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## **PLACING LANGUAGE IN THE CENTRE OF SCHOOLING**

Volume Editors: Michał Daszkiewicz, Dragana Božić Lenard



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## INTRODUCTION

Placing language where it – in the world of education – truly belongs

Educational systems which ignore language as its unequivocal foundation can be regarded as essentially haphazard. Not resting education on language is tantamount to disregard for four basic truths following from one another: (1) Language shapes one's identity and understanding of the world, (hence) (2) All education rests on language, (hence) (3) Every teacher is a language teacher, (hence) (4) Language merits a special position in education. These four straightforward statements – constituting the key premises of ERL Framework, to which ERL Association as the publisher of ERL Journal belongs to – point to such evident priority of language to be assigned to it that does not apply to any other subject or discipline. They also imply that in order to take them all into account in a sufficient degree, educational systems would need to be practically devised completely anew, which, with education remaining an ongoing process across the globe, may be hard to envisage as plausible for implementation too soon. Yet, it still remains not only possible, but unequivocally necessary if the education of our children and next generations is not to fall behind what we know today about how people learn and how significant a role is played by language in the entire process.

More specifically, what the world of education call been calling for is a thorough reconsideration of students' development marking the presence of language of four different levels (ranging from its one-off classroom uses to its pivotal role in life-changing processes). First, as we can read on ERL Association's website, on the instructional level, language needs to be "invited" more into classrooms of different subjects as it has been shown to underlie students' reality and to enable sense-making, genuine learning, and knowledge construction (or knowledge composition, as I myself tend to refer to the process of language use encompassing, like in music, the fixed and the novel, meaning well-known "pieces" (formulaic language), on the one hand, and authorial or artistic combinations of words and phrases). Second, on the systemic level language needs to be assigned a paradigmatic role in the construction of hybrid educational systems owing to its today-unquestioned developmental potential and interdisciplinary presence providing bases for educational alternatives resting on criticality, equality of languages, plurilingual and transdisciplinary literacy and oracy. Third, on the cultural level, language needs to be viewed as a platform of cultural change and intercultural communication, with cultural diversity resting predominantly on language and the quality of educational systems depending on the level of subject literacy and oracy being the fundamental indicator of effective teaching and meaningful learning. And fourth, on the societal level, language needs to be prioritized as the dominant "player" in civilizational change, with its omnipresence in social life serving international cooperation and formation of learners' and teachers' linguistic (culturally-conditioned) identities, and language determining the equalization of educational opportunities and thus fostering democracy.

To serve the language-oriented breakthrough in question, under the ERL Framework we join linguistic and educational "forces" by combining the aims of the two disciplines developing and drawing on interdisciplinary theories and devising joint research and practices. These four 'joints' have recently provided grounds for the fifth international Educational Role of Language

conference, which took place at the point when we were all coming out of the pandemic period and experiencing new – not only technological – solutions in linguistic education. Following a roughly two-year period during which we had all functioned essentially online without the possibility of natural and direct language exchange, we could approach the issue of combining educational and linguistic sciences from freshly developed perspectives and with remote-education experience that had made us crave for renewed face-to-face interaction and for the possibility of hearing and telling new educational and pedagogical “strokes” (as we have recently come to refer to such items of exchange as stories, jokes, riddles, or scientific discoveries). Besides all the hardship and toil brought about by the pandemic, numerous educationally-linguistic initiatives arose from the fact that when teaching online linguists had to reach out to pedagogical concepts in order to make their students more involved, all the educators who had had little to do with language in their everyday work could experience on an everyday basis the salience of language and (frequently faceless) communication.

This volume of ERL Journal tells a part of this ERL “tale” aiming at PLACING LANGUAGE IN THE CENTRE OF SCHOOLING. It covers two parts, one in which focuses on centralising spoken and written text, and the other on centralising language-oriented methods and policies. Jointly, the texts, seven papers and two reports, well exemplify the subject matter, which has always been educationally crucial but which had gained even more weight as a result of the pandemic. In relating to the pandemic aftermath the volume continues the theme undertaken by the previous volume, which was devoted to the notion of linguistic well-being (before, during, and after the pandemic). The volume does not aspire to tell the entire eponymous “story”, but only touches the surface as the problem of how to place language in the center of schooling requires extensive theoretical and empirical studies which we, under the ERL Framework, try to – in our pedagogically-linguistic circle, jointly undertake. We do encourage our readers to join these efforts and to submit texts (as scientific papers or other types of writings) which may help to put language in the at the heart of education, that is the place where it truly belongs.

Michał Daszkiewicz

## Functions of discourse micro-markers in spoken academic discourse in university setting

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### **Abstract**

*The present article aims to study the nature of spoken academic discourse in English in university setting and looks particularly at the role of discourse micro-markers in the organization of discourse of a lecturer. English is used as a medium of instruction by non-native academic personnel delivering soft science lectures to international students. The theory provides an overview of contemporary linguistics on discourse markers, outlining the definitions and their functional characteristics. The empirical part of the study is based on the analysis of a case study and the quantitative discourse analysis of a corpus of academic lectures available online. Discourse markers, that are most frequently used in spoken discourse of a lecturer, are studied and the use and the role of 'so', 'now', 'OK', 'well', 'however', 'therefore' and 'all right' is investigated. The results of the study describe the functions of discourse markers in spoken academic discourse and show how discourse micro-markers help in understanding the structure and the thematic development of the discourse.*

**Keywords:** *spoken academic discourse, university setting, English as a medium of instruction, discourse micro-markers*

### **Introduction**

English as an international language of communication used worldwide, including education, is not only a foreign language (FL) learnt at secondary schools in Latvia, but is often a language of studies in higher educational (HE) institutions. At Turiba University English is used in twelve study programs as a medium of instruction (EMI) to teach both international and local students (Online 1). English is often not the first language (L1) of students and lecturers, but is a lingua franca both for students and the academic personnel. The above-mentioned higher educational institution offers studies to international students, including Erasmus students; for example, there were 1614 exchange and full-time foreign (international) students studying in English in Turiba University in 2018 (Online 2). Bearing in mind the significance of EMI in university setting, a need to study the nature of spoken academic discourse and the students' concerns regarding the use of English by the academic personnel was identified. The fact that English is often not L1 of the academic personnel and students requires that lecturers put more effort in being precise while lecturing and that students pay more attention in order to understand the lecture in a FL. The present research looks at one aspect of the academic discourse – the use of discourse micro-markers (DMs) that serve to assist lecturers in structuring and students in following the spoken discourse.

### **Aims of research**

The research aims to find out whether students are aware of the use of DMs by lecturers and whether according to students, academic personnel (lecturers) apply DMs in their lectures delivered in English at all. The article investigates discourse micro-markers by first studying the theoretical background and later presenting the empirical part of the research including a case study and an analysis of the functions of most-frequently used discourse micro-markers in a corpus of academic lectures available online.

## Theoretical background

Interest in the study of the nature and characteristic features of spoken academic discourse in university setting started with the emergence of academic genres, such as seminars, conferences, workshops, or lectures. In recent decades lectures as a separate academic genre was explored by an array of researchers including Thompson (1994), Carter & McCarthy (1997), Biber (1999, 2009), Bellés & Fortanet (2004), Lee (2009), Crawford Camiciottoli (2007, 2021), Siepmann (2005), Hyland (2012), Barbieri (2013), Kashiha (2022) and many others who looked at lectures from diverse angles, as an 'oral academic genre' (Bellés & Fortanet, 2004), a 'pedagogical process genre' (e.g. Thompson 1994, Lee, 2009 and Carter & McCarthy (1997)), and as a 'pedagogical genre' or a 'pedagogic register' (Crawford Camiciottoli 2007).

Although discourse analysis as a sub-branch of linguistics has been researched for over five decades (for example Drozd & Seibicke 1973, Hoffmann 1983, Foucault 1990, Bourdieu 1991, Baumann 1992, Schiffrin 1994, Jaworski & Coupland 1999, LeVine & Scollon 2004, Gee 2005, Norris & Jones 2005, Paltridge 2006, Silverman 2010, Paltridge & Starfield 2013, Ranger 2018), the study of spoken academic discourse (university register, Biber 2006) began in the 1980s.

Drozdova (2021) studied the genre-specific features pertaining to the academic lecture, including such characteristics as speech plan, involvement and detachment, interactiveness, genre mixing, hybrid nature of lectures, intertextuality, interdiscursivity and interdisciplinarity of a lecture. Moreover, the move structure of a lecture, the lecturer's lecturing styles and note taking in the context of the academic lecture were researched and described as well.

Special attention in the study of academic spoken discourse was paid to the research of spoken discourse of a lecturer at the lexico-grammatical level, for example the use of lexis, grammatical word classes, pronouns and modal verbs (Biber 2006, Flowerdew & Tauroza 1995, Lee 2009, Bhatia 2013, Barbieri 2013, Drozdova 2021, Crawford Camiciottoli 2007, 2021).

Spoken academic discourse compared to the written discourse of academic genres demonstrated (Eggins 1994, Stubs 1996, Biber 2006, Crawford Camiciottoli 2005, 2007, Drozdova 2021) that the significant difference between them is that lecturing takes place in real time and thus spoken discourse is more dynamic and can be less grammatically structured. Speech is produced in a way of small spurts, each spurt is one clause which may or may not be interconnected. Some parts of texts are more implicit and leave what is to be understood unsaid. Perception of a lecture and note taking by students require understanding speaker's intentions, for example switching the topic, changing it, starting a new theme in the discourse; this is achieved through signaling by the use of special lexico-grammatical elements. That is why special attention in the study of spoken academic discourse should be devoted to such language elements or micro-features as discourse markers.

### Discourse markers: terminology and definition

As the study shows *discourse markers* are difficult to define and there exists a big variety of terms to denote these items. Flowerdew and Tauroza (1995), Chaudron and Richards (1986) focused their attention on the study of 'discourse markers' for academic purposes, Strodt-Lopez (1991) analyzed 'asides'. Such authors as DeCarrico and Nattinger (1992), Khuwaileh (1999) described how 'lexical phrases' and 'chunks' are used to indicate the structural organization of discourse and coherence in classroom teaching. Swales and Malczewski (2001: 150) applied the term 'new episode flags' to describe "moves from lecture format to the discussion or to change the direction of the lecture or discussion"; Crawford Camiciottoli (2004) described the application of 'discourse structuring expressions'. Biber (2006) used the term 'discourse connectors' to describe devices that are used as "bridges between turns in speech and sentences", and 'indicate' the interconnection of parts in the discourse. He differentiated between 'discourse markers' and 'linking adverbials.'

Fischer (2013: 1743), for example, stated the notorious difficulty of defining discourse markers and pointed out their 'functional spectrum'. The researcher (*ibid.*) suggested that the use of terms depended on their functional variability that is why different terminology was proposed, for example 'pragmatic markers', 'discourse particles', 'discourse connectives', 'feedback signals', 'backchannel tokens', 'interjections', 'text-relation markers' and others.

Despite this terminological diversity the term 'discourse marker' as stated by Dér (in Furco, 2020: 5) appears to be "the most inclusive and frequently used in the English literature", that is the reason why it is used as a core term in the present article.

Since there is no single precise definition of a discourse marker, the most applicable for the present research could be a definition based on the characteristics given by Furco (2020), Buck (2001), Fraser (1990) and Schiffrin (1987). Discourse markers are "metatextual and metacommunicative devices" (Furco, 2020) that "explicitly signal the micro- and macro-structure of the text" (Buck 2001), "expressions which signal a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse" (Fraser, 1990, 2015), "sequentially-dependent units of discourse which serve an integrative function in discourse and therefore contribute to discourse coherence" (Schiffrin 1987). That is to say discourse markers are devices that signal the structure of discourse, show relationship between utterances, help to make discourse more coherent.

### **Multifunctionality and ambiguousness of discourse markers**

Research on academic discourse proves the importance of DMs in structuring the university lecture. Swales and Malzcewski (2001), Tannen, Hamilton and Schiffrin (2015) studied the use of DMs in university settings. Buck (2001: 43), who explored listening comprehension by ESL students, pointed out that students often cannot comprehend the main points of the lecture when there is a lack of "devices that explicitly signal the micro- and macro-structure of the text", accordingly students can benefit from DMs used by lecturers.

Furco (2020: 1) considered that DMs "do not typically change the propositional meaning of an utterance but are essential for the organization and structuring of discourse, for marking the speaker's attitudes to the proposition".

Some authors mentioned the involving nature of DMs. Barbieri (2013) who compiled a taxonomy of linguistic features most common for Humanities and Social Sciences (soft science subjects) considered that the most common DMs in academic discourse were 'well', 'right', 'alright', 'yeah', 'oh', 'like', 'you know', 'I mean' and 'I guess'. The author discussed the "involved nature" of them, highlighting that different linguistic features (e.g. questions, directives, confirmation checks, pronouns, stance adverbs and others) including the above mentioned DMs do not only structure discourse but function as elements to involve the audience (students) in the lecture.

Furco (2020: 8-9), for example, indicated multifunctionality and ambiguousness of DMs, including such functions as "hedging, politeness function, conversational exchangers as openers, turn-taking devices, hesitational devices, backchannels, markers of topic shift and of receipt of information" and others. According to the researcher (*ibid.*) the functions of DMs in a university lecture can be to initiate the speech, to put ideas together, to switch topics, to show important parts in the discourse, to sum up, to make a pause, to conclude and many others. As regards to the perception of lectures by students, DMs are handy tools in the process of lecture comprehension in an academic environment.

It is to be noted that DMs cannot be studied separately, in isolation from the contextual background, their functions in utterance can be deciphered only in the context. As Furco (2020: 8) stated the important property of DMs is their "context-dependence" and "inherent indexicality". According to him "discourse markers are linked to attitudes, evaluation, types of speakers and other features of the communicative situation". The researcher compared "discourse markers" to deictics, "i.e., in terms of having meaning only by virtue of an indexical connection to some aspect of the speech event". Furco

(Ibid.) also associated “discourse markers” with “discourse deictics, including spatial, temporal and social deictics”.

Crawford Camiciotolli (2007: 80) differentiated between discourse micro-markers and macro-markers; micro-markers or ‘markers of lower-order’ indicate links between utterances or work as fillers; they can be attributed to the groups of “segmentation, contrast and emphasis”. For example, ‘so’, ‘right’, ‘ok’, ‘all right’ are lexical units used to show pauses and represent a “segmentation category”. The pause in the speech allows the speaker to reflect on what has been pronounced by him and to formulate the next part of the utterance; whereas a listener uses this break in order to ‘digest’ the information and to prepare his ‘mental feedback’. Discourse marker of ‘contrast’ that was revealed in corpuses of academic lectures is the particle “but”, (Fortanet-Gómez & Bellés-Fortuño 2005: 173), while the micro-markers of emphasis may include (Chaudron & Richards 1986 in Crawford Camiciotolli 2007: 80) such lexical items as ‘of course’, ‘you can see’, ‘actually’, ‘obviously’, ‘unbelievably’, ‘naturally’, ‘in fact’ and others.

Another category of discourse markers is macro-markers or ‘markers of higher order’ (Ibid.). The main role of macro-markers is to emphasize the major information or to indicate the main shift of the theme in the discourse. Some of the macro-markers analyzed by Chaurdon & Richards (1986: 123) include, for example:

*“What I’m going to talk about today is...; You probably know something about – already...; We’ll see that...; To begin with...; The next thing was...; This meant that...; What we’ve come to by now was that...; You probably know that...; As you may have heard...”* and others.

The most influential role in the study of DMs in a university setting can be noticed in the works of Biber (1999, 2006, 2009), who analyzed and summarized them. According to Biber (2006) DMs of lower-order most frequently used in spoken academic discourse include elements like “OK”, “well”, “now” and “so”. They primarily are characteristic to spoken rather than the written discourse. DMs that are linking adverbials “however”, “therefore”, “for example” and “that is” can be encountered in both. The table below shows the typology of DMs, used in spoken academic discourse according to their functions.

**Table 1:** Functional typology of discourse markers used in spoken academic discourse

Author (year)	Functions
Buck (2001)	Devices to signal the micro- and macro-structure of the text
Furco (2020)	Devices that are essential in the organization and structuring of discourse Hedging, politeness function, conversational exchangers (openers, turn-taking devices), hesitational devices, backchannels, markers of topic shift and receipt of information
Barbieri (2013)	Elements used to involve the audience
Crawford Camiciotolli (2007)	Micro-markers (indicate links between utterances or work as fillers; they can be attributed to the groups of “segmentation, contrast and emphasis”) and macro-markers (emphasize the major information or indicate the main shift of the theme in the discourse)
Biber (2006: 65)	Devices used to bridge between turns (in speech) and sentences, indicating the logical relations among the parts of a discourse, and providing an interpretive framework for the listener/reader. There are two major classes of discourse connectors: discourse markers and linking adverbials.

The author focused on the investigation of the DMs highlighted by Biber (ibid.) who provided the most detailed description of discourse micro-markers used in academic settings. The author of the present study wanted to discover in an empirical way the use of the most frequent discourse micro-

markers identified by Biber (2006) in the spoken discourse of academic lecturers, to find out whether students consider the use of DMs necessary, and to reveal functions of DMs in academic lectures. So, the following research questions were set and tackled in the present paper:

RQ 1. Do students notice the use of DMs by lecturers? Do Turiba University lecturers use DMs while lecturing in English as a medium of instruction to international students?

RQ 2. According to students, does the use of DMs assist them in lecture comprehension and what are their functions?

RQ 3. What are the functions of DMs encountered in the scripted discourse?

### **Methodology**

In the present article the following principles were applied: mixed methodology – the use of quantitative and qualitative types of research: a case study and a quantitative discourse analysis and triangulation of methods – primary and secondary research. The computer program *Listen and Write* was used to transcribe some lectures and the program *WordSmith 6.0* was applied to extract concordances for the analysis. The results and findings were further described using a manual descriptive approach.

### **Stage 1**

The first stage included a case study performed by way of guided interviews. Case study was chosen because of the small set of participants and limited time frames allocated for the research. It was used to gather information from students concerning the use of DMs by lecturers at Turiba University, Latvia. A set of questions were asked and discussed with students. The term *discourse marker* and its functions were explained to the students before interviews. Interviews were recorded on an IC Recorder Sony ICD – UX71, analyzed and typed in the Word version. The data received from the discussion was summarized in a descriptive way.

### **Participants**

Eleven students participated in the interview, including students from countries such as Belarus (2), Ukraine (1), Poland (3), France (2), Lithuania (1), Uzbekistan (1) and Latvia (1). The author of the present study was a lecturer delivering a subject of Intercultural Communication in English to this group of students and since “applied linguistic research normally depends on the voluntary participation of research subjects” (Duff in Chapelle (ed.) 2013: 696) and it was not easy to attract other respondents the group was chosen from students who attended the course. The English language proficiency level of respondents were found to vary from B1 to C1 according to the results of their university entrance assessment. All participants were the first and the second-year part-time Erasmus or full-time students at the faculty of International Tourism, where English was used as a medium of instruction, but for whom it was not L1.

### **Stage 2**

The second stage included the collection, transcript and analysis of spoken academic discourse (academic lectures). Since access to the lectures at the university was limited, the author had to borrow data from Internet resources. The data used during the course of the research comprises a corpus of 6 transcribed ‘soft science’ lectures given by university lecturers accessed on the Internet (from a corpus of Yale University lectures). Any of the specialized fields or disciplines, such as management, psychology, sociology, anthropology or political science that interpret human behavior are considered ‘soft science subjects’ (Hyland, 2005). The choice of lectures was determined by the Syllabus of students who participated in the case study – similar subjects were taught at the host university. Below is the list of lectures, their titles, length and links of access online.

Lecture 1 (AL1) – Management (length: 60:33) accessed on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ei57yFEIjrI>

Lecture 2 (AL2) – Introduction to Economics” (length: 74:12) accessed on

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQui\\_3Hpmmc](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WQui_3Hpmmc)

Lecture 3 (AL3) – “Financial Crisis” (length: 69:43) accessed on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QbosMr2JVrc&index=2&list=PL8FB14A2200B8718>

Lecture 4 (AL4) – “Climate change” (length: 104:54) accessed on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrSfloRDLL8>

Lecture 5 (AL5) – “Game Theory” (length: 68:32) accessed on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nM3rTU927io&list=PLwy3d3shfRNIxgFHkrYscDit-4uKa9yRC>

Lecture 6 (AL6) – “Lecture on Leadership” (51:17) accessed on

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-exu8UGieVQ>

Some lectures did not provide transcripts and were transcribed manually using the computer program *Listen and Write*. The quantitative discourse analysis of academic lectures in English delivered by subject teachers was carried out on the basis of the theoretical findings, described in the theoretical part of the present article and finally the conclusions were made.

The analysis was conducted with the help of the computer program WordSmith Tools 6.0. Due to the fact that the author was able to use only the Demo version of the program, the results of her findings on each linguistic element were limited to the number of 50 examples for each frequently used element. The Concord of *WordSmith Tools 6.0* was used in order to create concordances from the selected academic lectures; the concordances were analyzed and a set of the most frequently used discourse micro-markers was compiled and adapted for their possible application by lecturers who deliver lectures in English.

## Results and interpretations

### Stage 1. Analysis of the interviews

Students who participated in the interviews were informed about what *discourse markers* are and were asked the following questions concerning the use of them:

1. Do lecturers use discourse markers (DMs)?
2. Do DMs help to follow the lecturer’s speech?
3. What are DMs used for/ what is their role / what are their function?

1. The researcher wanted to ascertain whether students noticed the DMs used by lecturers. All students noted that they did not pay special attention to the use of DMs by lecturers, although they admitted they noticed them in the speech.
2. However, asked if, in their opinion, the usage of DMs was helpful in processing lecturers’ speech the majority of students (90%) stated that they noticed the interconnection of the use of DMs as ‘public speaking elements’ and the success in lecture comprehension. As it was admitted by almost half of the respondents (45%), irrespective of their level of the English language, students do not always notice the beginning, end and switch of the idea in a lecture. That is why they considered that it is possible that DMs might be helpful in following the organisation of discourse by a lecturer.
3. Asked about the possible function of DMs, the students (S) said that they understood the role of the them:

“They (DMs) help to understand the switch of topics and themes, however the words used are closer to informal style rather than formal conventions, something like: OK, next slide, let’s go further”. (S1)

According to the respondents the change of the topic or theme in the narration was also demonstrated by the lecturer by the use of a computer program:

“The change of slide in the screen also helps to understand the shift of topic and idea.” (S2)

The students noted that the spoken speech is processed easier with the assistance of DMs and the use of fillers and linking words in spoken discourse is one of the factors that makes it different from the written discourse. The majority (95%) asserted that lecturers use DMs on a frequent basis:

“These elements help to follow the structure, passing from one thought of a speaker to another. They help us to understand where there is a contrast in the sentence.” (S3)

“They help to follow, to compare things, to conclude. If a lecturer does not use DMs, it is more difficult to follow his speech.” (S4)

Another feature of DMs, according to the respondents, was the assisting role of DMs: discourse markers help lecturers to control their mental processes while delivering a lecture:

“Yes, DMs help lecturers, since most of the lecturers do not speak English as L1, these elements help lecturers to fill the gap and allow students to understand their speech. It is more “humane” than written in the book.” (S5)

It is seen from the description of interviews that students acknowledged the necessity of the use of DMs by lecturers, they also admitted that DMs are helpful in organization of spoken discourse by a lecturer, as well as they named several functions that DMs have, such as: to help listeners following the start, shifting the topic and making conclusions. Students also accepted that the lack of DMs hindered their lecture comprehension.

As a result of this stage the researcher decided to do a study of several discourse markers and see their functions in the discourse.

## Stage 2. Quantitative discourse analysis

The second stage of the empirical research included the study of the use of the discourse micro-markers in the spoken academic discourse. It was impossible to cover all discourse micro-markers that could be encountered in spoken academic discourse in the analysis, that is why the author limited her choice by the analysis of *so*, *now*, *OK*, *well*, *however*, *thus*, *therefore* and *all right* that were also highlighted by Biber (2006) in his previous research.

The purpose of the analysis was to discover how frequently the above-mentioned lexico-grammatical features are used in the examples of professionally delivered lectures and what functions they have in modelling the spoken academic discourse.

### The discourse marker ‘so’

Below are the examples of concordances with the discourse marker ‘so’ discovered in Lectures 1- 4 (AL1, AL2, AL3, AL4).

So + to introduce the topic:

- (1) “... in our management thinking. *So*, that’s what I wanna talk about...” (AL1)
- (2) “...we think about finance. *So*, I wanted to talk about ...” (AL3)

So+ to add information:

“... and so, what else can you do...” (AL2)

So + to introduce a sudden change of the topic:

“... at the same time. *So*, suddenly the covariance goes ...” (AL1)

So + to summarize:

- (1) “...and *so*, over and over again, so far 42 exciting ideas took...” (AL1)
- (2) “...and, *so* this is a kind of ...” (AL1)
- (3) “... river water temperatures *so* that leads to economical...” (AL4)
- (4) “...and *so*, what was happening is that...” (AL1)
- (5) “... my message here *so so* what is it insurance is the ...” (AL4)

So + to exemplify

- “... real hard science. So, for example, weather forecast...” (AL3)
- So + third person subject
- (1) “...so, these guys, actually don’t...” (AL1)
  - (2) “...had a financial crisis. And so, a lot of people were ...” (AL2)
  - (3) “...so, Intel started by making...” (AL1)
- So + that is construction
- “...until recently and so that’s part of the ...” (AL4)
- So + I think / I hope... expression of stance
- (1) “... and so, I think it is ...” (AL2) (Stance discourse marker expressing attitude.)
  - (2) “...we make things happen. And so, I hope that you have ...” (AL2) (Stance discourse marker expressing desire.)
  - (3) “...how much it went down. So, I figured, well if this we ...” (AL3)
  - (4) “...significant connections so I hope you all join me ...” (AL4)
- So in the meaning of stance expression
- “...will work outside the U.S., and so it’s important...” (AL2)
- So + going to construction in the meaning of intention
- (1) “...the details matter. And so, I’m not going to just ...” (AL3)
  - (2) “... the law school ...and so Am I so I’m gonna I’m...” (AL4)
- So + conditional sentence
- (1) “...but with people. And so, if we want to understand ...” (AL3)
  - (2) “...is of the distribution. So, if you observe a random choice ...” (AL3)
  - (3) “...them all. OK? So, if they all have the same...” (AL3)
  - (4) “...not extreme outliers. So, if you look at a small number of ...” (AL3)
- So + a question
- “... tell are just stories. So, how do we deal with the company...” (AL3) (A rhetorical question asked to the audience.)
- So + let’s expression
- “...a little bit iffy. So, let’s just think about the...” (AL3)
- So + an adjective, with a purpose to emphasize it
- “... the triggers of losses are so different there but ...” (AL4)

It is seen from the above examples that the DM *so* is used multifunctionally, for example: *to start the theme, to introduce the change of the topic, to recapitulate the main ideas, to provide an example* and etc. *So* was often followed by ‘there is’, ‘there are’, ‘this is’, ‘that is’, ‘it is’ constructions and it was also used *to summarize or to conclude*. The lecturers often used *so* with *conditional sentences* or *rhetorical questions* in order to involve the audience in the discussion or to exemplify something.

Another function of *so* was *to precede a phrase of intention*, for example, it was used with the phrase ‘going to’ or the colloquial contraction ‘gonna’. Another finding was that *so* was frequently used with the verbs that express stance, e.g., *so I believe, so I hope, so I think*, etc. as well as in the combination of *so + stance adjective*, e.g. *so it’s interesting*, as well as in order to emphasize an adjective, e.g. *so beautiful*.

It was discovered that *so* is the most often used discourse marker serving different purposes with the main functions *to make a break, to proceed to another theme, to signpost throughout a lecture* as well as *to involve the audience in the discussion*. Having analysed the frequency of the use of ‘*so*’ in the chosen lectures, it was found out that it was used 33 times in AL1, 20 times in AL2, 126 times in AL3 and 185 times in AL4.

### The discourse marker 'now'

The discourse marker *now* can be attributed to the category of frequently used markers in the spoken academic discourse too, although it was discovered less frequently than *so*. *Now* was used 4 times in AL 1, 23 times in AL 2, 18 times in AL 3 and 40 times in AL 4

*Now* was used as an explanation:

"...on 24/7 in any organization. *Now* let me describe how this ..." (AL1)

*Now* was discovered in the meaning of the next step in the logical proceeding or action:

(1) "... What do they have in common? *Now* about a third of them just..." (AL2)

(2) "...and infinity. *Now* what we're going to do ..." (AL3)

*Now* and *OK* can be used interchangeably in the function of initiating the topic. *Now* can be changed by *OK* in the following sentences, for example:

(1) "... bad ideas get thrown in to. *Now*, what also happens is that..." (AL1)

(2) "... so, that's where we are. *Now*, I wanted to put this in ..." (AL2)

*Now* was used with the verbs of stance, e.g., the discourse marker *now*+ I know / I do not know:

(1) "... it in the fall of 1985. *Now* I don't know if that's ..." (AL2)

(2) "...doing these functions. *Now* I know Karl Marx said he ..." (AL2)

*Now* was encountered with the words *so*, and *but*:

(1) "... the whole time. *And now*, we're trying to decide..." (AL3)

(2) "...Apple on this axis. *And now* I've added a line, which I..." (AL3)

(3) "...market movements. *So, now* the next plot, and this is..." (AL3)

(4) "... looks different. *But now*, what I want to do ..." (AL3)

*And now* was used 10 times in Lecture 3.

### The discourse marker 'OK'

Discourse marker *OK* was used 26 times in AL3 and 10 times in AL2. It was met eight times in both lectures in the end position of the sentence in the form of a question. It is possible to suggest that the lecturers used *OK* to check whether the listeners followed his thought, agreed with him or the lecturer was hesitant:

"...your gross return is 0, *OK*? So, if I plug in..." (AL3)

Another meaning of *OK* was to initiate a new sub-topic:

(1) "...one bad year with minus 100%, *OK*. So, what do you think...?"

(2) "... *OK*. Welcome to Economics 252..."

*OK* was used in the meaning of confirmation or approval by the listeners:

"...thousands want to set up a company, *OK*? How do you do that..." (AL2)

The analysis of DMs *so*, *now* and *OK* in lectures 1- 4 (AL1-AL4) showed that *so* was the most frequently used DM in all 4 lectures.

### The discourse markers 'well', 'however', 'thus', 'therefore' and 'all right'

In order to find out the frequency of other DMs in the spoken academic discourse five other lexical units (*well*, *however*, *thus*, *therefore* and *all right*) were chosen and analyzed in lectures 5 and 6. It was identified that the most frequently used DMs from the five above were *well* and *all right*. *Well* was encountered in both lectures, although in many cases it was an adverb meaning "something done well" and the phrase *as well as* in the meaning of "in addition to." *Well* was used 15 times (out of 18 times) as a DM in AL5 and 8 times (out of 21) in AL6.

It was often used before the construction *let's*+ a verb

"... strategic situation? *Well*, let's start off with what..." (AL5)

It was also used as a DM to start a new theme in the discourse:

"...what's the idea here? *Well*, the first idea is that ..." (AL5)

As a word of hesitation:

“...*Well*, I don’t know...” (AL5)

*Well* was encountered in the meaning of *OK* or *all right* in the answer to a question or the previous utterance:

“...a stronger argument. *Well*, how about this? Even if... ” (AL5)

Another use of this DM was in combination with the verb of stance:

(1) “... and I think a power *well* I think you where you have...” (AL6)

(2) “... that you want to do *well* I think I would be comfort...” (AL6)

Another DM that was discovered in Lecture 5, and which was not found in the other lecture was the DM *all right*. 25 out of 30 times, it was used *in the initial position of a sentence*, when the speaker wanted to *proceed with a new theme*, e.g.:

(1) “...everyone filled in. *All right*, so last things to talk about ... ” (AL5)

(2) “...we done with the forms? *All right*, so why don’t we send...” (AL5)

In three cases out of 30 *all right* was found in the middle position of a sentence, e.g.:

“I think it’s quite likely we’re going to get a lot of Alpha’s chosen, right? But if we played this game up in let’s say the Divinity School, *all right* and I’m guessing that Travis’ answer is reflecting what you guys are reasoning here”. (AL5)

In this case, *all right* was used with the purpose of finding out if the audience agrees with the proposition of the lecturer. He as if checked whether students followed him, and this DM was also preceded and followed by the verbs of stance: *I think it’s...*, *all right* and *I’m guessing that...*

“So, if you don’t buy this book this week, I may be able to make the advance copy of the new edition available for some of you next week. I’m not taking a cut on that either, *all right*, there’s no money changing hands”. (AL5)

In this episode *all right* was most probably used to check if the listeners agreed with what he was saying. The style of the lecture showed that the lecturer was not fully confident about the information he was giving or whether the audience agreed with him. This could be the reason why *all right* was used 30 times in a course of the lecture. It was noticed that *all right* was often substituted by *OK* or *well*, and that these discourse markers may be used in similar meanings: *OK*, *all right*, *well* are used to switch to a new topic; *OK* and *all right* are employed as reassurance to check whether the audience could follow the speaker.

The research showed that the DM *thus* was not present in the lectures whereas the DMs *therefore* and *however* were used only several times. *However* was used only one time in Lecture 5 in an initial position in the meaning of contrast:

“That’s not what Game Theory is about. *However*, once we know what your payoffs are, once we know what your goals are, perhaps Game Theory can you help you get there”. (AL5)

*Therefore* occurred in two lectures: two times in AL 5, and five times in AL 6:

“Okay, so you chose Alpha right? So why did you choose Alpha?

[inaudible] realized that my partner chose Alpha, *therefore* I chose [inaudible].”

In the next episode *therefore* was used by a student in the dialogue with the Professor, where the student was explaining his reason of choosing a Business Game Alfa. *Therefore* was encountered in the medial position in the sentence. The example is as follows:

“The mid-term will be held in class on October 17<sup>th</sup> that is also in your syllabus. Please don’t anybody tell me late – any time after today you didn’t know when the mid-term was and *therefore* it clashes with 17 different things. The mid-term is on October 17<sup>th</sup>, which is a Wednesday...” (AL5)

The table below shows the frequency use of the studied micro-markers.

**Table 2:** Frequency use of the discourse markers in the analyzed extracts (AL1-AL6)

Discourse markers	Number of encounters
So (AL1-AL4)	364
Now (AL1-AL4)	85
Ok (AL1-AL4)	36
All right (AL5-AL6)	30
Well (AL5-AL6)	23
Therefore (AL5-AL6)	7
However (AL5-AL6)	1

It is noticed that the most frequently used DMs in the selected extracts were: *so* which also could substitute *thus* and *therefore*; *OK*, which could also be used in the meaning of *all right*, which was used frequently only in one lecture in order to show that the speaker was hesitant whether the audience had agreed with him. *Therefore* and *however* occurred only in several cases in the meaning of giving result.

### Conclusion

An overview of the theory helped to define discourse markers and to reveal their main functions when used in spoken academic discourse by academic personnel in general. Theoretical findings of previous researchers demonstrated that the application of discourse markers is an integral skill of the discourse competence needed both for a lecturer and students; for the former in the organization of their speech in a foreign language (FL) and the latter in following and comprehension of the lecture. Discourse micro-markers allow lecturers to signal listeners the structure of a lecture (where they are in their narration, i.e., give structural indicators,); assist learners in recognizing main ideas, details, sequences, cause and effect relations, demonstrate the relationship between the key ideas and secondary details, help learners to differentiate between them, emphasize the main points of the discourse.

Interviews with students showed that, in general, after students were introduced the term discourse marker, they confirmed that they noticed lecturers' use of discourse markers in a course of a lecture. Students also noted several functions that discourse markers have and admitted the significance of the use of them by lecturers. Some students also stated that some lectures did not use or used some discourse markers incorrectly.

The analysis of the chosen spoken academic discourse demonstrated that the most frequently used discourse micro-markers in the analyzed episodes (from *so*, *now*, *ok*, *well*, *however*, *all right* and *therefore*) are *so* and *now*, whereas the least encountered are *however* and *therefore*. It is possible to extrapolate that the reason why the second group of discourse markers was used rarely in the analyzed extracts is because the first group of discourse markers are more common to spoken discourse as such, whereas discourse markers *however* and *therefore* are more characteristic to written discourse.

The computer software WordSmith Tools 6.0 allowed to create and to analyze the concordances from the selected lectures. It was discovered that the most frequently used DM *so* can have at least thirteen functions in the academic lecture, for example, *to introduce the topic*, *to add information*, *to summarize*, *to exemplify*, used with *the expression of stance* (e.g., *so, I think...*; *so, I hope*), with *conditional sentences*, with *let's expression* and others.

The second frequently used DM was the word *now*, that was encountered in the analyzed discourse 85 times in the meanings of *exemplification*, *explanation*, used with *the verbs of stance*, in combination with the words *so*, *and*, and *but* and in combination with the word *right*. It was noticed that *now* can be interchanged with the word *OK* in the function of *initiating the topic*.

Micro-marker *OK* was another frequently used word in the academic discourse used in the *end position* of the sentence in the form of a question, where the lecturer checked if listeners followed him or agreed with him and in the *initial position* of the sentence to initiate a new sub-topic.

Other analyzed DMs included *well*, *all right*, *however* and *therefore*, however their use was not that frequent in comparison to *so* and *now*. It was concluded that in comparison to a written discourse spoken discourse is often poorer in the choice of discourse markers.

Knowledge of the conventions of the use of discourse micro-markers by non-native English speakers in the course of a lecture in EMI settings can be helpful in preparing lectures. It is also beneficial for students' perception of the structure of the lecture and thematic development of the academic discourse. The possible pedagogical implication could be in students' and lecturers' awareness of the functional characteristics of different discourse markers, including those analyzed in the present study.

Cognitive processes taking place in the process of the construction of speech in a FL in EMI settings do not always allow lecturers finding synonyms or substitutes immediately in the moment of speech, as a result they often use discourse markers such as *so*, *now* and *ok* repeatedly. The researcher supposed that the rare use of other discourse micro-markers and frequent use of *so* and *OK* with diverse meanings may lead students to the miscomprehension or misinterpretation of a lecturer's discourse. It is possible that lecturers delivering lectures in EMI might need to pay more attention to the use of different lexico-grammatical elements (DMs) that could enrich their discourse and make it more coherent for the listeners (students). The delivery of soft science lectures by university lecturers in a FL requires the appropriate skills and knowledge of discourse organization and the awareness of making the right choices of language units.

The present study was an attempt to look into the nature of such lexico-grammatical elements as discourse micro-markers used in the spoken academic discourse with a focus on their frequency and functions. The findings need to be supplemented with additional studies of other micro- and macro-markers and by using other methods of data collection as well as a larger population of the participants in order to have a more realistic view of the question. The next study would focus more on the investigation of students' perception of discourse markers, (both micro- and macro-), applied by the lecturers to find out how they affect students' lecture comprehension, as well as the possible analysis of authentic discourse produced by the academic personnel rather than analyzing corpus available online.

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## Linguistic diversity and students' reading achievements in developing countries: a hierarchical linear model analysis using PISA-D data

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### Abstract

*Research suggests that students from linguistically diverse settings may show better learning outcomes, especially at languages. However, existing studies on the topic are predominantly theoretical ones and focus on developed countries. This study empirically examines linguistic diversity and learning outcomes with respect to developing countries. Specially, it investigates the association between linguistic diversity and students' reading achievements and explores how consistent findings are across countries. It draws from PISA for Development 2018 data to compute two measures of linguistic diversity and uses hierarchical linear modeling for a quantitative empirical analysis. Results suggest that linguistic diversity as measured by the two approaches used in this study is not associated with students' reading achievements, and the lack of statistical association is consistent across countries. These findings seem to provide evidence showing that linguistic diversity does not influence learning outcomes.*

**Keywords:** *linguistic diversity, Blau index, Herfindahl–Hirschman index (HHI), HLM, PISA for development*

### Introduction

Classrooms in many countries comprise students from different cultures and with different linguistic backgrounds due to mass migration and a continuous increase in ethnic and sociocultural diversity in societies (Dotzel et al. 2021). Linguistic diversity is among the discussed factors in the discourse on education quality (Bredtmann et al. 2021). Dotzel et al. (2021) demonstrated how linguistic diversity is differently related to migrant and non-migrant students' performance in reading comprehension. They further highlighted the important role linguistic diversity can play in promoting student learning; for example, it facilitates new language acquisition. A linguistically diverse learning environment may increase students' language awareness and thereby improve their reading performance.

Societies are getting more and more globalized and diverse, and more and more students tend to be instructed in a second language rather than their first one (Nikula et al. 2016). In contexts such as in Sub-Saharan Africa, almost all learning settings are linguistically diverse (partly as a result of ethnic diversity), creating many challenges for teachers. As a consequence, a foreign language is used (e.g., French or English) as the sole or predominant language of instruction. Teachers face more and more challenges in increasingly linguistically diverse classrooms, and they recognize the implications of such settings for teaching and learning (Gkaintartzi et al. 2015). Research has shown the importance of linguistic diversity for better learning achievements (e.g., Busse et al. 2019, Piller 2016). However, most studies on the

topic remain theoretical ones, as empirical evidence is scarce. Moreover, there is a debate among the few empirical studies that investigated the relation between linguistic diversity and learning outcomes. For example, while some studies demonstrate that linguistic diversity improves students' learning outcomes (e.g., Busse et al. 2019), others suggest that there is no relationship between the two (Bredtmann et al. 2021). This indicates that there are mixed findings on the topic. Additionally, what is also noticeable is that related research is skewed towards high-income countries, leaving a gap with respect to low-and-middle-income ones. Therefore, it is critical to empirically examine the association between linguistic diversity and students' learning outcomes in the context of low-and-middle-income countries. This will provide a better understanding of how linguistic diversity is associated with learning outcomes across different contexts.

This study employs Program for International Student Assessment for Development (PISA-D), and its main purpose is to empirically examine the association between linguistic diversity and learning outcomes in four of the countries surveyed by the program<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, it employs two measures of linguistic diversity often used in diversity research and it answers the following research questions:

- (1) What is the association between linguistic diversity and students' reading outcomes?
- (2) To what extent is the association consistent across the countries?

Based on previous studies, we hypothesize that linguistic diversity is positively associated with reading achievements (H1), and that the positive association is consistent across countries (H2). This cross-country study contributes to the literature by providing more evidence on the role of language in education from the perspective of countries with different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds relative to high-income ones.

### **Linguistic diversity and its role in students' learning achievements**

The relationship between language and academic achievements has been of much interest. Linguistic diversity has been increasing in many countries around the world, changing the linguistic composition of classrooms in these countries (Bredtmann et al. 2021). However, research suggests that teaching and learning in linguistically diverse classrooms is a significant challenge for both students and teachers (Dotzel et al. 2021, Phalet et al. 2004). The concept of linguistic diversity was approached in three ways by theoretical linguistics, namely language diversity, genealogical diversity, and structural variety (Hammarstrom 2016, Nettle, 1999). Among the three approaches, language diversity seems to be the most relevant to educational research (Busse et al. 2019). This approach defines linguistic diversity as the number of different languages spoken in a particular entity (e.g., geographic region, school), and it takes into account two key factors: first, speech patterns may be classified as discrete languages, and second, discrete languages can be counted. When applied to education, the approach implies that the more the languages spoken by students within a school or a classroom, the more linguistically diverse that setting is. Moreover, still from the perspective of the language diversity approach, an entity of high linguistic diversity is one where communication is poor and where an increase in communication leads to the rise of a *lingua franca*, imported or not (Greenberg 1956). This view is often referred to as the "monolingualism" approach, since it assumes that each individual speaks only a single language. On the other hand, it might be important to note that there is also a "polylingualism" approach to linguistic diversity, where every speaker is defined as speaking two or more languages. As such, in education, each student can be approached as a speaker of two or more languages.

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<sup>1</sup> PISA-D surveyed eight countries, but this study investigates only four of them because there was very low linguistic diversity in the remaining countries. See the data section for details on countries

Linguistic diversity may be theoretically defined as ethnic diversity in itself because it is reasonable to think of the former as a result of the latter. However, the literature points out that even though the two share various similarities, they are not the same and have different implications for empirical research in education (Dotzel et al. 2021). For example, teachers dealing with ethnic diversity need strategies that take into account a wide range of student backgrounds (e.g., religions, values, attitudes). However, when dealing with linguistic diversity, teachers need strategies that account for the cognitive aspects of learning<sup>2</sup>.

In the light of Jean Piaget's theory of disequilibrium and cognitive development (Piaget 1977), a linguistically diverse learning setting would increase learning because it creates a disequilibrium. As highlighted by Kibler (2011), students in such settings experience a state of cognitive disequilibrium (imbalance or conflict) that makes them uncomfortable and thereby drives them to seek ways to return to a state of equilibrium. In an environment where individuals encounter information that do not fit their existing schema, they tend to devote their cognitive energy to develop a new schema or adapt to the existing one. Consequently, they are cognitively stimulated as they seek to develop new schemas or extend existing ones.

Studies have demonstrated that learning quality may decline as a result of reduced stimulation of cognitive processes, and students' achievement may suffer from this (Driessen 2002, Peetsma et al. 2006, Van Ewijk & Slegers 2010, Rjosk et al. 2017). The process as presented in Piaget's theory may be linked to language awareness. Students in diverse linguistic settings are expected to have higher reading achievements because linguistic diversity creates an environment for a better understanding and knowledge of how languages function (Dotzel et al. 2021, Svalberg 2007). They face a linguistic conflict in these settings, which engages them to think about or question language rules and structures. These thinking skills can facilitate the learning process by helping students consider other perspectives and reflect on links between languages (van den Broek et al. 2022).

Despite the theoretical link explained, there is scarce empirical research on the association between linguistic diversity and students' learning outcomes. Among existing studies, Bredtmann et al. (2021) found that linguistic diversity is not related to grade 4 primary school students' learning achievements in Germany. However, Dotzel et al. (2021) investigated the same country using three different measures of linguistic diversity and found that the three measures show a positive relationship with grade 5 secondary school students' reading achievements. Similarly, an intervention study by Busse et al. (2019) highlighted that more linguistic diversity in schools is linked to better vocabulary learning. Furthermore, using the case of Sweden, Reierstam and Hellstén (2021) showed challenges teachers face in linguistically diverse settings when assessing students and how these challenges influence their students' learning outcomes.

In addition to scarcity of empirical studies on the relation between linguistic diversity and students' learning outcomes, literature is skewed towards high-income countries, leaving a gap with respect to low-and-middle-income ones. Mixed findings from existing studies seem to suggest that linguistic diversity may be important for learning outcomes in some contexts while it is not in others. Therefore, it is important to investigate the association between linguistic diversity and students' learning outcomes in different contexts in order to better understand the association across different contexts.

## **Data and methods**

### **Data**

This study uses data from PISA-D 2018, an international assessment covering seven low-and-middle-income countries: Cambodia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Paraguay, Senegal, and Zambia. PISA-D draws on the framework of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) administered by

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<sup>2</sup> See Glaz (2001) for details on the cognitive aspects of language diversity

the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), but it is designed to be more relevant to education in the context of low-and-middle-income countries. The program used different instruments to assess students' learning outcomes in reading, mathematics, and science, and it also collected contextual information to determine which factors influence these learning outcomes.

We employed data on four countries for the empirical analysis of this study, namely Guatemala, Paraguay, Senegal, and Zambia. This choice may be explained by the low linguistic diversity in the countries dropped from the sample. The target population of PISA-D consisted of students aged 15 and in grade 7 or higher. The sampling approach of PISA-D is known as a two-stage stratified design. In the first stage, the program had access to a national list of all eligible schools (those having eligible students or would have such students when the assessment is implemented) in each participating country, from which a sample of at least 150 schools were drawn in each country. The selection of schools was based on probability proportional to size, and the size of a school was measured as a function of the number of students attending that school and eligible for the program. In the second stage of the sampling approach, random selection technique was employed to select students from sampled schools. The program set a Target Cluster Size (TCS) of 42 students to be selected in each school, though the set TCS may be higher or lower for country-specific reasons. However, for schools that contained less than the TCS, all students were automatically included in the sample.

PISA-D ensured that technical selection standards were met in each country as to target student population coverage, accuracy and precision, and response rates from schools and students. For example, the standards in each country were to sample at least 150 schools and have a response rate of 85% and 80% from schools and students, respectively. The technical standards were met, and the sample used for the study provides information on students, their teachers, and their schools.

### Variables

Students' reading achievement scores were used as a dependent variable in this study. This learning outcome seems to be more relevant relative to other subjects' outcomes when empirically assessing the theory on linguistic diversity and learning outcomes because studies suggest that linguistic diversity seems to be more relevant to language (Dotzel et al. 2021). The reading achievement variable captures students' abilities in understanding, engaging with, and using written texts in their respective language of instruction in relevant daily life contexts.

In order to capture linguistic diversity in each school, we followed Dotzel et al. (2021) and used the language students speak with their parents at home (home language) to compute two measures of linguistic diversity. Our approach implies that students speak a given language with their parents at home, as well as speaking the same language with their friends in school. For originality relative to previous studies, we relied on two different measures of the concept of linguistic diversity. Specifically, we used Blau Index and Herfindahl–Hirschman Index (HHI)<sup>3</sup>. The first measures the probability that two students randomly drawn from a given school belong to different linguistic backgrounds. As such, the higher the measure, the more linguistically diverse the school. The second was developed in economics to measure market concentration: the more a small number of companies dominates a given industry, the higher the HHI. Applied to language in a school setting, HHI measures language concentration or domination in the school setting. The higher HHI value, the more one language dominates the linguistic landscape of the school (i.e., high HHI indicates less linguistic diversity in the school).

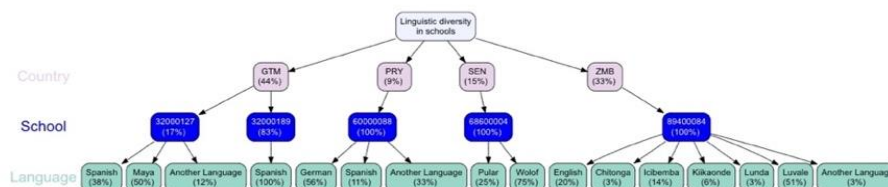
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<sup>3</sup> See Guevara et al. (2016) for a technical description of these measures of diversity

The two measures of diversity used in this study account for two important dimensions of diversity<sup>4</sup> that need to be analyzed jointly, i.e., variety and balance (Guevara et al. 2016). Variety is the number of categories or types an entity has. In the context of this study, variety refers to the number of languages present in a given school. For a better understanding of this dimension in our data, we randomly selected five schools from our sample and plotted a variable tree of language variety in each school (Figure 1). For example, the figure indicates that in Guatemala, while one language is spoken in a given school, three are spoken in another one. Therefore, language variety across schools can be different and this has different implications for student learning outcomes.

Balance is how much of each category the entity contains, that is, the proportion of each category in the entity. Applied to this study, balance refers to the abundance of each language relative to all languages present in a given school. Still referring to figure 1 and using a Zambian school as an example, we can see that Luvale is the dominant language (51%), followed by English (20%), Icibemba (14%), and Kiikaonde (6%). The languages with the lowest proportion in the selected school are Chitonga, Lunda, and “another language”, and all have a proportion of 3%.

**Figure 1:** Variable tree of language variety and balance from a sub-sample of the data



In addition to the variables of interest, we include a certain number of control variables, which are likely to also influence students’ learning achievements. These can be grouped into student background and school variables. For example, we controlled for student family socioeconomic status (SES) as a background variable and we also controlled for teacher being certified or not as a school-related variable. Tables 1 and 2 summarize all variables used in the study for the four countries<sup>5</sup>.

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics of the samples for Zambia and Senegal

Variable	Zambia		Senegal	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.

<sup>4</sup>Disparity, the third dimension often included in diversity measures, captures the dissimilarity between categories of an entity, i.e., how different the categories of an entity are (in this case how different languages in a school are), but our data does not allow us to include it

<sup>5</sup> See OECD (2018) for details on variables

Student age	15.821	0.301	15.857	0.252
Male	0.523	0.5	0.535	0.499
Family SES	-1.277	1.337	-1.728	1.342
Grade repetition status				
Did not repeat	0.621	0.485	0.508	0.5
Repeated	0.379	0.485	0.492	0.5
Attitudes towards school	7.277	2.534	7.499	2.162
Every student has a textbook	2.696	0.58	2.263	0.974
HHI	0.596	0.263	0.794	0.24
Blau index	0.404	0.263	0.206	0.24
Public school	0.955	0.207	0.863	0.344
Class size	45.882	12.125	36.246	20.286
Class disciplinary climate	0.13	1.078	0.101	1.045
No certified teacher	0.371	0.483	0.09	0.287
Classroom teaching resources	3.79	0.642	3.533	0.655
Urban	0.467	0.499	0.618	0.486

Note: HHI: Herfindahl–Hirschman Index

**Table 2:** Descriptive statistics of the samples for Paraguay and Guatemala

Variable	Paraguay		Guatemala	
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Student age	15.718	0.296	15.776	0.286
Male	0.506	0.5	0.482	0.5
Family SES	-1.185	1.113	-1.299	1.203
Grade repetition status				
Did not repeat	0.787	0.409	0.647	0.478
Repeated	0.213	0.409	0.353	0.478
Attitudes towards school	7.364	1.94	7.807	1.908
Every student has a textbook	1.622	0.858	0.964	0.91
HHI	0.818	0.222	0.912	0.163
Blau index	0.182	0.222	0.088	0.163
Public school	0.737	0.44	0.523	0.5
Class size	34.152	20.416	35.784	15.046
Class disciplinary climate	-0.2	0.987	0.177	0.968
No certified teacher	0.347	0.476	0.35	0.477
Classroom instructional resources	4.452	1.108	4.396	1.195
Urban	0.714	0.452	0.696	0.46

Note: HHI: Herfindahl–Hirschman Index

## Analysis

We used hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to estimate the association between linguistic diversity and students' reading achievements. HLM is one of the commonly used statistical modeling when data employed in a study present a nested or grouped structure (Hofmann 1998). In the context of this study, students are nested in schools, and this nesting makes those from a given school share more similarities relative to others from another school. As such, schools also have a non-negligible influence on students' performance. HLM allows an estimation of predictors affecting students' learning outcomes while at the same time accounting for the group-level effect (Woltam et al. 2012).

We started the analysis by checking whether the data fits the model, through an estimation of an empty model for each individual country. The empty model helped obtain the intraclass correlation, a measure of variance due to differences across schools. After estimating the empty model, we included predictors from a stepwise approach, by adding student-level predictors and then school-level ones. Our variables of interest are school-level ones and were added accordingly with other school variables.

For each measure of language diversity that we used in the study, we fitted an HLM model across countries separately. PISA-D data is similar to most international educational assessments, as cognitive outcome variables are provided as plausible values (PV). We estimated models for each of the ten PVs provided in the data while including school weight, and the average over these ten calculations provided more robust estimates (Mang et al. 2021, Rubin 1984). We checked model fit by using the deviance statistic ( $-2 \times \log$  likelihood), where a larger deviance for a more complex model indicates a poor fit of that model relative to the less complex one (Anderson 2012). Moreover, unlike some studies centering variables in analyses using HLM, we did not center variables before the analysis. This empirical choice was motivated by studies showing that the practice of centering may lead to an estimation of a model different than the one intended (Hofmann & Gavin 1998, Ita et al. 1995, Paccagnella 2006).

## Results and discussion

Tables 3 and 4 show the results of the association between linguistic diversity measured as the Blau Index and students' reading achievements in the four countries investigated by this study. The analysis was performed using HLM and the ten plausible values provided in the dataset as dependent variables. The tables indicate a positive association between the measure of linguistic diversity and students' reading achievements in Zambia, but a negative association between the two variables in Senegal, Guatemala, and Paraguay. However, across the four countries, the association shown is not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be said that from the perspective of the Blau Index, linguistic diversity is not statistically associated with reading achievements, and results are consistent across the four countries.

Tables 5 and 6 show the results on the association between diversity as measured by HHI and students' reading achievements. Similar to the case of the first measure of linguistic diversity, the analysis was performed using HLM and the ten plausible values provided in the dataset as dependent variables. Results indicate a negative association between the variable HHI and students' reading achievements in Zambia, but a positive association between the two in Senegal, Guatemala, and Paraguay. However, the coefficient for this predictor is not statistically significant across the four countries. In other words, linguistic diversity as measured by HHI is not associated with students' learning achievements, and the lack of association seems to be consistent across the four countries investigated.

From an overall perspective, our findings suggest that linguistic diversity is not associated with students' reading achievements, regardless of the diversity measure that we used, and regardless of the country. These findings do not confirm our hypotheses, which expected a positive and consistent relationship between our measures of linguistic diversity and students' reading achievements across the four countries investigated. The findings are inconsistent with previous studies, which showed that linguistic diversity improves students' achievements (Dotzel et al. 2021). Our null and different results might be explained by the key difference in contexts when comparing our study to previous ones. Most

previous studies were conducted on developed countries, where linguistic diversity is closely related to migrant or non-native speaker background. For example, in the study of Dotzel et al. (2021), 59% of the students in the sample have a migration background. However, in the context of our study, the countries investigated are low-and-middle-income ones, and almost all students are originally from their country of residence.

Our findings are not in line with Piaget's disequilibrium theory (1977), which suggests that the theory may not necessarily be supported in all contexts, at least in the contexts we investigated. It may be that there is not enough level of disequilibrium for students to interact in order to modify or create new schema. This situation is very likely to be expected in Guatemala and Paraguay, where our data shows that there is a lower level of variety of languages in these countries relative to Senegal and Zambia. In other words, a higher level of disequilibrium might be expected from Senegal and Zambia where there is a higher variety of languages used.

Our findings may also suggest that for students to cognitively profit from linguistic diversity, schools need to capitalize on the variety of linguistic resources that linguistic diversity provides (Goduka 1998). Reierstam and Hellstén (2021) support this by demonstrating in the context of Sweden that when schools leverage the strengths and resources offered by linguistic diversity, this helps improve student learning achievements. Unfortunately, this practice of capitalizing on linguistic diversity resources is likely not to be common in countries like the ones we investigated. Such countries tend to use a "borrowed" language as a medium of instruction and do not invest much in local languages in terms of their potential for better quality education (Stroud 2001). In these countries, current linguistic practices in schools might need to be reconsidered in order to find approaches, which benefit learners and improve education quality.

**Table 3:** Results on the association between linguistic diversity measured as Blau index and students' readings achievements

Variable	Zambia			Senegal		
	Coefficient	std.error	Sig	Coefficient	std.error	Sig
Intercept	158.28	67.569	***	271.996	120.803	***
Age	7.857	3.696	**	-1.986	7.653	
Male	-0.259	2.329		-3.764	3.788	
Family SES	3.877	1.001	***	-1.445	2.074	
Attitudes towards school	4.002	0.457	***	3.498	0.959	***
Grade repeater	-9.865	2.03	***	-10.941	5.275	*
Every student has a textbook	-83.385	46.018	*	17.033	19.65	
Blau index	5.032	5.14		-12.076	11.164	
Public school	-37.04	14.918	**	-10.868	14.952	
Class size	-0.527	0.29	.	0.303	0.184	
Class disciplinary climate	8.124	1.087	***	-0.801	2.23	
Not certified teacher	-0.083	0.072		-0.196	0.147	
Classroom instructional resources	13.809	3.799	***	10.122	4.661	**
Urban	36.423	6.711	***	23.614	7.468	**

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 4:** Results on the association between linguistic diversity measured as Blau index and students' readings achievements

Variable	Guatemala			Paraguay		
	Coefficient	std.error	Sig	Coefficient	std.error	Sig
Intercept	246.584	62.608	***	304.486	77.781	***
Age	5.411	3.744		3.823	4.949	
Male	-2.865	2.546		14.328	3.055	***
Family SES	7.479	1.365	***	9.552	1.376	***
Attitudes towards school	1.121	0.652	.	-0.316	0.728	
Grade repeater	-23.089	2.568	***	-37.11	3.484	***
Every student has a textbook	14.238	6.739	**	19.288	10.857	*
Blau index	-7.026	11.706		-2.144	8.325	
Public school	-7.409	7.162		-30.054	7.011	***
Class size	0.006	0.189		0.181	0.165	
Class disciplinary climate	2.318	1.067	**	3.434	1.515	**
Not certified teacher	-0.033	0.127		-0.081	0.077	
Classroom instructional resources	5.544	2.196	**	3.109	2.289	
Urban	37.196	7.139	***	23.054	6.337	***

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Table 5:** Results on the association between linguistic diversity measured as HHI and students' readings achievements

Variable	Zambia			Senegal		
	Coefficient	std.error	Sig	Coefficient	std.error	Sig
Intercept	163.312	67.303	**	259.92	123.481	**
Student age	7.857	3.696	**	-1.986	7.653	
Male	-0.259	2.329		-3.764	3.788	
Family SES	3.877	1.001	***	-1.445	2.074	
Attitudes towards school	4.002	0.457	***	3.498	0.959	***
Grade repeater	-9.865	2.03	***	-10.941	5.275	.
Every student has a textbook	-83.385	46.018	*	17.033	19.65	
HHI	-5.032	5.14		12.076	11.164	
Public school	-37.04	14.918	**	-10.868	14.952	
Class size	-0.527	0.29	.	0.303	0.184	
Class disciplinary climate	8.124	1.087	***	-0.801	2.23	
Not certified teacher	-0.083	0.072		-0.196	0.147	
Classroom instructional resources	13.809	3.799	***	10.122	4.661	***
Urban	36.423	6.711	***	23.614	7.468	***

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

Note: HHI: Herfindahl–Hirschman Index

**Table 6:** Results on the association between linguistic diversity measured as HHI and students' readings achievements

Variable	Guatemala			Paraguay		
	Coefficient	std.error	Sig	Coefficient	std.error	Sig
Intercept	239.558	63.729	***	302.342	78.849	***
Student age	5.411	3.744		3.823	4.949	
Male	-2.865	2.546		14.328	3.055	***
Family SES	7.479	1.365	***	9.552	1.376	***
Attitudes towards school	1.121	0.652	.	-0.316	0.728	
Grade repeater	-23.089	2.568	***	-37.11	3.484	***
Every student has a textbook	14.238	6.739	**	19.288	10.857	*
HHI	7.026	11.706		2.144	8.325	
Public school	-7.409	7.162		-30.054	7.011	***
Class size	0.006	0.189		0.181	0.165	
Class disciplinary climate	2.318	1.067	**	3.434	1.515	**
Not certified teacher	-0.033	0.127		-0.081	0.077	
Classroom instructional resources	5.544	2.196	**	3.109	2.289	
Urban	37.196	7.139	***	23.054	6.337	***

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 Note: HHI: Herfindahl–Hirschman Index

## Conclusion

Linguistic diversity in schools is one of the factors that may influence education quality. Previous studies suggest that students studying in linguistically diverse settings have better learning outcomes, mainly in language. Despite these findings, evidence on how linguistic diversity is associated with learning outcomes is predominantly theoretical, and empirical evidence scarce with respect to low-and-middle-income countries. Therefore, this study addressed this gap by examining the association between linguistic diversity and reading achievements in four low-and-middle-income countries, and it explored how consistent the estimates are across these countries. The study used two measures of linguistic diversity and Hierarchical Linear Modelling as a method. The analysis revealed that linguistic diversity as measured by the two approaches used in this study is not associated with students' reading achievements, and the lack of association is consistent across countries.

Findings indicate that linguistic diversity, at least, does not hinder learning in low-and-middle-income countries. The practical implications of this study are that the evidence to support either monolingualism or multilingualism in educational settings is weak. In other words, there is no single model that would fit all contexts or would solve issues in all contexts. Consequently, each educational system needs to find a relevant strategy to respond to linguistic diversity in its context, if they want students to benefit from it. From this perspective, Sierens and Avermaet (2014) proposed the capitalization of functional multilingual learning, i.e., a pedagogical approach that makes use of children's linguistic resources in the teaching and learning process. This approach may be promising in terms of how linguistic diversity may contribute to better education quality in schools.

Our study is to be interpreted while considering a certain number of limitations worth noting. First, we used only two measures of linguistic diversity, but there are other measures that can be used. Future research may replicate this study using different measures of linguistic diversity. Closely related to the

measures of linguistic diversity is that the study employed students' home language to compute diversity indices. There was a lack of variables capturing the linguistic behavior of students at school, and the variable used (student home language) assumes that each student is monolingual; however, it may be that some of them are bilingual or multilingual. Therefore, with availability of better data, future studies may help better capture the concept of linguistic diversity by including variables that capture actual linguistic interactions in school settings. Second, the package used to compute linguistic diversity measures does not allow an evaluation of the comparability of the constructs across countries. In other words, the construct used may vary across countries and make comparability challenging. This is a limitation that future studies could try to address. And third, we used only reading achievements as a measure of learning outcomes. Given that linguistic diversity may be relevant for other subjects, we suggest that future studies use other measures of learning outcomes.

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## **Social-emotional development of learners in primary level of education through “reading” wordless picture books**

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### **Abstract**

The aim of the paper is to demonstrate that selected wordless picture book *Sidewalk Flowers* (2015) by JonArno Lawson and Sydney Smith develop social-emotional skills of learners in primary level of education in English lessons using specific teaching tools suggested by Mikki Rogers (2020) such as character emotion charts, the character tree, the mood meter, character charts and the ruler approach. These tools are gradually implemented during six consecutive 45 minutes English (virtual) model lessons. The first three lessons primarily support learners' emotional development. The following three lessons are concentrated on the development of positive feelings and their impact on social relationships, social-emotional development of young learners. Based on the qualitative character of the study, we suggest to use a narrative approach and to use the methods of observation, individual interview and a test as a research tool for data collection. Lessons oriented towards social-emotional development of young learners may possibly contribute to the art of noticing which definitely helps the learners to improve the quality of their social contacts, to verbalize and justify their positive and negative emotions, to increase their vocabulary, to foster their self-regulation at school and outside of it and it teaches them to be emotionally resilient. These lessons should be, therefore, an essential part of the school curriculum because they shape cognitive and affective dimensions of the learners.

**Keywords:** *social-emotional development, primary education, wordless picture book, demonstration, English lessons, specific teaching tools, narrative approach.*

### **Introduction**

Social-emotional learning (SEL) should be an essential part in families, communities, English language classrooms and schools as illustrated in the “CASEL wheel” (<https://casel.org/fundamentals-of-sel/what-is-the-casel-framework/>). The authentic settings in which we live and grow contribute to the holistic development of each human being shaping him/her into complex personality who is able to acquire a set of certain notions, recognize and deal with own emotions, set yourself some short and long-term goals trying to accomplish them, be responsible, make a carefully considered decision, work collaboratively rather than competitively, cultivate healthy and enriching relationships and show empathy for other people's situations growing self-concept. Implementing and developing social-emotional skills is a demanding process which requires not only time and effort but also specific teaching aid (wordless picture book) and specific teaching tools (character emotion charts, the character tree, the mood meter, character charts and the ruler approach) used during the lesson to support all the above mentioned aspects.

### **(Wordless) picture books in ELT**

Going through various definitions of picture books, we can generally describe them as a kind of short dynamic literary genre and didactic material associated with text and visual components typical of a simple, understandable plot with easily predictable and repetitive language and minimal number of characters. If we specifically focus on the expression “picture book”, we realize that the pictures should

be an integral part of the book. However, there are also picture books in which a written text is central and pictures have a motivating function. On the one hand, this approach is convenient for teachers because it helps them to generate some ideas, questions to provoke discussion so they avoid unpleasant quiet moments in the classroom. On the other hand, it may be restrictive for the teacher and for the learners because they are working with ready-made ideas without the opportunity to introduce own suggestions, thoughts, interpret the meaning of the pictures freely, to convey different emotions and compare them in interaction with their classmates trying to understand how others think and feel improving their vocabulary. If the teacher wants to exclusively focus on “reading” pictures, it is better to use the term “wordless picture book” whose potential stated above is supported by several scholars.

Serafini (2014) claims that using wordless picture books enables the learners to be equally involved in a teaching process. All learners observe a set of pictures and they are free to introduce their own perception. It is important to tell the learners that the first encounter with pictures, which they have never seen before, does not have to be only positive but also negative or neutral. Arizpe (2014) believes that the learners should learn to enjoy the moment of observation. “Looking at complex pictures, children wonder, compare, discover, infer and comprehend” (Bland 2010: n.p.). Nowadays the learners are facing increasing pressure from the outside world to react immediately, without hesitating avoiding silent moments. In other words, there is no space to reflect upon things, which they see in front of them. Therefore, Arizpe (2014) suggests to use wordless picture books to explain characters’ attitudes, their behavior, posture and external conditions which may influence characters’ current mood. If the picture contains some objects, they can be mentioned, as well explaining their purpose. Dowhower (1997) collected thought-provoking research results about wordless picture books published from 1998 to 2012. She divided them into the following categories: the first category is related to emergent (visual) literacy and the appreciation of aesthetic values presented by Jalongo et al. (2002) and Yu (2012), the second category includes the fact that wordless picture books may improve second language learning as presented by Chen and Pan (2009) and the third category presented by Gorman et al. (2011) refers to organizational style and paralinguistic devices used by non-native English speakers such as African American, Latino and Caucasian learners emphasizing the influence of their culture which was perceived during the interpretation of pictures. The fourth category focuses on the importance of using wordless picture book at home because they are a perfect tool for intervention as mentioned by Caspe (2009). The fifth category includes building self-esteem (self-worth), identity or social imagination (Lysaker, 2006). The sixth category embraces learners with special educational needs whose narrative comprehension is assessed (Leonard et al., 2009). To sum it up, wordless picture books explicitly or implicitly include the idea of “development” so they shape learners’ qualities, their abilities and skills. Using wordless picture book in the classroom requires to use a specific approach suggested in the following paragraphs emphasizing the development of learners’ social and emotional skills (elaborated according to Horváthová, 2021a, b).

### **Social and emotional development at primary level of education**

Hestnes (2011) claims that “picture books are highly suitable for individually adapted teaching goals and can be of assistance to the teacher in his/her work to help both stronger and weaker students” (ibid, n.p.). In the past, it was generally believed that picture books have mostly aesthetic function and they are funny. We agree with this common belief but it is important to add that based on the recent theoretical studies and scientific papers, they are primarily used for educational purposes embracing cognitive and affective domains of young learners (O’Neill & Nyhout 2014).

Social and emotional aspect are two inseparable parts included basically in each (wordless) picture book. Their importance is stressed in terms of wordless picture books because the learners themselves become co-authors of the story adding emotional coloring to them thinking about concrete circumstances in which people/animals in the story are. As we stated in the previous paragraph, picture

book contains minimal number of characters. This lower number of characters enables the learners to analyze their reactions and attitudes more deeply, think about the potential reason of their actions trying to verbalize different social emotions, for example love, empathy, embarrassment, gratitude and others. Several degrees of the emotions and their nuances will be discussed in the paragraph Application of teaching methodology and discussion. Moreover, the position and size of the characters may influence learners' way of thinking. When the character is placed in the middle of the page and it is bigger in comparison to other characters, there is a tendency to think that it is the main protagonist of the story. Furthermore, bright colors used in the story may create a peaceful and joyful atmosphere and darker ones may evoke pessimistic and gloomy atmosphere and a possible foreshadowing that something negative is going to happen which has a certain impact on the feelings of each learner. The protagonists themselves can also be depicted either in black and white colors, in colors, or both and it is up to the learners to discover the author's intention.

We also mentioned that a plot should be simple and understandable so the learners dedicate their attention to their state of mind looking at the pictures describing concrete situation, which is usually not possible working with picture books with textual elements. Whether the teacher or the learner want or not, they are bound to verbal responses and they consciously or subconsciously follow them. The reason for heavy dependence on the text can be a cognitive aim of the lesson, i.e. acquiring vocabulary, grammatical structures, some fixed expressions, etc. omitting affective aim. Anyway, the language should be easily predictable, repetitive and rhythmic which helps the learner acquire these cognitive aims more easily which is different from wordless picture book since there is no text or only a few words and/or sentences.

Serafini (2014) asserts that wordless picture books are a visually rendered narrative so the picture can be also considered the text because it presents a story. There is a hidden message as it is seen in the selected wordless picture book *Sidewalk Flowers* (2015) by JonArno Lawson and Sydney Smith. Young learners usually connect the stories in the book with their own life and they are able to fully identify with the characters (Kuzmíková 2021).

### **Methodology**

The aim of the paper is to demonstrate that selected wordless picture book *Sidewalk Flowers* (2015) by JonArno Lawson and Sydney Smith develop social-emotional skills to learners in primary level of education in English lessons using specific teaching tools suggested by Mikki Rogers (2020) such as character emotion charts, the character tree, the mood meter, character charts and the ruler approach. We originally planned to design two consecutive 45 minutes English lessons. The length of the lesson can be different with respect to country. After careful consideration, we came to the conclusion that it would be better to work with each teaching tool for 45 minutes to design six model lessons; three ones focus on the emotional development and the other three ones focus on social development. The reason is that in the process of perceiving narrative pictures, their contemplation, recalling reading impressions, feelings and experiences, the young learner creates his/her attitude to the world and to himself/herself which takes some time (six model lessons). The learner builds "the first floor" of his/her own identity, which should be firm and stable (Chaloupka 1979, 100-101 in Liptáková et al. 2015, 2022).

Based on the qualitative character of the study, we suggest to use a narrative approach (known as a storytelling) which may explore unique viewpoints of learners and encourage them to think deeply about selected topic. Due to the fact that *Sidewalk Flowers* is a wordless picture book, it offers many possibilities for learners to construct their own story resulting from their individual experiences. To maintain a chronology of their experiences, which is also one of the characteristics of narrative approach, we recommend to follow the structure indicated below. In this way, the teacher may collect "stories" of learners creating an interesting mosaic of their ideas and suggestions (Squire 2008).

Moreover, specific teaching tools suggested by Mikki Rogers (2020) may help learners to generate more ideas.

Due to the fact that the aim of the paper is “to demonstrate”, research questions are stated on the level of theory with the aim of their application in a teaching process in primary level of education during the following months whereas one more teacher, a methodologist should be presented in the classroom to provide the one who is teaching a detailed feedback regarding learners’ ability to respond to questions, their ability to concentrate on the lesson, their ability to manipulate with the given teaching tools and their willingness to cooperate.

Data collected from observations will be coded and divided into several categories and then they will be analyzed and interpreted by both teachers. Individual interviews will be used as the second data collection method. The maximum number of learners involved in the interview is from five to seven. To measure social and emotional development to learners, we recommend to take the following test as a research tool which is related to positive character strengths: <https://www.viacharacter.org/survey/account/register?registerPageType=popup> before conducting research and after it to register potential changes to learners in terms of their social and emotional skills.

Research questions:

1. How do learners at primary level of education react to suggested specific teaching tools such as character emotion chart, mood meter and the ruler approach during the English lesson? (emotional development)
2. How do learners at primary level of education react to suggested teaching tools such as the character tree, folding the paper with semantically similar adjectives during the English lesson? (social, social-emotional development)
3. How do young learners at primary level of education improve their social and emotional skills during English lesson using suggested teaching tools?

As a result, we recommend to organize the lessons in the following manner:

Emotional development:

- 1<sup>st</sup> lesson: Teachers show the learners all selected pictures from the book (the homeless man sleeping on a park bench, the dead sparrow, the neighbor’s dog, little girl’s mother, little girl’s older brother and younger brother) and they use character emotion charts.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson: The teacher shows the learners all selected pictures from the book one by one and asks them how they feel about using mood meter.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson: The learners see all selected pictures from the book in front of them using the ruler approach.

Development of positive feelings and their impact on social relationships (social-emotional development):

- 4<sup>th</sup> lesson: The learners dedicate their attention to the positive qualities of the main protagonist (little girl) using the character tree.
- 5<sup>th</sup> lesson: The learners fold the paper in eight sections.
- 6<sup>th</sup> lesson: The teacher points out the importance of small things (“*Sidewalk Flowers*”).

### **Application of teaching methodology and discussion**

**Emotional development:**

- **1<sup>st</sup> lesson:** Teachers show the learners all selected pictures from the book (the homeless man sleeping on a park bench, the dead sparrow, the neighbor’s dog, little girl’s mother, little girl’s older brother and younger brother) and they use character emotion charts.

Figure 1: The homeless man sleeping on a park bench.



Figure 2: The dead sparrow.



Figure 3: The neighbour's dog.



Figure 4: Mother of the little girl.



Figure 5: Brother and sister of the little girl.



Source: <https://www.themarginalian.org/2015/03/17/sidewalk-flowers/>

Figure 6: Character emotion chart.



Source: inspired by <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/499899627384795006/> and modified by the author

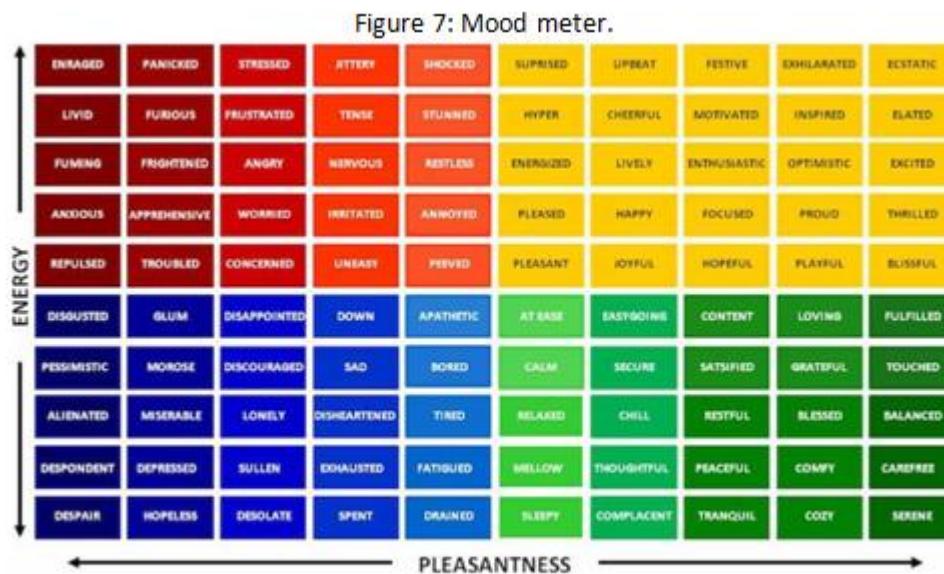
Before the teacher starts to carry out the following suggestions or own ones connected with social-emotional development, it is recommended to create a relaxing and motivating atmosphere and to discuss this topic with young learners based on an extract from the wordless picture book to explain

them the purpose of the lessons specifically designed to develop their social-emotional skills. During the first three lessons the teacher uses the same pictures but different teaching tools gradually shaping learner’s emotions. The point is that each picture contains *Sidewalk Flowers*, which make common situations exceptional.

The very first step is to observe the given situations and let the emotions release. To help the learners identify emotions in themselves, we suggest to use character emotion chart<sup>6</sup> (see Figure 6). At this point, many learners have problems to express / verbalize their emotions and the combination of emoticons together with the adjective below may help them. Beside this, using character emotion chart as a starting point could be a good idea because the learners are already familiar with emoticons. They are frequently used on a noticeboard as a motivation and feedback for the learners: happy emoticon represents good points and sad emoticon represents bad points. Emoticons are also used when learning emotions in general, they are often used in text messages, the thumb up and down is sometimes used with emoticons. When the learners are listening to each other, they (maybe for the first time) realize that their classmates feel differently looking at the same “things”. If possible, the teacher draws or sticks the emoticon on the blackboard to see the difference among learners. This lesson can be a little bit exhausting when teachers want each learner to identify their emotions but it definitely helps the teacher “map” learner’s state of mind at a particular time.

**Emotional development:**

- **2<sup>nd</sup> lesson:** The teacher shows the learners all selected pictures from the book one by one and asks them how they feel about using mood meter.



Source: <https://www.ps120q.org/mood-meter>

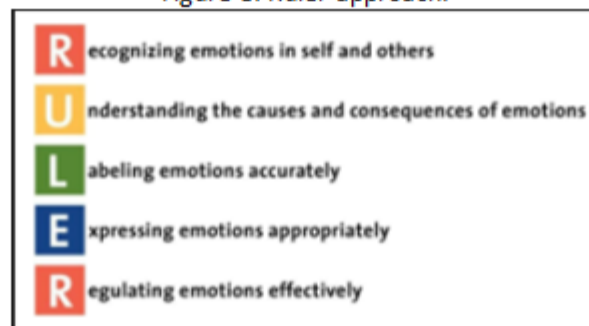
<sup>6</sup> There are different character emotion charts depicting faces, objects, cartoon/animated characters, figures animated clipart, etc.

During the second lesson, the learners are working with the same pictures and they revise some emotions from the previous lesson. The task of the learners is to decide which set of feelings representing by colors (red, blue, green, yellow) is the most suitable for them. The mood meter (see Figure 7) is a tool that helps the learners develop their emotional and social awareness thanks to more nuanced vocabulary which will be probably a cognitive aim of the lesson (except an affective one). In this way, the learner is aware of his/her own emotions and moods, emotions of other people and he/she understands that several degrees of emotions exist. Different feelings are grouped together based on their pleasantness and level of energy, which connects our current emotional state and body<sup>7</sup>. In addition, the proper recognition of own emotions helps the learners understand their cause, manage them and to realize that they have an impact on our behavior and making decisions because our emotions are changing during the day. As a result, the adjectives “happy” or “sad” become insufficient to describe positive and negative emotions because they are rather neutral and general. To address emotions precisely, there is the whole range of adjectives with a slight difference in meaning, which the mood meter offers to describe positive emotions, e.g. “cheerful,” “optimistic”, “enthusiastic”, “blissful”, “elated”, “exhilarated” and negative ones, e.g. “sullen”, “desolate”, “despondent”, “disheartened”, “morose”, “glum”. As we mentioned above, it is recommended to take some notes to see the difference among learners and to also see the difference between emotions introduced using character emotion charts at the first lesson and the mood meter used during the second lesson.

#### Emotional development:

- **3<sup>rd</sup> lesson:** The learners see all selected pictures from the book in front of them using the ruler approach.

Figure 8: Ruler approach.



Source: <https://www.vbsds.org/academics/social-emotional-learning-ruler-approach>

This is the last lesson focused on the development of emotional skills of the young learners. They are now supposed to understand why they feel in that particular way recognizing various levels of their emotions. Moreover, the learners learn to consciously control their emotions and they learn to explain the feelings of their classmates. At the beginning of the lesson, it is appropriate to mention some adjectives from each quadrant showing the mood meter. Then the teacher concentrates more on the causes of the emotions and encourage the learners to interpret their own emotions and emotions of their classmates based on the situations from the book, which are in front of them. The learners can sit in the circle and discuss. If possible, they share their experiences encountering similar or identical situations in their families, in the nature, in the street or the teacher shows some flash cards with these situations. During this lesson, it is not necessary to talk about the qualities of the little girl but to deepen

<sup>7</sup> Damasio (1994) puts emphasis on the connection of physical reactions and emotional responses (In Fekete 2020).

the meaning of the five verbs from the ruler approach, i.e. recognize, understand, label, express and regulate.

**Development of positive feelings and their impact on social relationships (social-emotional development):**

- **4<sup>th</sup> lesson:** The learners dedicate their attention to the positive qualities of the main protagonist (little girl) using the character tree.

Figure 9: Character tree.



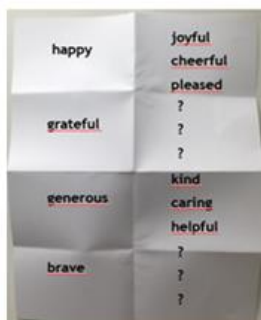
Source: <https://www.imom.com/printable/are-you-raising-your-children-with-character/>

The aim of the following three lessons is to develop social skills to young learners. Firstly, it is important to perceive, identify and name positive character qualities of the little girl. Character tree (see Figure 9) can contain empty spaces to fill in and young learners show what they have learnt during the previous lessons. However, it is recommended to write down at least two qualities as an example. Then the learners are encouraged by the teacher to add other positive qualities. Their number is not limited. It depends on the learners' richness of vocabulary but in general we suggest to introduce four qualities. If the learners introduced many qualities, the teacher with the help of the learners select four main ones. Consequently, these qualities are discussed by the whole class using selected pictures from the book as a support.

**Development of positive feelings and their impact on social relationships (social-emotional development):**

- **5<sup>th</sup> lesson:** The learners fold the paper in eight sections.

Figure 10: Folding the paper in eight sections.



Source: inspired by <https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/whats-the-maximum-number-of-times-that-you-can-fold-a-piece-of-paper/> and modified by the author

During this lesson, learners' task is to write down semantically similar adjectives to the four main positive character qualities mentioned at the previous lesson. It is probable that most of young learners will have problems to complete a column on the right-hand side. Because of this fact, we would recommend to prepare a piece of paper as it is illustrated in Figure 10 (the adjectives may be naturally different). It is also possible to write down some letters of semantically similar adjectives as a hint, e.g. the adjective "helpful" could be written as follows: h\_ \_ pf\_ l . The folded paper has something in common with the mood meter that is the enrichment of learners' vocabulary, however, during this lesson, social aspect should be emphasized so how these positive attributes of the little girl influence the quality of her relationships with other people. After answering this question, the learners finish the following statement in order to personalize its content, which connects their social and emotional development: When I am happy/grateful/generous/brave (it is recommended to use the adjectives one by one), other people ... If possible, the statements are written on the blackboard by the learners.

#### **Development of positive feelings and their impact on social relationships (social-emotional development):**

- **6<sup>th</sup> lesson:** The teacher points out the importance of small things ("*Sidewalk Flowers*").

The last lesson starts with the presentation (not necessarily PowerPoint one) of selected situations from the wordless picture book. The teacher asks the learners what they see in the picture highlighting the symbol (not the meaning) of "*Sidewalk Flowers*." Then the teacher calls some learners giving them some flowers. Their task will be to put them somewhere in the classroom, to give them as a gift to other classmates. Firstly, the teacher asks givers and receivers about their feelings. Secondly, the teacher asks why these small things make us happy and which kind of gifts they would like to get from their parents, relatives and siblings. The aim of the discussion is to start to perceive the importance of small things ("*Sidewalk Flowers*") which has a potential to shape our feelings (emotional development) and change people's life helping them to cultivate positive character qualities (social development).

#### **Conclusion**

To fill the mind with knowledge is very important because young learners need a solid educational background which is constantly increased but the development of their social and emotional skills is equally important, if not more important than acquiring notions. Wordless picture book "*Sidewalk Flowers*" naturally connects three levels, i.e. cognitive, emotional and social one contributing to a holistic approach to life, which is clearly depicted by several scholars in the theoretical part of the study. For this reason, it is significant to develop all these dimensions because only emotionally stable person who is able to collaborate with others and respect their attitudes can achieve goals, which are beneficial for him/her and also for the society.

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## Layers of the linguistic landscape in the West Bank: observations and questions on the roles of language in Palestine (report)

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Fulbright Scholar at Bethlehem University, Palestinian Occupied Territories (2022-23)

Although my primary role is as a professor at Portland State University, in Portland, Oregon, USA, I am spending this academic year (2022-23) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, as a Fulbright Scholar, based at Bethlehem University. Through my observations so far, as well as through my collaborations with colleagues and neighbors, it is easy to see the ways *language* sits at the center of schooling, particularly in considering the ways it may act as a mirror, to reflect and enhance identity, or an eraser, editing or even censoring parts of who one is or aspires to be. I am repeatedly finding myself reflecting on the ways language plays into the constructs of *culturally sustaining pedagogies* (Paris & Alim 2017), and what this means for children in Palestine today.

Even though I am only about a month into this year-long experience as a person from the US in Palestine, I am already marveling at the semiotic landscape (Kress & van Leeuwen 2020) around me, all, of course, filtered through my primary language, which is US English. And I am noting not just the ways in which the linguistic landscape shapes my realities, but also the ways in which it shows up in school settings, raising the question as to how language and power show up in educational contexts.

Upon arrival in Israel, which was my main transit point when traveling from the US, I immediately noticed the tri-lingual road signage, which I interpreted as a way to ensure directional information was accessible to a range of travelers. Given that the primary language of Israel is Hebrew, it was unsurprising to me that the first language on each sign was Hebrew, followed by Arabic, and finally by English. As an educator, I cannot help but wonder what it is like for children in this context – particularly in this Hebrew-speaking space – to grow up with this linguistic landscape – and wonder at how this shows up in their educational contexts.

After just a few days in Israel to sort out some of my paperwork with the US Embassy, I crossed into the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and specifically the West Bank. Immediately, I noticed that on the road signs – including on the road signs between the Palestinian “islands” in the West Bank (known as “Area A,” under the Oslo Agreement, under Palestinian administrative and police control) (Kelly 2016), the convention remained the same as in Israel, with Hebrew at the top, Arabic in the middle, and English at the bottom. This was different from what I anticipated, in that I predicted Arabic would now be first, followed by Hebrew and then English. But upon reflection, I realized these highway-like roads – which thread like corridors through variously controlled jurisdictions of the West Bank (Areas A, B, and C) – actually have a number of Israeli drivers on them, as they move to, from, and through Israeli Settlements (as explained in greater detail in the 2022 Office of the European Union Representative’s report, included in the references). Again, I am made to wonder what this might mean for the children in this context– this time, the Arabic-speaking children– to grow up with this landscape, and to see how this visual hierarchy of language shows up in educational contexts.

Reflecting on this role of language, and considering the role of the semiotic landscape as a whole, reminded me of a recent conversation with a well-educated Palestinian colleague I will call Layla. A lifelong resident of Ramallah currently working in East Jerusalem, Layla expressed her outrage and sorrow at the ways she saw Palestinian *erasure* taking place in school settings, and particularly those schools for Palestinian children being educated in Israel. First, she noted the frequent use of the term “Arab” rather than *Palestinian* in school textbooks and instruction, which she saw as a form of denial.

Secondly, she noted that in textbooks approved for use with Palestinian children in East Jerusalem, the term *Palestine* is not even used to describe the geographic region of the West Bank in which Palestinians live. Rather, according to Layla, the textbooks (approved by the Israeli Ministry of Education) use the terms “Judea and Samaria,” which reflect the historic naming of the *region*, but without naming Palestine nor Palestinian identity.

This form of re-naming (or perhaps erasure) has not gone without notice. Tel Aviv-based scholar Ben-Amos (2020, as quoted in Kashti), wrote about this issue of Israeli-approved textbooks and exams, which present a carefully curated version of the history of the region as well as a purposeful (re) naming of places. Ben-Amos noted that in the majority of textbooks, required for use by Israeli as well as some Palestinian children, Israel’s continued control of the West Bank is described in “a language that blurs the violence involved.”

Ben-Amos explains that much of the history (and contemporary expressions) of conflict in the region— well detailed by international organizations such as the United Nations— is glossed over in school curricula. “It is not simplistic denial, claiming that this reality does not exist. It is more complex denial, based on the fact that education officials know the reality in the [Palestinian] territories but are unwilling or unable to admit it,” (Ben-Amos 2020, as quoted in Kashti). Ben-Amos goes on to explain, “Denial appears in a subtle way that is difficult to pinpoint. It does not stem from the claim that the occupation does not exist, but from the way it is absent from the discourse, where it should have appeared. Alternatively, from the way it is represented in the discourse” (as quoted in Kashti 2020).

Although I freely admit my limited understanding of the nuance and scope of this entire context, I must wonder if this is a kind of intentional “ontology of forgetting,” which, “involves forgetting the history of white supremacy, racism, and Western imperial projects that proved central to the states’ formation and ascendancy” (Pon 2009: 66). Or perhaps this is a kind of symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1986), wherein terming Palestine as “Judea and Samaria” serves as a kind of eraser, quietly dusting away recent history, community, and identity. What does it mean for a Palestinian child today to see the name of their identity and homeland *not included* in the mandated curriculum and assessments? How does this use of language serve to affirm the identities of some children, while subsuming that of others? I pose these questions with genuine curiosity.

Within this broader context, in becoming situated in my new community for the coming year, I have spent much of the past month exploring my immediate neighborhood in Bethlehem, navigating my own hyper-local linguistic contexts. I have been learning the path to the university, exploring where to buy groceries, finding the most convenient ATM, and the like. In addition, because this is a town of tremendous historic importance, I have also been exploring the main tourism sites, which include the Church of the Nativity, said to be the birthplace of Jesus of Nazareth, located (perhaps unsurprisingly) in what is known as the “old city” section of Bethlehem. As is common with many travelers, I have been using a few essential mapping applications on my smartphone to help me find my way, and although this has been mostly beneficial and accurate, I encountered one key mystery related to place-names.

I primarily use two apps (Google Maps and Maps.me) to navigate, relying most heavily on Google Maps. During my first few days here in Bethlehem, while using Google Maps to navigate my way back to my apartment from the old city, I noted the most direct path was on a street Google Maps had labeled (in the Roman alphabet rather than in Arabic), “maggid Mezritch” (see Figure 1). I wandered, phone in hand like a divining rod, scanning the semiotic landscape for some sign or label that resembled this. Although not all streets are well-marked, this particular route seemed to be a rather major thoroughfare, which *did* have street signs— but that read, “شارع البابا بولس السادس,” which translates to “Pope Paul VI St.” (with the sign appearing in both Arabic and English, (Figure 2), with the English likely catering to the flow of tourists). This echoed what my guidebooks showed on their printed maps, as well as what Bing maps included. Why, then, would Google Maps have this street labeled differently?

In asking my neighbors about this street being labeled “maggid Mezritch” on Google Maps, no one I have asked has heard of this, and no one I have asked knows to what or whom that might refer. In an effort to learn more, I found a Wikipedia page (2022) focused on “Dov Ber of Mezeritch,” also known as the *Maggid of Mezeritch*, with the term “maggid” meaning, “an itinerant Jewish teacher” (Merriam Webster, 2022). In sharing this insight with my colleagues and neighbors, all are mystified.

At the time of this writing, I remain unclear about this label for this street name on Google Maps, and given the context of the larger issue of re-naming and “erasure” (as my colleague Layla said) of historically Arabic-language place names, I am left to wonder about it. Given that Pope Paul VI passed away in 1978, might the label “maggid Mezritch” perhaps be a not-yet-updated name for this street from a previous era? Or is it a new label? Whatever the case, this recasting of place-names has been occurring for centuries across Palestine, and continues in earnest today. The most commonly offered examples, of late, focus on the instances when Palestinian communities have been razed and/ or replaced with Israeli settlements, with, for example, Jabil Sikh being renamed as “Mount Jonah,” or parts of the Palestinian village Ni’lin taken and renamed as “Hashmonaim” (Dahamshe 2020). What is the experience of children taking geography tests, required to use these fresh labels?

This practice of renaming is occurring across the West Bank, with relatively few road signs identifying the existence of Palestinian towns and villages. Ujvari (2022) recently published a study of this very issue of road signs, describing, an “excessive placement of [road] signs referring to Israeli settlements compared to signs referring to Palestinian communities, transliteration of Arabic names of sites into Hebrew, and deletion of Arabic, a language associated with the Palestinian identity, from road signs” (p. 374). In short, signs of this nature offer both an informational function as well as a symbolic function, serving to establish (or maintain or defend) hierarchy in ways that leverage language (Landry & Bourhis 1997). One must wonder how all this lands upon Palestinians, and especially children in schools.

How, then, do these ideas circle back to the centrality of the role of language in education? For students, as well as for their families and teachers, what does this signify, and what form of emotional taxation does this cause? To consider these questions, I turn again to the insights from *culturally sustaining pedagogy*, and especially the contributions of Paris and Alim. In an interview by Ferlazzo in *Education Week* (2017), Paris and Alim explained, “Culturally sustaining pedagogy seeks to perpetuate and foster— to sustain— linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of schooling for positive social transformation and revitalization... [It] exists wherever education sustains the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling.” Given the current circumstances and conditions in Palestine, particularly as related to place naming, I am left to wonder how Palestinian children make sense of the language used to name them, and their homeland, in schools today.

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**Figure 1:** Screenshot from Google Maps, retrieved 28 September, 2022



**Figure 2:** Photograph of street sign in Bethlehem, Occupied Palestinian Territories, taken by author 28 September, 2022



## Ways and needs of transition from monolingual to multilingual teaching model in the Georgian education system

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### **Abstract**

In the contemporary field of education, instituting a multilinguistic education model is one of the prioritized aims for any multilingual and multiethnic society. Among these is Georgia, a diverse country in terms of ethnicity and language, where minorities cannot fully integrate in political, economic, social, and cultural life due to gaps in their knowledge of the national language. The state has taken important steps and carried out several events and programs since 2005 to address this issue. Local and international organizations are active collaborators in this process; yet, according to recent studies, the language competency level of minority groups remains as an ongoing challenge. Currently, monolingual schools where the language is not Georgian are transitioning into bilingual institutions. This process involves a myriad of obstacles that are connected to human, material, and educational resources, as well as teaching methods and the level of involvement on behalf of minorities. The paper describes and analyzes the current situation from 2005 to the present day, identifies strong and weak points of the multilingual education model, and offers specific recommendations that will contribute to its effective implementation. First, it is necessary to formulate a specific strategy and an institutional vision, which will consider both international experience and existing research and local data. It is also vital to train teachers and conduct targeted training programs. In addition, it is essential to develop effective learning resources, work closely with school administration and teachers and the local community, and collaborate with media platforms to raise public awareness and disseminate information. Most importantly, the CLIL approach must be implemented. This study is based on a qualitative research method that aims to present descriptive data. The data collection techniques used in the given study are as follows: observation, documentation, and processing of primary and secondary sources to identify general trends.

**Keywords:** *ethnic minority, bilingual education, integration*

### **Introduction**

Georgia is a multi-ethnic country. According to the latest census, ethnic Georgians make up 86.83 percent of the total population, while other ethnic groups represent the remaining 13.17 percent. 6.3 percent of individuals in minority ethnic groups are Azerbaijanis and 4.5 percent are Armenians. About 80 different "small" ethnic groups make up around 3 percent of the country's total population (Census Results 2014).

The difficulty concerning ethnic minorities is that they differ in quantity, types of settlement (compact and dispersed), and their degree of integration into the public life of the country. Along with being a multi-ethnic country, Georgia is also distinguished by linguistic diversity. The Georgian language is an official language (the dominant language of the dominant group - Georgians) that belongs to the Kartvelian language group. On the other hand, languages spoken in Georgia belong to different language families and groups: Russian belongs to the Slavic group, and Ossetian is part of the Iranian languages. Armenian and Greek take their place in the Indo-European language family; Azerbaijani belongs to the

Turkish language group from the Altaic language family; finally, Hebrew is part of the Semitic language family (Tabatadze, Gabunia & Odzeli 2008: 9, Gabunia 2014: 2).

The map of Georgia below illustrates the country's linguistic diversity:

Figure 1: The map of Georgia



The map was prepared by Professor Jost Gipert  
from Goethe University in Frankfurt (<http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de>)

In Soviet Georgia, non-Georgians (national minorities) were usually educated in their mother tongues, and Georgian gradually became a secondary, "unnecessary" language (taught in non-Georgian language schools as an elective subject). Consequently, the Georgian language skills of national minorities were elementary. Meanwhile, Russian was a "prestigious language" not only for national minorities but even for most Georgians. Moreover, it became the main non-official tool for interethnic communication within the county. Accordingly, knowledge of Russian became necessary for Georgian language speakers instead of Georgian being the language of communication for ethnic minorities (Gabunia & Gochitashvili 2019: 38). Nevertheless, Georgian remained as the official language. Due to the above-mentioned language policy, ethnic minorities living in Georgia became part of the Russian language community.

Since the collapse of the USSR in 1991, the situation has changed dramatically in terms of both political and linguistic policies. The Georgian language became the de facto official language and replaced Russian as the only language of proceedings and official relations within the state. The territory of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia is an exception to this rule. There, the Abkhazian language, together with Georgian, has the status of an official language (Gabunia & Gochitashvili 2019: 38-45).

It should be mentioned that Georgia followed a liberal path and after the restoration of independence (1991), local government granted citizenship to all residents of the territory of Georgia (regardless of their competencies in terms of mastering the state language). It should also be noted that the state granted individuals citizenship without any additional requirements. In itself, this step was very humane and progressive, however, in post-Soviet Georgia, the given approach left quite a few problems unsolved (Svanidze & Tabatadze 2011).

Today, despite the many measures taken, the language competence of ethnic minorities is still low, which serves as the main obstacle to their integration (Wheatly 2005: 12, Tabatadze 2010<sup>1</sup>: 22, Gabunia & Amirejibi 2021: 7-8). Since the end of the Soviet education system, Georgia has not been able to

develop an appropriate language policy for the full integration of ethnic minorities (Gabunia & Amirejibi 2021: 8). Nowadays, functioning non-Georgian schools are mostly monolingual and cannot ensure the complete teaching of the official language for minorities. This, in turn, prevents their integration into the dominant society and culture.

This research aims to study and analyze the process of transition from a monolingual system to a multilingual system in non-Georgian schools, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the existing structure, and offer systematic solutions. This paper argues that under the current educational environment, it is possible to improve the quality of education of minority students and develop the linguistic competence of a second/an official language through the bilingual education model.

This study also aims to present recommendations based on other conducted research (Wheatly 2005, Mekhuzla & Roche 2009, Dundua & Abashidze 2009, Tabatadze 2010<sup>1</sup>, Kachkachishvili 2019, CRRC 2021, Gabunia & Amirejibi 2021). Given recommendations will ensure the application of a strong bilingual education model.

This paper uses a qualitative research method by presenting descriptive data. The data collection techniques used in the given study are observation, documentation, and processing primary and secondary sources to identify general trends. The first part of the article provides an overview of existing literature. The second section analyzes the current situation in Georgia from the point of view of bilingual education, identifies existing gaps, and presents ways to overcome current challenges.

### **Bilingual education**

Bilingual education involves the usage of two languages as the languages of instruction. In essence, bilingual education does not imply the assimilation of a minority: with a well-planned and well-defined approach, a child's native cultural environment is not suppressed but instead, becomes well-developed. By comparing the second language environment to the native language environment, students can emphasize their cultural identities (Baker 2006: 218-228). The main difference between bilingual/multilingual and monolingual education is that **the language of instruction** is not only a tool, but **also a goal**. Therefore, constant balance is needed to achieve both goals (subject and language) and conduct lessons focused on subject content and language instruction. In other words, bilingual education is an approach that aims to solve the problem of official language efficiency (Tabatadze 2015: 98).

The goal of bilingual education, on the one hand, is to help students reach high competencies in a second language; however, the effectiveness of the program is determined by the students' general academic success. Therefore, the success/failure of bilingual education is displayed not only in linguistic but also in academic achievements (Baker 2006: 354-358).

### **Models of bilingual education**

The typology of bilingual education gives a clear picture of its versatility. Skutnabb-Kangas identified ten types of bilingual education models that are common in the world: submersion (structured immersion); submersion (with compensatory lessons); segregation transitive; basic/foreign language instruction; separatist; immersion; minority language preservation; dual bilingual education; minority language bilingual program (Skutnabb-Kangas 1999). Bilingual education programs are divided into weak and strong groups (Tabatadze 2010: 8).

When analyzing the effectiveness of bilingual education programs, it is important to consider another factor, namely, to take into account the educational paradigms of ethnic minorities. The educational policy of ethnic minorities can be divided into three main important paradigms: 1. assimilationist, 2. pluralist/integrative, and 3. isolationist. The assimilationist educational paradigm refers to the education of ethnic minorities based on the dominant, mainstream language and culture. According to the assimilationist approach, students can receive education in the state language at the expense of

ignoring their mother tongue (Rendon, Jalomo & Nora 2003). Consequently, this paradigm focuses on the complete separation of the individual from their native culture and their assimilation into the dominant culture.

The second is the pluralistic/integrative education paradigm according to which a person develops competencies in two languages and cultures. This paradigm rejects the assimilationist approach and tries to on the one hand, preserve and develop the native language and culture of ethnic minorities, and on the other hand, teach them the target language and culture (De Anda 1984, Rendon, Jalomo & Nora 2003). Third is the isolationist paradigm which refers to the education of ethnic minorities only in their native language and culture (Rendon, Jalomo & Nora 2003).

### **CLIL approach**

CLIL is an approach that extends the language competency of the learner to wider content (mathematics, natural sciences, history, etc.). The teacher, in addition to teaching the subject, also helps the learner develop language skills (Coyle, Hood & Marsh 2010: 1-2).

Language and Content Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focus educational approach in which the second, target language is used as a tool for understanding a separate subject content as well as for learning the language itself (Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols 2008: 7-8). In the process of teaching and learning, the emphasis is not only on the content but also on the language - they are intertwined.

It should be noted that the use of two languages in the teaching process requires serious preparation from teachers. Strategic two-component planning, such as teaching the subject content and the language is necessary for students to be able to achieve high competence in both languages.

There may also be a risk that students will not be able to master the subject due to limited knowledge of a second language, leading to academic regress.

### **Bilingual education in Georgia**

In Georgia, a multi-ethnic and multilingual country, the introduction and development of a bilingual education system is one of the urgent issues of the modern educational field. It must be mentioned that until 2005, non-Georgian language schools worked only with a monolingual system, the language of instruction was only the language of the minorities. For some time after gaining independence, the development of non-Georgian language schools received less attention. Educational reforms affected Georgian-language schools significantly; however, beneficial changes following 2004 have only partially reached those schools where Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani are taught. There is also a tendency to reduce the number of such schools. The number of non-Georgian language schools was cut in half from 2005 to 2022 (Tabatadze 2019: 67).

Next to the Georgian language schools, there are 208 non-Georgian language schools and 89 Georgian sectors. A total of 51,737 students study in these schools (Tabatadze 2019: 65).

**Figure 2: Non-Georgian language schools in Georgia**

Schools	numbers
1. Azerbaijanian	80
2. Russian	11
3. Armenian	117
In total:	208

**Figure 3: Non-Georgian language sectors in Georgia**

Sectors	numbers
1. Azerbaijanian	37

2. Russian	38
3. Armenian	14
In total:	89

(Tabatadze 2019: 66)

According to the law of Georgia on general education, any non-Georgian school has the right to choose the language of instruction (Law on General Education 2005). Currently, four languages can be used as languages of instruction: Georgian, Russian, Armenian, and Azerbaijani.

The above-mentioned non-Georgian language schools are mostly monolingual and Georgian is taught as a separate subject with five hours devoted to it each week. This, of course, is not enough to properly master the official language.

In order to improve the current situation, several steps were taken in the last decade and programs were developed with the participation of both the non-governmental sector and state structures; in particular, the pilot programs of Georgian as a second language, bilingual education (from 2016) and multilingual education (from 2019) were implemented. Each of them will be discussed below.

### **Programs for teaching Georgian as a second language**

To improve the quality of teaching Georgian as a state language, the Ministry of Education of Georgia has been taking steps since the 1990s. Like other post-Soviet countries, the process began with the development of several approaches aimed at mastering the official language. Materials were developed, special textbooks for the "transition period" were created ("Tavtavi", a set of Georgian as a second language textbooks with different levels), and various trainings were conducted for teachers of Georgian as a second language. This process was continued by analyzing the language situation, as well as piloting different models of minority education and formulating language policies.

Since 2004, a number of local and international organizations has been working on issues concerning teaching Georgian as a second language. A large amount of money was spent on special programs for teaching Georgian as a second language, however, a systemic change in this regard, unfortunately, was not implemented and these projects (Report on the Implementation, 2016, 2021) remained local. Based on the research, it can be said that the current unfavorable situation is due to the lack of a strategy and unified vision for minority education. With the aid of existing studies, it is possible to develop a fundamentally different approach, which has shown favorable results in advanced foreign education systems. Moreover, in Georgia, pilot projects could yield some results; in particular, we are talking about pilot bilingual programs that have been implemented since 2006 with the support of OSCE HCNM in non-Georgian schools and have resulted in progress (see Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia 2020).

### **Programs for bilingual education**

Since the 2000s, with the support of international organizations, the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has implemented several interesting projects in the field of multilingual education.

The Swiss non-governmental organization Cimera has been actively working on language policy in Georgia since September 2004 with the financial support of the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. In 2005, Cimera issued a policy document on the language situation in Georgia (Mekhuzla & Roche 2009). This policy document reflected the situation in densely populated regions of Georgia (Grigule 2009: 50-51).

In 2006-2008, Cimera implemented a bilingual education pilot project in Georgia. The project aimed to provide education to ethnic minority students in both their native and state languages, in some cases even in Russian (Grigule 2009: 52-54).

The pilot project was implemented in twelve primary schools in two regions of Georgia populated by ethnic minorities.

The pilot model offered bilingual models, where the distribution of Georgian language varied from 17% to 29% of the total teaching hours, and trilingual models, where Georgian language classes accounted for 15-17% while third language classes (Russian language) made up 2-5%.

In the 2006-2007 academic year, a multilingual education program was piloted in the first grade classes of eighteen local schools (six Azerbaijani-language, seven Armenian-language, three Russian-language, and two Georgian-language schools).

In the 2008 academic year, a multilingual education pilot program was implemented in seventeen primary and eighteen secondary schools. In total, the number of students involved in the multilingual education program reached 580 (Grigule 2009: 50-54).

The effectiveness of bilingual education pilot programs was assessed using several methods, namely:

- (A) assessment of students' language competencies,
- (B) parent surveys,
- (C) open lesson observations,
- (D) meetings and discussions with parents,
- (E) surveys of teachers and school principals,
- (F) focus group discussions,
- (G) roundtables,
- (H) analysis of data obtained during lesson observations,
- (I) evaluation of international experts' reports and recommendations (Grigule 2009: 50-54).

Bilingual education pilot programs have received high evaluations (ibid). The selected models of bilingual education worked effectively in each pilot school.

It is noteworthy that at this stage the focus was on weaker models of multilingual education (see existing models of bilingual education) and this choice was determined by various factors (see Tabatadze 2010). This teaching approach was perceived simply as an effective tool for learning the state language (in these schools less attention was paid to the issue of improving the educational quality in general).

### **Georgian-language sectors**

In parallel with the bilingual programs, Georgian-language sectors were established in non-Georgian-speaking regions (mainly in Kvemo Kartli), which were implemented within the framework of a weak-submersion education model (Tabatadze 2010).

According to various research, these subversive schools could not provide positive results in terms of teaching quality (Mekhuzla & Roche 2009, Tabatadze 2010, Kachkachishvili 2019, CRRC 2021). The population preferred a model of teaching reliant on their native language<sup>8</sup>.

It should be noted that the growth trend of Georgian-speaking sectors is observed mainly in the Azerbaijani-speaking villages of Kvemo Kartli, which can be explained by the location (the region is close to the capital Tbilisi) and the intensity of trade relations with the capital.

In this regard, no significant changes are found in the Javakheti region, where Georgian-language schools and sectors are less popular (Gabunia 2021: 42-45). Another weak point in the Georgian educational space is the situation in pre-school education institutions. For example, sub-curricular programs do not cover the level of preschool education. On the one hand, the lack of preschool facilities, in general, is a significant problem for these regions. In addition, in schools focused on the submersion educational model where minority languages are not taught at all, children are losing the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue.

A separate problem is less involvement of the family and community in the process of adolescent education, which is due to the language barrier (CRRC 2021).

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<sup>8</sup> According the Law of Georgia on General Education, schools choose the language of instruction (Law of Georgia on General Education; 2005: <https://matsne.gov.ge/ka/document/view/29248?publication=94>).

In 2019, as a result of 15 years of discussions, various pilot projects, and studies, the issue of introducing a bilingual model (based on CLIL model, will be discussed later) became more prevalent at the state level.

### **Multilingual pilot program**

An internal multilingual program of the Ministry was created, which included four schools and a preschool institution.

Currently, 25 schools are involved in the pilot project. At this stage, Armenian and Azerbaijani language teachers are being trained by the Ministry of Education and Science, the competitive processes of teacher selection are ongoing, and teaching resources are being developed, primarily in the field of natural sciences for primary school level students. Developing the resources for social sciences (history, geography, civil education) is planned for the second phase (Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia 2020).

The current model is based on the principles and approaches of the project implemented by the OSCE/HCNM in 2018-2020, which was conducted in 20 pilot schools and revealed interesting results.

The methodology of integrated teaching of content and language (CLIL) is used in this project. This approach is relevant given the current situation in non-Georgian language schools in the regions of Georgia.

At the initial stage of the project, subject teachers feared that devoting some time to enhancing language competencies in an integrated lesson would hurt the national curriculum learning outcomes (Mathematics, Physics, Geography, etc.) that are mandatory in all subjects.

Piloting has been carried out since 2018 in the third and fourth grades of Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti with an integrated language and content teaching (CLIL) approach in natural sciences (Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia 2020: 8-14)

In the frame of the project, with the support of OSCE/ODIHR, a variety of teaching materials for students and methodological guidelines for teachers were developed to support pilot schools.

### **Professional development program**

A long-term, multi-stage professional development program was planned for the teachers involved in the project. Trainings were conducted by Georgian and Estonian experts. The project also trained school principals to create an appropriate school environment and facilitate the implementation of bilingual education. Teacher trainings included the improvement of both general professional and subject skills, as well as equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary for the implementation of CLIL (Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia 2020: 8-14).

It should also be noted that no specific research in this area has been conducted so far. The process can be assessed as chaotic and spontaneous rather than planned and regulated.

Bilingual programs and their parameters are presented below:

**Table 1:** Bilingual programs and their parameters

<b>Program</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Paradigm</b>	<b>Type of Bilingual Education</b>	<b>Organization</b>
<b>SL program</b>	<b>2000-current</b>	<b>School level Adult education</b>	<b>INTEGRATIONALIST</b>	<b>Weak bilingual</b>	<b>OSCE HCNM MES</b>
<b>Bilingual program</b>	<b>2006-2001</b>	<b>School-level</b>	<b>INTEGRATIONALIST</b>	<b>STRONG bilingual</b>	<b>Cemera OSCE HCNM MES</b>
<b>Multilingual pilot program</b>	<b>2019-current</b>	<b>Pre-school level School-level</b>	<b>INTEGRATIONALIST</b>	<b>STRONG bilingual</b>	<b>MES</b>

As we can see, all three programs have an integrationist character, although the first program is a weak bilingual approach, while the second and third programs represent a strong bilingual model. In addition, it can be said that the third program is a continuation of the second program and, unlike it, includes also the Preschool level. Although, despite the development of the mentioned programs, systemic results have yet to be achieved.

Several factors hinder the complete and successful implementation of the bilingual education system in Georgia. These are teaching methodologies and strategies, qualifications and age of teachers, and quality of textbooks. Each of them will be discussed separately below.

#### **A) Teaching methodologies and strategies**

There are significant challenges in teaching a second/foreign language in Georgia. One of these hindering factors is teaching methods and strategies. The Soviet education system was not familiar with modern methods and approaches to teaching a second/foreign language. In the 1990s, the Soviet educational policy continued by inertia in Georgia (Mekhuzla & Roche 2009). The teaching was based on an outdated grammar-translation method that could not give tangible results. Proof of this is the fact that non-Georgian-speaking school graduates cannot pass university entrance exams (unified national exams) in the Georgian language. For them, there is a special state program 1+4, which is implemented on the basis of Georgian higher education institutions and aims at intensive preparation of future students of a particular university in the Georgian language. (Tabatadze & Gorgadze 2020). Based on previous research, the reason for the current unfavorable results is the lack of a strategy and unified vision for minority education (Report on the Implementation 2016: 2021).

#### **B) Qualifications and age of teachers**

The qualification of teachers is one of the main challenges in non-Georgian schools since teachers are no longer trained. Currently, there are no educational programs in higher education institutions in Georgia that would prepare teachers for non-Georgian language schools. (Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia 2020). Besides, instruction in the Georgian higher education is done only in the Georgian language. In particular, higher education programs are not designed in Armenian and Azerbaijani languages to prepare subject teachers. Because of this, subject teachers are not trained for non-Georgian language schools. The only possibility for non-Georgian schools is to hire staff who studied abroad and received a proper pedagogical education there (in Azerbaijan or Armenia) (Report on the Implementation 2021). However, this is currently associated with some difficulties, for objective reasons. One of the serious obstacles is the economic readiness of families to finance their children's studies abroad. Moreover, individuals have low motivation for employment in schools due to the low salary of teachers (Report on the Implementation, 2021). Consequently, there is a shortage of subject teachers in these types of schools, which leads to high demand for teachers who are nearing or over retirement age (Tabatadze, Gorgadze & Gabunia 2020). The Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia has chosen the following way to solve this problem: they made an exception and allowed these schools not to limit teachers' ages. In these types of schools, teachers can work without restrictions until the end of their lives (Law of Georgia on General Education 2005).

Consequently, the number of aged teachers is extremely high, which naturally affects the quality of teaching. Unfortunately, due to a lack of teachers, it is no longer possible to replace retired or deceased teachers. This has been found as a major problem in many studies (Mekhuzla & Roche 2009, Tabatadze 2015, Tabatadze 2019, Report on the Implementation 2021, Gabunia 2021).

### C) The quality of textbooks

According to the National Curriculum, all schools (regardless of the language of instruction) use certified textbooks, which, in the case of non-Georgian schools, are translated from Georgian into other languages (Report on the Implementation 2016, Report on the Implementation 2021). It should be noted that there is great dissatisfaction with the quality of translations (from Georgian to Armenian, Azerbaijani, and Russian). The situation was further aggravated by the decision of the Ministry of Education and Science in 2010-2014 to translate the textbooks only partially (creating so-called bilingual textbooks). This led to dire consequences because, first and foremost, this approach was methodologically unjustified, causing some protests in regional schools (Report on the Implementation 2016, 2021). Consequently, the Ministry abandoned this practice from 2014 to 2015 and the education system returned to translating certified textbooks from Georgian; however, criticism of the quality of translation is still valid (Report on the Implementation 2016, 2021).

As we have seen, most non-Georgian language schools in Georgia are monolingual and, therefore, based on an isolationist model. At the same time, there are 25 schools operating in Georgia that works with the principles of multilingual/bilingual education, however, their percentage ratio with monolingual schools is significantly lower, not enough to positively change the general picture. To implement a successful system, it is necessary to transfer monolingual schools to a multilingual system in order to ensure the basic needs necessary for the integration of non-Georgian students. Based on the analysis of current trends, it is necessary to implement specific effective steps to move from a monolingual system to a bilingual one. In particular, it is vital to develop a state strategy that will include both pre-educational institutions and educational policy leaders, as well as school representatives and the community itself, and consider the interests and capabilities of each of these actors.

The analysis of the results of research conducted in the pilot schools became the basis for us to develop several important recommendations:

- 1) Developing a detailed vision (state strategy) based on international experience and existing research, taking into account the local context. This vision should be reflected in educational policy documents, as well as in educational standards and curricula. Both experts and practicing teachers and appropriately qualified local community representatives should participate in the creation of the strategy.
- 2) Designing special teachers' training programs:
  - a) Teaching Georgian as a second language
  - b) Teaching with CLIL methodology
  - c) Modern teaching methods
  - d) Teaching language and culture
  - e) Intercultural competence
  - f) Media literacy

Trainings should not be general or only theoretical. Trainings should address specific needs and problems; they should help teachers solve specific practical issues.

For bilingual education to be successfully introduced, teachers at non-Georgian language schools must follow real and non-formal requirements for improving state language competencies within a reasonable time. If this requirement is not met, it is necessary to replace the staff and take necessary measures to train new hires. Trainings should be provided in two main directions: retraining teachers (teachers of both Georgian as separate subject and Georgian as a second language); Training of bilingual teachers (in the context of the current programs of multilingual education for teachers);

- 3) Creating teaching resources that include methodological literature and learning materials (texts, visuals - visual materials, spreadsheets, posters, worksheets, videos, cartoons);
- 4) Working with non-Georgian language school staff (principals, administration, teachers), community, and families to raise awareness (involving volunteers in the campaign, sharing success stories with

people involved in the process, organizing meetings with prominent politicians, artists, journalists who support the idea, etc.);

5) Training school staff in fundraising;

6) Conducting an extensive information campaign with the support of mass media and other media to popularize the bilingual education model;

7) Carrying out interventions in non-Georgian language schools by the Ministry of Education and international organizations or institutions. Programs should be subject to permanent monitoring and evaluation. This will allow for a detailed analysis of the pros and cons of the practice.

8) Designing exchange programs for teachers and students from different Georgian-speaking regions to raise intercultural competence.

9) Conducting incentivizing events in non-Georgian-speaking schools: thematic competitions, projects, and awards, which will emphasize the importance of knowing the state language and increase the motivation of students and schools.

10) Working with the local community to identify challenges and obstacles to recognizing given issues and encourage actors to participate in organized events and programs. On the other hand, policymakers should be aware of what minority representatives consider the main strengths and advantages of the given processes. Consequently, it will be beneficial to policymakers, educators, and NGOs to define the priorities and needs of target groups.

11) Promote the introduction of the CLIL approach. The Ministry of Education and Science should work in three directions: a) ensure high-level teaching of the official language for all subject teachers of schools operating today; b) carry out training of primary school and subject teachers in non-Georgian language schools with the latest methodology (strategies of integrated teaching of language and subject content); c) promote the introduction and development of multilingual education programs/modules of Georgian higher education institutions.

As the research has shown, even though the process of reforms has started and the pilot schools have moved to a bilingual education model, several problems in non-Georgian language schools in the Georgian educational space remain unsolved in terms of both administration and teaching. These problems can be solved, on the one hand, through the development and implementation of a unified state strategy, and on the other hand, by carrying out specific measures. In addition, transition from a monolingual system to a strong bilingual model is an urgent measure, needed to increase the involvement of the non-Georgian population and their level of socio-cultural integration. A prerequisite for this is the knowledge of the state language. Moving to a strong bilingual model and introducing the CLIL approach requires considering the existing international data and integrating all the features and requirements of the CLIL model into the educational process.

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## Family language policy in families of Ukrainian origin: maintaining ties to heritage and fostering well-being

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### **Abstract**

*Ukrainians constitute the third largest ethnic group in Estonia (The Population and Housing Census, 2011). In the same time, it regrettably becomes evident that the maintaining of the language and culture of the Ukrainian minority living in Estonia and their attitudes towards their own heritage language have hardly been studied at all (see also Küün, 2022). This study seeks to fill mentioned gap by adding information on the family language policy practiced by the Ukrainians living in the Republic of Estonia to the field of research concerned with family language policy (FLP) and transmission of the heritage language and culture. The article describes the role of Ukrainian Sunday schools in two Estonian towns, Tapa and Sillamäe. Some of the parents of children studying Ukrainian language and culture in Sunday schools in mentioned towns are involved as informants of the study. I used four semi-structured interviews in frame of case studies as my research method. Study results reveal that the role of language and culture related Sunday schools should certainly not be underestimated in strengthening national mindsets and a sense of belonging, learning the heritage language, and encouraging the use of Ukrainian.*

**Keywords:** *family language policy, language ideology, language practice, language management tools, languages of education, Ukrainian Sunday school, Ukrainian*

### **Introduction**

The search for opportunities in support of heritage language and culture studies by one's children is directly linked to family language policy (FLP). The article thus adopts FLP as its central topic. In addition, in my study I discuss the use of Ukrainian and the conditions of use and maintain it in Estonia.

I find that it is the model proposed by Spolsky (2004) that offers essential aspects that should be considered as a matter of priority when examining FLP. I agree that in examining FLP, the most important aspects to consider include language ideologies applied within families. This mainly involves the parents' concept of the importance of different languages, including the heritage language – the ways in which language ideology is applied both at home and outside of the home, i.e. language management tools (Spolsky 2004). Also, FLP includes the family members' language practice patterns (ibid.).

The objectives of the study included in this article are as follows: 1) to establish what has motivated informants in maintaining their heritage language and culture in Estonia, using to that end among other things the help of respective Sunday schools; 2) to establish the factors contributing to maintenance of the Ukrainian language and culture.

Based on these study objectives, I developed the following research question:

1) Which language ideologies do the families studied follow in implementing language management tools internal and external to the family?

The article first briefly introduces studies in FLP. The empirical part of the article presents data and analysis in a systematic manner correspondingly to the language management tools, language practices, and language ideologies of the studied families. The article concludes with a discussion and summary.

### **Studies in FLP**

Language practice is often seen as having a special connection with ethnic self-perception (see, e.g., Tabouret-Keller 2000, Tseng 2020). For example, B. Busch as well has written about how young bilingual people in particular construct their ethnic and/or cultural identity and mark their social inclusion using language choices (Busch 2017). As I agree with the main thrust of this approach, I rely on the notion of ethnic identity as something that is not innate but a phenomenon akin to potential changes during a person's life span based on various life events (see also Padilla & Perez 2003, Tabouret-Keller 2000). An individual can denote both their personal and social identity by using the characteristics of linguistic features (Staicov 2020). Consequently, the relationship between heritage language and ethnic identity has also been seen as significant to the sense of belonging to a particular ethnic-linguistic community (see, for example, He 2010). At the same time it should not be forgotten that not all members of national minorities may have an internal sense of connection to their mother tongue (Gogonas & Kirsch 2016).

However, in the context of the study underlying this article, it is important – as also noted by N. Shevchenko (2015) – that for the Ukrainian population, language is no longer the main marker of Ukrainian identity. However, I assume that it may have changed with recent events in Ukraine and large number of Ukrainians moving across Europe in recent months. Rather, formation of Ukrainian identity is becoming a political concept instead of an ethnic definition (Shevchenko 2015).

Although one could assume that FLP applied in families is very clear-cut, it may not always be clearly visible – in many cases it may be skillfully manipulated by parents (but also by children) (Curdt-Christiansen 2009). In retrospective analysis, in line with the so-called traditional approach, the opinions and aspirations of the children in studied families have regrettably generally not been observed (see, for example, Wilson 2020). However, this aspect has rightly received more and more attention recently (see, for example, Kopeliovich 2013, Palviainen & Boyd 2013, Verschik & Doyle 2017), proving that children in relevant families are not mere reflectors of their parents' FLP but active facilitators of the FLP (see also Fogle & King 2013, Kheirkhah 2016, Wilson 2020). My current article tentatively addresses the issue of children's perspectives and well-being. This is in keeping with whole child focus in FLP. Thus, there are also examples of steps having been taken in the study of FLP, adopting a broader approach to the studied issues, considering both the parents and the children.

Shulamit Kopeliovich introduced the *happylingual* approach to FLP, a principle he established during the course of his study: the language preferences of children in the family must be respected, while maintaining an impartial attitude towards all the languages the household is exposed to (Kopeliovich 2013). This serves as a prerequisite to the children's harmonious bilingual development as they are raised within the family, i.e. the subjective (incl linguistic) well-being of the family members is not in any way negatively affected by factors in the bilingual or multilingual environment (see De Houwer 2020). Otherwise, if parents do not show a flexible attitude towards FLP, the family's children may be at risk of conflicting bilingualism (Wilson, 2020) that, naturally, will damage the family's microclimate. It is clear that although FLP in bilingual or multilingual families often tends to be quite an emotional issue for those involved (De Houwer 2020), respective families and households should be flexible in implementing FLP (Kopeliovich 2013, Soler & Zabrodska 2017). A similar tendency has already been shown in previous studies, such as relevant study by A. Leist-Villis where it was concluded that without parental pressure, i.e. without imposing the parents' own language ideologies, children in the studied bilingual families (including adolescents) managed to achieve a harmonious bilingual experience (Leist-Villis 2004).

Another important aspect in favor of FLP flexibility is one that S. Wilson (2020) noticed based on his research: namely, if corrections are made in the case of a nonfunctional rigid FLP, children from bilingual or multilingual families should be given a greater opportunity to create their own cultural identity (see also Kheirkhah 2016, Küün 2022). Although parents may wish for their children's linguistic beliefs and cultural identity to coincide unconditionally with their own and with those of their ancestors, there is no guarantee that this will indeed be so (see, for example, Duff 2015, see also Küün 2022), especially in today's mobile and globalized world. At the same time, it has been noted that the other extreme – providing children too little input in their heritage language within a family – may result in the risk that younger members of new immigrant families in particular lose part of their cultural identity when they arrive in the destination country (De Houwer 2013). However, it is clear that parents should nevertheless allow especially their school-age children to create their own identity (Kubiliūtė 2021). In the opinion of the author of this article, this on the one hand relates to the rights of young people and, on the other hand, can create a more favorable ground for a more positive attitude towards one's heritage culture and language.

As briefly mentioned above (and also as became apparent in the study underlying this article), a tendency may be noted for the sociolinguistic environment external to the family surrounding the children to become more and more restrictive in terms of the use of the heritage language, especially for school-age children (see e.g. Kubiliūtė 2021, Yamamoto 2001). In other words, in the social circle formed in educational institutions, even more important guides of language attitudes have been seen, compared to the family (see e.g. Kubiliūtė 2021). In addition, important factors influencing the development of FLP, including socio-cultural, economic, and historical-political circumstances, cannot be ignored (Curdts-Christiansen 2018, Lazdiņa & Marten 2021, Tseng 2020, see also Küün 2022). Thus, the sociolinguistic background surrounding the family should certainly not be underestimated in the study of FLP (see e.g. Lazdiņa & Marten 2021, see also Küün 2022), and in this article as well I have taken this principle into account when analyzing the FLP of the families studied.

### **Research methodology**

The article is based on the principles of a case study, with the keywords being dissecting the phenomena under study based on the perceptions of the informants (Peräkylä 2005, Yin 2009), i.e. on the example of four families (each family has been treated as a separated case). They participated in the interviews in an environment that was comfortable and, due to the coronary pandemic, safe for them – at home. Although the interviews were conducted using smart devices, the author of the article still acquired exhaustive answers to her questions when conducting the interviews in this way.

The head of the Tapa Sunday School (A) helped to find out if there were any informants who met both selection criteria and would be willing to take part in the study. It turned out that one person from the city of Tapa agreed to participate in the interview and the interview was conducted virtually on the Viber environment, as this was the safest option. Informant A emphasized that the Sunday school had been stalled since the spring of 2021 due to the global coronary pandemic. At the moment, according to the informant M1, the school's activities have been suspended also because the organization need to find new premises and also a new leader. In the case of informant M1, I conducted the interview via video (whereas I recorded the interviewee's speech but not the video).

Similar to Tapa Sunday School, the head of the Vodograi Sunday School (B) also helped to reach the informants of the Sillamäe educational institution. Interviews were conducted with each interviewee at a separately agreed time (May and June 2021). Due to technical problems with Viber, I decided to conduct telephone interviews with informants in a coordinated manner. Although I wished to get acquainted with the Vodograi school landscape from a linguistic point of view in the autumn of 2021, according to B, this was not possible in the conditions of the global coronary pandemic.

The language of the interviews was Russian, as both the informants and the interviewer spoke the language fluently. In mentioned situation we used it as a lingua franca (i.e., the author of the article does not speak Ukrainian at the communicative level). Some interviewees felt insecure in the use of the Estonian language (they mentioned this before the interview), which is the interviewer's mother tongue. Starting from the first contact, Russian proved to be the most suitable common language for all parties. With the permission of the informants, I used a voice recorder for all the interviews, at the beginning of the interview repeating the aims of the study and the fact that the purpose of data collection is to use the obtained information in research. I also informed the informants that I use pseudonyms when presenting the excerpts of the interview, thus ensuring the anonymity of the participants.

I transcribed the interviews manually and did so using a verbatim transcription strategy. There was no need to use transcription symbols, as the aim of the work was not to analyze, for example, the structure of the conversation, etc. (Linno 2021). In other words, I used unfocused transcription because it was required by the data analysis strategy – qualitative content analysis, during which I monitored the repetition of the patterns and topics of the thematic content throughout all interviews (see also Kalmus et al. 2015).

### **Sampling**

The sample of the study consists of informants of Ukrainian origin whose children (or grandchildren) attend a Ukrainian language and culture Sunday school (in the cities of Tapa and Sillamäe, respectively), i.e., it is a purposeful sample (see also Õunapuu 2014). Thus, the above-mentioned content criterion (ibid.) has been decisive in the selection of the sample.

However, in addition to the four interviewee, I received more general information about Sunday schools from two other informants – the principals of the Sunday School of Ukrainian Language and Culture in Tapa and Vodograi (A and B, respectively). I have identified the informants from Tapa with the pseudonym M1. In Sillamäe, I managed to obtain the consent of three informant parents to participate in the study (M2, M3, M4, respectively). I have more generally marked the families of the language managers as F1, F2, F3, and F4, respectively. The average length of all interviews was 37 minutes, with each informant talking about their own language practices and other aspects of FLP.

### **Methodology and data**

#### **General information on the first family (F1)**

M1 was 61 years of age at the time of the study and her ethnicity by self-definition is Ukrainian. M1 has three mother tongues: Russian, Ukrainian (her main childhood language), and Polish. According to M1, the maternal grandmother spoke Polish with her, but M1 has forgotten that language to some extent by now. She has graduated from a Ukrainian-language school (Russian was also studied as a separate subject). M1 has a secondary vocational education. There are currently only two people in her household: M1's husband and M1 herself. M1 met her husband while living in Estonia, but her husband is from Russia. M1's husband does not speak Ukrainian. M1 lives currently in Tallinn. While living in Ukraine, the family had previously lived in the Carpathians, where M1's parents came from. F1 has one child – a 37-year-old daughter. M1 has two grandchildren (ages 13 and 11) living in Tallinn.

#### **General information about the second family (F2)**

M2 is 42 years old at the time of the interview. She was born in the Estonian border town of Narva, near Sillamäe. She considers herself a Russian by ethnicity and also mentions Russian as her mother tongue. As a child, Russian and Ukrainian were used in her family. M1 communicated with her father in Ukrainian until she was eight years old without using any other languages. After the age of eight, M2 no longer used Ukrainian because her father divorced her mother, and her relationship with her father was severed. M1's father came from a mixed family, where her father's father was Russian, but her father's

mother was Ukrainian. Today, M2's paternal parents, who used to live in Ukraine, are dead (M2's children have never seen them), but M1 herself communicated with them in Ukrainian during their lifetime. Her family consists of herself and her daughter and son. The father of M2's older child (son) was Lithuanian but died when the son was nine months old. M2 is divorced from her next husband, who is also the father of M2's daughter. M2 studied at a school with Russian as the language of instruction, has higher education, and works as an entrepreneur.

### General information about the third family (F3)

M3 was 32 years old at the time of the study, and her hometown is Narva. She considers herself a Ukrainian, although her mother tongue is Russian. M3 has Estonian citizenship. When she was a child, the M3's family used both Russian (the language of communication with her Estonian father) and Russian and Ukrainian simultaneously (with her mother). M3's mother is from Vinnytsia Oblast, Ukraine, and was sent to work in the former ESSR after graduation. M3 emphasizes that as a child, she spent time with her grandparents in Ukraine every summer.

M3 has no siblings. F3 has four members: M3, her husband, and two daughters (2 and 9 years old). M3 studied in a school with Russian as the language of instruction and has a secondary vocational education.

### General information about the fourth family (F4)

The fourth informant, 31-year-old M4, was born in the Kirovograd Oblast of central Ukraine, where her parents still live. M4 came to live in Estonia in 2016. Thus, as of the moment of participating in the interview, she officially qualified as a new immigrant because it had not been five years since she settled in Estonia (see also Riigi Teataja 2014). M4 has the Ukrainian citizenship. According to her self-definition, she is Ukrainian by ethnicity. M4 considers Ukrainian and Russian to be her mother tongues. She studied at a school with Russian as the language of instruction.

In M4's childhood home, both Ukrainian and Russian were used in parallel. M4 emphasizes that the village in which she lived has a Russian-speaking language environment. Her father has always lived in this village, but M4's mother is from a little farther away from the Ukrainian language-dominated region, and her mother still prefers to use Ukrainian. She has used Russian with one of her grandmothers and Ukrainian with the other one. F4 has three members: M1, her husband, and her 13-year-old daughter born in Ukraine. In Ukraine, M4 received higher education in Ukrainian. She currently works as a kindergarten teacher in Sillamäe.

Table 1 provides compact background information on interviewees.

**Table 1:** General information about the interviewees of Vodograi Sunday School in Sillamäe and Tapa town

Family	Informant	Age	Education	Children	Ethnicity by self-definition	Mother tongue
F1	M1	61	Secondary vocational education	Daughter (37 years old)	Ukrainian	Russian, Ukrainian and Polish
F2	M2	42	Higher education	Daughter (10 years old) and son (16 years old)	Russian	Russian
F3	M3	32	Secondary vocational education	2 daughters (2 and 9 years old)	Ukrainian	Russian
F4	M4	31	Higher education	Daughter (13 years old)	Ukrainian	Ukrainian and Russian

## Findings

### FLP of F1

As a child, in the family of M1, the most widely used language was Ukrainian, and Ukrainian was also the language of instruction at school from the age of 11 when she and her parents returned from Russia to the Carpathians in Western Ukraine. It is characteristic of Ukraine that there are strong Ukrainian-speaking communities in rural areas and especially in western Ukraine (including the Carpathian Mountains) (see, for example, Goodman 2009). At the same time, according to M1, Russian was the predominant language used in hobby groups (e.g., folk dance and singing groups). As M1's husband, who is from Russia, speaks Russian ("he does not speak any languages other than Russian"), the spouses have chosen Russian as the language of communication since the beginning of their acquaintance. The family's 37-year-old daughter is fluent in both Ukrainian and Russian. M1 has used Ukrainian to communicate with his daughter.

Currently, the interviewee M1 hears mostly Russian around her, but also some Ukrainian – in connection with the Tapa Ukrainian Sunday School. During the interview, M1 emphasizes that her social circle differs from that of her husband precisely in that M1's circle of friends includes mainly Ukrainians. In addition to the Ukrainian Sunday school in Tapa, in which she previously participated, M1 was also the conductor of Tapa Ukrainian Choir. It is in the choir's work that M1 has been exposed to language switching: since, according to M1, there have been singers in the choir she conducts who prefer Estonian, Russian or Ukrainian languages, she has even switched the language within a sentence.

M1's language of reading is mainly Russian. She uses Ukrainian to communicate via Facebook with relatives and acquaintances living in the Carpathians, including former classmates.

M1 has provided the daughter with continuous input in Ukrainian as a language management tool (although the first language the daughter learned was Russian). In addition, M1 has sung Ukrainian lullabies and other songs to her daughter. M1 emphasizes that because she encouraged her daughter to read books and poems in Ukrainian, her daughter learned to love reading in Ukrainian. M1 has also considered it necessary for her daughter to develop her literacy in Ukrainian – her daughter writes in Ukrainian, Russian and Estonian without any mistakes.

Among the external language management tools, M1's daughter has been actively visited relatives in the Carpathians for many years – daughter has been using Ukrainian when communicating with her grandparents in her childhood and other relatives also later. However, since the daughter went to a school with Russian as the language of instruction in Estonia, she mainly uses Russian when writing. The M1's daughter did not study at Tapa Sunday school because when her daughter was of the relevant age, this school had not been established yet. At the same time, already in the 1990s, M1 put her daughter to a singing club, where they also sang songs in Ukrainian.

M1 had previously taught Ukrainian at Tapa Sunday School and in addition, before the corona pandemic, she had travelled from Tallinn to Tapa every week and often took her grandchildren with her to Sunday school.

### Excerpt 1

**M1:** *It's just ... I tell them [M1 grandchildren] about my roots, where my parents come from, so they know. And of course ...no language skills and knowledge are useless ... and they [M1's grandchildren] have really started to understand Ukrainian better thanks to attending Tapa Sunday School... if I ask them something, they will answer me [in Ukrainian]. I want them to be interested in the Ukrainian language and Ukraine. And the grandchildren, indeed, it is obvious especially after they started going to Sunday school, they are interested and understand much more about their roots.*

In my research, finding this out was to achieve to research objective. Based on the interview, it can be concluded that this family is interested in passing on their language and cultural knowledge and has been quite successful in doing so.

According to M1, attending Sunday school has strengthened the eagerness of the studied family to celebrate Ukrainian national holidays. Some holidays are celebrated twice (e.g., Christmas, i.e., according to the Estonian and Ukrainian folk calendars). M1 has been keeping the tradition for decades, often making Ukrainian national dishes vareniki and borscht for the family, as well as a variety of cakes. M1 also passed on her knowledge of Ukrainian cuisine during her Ukrainian language lessons at Tapa Sunday School. In language learning, however, M1 always introduced new words to students through poems because she found that this method made it easier for them to learn new words.

According to the stated research question, I found out that grandchildren, like M1's daughter, are also taken to relatives in Ukraine every year, where they can play with relatives of the same age (i.e. one of the external language management tools). According to M1, her grandchildren understand Ukrainian very well. But M1's daughter has sent her children to a school with Estonian as the language of instruction, so sometimes there is a situation where they admit that it is difficult to communicate in Russian even when communicating with their grandmother because they no longer remember Russian words in every situation. At the same time, M1 confirms that neither the choice of a school with Estonian as the language of instruction nor the multi-ethnic family has changed the language practices in the family – the main language of communication is Russian. Regarding my research objective, I received important information: M1 is convinced that the role of the Sunday School of Ukrainian Language and Culture is sufficient to carry out the language ideologies of the parents studying at the school, as “in addition to language, the transmission of culture and traditions is also extremely important, and this school also pays close attention to it.” According to her, M1 has used a “soft approach” to teaching Ukrainian, i.e., she has not considered it right to force her daughter, grandchildren, or students to use Ukrainian. Thus, it could be said that it coincides, for example, with S. Wilson's (2020) approach (to mention only one author) about the most successful language ideologies in the family.

### **FLP of F2**

Even though M2 considers Russian her mother tongue and has always been communicating with her mother in Russian, in her childhood, she spoke Ukrainian to her father and her grandmother on her father's side. As it is the family of M2 on her father's side and the connection with her father was lost at an early age, she was estranged from the family in Ukraine.

M2 went to a school where Russian was the language of instruction. She is surrounded by Russian language now, which is not actually surprising, taking into consideration the language environment in the town of Sillamäe. The language used in her work as an entrepreneur is also Russian. She only hears Ukrainian at the Vodograi Sunday School, where she serves as a board member today – M2 claims that this Sunday school always works in the Ukrainian language.

With the first husband of M2 with Lithuanian and Estonian roots, her language of communication was Estonian. However, M2 only got to live with the father of her first child until her son became 9 months old. They also planned to teach Lithuanian to their son, which was spoken by the first husband of M2, but as her husband died when the son had not yet learned to speak, the child never got the opportunity to learn Lithuanian as one of the languages of the family.

With the father of her second child – the daughter – she always spoke Russian since they first met. During the interview, the daughter of M2, who was finishing the fourth grade (ten years old), and the son, who went to the upper secondary school, spoke Russian to one another. According to M2, her son does not speak Ukrainian but her daughter understands Ukrainian very well.

M2 prefers reading news as well as literature in the Russian language. The menu on her phone is in Russian and she also uses Facebook and other social media networks in the Russian language. Thus, it may be concluded that the media language of M2 is Russian.

An interesting fact is that even though M2 always uses Russian at home “and never uses mixed language”, she admitted that “as strange as it may sound, I always switch to Ukrainian when I sing”. M2 also used to sing songs, including lullabies in Ukrainian, to her older son when the children were small. In regard to reading books in Ukrainian, became clear that her children did not read them. On the other hand, M2 occasionally watches films in Ukrainian on YouTube. Thus, in the light of this information, it may be presumed that M2 prioritizes spoken Ukrainian language skills to the written skills in the case of her daughter.

M2 also uses several options for external language management tools. She registered her son at a school where the language of instruction is Russian but some of the subjects are taught in Estonian. Namely, the so-called “60/40 policy” is being implemented in Estonia, which partly means that 60% of the curriculum is taught in the Estonian language at schools where the Russian is the language of instruction (see Dijckmans 2017). M2 highlights an important fact in her interview: as she has registered her younger child at a fully Estonian language school in Sillamäe, where English is also being taught from the first grade, according to M2, she has noticed that all languages mix in the head of her daughter and she occasionally uses “a bizarre language of abbreviations” which contains bits of different languages.

### Excerpt 2

*M2: My daughter is, of course, suffering in the sense that some parts of the grammar in Estonian as well as Russian are difficult for her. The positive is, however, that she speaks Estonian completely freely otherwise.*

Still, the mother of M2 decided before her daughter started school that an Estonian language school would be the best option for her daughter if she were to remain in Estonia in the future. This was based on the conviction that her daughter would have overcome the slight difficulties with the Estonian grammar by the time of graduating from school and would later have more opportunities for acquiring education and for employment if she spoke Estonian at a very good level. M2 also considers English language skills important. Indeed, as mentioned in the theoretical part of the article, some pragmatic considerations can be observed in the selection of the language of instruction also in this case (see Gogonas & Kirsch 2016).

Russian is included in the curriculum at the school of the daughter of M2 and as it is also the language of communication at home, M2 believes that this will be enough for her daughter to acquire verbal and written Russian language skills for now.

M2 also highlights the significant fact that her daughter has been happily attending the Vodograi Sunday School in Sillamäe for years where Ukrainian language and culture are taught. Thanks to the events regularly organized by the Sunday school, her daughter is used to reciting Ukrainian poems and singing in Ukrainian. However, the daughter of M2 also writes in Ukrainian in a certain area, which is illustrated well by the following excerpt from the interview.

### Excerpt 3

*M2: Even when we were writing a letter to Santa Clause, my daughter wanted to use Ukrainian. I do not know why. Even at the Estonian [language] school, she recites poems to the Santa Clause in Ukrainian (laughs).*

On the one hand, this indicates that the children at the Sunday school probably regularly practice reciting poems expressively in Ukrainian and writing letters in Ukrainian at the Sunday school. As was

added by M2, her daughter also occasionally writes Ukrainian letters to the children in her age who attend the same Sunday school. Reciting a poem in Ukrainian to the Santa at the Christmas party at a school where the language of instruction is Estonian can probably be considered culturally enriching for the children from Estonian-speaking families as well.

To the question of what has made M2 wish that her daughter attended a Ukrainian Sunday school, M2 responds as follows.

#### **Excerpt 4**

*M2: It is, of course, learning the language, learning about the roots... the culture. But also pulling the child away from the phone for at least for two-three hours. For example, they practice crafts there [at the Sunday school] which is important for the development of the brain. And dancing, singing on the stage. And all those communication skills which are being used there. They also learn to write in Ukrainian.*

M2 also stresses that her family always celebrates Estonian, Russian, and Ukrainian holidays at home. Among other things, M2 has always been creating national embroideries which has been the tradition in her family, according to her. She also highlights that “borscht and pork lard are essential for us [F2]”. But still M2 believes that her 10-year-old daughter does not yet clearly acknowledge her Ukrainian roots.

M4 considers the role of the Sunday school where the Ukrainian language and culture are being taught sufficient for implementing their language ideologies in the case of their children. When it comes to learning languages, M2 believes that “children should not be forced to learn a language, instead, it should be made sure that the children themselves want to learn, at that, providing controlled freedom to the child”. This is largely aligned with the approach in the case of which flexible implementation is deemed the best option for FLP (see Kopeliovich 2013, Soler & Zabrodskaia 2017).

#### **FLP of F3**

M3 was 32 years old when the interview was conducted. M3 claims to be Ukrainian, but admits that their mother tongue is Russian. This case also shows that the ethnicity and mother tongue may not always fully match. On the other hand, it should be noted that the concept ‘mother tongue’ which all informants have referred to has several meanings by its nature: for example, Ukrainians most commonly tend to associate *mother tongue* with the language community which they most relate to (Shevchenko 2015).

F3 consists of four members: M3, her spouse, and two children. In the childhood of M3, Russian and Ukrainian were used in parallel in their family (she spoke Russian and Ukrainian with their mother and Russian with their father). The mother of M3 also lives in Sillamäe and speaks Russian to the children of M3, although M3 claims that “when my mother argues with her grandchildren, she may also use Ukrainian”. It has indeed been found that people tend to express their stronger emotional responses in their first language (L1) (Dylman & Bjärtå 2019), especially in the case of bilingual individuals (see also Belcher & Connor 2001).

In the F3 family, the language of communication of the spouses is Russian and the daughters also speak Russian to one another. M3 has been buying books in Russian for the children and has been singing Russian songs to them from an early age. Conclusively, the afore-mentioned internal management tools are implemented in F3.

M3 stresses that they mostly hear Russian in their daily environment and adds that “Sillamäe is a Russian-speaking city, we [the residents of the city] do not speak Estonian here [in Sillamäe]”.

M3 and their spouse consume media in the Russian language and especially like reading news on the internet. However, a bit later in the course of the interview M3 also adds that as she understands Ukrainian well, she also follow the news in Ukrainian to a certain extent.

M2 of the family members live in Vinnytsia and M3 uses Facebook or Viber to contact them, using Russian to speak to the family, while they respond in Ukrainian. According to M3, she have never experienced any issues with understanding one another when communicating with those family members. It should also be noted that the people in Ukraine generally speak Russian, while the opposite is not true in many cases: this phenomenon is still being associated with the extent of the impact of the Russification in the Soviet era (see Kulyk 2014). The children of M3 speak Russian to their Ukrainian grandmother, even though M3's own languages of communication with their mother (i.e. the grandmother of the children) have been Ukrainian and Russian. Therefore, linguistic consistency between the representatives of different generations cannot be observed in this case.

On the other hand, M2 highlights an important fact: she has registered her daughter at the school with Estonian as the language of instruction, which she justify as follows: "we live in Estonia, Estonian language is the priority". The daughter of M3 is also attending at the Vodograi Sunday school of Ukrainian language and culture (which was also attended by M3). Thus, in the case of the older child, M3 uses a school with Estonian as the language of instruction and Ukrainian language hobby education as the external management tools (although M3 of the daughter has also attended other, Russian-speaking hobby groups). While M3 has a positive attitude towards learning different languages in parallel, she also refer to a more complicated side of being in the sphere of influence of different languages.

#### **Excerpt 5**

*M3: Most of the classmates of my daughter at the Estonian language school which my daughter goes to come from Russian-speaking families. The teachers naturally speak with the students in Estonian. My child is bilingual, she speaks Estonian and Russian very well, but it is still a bit difficult for her to read in Ukrainian, as the Ukrainian letters are a bit different from the Russian ones. And she is also studying English... And Estonian at the same time... And Russian. But my daughter reads very well in Estonian and Russian. Yet, it can be seen that the languages are getting mixed for her a bit, which makes using several languages almost in parallel more difficult.*

When asked what was the motivation behind the wish of M3 for her child to attend the Sunday school for Ukrainian language and culture, M3 responded that it was primarily the fact that the child was very active, wishing to take part in any sports and hobby activities available. On the other hand, it is interesting that M3 believes (as does M2) that "the Sunday school has not yet helped the child to acknowledge her Ukrainian roots, as she is probably still too young". This response allows concluding that M3 does not probably consider the Sunday school part fully sufficient for implementing their FLP, as this includes acknowledgement of one's ethnic identity, based on the interpretation of the author. This shows that it would be necessary to separately study the perceptions of the children of these issues, as the knowledge of the parents may not match the knowledge of the child/children.

#### **FLP of F4**

M4 emphasizes that her former home in Central Ukraine (also the home of her father) is a Russian-speaking small town. M4 brings out the connection that, "it was probably due to the Russian language environment I was speaking Russian to my father, although he knows how to speak Ukrainian". M4's mother, however, comes from a Ukrainian-speaking region and this is why "it was natural for me to speak Ukrainian to my mother". As for grandparents, she spoke Russian to one grandmother and Ukrainian to the other. Therefore, in her childhood home, M4 spoke both Russian and Ukrainian, and she considers both languages her mother tongues.

At the time of the interview, M4's daughter (from her previous marriage) was 13 years old, she was born in Ukraine and moved to Sillamäe with her mother in 2016. M4's husband from Sillamäe, whom

M4 met via the internet, also uses Russian to communicate with M4's daughter. M4 uses Russian to speaking with her husband (she used Russian for communicating with her previous husband as well), and with her daughter, because her daughter "does not want [to speak] Ukrainian". The language of communication between M4 and her daughter has been Russian since the day she was born.

#### Excerpt 6

M4: [daughter's name] *prefers Estonian to Ukrainian and if I start speaking in Estonian, she also starts speaking Estonian to me immediately. But [the daughter of M4] realizes that I do not understand everything in Estonian. And then she starts speaking to me in Russian.*

The reason why M4's daughter prefers Estonian to Ukrainian can be explained with the fact that she goes to an Estonian school in Sillamäe. The following excerpt will reveal the internal management tools implemented by M4 that were used to develop her daughter's Ukrainian skills since early age. The interview also sheds light to which direction the language management tools implemented by M4 are going.

#### Excerpt 7

M4: *When [M4's daughter] started to show interest in books, then ... I started reading fairy tales to her. At some point I would take a fairy tale in Ukrainian and read it to her. Then I realized that she did not understand a word of Ukrainian. I decided this is not the way to go. I bought an alphabet book and letters that can be attached to the wall. When you push a letter, you'll hear the pronunciation of the letter. We already had a similar Russian-language educational toy at home. My child started playing with these Ukrainian letters. Later on, when she was 4–5 years old, we started learning poems in Ukrainian, again, by shifting from Russian to Ukrainian. But... let's say, things were great until we moved to Estonia. We completely lost touch with Ukrainian after we moved here.*

M4 admits that while living in Estonia "it has been hard to prove to her that Ukrainian is an interesting language which may become useful in her life". This case shows clearly how the drastic changes in living and language environment may change language preferences (see also Küün 2022).

M4 emphasizes that her daughter usually starts speaking Russian to her grandmother living in Ukraine (M4's mother), and switches to Surzhyk (emphasizes) in the course of conversation. During the interview, M4 mentions that she "also sometimes speaks Surzhyk", at the same time confirming that her writing is impeccable both in Ukrainian and Russian. She adds that in the Ukrainian small town where her daughter was born, "there is no way to escape from Surzhyk". Indeed, the use of Surzhyk in Ukraine is quite frequent (see, e.g., Seals, 2009). Despite the fact that this Russian-Ukrainian mixed language is widely used in Ukraine, Surzhyk is not considered a pure language, which has given it a negative reputation (Bilaniuk 2005). However, as shown by the current case, the informant M4 was not afraid to acknowledge that she also uses this language from time to time.

The working language of M4 is Russian. During the interview, M4 mentions that she has found all her friends and acquaintances through the Vodograi Sunday school. M4 confirms (with sadness in her voice), that as the language environment of Sillamäe is Russian, M4's circle of friends only uses Ukrainian when they meet for Sunday school. As for her friends and acquaintances in Ukraine, M4 uses Ukrainian with some of them and Russian with her friends from the university.

M4 rarely watches television. She rather watches TV-shows and series from YouTube. She also uses social networks Facebook and Instagram – she mainly uses the internet in Russian. She also reads the news from the news portal Delfi or from the local newspaper Postimees in Russian.

M4 emphasizes that as she lives in Sillamäe, she almost never hears Estonian. She highlights that this fact is certainly not helping her to learn the language efficiently (“In Sillamäe, I encounter Estonian only on the packages of goods, on cheques, on some papers, and, of course, in language courses”). This is why she is really happy that the school language of her child is Estonian, “although there is only one Estonian child in her class”. In the light of these data, it may be said that in Sillamäe, a lot of parents have acknowledged that enrolling their children to Estonian schools helps and encourages them to learn Estonian as the official language of Estonia.

According to M4, her daughter, who in 2021 graduated from the 6th grade of the Estonian-language school, has never any language-related or other problems in school. M4 emphasizes that she is very happy about her daughter ending up in the Estonian-language school, as “I wish that job-wise, my daughter would have it easier than me” and adds that unfortunately, she has not “picked up” Estonian herself yet. M4 confirms that although she has studied Estonian “since the day I arrived in Estonia, taking the language courses”, the language environment in Sillamäe does not foster the natural and quick acquisition of Estonian (informant M3 also referred to this).

In addition, M4 brings out the Sunday school as an external language management tool for teaching her daughter Ukrainian and educating her about the Ukrainian culture. The motivating factors for that are mentioned as follows.

#### Excerpt 8

*M4: Even if the language [language of origin] is not used, you need to know where you were born, know about the country. Secondly, you do not know what will happen in ten years, where your life will take you. For example, I was taken to Estonia (laughs). I had never thought about it or dreamt about it, but it happened. Maybe one day my daughter will return to her birth country. Learning a language always comes in handy. For example, you can work as a translator. Thirdly, speaking different languages is good for the development of thinking.*

This shows that for M4, it is important for her daughter to learn Ukrainian from the emotional point of view. However, it is known that parents can decide on language management tools based on practical aspects (see, e.g., Gogonas & Kirsch 2016). The answer also reflects the pragmatic reason behind M4’s wish for her daughter to learn Ukrainian: M4 thinks it is possible that her daughter will return to her birth country and that she could, for example, work as a translator.

During the interview, it turns out M4 has worked in the Sunday school as a teacher of Ukrainian and handicrafts, although now she has given up the job because of lack of time. In addition to Ukrainian children, some Estonian children are attending the Sunday school, she adds. M4 happily confirms that thanks to Vodograi Sunday school, their family has adapted holidays “my husband had never heard about before, and this is very nice, as we now have more days we can make presents to each other as family”. She adds that the Sunday school is what brings together the Ukrainian community in Sillamäe, and that the school has also unified her family.

Similarly to the M2, M4 thinks that her daughter does not recognize her Ukrainian roots (“she does not understand yet what ethnicity is”). It cannot be ruled out that M4’s daughter has got a mixed sense of ethnicity due to using different languages daily. In order to claim this with certainty, the child of the informant should be included in the study. M4 says that her “daughter has been born in Ukraine but is actually an Estonian”. From this, it can be concluded that the sense of ethnicity is heavily influenced by spending time in the everyday Estonian micro-language environment and cultural space (Estonian-language middle school): it can have an effect of a person’s sense of ethnicity, although the language at home, in this case, is Russian (see also Küün 2022).

M4’s language ideology concerning Ukrainian is that a child cannot be forced to learn the language. She considers any type of forced guidance to be fruitless.

**Excerpt 9**

*M4: It's not working anymore when I say to my daughter: go to the [Vodograi] Sunday school. If she does not want to go, we will spend, for example, 2 to 3 hours watching at home "Harry Potter" in Ukrainian. At least we have this option on the day she is not attending the Sunday school. The option of not hearing any Ukrainian at all that day... no, this cannot be.*

M4 regrets that she has not been able to offer enough writing practice in Ukrainian for her child, and she connects this to her daughter's wish, e.g., her daughter has no interest in writing in Ukrainian. It may be that her daughter senses that she will not need this skill, as at the moment, she has no one to write to in Ukrainian. However, M4 admits that "it is very difficult to keep up the child's desire to communicate in Ukrainian". It can be assumed that the mentioned circumstances can be explained by the fact that the daughter is surrounded by other languages on a daily basis and therefore she may not feel, at such a young age, the practical value of knowing Ukrainian while living in Estonia.

**Discussion and summary**

In summary, the study showed that informants are motivated to maintain their language and culture of origin by the aspiration to ensure the continuity of their language and cultural heritage. The first reason is related to the emotional aspect: the language managers foremost see a symbolic meaning in learning Ukrainian language and culture in view of the Ukrainian identity in the Estonian context because in real life, even more so when living in a Russian-speaking environment, there are few opportunities to use Ukrainian. The study revealed that Ukrainian is mainly used only when meeting at the Sunday school.

The informant M4, however, also highlighted a practical purpose of learning Ukrainian for her daughter: she emphasized that it is possible that her daughter might start working as a translator in the future where she will need a high level of proficiency in Ukrainian and/or she might return to Ukraine as an adult. As a third reason for informants wanting their children to study at the respective Sunday schools is the fact that parents are of the opinion that even if their children do not end up using Ukrainian in the future, having any language proficiency or any skill is developmental for a child or young person. In addition to learning the language and culture of origin, Sunday school is generally also seen as a hobby group that broadens the horizons (see also Küün 2021) and offers exciting activities for young people. It should be mentioned that it came as a surprise to the author of the article that Tapa and Vodograi Sunday schools are open and ready to accept children and young people with any roots. At the same time, I am sure that this non-formal and, according to the heads of schools, individualized learning is educational and culturally enriching for everyone, regardless of their ethnicity or native language. The informants also mentioned the role of Ukrainian Sunday schools operating in Estonia in uniting local people with Ukrainian roots and creating a united sense of community (see also Küün 2022).

The study on which the article is based indicated that internal-familial language management plays the most important role in the maintaining of Ukrainian language and culture – in particular, providing a linguistic input, e.g., talking to the child in Ukrainian, singing to them, also guiding them to Ukrainian-language books to develop their literacy. But it all starts with attitude towards one's language of origin, i.e. how much the language and culture is valued (see e.g., Schwartz & Verschik 2013, see also Küün 2021). Indeed, it can be presumed that the ability to offer a sufficient linguistic and cultural environment to children so that we could even talk about the possibility of maintaining one's language of origin is particularly important for the maintaining of heritage language (Wilson 2020).

The most important external-familial language management included participation in the Ukrainian language and culture studies at a Sunday school and the opportunity to interact with relatives living in Ukraine. M4 pointed out that, unfortunately, her daughter has lost interest in the Ukrainian language

due to moving to Estonia from Ukraine. Instead, M4 added that her daughter who studies in a school with Estonian language of instruction and communicates in Estonian prefers to communicate in Estonian and, according to M4, it seems to her that in the five years of living in Estonia, her daughter has acclimated to Estonia so much that “she is as if she was born in Ukraine but is actually Estonian”. It is obvious that at one point, the constant presence in a certain language and cultural environment (school with Estonian language of instruction) could start to affect one’s self-perception (see also Küün 2022). However, I was unable to learn whether M4’s daughter herself feels this way about herself or with whom she associates ethnically, because I did not interview the children of the families. However, the study revealed that both, M2 and M4, believe that their children are still too young to acknowledge ethnicity. As the author of the article, I am sure that in the field of FLP, both in the context of language and identity, future studies should also address the perception of ethnicity among the children of the studied families in order to get the fullest picture possible of the issues examined.

Coming back to the research question raised in the beginning of the article, in terms of the language ideology of families, it can be highlighted separately that parents are generally of the opinion that even if their children do not end up using Ukrainian in the future, knowledge of Ukraine as a country (and other aspects of the Ukrainian culture) and, of course, proficiency in Ukrainian are important to know your own roots and those of your ancestors. At the same time, informants M2 and M4, in particular, emphasized that children should never be forced to learn a particular language and use it at home, for example. They also do not think it would be right to force them to attend a Ukrainian Sunday school. In summary, both M2’s and M4’s understanding of the effectiveness of the flexibility of language ideology in the implementation of FLP coincides with that of S. Wilson (2020). Based on their research results, J. Soler & A. Zabrodska (2017) have also encouraged the adoption of softer language ideology in the form of more flexible language practices in the family, which, in addition to parents, linguists studying the respective topics should also regard more positively (Soler & Zabrodska 2017). In summary, the FLP of families I studied was flexible in all cases: parents fully took their children’s wishes into account when introducing language practices and language ideologies. In other words, they tried to ensure the linguistic well-being of their children (see e.g., De Houwer 2013, Yates & Terraschke 2013).

There was another recurring pattern that revealed itself in the study of language ideologies of the families examined. Namely, the 37-year-old daughter of M1, M2, and M3 as well as M4 considered it important to enroll their children in a school with Estonian language of instruction. There is, of course, a practical value and purpose to it, because parents have an expectation that it will significantly accelerate their children’s acquisition of Estonian as the official language of Estonia (see also Küün 2022). At the same time, M2, M3 and M4’s words revealed a downside: as their children are in the sphere of influence of several languages (Russian, Estonian, English, and Ukrainian), the languages seem to mix for their children, which can sometimes cause certain communication problems. However, the parents are still happy with their choice of a school with Estonian language of instruction for their children. Russian is spoken at home and also studied as part of a subject at a school of Estonian language of instruction, and parents believe that this is enough at first for their children to acquire (and become literate in) Russian. M2’s, M3’s and M4’s children have also been studying English since grade 1 in the same school.

When mentioning the relationship between language and identity, it is important to note that, in general, in Ukraine, a situation is common where people who see themselves as ethnic Ukrainians speak Russian or Surzhyk, not Ukrainian (Bilaniuk 2005). Thus, a person may carry a certain sense of ethnicity without using their language of origin (*ibid.*) as was also the case in this article. In the case of Ukrainians, a dual association with two languages, i.e. Ukrainian and Russian, is commonly observed (see e.g., Seals 2009). This is also confirmed by the results of the study on which this article is based.

As one of the cases described in this article illustrated (F4’s daughter who had already acquired Ukrainian as one of the languages of the family but has lost the desire to use Ukrainian while living in Sillamäe), it is also possible to become alienated from one’s language of origin even when initially using

one's language of origin but changing one's country of residence and language of education (see also Küün 2022). However, it can be presumed that, in the end, it may not always be associated with an immediate change of identity. If the circumstances surrounding the specific family change, however, this might also have an impact on the family's FLP (see also Küün 2022) and parents need to be prepared for this possibility. Particularly when it comes to school-aged and older children whose social networks are, of course, much broader than those of pre-schoolers (see e.g., Kubiliutė 2021).

In conclusion, overall participants reported motivated to maintain their language and culture of origin. The aim of this study was not, of course, to study the FLP of all Ukrainians living in Estonia, but the results help to delve deeper into the issues examined based on the principles of a case study and, at the same time, these results provide enough information to answer the research question. It seems important to note that interviews provide participant perspectives on what they think happened and what they want to share with interviewer, including perceptions of bilingual parenting as good parenting (see e.g., King & Fogle 2006). As the largest limitation, however, I must admit that, in the study, I am not taking into account directly the perceptions of the children of the families studied but am instead focusing on the opinions and statements mediated by their mothers. The plan is to take children as an important party in shaping the FLP (see Wilson, 2020) into account in studying these issues in the future because I agree that researching parents and their children will provide a clearer and more unbiased picture of the main issues and dilemmas of FLP (*ibid.*), also of linguistic well-being of children.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> When interviewing research participants in both Tapa and Sillamäe, I used an adapted version of a questionnaire from the research project "Globalization and family and social plurilingualism in medium-sized language communities (MSLC) in Europe" (GLOBLINMED). First, I received permission to use it from the developer and principal executor of the original questionnaire in Estonia, who is a Professor Anastassia Zabrodskaia at Tallinn University. I then supplemented the semi-structured questionnaire with questions relevant to the research question in my study. More specifically, Tallinn University research and development project TRU15044 (FFI2012-35502), 2014–2015.

<sup>2</sup> The author of the article thanks the informants, school heads and teachers who participated in the study for their cooperation. The article forms one part of my doctoral thesis.

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## Systemic functional linguistics and inclusivity in the classroom

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### Abstract

*This paper contends that pedagogies like genre-based pedagogy and Reading to Learn (R2L), which are informed by systemic functional linguistics (SFL), can help foster inclusivity in classrooms. Both pedagogies are based on the idea that language should be taught functionally and explicitly. SFL informed teaching practices have been used, particularly in educational settings like low-achieving schools, to make the linguistic demands of the curriculum explicit to learners. This has resulted in enhanced student engagement and narrowing of achievement gaps. The paper begins with a brief note on inclusivity and its importance, followed by an introduction to SFL and its architecture. It then explores the applications of genre-based pedagogy and R2L in classrooms (mainly in North America and Australia) as well as the results of such implementations and concludes with an argument that educational research in the Indian context could benefit from applications of Halliday's functional theory to teacher training and teaching practices at the school level.*

**Keywords:** *systemic functional linguistics, inclusivity in the language classroom, genre-based pedagogy, reading to learn, language teaching*

### Introduction

The term “inclusive classrooms” can be defined as learning settings, which address the needs of the majority of students (if not all). Inclusive classrooms use instructional techniques, which enable students of diverse backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities to develop to their maximum potential<sup>9</sup>. This paper attempts to show that Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) informed pedagogies offer one way to encourage inclusivity in language classrooms, notably by explicitly teaching students the curriculum's language. Researchers such as David Rose, Frances Christie, Jim Martin, Maria E. Brisk, Mary Schleppegrell, Meg Gebhard have argued that the teaching of academic language is crucial in addressing school failure. It follows then that poor academic achievement can be attributed, in part, to students' inability to grasp the curriculum's language or their need for more assistance with it. In addition to that, (Christie 1994, McCabe 2017, McCabe et al. 2015) have highlighted that the language of education is taken for granted by not only traditional teaching methods but even progressive ones (such the child-centered approach and the communicative approach to teaching). SFL-based teaching methods emerged as a response to such teaching practices and the needs of students and teachers. They are predicated on the notion that all learning occurs through language, and that language must be taught explicitly to the learners alongside the subject matter. This has been crucial for pupils whose

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<sup>9</sup> According to Motschenbacher (2016), the term "inclusive education" originates from the field of education and was developed as a response to traditional teaching methods that assume that all students in a classroom begin at the same level of competence and should progress to the desired level of achievement, and that anyone who does not perform well should receive special education. Those who support inclusive education contend, however, that heterogeneity is common in most classes and should be viewed as a valuable diversity rather than a barrier to learning. In a similar vein, UNESCO (2017) describes inclusion as a process of removing obstacles that prevent learners from being involved, participating, and excelling in educational settings.

home language is not the same as the language of instruction as well as those who come from homes with low levels of literacy in them.

Let us begin by considering why it is necessary to discuss inclusivity in the classroom. According to sociological theories of education based on the conflict tradition<sup>10</sup>, educational institutions play a role in both the upkeep and creation of hierarchies. Hierarchies that students already enter the classroom with (e.g., class differences, gender, ethnicity, etc.) and those that are created inside the institutional context (e.g., segregation based on assessment). In other words, students come from a wide range of social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Some students come from homes with high rates of home literacy, a stable home environment, and socioeconomic conditions; in other words, circumstances that enable children to move through the educational environment without difficulty. Others come from difficult backgrounds with circumstances that hinder learning and development, such as poor literacy rates at home, lack of resources, prevalence of violence, to name just a few. These factors have an impact on how well students perform in class and engage with the curriculum. Although many of these background concerns may not be issues educational institutions can directly address or control, educational institutions can certainly influence how these difficulties affect a child's performance and growth through the pedagogy they use in the classroom.

The findings of two significant educational surveys conducted in India provide insights into the role educational institutions play in establishing and maintaining hierarchies. Both the studies reveal poor learning outcomes from the majority of Indian schools.

The first study, the National Achievement Survey (NAS)<sup>11</sup>, is one of the biggest studies on the standard of education in Indian schools. Students in grades three, five, eight, and ten are tested in all foundational areas. The findings from the latest survey, conducted in November 2021, reveal the following: First, achievement levels declines as we move up the ladder. The national average score for mathematics in grade three is 57%, it decreases to 32% in class ten. The study notes a similar pattern for other subjects as well. According to Yadav (2022), this seems to imply that pupils do worse the more years they spend in school. Second, the learning gap widens as students spend more years in school. The study reports that while there is not much of a difference between the academic achievement of pupils in government and private schools in standard three, the difference widens as we move up the ladder. Third, the difference between students from the general category and those from historically

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<sup>10</sup> There are two basic categories of sociological theories of education: functional theories (seen in works of Emile Durkheim and Talcott Parsons, among others) and conflict tradition theories (seen in works of Bowles & Gintis, Pierre Bourdieu, Ivan Illich, Basil Bernstein, to name a few). According to theorists that take a functional approach, educational institutions play a significant role in socializing people and helping them acquire the skills necessary to do a variety of specialised occupations. Conversely, conflict theorists adopt a pessimistic stance toward educational institutions. They maintain that inequality is a feature of society and that educational institutions do not reduce inequality but rather reinforce it. Institutions of higher learning uphold the status quo in their eyes. Although there are major differences among conflict tradition theorists, they all share the core belief that education in an unequal society does not level the playing field and create opportunities for all social classes, but rather contributes to the perpetuation of inequalities (Giddens, 2020).

<sup>11</sup> The Ministry of Education, Government of India, oversees NAS. It contains a nationally representative sample. In 1.18 lakh schools throughout India, 34 lakh students participated in the NAS 2021 survey. It is conducted every three years. In grades 3 and 5 children are assessed in a modern Indian language (MIL), environmental studies, and math fundamentals; in grade 8, they are assessed in math, science, social science and MIL; and in grade 10 students are assessed in math, science, social science, MIL and English. The sample encompasses a wide range of schools distinguished on the basis of management – central government, state government, government-aided, and private schools. Students from all over the country take the test simultaneously on a single day on the school premises. The test contains multiple choice questions which have been designed and piloted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

marginalized groups like Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Castes widens as well (Ministry of Education 2022, Yadav 2022).

It is important to emphasize that this is the first survey on the quality of education following the lockdown caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the protracted school closure. It is therefore apparent that there will be a fall in learning levels. However, the survey's findings from before the pandemic also indicate that Indian schools have low learning standards. While describing the overall national performance across subjects and classes NAS 2017 has the following to say, "Thus, there is a total of 45.2% of students achieving targeted levels (Proficient and Advanced) which leaves overall 54.8% of students that need improvements (Basic and Below Basic) as they are achieving below the desired levels" (Ministry of Education 2019: 154). Which is to say that nationally approximately 50% of the students perform below the target level for their grade.

The second survey, known as the Annual Status of Education (ASER)<sup>12</sup>, is carried out by an independent organization called Pratham, whose volunteers visit numerous houses in rural areas and ask simple questions about linguistic and mathematical proficiency. The survey looks at the status of schooling and how much children have learned in their foundational years in rural India's districts and states. It is a nationwide survey that changed from being an annual study to being conducted once every two years since 2016. ASER surveys have revealed the subpar learning in rural schools for the past 16 years, and the results have remained mostly unchanged.

The most recent pre-pandemic study, ASER 2018, found that 73% of grade 8 children can read a basic text of standard II level. There has been a decline in students' reading proficiency since 2008 when 85% of students could read a text at the grade II level. On the other hand, the study shows an increase in the reading proficiency of third-grade kids, from 22.2 % in 2008 to 27 % in 2018. However, the issue is present at both the younger and older levels for basic mathematics. In contrast to the 68.4% of students who were able to complete a basic division problem successfully in 2010, only 44% of students in 2018 were able to do so. In a similar vein, the report notes that class 3 students' ability to do simple subtraction has not changed much over time. In 2016, 27.6 % of pupils could attempt it, and in 2018 only 28.1 % could succeed (Pratham 2017, Pratham 2019).

Both NAS and ASER highlight Indian schools' poor learning outcomes and provide credence to the concept that these schools in India seem to be fostering rather than eradicating inherited disadvantages. The condition of education and learning across the country is poor, with the exception of a few elite schools in major cities. Some of the causes of this include poor teaching techniques, pupil undernutrition, classroom overcrowding, poor infrastructure, and inadequate teacher preparation. Teaching strategies that are informed by SFL offer one way to enhance classroom instruction. They are made with teachers and students in mind. Teachers used SFL metalanguage to help students develop academic language, and students are helped with the curriculum's language so they can understand what is being taught and how to go about completing curricular tasks.

The aim of this paper is to make a case that Halliday's functional theory of language – Systemic Functional Linguistics and SFL-informed pedagogies have much to offer educational contexts with low-levels of achievement such as India. The paper begins with a brief overview of the theoretical constructs

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<sup>12</sup> ASER 2018 gathered information from 3,54, 944 households in 596 rural Indian districts from a total of 5,46,527 kids aged 3 to 16 years old. It is a household-based survey in which volunteers go door-to-door and assess each child's proficiency in reading easy texts and basic math. In contrast to NAS, which focuses on grade level competence, all kids are tested using the same tool, regardless of age or grade. This is so that the ASER survey can determine if children have mastered the fundamentals of reading and math. Additionally, the study is only carried out in rural areas, but even in those places, it evaluates pupils who attend government, private, and even out-of-school children. This poll is significant because the results revealed that kids lacked fundamental abilities despite the fact that enrolment in schools was rising, which in a way shocked the nation and posed the crucial question, "What is going on in Indian school?"

of SFL. After that, it discussed how the theory has been used to design two pedagogies – genre-based pedagogy and Reading to Learn. This is followed by a review of selected articles that document how SFL based pedagogies have been applied in educational settings to improve learning outcomes as well as to train teachers (mainly in Australia and North America). The paper concludes by arguing that there is a need for debates on literacy in the Indian context to move beyond discussions of the appropriate age to introduce English as the medium of instruction and looks towards pedagogies, which have the potential to improve teaching practices in Indian schools. The paper offers some suggestions for how SFL can be incorporated into teacher training and classroom instruction in the Indian context<sup>13</sup>.

### **SFL - A brief overview**

Systemic Functional Linguistics is a theory of language that was founded by M. A. K. Halliday between 1930s and 1950s (Herriman 2013). It is an approach towards language from the perspective of meaning and function as opposed to rules and structures. Some of the key influences on Halliday and on the development of the theory are the British linguist J.R. Firth, the Polish-British anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski, and the British sociologist Basil Bernstein. In particular it was Firth's emphasis on the social aspect of language with meaning as its central concern that had an impact on Halliday and the development of the theory (Halliday & Hassan 2006, Webster 2013).

According to Gebhard (2013), using an SFL-based approach to language development means adopting a sociocultural perspective on language and language learning. Such a method of learning languages is distinct from behaviorist and cognitivist methods of language acquisition. According to a behaviorist perspective, language learning is habit formation in the course of which pupils memorize decontextualized language chunks through language exercises. Contrarily, a cognitivist viewpoint asserts that people have the capacity to acquire language over time through oral exchanges and engagement with texts. They concentrate on the cognitive processes in the mind of the language users. Critics of the cognitivist perspective claim that the perspective places an excessive amount of emphasis on an individual's own mental processes at the detriment of the social context in which the user is positioned. They contend that language acquisition should be viewed as a combination of interpersonal, socially created, and contextual processes. Language learning is thus viewed by academics who take a socio-cultural perspective on language as a process of socialization into the discourse community's linguistic practices. Such a viewpoint holds that the role of the teacher is to introduce students to the discourse community's language by examining the usage and thought patterns of that particular discipline.

Language teaching was a primary concern that influenced Halliday to develop his theory of language (Steiner 1997). Halliday was interested in practicing “applicable” linguistics (Webster 2013, McCabe 2017). In other words, a language theory that can be applied in real-world teaching situations. This can be seen in the following quote by Halliday “. . . as a teacher I was a lot more conscious of the need to provide explanations of problems faced by the learners, to try to develop some kind of coherent notion of a language, how it works, how it is learned, and so forth, in order simply to improve the quality of the language teaching” (Halliday & Hasan 2006: 16). The motivation for developing a usable theory of language that instructors can use to teach language and how it functions to create meaning is outlined

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<sup>13</sup> It is important to mention that, to the best of my knowledge, no study has been done that uses SFL-based pedagogies in order to improve students' academic literacy at the school level in the Indian context. This essay makes the case that research on the effects of such pedagogies from underdeveloped countries like India is required. This will contribute to the growing body of literature on the use of SFL in education. It will also offer new insights into what happens when teaching methods that have worked well in English-speaking western contexts are applied in challenging countries like India. With this goal in mind, I wrote this essay. It should be emphasised that at the time I was writing this paper, I was working on an experimental study for my PhD dissertation in a Delhi government school that looked at the impacts of implementing a genre-based pedagogy inspired by SFL to enhance grade 8 students' English language writing skills.

by Halliday in the aforementioned remark. Therefore, it would not be wrong to argue that systemic functional linguistics lends itself better to the teaching and learning of languages in comparison to other theories of language that have dominated language teaching like traditional grammar or Chomsky's formal grammar. However, McCabe points out SFL uptake in language teaching has been very limited.

Before moving on to how the theory has been applied for teaching purposes, it is important to understand its distinctive aspects.

First, Systemic Functional Linguistics is based on an understating of language, which views language as a semiotic resource for making meaning. By which they mean that language helps us participate in our social world by enabling us to make sense of our world and represent it using language. However, it is important to note that SFL theorists do not work with a simple understanding of the relationship between reality and language in which an 'objective' reality exists and language is simply a means to represent it, rather they see it as a two-way process in which language helps us represent our reality but also constructs that reality for us.

Second, SFL theorists argue that language has evolved to fulfil human communicative needs. Which means that they do not view language as an autonomous system, which exists independently of the social as a set of rules to be studied and acquired. Which is to say that the system of language has emerged in the way in which it exists to fulfil the communicative need of the human society.

Third, SFL theorists view language use as functional. Which means that language is used by its users to perform various functions like arguing, explaining, requesting, expressing opinions, venting, to name a few. They view grammar as a resource that enables its users to perform these functions. Thus, systemacists do not view grammar as separate from meaning.

And finally, SFL analysis focuses on language in use (authentic texts) rather than isolated sentences. The term 'text' is of particular significance to this theory and can be defined as "The term 'text' refers to any instance of language, in any medium, that makes sense to someone who knows the language; we can characterize text as language functioning in context" (Halliday & Matthiessen 2013: 3). Thus, SFL works with language as it is used by people to speak and write it to make meaning and participate in their social work. This is in contrast to theories of language, which make a distinction between competence and performance. Systemic linguists argue that there is no idealized system of language in the head of native speakers, which is distinct from how language exists in use.

The notion of 'context' is an important one in SFL. According to SFL theorists, language use is always contextual and changes depending on the situation in which language is being used. SFL theorists further divide context into context of culture and context of situation.

Context of culture, also known as genre, refers to "the institutionalized way that language is structured in various stages, in order to achieve a certain goal" (Herriman 2013). Simply put, this means that when we use language to achieve something it is usually done in stages. As an illustration, a sales transaction typically includes the following stages: a sales request, a price clarification, and a payment and sales close. According to Eggins (2004: 9), explaining the steps people take to achieve their goal is explaining genre. Butt et al. (2000) go one step further and explain how genres are formed, they write "when texts share the same general purpose in the culture, they will often share the same obligatory and optional structural elements and so they belong to the same genre". Genre theory has been used by educational linguists to explain the organization of texts that learners are expected to read and write in order to do well academically such as reports, narratives, argumentative texts.

In contrast, the context of situation, also referred to as the register, consists of three variables: field, tenor, and mode. The subject matter or topic in a text is referred to as the field of that text. To understand the field of a text SFL theories ask – what is the text about? who are the participants involved? and what are the circumstances involved? The tenor of a text refers to the social relations between those involved in the communicative act. This is so because the linguistic choices made in a text will depend on the relationship between the writer/speaker and the reader/listener. The mode of a

text also describes the type of communication that occurs, such as oral, written, or computer-mediated. This has been shown to be useful in demonstrating to pupils how to transition from spoken language to written academic materials. To conclude, these three variables together determine how language users make choices in a text. Systemic linguists have used the three register variables to deconstruct texts and explain to language learner how writers and speakers of a text make choices to achieve their purpose.

According to Herriman (2013), the three variables—field, tenor, and mode—are connected to the three functions of language - ideational, interpersonal, and textual. According to Halliday (2013) all languages perform these three functions. In other words, all languages help us represent our world (ideational function), they help us establish social relations (interpersonal function), and they help us organize our ideas into a meaningful unit (textual function). Language performs these three functions simultaneously. To put it another way, each clause serves an ideational, interpersonal, and textual purpose. Further, each function has its own system networks.

System networks refers to a finite set of choices that language users draw from when using language. Language users create different types of meanings by choosing from these finite choices that exist in the language system. Choices are made at three levels: semantics or discourse-semantics, syntax/ wordings/ morphology also known as lexicogrammar, and the letters or sounds used to represent them (phonology and graphology). These decisions are influenced by the context of language use, who the language users are and the relationship between them. This is important to understand because as opposed to structural or rule-based theories of language that label language use as "right" or "wrong" SFL contends that language users make choices from the system networks when they use language for varied reasons. Thus, when educationists adopt an SFL perspective towards language it means that language is a system of choices that students must learn to employ to achieve a range of goals - social, economic, and political.

### **SFL-based approaches to teaching English**

SFL was first used to teach academic literacies to students from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds in Sydney's primary and secondary schools in the 1980s. In other words, students for whom the language of instruction at school was not the same as their home language. It follows then that students need to be socialized into ways of reading and writing that are prized in schools. It has been seen that it is usually children from low socio-economic backgrounds and/or with low levels of literacy in their home environment who struggle with curricular tasks and benefit from such instruction. Australian educational linguists used SFL to give teachers the resources they needed to explain to learners from historically underrepresented groups how language functions in academic contexts (Rose & Martin, 2012). What is clear is that schools and the different disciplines have ways in which they use language to construct knowledge and more often these disciplinary literacies need to be made explicit to students.

Similarly, in the United States SFL-based teaching practices have been used to develop academic language of English Language Learners (ELLs) (Achugar et al. 2007, Gebhard 2013, Gebhard et al. 2010, Schleppegrell et al. 2004). ELLs refer to those learners for whom English is not their first language, as a result they are not only learning English as a subject but also learning other subjects in English. Studies have shown performance differences between ELLs and children of native speakers in the U.S., with the former struggling to perform up to grade appropriate level. SFL has been utilized by educational linguists in this context to give teachers tools to help students grasp the distinction between academic language and ordinary language. It has also been used to help students understand how academic language functions in the various disciplinary texts they are expected to read and write in school.

In the Indian context students have to contend with English as the medium of instruction. English is now being taught in many schools as early as standard one in response to a demand for "English-medium schools." Due to the fact that English is not the majority of Indian students' first language, this

causes friction. Students struggle to acquire a language that is far away from their everyday environments with the help of teachers who are not proficient in the language of instruction. Given that pupils must comprehend how English functions to represent their world as well as the subject matter of different disciplines (like science, mathematics, social sciences) a functionally focused teaching methodology can be helpful in this situation.

### **Genre-based pedagogy**

The most widely known SFL based practice is the genre-based approach to teaching writing that uses “curriculum cycle” or the “teaching-learning cycle” (hereafter TLC). This approach was designed by educational linguists in the 1980s in Australia. There are different versions of TLC, but largely it consists of the following stages. The first stage is the planning stage, in this stage teachers analyze the curriculum for the genres that students are expected to routinely read and write in school. The second stage is the modelling stage or the deconstruction stage, here teachers introduce exemplary texts of the chosen genre to the class and deconstruct those for the disciplinary knowledge and the language features used by the writer. Deconstructing a text means to analyze it for its structure or stages, which involves looking at how the structure of the text helps to realize its purpose. Next, learners are made to question whom the text is intended for as that determines the language choices adopted by the writer. Further, a detailed linguistic analysis of the text is done to analyze it for the words and phrases used by the writer and how they construct the subject matter of the text (field), its voice (tenor) and the flow of the information (mode).

This is followed by joint construction, in this stage students work with the teacher and their peers and construct a text of the same genre. Students are expected to use the language features of the specific genre they have learnt in the previous stages of the cycle.

The last stage is the independent construction stage, in this stage students work independently to write a text of the same genre. In this way TLC is designed to help students move towards controlling genres that are important for their academic success. In Gebhard’s (2013: 3) words, students learn to attend “to how their linguistic choices construct the subject matter, maintain text coherence, and reflect their voice as members of various discourse communities”.

A popular criticism levelled against genre-based teaching practices is that it imposes academic genres and a particular way of writing on learners thereby curbing creativity and freedom of expression. However, Gebhard (2013) argues that rather than simply imposing genre-based practice as the only way of teaching writing and instead of applying it in an uncritical manner, teachers and educators can perform ‘critical SFL’ which values the social and linguistic worlds that students bring with them to the classroom and supports students “in participating in and creating possible future worlds by expanding the meaning-making resources available to them” (Gebhard 2013: 2).

### **Reading to learn pedagogy**

The Reading to Learn pedagogy (hereafter R2L) includes genre-based writing approach but goes a step further by beginning with reading. It is founded on the notion that reading is a fundamental academic skill and assists students in starting with reading and incorporating what they have read into their writing. R2L is another example of using SFL to plan classroom instruction. David Rose created it to enhance the literacy outcomes of indigenous communities in Australia. Students from this community were three to eight years behind the national average for their grade level when compared to other students in their grade level. R2L includes the following stages:

First is “preparation for reading,” where the teacher summarizes the topic of the text and goes over the genre phases so that pupils are familiar with the topic before they start reading. This lessens the reader's semiotic workload. To aid students in understanding new vocabulary, the teacher can read the

material aloud one more time. This step enables students to comprehend materials that are above their abilities of independent reading.

R2L then moves on to the writing stages called “joint construction” and “independent construction”. In “joint construction,” the whole class collaborates with the teacher to create a text in the genre they have been studying in reading. Students benefit from this scaffolding when they advance to the “independent construction” level. In “independent construction” students work by themselves to construct a text of the same genre but on a new topic.

This is followed by the second stage of reading called “detailed reading”, the sentences in the text are “carefully read” in this stage. The teacher selects key portions from the text, and goes phrase by phrase drawing students' attention to the word groups in each sentence and explains the meaning of the word groupings. The emphasis at this level is on the finer points because students already comprehend the text's broad meaning. Students are urged to point out the wordings, explain what they mean, define new words, and define abstract concepts. By the end of this stage students should be able to read the passage with fluency and comprehension. The instructor may do a critical analysis of the subject and the language at this stage.

This is followed by writing stages called “joint rewriting” and “individual rewriting”. Students work to incorporate the grammatical structures they have learned in the “detailed reading” stage into their writing during these stages. Students first collaborate before working individually.

During the final stage “sentence construction”, sentences from the in-depth reading passage are distributed to groups of students to work on. Important sentences are printed on paper by the teacher, who then directs the students to breakdown the sentences into word groups and then individual words. The cut strips are mixed, and the students are instructed to arrange the strips into coherent phrases and sentences. This is a crucial activity because it allows pupils to take control of the written word without having to worry about having to come up with their own sentences. The teacher can then help pupils spell challenging words by breaking them down into letter patterns and instructing the students to put the letters together to form the right words. This is how students practice sound-letter correspondence in R2L. This is different from decontextualized phonics and spelling activities that are usually done in classrooms. In R2L students practice sentence and word construction in a meaningful context.

R2L includes strategies that allow teachers to integrate reading and writing skills into the general curriculum for all grades and all subjects. It has been applied for over ten years now and has helped to accelerate the learning of all students as well as reduce the learning gap between low and high achievers. The important point is that the strategies are meant to engage all students and can be implemented into the existing curriculum (McCabe 2017, Rose 2018). R2L focuses on skills that students need in order to become independent learners and that are necessary for their academic success.

### **Advantages of using SFL-based pedagogies**

Reforms in the educational sector in the United States have put pressure on instructors to support the development of the academic literacy of ELLs and speakers of non-dominant varieties of English. As a result, many teacher educators have used SFL scholarship to assist their teachers.

In California, Mary Schleppegrell and her colleagues (Schleppegrell 2003) in collaboration with teachers studied the academic language requirements placed on students by the curriculum. This led to them identifying the genres that students were expected to read and write as part of their schoolwork and those that teachers were expected to teach. In the process, they realized that all students required help as they transitioned from elementary to secondary school, not just ELLs. Further, they realized that students need help in developing an awareness of the genre and register features of texts as they transition from reading and writing commonplace texts (like personal narratives) to more technical and grammatical texts (like scientific reports). Schleppegrell and her colleagues found that providing teacher

with a metalinguistic awareness of genre and register features of the academic texts helped teachers enable their students make this transition.

In a different project, educational linguists (Achugar et al. 2007, Schleppegrell et al. 2004) used SFL tools to assist teachers in analyzing primary source documents and passages from history textbooks. This enabled teachers in creating lessons that allowed for more in-depth discussion and knowledge of history. As a result, students' performance on the standardized tests improved significantly and ELLs showed tremendous gains.

Gebhard et al. (2010) used SFL to engage with elementary and middle school teachers in a project called ACCELA (Access to Critical Content and English Language Acquisition). They provided professional development to teacher educators and teachers so that they could use SFL tools to help improve the academic literacy students in urban schools. Teachers designed curricular interventions based on the "Curriculum cycle" to help ELLs negotiate the language demands of high-stakes exams and learn to use academic genres to explore topics of their interest.

In applying the R2L methodology, Rose and his colleagues found that while other teaching methodologies maintain an achievement gap between low-achievers and high-achievers, the application of R2L helped reduce this achievement gap by accelerating the growth of high achievers by 1.5 times their standard growth and accelerating the growth of low-achievers by 4 times. In this way, the teaching methodology was found to accelerate the learning of all students while at the same time narrowing the achievement gap (Rose 2018).

### **Suggestions for teaching of English in India**

The use of SFL-based approaches to language teaching can be applied at two levels: teacher training programs and classroom instruction to teach reading and writing.

#### *Suggestions for Teacher-Training Programs*

Gebhard (2013) argues that when teachers were assisted in using SFL-based teaching practices it helped them gain stronger control over the subject they were expected to teach as well as the linguistic practices that go with it. Based on this it would not be wrong to argue that teacher-training programs in India, both pre-service and in-service, could benefit by incorporating a module on SFL. This has implications for improving teachers' knowledge base as well as their proficiency in the taught language. The module should not only introduce teachers to the theory of SFL but more importantly, show them how it can be applied in the actual classroom setting and give them practice in applying it to their respective contexts. Studies that show what aspects of SFL teachers were taught and how that helped to change their understanding of language and teaching practices would be a welcome step in this regard.

#### *Suggestions for Improving Classroom Instruction*

SFL-based pedagogies can be applied to improve literacy levels in Indian schools. Large-scale educational research surveys point out that learning levels are poor in many government and low-cost private schools across India. One of the reasons for the low literacy rates is the use of English as the medium of instruction. English is not present in the learner's environment but is the language of instruction and evaluation at school. This creates a problem as the child is unable to follow what is happening in class. The child has only learnt to understand the world and his/her surroundings through their home language/mother tongue. In such a case the child needs instruction to begin to understand the world with the help of English. This would require carefully designed pedagogic practices that can help the students' transition from their L1 to L2. Meanwhile, the L1 should continue to develop as a subject in school. As reported above, SFL-based pedagogies have been used with language minority students in the U.S. and Australia to help them develop the academic literacies they need to succeed in

school. It would be interesting to see how SFL can be applied to address the learning gap in the Indian context.

### Conclusion

SFL-based teaching practices have tried to address the issue of inclusivity by arguing for teaching practices that bring a focus on language and explicitly teach the language demands of the curriculum to learners. Proponents of SFL have pointed out that other language teaching practices can be unfair to language minority students or students whose mother tongue is not the same as the medium of instruction. Researchers in Australia and North America have used SFL tools to assist teachers in helping their students understand the differences between every day and academic language. SFL tools have also helped teachers in unpacking the academic language of the different disciplines they are expected to teach. This has further helped teachers develop their own content knowledge and become aware of the language practices of their discipline. On the basis of this, it would not be wrong to argue that an approach to teaching reading and writing as the one elaborated in this paper can have positive outcomes in the Indian context where because of the high demand for English-medium education students learn the English language as well as content subjects in English. Thus, there is a need for research to try SFL based approaches to teaching in the Indian setting to see how the theory and the practice can be adopted to fit the Indian context and contribute to the expanding literature on SFL in education.

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## Theoretical and practical aspects of team teaching

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### Abstract

*The paper deals with the theory of team teaching and related terms. This theoretical background leads us to implementation of the team teaching approach during the EPTE (European Primary Teacher Education) teaching in the Pedagogy and Didactics module through English language as a mean of instruction. We adopted action research and case study as a qualitative research design. The purpose of the research was the reflection of participated teachers on important aspects of the team teaching practice (e.g., necessary time for planning lessons, collaboration, solving issues, as well as evaluation, etc.). The students' attitude towards team teaching was positive and it was their first experience. We formulate several advantages, disadvantages, as well as implications for teacher practice.*

**Keywords:** team teaching, teamwork, collaboration, action research, lesson planning

### Introduction

A teacher's individual conception of teaching is often based on intuitive practice and experience, but it necessarily has to be supported by educational theory as well. This cycle of reflected theory and experience is ongoing process, which develops a teacher's skills and professional competences. Theory needs to be validated through practice and practice enriches, supports, or corrects theory.

Action research is a type of research, which can be very useful for teacher as an instrument for evaluation of any theoretical knowledge in educational environment. Integration of theory and practice can be explained by statement of Lewin (in Conkbayir and Pascall 2018: 155) "*there is nothing so practical as a good theory*". Action research is also known as practitioner research which contributes to change and improvement of educational process through own evaluation where new knowledge is linked to theoretical background and reflected in individual experience. Schön (in Bates, 2019) described two types of reflection, which build new understanding that will shape teacher's action:

- reflection-on-action starts after the teaching, practitioner reviews, analyses, and evaluates past practice with the effort to improve future practice;
- reflection-in-action is thinking during acting where practitioner responds to situations and makes decisions directly, they occur.

According to Conkbayir and Pascall (2018), there are two main goals of action research, to make improvements to practice in a school environment, and to generate new knowledge or theories. The authors have also stated the barriers, which should be overcome in reaching these goals. It might be:

- fear of the unknown, a teacher might not understand the proposed change or its role,
- teacher might feel that proposed issue or change are direct criticism of his practice,
- teacher might feel insecure about contributing to the process of change,
- teacher might feel exhausted at the rate of change in the setting.

Despite these barriers, action research can increase the professionalization, and as a reflective tool helps to every colleague involved in teaching to improve social and educational practice and it can be

shared collectively. This idea of sharing knowledge and experience among colleagues led to examine team teaching as a didactic approach. Of course, team teaching doesn't have to always work. Kind of rigid teacher's personality or a fear acting in front of colleagues could be a reason for not using this approach.

Team teaching becomes an instrument of teaching and practice improvement as well as professional development. Professional development is according to Guskey (2000: 16) set of "processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students." The teachers should improve their knowledge, classroom practice, and promote students learning. Mentioned facts was inspiring also for our study.

### **Theoretical background of team teaching**

Bates (2019) suggested that teachers are not, by nature, good team members. Team teaching involves at least two teachers who cooperate intentionally and methodically in the instructional process. This means that teachers have to learn how to work in team and develop soft skills and necessary collaborative skills. Colleagues who teach together in a team can build up professional bonds and can be a model for students. This kind of collaboration shows how teachers engaged in teaching can solve problems and ideas complexly (Marantz Cohen & Mule 2019). Team teaching seems to impact teaching and learning, in both, it is implemented in the different way. Buckley (2000) stated that team teaching:

- improves the quality teaching through teachers' interactions,
- encourages teachers to learn new approaches from observing others,
- creates more time for lesson planning by spreading the responsibility among others,
- provides opportunities to form deep working relationships with colleagues,
- prevents routine arising from teaching the same material in the same way.

Team teaching is about leaving safe environment of individuals and be able to take the risk of collaborating with someone else (Plank 2013). If team teaching approach is chosen, we should be aware of why we adopt it and make the development of the team a priority. "The trick to creating teams is to learn enough about how groups function so that we can increase the chances that groups will become high performance teams". Group becomes a team when members are able to establish goals and gain them by appropriate methods (Wheelan 2013: 3). Nor et al. (2014) also write that team is based on mutual interactions, reciprocal trust and support must be present because members are dependent on each other. In building a team is often mentioned teamwork and collaboration. These terms seem like synonyms that group of people work together efficiently towards a common goal. However, we can distinguish teamwork, which combines members' individual efforts to complete a task. There is usually a team leader who delegates tasks to each member to contribute to the goal completion. On the other hand, collaborative work means that members complete a task collectively, work as equals and have no leader to make decisions (Stoica 2020).

Teamwork could be explained by one of the first model dealing with the small group development, which is from Tuckman (1965). It is based on the notion that group is changing and goes through four stage process before it becomes a team. Any group must focus itself on successful completion of a task. At the same time, group members are related to one another interpersonally and create group structure, they act in time. The content of interaction is referred to as task activity. This model was set up to help individuals interact among themselves in a more productive manner with a goal on interpersonal sensitivity in a group of members and one leader. Four stages process develops through:

- Forming - interactions and relationships of members are established through testing, which identifies boundaries of interpersonal, and task activities (variety of expectations from the team occurs).
- Storming - is characterized by conflicts in relations of members because it is affected by individual emotional response to the task. This serves as resistance to group influence and task requirements.

- Norming - resistance is overcome, members can find ways to solve conflicts, deal with disagreements and work as cohesive unit by adopting new roles and standards, by starting work cooperatively.
- Performing - structure of the team relationships influences task fulfilment whereas roles are flexible, functional, and create team supportive energy directed to task completion.

In teamwork, leaders should demonstrate some attributes like know their staff (teachers), have a clear vision, respect to and care for their colleagues, have high expectations, demonstrate integrity, be role models (be motivating persons). They must be decisive, flexible, positive, innovative, introspective, willing to take risks. They must be able to understand people, communicate, know to delegate, set priorities, but also to have a sense of humor and know their content area/discipline (Sousa 2003, Carr & Walton 2014, Nor et al. 2014).

Collaborative work means that every team member contributes and shares the ideas, opinions, knowledge, is engaged and motivated to complete goals. It includes a willingness to solve problems, thinking creatively and critically, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, responsibility and adaptability. Collaborative teaching can help teachers to overcome the sense of isolation. Much of teachers' work is solitary, usually done alone and it is an opportunity to consult with colleagues, to share mutual advice and to explore teaching by sharing ideas, to design, plan, evaluate processes in the class and to look on their own teaching from another perspective (Plank 2013). Team teaching includes principles of collaborative work, but it can't be agreed that it is the same construct as the team teaching.

As mentioned earlier, to be able to work with others means to adopt or develop necessary skills. include understanding a variety of perspectives and meeting expectations as a team member. Doyle (2022) describes skills like communication, emotional intelligence and respect to diversity. Among essential communicative skills belongs:

- active listening (listening with understanding and without judgement),
- verbal communication (meaningful, respectful, polite),
- nonverbal communication (impacts as much as words, contextualize the speech),
- written communication.

Emotional intelligence is ability to identify, manage own emotions, recognize them in others and react appropriately (Goleman 2017). It includes resilience, curiosity, empathy, non-offensiveness, not taking criticism personally, compassion, conflict resolution etc. Respect for diversity includes sensitivity to cultural backgrounds, open communication, building expectations as well as consensus, facilitating group discussion etc. (Bartlett & Burton 2016).

In summary, a team consists of two or more members joining forces for common goals, who are responsible for teaching and gained results, team teaching connects teachers who collaborate, plan, and conduct lessons, evaluate students' learning and own teaching (Nor et al. 2014).

Decision about distribution of responsibilities during teaching is up to teachers. We distinguish several forms of team teaching:

- Teachers are equal, and responsibility is distributed over the lessons, they are present at every stage in the lesson (collaborative teamwork).
- One teacher is a leader of the instruction and other teachers can help or support his teaching (teamwork).
- Two or more teachers equally participate on teaching and divide responsibilities during the lesson or according to different task (one teacher is responsible for example for designing activities, another for delivering content etc.).
- Frequent form of team teaching is interdisciplinary lesson/course. One teacher is a content expert, and another is a language teacher focused on linguistic needs (e.g., CLIL), or both teachers are experts in different science fields. In tertiary education is common collaboration among field experts in academic discipline who are responsible for different parts of the course (e.g., one leads lecturers and second seminars – practical parts of the course).

In our study, we focused on describing team teaching, their forms, as well as teamwork, and collaborative work in education.

### Research design

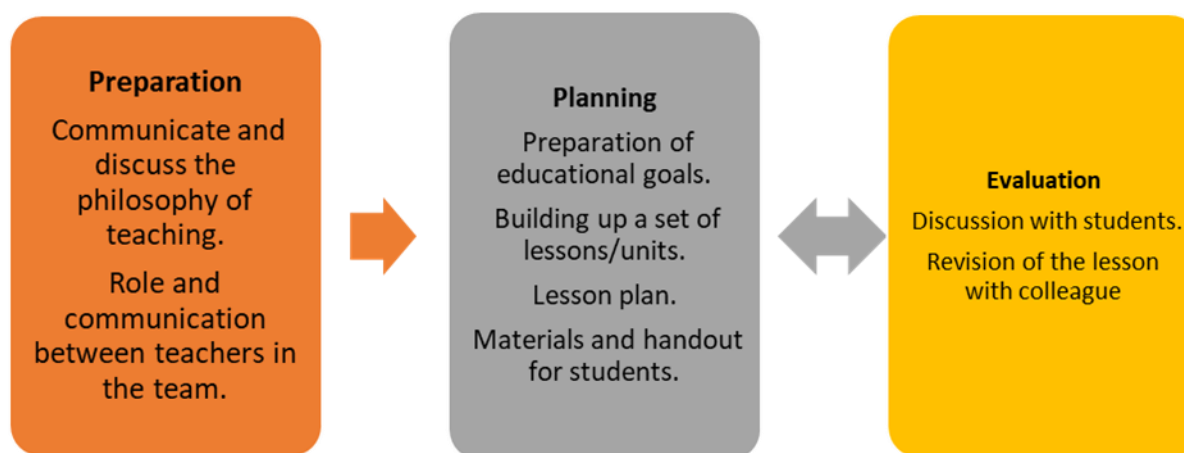
The aim of the research was to investigate whether team teaching is beneficial to university students participating in the international class. We decided to adopt a qualitative research design, particularly, we used case study and interview. The case study explores teachers' perspectives and reflections on necessary time needed to plan and prepare team teaching lessons, collaborative practice, solving questions together, evaluation of the teaching and learning process, etc. (Canaran & Hakki Mirici, 2020). Students were interviewed about realized lessons and their feedback about the team teaching.

The participants of the case study were 2 Slovak university teachers, teaching Pedagogy and Didactics module in EPTE programme (European Primary Teacher Education), both focusing on the same research area (education science) and 17 students studying pre-primary and primary education study programmes from 6 different European countries in summer semester 2021-22. The communication language was English and not even one member of the team and group of students was a native speaker. English was a foreign language and the level of communication depended on individual experiences of the participants.

We set the participated teachers' professional profile as a necessary part of this case study. The first teacher has a master's degree in primary school education and doctoral degree in Pedagogy. She has 17 years of experience in education at primary and university level. The second teacher has a master's degree in pedagogy and teaching and doctoral degree in Pedagogy. She has 19 years of experience at university level.

Team teaching was implemented in 12 lessons (divided in 3 teaching days) in HEI in Porto (Portugal). Lessons were created and prepared respecting given curriculum of EPTE module Pedagogy and Didactics. The process of the team teaching was divided into the 3 stages (Figure 1). Each part is important, cannot be omitted and play crucial role in the process of teaching and learning.

**Figure 1:** The process of the team teaching



The **preparation stage** consisted of several meetings and discussions about the curriculum, topics, as well as philosophy of the team teaching. It was the opportunity to get to know each other better and to share opinions about the important issues. Teachers focused on philosophy of team-teaching, what is it about and how to handle it. They discussed the purpose of this conception of teaching and their expectations. "Is the team teaching beneficial for me as a teacher? What should I expect of it? Why do I want to implement this conception? How should I implement theory on team teaching into the

practice?”. There were also questions oriented on students. “Is the team teaching beneficial to students? Do my expectations meet students’ needs and goals? Will be the team teaching approach interesting to students?”. Teachers communicated and made decision about distribution of roles during the teaching. Both teachers were equal in the teaching process, and they distributed topics to be taught according to their expertise and professional interests. They discussed the goals and content of the taught module. One of the important questions was: “How should we motivate students and involve them into the educational process?”. It was taken in consideration that students are at different knowledge level, with different experiences from cultural, educational environments and for all participants English was a foreign language.

The stage of **planning and implementation** was very interesting and demanding for both teachers. There were several meetings to discuss and debate EPTE curriculum (module Pedagogy and Didactics), to set goals and prepare topics supported by theory, tasks, and activities. Teachers decided to divide the themes according to similarities and logical aspect. They wanted to support and activate prior learning and memory, enhance learning outcomes and critical thinking skills, improve communicative skills and collaboration. An integral part of this stage was collecting literature and gathering of various resources connected with the topics and setting criteria for evaluating students work and lessons. Finally, a time management was agreed upon.

The curriculum of the P&D module was divided into 3 separate meetings, 12 lessons altogether (lesson duration 60 minutes). 1st teaching day was covered with the main topic, teacher as an educational professional and included several themes focused on professional competences (Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications), teacher’s roles, teacher’s standards, beginning teacher’s characteristics etc. During the 2nd teaching day, didactic aspects of teaching and learning were discussed. There was presented a lesson plan and how to build it up, what must contain (goals, curricula, outcomes etc.), as well as comparison of national primary school curriculum of participating European countries, work with taxonomy of cognitive domain, construction of knowledge through higher level thinking processes, strategies from prior learning to new learning, instructional approaches, and methods suitable for primary school. Main topic of the 3rd teaching day was cooperation, teamwork, team teaching, leadership, and styles.

In the planning stage, teachers discussed if the teaching material, scholar texts are suitable for students, if prepared activities cover the topic and make sense in connection with stated goals. “Are selected scientific texts appropriate to the students’ level of knowledge? Are these texts understandable to them? Can students manage prepared activities and tasks?”. The team teachers shared the responsibilities of designing and preparing the activities for students and they arranged order of planned activities and tasks as well as approximate time needed for the completion.

The last stage was focused on **evaluation**. Teachers reflected team teaching approach, their own teaching, and students’ learning processes occurred during the lessons. Team teachers questioned themselves if team teaching was useful, if they fulfilled the given goals, managed the time, completed the activities and tasks, if students developed required knowledge and skills. “Was team teaching beneficial to me? In which way? Does team teaching help me to improve professionally? Which competencies did I developed? What should be done differently and why? What was the attitude of students to the teaching?”. The students were interviewed after the last lesson on pros and cons of team teaching. They were asked for sharing their opinions and experiences, evaluating the team teaching from their perspectives. “Have you ever experienced team teaching before? Was the team teaching beneficial to you, in which way? Have you been motivated to participate on lessons where team teaching was used? Have you developed any collaborative skills? Use three words to describe your experience with team teaching.”

Each teacher involved in team teaching wrote a reflective lessons report contained answers to above mentioned questions, overall impressions of the lessons, as well as advantages, and disadvantages. They

focused on situations, activities and facts which went well, did not go as were planned, and could be done differently next time. By sharing their experiences, they contributed to their professionalisation, and the findings are presented below.

### Results and discussion

Based on the case study, the teachers' reflective lessons reports and interviews with students, we came to the findings which can be consider as beneficial for the most participants when using team teaching.

- Teacher can see the content knowledge in different perspective enriched by a collaborated colleague's point of view. Professional discussion develops new perspectives on subject topic.
- Teacher can improve collaborative and communicative skills like sharing information, formulating the ideas, reasoning and problem solving, making decisions, taking responsibility.
- Teacher can be more creative. Sharing thoughts between teachers leads to new ideas and proposals. Collaborative teaching is an inspiring approach and brings enthusiasm into the team. This led participated teachers to think about their way of teaching, expectations, giving instructions, activities, etc.
- Teacher can adopt new teaching methods and techniques and employ alternative teaching practice.
- Teacher can better manage the time. S/he is forced to plan activities in collaboration with the colleague precisely in advance. This requires a lot of time and energy in preparation and planning stage, but at the end less effort in lesson realisation.
- Teacher can realize his/her strengths, weaknesses, and necessary aspects of their individual teaching conception.
- Precise planning leads to dynamic lesson with positive atmosphere and it can be motivating for student to participate on tasks actively.
- Different teachers bring different communicative styles, teaching styles, and it gives students more opportunities to interact with them. Teachers become appropriate role models.

In our research, team teaching reveals benefits in scientific language extension, positive attitude, developing positive feelings such as comfort, productivity, and creativity, tension reducing, sharing good practice, and enhancing self-confidence. In interview, students considered the team teaching as an interesting approach because most of them experienced it for the first time.

In comparison to our findings, Nor et al. (2014) pointed to the similar team teaching benefits and mention another advantages, for example, positive effects on a person's health, joint scholarly resources, student's favour teaching style, and promotes interdisciplinary contact between academicians. Students are stimulated by viewing at least two teachers, lecturers discussing the topics. Learners can expand or enrich their understanding of the topic and communication styles. Effective teamwork leads to make better decisions, solve complex problems, develop soft and collaborative skills as well as enhance creativity in comparison to individual work. Buckley (2000) observed that students can see various perspective of the subject content, can take in consideration more opinions, which can encourage their critical thinking skills. Students can obtain a more mature level of knowledge by comparing various views of matters.

### Conclusion

Team teaching was implemented as a procedure of action research focused on investigation of its impact on teaching and students' learning. We adopted Tuckman's model dealing with small groups development, which is also possible to use in school collaborative environment. Team teaching becomes a pedagogical approach, which leads to improvement of professional skills like creative and critical thinking, learning from each other, solving various problems together, and collective responsibility. The university teachers participated on team teaching supported their content knowledge with the

experience and it was beneficial for both sides, teachers as well as students. We paid less attention to language as linguistic category because English had communicative role through which the module content was delivered to students. It can be concluded that team teaching as didactic approach brought more advantages into the instruction with direct impact on teaching and learning.

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**English language instruction in a multilingual and multicultural academic setting:  
Introspections and perspectives (report)**

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**Abstract**

*Despite multilingualism and multiculturalism, English language is taught by teachers as they face impacts of globalization, diffusion, and disruption. Armed with ideas, practices, strategies, and perspectives, the English language teachers continue providing quality and relevant language instruction to their students both in virtual and onsite classes. Living in a borderless and boundless world makes learners acquire and learn other languages. As language and literature teachers, we have to be innovative in developing, designing, and implementing new curriculum and instruction that will cater to the needs and diversities of the learners. This reflective and narrative paper aims to discuss and describe the researcher's fruitful and thoughtful introspections on multilingualism and multiculturalism as they affect and effect online and offline ESL classes, and how teachers cope with the situation.*

**Keywords:** *multilingualism, multiculturalism, school/academic setting, inclusivity, socialization*

In the rapid evolution of time, noticeable improvements are witnessed by people. In the academic setting, language teachers, among others, have been using technology and innovation to engage in instruction and assessment for their students. What seems to be challenging is the background knowledge and capability to manipulate all the available tools online.

Teachers and language teachers are trying to handle and manage learners of multicultural origin. When these learners come to school or attend virtual classes, they possess diverse and distinct culture. Some are even multilingual. How can language teachers effectively cultivate and nurture the potentials of learners amidst multicultural factors and reasons?

For assessment of perspectives, the researcher intended to examine the reflections of participants by asking this question: "How do you teach English in a multicultural setting"? The answers of participants were carefully analyzed to create big ideas and achieve synthesis.

Being in a multicultural area entails both opportunity and challenges. But as language teachers, we have to be prudent and responsive to the existing traits and qualities of ESL learners. They have predicaments and worries too especially, in the new setting brought about by the health crisis.

We might be asking how we as language teachers who are now virtual or online feel and see the multiculturalism of our students?

There is a need to emphasize the role of differentiated instruction and multiple intelligences as approaches and theory to carry out our responsibilities and obligations as educators and language teachers to be specific. Once, we have evaluated the traits of our learners, then we could easily redefine our goals and re-engineer the curriculum. Quality language instruction follows the scene.

Despite changes in the setting, the language teacher still needs to be responsive and flexible to meet the changing needs of students.

Language has particular roles in school as best justified by the new normal where students attempt to communicate and socialize with each other despite limited physical interaction. Through virtual

sessions, they try their best to interact with their classmates and send in important information and ideas.

Language variation in a multilingual and multicultural setting helps the language educator to be more receptive and dynamic in the design of curricula and development of teaching-learning materials by being well-oriented on the realities of the phenomena and/or issues that affect the transmission of ideas and socialization. The learning outcomes must be aligned with the changes, transitions, and realities of the social environment where people are working and interacting. As new changes come, the language users and learners should have the drive and enthusiasm to meet the expectations and standards with confidence and courage. The opportunities to learn and improve should be made available for teachers in line with multilingualism, multiculturalism, and socialization that have bearing on the success and progress of learning situation and performances of the students.

### **Literature review**

The term “multilingualism” is applied to people who have fluency in more than one languages or to areas where many languages are being used. The Council of Europe provides a distinction between multilingualism as city, society, and state where many languages are spoken; on the other hand, plurilingualism is the characteristic of an individual who possesses plurilingual repertoire (Council of Europe, 2007). Multilingualism refers to the presence of mode of speaking of a group in which more than one variety of language is being spoken.

Diversity is inevitable and pervasive. In facing the challenges of diversity, it is clear that avoiding this phenomenon is never a solution. Diversity is existing and increasing. It is unavoidable and expanding. Students and teachers need to acquire the intercultural competencies to deal with the challenges and realities.

In the rapidly changing learning environment, language teachers are encountering social realities and academic concerns that require actionable plans for the improvement of language instruction. Today, new techniques and approaches are incorporated in the language classroom. The kind of instruction that being employed in the classroom is engaging, interesting, supportive, and inclusive. Among other factors that language teachers have to address, multiculturalism and multilingualism are predominant in the educational settings. A wide range of programs and activities are needed to address the changing environments and transitions of modalities so that curriculum and instruction can be upgraded and updated.

Many cities around the world promote a degree of multilingualism as pleasant factor in a globalized world. Other cities however, are not yet considered as multilingual because that is only regarded as almost incidental or temporary by people staying there. The speed of change caused mobility, communication modes, and new ways of business. The globalization phenomenon has brought about massive and rapid changes (Lid, 2018)

To foster moral, social, and intellectual development of all students to their maximum potential, it is essential that each student will be given equal opportunity to learn and socialize. The purpose of multicultural education is to provide a balanced and equal learning opportunity. This may be achieved through diverse but interrelated activities. Educational opportunities of all students should be equal and equitable so that all students including socially and economically disadvantaged ones can achieve the highest potentials (Johnson & Johnson, 2002).

Transforming the learning environment according to Johnson and Johnson (2002) requires changes and improvements on hidden curriculum, teacher expectations, instructional strategies, community relations, and classroom climates.

## Conclusions

The place of multilingualism in academic setting is naturally occurring and cannot be stopped. While language teachers are facing the challenges and transitions, they have to be flexible and reflective on the wide array of methods, strategies, approaches, and practices they can use to provide healthy learning atmosphere to their ESL and EFL classes. Knowledge of different strategies and principles can support language teachers on their quest for quality and relevant education that is diverse, equitable, and inclusive amidst transitions and uncertainties of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education and learning.

Language teachers in the Philippines needs to be (re) oriented and (re) educated on how they can handle multilingualism and multiculturalism in the class. Through this effort, they can find ways and means on how they can tap the abilities of their students at the same time, they can unleash the potentials of the learners. With proper training and orientation, I am sure learners can become more flexible, reflexive, and productive being multilingual and multicultural in the age of globalization and industrial revolution. More so, linguistic diversity is inevitable, instead of ignoring and disregarding its presence why not deal with it by looking into the advantages and perks which learners may enjoy in the future. Local languages in the Philippines are preserved and kept by allowing children and youth to acquire and develop the said languages. If we want to preserve national identify and culture, then we have to use our languages to the fullest. The language carries our identity, ideas, and culture. While we practice multilingualism, we can also continue to use and speak our local languages as we socialize with others.

Other than the presence of multilingualism and multiculturalism, language teachers need to be aware of the existing and dominant intelligences and learning styles of students. A knowledge of such areas will help language teachers to retool themselves and redesign the evaluation tools, procedures, and materials stored in the classroom environment. The ideas and constructs mentioned are important factors we have to consider when we are designing curricula and programs in school.

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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.*

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