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Insights into the Application of Action-oriented Approach to Language Teaching and Learning at University Level: a case of Vilnius University

ABSTRACT

This study aims to clarify how the outcomes of the Action-oriented Approach implemented in ESP teaching at the university level is evaluated and assessed by the students of Vilnius University (Lithuania). To achieve the research aim, the data sample of 150 students' responses, representing three different faculties of Vilnius University (i.e. Life Sciences Centre, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of International Relations and Political Science), to the structured interview were collected in the period of one academic year 2019/2020. The qualitative analysis of anonymous students' responses resulted in 164 statements of positive feedback, 37 statements of negative feedback, and 27 statements of further recommendations. More specifically, the analysis of the qualitative research data has clearly demonstrated that despite the difficulties in implementing an action-oriented approach into ESP teaching at Vilnius University, the changes in the language course have been mostly positively evaluated by the students. Also, the combined approach to analysing scientific discourse with the implementation of various practical tasks related to public speaking and team project has been assessed by the students as an opportunity to develop their critical thinking skills and become more engaged and motivated for further studies.

Key words: *action-oriented approach; structured interview; students' responses; tasks; university teaching.*

1. Introduction

Theoretical implications of a new updated version of Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume* (2018, 2020) and new language teaching /, learning methodology Action-oriented Approach (AoA) presented by Piccardo and

North (2019) require university language teachers, curriculum developers to rethink and reshape their approach to language teaching. This is a complicated task as it is necessary to take into account all the necessary components of teaching / learning process: students, teachers and the content of teaching, the latter including teaching and learning methods, materials, modes and ways of pedagogical interaction.

The most important thing in the successful implementation of AoA in the process of language teaching / learning is a well-developed understanding of the essence of this approach, and its underlying principles by all the stakeholders of the teaching process at the university level. Besides, it is an undeniable fact that language courses are very suitable for fulfilling the ultimate aim of university education, i.e., to prepare future leaders of our society, which is expected to be accomplished during the entire study process at university. Language courses are very suitable for this aim to be achieved as they can provide favourable conditions for enhancing learners' capacity to become active social agents of our society, especially with an application of AoA.

Following action-oriented approach (AoA) to language teaching and learning, as well as taking into consideration students' feedback on the language courses, ESP courses at Vilnius University have been recently modified and changes have been implemented. Thus, **the aim** of this article is to overview and discuss how Vilnius University students approach the implemented changes of AoA in their ESP course. In order to fulfil this aim, the following research questions have been raised:

- 1) What kind of AoA changes in the language teaching/ learning process at VU were implemented?
- 2) What were the specific steps undertaken to implement the changes involved?
- 3) How did students respond to the implemented changes?

Before the response to the above questions, in the rest of the paper, some theoretical background related to the current study is briefly outlined. It is then that the application of AoA in ESP course of VU is overviewed. In the following section, the research data and methodology are presented. Finally, the research findings are discussed and illustrated, while the concluding remarks are provided at the end of the paper.

1.1.Theoretical background of the research

The on-going research being carried out over the period of three decades by the experts in the field of second language teaching and learning has clearly shown that action-oriented approach is a combination of the communicative approach and task-based language teaching (TBLT). Although this study does not aim at a thorough analysis of all the theories of second language teaching that have evolved over the past century, it should be noted that

the approaches to second language instruction have developed from a strict focus on grammar and reading to an emphasis on the learner's capacity to carry out specific social or interactive tasks in the target language, with the learner's role as an active social agent of a society.

Thus, it is not surprising that action-oriented approach overlaps with communicative and task-based language teaching (TBLT) approaches; however, some differences have also been observed (Piccardo, 2010, 2014; Delibaş, Günday, 2016; Kaliska, 2016; Piccardo, North, 2019). One of the clear differences is related to the overall aim of a lesson. For instance, communicative approach focuses on the learners' communication in the target language, in the most general fluency terms. Thus, in CTA the learners are engaged in meaningful, authentic language use by following the classroom schema of PPP, i.e. presentation, practice and production with the focus on the development of the fluency of language. By contrast, task-based approach aims at presenting opportunities for learners to master language via learning activities designed to engage learners in the natural, practical and functional use of language for meaningful purpose (Lin, 2009). Regarding, the overall goal of learning

TBLT is thus more specifically oriented, as compared to CTA.

The action-oriented approach goes beyond the communicative approach to emphasize *active language use* with the main purpose to actively engage students in life-oriented tasks. As argued by Piccardo and North (2019), AoA views communication as a social activity designed to accomplish specific tasks taking place in the real world. Similarly, Delibaş and Günday (2016) observe that fulfilling the tasks makes the learning process more effective and the learner more active. Moreover, it is important that the tasks are not only of linguistic nature, but they also integrate pragmatic and communicative skills.

While discussing all three approaches to language teaching and learning, the researchers (Delibaş, Günday, 2016; Kaliska, 2016) compare how the concept of the task can be differently interpreted. In the task-based approach, tasks are focused more on learning the language, while in the communicative approach the task serves communication purposes, finally the action-oriented approach tasks are focused on social life, where learners, as members of society, accomplish both linguistic and pragmatic tasks in a wider social context. According to Van Den Branden (2015, pp. 304-305), *task* within the framework of

TBLT is referred to as "*an activity in which a person engages in order to attain an objective, and which necessitates the use of language*". By contrast, a task within the framework of action-oriented approach is a way to launch learners into action in the pursuit of a specific socially-oriented goal. As Piccardo (2014, p. 18) vividly explains:

*"We do not read in order to read,
nor do we speak in order to speak.
In real life, we read or speak as a
means of achieving a specific
goal other than (or in addition to)
a language goal"*.

Thus, one of the major characteristic features of AoA is its engagement of learners into socially oriented action with the purpose of achieving an authentic goal. In that context, Piccardo (2014, p. 28) clarifies that "*the action-oriented task seeks to break down the walls of the classroom and connect it with the outside world.*" Such an accomplishment of goals requires learners' understanding what kind of linguistic and non-linguistic activities are to be performed as well as one's personal involvement and collaboration with others.

More importantly, the real and socially meaningful interaction that occurs in a language classroom (Piccardo 2010, p. 20–35; Kaliska, 2016) necessitates conditions for learners' creative and critical thinking development. In order to develop

students' critical thinking, tasks have to be cognitively challenging and engaging. In AoA language classroom, learners have to draw on all their linguistic resources and general competences to accomplish the provided tasks. The focus of attention in such a classroom is shifted from a mere analysis of linguistic items towards learners' performance of tasks within the area of professional content and context with learners' existing linguistic resources available, and with teachers' linguistic scaffolding provided, when necessary.

Another issue to be considered is teacher's role in AoA, and how this role is approached from the perspective of different teaching approaches. Piccardo (2014, p. 30) points out to a different role of the teacher in the action-oriented approach, where the teacher guides learners gradually toward the accomplishment of the pre-set task. Thus, in the action-oriented approach, the learner becomes an agent in one's own learning by guiding oneself to the accomplishment of an authentic task. In the action-oriented approach, student's role has thus changed to the learner, who is expected to act effectively and autonomously, make choices, exchange ideas, knowledge, experience while interacting with a group of peers, with the teacher acting as a facilitator. This type of task performance requires students to put down their

textbooks and explore authentic texts from real life (Piccardo, 2014, p. 30).

A similar idea is expressed by M. Kaliska (2016) who argues that in order to achieve didactic goals of action-oriented approach, course syllabuses and materials need to be organized on the basis of authentic data. By authentic data materials here is meant what refers to actual language use within a sociocultural context that enables learners to take more responsibility for their own learning outcomes. This is how this idea is supported by Kaliska (2016, p. 31):

"Using one course book does not suit the actual conditions of the learning/teaching process. In the era of the Internet and rapid sociocultural changes, teachers should avail themselves of a variety of materials and resources which represent a real life language use. But, instead of composing all tasks and activities on their own, they should assign a certain part of work to learners, making them responsible for their own learning process. Learners can both carry out the research on language use and accomplish different tasks which require their active attitude as well as personal involvement in the learning process."

Naturally, all language teaching textbooks contain various tasks, the so-called "consciously constructed pedagogical activities" that the learners have to perform under the teacher's guidance. However, as Bygate (2015) points out that the performance of such tasks does not necessarily empower learners to use their language skills outside the classroom successfully, as the conditions where learners practice them are decontextualised or artificial. It seems appropriate to refer to the recent research carried out by Jordan and Gray (2019, p. 7), who have criticised the use of coursebooks in ELT learning.

Despite the need for authentic learning and teaching materials, researchers still tend to acknowledge some positive factors of coursebooks. This is explained by the sense of familiarity textbooks can provide. The use of a textbook is commonly associated with a certain kind of order, security, purpose, direction, a beginning and an end, and a clear way through, and above all it saves time. Nevertheless, AoA focuses on the tasks and the decreasing reliance on textbooks, which naturally ignites fears and uncertainty of language teaching among teachers. Some teachers might feel that they are losing their expertise and knowledge, while moving into the "unknown land" of uncertainty

without any specific textbooks and pre-defined trajectory of action.

Despite the fears and doubts teachers might experience, universities across Europe and in the rest of the world continue to explore the possibilities provided by language teaching approaches that favour the use of authentic texts for language learning. A task-based approach to language teaching has already been implemented in many curricula at university language centres in Europe. This change is due to the fact as it is seen as an effective way of improving learners' communicative competence (Fischer, Musacchio, Standring, 2009; Fischer, et al., 2011). A recent meta-analysis by Bryfonski and McKay (2017) (cited in *Geoff Jordan and Humphrey Gray*, 2019, pp. 8-9) of TBLT implementation has determined high levels of success and stakeholder satisfaction. Following the successful experience of other European universities, Vilnius University has also made an attempt to upgrade ESP courses with the focus on both task-based and more specifically action-oriented approach to be implemented in undergraduate teaching. The steps of implementing the changes in ESP course are discussed in the following section below.

1.2. Application of AoA approach to ESP course at VU

The principles of AoA and task-based teaching and learning have been adapted to the curricula of languages for specific purposes at Vilnius University and all the English language courses have been upgraded and updated accordingly since the academic year of 2019 / 2020. In order to answer the first research question raised in the introductory part of this paper, it is important to overview the reasons that led to the application of AoA in the ESP courses at VU.

The first reason, why curriculum changes seemed to be inevitable, was related to the students' survey results at Vilnius University. Every academic year VU Department of Study Quality Assurance and Development carries out students' feedback surveys on all the subjects at the end of each semester. The results of the surveys are accessible for each lecturer and the administrative staff. The results of the surveys on language courses were meticulously followed and analysed for several consecutive years, and the emerging tendency of students to complain about language courses as being too easy and bearing no difference from secondary schools has been established. In spite of the fact that some remedial actions have been taken by the administrative staff

of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University in the recent years, the results of the surveys have led to a bottom-up as well as top-down reflection about them with the teaching staff of the Institute of Foreign Languages leading to the conclusion that needs and expectations of students have not been adequately met, and the decision that changes in ESP curricula have to be imminently implemented was taken.

The second reason was the appearance of a newly updated version of *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment – Companion volume* (2018, 2020) with its extended implications for language teaching, learning and assessment and a new understanding of a learner as a social agent also inspired us to rethink and reshape the whole approach to ESP curricular. We have started rethinking and reshaping our ultimate aims, objectives and competences to be developed, as well as updating the content, methods of teaching and assessment criteria for evaluation of students' achievements. With the breadth and depth of research-informed description of the AoA, a new updated version of CEFR (2018, 2020) has extended our perception of the notion of competence itself and the kind of competences, apart from the linguistic one, i.e. sociolinguistic and

pragmatic, to be developed in language courses. The new CEFR (2018, 2020) has broadened our views on the ESP curricular planning and strengthened our determination to make changes in ESP courses at VU.

Our next step was to benchmark our ESP language courses with the ones delivered at other European universities. The investigation was limited to gathering information from universities belonging to the League of European Research Universities (LERU) (Kortmann, 2019), while visiting their websites and looking into their language policy documents. Our investigation of the available information of LERU led us to the conclusion that language courses that are offered at these universities are targeted at academic English and scientific discourse in order to meet and satisfy the needs for undergraduate students to obtain an international perspective on the discipline of their studies and their future profession. Following this, the titles of most of our ESP courses have been changed into *English for Academic Purposes and Research*.

The next step in our changes was the curriculum development. A model template of a Course Description Unit for the course *English for Academic Purposes and Research* was developed. The main aim was to develop general as well as linguistic-

communicative competences with a specific scenario as an overarching aim of the course, followed by the objectives and expected learning outcomes. The Course Description Unit has been divided into the

following parts which consisted of teaching components and were complemented by a list of specific tasks, as summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. The components and tasks of the course description

| <i>English for Academic Purposes and Research</i> | | |
|--|---|---|
| Course components | Course tasks | Assessment |
| 1. Scholarly/scientific discourse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject-specific research article analysis | ORAL EXAM Case study (25%) |
| 2. Academic writing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research-based academic essay writing within a subject-specific area • Research proposal writing | WRITTEN EXAM research proposal (25%) |
| 3. Academic communication | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team research proposal presentation | [End of semester] team project presentation (40%) |
| 4. (Subject-specific) media discourse and news briefings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debates and public speaking tasks | [During the semester] public speaking tasks (10%) |

As can be seen from Table 1 above, the main tasks alongside four structural parts (i.e., scholarly/scientific discourse, academic writing, academic communication, media discourse) are as follows: subject-specific research article analysis, research-based academic essay writing within a subject-specific area, research proposal writing, team research proposal presentation, debates and public speaking tasks. The assessment of students' achievement is aimed to be 50%

accumulative, and the rest of 50% is intended for the oral and written examination via case study analysis and a research proposal.

This new Course Description Unit was developed in a top-down manner, and discussed with the academic staff of the Institute of Foreign Languages. It was also circulated to the experts including the representatives of major universities of Lithuania such as Kaunas University of Technology, Mykolas Romeris University,

Vytautas Magnus University, and the experts from Vilnius University. Their feedback was the most valuable and their remarks have been taken into consideration and corrections in the Course Description Unit have been made accordingly. Finally, an external expert from Göttingen University (Germany) Dr. Johann Fischer was invited to evaluate our preparation for changes and to deliver a 40-hour workshop on *University Language Teaching, Learning and Assessment within the Context of the CEFR Companion Volume: implementing changes in university language teaching and assessment* to our teaching staff. After a few sets of intensive workshops, our curricular were reviewed once again, with course scenarios being specified and slight adaptations being made to meet the subject-specific needs of the

study programmes at different faculties, where our courses were to be delivered. The updated courses of *English for Academic Purposes and Research* were also presented to the administrations of the faculties of Vilnius University and heads of study programme committees.

The process of implementing the changes was intense and challenging, and the results of these changes were also approached from the perspective of the qualitative analysis that will be discussed below.

2. Research data and methodology

In order to assess the quality of the changes and their contribution to improving learning outcomes of ESP course in VU the following research **methods** were used, as shown in Figure 1 below:

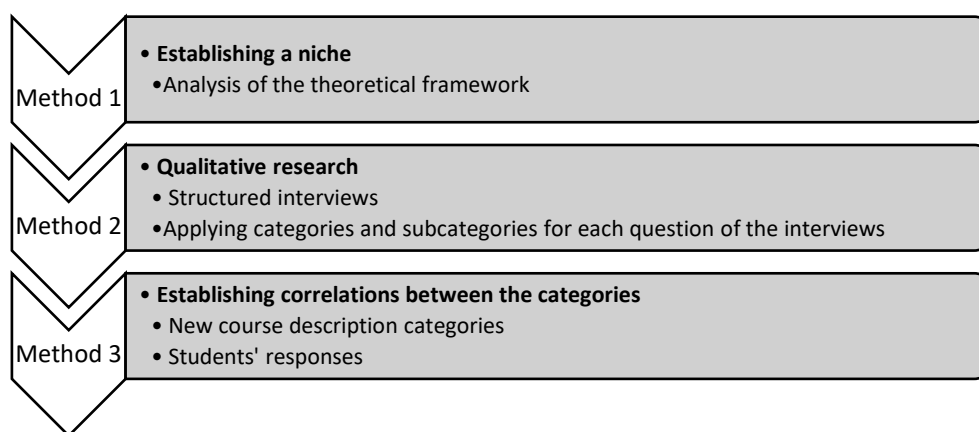


Figure 1. Research methodology

As shown above, the first step of the procedure was implemented by analysing

theoretical literature and implemented recent studies in the context of Action-

oriented Approach and its application. Secondly, the *qualitative research* of structured interviews with the students of Vilnius University from three faculties (i.e., the **Faculty of Philosophy**, the study programme of *Childhood Pedagogy* (N=30), **Life Sciences Centre**, the study programme of *Genetics* (N=70), and the **Institute of International Relations and Political Science** (N=50) were carried out. The qualitative data was collected in January of 2020, at the end of the autumn semester of 2019 at Vilnius University, Lithuania. The students who took part in the research were asked three open questions concerning the application of AoA in their English language course “*English for Academic Purposes and Research*”. The questions were specifically targeted students' evaluation of the course, drawing their attention to the following questions:

- **Q1:** What did you like about the course?

- **Q2:** What did you dislike about the course?
- **Q3:** What should be improved?

All the participants' responses were anonymous. Finally, the data of the structured interviews was analysed by applying categories and subcategories for each question of the interviews. In the following section, the research findings will be discussed.

3. Qualitative research findings

As it has been mentioned above, the first question that students had to answer in order to evaluate our English language course “*English for Academic Purposes and Research*” was to identify positive aspects of it. The results of their answers are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Students positive responses about the course of “English for Academic Purposes and Research”

| Category: | Subcategories | Nr. of statements | Examples |
|--------------------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| Positive aspects of the course | 1. All themes were in line with the course scenario | 15 | <i>All the topics were related with the programme; The themes were very useful for the development of our personalities; Very useful that we were discussing and getting deeper into the social impact of science, the researchers' role in society; All the time we were getting new knowledge; information will be useful later in the course; a well-</i> |

- structured course; the tasks were good and motivating to learn; The information that we have received was very valuable; lectures were informative; interesting lectures; there was no monotony in lectures; very clear and connected with genetics; lectures were well-planned, they were in line with the genetics course; the course was well-balanced, interesting presentation of subjects; much information that could be applied later in the studies; the course was valuable for other subjects; we are taught more how to think as future researchers.*
2. Application of different teaching / learning methods 23
Pair work, group work, listening, reading tasks, dilemma discussions, debates, interesting video materials, it was possible to develop different skills during the module; variety of teaching methods, not only reading and listening, but viewing videos was useful; writing tasks were very useful; various forms of learning were applied; news briefs were good opportunity to improve your speaking skills; much new information presented in different modes of teaching; Reading research papers Was useful, interesting, very useful for further studies; lecture structure is very good.
3. Debates 11
Good opportunity to improve your speaking skills; a more academic approach to debates, studying English allowed me to take part at the Debate Tournament; debates were very useful to overcome fear of speaking in public; debates were very good for my speaking in public skills; a very good task as it teaches you how to ground your opinion; debates were good as you learn how to clearly formulate you speech, there should be more tasks like this at university; debate topics were very good.
4. Difference from previous language studies 14
We learnt new useful things: summaries, research proposals, academic essays, improvement of academic style; different from what we had previously.
5. Team work, team projects; 22
Helps with public speaking, helps to manage to work in groups and share

| | | |
|------------------------------------|----|--|
| research proposals, case studies | | <i>responsibilities; very good valuable tasks, there could be more of these tasks; the task was very useful as I learnt a lot of new things; I learnt how to plan time better; very useful; very good; helped to learn how to look for necessary information and how to find it and assess it; teamwork was useful as it helped to know friends, classmates better; case studies were very good for learning a language, it was new, different from other studies; topics were very difficult.</i> |
| 6. Vocabulary and concept learning | 28 | <i>Very useful definitions; it was OK that vocabulary coincided with the themes of other study subjects; learning the concepts helped to understand the subject of study genetics; very valuable test on vocabulary, it extended my knowledge of the study subject; developed vocabulary a lot; vocabulary learning was useful for other subjects; it was useful for genetics course; learnt many new things from English classes; very good for other lecturers; good as it coincided with cytogenetics subject; learnt much of new vocabulary; was good; good for other lectures; learnt new concepts.</i> |
| 7. Favourable learning environment | 18 | <i>Atmosphere in the class was good for studies; no pressure, friendly environment; you are not afraid to make mistakes; lectures were not only informative, but transmitting good energy and friendly; very relaxing atmosphere.</i> |
| 8. Lecturer | 17 | <i>Non- judgemental, never offends, she helps in any way she could, good sense of humour; very helpful; explained everything very clearly; information transmitted in a clear and concise way; a lecturer was a very warm personality; a very good lecturer, then the learning is easier.</i> |
| 9. Achievement and evaluation | 16 | <i>I feel that I have learnt a lot during these lectures; lots of obligatory tasks that you accumulate during the semester; the evaluation is well-wishing for students; the lecturer was always very understanding and helpful; always gives feedback about tasks; the teacher evaluated not only our</i> |

knowledge, but our efforts as well; accumulative score was good; different assessment strategies.

Total 164

As can be seen from the examples of the statements provided by the students, one of the most positive things about our modified English course is that the students seem to understand the course scenarios and their meaning, which is an essential component of the course description. While preparing scenarios for their courses, lecturers were trying to offer such themes that were in line with students' professional study area and focused on the social impact of the research carried out in the field of their studies as well as on the current issues of our society, or putting it in E. Piccardo's (2014, p. 30) words, continues its existence

"outside the classroom walls". Following the Action-oriented approach all the tasks of each course were harmonised to be in line with the course scenarios. Thus, an attempt was made to meet the requirements of AoA to address current social issues and empower learners to be the social agents of our society, who are socially responsible professionals and / or researchers in the fields of their studies.

Regarding the Course Scenarios, they were offered to the students from three different study programmes in accordance with their professional and academic needs, as provided in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Course Scenarios

| Course scenario for the course of "English for Academic Purposes and Research" | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Study programme of Genetics | 2. Study programme of Childhood Pedagogy | 3. Study Programme of International Relations and Political Science |
| <i>"You are students of genetics at the University. Your final goal is to evaluate critically the Lifestyle vs. Genetics of young adults: social and cultural paradigms; and to propose a set of specific recommendations to young adults in the form of research proposal and conference talk."</i> | <i>"Students are members of a university research team. Their aim is to make a critical evaluation of the quality of teaching in primary schools in Lithuania and to present their research results and propose recommendations to the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, Science and Sports in the form of a research</i> | <i>"You are members of the research team for the independent public policy institute that raises critical public awareness on a range of social, economic and political issues. Your major aim is to critically evaluate the content of political discourse and its features in the analytical media and direct political</i> |

proposal and a conference talk/representation and to talk.”
propose a set of specific recommendations to the analytical forum in the form of a written research proposal and a conference talk.”

The inclusion of scenarios was an innovation that has been evaluated most positively by our students. Under the subcategory of “*All themes were in line with the course scenarios*” (Table 2), which emerged in the process of the analysis of the collected students’ responses, it has been clarified that, overall, the courses were in line with other subjects taught during the semester, they were interesting, motivating, well-structured and planned with different tasks, useful for their future careers, helped to have a better understanding of the researcher's role in our society, provided in-depth insights into the social impact of their representative discipline. To sum up, most of the students found this course useful for their future studies.

Another subcategory of “*Application of different teaching / learning methods*” confirmed students' positive evaluation of different modes of teaching, the application of a variety of methods aimed to develop reading, speaking, writing, and listening skills. Students expressed a positive attitude towards reading research papers within the area of their future profession. Although the inclusion of research papers in the courses

was a debatable issue among the teaching staff of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University, the students’ response to this method of scholarly discourse analysis was the most positive one.

It should also be pointed out that debates emerged as a very well-valued mode of teaching, therefore it has been included separately under the subcategory of *Debates*. The debate task was included in nearly all course descriptions with the aim of developing students' critical thinking skills, which is one of the most important general competences among other subject specific competences that all university courses target to develop. Although the inclusion of debates task in the courses caused a lot of discussion among the lecturers in terms of its effectiveness and its appropriateness, students appreciated it a lot. They highly valued a possibility to develop their public speaking skills, and they also considered debates to be a unique opportunity for them to take part in an annual University Christmas Debate Tournament, organized by the staff of the Institute of Foreign Languages, Faculty of

Philology (VU). Students also expressed an opinion that the debate motions were very interesting and encouraged discussions, and presumably they helped to improve students' critical thinking skills.

The next subcategory under the analysis is that of “*Difference from previous language studies*” (see Table 2). As mentioned above, one of the reasons for upgrading the ESP course at Vilnius University was students' unfavourable evaluation, as they had considered them to bear no difference from their language studies in secondary schools. Thus, students' responses have confirmed that the undertaken changes were adequate and justifiable. They acknowledged that the tasks were very innovative and creative, and that they had not practised them before.

Another subcategory of “*Team work, team projects, research proposals*” (see Table 2) also proves that the changes made in the ESP curricular were the righteous ones. Students' responses revealed that they enjoyed working in teams, which was a new experience for them. They also learned how to better manage time, and learned how to perform tasks collaboratively by gaining knowledge from each other, which demonstrated their mediation skills as well.

The next subcategory of “*Vocabulary and concept learning*” showed students' satisfaction with the acquisition of new

terms and concepts in the area of their studies. The students of the Study programme of Genetics expressed their undoubtedly positive evaluation of learning new concepts within the area of their studies. They mentioned that this was helpful for their other subjects as well as extended their knowledge to cover more subject-related topics.

Finally, the students' positive responses have shown that they enjoyed favourable learning environment and valued lecturers' work a lot. The respondents' answers grouped under the subcategories of “*Favourable learning environment*” and “*Lecturers*” (see Table 2) demonstrate that it is important for the students to study without any stress in a calm and relaxed atmosphere with a lot of support and encouragement and positive attitude from their teachers. The students' answers clearly indicate that the teacher's scaffolding and encouragement are necessary for attaining better learning outcomes.

Turning to the point of students' evaluation of their achievements, it could be assumed that their views are very positive. Their answers under the subcategory of “*Achievement and evaluation*” convey that accumulative mark was beneficial for them. They valued teachers' feedback on their achievements, positive attitude, support, different

assessment strategies. Overall, students' answers reveal that they were satisfied with their achievements of the course.

The research participants were also encouraged to point out those aspects of the

course that they were not satisfied with. Their answers are grouped under the category of “*Negative aspects of the course*” that are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Students negative responses about the course of “English for Academic Purposes and Research”

| Category: Negative aspects of the course | Subcategories | Nr. of statements | Examples |
|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|---|
| | 1. Lack of clarity and coherence | 14 | <i>Too much information, confusing; lack of clarity; unclear structure of the course; unclear tasks, clarification of tasks and connection among them; confusion with tasks; explanation of tasks should be more precise, clear; preparation for exam should be more explained, more examples should be given; some information was presented too late; more examples of solving tasks; unclear course tasks or too complex explanation; more time for explanations, text analysis; sometimes the task was not clear till the end; unclear and scattered material for essays and mid-term test.</i> |
| | 2. Lack of clear assessment criteria | 4 | <i>Assessment of debates was not clear, some students who performed better got lower marks than those who performed worse; evaluation of debates was not clear;</i> |
| | 3. Big workload and lack of time | 15 | <i>Too much preparation for lectures, too much teamwork tasks; too much work, I was unable to prepare well for all the tasks; too much workload, even more than other serious subject lectures; too many tasks to account; too big workload especially in the last two months. Big tempo, lack of time to prepare, too much work for the last weeks before the semester finished; too</i> |

| | | |
|--------------|--|---|
| | | <i>little time was left to explore the articles; at the beginning of the semester, it was easy and later at the end - lots of tasks to finish; much stress was caused; too much workload at the end of the semester; tasks should be more equally managed throughout the semester; at the end of the course too many tasks to deliver; lack of time to read and prepare for the speech in case studies;</i> |
| 4. | Too much work in groups | 2 <i>Unclear purpose of the projects; disliked team work.</i> |
| 5. | Use of different learning online platforms | 2 <i>Using Google instead of VMA.</i> |
| Total | | 37 |

As seen from Table 3 above, the analysis of the collected negative responses under the category of *Negative aspects of the course* has demonstrated that the students' main complaint is related to a lack of clarity and cohesion during the course. The subcategory of "*Lack of clarity and coherence*" illustrates students' statements that the course structure was not always clear, and that the tasks were not always fully explained, and / or examples were not always provided, sometimes too much information was given, which was not fully explained, students sometimes did not see the connection between the tasks. Students expressed their wish to have more clarity on examination tasks and more preparation practice for the case studies. Some students also mentioned the criteria of evaluation of

some tasks that were not very clearly explained. These respondents' insights explicitly indicate what improvements in our course delivery should be made in terms of clarity and cohesion. It suggests that task instruction should be more translucent and comprehensible. It appears that teachers have to be more precise in all the stages of AoA task preparation: development, instruction, implementation, facilitation, and evaluation.

The other two issues requiring more attention of course developers were students' disapproval of too much workload and a lack of time. A closer analysis of their comments under the subcategory of "*Big workload and lack of time*" has made it evident that students had too much work to do while preparing tasks and collaborating

on team projects. Students were concerned that at the end of the course there were too many tasks to deliver and suggested that the tasks should be more equally allocated throughout the semester. This is a clear indication that teachers have to plan the course more carefully leaving enough time for explanation of all task stages: preparation, delivery, feedback, evaluation and reflection. Some of the comments were specifically directed at the examination case study tasks, where students complained about the shortage of time. This also should be taken into consideration and more lecture time should be allocated for examination task practice.

The empirical data analysis has revealed that there were two more subcategories in connection with team work and different learning online platforms. Although the majority of the students liked working in teams; however, there were a few who disliked this type of task performance. The students' criticism of using one way of online communication and information transfer is logical and well-grounded and should be necessarily improved in the future. Finally, the last question in this qualitative research was to find out students' opinion about possible improvement of the course of “*English for Academic Purposes and Research*.” Their overview is provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Students’ recommendations to the course “English for Academic Purposes and Research”

| Category: Recommendations | Subcategories | Nr. of statements | Examples |
|---------------------------|---|-------------------|--|
| | 1. Availability of model examples for tasks | 10 | <i>It would be good to have not only the frameworks of tasks, but also good, well-done samples; there could have been essay models provided; there should be at least one model example given; examples could be helpful to understand the tasks better; project and essay examples.</i> |
| | 2. Time management | 6 | <i>There should be more time management in class; sometimes lectures took longer; we sometimes forgot about the brakes; we worked without brakes; task completion</i> |

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------------------------|-----------|---|
| | | | <i>deadlines should have been more equally planned.</i> |
| 3. | Variation of teaching methods | 2 | <i>More videos with more interviews and discussions to follow.</i> |
| 4. | Vocabulary | 5 | <i>More vocabulary tasks to get to know more new words; more tests on vocabulary; more tests for each topic; more vocabulary tasks;</i> |
| 5. | Reading research papers | 2 | <i>Reading more controversial research papers would be good for the development of speaking and argumentation.</i> |
| 6. | Writing | 2 | <i>There should be more focus on the process of writing.</i> |
| Total | | 27 | |

As indicated in Table 4 above, the first subcategory is dealing with “*Availability of model examples for tasks*”. In order to have a full understanding of tasks students were willing to have not only clearer framework of tasks, but good examples of how these tasks can be accomplished. In another subcategory of “*Time management*” students' comments show their concern about the length of tasks and necessary time for their fulfilment. The students complained about working longer than usually and sometimes even having lectures without breaks. They were also critical about the deadlines of task completion and offered to develop a more balanced arrangement of deadlines. These insights coincide with the previous criticism

expressed by the students about too much workload and shortage of time for task completion.

There have been several other suggestions expressed in terms of variety of methods applied. Students wanted more videos with more discussions to follow them. Although the majority of students were satisfied with the level of acquisition of new vocabulary, still there were some who wanted more focus on vocabulary development and enhancement. Students also mentioned that reading research papers should include more controversial themes in order to inspire more discussion, and a more critical approach to reading. As it has been observed in Table 2, students were generally satisfied with the development of

their writing skills; however, they pointed out their need to focus on the process of writing rather than on the outcome of it. As based on the research findings, conclusions and some final remarks will be drawn in the following section.

4. Conclusions

All things considered, it could be argued that students' evaluation of the course of *“English for Academic Purposes and Research”* at Vilnius University were more positively rather than negatively evaluated. The qualitative analysis of students' responses to the structured interview questions demonstrated more

appreciation than criticism of the course, and there were not so many suggestions provided for its improvement. Therefore, it could be concluded that the attempt to apply action-oriented-approach at Vilnius university in ESP course has been successful. Application of the AoA could be continued further by focusing more on reflection of the outcomes of its implementation in language courses and more measurement of its positive aspects.

More specifically, the analysis of the students' responses has also pointed to the overall positive feedback, regarding the overall statistical distribution of the provide responses, as illustrated in Figure 2 below:

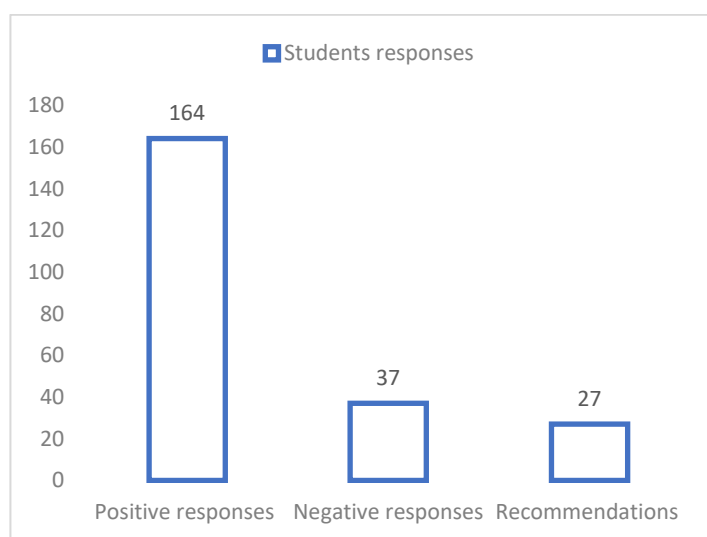


Figure 2. Summary of the students' responses

As indicated above, the analysis of the structured interviews with 150 students from three different study programmes (i.e., Genetics, Child Pedagogy, International Relations and Political Science) at Vilnius University has resulted in the overall

numbers of 164 positive statements, 37 negative statements and 27 recommendations in the context of the ESP course *“English for Academic Purposes and Research”*.

As the focus of this study was the qualitative analysis of the collected data, one of the main limitations is that more students could have been interviewed to get a more detailed and extensive understanding of the level of their satisfaction with the course. In the future,

this study should be complemented by the combined application of both qualitative and quantitative methods to get a more detailed representation of the positive impact of the Action-oriented approach in the English language course at university level.

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Gender and language: Gender Implications in Proverbs (The Kartvelian Case)¹

ABSTRACT:

Gender studies have been remarkably popular among the representatives of different scientific fields in recent times. These topics appear to interest Sociolinguistics, Culturology, Anthropology and other neighboring disciplines besides Linguistics itself. Studying proverbs of the peoples all over the world as one of the perfect mediums for observing and comparing different cultures, is crucial in many respects. Studying proverbs from Gender perspective do not represent an exception. Highlighting and accentuating gender aspects contained in proverbs becomes particularly important while talking about cultures that are rich with masculine or feminine tendencies. Proverbs can be considered as an important medium for the representation of the stereotypes existed in any society, since they are the reflection of the knowledge and experience accumulated over the centuries within the culture. Human wisdom and the system of perspectives concentrated in proverbs determine the core nature of a certain culture. Thus, the structural-semantic analysis of proverbs demarcates the general picture built upon the common beliefs, viewpoints and global perspectives of a certain society.

Key words: *Kartvelian languages, gender stereotypes, language and gender, proverb*

Introduction

Choosing closely related Kartvelian Languages as data for the analysis of abovementioned issues is conditioned by the research hypothesis as well. Precisely, it is known that the basic stock of Kartvelian proverbs is common Georgian, to be more precise, unified common Kartvelian, since these Proverbs had a common path of origination, passing from generation to generation and development. Taking all these factors into consideration,

Kartvelian cultural space (where, by the way, androcentric tendencies are more conspicuous) differences based on deep national perspectives are less expected, because people speaking these languages have shared historical experience and intentions towards unified Georgian literary language. Our **aim** is to analyze Gender stereotypes reflected in the proverbs of Kartvelian languages and to highlight similar differences in unified Kartvelian cultural space.

¹ This article is based on a paper presented at the International Conference “Archival and Source Studies – Trends and Challenges”, Tbilisi, Georgia, 26-28 September 2019.

In specialized literature gender is equalled to sex, which “illuminates the characteristics of male and female speech in a language. Accordingly, Gender Linguistics studies the stereotypes characteristic of male and female speech.” (Kurdadze, 2008: p. 109)

Numerous works are being done in present day Georgian as well as European scholar fields referring the examination and exposure of interrelation of language and gender. Despite this, we still do not have sufficient conclusions about male and female social roles, their manifestation on different levels, existing limits and priorities, etc. Since we do not encounter Grammatical gender in any closely related languages of Kartvelian language family, there are only male/ female indicative words in Georgian, Megrelian, Laz and Svan languages. This very principle guides the qualification and classification of the proverbs accessible to us.

As shown by existed studies, uneven and unequal representation of the people of different sexes can be considered as universality at some point, which is called **Gender asymmetry**. In this respect the following case requires our attention: “It is considered that the image of the world is pictured in a language according to man’s vision, therefore language is not only anthropocentric, i.e. oriented towards human,

but androcentric too, i.e. oriented towards man as well. More precisely, language creates the world image built upon man’s standpoint, where the subject is the man whose perspective is obvious; and the object is a woman, she appears to be a “stranger”, or is completely ignored... Georgian literature and folklore requires a very specific approach and the consideration of numerous factors in terms of Gender asymmetry and Gender-related research in general.” (Kurdadze, 2011: p. 77).

Gender Implications in the Kartvelian Proverbs

The fact that Gender asymmetry in a language is a universal case is proven by Kartvelian proverbs as well. As it was mentioned above, in unified-Kartvelian language area the majority of gender-specific proverbs reveal androcentric tendencies and, accordingly, male dominancy, that will be verified by the material presented in groups below. The first group is consisted by the proverbs, where the male agent is preferred over the female one. Two subgroups can be allocated here:

a (1). Proverbs, where the male preference over a female is emphasized by comparing and creating contrast between them:

Georgian:

(1) **L1:** ვაჟი სახლის ბურჯია, ქალი – სხვათა ლუკმაა (<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=16609>).

L2: važi saxlis buržia, kali – sxvata lukmaa.

Word by word: “Son is the bastion of the family, woman is the morsel of others”.

Conceptual equivalent: “The elder son is the support of the family”

(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=16609>) / “A woman builds her own house”

(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=17197>)

Laz:

(2) **L1:** ბაბაში ნენა ნანაქ ვა გოგუაფს (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p. 202).

L2: babaši nena nanak va goguaps.

Word by word: „Mother will not provide you with the discipline of your father“.

Svan:

(3) **L1:** ფიშირ დინა ლაჭტარ ესერ ლი ი ფიშირ ნაღუჟურ – ლაზიგარ (Davitiani, 1973: p. 144).

L2: pišir dina laçtär eser li i pišir nağûžur – läzigar.

Word by word: “Many daughters are a curse, numerous sons are flourishers”.

It is worth mentioning that we encounter some proverbs that portray a man or a woman without mentioning the opposite sex (which in

our case can be seen as a somewhat opposing half), however, in such cases the other sex is always implied. Respectively, the second subgroup of the first group is:

*a (2). Proverbs that depreciate women’s role and face and, hence, reveal male preference, but without mentioning the latter.*²

Georgian:

(4) **L1:** ქალი სხვისი საქონელიაო (Prov. I: p. 133).

L2: kali sxvisi sakoneliao.

Word by word: “Daughter is the property of others”.

² It must be mentioned that unlike proverbs in **a (1)**, proverbs in **a (2)** are more frequent in Kartvelian languages, that must be conditioned by the Paroemial principle characteristic of proverbs, laconic nature, quickness and flexibility of a phrase. It is also interesting that proverbs expressing male preference may not mention the female agent, only male one, and the preference tend to be distributed by praising and admiring him, that to a certain extent prevents the necessity to mention female agent at all. Cf.

Megrelian: L1: ქომოლკოჩი ცუდეს ვარენ, კიდალევი ინგარანია (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p. 144).

L2: komolkoči `udes varen, kīdalepi ingarania.

Word by word: “Even walls cry when a man leaves house”.

Laz: L1: ბაბაში ნენაფეში ჟინ ოხთიმუ უნონ (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p. 202).

L2: babaši nenapeši žin oxtimu unon.

Word by word: “Listen to your father’s advice”.

Svan: L1: ქორლისგა ლეღუმარიშ (ღუაჟმარემ) მენჩალ ესერი ხოჩა ლი (Davitiani, 1973: p. 152).

L2: korlisgā leğūzmāriš (ğūažmarem) mənçal eseri xoča li.

Word by word: “Even the shadow of a man fills the house”.

Megrelian:

(5) **L1:** ძღაბიში ერჩქინას ღორონთო
ვანოკათუენია (Sherozia & Memishishi,
1994: p. 171).

L2: zǵabiši erčkinas ğoronti vanoĸatuenia.

Word by word: “God does not participate
in woman’s creation”.

Conceptual equivalent: “A woman is
never helped by God” / “A woman’s work is
never done” (<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=17206>).

Laz:

(6) **L1:** ოხორჯალეფეშა კაპულა ვარ
ნიდვენ (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p.
247).

L2: oxorǵalepeša ĸapula var nidven.

Word by word: “One should not lean back
on women”.

Svan:

(7) **L1:** აშუ ნეზუიშ თელ ჩხარა ზურალს
ესერ ოთგთალახ (Davitiani, 1973: p. 18).

L2: ašû nezûiŝ tel čxara zurals eser
otǵtalax.

Word by word: “Nine women shared a
sow’s brain”.

The majority of the proverbs given here
may seem obsolete or less popular, and may
not be distinctive in terms of frequent use,
which is normal, however, it is worth
mentioning, that Kartvelian languages are not

the exception regarding such stereotypical
depiction of a female agents and sharply
exposed Gender asymmetry. For instance, a
Rajasthani (Rajasthan – a state in Northern
India) proverb says: „When a girl is born,
don’t take care of her, she will grow like a
cactus; when a boy is born, take good care of
him, as you would with a rose tree“ (Rasul,
2015: p. 2). Proverbs with similar narrative
can be encountered in English language as
well: i) Women are wacky, women are vain;
they’d rather be pretty than have a good brain
(Rasul, 2015: p. 3); ii) Women in state affairs
are like monkeys in glass-shops (Rasul, 2015,
p. 6); iii) Women are the devil’s nets (Rasul,
2015: p. 8).

Another interesting fact in this respect is
that in 2003 in the preface of “Selected
Georgian Proverbs” compiled by Karlo
Jorjaneli, the author writes: “The collection
had to exclude as well: «Woman’s brain got
eaten by a goat», «Long of hair and short of
brains» and other similar proverbs that were
morally obsolete and no longer relevant”.³
Apparently, Karlo Jorjaneli legitimately labels
these proverbs as **obsolete** and **irrelevant**.

In opposition to the discussion before,
another group of proverbs are encountered in
Kartvelian languages, precisely, proverbs that

³ see. K. Jorjaneli, Selected Georgian Proverbs.
“Merani” Publishing House, Tbilisi, 2003.

carry the female preference narrative, her almightiness. Similar to the case (a), two subgroups were allocated:

b (1). Proverbs that carry the female preference narrative, depicting her almightiness comparing and in opposition to the male one:

Georgian:

(8) **L1:** ქალის გაბედნიერებული კაცი ღმერთმა ვერ გააუბედურაო, ქალის გაუბედურებული კაცი ღმერთმა ვერ გააბედნიერაო
(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=15397>).

L2: kalis gabednierebuli kaci ḡmertma ver gaaubeduraa, kalis gaubedurebuli kaci ḡmertma ver gaabednierao.

Word by word: “God could not dispirit a man delighted by a woman; and delight a man dispirited by a woman”.

Conceptual equivalent: “Where the devil cannot come, he will send a woman”
(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=10048>).

Laz:

(9) **L1:** ნანაშანტეში გიყონ-ნა, ბაბათი ბაბაშანტეში იყვენ (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p. 240).

L2: nanašanṭeši giqoon-na, babati babašanṭeši iqven.

Word by word: “When one has a stepmother, father also becomes a stepfather” (<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=7513>).

b (2). Proverbs that show female preference, her almightiness without mentioning the opposite sex:

Georgian:

(10) **L1:** ქალმა თუ გაიწია, ცხრა უღელი ხარ-კამეჩი ვეღარ დააკავებსო
(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=10048>).

L2: kalma tu gaiçia, cxra uḡeli xar-kameçi vegar daakavebso.

Word by word: “Nine oxen cannot subdue an angry woman”.

Conceptual equivalent: “Where the devil cannot come, he will send a woman” / “A woman can make or break a man”
(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=10048>).

Megrelian:

(11) **L1:** ოსური ქოთი ქიდგობორუანს დო ქოთი ერჭყვიდუნსია (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p. 110).

L2: osuri koti kidgoxoruan do koti erçqvidunsia.

Word by word: “Wife (woman) can build your life or exterminate you with the same success”.

Conceptual equivalent: “Where the devil cannot come, he will send a woman” / “A

woman can make or break a man“

(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=10048>).

Laz:

(12) **L1:** ნოსეი ნანამ ბერეფე ნოსეი

ოყვენან-და (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p. 242).

L2: nosei nanas berepe nosei iqvenan-ja.

Word by word: “Wise woman has wise children”.

Svan:

(13) **L1:** ზურალ ისგ’ პათეშუი, ეჯი კოჯ
ესერი ჩუ კეშნი (Davitiani, 1973: p. 40).

L2: zural isg ätešüi, eži kož eseri ču
kešni.

Word by word: “Woman’s rage can
break a rock”.

Conceptual equivalent: “Where the devil
cannot come, he will send a woman” / “A
woman can make or break a man”

(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=10048>).

On the basis of empirical data given
here, interesting circumstances are displayed
by another group of Kartvelian languages:

*c. proverbs where male and female
agents are pictured positively, that ruins
Gender asymmetry:*⁴

⁴ Unlike the groups **a** and **b**, we have not managed to allocate subgroups in this case, because we think that mentioning both sexes in the given proverbs makes an essential difference.

Georgian:

(14) **L1:** ვაჟიშვილი ოჯახის საყრდენია,
ქალიშვილი სიმშვენე (Jorjaneli, 2003: p.
92).

L2: važišvili ožaxis saqrdenia, kališvili
simšvene.

Word by word: “Son is the pillar of the
family; daughter is the adornment”.

Conceptual equivalent: “The elder son is
the support of the family”

(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=16609>).

Svan:

(15) **L1:** დინა ი ნალჷჷურ ქერდ’ ესერ
გეზალ ლიბ (Davitiani, 1973: p. 34).

L2: dina i nağûžur kərd eser gezal lix.

Word by word: “Son or daughter, both
are children”.

Another separate group must be
designated in the proverbs of Kartvelian
languages:

*d. proverbs where male and/ or female
agents are characterized by their main
occupation or personality traits:*

Georgian:

(16) **L1:** ტირილი ქალის საქმეა, გაძლება
– ვაჟკაცისაო
(<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=17112>).

L2: țirili kalis sakmea, gazleba –
važkacisao.

Word by word: “Crying is a job for a women, man must endure”.

Conceptual equivalent: “Women cry, men endure” (<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=17112>).

Megrelian:

(17) **L1:** ოსურკოჩიში იარაღი კიჟინი (ბილამური) რენია (Sherozia&Memishishi, 1994: p. 111).

L2: osurkočiši iaraği kižini (čilamuri) renia.

Word by word: “Woman’s scream (tears) is her ultimate gun”.

Conceptual equivalent: “A woman can beat the devil” / “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned” (<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=19906>).

Laz:

(18) **L1:** ქიმოლი კოჩის თი ომცქუ ვარ უბქინ (Sherozia & Memishishi, 1994: p. 255).

L2: kimoli kočis ti omcku var učkin.

Word by word: “Real man does not praise himself”.

Conceptual equivalent: “Man’s praise in his own mouth stinks” (Br.) (<http://idioms.tsu.ge/?p=15319>).

Svan:

(19) **L1:** ლაკუტანი ესერ ზურალს ხესგუიმ, ფაყუ – ლქაჟმარა (Davitiani, 1973: p. 49).

L2: laḳûcani eser zurals xesgûiṣ, paḳû – ḡûažmara.

Word by word: “Head covering suits women; hat suits men”.

In respect of gender stereotypes reflected in paremiological stock, it must be mentioned that the idea that a woman is associated with beauty, tenderness and other similar characteristics and man – to strength and intelligence, is maintained not only in proverbs of Georgian, Megrelian, Laz and Svan but of foreign languages as well, that is worth the attention in respect of Typology. For instance: *More beauty than a peacock, but the intelligence of a block of wood* (Mangolian); „*A doll’s head and an empty brain*“ (Polish); (Rasul, 2015: p. 3); *The more women look in their glass the less they look to their house* (Rasul, 2015: p. 5).

Conclusion

Thus, as shown by the analysis of the appropriate empirical data and respectively designated abovementioned groups of adverbs, gender stereotypes reflected in Kartvelian paremiological stock do not express only androcentric tendencies. In parallel to Gender asymmetry reflected proverbs, the tendency of attempts for equalization of gender stereotypes are encountered, that makes unable to firmly state

that the proverbs of Kartvelian languages built on male-female interrelation, and ones that reveal their faces, carry discriminative nature. In such cases the time and purpose of the formation of a certain proverb gains crucial importance, to what extent was it spread and established in folks, what type of social-economic factors conditioned his origin, etc.⁵ The issues discussed above are an object of a separate study, that will demand the extension of empirical data and further discussion of gender aspects in the context of the neighboring disciplines, that enables us to present the abovementioned problems viewed from a different angle. Furthermore, it is also interesting to take into consideration the environment of other languages in this respect.

⁵ In this respect, the idea according to which “social basis for gender difference between a man and a woman shows up in different methods of raising boys and girls, and is later conditioned by tough outdoor tasks done by men and domestic activities done by women. In fact, these social factors determine the gender domination of men.” (Kurdadze, 2008: p. 110)

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Abbreviations and Contractions

- L1** – Linguistic data in the original language;
L2 – Transcription.

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Modern Program Packages (FLEX and Elan) of the Language Data Management and the Prospects of Their Usage

ABSTRACT

Documenting the languages and cultures and managing the data is firm basis of the future interdisciplinary researches. This gains even more importance for endangered and unexplored languages. The paper deals with the issues connected to the usage of Modern Program Packages (Flex and Elan) vividly and professionally for interdisciplinary researches, advantages and unique abilities of them. The work provides the information about the principles of Doculinguistics and about the modern standards of documentation. The issue of fitting Georgian, as an agglutinative Language to the international standards so that its nature is truly revealed, appears to be a challenging task.

The cooperative scientific project “Linguocultural Digiarchive” was implemented by Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University and Frankfurt Goethe University. It was created using the modern framework standards of documentation and archiving in Elan and FLEX formats.

FLEX is able to show the essential peculiarities of the language and to show the ways of fragmentation and the functions of morphemes: various existing wordforms, kind of grammar, semantic and pragmatic categories.

FLEX as a modern package of managing the language data gives an unique opportunity to show the diversity of language materials and to synchronically and diachronically study a wide range of issues; to check the scientific hypothesis; to create new lexicons; to describe the paradigm of declension and conjugation; to create the grammar framework; to give automatic analysis of the data, to create a united standard.

Key words: *Language documentation, FLEX, Elan, Batumi Linguocultural DigiArchive*¹

Introduction

In the last thirty years it has become essential to document unexplored and endangered languages. This is even more important for the modern world, because it needs to

have a reliable knowledge of Linguocultural problems. Because of the “Big Languages”, language forms and categories that are found in unexplored languages have not yet been analyzed linguistically.

¹ This project has been made possible by financial support from the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation (№DI 2016-43). All ideas expressed herewith are those of the author, and may not represent the opinion of the Foundation itself.

Consequently, the knowledge of the system of General linguistics appears to be imperfect and incomplete. Reinterpretation of language as linguocultural phenomenon became the basis of new scientific trend – doculingistics.

In a document- “The Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger of Disappearance and Georgia”¹, includes the Georgian Language among those languages, which may be replaced by some dominant languages by the end of the 21st century. Accordingly, the specialized literature underlines the importance of the following issues: creation of digitalization, consolidation of documented materials standardization, availability and creation of national corpus (Gippert, Tandashvili, 2012; Tandashvili, 2016; Tandashvili, Phurtskhvanidze, 2013; Lomia, Gersamia, 2012).

This article aims at revealing the prospects of using Modern Program Packages (Flex and Elan) vividly and

professionally for interdisciplinary researches. It also depicts the advantages and unique abilities of them. The article discusses the issue of fitting Georgian, as an agglutinative Language to the international standards so that its nature is truly revealed, that appears to be a challenging task.

The creation of National Corpus promoted the accumulation of the experience in documentation. It meant recording the forms in authentic, natural situations (Himmelman, 1998: pp.161–195); It is about the multipurpose of the records (Gippert, Himmelman, Mosel, 2006) and about the major strategies of language documentation (recording, processing, preservation and dissemination of the primary data) etc.

Discussion

The cooperative scientific project “Linguocultural Digiarchive”² was implemented by Batumi Shota Rustaveli State University and

¹
http://www.ice.ge/kartuliena/pages/unesco/atlas_g.pdf

² <http://digiarchive.bsu.edu.ge>

Frankfurt Goethe University. These universities were mainly responsible for introducing the main principles of docuLinguistics and creating the modern framework standards of documentation and archiving in Elan and FLEEx formats.

The project aimed at finding and development the verbal materials (biographies, household and agricultural details, the cultural and historical facts preserved in memory, religious rituals and customs, ethnological materials) by using new methodological and technological basis, creating a certain framework for digital documenting (Tandashvili, Khalvashi, Beridze, Khakhutaishvili, Tsetskhladze, 2017), that consists of several stages: finding the resources (recording the material), recording (registration), digitalizing, preserving (archiving) and further caring (protecting) of the data.

Four types of resources are being prepared: A- Archived audio and video materials (MP3 and AVI formats); B - Archived audio and

video materials with transcribed texts (in Elan format); C - Multimedia annotation of the Archived video materials: transcribed, glossed and interlined; (Processed in FLEEx); D- Digitally documented and archived video material with multimedia annotation and English Translation (Tandashvili, and all, 2017).

Transcribed material was processed in FLEEx³, which is a multimedia platform for Data Management, text differentiation and analysis. The package was created by international scientific society in SIL international⁴.

Together with FLEEx, professional instrument Elan⁵ was used for multimedia annotation, transcription, glossing and interlining. Annotated video, audio and multimedia files were united in EAF⁶

It should be taken into consideration, that finding, structuring

³ <https://software.sil.org/fieldworks/download/>

⁴ <http://www.sil.org/>

⁵ <https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/download/>

⁶ <http://www.file-extension.org/de/extensions/eaf>

and preserving the resources using modern program packages (FLEx and Elan) in the framework of this project appears to be unprecedented and not yet fully used to its maximum capacity.

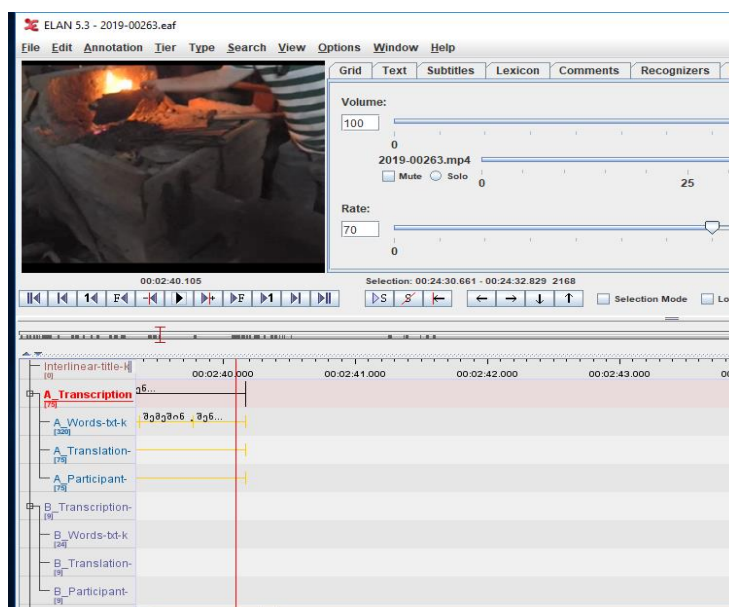
The main advantage of ELAN is that it can incorporate video material and text resources in one file. Nereby it is also able to synchronize transcribed text with video and audios signals. Consequently, this kind of diverse (social, cultural, political, economical, spiritual, religious etc.) material is credible and all the resources resulting from this work are interdisciplinary. It will become the basis of several linguocultural reseaches as it comprises different

traditions that can be a very valuable information for different branches of science. It also makes it possible to analyze some issues of the verbal speech, gestures and mimes.

After the video material is processed, Elan text is segmented into sentences. Some fields have been created for structuring the video files:

1. transcription-txt. kat – for transcribing the sentences;
2. Translation-gls.en – for English Translation;
3. Words-txt.kat – For lemnes;
4. Participant-note.kat –for additional information concerning infromants (surname; name, age etc).

This is how the final file looks: (See picture 1)



Picture.1. Structure of fields in ELAN

This kind of file is ready for being processed in FLEx. The advantage of the given program is the standardization and automatization of the language data and better interface. It met all the five key requirements necessary for field research: 1. On the cost of processing interlinear text, the lexicon is automatically generated and then, completed. 2. all the operations are conducted inside the FLEx and a user is not obliged to use the other program. 3. The morphological model is pre-processed and it is integrated in the program as grammatical characteristics. 4. The principle of working in the program is not complicated as it is based on the principles of preceding programs. 5. The software is easily perceivable and usable (Black, Simons, 2006).

FLEx also has an editor of metadata (the following things are indicated: the time and place of recording; thematics; the age, education, migration of the teller; the type of conversations (monologue and dialogue)) etc. The materials are prepared in IMDI⁷, CMD⁸ and XML⁹ formats and the multitude of

formats is necessary for the exchange of data with different programs.

Flex, as a very elaborate system of language data management. The program includes ten classes and 88 fields for describing the vocabulary. For morphological analysis, there are 60 classes and 185 fields. FLEx is a unique instrument for creating a lexicon. After exporting a file from ELAN to FLEx, the annotated and internationalized words that are necessary for integrating the data are depicted in the Lexicon. This operation goes beyond the function of ELAN. The information about certain words is collected, such as: anthropologic category, genre (monologue, behavioral text, narrative, also the sources, researchers, localization, tellers etc). The lexicon also contains wordlist with grammar indexes and definitions. Thus, making it possible to analyze the materials synchronically and diachronically.

There are different windows in Texts & words instrument. The window - **Info** gives comprehensive information about certain words; In **Baseline**, one can find a full text; **Gloss** gives the translation of the words. In **Analyse**, grammatical

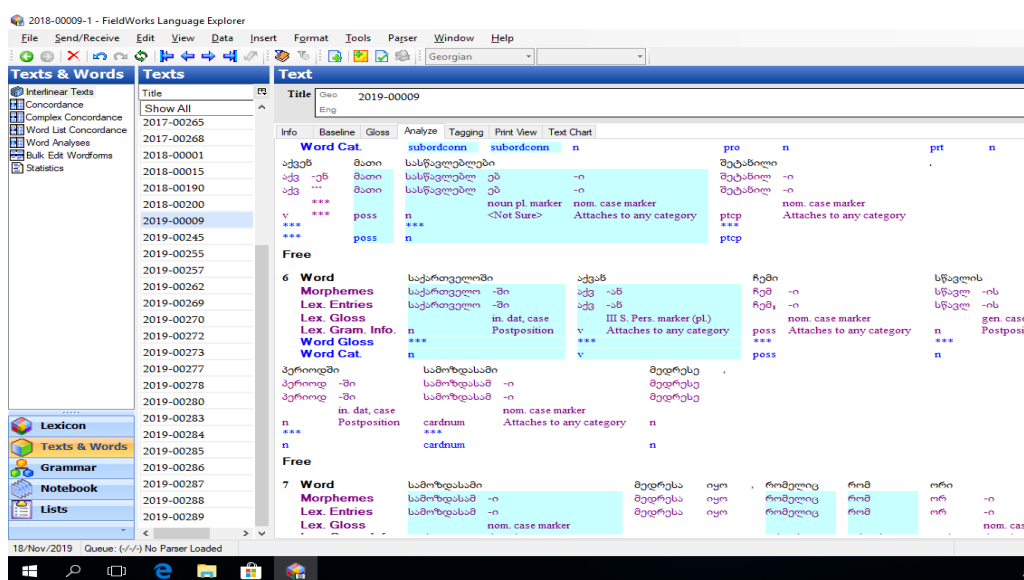
⁷ <https://tla.mpi.nl/imdi-metadata/>

⁸ <https://portal.clarin.nl/node/4061>

⁹ <https://www.w3.org/XML/>

analysis of the words is possible. The stem, the root, affixes are identified and classified using **Parser**, the grammatical analyser. **Print view** gives an opportunity to

preview the document before printing. **Tagging** implies tagging the text. **Text chart** is an instrument dealing with text discourse (picture 2).

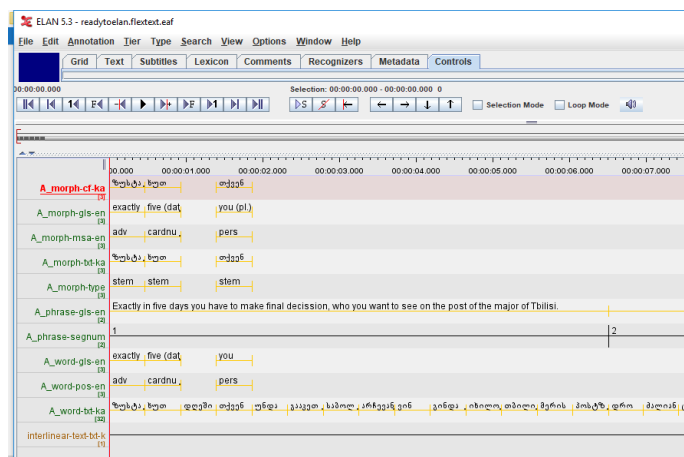


Picture 2. Instrument **Texts & words** in FLEX

List is a multifunctional instrument: academic domains, anthropological categories, the level of education, genres, dialectological information, semantic domains (social behaviour, language and

thinking, daily life, activity, physical activity) and they have their subdomains.

The processed information in FLEX is again imported in ELAN (picture 3).



Picture 3: Language data processed in ELAN

Segmentation system is very flexible and convenient.

As it can be seen at the picture, FLEX is invaluable in a way that in the instrument “Grammar”, one can find parts of speech with definitions and it is possible to add affix pattern (the name, description of the pattern) and also, subcategories.

Using segmentation and glossing, FLEX is able to show the essential peculiarities of the language and to show the ways of fragmentation and the functions of morphemes: various existing wordforms and kind of grammat, semantic and pragmatic categories are expressed in the language using the morphemes.

For example, suffix “-eb” is a marker of the plural number (*khe-eb-i* (trees)) and in the verb it is the thematic suffix (*ak’et-eb* (you do)). “o” is the third person marker in imperfect screeve (*ts’aiġ-o tsigni* (He tooks the book)); “o” is also a marker of subjunctive mood (*ts’aiġ-o* : kargi iqneba tsigni shen rom *ts’aiġ-o* (it will be good if you take the book));

“s” is a marker of Dative Case and the third person marker of subjective verbs: A) *deda-s* Dative case marker; B) *sts’er-s* (He writs) III Subj. marker.

When “s” is already depicted in the program as a dative case marker and a specialist does not agree, he/she can add the exact classification.

As differential analysis of the above-given morphemes is fixed in the program, specialists have opportunity to select exact qualification in every concrete case.

Several parts of speech can be simultaneously main parts of speech and functional words: “*unda*” is a **verb** (wants/wants to go) and **modal component** “*unda*” (must go/ is obliged) to go.

One and the same segment, for example, “da” can be major part of speech (noun), the minor part of speech (linker), morpheme (preverb: *da-ts’era*) and adposition dialect form (*chemda* (for me) etc.

Morphemes and words can stay without categories (due to morpho-

syntax specifics of languages), however the program gives an opportunity to make a comprehensive analysis - it is possible to add non-existent categories to standard version (i.e. to adapt morpho-syntax of the Georgian language). This makes the program to be even more perfect.

The program enables us to show the diverse dialectal forms as well as literary ones. In the variants of the data, one can find accumulated literary, dialectal, old and new language forms and also, lexical and grammatical units of relative languages. For example: “*darga*” (sow) and “*dargo*”, or “*dapkveuli*” (milled) and “*dapkvevli*”, “*avadmq’opi*” (ill) and “*avantq’opi*” are divided as literary and dialectal language forms.

“*khvimiri*” (place for grain/corn in the mill) and “*godori*”(long twiggen/woven basket) are represented as archaism and modern language forms. The lexicon also shows the language contacts: *topali*

(Turkish, lamed), *zastavo* (Russian, border post), *iodosi* (Greek, warm cloudy weather that speeds the melting of the snow) and *jumadia* (Lazian, uncle).

The texts incorporated in the project are considered to be a corpus, which gives dialectal and literary forms (phonetic and morphologic) and literary forms can have several versions in one and multiple subsystems.

By providing complete material of a dialect, we can later create comparative lexicons. From the field of data, we can clearly see the peculiarities of the English Language but not Georgian. For example, Grammatical gender, article, supinum and gerund etc. For the successful functioning of the program, adding the new fields (it is possible in the program using “Add new Sense” icon), which would depict the different markers of the Georgian Language (mostly all the essential markers of the verb, especially, polipersonalism, screeves,

thematic markers, contact, additional functions of preverbs, semantic details of passive voice and a lot more) became necessary (Shanidze, 1973).

In order to successfully operate the above given packages, it's necessary to perfectly show the Grammatical structure of the Georgian language. After the comparative study of the certain issue, it is necessary to accurately and qualitatively segment the data and choose the appropriate terms (Surmava, Beridze, 2008) and also, it's important to solve the problem of the terminology differences.

The advantage of FLEx is automatization of analysis. As A. Blake and G. Simmons state, the more elaborate system becomes, the better automatization of the text analysis it gets: "When a grammatical morpheme is glossed in interlinear text analysis, the MGA presents a view of the complete feature catalog as a choice list for possible glosses. As glosses are selected, they are added to a

language-specific feature system which is being automatically constructed behind the scenes" (Black, Simons, 2006).

Automatic description of the grammar is a very faraway perspective. And the most interesting thing is that FLEx is capable of checking the hypothesis of the linguists using the factual data it includes (ibid).

What should be done now? The main difficulty now is the shortage of data: "Thousands of word forms could be needed to establish basic patterns of allomorphy, for example, or the structure of an inflection-class system" (Kim, 2020).

Conclusions

Therefore, by accurate processing of multiple texts of different contents, by recording them in authentic situations, it will become possible to depict the peculiarities of agglutinative languages. Making the exact and qualitative analysis, reviewing certain issues and elaborating the

terms will promote the stable development of the Georgian language. The availability of the resources will become the basis for some fundamental interdisciplinary researches.

Documenting the languages and cultures and managing the data is firm basis of the future interdisciplinary researches. This gains even more importance for endangered and unexplored languages. FLEX and Elan, which are modern packages of managing the

language data give us an unique opportunity to show the diversity of language materials and to synchronically and diachronically study a wide range of issues; to check the scientific hypothesis; to create new lexicons; to describe precisely the paradigm of declension and conjugation; to create the grammar framework; to give automatic analysis of the data, and finally, to create a united standard of preserving and analyzing the data.

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Learning and Teaching Russian as a Pluricentric Language

ABSTRACT

Teaching Russian as a foreign language outside the nation might still be oriented towards the norm and conventions of contemporary metropolitan Russian, but in the minority situation, which emerged after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and massive migrations, teaching should absorb the newly developed local lexis and formulate the rules reflecting regional changes in the structure. State-of-the-art language pedagogy rejects stringency of approach to communication and accepts the reality of translanguaging and regional varieties, considering them in the curricula. Clearly, teaching Russian in the situation of the new linguistic contacts calls for innovative methods and flexible approaches. The article is based on the interviews and informal conversations with Russian-language teachers and school owners, as well as on meta-analysis of the already published data. This article aims to show challenges confronting Russian-language teachers in various countries, with examples drawn from Estonia, Finland, Germany, Israel, Kazakhstan, Norway, and Slovakia.

Key words: Russian language studies, heritage learners, diaspora, language maintenance, Russian as a pluricentric language, translanguaging, Russian language abroad

Teaching Russian as a second language

Russian is spread across a large territory and interacts with hundreds of languages. The contact varieties of Russian range from pidgins to mutual influence in *Sprachbunds* (a case in point is convergence with the Fenno-Ugric and Turkic languages). Some contacts have lasted for thousands of years, whereas others are quite recent. As compared with language acquisition in the process of spontaneous everyday interactions, language learning following structured curricula and based on textbooks is

much younger. Indeed, goal-oriented tutoring started only in the middle of the 17th century thanks to the efforts of John Amos Comenius, who wrote a treatise outlining a theory of language acquisition.

The system of teaching Russian as a second language developed in several stages. The earliest Russian-language teaching abroad was initiated by ethno-linguistic minorities, such as Old Believers. Having emigrated, they organized their own schools, mostly for religious purposes. Then, there were members

of the international high society who provided multilingual education for their children. In some countries, Russian-language teaching started with the military invasions, which required organization of the infrastructure in the Russian language, including schools for children of the contingent left in the new territories to maintain order, as well as for clergy, entrepreneurs, medical doctors, workers, and others. To preserve their role in society, local elites had to become Russified, which means that they would send their children to the educational institutions operating in the Russian language. To make a career one had to be proficient in Russian. This trend persisted in the Soviet times and remained as a legacy in the post-Soviet space. The Soviet rule should be credited for spreading literacy and education to all layers of society, yet many teachers, including Russian-language instructors, lacked professional competence (Ketola, 2007, Pavlenko, 2011, Protassova, 2018).

On a large scale, teaching Russian as a foreign language outside the Russian-speaking world started relatively late, after World War II. Earlier, Russian had been studied by philologists as a university discipline. In the postwar years Russian was taught as a compulsory subject in many Eastern bloc countries at school and in pre-primary educational institutions. To support and intensify its political and economic influence

upon its allies, the USSR offered free higher education in every domain of science, technology, and medicine to young people from these countries. Since instruction was in Russian, the students took intensive courses of Russian in the first year prior to academic studies. In the dorms, they often shared rooms with Soviet students, so academic studies were combined with true language immersion and they attained high proficiency in Russian (Yelenevskaya, 2015). Upon return to their home countries after graduation, these alumni had nostalgic memories of their student years and the Russian language, and many came back with Russian spouses. These people lobbied for Soviet interests in their respective nations.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, and thanks to technological advances in language pedagogies models of teaching Russian have diversified. Depending on a country's language policy, attitudes to multilingualism, and above all, political and economic relations with Russia, every country chooses its own policy toward the Russian language and its role in the education system. These policies determine the scope of teaching and the status of Russian courses, taught as mandatory or elective. The site of *Rossotrudnichestvo* (rs.gov.ru) cites the number of Russian speakers in various countries: 146 million in the RF and 127 million abroad, with 36.8 m living in Ukraine, 13.5 m in Kazakhstan, 11.8 m in Uzbekistan,

9.3 m in Belarus, 5.5 m in Poland, 5.4 m in Germany, 4.9 m in Azerbaijan, 3.5 m in the U.S.A., 2.7 m in Kyrgyzstan, 2.5 m in Tajikistan, 2.4 m in Georgia, 2.1 m in Armenia, 2 m in Bulgaria, 2 m in the Czech Republic, 1.95 m in Estonia, 1.8 m in Latvia, 1.7 m in Moldova, 1.4 m in Serbia, 1.3 m in Slovakia, 1.3 m in Lithuania, 1.2 m in Mongolia, 1 m in Israel, 0.9 m in Turkmenistan, 0.7 m in China, 4.1 m in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, 2.7 m in Asia, 1.3 m in the Middle East and North Africa, 0.2 m in the Latin America, 0.1 m in Sub-Saharan Africa. The site also gives numbers for the self-proclaimed political entities of Transnistria (0.5 m) and Abkhazia (0.45 m). Some of these estimates seem to be inflated or fake. They may have been based on the statistics of the Soviet era, when Russian dominated in all the 15 republics of the USSR, and the population of the Eastern bloc countries had to study Russian in state schools, thus adding to the number of proficient speakers. Importantly, the site adds statistics of recent migrations of Russian speakers.

In the republics of the Soviet Union, there were two types of schools: so-called *national schools* with the titular or local language being the main tool of instruction and Russian used as an additional language, and Russian, or *multinational schools*, where children of dozens of ethnicities studied together in Russian, which served as the medium of interethnic communication, while the local

languages were studied as a subject. Most of the schoolbooks for Russian studies were authored and published in the center, in Moscow or Leningrad, but in many national republics, professional journals for teachers of Russian were published. The principles behind textbooks differed for Russian as L1 and the main language of instruction, and for Russian as L2. The authors of the latter conceived them for groups of typologically similar languages, so that the typical interferential errors could be treated in the same way. For the republics with relatively big languages, such as Ukrainian or Kazakh, Russian textbooks were written separately, because there were enough learners to justify separate editions.

Struggle for the rights of the national languages started prior to the dissolution of the Soviet regime, during the perestroika. The situation changed in the 1990s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the former national republics, which became independent states, there were still many predominantly Russian-speaking bilinguals and even some Russian monolinguals who preferred to use Russian in everyday life and professional settings. Many native Russian speakers migrated to other countries due to new nationalist policies that obliged everyone to use titular languages in the public sphere while Russian was in decline. As time passed, the new independent states came to teach Russian as a foreign language, rather than L2. They

began publishing their own textbooks and dictionaries of the Russian language based on the regional varieties, and even to teach Russian to foreigners, using the regional lexis and phraseology some of which deviated from the norm ruling in the metropolis. There are still very few efforts to establish new codified norms of Russian that would not mirror the rules used in Russia itself, but there are attempts, especially in the Baltic States and Kazakhstan, to introduce orthological guidelines as to how to use Russian for the regional purposes.

As stated in different sources, the Russian language occupies the 8th–10th place in the world, in terms of its spread, and it is used in the public sphere of at least 27 countries. Yet, according to a report prepared by the Federal State Autonomous Sociological Research Center (sociocenter.info) in 2018, the number of foreigners learning Russian shrank almost by half (Sociocenter, 2019). At the beginning of the 1990s, 74.6 million people studied it outside the nation, while in 2018, there were only 38.2 million learners. If we deduct those who live in the territory of the former Soviet Union (FSU), there will be a decrease from 20 million to a little more than one. In Eastern Europe and on the Balkans, there were 38 million Russian speakers in 1990 while in 2015, only 8 million remained. The numbers also dropped from 119.5 to 82.5 million in the independent states in the territory of the FSU. By contrast, the

number of Russian speakers has grown in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand from 1.2 to 4 million. The experts (e.g., Arefiev, 2017) estimate that by 2025, those who speak Russian will represent approximately 2,7% (215 million) out of 8 billion inhabitants of the Earth. One can expect the number of those who study Russian to grow thanks to the children of the Russian-speaking immigrants from the FSU. Research conducted in immigrant groups in different countries testifies to the intention of parents to maintain the Russian language in the home communication with the second generation and send children to Russian or bilingual kindergartens and Russian afternoon schools (Moin et al., 2013; Perotto, Niznik 2014; Zbenovich, 2016; Ringblom et al., 2018; Karpava, 2019). In addition, from 2014 to 2018, the number of students learning Russian grew in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (Sociocenter 2019). Practitioners' observations confirm that what motivates parents to send their children to learn Russian is better educational and career opportunities. Moreover, at least some Russian proficiency is required of circular migrants shuttling between Russia and home countries in CIS and employed in building and other manual jobs in Russia. Their children in Russia have to be taught differently from those born in the Russian-speaking families and growing up in Russia. Russian educators experiment adjusting teaching methods to these audiences; e.g., an interdisciplinary approach is

demonstrated by Tolstova, Kozlovtseva, 2018 who try to fill in the gap in the knowledge of the immigrant children in Moscow, and Kryahtunova, 2018 introduces immigrant children to the basics of Russian while they play with objects.

The educational institutions operating in the Russian language abroad

In Russia itself, schoolbooks for Russian as the mother tongue still mostly follow the tradition of the previous centuries focusing on orthographic and theoretic drills. Some new tendencies arise as alternatives, but they are not yet widespread. According to the vice-director of the Vinogradov Institute of the Russian Language of the Russian Academy of Science, Vladimir Plungjan (2012), methods of teaching native speakers in Russia lag behind or even contradict up-to-date methods of linguistic analysis applied in other countries. Language and literature studies are still divided into two different subjects. Classic literary texts dominate in exercises, while essay writing and composition come only late in the curriculum. Despite an ongoing discussion about modernization of language pedagogies, most linguists fear that it is hardly possible to make schoolteachers adopt more up-to-date methods of teaching and change their views on the language structure and rules governing use (see e.g., personal interview with Alexey Shmelyov, professor of the Moscow Pedagogical State

University). Reading material for schoolchildren is drawn primarily from the classics of the 19th and 20th centuries, abounding in descriptions of nature, peasant work and weather. Media texts or pieces of contemporary literature are not included. The layout is obsolete, and reproductions of the classical Russian and Soviet paintings, drawn in the style of social realism, are chosen as illustrations. They form the canon of the language and culture perception reproduced over and over again.

The authors writing schoolbooks abroad try to bring them closer to the language of children's environment (Guelfreikh, Golubeva, 2019). They do not only use illustrations reflecting contemporary life and pupils' experience, but they fill them with content that can help children navigate in the contemporary world. New schoolbooks written for young diasporans structure teaching in the way consistent with new pedagogical developments (e.g., various materials prepared by Olga Kagan and Anna Kudyma, as well as Dubinina, Kisselev, 2019). The corpus-based methods of the Russian language teaching (e.g., Ol'khovskaya, 2019) are just entering the field (e.g., the website vsrussian.com). Another valuable resource of the Russian language exercises, texts, videos, and tests for children is the site pushkin.institute/projects/russkiy_yazyk_dlya_nashih_detey.php.

According to Akifyeva (2016), who conducted her research in Spain, Russian-speaking families abroad seek to organize structured activities for their children, trying to preserve old and familiar principles of rearing and upbringing in pre-primary and school education. Parents aim to form a circle of Russian-speaking friends for their children. They wish the young ones to learn and maintain the home language, and involvement in the community life helps to transmit the culture. Similar results were demonstrated in Germany by Meng (2006) and in Israel by Zbenovich, Lerner (2013). Family language policies (see Schwartz, Verschik, 2013, Haque, Le Lièvre, 2019) contribute to development of bilingualism and biculturalism among the second-generation children of the Russian-speaking parents. Such tendencies are not exceptional but are quite typical of many immigrant parents (Holloway, Jonas, 2016).

Many Russian-speaking expats permanently residing abroad are determined to provide their children with opportunities to receive education in Russian. The RF considers the general education in Russian abroad an important factor in its political and humanitarian influence in the world community that should serve to strengthen the position of the Russian language and spread Russian culture and values outside the nation. On 04.11.2015, the President of the RF approved the “Concept of the Russian school abroad”,

which defines the priority goals and objectives of the state policy of the RF in relation to general education in Russian in the international educational space. It specifies approaches ensuring access of Russian and foreign citizens, as well as stateless persons to general education in Russian abroad and enumerates types of state support for educational organizations that teach in Russian in foreign countries (Concept, 2015). Information support (textbooks and course materials) for Russian schools abroad is provided in order to strengthen the prestige of Russia. Rementsov et al. (2017) claim that teaching Russian to bilinguals and multilinguals abroad should be patriotic and emphasize the role of the Russian ethno-cultural components in the courses of history and geography. Krezhevskiykh et al. (2018) want to promote Russian cultural heritage, including regional traditions. Both projects target online-learning. Khamraeva (2019) advocates strengthening cognitive aspects of L1 maintenance and meta-disciplinary ties in bilingual children abroad. A group at the Pushkin Russian Language Institute in Moscow is developing tests for bilingual children of different age living abroad (e.g., Bezrukova, Kalenkova, 2016, Kalenkova, Zhiltsova, 2018, 2019). Some researchers compare various aspects of the language teaching methods when Russian is taught as L1, L2 or a migrant language (Balykhina, 2017). The VIA LIGHT

Association unites educators working at Russian schools in various parts of the world and organizes congresses “In Russian. In the Multilingualism Context”. In fact, many private complementary schools abroad function almost independently of the Russian governmental organizations.

Diverse publications reflect the experience accumulated by the schools operating in Russian outside Russia in the system of general or complementary education. There are publications of general interest (Dronov et al. 2009, Protassova, Rodina, 2010) and studies focusing on different regions and various problems of bilingualism and biculturalism: China (Tsuj Sjuopin, 2014), France (Zaprometova, 2017), Great Britain (Gasparyan, 2017), Italy (Kotikova, Yashina, 2017, Guelfreikh, 2018), Latvia (Gavrilina), Marocco (Krylova, Sukhov, 2012), the Netherlands (Peeters-Podgaevskaja, 2008), Poland (Mizerniuk-Rotkiewicz, 2016), Switzerland (Hugentobler, Sorvacheva, 2012). Krivoborskaja (2019) raises the question of the first language maintenance with adopted children in Spain. Various special issues of the journal “Russian Language Abroad” (Russkij jazyk za rubezhom), available at journal-rla.pushkininstitute.ru, are dedicated to Russian studies in Bulgaria, China, the CIS-countries, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Iran, Italy, Japan, Poland, Spain, South Korea, the USA, Vietnam and give a rich overview of the

multifaceted use of Russian in respective countries. Ryazanova-Clarke (2019) analyzes the situation with the cultural leaders in the UK and finds that they represent different tendencies in the relationships with the country where they live, the country of their origin, with themselves and other entrepreneurs within the Russian diaspora.

In the following part of the essay we chose Estonia and Kazakhstan as two countries on the territory of the former Soviet Union (FSU) which pursued completely different language policies towards the Russian language, and Finland, Germany and Israel as countries in which Russian-speaking communities can be divided into returning diaspora and immigrants. In addition, we present Norway and Slovakia as countries with relatively recent Russian-speaking forms of schooling. All these countries have sizeable communities of Russian speakers (i.e. mono- and plurilingual speakers, heritage speakers of different generations, L2 speakers including those who studied in Russia, speakers of one of the Russian regional varieties because of their background, etc.). In general, it is better not to conflate ‘speakers’ and ‘learners’ because this can lead to incorrect categorization and numbers and mislead evaluations of the vitality of the Russian language. In each of the analyzed country, there are numerous cultural institutions catering to the needs of co-ethnics, which is also beneficial for Russian-language

maintenance. We anticipated that comparative analysis of dissimilar diasporic communities would make similarities in their language ideologies and motivation for Russian-language maintenance particularly meaningful and useful for academic linguists as well as for practitioners. Our main goal in these sections is to demonstrate how the situation in the country influences the specificity of learning and schoolbooks used there. Having conducted projects in these countries we could have a good view of the state-of-the-art in Russian-language pedagogy there. Moreover, we aim to show that Russian language pedagogy abroad has no universal strategy but must adjust to different language ideologies and educational policies in the host countries.

Estonia. Approximately 25% of the 1,3 million population of the country speak Russian as their L1 (stat.ee/34267); they live predominantly in the capital area and in the North-East of the country. Some Russian speakers belong to the confessional group of the Old Believers and have lived there for centuries. Their language displays some peculiarities, so does spoken Russian all over the country, where the mutual influence of the native and non-native varieties is crucial for emergence of contact phenomena (Adamson, 2019, Kostandi et al., 2020). Proximity to Russia and a high concentration of native speakers in some settlements contribute to the maintenance of the language, which

formally has the status of a foreign one. Young generations are growing up bilingual, and Estonian immersion programs rank among the best in the world. The development of the school system still allows mother-tongue based bilingual education with a gradual transition to Estonian-oriented curriculum for the speakers of Russian (Golubeva, 2018). One of the main concerns of the Russian-speaking educators in Estonia is about the uncertainty of the growing multicultural and multilingual identity of the students who receive a strong input from the surroundings through the Estonian language and culture (Burdakova, 2018, Moissejenko et al., 2019). Local authorities make a lot of efforts for the residents of such settlements to form a new and positive self-image. This sizeable Russian-speaking minority and its interests are represented in parliament. Institutions such as publishing houses, newspapers, TV channels and theaters ensure a vibrant cultural life in Russian. Russian is still widely used in the streets and ethnic Estonians can speak it; moreover, many want to study it to improve their proficiency.

One of the winners of the international students' competition PISA, Estonia is highly computerized and advanced in e-learning, including hybrid teaching materials. It has developed several generations of schoolbooks for teaching Russian as L1 and as a foreign language. The underlying principle of these resources is to teach Russian as a local language

with the use of Estonian and Russian proper and geographic names and stories about Russian-speaking people who lived in Estonia in the past. The schoolbooks include jokes playing with misuse of words and comparative explanations of the linguistic phenomena focusing on the specific difficulties for Estonian-Russian bilinguals and thus helping students avoid mistakes. Russian culture features in Estonian folkloric collections, documenting both old and contemporary rituals, traditions and verbal lore.

Finland. The Russian-speaking minority in Finland numbers about 82,000 people out of the total of 5,5 million (statfin_vaerak_pxt_11rl.px). The two neighboring countries have exchanged their population for centuries. These processes intensified when Finland was a Grand Duchy in the Russian Empire (1809–1917), after the October Revolution (1917–1920s), during WWII and in the last three decades. The ethnic composition of the Russian speaking community is heterogeneous and consists of descendants of the indigenous Russian population, repatriates with Finnish roots, spouses, businesspeople, and students (Viimaranta, 2020). Finnish TV broadcasts news in Russian daily, and at least one Russian-language newspaper comes out monthly. The support of Russian in public settings is mainly due to the influx of tourists coming from St. Petersburg, the Leningrad region and the

Russian part of Karelia. A lot of websites, advertisements, signs and information brochures have Russian translations.

The history of teaching Russian in Finland is long, starting in the first half of the 19th century. From the beginning, textbooks were created in Finland and abounded in local realities, and this trend continues. In addition, textbooks written for Berlitz schools and by Swedish educators, as well as authentic Russian schoolbooks were also used. Under the Russian Empire, teaching of Russian was regulated by special documents. Independent Finland reduced its teaching to just a few schools for Russian speakers. After World War II, remaining Russian educational institutions formed a new Russian-Finnish school in 1955. It was run by the state since 1977 and trained workforce for the Finnish-Soviet trade (Mustajoki et al., 2010, Yurkov et al., 2012). Nowadays, Russian is taught as a foreign language in all programs from primary to high school education. There are various institutions specializing in the Russian language teaching: private day care centers, schools and classes. A variety of inhouse schoolbooks are provided for all classes starting from the first grade. An increasing number of teaching materials are written for online learning. There are also programs for children from Russian-speaking homes, with two classes per week. They cater to the students aged 6 to 18, with the option of the final state exam. In addition, private hobby

groups add to the language and culture maintenance (Viimaranta et al., 2018). Despite educators' and publishers' efforts to stick to the norm and transmit it to the young generation, few bilinguals are able to speak and write without violating grammar rules or inserting Finnish words and calques into their oral and written speech. In-house teaching materials for bilinguals are available in the e-format only.

Education is a commodity sold worldwide officially by the Ministry of Education. The Russian language teaching is also organized mostly by the state or municipalities. Still, there are some organizations filling the gaps in the official immigrants' language policy (Viimaranta *et al.*, 2017). We interviewed many directors, among them Suvi Nyström, the head of the center of the child culture Muzykanty (musikantit.fi). She is a Finnish repatriate from Uzbekistan, educated as a musician in Finland, she organized her center in 2004 with the goal to maintain the Russian language and culture (about 80% of activities), but some are in Finnish, Swedish, and English (e.g., language courses). About 800 children are involved into different activities. Parents are also interested to participate. Educators try to create family-like atmosphere, propose all the time new circles, organize projects, shows, concerts, take part in the Finnish and international festivals and holiday camps. They also collaborate with the school whose students' composition is

international. Sometimes Finnish children come to study music and afterwards get involved into the Russian language learning.

Germany. The total population of Germany is 83 million, and about 4,5 million speak Russian at home. Many children in these families receive formal or semi-formal education in Russian. German scholars and educators investigate various aspects of Russian language teaching and learning in Germany (see, e.g., Bergmann, 2014, Witzlack-Makarevich, Wulff, 2017, Mehlhorn, Bremer, 2018, Hamann et al., 2020).

Teaching Russian as a foreign language started in schools mostly after World War II, differing significantly in West and East Germany. While in the West Russian was an elective and schoolbooks were anti-Soviet, in the East, Russian was a mandatory school subject, and teaching materials were saturated with pro-Soviet ideology. Today, Russian does not rank among the most popular foreign languages, yet more than a hundred thousand pupils learn it as a 2nd, 3rd, 4th or even 5th foreign language. At two universities, in Berlin and Leipzig, there are professorships in the methods of Russian language teaching, and the academic staff have published a solid body of research. In recent years, dozens of private day-care centers, afternoon- and weekend-schools have launched programs for studying Russian as a mother tongue. Some target fully bilingual

education. This turn is due to the immigration of millions of Russian Germans, Jews and Russian speakers belonging to various other ethnicities. Many newcomers wish to transmit their native language to the next generations and educate their children in a way similar to their own upbringing, following traditions of the past. Moreover, several government-run schools in different states provide instruction for heritage speakers of Russian. There are many domestically produced textbooks for teaching Russian as a foreign language. Although interesting for the local students, they contain some deviations from the Russian norm, e.g. *die Tastatur* ‘keyboard’, *klaviatura* in Russian, is called *tastatura* – a hybrid word, combining both languages. The noun ‘monkey’ obtains a masculine form *obez’jan* instead of the feminine *obez’jana* in the normative Russian. The plural form of ‘animals’ *zhivotnye* appears with an *y*, instead of *i* as prescribed by the norm. When introduced into schoolbooks, these and other deviations are no longer seen as violations of the established rules but are treated as normative. These forms will be consolidated by future native and heritage speakers.

Analyzing the influence of the RF on the Russian schools in Germany, Guzhelja (2018) writes that only the school at the embassy in Berlin and the school at the consulate in Bonn could be considered as corresponding to the concept of the Russian school abroad. It means

that it failed in the country where it had the best chances to succeed without substantial financial and legal support. Instead, there are different bilingual kindergartens, schools and classes both on the Federal, Province and private basis, as well as numerous organizations working at weekends and in the after-school hours. There are a few schoolbooks written by the German Russian-speaking specialists for teaching Russian as a “background language” (*Herkunftssprache*, heritage language) concentrating on difficulties confronting bilingual students and offering contrastive exercises aimed at preventing interlanguage interference.

Israel. The total population of Israel is 9,152,100 people (cbs.gov.il/he/Pages/default.aspx). Hebrew and Arabic are official languages, and about 35 languages are spoken informally (Lewis et al. 2016). According to the report released by the Central Bureau of Statistics to the media in 2014, it is the third most spoken language after Hebrew and Arabic (jewish.ru/news/israel/2014/02/news994323074.php), with 15% of the population using it in daily life. Russian has no formal status in Israel, but it is widely used in the public sphere, and is less of a stigma for its speakers than in the 1990s (cf. Otwinowska et al., 2019).

Since revival of Hebrew was the cornerstone of Zionist ideology, Russian was abandoned by the first immigration waves and

almost completely disappeared from communication. It made the first comeback in the 1970s when 165,000 Soviet Jews settled in Israel (Toltz, 2012). Then the 1990s brought “the great immigration wave” of 835,410 people from FSU (moia.gov.il).

Russian-speaking immigrants launched numerous cultural institutions, such as libraries, publishing houses, theaters, book clubs, travel agencies, translation bureaus, mass media, and others. These institutions heavily depend on the language use, and although some of them offer services in Hebrew, their main language is still Russian. Commercial enterprises were the first to realize the benefits of providing information for their new customers in their own language, and although hesitantly, government agencies followed. So today, most of the municipalities and ministries have websites with information pages in Russian. In addition, translation services are offered free of charge in hospitals and courts (Yelenevskaya, 2015).

Russian entered mainstream school curricula only in the 1990s. Today, it is taught as a second foreign language, although most of the students are heritage speakers. About 6,000 pupils attend Russian classes in the 7th–12th grades, learning from schoolbooks written by Russian-speaking Israeli educators and meeting the needs of Israeli students (Muchnik et al., 2016: 66–70). The Israeli and Russian cultures are interwoven, and the schoolbooks take this into account, trying to develop functional

bilingualism and biculturalism. The Russian literature abounds in the authors of the Jewish origin, and to study their work in Russian is only natural in this situation. These books conceived in Israel have also become very popular all over the world. At the tertiary level, Russian courses are offered at four out of seven universities as an elective. Since relatively few young people from Russian-speaking families study the language formally, their oral proficiency is much higher than written, and some remain illiterate and unaware of Russian cultural and pragmalinguistic conventions (Niznik, 2011). Russian-language teachers who failed to find jobs in the state-run educational system founded kindergartens and afternoon schools.

The Russian language in Israel has absorbed numerous Hebraisms. Most of the fieldwork done so far shows that in the absence of codification, deviations from the language of the metropolis are unstable. They are few on the syntactic level and are most noticeable on the lexical and morphological levels, as well as in the prosody (for detailed analysis see Naiditch, 2004, 2008; Perelmutter, 2018). Like other bi- and multilinguals, Russian-speaking Israelis often insert names of administrative bodies, foods, holidays, rituals, professions, and others that do not exist in Russian. Experiments investigating mental lexicons of Russian-Hebrew bilinguals reveal big deviations in their verbal associations from those demonstrated in

the metropolis. This suggests that a new image of the world is developing in bilinguals thanks to the use of Russian as a tool of informal communication in the Middle Eastern country with its political, economic and religious peculiarities (Yelenevskaya, Ovchinnikova, 2015; Ovchinnikova, Yelenevskaya, 2019).

Kazakhstan. In Kazakhstan with its population of 18,5 million, Kazakh (the ethnic language for more than 65% of the population) is the official state language, and Russian is co-official, spoken mostly by the ethnically non-Russian population and having many peculiarities differing it from the Russia's norm (Smagulova, 2017; Shaibakova, 2020). The Kazakhization of the Russian language is one of the most advanced cases of hybridity, considering that it started later and on a different basis than Russian contacts with Byelorussian and Ukrainian (both Slavic languages). Although in Kazakhstan itself, voices for codification of the regional variant of Russian are still weak, the reality of the language use gives numerous examples of corrosion of the norm which appear in schoolbooks, newsletters, slogans, and other types of texts found all over the country. In the countryside, Russian was primarily learned as L2 from the teachers for whom it was also a second language, so the deterioration of the quality accumulated (Alisharieva et al., 2017). The motivation to study Russian is high

because of the opportunities offered by the close inter-cultural ties, instrumental, emotional and rational factors, historical memories, although the role of Russia is not unanimously evaluated as positive (Kosmarskaya, 2020). A massive influx of the Kazakh-dominant speakers to the cities and emigration of those who spoke Russian as a dominant language that occurred after the dissolution of the Soviet Union changed the scene. The introduction of the state language, Kazakh, into all spheres of life reduced the need and opportunity to use Russian, although in towns it is still spoken widely. Because of the influence of the Russian TV, Internet and other mass media, comprehension of Russian remains high. Moreover, Kazakhstan positions itself as a Russian-speaking country for those who fear to study or cannot study it in Russia itself, and many American and German students come there for a training period in Russian. Yet, the introduction of the official trilingualism (including English) and transition from the Cyrillic to the Roman alphabet for the Kazakh language diminish the prospects for Russian to survive and thrive.

In the case of *Norway*, we conducted interviews with the principal, teachers and parents in one Oslo Russian school, opened in 2003 (Reiersen, 2013). Today, Norway is one of the richest countries of the world, and the influx of immigrants was a new phenomenon

that happened in all layers of society. Russian is taught in the afternoons or on weekends, and different activities happen in this language. The school started due to the Old Russians (who were few) and Norwegians interested in Russian. It operates on weekends and rarely teaches Russian to children elder than 12-14. Children are grouped according to their age; different subjects and activities are offered. According to the law, such institutions should only be non-political and non-religious. Most of the activists are women, but without their husbands' help, many problems can be solved.

According to parents, communication in Russian is the main goal of the immigrant communities. They have subdivisions aiming to meet interests of various age groups. They confirm that in their former life in Russia, they were not eager to be active in the organized social life, but in the small organizations, representing expats working abroad and immigrants, it has a very different sense. On the other hand, when the leaders are nice and welcoming and offer an interesting program, it is very similar to other language-based communities abroad.

The situation in *Slovakia* is special because Russian is an official minority language, although no more than 20,000 inhabitants of this multilingual country with the total population of four million speak Russian at home. Nonetheless, from 7 to 17 per cent of the

population are proficient in Russian. Among them are descendants of the “White Emigration”. In addition, members of another minority, Rusyns, are traditionally proficient in Russian, so are some members of the older generation Slovaks, who had to learn Russian at school in the socialist period or studied for a degree in the Soviet Union. More than 10 Slavic journals regularly publish articles on the Russian language and literature. Few pupils start learning Russian as a foreign language in the first grade, but many choose it as a second foreign language in the 7th grade. Some schools have bilingual programs, and there is a private Slovak-Russian bilingual school. Interest in acquisition of Russian is highest in the Northern and Eastern parts of the country (Korenkova et al., 2019).

In Slovakia, we studied situation in the Slovak-Russian Elementary and Secondary School (till the 9th grade), directed by Josef Bača. Children come from the Slovak-speaking, Russian-speaking and bilingual homes. His idea is to develop parallel competencies in both languages and educational systems, dividing education to the weekdays, combining this conception with early English as a foreign language teaching. Students must go through state examinations in the Slovak language after the 5th and 9th class. In the future, they may be will be able to pass through the Russian state exam as well. The maximum bilingualism is the goal, but the

Oxford test in English will be available. Without enthusiasm, nothing is possible. Teachers adapt schoolbooks, buy, invent and prepare their own materials, organize circles (choir, drama, music, arts, chess), stay with the children during extended days. Both Slovak and Russian traditions are celebrated. Families like the warm atmosphere.

Conclusion

Despite differences in the history of language contacts and sociolinguistic situations in different countries discussed in this article, they have an important similarity: the Russian language and culture proved to be the chief element of self-identification and community building among ex-Soviets residing outside the nation. Moreover, in the diaspora Russian serves as a lingua franca for ex-Soviets and their children irrespective of their ethnicity. Among the cultural institutions created by Russian speakers outside Russia, mass media and educational institutions are the most important ones. Electronic media replaced conventional press. *Runet* has evolved into a place of transnational communicative space, enabling diasporans to do business together, keep friendships and find entertainment. They also motivate Russian-language maintenance.

Russian-speaking parents in all the five countries are generally in favor of their children maintaining Russian as they see it as an important element of one's social capital.

Where bilingual education is not provided by the state, day care centers and afternoon schools teaching Russian and in Russian are opened by émigré teachers. They often start as Russian only, but gradually shift to a bilingual model. Educated in the USSR or post-Soviet times, immigrant teachers advocate education guided by the Soviet pedagogical theories. The goal of the schools is to bring up bilingual personalities equally comfortable with Russian and the language and culture of their host countries. Diasporic communities have a dilemma: should they initiate teaching themselves? If they do, at whose expense, and to what extent? Should opportunities for learning be available only for children or also for adults? Should the learning goals be limited to oral communication or include writing? Should students study literature and culture in Russian or in the language of their environment? Confronted with these questions, teaching methodologists are investigating how to modernize the field of Russian studies by incorporating state-of-the-art techniques and training teachers to face the challenge.

Young diasporans evolve a concept of Russian and Russianness markedly different from that in the metropolis, and they have little respect for the Moscow language norm. If parents and teachers attempt to improve their language by imposing the norm, the students' motivation drops, and they may refuse to read or write in Russian. The texts of Russian

classics, which still form the basis of school reading, contain numerous words unknown to young immigrants and even to their peers in Russia. Many of these have become archaisms and they express unfamiliar and at times alien phenomena that may be difficult to comprehend. Such texts are unlikely to be enjoyed or motivate students to learn. Research conducted in the diaspora shows that this task is significantly harder in the diaspora due to the interference with the host language/s and culture/s (Miukaylova, 2018; Niznik, Yelenevskaya, 2019; Zbenovich, 2016). It is important for language teachers to help learners acquire metalinguistic knowledge which can make speakers more sensitive to differences between socio- and idiolects, and at the same time make them more tolerant of other people's speech varieties.

The history and nature of the pedagogies practiced in the educational institutions created by Russian speaking immigrants is yet to be documented, systematized and written. Immigrants' networks and organizations that have emerged in host countries, as well as scholarly publications reflect the intersection of

various tendencies: Soviet, post-Soviet, Western and neighbors' education systems are used as sources of "homemade" instructional methods which evolve to meet specific needs of the students. Further research and case studies are needed to understand how parents, teachers and society at large collaborate to achieve the ambitious targets of bilingual instruction.

Teachers and parents do their everyday work in the best way they can, and methodologists of various levels summarize their experience, whereas the ideological centers in Moscow and St. Petersburg try to proclaim the dominance of the "correct" norm in Russian over the multilingual life. The linguistic and cultural repertoires must not be restricted to one theoretical language but enriched through creative hybridization, combining centrifugal and centripetal tendencies. In our further research projects we are going to explore approaches to teaching pluricentric languages, involvement of the old and new regions of Russian use in pedagogical work and interaction between them, and the role of commodification of Russian abroad in the life of diasporans.

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**An initial stage of preparation of study material
(For the purpose of teaching Russian monologue speech)**

ABSTRACT

This article discusses the preparation of study materials in Russian as a second foreign language in Georgian schools for the purpose of teaching monologue through the inductive method. The development of speaking skills in Russian in Georgian schools is one of the most acute problems due to the fact that Georgian textbooks are traditionally built in grammatical order which hinders the development of speaking skills, and the new requirement of the state standard - to compose teaching and learning materials and textbooks according to the thematic principle becomes only formal. To solve this problem, we offer tips and principles for preparing training materials through consistent teaching of speaking topics.

The requirement of the State Standard - to construct the textbook according to the thematic principle - is not easy to meet due to the flexional nature of the Russian language. Based on this problem, this article discusses the ways a) to develop a working scenario for a speaking monologue at class, b) to select new learning speaking items based on the qualitative and quantitative indicators of grammar and vocabulary items, and c) to compile samples of mini-monologues similar to which students are expected to be able to compose after practice.

Keywords: *Russian as a foreign language, teaching monologue by the induction method, preparation of study materials, scenario, selection of units for speaking*

Introduction

As is known, the purpose of teaching a foreign language in school is to teach the language for communicative purposes and not as an academic language. This determines the development of language skills in the following order: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Muriel

Saville-Troike, 2016. p.154). Teaching of speaking skills in Georgian schools, unfortunately, leaves much to be desired and this was further confirmed by a survey of Russian language teachers teaching at Georgian schools conducted

on the Internet in 2020.¹ The survey was conducted in the most active open group of Russian language teachers on Facebook entitled "Russian language teachers of Georgia". Teachers were expected to rate their students' performance concerning speaking skills using a 4-point system. The numbers indicate the following: 1 – The students mastered the given skill poorly, 2 – they master the skill more poorly than well, 3 – they master the skill better than poorly, 4 – They master the skill well. According to the data of 55 participants, the average arithmetic assessment of all skills looks like this: reading – 3.2 points; listening - 2.9 points; writing – 2.3 points; speaking - 2.1 points

Such a low rate concerning teaching speaking skills can be explained by the fact that Georgian textbooks are still constructed following only linguistic principles.

In 2018, following the new Standard, the State published the certified

textbooks of the following authors for the 5th and 6th grades of Georgian public schools (elementary level): (Barsegova, V and VI, 2018; Lortkipanidze, Chkheidze and Chimakadze, V and VI, 2018; Shoshiashvili, Lutidze and Khomeriki, V and VI, 2018). The set of these textbooks includes a student book, a teacher's book and a workbook. The analysis of the given textbooks concerning the development of speaking skills revealed the following main shortcomings: 1) None of the textbooks offers the teaching of monologue speech (monologues which would include several sentences); 2) Speaking largely is presented as a means of teaching and not a goal. Oral assignments are usually employed as a tool to answer control questions semantically attached to the texts and are given as a listening or reading exercise; 3) The lexical-grammatical constructions offered within the learning topic do not correspond to the overall communicative

¹. The survey was conducted on the Facebook page "Russian language teachers of Georgia" on 22.07.2020 https://www.facebook.com/groups/583409495041914/3102092459840259/?comment_id=3102420566474115&reply_comment_id=3102432053139633¬if_id=1595416040661883¬if_t=group_comment (the date of access 5.08.2020).

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goals of the topic; 4) Lexical-grammatical constructions to be acquired are mainly practised through language exercises, which is manifested, amongst other factors, by the excessive use of meta-language. Pasov's remark can be considered relevant in our case: "Unfortunately, functionality and situationality as the most important principles concerning the mastering of the grammatical aspect of speech are often overlooked. As a result, students know how to reproduce this or that grammatical form, but cannot use it correctly in speech. Why? Because we do not connect the grammatical form with its functional aspect - the speaking task" (Pasov & Kuzovliova, 2010, p. 410).

In this article I will focus on two main reasons concerning building textbooks of the Russian language on linguistic principles by Georgian authors, namely:

1) When compiling Russian language study materials, the authors of Georgian textbooks are oriented on Russian methodological and practical literature. Despite the gradual establishment of the communication approach in Russia

during the past decades, reflected in a number of methodological books or textbooks (Galskova & Gezi, 2006; (Lebedinsky & Gerberik, 2011; Chesnokova, 2015; Fedotova, 2016 amongst others), based on the flexional, synthetic nature of the Russian language, the development of linguistic competence while teaching remains one of the leading directions: "Methodological research has revealed that it is necessary to introduce a new component into the term "communicative competencies". This component is a linguistic component" (Kriuchkova & Moshchinskaya, 2009, p. 21). Teaching an additional linguistic component in Georgian schools with two 40/45 minute lessons per week will lead to making and currently has made the goals of communicative language proficiency remain unattainable.

2). The other important reason is the recent change of the State Standard and the fact that the compilers of the study material were not prepared for changes - the requirements of the new Standard were not met by any of the 7th grade textbooks submitted in 2019, and by

none of the 8th grade textbooks submitted in 2020.

To strengthen the communicative approach, based on the new Standard, the compilers of the textbooks were required to include thematic learning material. The elementary level Standard provides only a thematic framework (National Curriculum 2016-2024 D. Level), while the basic level Standard discusses, in more detail, the function of the thematic unity regarding textbook writing and its main purpose is considered to use a foreign language within this unity: “Outcomes, concepts, and functional speaking activities determined by the basic level Standard should be processed in meaningful contexts. These contexts are defined in the form of a thematic framework” (National Curriculum 2018-2024. Basic Level, p.2).

To solve this problem, this article offers principles and tips for teaching monologue speech using the method of induction, which will assist school teachers and textbook compilers to prepare study materials at the A1-A2 levels of knowledge (excluding the initial (alphabetical) level of knowledge).

Moreover, the article offers only the preparatory stage of building the study material, most of which is not directly reflected in it and therefore, remains behind the scenes.

Principles of building the study material concerning the speaking skills

The new State Standard requires the construction of a second foreign language textbook based on the method of "backward design": First, it should be ascertained what complex and functional tasks would be fulfilled by the student at the end of a specific thematic assignment. Next, the tasks should be broken into separate components of knowledge and skills, which the student will need to master” (National Curriculum 2016-2024. Basic Level, p. 9)

According to the "backward planning", if our goal is to teach a student how to produce a monologue, we first need to imagine the final product – the monologue and its constituent constructions. The main problem is that, due to the flexional nature of the Russian language, an average monologue usually includes < 8 – 10 morphologically variable

forms. Therefore, it is necessary to break the monologue down into even smaller components and divide them into mini-monologues based on similar study constructions. For example, if a teacher wants students to talk about a complex task concerning a certain topic, for instance when and with whom they were at the entertainment center and how long they spent there, when teaching Russian we will have to divide this complex task into smaller subtasks: first, we should teach (or revise with students) how to deliver mini-monologues about when (когда) and where (где) the participants of the monologue were; next we can teach them the phrases and constructs (БЫЛИ ВМЕСТЕ С КЕМ) that express the emotions associated with the given topic, and only after this students should be taught the conversational constructions typical of the topic: катались на чем, с кем общались. Next, students should practice the newly acquired constructions together with the already learned material.

Using the example of this topic, we have outlined superficially the content direction built on the linguistic

constructions of texts with mini-monologues. While preparing the study material we will need to perform more detailed tasks that are proposed in a certain sequence, although the boundary between the elements of the sequence is very subtle: 1) developing a working scenario based on the acquired and yet to be acquired speaking items, 2) selecting speaking items according to certain conditions and 3) compilation of variants of mini-monologues, similar to which we expect students to compile.

1. Compilation of a mini-monologue scenario;

2. Selection of speaking items:

2.1. Number of speaking items;

2.2. Number of grammatical patterns to acquire

2.3. Functional teaching of grammatical forms.

2.4. Lexical-grammatical unity;

3. Recording of the mini-monologue samples.

1. Compilation of a mini-monologue scenario

Compilation of a mini-monologue scenario enables us to outline the

language constructions the combination of which will help a student to build a mini-monologue. At this stage, we take into account the prior, background knowledge concerning the constructions students employ actively in speaking and the new constructions that we plan to teach. It is necessary to create a scenario which, filled out by the student utilizing the already acquired and new grammatical-lexical units, will enable him/her to produce not an already memorized text, but a mini-monologue compiled by him/her. The following conditions should be taken into account when making up a scenario:

- 1) The scenario should be as close as possible to the natural spoken language;
- 2) It should be short (within the limit of 5 - 7 sentences);
- 3) It is necessary for the scenario to include an opposition, for example, like / dislike, agree / disagree, possess / do not possess, often / rarely, etc. The very existence of these oppositions will give the student space to produce his own mini-monologue and not mechanically repeat the text already acquired through a number of exercises while practicing;
- 4) the scenario should

- include no more than 2 new morphologically variable forms;
- 5) The vocabulary should be typical of a given topic, and should take into account the level of knowledge and the age of the student;
- 6) The scenario should include connectors, parentheses, interjections, etc. characteristic of oral speech.
- 7) If during further work we consider it necessary to use more additional constructions, they should also be reflected in the scenario (I will talk about these principles in detail in the section dedicated to the selection of study items).

Example: Suppose while teaching the topic "My Family (Моя семья)", the students have already been taught a mini-monologue containing the constructions: у меня (тебя) один брат/одна сестра; два/(две), три, четыре брата/сестры, у меня (тебя) нет брата/ сестры) and the set phrase: я (не) единственный ребёнок в семье . In addition, the students have revised both the infinitive phrases: смотреть телевизор, делать уроки, готовить обед, убирать комнату and the use of verb phrases in the present tense: мы вместе играем, ужинаем, гуляем, etc.

In the scenario of the new mini-monologue, together with the already acquired constructions, we introduce the new speaking elements, which have been outlined in italics:

Scenario 1: У нас большая семья – я, мама, ..., (СКОЛЬКО) брата и (СКОЛЬКО) сестры. *Наша семья дружная и веселая. Мы вместе проводим время*, иногда мы вместе (что делаем). *Мы всегда помогаем друг другу. Я помогаю (кому?)* (делать что?), а сестра *помогает мне* (делать что).

Below there are two more mini-monologue scenarios that differ concerning thematic and grammatical materials, but we will not discuss them in detail in this article:

Scenario 2: Думаю, человек в 23 веке изменится, потому что *у людей (детей) (не) останется больше времени на (ЧТО и ЧТО)*. *Вместо нас будут работать машины. Людям/ детям (не) нужно будет (ДЕЛАТЬ что и что)*, поэтому *они станут более (какИМИ)*. (In the construction „больше времени на ЧТО“ only the nouns of the 2nd type of declension are employed).

Scenario 3: Мне нравятся такие *учителя, которЫЕ ((не) делАЮТ* что и что) ... *нам*, и мне очень не нравятся учителя, *которые ((не) делАЮТ* что и что) ... *нас*. Это всегда обидно! Кстати, у меня есть *учитель, которЫЙ ((не) делАЕТ что)*, и еще *((не) делАЕТ* что). *И это здорово!* (Only the productive verbs of class 1 are used in the lesson).

2. Selection of speaking items

The following are the basic conditions that assist us in the correct selection of the new speaking items within the scenario in 2 directions: 1) quantitative - how much new material should be selected for learning and 2) qualitative - which lexical-grammatical constructions should be used to “fill” the mini-monologue. In order to achieve this goal, the following selection principles have been outlined in the article:

2.1. Number of grammatical patterns to acquire

It is impossible to teach a student the grammatical diversity characteristic of a given topic for speaking in one lesson; therefore, some "sacrifices" have to be

made. Theoretically, within one lesson it is feasible to teach grammatical material which includes 3-4 and more morphologically varied forms. As a result, our students may be able to complete test tasks with some success, but it is impossible to automate 3-4 grammatical forms in one lesson. Students will mix these forms while the stages of substitution and transformation will take up the entire lesson and actually turn it into a mere grammar practice lesson. In order for this not to happen, we need to limit ourselves to teaching 1 or 2 grammatical, mostly morphological patterns.

Scenario 1. Discussion: We teach only I and II types of noun declension - *советовать сестре (маме, бабушке, папе, дедушке) и брату (отцу, деду)*. Despite the common root, in this particular case I avoided the use of the reflexive verb «советоваться», as it requires a noun in the instrumental case. In order not to overload the learning process with grammatical material, we teach the phrase *помогает мне* as a ready-made, set unit and thus do not focus on form

variability of other personal pronouns in the dative case.

2.2. Number of speaking items - 5 - 7

In order to be able to present, practice and use all the planned speaking items in one (or as a maximum two) lessons, it can be considered optimal to teach on average 6 items per lesson. However, within one lesson, 3 - 5 or 9 - 10 items can be taught. It all depends on the novelty, complexity and variety of the selected speaking items. Specifically, the maximum number of speaking items can be outlined if 1) we teach only one construction with a minimal amount of grammatical variability, 2) the students are relatively familiar with the vocabulary of the items; 3) there are no additional issues related to phonetics; 4) complex parentheses, characteristic of oral speech are not used: *Я только что говорил/а о своей подруге, /Я только что рассказывал/а о своей однокласснице / сестре (маме, папе, дедушке, соседке)... Я говорил/а о нашей поездке, /Разумеется, я не рассказывал/а о нашей ссоре /(встрече, /дружбе, /поездке, /переписке). И еще я (не) рассказывала о ...,*

НО

As can be seen, the study units are selected in such a way that only type I declension forms of nouns are taught, but not the use of prepositions and verb paradigms. Compare the variety of vocabulary and grammatical forms dealt with in the topic of "Rainy Weather": *Сегодня пасмурный день. С утра на небе серые тучи. Я (не) люблю дождливую погоду. В дождливую погоду я (не) всегда сижу дома. В дождливую погоду я (не) люблю (делать что)*. In this case, we should limit ourselves to about 5 new items (phrases) for speaking.

1.3. Functional teaching of grammatical forms

Students find it very difficult to use the acquired grammatical forms with different speech functions, especially in the case of the negative grammatical interference. For example, knowledge of the variability of the instrumental case of the construction "Кто хочет стать (каким) КЕМ" cannot be automatically transferred to the construction "жить, учиться, играть и т.п. вместе с КЕМ",

since, in this case, the instrumental case performs 2 different speech functions, and we are also dealing with grammatical interference - one case in Russian corresponds to 2 different case forms in the Georgian language. Therefore, when selecting grammatical material, it should be borne in mind that although students have already acquired certain forms of declension, the same case form employed in a different speech function in the learning material should be singled out as a new study item for speaking and not as one already acquired.

In addition, when selecting study items, the starting point should be the frequency of their use in speaking exercises within a particular topic as, due to the low frequency, students will soon forget them. Every speaking situation is characterized by its own lexical-grammatical construction, for example, in the speaking situation "Дружба" the instrumental case forms are frequently utilized to denote the joint action: дружить, подружиться, общаться, познакомиться с кем, мы (с кем) большие друзья. We can also revise the already acquired construction мой друг

какой и какой, and the use of the Present tense.

In the topic "«Моя будущая профессия» or "Хобби" teaching the forms of instrumental case will be relevant, although in this specific case, with the function of naming the object: «Кем я хочу стать» or «Чем я увлекаюсь» etc.

The grammar of the Russian language is inexhaustible. As well as this, the starting point should be not the grammatical regularity, but the functionality of grammatical forms, which makes the grammar material even more "abundant". At such times, we find that compilation of a school textbook through strictly consistent teaching of grammatical patterns proves to be ineffective from the point of view of the purposes of teaching at school, especially if the Georgian school's weekly schedule (two 40/45 minute lessons per week) is taken into consideration.

2.4 Lexical-grammatical unity

The starting point for selecting speaking material should be the complex use of vocabulary and grammar and not

the teaching of separate vocabulary and grammatical forms. Sadly, in all the Russian language textbooks written in Georgia, grammatical forms are mainly taught based on the vocabulary items which are not related semantically. On the other hand, thematic lexical units are taught with different grammatical forms, which ultimately makes it impossible for the teacher to employ the communicative approach. Such tasks often take up the whole lesson and, as a result, the main purpose of teaching (to teach students to use vocabulary and grammar structures in speech) fails to be achieved.

In order to maintain lexical-grammatical unity while teaching monologue speech, it is necessary to provide the students with new lexical and grammatical items in the form of speaking items within the planned scenario. In order to observe this goal, 1) It is necessary for the learning vocabulary to be at least a phrase and not a word. This will make it easy for a student to employ properly forms characterized by grammatical variability ; 2) New vocabulary (including phraseological units, parentheses characteristic of

spoken language, connectors, etc.) should be included in the learning grammatical constructions as much as possible; 3) When presenting learning vocabulary, the words should be provided in the grammatical form relevant to the given topic; 4) If the student needs to know certain phrases within the given topic, but the grammatical material of these phrases overloads the grammatical component of the lesson, then they should be provided as ready-made, fixed speaking items.

In terms of lexical-grammatical unity, let us consider **Scenario 1** in detail. In the new lesson we have identified 6 new speaking items: 1) *наша семья дружная и весёлая*; 2) *мы вместе проводим время*; 3) *я помогаю брату готовить уроки*; 4) *мама помогает сестре убирать комнату*; 5) *мы помогаем друг другу*; 6) *Папа помогает мне*.

As can be seen, the grammatical material employed in the scenario includes the nouns of the I and II types of declension employed with the addressee-oriented function, which is presented in various forms in two speaking items (# 3 and 4). The content of the speaking

situation scenario does not require teaching the use of personal pronouns used in the dative case, therefore no special practice concerning the use of these pronouns is required, although we will still need to use the first person pronoun in the phrase *помогает мне*, which should be provided in a ready-made form. The rest of the phrases are included in the scenario not as grammatical but as lexical items, as ready-made items, and students will be actively trained in using them in the future. As for the vocabulary, in this case even at the substitution stage, we should try to use only the items relevant for this scenario or for a given thematic unit and not include words such as «друг/подруга, сосед/соседка, директор, etc.

Other scenarios:

Scenario 2: 1) у людей останется много времени на общение; 2) у детей останется больше времени на занятие спортом; 3) дети станут более занятыми; 4) люди станут более счастливыми 5) люди станут более несчастными; 6) вместо нас будут работать машины; 7) людям не нужно будет ходить на работу.

Scenario 3: 1) учитель, который постоянно делает нам замечания; 2) учителя, которые отчитывают нас перед всем классом; 3) учитель, который помогает нам учиться; 4) учителя, которые уважают нас; 5) Это всегда обидно! 6) Это здорово!

3. Recording of the samples of mini-monologue variants

Elementary and basic school students are often given a task to make up a mini-monologue or dialogue in a production assignment, not all components of which have been practiced in speaking, so that only a language-savvy student can fulfill the assignment successfully (over time, this becomes one of the main reasons for student-centered lessons oriented on only on good students).

At the elementary and basic levels it is quite possible to predict what phrases our students will be able to use to make up a mini-monologue. It is advisable for us (and not necessarily for the learner) to present and record the samples in the form of a mini-monologue by repeating the speaking units outlined according to the principles listed above. The following

conditions need to be considered when compiling such samples:

a) The sample must be understood according to the scenario; b) the majority of the learning items should be constantly repeated in the samples; c) the samples should not include a speaking item the practice (or revision) of which is not planned; d) it is necessary to record 3 - 4 samples. Experience has revealed that it is relatively easy to create 1 - 2 samples, but the process of creating each subsequent sample becomes more complicated. Teaching students speaking skills in 1 - 2 samples of mini-dialogues may lead to memorizing the text prepared in advance, while our goal is for the learner to create a mini-monologue through their own experience using the acquired speaking items.

For example, 3 samples of Scenario 1 are given below:

- У нас большая семья – я, мама, папа, два брата и две сестры. Наша семья дружная и веселая. Мы вместе проводим время, иногда мы вместе гуляем в парке. Мы всегда помогаем друг другу. Я помогаю сестре

готовить уроки, а сестра помогает мне есть конфеты.

- У нас маленькая семья – я единственный ребенок в семье. Наша семья дружная и веселая. Мы часто помогаем друг другу – я помогаю маме есть шоколады, а папа помогает мне делать уроки.
- Я не единственный ребенок в семье. У меня два брата и две сестры. Наша семья очень дружная, мы вместе проводим время, вместе гуляем и ходим в кино. Я помогаю маме готовить обед, а папе помогаю смотреть телевизор, но мама не помогает мне есть суп.

Compiling such samples of mini-dialogues has the following practical advantages: a) it enables us to present the learning material in perspective; b) examples allow us to follow the principle *goal = result / result = goal*; c) the examples will act as a guide for us at all stages of the practice; d) at the stage of conditional - educational production, if we deem it necessary, we will have a ready-made sample, based on which students will be able to compose their own mini-monologues; e) prepared mini-

texts can be used as examples to develop other aspects of speaking skills.

Conclusion

In order to be able to teach a mini-monologue in Georgian schools at the elementary and basic levels through the inductive method, first of all, it is necessary to change the principle of building the textbook. Instead of compiling a book in a strictly grammatical order, the textbooks should be based on the principle of thematic construction. In order to implement this principle at the initial stage of preparation of the Russian language study material, we need to divide the presented above study monologue into mini-monologues and compile a separate scenario for each of them, selecting grammatical constructions and teaching speaking items according to a number of conditions. It is important to limit the number of grammatical forms by introducing ready-made speaking items which will make it easier for the student not to limit themselves to the acquired grammatical forms and compose a more “enriched” mini-monologue than to

produce a couple of grammatically correct sentences. When preparing the study material, it is also important to compose several (<3) samples containing the speaking items to be acquired, selected

within the given scenario. This can be considered to be a prerequisite for creating a production space for the student.

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Field Research under Pandemic and Hybrid Remote Field Research

ABSTRACT

The scientific fields that generate data for research through interaction with people in socio-cultural contexts have been cut off from their basis of work due to the restrictions resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. Abrupt interruption of any activities that were taken for granted in traditional field research puts especially linguistic, sociological and cultural anthropological researchers in an unprecedented state of shock. The methodology and technical tools of traditional field research do not include a scenario that would catch the social consequences of a pandemic and replace the missing central aspects of documenting a life practice. The following article describes the seemingly unmanageable problems of field research under pandemic conditions and presents an attempt to find a methodological way out.

Key words: *Covid-19 pandemic, definition of the "field", "observer paradox".*

The definition of the "field" as a complex environment of different social and cultural practices with a human at the center is not easily adaptable or re-definable to a situation where the human object is not accessible for observation. "Accessibility" here refers to the shared temporal and spatial situatedness of the observer and human object. This essential specification describes the ideal starting point of field research and marginalizes the use of technological tools as an adequate compensation. The field researcher documents the context in

which he has to find himself in order to control the process of documentation on the one hand and to get an adequate and bias-free picture of reality on the other hand (Gippert at all 2006).¹

The "observer paradox" describes the field researcher and observation process triggered by him as the main factors of

¹ A. Dwyer's five ethical principles for field research are: (1) Do no harm, (2) Reciprocity and equality, (3) Do good (for the community and for science), (4) Obtain informed consent before beginning research, (5) Archive and publish data and results. In: "Ethics and practicalities of cooperative fieldwork and analysis.").

reality bias. In real field research, however, the negative influence of the observer is substantially reduced by the working relationship with the human object - in the perception of the person observed, the field researcher ideally appears as an organic part of his or her own life practice. The term "language assistant" (instead of "informant") established in recent years in linguistic field research emphasizes exactly this aspect: the observed does not represent a passive participant in the field researcher's plan, but acts as a collaborator with wide-ranging mechanisms of control in the process.

In the preparation of classical field research, the establishment of a confidential working relationship with the observed plays a decisive role, so that after an extensive field research phase, the participants on both sides of the process meet each other on a different human level. The quality of the possible results of field research depends significantly on such interactions. The personal narratives of many veteran field researchers confirm this conviction (Dixon, 2010). Apart from the personal relation, in a field research there is a different degree of involvement in the community of the assistant. At the same time, documenting a life practice also represents a certain form of

transferring information about the cultural network. Often it is not done without the knowledge and consent of the represented network or community. For this reason, fieldwork with the human object often also means working with the corresponding community.

The worldwide pandemic caused by Covid-19 initially forced a complete shutdown of logistical and transportation routes for the get-together of participants in a field research. Accessibility to distant locations was not the only problem in realizing field research plans. Urban field research in geographically close places also turns out to be difficult to implement, because both the initial contact and the maintenance of an existing contact with the assistant prove to be difficult. The state-authorized orders of restrictions on social contact create an atmosphere in which the willingness to respond positively, if at all, to the fieldworker's requests is extraordinarily low. All social interactions that are not part of everyday core relations are avoided, and a scientific context is one of them. The readiness to act as a test subject for the Covid-19 test vaccination can be seen as an exception.

The first way out of this situation for humanities scholars seems to be the use

of technical methods of communication. The technologically mediated ways field research existed even before the pandemic (Burke et al 2001). Described scenarios range from simple telephone interviews to video conferencing using Skype as an option for qualitative field research (Lo Lacono et al 2016). Such deployments were traditionally implemented in the first phase of an interview.

In the pre-interview phase of a field research, there is a lot of clarification work regarding confidentiality. The assistants have to be informed about the purpose for which the data are collected and what will be done with them after documentation. However, this presupposes that a common basis for cooperation has already been established. The targeted use of technical communication tools can only be successful if the communication participants on both sides are familiar with each other and the intentions are clarified in advance.

Another difference between the immediate conversation in situ and the dialogue over the various technical media is the handling of the speech overlaps. In

a telephone interview, almost any interruption is possible only with the foreign choice of the speaker, which leads to an exhausting conversation. The modern videoconference rooms, which are equipped with chat options in parallel, enable an announcement of a speaker's self-selection or foreign choice.

The fact that technical communication tools are taking up more and more space in everyday life, and that the pandemic has extremely increased this use, helps the field research in that the potential assistants do not need to be additionally sensitized to the technical environment. As expected, they are adept at using the technical tools and demonstrate advanced competencies in terms of "self-presentation" in the technologically framed dialogue.

Initial contact is one of the biggest problems in field research under pandemic conditions. The search for suitable field research assistants in the already existing virtual groups and online networks seems to be one of many solutions. Whereby even such groups are now overflowing with inquiries about the test subjects.



Figure 1. example of a proband search advertisement.

After a successful initial contact, the establishment of the "field" as an observation space is the next methodological challenge. The questions, which socio-cultural practices remain outside the observation in a virtual interview and how can they be compensated, will be part of the scientific discussion for a long time.

Hybrid remote field research is based on the combination of digital (virtual) and analog field research methods. This implies the different realization of field research phases.

The concept thus combines traditional field research methods with the unavoidable digital phases of the

realization of a field research project with the aim to gain qualitative data and to get as adequate a picture as possible of the socio-cultural setting.

A virtual first contact and the establishment of a familiar working relationship with the assistant can be differentiated as a generation-related problem and an assumption can be made: the virtual first contact seems to be more promising with the usually younger persons who have high digital competences.

Two interlocking pictures emerge in the given context: (1) The logistical simplification of the field research phases through the "short" digital paths of

communication limits the observation space to the social and cultural practices of the assistant; (2) The digital content from the assistant's everyday life represents the life practice on a different level of observation.

It can be assumed that the shift of focus in the field research methods in favor of more digitalization takes a decisive influence on the content of the obtained data - the socio-cultural practices concern accordingly more and

more virtual networks and social media.

The confidential connection between the field researcher and assistant can be established based on the assistant making digital content accessible to the observer. Thus, the documentation of language in the context of future field research can mean the documentation of digital language content generated in a specific socio-cultural context.

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Conceptual and Linguistic Representations of Concept Flora in the Phraseological Worldview: A Multilingual Aspect

ABSTRACT

The article gives the definition of a notion ‘concept’ and presents its main interpretations in modern linguistics. This research describes the notion of phraseological worldview and its relation to the notion concept. In this article 62 English, 61 French and 57 Ukrainian phraseological units that reveal the concept FLORA, have been analysed. Based on this analysis, the frame structure of the FLORA concept in the English, French and Ukrainian phraseological worldview is proposed and developed. This made it possible to prove that the linguistic actualization of the FLORA concept is associated with the identification of national characteristics of the studied cultures, their worldview and mentality. It is stated in the article that the English, French and Ukrainians use the names of plants in the phraseological units for the characterization of a person, the designation of certain qualities and traits of character, appearance and mental abilities.

Key words: concept, FLORA concept, phraseological worldview, English phraseological worldview, French phraseological worldview, Ukrainian phraseological worldview, frame structure, multilingual aspect.

Introduction

The national peculiarities of the FLORA concept verbalized by the phraseological units in the three languages English, French and Ukrainian are studied multilingually. Phraseological worldviews are of great interest for the researchers. The phraseological units with the floristic component contain information about archaic beliefs and vision of the surrounding reality that is encoded by representatives of a certain ethnic group. They are the subject of scientific study of many scholars, such as N. Yevtushenko

(2004), T. Popova (2004), N. Dzyuba (2018), G. Miller (1979) etc.

The novelty of this work lies in the fact that the phraseological units with component FLORA have not been compared and contrasted directly in English, French and Ukrainian languages.

The aim of this article is to identify and to analyze national peculiarities of the concept FLORA in the English, French and Ukrainian phraseological worldviews, to examine the basic notions of cognitive linguistics. To reveal the aim it is necessary to fulfill the following objectives:

- to explore the notion of the worldview in linguistics;
- to study the frame structure verbalized by phraseological units in a multilingual aspect;
- to analyze the peculiarities of the frame structure FLORA actualized by phraseological units within three languages: English, French and Ukrainian.

Theory

One of the theoretical key words is the notion concept. The term is originated by works of foreign scholars. There was a problem with its translation. First, the English word 'concept' was translated as 'notion', 'conceptus' - as 'semantic elements', 'conceptual basis' - as 'semantically oriented'. Further, the concept was established in the linguistic science, which led to the emergence of derivative terms from it - such as the 'sphere of concept', 'conceptualization', conceptual signs and others (W. von Humbolt; 1976, G. Miller, 1991 etc.).

In modern linguistics, the concept is more often interpreted as the form of representation of knowledge in human consciousness (N. Skorobogatova 2017: p. 105).

In the first half of the 20th century cognitive linguistics was analyzed with the

help of basic knowledge within a modern anthropocentric paradigm. The modern state of global and Ukrainian linguistics is characterized by an anthropocentric approach. Such a new area as cognitive linguistics was formed thanks to an anthropocentric way of research. The source and formation way of this new scientific field can be found in European linguistic works, namely in Wilhelm von Humboldt's linguo-philosophical conception (1991), and in the U.S. scientific ideas expressed by F. Boas (1943), E. Sapir (1949) and B. L. Whorf (1956). In the 20th century, many scientists paid much attention to B. L. Whorf's research-and-practice theory (P. Kroeber, 1943, S. Edward, 1949).

The term 'phraseological worldview' was interpreted as the image of the world, which was formed in science and reflected the patterns of natural phenomena. The worldview is the reality of human consciousness, the creation of which is the goal of human life. The tasks of phraseology as a linguistic discipline include the comprehensive study of the phraseological fund of a language. The key aspects of research of this science are: stability of phraseological units, systemic phraseology and semantic structure of

phraseological units, their origin and functions (A. Kunin, 1972, p.115).

Objectives of our research were to detect the British, French and Ukrainian mentalities through phraseological units. One of the important issues of modern linguistics is the issue of relations between the language of the people and their culture. In this regard, those linguistic aspects that reflect the national identity and the specifics of a particular nation become more and more relevant. One of these linguistic instruments of the research is the cognitive approach to the phraseological units. According to N. Yevtushenko, the definition of semantic peculiarities of phraseological units of any language allows us to assume that the component composition of phraseological units has its own distinctions (N. Yvtushenko, 2018, p. 3).

The multilingual aspect is one of the most significant ones in the study of the phraseological worldview that makes it possible to compare and contrast language revelation of the national character. Each of the world's nations has groups of individuals living within its borders who use other languages in addition to the national language to function in their everyday lives. That is why it is of crucial importance to consider this aspect while

studying and comparing two or more phraseological worldviews (N. Scorobogatova, 2017).

The German philosopher and linguist W. von Humboldt (1767-1835) was the first who analyzed such crucial notions as language, cognition and reality. In L. Weisberger's opinion, a language cannot express the objective reality, it reveals only a person's subjective attitude to it (L. Weisberger, 1841). That is why cognition is determined by a certain language. In Miller's term "Language is a key to the world" (G. Miller, 2004). The scientist assimilated language and cognition (thoughts), and studied them dialectically.

Method

Cognitive linguistics is a scientific sphere that studies the knowledge about the world formed in the human mind, its inner structures, representative methods and regularities. Cognitive linguistics also aims at modeling the world and the structure of the linguistic cognition. The world representation is formed in one's mind through feelings (tactile, visual, taste-bud) on the level of notion (signs, worldview) or thoughts organization. When these matters are being formed in one's mind, they

represent the definite information about the world (P. Sternin, 1985).

Basic methods of cognitive linguistics can be summarized in the following way: collecting information about the world that is formed in the human mind before mastering a language; grouping these data into a single system; defining the world in the human mind; revealing the representation of this world image in the corresponding language etc.

Cognitive linguistics, or cognitive metaphor theory serves as a means to systematize and form linguistics with regard to the concepts of the linguistic worldview. The concept of any given word is determined through its semantic and associative field. Words express the information there and they are regarded as separate elements of cognitive and pragmatic meanings. The scholars state that cognitive science is mostly concerned with human cognitions. Besides these actions, it also studies their mental representations, inner world images, patterns, signs that serve as symbols of the cognitive language model, strategies – all these matters lay in the foundation of human actions. Thus, the human cognitive world is analyzed through actions and activities. The whole human activity and thoughts themselves are formed through the language. It is the

language that builds motives and beliefs, and predicts their possible results (V. Maslova, 2004).

There are several methods that can help reveal the aim and objectives of the research and these methods are linguocultural and linguocognitive.

Under the linguocultural approach the researcher understands the study of the specifics of the national conceptual sphere during the transition from culture to consciousness. This approach defines the concept as the basic unit of culture, possessing imaginative, conceptual signs. From the standpoint of the linguocognitive approach to the concept study, the field model has been developed, and presented in terms of the core and the periphery. Adherents of this approach (M. Kybryakova, 1996; T. Popova *et al*, 2007; I. Sternin, 1985), etc.) investigate lexemes, the meanings of which forms the content of national speech consciousness, and also form a general worldview of the native speakers of this language.

These two approaches study representations patterns signs that serve as symbols of cognitive language model as it was mentioned all these matters lie in the basis of human actions. So, due to them we can understand the peculiarities of people's mentality, living in definite cultures

because the language as a part of the culture reveals its features and inner world images through the language.

Discussion and Results

In the practical part of our investigation we have analyzed the concept FLORA in the English, French and Ukrainian phraseological worldviews. Some scholars propose different classifications of phraseological units with the concept FLORA (T. Scorobogova, 2017, G. Miller, 2004). Some scientists classify phraseological units according the presence or absence of the equivalents of proverbs in the language we translate into, the syntactic structure and features of the character denoting this or that expression (V. Maslova, 2004).

For the English, French and Ukrainians, flowers as a part of the concept FLORA verbalized by phraseological units are not just plants, but also expressions of people's preferences, decorations, ceremonial actions, beliefs, customs and superstitions. Considering the traditions of the use of flowers in everyday life, rituals and ceremonial actions, one can trace the origins of a figurative perception, and hence their symbolic names. Englishmen even have the concept of flower language. Flower dictionaries were published

throughout the eighteenth century, telling about the importance of a particular plant. The language of flowers was very popular with both France and England during the days of Queen Victoria (N. Zolotnitski, 1923) Flowers were intended to provide health to the people, to strengthen the well-being of the family, to increase the fertility of land and livestock, to protect the economy from unclean power, and so on. The rose is ambivalent, insofar as it symbolizes both perfection and earthly passion, time and eternity, life and death, fertility and chastity. This flower symbolizes the perfection, the mystery of life, its surroundings, the unknown, the beauty, the grace, the happiness, but also the sensual comfort and passion.

The frame structure of the concept FLORA in the English phraseological worldview is one of the most abundant. It consists of the frame FLORA which is subdivided into subframes 'flower' and 'plant' which in their turn include the slots. The subframe 'flower' comprises such slots as 'roots', 'leaves', 'flowers' and 'seeds'. The subframe 'plant' consists of 'fruit' and 'vegetables' subgroups. Subgroup 'fruit' includes such slots as 'apple', 'peach' and 'lemon', whereas the subgroup 'vegetables' consists of 'potatoes', 'carrots' slots.

In the course of research we singled out 62 phraseological units in the English language which verbalized concept FLORA: *beat about the bush, bouquet of orchid, broken reed, demon weed, flowery speech, gild the lily, go to seed, last straw, knock on wood, old chestnut, primrose path, seed money, run around the bush, wallflower, turn a new leaf, come up smelling of roses etc.*

The most widespread subframe is 'flower' which consists of such slots as 'rose', 'lily', 'daisy'.

The rose is ambivalent, it symbolizes both perfection and earthly passion (*bed of roses*); time and eternity (*come up roses*); life (*stop and smell the roses*) and death (*pushing up daisies*); fertility and chastity (*gather rose buds, rose garden*). The flower symbolizes the perfection (*bouquet of orchids*); the mystery of life, the unknown (*under the rose*); the life (*never a rose without the prick, gather rosebuds*); the beauty (*as fresh as a daisy, gild the lily*); the grace (*as beautiful as a flower*); the happiness (*leave the field open, rose garden*); the luck (*come up smelling of roses*); but also the discomfort (*shrinking violet*). As the flower of female deities, the rose means love, life, creativity, fertility, and beauty, the wilting of the rose symbolizes death, mortality and mourning;

her pins are pain, martyrdom and blood. In the ritual of ritual represents eternal life, eternal spring, resurrection.

In the French language the rose is also very symbolic flower and there are a lot of phraseological units with the name of 'rose'. During the era of courtly love in 12th century France, the Rose became the chief symbol of the newly re-emerging feminine principle. It represented romantic love, and especially the beloved lady herself, in many of the poems of the troubadours (N. Zolotnitsky, 2018). The Rose in France is a symbol of the sun, the star, the goddess of love and beauty: *'humeur de rose'* (to have a good mood); *'être sur des roses'* (enjoy the life); *'chemin sem é de roses'* (everything is going well). However, there are examples with negative connotation: *'flairer le pot aux roses'* (have a feeling, that something goes wrong); *'c'est pas des roses'* (to have difficulties).

In the Ukrainian language 'rose' is represented by two lexical items: «*троянда*» і «*ружа*». In the phraseological units these lexemes are mostly associated with beauty and happiness: *гарна як ружа* (it refers to the girl who may be very beautiful), *дорога всипана трояндами* (the life that is very happy and without any problems).

Phraseological units with the name of 'root' in English normally have some positive connotation: 'get to the root of the problem' (discover the cause of the problem...), 'to put down roots' (to feel that one belong in a place), 'grass roots' (essential foundation or source of something) etc. These phraseological units are associated with stability and we can observe the same connotation with the word «корінь» ('root') in the Ukrainian language: *дивитися у корінь / докопуватися до кореня* (to understand the essence of the situation), *пустити коріння* (to settle in some place) etc.

We can analyze the national peculiarities of this concept in the English phraseological worldview, since it is the frame structure that shows the most generalized principles of categorization and organization of information expressed by the means of the language. It is divided into three subframes 'flower', 'forest' and 'plant'.

The subframe 'flower' is presented by the following slots: 'daisy', 'rose' and 'lilly'. The subframe 'plant' has such slots as 'fruit' and 'vegetables'. The slots 'fruit' includes 'peach', 'apple' and 'lemon' slots, whereas 'vegetables' comprise 'potatoes' and 'carrots' slots. It should be mentioned

that all these slots are verbalized by phraseological units.

To do this research, we divided all phraseological units with the FLORA component into two groups: phraseological units with the floristic component and phraseological units containing the names of the plants. Phraseological units with a floristic component contain four substrates: 'root', 'leaf', 'flower' and 'seeds'. From a huge number of flowers, we have chosen three, such as a rose, a lily and a daisy. These three flowers play a key part in the British culture, and, therefore, have an important meaning for the British. Phraseological units containing the names of the fruit are divided into two subgroups: fruits and vegetables. Of all the names of fruits, we chose the most numerous and those that matter for English history, namely 'apple', 'peach' and 'lemon'. Vegetables were the most widely presented by 'potatoes' and 'carrots'.

The next one is the frame structure of the concept FLORA in the French phraseological worldview. It looks as follows: the frame FLORA is divided into two subframes 'flower' and 'fruit' which are verbalized by phraseological units with floristic component and phraseological units containing the name of fruit. Phraseological units with floristic

component fill the following slots: ‘daisy’, ‘rose’, ‘peon’, ‘lily’. Phraseological units containing the name of fruit verbalize the slots of ‘fruit’ and ‘vegetables’: ‘peach’, ‘apple’, ‘lemon’ and ‘vegetables’ – ‘onion’, ‘cabbage’.

In the course of the research we analyzed 61 French phraseological units, which verbalize the concept FLORA. Due to this the analysis we may reveal the national peculiarities of this concept in the French phraseological worldview. This frame structure shows the most common peculiarities of categorization and organization of information expressed by the means of language. During the research we divided all phraseological units with the FLORA component into two groups: phraseological units with the floristic component and phraseological units containing the names of the plants. Phraseological units with a floristic component contain two substrates: ‘forest’ and ‘flower’. From a huge number of flowers, we have chosen four ones, such as ‘rose’, ‘lily’, ‘daisy’ and ‘peon’. These four flowers play a key role in the French culture. Phraseological units containing the names of the plants are divided into two subgroups: fruits and vegetables. Of all the names of fruits, we chose the most numerous and those that matter for French

people, namely ‘apple’, ‘peach’ and ‘lemon’. Vegetables were the most abundantly presented by the ‘onion’ and ‘cabbage’.

As for the Ukrainian phraseological worldview, in the course of the research 57 Ukrainian phraseological units, which actualize the concept Flora, were selected: *міцний як дуб; березова припарка; як виросте гарбуз на вербі; пишна як калина; дівчина, дівчин; хлопець молодий як барвінок etc.*

The modeled frame structure turned out to be almost the same as in the English and French phraseological worldviews, only with two added subframes – ‘tree’, ‘grass’. Also such subframes as ‘seeds’ and ‘leaves’ were excluded.

It should be noted that we analyse the peculiarities of the concept FLORA presented by the phraseological units. We analyse similarities and differences of all the concepts in English and French languages. It should be emphasized that the term concept FLORA and the phraseological units with floristic component may coincide in the meaning.

Finally, we analyzed the peculiarities of the concept FLORA covered by phraseological units. There we have compared and analyzed the similarities and differences of phraseological units in the

English and French languages. According to the analysis of the frame structure of the concept FLORA the phraseological units with the concept 'rose' is the most widely spread in both languages. The red rose is widely recognized as the national flower of England. For Englishmen this flower symbolizes perfection, the sacrament of life, its focus, ignorance, beauty, grace, happiness, but also sensual pleasure and passion. Usually red is used for instance, in the emblems of the English Golf Union and England national rugby union team. In England, the rose became known only in the 14th century, shortly before the hostility between the houses of York and Lancaster. This flower fascinated them with their beauty so much that they both placed her on his coat of arms, and the first one chose white and the second one red. As a result, the enmity for the throne was called the White and Red Rose War. The Rose in France is a symbol of the sun, the star, the goddess of love and beauty. During the era of courtly love in 12th century France, the Rose became the chief symbol of the newly re-emerging feminine principle. It represented romantic love, and especially the beloved lady herself, in many of the poems of the troubadours (M. Ashraf, 2004).

However, in the Ukrainian language the most abundant group of phraseological units verbalize the slot 'poppy'. It is a special flower for Ukrainians. Ukrainians associated the importance of poppy seeds with youth and beauty: *як маківка; як маків цвім*. Embroideries of unmarried girls were decorated with poppies. The poppy was also considered as a symbol of the fertility, as it contains many grains: *хоч мак сій; черен мак etc.*. All these facts tell us about linguacultural relevance through the language.

A considerable number of English idioms contain the component 'root'. The British are very respectful of their origin. Therefore, it is not accidentally that this component occurs in English idioms.

The situation with the French phraseological picture of the world is slightly different. The important place is taken by the concept 'onion'. It is explained by the fact that onions are grown on the territory of France and added to the rich number of classic French dishes (M. Ashraf, 1995, p.95).

However, a lot of English and French phraseological units are exemplified by the component 'apple': *comparing apples and oranges* (very different people or things); *apple of my eye* (someone very special); *big apple* (a very important occasion). Apples

are the most popular fruit in many countries of the world. The English proverb says: 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away'. The Apple Day is an annual event dedicated to apples, which is organized on the initiative of the Common Ground Charitable Organization since 1990 (Ashraf, 1995).

Conclusions

To sum up, we can state that phraseological units reveal the mentality and culture of the nations. So the concept FLORA in the English, French and Ukrainian phraseological worldviews allows us to assume the similarities and differences of the nations. The methods of research and theoretical basis gave us the theoretical instruments to analyze not only the specifics of cognitive linguistics, but also to use linguocognitive and linguocultural approaches to investigate the peculiarities of the concept in the multilingual aspect within three languages: English, French and Ukrainian. The research shows that the cognitive signs that structure this concept FLORA which is verbalized in phraseological areas of the English, French and Ukrainian languages show that the cognitive signs that structure these concept are practically the same because the flowers are associated with the beauty, health, eternity, perfection, life, grace, happiness with the small difference

in the particular flowers that grow on the definite territories e.g. daisies (English), roses (French), poppies (Ukrainian).

Of all the fruit the specific ones are apple and peach for the British, for the Ukrainians – 'apple', 'cherry', 'plum', for the French – 'apple' and 'peach' which are the slots that are verbalized by the multilingual phraseological units that mean health, wealth, prosperity, luck, grace, fertility. The subframe 'vegetables' are represented in all three subframes with a little difference. In French the slot 'onion' is dominating: '*oignon vrai*' (someone very special). In the Ukrainian language the slot 'carrot' in the subframe 'vegetables' is the most abundant and presented by the phraseological units: *моркву терти* (to play joke on someone), *хатня морква* (the quarrel between the husband and wife) etc. In English the slot 'cabbage' is also widely verbalized: *cabbage* (money), *how the cow ate the cabbage* (the true things).

The majority of slots in the frame FLORA has positive meanings, but some of them has negative meanings. All of them represent the real life of people.

Prospects for further research lie in the dimension of further investigations the other slots ('forest', 'bush', 'branch', 'seeds') and other subframes 'fruit' and 'vegetable' that comprise the frame FLORA.

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