster, especially the combination k/g, and generally reduplications of voiced consonants were rated faster than voiceless, but without any huge difference. The vowel /i/ was rated as faster than the vowel /u/, which was rated slowest in combinations with both reduplicated and mixed consonants, which is in line with the previous findings according to which the back vowel /u/ was considered slow.

### Semantic dimensions

The last two questions were used to test whether Macedonian speakers could sense some semantic dimensions of Japanese ideophones. Despite the fact that Japanese is a distant language to Macedonian speakers, we were curious to see if the sole sound of these ideophones would be able to bring to mind a vivid impression of an idea, a sensation or some sort of a depiction in the mind of the participants with

no previous knowledge of the Japanese culture and language, which might help them associate the right semantic dimension to the words. We also wished to see to what extent native Macedonian speakers would be able to sense the semantic dimensions, and whether they would also be sensitive to the same universalities as the Japanese and English participants in Iwasaki et al.'s study (2007). In total 12 ideophones were used, borrowed from the list used by Iwasaki et al. (2007) - six ideophones for laughing, and six for walking.

Unfortunately, this question was largely misunderstood by the participants; some of them only chose one dimension, others included only a few, or wrote a dimension of their own. Therefore, it was hard to reach any definite conclusions in regards to this question, and the ratings that will be presented include only semantic dimensions that were chosen by at least three of the participants, i.e. a semantic dimension will be included only if at least three people out of 15 rated the semantic dimension for that particular word.

### **Ideophones for laughing**

A. *kusu-kusu* was rated as a formal (3), purposeful (3), good (3), nice/kind (3) laughter produced by one person (3), a female<sup>4</sup> (3) with a beautiful voice (3).

Original meaning: the manner of laughing to oneself.

B. *kera-kera* was rated as formal (3), nice/kind (5), loud (4), momentary (3), laughter produced by someone who is amused (3) and has a pleasant voice (5), but is laughing without energy (3).

Original meaning: the sound of high-pitched, unrestrained laughter.

C. *kara-kara* was rated as unrestrained laughter (4) produced by someone who has a pleasant (4) and beautiful (3) voice.

Original meaning: the manner of laughing loudly but without malice.

D. *ahaha* was rated as loud (9), energetic (5), unrestrained (4), cheerful (3), continuous (4) laughter of many people (4), who are amused (5), and laugh with their mouth wide open (6).

Original meaning: the sound of loud laughter.

E. *ehehe* was rated as cheerful (4), purposeful (4), restrained (3), nasty/mean (3), laughter of one person (3), a young child (4).

Original meaning: the sound of soft laughter (usually embarrassed or lascivious laughter).

F. *uhuQ* was rated as excited (3), restrained (3), involuntary (3), low pitched (3) laughter produced by a young child (3), or adult (3), with mouth shut (4).

Original meaning: the sound of laughing, or chuckling, to oneself briefly and softly.

The participants explained that they rated the dimensions based on how they sounded to them when pronounced. They said they used their instinct to rate a dimension, as well as by pronouncing the words; according to their intonation, they imagined how the words would sound, and what their intention might be. Two participants mentioned creating mental pictures of the meaning of these words when they read or tried to pronounce them, based on which they rated the dimensions. One person mentioned that they took into consideration the vowels and their strength when they rated the dimensions. Also, association was employed by one person, who stated their answers were based on the way in which their friends and people around them laugh, and, also, they were influenced by the softness or roughness of the words when pronounced.

The only possible conclusion that may be made with the previous study is that /a/ was also rated as *amused, cheerful, energetic, pleasant voice, nice, and mouth-wide open*.

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<sup>4</sup> Though the semantic dimension is *feminine*, the term *female* is used in the study carried out, as well as in the conclusions from the analyses.

### Ideophones for walking

A. *toko-toko* was rated as quiet (6), fast (3), steady (4), energetic (3), feminine (3), clumsy (3), even-paced (4) walk of a small person (3) who is wearing hard-soled shoes (4), and is walking with small strides (4).

Original meaning: the manner of walking, trotting, etc., with quick, short steps.

B. *sorori-sorori* was rated as a quiet (3), good (4), graceful (6), purposeful (3), steady (4), long distance (3), walk of many people (4) or a young child (3) on a hard surface (ground/floor) (4).

Original meaning: the manner of moving slowly.

C. *bura-bura* was rated as a noisy (4), fast (4), informal (3), clumsy (3), aimless (3), uneven-paced (3), walk of many, big people (5), possibly a young child (3) on a wet surface (ground/floor) (3), who is/are walking with big strides (3).

Original meaning: the manner of walking around leisurely.

D. *tuka-tuka* was rated as a slow (3), steady (4), clumsy (3), recreational (3) walk on a hard surface (3) wearing hard-soled shoes (4).

Original meaning: the manner of walking toward someone briskly and with determination.

E. *noso-noso* was rated as a steady (5), aimless (3), good (3), energetic (4), feminine (4) walk on a soft surface (4).

Original meaning: the manner of moving slowly and lethargically.

F. *dosin-dosin* was rated as a masculine (4), noisy (3), energetic (4), clumsy (3), even-paced (3), long distance (4), walk of many people (3) with a high self-image (5) on a dry (3), hard surface (ground/floor) (3).

Original meaning: loud, resonant sounds as of a very large person or animal walking or stomping heavily.

The participants responded that they rated the words based on how they sounded to them when pronounced, the rhythm that the words produced, and whether they instinctively sounded soft or rough based on their own criteria for these dimensions. Several people stated that when they read and pronounced the words, mental images were created in their mind, depicting people walking. This means that the participants imagined people, and the way in which they walk based on the sound of the words. One respondent stated that they rated the words based on associations. For example, *bura-bura* reminded them of the Macedonian word for *storm* (*bura*); *tuka-tuka* reminded them of the steadiness and inability to move or do anything, meaning one is stuck in one place for a longer period of time based on the Macedonian word for here – *tuka*, the association presented was '*tuka pa tuka*'; *toko-toko* reminded them of something happening on a daily basis; *noso-noso* of some word taken from baby talk, and *sorori-sorori* of a person who does not know what to do with their life but does not take any action to change that.

Several ratings showed an overlapping in the semantic dimensions rated in the previous research. For example, *toko-toko* was rated by the Macedonian, English, and Japanese participants as a small person wearing hard-soled shoes, walking quickly and energetically with small strides, based on the study carried out by Iwasaki et al. (2007). As opposed to Japanese, where /o/ and voiced consonants were rated as low self-image, the ideophone *dosin-dosin* received ratings for the opposite dimension in the survey, i.e. high self-image. The same ratings with the previous research were also perceived for the voiced consonants, as in the ideophones *bura-bura* and *dosin-dosin*, which were related to big-stride and noisy, as well as the voiceless consonants, as in *toko-toko*, which showed correspondence in the ratings of the semantic dimensions even-paced and feminine, and *sorori-sorori* for the dimensions good and graceful.

## Conclusion

Both theories (the theory of arbitrariness and sound-symbolism) about the origin of words have valid points. The *theory of arbitrariness*, as such, suggests no relation between the form of the word and its meaning, which means that people have tailored words to fit their own needs, and those words reflect their environment and culture. For example, many nations have vocabularies associated with certain trades that are non-existent in other environments and hard to translate accurately. Furthermore, Eskimos have 50 words for *snow*, while Americans have 13 different words for one type of *sandwich* – such as *submarine*, *hoagie*, *hero*, and so on.

However, after the arguments, explanations and evidence provided by those linguists who support the *sound-symbolism theory* as evidence of form-meaning association, we can conclude that there are indeed words that reflect meaning through their form, some in its entirety, while some exhibit only hints that help the user to decipher the meaning of words. Such is the case, for example, of words that exhibit relative iconicity, such as phonesthemes and ideophones.

Even though Macedonian is not one of the languages that have ideophones in their vocabulary, we believe that everyone has, at least once, experienced the vividness of some word, or its performance, as Dingemans (2012) describes it. Moreover, the native Macedonian speakers who participated in the survey also reported creating mental images and imagining the ways in which people walk while mapping the semantic dimensions for the ideophones for walking. The findings from these two questions indicate that the participants were also able to sense some semantic dimensions, which were referred to as universal between the English and the Japanese participants in the study carried out by Iwasaki et al. (2007). We cannot discuss the culturally-specific dimensions of Macedonian since the participants did not rate each semantic dimension, and more data is necessary to make definite conclusions.

The given summary of several studies, as well our study, show, in a way, consistent results, as low back vowels and voiced consonants are frequently linked with words that convey some sort of meaning that has to do with roundness and darkness in terms of colour. Back vowels are also associated with slowness in motion, as compared to front vowels, which are related with quickness. On the other hand, high front vowels and voiceless consonants are present in words whose meaning is associated with spikiness and brightness in colour.

In terms of previous sound- and (physical) size-associations, it was discovered that low and back vowels are usually associated with big objects, while high and front vowels with small objects.

In terms of our study, the findings are similar, with the exception that the vowel /a/ in Macedonian, which was associated with bigger objects, is classified as a low (according to the position of the tongue in the oral cavity during pronunciation), middle vowel (according to the movement of the tongue during pronunciation), and, also the fact that the Macedonian respondents associate the vowel /e/ with smaller objects, which, in turn, is classified as a middle, front vowel. Both vowels /a/ and /e/ are classified as unrounded in Macedonian and in English.

In spite of all these sound-meaning associations, it has been proven that some aspects of the meaning of words are language-specific and culturally-bound.

After taking into consideration all the information presented, we, personally, believe that the semiologist Charles Sanders Peirce (1955) is the one that might have proposed a reasonable solution, i.e. the co-existence of arbitrariness and sound-symbolism in words. This would mean that a word can be both arbitrary and sound-symbolic at the same time; these two concepts would simply operate on a different level in a word, which would give hints to the language user about the meaning of words, but also, at the same time, would require them to have some prior knowledge of the language in order to fully grasp the meaning of the word.

Finally, our belief is that words exhibit different levels of iconicity, some are simply more iconic than others.

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**In the search of a language pedagogical paradigm, Michał Daszkiewicz and Anna Dąbrowska (Eds.), Krakow: Impuls, 2020, 288 p. – A book review**

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*In the Search of a Language Pedagogical Paradigm*, edited by **Michał Daszkiewicz** (University of Gdańsk) and **Anna Dąbrowska** (University of Warsaw) is the third volume published within the Educational Role of Language (ERL) framework. Like the volumes that preceded it and in line with the objectives of the ERL Association, which is to study and boost the position of language in education and to bridge the gap between linguistic and educational studies, this volume also explores the many facets of the educational role of language at the level of school, culture, methods and personality. These, along with the experiencing of language by learners in terms of their language beliefs, activity, affect and cognition, represent the main goals and the scope of the ERL Association and are all addressed in the 16 papers which comprise this book.

Though the volume centres around how language is and should be implemented in education, the contributions in it can be divided into two parts based on the ERL strands they address. The first part of the book focuses on overall upbringing and includes papers, which make reference to the relationship between schooling, culture, methodology and personality (the ERL framework's Scope Major). The chapters in second part of the book focus on the process of language learning and explore the links between language and learners' beliefs, activity, affect and thinking (the framework's Scope Minor). The editors have struck an excellent balance here, with exactly two papers devoted to each of the strands within the ERL framework.

Part I, entitled *In the search of a language educational paradigm*, consists of eight chapters addressing topics like previously unknown patterns of communication, alignment of textbooks with learners' development, development of bicultural identities through multimodal practices, impact of speech on students' personalities, prescience derived from reading, the fostering of individual potential through Internet of things literacy as a dimension of civic functioning and informed multicomponent personal pedagogies.

Anna Dąbrowska's "Youth Literacy in the Era of New Orality – a Local or Global Problem?" reports on the results of a 3-year-long study of the cultural conditions shaping youth literacy, the function school (and the focus on assessment through testing) fulfils in the process of acquiring, improving and diagnosing literacy, as well as the extent to which adolescents attain literacy skills which allow them to participate in the culture. The second chapter in this strand (Language & Schooling), "Contemporary English Teaching Techniques in Primary School and their Pedagogical Grounding", by Dragana Božić Lenard and Ivan Lenard, presents the results of a qualitative and quantitative analysis of eight current teachers' books in order to establish how the four language skills (reading, listening, speaking and writing) are distributed in grades 5 to 8 of EFL classes in Croatian primary schools and whether the exercise complexity is in line with students' development level.

Within the Language & Culture strand, Ivana Espinet, Karen Zaino and Michelle Demeroukas describe how an English as a New Language teacher designed and implemented a reading and writing project from a translanguaging and pedagogical stance, how she examined and refined her practices, incorporating translanguaging pedagogy into her established curriculum, adopting a translanguaging stance and adapting her units to leverage her students' dynamic multilingualism ("Translanguaging

Narratives: Leveraging Students' Linguistic and Multimodal Practices in an ENL Classroom"). In a similar vein, in "It's Just Not Another Language' – Impact of Learning English as a Second Language on the Personality of Undergraduate Students in India" by Somali Gupta also explores the connection between language and culture but from a different perspective, aiming to show how the acquisition of English as a second language helps in the transformation of the personality of third-year undergraduate students in India. The results of the research suggest that the predictors of student achievement are positively impacted by their behaviour and personality.

The third strand, Language & Methodology, is also represented by two chapters, dealing with literature as pedagogy and language learning in the world of artificial intelligence. Tess Maginess' "Language as Resistance in the Panopticon of *Milkman*" explores what happens to language within the highly surveilled or panoptical (all-seeing) world of A. Burns' prizewinning novel. The author claims that even though a lexis of weaponisation, degradation and fake news has become in the past ten years a truth universally acknowledged, great literature performs a crucial educational and even moral role in reminding us of the need for Resistance, for dissent, however iotic and however doomed to fail it is. On the other hand, in "Foreign Language Learning in the World of Artificial Intelligence and the Future FL Teacher Roles," Ľudmila Hurajová analyses current and relevant roles of teachers, specifically FL teachers in the world of Artificial Intelligence, globalization and paradoxes stemming from educational, social and industrial/commercial dimensions. She tackles the issue of the current and future labour market needs and their requirements and attempts to reveal the most critical skills teachers should focus on and the most required competence of FL teachers in today's changing world.

Part I closes with two papers which address the relationship between Language & Personality. In "Literacy and the L2 Self as a Pedagogical Challenge in Teaching and Learning Norwegian – First, Second or Foreign Language?" Jens Haugan deals with the relation between the concept of literacy and the role of the first language in the educational system and national curricula in Norway, where Norwegian is represented by two written varieties. The author stresses the importance of defining whether Nynorsk is a first, second or foreign language, and what kind of L2 Self the pupils may develop as a reference for a future self. "Transforming L2 Teachers' Personal Pedagogies" by Ervin Kovačević explores the extent to which L2 teacher training programs ensure that the graduates can influence their professional environment and modify their own teaching personalities when necessary. The results of the research conducted with 18 students point to the need for L2 teacher training programs to promote the principles of flexible but informed personal pedagogies.

Part II of this volume focuses on focus on the process of language learning and explore the links between language and learners' beliefs, activity, affect and thinking. It opens with Michał Daszkiewicz's paper entitled "Language Composing as the Conceptual Axis of a Four-Domain Educational Paradigm," in which the author claims that language merits a special place in educational studies and systems since it underlies and binds education and as such affects our views, behaviours, emotions and thoughts. The author, who is also the founder of the ERL Framework, outlines an authorial proposal for education being predominantly conceived and organised through the prism of language. Also within the strand Language & Beliefs is Naeun Choi and Byeonggon Min's chapter "Epistemological Beliefs in Relation to Classroom Conversation," which examines the impact of learners' epistemological beliefs (beliefs of the source of knowledge and its justification process) on participation in classroom communication. Based on a survey conducted with nearly 300 pupils the authors conclude that students' experience of participating in small group dialogue and questions are indeed related to students' formation of structural views and should therefore be used to boost constructive classroom communication.

The strand Language & Activity is introduced by "'Languagizing' the Preschool Classroom: Six Principles" co-authored by Elias Blinkoff, Roberta Michnick Golinkoff and Kathryn Hirsh-Pasek. The argument developed in this paper is that languagizing preschool classrooms (setting up a culture of

language-rich interactions) could bolster children's language skills prior to school entry and promote later academic achievement. The authors outline six principles, which provide a guide to assist preschool teachers and administrators in realizing the potential of preschool classrooms. This chapter is followed by Tatjana Glušac's review paper entitled "Foreign Language Teachers' Beliefs: A Review of Literature on the Sources, Effects, and Malleability of Beliefs," which shows that some long-held conceptions about the origins and nature of teacher beliefs have remained uncontested to this day but that recent studies have also shown that practicing teachers' beliefs are amenable if reflection proves there are areas which require intervention and when evidence exists that an implemented change yields positive results regarding students' learning. Contextual factors also seem to play a significant role in the realization of beliefs and therefore, if change is to be incurred, adequate contextual factors need to be ensured.

The relationship of Language & Affect is first explored in Anita Bright's "Sticks and Stones May Break my Bones: The Role of Unintentionally Harmful Words in Language Education Settings". This chapter explores the ways groups of multicultural and multilingual teacher candidates navigated the issues surrounding the use of particular terms or trigger words invoking pain or poison in some hearers and it stresses the importance of holding clear ideas about the ways language lands upon and shapes realities, especially in the work of educators. Aneta Naumoska focuses on "The Effect of Gender Inconsistencies in English on Construction of Student Identities". Since Macedonian is a Slavic language that has grammatical gender, while English has natural gender, EFL teachers need to be fully aware that when introducing gender in English they are actually introducing a new element of students' wider understanding of language. The author emphasises that seemingly minor details (like noun gender inconsistencies in English) mirror on students' identities, opening them up to expansive viewpoints and should therefore be approached with caution.

Language & Thinking, the strand which closes this volume, is represented by "Students' Learning Language and Learning to Reason Mathematically" by Louise C. Wilkinson, Alison L. Bailey and Carolyn A. Maher, followed by Irene Krasner's "Some Applications of Neuroscience to Teaching Foreign Languages". The former paper focuses on the didactics of language use for mathematics and argues for the teaching of language forms to all novice teachers, i.e. for a role for language teaching in preparation of future all teachers. This is especially important at the primary level of education, the authors stress, where general education teachers would benefit by mastering some of the key pedagogical understandings about language and practices that optimally support students' language. The latter chapter explores the importance of using brain research in second language teaching, specifically patterns of attention-management and maintenance. The author concludes the chapter with several points which prove to be important for attracting and holding students' attention, such as emotional intensity of the material, clear setting of goals to motivate but not to overly arouse students, shaping information in a concise pattern familiar to the students, as well as the novelty of the stimulus.

In addition to the 16 chapters briefly described here, the volume also contains the sections References (p. 241-271), Index of things (p. 273-275), Index of Names (p. 277-280) and Bio-notes (281-288).

Overall, the collection of papers *In the Search of a Language Pedagogical Paradigm* successfully addresses all eight strands of the ERL Framework, which cover the entirety of language reality and education. One of the primary merits of the volume is its truly international character – as many as 24 competent scholars from 11 countries have contributed to it, proving once more that people engaged in "the mosaic of the pedagogy-cum-linguistics intersection" (p. 10), exploring the cognitive, social and cultural role of language, the development of linguistic and communicative competences and their pedagogical implications indeed have a lot to offer as they recognise the key role of language in educational processes and search for the most effective methods of language education. In spite of a few typos (the title of Dąbrowska's chapter in the Contents, multiple occurrences of 'epidemiological'

instead of 'epistemological' in Choi and Min's paper, 'tobe' instead of 'to be' on p. 229, etc.), this skillfully edited collection of papers will certainly appeal to a wide audience ranging from students to established scholars whose interests lie on the intersection of language and education. It is to be hoped that the ERL Framework will continue publishing and disseminating volumes like this one, aimed at recognizing and implementing possible intricacies of all eight strands within the Framework and ultimately promoting and introducing into educational systems across the globe the resulting linguistic pedagogical paradigm.

## Practical activities and their theoretical background in second language and culture integrated teaching

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### **Abstract**

*The aim of the paper is to introduce some practical exercises and activities to the teachers of Georgian as a second language. These activities will help the teachers in the teaching process. In addition to this, these activities are designed to help second language learners who grow up in a Georgian environment and are more or less familiar with the realities of the dominant culture but are not fully able to establish effective and successful communication and socialisation due to language scarcity and insufficient cultural and socio-cultural competencies. The paper introduces six practical activities based on scientific research and theoretical background, and presents a table outlining each activity in terms of teaching purpose, level, language competence, outcomes, and teacher's role. The paper employs descriptive methods, hence different activities are provided and analysed. The paper is also based on the method of observation (classroom observation), each exercise is tested by us in the classroom environment.*

**Keywords:** *Culture, teaching target culture, L2 teaching, role of language instructor, practical activities for L2 teaching*

### **Introduction**

The importance of cultural aspects in second language teaching is extensively studied over the past few decades. Different approaches, methods, and theoretical background are revealed, data of different languages are examined. Nevertheless, one can clearly claim that language and culture are strongly interrelated variables, hence teaching language tightly correlates to the teaching of culture. As different studies show, based on this approach, the teaching process is more successful and fruitful, since “evidence suggests that learners can be more successful in language learning if teachers integrate culture into a language classroom, that is, learners will immerse themselves into the entire culture of the target language” (Salim, 2017 : 468). On the other hand, in order to succeed from this perspective, the teaching process must be well planned, well organized, and appropriate. On the basis of different theories, the paper discusses specific activities that combine linguistic and cultural elements and enhance the cultural competence of language learners.

The aim of the paper is to introduce some practical exercises and activities to the teachers of Georgian as a second language. These activities will help the teachers in the teaching process. In addition to this, these activities are designed to help second language learners who grow up in a Georgian environment and are more or less familiar with the realities of the dominant culture but are not fully able to establish effective and successful communication and socialization due to language scarcity and insufficient cultural and socio-cultural competencies. The paper introduces six practical activities based on scientific research and theoretical background and presents a table outlining each activity in terms of teaching purpose, level, language competence, outcomes, and teacher role. The paper employs descriptive methods, hence different activities are provided and analysed. The paper is based on the method of observation (classroom observation); each exercise is tested by us in the classroom environment.

The introduction of such an approach in the educational process is vital in a multi-ethnic society because the integrated teaching of the dominant language and culture of the state helps the representatives of ethnic/linguistic minorities in fully realizing themselves both personally and professionally.

Ethnically, Georgia is a very diverse country. Ethnic minorities make up 15.8% of its population. Densely populated in the Kvemo Kartli region, Azerbaijanis are the largest ethnic group (6.5%) after Georgians. The second-largest ethnic group is Armenians (5.7%), they live mainly in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. Azerbaijani and Armenian settlements are also found in Tbilisi along with various small ethnic groups. In addition to compact accommodation, there are different ethnic groups living in Georgia (Survey of Aspects of Intercultural Education according to Teacher Education Programs of Georgian Higher Education Institutions, 2014: 4). According to 2019 data, about 2.55% of students in the country study in Armenian-language schools; 4.86% in Azerbaijani and 2.5% - in Russian (State Strategy for Civic Equality and Integration and report of 2015-2020 Action Plan, 2020: 49). According to the latest research, the situation with state language proficiency in ethnic minorities is concerning: only 29.2% of Armenians and 29.1% of Azerbaijanis are proficient enough to understand information) the Armenian and Azerbaijani-speaking population (Abashidze, 2011: 23). Currently, Georgian is taught as a second language both in schools and in higher education institutions. Universities offer Georgian language training program.

The aim of the paper is to introduce some practical exercises and activities to the teachers of Georgian as a second language. These activities will help the teachers in the teaching process. In addition to this, these activities are designed to help second language learners who grow up in a Georgian environment and are more or less familiar with the realities of the dominant culture but are not fully able to establish effective and successful communication and socialisation due to language scarcity and insufficient cultural and socio-cultural competencies.

The activities discussed in this article aim to assist second language learners to acquire and understand cultural information in practical, simple and manifold ways. Thus, in the process of learning a language, they acquire not only linguistic but also cultural competence.

It should be noted that the practical activities offered in the paper are based on various theoretical studies and are tested in the teaching process. Some activities have been modified and developed to accommodate Georgian. They have already been introduced to our students.

The paper is practical in nature; it introduces specific practical activities, and each activity is followed by a detailed description, purpose, expected results; the role of the teacher in the implementation of each activity is also discussed. Consequently, this will allow the teacher to select an activity according to the purpose of the specific goal and, if necessary, they can make certain modifications to them. The paper employs descriptive methods, hence different activities are provided and analysed. The paper employs descriptive methods, hence different activities are provided and analysed. The paper is also based on the method of observation (classroom observation); each exercise is tested by us in the classroom environment.

The first part of the paper provides a literature review, outlining the role of culture in the process of learning a second language and presents the criteria on the basis of which each activity is developed. The second part of the paper introduces specific activities and exercises that had been tested in the process of teaching Georgian as a second language. The final part of the paper presents a table of descriptions and evaluations of activities, conclusions and a list of references.

### **Literature review**

According to Brooks (1968: 206), language can be analysed due to the three distinct bands: syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. The latest represents “manipulation of syntax and semantics by an actual user

of language". It means that a language user applies the individual factors within the language act: age, status, attitude, intent (Brooks 1968: 206), which naturally refers to the cultural characteristics. In terms of discussing the connection between language and culture, the definition of Brown should be taken into account. Namely, the researcher thinks that these two notions are tightly bonded. We are not able to separate them without losing the meaning of each of them. Thus, it can be said that the language is the part of the culture and, and conversely, the culture is the part of the language (Brown 2007: 164).

The definition of culture and its division by subgroups are deeply studied by Brooks (1968: 210). He identifies five varieties of culture that can be gradually applied in L2 classes. He defines the following types of culture: Culture1 refers to biological growth. Culture2 links to personal refinement. Culture3 requires to activate knowledge of literature and fine arts. Culture4 refers to the patterns of living. In Culture5 interest is centred upon the sum total of a way of life. Brooks discusses in detail all the varieties of those of cultures. He analyses Culture4 in the following way:

Culture4 refers to the individual's role in the unending kaleidoscope of life situations of every kind and the rules and models for attitude and conduct in them. By reference to these models, every human being, from infancy onward, justifies the world to himself as best he can, associates with those around him, and relates to the social order to which he is attached (Brooks 1968: 210).

It must be noted that according to Brooks (1968), culture is not the same as geography, history, folklore, or sociology. In his opinion, the only way to distinguish these notions from the culture is to apply the individual approach. For example, natural conditions can be defined as part of the culture when the role of a human being, his lifestyle, or the ways of adapting is apparent in creating these conditions.

In the majority of cases, the geographical and historical texts are directly included in the textbooks of Georgian as a second language. These texts are not adapted to Georgian reality and are not followed by relevant explanations from a cultural perspective. The second part of the paper presents the synthesis of this type of information and their cultural values, the connections are reflected in specific activities. Such an approach will help teachers and students to fill the existing gap and diversify the lesson process. This, in turn, will contribute to increasing student motivation and engagement. As Khan (2014: 66) points out, teaching aspects of culture takes on an outdated and monotonous look in the process of teaching a second language. Thus, the lesson process is focused on the formal face of culture and the passive form of teaching. Instead, the main focus should be on the target culture and active learning.

"The target language teachers should diagnose important linguistic issue, and incorporate key cultural items in a well developed lesson plan to facilitate the target students who can perform effectively not only in the particular language but also in related culture" (Khan 2014: 65).

When analysing the culture, the comparison with the iceberg is often referred to. Visual culture is a visible part of the iceberg, which is called explicit culture. This type of culture is easy to browse. This is what tourists can check and easily perceive. Invisible culture is what is hidden in the water, particularly implicit culture. In this case, the values, attitudes, risks, punctuality, and communication are meant (Oberg 1960). It can be said that culture is the evolving way of life, which is common for a particular group of people. Any of those particular groups share common experiences and practices, common views, and context (Moran 2001: 24). In other words, perception, beliefs, values, and attitudes – these are the main variables, which reflect the culture. Consequently, to learn it "requires skills in probing, analysing, and explaining the cultural phenomena learners' encounter, which necessarily involves a comparison with their own culture and themselves" (Shukurova 2017). It means that the language learner should be able to be adaptive or to integrate within the target culture. He/she should be able to express his thoughts and opinions the way target culture representatives do. Thus, it requires "changing behaviours to develop others that are appropriate for the culture" (Shukurova 2017).

When discussing the cultural issues American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL)'s national standards on culture must be considered as well. The given document incorporates the three dimensions of culture which are practices, products, perspectives (Rayan-schutz and Nussel 2010: 38).

It must be noted as well that “defining culture in terms of the 3Ps avoids the common, overworked conflict between C and c by interweaving the formal and informal aspects of daily life, as one normally lives it in any culture” (Dema & Moeller 2012: 87). Consequently, it permits to widen of the notion of culture and to apply more possibilities for the language instructors. The 3P approach allows using any written document including news, articles, advertisements for the one purpose, for increasing knowledge of target culture (Lange 1999: 60). Consequently, “this re-conceptualized approach to culture shifted the focus of teaching culture to a study of underlying values, attitudes, and beliefs, rather than simply learning about cultural products and practices” (Dema & Moeller 2012: 87).

### **Teaching second language through target culture**

In the literature a few goals of teaching culture are defined: 1. developing the idea that the behaviour of different people is dictated by culture; 2. realizing that behaviour of people is conditioned by the following social factors: age, social class, and place of living; 3. understanding the behaviour in everyday life situation within the target culture; 4. increasing the knowledge of the separate words and phrases within the target language; 5. develop the ability to evaluate and refine generalizations about the target culture, 6. develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture; 7. stimulate students ' intellectual curiosity about the target culture” (Tomalin & Stempleski 1993: 7).

When teaching culture, it is essential to consider the following factor – dynamic connection of linguistic competence and culture. As it is well-known, linguistic knowledge and linguistic communication mean adequate perception, explanation, and action. Thus, culture is one of the central parts of language teaching. If communication teaching aims for successful communication, involving cultural issues is the main means to achieve this goal. As it is mention in the different studies, learners linking with the culture are more successful in using the language properly (Brown 2007).

Few different approaches are identified for combining language and culture teaching. This section will briefly address the knowledge-based approach, contrast-based approach, and issues of intercultural communicative competence. As it is known, the knowledge-based approach is aimed at providing students with the following information about the target culture: folklore, everyday situations, customs, rituals, holidays, dress code style, cuisine, festivals, literature, and art. Subsequently, the given approach distinguishes high and low culture (Hinkel 2001: 444), thus students can be provided with factual information. As a result, according to the approach, the main goal of teaching a foreign language is for the student to be able to learn the target culture to read foreign literature. Consequently, following the theory “language and culture are two separate domains of language learning, with language competence being given priority over cultural” (Piątkowska 2015: 3).

On the opposite, the contrastive approach emphasizes psychological and anthropological aspects (Guest 2002) and addresses the differences and similarities between students and the target cultures (Thanasoulas 2001). In other words, language learners must be able to connect their own and target cultures by learning both cultures and analysing both similarities and differences. As Guest (2002: 157) reports, “the target culture is perceived as a monolithic entity because the nature of the interaction is such that an entire culture is being addressed”. Another researcher critically argues that “the approach perceives culture as a monolithic, general category, ignoring the fact that most interaction is intercultural in nature that is, it takes place between non-native speakers of a given language where they interact as individuals or representatives of small groups” (Piątkowska 2015: 4).

The following approach aims to develop and to widen Intercultural competence. The model of intercultural communicative competence is developed by Byram (1997). The researcher distinguishes five components that constitute cultural competence: attitudes, knowledge, skills of interpreting and skills of discovering and interacting, critical awareness. "Intercultural communicative competence approach with its focus on developing skills necessary in cross-cultural communication offers a completely new perspective on the role of foreign language teaching" (Piątkowska 2015: 10).

It can be said that intercultural dimension helps students to increase their linguistic competence. But on the other side, "it also develops their intercultural competence i.e. their ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and their ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality" (Byram et al. 2002: 9-10). Thus, it can be concluded, that integrating intercultural communicative competence within the language classes raises the linguistic and cultural knowledge of the language learners but also develops their critical thinking skills.

Another important issue in teaching the language and culture, is the role of the language instructor. As mentioned by Moran (2001: 138), the main functions of the teacher are to offer information about culture, extract information from the text, set cultural patterns of behaviour, model cultural behaviour, investigate and analyse cultural aspects, exchange cultural experiences, listen to students.

Naturally, the role of the teacher varies according to the activities. Each of the roles listed above is presented in more detail in the second part of the paper, which presents the function and role of the language instructors in each activity.

In addition to the role of a language instructor, it is also important to analyse teaching methods and use them in the learning process that directly helps the language learner to develop cultural competence. Brown (2007) studied the methods of teaching culture. In his opinion, due to the low level of language proficiency, the teaching process should be focused on the student's culture. The intermediate level requires reference to the characteristics of the target culture. Finally, the high level of language proficiency links to the comparative approach, to the double perspective that means to focus on the own culture from the perspective of the target culture.

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Another important strategy to focus on in the process of integrated language and culture learning is cultural capsules. As it is known in the scientific literature, cultural capsules are one of the most effective methods in the process of teaching language and culture. The idea of a cultural capsule belongs to Taylor & Sorenson (1961: 352) and is still used in the teaching of a second language. The cultural capsule system is a brief description of certain aspects of the target language and culture (marriage tradition, feast tradition, etc.). These aspects are compared to the relevant data and information from the student culture. "The culture capsule is a brief presentation of a target culture element which differentiates the source culture and the target culture, followed by a discussion leading to the explanation of the cultural element concerned" (Fatalaki et al. 2017: 11).

When using cultural capsules, the teacher should focus on various specific goals: Behavioural: will the student be able to behave properly in a particular situation? Can they employ adequate gestures and physical movements? 2. Linguistic: Does the student learn the language formulas that apply effectively to a particular situation? 3. Visual: Can a student identify a specific building, sign, or physical signals that are part of a particular situation, and what are the differences in this regard between the student's own

and target cultures? 4. Linguistic: the student is not only able to understand the differences between cultures, but also to explain and analyse the reasons behind these differences (Knop 1976: 55-56).

The activities discussed in the paper, with few exceptions, are aimed at intermediate and upper-intermediate learners. The teaching methods mentioned above, including cultural capsule strategy, are integrated into each activity.

As a conclusion, it is important to determine what type of culture described by Brooks (1968) should be applied to different levels of language instruction. For example, the intermediate level can be linked to Culture3 and Culture4, which aims to widen the cultural knowledge of language learners through written texts and art piece. On the upper level of language teaching, cognitive skills of connecting two cultural data should be developed in concordance with the requirement of Culture5. On the other hand, constituents of intercultural communicative competence should be considered in the process of planning teaching activities. In addition, aspects of the contrastive approach should be applied since the ability to compare different patterns of native and target cultures and to define similarities and differences between them contribute to the development of critical thinking and prevents direct cultural transferring. And finally, in parallel with different methods, the role of the instructor should be clearly determined in advance. Based on the above-mentioned theoretical framework following section provides different practical exercises that aim to develop both foreign/second language proficiency and cultural awareness.

### **Description of activities**

#### **Activity 1**

##### **The most famous...**

**Language level:** A2 and B1

**Teacher's role:** The teacher gives verbal instructions to the students at the beginning of the activity. In the process, the teacher is advised to walk around the group to observe the groups. If necessary, they might also give remarks or answer questions. After finishing the group-work, the teacher listens to the students' presentation in the target language, if necessary, helps to lead the discussion in Georgian and gives final instructions.

**Goal:** This activity will help learners to get general information from Culture3, Culture4, Culture5. In addition to this, the aim of the activity is to develop the skills of selecting useful, substantial information from extensive texts in the target language and presenting it to the audience.

**Duration:** 2 academic hours.

**Method:** Teamwork/working in groups, use of multimedia tools, answering questions

**Result:** Enhancing cultural competence, enhancing language knowledge, enhancing communication competence. In addition, learners will develop attitudes, skills of interpreting, skills of discovering.

##### **Description:**

Teacher presents a list of activities to the students:

1. A famous Georgian building
2. A famous modern Georgian politician
3. A famous Georgian historical figure
4. Famous Georgian artist
5. Famous Georgian athlete
6. Famous Georgian movie
7. Famous Georgian literary works
8. Famous Georgian businessmen

The teacher then divides the class into groups. Based on the list, each group must choose to work on one segment of the target culture. The teacher instructs each group to gather information about this

specific segment. During the lesson, students should find relevant, adequate information, process it, and prepare a short presentation. At the end of the presentation, different groups of students ask each other additional questions.

## **Activity 2**

### **Cuisine**

**Language level:** B1 and B2

**Teacher's role:** The teacher organises brainstorming session, asks questions relevant to the topic. The teacher provides information about the culture – in this case, about the cuisine of the target language. More specifically the teacher introduces specific recipe. As a result, the teacher sets cultural patterns of behaviour.

**Goal:** This activity will help learners to get general information from Culture4.

**Duration:** 2 academic hours

**Method:** Brainstorming sessions, answering questions, comparing data from native and target cultures.

**Result:** The student finds similarities and differences between dishes in their own and target culture. Learners will be able to intensify their knowledge of Culture4. They will be able to participate in various discussions on this topic and learn table manners. As a result of the activity, students will acquire specific knowledge and develop skills of discovering.

#### **Description:**

Cuisine is an integral part of any culture that provides important insights into that culture. The language teacher can plan a variety of activities on the relevant topic to teach her/his students about the target language / culture /cuisine / dishes. Here are some of them:

The teacher asks the following questions for brainstorming:

1. List the dishes you are familiar with from the target culture.
2. List the dishes that are made in your culture and in the target culture.
3. List the dishes that are prepared for breakfast / lunch / dinner in your culture.
4. List the dishes prepared in the target culture for breakfast / lunch / dinner?
5. What are some table manners in your culture?
6. What phrases are used at the table in your culture?
7. If they know, what phrases are used at the table in Georgian culture?
8. Compare the phrases established in your own and the target language, discuss the similarities and differences.

After discussing these questions, the teacher distributes sheets of papers to students with a recipe for the most representative dish from the target culture. The teacher asks students to read the recipe and answer the following questions:

1. Which of the following ingredients are used in their culture?
2. Is this dish a healthy food?
3. Is it similar to any dish they make in their culture?

## **Activity 3**

### **Cultural capsules**

**Language level:** B1 and B2

**Teacher's role:** offers information about culture, set cultural patterns of behaviour, model cultural behaviour, investigate and analyse cultural aspects, exchange cultural experiences, listen to students.

**Goal:** This activity will help learners to get general information from Culture4. Students will develop skills of applying their knowledge about traditions, norms of behaviour and language formulas in real life.

**Duration:** One academic hour, 10 minutes for presentation

**Method:** Teamwork/working in groups, discussion, answering questions, comparing data from native and target cultures.

**Result:** The student learns to create textual material based on visual material in the target language. The student can discuss the differences and similarities between traditions, the development, and changes of traditions. The student will also be able to apply this knowledge to adapt to a specific life situation in accordance with the social norms observed in the target culture and to use language formulas effectively. Learners will be able to intensify their knowledge of Culture4. Students will also develop Critical awareness, skills of interpreting and discovering.

**Description:**

The teacher presents visual material. This can be a photo or a short video about a traditional wedding and asks students to prepare a ten-minute presentation based on the film or photos about the wedding tradition in the target culture. After the presentation, the teacher asks the student to discuss the similarities and differences between this or that tradition in their own and the target culture. The teacher may ask students some other relevant questions, such as: does the wedding tradition change over time? What influences this and why?

**Activity 4**

“Press conference“

**Language level:** B1 and B2. However, this activity could be adapted for students with A2 level by changing the complexity of questions.

**Teacher’s role:** The teacher determines in advance how many questions each student is allowed to ask and makes sure that the questions are not repeated. The teacher assists the students in formulating the questions, guides the process of the session and acts as a facilitator, analysing the frequently made linguistic mistakes after the end of the session. In terms of the development of cultural competence, language instructor investigates and analyses cultural aspects.

**Goal:** This activity will help learners to get general information from Culture4 and Culture5. To develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture. The student will also be able to apply this knowledge to adapt to a specific life situation in accordance with the social norms observed in the target culture and to use language formulas effectively.

**Duration:** 1 academic hour for preparatory work, 1 academic hour for activity and analysis of results.

**Method:** Discussion, answering questions, comparing data from native and target cultures.

**Result:** The student will be introduced to formal speech and politeness strategies. They will develop the skills to receive, adequately understand and analyse information from the source in the target language. Students will develop Critical awareness.

**Description:**

When teaching a second / foreign language, it is quite effective to use an authentic source of human beings as "cultural resources". Students play the role of journalists and ask questions to people from the target culture about issues that will help them understand the everyday culture of the target country.

One of the topics of conversation that can effectively develop cultural and sociocultural competence in learners is the topic of birthdays. As part of this activity, students can ask the following types of questions:

1. Do you celebrate a birthday in a narrow circle of people or do they invite many guests?
2. Do you have a party more often at home or in a restaurant?
3. Is there a dress code for birthday parties?
4. What is the most common gift for a birthday woman / man / child?
5. Which song do you sing on birthdays to congratulate?

6. Is there anything special about birthday celebrations?

By the end of the activity, the class is instructed to summarize the results, analyze the discussed cultural and linguistic knowledge and compare it with their own cultural data to identify similarities and differences.

### **Activity 5**

#### **Geographical Excursion**

**Language level:** B1 and B2

**Teacher's role:** The teacher provides necessary resources for obtaining information in advance.

In addition, the teacher offers background information about culture, sets cultural patterns of behaviour, models of cultural behaviour, listens to students, moderates the session.

**Goal:** To develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture. The students learn more about the history, geography, ethnography of the country; they get familiar with the traditions and peculiarities of this or that region in the context of Culture 4 and Culture 5.

**Duration:** 1 academic hour for preparatory work, 30 minutes – for the activity.

**Method:** Discussion, answering questions, finding relevant information in sources, working with multimedia sources.

**Results:** The student is able to understand, analyse, and categorize, compare, and visualize the characteristics of different regions. Students will acquire specific knowledge and develop skills of discovering.

#### **Description:**

The activity consists of 2 steps:

At first, students are provided with the relevant materials in advance. The teacher divides the class into groups of 4-5 students and asks questions from the geography of the target country. The winner is the team that says the answer first. The final victory will be calculated by the sum of correct answers.

#### **Step 1**

Suggested questions:

1. Which is the highest mountain in Georgia? Is it popular among climbers and tourists?
2. Which is the highest populated area? and what is the architecture of the given region?
3. Which is the longest river? Is this river used in industry and in which way?
4. The capital of Georgia Tbilisi is considered to be the most multi-ethnic city in the region, what is the reason behind it?
5. What is the population and the main ethnic composition of Georgia? What the lifestyle do they have?
6. What is the second largest city in Georgia? What are the main industries and traditions of the city?
7. What are the main regions of the country? What makes each region unique?
8. Which sea surrounds Georgia? Which famous seaside resorts do you know? What makes these resorts popular?
9. How do you think, which is the most touristic place in the country and what distinguishes it?
10. What are the climate zones in the country and how does it affect people's lives and their traditions?

#### **Step 2**

##### **Drawing a map**

After answering the questions, the students draw a map together on a blackboard or flipchart and mark on it all the points and their specifics that were correctly named in the quiz.

## **Activity 6**

### **Cultural iceberg**

**Language level:** B1, B2 and C1

**Teacher's role:** The teacher prepares worksheets with relevant information in advance, helps students to find information, facilitates the session, models cultural behaviour.

**Goal:** to develop the idea that the behaviour of different people is dictated by culture; to understand culture in its broadest sense, learn to make adequate use of linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge in a particular cultural context. The aim of the activity is for students to gain relevant knowledge and enhance cultural competence in the context of Culture 4 and Culture 5.

**Duration:** 1 academic hour.

**Method:** Individual work, working with Venn diagrams, answering questions, finding relevant information in sources, working with multimedia sources.

**Result:** The student is able to establish successful communication using linguistic and extralinguistic data in the sociocultural space of the target language. This activity will help students to develop cultural and socio-cultural competence. As a result, students will develop Critical awareness.

#### **Description:**

The activity consists of 2 steps:

##### **Step 1**

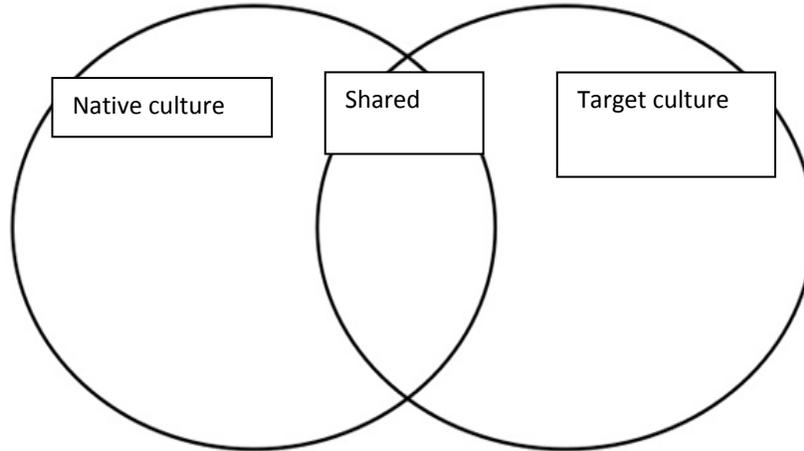
At first, the teacher hands out to the students the sheets of paper with the components of the culture, which are located on the "hidden side of the iceberg" with the following wording:

1. Gestures and body language are actively used
2. Humour is a part of everyday life
3. Education is highly valued
4. Children grow up freely, without restrictions
5. Gender roles are strictly established
6. Family responsibilities are distributed among family members
7. Family is the main value
8. Private space is respected
9. Respect for the elder is a social requirement
10. They pay great attention to their own health
11. Strict work ethic is characteristic
12. Punctuality is essential part of culture
13. Many families have animals
14. They pay attention to ecology and environmental issues.

##### **Step 2**

The students should work on a Venn diagram that identifies similarities and differences between their own and target cultures.

**Diagram 1:** Based on this list Students fill in the Venn diagram on the same sheet.



These activities will enable the language learner to develop cultural and socio-cultural competence in parallel with developing linguistic competence. Such an approach will help them to establish successful communication and apply knowledge in practice. Each activity involves working on authentic material, which is an added benefit in language development.

The activities will also help teachers of Georgian as a second language to plan and manage the learning process effectively, conducting dynamic and student-centred lessons.

Implementing the above discussed activities enriches teaching environment, raises learners' motivation and helps them to be fully engaged within the teaching process. Moreover, it allows to development of a few competencies and skills simultaneously and what is important, it prevents learners from direct cultural transfer and improves their language proficiency. In terms to analyse each activity, the given table presents what type of culture is activated, what aspect of cultural competence is applied, what is the role of the instructor and finally what is the goal due to teaching cultural aspects through language. As the table reveals, the given activities can be mostly applied on intermediate the level, thus culture4 is activated more frequently.

**Table 2:** Activities and their descriptions.

Activity	Type of culture	Cultural competence	Role of instructor	Goal of teaching culture	Language proficiency
The most famous...	Culture <sub>3</sub> Culture <sub>4</sub> Culture <sub>5</sub>	Attitude, skills of interpreting, skills of discovering	Model cultural behaviour Set cultural patterns of behaviour	To develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture	A2 and B1
Cuisine	Culture <sub>4</sub>	Knowledge, skills of discovering	Offer information about culture Exchange cultural experience	To understand the behaviour in everyday life situation within the target culture; to increase the	B1 and B2

				knowledge of the separate words and phrases within the target language	
Cultural capsules	culture <sub>4</sub>	Critical awareness, skills of interpreting and discovering	Model cultural behaviour Set cultural patterns of behaviour	To develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture	B1 and B2
Press conference	Culture <sub>4</sub> Culture <sub>5</sub>	Critical awareness	Investigate and analyse cultural aspects	To develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture	B1 and B2
Geographical excursion	Culture <sub>4</sub>	Knowledge, skills of discovering	Offer information about culture	To develop the necessary skills to locate and organize information about the target culture	B1 and B2
Drawing the map	Culture <sub>4</sub>	Skills of discovering, knowledge	Listen to students Offer information extract information from the text	To stimulate students' intellectual curiosity about the target culture	B1 and B2
Cultural Iceberg	Culture <sub>4</sub> Culture <sub>5</sub>	Critical awareness	Model cultural behaviour	to develop the idea that the behaviour of different people is dictated by culture	B1, B2 and C1

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# Norwegian linguistic identity through history - from national identity to linguistic individualism

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## **Abstract**

*This paper will discuss how linguistic identity has changed during the history of the Norwegian society and language from the time of the Vikings until today's identity shaping of Generation Z. Because of the great span of time that is covered in this discussion it will not be possible to go into greater detail. The overall picture is that while there was little awareness about language as an identity marker during the middle ages, linguistic identity became a group project during national romanticism, even though this group project divided into two different linguistic varieties and identities, Bokmål (Dano-Norwegian) and Nynorsk (New Norwegian). In today's society, linguistic identity is to a large extent characterized by individual language shaping, at least in social media. At the same time, there is still a tendency to accommodate to a group standard and group identity.*

**Keywords:** *language identity, linguistic identity, educational role of language, nationalism, individualism, language history*

## **Introduction**

The topic of linguistic identity is a central field of investigation in accordance with the four research topics of the ERL network: Language-Beliefs, Language-Activity, Language-Affect, and Language-Thinking (ERL Research 2021). Shaping one's own identity with or through language or shaping one's own language because of a certain identity has to do with beliefs – beliefs about oneself, about the language community, and about a national, regional, ethnical, cultural or individual identity. Shaping or reshaping one's identity also has to do with activity. Shaping or reshaping language can be an active process. However, this process can either be led by national language policies or by individual preferences. Language is one of the most important or maybe the most important identity feature of human beings. Even though modern language research principally prefers the term 'first language' instead of 'mother tongue', the exposure to the first language or languages usually happens through close relatives or caregivers during the years of identity shaping. Language is naturally tied to identity and, thus, also to emotions and language-affect. On an intellectual level, language shapes our thinking and, therefore, also our identity. Language-thinking is, thus, also an important part of the picture.

The topic of the present paper is the development of linguistic identity in Norway, i.e. within the Norwegian speaking and writing community. Norwegian as a language is an interesting research object from the perspective of identity shaping. Not only is it possible to use dialects, sociolects and idelects in public communication, one can additionally choose between two official written Norwegian languages. Hence, there are many possibilities to shape or reshape one's identity through language. From the perspective of human rights, this is, of course, rather positive. From the perspective of teaching and learning and the public school system, on the other hand, this creates certain challenges.

### **Theoretical background**

The aim of this paper is to discuss the topic identity shaping/reshaping with or through language from the perspective of Norwegian language history. Instead of presenting detailed case studies, I will look at important milestones in the development of the Norwegian language and the Norwegian nation

and reflect on the relationship between language and identity. According to the Terminology Coordination Unit (2021), “There are different kinds of identities, social identities, national identities, racial identities, ethnic identities, etc.” They also state that linguistic identity is not “frequently talked about”. The Terminology Coordination Unit defines linguistic identity as:

Linguistic identity refers to a person’s identification as a speaker of one or more languages. The linguistic identity is part and often an important part of our identity. And this is especially true for multilingual individuals.

Joseph (2004: 1) states: “Put as simply as possible, your identity is who you are.” (see also the discussion on identities in Eiksund 2015, Mæhlum 2003, or Mæhlum & Hårstad 2018). In his introduction to language and identity, Joseph (2004:2) uses three different oral remarks as an example and argues that “if we heard the dialogue spoken by the three different individuals, our interpretation of their identities would be affected by their voices, accents and other features of how they speak.” This would be the perspective of others trying to create a picture of our identity on the background of linguistic input. Interestingly, Joseph starts his book with the external perspective, i.e. how we conceive other people and interpret language use as an identity marker. As Joseph (2004: 3) puts it:

In a large number of instances our contact with people is purely linguistic, taking place over the phone, by Internet, by letter, reading the as a character in a book, etc. Under these circumstances we seem to be able to size them up, to feel that we know who they really are – that ‘deep’ identity again – more satisfactorily than when we only see them and have no linguistic contact. Looks proverbially deceive.

Of course, if we happen to be members of a society, we know that we are observed, categorized and judged by other members of the society. Hence, we would also consider shaping our own language use in order to present a certain identity to other members of the society (see e.g. Eiksund 2015, Myklebust 2015, Juuhl 2015). As Wardhaugh (2010: 7) puts it: “Much of what we find in linguistic behaviour will be explicable in terms of people seeking to perform, negotiate, realize, or even reject identities through the use of language.” Joseph (2004: 3) distinguishes between three different “fundamental types of identity”:

- one for real people and one for fictional characters;
- one for oneself and one for others;
- one for individuals and one for groups.

These categories are actually quite interesting when it comes to defining one own’s linguistic identity. Do you have the same linguistic identity in speaking and writing? If you are used to expressing yourself orally in a dialect or even a language very different from the official written language in your society, do you have the same identity? Do you feel (cf. the ERL terms Language-Beliefs and Language-Affects) that you are the same person when you are forced to express yourself in a different linguistic variety? In what way may your linguistic differences represent differences from other individuals or groups? When reading books from your own national/linguistic society (speech community) in a language variety that differs in one way or the other from your personal linguistic identity, do you feel as a part of this society, or do you feel alienated in some way?

Joseph (2004: 4) states:

The difference between individual identity and the identity of a group – a nation or town, a race or ethnicity, a gender or sexual orientation, a religion or sect, a school or club, a company or profession, or that most nebulous group identity, a social class (the list is far from exhaustive) – is most likely a true difference of kind.

Identity can be used in a deictic (pointing) sense, for instance, like the examples “American” or “female” that Joseph uses. Again, from an external perspective, we often feel the need to point out

other individuals or groups as having this or that “identity”. Joseph (2004: 5), however, states that the difference between individual and group identity is more complex:

Your ‘deep’ identity is made up in part of the various group identities to which you stake a claim, though you no doubt believe there is still a part of you that transcends the sum of these parts.

According to Joseph (2004: 5), group identities seem to be more abstract than individual identities. Instead of using Americans and “Americanness” as an example, one could say that ‘Norwegianness’ is an abstract concept that does not exist separately from the Norwegians who possess it, and that the individual Norwegian identities are made up of it. Another aspect of group identity is, according to Joseph (2004: 5), that it finds its “most ‘concrete manifestation in a single, symbolic individual”. Thus, “Individual identity is established in part by rank relative to others with the same group identity.” (Joseph *ibid.*).

Shaping or reshaping one’s own identity with or through language is not a simple task since individuals usually are members of a community. Wardhaugh (2010: 118) states:

Language is both an individual possession and a social possession. We would expect, therefore, that certain individuals would behave linguistically like other individuals: they might be said to speak the same language or the same dialect or the same variety, i.e., to employ the same code, and in that respect to be members of the same speech community, a term probably derived from the German Sprachgemeinschaft.

Even though Wardhaugh (*ibid.*) points out that ‘speech community’ is not easy to define, it is necessary to keep the notion of a speech community because (quoting Labov 2006: 380): “the linguistic behaviour of individuals cannot be understood without knowledge of the communities they belong to”.

In the discussion below, I will problematize Norwegian as the language of the/a Norwegian speech community from a historical perspective and discuss some aspects of shaping and reshaping identity with and through language as it can be observed in the linguistic behaviour of Generation Z, to use a term that refers to the generation of ‘digital natives’ born right before or after the shift of the Millennium. Due to the nature of this historic approach, it is not possible to go much into detail of some of the aspects that would deserve further investigation.

## **Discussion**

Norwegian belongs to the Germanic languages (see e.g. Braunmüller 1991, Haugen 1976, Hutterer 2002, König and van der Auwera 1994, Nielsen 1989). The North Germanic branch, referred to as Ancient Nordic, is documented in writing through the runic alphabet since around AD 200. During and after the Migration Period in Europe, Ancient Nordic underwent major changes and also split into East and West Nordic dialects. From the time of the Viking Age (8th century) or the establishment of the Nordic kingdoms Norway, Denmark and Sweden (9th and 10th century), one may differentiate between Old Norse (including Old Icelandic), Old Danish and Old Swedish. However, the dialects were mutually intelligible and were usually conceived as the same language, referred to as ‘Danish tongue’ (see e.g. Wessén 1960: 29; Sandøy 2018: 155; Janson 2018: 433). It is rather likely that the establishment of greater Nordic kingdoms led to a feeling of identity (or possibly loyalty) tied more to a region or kingdom than to the shared Nordic language – the term ‘Danish tongue’ was in use as late as in the 14th century (Sandøy 2018: 156). While the names Denmark and Sweden are related to certain Germanic tribes, Norway literally just means ‘north/northern way’, i.e. ‘the way towards the northern region’. Danes and Swedes referred to Norwegians as ‘Northmen’ (Norsemen) (see e.g. also Mæhlum & Hårstad 2018: 247), whereas the emigrated Norwegian communities in Iceland and the Faroese Islands referred to their neighbours (and family) from Norway as ‘Eastmen’ (see e.g. Wessén 1960: 24). Hence, identity seemed to have been a matter of belonging to a region more than to a language community. The settlement of Iceland got a kick-start by the establishment of the Norwegian kingdom at the end of the

9th century where many 'Norwegians' or Norsemen decided to emigrate to Iceland and other western islands. After some time, these Norsemen developed an Icelandic identity. However, even after the introduction of the Latin alphabet after AD 1000 and the development of some forms of written standards, Norway and Iceland can be said to have shared the same or a similar linguistic identity on a higher level for some time. There were dialectal differences by the time of the 13th century, but it still took some time before the mainland Old Norse and island Old Norse divided into separate languages.

Naturally, because of political and geographical reasons, the Norse language on Iceland and the Faroese Islands eventually developed differently than the Norse language in Norway. Compare e.g. the first sentence of the Icelandic entry on Norwegian in Wikipedia with the corresponding Norwegian (Nynorsk) translation:

Norska er norrænt tungumál, sem talað er í Noregi.

Norsk er eit nordisk språk som blir tala/snakka i Noreg.

Icelandic and Faroese are often categorized as 'Island Scandinavian', whereas Norwegian, Danish and Swedish belong to 'Mainland Scandinavian'. Other scholars might use the term Nordic languages for all five languages and reserve the term Scandinavian for the three Mainland Scandinavian languages, Norwegian, Danish and Swedish. This is not that important in the present discussion. What is important is the fact that even though Icelandic had its offspring in Old Norse/Norwegian, the only trace of shared identity can be said to be related to the Old Icelandic saga literature, which is still used in both countries as a form of cultural identity marker. As a digression one could mention that the saga literature also played a role at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century where it was used as an attempt to create and legitimate a Pan-Germanic identity.

Here is not the place to deal with all the wars between Norway, Denmark and Sweden during the Middle Ages. The wars were about territory, kings, heritage, alliances and typical reasons for disputes during these times, but not necessarily about identity and certainly not about language. For some time, Norway, Denmark and Sweden were united under queen Margaret I (1353-1412). Obviously, the former wars and alliances between the three Scandinavian countries played a role, but in our discussion, it is interesting that the Kalmar Union (1389/1397–1521) initiated by queen Margaret I was meant to be a defence pact, among others against the German Hansa, i.e. a foreign financial and cultural power. Hence, one may imagine that there might have been a concept of Scandinavian unity and identity based on shared culture and language/dialects at that time. Even though the Scandinavian countries tried to deal with the German Hansa in different ways, German (Low German) had a huge impact on the Scandinavian languages (see e.g. Jahr 1995, Nesse 2002, Rambø 2008). One aspect of this was the fact that Low German was linguistically not too different from the Scandinavian languages. Hence, borrowing and transfer was relatively easy. Whether the language of the Hansa had higher status which subsequently might have led to accommodation (see e.g. Holmes 1992: 255) or whether it was the linguistic compatibility is not important in the present discussion. A fact is that the Scandinavian languages were shaped dramatically during the Hansa time and incorporated a huge number of German loanwords and grammatical structures (see e.g. Mørck 2018: 348). Maybe there have been Scandinavian individuals during that time who wanted to identify with the German merchants or the German language, but for the Scandinavian countries and culture as a whole it would not be possible to say that the language or culture was perceived more German. Scandinavians were still Scandinavians, and Norwegians were still Norwegians, the same way Danes were Danes and Swedes were Swedes. However, the German linguistic influence would play a role later in the history of Norway (and Denmark) when purism led to active language shaping and reshaping from the end of the 18th century.

One important aspect to remember so far in the history of Scandinavian is the fact that most people could not read or write and that most of the writing was concentrated around the domains of the king and the church. Therefore, we do not know very much about how common people thought or felt about

language and identity. But for the history of Norway and Norwegian as a language it is also important to know that Sweden left the union and that Norway, being the weakest part of the Denmark-Norway union was reduced to a Danish province from 1536.

The year 1536 is in many respects an important year in the Norwegian history since Denmark introduced the Reformation which consequently also came to Norway. From a linguistic point of view, the Reformation had a great impact since the Bible was translated into many national languages and the national language was used in church instead of Latin. Representing 'the word of God', Bible translations also served as a consolidation of or a standard for national languages. At that time, there was no official Norwegian written standard anymore. Neither was there a Norwegian political, intellectual or cultural elite. The Bible was only translated into Danish and from 1550, Danish was used in church and public administration. More and more positions were filled by Danish officials and Danish was the 'official' language of administration also in Norway, even though this was long before official language policies. From the perspective of language and identity, it is interesting to notice that national languages did not have any status in the Scandinavian countries from the 16th – 18th century. Due to the status of German and French kings and culture during those centuries, German and French had status while Danish and Norwegian did not. In fact, the Danish poet Christian Wilster (1827:63) wrote a poem about the famous Danish-Norwegian poet Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754) where he referred to the status of languages:

Hver Mand, som med Kløgtgik i Lærdom til Bund,  
Latin paa Papiret kun malte,  
Med Fruerne Fransk, og Tydsk med sin Hund,  
Og Dansk med sin Tjener han talte.

Here, Wilster points at the situation that a well-educated man would write Latin, talk French to the ladies, German to his dog and Danish with his servant. However, the Danish language had more status in Norway than in Denmark since it was the language of administration and church, and Norwegian had no official status at all. In the 18th century, then, public school was introduced, which in effect led to a situation where everyone in Norway was supposed to learn to read and write Danish. Among other things, one had to learn the catechism (in Danish) by heart.

There are no signs of a Norwegian linguistic identity that led to political attempts to preserve the Norwegian language. However, there was a tendency to write more archaic Danish in Norway (15th century Danish) until the 17th century because this variety was closer to Norwegian dialects (Otnes & Aamotsbakken 1999/2017: 109). Otnes & Aamotsbakken (ibid.) also present a text from the end of the 17th century that shows that the writer is aware of his own Norwegian language in contrast to Latin, German, French and Russian. Most common people did not write (or read) and living far away from Denmark and the Danish king, most people did not seem to bother much about Danish versus Norwegian and their own linguistic identity. However, language might represent a barrier between the message and the people, and in this context, it is natural to mention the Norwegian priest Petter Dass (1647-1707) who also happened to write poems. Even though he wrote in Danish, he started using Norwegian words when he could not find corresponding or adequate Danish words. For instance, he would write Qveite instead of Danish Helleflyndre (halibut) or Kaabbe for Danish Sælhund (seal). This can be taken as a sign that a Norwegian writer started shaping the Danish language from the perspective of a Norwegian linguistic identity. Maybe he felt that he as a priest had to be genuine and close to his congregation, which, then, would refer to his personal identity. But most likely he chose to shape his (written) language in order to appeal to a group identity. Hence, language shaping was probably used to unify the congregation and create or state a common group identity.

By this time, the Age of Enlightenment had also come to Denmark-Norway. Among other things, this led to the first attempts to collect genuine Norwegian words and gather them in lists. Obviously, many

of the Danish officials stationed in Norwegian rural dialect-speaking regions would have felt a need to create such lists. Eventually, the time had also come for an interest in the Norwegian language itself. However, the introduction of the confirmation and the public school system in the first half of the 18th century fortified the Danish impact on the Norwegian language. No one could get married without being confirmed and having children without being married was a sin. This was obviously an important incentive to learn to read and to some extent speak Danish. Some individuals even tried to learn to speak Danish because they wanted to identify with the Danish elite. Obviously, the higher classes used Danish as a status symbol and at least to identify with their own class. During the 17th and 18th century it was clear that the Norwegian dialects in urban areas were more influenced by Danish than the dialects of rural areas. This was the reason why the 19th century linguist Ivar Aasen (1813-1896) wanted to exclude the urban dialects from his variety of 'genuine' Norwegian (see below).

The 19th century is the most important century for the Norwegian language and the subsequent period of language shaping and reshaping – and identity shaping – seen from a national perspective or group perspective. On the philosophy and literature side, romanticism and national romanticism had spread in Europe and eventually came to Norway. Among other ideologies from that time was the notion of 'one language – one nation' (see e.g. Mæhlum & Hårstad 2018: 288). Already at the beginning of the 19th century, the question came up why Norway did not have its own language. Then, in 1814, Norway got independent from Denmark after having been the weaker part of the union (and actually been reduced to a province) for 400 years. Suddenly, Norway got its own constitution. During the following decades this created a debate. The only official language in Norway was Danish, but due to the new idea of a genuine Norwegian identity it was not appropriate to call this language Danish. Instead one chose to refer to it as 'the common book language'. In the 19th and 20th century, then – actually, almost for two hundred years, national identity and language shaping and reshaping were defining processes.

In many respects, one could call the situation after 1814 an identity crisis. For hundreds of years one was supposed to be a part of the Danish kingdom, nation and language, and suddenly, one is supposed to find and define an independent Norwegian identity. From our perspective, the crucial point is here that this is a national identity project, hence a group identity project. One important part of national romanticism was literature and art where the writers and artists tried to find and describe the original and genuine soul of the nation and its people, for instance, by collecting folk tales and songs (cf. the Brothers Grimm in Germany). Folk tales, national theatre and national literature in general were a challenge for Norwegian national romanticism since it did not feel right to present them in the Danish language (anymore). Obviously, it was not easy to shape or reshape the (only) official language at that time, which was Danish, in public writing and administration. But authors had their own artistic freedom to search for and demonstrate the linguistic identity of the nation. Even though they were individual writers, the romantic 'project' during that time was a national group project. The vision was to identify and consolidate a Norwegian identity with and through language. The easiest way was, of course, on the lexical plan, i.e. to use genuine Norwegian words not found in Danish, but with Danish spelling in writing. However, some writers, e.g. Henrik Wergeland (1808-1845), also proposed concrete orthographic and grammatical changes that should be made to the written Danish language in order to make it more Norwegian.

However, many romantic writers and artist were radicals at that time when it comes to the use of language. Hundreds of years as 'the little brother of Denmark' had left their traces. The leading elite class still had strong ties to Denmark and the Danish language. In fact, oral speech among the upper class became even more Danish during the first part of the 19th century (see e.g. Jahr 1992: 12) since Copenhagen and Denmark still were seen as the only legitimate reference point for culture and proper education by the elite. Since there had not been any official Norwegian written language since the end

of the Old Norse period in the 14th century, there were only hundreds of different Norwegian dialects. In accordance with the common view at that time (a view that is still maintained in many countries today), dialects were not 'suitable' for academic thinking and writing. Hence, Danish seemed to be the only alternative as an official language in Norway. On the other hand, national romanticism was strong and the birth or rebirth of Norway in 1814 was a valid argument in line with the ideology of 'one language – one nation' or rather 'one nation – one language'.

Even though Norway was a more or less separate nation from 1814 (Norway was in another union with Sweden between 1814-1905, but with no significant impact on language and national identity), it is difficult to claim that there was a Norwegian linguistic identity on a national level. One of the romantic nationalists of that time, Jonas Anton Hielm (1782-1848), pointed at the linguistic differences in Norway by referring to three different linguistic varieties: 1 the dialects that were spoken in the valleys, 2 the Danish-influenced dialects that were spoken in the merchant cities, and 3 the written language, which was the same as in Denmark (see e.g. Otnes & Aamotsbakken 1999/2017:125). Even though Hielm considered the rural dialects the genuine Norwegian language, he proposed that a new Norwegian written norm should be based on urban speech. This could be considered an identity conflict. From the national romantic perspective, the Norwegian dialects spoken by farmers and fishermen in rural Norway represented the genuine Norwegian language with direct roots back to Old Norse. However, writers, scholars and politicians had all been socialized through their background and education into a culture where dialects did not have any status suitable for the leading class in society.

Here is not the place to go into too much detail, but the development of a national linguistic identity took three different directions in the 19th century. The most conservative groups wanted to continue as before, i.e. to write Danish and speak as close to Danish as possible. Other, more moderate, groups wanted to modify the Danish written language and shape it in accordance with the dialects used in the urban cities, which would not be too difficult since these dialects were heavily influenced by Danish. The third direction was radical in the way that the Norwegian rural dialects should build the base for an entirely new written Norwegian standard and all traces of non-Norwegian influence, especially from German, should be eradicated (purism).

From a political and identity perspective, the time for a pure Danish written language in Norway was over. But, interestingly, both of the two other alternatives were followed at the same time. Again, I will skip the details, but the two language shaping ways can be tied to two individuals. Knud Knudsen (1812-1895) tried to reshape Danish into a variety that was closer to Norwegian urban dialects, and Ivar Aasen (1813-1896), in fact, shaped a whole new written standard based on the traditional Norwegian dialects, excluding the urban city dialects. At that time, no one did foresee a situation where one would actually end up with two alternative written languages. The overall goal was to shape one Norwegian language. Hence, those two language shaping strategies were supposed to merge at some point in the future.

Obviously, there were some plain practical issues connected to the two ways of shaping a Norwegian language. Knud Knudsen chose 'the long way' by planning to modify the Danish written language bit by bit with small revisions over a long period of time until it reached a state where it could be considered Norwegian. This Danish-Norwegian variety could be adopted and implemented relatively easily without great effort. Ivar Aasen, on the other hand, presented a totally new variety of Norwegian that had not been used in this form before (since it was constructed as a symbiosis of all Norwegian dialects and not just one dialect), and that therefore felt unfamiliar and required some effort to learn and master, especially since there was such a short time of practical use and such a little text corpus at that time. Interestingly, Ivar Aasen himself still did all his academic writing in Danish. Nevertheless, the Norwegian government chose to give both Danish-Norwegian and the new Norwegian written language official status as national written languages (the so-called 'equality decision' (jamstillingsvedtaket) 1885). To some extent, one might say that this decision was made with an ideal Norwegian linguistic identity in

mind. From an ideological point of view, one accepted the premise that the new Norwegian language was the only genuine Norwegian language and, therefore, the 'right' choice. From a historical and practical point of view, most people only knew Danish as a written language and did not necessarily imagine any concrete Norwegian alternative.

Of course, having two official written languages created a dilemma. The curriculum had to be changed, and from now on, both written languages had to be taught at school and all pupils were supposed to learn both varieties since both were equally official languages. Due to pedagogical considerations, one decided to define one of the written varieties as the main language in school and the other one as the alternative language. But the choice of main language at school was not an individual choice. This choice was made by the municipality. Hence, every pupil in one municipality had to learn one of the varieties as the main written language and the other one as the alternative language. Language use or language shaping was, then, not on an individual level, but rather a matter of group ideology and politics.

At the beginning of the 20th century more and more municipalities chose the new Norwegian variety as their main written language. At the same time, there were several revisions of both written languages in order to make them more alike with the goal to merge them at some point in the future (1907, 1917, 1938, see e.g. Otnes & Aamotsbakken 1999/2017, ch. 7). For instance, Danish had lost the distinction between masculine and feminine gender, while Norwegian still had three grammatical genders. With the 1917 revision, genuine Norwegian female nouns could have the female ending -a (definite article suffix) in the Danish-Norwegian variety as an alternative, e.g. byen (masculine def., 'the city') vs. bygden or bygda (fem. def., 'the village'). Nynorsk, being based on the Norwegian dialects, already had the three-gender system. However, there was a distinction between strong and weak female nouns, strong female nouns having -i as the definite article suffix, weak female nouns having -a as the definite article suffix. Before 1907, thus, bygd could only have the suffix -i in the definite form, while it was made optional -i/-a with the 1917 revision. Hence, both the Danish-Norwegian variety and the new Norwegian variety could choose the form bygda as the definite form instead of bygden and bygdi, respectively (the more conservative forms were still allowed, though). This is just one example of the many adjustments that were made over time.

Note that the revisions (i.e. language shaping and reshaping) were state policy and had become more of a practical matter than a matter of national identity. As it turned out, every new revision of the written varieties resulted in criticism from each of the user groups (see e.g. Jahr 2015). Romantic nationalism was long over, and most people were not necessarily interested in merging both varieties into one written language. Instead the revisions were by many seen as creating a 'bastard language'. The writer Arnold Øverland (1889-1968), for instance, organized his own campaign against the revision of 1938 where he rhetorically asked whether the government had abolished the Norwegian language by destroying the two official varieties and creating a third one (Otnes & Aamotsbakken 1999/2017: 167). Few people imagined a merged Norwegian language as an ideal. Both varieties had developed their own linguistic culture and identity. However, the spreading of the new Norwegian language in the beginning of the 20th century was also seen as a threat by many conservatives (see e.g. Jahr 2015: 45). Before the Second World War, more than 30 % of the municipalities had chosen the new Norwegian language as their language of administration and by this as the main language taught at school (see e.g. Grepstad 2020). There was no concrete end point for the public policy for the merging process that was supposed to end in only one written language. With the growing number of communities that used the new Norwegian language, it must have felt like a battle between the two varieties where one of the varieties would win over the other. Consequently, many felt this as a battle of linguistic identities and defended their variety against the other variety instead of having a merged language as their future ideal.

After the Second World War, language policy gradually changed. Again, I will skip the details (see e.g. Jahr 2015). In 1952, the government created a national language council in order to deal with language issues on the way towards one written language. However, during the following decades it became more and more clear that the public opinion made it impossible to merge the two official varieties into one language. Now in the 21st century, the one-language policy is officially abandoned. Each of the varieties had its own revision in 2005 and 2012, only this time the revisions were made without the goal to make the two varieties more alike. They were independent revisions with the purpose to shape and consolidate each variety on its own terms. The official language policy states that there is one Norwegian language, and that the Norwegian language consists of all Norwegian dialects and the two official written varieties (and Norwegian sign language which is not discussed here).

From an overall perspective, one can see language identity and language shaping/reshaping in the form of standardization and a large number of revisions of both language varieties during the 20th century as an attempt by the government to create a linguistic group identity. After the introduction of radio and television, written official standards also had an impact on oral speech (see e.g. Hårstad & Opsahl 2013: 152). During the 1970s, however, a 'dialect wave' came over many countries in Europe (see e.g. Grijp 2007 for Dutch). From that time on, one can speak of shaping and reshaping the linguistic identity of and by individuals independently of governmental language policy. Of course, we are not necessarily speaking of *ideolects* and individual linguistic identity in a narrow sense. The use of dialect in music and in public speech can be said to be an attempt to identify with smaller groups than the nation one is a citizen of. For instance, before the 1970s, people from other regions usually were forced to change their dialect and accommodate to the oral speech in Oslo when they moved to the capital. In fact, speaking another dialect could in some cases effectively prevent you from getting a job or even a place to live in Oslo. In today's society, one is – in principle – entitled to use dialect in all areas where oral speech is used. The politicians in the government speak their individual dialects and the current prime minister, Erna Solberg, speaks her Bergen dialect and not a dialect from the Oslo area. Even in television and radio, dialect-tainted speech has conquered almost every domain, even the news.

These are some interesting dynamics. On the one hand, we have official written standards. On the other hand, we have the desire to maintain a linguistic identity based on regional dialects which in some cases may deviate a lot from the written standards. Still, in this context one may rather speak of several linguistic identities, where the first language or 'mother tongue', if you like, is the regional dialect one learned before one went to school and had to learn to write the official written language(s). From that perspective, there is not necessarily any reshaping of linguistic identity involved. However, even though most Norwegians, in one way or the other, feel connected to their original regional dialect, the impact of the written language is strong.

After the Second World War, the use of the new Norwegian variety has dropped to 12 % (Grepstad 2020:564). The Dano-Norwegian variety is totally dominating public communication, popular culture and media – if we disregard the fact that English is even more dominating in certain domains. From this perspective, one might say that Dano-Norwegian has 'won' over the new Norwegian variety when it comes to the actual use and the impact. Even though most Norwegians speak dialects, more and more adolescents 'shape' their speech unconsciously or consciously towards their written language (see e.g. Hårstad & Opsahl 2013: 148), which at the same time has most in common with the dialects around the capitol Oslo (see e.g. Hårstad & Opsahl 2013: 151). Hence, identity shaping is not necessarily any longer about belonging to a certain region. The introduction of the internet and national and global social communities led to the development of what one might call hybrid linguistic identities. Hårstad & Opsahl (2013: 23), for instance, observe that despite the potential freedom of linguistic choice and identity in the postmodern age, there is a striking tendency to make traditional and similar choices.

Unlike most other languages, both Norwegian written varieties – as a remnant of the merging process during the 20th century – exhibit a rather huge amount of so-called optional forms. Remember that the original language policy had been to merge the two official written varieties into one written form. One way to achieve this was to offer optional forms in both varieties that were the same, with an underlying idea that people would choose to use these forms and abandon the forms that were not equal. In praxis, this has been a policy of limited success. For instance, in Bokmål (Dano-Norwegian) one can choose past forms that are equal to the Nynorsk (New Norwegian) forms. Both *kastet* and *kasta* are official preterite forms of the verb *kaste* ('cast'). *Kasta* is also the most frequent form in Norwegian dialects. Nevertheless, there is a tendency to conformity and to choose the more conservative form *kastet* (Danish *kastede*) in Bokmål. Also, Norwegian is a language with three grammatical genders (masculine, feminine, neuter). In Danish, as mentioned before, masculine and feminine merged into one form (identical with masculine). Since the upper class in the capital was used to speak Danish or close to Danish, feminine forms were conceived as vulgar forms belonging to the dialects of common people. Still today, the sociolects of Oslo West (traditionally upper class) and Oslo East (traditionally working class) often may be distinguished by the use or lack of feminine nouns. Even though the working-class dialect/sociolect from Oslo has gained status since the 1970s, there is an interesting tendency that some urban dialects start to use masculine forms of nouns instead of the traditional feminine forms (see e.g. Busterud et al. 2019). Formally, Bokmål, the Dano-Norwegian variety, allows to avoid more or less all feminine nouns. This is not an option in Nynorsk, the new Norwegian variety, which has a full three-gender system. This shows that shaping of linguistic identity is a complicated process. One perspective could be that abandoning feminine noun inflection might be an attempt to signal an identity related to a more conservative writing tradition and an abstract concept of an urban and slightly higher class. Another perspective could be that feminine nouns are associated with rural dialects and/or Nynorsk; hence, they have less status. It is not possible to dive deeper into that topic here.

The generation born right before and after the millennium shift is sometimes referred to as Generation Z. One trait of this generation is that they have not lived without the internet. On the contrary, social media has been an important part of their life and identity from early age on. Another trait of this generation is the fact that everyone is writing and producing text on a much larger scale than ever before in history. In Norway, many children are introduced to iPads/tablets already in kindergarten or primary school. It is not unusual for ten-year-old children to have their own mobile phone and the way to social media is not long either, even before legal age (which is normally 13 years). Naturally, most young children do not master the written language perfectly yet. The driving force is communication and the tool is phonological, dialect-based writing. The young communicators learn relative early that dialect-based writing is associated with close relations and informal writing whereas school writing is associated with written norms and standards. The 'real' linguistic identity is shaped by trying to write as closely as possible to the way one actually speaks. Dialect in itself is not necessarily a goal. In the 21st century, every entry on social media is usually individual and not as a representative of a group.

Since Norwegian spelling and writing already has many optional forms in the standards of both written varieties and the use of dialect or dialect-tainted speech is common, the use of dialect-tainted writing is also a way to escape 'the red pen' of the teacher and other adults or peers. Individual linguistic identity in social media has become a reality in Norway. If anyone tries to criticise the declination or spelling, one can always reply that this is the way I speak or choose to express myself, and this is my right to do. 'Hiding' behind free spelling like this takes the pressure away and makes it even easier for adolescents to use social media as a platform.

If we draw in the perspective of 'the role of language in education', the relationship between the two written varieties is interesting. Not only is there a discrepancy in the use, where Bokmål is the main

written language for 88 % of the pupils, whereas only 12% have Nynorsk as their main written language (Grepstad 2020: 564). Bokmål being the dominant language in almost every domain in the Norwegian society is impossible to ignore no matter what political or personal preferences one might have. From this perspective, Nynorsk users would normally have a kind of extended linguistic identity that includes both written varieties. Nynorsk being the lesser-used language (see e.g. Walton 2015) can be more or less non-existent in certain domains and is much easier to ignore or avoid. Since all pupils (with few exceptions) are expected to learn both written varieties in school many pupils develop antipathies again Nynorsk (which live on in the Norwegian society in general). Hence, Nynorsk is not necessarily a language that those pupils would identify with – even if they speak dialects that are more similar to Nynorsk than to Bokmål (see e.g. Haugan 2017, 2019). This discrepancy, then, has an effect on language shaping. While many Nynorsk users would consciously or unconsciously use Bokmål words and inflections because of the exposure and the dominant or more neutral status of Bokmål this does not happen in the same way the other way round (see e.g. Goffeney 2015). Few Bokmål users would normally want to be associated with a Nynorsk identity since they have been socialized from early age on to think that all pupils (and parents) dislike Nynorsk. There are numerous jokes about Nynorsk, and stand-up comedians and other shows or movie clips mocking Nynorsk in public whereas there is no such genre for making fun of Bokmål. Furthermore, there are returning attempts by pupils and politicians to remove Nynorsk as an obligatory subject in school where it is argued that it should be a free choice of written variety in school. The temperature in these public debates can be rather high and Nynorsk can be a typical hate object in the Norwegian public on the same level as the debate whether there should be wolves in Norway or not. However, whereas it in principle would be possible to avoid Nynorsk for a Bokmål user, it would not be possible to avoid Bokmål for a Nynorsk user due to the ubiquitous presence of Bokmål in all public domains. Hence, it would not be a free choice for a Nynorsk user.

Even though one could say that the majority of Norwegians have a Bokmål identity in writing, this linguistic identity is not necessarily very conscious or based on active choices. Since the majority of pupils learn Bokmål as their first language in school, they just continue with it without necessarily reflecting upon it. Nynorsk as the (way) lesser-used language is a constant identity choice that often has to be defended. Even pupils who start learning Nynorsk as their main language in school might choose to change their main language to Bokmål during lower or upper secondary school (probably 25% (Grepstad 2020: 584)). Those who choose to continue with Nynorsk (and those who change from Bokmål to Nynorsk for some reason) usually have a more conscious linguistic identity. Interestingly, there exists a concrete word for a Nynorsk user or a Nynorsk identity: *nynorsking*, while there is no such word for a Bokmål user (there are, of course, the neutral terms *Nynorsk user* and *Bokmål user*, i.e. *nynorskbrukar* – *bokmålsbrukar*, respectively).

However, Generation Z has been socialized into a hybrid text culture where text on social media usually is perceived as a variety of oral speech rather than standardized written language (see e.g. Otnes 2007; see also Hagland, Nesse & Otnes 2018: 77). Using standard Bokmål or Nynorsk on social media is often associated with older users or adults (Eiksund 2015:45). Adolescents need to shape their own identity with and through language. On the other hand, Nynorsk as the lesser-used language with well-known antipathies in the Bokmål society may be conceived too marked in certain contexts, even for a Nynorsk user who normally professes to Nynorsk as his or her linguistic identity. When addressing a public audience outside the inner circle, even those Nynorsk users might choose to write Bokmål (see e.g. Myklebust 2015, Juuhl 2015). Nynorsk users, thus, have a greater toolbox when it comes to shaping, reshaping and presenting one or several identities with or through language. Bokmål as the majority language is in many respects neutral and can therefore be chosen as one of the linguistic varieties by all users. Nynorsk, on the other hand, is marked and would normally be totally avoided by most Bokmål users. Hence, there are fewer linguistic tools to ‘play with’ to shape identity. From an overall

perspective, with two official written varieties with several sub-standards, some non-standard written varieties, and the high number of regional dialects that may be used in public communication, Norwegian like few other languages offers many possibilities to shape and reshape identity on an individual level.

## Conclusions

In this paper, I have tried to show how shaping identity with and through language has changed during the history of the Norwegian society and language. While it can be said that there was little awareness about language as an identity marker during the middle ages, at best referring to a shared Scandinavian identity, language shaping happened to a large extent due to external forces represented by not the least the German Hansa and Denmark from AD 1200-1800. Between 1800 and 2000 (1970), then, linguistic identity can be said to have been a group project, even though this group project divided into two different linguistic varieties and identities, Bokmål and Nynorsk. Norwegian as a language today is constituted by the two official written standards (and some non-official standards that have not been mentioned in this paper) and all the hundreds of dialects/sociolects/ideolects that people use in speech and partly in writing. In today's society, linguistic identity is to a large extent individual language shaping. At the same time, there is still a tendency to accommodate to a group standard and identity.

If we try to relate this picture to the four areas are the Educational Role of Language network: Language-Beliefs, Language-Activity, Language-Affect, and Language-Thinking (ERL Research 2021), it is clear that the Language-Beliefs of most members of Generation Z imply that Bokmål is the 'real' Norwegian language and standard. This is expressed by the fact that the Language-Activity exhibits accommodation to Bokmål even though when one tries to shape the identity by using dialect-tainted language. Language-Affect has been an important part of Norwegian history since the 19th century with the continuous 'fight' between the two written standards. Many Norwegians dislike Nynorsk and would not count this variety as a part of their identity. Language-Thinking has not been discussed in this paper, but one aspect of this is the fact that many pupils feel that Bokmål is better suited for academic writing. This claim has existed in various forms since the 19th century (see e.g. Walton 2015).

What remains to be seen is whether the extensive use of dialect-tainted language in digital writing eventually leads to a form of merging of Bokmål and Nynorsk after all. Maybe Norwegian develops into one language standard and one linguistic identity after all. In that case, it will be through democratic shaping and reshaping of the language in social media with subsequent extension to other domains if or when official language policy and the school system opens for lesser narrow standards. This story is for future generations to tell.

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**Coming together at a distance: How language researchers across the globe met for the 1<sup>st</sup> Educational Role of Language online Session “Language and Teacher Language Identity”  
– A report**

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The 1st Educational Role of Language online session on the theme of “Language and Teacher Language Identity” organized and hosted by the International Association for the Educational Role of Language took place on May 5, 2020 in the homes and offices of language researchers all across the globe. A total of 16 papers was presented in workshop-style over the course of a day, spanning multiple time zones. Presenters hailed from across several continents, including Europe, North America and Asia. Attendees numbered 40 and joined from all around the world.

For many participants, the virtual gathering was an unexpected respite to the relentless challenges of this pandemic-stricken year. Academic conferences everywhere were being cancelled at the last minute. Where disappointment abounded, Michał Daszkiewicz (University of Gdańsk, Poland) and Dragana Božić Lenard (University of Osijek, Croatia), both part of the Educational Role of Language Network, were able to offer a unique and uplifting solution to our new “normal”. Folks came together using online communication technologies (Google Drive, Webex) to circumvent the dangers of gathering together at an in-person conference. Moreover, the virtual venue offered a much more collegial and intimate setting than can often be gleaned even from an in-person conference when attendees shift between different break-out sessions and rarely get to collectively experience a sustained set of presentations and follow-up conversations.

As a whole, the papers and ensuing conversation (including lively parallel communication via the chat box) addressed both the major and minor scopes of the International Association for the Educational Role of Language focal strands. While the title of the session had invited a focus on teacher language identity, the topics chosen meant that the four major scopes were well represented in the presentations, namely Language & School, Language & Culture, Language & Methodology, and Language & Personality. Several of the minor scope themes that focus on learners’ beliefs, activity, affect and thinking were also covered in the session.

Perhaps closest to the session title were papers by Ewa Bandura (Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Poland), Andre Kurowski (University of Chichester, UK) and Anita Bright (Portland State University, USA). Ewa Bandura’s presentation shared her thoughts on how foreign language education should promote students’ and teachers’ cultural self-awareness and foster the expression of both students’ and teacher’s identities. Andre Kurowski shifted the focus to school leaders who in the face of policy changes can take on different stances to power. Andre’s paper also highlighted the Language & Methodology scope as it used language as a tool through which to make sense of school leaders’ views. Anita Bright described how she and a colleague had worked collaboratively with a cohort of graduate students to humanize the research enterprise. Anita’s paper was in response to how her own teacher identity had shifted as a result of contingencies in teaching at the higher education level due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Inevitably, the realities of the pandemic crept into other presentations as well. One particularly thought-provoking presentation was given by Martha Decker (Hidasta, USA) who explained how cultivating mindfulness techniques can make teaching and learning more effective in the online classroom—something we all can benefit from knowing more about right now. Identity was also addressed by Paulina Krzeszewska, (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland) from the learner’s

perspective and more broadly from the perspective of parents and their understanding that child language disorder is linked to students' identities.

My colleagues, Louise Wilkinson (Syracuse University, USA) and Carolyn Maher (Rutgers University, USA), and I contributed to the Language & School major scope with some acknowledgement of the role played by identity of teachers who may view themselves as content teachers (e.g., mathematics teachers) rather than as language teachers. However, to assist school-age students who are acquiring English as a new language (as in this US context), teachers need to know how to capture what mathematics students know at any point in time while students are still learning the language of the discipline. We shared how our review of the literature and analysis of verbatim interactions between teachers and 4<sup>th</sup> grade (10-year-old) students and between students in mathematics classrooms leads us to propose teachers formatively assess mathematics understanding in a language-informed way by 1) using learning progressions to monitor development of language and mathematics learning, 2) adopting open-ended mathematical investigations that encourage lots of talk and writing in the new language, 3) supporting phenomena-based teaching so students have first-hand experiences they can discuss and problem solve, and 4) becoming culturally responsive and sustaining teachers so that students' identities and speech communities are reflected in the curricula, enabling students to engage in deeper, more meaningful learning.

There were many points of contact between our own work and that of Dilyan Gatev (University of National and World Economy, Bulgaria) whose presentation was on teaching business English vocabulary. While Dilyan's work is at the higher education level and ours at the compulsory school-age level, the focus on terminology revealed the language demands placed on learners of English within a specific disciplinary context across the educational life-span. For example, in common, we were able to discuss how words that have an everyday meaning in English can take on a very precise and often less familiar meaning in mathematics or business studies e.g., *times* [vb.] (multiply); *liquid* [adj.] (characteristic of an asset easily converted to cash). Such differences in meaning can be a point of confusion for learners of English as a new language young and old, although content teachers may not always be aware of this situation.

Louise Wilkinson and I continued and extended the discussion by pointing out the increasingly contested notion of academic uses of language in the US context at the follow-up Educational Role of Language on-line session held October 6, 2020. We wanted to know if such a debate was also taking hold elsewhere in the world—if students' need proficiency in the dominant societal language for learning in schools and the current status of education offered to students in their home languages. The 2<sup>nd</sup> session allowed for us to hear how ideas in these areas of language research and policy are being articulated in other countries. From researchers working in India and in Arabic-speaking countries, we heard how education in a student's home language was only just beginning to surface and there was discussion on how it might better reflect the learning of culturally and linguistically diverse students the world over.

Anyone wanting to participate in this on-going conversation is encouraged to contact me at [abailey@gseis.ucla.edu](mailto:abailey@gseis.ucla.edu).

# Child identity development affected by language disorder - A literature review

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## **Abstract**

*Identity construction reflects the view of a person as a unique individual and a member of society at the same time. It is strongly related to one's speaking language and limitations of communication abilities may impact the specific identity development. The article reviews the literature concerning issues of child identity development as one of the aspects affected by language impairment. The aim of this review is to answer three questions: 1. To what extent do language disorders affect identity in children? 2. Who should be involved in the supporting process for the development of child identity? 3. What are the implications for professional practice and further research? The conclusions may contribute to awareness-raise about the link between identity development and language disorders as well as increasing the efficacy of interventions dedicated to children with language disorders.*

**Keywords:** *child identity, identity development, language disorders, language impairment*

## **Introduction**

Identity is a concept that provides individuals with a sense of belonging, a place in the world. It reflects ways of being and seeing the world. Moreover, identity affects ways in which children relate to others, as well as ways in which others see and relate to them (Lyons 2014). □ Identity is a psychological concept that has specific features for adults and children.

In a child's identity there are two components specified: self-identity/personal identity and cultural/social identity. Personal identity is a reflection of a child's feelings about her or his individuality, distinctiveness, uniqueness, while social identity is an image of how a child identifies with family members, peers and culture. Therefore, child identity combines being like the others and different from the others at the same time (Schaffer 2006). □

Modern identity is also said to be dynamic, subject to change through experiences in specific cultures and societies (Brooker & Woodhead 2008). Another feature that authors highlight is the complexity of identity in each individual, including: gender, cultural, emotional identity and social, ethnic and racial identity (Tillman 2015).

Considering whether language disorders influence child identity construction, it seems reasonable to define the term language disorders (which are also named 'impairments'). American Speech-Language and Hearing Association (ASHA) defines language disorder as: impaired comprehension and/or use of spoken, written and/or other symbol systems. The disorder may involve (1) the form of language (phonology, morphology, syntax), (2) the content of language (semantics), and/or (3) the function of language in communication (pragmatics) in any combination.

(1) Form of Language: Phonology is the sound system of a language and the rules that govern the sound combinations; Morphology is the system that governs the structure of words and the construction of word forms; Syntax is the system governing the order and combination of words to form sentences, and the relationships among the elements within a sentence.

(2) Content of Language: Semantics is the system that governs the meanings of words and sentences;

(3) Function of Language: Pragmatics is the system that combines the above language components in functional and socially appropriate communication (ASHA, 1993) □.

Language disorders fall into two groups: expressive (referring to speech production) and receptive (referring to language processing and understanding) impairments. However, they may also co-occur.

The language disorder which appears in researches referring to child identity is specific language impairment (SLI). It is also named as developmental language disorder (DLD), primary language impairment (PLI), developmental dysphasia or developmental aphasia. It refers to language difficulties that are not caused by 'known neurological, sensory, intellectual, or emotional deficit. It can affect the development of vocabulary, grammar, and discourse skills, with evidence that certain morphemes may be especially difficult to acquire' (Ervin, 2001). Children with SLI can have high nonverbal IQ. The only disturbed element in their physical and mental development is language.

If linguistic value is important for the development of identity, it seems justified to consider language disorders in the process of child identity creation.

### **Objectives and methods**

The aim of the article is to answer three key questions:

1. To what extent do language disorders affect identity in children?
2. Who should be involved in the supporting process for child identity development?
3. Therefore, what are implications for professional practice and further research?

These problems show how an interdisciplinary perspective is essential in this matter. This article includes a literature review in the fields of linguistics, speech-language pathology, psychology, education and medicine. The literature review required analysing following databases: Semantic Scholar, PubMed and speechBITE. The greatest number of results was shown on the Semantic Scholar database. The review has shown about 368,000 results for 'child identity development', about 10,400 results for 'child identity in language disorder' and 112,000 results for 'identity in language impairment' keywords. However, less than 30 of them were actually referring to the topic of this article.

### **Theoretical background**

#### **Aspects of child identity**

In order to characterise child identity and assess the outcomes of meaning-centered therapies later on, the Child Identity and Purpose Questionnaire (Ch.I.P.) has been created (Armstrong 2016)  and adopted for the purpose of this review (Appendix). This is a tool which enables the researcher to measure changes within child identity and meaning-making development process, Author of the Ch.I.P. Questionnaire was inspired by the concept of Positive-Identity construct (VanderVen 2008), which distinguishes four components: Personal Power or Agency, Self-esteem or Personal Sense of Worth, Openness to Experiences, and Hope for the Future. The assets of positive-identity are further explained as follow:

- Personal Power— autonomy, ability to make choices which can give a sense of having impact on what is happening in a child's life.
- Self-Esteem—liking oneself, sense of being valued by a child him- or herself and by others.
- Sense of Purpose—ability to anticipate opportunities, experiences, and milestones in growing up.
- Positive View of Personal Future—sense of living in interesting and enjoyable world, perceiving the place in it positive (VanderVen 2008, 98-103) .

In terms of identity assessment in children with language impairments, it seems justified to refer to the questions contained in Ch.I.P. (Armstrong, 2016). To complete the questionnaire, a child is supposed to read or listen to 20 sentences. Thereafter, the child needs to colour one face, which reflects the reaction to the chosen sentence. Faces reflect the following types of answers: 'Yes', 'Mostly yes', 'A bit yes , a bit no', 'Mostly no', 'NO!!!' (Appendix).

It is worth noticing that less than half of these statements are simple sentences. Half of the points are compound or complex sentences, which demand the ability to process, understand them and then – finally – decide, which face matches the child’s perception. This is a major obstacle for children with language disorders to complete such a questionnaire. Firstly, it might even become out of reach for children with language disorders. Secondly, if such a child gave the answers, the results of such an assessment would be doubtful or even useless. Poor understanding the questions by a child lead to inconsiderate answers. In such circumstances, results of Ch.I.P. obtained by a child with language impairments should not be the determinant of identity development evaluation.

In conclusion, child identity is influenced by many factors. Nevertheless, it seems to be strongly affected by language disorder and this problem needs further research.

### **Aspects affected by language disorders in children**

To appreciate the interdependence of identity development and language disorders, well-known facets affected by language impairments should be reviewed. Kuder (2003) distinguished four main educational aspects that are affected by different kinds of language disorders in school-age children:

- academic performance;
- cognitive functioning;
- behaviour;
- social interaction.

Academic performance influenced by language impairment includes: difficulty recognizing phonemes, producing sounds, following directions, finding the right words for things, organizing ideas, all of which very often causes an aversion among children to contribute to class discussions (Kuder 2003).□

The connection between language development problems and academic performance was already reported 40 years ago (Aram & Nation 1980)□. The study was conducted among 63 children with language disorders. They were initially diagnosed with language impairment in preschool and then diagnosed again in follow-up, 4-5 years later. Almost 40% of the participants manifested speech-language problems at school and approximately 40% had other learning problems. What is more, levels of language skills and speech sounds production in preschool appeared moderately correlated to obtained grades in class placement. Newer publications also present language impairment as a factor, which affects academic performance in children and youngsters.

A longitudinal study in which the participants were examined at 5 and then re-examined in 19 years of age showed that individuals with language impairment (LI) in childhood manifested significantly poorer academic performance in adulthood (Young et al. 2002). Authors use the term language impairment (LI) which symptoms are consistent with the clinical picture of specific language impairment (SLI). The most affected by LI skills were: non-verbal IQ, verbal working memory, phonological awareness, naming speed for digits, and executive function. Another piece of research showed significantly poorer vocabulary development throughout 20 years (between 5 and 25 years of age) in participants with language LI compared to children with typical language development or with only speech disorder (Beitchman et al. 2008).

Other interesting conclusions came from research conducted among 48 8-year-olds diagnosed with Specific Language Impairment - SLI (Donlan et al. 2007). This investigation has shown significant difficulties in understanding such mathematical concepts as the place-value principle in Hindu-Arabic notation (the value of the digit is represented by its position in number based on powers of ten, for example ‘3’ may represent three, thirty or three hundred depending on the position in number) as well as production of the count word sequence (the ability to count consistently, for example from one to

ten or backwards counting) and basic calculation. This shows that such language disorder as SLI may affect skills demanding higher level of processing, including mathematical operations.

Another element affected by language impairment is cognitive functioning. Kuder (2003)□ means by that difficulty organizing information for recall, inattentiveness as well as slow responding. However, speaking of cognitive functioning psychology usually means such functions as: memory, orientation, gnosis, attention, praxis or language. The following publications on research testing cognitive skills highlight it.

One of the studies concerning cognitive abilities in children with specific language impairment (SLI) measured visuo-spatial short-term memory, visuo-spatial processing and verbal short-term memory (Hick et al. 2005)□. Eighteen children (one group of nine typically developing children and the other of 9 with Specific Language Impairment – SLI) were assigned to do tasks involving the three abilities mentioned above. As a result, both groups performed similarly on the verbal short-term memory task and the visuo-spatial processing task. Participants with SLI presented poorer development only on visuo-spatial short-term memory tasks. These outcomes confirm that language impairment does not have to affect the other cognitive skills.

However, there are studies suggesting that executive functioning (EF) might be affected by specific language impairment (SLI). Three core executive functions are included in EF: inhibition [inhibitory control, including self-control and interference control (selective attention and cognitive inhibition), working memory, and cognitive flexibility (Diamond 2012).

One of the assessments involved 160 children (41 with SLI, 31 with low language functioning (LLF), 88 typically developing children). Each participant had 10 EF tasks and those with SLI and LLF manifested difficulties on EF tasks, obtaining significantly lower scores on 6 of the 10 EF measures (Henry et al., 2012). Therefore, further study on cognitive and executive functioning in children with language disorders is needed.

The next aspect affected by language disorders is behaviour. The consequences are manifested in: high level of frustration, arguments and fights with peers, withdrawing from interaction (Kuder 2003)□.

Research shows more social behaviour problems in children with language disorders, such as SLI. One of the studies, which was conducted among of 71 five-year-olds, resulted in serious significant behaviour problems in 40% of all participants, such as: withdrawal or aggressiveness, somatic complaints (van Daal et al. 2007)□.

The other research proved an even higher percentage of behaviour problems in children with language disorders. After assessing 114 children of age 2-7-years old, in 54% of the participants manifested behaviour problems, including: withdrawal among pre-schoolers, anxiety/depression and social isolation or aggressiveness among older children (Maggio et al. 2014)□. The results would be more reliable, if compared to the group of children with typical speech and language development. Nevertheless, the number of children with language impairment who suffer from behavioural problems is still significant. A systematic review on language impairment in youth offenders indicated their significantly poorer language skills in comparison to age-matched peers (Anderson et al., 2016), which is another example of interdependence of behaviour problems and language impairments.

Social interaction is another aspect influenced by language impairment. Kuder (2003)□ signalizes the following display of social interaction problems: exclusion or rejection by peers, reluctance to interact with other children, difficulty carrying on a conversation or negotiating rules for games. This reflects behaviour problems very often, but might also be connected to other phenomena, such as stigmatization or labelling.

One of the studies included parents' point of view in terms of social interaction of their children with the diagnosis of language impairment in preschool. After 10 years, parents found their children to have more behavioural problems and poorer social competence than their peers (Aram et al. 1984). Even

though the investigation is an older study, it shows how apparent is the correlation of language impairments and social interactions for caregivers.

According to Goldstein and Gallagher (1992), children with language impairments seem to be at risk of experiencing social interaction problems related to communication, since language skills are essential in social interaction. Children with SLI may experience difficulties entering social interactions and less social interaction with peers in general. Their mishaps as conversational partners mean mishaps as social partners (Brinton & Fujiki 1993).

Influence of language disorders on four educational aspects mentioned above (academic performance, cognitive functioning, behaviour and social interaction) is reflected by presented results of research. They are consistent with aspects concerning child identity that may be affected by language impairments. Studies presenting this correlation shall be elaborated in more detail further on.

### **Child identity affected by language disorders**

The connection between child identity formation and language disorders was noticed by Lyons. She conducted a research study aimed at exploring identity formation among 11 Irish children with primary speech and language impairments (which is another term related to SLI) and how these pupils make sense of their experiences showed interesting results in terms of language disorders influence on child identity development (Lyons 2014)□. □

The aspects of identity, which are affected by language disorders, relate to meaning-making, well-being and belonging. With regard to interviews with children presenting language disorders, Lyons (2014) distinguished the following aspects of child identity affected by language disorders:

- self and experiences of talking;
- self in relation to family members in terms of autonomy and fairness;
- self in relation to peers including friends, bullies and barriers to friendships;
- self in relation to others in school context, e.g. when negotiating rules or additional supports, assessing self-efficacy, competence;
- self in relation to others in the leisure context - mastery and self-efficacy, fun, relaxation and freedom;
- self in the future, imagined possibilities for self, hopes and concerns for self in the future.

These are issues which were present in opinions of children affected by the awareness of having a language disorder. When we cross-reference them with four aspects of positive-identity, it appears that the reflections listed above apply to all categories:

- Personal Power— self-efficacy in leisure context, self in relation to others: family, friends and bullies;
- Self-Esteem—self in experience of talking, negotiating;
- Sense of Purpose—making sense of disability;
- View of Personal Future – hopes and concerns for self in the future.

All of the aspects affected by primary (or specific) language impairments (Lyons 2014) fall into all four aspects of positive-identity (VanderVen 2008). This connection corroborates the fact that language disorders can make a significant contribution to the development of child identity.

Other research confirms these problems. The assessment of perceived stigmatization and potential negative labelling was the objective of a study in which 362 questionnaires were completed by parents of children with language disorders. Approximately 50% of parents noticed negative labelling of their children who presented language difficulties, but also 30% of the caregivers felt stigmatized because of children's impairment (Macharey & Von Suchodoletz 2008)□. Any kind of labelling and stigmatization experienced by a child influences that child's Personal Power, and Sense of Autonomy.

Another study showed that the labelling experienced by children with primary speech and language disorders was a potential risk factor to their well-being (Lyons 2017), which undoubtedly has an impact on the View of Personal Future. This is another example that reinforces the influence of language impairments on chosen aspects of identity creation. Starting with language impairment, children may become the object of labelling in society, which leads to difficulties in achieving well-being and finally determines the vision of him- or herself and personal future.

Another study confirming these conditions was administered among 69 pupils, who were 10-11 years old, with specific language impairment. The results showed not only speech-language problems in the participants, but also underestimations of their school abilities and their own competence in peer relationships (Lindsay et al. 2002)□. These findings refer to the Self-Esteem aspect of identity, since children with SLI seem to perceive not only their speech-language capabilities within the context of impairment, but also their academic performance (underestimated school abilities) and social communicative competence (in peer relationships).

The language disorder which clearly affects all the aspects of identity is stuttering. A work exploring women aged 35-80 years old, who stutter, in terms of self-identity, relationships and quality of life development showed that a language impairment such as stuttering impacted the women in terms of negative self-perception (Self-Esteem), career potential (View of Personal Future), relationships and the view of how the others perceived them in society (Personal Power) as well as decreased quality of life (Sense of Purpose) due to stuttering (Nang et al. 2018)□. Their voice - as people who experience language disorder every day - seems to be significant for perceiving the construction of identity affected by a specific kind of language impairment. It is noteworthy that creation of pointed identity assets progresses together with lasting language disorder.

## **Results and discussion**

The results of literature review indicate the link between language disorders and identity construction in children. Having regard to facets of identity and the methods of its assessment, it is indicated that language impairments significantly affect child identity.

The first aim of the article was to answer the question about the extension of the impact of language disorders on identity in children. In reference to aspects of the Positive-Identity (VanderVen 2008)□ as well as meaning-making and identities (Lyons 2014)□, it seems justified to say that all four aspects of child identity development are affected by language disorders: Personal Power, including self-efficacy in leisure context, self in relation to others (family, friends and bullies); Self-Esteem, including self in experience of talking and negotiating; Sense of Purpose, including making sense of disability; View of Personal Future, including hopes and concerns for self in the future.

Speech-language pathologists highlight that social communication is commonly affected by language disorders in children. Such conditions need specific speech-language therapy and therefore they present effective strategies for diagnosis and therapy (Timler 2008). This means that solutions to social interactions difficulties that are experienced by children with language disorders are available. It seems justified to raise awareness of it also outside of the speech-language pathology community.

The second problem applies for people involved in the process of child identity development. There is no doubt that parents, who are the primary caregivers, ought to be mindful participants of their children's lives, active companions in the process of rehabilitation and therapy that their children are activated in.

The other adults who may play an important role for young learners' identity formation are teachers. Spending much time of the week with pupils must have an impact in child identity development. Also specialists who are involved in the rehabilitation process of a child with language impairment on the regular basis, such as psychologists, speech-language therapists, should be taken into consideration.

They are supposed to professionally support the psychomotor development in children, which are cognitive, emotional, motor, social and language abilities. Promotion of these capacities seems to be another way to influence the identity construction in children with language impairments. Therefore, teachers' and therapists' knowledge of the clinical picture of language disorders is essential to provide effective intervention strategies, since these actions support academic performance, communication competency, which impacts self-esteem, relations with peers and adults, well-being, vision of future possibilities, which are elements of positive-identity and may contribute to child identity construction.

Last, but not least, are the implications for professional practice and further research. There is still a great need to raise awareness of risk-factors, clinical picture and – finally – consequences of language disorders. This refers not only to parents and teachers but even to health professionals. Parents have noticed that there is still a tendency to underestimate abnormalities in speech-language development among paediatricians and to let the language bloom spontaneously, which contributes to delaying appropriate speech-language therapy (Rannard et al. 2005). Therefore, awareness-raising in the field of child identity affected by language disorder is the first priority.

The second one is the call for mindful listening to children with language impairments. Parents and professional practitioners working with children who present any kind of language disorder should listen carefully. This is the key feature to identify many aspects affected by language impairment, including extensive functioning academic performance, social competence and - finally – identity. Studies based on the analysis of reviews with children (Lyons 2014, 2017) as well as children's drawings (Cooper 2014) show this markedly.

Implications for further research suggest need to verify intervention strategies offered by different kinds of professionals to children with language disorders. Moreover, research in psychiatry, psychology, education and speech-language pathology suggest effective outcomes if representatives of these areas cooperate along therapy and/or rehabilitation. Nonetheless, the efficacy and effectiveness ought to be verified in studies.

## **Conclusion**

The reason why this review is vital is that there is still low awareness of the effect of language disorders on children's quality of life, including identity development and it needs to be changed – especially in the field of educational role of language. It is vital for the teachers and other professionals working with pupils who present language impairments as well as society as a whole.

Taking into account the presence of parents and teachers in young learners' lives, the knowledge of the topic and careful listening as a consequence, enhances possibilities for appropriate support for identity development in children with language disorders.

The number of articles focused on the consequences of different kinds of language impairment underlines the scale and significance of this issue. The analysis of medical, psychological, educational and speech-language pathology literature and research shows that development of identity in children with language disorders requires an interdisciplinary approach. This article contributes to further research on this topic, as well as to professional practise for health professionals and therapists.

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## Appendix

- 1) When I have a problem, I can come up with ways to solve it.
- 2) I can make choices about many things in my life.
- 3) If I have a difficult feeling (sadness, fear, or anger), I can change my thoughts or attitude to help myself feel a bit better.
- 4) If I have a difficult feeling (sadness, fear, or anger), I believe that I could talk to someone, or play with someone, to feel a bit better.
- 5) If I have a difficult feeling (sadness, fear, or anger), I can choose to do a relaxing, fun, or creative activity that might make me feel a bit better.
- 6) I am happy to be me.
- 7) I am important to other people.
- 8) I have done a lot of things that I am proud of.

- 9) I like myself.
- 10) I can do things as well as other kids.
- 11) I am a curious kid.
- 12) I like to do nice things for other people.
- 13) I like to hear other people's stories.
- 14) I feel fun or joy in everyday activities.
- 15) I like to learn new things.
- 16) When I think of growing up, I believe that I have a lot to look forward to in my life.
- 17) I think that I can reach goals that I set for myself.
- 18) I think that I will be able to find ways to get things in life that are important to me.
- 19) When things are going badly, I think that things will get better.
- 20) My life is important.

## Peer learning: mentoring in a Portuguese as a foreign language course

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### **Abstract**

*Mentoring is valued in foreign language learning, as it is based on the recognition of the benefits of the interaction between peers. This paper aims at presenting the results of a mentorship experience thought for a Portuguese as a Foreign Language course in higher education, in 2017/18. The mentees are Erasmus students attending these courses. This initiative was developed through the preparation of mentors, structured sessions of interaction between mentors and mentees, a reflection upon the experienced process and the administration of questionnaires to the participants. Data were collected through direct observation, following a naturalist observation protocol. There was a content analysis of the answers for open questions and a statistical analysis of all answers. Results suggest the existence of positive effects of the mentoring program, such as the individual, social and linguistic development of the mentors, the mentees' integration and learning of Portuguese and the interpersonal relationship in both groups.*

**Keywords:** *mentoring, Portuguese as foreign language, Erasmus program*

### **Introduction**

Aiming at promoting the integration of Erasmus students<sup>5</sup> who take courses in Portuguese as a Foreign Language at a Centre for Languages and Culture of an Institution of Higher Education, a mentoring program was designed to bring foreign students and Portuguese students together, since we understand peer support can be very important. There are several benefits of a close relationship of these participants during the process, whose modelling behaviours (Bandura 1969) may facilitate the promotion of a good adaptation of new students in their first moments in a given institution (Welling 1997).

In this study, Erasmus students live for a few months in Lisbon, and the global dimension of the Portuguese language has to be emphasized by teachers. Taking into account the discursive issues, the structural system of the language, the semantics, the pragmatics and the socio-cultural dimension, the importance of using language in context should be highly recognized, namely in everyday communication situations. A mentoring program seems to be able to provide this use of the language in context.

More specifically, the context of immersion facilitates language learning and the appropriation of cultural aspects, and it is particularly useful if students can have, with pedagogical and linguistic supervision, access to people and places that will be part of their daily lives, promoting what is conveyed by Reis (2010) when this author claims that the notion of internationalization of the Portuguese language implies a unique articulation of language and culture.

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<sup>5</sup> The Erasmus+ Program is a European funding program established in 1987 offering university students a possibility of studying or doing an internship abroad in another country

Our main purpose with this mentoring program is to be able to provide new Erasmus students with a significant involvement with the school community, which implies that they know the institution and its functioning, as well as the geographic context in which they are, and that welcoming strategies are promoted in order to avoid social isolation and help to outline clear and achievable academic goals. If this type of contact exists, foreign students will have the opportunity to interact individually with native speakers on different topics, always according to their level of linguistic proficiency. For Portuguese students who took on the role of mentors in Portuguese as a Foreign Language (PLE) classes, a guide was created with guidelines for their action, with training and follow-up sessions.

In this work, a review of the related literature and a theoretical contextualization is presented regarding the characterization and advantages of the mentoring programs, highlighting the impact on the different actors. We explain how the mentoring sessions were designed and implemented and how the Portuguese students took on the role of mentors with Erasmus students. One of the main ideas was to create a more personalized approach on speaking and listening. The goals of the program, the methodology and the participants are then described. The results are presented, with regard to language learning, the development of language skills, the academic and social integration, the development of attitudes of respect and appreciation of other languages and cultures and the valorisation of the experience, followed by the presentation of the main conclusions of the study. In the last section, some final considerations are made, reflecting on the experience and establishing bridges with the general problem that gave rise to this work.

### **Review of the literature**

In second/foreign language learning, there is evidence of the benefits of peer learning. Learning with and from each other can be termed Peer Language Learning (PLL), which refers to informal adult language learning interactions. A native speaker who is not the teacher will be seen as a reference point of the norm for the target language (Ziegler, Durus, Max & Moreau 2014: 4). As the interaction with a native speaker occurs, the learner receives input, “a necessary component of all theories of language acquisition” (Lowen & Sato 2018: 287), that will be analysed and transformed into new speaking skills or outputs, “the language that learners produce during meaning-focused interaction (Lowen & Sato 2018: 291). Additionally, PLL upholds a stress-free environment, which promotes a psychological benefit, because participants know they are not being carefully monitored and feel comfortable to experiment with the language (Lowen & Sato 2018: 295).

In PLL, communication competence is paramount, and above linguistic competence. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) can be looked at from two different perspectives: cognitive and sociocultural. The first is interested in analysing the mental process of language learning, favouring quantitative studies (Foster & Ohta 2005: 402-403); the second seeks to interpret language development as a social process and usually uses qualitative research methodology to study data. Therefore, cognitive perspective can consider a big amount of data and sociocultural research usually studies a small number of subjects.

Taking into account the possibility of increasing foreign language knowledge, Watanabe and Swain (2007) developed a study with a small group of 12 English as a second language adult learners. The purpose was to understand “how proficiency differences and patterns of interaction affect L2 learning” (Watanabe & Swain 2007: 124). They paired the 12 participants with a different group of students and gave them a task. They found that peer-peer collaborative dialogue increases language-related episodes (part of a dialogue where language learner talk about the language), especially when pairs have a collaborative orientation, regardless of the proficiency differences. Overall, “this study confirmed the importance of considering peer–peer collaborative dialogue as a mediator of L2 learning” (Watanabe & Swain 2007: 139).

The peer learning that is “collaborative practices between students” (Zabalza 2011: 411), whether in the tutoring or mentoring model, can be seen as advantageous, since it promotes “socialization, learning, career advancement, psychological adjustment, and preparation for leadership in those who are mentored” (Johnson 2016: 3).

Similarly stressing the importance of sociocultural aspects of language learning, Lowen and Sato (2018: 296) highlight “the importance of a classroom environment where learners’ collaborative interaction is encouraged and, possibly, explicitly taught. In such an environment, learner psychology may be aligned to psycholinguistic processes conducive to L2 development”.

In recognizing the impact that students have on their colleagues, not only in higher education but also in other levels, there has been a multiplication of initiatives whose core is the collaboration between peers, registering two more common situations: tutoring and mentoring, assuming that the first “typically focuses on a more advanced student helping lower-level students with course contents (...)”, while “Mentoring focuses on a more experienced student helping a less experienced student improve overall academic performance” (Colvin & Ashman 2010: 122). Regardless of the strategy to be implemented, there are some aspects that must be taken into account by all the stakeholders, which are related. On the one hand, we have to consider the role that each part will play when interacting. On the other, we have to address the expectations and objectives of the initiative.

This paper focuses on mentoring, which can be seen as a “process of intellectual, psychological and affective development based on relative frequency scheduled meetings over a reasonably extended time frame and that mentors accept personal responsibility as competent and trustworthy non-parental figures for the significant growth of other individuals” (Galbraith & Maslin-Ostrowski 2000: 136).

There are several examples of successful cases in the literature on this subject. In the 1990s, in the United States of America, a mentoring project was implemented at a public university, which involved, over several decades, 400 student mentors and 15000 student mentees. In 2008, interviews were carried out covering experienced mentors, newer mentors, teachers and mentees, and it was found that there were benefits, mainly in improving academic performance for all students involved. The women interviewees highlighted interpersonal relationships, and the men interviewees the academic results, as emphasized by Colvin and Ashman (2010: 132), as “women see relationship benefits and men see academic benefits”. Another factor evidenced in this work is related to issues of hierarchy that are created between the three parties involved, teacher, mentor and mentee, and there may be situations of struggle for power or resistance to the performance of tasks, because “students, teachers and mentors all have different ideas about a mentor's role and how it should be enacted in various relationships” (Colvin & Ashman 2010: 132).

To mitigate these struggles for power, Rosillo, García, Duarte and Santa (2018: 3301) offer recommendations, namely that the work and dedication of mentors should be recognized “as part of their teaching assignment and thus reward their effort to perform this role, they must be provided with a high level of support from program staff and should receive greater recognition and reward for their hard work and dedication to the program.”

With results that point to the conclusion that mentoring improves students' academic performance, “ensuring their persistence in university”, we find Lunsford, Crisp, Dolan and Wuetherick (2017: 316-317), who look, also, on the importance of choosing mentors, admitting that they often “may be selected according to criteria such as high level of academic achievement, interpersonal and communications skills, and conscientiousness” (Lunsford, Crisp, Dolan & Wuetherick 2017: 320). In fact, for a language-focused peer relation, it is crucial that mentors serve as a model at various levels and that they support the development of the academic, social and linguistic knowledge of the mentees. In truth, mentoring is a relationship where the focus is on the development of the mentee.

Based on the idea that, in Higher Education, peer interactions are the source of diverse experiences that can have significant and positive effects for practically all students in the university results (Manso 2016), let us focus, in more detail, on the benefits that the implementation of mentoring projects promote in all stakeholders, to include mentors, mentees and institutions. In Johnson's perspective (2016), there are clear advantages for mentees, namely:

1. Academic performance increases, because the mentees are more motivated and are able to overcome adversity more safely, revealing themselves both in an average higher than that of colleagues at the end of the degree, or in the conclusion of the academic degree within the established period.

2. The productivity of mentees increases, especially when mentoring exists at doctorate level with a greater proliferation of publications of scientific articles, as well as presentation of communications.

3. The mentees, when accompanied, recognize that the mentoring programme was a promoter of the development of skills, namely self-confidence, empathy, knowing how to listen and emotional intelligence.

4. Through the mentoring programme, the mentee has privileged access to other older colleagues and teachers from other areas, allowing network work to flow more naturally, including favouring access to other projects and grants.

5. Since increase in self-confidence is one of the benefits pointed out in the mentoring programme, the professional confidence and the identity development of the mentees favours their own perception of professional success, corroborated, often, by the mentors themselves.

6. The advantages listed above foster positive notoriety in the workplace, increasing opportunities for professional mobility, as well as the number of job offers and, consequently, better working conditions.

7. When there is a close relationship between mentor and mentee, there is greater satisfaction with the academic program and the institution, which makes the mentor feel more motivated with their studies and more likely to publicly recognize the institution, which could lead to an increase in student enrolment.

8. Once the mentee feels fulfilled with their academic participation, there are fewer conflicts in their personal path and, consequently, a reduction in stress, promoting an emotional balance that, invariably, is reflected in his professional performance.

Regarding institutional benefits, Johnson (2016: 13) states that “institutions with active mentoring are more likely to have productive employees, stronger organizational commitment, reduced turnover, a stronger record of developing junior talent, and a loyal group of alumni and faculty”. Therefore, mentees whose mentoring experience was positive are more receptive to being mentors in the future, prolonging the sustainability of a project with clear advantages for all stakeholders.

In another study, carried out by the partnership between Gallup and Purdue University, the data collected allowed the authors to analyse the success of long-term graduates, including in relation to issues of employability and quality of life (Gallup 2014: 1), through positioning in five categories: general well-being, social sphere, financial stability, belonging to the community and physical health (Gallup 2014: 2). The results that we are going to highlight relate the success of the participants with the accompaniment, through mentoring, in the course of their academic training. Based on the premise that “if an employed graduate had a teacher who cared about them as a person, one who made them excited about learning, and had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their dreams, the graduate's odds of being engaged at work more than doubled” (Gallup 2014: 5). Johnson's conclusions (2016) presented above are corroborated, precisely those that focus on performance and opportunities for professionals. This underscores the idea that mentoring projects can have positive repercussions that do not stop with the conclusion of an academic degree. On the contrary, the results accompany the mentee throughout their life, in the various spheres analysed. Gallup (2014: 18) noted

“more college graduates who felt supported in college — because they had a mentor who encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams, a professor who made them excited about learning, and felt their professors cared about them as a person — are thriving in all areas of their well-being. Seventeen percent of those who felt supported are thriving in all five areas, compared with 6% of those who did not feel supported.”

Some studies also suggest that the ability of mentors to communicate effectively and provide some type of support will be essential and may improve the future results of the mentees (Ismail & Jui 2014), which forces us to reflect on the importance of the training offered to mentor-candidates before they become mentors, as well as ongoing support during the mentoring process. This training of mentors is essential because it allows them to become aware, on the one hand, of the importance and responsibility of the role they will assume and, on the other hand, it also leads them to reflect on linguistic and other knowledge that they will share.

According to DuBois and Karcher (2005), there are three core elements of successful mentors: the mentor has greater experience or wisdom than the mentee; the mentor offers guidance and instruction to facilitate the development of the mentee; and there is an emotional bond characterized by a sense of trust between the mentor and the mentee. These aspects are very important when we think about the mentors that we select.

Although the literature reviewed here allows us to draw from experiences carried out at various educational levels, including higher education, we did not have access to studies on mentoring experiences in contexts of teaching and learning Portuguese as a Foreign Language, and as such, we envision this work as a relevant focus and that would certainly benefit from more detailed studies.

## **Methodology**

Taking into account the recognition of the potential of mentoring experiences presented in the previous section, and seeking to extend this approach to Portuguese as a Foreign Language classes, in the academic year 2017 - 2018, a mentoring program was put into practice in a context of teaching and learning Portuguese as a Foreign Language in Higher Education. This was a methodological option based on the recognition of the benefits of interaction between peers, the language learners (mentees) and the native speakers (mentors), for language learning and academic and social integration of students. This initiative was developed with the objectives of promoting the learning of the mentees regarding oral language (speaking and listening), facilitating the linguistic and cultural integration of the mentees, and contributing to the exercise of language skills and the exercise of citizenship by the mentors.

The mentoring program was operationalized through a three-part sequence, starting with the training of mentors, followed by the promotion of structured sessions of interaction between mentors and mentees, and finally with reflection on the process experienced. This first iteration of the program worked as a pilot experiment. The analysis of data collected and the reflection carried out will allow us to improve the subsequent iterations of the program.

In the collection and analysis of data, direct observation (non-participant observation) and indirect observation (questionnaire survey) were reconciled. The crossing and triangulation of the data obtained through these two types of observations allowed us to identify the results and formulate the conclusions that we present, which guided the sequence put into practice in the academic year 2018 - 2019. The collection of information was made with two groups of participants: mentors and mentees. The mentor group consisted of 6 students from the 1st year of the Basic Education Degree, aged between 18 and 20 years old, with European Portuguese as their mother tongue. The group of mentees was comprised of 8 students attending the teaching units of a polytechnic higher education institution under the Erasmus Program, in the academic year 2017 - 2018. The mentees were between 21 and 24 years old, and studied Portuguese as foreign language at the beginning level (A1). For this study, we

paired a mentor (Portuguese native speaker) and a student (Portuguese non-native speaker), “towards a situation where a more competent speaker chooses to turn the learner’s attention productively from meaning and towards form” (Foster & Ohta 2005: 407), using communication breakdowns as valuable learning moments that pushes the Portuguese second language speaker to learn and add new forms to their linguistic repertoire.

Knowing that PLL will benefit if the meetings take place on a regular basis (Ziegler, Durus, Max & Moreau 2014: 11), four sessions, of about thirty minutes each, of interaction between the two groups of participants were observed. These observations were made by the teacher-researcher, who did not intervene in the conversation established between the students. The researcher recorded the information collected by observation through written notes, according to a naturalistic protocol, and through photographic records. The data collected were analysed by completing two analysis grids, one regarding mentors and other mentees. The data analysis grid for mentors was organized into four categories: dimension of the involvement in the project (i); the linguistic dimension (ii); the paralinguistic and extralinguistic dimensions (iii); the attitudinal and relational dimensions (iv). For the mentees, the data were organized into three categories of analysis: (i) dimension of the implication in the project; linguistic dimension (ii); attitudinal and relational dimensions (iii).

With regard to the questionnaire survey, two questionnaires were prepared, one for each group of participants, applied at the end of the set of observed sessions. The questionnaire applied to the mentors was formulated in Portuguese. This was conceived with the objective of evaluating the participation of mentors in the program. The questionnaire is composed of three parts: socio-academic characterization; involvement in extracurricular initiatives; participation in the mentoring program.

The questionnaire provided to the mentees was written in English and aimed at assessing the participation of the mentees in the program. The questions were organized in two parts: socio-academic characterization; participation in the mentoring program.

## Results and discussion

The triangulation of the information collected through the different channels allowed us to identify several results, which we grouped into five categories: (i) language progress in conversation (speaking/ listening) (mentees); (ii) development of language skills in conversation and metalinguistic knowledge (mentors); (iii) academic and social integration (mentors and mentees); (iv) development of attitudes of respect and appreciation for other languages and cultures (mentors and mentees); (v) valuing of the lived experience.

### (i) Language progress in conversation (speaking/ learning) (mentees)

The participation of students learning Portuguese in the mentoring sessions allowed them to practise and consolidate content addressed in other moments of the PLE classes, having registered growth in several linguistic levels: lexicon, syntax and phonetics -phonology.

There was also progress in terms of comprehension and expression, in the oral modality, which brought greater fluency to the conversation.

The mentees' linguistic learnings were observed by the teacher-researchers and recognized by both groups of participants, especially the mentors, as can be read in their own words<sup>6</sup>:

*First, I felt that I contributed to the learning of Portuguese by Erasmus students. It was also a very enriching experience, as I will be a teacher in the future (Mentor 1).*

*I think it was very important to participate in this initiative because it was possible to talk to Erasmus students to get to know them more and I was able to help them with linguistic issues where they had more difficulty (Mentor 2).*

### (ii) Development of language skills in conversation and metalinguistic knowledge (mentors)

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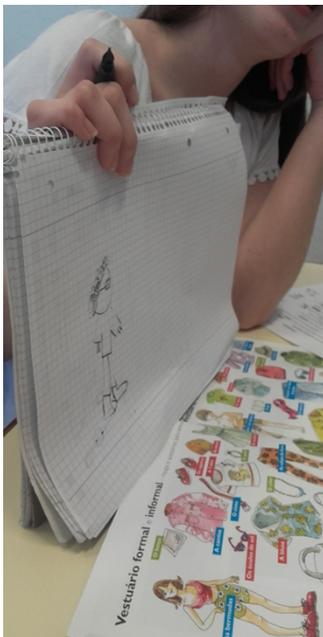
<sup>6</sup> These comments were translated from Portuguese

The analysis of the observations made by the teacher-researchers in the mentoring sessions showed a progressive awareness on the part of the mentors regarding the relevance of complying with the rules of discursive interaction, the importance of didactic transposition (e.g. adaptation of grammatical structures and the speed of speech) and the use of elements that facilitate conversation (e.g. paralinguistic and extra-linguistic elements). In the following examples (see Figures 1-4), mentors support their verbal interaction with the mentees using various supports, some previously prepared, others resulting from needs at the time of communication. In fact, “When they are interacting face-to-face, they can use teaching material or objects in order to facilitate language learning” (Ziegler, Durus, Max & Moreau 2014: 8).

**Figure 1:** Verbal interaction between mentor (left) and mentees using images and an illustrated dictionary.



**Figures 2, 3, 4:** Verbal interaction between mentors and mentees using drawing (left), illustrated dictionaries and mobile phone (centre).



(iii) Academic and social integration (mentors and mentees)

A result that was easily identified by the teacher-researchers was the interrelationship between Portuguese and foreign students during the sessions in a fluid and cordial way, which facilitated the learning tasks, but also the strengthening of some social ties, not only in the class but also outside of the class. This program contributed to the mentee's integration in Portugal, as can be read in the words of two mentors transcribed below.

*I met new colleagues and contributed to their integration (Mentor 2).*

*I think it is something very important for the integration of Erasmus colleagues and helping with that and talking to them about Portugal or any doubts that arise is very good and I feel useful (Mentor 3).*

It was possible to observe, outside the mentoring sessions, foreign students studying with the mentors, which might have been a facilitating factor in the learning process, but also in the integration of the foreign students in academic life and in the local context.

The analysis of the collected data allowed us to verify that there were interactions between members of both groups outside the mentoring sessions, either by cell phone and email, or in person. In this context, some mentees participated in events at the invitation of mentors, as can be read in an excerpt from one of a mentee's responses to the final questionnaire.

*(...) I was invited for the party in Santos in the end of the exam period (Mentee 1).*

(iv) Development of attitudes of respect and appreciation for other languages and cultures

During the mentoring sessions, it was possible to observe in general a curiosity towards other habits and cultures by mentors and mentees.

The experience of participating in the mentoring program was perceived by most of those involved as a desire for contact, knowledge and appreciation of languages and cultures in addition to those of origin, an aspect emphasized by several participants, as can be seen by reading the excerpt:

*The most positive aspects of this initiative were| meeting new people, speaking with locals, explaining cultural differences (Mentee 3).*

In the following example, one of the mentors states that participation in the experience motivated him to carry out an Erasmus mission.

*It allowed me to meet new people and made me think about having an Erasmus mission (Mentor 1).*

(v) Valuing of the lived experience

The analysis of the information collected showed a global appreciation of the mentoring initiative in a very positive way, both by mentors and by mentees. The excerpts below speak to this positive appreciation.

*It was a very rich experience (Mentor 2).*

*It was a nice experience (Mentee 3).*

*Very useful and pleasant part of Portuguese class (Mentee 1).*

In general, the mentees valued the role played by the mentors in their learning of Portuguese, as we can see in the words of one of the students:

*Overall a very worthwhile experience. I am very thankful for the students giving up their time to help me (Mentee 4).*

The benefits of the participation in the program were recognized by both groups. Mentors valued personal and social development, professional development and interpersonal relationships provided by the involvement in the program. In fact, students who teach their peers benefit from their interaction and learn a lot from the experience (Watanabe & Swain 2007: 138). The mentees emphasized interpersonal relationships, PLE learning and their integration.

With regard to the overall appreciation of the program, Portuguese students consider the most positive aspects of the program the use of different materials, the good mood, the knowledge of new cultures and new people, the contribution for the development of the linguistic learning of the Erasmus colleagues and language games. As the least satisfactory factors, they indicate the short time of the sessions, the non-participation of mentors in all PLE sessions, the timing of the sessions (in the late afternoon), some communication problems with Erasmus students, and their own lack of preparation regarding some cultural suggestions and recommendations.

The mentees point out as the most positive aspects of the experience making new acquaintances, the conversation with native speakers, the interaction with people of a close age, the interaction with friendly and helpful students, the reflection on cultural differences, the practical application of acquired knowledge. Besides this, linguistic aspects were also mentioned: the development of fluency in conversation, the increase in vocabulary, the improvement of pronunciation, the strengthening of linguistic self-confidence. As less satisfactory factors, foreign students indicate conversation in Portuguese only, an occasional lack of conversation topics, difficulties in understanding the spoken language, the few suggestions on cultural destinations, gastronomy and travel, as well as the short duration of the sessions.

Returning to the main goals of the mentoring experience, we can conclude that mentees could develop their competence in speaking and listening to the Portuguese language. The linguistic and cultural integration of the mentees was well facilitated, and also allowed the mentors the opportunity to develop their language skills and citizenship.

Taking into account the analysis of the data collected and the reflection carried out, we identified as main limitations of this pilot experience the little preparation of the mentors at a cultural level, the limited attendance of some foreign students, the weaknesses in the didactic transposition by the mentors (using paraphrases), the type of training developed with mentors (including a lack of depth and little specific focus on cultural issues).

In future iterations of the mentoring program, we intend to keep a similar numerical proportion of mentors and mentees, sessions integrated in the class, sessions throughout the course, the initial preparation of the mentors, the presence of the teacher in the session (as a non-participant observer) and the issuance of a certificate for the mentors, as recognition and appreciation of their participation in the experience.

We assume as goals in the near future a greater investment in the preparation of mentors (before, during and after the period of realization of the sessions), an extension of the experience to several classes of students of PLE, with different levels of language proficiency, and the use of mentoring formats that allows to reach PLE classes across borders (via videoconferencing such as Skype or Zoom).

## **Conclusion**

The evaluation and reflection on the mentoring experience carried out in a context of teaching and learning Portuguese as a Foreign Language allowed to respond to a gap identified in the research in the field of mentoring. Taking as a starting point the benefits of peer interaction for learning and socialization, pointed out by several authors, we decided to apply this methodology to PLE courses in a higher education institution. Our goal was to form a greater knowledge of the potential of the mentoring programme for the learning of Portuguese. In fact, taking into account the results and conclusions of the study, we can say that the benefits of this approach are considerable.

First, the involvement in mentoring dynamics enhanced the language learning of foreign students, who enjoyed moments of verbal interaction with native speakers of close ages, developing fluency in conversation in a contextualized, authentic and stimulating way. Although this study does not allow us to verify whether the academic performance of the participants improved with their integration in this

program, as evidenced by other investigations (Colvin & Ashman 2010, Ismail & Jui 2014, Lunsford, Crisp, Dolan & Wuetherick 2017), its contribution to students' linguistic development is evident, so it is possible to foresee its impact on academic performance.

Secondly, the involvement of Portuguese students in this initiative was highly valued by the participating mentors themselves, which is consistent with the benefits pointed out by Johnson (2016), as the mentor achieves a different fulfilment and personal satisfaction than other academic interactions. At the same time, the student responsible for accompanying the mentees can find greater motivation for their own study and for their own continued scientific learning.

Thirdly, mentors developed their linguistic and metalinguistic skills, as they were constantly challenged by the colleagues at the time of the conversation, being forced to experiment with different strategies, to diversify linguistic structures, to reinvent materials.

Fourthly, the development of the social dimension was also evident, either through the identification of the benefits of this experience for the integration and well-being of mentees in the local academic and social context, or through the contribution for the exercise of an active and responsible citizenship, on the part of the mentors, who assumed as their own the important role of contributing to the development, integration and learning of their foreign colleagues. In related ways, this experience favoured the development of attitudes of respect and acceptance of other languages and cultures, in both groups of participants.

Finally, the practice of mentoring within the classroom allows participants to enhance their development, which is reason enough to perpetuate and extend this practice in other, similar institutions. It seems to us, therefore, essential to provide opportunities for mentoring to students, aiming at their interest in participating as mentors, in order to contribute to their personal and academic growth and that of their foreign colleagues. Being an innovative practice that reinforces participation and promotes learning, it must be stimulated and supported, reinforcing the sense of belonging and community.

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## Creating a favourable language identity through grammar accuracy enhancement The Verb and Adverb Systems in English – A book review

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The book entitled *The Verb and Adverb Systems in English* was published only a month ago by the Faculty of Law and Business Studies *dr Lazar Vrkić*, Novi Sad, Serbia, a higher education institution where the book Author, Tatjana Glušac, is employed as an associate professor. Tatjana works at the Department of English at the mentioned Faculty and the book is, as it is stated in the Introduction, primarily intended for her first-year students, but it certainly has wider appeal.

The book has 261 pages and is divided into eleven chapters, which offer a synthesis of up-to-date, relevant theoretical concepts related to the English verb and adverb systems. Moreover, each chapter is accompanied by a set of exercises/activities aimed at initiating discussion about a number of possible answers to the questions they contain, assessing students' understanding of the presented theoretical concepts, or their ability to apply the newly acquired content in communicative contexts. Explaining in detail how the verb and adverb systems function in the English language, not only does Tatjana contribute to the expansion of her students' knowledge of these aspects of English grammar, but she also helps them question their existing knowledge base and amend any potential erroneous beliefs they might hold. Since many activities require the application of knowledge, provoke discussion, and active language use, they contribute to improving students' language ability and thinking. Perfecting their knowledge of grammar is paramount both for the quality of the education they are pursuing and the quality of different language services they will provide one day. The Author succeeds in achieving all that has been mentioned so far not only by providing a sound synthesis of relevant linguistic sources, but also by using good examples to illustrate her theoretical points and, wherever possible, by explaining how a certain grammatical point is realized in different varieties of the English language.

The first six chapters tackle various verb-related issues. The first chapter is entitled "Characteristics of the English verb" and gives some basic, yet crucial information regarding the verb as a part of speech, such as its form, categories (tense, aspect, mood, and voice), and classifications (stative and dynamic, main and auxiliary). Besides that, in this chapter the Author discusses the concept of the verb phrase as well. Chapter 2 is devoted to main and auxiliary verbs and the Author discusses the characteristics and use of the two groups of verbs. In Chapter 3 Tatjana tackles the five forms of the English verb discussing how each is used, what implications different forms of a single verb have, etc. Where needed, the Author specifies pronunciation or spelling rules and draws a parallel between British and American English. Chapter 4 offers an insight into the nature and use of stative and dynamic verbs. The Author devotes much attention to exceptions as well, i.e. to those stative verbs that can sometimes be used as dynamic, and thus helps the reader understand how and why it is possible to hear and say *I'm lovin' it* (McDonald's advertisement), for instance. Chapters 5 and 6 deal with the categories of aspect and tense. In the former, the Author discusses different types of aspect and their implications for the use of verbs in English. In the latter, the Author differentiates between the terms *tense* and *time*, alluding thus to the need to use different English verb forms and time adverbials in a non-plastic way. Tatjana illustrates her point by, for instance, discussing how and why the Past Simple tense, owing to the fact that it is characterized by being factual and remote, can be used to locate an activity before the moment of speaking, denote an action that is not likely to occur, or speak politely to someone. The Author uses unambiguous, interesting, and illustrative examples that clearly show the implications a single verb form

can have in English. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 deal with the present, past, and future verb forms, respectively. In each chapter the Author tackles different verb forms separately, discussing first how each is formed and what implications it has. Furthermore, whenever possible and needed, the Author indicates how a particular verb form is used in British and American English. Tatjana also devotes separate subsections to contrasting pairs of verb forms which she assumes might pose a problem for non-native speakers of English. For instance, she contrasts the use of the Present Perfect Simple and Continuous tenses explicating when one is more suitable, expected, or favoured over the other. Chapter 10 gives a thorough review of adverbs. The Author presents different forms of this part of speech, as well as many ways of its formation and comparison. Besides that, the Author offers a systematic classification of adverbs and then devotes an individual section to the use, position, and types of adjuncts, disjuncts, and conjuncts. The last chapter (11) deals with the word order in declarative and interrogative sentences.

In summation, *The Verb and Adverb Systems in English* by Tatjana Glušac provides a valuable grammar coursebook for academic students of English since it deals with particular grammar units that happen to be just an integral part of existing grammar books of English. Even though such a narrowly-specialized source may prove scope-deficient, it fully meets the needs of the 1<sup>st</sup> year students of English and the course requirements when judged from the target user's perspective. A special quality of this book is its applied dimension since it includes the Author's original present-day examples and two well-known short stories, which perform a double function. Firstly, they conform to the communicative method of language teaching and, secondly, they are a means of providing feedback information to the teacher and student concerning the scope of knowledge acquisition. The strong point of the book is its comprehensibility for the intended user because crucial concepts are both defined and exemplified and since the use of less frequent and scientific lexis is reduced to a minimum. Regarding the above, the book is recommendable not only for undergraduate and/or graduate students of English and their teachers but also for advanced EFL learners in need of correct information on the standard use of English verbs and adverbs.

## **Non-natives writing for Anglo-American journals: Challenges and urgent needs – A book review**

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This is a review of *Non-natives writing for Anglo-American journals: Challenges and urgent needs* by Katarzyna Hryniuk published in 2019 by Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego. Katarzyna Hryniuk is Assistant Professor in the Institute of English Studies at the University of Warsaw. Her research interests are foreign language learning and teaching, in particular developing writing skills in a foreign language and comparing Polish and Anglo-American conventions of academic writing, the issue that she pursues in the book reviewed here. The main aim of the monograph is to have a closer look at how Polish scholars approach a difficult task of writing academic articles for publication in prestigious Anglo-American journals. This aspect of academia seems particularly important in the light of the requirement to publish in international journals, which researchers in Poland and other semi periphery countries may find challenging to complete. In relation to the ERL framework, the book addresses the research topics discussed in the Language and Schooling strand. I believe academic writing presented from the perspective of the skills mastered by FL writers and the problems they face will always be an issue that deserves more attention of those interested in teaching and researching writing.

The monograph consists of six chapters. The first four chapters provide a theoretical background for a report on an empirical study, presented in the last two chapter, in which the author explores the problems that Polish scholars encounter when preparing their papers for publication in highly ranked journals.

The first chapter explains why non-native writers, including Polish ones, are put at a disadvantage as academics when they intend to popularize their voice in international academia. It discusses factors that have contributed to the spread of English in the world and its dominant position as the language of academic publications. The author presents the status of Poland as a semi periphery country and explains the consequences that this situation may have on researchers' writing practices.

Chapter Two focusses on written academic discourse and its composition. Drawing on contemporary authorities in the subject, Hryniuk elucidates the main characteristics of academic discourse, such as lexis and text structure. Further, she discusses the strategies that skilled academic writers apply in their work on academic texts, which I consider a valuable part of this discussion. Other issues presented in this chapter are the features of a research paper in linguistics and applied linguistics, and culture-specific differences in writing research articles. The chapter ends with a short overview of models of writing that can be useful in understanding the specificity of academic writing.

Chapter Three discusses the issue of writing for publishing from a geopolitical perspective. First, the author examines the system of evaluating scholars' achievements, criticizing some aspects of evaluation practices, such as the "publish or perish" culture. Then Hryniuk discusses the problems that non-native English speaker writers usually encounter when trying to publish in international journals. She focusses on gatekeeping practices of editors and reviewers as well as some non-discursive problems, e.g. financial barriers and a more difficult access to up-to-date technologies. Finally, she discusses the specificity of publishing in local journals. Hryniuk (2019: 66) concludes this discussion with an interesting conclusion that "the scholars who are most often members of both global and local research communities choose to publish in local journals due to their educational commitments, rather than for career advancement."

Chapter Four is an extensive and up-to-date overview of studies related to learning and teaching academic writing which were carried out in Poland by Polish scholars. The studies presented by Hryniuk concern textual analyses, such as corpus-based comparisons of Polish and Anglo-American conventions of writing, and empirical investigations that focus on the process of writing, attitudes towards developing the writing skill and the epistemic function of writing. This chapter is a good introduction to the next part of the book, in which the author presents her study.

Chapter Five, which is the longest chapter, is a detailed report on the empirical study conducted by Hryniuk. The study utilized text-based interviews carried out with 16 Polish scholars in linguistics and applied linguistics who were successful in publishing their article in Anglo-American academic journals. All the topics and questions used in the interviews are provided in the appendix at the end of the book (143-144). In her study, Hryniuk explored the challenges that Polish writers encountered when trying to publish their papers and investigated the writers' attitudes and needs with regard to writing for publishing in highly-ranked journals. Apart from general questions, each subject was interviewed about one of his/her articles published in a prestigious international journal; the articles, which served as the basis for the interviews, were selected by Hryniuk before the interview sessions. The researchers were asked about the review system, the comments they obtained from the reviewers and the aspects of their texts that were reviewed as the best points of their research papers. Some questions were related to the use of hedges, authorial voice and evaluative language. Additionally, the scholars were asked to compare their experiences concerning writing for international journals in English and writing for local journals in Polish. The data obtained from the interviews were analysed in a qualitative way. The results are illustrated with extensive quotations taken from the scholars' answers.

The findings of the study are summarized in the table (131-134). The results indicate that the scholars did not feel disadvantaged as writers, which was suggested by some of the previous studies discussed in the theoretical chapters. Most of the scientists recall the process of publishing as a positive experience and the reviews obtained as helpful and constructive. One of the obstacles the researchers faced was a lack of funds for their research projects. The results concerning the language the scholars used in their texts are very general, which may be due to the fact that for some reason in this discussion the author does not refer to the texts of the subjects.

In the last chapter, a relatively short one, the author draws conclusions and presents implications for instruction. She emphasizes the importance of academic writing training, which would prepare non-native writers for the challenging task of publishing in international journals.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the book? An undeniable advantage of this publication is the topic, which still can be regarded as under investigated, and the manner in which the author approached it. Writing research papers for publication in international journals is presented as a multifaceted issue in which social, cognitive and rhetorical factors intertwine. The process of entering the communities of professional journals is discussed from a perspective of individual writers who by complying with the writing conventions and journal publication requirements were successful in publishing their papers. The difficulties that non-native writers experienced reflect the problems faced not only by Polish scholars, but all academics who do not feel at home with the rules imposed by academic discourse conventions and journal publishers' expectations.

Another merit of the book is an empirical study conducted by the author of the publication, which is an interesting attempt to explore the issue of writing research papers for publication in international journals. Text-based interviews seem a good choice of methodology as they can offer reliable data for this kind of investigation. However, it is a pity that in the presentation of the results Hryniuk did not refer to the texts of the scholars she had analysed, especially when analysing the researchers' answers concerning their use of authorial voice and the use of hedges and evaluative language. More insightful

results would have been obtained if the results of both the writer and the text perspectives had been presented and discussed in a direct way.

There are some changes that the author could have introduced in the procedure of her research. The analysis of the data would have yielded more detailed findings if the author had decided to distinguish and look at different groups of scholars in the sample investigated, e.g. more experienced vs. less experienced scholars, researchers in theoretical linguistics vs. researchers in applied linguistics.

In summary, the publication is fairly successful as it contributes to our understanding of writers' problems, the difficulty that many non-native scholars experience. The book addresses the issue that can be of interest of several groups of academics. Not only non-native writers who write scientific papers for Anglo-American journals can benefit from the publication but also students working on their diploma theses and their teachers. The research reported in the book offers new avenues for further studies. I think that it can be easily replicated by other scholars. The study conducted by Hryniuk provides a general scheme of procedure that lends itself to further modifications and variations. It would be useful to develop effective research techniques that could explore writers' attitudes and opinions in relation to their texts, which is suggested by Hryniuk in her book but is not reported in the results section. A good idea may be to explore differences and similarities between scholars that represent different disciplines, e.g. pedagogy and linguistics, which would mean analysing their texts and interviewing them about their writing practices. This idea can give a beginning to interesting interdisciplinary and international projects, which can be launched within the Educational Role of Language research network. It is my hope as the reviewer of this publication that my paper will encourage readers to consider embarking on this kind of academic cooperation.

# Desire, freedom, and pain in English learners' emotional responses to SLA: A holistic look at English learners' multilingual identity construction

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## Abstract

*The paper examines Hungarian English majors' emotional and identity responses to second language acquisition (SLA) and proposes that the two are inherently linked. The theoretical underpinnings of the study draw on the holistic post-structuralist approach that looks at learners in their entirety and complexity (Kramsch 2009) and language learning as an embodied experience (Damasio 1994) that can be more or less transformative for the learner. The participants' multilingual identities are mapped in terms of desire (Kristeva 1980) and pain (Lacan 1977) in SLA, imagination (Anderson 1983), symbolic language use (Kramsch 2009), and conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002). The paper is based on a multiple case study that involved 31 English majors as participants from the University of Pécs, in Hungary. Data were collected via a structured written task that contained three open-ended questions about the participants' language learning experiences and preferences. The questions addressed the participants' emotional and identity responses to SLA. Data were analysed using qualitative content analysis in an iterative manner. The findings confirmed that language learners respond emotionally to language learning and these emotional responses shed light on their identities associated with SLA. The magnitude of the learner's transformation resulting from SLA corresponds to the magnitude of their emotional responses, shaping their multilingual identity accordingly. Emotions were frequently captured with the help of metaphors as a result of conceptual blending. Three recurring emotional responses emerged from the data addressing the experience of desire, pain, and freedom associated with English learning.*

**Keywords:** *identity, emotions, post-structuralist research, imagination, desire in SLA, symbolic pain, conceptual blending*

## Introduction

Traditionally, studies in English applied linguistics have often examined aspects of second language acquisition (SLA) or those of the second language (L2) learner in isolation (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope 1986, MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei, & Noels 1998, Noels, Pelletier, Clément, & Vallerand 2000). This approach often entailed the application of quantitative research. There is vast literature on research methodology used in the field of applied linguistics (Creswell 2003, 2007, Dörnyei 2007, 2010, Griffee 2012, Hammersley 2013, Mackey & Gass 2012, Nunan & Bailey 2009). In essence, quantitative research has always been a scientifically accepted research method due to its rigorous research design involving the testing of hypotheses with the help of variables and statistical procedures that make sense of numerical data provided by a large number of respondents (approximately 100-1000). The results of such analyses are generalizable and often representative of a greater population describing the phenomena under study in a scientific manner. However, these results do not shed light on why and how such phenomena have arisen and cannot explain subtle details. Such approach does not consider a single individual's case, but the average of the answers provided by many respondents. Quantitative studies yield generalizable results in an effort to facilitate L2 teaching and learning, often, without considering the interconnectedness of learner factors and the environment.

Besides quantitative research, qualitative research has been gaining acceptance and momentum in the new millennium. In contrast with quantitative research, qualitative research, particularly case study research, focuses on special cases that cast light on subtle details explaining why and how phenomena have emerged. Consequently, the results of such research designs are rarely generalizable to a greater population but rather specific and unique to the participants. Instead of using a rigorous research design involving variables and statistical procedures, qualitative research methods rely on an interpretive approach making sense of textual data in an iterative fashion. Many researchers find the two methods incompatible and exclusive. However, I believe the two methods can be reconciled with the help of mixed methods that can offset the disadvantages of one method and provide benefits where the other method cannot (Fekete 2018, 2019).

With the spread of qualitative research, applied linguists have started to take a holistic and complex look at language learners and their learning experiences that are situated in a specific environment. Therefore, three holistic approaches have been adopted in the field of applied linguistics. **Language ecology** (Cao 2011, Fekete in press, Kasbi & Shirvan 2017, Steffensen & Kramsch 2017) focuses on the interaction between the learner, the L2, and the learning environment considering the learner's past and present experiences along with their future goals and desires. **Complexity theory** (de Bot 2017, Dörnyei 2017, Fekete 2018, Larsen-Freeman 1997, 2017, Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008) regards learners, teachers, the language, and the environment as complex dynamic systems that keep interacting with one another, leading to emergent phenomena. **The post-structuralist approach** (Kramsch 2009, Kristeva 1980, Norton 2013) deems the users of the language inseparable from the language and proposes that SLA involves the whole being of the learner involving their brain, mind, and body, resulting in emotional and identity responses.

The study seeks to fill a theoretical gap by adopting a holistic perspective that does not separate learners from the language they learn or from the environment in which they learn the language. This holistic view also necessitates the application of qualitative research drawing on a case-study design. Therefore, the theoretical foundations of the study rely on the post-structuralist approach taking a holistic look at language learners' experiences with SLA. In this view, success in SLA is not measured in terms of proficiency level or linguistic knowledge but in terms of the linguistic, psychological, social, and cultural transformation experienced by the learner (Kramch 2009). In other words, SLA is construed as a life-changing experience.

Therefore, when talking about in what ways L2 learning has shaped and transformed their lives, language learners respond emotionally. These emotional responses, based on imagined and real-life experiences, provide insights into their identities associated with SLA. Although learners' inwardly generated identity is often imagined, it becomes real when it results from their real experiences and when it guides their emotions, attitudes, and behaviour (Kramsch 2009). Consequently, the study proposes that emotions, imagination, and identity construction are inherently linked and thus constantly feed into one another. It is also argued that metaphorical language use by language learners, drawing on conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002), indicates strong emotional involvement in SLA, and, as a result, a stronger identity response to language learning.

As for the structure of the paper, the theoretical background presents the post-structuralist approach taken by the study involving the discussion of becoming a *multilingual subject (MLS)* via L2 learning, *symbolic language use*, the experience of *desire* and *pain in SLA*, *the embodied nature of language learning*, and *conceptual blending* inherent in creative and metaphorical thinking. The literature review is followed by the presentation of the research background. In the Discussion section, I answer the research question regarding the participants' emotional and identity responses to SLA. Finally, the main findings of the study are summed up and conclusions are presented based on these findings.

## Theoretical background

### The post-structuralist view of SLA

Language learning may be perceived not as successful or unsuccessful in relation to language attainment or language proficiency level but as an experience that is more or less meaningfully lived by the learner and which may be more or less transformative for the learner (Kramersch 2009). Kramersch (2009) argues that to understand learners and their learning processes is to understand their idiosyncratic meaning-making processes, their subjective and creative associations, and their resonances related to learning an L2. Language learning triggers emotional responses in learners constructing their feelings, fantasies, desires, beliefs, fears, or attitudes towards learning and using the new language, making SLA an embodied experience that involves the whole being of learners.

Concerning the psychology of L2 learners, drawing on Neisser's (1988) different Selves, Kramersch (2009) coined the term *Reflexive Self* that is conscious of the other Selves, the outside world, and its experience of the outside world, allowing for the Self to reflect on these experiences, including SLA. The *Conceptual Self* has a concept about the individual in a familiar world, for example, my Conceptual Self knows that I am Hungarian, I am a woman, and I am a researcher. In the same vein, L2 learners have various concepts about themselves. Thereby, drawing on these Selves, L2 learners can meaningfully reflect on themselves and their learning experiences, shedding light on their linguistic identities constructed in the process of SLA.

Moreover, Kramersch (2009: 6-7) views **language learning as a symbolic activity** and language learners as multilingual subjects. *Multilingual subject* is understood as an individual speaking more than one language whose identity is constantly shaped and constructed in and via language and in interactions with other people. Being *multilingual* in the study is, therefore, construed in terms of knowledge of any number of languages besides the mother tongue irrespective of proficiency level and the context of learning. Consequently, success in language learning is not measured in terms of proficiency level but in terms of the transformation experienced by learners in the process of SLA.

Kramersch (2009) explains that there are **two types of symbolic language use** drawn on by L2 learners. First, language use is symbolic because language is made up of a set of symbols that represent the social and psychological reality of a speech community agreed upon by social convention. Language learners utilize the new language in a symbolic way by using the language as a system of symbols conforming to linguistic and cultural conventions agreed upon by a speech community. Thereby, they are granted symbolic power to enter a historical speech community and become an accepted member in that particular community.

By speaking a new language, MLSs may have ideas and thoughts they have never had before. Nevertheless, having to conform to linguistic and cultural rules may limit the realm of the sayable in the new language. Due to this type of symbolic language use, **language and culture are inseparable** and, therefore, the two are interwoven in the process of SLA (Kramersch 1998, 2009). Risager (2005), for example, puts forth the concept of *langaculture* pointing out the interconnectedness of language and culture on different levels. When addressing the intertwined nature of language and culture, I refer to the process of learning pragmatic and connotative meanings in the target language prescribed by linguistic and social conventions that go beyond grammatical accuracy and the denotative meaning of words.

The second type of symbolic language use by learners lies in the foreignness of the new language, which enables MLSs to find unconventional and subjective meanings they associate the language with that may not conform to the way native speakers (NSs) make meaning (Kramersch 2009: 6-7). This duality permits MLSs to get closer to and distance themselves from the L2 at the same time. These are idiosyncratic meaning-making practices that trigger emotional responses in language learners, which are

manifest in their reflections on the learning experience providing insights into their linguistic identities. These reflections of the participants provide the qualitative data for the study. The terms '*linguistic identity*' and '*multilingual identity*' are used synonymously and interchangeably in the paper referring to language learners' identity construction in the process of SLA.

### **Imagination and imagined communities**

Imagination plays a fundamental role in the process of becoming a MLS, as L2 learners use their imagination to create their subjective and unconventional resonances and emotional responses to L2 learning that construct their multilingual identity. Learners' inwardly generated identity is often imagined but it becomes real when it guides and orients their thoughts, emotions, feelings, attitudes, and their behaviour when using the L2 (Kramsch 2009: 17). Learners' identity is linked to their identification with other L2 speakers or groups of L2 speakers. In identifying with certain L2 speakers or groups of L2 speakers, learners draw on their imagination because they cannot get to know all L2 speakers; thus, they generate an image about them in their head. This way they live in an *imagined community* (Anderson 1983: 48) of English speakers.

An extended version of Anderson's imagined community is a *community of practice* (Wenger 2000) that individuals strive to be part of. For example, some English learners seek entrance to the imagined communities of English majors, English teachers, or native British or American speakers. Language learners' inwardly created identity is often imagined but it becomes fathomable and palpable in their utterances, actions, and feelings. L2 learners' identity construction may be explored by mapping into their emotional and symbolic language use, which constitutes the focus of the study.

### **Desire and pain in language learning**

In the field of semiotics, Kristeva (1980: 23-35) proposed that language is much more than a social code embedded in the structure of the language, because such an approach separates the language from the speaker; therefore, she focuses on how the speaking subject uses the language, making language and the speaking subject inseparable. On the other hand, learning the native language is a painful activity, according to Lacan, because the child learns the language of the Other along with a consciousness that comes with it: "one cannot even speak of a code without it already being the Other's code" (Lacan 1977: 683). Taking both Kristeva's and Lacan's views into consideration, the desire to identify with the Other in an effort to create one's own identity touches the core of who the individual is, and it creates a powerful desire for self-fulfillment in and through language (Kramsch 2009: 14).

Kramsch (2009: 14-25) adopted Kristeva's concept of desire in the context of SLA to denote **the learner's desire for self-fulfilment in and via learning an L2** by which the learner can create an **inwardly generated identity** drawing on imagination, fantasies, projections, and fears, as well as real life experiences with the L2 and the speakers of the L2. According to *the first type of desire*, learners learn the L2 to provide themselves with a new mode of (self-) expression from a repertoire of more than one language and thus can rid themselves of the linguistic, social, and cultural constraints of the L1, as language and culture are interwoven in language learning. The Other they wish to identify with may be a NS or a non-native speaker (NNS) of the L2, an imagined representation inspired by real people, or an imagined version of the learner. The desired Other is oftentimes the product of imagination, for learners may create an imagined community (Anderson 1983) or an imagined community of practice (Wenger 2000) with other L2 speakers.

In the case of *the second type of desire*, learners refuse to identify with the Other in and through the L2 and thus return to the meaning-making practices afforded by their familiar mother tongue. This happens owing to the transformative potential of language learning that poses a threat to the integrity of the learner's identity. Learners claiming that learning an L2 is simply giving different labels to things in

the world is indicative of the magnitude of the threat posed by the L2 on the learner's existing identity. The type and quality of learners' desire in language learning is in line with the transformation they have experienced in SLA. **The transformative potential of L2 learning** is evidenced by learner testimonies in the study.

### **Emotions in SLA**

*Emotions or affect*, as it is often referred to in applied linguistics, has always been deemed an important field in SLA research, but how learners' emotions and their emotional responses are viewed has significantly changed as a result of neurobiological studies in the field of SLA. Examining **the neurobiological foundations of emotions**, Damasio (1994) pinpoints that both the mind and the body are linked to generating emotions and feelings. Emotions trigger neurobiological responses in the brain as well as physical reactions in the body. For instance, a threat is registered in the body when seeing a scary object, so the eyes visually register the threat and the body sends a signal to the brain that produces hormones (adrenaline or cortisol), which, then, results in further bodily reactions such as rapid heart rate, perspiration, and a readiness for fight or flight.

The same process is true for all emotions and feelings with variations in the strength of the neurobiological and physical response. In the process of SLA, learners are likely to experience a wide range of emotions such as anxiety or fear when taking an exam or not knowing how to say something in the target language, or happiness or pride when experiencing success in learning, or excitement or frustration when facing novelty in the new language, or shame, humiliation or resignation when experiencing failure or poor attainment in language learning. These emotions are registered both by the brain and the body of the learner. Similarly to everything else in life, language learning also generates emotional responses in individuals. Consequently, SLA is perceived as an **embodied experience** and the study of L2 learners' **emotional responses to SLA** provides insights into their learning processes and their identity construction associated with the L2. The embodied nature of language learning explains why the participants in the study responded emotionally when they were asked about their language learning experiences.

### **Blended space theory**

*Conceptual blending* is a subjective and symbolic activity that all humans do. However, in the case of L2 learners conceptual blending is magnified by the use of more than language. Fauconnier and Turner (2002) elaborated on *blended space theory* arguing that the mind creates meaning drawing on three operations: identity, integration, and imagination in a complex, emergent, and dynamic way that most of the time takes place unconsciously (6-7). The integration of identity and difference takes place in the imaginative mind through brain simulation. Biologically, the mind is metaphorical and is capable of matching and aligning the elements of two domains or two mental spaces, but people are not aware of the imaginative work that such integration entails (p. 12). Conceptual integration of different domains is part of the way humans think and live to create new blended meanings that are the result of imaginative integration (389-391).

Since conceptual blending and metaphorical thought are part of our everyday life, it is highly intriguing how MLSs blend various domains, concepts, meanings, and mental spaces drawing on one or more languages to create new blended meanings in the process of becoming an MLS. Conceptual blending is in evidence in the data, because the participants blended elements of different domains in their L1 and L2 to create subjective meanings (symbolic language use type 2) that subvert conventional symbolic language use (type 1).

## Methodology

### Aim and context of study

The aim of the study is to **explore Hungarian English majors' emotional and identity responses to SLA** drawing on the **holistic post-structuralist approach** elaborated on in the theoretical overview.

### Research questions

In this study, I seek an answer to the following research question:  
What characterizes the participants' emotional responses to English learning that construct their multilingual identities?

### Participants

This inquiry is part of a big **classroom research project** (Fekete 2018) involving first-year English majors studying at the University of Pécs (UP), in Hungary. The participants came from three Listening and Speaking Skills II courses that I taught at UP. Out of the total 42 students, 31 completed the assignment generating data for the research. The only criterion for selecting participants was at least intermediate proficiency level in English besides the mother tongue, which enabled students to reflect on their experiences in English. Being English majors at university, the participants' language proficiency ranged from intermediate to advanced level (based on the university's admission requirements and my expert opinion), making them multilingual in the context of the term used in the study. Speaking languages in addition to English and the mother tongue was not required; however, some students had learnt additional languages. I used pseudonyms to protect the participants' identity.

As for the gender ratio of the participants, 23 students were females and nine were males. The participants' gender and linguistic knowledge are not considered as separate factors, because the study does not focus on emotions and identity in relation to linguistic knowledge or gender; instead, it takes a holistic approach to scrutinize how transformative language learning is in learners' life and how meaningfully it is lived by them, triggering emotional and identity responses in the participants.

As for the participants' nationality and mother tongue, all but three undergraduates were Hungarian citizens speaking Hungarian as their mother tongue. One student, Brandon was a Hungarian and U.S. citizen who had lived the first ten years of his life in the U.S.A. before moving to Hungary. His parents were Hungarians who had immigrated to the U.S. before he was born. The other non-Hungarian student, Hyun came from South-Korea and spent only one semester at UP as an ERASMUS student. The third student, Samir came from Libya and was a full-time student at UP.

### Data collection instrument

The research instrument used to gather data for this inquiry was a **structured writing task** including three open-ended questions that the students answered in writing. The instrument contained in the Appendix served two purposes: 1) it was a home assignment for students to improve their English language skills at C1 level and to provide a meaningful context for an in-class discussion, and 2) it served as a data source for my research. The three open-ended questions addressed the respondents' emotional and identity responses to L2 learning. The inquiry relied on a **bottom-up approach**, because the **emerging patterns** in the data provided the rationale for the holistic approach employed in the study.

### Procedures

In the framework of the structured writing task, the participants were invited to answer three written questions at home as a home assignment. The task was clarified to students in the seminar, and they were sent a word document containing instructions and the three questions (see Appendix) in an email.

They were kindly asked to answer the questions in writing and send their answers back to me via email or bring their answers to the next seminar. The questions addressed in the home assignment were further elaborated on in class to improve the participants' speaking skills and to raise their awareness of their multilingual identities.

### **Research methods**

Holistic approaches to identity research tend to employ qualitative research methods to explore the subtleties of the construct on a small scale (Fekete 2016 in press, Kramsch 2009, Norton 2013, Pavlenko 2003). Qualitative research seeks to reveal why and how a phenomenon has arisen and explores the subjective and subtle aspects of the issue under scrutiny drawing on special cases rather than variables and averages in an iterative manner (Dörnyei 2007: 39-41). This study is a qualitative inquiry drawing on textual data gathered with the help of a structured writing task. The data were analysed in an iterative manner using **qualitative content analysis** to seek **emerging patterns** and **uniqueness** in the data. This bottom-up approach led to the inclusion of multiple disciplines and perspectives in the study.

For the qualitative research design, I chose case study research and involved over 30 students in the study, which is a relatively large number in qualitative research. The participants were treated as special cases providing unique and idiosyncratic data; therefore, the study qualifies as a **multiple case study** (Creswell 2007: 74) that addresses a central subject matter drawing on several cases. The study is also **classroom research** and **action research**, since it was conducted in the classroom and the person implementing the research and the teacher teaching the three courses were one and the same person (Nunan & Bailey 2009: 226). With action research the researcher-teacher fulfilled two goals: 1) she conducted research to ameliorate her teaching practice and make learning more meaningful and motivating to the students in her classes, and 2) she communicated her research findings to a wider audience by publishing her study in an international journal.

### **Results and discussion**

#### **Emotional responses to language learning**

The results confirm the findings of neurobiological and applied linguistic studies pinpointing the embodied nature of SLA. Out of the 31 respondents, 23 students responded emotionally to the three questions in the structured writing task. **Three recurring themes** emerged in the datasets that are put under scrutiny in the study. The experience of **desire, freedom, and pain associated with SLA** turned out to be an immense emotional response. The data also revealed that powerful emotional experiences were frequently explicated using metaphors. **Metaphorical thought** results from **conceptual blending**. The feeling of freedom and pain was often described with the help of mixing or joining elements of different domains or blending the different connotative meanings of words drawing on two languages.

#### **Desire for self-fulfilment in and via the second language**

Conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner: 2002) may take place by joining or aligning an element of different fields or concepts to create new meanings using only one language. Language learners often employ this technique to describe their learning experience. These new meaning-making processes correspond to the second type of symbolic language use that subverts conventional meanings. The learners' such creative and unconventional processes reflect their desire for self-fulfilment in and via language. The findings revealed that strong emotional responses to SLA often resulted in metaphorical descriptions based on conceptual blending. Learning English triggered powerful emotional responses in three participants, which provides evidence for the magnitude of the transformation these language learners have experienced in the process SLA.

*I have an English-myself, that was born when I started to learn the language and it developed and was getting stronger and stronger with every single English word I acquired.*  
(Italics in original) Sandra

I am different because I was born without this knowledge and I didn't use it. Jennifer

Sandra and Jennifer are conscious of their inwardly generated identity (Kramersch 2009) in and through English. Sandra proposes that her English Self was "born" when she started to learn English. She covertly refers to the metaphor of nurturing a baby into adulthood. Metaphorically speaking, English is a baby that needs to be fed by learning new words so that it can become a fully-fledged entity. In her account, Sandra blends two concepts when she compares nurturing a child to learning a new language. She uses the new signs as icons of reality, focusing on an analogy between the language and another concept (Kramersch 2009: 41). The analogy between nurturing a baby and nurturing English indexes a mother-child relationship between Sandra's Hungarian and English Self. The creation of an inwardly generated identity through the new language is analogous with the conception of a child. Similarly to Sandra, Jennifer draws on another powerful metaphor to address her English Self. She reflects on becoming more or gaining something new by means of learning English. The metaphor of self-growth is indicative of self-enhancement, which refers to the improvement of the Self through L2 learning (Kramersch 2009: 63-64).

Amanda compares the use of English to taking up a new persona and becoming another person.

I also feel different when I speak in another language than my mother tongue because I use different phrases and expressions that it feels like I'm not even Hungarian, I think differently, I sing Hungarian and English songs in a different way. Amanda

Amanda's account of her feelings describes a person who is in transition: moving away from being a monolingual Hungarian with thoughts and ideas afforded and limited by the mother tongue to becoming a multilingual speaker with novel ideas, experiences, and feelings provided by the L2. This stage also indexes a transition from convention-governed language use to the creation of unconventional meanings allowed by the use of more than one language.

These three learner testimonies provide **evidence for the transformative potential of language learning** (Kramersch 2009) and signal important changes in their multilingual identities resulting from SLA. The theme of self-enhancement via English is in line with Kramersch's (2009) findings, pointing out that the theme of self-growth is a major and recurring theme associated with SLA. It is also in evidence in the testimonies that **the mind is metaphorical** and relies on conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) in the area of language learning as well, generating emotionally powerful metaphors. Becoming a mother to a child, comparing English learning to raising a child, and taking up a new persona are thought-provoking metaphors that reflect the strength of the learner's **emotional involvement in SLA**. In the process of conceptual blending, learners rely on their imagination and emotions, which points out that the learner's **body and mind are equally involved in language learning** (Damasio 1994).

The three accounts pinpoint how transformative L2 learning can be and how meaningfully it may be lived by learners. The transformation experienced by learners derives from their **desire for self-fulfilment in and via English**. The new language provides spaces for them to liberate themselves from the linguistic and socio-cultural conventions and expectations of the first language. This may be a massive experience that can be accurately and meaningfully conveyed with the help of metaphors drawing on conceptual blending.

Traditionally, these three learners may not be regarded as most successful based on their linguistic knowledge with an English proficiency level of B2-C1. However, the post-structuralist view adopted by the study provides a holistic perspective to evaluate their success. Accordingly, they cannot be deemed moderately successful language learners if learning English has completely changed their lives.

Therefore, understanding **success in relation to the transformation experienced by learners**, which is a highly meaningful and emotional experience, can be a more meaningful measure of success in SLA.

### **The experience of freedom via language**

#### **Desire for freedom**

Conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) may also be achieved when learners join, blend, or contrast the different connotations of words with the same denotative meaning in different languages to conceive novel and subjective meanings. These idiosyncratic meaning-making processes subvert linguistic and social convention governing meaning in one language and, therefore, create unconventional meanings that reflect the learner's desire for self-fulfilment, which, then, translates into their multilingual identities in and via the L2. Thereby, **subjective connotation becomes objective denotation** for the learner altering their reality via language (Kramsch 2009).

An important pattern of conceptual blending drawing on English and Hungarian emerged in the data. **A blended meaning of freedom** relying on the word's different connotative meanings in Hungarian and English was created by four students. Rosemary's account sheds light on how speaking English exempts her from the expectations imposed on her by Hungarian social, cultural, and linguistic conventions.

When I use English, I feel like I'm thinking differently. Maybe it's because of the fact that our culture, behaviour, attitude differ from one another. To be honest, I think I can express myself in English better. I can talk more freely, which gives me more confidence. When I am abroad and use English..., it feels like a fresh start. Rosemary

Rosemary's real or imagined ability to express her thoughts and ideas better in English does not result from her proficiency level or linguistic knowledge but from her unique and personalized experience of freedom that is based on her imagined and real-life experiences with English. In English, she does not feel limited by linguistic, social, and cultural conventions imbedded in the Hungarian language. The psychological experience of freedom is intensified by the physical experience of freedom when she stays in another country where English is used for communication. This is a heightened experience of freedom. Speaking English is perceived, by her, as **a liberating experience of self-fulfilment** via the L2. This finding strongly resonates with the desire of becoming another person via English, resulting in a metaphorical and emotional response to English learning.

Similarly to Rosemary, other students reported the feeling of being at ease when speaking English rather than Hungarian.

English is an easy language and most of the time I think in English because that is faster and easier. Jane

I often feel that it is more comfortable to use it [English] than Hungarian. Kailee

Well, sometimes I feel that I can express myself much more accurately in English than in my mother tongue. Donna

The liberating experience of speaking English perceived by Jane, Kailee, and Donna resonates with Rosemary's experience. The feeling of being at ease when speaking English may originate from the feeling of freedom generated by the imagined and real connotations of English cultural products associated with the language rather than native-like proficiency level in English. The preference for using English rather than the native language may lie in **the cultural connotations of English** that often evoke **freedom and economic opportunity** in English learners. Movies depicting some version of the American dream, as well as TV shows and sit coms showing easy-going and funny interactions, situations, and contexts convey linguistically and culturally the image of freedom. Therefore, the word freedom is often associated with the English language and English-speaking cultures. The ease of speaking in English for these learners may only be imagined based on the cultural connotations of English depicted in popular media rather than their linguistic knowledge of English being far from native-like.

Consequently, these learner accounts confirm that **language and culture are intertwined in SLA** (Kramsch 1998). The culture that is learnt by learners in and via the L2 may only be imagined based on cultural phenomena and cultural products. Learners rely on their imagination to make sense of culture and the imagined communities associated with that culture.

### **Desire to escape**

The desire to learn a new language often results from **learners' desire to escape the linguistic and cultural constraints of their mother tongue** (Kramsch 2009, Kristeva 1980). Nonetheless, they often distance themselves from the L2 by creating their subjective meanings of and resonances about the L2. Kramsch (2009) puts forth that language learners can only own the L2 when they can distance themselves from it and find spaces to subvert conventions and conceive creative and subjective meanings that are idiosyncratic.

Donna uses English to escape the old world of her mother tongue and through the distance offered by English she distances herself from her problems experienced in Hungarian.

Well, I have a habit which is the following: when I feel that my head is full of crap (friendship-dramas, family-dramas or boyfriend-dramas) and I need to clear it, I often write all the stuff out of my head and it helps leave things behind or at least put them away for a short period of time. Well, sometimes I feel that I can express myself much more accurately in English than in my mother language. I just find more fitting expressions in English and it just comes to my mind in English, sometimes I cannot even find a word or phrase in Hungarian. Donna

Kramsch (2009) stresses that language learning is often motivated by the promise of escape from the constraints of the L1. Donna cannot physically escape her problems, but she can find refuge in using English, which provides sufficient distance for her from her problems in Hungarian. By distancing herself from them, she can look at her issues from the perspective of an outsider rather than from that of an insider. This is a liberating experience for her: "I feel that I can express myself much more accurately in English... I just find more fitting expressions in English ... I cannot even find a word or phrase in Hungarian." The powerful emotional response, merging the feeling of excitement, freedom, and exhilaration triggered by English, is in evidence in the reiteration of the experience. Donna draws on conceptual blending (Fauconnier & Turner 2002) by creating a **hybrid meaning of freedom** for herself: she frees herself from her problems (Hungarian meaning of 'freedom'); nevertheless, she uses English instead of Hungarian to do so (drawing on the English meaning of freedom).

Owing to the tormented history of Hungary the cultural connotation of freedom in Hungarian often refers to freedom from restraint or being free from domination. By contrast, due to the global spread of cultural products advertising freedom and opportunity, the cultural connotation of freedom in English has become freedom to act, do, or become something/somebody (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/freedom>). L2 learners oftentimes start blending the cultural connotations of words in their different languages whose dictionary meaning seems to be the same to create hybrid meanings for themselves. Others might replace the cultural connotation of a word in one language with that of another one in another language. For example, these Hungarian English learners might replace the Hungarian meaning of freedom (freedom from something) with the English meaning of freedom (freedom to do something); thus, cultural connotation becomes denotation and the subjective becomes the objective reality. The participants' feeling of freedom associated with the feeling of being at ease or the ability to talk and think faster also comes from their conceptual blending of the cultural connotations of English and Hungarian rather than their linguistic knowledge of English that does not compare to their mother tongue.

## Symbolic pain in SLA

### The experience of pain in SLA

On the other end of the emotional continuum, the symbolic pain of learning the language of the Other that comes with a foreign consciousness (Lacan 1977) is evidenced by the following testimonies. The painful process of SLA can be manifest in **physical, psychological, or symbolic pain** that needs to be alleviated by the learner.

*The other activity when I prefer my second language is writing my diary or just putting my thoughts and ideas on a piece of paper. Sometimes it is painful to recognize your mistakes, but if you admit them in a different language: they are not your sins anymore. You confess them and do not at the same time, and it gives you relief.* (Italics in original) Sandra

According to the transmission model of language (Graddol 1994), written and print medium focuses on form (grammar) and information (lexical structures) that can be analysed and taught. Once they are learnt, the learner is capable of communicating in the new language relying on the referential meanings of words. Foreign language teaching and learning often prioritize this model over the social model that emphasizes communication and dialogue to make meaning by using the L2. Sandra, who is a high achiever and a perfectionist in English classes (my own observations and personal communication with the student), believes in this model because it offers attainable boundaries of the learning process, promising a predictable future in the unpredictable and volatile process of language learning which seems so dreadful to her. Sandra's pain of speaking English that belongs to other people (Lacan 1977) is heightened by the fear of an unpredictable future. Freeing herself from the constraints of form and referential meanings can only take place privately and creatively through writing a diary when she is not obligated to meet the requirements of educational institutions and gate-keeping mechanisms (Kramsch 2009: 156-7). Sandra's testimony is immensely emotional in tone, the genre of her narrative is similar to a religious confession in which she privately confesses her linguistic sins, causing her symbolic body immense symbolic pain, and then she receives redemption, in return.

Sandra's strategy for self-expression and the creation of her symbolic Self when speaking English is identical to the strategy that she applies in writing.

*I have a strange habit; I love talking to myself. If I do it in Hungarian, it sounds a bit crazy. But if I communicate with myself in English, it is like talking to another person. I really love speaking in English, but I am terribly afraid of making mistakes in public, so this is the solution for this problem too.* (Italics in original) Sandra

By talking to herself, she can evade meeting the conventions of the L2 as set by the transmission model of language. Talking to herself is the spoken version of writing a diary: a private and creative way of self-expression that is free of constraints enforced by rules and gatekeepers.

In the same vein, Emma's testimony provides clear evidence for the **struggle** between the learner's obligation to conform to conventions and their desire to break away from them in an effort to create subjective meanings for themselves.

[Native speakers] understand their mother tongue through my knowledge. When I use English, I have this feeling that I have another person deep inside that we make the sentences not only me. Because I have to think about English sentences to convert from Hungarian. Even if my speech becomes a little Hunglish, I feel the same with a smile on my face. Emma

Emma confirms that she has gained symbolic access to a speech community of native English speakers by conforming to the linguistic and cultural norms agreed upon by the community. However, having to conform to conventions restricts the sphere of the sayable. The mutual understanding between NSs and L2 learners lies in the misconception that by speaking the common tongue we mean the same. This is a fallacious ratiocination for several reasons. Since language and culture go hand in hand with each other

(Kramsch 1998), learning English in an English-speaking culture is not the same as learning English in a Hungarian-speaking culture. Language is a product of culture because it expresses the cultural reality as agreed by a speech community (Kramsch 1998). Finally, the subjective meanings that language learners attach to the L2 are unconventional from the perspective of native speakers (Kramsch 2009). Precisely due to the freedom rendered by the second type of symbolic language use, Emma is allowed to break away from linguistic conventions and become “Hunglish” even if it should be disapproved of by native English speakers. The struggle between what Emma is expected to do and what she can or would prefer to do is indicated in her statements “I have another person deep inside” and “even if my speech becomes a little Hunglish, I feel the same”. It is impossible, however, for her to “feel the same” because she is learning the language of the Other (Lacan 1977). The language can only be hers if she can access the symbolic order where she can find a space to subvert the tradition and create her own meanings associated with the language (Kramsch 2009: 101). In other words, she can only gain ownership of English by distancing herself from the language through symbolic forms.

In Janet’s statement the duality of positive and negative emotions is detectable. The pain of speaking the Other’s language and the transformative potential of SLA may be seen as both terrifying and painful.

I act differently when I’m talking in English.... I get more open with people when I am talking in English, but I feel more like myself when I speak in Hungarian. Janet

When I speak Hungarian, I am not so patient but it’s different in English because I have to pay attention to my pronunciation and that helps me to [speak] a bit slower and be more patient with the people I talk to. Rachel

Due to the foreignness of English and her limited proficiency level in English, Rachel has to monitor what she says and how when she speaks a language that belongs to other people. She even enforces a different behaviour on herself when she speaks English owing to the foreignness of the new language as well as due to the monitoring activity she performs. Using the new language requires her to work more if she is to express her ideas and thoughts in English. Janet and Rachel both feel impeded in their self-expression and limited by the new language that they do not yet fully own. Therefore, their **desire for self-fulfilment takes places** not via the L2 but **via the familiar mother tongue**.

### Emotions and pain in SLA

In contrast with the learner testimonies discussed in sections 4.2 and 4.3, learner accounts in 4.4 threw light on how freedom may be experienced in and via the mother tongue instead of the L2. However, **symbolic pain can become emotional pain** because language learning is an embodied experience. The use of the L2 may seem a rather painful experience when it comes to the expression of emotions in intimate situations. The expression of intimate feelings may have little to do with the linguistic knowledge of emotional phrases but rather with the novelty and the transformative potential of the L2. Words and phrases expressing romantic and affectionate feelings have different meanings and are contextualized differently in different languages. This may be an uncharted and thus unsafe territory for L2 learners trying to voice their intimate emotions. Therefore, returning to familiar meaning-making practices in the native language in the domain of emotions may be preferred, as it was the case in the accounts of two learners.

I spent two weeks in England and I got to know a boy. We talked a lot and spent that time together. On the last day he said to me that he really liked me and if he had been able to, he wouldn’t have hesitated to come with me. I liked him too or maybe it was more than a like. I tried to express clearly my feelings but I didn’t find the best words. That was the time when I realized that from my point of view exists a limit which you get over by learning. I really like to tell my boyfriend about my feelings. And I can’t imagine that I would do it in another language. Estela

I feel like I cannot express my anger in a second or third language, so if I get into a fight, I will probably use Berber curses... If I am in an intimate moment, I will not be using English or Arabic, I do not know why! It just does not sound right. Samir

Primary emotions (Damasio 1994), such as love, happiness, or anger, are deeply rooted in Estela and Samir and they are strongly linked to their first language socialization and enculturation and thus to their first language cultural and linguistic identity. Therefore, novel and uncharted meanings conveyed by the L2 or the L3 are perceived as threatening and unsafe by learners. The feeling of insecurity may be magnified in intimate situations in which individuals may see themselves as vulnerable. Returning to the emotional and linguistic comfort zone of the mother tongue can evade the threat.

### Summary of findings

In this inquiry, I presented the special and unique cases of some of the students who participated in the research. Their reflections on their English learning experiences and preferences pointed out their **intensive emotional involvement in SLA** and their **symbolic language use** that enabled them to create their own subjective and unconventional meanings associated with English learning. The participants' emotional responses to English learning confirm the embodied nature of SLA, which can be manifest in their attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, and thoughts.

Three recurring emotional themes emerged in the data: the experience of desire, freedom, and pain associated with English learning. The data pointed out that the participants experienced **powerful emotional responses to learning and speaking English**, which reflected their **desire to achieve self-fulfilment in and via English** (Kristeva 1980). Most participants embraced and exploited the **transformative potential of English learning**, which shaped their **multilingual identity** accordingly.

The second theme was the **reinterpretation of the meaning of freedom** by learners in and via English. Freedom was associated with the ease of speaking and thinking in English triggered by the promise of self-fulfilment in and via English. The hybrid meaning of freedom conceived by learners was associated with the **cultural connotations** of the word in English and in Hungarian **based on the learners' imagination**.

**Conceptual blending** applied by the participants was a way of creating subjective meanings in English to subvert linguistic and cultural convention. Conceptual blending, therefore, marked the second type of symbolic language use by the participants. These creative meaning-making processes allowed them to **alter their subjective reality**, which, then, was transformed into objective reality in the form of utterances, thoughts, and actions.

Finally, the third theme touched upon the experience of **pain in SLA**. Symbolic pain as a theme emerged in relation to the struggle for subjective meanings and self-expression via English. Pain, therefore, was also linked to the second type of 'desire' (Kramsch 2009). **Emotional pain** emerged in connection with the expression of private emotions in intimate situations. Such emotions constituting the core of the learner were threatened by the novel meaning-making practices of English, resulting in a preference for using the mother tongue in intimate situations.

### Conclusions

The findings of the study pointed out the **validity and the feasibility of the holistic approach** in the study of language learners and their learning experiences afforded by the **post-structuralist approach**. Looking at language learners and their learning processes in their complexity and entirety, this approach is suitable for mapping into language learners' emotional and identity responses in the process of SLA.

The findings also pinpoint how **SLA is an inherently emotional experience** involving the brain, the mind, and the body of the learner. Consequently, **language learners' emotional responses are**

**inherently linked to their linguistic identity construction**; thus, the two are intertwined and should be examined together.

It also became unequivocal in the study that the novelty of English learning is tackled, by learners, drawing on their **imagination** and their subjective resonances to the new language, as well as their real-life experiences. Consequently, emotions and feelings associated with the L2 are also inherently linked to imagination, creativity, and metaphorical thinking based on conceptual blending. Therefore, making sense of learners' **language learning metaphors** associated with their emotional responses to SLA taps into their **linguistic identity construction**.

The use of metaphors by learners to describe their experiences with English is indicative of the transformation they have experienced in the process of SLA. This transformation is accompanied by emotional responses to SLA that further shape learners' identities in and via language. Conceptual blending taking the form of metaphorical language use relies on the **interconnectedness of language and culture in SLA**. In the process of conceptual blending language learners draw on the **cultural connotations and cultural associations of the L2** to create **unconventional or hybrid meanings that subvert linguistic and social conventions**. This process corresponds to their desire for self-fulfilment in and via the L2.

Regarding the **theoretical gap** the study sought to address, the post-structuralist view of language learning focusing on the transformative potential of SLA does not categorize learners as good or bad learners, or successful or unsuccessful learners, or motivated or unmotivated learners. These adjectives only scratch the surface of what is really going on in learners in the process of SLA. An in-depth understanding of these processes and experiences requires a holistic view that is very much advocated by the post-structuralist approach that places learners' identity construction in the centre of scrutiny. Since identity construction fuelled by emotions is constantly changing and volatile, it is in constant interaction with other learner characteristics such as motivation, willingness-to communicate in English, or anxiety, as well as environmental factors. The interactional and dialogic relationship between the learner, the language, and the environment inherently **links traditional SLA research to holistic identity research**.

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## Appendix

### STRUCTURED WRITING TASK

Dear Students,

Please answer the following three questions in as many words as you like. Having done so, please bring this sheet to the next class or send it back to me via email. Your answers will be treated confidentially. Thank you!

1. Some people feel they are different persons when they use their various languages. Can you reflect on your experiences? How are you a different person using your various languages?
2. Please tell me about situations in which you felt more comfortable using your second or third language rather than your mother tongue. Explain why.
3. Will you please recall situations when you felt you could not fully express something in your second or third language as well as in your mother tongue? Why?

# The creation of multimodal texts of adult English language learners in a Canadian university - A case study

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## **Abstract**

*This paper reviews the larger context of English language learning and multimodality and attempts to shed light on how multimodal texts impact adult English language learners' social practice of second language learning and their identities. The theories of multimodality and identity texts shape this study. The data in this case study were collected through participant observation, interview, and artefact elicitation. The results show that multimodal text creation could help adult English language learners transform the learning model from competition to cooperation, from operational aspects to social aspects, and from monolingual to multimodal, as they invest their identities in the creation of these texts. Some implications and recommendations for English language teaching instructors and researchers are provided.*

**Keywords:** *multimodal texts, international education, English language learning, language and identity, artefact elicitation*

## **Introduction**

Globalization of economies and internationalization of education have promoted the rapid expansion of programs within and between universities, which has encouraged international exchange and study abroad (Tarc 2019). There has been an increasing number of students from ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse backgrounds coming to the North America for higher education (Zhou & Zhang 2014). Canada has become an increasingly popular choice for international students. In 2018, Canada issued 356,876 study permits to international students at all levels of study with more than 721,000 international students, up 13% from 2017 (Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship 2018), and this number is still rising.

English language learners meet various challenges in English-speaking universities. One of the challenges is to adjust to unfamiliar pedagogy and new learning environment. The biggest difficulty for English language learners is limited language and literacy skills (Zhou & Zhang 2014). Traditionally, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. However, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, literacy has become multidimensional and integrated with new technologies and multimodality (Luke 2003). In contrast with the operational dimension of literacy (Green 1988) that most often involves mastering printed-based text, new literacy goes beyond the traditional print-based texts to multimodal text such as images, sound, and other different modes of communication (Kress 2010). Literacy and language teachers' main tasks are to design different activities to facilitate students' meaning making and representation process (Stein 2000, Zammit 2015). English language teachers strive to find different strategies to help students transform "what students know, remember, sense, feel, and believe into a paragraph of writing, a lively dialogue, or a scrapbook of images" (Stein 2000: 333). This case study explores how an English improvement program offered by a Canadian university used multimodal texts to expand English language learners' skills while tapping into their life experience. In this paper, we review the larger context of English language learners and multimodality; and attempt to shed light on how multimodal texts impact adult English language learners' social practice of English language learning.

## **Theoretical background**

According to Lankshear and Knobel (2006), there have been three major changes in literacy and language education in Western countries during the 1970s. The first shift was the result of Freire and Macedo's work on critical literacy (Freire & Macedo 1987). Freire and Macedo's concept of "reading the word and the world" saw language as an outgrowth of consciousness of critical social praxis and critical awareness. McLaren (1992: 10) states that "Freire has revealed to us that literacy practices are practices of power" and being literate means to develop various ways of "resisting oppression so that a better world can be summoned, struggled for, and eventually grasped". Paulo Freire's work helped people know the world more deeply and critically. Second, the profound changes of society due to structural changes in the economy, labor market, and employment require "leaners [to] [become] literate to the extent required to live 'effectively' under contemporary conditions" (Lankshear & Knobel 2006: 10). This dissonance led to "literacy crisis" in the 1970s that swept over almost all English-speaking countries such as Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The third shift was the popularity of sociocultural perspectives on literacy. Those perspectives changed the landscape of literacy and language education and promoted different perspectives on literacy and language such as ideological perspective (Street 1984); literacy as a social practice (Street, 1984); cultural literacy (Hirsch 1987); three-dimensional literacy (Green 1988, 1997); multiliteracies (Cazden et al. 1996, Cope and Kalantzis 2000, 2009); powerful literacy (Gee 2001); multimodality (Kress 2003, Jewitt 2008, Siegel 2012, Lee 2014); and multilingual and identity text (Cummins & Early 2001). This plethora of approaches was further complicated by the development of multimedia technologies, which led to a new understanding of what it means to be literate (Jewitt 2005, Kress & Van Leeuwen 2001). For this paper, literacy is understood as social practices of communication; and multimodality builds on the idea of social semiotics as a response to social meaning-making.

## **Multimodality**

Multimodality indicates more than one modality in representation and communication processes; and assumes that people's meaning making often draws on multiple modes such as text and pictures, video and script, music and lyrics, gesture and sign, and so on. According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001: 20), multimodality is "the use of several semiotic modes in the design of a semiotic product or event". Therefore, meaning is "made through the situated configurations across image, gesture, gaze, body posture, sound, writing, music, speech" (Jewitt 2008: 246). The ways of representation are modes that organize sets of semiotic resources for meaning making. Kress (2009: 79) defines mode as "a socially shaped and culturally given resources for making meaning. Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack are examples of modes used in representation and communication". According to Jewitt (2008), many scholars have contributed to the development of different communication modes such as Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) work on images, van Leeuwen's (1999) work on sound and Martinec's (2000) work on movement and gesture. The ability of using different semiotic modes to convey meanings is defined as "affordance" (Jewitt 2008). Therefore, to create multimodal texts, in this sense, requires "affordance".

Students in higher education use language for a variety of purposes, not only academic but also social purposes (Kress 1997). Communication with peers, for social purposes and for learning in the classroom, may be heightened or expanded through using more than one modality (Stein 2000). Transformation of different modes of communication depends on the needs of communication with certain social contexts (Ajayi 2009, Jewitt 2008). People may also use a new mode of communication to express the old information, which often leads to the creation of new meaning. As Stein (2000: 336)

states, “taking invisible, taken-for-granted resources to a new context of the situation to create new meaning” allows students learn differently.

Through this rearticulating in a new site, students come to see what they have and what they know differently: the source is re-sourced. Re-sourcing resources is possible through multimodal pedagogies that recognize students as re-makers and transformers of the representational resources available to them. (Stein 2000: 336)

Compared to students whose native language is English, English language learners not only need English language for academic purposes but for social purposes. Therefore, English language learners who are accustomed to one traditional way of meaning making such as written language, need to develop skills with different modalities in order to create new meanings in different contexts—to ‘Re-source resources’.

### **Identity text**

International students who arrive in a new country and are faced with the challenge of learning in a second language may also be facing a sense of identity crisis, or feelings of alienation--of not belonging--as they attempt to adapt to a place that is not home, in a language that is not their first or mother tongue. As Metro-Rolan (2018: 1412) points out,

In studying abroad, students face the dilemma of interacting with people and places that do not lend themselves to the sense of well being one can find at home. Part of the tension here goes back to this issue of identity—of wanting to feel a sense of belonging. For many international students studying in the US, especially for those coming from more communal rather than individualistic cultures, the experience can be alienating.

Cummins and Early (2011) develop the concept of identity text to describe the way students may construct and communicate a sense of their identity. Cultural production represents an expression of identity and projection of identity into new social contexts (Cummins, Markus & Montero 2015). Recreation of identity results from feedback from and conversation with various audiences (Cummins & Early 2011).

Students invest their identities in the creation of these texts—which can be written, spoken, signed, visual, musical, dramatic, or combinations in multimodal form. The identity text then holds a mirror up to students in which their identities are reflected in a positive light. When students share identity texts with multiple audiences (peers, teachers, parents, grandparents, sister classes, the media, etc.) they are likely to receive positive feedback and affirmation of self in interaction with these audiences. (Cummins and Early 2011: 3)

In this study, we adopt the theoretical frameworks of multimodality (Jewitt 2008, Kress 1997, Kress & van Leeuwen 2001, Stein 2000) and identity text (Cummins & Early 2011) to understand an adult English language learner’s experiences of multimodal texts creation.

### **Multimodal learning**

Many studies have discussed the multimodal approach to English language learners in terms of a sense of control. English language learners who struggle with language may gain a sense of power over the object or establish communication between the body and the object through taking photos, a sensory appropriation of an object (Sontag 1977). Krause (2015) argues that young English language learners can build a sense of ownership through a selection of their ways to present their narratives, which is also called meaning-making autonomy (Ganapathy & Seetharam 2016). In the process of making multimodal texts, English language learners can self-direct their meaning making with a high level of accomplishment (Stille & Prasad 2015) while receiving minimal guidance from teachers (Ganapathy & Seetharam 2016). Those studies focus on the relationship between multimodal resources

and English language learners and show that multimodal resources can help English language learners enhance their learning autonomy.

In addition to learning autonomy, a sense of identity is another feature of a multimodal approach (Ajayi 2009). English language learners project cultural and national identities into their multimodal text (Shin & Cimasko 2008). Cummins and Early's work (2011) on identity text explains how English language learners in multilingual settings use multimodal recourse to reflect their identity. Students invested their identities to create multimodal texts such as written, spoken signed, visual, musical, and dramatic forms. "Through identity texts, students' identities, cultures, languages, and past and present experiences are reflected in a positive light" (Cummins & Early 2011: 4). Following up on Cummins and Early's work, Stille and Prasad (2015) explore the potential contribution of a multimodal approach to English language learners in an Ontario classroom. They found that "through creative multimodal engagement, students can direct themselves toward producing language and literacy work at a high level of accomplishment, constituting a powerful tool for teachers to support students in developing positive affiliations with and identifications in school" (619).

Different modes of representation become increasingly integral in the lives of young adults and play a more essential role in developing their identities than traditional modes (Mina 2014). International students translate between two cultures. In a foreign culture, international students "lack the sense of commonness they used to have with groups in their culture" (Mina 2014: 144). Encouraging international and multilingual students to represent their identities through their stories could be of great significance.

Some previous studies focus on the affective effects of a multimodal approach to English language learners. Lee (2014) conducts a longitudinal case study and finds that multimodal composition can improve the confidence of English language learners who are identified as at-risk. Multimodal approaches can help students to develop a sense of authenticity to learning (Krause 2015). English language learners may develop emotional connections with the multimodal texts that they create (Shin & Cimasko 2008). Furthermore, students who find traditional literacy challenging can discover other strengths by creating multimodal texts (Zammit 2015). Some researchers point out that this approach can also improve English language learners' motivation (Ganapathy & Seetharam 2016, Lee 2014). However, they do not investigate which dimension of motivation has been improved. Promoting a multimodal approach with English language learners can enhance effective interaction, collaborations, and creativity (Hafner 2013, Ruefman 2015, Zammit 2014).

Many studies focus on English language children learners, but few discuss the adult English language learners in Canadian universities. This current study attempts to address this gap by focusing on how multimodal text creation impacts adult English language learners' experiences in an English improvement program at a medium-sized comprehensive Canadian university.

## **Methodology**

This study looks at one participant in a research project that took place during one semester in an English language development program. While the project included several participants, this paper will focus on one of them, as a case study in order to obtain rich and detailed description. A case study can be located at the "micro ... or macro levels" and involve one participant or many (Schwandt & Gates 2018). The goal of the case study is to provide an in-depth look at a bounded phenomenon, to focus on "particularity and complexity" (Stake 1995). The phenomenon under investigation is adult English language learners' experiences of multimodal text creation in a Canadian university language improvement program. The case for the study is an adult English language learner in Canada. We collected rich and detailed information in different ways over a continued period (Stake 1995). Data was collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and artefact elicitation.

Artefact elicitation, photo elicitation, or document elicitation use artefacts to prompt (or elicit) discussion. The researcher may present an artefact; or the participant may bring an artefact of their creation or choice, in which case both the artefact and the discussion provide data for analysis. Artefacts that the participant creates or provides allow greater opportunity for the researcher to ask questions that attribute meaning to the artefact (Grant 2019). Artefacts can serve as a buffer to help the participants feel less nervous, because they talk about their experience with a concrete artefact; and artefacts can help participants to express their memories and emotions (Prosser 2011). The artefacts can act as stimulus materials in interviews (Crilly, Blackwell & Clarkson 2006). Harper (2002: 22) states “photo elicitation mines deeper shafts into a different part of human consciousness than do words-alone interviews”.

Interviews were conducted and audio-taped; tapes were transcribed into word documents; data were coded for emergent themes. Artefacts were analysed for content and integrated with related interview text. Another component of the case study is the unit of analysis, defined as the area of focus of the study (Merriam 1988, Yin 2009). For this study, the unit of analysis is the English through arts program provided by a Canadian university English language improvement program. To connect data to propositions, we try to match patterns that appear in the data with the theoretical framework (Yin, 2009). Finally, we carefully extract meaning from the findings to identify implications and recommendations for practitioners and researchers.

### **Research site**

With the high growth of international students arriving in Canada, English language centres that offer courses and activities to raise the English language skills of registered students or prospective applicants are increasingly the norm on Canadian campuses. We approached the director of the centre and proposed collaborating with an instructor to implement multimodal activities into one of the centre’s courses. The director was receptive to our proposal. We exchanged ideas for multimodal activities that would support English language learners’ learning and mapped out a program outline that reflected our initial vision. The purpose of this course was not to provide students with specific language training such as vocabulary exercise, grammatical drill and listening exercises. Rather, the purpose was to provide students with more opportunities to use English through multimodal resources and assess the effect on learners’ experience.

### **Participants**

For the current analysis, we focus on “Rose” (age range 25-35 years old), one of the seven participants of the study. All students who registered for the course did the same activities and drew the same benefits from the program, whether they chose to be a research participant or not. The course ran for ten weeks, two sessions per week. Author 1’s role was to assist the primary instructor in the classroom. Each session was planned to help create opportunities to encourage students to use English, by using a variety of strategies and media. We chose a single case in order to have deeper and detailed understanding of exploring the subject (Dyer & Wilikins 1991) and to describe richly the existence of phenomenon (Siggelkow 2007). Compared to single case, multiple cases are chosen to understand similarities and differences between cases (Stake 1995). This study was not intended to compare and contrast different cases but to extensively and deeply explore one case. We will first describe the methods used during the full study, and then provide a detailed description and analysis of one case, Rose’s story.

### **Data collection and analysis**

The data were collected through participant observation and a follow-up interview with artefact elicitation. There were ten sessions of the program and each session had different topics of multimodal text creation. Author 1, as a facilitator in the program, took field notes of each session. His observations were of those students who had consented to participate in the research. During the observation, he also had casual talks with Rose to learn about her experience of creating multimodal texts, and those casual talks were included in the field notes. At the end of the program, the researcher did a follow-up interview with Rose to have a better understanding of her whole sense of multimodal text experiences; during the interview, Rose was invited to bring and talk about her artefacts. The data were coded, categorized and themed. The artefacts that Rose chose to share, with the class, and with the researcher, were saved as a form of documentary data.

### **Results - Rose's case**

Before we explore Rose's story, it is important to give some background information about the context of language proficiency requirements at the university. As do all universities in Canada, the university setting for this research (henceforth to be referred to as The University) has language requirements for international students. Applicants who have not previously studied at an English language university must have taken one of the internationally recognized language proficiency tests (e.g., International English Language Testing System, IELTS or Internet-based Test of English as a Foreign Language, TOEFL) and passed with a score as determined by the university or program. If students have previously failed to achieve the required standard, they can register with a language development centre. At The University, students must take courses until they complete Level 3 of the "English Language Improvement Program." They may then apply to any faculty or degree program in The University. The centre categorizes students' English Level based on their entry test Level and offers five language improvement programs: Foundation, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Level 3 Fast Track. Each student needed to take an entry test to qualify for different Levels. Level 3 fast track program aims to help students who need quick entry to university courses, and it condenses all the courses that are supposed to be taught in three months into a month. Students who have a conditional offer by The University, once they have achieved Level 3 or Level 3 fast track (75% or better), can register for university courses.

Rose was categorized into Level 2 according to her entry test results. She already held a Master of Science in Hydrology in Kazakhstan. She was offered a language-conditional offer majoring in Earth Science by The University; meaning, she had to provide proof of English language proficiency before the day of registration (i.e., pass the Level 3 examination).

### **Translating two cultures**

Rose's past learning experiences influenced her current learning experiences. According to Rose, while learning English in Kazakhstan it was important to be competitive among her peers. In the follow-up interview, she said, "we [had] to know English because maybe before ten or twenty years ago, it was not popular but now everyone [knew] English. If you [did] not know English, you [would] look like a loser" (follow-up Interview, March 2017). She said that she learned English through text memorization; and that most of her classmates in Kazakhstan had low communicative competence.

At the very beginning of the program, Rose sat alone at the corner of the classroom whereas other students sat in groups. Rose placed her grammar exercise book and a reading textbook on the desk. During the first two classes, she kept busy doing grammar exercises and checking some unfamiliar vocabulary on her smartphone. (Field notes, February 2017). Eventually, in the third session, which used the theme of music and writing, we successfully engaged Rose in a creative activity. We asked the class to express their gratitude to their loved ones by any form they preferred. Rose chose to write a letter to

her parents. Other students chose different ways such as drawings and poetry to express themselves, and some recorded a video. After the session, she told us that she preferred to write letters because she thought it was safer and could be corrected if there were some mistakes (Field notes, February 2017).

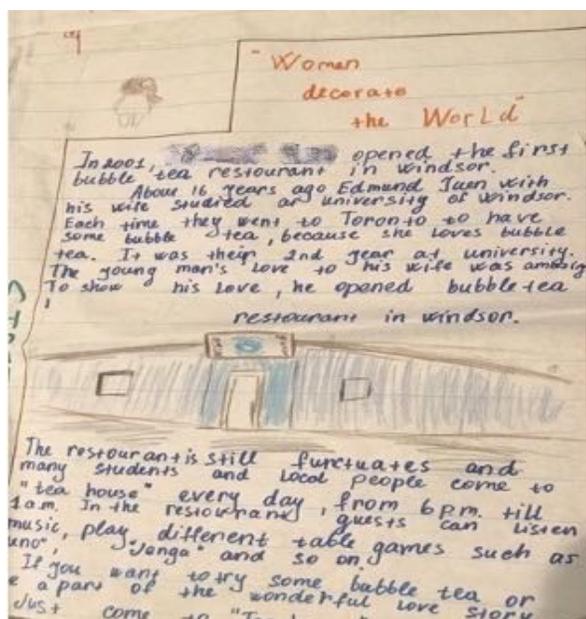
After several sessions, Rose's behaviour started to change. First, she began to cooperate with other students. She sat closer with others and, in one session, she worked with four other students from different countries to design a poster that represented their experience of walking in the local community (Field notes, March 2017). Second, after the third session, she stopped bringing her grammar exercise book and reading textbooks during class. In the follow-up interview, she told us that the multimodality activities were interesting and that she liked the way of communicating with others. Finally, Rose began to explore different ways of expressing her feelings (Field notes, March 2017). She used a bio-poem to express her identity; drawings, pictures, and written content to express her community experiences; and music to express her homesickness.

### Re-sourcing resource

Rose created new meanings through her multimodal texts. Rose lived on the campus, and the language centre was near to the campus. In the follow-up interview, she told us that she often went to a bubble tea store near the language centre; and she was familiar with the local community as she walked from where she lived to her classes at the centre. In one of the sessions, the instructor encouraged each student to go outside to explore the local community. She went into the bubble tea shop and talked with the boss. She took notes of what the boss said to her. After that, she took a picture of the bubble tea and went back to the centre (Field notes, March 2017).

After she came back to the centre, we encouraged the students to present to us what they found interesting when they explored the community. Rose presented a story of a bubble tea restaurant to the class. Other students attentively listened to her presentation. After her presentation, we also invited Rose to make a poster from a combination of images and texts, of what she would like to include and express. She collaborated with other students to make a poster (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Community poster artefact.



In her poster, Rose wrote about the history of the business and drew a picture of the front of the building. During our interview, we used this poster for the artefact elicitation. Rose commented:

I find the photo and poster are interesting. Taking a picture is my favourite... I like taking a picture because and it is my hobby. I can choose what I want to take. I also talked with the boss and I like this way (follow-up interview, March 2017).

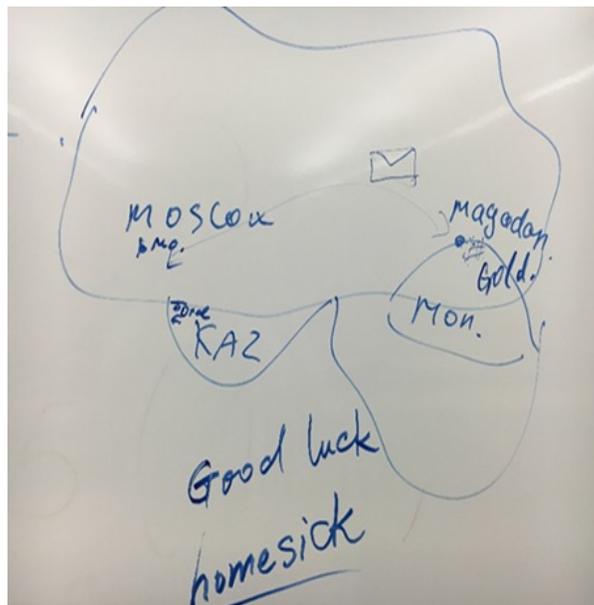
Rose's statement reflected the freedom and autonomy that multimodal representation provided to her. Rose appeared confident to talk about her experiences, while using her poster during the artefact elicitation. Recalling her memories about her experiences of making this poster also helped her to make new meanings. When she looked at the poster, she also reflected on her experiences of being pregnant, which would be her process of identity projection.

### Identity projection

For one of the session activities, students were asked to introduce their home country by any form they preferred. One student from China played a song named Descendant of Dragon, through YouTube.<sup>7</sup> When the video stopped, all students were confused as they did not understand Chinese. Rose said that it may be about the patriotism and nationalism. She added that, although she could not understand the Chinese language, she could guess that the singer loved his country. The Chinese student said yes and gave Rose a thumbs-up.

Rose came to the front of the classroom and she also decided to play a song, through YouTube, in Kazakhstan language. When the video played, everyone was immersed in this song because this rhythm was beautiful. When the video stopped, The Chinese girl raised her hand quickly and said that this song was about a man who loved a woman, but he could not see her. While smiling, Rose said that was incorrect. The Indian student said that it was about the battle, and soldiers were sad because they could not go home. Rose said that was partially correct. After that, Rose drew a picture to explain the story (Field notes, March 2017).

Figure 2: Kazakhstan song artefact.



<sup>7</sup> Descendants of Dragon <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igs788j02Os>

She introduced two cities in Russia: Moscow and Magadan. Magadan is a port town and is famous for the Natalka gold mine. She said that those two cities had a battle, and Moscow lost. So, some people living in Moscow were sent to the Magadan and put into prison. They became slaves and cheap labour in the gold mine. They received letters from their family in Moscow, and this song is about their homesickness. After the explanation, she wrote down the story besides the picture she drew.

In the follow-up interview, Rose said that “I [liked] ...sharing home country music with others. My sharing song [was] about homesickness. It [was] interesting and I never did that before” (Follow-up interview, March 2017). For the artefact elicitation, Rose chose the picture (Figure 2) to express her feelings. She said she was homesick and hoped she could obtain some supports because she was pregnant (Follow-up interview, March 2017); but it was too hard for her family to travel from her home-country to take care of her. In addition, she was concerned about her pursuing her studies, because of her pregnancy. The feelings of uncertainty and being helpless were evoked by reflecting on the map she had drawn.

The images in Figures 1 and 2 carried symbolic meaning to her, representing her identity, as an international student, and her sense of vulnerability due to her pregnancy. Artefact elicitation, using multimodal texts, enabled Rose to make new meanings of the taken-for-granted things and to project her identity through her narratives.

## **Discussion**

Our research aim was to explore how multimodal texts impact an adult English language learner’s social practice of second language learning and identities. We will now discuss the transformations that occurred for Rose during the language program; and then we will reflect on effect that the research had on us.

### **Competition to cooperation**

Author 1 met Rose in December 2016 and got to know her as Rose took every session of the multimodal program. The program ended in March 2017. Through the four-month communication, Author 1 established a trust relationship with Rose.

Rose thought that learning English was a must for her in Kazakhstan because she wanted to appear successful in other people’s eyes. Memorization was an effective way to compete with others as her early schooling focused on the operational dimension of literacy (Green, 1988). This mode of learning was Rose’s expectation when she began the English language course with us. She brought her grammatical exercise book and reading textbooks and did not engage in communication with others around her. However, after several sessions, she started to cooperate and collaborate with others, and participate in the multimodal activities. This finding corresponded to Ruefman (2015), Hafner (2013) and Zammit (2014)’s work of multimodal approach promoting second language learners’ effective interaction and collaborations. In other words, Rose’s initial understanding of language learning was as a knowledge consumer, not a creator; it took time for her to open up to the potential of cooperating with other students and contributing to group learning through creative activity.

### **Operational aspects of language learning to social aspects of language learning**

Just as Rose experienced during her early education in Kazakhstan, many students from non-English speaking countries still regard English literacy as a *requirement* of learning instead of as *a goal* of learning (Lankshear & Knobel 2006). This is despite the many sociological perspectives that have been introduced into literacy and language practices over the past thirty or more years; approaches that expand people’s understanding of literacy beyond the traditional forms of reading and writing. For example, Hirsch (1987) proposed cultural literacy to urge students to be familiar with a cultural canon in

order to be able to negotiate their social contexts effectively. Green (1988) proposed three-dimensional literacy including operational, cultural and critical dimensions.

Rose's experiences in her home country reflect the operational dimension, that is to say, the cognitive aspect of being able to read and write. To help English language learners become competent in their future life, in all its facets, literacy education should go beyond the operational level and include cultural and critical levels of communication and thinking. In our program, multimodal resources encouraged students to go beyond the operational level, and to communicate at an emotional level, if not at a literal level. For example, in the music session, Rose shared a song from her home culture with others who could not understand the meaning of the Kazakhstan lyrics. Rose then used her English skills to share the stories behind the song, and the culturally embedded meaning within those stories. In the follow-up talks with Rose, she described her experiences of the music session as positive. In addition, this transformation also creates conditions for Rose to enhance her affordances (Jewitt 2008). The transformation from monolingual model to multimodal model resulted from the change of concept in literacy. Rose's concept of literacy initially was monolingual and functional, but after those sessions, her concept of literacy has expanded to a multimodal and social model. Rose preferred to use print-texts to express her feelings at the very beginning of the program. For example, when she was encouraged to express her gratitude to her loved ones, she wrote a letter. Then, after several sessions, Rose started to use different modes of communication, such as bio-poem, drawings, music, storytelling, poster and pictures, to express her feelings. In the artefact elicitation, she stated that these activities were "interesting." What we observed as a change in her behaviour was her engagement with her classmates through the various activities – the "interest" she experienced motivated her actions, and her actions changed her learning modality.

### **New meaning-making**

The multimodality approach can provide English language learners with opportunities to make new meanings of their taken-for-granted daily activities. Rose often went to the bubble tea shop, but she had not thought about talking with the owner. This experience caused her to reflect about herself through her daily routine. The multimodal text creation activity allowed her to 're-source the resource' (Stein 2000) – to experience in a new way and give new meanings to something that she often took for granted. Both in front of her classmates, and later, during our interviews. The song that Rose shared with her classmates was famous in Russia and well known to Rose; however, when she shared this song with others who did not know it, she rediscovered the richness of cultural meaning the song evoked. The "re-sourcing" of this song in an English language learning context gave Rose an alternative way to produce meaning, first by creating a visual diagram, and then by adding a translation into English text. The poster that Rose made built on this experience. The poster was a multimodal text where she included her social experience, visual images, written and spoken texts. Each of these sources was integrated into the re-sourcing of meaning-making, which "recognize[s] students as re-makers and transformers of the representational resources available to them" (Stein 2000: 336).

### **Cultural identity**

Rose produced a number of artefacts and took part in some creative and communicative activities. In each of these activities, she opened up a little more. Over time, Rose was able to engage in a way of learning and collaborating and communicating that, when the course began, was unfamiliar to her. For Rose, this was "transformational learning" (Cummins & Early 2011, Ajayi 2009, Shin & Cimasko 2008). As an international student struggling to gain university admission, and as a pregnant woman, she needed support from others, but she was reticent to engage with others in English. Rose's reflections during the

artefact elicitation illustrates the relationship between multimodal text creation and cultural identities (Mina 2014, Norton 2008).

During the classes, Author 1, as a facilitator, provided guidance only if students requested help. Most of the time, students organised their time to do what they wanted. Author 1 gave students the freedom to explore the nearby community and never asked them to use certain ways to record and express their feelings. The students maintained their choice and freedom to design and experience different modalities, and to exert a sense of power to a certain object (Sontag 1977), a sense of ownership (Krause 2015), and meaning-making autonomy (Garapathy & Seetharam 2016).

## **Researcher reflections**

### **Author 1**

This research originated as a master's thesis project of Author 1. Early in the process, Author 2, the thesis supervisor, stated that, "Conducting research is to create new knowledge." Author 1 kept this in his mind but kept questioning what knowledge is and how one can acquire knowledge. For Author 1, the connotation of knowledge is associated with science that can, for example, help people launch rockets, cure illness, create new products, etcetera. This paradigm of knowledge was formed as part of his early education. Author 1 began the research project with this understanding, and with an assumption that quantitative results from a statistically significant number of participants would be necessary for research to create new knowledge. Therefore, when he designed the activities for this program, he still followed the old understanding on language learning, trying to focus on operational aspects of language learning.

However, Author 1 found that the number of students showing up in the second session dropped sharply. In the first session, there were almost 20 people, but there were only 5 people in the second session. Looking at the design of the class activities, it was clear that the activities were centred heavily on the operational aspect of language learning. Students had already been learning these skills through their prior classes in the centre and may have expected this class to provide more of the social aspects of language acquisition. Author 1 modified the activities, focusing more on the social aspects of multimodal texts. As the sessions went on, Author 1 had a new understanding of what knowledge is. Knowledge is all about the human and for the human. Creating new knowledge is also to create new channels to know oneself and to know one another. By observing the personal transformations that participants experienced from creating multimodal texts, Author 1 realized that not only scientific knowledge could greatly contribute to human development, but social and spiritual knowledge was also vital to learning.

Author 1's affordance of using multimodality to do research was also enhanced. In this study, with the guidance of Author 2, one more method was added: artefact elicitation interview. During the artefact elicitation, Author 1 could feel that the participants were more willing to share personal information. The multimodal approach created unexpected learning that was reciprocal to both participants and researchers.

### **Author 2**

As a supervisor of many students both at the master and doctoral levels, Author 2 had often been asked about co-authorship, but had not previously agreed to work with a graduate student. However, this project was of particular interest for two reasons. First, because many of Author 2's students were international students who had ongoing need for language support. Author 2 had often bemoaned the seeming lack of language supports at The University; but she had little knowledge of the English language development centre, or how it supported students to successfully reach The University's language requirement. Second, because the use of multimodality and artefact elicitation are approaches

that are of particular interest to Author 2 in her own research in the arts, she was fascinated to see these methods applied to the English language learning setting. The most profound learning for Author 2, though, was the persistence and dedication of Author 1; the evolution of his thinking and writing over time was a lesson in patience. The rush to research, write, and publish, that many graduate students exhibit, especially at the master's level, mitigates against the benefits that come from slow, persistent engagement with a singular purpose.

Because of this project, and curiosity it had raised about the English language development centre, Author 2 attended a workshop for faculty and staff offered by the centre and had a conversation with the director. The aura of the space - modern teaching classrooms, cool quiet offices, comfortable sitting and study areas - communicated a powerful sense of purpose, but also of calm. It reinforced the importance of lived experience, and of immersive research, a principle of doing case study research which Author 2 often taught, but rarely had experienced so vividly.

### **Conclusion and implications**

This study explored the impact of multimodal text creation on adult English language learners' English learning at a Canadian university. The results show that multimodal text creation could help adult English language learners to transform the learning model from competition to cooperation, from operational aspects to social aspects, and from monolingual to multimodal communication. It can also provide English language learners with opportunities to make taken-for-granted resources into new meanings in a new context, to "re-source resources" (Stein 2000). Furthermore, it has the potential to empower adult English language learners to project their cultural identity into the process of multimodal text creation during which they develop a sense of ownership. Based on this study, the following are some implications and recommendations for English language instructors and researchers.

### **Recommendations**

#### **Using inclusive pedagogy to help create the conditions for personal transformation**

Language learning that stresses reading and writing is common in some non-English speaking countries. Personal transformation may be nurtured in an inclusive environment where the instructor gives English language learners freedom and autonomy to choose what they want to express and how they want to express it. For English language learners who come from different educational traditions, it is important to feel the difference of pedagogy in a gradual way. Providing English language learners with a situated learning experience, and without judgement about their prior experiences of learning, encourages them to be open to a transformative approach.

#### **Building confidence through prior knowledge and lived experience**

A multilingual and multicultural learning environment is common in Canada. International English language learners often would like to sit with classmates who are from the same cultural background. This may increase their sense of confidence, to participate in class discussions, as they have the support of their peers. If there is no one in the classroom from their home country, a student may be reluctant to engage and communicate with their classmates. Using a multimodal approach, English language instructors can encourage English language learners, who may be reticent to communicate, to share familiar things such as their home country's culture (e.g., songs, paintings, poems, festivals), stories of family members, or favourite pictures. It is important, while implementing these strategies, to give students time, and not to force them into activities until they have developed some confidence to bridge the gap. This may be through transitional activities that are shared only with the instructor.

#### **Using artefact elicitation in interviews with English language learners**

Many international English language learners have limited communicative competence. Some researchers will invite them to speak in their native language and then hire translators to translate the

contents. It is time-consuming and expensive. We have found that some English language learners have the competence to express themselves, but their performance is subject to other factors such as anxiety. Using artefact elicitation may help those students to speak about their feelings. Furthermore, allowing participants to choose which of their artefacts they want to share reinforces a sense of autonomy. This increases their sense of ownership over the interview process.

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## Transversal competences in education for sustainable development and international solidarity – A book review

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**Motto: "You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending." C.S. Lewis**

In the current educational scenario of training students for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when teaching methodologies are rapidly changing to suit the more and more challenging demands, there is a stringent need to equip pupils, students, teachers, educators, and not only, with the adequate skills to succeed in their activities. Particularly teachers, teacher trainers and trainee teachers, since they are the real protagonists of change when it comes to educating and shaping the society they live in and bringing up responsible and actively engaged citizens. In a year like no other, this need has become even more obvious in the case of the recent pandemic, which forced teachers to adjust their capabilities to the new environment and to resort to reskilling and upskilling strategies, so as to better cope with the unique, unprecedented educational setting.

In this context, the book edited by Monica Tilea, Olivier Morin and Oana-Adriana Duță, and entitled *Transversal Competences in Education for Sustainable Development and International Solidarity* advocates for the use of inter- and transdisciplinary educational tools in developing and assessing transversal competences in classroom practice. It materializes the results of the research carried out in the Erasmus+ project *Acteurs du Territoire pour une Éducation à la Citoyenneté Mondiale (ACTECIM)*<sup>8</sup> by a team of academics with solid background in educational sciences: Olivier Morin and Sandie Bernard from the Claude Bernard University of Lyon 1 (France), Davide Della Rina, Roberto Trincherro, Selena Notaro and Alessio Tomassone from the University of Turin (Italy), and Monica Tilea, Claudiu Bunăiașu and Aida Stoian from the University of Craiova (Romania)<sup>9</sup>.

Published at the Universitaria Publishing House (Craiova) in 2019 as a bilingual edition, in Romanian (pp. 5-107) and English (pp. 109-202), the book is structured in four chapters, which are complemented by six annexes and bibliographical references. As stated above, the analysis presented in this volume is based on the experimental results and data collected within the ACTECIM project, and proposes a characterisation of the transversal competences associated to Education for Sustainable Development and International Solidarity (Éducation au développement durable et à la solidarité internationale – EDDSI). Overall, the main objective is linked to the general idea that EDDSI provides “solutions for understanding economic, social and global interdependences all around the world, reinforcing social

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<sup>8</sup> As stated in the editors' introduction to this book, the Erasmus+ project *Acteurs du Territoire pour une Éducation à la Citoyenneté Mondiale (ACTECIM)*, implemented during 2015-2018, was aimed at “providing a better understanding of the means to achieve education for sustainable development and international solidarity and helped take a further step in modelling tomorrow's citizens” by reuniting universities, schools, colleges and non-governmental organizations from three European regions: the Rhône-Alpes region, the South-West Oltenia region and the Piedmont region, which engaged in a joint reflection on education for sustainable development and international solidarity (p. 111). More information about the ACTECIM project are available here: <http://www.piemontcooperazioneinternazionale.it/actecim/>

<sup>9</sup> The research carried out within the ACTECIM project included two interdependent phases: (i) observations and analyses performed by university researchers on the experiences of training and transversal skills acquisition in the three partner regions, and (ii) the collaborative production of a joint analysis of transversal competences associated to world citizenship.

cohesion and the people's capacity to act" (p. 111), and helps to train responsible and actively engaged individuals at a local and global level.

The first chapter is entitled *Transversal Skills Associated to World Citizenship: Definitions and Indicators*, and, as the title suggests, it focuses on education for world citizenship as a means of shaping the future generations, not just by endowing them with "stereotyped and reproducible abilities", but also by enabling them "to learn *for* citizen action and *through* citizen action" (p. 113). Moreover, the authors acknowledge the role and importance of an educational approach of world citizenship, and state that "education for world citizenship should be seen as a transformative learning process" (p. 113) as it deals with "interconnecting and implementing all possible means to provide enough equality, social justice, comprehension and cooperation between peoples" (p. 113). To this end, four important competences were chosen and described in relation to Education for Sustainable Development and International Solidarity: critical thinking, active citizenship, embracing complexity and interculturality. Based on state-of-the-art bibliographical references, theoretical and methodological insights obtained from previous research carried out in similar projects (i.e. the REDDSO programme<sup>10</sup>, cf. Morin & Bernard 2015), and experimental results obtained within the ACTECIM joint research, the authors elaborated the competence description sheets for teachers and pupils associated with each of the four competences discussed herein. The structure of these description sheets includes: a general description of the competence (with bibliographical references), a definition of the competence from the point of view of EDDSI, a presentation of the indicators for the assessment of pupils' and teachers' competences (116-124).

In the second chapter, *Identifying Specific Descriptors for Problem-based Tests*, the authors describe the process of designing an educational resource for the development and assessment of competences related to education for world citizenship in the form of assessment grids, subsequently applied to each of the four competences discussed in the previous chapter. Starting from the idea that "competences – both individual and collective – represent people's abilities to mobilize and combine resources in a specific manner" (p. 125), the authors claim that, in order to properly characterise such competences, a distinction should be made "between *indicators* – which are general and applicable to categories of situations – and *descriptors*, which are specific to a precise situation" (p. 125). The indicators are then applied to different precise problem-based tests, against which the competences levels are assessed. Thus, a descriptor is "an indicator associated to the specific content of the problem-based test", which reports an observation under the form of a statement, using a verb of action (p. 125). The interesting and novel idea behind the use of assessment grids is that not only the general indicators of the envisaged competences should be detailed, but also the descriptors, in order to relate the achieved performance to the problem-based test-specific measurement scale. Therefore, in the latter part of the second chapter, the descriptor grids of the four areas of competence are described in accordance with the elements of the RIZA model (Trincherò 2012)<sup>11</sup>, which are said to characterize the possibility to act effectively in a situation and to assess the level of the subject's competence, based on possible learning descriptors, subsequently associated with interpretation, action and self-regulation structures. These competence description sheets were then applied to two problem-based tests (i.e. the "Philippines" problem-based test, described in Annex 1 and the "Honeybees" problem-based test, described in Annex 2) and resulted in four competence levels associated with each structure of the above-mentioned EDDSI competences (Level A Advanced, Level B Intermediate, Level C Weak and Level D Non-autonomous).

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<sup>10</sup> More information about the programme *Régions pour une Education au Développement Durable et Solidaire – Regions Supporting an Education for Sustainable and Solidary Development* (REDDSO) are available here: <https://reddso.wordpress.com>.

<sup>11</sup> The four elements that form the R-I-Z-A model are Resources (Risorse), Interpretation (Interpretazione), Action (aZione), Self-Regulation (Autoregolazione). The model is described in detail in chapter 2 of this book, pp. 126-131.

What is particularly useful about these educational resources is that they could be set against many different competences and are applicable to different cognitive areas at different school levels.

The third chapter, *A Competence Descriptive Tool*, is aimed at discussing the interdependence relation between the mental structures described in the RIZA model which are associated with competences, regarding critical thinking, embracing complexity and active citizenship. The stated purpose was to validate the “creation of indicator and descriptor grids for competences associated to world citizenship” (p. 146), by studying i) to what extent the descriptors help reveal a spectrum of acquisition levels in a given situation and ii) the existence or absence of a relation between the mobilization of mental structures of interpretation and the mental structures of action (147-148). The authors also tried to find out whether the three competences are manifestations of the same mental structure or they can be independently examined. To this end, a study corpus was created, consisting of answers to a question-based test provided by 106 pupils aged 12-18 on an online platform (the test, which is described in Annex 1, only included questions explicitly related to the three competences). The answers were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively, and the overall results were interpreted and compared. The tool based on the “Philippines” problem-based test was then used by the Italian researchers in 2016/2017 and in 2017/2018 as a pre-test and a post-test to measure the evolution of the pupils’ competences for each field of expertise, before and after their involvement in the ACTECIM project. The results indicated a statistically significant improvement in the two groups for each assessed competence (for example, critical thinking competence improved by 28.6% and citizenship competence, by 21.4%).

The fourth chapter of the book, *The “Honeybees” Problem-based Test: an analysis of competences*, draws a parallel between what the pupils are expected to do when answering the questions of the “Honeybees” problem-based test (Annex 2) and some excerpts of the pupils’ actual answers. This concretely shows how competences can be measured through specific elements of answers to various questions.

The six Annexes include useful context and background materials that aid the readers’ understanding of the topic and felicitously complement the content of the book. They are organised as follows: Annex 1. The “Philippines” Problem-Based Test, Annex 2. The “Honeybees” Problem-Based Test, Annex 3. Summary of Discussions with the Teams of Pilot Institutions of Rhone Alpes Auvergne at the End of the Experimental Phase, Annex 4. Report on the Activity of the Romanian Focus Group, Annex 5. Report Pursuant to Interviews with Italian Teachers, and Annex 6. Questionnaire for teachers.

Considering the above, the strengths of this book lie in its proposed methodology and research results, which make it a versatile educational resource, adaptable to heterogeneous audiences and various national and educational settings. Moreover, the use of indicator grids for the description of EDDSI-related transversal competences highlights its transferable character across subject areas, contexts or educational needs. In support of this claim, the competence assessment model described in this book has been successfully applied and validated in subsequent research studies (Tilea, Duță&Reșceanu, 2020; Reșceanu&Tilea, 2020) that proved its efficiency in designing activities for the development and assessment of various transversal competences in foreign language classes (i.e. competences related to education for democratic citizenship: critical thinking and active citizenship). Therefore, this book quite obviously relates to the ERL Journal Scope Major, whose rationale is based, among others, on developing interdisciplinary educational studies highlighting the educational role of language in fostering transversal skills and 21<sup>st</sup> century competences.

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## ERL Journal – Scope Major

*Key premise.* **The educational role of language, reaching far beyond school(ing), is determined by multiple aspects relating to culture, methodology and/or personality.** To be suitably comprehensive, studies blending educational with linguistic studies need to comprise all these aspects.



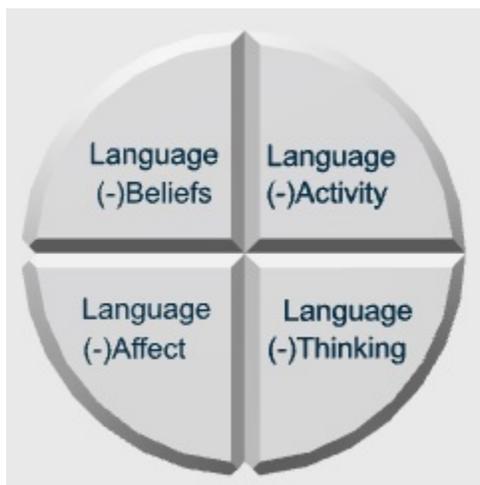
*General rationale.* Language lies at the heart of schooling, culture, (learning and teaching) methods, and personality – thus underlying education on the individual and on the social level. Its social existence determines its experiencing by an individual person and vice versa. Both these levels matter when it comes to learning and teaching methods as well as schooling as a whole. Socially determined and individually experienced, language shapes culture and education, and, from an individual perspective, it defines a person’s place in the world and defines the world in which a person is placed.

*Specific issues.* Accordingly, ERL Journal welcomes papers addressing issues such as: language of schooling, bilingual education, language identity, intercultural competence, discourse analysis, children narratives, personal constructs, language in special education, transversal skills, language mediation, academic language, elicitation, plurilingual teaching, CLIL, functions of language, etc.

*Expected outcome.* Systematization of knowledge concerning the educational position of language; aggregation of empirical findings pertaining to social and cultural determinants of how language serves education; development of interdisciplinary educational and linguistic studies; recognition of problems calling for research and discussion of ways of putting language theories into practice.

## ERL Journal – Scope Minor

*Key premise.* A person's education is determined by how language operates on four levels – beliefs, activity, affect and thinking. To be maximally educational, the experiencing of language by a person comprises these four dimensions, which implies a need for their comprehensive studies.



*General rationale.* How language affects a person's education depends on multiple axiological, psychomotor, affective, and cognitive factors. For instance, what a person thinks of language (e.g. on whether it is worth speaking or not) and how much a person speaks determines that person's mental faculties. Conversely, how a person understands a given issue (as well as how s/he feels about it) impacts on how interesting utterances s/he produces. Hence, there exist relationships between language and all the aforementioned educational domains.

*Specific issues.* Accordingly, ERL Journal welcomes papers concerning issues falling within one or more of the four domains, such as: status of language in school curricula, language of textbooks, language activity of children or grown-ups, stages of language fossilization, argumentative skills, language learning styles, verbalization of knowledge, approaches to oracy, personal experiencing of language skills, language image of the world, cognitive discourse functions, language reflectivity, etc.

*Expected outcome.* Collection of theoretical proposals and empirical data supporting learner-oriented educational practice; exploration of the relationship between language and four educational domains; detection of factors determining learners' language identity/personality; accumulation of data providing assistance in construction of language-grounded educational systems.

*ERL Journal is designated for papers on cross-disciplinary, educational and linguistic, issues. It is meant to address (I) the position of language and how it is put into practice across different schools, cultures, methods and personalities, and (II) the experiencing of language by learners in terms of their language beliefs, activity, affect and cognition. ERL Journal includes theoretical and empirical papers, presenting qualitative and quantitative approaches. Resting on the overarching premise of language shaping our reality and education (assignment of meanings to the world and subject matter learnt), it ultimately aims to unravel this process and to boost the position of language in education.*

*ERL Journal is international, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed, and double-blinded.  
It is open access and follows free-of-charge policy for authors.*

<http://educationalroleoflanguage.org/erl-journal/>