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# Discrepancies of Figurative Language Use Reflected Through Cross-Linguistic and Intercultural Differences in English and Albanian Language

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## Abstract

The present paper aims at highlighting some cultural and cross-linguistic aspects of idioms causing miscommunication in language. Learning a foreign language shapes the language system of communication with its literal and figurative meanings. While the literal meaning is the direct reference of words or sentences to objects, the figurative sense is used for giving an imaginative description or a special effect. Gaining competence in language enrolls a good command of the figurative use of that language together with its frequent, spontaneous and appropriate use of idioms being an indicator of native or near native mastery of the language. When such command of a foreign language lacks then it gives rise to discrepancies in language, and idioms for the sake of truth become often subject to misconstrued utterances in a target language on the part of L2 learners. Using literal senses of words to trigger the recognition of idioms brings some potential problems. Thus, this article brings together the findings and insights of figurative aspect of English and Albanian language system and its cultural aspect to further the understanding of the phenomena of communicative failures and mismatches in language. The study seeks to analyze and present through a corpus analysis idiom occurrences of communication failure in both languages. A variety of figurative use of language is illustrated in certain contexts and situations to lighten up the usage of idiom mismatches in second language acquisition and provide the paper with rich examples as well.

**Keywords:** cross-linguistic, intercultural, discrepancies, idiom, communication, English, Albanian language

## Introduction

### Theoretical background

The issue of communication has recently become an important means of building up relations between language, culture, human beings and the mixed interrelation

between them. The inextricable connection highlights various manifestations of conventionalized language including the idiomatic expressions as one of the important and pervasive language uses reflecting culture in real life.

Peterson and Coltrane (2003) emphasize that to achieve desired communication, culturally appropriate language use appear to be a must. In other words, knowledge of linguistic features is not adequate for successful intercultural communication (Scarino, 2010). This knowledge, in fact, must be supported by an awareness of sociocultural context, tendencies, conventions, and norms in which the communication takes place (Baker, 2012). Culture as a body of knowledge of common beliefs, behaviors and values appear to be the factor to establish and interpret meaning in both verbal and nonverbal language. Alptekin (2002) explains this conceptualizing process as the enculturation of the foreign language learner and states: “ Learners are not only expected to acquire accurate forms of the target language, but also to learn how to use these forms in given social situations in the target language setting to convey appropriate, coherent and strategically- effective meanings for the native speaker’. Thus learning a new language becomes a kind of enculturation, where one acquires new cultural frames of reference and a new world view, reflecting those of the target language culture and its speakers.” (2002, p.58) The cloze relation between language, culture and the role of culture in language are crucial issues which have not been studied even before.

On the other hand Min (2007) categorizes culture in English under two phenomena; high culture, and anthropological culture. The first underlines the intellectual and artistic achievements; the second refers to any of the customs, worldviews, languages, and conventions that make some people distinct from other social group. Culture, accordingly, encompasses three aspects, that is, material culture, social (institutional) culture and ideological culture. Language, as a special product of human society and an instrument of human thinking and communication, is a kind of institutional culture. Given the intermingled relationship between language and culture, the analysis of the ideological ground enriches the analysis of linguistic forms which show the language forms. In Peterson and Coltrane (2003, cited in Al-Issa, 2005 ) state that language and culture are interwoven and the students“ success in achieving higher level of oral proficiency in target language relies on the consideration of culture in designing and developing course materials.

Research findings show that formulaic language comprises up to one half of language. In the traditional view, idioms, “notoriously difficult” (Celce-Murcia& Larsen-Freeman, 1999) are considered special multiwords, and merely a matter of linguistic device with a special meaning and have certain syntactic properties. However, Kovecses (2002, p. 201) suggests that in contrast to traditional view, an idiom is not merely an extraordinary and somewhat complicated utterance of meaning which is special and hard to understand and requires deep linguistic knowledge, but many of

them arises from our conceptual understanding comes from human's conceptual system which is natural and not subtle.

As figurative language such as idioms, metaphors, and metonymies is pervasive in real life as a part of the culture, then language learners will be certainly encountered and exposed with idiomatic expressions as a part of language learning and they should attempt to build up their knowledge of idioms if they want to survive in real communication settings. (Boers et al., 2004, p.376) Idioms in particular are widely recognized to be a stumbling block (Buckingham, 2006) in the acquisition of a foreign language; though they are often recognized as incongruous, occasionally ungrammatical and difficult to figure out and resistant to translation for language learners and their contribution to communicative competence and intercultural awareness is both theoretically and empirically acknowledged (Boers et al, 2004; Kovecses& Szabo, 1996; Lin, 2012; Littlemore& Low 2006; Martinez & Schmitt, 2012). More than the Albanian language English is full of idiomatic expressions, hence learning these idioms constitutes the spirit of language and idioms have a considerable role in an L2. This does not necessarily imply that Albanian is a poor language regarding this aspect, but based in a comparative analysis of both of them English language level of idiomaticity gives it the unique and undisputable value of importance in speech and written language as well.

### **Culture and language**

Culture and language are means of collective co-existence and social practice kept in the memory of the society that is created by the people during the centuries. Cultural awareness helps people to become more understanding and tolerant of behaviors which are different from their own. Acquiring another language need not only linguistic competence but cultural awareness as well. Difference between cultures cause some misunderstandings in the interactive communications. The native speaker's vocabulary focuses on cultural and social factors while the non-native one neglect to consider such factors because of the lack of cultural and moral beliefs of that nation. There is a difference between the native and the non-native speaker's focus in an oral discussion. The native speaker puts into his language his mentality, culture, world vision in a cross-cultural dialogue and the non-native speaker receives that vision.

The indispensable condition of realization of any communication is that a speaker and a listener should have a mutual knowledge of realities or the background knowledge as a basis of a language interaction to understand each other. A "Language world picture" gives a non-native speaker the opportunity to realize the implicit meaning of the vocabulary through explicit meaning, to understand accumulated unconscious cultural information via background knowledge, to investigate cultural values via communicative process, to synthesize interrelation and interaction of the culture and the language.



Idioms are considered as the reflection of the national specificity of the people, the origin of which in many cases is difficult to ascertain. They give a figurative interpretation of reality and an emotional model of communication. They are strong and colorful examples of cross-cultural relations. The problem of misunderstanding and confusion comes when a non-native speaker tries to translate an idiom or collocation from his native language into English. Since idioms evaluate the whole narrative summarizing the main events or opinion, a native speakers' unconscious knowledge of collocation is an essential component of their idiomatic and fluent language use and is, therefore, an important part of their communicative competence. Knowing culture, literature, history, traditions of other nationalities equips oneself with the proper language competence easing the communication with a native speaker adequately. According to L. Prodromou (2003, 42) "what is striking about informal uses of language is not only how common the idiom principle is, but just how common creativity with idioms is among native-speakers".

Misunderstandings arise in language based on the fact that language is characterized by the fascinating aspect of figurative language where the meaning cannot be discovered by parsing out these non-literal expressions of speech word-by-word. The meaning is contextual, rather than literal, and we must examine culture in order to discover what these expressions mean. As a result of these the idiom "*kick the bucket*" may cause a lot of discrepancies in Albanian if the non-native speaker does not know the relation between the meaning and the idiom. In Albanian we show the meaning of this expression by using the expression "*ktheu këmbët/patkonjtë nga dielli*", "*iu fik kandili/qiriri*", "*mbylli sytë*", "*ndërroi jetë*", "*iu shua / fik jeta*" etc. Structural components of this expression "*këmbë*" (foot) and "*diell*" (sun) are semantically different from the English components "*kick*" and "*bucket*", an expression that might cause misunderstanding in Albanian (or in any other language as well). The idiom "*It's raining cats and dogs*," which means it is raining hard, the expression is not literal, but rather conveys an idea through an image. In Albanian the same concept is expressed by using other structural and semantically different components "*bie shi me gjyma*". Or idioms "*pay through the nose*" (paguej shtrenjtë); "*penny wise (and) pound foolish*" (i lire në miell, i shtrenjtë në krunde); "*dog in the manger*" (egoist); "*cast pearls before swine*" (ku di dhia ç'është tagjia); "*go at it hammer and tongs*" (zihen, grinden me të madhe); "*hate sb's guts*" (urrej për vdekje, kam antipati të thellë për) etc. We can give a lot of examples like this to justify that English is a highly idiomatic language and the cases for causing discrepancies in communication are great, since languages use different conceptual metaphors and structural components and the meaning is also conveyed through different linguistic tools. A corpus analyses in both languages is presented below based in an empirical study of idioms.

The origin of idiomatic expressions in both languages varies from history, mythology, folk and traditions to literature, sports, agriculture, medicine, science and technology. The immense variety of sources of idioms shapes language peculiarities of each language. In the examination of language universals, figurative speech plays an

important role. This is because universal or near-universal ideas, while conveying the same idea across languages, use varying expressions of speech to do so. As Kövesces (2010) shows in his article “Metaphor, Language, and Culture,” three main views explain near-universal metaphors. First, near-universal metaphors could be a miracle with no logical reason behind them. Perhaps similar concepts arose in different languages by chance, and the study of near-universal metaphors will lead to no conclusive explanation. Second, near-universal metaphors could exist due to languages borrowing words from each other in the past. This is a logical idea, as the existence of the thousands of languages in the world today can be mapped as having descended from common languages. Lastly is the view that people in all cultures share a universal bias for certain metaphors. This view is based on the idea that people in all cultures share elementary human experiences and that these common experiences create universal meaning.

Culture expresses meaning through a variety of ways such as art, dance, music, ceremonies, names, and narratives. Language expresses meaning through the words that give verbalization to the experiences that humans share. According to Han S. J. Verneer, language is an intrinsic part of culture. Language not only preserves and transmits culture, but it is also a vessel of cultural change (Liu, Yin, & Zhang, 2014). Without the use of language to convey meaning and transmit ideas, cultural changes would be limited to non-linguistic ideas. Because a culture without language is not true reality, cultural studies should be closely tied with language studies. L2 learner shows that language is composed of more than linguistics; language requires cultural understanding in order to speak and comprehend the meaning of the language (Byram, 2012).

In the study of the connection between language and culture, one of the main theories is the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis—also called the theory of linguistic relativity. Sapir (1929) summarizes the ideas of the hypothesis: “Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society” (p. 207). Sapir argues that language has great control over a society and the people within it. This view also signifies that language is a tool to direct speakers’ attention to specific attributes of the real world.

### **Cross-cultural differences and translation relationship in language interpretation**

Considering the relationship between culture and language in language learning, it can be said that culture has its own language - our culture by all means of social activities speaks. By using this tool, people can have ideas about how the environment under the impact of culture is expressed, interpreted, and spoken. As founders of language Vereshagn and Kastamarov (1990), in their book title "Language and culture," argued that though people speak a common language, they may not properly

understand each other due to intercultural differences. Since language has a social nature the main function of language is its instrumental role in communication between individuals. Culture not only reflects the real world around humans and their living conditions, but a nation's social consciousness means thinking, lifestyle, traditions, value systems, and world views. Ter-Minasova (2000) states that language as a coating material for culture, in vocabulary, grammar rules, idioms, proverbs and interpretation, folklore, literature, science, in written and oral discourse, cultural values are maintained.

According to Bruner (1990, 29) a human being is related to culture by the system of values, which “inhere in commitment to “ways of life”, and ways of life in their complex interaction constitute a culture”. For Boas (1986) there is no direct relation between language and culture - the former is ‘modeled’ by the latter; culture defines the way of thinking by members of the community – it may require some abstract thinking from them – generalized terms appear in the language, as a result of that demand. Then, there is a direct relation between culture and thinking, as well as between thinking and language, whereas culture and language are indirectly connected.

The link between an idiom and its meaning is provided by the image and conceptual metaphors known as image-schematic structure and basic-level structure. To predict the meaning of an idiom one should find motivating links which consist of images and metaphors as previously said. In case this link can be traced idioms become subject to processing and easier for guessing. If one knows the background reasoning of a word or idiom he can hypothesize about its meaning, including the figurative one as in the examples *to win sb's hand, be all thumbs, to fall on one's feet*. Dobrovol'skij and Piirainen (2005, 141) argue that the comprehension of an idiom is based on backward reasoning rather than conceptual mapping. In other language the idiom “*to keep someone at arm's* (that is you keep a safe distance away from them) may mean quite the opposite: “to be available, to be at someone's disposal’. The expression *red tape* in English has the Albanian equivalent “*formalitetet (proçedura) administrative*”. As it is seen there is no relationship between the color ‘red’ and ‘collar’ and the paraphrased meaning in Albanian is rather given by a non-idiomatic expression.

Based on the above examples it can be concluded that the words can be conceptually equivalent completely, but in terms of schematic knowledge, they may not be entirely equivalent. Words with no equivalent throughout foreign language learning can cause many problems. Because it implies that the concepts in a language and culture may not exist in another. Thus, words with no equivalent of the former reflect the underlying characteristics of each nation's culture. Various thoughts on understanding various nations and nationalities come from different ways of thinking and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, their understanding of abstract equivalents and methods can vary as well. Finding two words in two distinct languages that have the same meanings are very rare. Thus, as result idiomatic language is a cause for a lot of

discrepancies when translating or communicating from one language to another. Based on the fact that figurative language reflect a nation's spirit it is clear that it's geographical, literature, spiritual, moral beliefs and traditions are reflected in the language.

Cultural knowledge and differences have represented a major focus of translation scholars. It is frequently difficult for a translator to match or give an equivalency of idioms from one language to another. It has become the issue of many researchers adopting the appropriate ways and methods of conducting the right meaning. The definitions of translation appearing in the 1960s-1970s cover some guidelines: first, there is a change of expression from one language to another one. Second, most of the theorists are for the primacy of rendering the message and its meaning in the target culture. Third, the translator is obliged to find the closest equivalent in the target language. T. Vianu (cited in Kohn 1983:106) says that a good translation stands for the product of delicate equilibrium between what is national and what is foreigner, between the ways in which both source and target languages express themselves. Micaela Muñoz-Calvo, from the University of Zaraoza, Spain, affirms that translators need "cultural literacy, communicative language competences and cross-cultural competencies as well" (2010:2-3), because they must interpret "socio-cultural meaning in cross-cultural encounters, contributing to the transfer of knowledge across cultures and to cultural development as well". There are many 'culture-bound' terms, deeply rooted in culture, which the translator or a non-native speaker finds difficulties in dealing with. According to some researchers, areas of culture such as jobs, positions, professions, food, drink, baking are particular aspect of social life, which differentiate a community from another and are difficult to translate. For Santoyo sport, dances, musical and artistic terms are "specific areas of activity which correspond in the end to actions which are unique to a person or social group, subject to very specific place and time" (2010:15).

The process of translation is seen as means to perceive our own culture reported to the others' cultures. As the structuralists claim for, the use of language as a means for communication between people underlines its social function; each culture has its own language. As a result, Humboldt shows the fact that every community talk about their thought and ideas in reference to their own way of perceiving the universe, to their intellectual knowledge and experience. In other words, culture is the implicitness shared by a community.

## **Methodology**

This paper aims at presenting the discrepancies of figurative language of English and Albanian idiomatic phrases through a corpus analysis of idioms in both languages. Data were collected from two English-Albanian dictionaries and one Albanian-Albanian dictionary and a considerable number of phrases form literary books in both languages were taken for analysis. Examples were selected according to the different syntactic and semantic structure noticed in either of the languages in dictionaries and

the literary books. Dictionaries were studied by the semantic group under which the idiom falls as idioms with body parts, idioms with proper nouns typical of the culture of a certain language, idioms that come from customs and traditions, literature, fables, religious beliefs, the life of sea and seaman, idioms that come from sports and politics, etc. The figurative language from literary books was selected after a continuous and careful reading of the books to depict the figurative language used by authors.

### **Discussion of corpus analyses**

Communication does not necessarily result in understanding. Cross-cultural communication continually involves misunderstanding caused by misperception, misinterpretation, and misevaluation. In approaching cross-cultural situations, one should therefore assume difference until similarity is proven. Culture strongly influences, and in many cases determines, our interpretations. Both the categories and the meanings we attach to them are based on our cultural background. Sources of cross-cultural misinterpretation include subconscious cultural "blindness," a lack of cultural self-awareness, projected similarity, and parochialism. In subconscious cultural "blindness," most interpretation goes on at a subconscious level, we lack awareness of the assumptions we make and their cultural basis. Our home culture reality never forces us to examine our assumptions or the extent to which they are culturally based, because we share our cultural assumptions with most other citizens of our country. All we know is that things do not work as smoothly or logically when we work outside our own culture as when we work with people more similar to ourselves. The figurative meaning of idioms offers less possibility for a non-native speaker to communicate and thus get understood in a language. Since we cannot sum up the meaning of the whole expression by the meaning of each constituent it creates a gap for getting lost in languages. Literary meaning of each component can result in language discrepancies and failure in communication.

Literary works, proverbs and idioms are a real and vivid source of illustrating idiom discrepancies in language. To accomplish the aim of this article we have provided several typical situations from some literary works both in English and Albanian.

He nodded, knowing it was true. And so John left their lives, for good. Ben had been with him almost every day of his life since he was rescued from the Institution.

Ben took it hard. At first he did not believe it. (Doris Lessing, *The Fifth Child*, p. 133)

*With characteristic insight he saw he must part with one or with the other; no half-measures could serve in such a situation. In that lay its tragedy. And the tiny, helpless thing prevailed. He would not **run with the hare and hunt with the hounds**, and so to his son he said good-bye.*

(J. Galsworthy, *The Forsyte Saga*, p. 22)

*And here Jolly, having begun the day badly by introducing fizzy magnesia into Mademoiselle Beauce's new-laid egg, and gone on to worse, had been sent down (in the absence of his father)*

*to the ensuing dialogue:*

*"Now, my boy, you mustn't go on like this."*

*"Well, she **boxed my ears**, Gran, so I only **boxed hers**, and then she **boxed mine** again."  
(J. Galsworthy, The Forsyte Saga, p. 325)*

*In another moment, he stood as he had stood all the time – his usual stoop upon him; his pondering face addressed to Mr. Bounderby, with a curious expression on it, half shrewd, half perplexed, as if **his mind were set upon** unraveling something very difficult; his hat held tight in his left hand which rested in his lip; his right arm, with a rugged propriety and force of action, very earnestly emphasizing what he said; .....*

(Charles Dickens, Hard Times, p. 80)

From the examples above *boxed my ears*, ..... *boxed hers*, ..... *boxed mine* they can be confused if seen about of the context. For a non-native speaker sometimes even the context might represent problems. If taken only the last sentence alone without considering the context it is pretty sure that it might show problems of misunderstanding idioms even in one sentence. The proverb *run with the hare and hunt with the hounds* might be more common to the ear of the non-native speaker. The idiom *his mind were set upon* becomes more clear in the context since the reader might understand and catch the meaning from the context.

*Mbathën apingat e veshën zhgunet dhe u nisën prapë për udhë. Ec e ec, kapërcyen shumë male e shumë pllaja. Moti ishte i egër e i keq. U lodhën e u këputën e **u plasi shpirtin** kjo punë. As era, as dëbora nuk u tregonin ku gjendeshin ushtarët që kërkonin.*

(I. Kadare, Gjenerali i ushtrisë së vdekur, p.198)

*Ah, more Mina! Një gjë është kryesore. Sot njeriun e mbron nga rreziqet shoqëria. Kjo mbrojtje nuk është individuale, gabon rëndë. Doemos, individi **nuk duhet të rrijë duarkryq**. Po **qëndroi duarkryq**, nuk ka të drejtë, as guxim t'i kerkojë shoqërisë mbrojtje.*

(D. Agolli, Trëndaili në gotë, p. 273)

Idioms given above are illustrated in figurative contexts which makes easier for the foreigner to understand the expression better. The contexts provide vivid situation where the speaker might find himself more comfortable in understanding them based on the clues the context or situations provide.

A lot of idioms with semantic components body parts lead also to a lot of discrepancies in language. In the examples given below idioms have a semantic component with body parts but the equivalent in Albanian is in most of the cases

expressed with a different one compared to English. The idiom *frame of mind* “gjendje shpirtërore” in English we have the body part *mind* while in Albanian the equivalent is given with another component shpirtërore (used as adjective, shpirt (soul). If we would make an analysis of the idioms below *get the length of somebody's foot* “e njoh dhëmbë e dhëmballë” (foot – këmbë); *get the upper hand* “bëj zap” (the meaning is given with a non-body equivalent), each one of them creates a different perception in guessing the meaning if the non-native speaker (in our case the Albanian) did not it before or is not provided in a certain context. Other examples to illustrate misunderstanding in both languages taken into consideration in this article are shown as below: *get under somebody's skin* “i ngre nervat”; *give one's ears* “sakrifikoj gjithçka”; *hang heavy (heavily) on one's hands* “mezi kalon (koha etj)”; *head and ears* “i mbytur në borxhe”; *jump down somebody's throat* “ndërpres në mënyrë të ashpër”; *keep a good heart* “e mbaj veten”; *keep a stiff upper lip* “nuk e lëshoj veten”; *lie in one's teeth (throat)* “gënjej sy për sy”; *pass one's lips* “fus në gojë”, *get one's teeth into* “merrem (angazhohem) seriozisht”.

Other than body-part idioms, a rich source of idioms in both languages there are other idiom origins too be considered. A typical example of them are idioms with proper nouns typical of the culture of a certain language, idioms that come from customs and traditions, literature, fables, religious beliefs, the life of sea and seaman, idioms that come from sports and politics, etc. Such sources of idioms are non-motivated and make the understanding of the Albanian speaker difficult to comprehend without knowing the history and traditions they have come from. In the examples below *before you can say Jack Robinson* “sa hap e mbyll sytë” the Albanian equivalent is not given with a proper name because it is very difficult in almost all the cases to find a typical example with the same semantic and structural components. The name *Jack Robinson* is approximate in meaning with the idiom “sa hap e mbyll sytë” the paraphrased meaning in English could be “as soon as you open and close your eyes” but we encounter an idiom with Jack Robinson and not with the component “eye”. Also in “*give sb. a Roland for an Oliver*” “i përgjigjem me të njëjtën monedhë” the Albanian component lacks the proper name so the meaning cannot be inferred by the proper noun components Roland and Oliver; *castles in Spain/castles in the air* – *ëndrra me sy hapur*; *spitting image/chip off the old block* – *sikur e ka nxjerrë nga hundët (i ati / e ëma)*; *Jack of all trades* – *ç'i sheh syri i bën dora* are typical examples of this case. The interpretation of the last idiom in Albanian might be Xheku që i bën të gjitha but in Albanian *Jack* is unknown and the equivalent exists with the components “sy” and “dorë” in the expression “ç'i sheh syri i bën dora”. Taken from the other side we can provide in the article idioms with Albanian proper names the meaning of which can be paraphrased in English and could not be given with a synonymous since it is an idiom which originates from the Albanian social conditions, cultural and moral beliefs. In most of the cases it is difficult to explain the origin of such idioms since they might have been created based on a situation or social event of the time and has not left traces in the history to get an explanation. These are highly non-motivated idioms

which a non-native or an English speaker cannot understand and might lead to cases of misinterpretation as well. Typical examples are: *si Xhaferrî simiten, si ferra Ibrahim, si Kolja me Deden*; idioms with place names: *për një fërgesë në Shalës, rrip i kuq i Korçës, për një kockë gjer në Polos*. In English: *meet one's Waterloo, paint the Fourth Bridge, pile/heap Pelion on Ossa, send someone to Coventry, built castles in Spain, carry/take coals to Newcastle, fiddle while Rome burns, etc.*

In English and Albanian are also evident phrases with synonymous component parts which according to the Albanian linguist A. Jashari lexical diversity become more evident when verbal components are framed according to the level of the action intensity as in examples "*e karfosi me shpatulla për muri*" instead of the verb "*karfos*" (put) where the intensity of the action is higher than in the verbs "*mbërthen, vë*". We can give similar examples with a synonymous noun component "*i dha udhët*" or "*i dha rrugët/duart*"; "*ngre kryet*" – "*ngre kokën*"; "*kruan dhëmbin*" – "*kruan thonjtë*" etc. In English *find one's tongue - find one's voice; fold one's arms - fold one's hands; get out of one's mind/head; lick one's chops - lick one's lips; cut to the soul- cut to the heart; drenched to the bone - drenched to the skin etc.*

On the other hand some figurative expressions in both languages leave speakers and foreign users of language to grasp the meaning of the idiom in cases when they are partly or totally motivated. Such idioms are those originating from bible, mythology, literature, sciences, sports and other fields of life. Totally motivated idioms: The idiom *the Achilles heel* is translated the same in Albanian "*thembra e Akilit*"; Pandora's box "*kutia e Pandorës*"; a doubting Thomas "*si shën Thomai mosbesues*"; many are called, but few are chosen "*shumë të thirrur pak të zgjedhur*"; hatred stirreth up strife "*urrejtja shkaktôn grindje*"; to bury one's talent "*gropos talentin*"; the bed of Procrustes "*kallëpi i Prokrustit*"; Danaide's work "*kova e Danaideve*"; partly motivated idioms: thirty pieces of silver "*shitet për tridhjetë aspra*"; the confusion of Babylon "*është Babiloni*"; the rich hath many friends, make friends with sb "*i pasuri ka shumë miklues*"; keep company with "*shoqërohem me*"; hate like poison "*urrej për vdekje*"; gather one's courage "*marr kurajo*", cost money "*do para*"; console oneself with "*ngushëlloj veten me*"; come to an end "*përfundoj, i vij në fund*"; etc. From these examples it is clear that the meaning of the idiom can be easily grasped by the reader but it is worth mentioning that English has a lot of idiomatic expressions which create little or no chance of understanding or translation. Thus, idioms are subject of discrepancies in language since a non-native speaker is not based on the literary meaning of the idiom neither on the meaning of separate components of the figurative expression, but rather on the meaning of it as a whole. Based on this fact true for each language idioms can cause a lot of misunderstandings and are means of confusion and create problems in communication for every non-native speaker of a foreign language. Thus it is necessary for every speaker to have a good command of the language to result in successful communication. As a consequence, a non-native speaker might know the meaning of the idiom used in one of the synonymous versions, but might not know if



the idiom is used with an equivalent counterpart in another context, thus leading to difficulties for interpretation for native speakers of the language as well.

## Conclusion

Like other types of figurative language, idioms appear to be the natural decoders of customs, cultural beliefs, social conventions, and norms. Idioms, as a major component of native-like communication, enable a language learner to understand the thoughts, emotions and views of the speakers of target language. Idioms are a constituent part of language and play a crucial role in understanding and as a part of language learning and they should attempt to build up their knowledge of idioms if they want to survive in real communication settings. Acquiring another language need not only linguistic competence but cultural awareness as well.

Difference between cultures cause misunderstandings in the interactive communications. The origin of idiomatic expressions in both languages varies from history, mythology, folk and traditions to literature, sports, agriculture, medicine, science and technology. The immense variety of sources of idioms shapes language peculiarities of each language. They are strong and colorful examples of cross-cultural relations. Misunderstandings and confusion of idiomatic expressions come when non-native speakers try to translate an idiom or collocations based on native language into English. Based on cultural knowledge and background this task becomes simpler.

This paper aimed at presenting in detail some specific issues concerning the discrepancies in English and Albanian language caused by the misinterpretation of idioms. We have taken into consideration a number of idioms and certain literary contexts to illustrate the contexts they are used. Based on the degree of motivation idioms cause a lot of difficulties in understanding and use from non-native speakers. Highly motivated idioms present sources of national and social characteristic as in the examples *kick the bucket* or *spill the beans*. Typical examples are present even in the Albanian language *shkoi dushk për gogla* or *si Xhaferri simiten*. Other idioms possess a lower degree of motivation and might lead to lesser cases that cause misinterpretation. However idiomatic language in all the languages specifically for the two languages we have taken into consideration in this article are subject to discrepancies in many situations. A non-native speaker should possess cultural background of the language to reduce cases of misinterpretation. In approaching cross-cultural situations, one should therefore assume difference until similarity is proven as culture strongly influences, and in many cases determines, our interpretations.

Idioms become often subject of getting lost in languages since the literary meaning of each constituent does not contribute to the overall meaning of the expression. Acquiring good knowledge of them enhances the chances of good communication from the non-native speaker and establishes strong ties in cross-cultural and inter-language relationship. Interpretation in terms of culture means the study of language

symbols and cultural concepts in foreign languages, not only possible but also necessary.

Based on the corpus analyses of idioms in both languages, the empirical study carefully analyses cases of misinterpretation from several perspectives. The study sheds light into cases and situations where the idiomatic structure and syntactical components lead to difficulties of idiom understanding. We can conclude that idioms from the linguistic perspective are culturally bound units that shape and intensify the colorful diversity of a language, hence making communication an immense source of discrepancies if one doesn't possess the cultural and national characteristics of it. Possessing idiomatic competence of a language opens new doors to the figurative and linguistic usage of the language itself, mastering with professionalism and having a good command of that language.

The study creates possibilities and opens new ways for further future researches in this deep and immense field, consolidating the strong linguistic and communicative relationships between languages. Language and phraseology are closely related disciplines and offer great opportunities for new contributions in the field.

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# Scaffolding the Lebanese EFL Cycle 3 in Science Report Writing

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## Abstract

Some Lebanese university science instructors complain that students face difficulty in writing reports. The same problem was detected at Harvard University; where professors have also traced a similar problem. Little attention was paid to the scientific report writing process since high-school days. Usually, secondary schools focus on the content, rather than on the process writing itself. The aim of this study was to help cycle 3 Lebanese learners become proficient in science report writing. An action research was carried on a group of Lebanese grade 8 science class learners (n=10). The theoretical framework followed the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (Koehler & Mishra, 2009), to investigate the impact of integrating: the web tool, Google+ platform (Cavazza, 2012), known for its instructional, collaborative and motivating features, the procedural scaffolding (Constructivist theory), and authentic content, in science report writing. Data collection instruments used in this study were: (a) samples from the students' reports written pre, during, and post intervention; (b) the students' class performance scores; (c) interviews with the students (pre/post intervention) and their science teacher. The results revealed that the focus group outperformed the passive significantly by fifteen points. Suggestions and recommendations for further research were shared.

**Keywords:** science report writing, integration theory, web-based learning, authentic content, procedural scaffolding

## Introduction

Many Lebanese university instructors complain that their students in science classes face difficulty in writing reports. Since their high-school days, the focus has been usually on science content, but not on the process writing itself. Similarly, professors at Harvard University (Morris et al., 2007) realized that there were loads of writing assignments in their undergraduate classes; however, little attention was paid to the scientific report writing process. They pointed out that a good scientist is someone

who knows how to “keep an accurate and current record of all experimental procedures, observations, and results” (p.10). Fortunately, EFL pedagogy nowadays is leaning towards integration of Internet technology and authenticity of content material in language instruction. Mishra & Koehler (2006), who introduced Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK), drew that integration of the 3 elements: thoughtful technology, authentic content materials, and pedagogical methods of teaching, requires an understanding of cognitive, social, and developmental theories of learning, as well as supports the learning goals and outcomes of an instructional plan. So, an action research was conducted to investigate the practical science report writing problems and to take future actions, as discussed by Norton (2009) and Abbott (2014). Thus, the aim of this research was to help cycle 3 Lebanese learners become proficient in writing scientific reports through implementing writing as a process on an Internet platform (Google+). Contemporary pedagogical theories were applied and authentic scientific materials were used. TPACK was adopted from Koehler & Mishra (2009). The Google+ platform was employed to benefit from its large set of functionalities, and to instruct and motivate the learners, as discussed by Cavazza (2012). Vygotskian constructivist approach was adopted to help the learners collaborate working in groups on this platform on one hand; while on the other, to apply procedural scaffolding approach (e.g. modelling, sharing, rehearsing, applying), implementing the writing-process techniques from prewriting to final posting. Moreover, learners were exposed to online authentic material, which can supply learners with up-to-date valuable information, develop their own strategies for dealing with real language, and make the task more interesting and motivating, as stated by Lowe (2010).

## **2. Literature Review and Theoretical framework**

### **Science Report Writing**

Harvard University professors, Morris et al. (2007) focused on writing in the sciences and discussed that it is no different from writing in other fields. It requires a clear argument or development of a hypothesis, careful use of evidence and sources, organization, and attention to grammar and wording. Although science report writing follows additional conventions and step-by-step process format, but its outline comprises of title, abstract, problem, hypothesis, introduction, method (safety, material, procedure), results, analysis, conclusion, and references (pp.5-10) (see Appendix B). To develop learners’ report writing, educators may benefit from TPACK framework.

### **Integration Theory**

Many Integration theories supported employment of technology to develop language skills, such as, Mishra & Koehler’s (2006) TPACK theory. They considered that the thoughtful interplay of the three domains: technology, pedagogy (the methods of teaching), and content (the subject matter), “support the learning goals and outcomes

of the instructional plan” (p.15). Specially, when access to class content is extended beyond the actual instructional period, it could make a big difference for students, who require additional processing time. Opportunities to access online tools and tutorials enhance integration of new information. The ability to repeatedly review material like video tutorials, demonstrations, and archived lecture recordings outside of class can aid students’ comprehension and provide invaluable access to instructional materials for their tutors or parents (ibid, p.15). Similarly, González-Lloret & Ortega (2014) realized that developing pedagogic tasks requires taking full advantage of technology and doing what cannot be done in the classroom with paper and pencil. For example, one can integrate multimedia for rich and authentic input (i.e. video, simulations, gaming environments) and engage in learning that allow students use the language and the technology in productive and creative ways. Finally, they considered the Internet as a rich database of authentic material (p.8), which exposes learners to unlimited sources.

### **Authentic Content**

Authentic content material has gained momentum in educational pedagogy nowadays. Nunan (2004) described authenticity as “the use of spoken and written material that has been produced for purposes of communication not for purposes of language teaching” (p.49). What concerned him was not whether authentic materials were used or not, but how the combination of authentic, simulated and specially written materials provided learners with optimal learning opportunities (p.49). Moreover, to Vaičiūnienė & Užpalienė (2010) authentic materials come from unlimited sources: photographs, business cards, computer-based information, as, news, journals, TV and radio broadcast, films, documentaries, internet websites, general or special literature and easily accessible websites (e.g. authentic specialist publications in the field, statistics, reports, surveys, etc.). They pointed that when these materials were derived from the real world and brought into the classroom they made the task more interesting and motivating and led the learners develop strategies for dealing with real language (p.94). Referring to Berardo (2006), Vaičiūnienė & Užpalienė (2010) discussed that when teachers search for sites on a specific topic, prepare questions, and post them online, they can successfully replace authentic printed materials brought into the classroom and make the ESL classroom significantly livelier (p.94). While hard-copied material may date very quickly, online authentic material is continuously updated. At last, exposing learners to contemporary information from a real text in a target language definitely motivates the learners (p.94).

### **Web-based learning**

Research revealed that Internet technology and web-based learning offer a valuable source of language input. It is significant in enhancing learning outcomes, reinforcing the direct relationship between the language classroom and outside world, developing language skills and promoting different types of interaction increasing

students' motivation in the subject matter and language proficiency (Vaičiūnienė & Užpalienė, 2010, p.97). Bloch (2013) drew that the development of technological applications has offered tools for language learning and for creating a communicative space. This space can be asynchronous (different time, different place), where users interact using any of these modes of discourse, e.g. email, listservs, blogs, discussion boards, social networking sites. It can as well include synchronous modes of discourse (same time, different place), where participants interact in the same time frame, (e.g. chats, video conferencing, e-learning systems or virtual learning environments) (c.i. Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015). In addition, students can benefit from features of word processing software as Microsoft Word, in writing and processing, for instance: spell check, autocorrect, grammar check for awkward grammatical constructions (e.g. passive sentences, text-to-speech add-ins that support auditory proofing before students submit their work) (Mishra & Koehler, 2006, p.15). Moreover, the platform used for this study was Google+. Cavazza (2012) considered it a major player similar to Facebook and Twitter. Google+ comprises of large set of functionalities that enables the users to share, publish, play and network on its platform. In addition, the administrator can: (a) form a private group by sending numerous membership invitations, (b) post instructional material easily in rich-text posts as, fonts, colors, images, PPT and videos. Furthermore, to reinforce collective communication among learners, members can like the posts and hold peer-peer/peer-instructor discussions on the dashboard.

### **Vygotskian Constructivism**

Procedural scaffolding of Vygotskian constructivism builds students' independent knowledge of concepts and language and moves beyond explicit teaching to modeling, sharing, rehearsing, and applying. Such practices include grouping of students into teams to build skills and increase independence (Echevarria, et al., 2002). Moreover, as Dennen (2004) drew, scaffolded learning activities come up with adequate challenges based on the learner's current knowledge. The instructor is expected to model and scaffold a certain context for learning decision-making process, talk aloud about the considerations and explain the rationale for the end result. Then, the learners can use similar strategies to build content and genre knowledge, related to the topic they can draw on authentic life experiences, lab experiments, books, and Internet resources (p. 815). Likewise, one always should keep in mind the metacognitive strategies Brown (2007) discussed, such as, self-questioning, reflecting and inferring that raise awareness of one's own cognition.

## **3. Methodology**

### **Participants**

When the problem of science report writing in Lebanese EFL classrooms was pinpointed, an action research was carried in one Lebanese private high school, on one class (n=10) as a pilot study, to find out the impact of integration of the web tool,

Google+, procedural scaffolding, and authentic content, on the development of science report writing process, which was neglected for lack of time. Grade 8 was chosen as a basic level, as Grade 9 learners have the Lebanese official exams (Brevet). For the purpose of sampling, participation on the platform was left optional, but observed. The focus group were the participants who interacted actively on the platform for more than 10 times; the passive group were those who just listened and participated less than 9 times on the platform. For ethical purposes names were unrevealed. Thereafter, random sampling of these learners was performed and their results were compared. Captures (screen shots) of the participation on the platform were taken and presented.

## **Data Collection Instruments**

### **Reports**

Pre-intervention reports on 3 different scientific themes written by the 10 participants were collected (No. 30). One from each theme was randomly chosen for qualitative content analysis (see Appendix E). Post-intervention reports on a new theme written by the 2 groups were randomly chosen for analysis and comparison of pre/post-intervention results, to find out how each of the students from the different categories developed their report writing at the higher order concern (HOC) and lower order concern (LOC) levels. This evaluation was based on a science report writing rubric (see Appendix C) and accordingly it was assessed by 2 instructors; for reliability purpose, a 3rd was assigned in case of discrepancy in results were revealed. Tables were formed to display the results (see Appendix F).

### **Scores**

The pre/post-intervention class performance scores were analyzed employing Microsoft Excel and displayed in charts, bar graphs and tables. The aim of selecting these instruments was to compare how the students developed in report writing at the post-intervention stage.

### **Interviews**

As Mackey & Gass (2005) drew, an interview is a research tool that can test a hypothesis (p.179). An interview with the participants was designed, to get their opinion at the end of this intervention. Another interview with the participants' school science teacher was designed to find out how she integrates the use of Internet technology, contemporary pedagogical theories and authentic scientific materials in the science class, in order to motivate and develop report writing through instruction of process-writing techniques.



## 4. The findings, Interpretation and Discussion

### Content Analysis of Pre-intervention Reports

Content analysis of science reports written by the two groups at the pre-intervention stage was conducted. As Cohen (2005) stated that content analysis requires auditing communication content against standards, taking a verbal and non-quantitative document and transforming it into quantitative data (pp.164-165), so this analysis was based on an Outline of Science Report (see Appendix B) and Report Writing Rubric (see Appendix C). Based on Hewett's (2012) description of HOC and LOC, the researcher mapped and analyzed the elements of HOCs at content-based level: title, thesis statement, content development, introduction and conclusion, organization, use of outside sources and appropriate quotation; as well as, she mapped and analyzed the elements of LOCs at sentence level: transitional words, word-level mistakes, grammar and mechanics errors, and citation style issues.

Pre-intervention reports were collected from the website of the school (see Appendix D), examined and the following was revealed.

**The title:** Titles should be written in informative and neutral form; instead, learners wrote them in interrogative form, as, "How is my blood type determined?"

**The Abstract:** An abstract is comprised of the purpose, method and results of the experiment; however, all the reports missed this part (In the mid/post-intervention the abstract was included).

**The Problem:** The problem was clearly stated, but it was displaced.

**The Hypothesis:** The investigated problem and results were clear.

**The Introduction:** The Introduction should include the aim of performing the experiment, background information (outside sources) and in-text citation. The learners missed the aim, didn't maintain a paragraph form, but copy-pasted info in bullets and missed to cite the background information. The form should be written in a paragraph-like form, but at times they wrote it in bullets and at others they mixed the paragraph with the bullets, such as,

"Plants need to take in a number of elements to stay alive. The most important are:

carbon

hydrogen

oxygen."

**The Method:** The Method section comprises of 3 parts written in bullets, and addressed in the passive voice and the past tense (see next).

- **Safety:** the steps taken to keep safe from hazardous material were missing.

- **Material:** materials, instruments and steps used were written but in a paragraph form.

**Procedure:** Instead of describing how the experiment was performed step by step, the learners copy-pasted it, and used the imperative case as, “Follow the virtual lab on the following website: <http://www.kscience.co.uk/animations/minerals.htm>”,

“Fill the test tubes with water. Place the plants in the water.” At other times, instead of using the passive voice, they employed the pronoun “we” in the present tense, such as, “First we choose a finger... we embrocate so that the blood will we inject our finger...” as if it was read in an instruction book!

**The Results:** to illustrate the results, data is set in tables, graphs, charts and figures, descriptive captions and numbers are seen in the order they appear in the text (e.g. Figure 1/Table 1). However, in these reports, data were floating and were not set in tables.

**The Figures and graphs:** These were employed, but descriptive titles and numbers were missing.

**The Analysis:** This part involves an explanation of what the results mean, e.g. “as seen in Figure1/Graph 2 ...” in a paragraph form. At times, the learners explained what the results meant, without referring to the expression “as seen in Figure1/Graph 2 ...”, but at others, they just skipped this part.

**The Conclusion:** This part involves writing 1 or 2 sentences about data analysis and whether or not the results support the experimental hypothesis. In these reports, the conclusion supported the experimental hypothesis, but at other times it didn't, such as, the conclusion of “How is my blood type determined?” came as, “My blood type is AB+”.

**The References:** References are the citation of outside sources used in the report according to the requirements of the APA format. However, in-text-citation for outside sources in the introduction section was missing, so references following the APA format did totally not exist.

Given that errors at HOCs (content-based level) and at LOCs (grammar and mechanics level) were traced, an intervention was required.

### **The intervention phase**

The intervention started with the formation of a private group of Lebanese EFL grade 8 learners on Google+, which aroused curiosity and interest to integrate constructing knowledge with using Google+. The aim and objective of the study was to develop the report-writing skills. Then, Procedural scaffolding was implemented to serve this purpose. The first component of Procedural scaffolding was realized through modeling and sharing of an authentic science report. The “Boiling Water” report (see the link in Appendix A) was posted on the Google+ platform, its context was in line

with the theme of the month, on the syllabus of the learners. They were asked to read it and meet the next day by 8:00 p.m., for a synchronic group discussion session. When they met, online Think Aloud strategy was used to raise awareness of their own cognition and build knowledge on the frame. So, the purpose and the context of science report writing at the HOC and LOC levels were addressed. First, the HOC questions, related to the structure of the report (boiling water) (see Figure 1), discussed the content of each section laying the stress on their weakness, based on the corrected reports, as: When you read this report what did you realize? What was the abstract about? What did the thesis statement prove? What did the introduction include? What were the main parts of the Method? Where was the data set? What was the most important issue about the conclusion? What were the references used for?

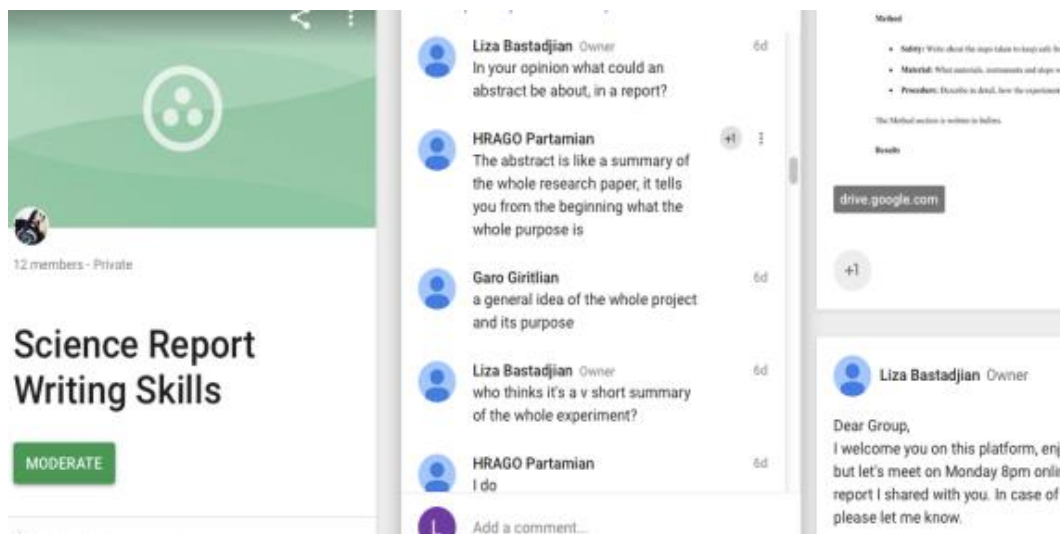


Figure 1. Discussion of HOCs on Google+

As seen in Fig. 1, the focus group students were highly motivated; they were interacting on the platform and answering all the questions related to HOC. For example, one student said that the abstract looks like “a summary of the whole research paper...”; another said, “it includes the aim, the purpose...”. The main idea behind asking all these questions was to trigger their own metacognition about the parts they were skipping in their reports. Afterwards, LOC questions, concerning the language features of that report (see Figure 2) were addressed: What was the tense used here (past tense)? Why? Did the researcher use 1st or 3rd person when writing the report (third person)? Can you show me where? Did the writer focus on issues, information, processes rather than the subject or doer of the action? What do we call this form, active or passive (passive voice)?

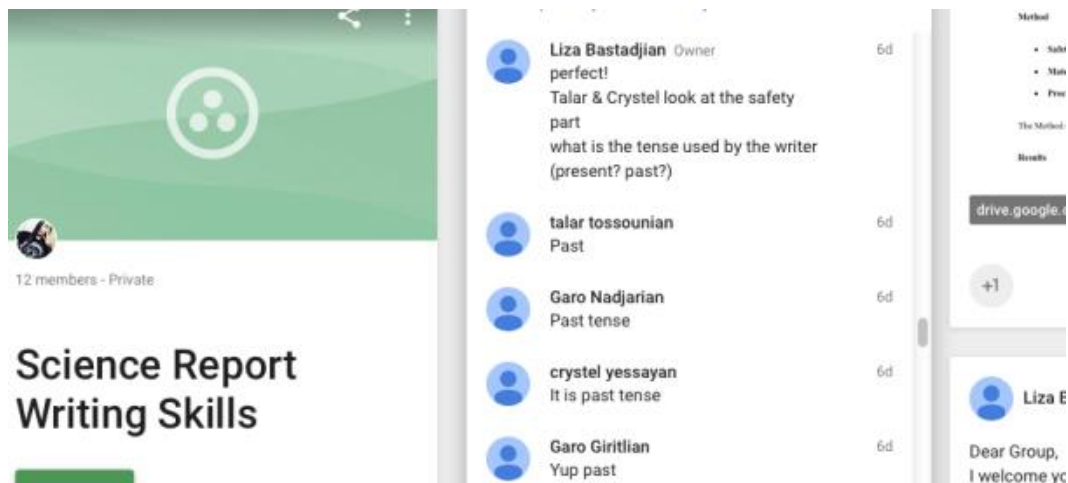


Figure 2. Discussion of LOCs on Google+

The same strategy was used in discussing the LOC. As seen in Fig. 2, the focus group interacted and gave correct answers to all the questions raised here. For example, they all realized that the tense used in the model was the past, not the imperative mood they were using. These questions made them realize the mistakes they were committing in their reports.

The second step of procedural scaffolding was realized through Rehearsing. At the end of the session, the learners were given guidelines related to writing scientific reports. The intervention period started when their 1st reports were already written, the implemented writing-process techniques comprised of revising, editing, rewriting, and final posting on Google+ platform. They were asked to reread a recent science report on "Blood Typing" (not written for this study rather as an assignment for their science course), to revise and edit it based on the given guidelines and then post it on the platform, in one-week time. They wrote their first draft, the teacher gave them feedback, focusing primarily on the errors that were observed in their texts. Finally, they wrote their final drafts. When they posted the revised drafts, they were led to coach each other on the platform and discuss the mistakes through peer-peer and instructor-learner discussion and commentary. Peer review and clear guidelines motivated them. Following the online discussion, she scaffolded their production, and led them to reread their own work more than once, to revise and do the necessary changes of their draft. They edited their reports at the HOC and LOC levels with the help of the instructor. When they started rewriting, she led the students to incorporate changes and post the final drafts.

The third step of procedural scaffolding was achieved through Applying. Finally, the learners applied the constructed knowledge and wrote a new authentic science report about "Natural Antibiotics" independently and shared it with their peers by posting it on the Google+ platform. The role of the instructor was to coach and gradually

withdraw from the process when independent work was attained. This intervention lasted for four weeks, two times per week. To sum up, Procedural scaffolding was successfully implemented, to develop the learners' report-writing skills.

### **Pre/post intervention report scores**

The mean score of pre-intervention reports written by the two groups was 50/100 = F; no statistically significant differences were found; they wrote in the same pattern. The mean score of post-intervention reports of the passive group was 65/100= D; whereas, the mean score of post-intervention reports of the focus group was 80/100= B (see Figure 10). The focus group outperformed the control significantly by 15 points.

### **Qualitative Results**

#### **Content Analysis of Post-intervention Reports**

Online instruction of report writing skills, which applied procedural scaffolding approach (e.g. modeling, sharing, rehearsing, applying), and the writing-process techniques from prewriting to final posting, had brought about encouraging results on some of the features of science reports. Content analysis of science reports written by the two groups at pre/post-intervention was conducted, based on Report Writing Rubric and Outline of Science Report. As Cohen (2005) stated, content analysis is auditing communication content against standards; its basic goal is to take a verbal, non-quantitative document and transform it into quantitative data (pp.164-165). HOC at content-based level (title, thesis statement, content development, introduction and conclusion, organization, using outside sources and appropriate quotation) was mapped. In addition, LOCs at sentence level (transitional words, word-level mistakes, grammar and mechanics errors, citation style issues) was mapped.

Title: Titles written in interrogative form were successfully changed to declarative, as, "Natural antibiotics from plants".

The Abstract section requires a summary of the entire report without including specific details, where the purpose, the method and the results of the experiment are included (see Figure 3 and 4).

#### **Natural Antibiotics from Plants**

Summary:What is the best natural antibiotics in plants? My hypothesis was that the olive oil and garlic have better antimicrobial properties. We conducted an experiment using culture plates where we used germs from our hands and sterile disks which contain the 4 natural antibiotics: solution of thyme, solution of lemon, honey and olive oil the has been soaked by garlic. The zone of inhibition of garlic and olive oil were larger than those of the other. Therefore, olive oil and garlic is the best natural antibiotic.

Figure 3: A sample of the passive group's abstract

### **Natural Antibiotics From Plants**

#### **Abstract**

Some natural antibiotics inhibit the growth of bacteria. This project was performed to measure the effectiveness of different antimicrobial agents by measuring zones of inhibition on bacterial culture plates, using the Kirby-Bauer disk-diffusion method and I tested the most effective one on bacteria found on human feet. Four different natural antibiotics were used- lemon, olive oil and garlic solution, thyme and honey, where it was found that an olive oil and garlic solution was the most effective at fighting against bacteria found on human feet.

Figure 4: A sample of the focus group's abstract

As seen in Figure 3 the passive group learner used another title for "Abstract", he opened up with a question, and wrote the hypothesis, however, gave a detailed info on the experiment and the results. The focus group in figure 4 discussed concisely the purpose, the method and the results of the experiment.

The Introduction section requires that one clarifies the aim, and supplies related background information (outside sources) and in-text citation (see samples of the 2 groups here).

Research: Here is a list of 8 of the best natural antibiotics to help beat infections.

Echinacea: Echinacea was very popular in the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries, but its use began to decline after pharmaceutical antibiotics were developed. Studies have since show that it can be very effective for treating many strains of bacteria. Note: Echinacea can slow your body's metabolism of coffee and certain medications.

Goldenseal: Berberine, an alkaloid found in goldenseal, has demonstrated activity against Gram-positive bacteria, including MRSA. There are additional compounds in goldenseal that may enhance the antibiotic effects of berberine, so it may be prudent to supplement with goldenseal rather than its berberine extract. Note: Berberine may cause brain damage in infants and children. Do not consume if you are pregnant or nursing.

Garlic: The active component of garlic, called allicin, successfully targets many strains of bacteria. Garlic cloves can have beneficial effects but are not as potent as its supplement form. Note: Garlic as a supplement may prolong bleeding and can have major interactions with certain medications. It may be unsafe for children.

Figure 5: A sample of the passive group's introduction

## Introduction

Nature has provided thousands of natural medicines and natural antibiotics over millennia. Most people are unaware, but virtually all pharmaceutical medications originally came from the plants of the Earth. After they were proven effective in treating various ailments, the pharmaceutical industry then created synthetic variants, which they could patent. In this way, they retained the exclusive rights to earn revenues from their patents over a specific period of time. The aim of this experiment was to find a natural antibiotic to fight against bacteria found on human feet.

The point is that every medicine under the sun originated as an herb or a spice, a tree leaf or shrub root, a berry or a fruit. Fortunately, some of these same medicinal function as very efficacious natural antibiotics. Especially when they are prepared properly, these potent medicines can produce the desired effects without many of the adverse side effects associated with pharmaceutical-grade antibiotics.

High-powered pharmaceutical antibiotics certainly have their place in today's society.

Figure 6: A sample of the focus group's introduction

As seen in Figure 5, the passive group learner used another title for "Introduction", missed the aim, didn't maintain a paragraph form, but copy-pasted info in bullets and missed to cite background information. Whereas the focus group learner in Figure 6 included the aim, maintained the paragraph form, summarized and paraphrased info, but missed to cite background information.

The Method section requires 3 parts

**Safety:** This part is about the steps taken to keep safe from hazardous material.

**Material:** All the materials, instruments and steps used in the experiment are mentioned here.

**Procedure:** Description of conducting the experiment in details step by step are mentioned here (see samples of the 2 groups next).

**Materials:**

- Sterile disks (.1 per natural antibiotic tested). Alternatively, disks may be made by using a hole punch and filter paper, but they will need to be sterilized in the oven, as described in the procedure.
- Nutrient agar plates (2):
  - 1 plate will serve as controls, with no antibiotics.
  - 1 plate will serve as test plates, with antibiotic disks...

**You will also need to gather these items**

- Permanent marker
- Pencil
- Timer or clock
- Natural antibiotics extract...

**Procedure: Isolation of bacteria from your body**

**Hands:** Before washing your hands after a meal swirl it in a small amount of water

**Preparing plate for disk diffusion test**

1. Use a pencil or permanent marker to label each sterile disk with a code for the natural antibiotic, then keep track of the codes in your lab notebook.
2. Use a permanent marker to mark the bottoms of the nutrient agar plate that will be your test plate with 4 sections. The sections should all be equal in size. Number the sections sequentially.
3. Label the nutrient agar plate that will be your control panel...

**Measuring zones of inhibition**

1. After overnight incubation, examine your plates and take pictures of them
2. Measure the diameter of the zones of inhibition for each disk. Keeping the lid on the plate in place, use a ruler to measure the diameter of the disk plus the surrounding clear area (in millimeters)
3. Construct a bar graph of the results




Figure 7: A sample of the passive group’s method

**Method**

**Safety:**

- A disinfectant (Dettol) was used both at the beginning and the end to make sure the workspace was clear of other bacteria.
- Gloves were used in this experiment to make sure our hands were clear of any possible harmful bacteria.
- The forceps were placed in a Dettol solution every time the sterile disk was dipped in a different natural antibiotic.
- We washed our hands at the end of the experiment because we had dealt with bacteria.

**Materials:**

- sterile disks (from filter paper)
- nutrient agar plates
- sterile cotton-tipped applicator swabs
- bacteria isolated from my feet
- forceps

**Procedure:**

- Our workspace was disinfected with Dettol to make sure it was clear of any other bacteria.
- The sterile disks made from filter paper were placed in a microwave to incubate them and to remove any bacteria found on them...




Figure 8: A sample of the focus group’s method

As seen in Figure 7, the passive group learner missed the title “Method” and missed the “safety section” but copy-pasted instructions as these appear in the imperative form but not in the past tense. The focus group learner, as seen in Figure 8, followed the proper structure of the Method section and titles; he included the safety section



using the appropriate language, the passive past tense as “Gloves were used in this experiment”.

Results: The results were not set in tables in the pre-intervention phase; however, in the post-intervention phase these were included, but missing the titles (see Fig. 9).

Antibiotic	Thyme	Honey	Lemon	Garlic & olive oil
zone of inhibition (in mm)	9	9	17	20

Figure 9: A sample of the focus group’s results

Analysis: all learners explained what the results meant, but without adding the expression “referring to ...” or “as

seen in Figure1/Graph 2 ...”

Conclusion: the conclusion supported the experimental hypothesis, e.g. “therefore, the solution of olive oil and garlic is the best natural antibiotic.”

References: the 2 groups included the references, such as,

*Passive group*

<http://www.chopra.com/articles/8-effective-natural-antibiotics-to-help-beat-infections#sm.0001oede7o9x8dzssww2jri2qo24l>

*Focus group*

<http://naturalsociety.com/what-are-the-most-effective-natural-antibiotics>

<https://www.google.com.lb>

Mechanics: although the checklist instructions said that “12 point Times New Roman” font should be used, the passive group learner used font 18 for his titles, whereas, the focus group abided to the checklist.

Language: synthesized language is favored, the passive learner copy-pasted word for word from another source; whereas, the focus group learner summarized and paraphrased the gathered info.

Quantitative Results: Pre/Post-intervention Scores

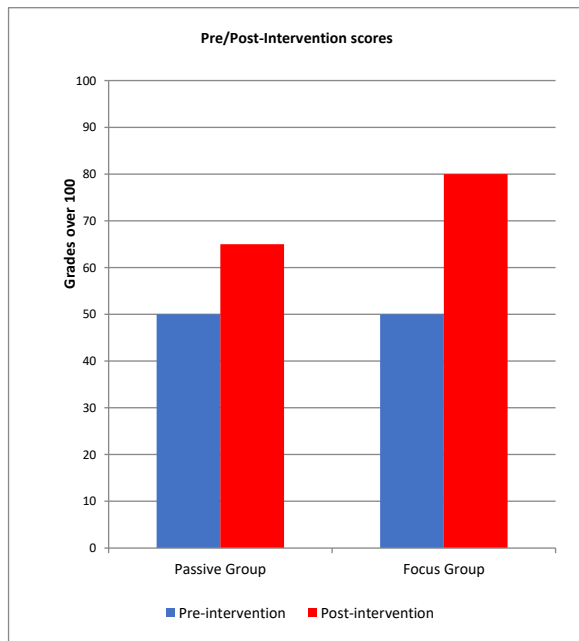


Figure 10: pre/post-intervention scores of the 2 groups

As seen in Figure 10, the score of the passive group shifted from 50.0 to 65; whereas, the focus group shifted from 50 to 80. This means that the focus group, who participated in online instructions and in procedural scaffolding approach, implemented the writing-process techniques, outperformed the passive at school significantly by 15 points. This validates the hypothesis that the integration of technology, Google+, pedagogy, Vygotskian constructivism, and exposure to authentic material led the learners to improve in Science Report writing.

### The Interviews

At the end of the intervention, the participants were asked their opinion about the intervention, “How did you benefit from the study?” “Do you think it could help in other courses? How?” Learners from the focus group responded (see the snapshot in Appendix G), one learner said, “This was very helpful ...we may benefit at the university...”, another said “I enjoyed it, it was helpful, it can help in our upcoming research papers as well.” These learners realized that instruction on this platform was effective and applicable to other studies and in higher education in the future. Moreover, an Interview with their science instructor was conducted, following each question (Q) she answered (A), as seen here:

Q1-Do you integrate Internet technology and authentic contents in science classroom? (Internet sources) How?

A1-Yes, I do. Science fair projects are assigned to students where they research about the scientific problem in hand on the Internet using reliable sources to come up with a hypothesis, which is then verified experimentally. Students' science reports, ideas, opinions and collected information are shared in the school-blog. Virtual field trips are done to different ecosystems; tours inside cells or living organisms' different systems are visited, next to virtual labs and simulations. Our future plans include arranging meetings in class, via Skype with scientists, NASA researchers, and astronauts...

Q2-Do you usually integrate science and EFL teaching? When teaching science do you correct their English? How?

A2- I correct their grammatical and spelling mistakes without having to deduct any grades. My target is their scientific literacy. I focus on the scientific content in my evaluations rather than their English language.

Q3-What is the rubric you follow to instruct science report writing? (free writing? the book? other?)

A3- I evaluate each part according to the scientific content.

Q4-Do they work individually, in pairs or in groups? How?

A4- They work individually applying their knowledge i.e solving the exercises or answering the questions in class or writing reports. They work in pairs in visible thinking routines such as think, pair, and share... They work in groups in science fair projects, activities in class and experiments.

As seen in this interview she employs Internet for research purposes, as virtual labs and other, which expands their knowledge horizons and moves beyond the textbook; however, her focus is on the scientific content. As for science report writing rubric, she doesn't abide by any format, this validates the pre-intervention report content analysis. For their science projects, they work in pairs but procedural scaffolding is not applied.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the results validate the hypothesis that employment of TPACK framework, namely integration of Google+ (Cavazza, 2012), the instructional, collaborative and motivating platform, procedural scaffolding (Constructivist theory), and exposure to authentic content developed cycle 3 Lebanese learners in science report writing. The perception of the learners, reflected through the interviews, was positive. Similarly, their science class instructor implemented all the skills, related to science report writing, practiced in this study, on the rest of her cycle 3 classrooms. The significance of this study is in line with timely studies involving Web-based learning. At last, the Quantitative and the Qualitative results contributed to the field of integration of technology in EFL learning. It is recommended that authorities adopt: a unified form of science report writing for the science classes in the Curriculum of

cycle 3, and integrate Pedagogic theories and Authentic Content in various school courses to instruct the learners while motivating them.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: A sample of science report “Boiling Water”

Retrieved on February 4, 2017, and adapted from <http://studylib.net/doc/8430705/how-to-write-a-scientific-report>

### Appendix B: The outline of science report

Retrieved on February 12, 2017, and adapted from: <https://unilearning.uow.edu.au/report/2b.html>

## Appendix C: Report Writing Rubric

### Report Writing Rubric

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

	Advanced/Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Failing	Score
Title/Introduction/Hypothesis	Title is informative and clear. Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow. Clearly explains the purpose of the lab. Includes background information, vocabulary, question(s) or problem(s) to study, and a hypothesis with a full explanation. (Variables fully and clearly identified.) Provides a link between the background information and hypothesis.	Title is mostly informative and clear. Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow. Adequately explains the purpose of the lab. Includes some background information, vocabulary, a question or problem to study and a hypothesis with some explanation. (Variables clearly identified.)	Title is mostly clear but not informative. Intro. somewhat explains the purpose of the lab. Includes some background information, vocabulary, a question or problem to study and a hypothesis with no explanation. (Some variables identified.)	Title information is not clear or not relevant to lab. Intro. does not explain purpose of lab. Includes no background information. The problem or question is unclear. Hypothesis is not testable.	
Safety/ Materials / Procedure	Fully explores all relevant safety considerations. Effectively describes, in detail, how the experiment was performed. Includes all materials used and the procedure followed. Written in a manner that allows the experiment to be repeated. (Optional) Designs a detailed procedure that effectively addresses the question being studied. Generates data relevant to the variable(s) being studied and provides for adequate controls.	Explores relevant safety considerations. Adequately describes how the experiment was performed. Includes important materials used and the procedure followed. Mostly written so that the experiment can be repeated. (Optional) Designs a procedure that addresses the question being studied. Generates data mostly relevant to the variable(s) being studied and provides for adequate controls.	Explores some relevant safety considerations. Somewhat describes how the experiment was performed. Includes some materials used and a skeletal procedure. Somewhat written so that the experiment to be repeated. (Optional) Designs a procedure that barely addresses the question being studied. Lacks ability to collect important data. Variable are not clear and/or lacks adequate controls.	Explores irrelevant safety considerations or safety missing. Does not adequately describe how the experiment was performed. Lacks most materials. Experiment cannot be repeated. (Optional) Procedure design is completely inadequate to study question. Lacks variables and data collection methods.	
Data & Results / Calculations	Fully, clearly, and effectively organizes and reports all data collected during the experiment, including all raw data (without interpretation). All data and results organized in clear and fully labeled tables, charts, and graphs. All calculations shown, with units.	Clearly and effectively reports most data collected during the experiment with adequate organization. Data and results organized in clear tables, charts, and graphs. Most calculations shown, with units.	Reports most data collected during the experiment with some organization. Missing some data. Some data and results in tables, charts, and graphs. Some calculations shown, with some units.	Report is missing large amounts of data and is very unorganized. Tables, charts, and graphs do not show data and results. Calculations not shown.	
Conclusion/ Discussion / Sources of Error	Claims a precise and well-supported conclusion that responds to the purpose of the lab. Distinguishes the claim from an alternative or opposing claim. Supports claim with logical reasoning and many examples of relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic. Fully summarizes and explains the meaning of data and results, with some examples. Explains relationship to hypothesis. Identifies important sources of error and explains effects on results.	Claims a conclusion based on data and results that ties to the purpose of the lab. Distinguishes the claim from an alternative or opposing claim. Supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic. Adequately summarizes and explains the meaning of the data and results. Hypothesis tied to results. Identifies some important sources of error and an effect of a source of error.	Makes claims and reaches conclusions minimally based on data and results. Somewhat supports claim with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that somewhat demonstrate an understanding of the topic. Somewhat summarizes and explains the meaning of the data and results with no concrete examples. Indirectly or barely refers to hypothesis. Inappropriately or minimally identifies sources of error.	Conclusion and claims do not relate to data and results. Does not support claim with logical reasoning. Uses little relevant, accurate data or evidence. Does not demonstrate an understanding of the topic. Does not summarize and/or explain data and results. Does not use examples of observations; generalizes without support. Fails to identify sources of error.	
Format	Meets all requirements given by your instructor.	Meets most requirements given by your instructor.	Meets some requirements given by your instructor.	Does not meet requirements given by instructor.	

Retrieved on March 4, 2017, from Formal Lab Report Writing Toolkit for Grades 6-8, Dr. Robert G. O'Donnell Middle School. Revised in Summer 2013.

## Appendix D: Pre-intervention Science Report samples

Sample 1 - Biology Research Paper: Chlorophyllic Plants

Sample 2 - The Scientific Method: Can we fold A4 paper equally more than seven times?

Sample 3 - How is my blood type determined?

<https://agbuschools.edublogs.org/2017/01/19/how-is-my-blood-type-determined/#.XVe0erj7I6g>

## Appendix E: Results of 3 random pre-intervention reports

Criteria	Sample 1	Sample 2	Sample 3
Title	✓ Too general	✓ Interrogative form	✓ Interrogative form
Abstract	x	x	x
Problem	✓ mis-ordered	✓ mis-ordered	✓ mis-ordered
Hypothesis	✓	✓	✓
Introduction	✓ Wrong title	✓ Wrong title	✓ Wrong title
Aim	x	x	x
Background information & Citation	✓ not paraphrased nor cited	✓ not cited	✓ not paraphrased nor cited
Form (paragraph)	✓	✓	Bulleted
Method	Title: Experiment	Title: Experiment	Title: Experiment
Safety	x	x	✓ (not bulleted)
Material (bulleted)	✓ (not bulleted)	✓ (not bulleted)	✓ (not bulleted)
Procedure (bulleted)	✓ (not bulleted)	✓ (not bulleted)	
Results	✓	✓	✓
Table	x	x	x
Graph	✓ (not labeled)	x	x
Chart	x	x	x
Figure (Labelled)	x	x	✓ (not labeled)
Analysis	✓	✓	x
Conclusion	✓	✓	✓ insufficient no transition
References	x	x	x

Formal Style	✓	✓	✓
Grammar:			
Past tense	Use of imperative and passive forms	Use of imperative Passive not used	Use of present tense and pronoun
Passive voice		Use of pronoun We	Passive not used Use of pronoun We

Notes. Abbreviated symbols mean: ✓ Present, x Absent

### Appendix F: Results of pre/post-intervention reports

Criteria	Pre-intervention 2 groups	Post-interv Focus group	Post-interv Passive group
Title	✓	✓	✓
Abstract	Interrogative X Totally absent	Declarative ✓	Declarative ✓ needs restructuring
Problem	✓ mis-ordered	✓	✓ Titled as "Question"
Hypothesis	✓	✓	✓
Introduction	✓ Wrong title	✓	Wrong title
Aim	x	✓	x
Background information & Citation	✓	✓	✓
Form (paragraph)	not paraphrased nor cited Bulleted	not cited ✓	not cited not paraphrased Bulleted
Method	Title: Experiment	✓	Title: Experiment
Safety	X (Totally absent)	✓	x
Material (bulleted)	✓ (not bulleted)	(bulleted)	✓ (bulleted)
Procedure (bulleted)	✓ (not bulleted)	✓ (bulleted) ✓ (bulleted)	✓ (bulleted)
Results	✓	✓	✓
Table	x	✓	✓
Graph	x	✓ (not labeled)	✓
Chart	x	x	x
Figure (Labelled)	✓ (not labeled)	x x	x
Analysis	x	✓	✓
Conclusion	✓	✓	✓



References	insufficient no transition x	✓	✓
Formal Style	✓	✓	✓
Grammar:			
Past tense	Use of imperative, present tense and pronoun	Use of and passive forms in the past	Use of imperative Passive not used Use of pronoun
Passive voice	Passive not used Use of pronoun We.		We

Notes. Abbreviated symbols mean: ✓ Present, x Absent

## Appendix G: The learners' interview answers

The image shows a Facebook group interface for 'Science Report Writing Skills' with 13 members. A discussion post by Liza Bastadjian asks for feedback on a platform. A response from Garo Giritlian is shown. Below, a list of comments from other members expresses gratitude and appreciation for the session.

**Science Report Writing Skills**  
13 members - Private

**Liza Bastadjian** Owner • Discussion • 4d  
Dear group,  
I thank you for your participation on this platform.  
Who can tell, how did you benefit from this intervention?  
Do you think it could help in other courses? how?

**Garo Giritlian:** This was very helpful for us, and we may benefit from this in the future at university. Thank you. :)

Good Evening everyone!  
How are you?

Shared privately • View activity

- Garo Giritlian** +1 • 6d  
Thank you very much!!
- Garo Nadjarian** +1 • 6d  
I enjoyed it!!!
- crystal yessayan** +1 • 6d  
Thank you 😊
- HRAGO Partamian** +1 • 6d  
I enjoyed it, and this session was helpful and it can also help in our upcoming research papers aswell
- Garo Nadjarian** +1 • 6d  
Thank you!! :)
- HRAGO Partamian** +1 • 6d  
Thanks

# Imagological Stereotypes in Letters and Diaries of Besieged Leningrad

**Ekaterina Gurina**

Bauman Moscow State Technical University

## Abstract

The article deals with the problem of cross-cultural communication and imagological stereotypes that every nation has. It discusses their influence on the assessment of historical events. It analyses “Pryamaya rech” (Direct Speech) - a documentary book created by amateur writers L. Romankov, M. Romankova - engineers and physisits, L. Myasnikova – a surgeon, and the reviews of a historical book written by Boston University assosiate professor of history A. Peri, containing diaries of besieged Leningrad. The Russian belief in such principles as collectivism, generosity, self-restriction, self-control, diligence and conscientiousness is considered by foreign scholars to have been imposed by “Soviet propaganda”. Nevertheless, I argue that they became the result of the Russian nation’s evolutionary development during its long and tragic history. It is these traits of character rather than individualism, found by A. Peri in the diaries, that are more typical for Russian people and that can help to survive in historical catastrophes. I also suppose that Russian classical literature has become part and parcel of foreign hetero -stereotype image of Russia. Several intertextual links of besieged Leningrad diaries to classical Russian literature have been found by A Peri and the authors of foreign reviews.

**Keywords:** imagological stereotype, siege, documentary book, cross-cultural communication

## Introduction

Nowadays cross-cultural communication is discussed very widely. At present various national cultures are regarded as interdependent entities (Holden) rather than different ones (E. T. Hall, R. D. Lewis, G. Hofstede, F. Trompenaars, C. Geertz as quoted in Realo et.al., 2009) The latter viewpoint is based on the 19th century cultural anthropology theory. As far as communication is concerned, it is usually a kind of dialogue between parties. It implies the ability to deliver information as well as to receive and interpret it. During the process of cross-cultural communication, i.e. the communication between different peoples, “the introduction to <...> another

country's culture" is essential for information perception and mutual understanding, though it does not deny the necessity to "study one's own culture" (Mirolyubov, 2012, p. 43). The knowledge of national and world history and culture allows to get an "increment in spiritual realm" (Mirolyubov, 2012, p. 45), obtain cultural identity and get rid of stereotypes.

## **Methodology**

The attributes of imagological or ethno-stereotypes, which are subdivided into auto- and hetero-stereotypes and represent the self in contrast to other nations, can be found as early as in medieval literature (Koroleva, S., 2014), (Papilova, E., 2013). They vary among different countries. It is assumed that "it takes decades to change the content of national stereotypes (Madon et al., 2001)", because "national stereotypes are very stable over time and even significant events in the world political landscape do not radically change their content." (Realo et al., 2009, p. 231) They are 'pictures in our heads' (Lippmann, 1922), they are acquired <...> from<...> gossip, anecdotes, books and films." (Realo et al., 2009 p.231) Nowadays these stereotypes are studied by sociologists and political scientists, linguists and literary critics. For this purpose, the latter apply the tools of a special branch of comparative literature studies called imagology. The information it provides may help to overcome ethnic hatred due to achieving better understanding during the process of cross-national communication. For an ethno-stereotype study, which involves auto- and hetero-ones, personal communication, fiction and poetry cannot be considered the only sources of information. Letters published in books of memoirs and documentary biographies are able to make a substantial contribution to this study too.

## **Discussion**

### **Cannibalism and crime**

One of the most important episodes in Russian history is the siege of Leningrad during the Great Patriotic War which lasted from the 22-d of June 1941 to the 9-th of May 1945. Undoubtedly, it was a part of World War II, nevertheless, it became a special war for the Soviet people. For any resident of the former Soviet Union, the word "blockade" which is translated as a siege recalls such stereotype images as: a tiny piece of bread weighing 125 grams, snow, emaciated people pulling sledges with: buckets of water, relatives or corpses. G. Manaev also adds to this list: cards, light reflectors, animal glue, loudspeakers and cigarettes. (Manaev, 2019) All these images can be found in Russian memoirs and novels about the siege: "The Siege Book" by D. Granin, "Almost three years" by V. Ibner and a lot of other books offered at the site "Livelib" (<https://www.livelib.ru/selection/541930-knigi-o-blokade-leningrada>). However, analyzing some foreign historical works and their reviews, one comes to the conclusion that abroad these 872 war days are associated with absolutely different things: cannibalism, theft, cruelty and corruption. Unfortunately, it is these concepts that correspond to the contemporary western reader's idea of Russia as a

country of tycoons and criminals, “as a black -hatted villain” (Crosston, 2018, p.1), as “the world of the thieves” (Galeotti, 2018) and allow D. Benioff to name his book (2008) about besieged Leningrad ‘City of Thieves’. It sounds insulting and before publishing it in this country, its title has been changed into “City”. But the closer the publication is to the war time, the less the discrepancy between Russian and foreign images of the siege is. A. Werth was a British correspondent in the USSR during the war and interviewed Leningrad citizens as soon as the siege was over. Of course, he narrates about hunger and cold, but he does stress people’s fortitude and conscientiousness: “We went on with this blueprint work right through the winter 1941-2. . . It was a blessing for us architects. The best medicine that could have been given us during the famine. The moral effect is when a hungry man knows he's got a useful job of work to do.” (Werth, as quoted in Eyewitnesstohistory) This quote refutes “common belief about the Russian national character shared” in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland and Belarus that Russians are “low in<...> conscientiousness” (Realo et.al., 2009 p.245). This “belief” contradicts the witnesses of “blokadniks” – people who lived in besieged Leningrad. They are provided by some contemporary western authors and ought to be taken into consideration: “One woman of fifty-seven years of age, wrote of eighteen day shifts, twelve hours a day hacking at ground “as hard as rock” .<...> Teenage girls <...>were expected to dig and maneuvered concrete blocks using just their hands and a crowbar. People always reported for work either out of patriotic duty or<...> penalty.” (Colley, 2012, p. 10) It is these traits of character that are connected to a siege victim image in Russia, though there were numerous crimes and even 1500 registered cannibalism cases. The blokadniks’ correspondence has been included into the book “Pryamaya rech’ (Direct Speech)” by L. Romankov, M. Romankova, and L. Myasnikova. They survived the siege in their childhood and the information they provide coincides with the facts that can be found in the book “The War Within Diaries from the Siege of Leningrad” written by Boston University associate professor of history A. Peri in 2016. However, its interpretation is slightly different. The book has got positive reviews in “The Guardian” and in the weekly “The Spectator “. “The Guardian’s” assessment of the facts presented in the book, which analyses 125 diaries found by the author in 8 Russian archives or obtained from blokadniks and their relatives, does not diverge much from the traditional one. D. Alberge, a representative of the liberal press, writes about hunger and cold, but pinpoints that the blokadniks’ struggle was their internal battle with themselves rather than a heroic collective resistance to the enemy. She refers the readers to the New Testament as well as to the 2012 film adaptation of L. Tolstoy’s novel “Anna Karenina” made by J. Wright and T. Stoppard, when quoting Aleksandra Liubovskaia’s diary. The woman compares herself with Virgin Mary: “Describing the horror of washing her son, whose skin was covered with scurvy-induced blotches, she recalled Mary cleansing the body of her crucified son.” (Alberge, 2016) The audience recollects both “The Bible” and the episode in “Anna Karenina” when Kitty starts to take care of K. Levin's dying. L. Tolstoy describes “the sick man” who was as skinny as a blokadnik. His underwear “on Kitty’s orders <...> was being

changed” and his body became visible: “The long, white frame of his back, with enormous protruding shoulder blades, the ribs and vertebrae sticking out, was bare”. (Tolstoy, 2013, p. 494). It was a “frightening body” for Levin, but not for Kitty who “obviously did not think about herself <...>; she thought about him [Nikolai]” (Tolstoy, 2013, p. 495, 496). However, in the novel Kitty avoided looking at Nikolay’s naked body, respected his feelings, understood that he” found it embarrassing and unpleasant to be naked in front of her” (Tolstoy, 2013, p. 494) But nowadays the attitude towards nakedness has changed. T. Stoppard and J. Wright violate the historical truth for the sake of modern trends. They recoup on poor sick Nikolai turning Maria Nikolaevna and Kitty into indifferent nurses paying no attention to the patient’s weak protests and the harm that they do to his soul: “Nikolai lies naked in clean sheets. Masha hauls him up into a sitting position. Kitty puts a nightshirt over his head. Nikolai protests feebly”. But everything becomes clean around him:” Nikolai lies quietly in a neat bed in the neat room, with medicine and water jug, etc., tidily by the bed.” (Stoppard, 2012, p. 157) Unfortunately, today Americans and Europeans are very reasonable. They care much more about washing their hair rather than cleansing their sins. However, L. Tolstoy who tried to be reasonable too, comes to the conclusion that reason does not help when people die. Quoting Matthew, he calls Kitty and Maria Nikolaevna “babes” and K. Levin “the imprudent” (Tolstoy, 2013, p.496), because K. Levin “could not help knowing that he was more intelligent than his wife” (Tolstoy, 2013, p. 496) and tried to “believe in reason” (Stoppard, 2012, p.194), but death makes him admit that he “did not know a hundredth part of what his wife <...> knew about it” (Tolstoy, 2013, p.496) Kitty and Agafia know that people must not be afraid of death, if their lives are righteous. But people are sinful. And as D. Alberge underlines, suffering is the path to salvation. In her review she stresses the significance of the Leningraders’ sacrifice, drawing a parallel between Aleksandra Liubovskaia family’s lot, Nikolai’s death and Jesus Christ’s predestination, who “loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5), who died for our sins. “The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23) and “without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins” (9:22, NRSV). By 1941 the city had been gripped by sin. As for Colley, describing Saint-Petersburg, he also mentions L. Tolstoy, saying that Saint-Petersburg “was the city of Tolstoy” (Colley, 2012, p.5) and appealing to the foreign stereotype image of Russia as the homeland of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky’s “the holy” literature. Nevertheless, speaking about Saint-Petersburg, he does not mention Dostoevsky’s gloomy city which was full of evil and can remind us besieged Leningrad. This image contradicts to Tolstoy’s city of “high culture “and” French-speaking Russian aristocrats” (Colley, 2012, p.5) especially scrupulous about the issues of decency and honor. But eventually Saint-Petersburg became “the cradle of revolution” (Colley, 2012, p.6) Sin had taken possession of its people. They forgot about conscience and God, got used to writing denunciations out of jealousy, greed and fear. The result of that was that “30000 Leningraders were arrested, exiled, or executed, labelled as enemies of the people” (Colley, 2012, p.6). These victims were the price to be paid for being possessed by sin. But they were not enough to be

forgiven for those sins and “ for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:1-2, New Revised Standard Version).Leningraders were made to pay “over one million” (Colley, 2012, p.3) human death toll to try to save the world from “oblivion through death with no hope beyond the grave” ( Aust, 2009). D. Alberge argues in her review that in spite of the terrible accidents and atrocities that took place during the siege A. Peri feels deep respect towards the Leningraders.

As for J. Mirsky, who writes for the Conservative Party weekly magazine “The Spectator”, he avoids analyzing the events making into account the sinful nature of man and follows the tradition to blame the Soviet ideology that failed to prevent people from cannibalism, theft, cruelty and corruption that took place in the city, from plunging into “the political, social, familial and personal nightmares” (Myrsky, 2016) when “ parents [were] eat[ing] their dead children, or vice versa” and people were “ steal[ing] the ration cards of those who “dropped dead” (Myrsky, 2016) in ques. His words “I wouldn’t have ever believed” (Myrsky, 2016) demonstrate that the journalist sees the English as a nation possessing special endurance and upbringing, incapable of mistakes and mean deeds, impeccable and unerring. This auto-stereotype is opposed to the old hetero-stereotype image of Russians as “barbarians at the gate “ (Koroleva, 2014) who are prone to numerous vices. For example, describing the siege, the author tries to impress the audience speaking about sexual harassment in that city: “Those in charge of food supplies, and of dishing out the meagre rations, often stole food for themselves - you could tell by looking at them - or exchanged it for sexual favors. So, when you saw a plump, pretty girl with lovely hair and color, you always knew why she looked so good.” (Myrsky, 2016) Addressing intellectual readers, he draws parallels between the siege of Leningrad and the siege of Troy described by Homer in the Iliad: “Stand aside, Homer. I doubt whether even the author of the Iliad could have matched Alexis Peri’s account of the 872-day siege which Leningrad endured after Hitler’s army encircled the city in September 1941.” (Myrsky, 2016) Demonstrating excellent knowledge of classical literature, referring to Tolstoy and to the hetero-stereotype image of “holy” Russian literature, the author nevertheless makes a blunder dealing with the Soviet history. He claims that Stalin escaped from Moscow during the war: “In Stalin’s Moscow all this [ the siege] was supposed to be a glorious second Fatherland War, like the one Tolstoy created in “War and Peace”, this time led by Stalin (who had fled Moscow when Hitler invaded) ” (Myrsky, 2016). However, his error, which, unfortunately, is not obvious to foreign audience, makes Russian readers doubt that they can trust the information provided in the article. For example, the author arrives at the conclusion: in those days, Russian classical literature with its high ideals had an opposite effect on the people. The audience is referred to the novel “War and Peace” by L. Tolstoy as well as to its 2016 BBC film adaptation. In diaries Leningraders compared their life during the siege and Tolstoy characters’ life during the war with Napoleon: “But when the Leningrad blokadniki read Tolstoy they experienced not inspiration but puzzlement. The Rostovs weren’t

starving; they could leave Moscow with cartloads of belongings, and few of the major characters died" (Myrsky, 2016). It made people feel discouraged.

### **Collectivism vs. individualism**

In their reviews the journalists draw the reader's attention to different narration points in A. Peri's book and interpret them inequally. One of the imagological images of Russia is a dissident - "a person who publicly disagrees with and criticizes their government" (Cambridge dictionary) J. Myrsky pinpoints that although *blokadni* did not oppose the party's line frankly, the diaries testify that their thoughts were in conflict with the propaganda that demanded heroism and faith in victory from the citizens: "Peri contends that while the diarists were rarely subversive or anti-Soviet, what they generally recorded was despair, pain and terror. Their insights and reflections fell outside the Party line of heroism and hope." (Myrsky, 2016) "The Guardian" also holds it that most of the diaries lack any heroic motive. They are very self-centered, full of despair and depression. People were worried not about collective, but individual problems which they were facing and striving to solve at those times and were able to entrust to their diaries only. The explanation of this fact that the journalists offer to their readers does not take into account that individualism is less typical for Russians than for any other European nation due to their Orthodox conciseness. Unlike community spirit, self-dependence has never been considered to be one of the main Russian traits of character. Isolation could never help in Russia. The foreign interpretation of the siege is influenced by the western critical attitude towards this country which has always been viewed on either as "a barbarian at the gate" or a negligent "student". Moreover, every episode of Soviet history is assessed in terms of one more imagological stereotype - "Soviet propaganda". The access to western radio stations is considered to be important even during the war as only they are thought to be able to guarantee the freedom of speech: "It was not until the era of glasnost in the mid-1980s that the Ukraine famine and the starvation in Leningrad emerged from their smothering in propaganda." (Darori, 2018) This point of view can hardly be considered well-grounded. The author defines the famine of the 30-ies as "the Ukraine" one in spite of the fact that it took place in Russia too. He writes: "Isolation increased with the lack of outside news. Anyone who listened to a foreign radio station, when the electricity was working, risked execution. Cautious citizens did not dare mention the blockade or the siege. The correct phrase was "the battle" or "the defense" of Leningrad. Bulletins from the Soviet Information Bureau and reports in *Leningradskaya Pravda* revealed little, so rumors ran unchecked" (Darori, 2018). This statement is disproved by Marina Romankova's letter published in her book "Pryamaya rech" (Direct speech). She is 10 years old and demonstrates her excellent knowledge of the current international affairs to her aunt: "I want to tell you important news: Japan declared war on America and England. Two air attacks and one sea attack have already been made on the Hawaiian Islands" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 37)

Of course, it goes without saying that letters usually differed greatly from diaries. When writing a letter, people usually became their own censors as they tried "not to give extra work of cutting out <...> lines to military censorship" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 35). However, the "medical nightmare" described by Myrsky does not correlate with the real blokadnik letters. According to N. Davidenkov, it is better to view the war and Leningrad siege as a "historical catastrophe" which the citizens "have got into".

### **Direct speech**

Since the advent of political and economic reforms in Russia, lots of amateur authors have published their books. The grandchildren of the famous Soviet physicist N. Davidenkov: M. Romankova, L. Romankov, L. Myasnikova have compiled a documentary book "Pryamayarech", ("Direct Speech"). It contains about 60 letters of their relatives from besieged Leningrad to their aunt, an assistant professor of Moscow State Technical School named after N.E. Bauman I. Voshchinina, evacuated to Chelyabinsk. She was a very charming person, was acquainted with poetess A. Akhmatova and ballerina G. Ulanova, so her nephew and nieces hope that "at least <...> children, grandchildren and their friends" will read this book, find out their family story and it will "give them something in order to understand the complexity and diversity of the world." (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 6). Though its introduction and conclusion may seem to be too academic, the letters let us hear the speech of Russian intelligentsia and make this book interesting and easy to read.

The head of the family N. Davidenkov was born in a noble family in Riga at the end of the 70ies of the 19th century. K. Levin's son Mitya whose birth is described by L. Tolstoy in "Anna Karenina" could have been his coeval. Lots of those who belonged to that generation immigrated, were shot or died in the camps after the revolution. N. Davidenkov belonged to those who were lucky enough to avoid repression. He did a lot for the development of science and engineering in this country. His work was highly appreciated by the government especially during the war. Having spent his childhood in Smolensk, he later moved to St. Petersburg, where he studied and then lived and worked almost all his life. He stayed in the city when the war began. He and his family wrote letters to his wife's niece, dear Irinochka, from besieged Leningrad. I. Voshinina belonged to a noble family, was nee Rot and the granddaughter of the governor of Kiev. Her father left Russia with the White Army. Her step father (her father's brother) was executed. That's why she had to change her surname and spend her childhood in the Davidenkovs family. They brought her up like their own child. In 1941 she and her husband, who was a valuable specialist, had two Ph. D degrees in Science, were evacuated, but she kept correspondence with the Davidenkovs and sent them food as often and as much as she could. One cannot find in them any trace of the slightest despair, so typical for Leningrad diaries, probably, because there was a military censorship. Nevertheless, they are very sincere and sometimes full of



humor. Even in such a difficult situation, the Davidenkovs are able to joke. Typical Russian “openness” (Realo et.al., 2009) and “collective” (Myrsky, 2016) spirit were their recipe of survival. It is contrary to Peri’s call for individualism: “‘The best way to survive was to draw an even tighter ring around oneself.’ (Myrsky, 2016) According to A. Peri, “collective solidarity is fine for socialist ideology, but it’s really isolation that people experience[d]” (Alberge, 2016) during the siege. The letters demonstrate that the Russian saying: “Do not have a hundred of rubles, but have a hundred of friends” happened to be true. Isolation, the lack of support led to death inevitably, while freinship saved people. N. Davidenkov writes: “Petya and I have friends - former students who help a little here and there” (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 38). Perhaps this spirit of collectivism, which A. Peri does not believe in, can explain “how such a miracle happened that almost all of us survived” (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 6)

### **Adults and children during the siege**

The characters of the book are both adults and children. Their common peculiar feature is that they are all ready- to- help persons. Thanks God, the firewood for that winter had been bought by the family before the war in May. If it had been done as usual in September, it would have been too late. Besides that, their neighbors were decent people and nobody tried to steal it. The family understood what a blessing it was. That’s why instead of eating somebody, they shared what they possessed with other people. They offered hot water to their numerous guests and let their neighbors warm up in their flat. Besides kindness and generosity, it was their diligence, hardworking, an ability to cope with their instincts , to organize their life properly that helped them to survive: “It's so good that you found a job for yourself, - writes N. Davidenkov to I. Voshinina, - it helps to live and endure hardships and anxieties, even hunger: when you work, you forget about hunger. ”( Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 65) In their letters dating back to the terrible winter of 1942 when the famine and cold were the worst, they still attempt to make jokes: “As you can see, we are OK, although we are actually starving, but not very much and even less than many of the others. Your mother has become like a young lady, and the aunt too. But she has found out the great pleasure of eating when the stomach is empty. Our dreams are about cuisine and food.” (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 48) “Sometimes we manage to buy tiles of animal glue for 25-50 rubles and make the filler out of it. It is fragrant.” (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 50)

The style of the letters is amazing, taking into consideration the conditions under which the authors lived at that time. Sometimes there is a feeling that they do not speak about evacuation but about a tour: “Here we have received a wonderful New Year's gift from you - a telegram that your trip has finally ended safely! ... I hope you will describe in detail the whole trip.” (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p.

39) I. Voshchinina lived more than 100 years, and she kept these letters from besieged Leningrad all her life. These 60 letters give us an opportunity not only to find out what was happening at that hard period of Russian history, but to hear the eyewitnesses voices and enjoy their 19-th century old-fashioned, but elegant style that was still in use among Russian intelligentsia in the middle of the 20th century, who, nevertheless, had already stopped "French-speaking" being afraid of prosecution. The letter topics are not diverse. There are only 6 of them: 1. food and meals, 2. work that provides them food, 3. household chores, 4. illnesses and cold, 5. evacuation, 6. incidents in their life, with food being the main one. Politics is discussed very rarely and delicately. Their daily meager menu is reported in almost every letter, and, as one can see above, with subtle humor. The illnesses caused by the cold and hunger were inevitable and numerous: bowel disorder - "23 r. Per day!", pleurisy, flu, a urinary canal polyp, a full range of childhood diseases - whooping cough, scarlet fever, chickenpox, smallpox, milk tooth. The military censorship made them write about their friends' deaths choosing words very carefully too: "Borechka (Vorobyov) selflessly worked for his INSTITUTE <...> has been deprived of the opportunity to be useful to the state" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 72) - which means that the rector was shot on charges of panic. The narration about their daily routine is quite understandable. The winter of 1941-1942 was very severe. The temperature dropped below minus 30C. Transport, water supply, sewage, central heating did not work, electricity was cut off. They stood in lines for bread, went for water with buckets, took out "their buckets of shit to the scrapheap". Their chance to survive was close to nothing. However, they refused to waste their time on going to the bomb shelter, which they called the "Petushkovs", and continued their scientific research the dim gas lamp light. They were working on the recipe of soy milk which helped to save children from hunger, writing and books, even managed to get a doctoral degree. And even their grandchildren, being four years old, studied a lot. They "learned how to write, to add and subtract to five by themselves" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 54). The daughter of L. Myasnikova's former Ph.D. student devoted her essay in Switzerland to the analysis of the Davidenkov's siege experience. She writes to L. Myasnikova: "My German teacher <...> was especially interested in your grandmother, how she was able to organize the family in order to survive, namely, that the children had to be busy (writing, cleaning) and that they had to eat their rations strictly in time. It turns out that her mother, when she was little, also survived the war. Unfortunately, the war traumatized her mother mentally. Frau Schroedter said that if her mother had had such a grandmother at that moment, then perhaps she would have survived the war easier." (Tervoort, 2019) The adults in the Davidenkovs family cared about their children very much and were very attentive to them and put down their wise remarks. Lelia, who was 4 years old, asked: "Mom, what is a dependent, is it a person or a thing?" A dependent is a person who does not work. In besieged Leningrad, dependents as well as children received the least ration of bread-only 125 g per day. Since life was so difficult, both children and adults tried to enjoy trivia. The restart of sewage and running water in the summer of 1942 was a

great present for them: "A very happy thing has recently taken place: since May 20, the sewage has been working, and since May 23, the running water has been in operation, you do not need to go to the fire hydrant to get water. This is a very, very big relief." (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 76). Being rather pragmatic, Marina, who is ten, takes care of her garden on the balcony. She plants "lettuce seedlings, <...> onions and dill" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 73) there. She tries to teach her aunt in Chelyabinsk: "I am very sad that you don't visit your garden because "the garden is life," from our point of view." (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 78) As a child, Marina is more optimistic than the grownups. She believes that Germans will be defeated and tries to support her depressed aunt: "Do not Cry! See you some day. After all, this terrible, bloody war will not last for centuries." (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 52) When spring comes, N. Davidenkov is delighted by the beauty of nature: "It is the middle of spring, the weather is wonderful, the trees are turning green, and the city looks so peaceful, as if there were no war." (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 64) "Now in Leningrad, there is beautiful, fresh, lush greenery, everything is clean and quiet, the whole city has been turned into kitchen gardens" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 68) The life is getting better and it is important "to be as careful as possible so as not to fall into the number of "extra victims." (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 78)

In "Anna Karenina" L. Tolstoy, who was always proud of his ancestry, stresses how important good manners can be. He describes Kitty's feelings at the ball, when she finds out that Vronsky is in love with Anna: "Only the strict school of upbringing she had gone through supported her and made her do what was demanded of her" (Tolstoy, 2013, p. 81) Belonging to the nobility, N. Davidenkov and his wife possessed excellent manners and self-control and managed to bring up their children and grandchildren in the same way. It is the ability to cope with instincts, wishes and vices that made it possible for them to survive. In the letters to I. Voshinina there are complaints about their housekeeper Marusya (a former peasant) who was unable and unwilling to control her feeling of hunger. : "Marusia is very annoying, she grabs and eats everything that has been left somewhere, put into storage or forgotten; it is impossible to persuade her to stop it, and you have to keep everything locked up" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 74) When she went away, they felt a relief. The Davidenkovs bought scales to share food equally and even to get an opportunity to feed their son, who lived at his wife's place and "they [did] not leave much [for him] in his family" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 42). The Davidenkovs were not greedy. When the parcel with bread that I. Voshinina had sent them was stolen they treated the accident philosophical: "Your package, unfortunately, has not reached its destination: at such a time as now, food orders are not delivered!" (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p.38) Everyday issues prevail in their letters, but one can find a lot of philosophical motives in the correspondence too: "Do not spoil your life and think less about us. Remember that

this is a historical catastrophe and nothing can be influenced by us anymore.” (Romankov, Romankova&Myasnikova, 2019, p. 765)

The perception of everything that is happening as a historical catastrophe, similar to the one they had endured during the revolution, the understanding that everything, except love and care should someday come to an end, helps this family not to live in isolation, to stay together and not to perish.

## Conclusion

The rules for survival in historical catastrophes have been obtained by Russian people in the course of history. They are: collectivism, generosity, self-restriction, self-control, diligence and conscientiousness. They are able to share their experience with the rest of the world, because “it is important not to forget history. It is important to listen to those who survived the tragic time and record their memories.” (Tervoort. A., Myasnikova. L., personal communication, September 18, 2019) Knowledge of history may be crucial for cross-cultural communication, but negative imagological stereotypes, such as Russia is a country of thieves, Russians are barbarians, cannibals and criminals can become a serious obstacle in it.

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# A Critical Appraisal of Al-Masudi's Perception of Northern India: A Special Study on Multan

Dr. Yousef Bennaji

## Abstract

Arab writers contributed significantly in the development of Indian historiography during the early medieval period. Among these Arab historiographers were historians, travellers, visitors, administrators, businessmen and warriors who came to India between 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. These individuals provided important information about the socio-political and religious life of Indians. This record has paramount importance for understanding India, especially from Arab perspectives. Al-Masudi (d. 345/956) is a central Arab historiographer of India who personally visited India. His historiography is based on his personal observation and first-hand reports of his visit to Multan and all that he witnessed. This paper aims to provide a critical appraisal of al-Masudi's perception of Northern India. A careful study of *Muruj al-Dhahab* has been conducted to determine al-Masudi's understanding of Northern India, with particular reference to Multan.

**Keywords:** Arab historiography, Al-Masudi, Indian history, Multan, Islam in Sindh, *Muruj Al-Dhahab*.

## Introduction

Abu al-Hasan Ali b. Husayn al-Masudi was descended from Abd Allah b. Masud – a companion of the Prophet Muhammad. Al-Masudi was born in Baghdad and became one of the most important historiographers to travel to India and China and across the Muslim world and record significant information (cf. Ibn al-Nadim 1398/1978, p. 219; Yaqut al-Hamwi 1922, vol. 13, p. 90; al-Kitbi 1951, vol. 2, p. 94; Ibn Taghribirdi, n.d, vol. 3, p. 315). He was prolific historian and composed a voluminous works in various fields, including history, genealogy, geography, astronomy, mathematics and religion. Among more than thirty-five books written by al-Masudi, only two have survived: *Muruj al-Dhahab* and *Tanbih wa-al-Ishraf*. On the basis of his historiography, Alfred Von Kremer called al-Masudi the Arab Herodotus (al-Zirikli 1980, p. 7/2; Maluf 1978, p. 736).

Al-Masudi's historical writings on India are considered unbiased and objective, even by Indian historians. He evaluated divergent ideas and conflicting reports regarding

important event in Indian history. Al-Masudi visited Multan after 300/912, during the reign of Abu al-Luhab al-Munabih b. Asad al-Qurashi (al-Masudi 1385/1865, 189/1) and recorded that Multan remained under the rule of the Qurayshis who were descendants of Sama b. Lui b. Ghalib during the third century of hijrah. There was also a cantonment for armed forces in Multan – and a great Muslim army resided there equipped with necessary ammunition – because the city was situated at one of the most important frontiers of the Muslim dynasty. Al-Masudi recorded first-hand information based on his personal observations. Srivastav notes that al-Masudi was not simply an enlightened thinker, but was also much ahead by his contemporaries:

He enumerates a series of ancient kings of India starting from Brahma who, according to him, reigned for 366 years. Al-Masudi, personally, visited many places of India and gave clear account of the political and social customs of the Hindus. The main feature of his work is that he also mentions about the tongue and language of the Indian people of the various places. Al-Masudi greatly admires the kings of Balhara for their greater respect for and protection of Islam. (Srivastav 1980, p. 6)

Al-Masudi depended mostly on the Shi'ite reports regarding the Umayyad assessment, while his presentation of Multan is based on his personal observations without evidence from other historical sources. He portrays Multan as the centre of Hindu civilisation and religious activities. In his attempts to depict the social and intellectual conduct of Hindu society, al-Masudi's elaboration of history in *Muruj al-Dhahab* is anecdotal. *Muruj* is also an important source for the study of Hindu culture and civilisation. These accounts are vital for establishing an authentic and reliable understanding of the nature of Hindu-Muslim relationships in the Multan and Sindh regions particularly. According to al-Masudi, Raja Bhuj Rai- king of Qunuj was considered a great danger to Muslim rule in Multan and Sindh, while the relationship between Balhara –a general title of the rulers of Deccan – and Muslims was cordial, as both had to cope with a general common enemy. Such narratives greatly assist our understanding of the nature of internal conflicts among Hindu rulers and the formation of political development during the early medieval period.

The Arab travelers were unanimous in describing the religious importance of Multan. According to these travellers, Multan was one of the most celebrated places of Hindu worship to which people would come on pilgrimages from the great distances. Al-Masudi also records that there was a famous statue of a deity/idol that known as Moltan. Thousands of people from across India and Sindh used to go on pilgrimage to the statue and paid homage to the idol. They also presented precious stones, aloe-wood and all sorts of perfumes to fulfill their vows (Elliot and Downson 1952, p. 23/1). This idol was the main source of income for the people of Multan, as the visitors brought aloe-wood, a kind of costly wood – twenty kilogrammes of aloe-wood cost one hundred *dinar* –that was very soft and easily engraved. According to al-Masudi, presents offered to this idol-temple were the greatest source of income to the local king, so the idol had great significance in the socio-religious and political life of the



area. Whenever Indian rulers attacked Multan, Muslim rulers used to threaten to destroy the idol, so the Indian attackers would retreat without damaging Multan (Muhammad Nasr, 2014, pp. 32, 86, 90, 98, 126).

Other Arab historians such as al-Istakhri (d. 328/957) described in detail the grandeur and religious significance of Multan. Al-Istakhri wrote that the temple of Multan was the most important centre of worship for all who idol-worshippers across Sindh and Hind. Moreover, Ibn Haukal (d. 367/977) visited India in the middle of the 10th century, and he also recorded the significance of Multan and the centrality of the temple for idol-worshippers in the region. Al-Idrisi (d. 559/ 1166) also considered the idol of Multan to be the most venerated idol in India. Visitors came from the most distant regions of India and Sindh, believing that the idol of Multan was superior, so the pilgrims highly respected and obeyed it (Elliot and Downson 1952, pp. 28, 81–82).

The early sources also confirm that the idol temple of Multan was the most celebrated in India at the time the Arab travellers visited India. Al-Baladhuri in *Futuh al-Buldan* and the Indian source Chach-Nama indicate that Multan was the centre of culture and civilisation and the key factor of its centrality was its temple (Al-Baladhuri, vol. 1, 123-205). Muhammad b. Qasim had to face great challenges in the conquest of Multan in 713 C.E. because the Indians fought against Qasim to defend and safeguard the sanctity of the temple. However, he successfully defeated the Indians and obtained great wealth from the temple (Elliot and Downson 1952, pp. 123, 206; Srivastav 1980, p. 61).

### **Multan's Geography**

Al-Masudi describes the geographical location of Multan. He records that the frontier of India was attached to Khurasan and Sindh, and Multan and Mansura are cities of Sindh. Multan is situated on the border of Sindh and there are many towns and villages surrounding Multan (al-Masudi 1385/1865, pp. 178, 190–1). Al-Masudi records that there was a city called Buwara named after the title of the King of the Qunuj, that was then under Muslim rule in the jurisdiction of Multan. From this city a river flows through to connect to another river (the Mehran al-Sind).

The early Arab historians made significant errors in their geographical descriptions of India.<sup>1</sup> For instance, Jahiz (d. 255/868) claimed that Mehran comes out from River Nile of Africa, while other geographers thought that it was a branch of Khurasanian River Jayhun (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 186). Perhaps, on the basis of these accounts, Srivastav argues that 'since Arab Geographers did not stay in India for a long period and could not travel the whole of India, they mostly gathered their information from the hearsay narrations of recitals. They also, had no knowledge of the Indian topography, social structure and the religion of the people. Similarly, they were not

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<sup>1</sup>Elliot refers to these writers as "Early Arab Geographers", who travelled India several times, and left an account of their own. It is also significant to note that a few of them never visited India. But they seem to have derived their information from those who visited India. (Elliot and Dowson 1952, f.n. 1/1.)

aware of the many facts which were quite in vogue at the time they made their visits' (Srivastav 1980, p. 2) However, it has been observed that al-Masudi's understanding was objective, as he had visited India and stayed there. Thus, al-Masudi rectifies the errors of earlier geographers regarding the Sindh River. He writes that the River Sindh comes from the highlands of Sind that are the land of Qannuj of Bawura Kingdom, Kashmir, Qandhar and Tafir. It flows from these highlands to Multan, where its name is Mehran al-Dhahab (House of Gold). The river Sindh goes from Multan to Mansura and then to Daybal, where it ends up in the Indian Ocean. He further writes that the branches of the River Sindh met with each other between Multan and Mansura on the place of Dushaab that was at a distance of three days' journey from Multan. The River Sind then reached the city of Ruz in the west of Dushaab where it was named Mehran. The river thence again flowed in two branches to the city of Sharika, where it reached the Indian Ocean. Sharika was at distance of two days journey from city of Daybal (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 114/1). The distance between Multan and Mansura was 75 Sindi Farsakh, where one Farsakh was equal to eight miles (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 119/1).

Both Multan and Mansura were under the Qurayshis at that time. Al-Masudi records that Multan was under the rule of a Qurayshi descended from Lui b. Ghalib. All travellers going to Khurasan travelled via Multan. Similarly, the king of Mansura was also a Qurayshi descended from Hubar b. al-Aswad. Multan and Mansura always remained successively under the Qurayshis since early period of Islam (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 114/1). Al-Masudi also described the socio-political and geographical conditions of India; according to him, India extended from the mountains to Khurasan and Sindh as far as Tibet. There were a variety of languages and religions in the region. Similarly, there were many kingdoms in India that were often at war with each other (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 92/1). This suggests that al-Masudi's descriptions of the geographical conditions of India were comprehensive and objective; indeed, Srivastav conducted a critical study of Arab historiography, comparing them with Hindu sources. He writes: 'for this purpose, the contemporary literary works of the Hindu authors, inscriptions, coins, epigraphic evidences and various other sources, have to be utilized fully and they should be compared with that of the Arab Travelers. This can help us to arrive at a fair conclusion. However, in spite of many accompanying defects and shortcomings, the accounts of these travelers cannot be ignored. Rather they are very valuable informants from the Indian point of view' (1980, p. 3).

### **House of Gold and Meetings of Philosophers**

Describing the historical significance of Multan, al-Masudi records the details regarding the House of Gold in Multan. He noted that Hindu scholars prepared a calendar from the beginning of universe to the present that was placed in the House of Gold. The Indians scheduled their events according to that calendar, but it was not used beyond the boundaries of India (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 92/1).

Al-Masudi records that the House of Gold had been a famous centre for dialogue and academic discussions, as well as a meeting point for intellectuals since the rule of Brahmans from antiquity. He also describes the details from such a meeting, where seven intellectuals gathered and discussed the nature of life and universe. They identified the following fundamental questions for their discussion: What is the reality of the world and the secret behind it? Whence did we come and what is our destiny? What is the wisdom behind our existence and how are we brought from nothingness to this physical world? What is the benefit in our creation for our creator? What kind of benefit may God have in our destruction? Does God want to get away from imperfection by our destruction? Does the Creator have desires like we have, and is he afflicted by the loss of his intentions? Or does the creator not care at all about these things? Why does the creator create and destroy us?

All intellectuals responded to these questions according to their own understanding. The first philosopher asserted that no one could understand the reality of all seen and unseen things, and he did not see anyone who succeeded in it. The second replied that if a human being could understand the wisdom behind the acts of the Creator, then there must have been some deficiency in the acts of God. The third philosopher argued that we should understand the reality of our inner self before we explore the reality of other things, because our self and ego is closer than anything else so we ought to explore it first. The fourth stated that it was erroneous that a person could reach the point where he needed to know his own personality. The fifth philosopher asserted that this matter could not be resolved without proper investigation, so consistent philosophical discourse was required to resolve the issue. The sixth philosopher said that the person who wanted his happiness should not be ignorant about his own self, particularly when we know that our life is short and not eternal. The seventh philosopher replied that he did not have any strong argument regarding the topic under discussion, but they were living under a particular pre-determinism; that is, he knew that he came to this world without desire and he was living against his own desires and would have to leave the world that he vehemently liked. Al-Masudi writes that the Indians had a difference of opinion regarding the life and nature of universe but that, by-and-large, they followed the opinions of these thinkers and there were about seventy religious sects among the Hindus (al-Masudi 1385/1865, pp. 93–4/1).

### **Multan and Bhuj Rai**

Al-Masudi visited northern India when Maharaja Bhoja ruled Kannauj during the 9th century C.E. His accounts give significant information about the region during that period. He records that Raja Bhoja Rai was considered a great danger to Multan because he possessed a great army consisting of four wings, with 70,000 or 90,000 soldiers in wing, or perhaps even nine million soldiers in the army as a whole. The northern wing fought against the king of Multan and other Muslim rulers on the frontiers, while the southern wing fought against King Balhara (Walhab Rai) of

Mahangir, and the other two wings fought as needed with the other forces (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 188/1).

It seems that Balhara was the general title of the rulers of the Deccan with Malkhed, while their capital was south of Gulbarga. Arab historians praised Balhara and considered him the noblest of all the kings of India because he intensely admired the Arabs (Muslims), as did the inhabitants of his kingdom. His kingdom extended as far as Cambay in the northwest and Konkan to the west. During his visit to Cambay, al-Masudi mentions that the ruler of that region was a local Brahman whose name, according to him, was Baniya (probably Vaniya in Gujrati) who ruled in the name of Balhara. Again, when he visited Chaul in the Kolaba district of Bombay, he said that the region was ruled by a person called Jang (probably the Arabic form of Ganga) (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 188/1). Srivastav writes:

The Arab traveler's praise for the state of Balhara seems to be lopsided. As a matter of fact Balhara was always at war with the rulers of Kanauj who were the greatest enemies of the Arabs. Hence, prompted by the desire of gaining the favour of the Arabs, the ruler of Balhara accorded generous treatment towards them in propagating their religion freely. Moreover, when Northern India suffered most inhuman molestations at the hands of the Muslims, the South West India had already come in contact with them through trade and commerce. Hence, it was not unnatural for the Arabs to give lopsided statement in the praise of this state of Balhara. (1980, p. 69).

Besides Balhara, al-Masudi mentioned other kings as well, including Kanauj. Al-Masudi notes that one of the important Indian kings was 'Bauura', who ruled over the city of Kanauj, situated far from the sea. Bauura is the title given to all the sovereigns on the north and on the south, on the east and on the west, for he is surrounded on all sides by warlike kings. He was also an enemy of Balhara (Elliot and Downson 1952, pp. 21-2), with great military strength as mentioned above; al-Masudi's observations are supported by those of Merchant Sulaiman, who notes that 'this king maintains numerous forces, and not other Indian prince has so fine a cavalry' (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 187-8/1).

As the ruler of Kanauj did not have good relations with other ruling dynasties of India, the rulers of Kanauj rightly used to post an army in each direction. In the west, the empire was chiefly confronted by the Arabs in Sindh and Multan, which necessitated the posting of a strong army in that direction. The army of the south was posted against Balhara, who was a friend of the Arabs. The Arabs also recorded that the armies in the east and north constantly moved from place to place, probably to protect the frontiers from the enemies (Elliot and Downson 1952, pp. 4, 34). Srivastav (1980, p. 79) has suggested that Arab historians exaggerated the strength of the army and the number of elephants and logistics, but the discrepancy may have been due to the fact that some historians recorded the strength of the Pala Army when it was in its zenith, while others revealed the weakness of the armed forces

during its decadence and decline. In either case, Arab historiography provides vital information regarding the strength of the armed forces of various kings, as well as the state of their relations with each other.

### **Elephants in Multan**

Al-Masudi also recorded interesting information about Arabs in Multan. He noted that the Indians raised elephants and trained them for the battlefield, just as they also nurtured and trained cows and camels for fighting. It was revealed that Haroon b. Musa – a liberated slave from the Azar Tribe, as well as a poet – lived in a concrete castle in Multan. Once a Hindu King attacked him with a strong army on elephants, and when Haroon b. Musa approached the front of the army, he threw a cat on them and they were frightened into retreat. This led to disorder in the ranks of the Indian army, and the Muslims won the battle without fighting (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 427–9/1). This report shows the intelligence of the Arabs living in India, who reacted effectively to the Hindu army despite having comparatively weak armed forces.

### **Languages**

The Arab travellers frequently referred to the language of the Indians. Al-Masudi wrote that the language of Sindh was different from the other languages of northern India. The reason for this difference, according to him, was due to its nearness to the dominions of the Arabs. It is obvious that when al-Masudi visited India, Sindh and Multan formed part of the vast Muslim empire in the east, and due to this political annexation of Sindh and Multan, the Arabs settled there in large numbers, which not only affected the religious, social and political life of the people, but also made a lasting impression upon the language of the people. Arabic became their official language, which naturally differed from the rest of India. Ibn Haukal also confirms this testimony from al-Masudi and clearly states that the language of the people of Mansura, Multan and its environs was both Arabic and Sindhi (Elliot and Dowson 1952, pp. 39).

### **Food and Drink**

Al-Masudi also made observations concerning the eating and drinking habits of the Indians, noting that Hindus abstained from drinking wine because of its dangers. They believed that intoxicating liquors prevented people from rational thinking and a drunken person could not properly perform his duties. It was not, however, prohibited in their religion, although it was prohibited for the king or ruler. If the king was inebriated, he had to forfeit his crown because of his inability to govern the empire (al-Masudi 1385/1865, p. 427–9/1). Similarly, al-Idrisi remarks that the Brahmans never drank wine or fermented liquors, but according to the same traveller, Kshatriyas were allowed to drink as much as three *ratls* (goblets) of wine, but not more, lest they should lose their reason (Al-Idrisi 1960, vol. 1. p.76). However, the Indians sometimes on occasions of joyousness and jubilation made girls drunk so that the beholder would be inspired with joviality by their jollity. On

such occasions, drinks were served to the guests and invitees. Nainar notes that al-Masudi thought that Indian people abstained from liquors not in obedience to religious precepts, but because they did not choose to consume intoxicants and destroy the supremacy that reason should exercise over men (Nainar 2011, pp. 89–90). Contemporary historians such as Srivastav note that, contrary to the observation of Muslim historians who admired the Indian habit of sobriety, the common people of India as well as the aristocracy and royalty used to drink wine on the occasion of jubilation, observing that:

It is quite clear that most of the Muslim travelers record and praise the Indians for not being fond of drinking wine. But it is not always true because our contemporary literary evidences show that drinking was partially used by the Indians—men, women and even by the kings. (Srivastav 1980, p. 26)

Srivastav argues that al-Masudi also confirms that Indians made girls drunk on the occasions of delight, based on events recoded when he personally visited Cambay in 943–955 C.E. This certainly corroborates the fact that, at least on some occasions, Indians made girls drink to excite them to show their joviality to their beholders to inspire them with mirth and fine spirits (Nainar 2011, p. 90). This statement also finds support from Bana, who describes similar escapades at Harsha. Although Bana was not present on the occasion, it must have been a usual feature during his time, and no doubt the same custom prevailed with some modifications until the time of al-Masudi. It is also evident from the statements of the Arab travellers that, though not completely, the Brahmans were generally abstainers from flesh, as Al-Masudi observed. Srivastav thinks that al-Masudi's observations may be treated as correct, in that the eating of flesh by Brahmans was not common (Srivastav 1980, p. 27), thus suggesting the general accuracy of al-Masudi's reports regarding the eating habits of people of northern India.

## **Conclusion**

The present research confirms that al-Masudi's perceptions of northern India were accurate, as has been acknowledged by the medieval and even modern Hindu authors. Al-Masudi visited Multan and stayed there for about four years, so his understanding of Multan and its socio-cultural life was not superficial, but rather based on his realistic assessment of the region, without exaggeration. The Indian sources also confirm most of the events recorded by al-Masudi, so it appears that al-Masudi's knowledge of northern India is extensive, and he presented socio-political, religious and geographical information concerning Multan and its environs in an authentic and comprehensive way. His historiography provides significant information that allows our better understanding of and construction of a history about northern India and Multan.

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# Interpretation of the Return Motif of Ulysses in the Early Novels of S. Beckett

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## Abstract

The Ulysses's motif of return in *More Pricks Than Kicks* and *Murphy* by S. Beckett becomes a key theme. Belacqua Shuah and Murphy strive for being at home, as well as Bloom and Odysseus. The main character of *More Pricks Than Kicks* Belacqua Shuah wanders from one of his beloved to another, that can be a reflection of Odysseus's wanders. Bloom's coming back home is reconsidered by S. Beckett: Belacqua and Murphy die in the end of the novels. The idea of coming back is also represented by Belacqua's concept about the way of boomerang in *More Pricks Than Kicks* and the way that loops the loop like an eight, following which however you don't return to the place where you started, but going down you meet yourself, 'going up'. Stephen's 'silence, exile and cunning' and Bloom's 'coming back was the worst thing you ever did' is played up by S. Beckett as 'Doubt, Despair and Scrounging' in *More Pricks Than Kicks*. In *More Pricks Than Kicks* the image of a bicycle, inherited from Ulysses, symbolize the increasing mechanization of human's life, and in *Murphy* the image of a bicycle is replaced by a rocking-chair, Murphy strives for 'state' movement, movement at the same place.

**Keywords:** James Joyce, home coming, searching for home, Samuel Beckett, wandering

## Introduction

Irish writer Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) is considered to be the disciple of James Joyce (1882–1941). S. Beckett inherited J. Joyce's narrative techniques, motif of bodiness etc. But from the very beginning he was searching for overcoming the great influence of *Ulysses* (1922).

An English researcher of *Ulysses* S. Gilbert notes that Bloom is a "<...> Wandering Jew, an exile <...>" [9: 366].

H. Blamires, an English scholar, points to the Bloom's focus on wanderings and says, that "Correspondences between Murphy and Sindbad and the Flying Dutchman build up the Odyssean-Wanderer theme" [5: 164]. J. Joyce himself emphasized the motif of



wandering and return in Homer's *Odyssey* and considers this return as "<...> profoundly human <...>" [8: 417]

A Canadian researcher J. Boulter claims that S. Beckett is «<...> keeping with Freud's notion of the death drive: both Murphy and Freud speak of life as a 'circuitous path', a wandering trajectory that is essentially a return to a prior state (death; inorganicism), a prior location (home). Life is thus characterized as essentially nostalgic by both Freud and Murphy, <...> a homesickness» [6: 93].

In their turn, British researchers M. Bariselli, N. M. Bowe and W. Davies in *Samuel Beckett and Europe: History, Culture, Tradition* claim that Murphy's «<...> "wandering to find home" and his obsession with the 'inner' sense of his self (or mind) not only indicate the want to re-configure the metaphysical aspect of existence but also a desire to 'retreat' from a world <...>» [2: 60].

However, comparing analysis of the return motif, which is one of the dominant in *Ulysses*, *More Pricks Than Kicks* and *Murphy* wasn't held.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the specifics of the functioning of the return motif in *Ulysses*, *More Pricks Than Kicks* and *Murphy*, to establish a way of S. Beckett's reconsidering and reinterpreting of return motif of *Ulysses*.

## Analysis

A Russian mythologist E. M. Meletinskyi considers Bloom as Odysseus of the XX cent., a parody to Homer's Odysseus [12: 309]. A Russian writer and literary critic V. Nabokov in his lecture on *Ulysses* beware from seeing in Bloom's wanders the wanders of Odysseus and notes that J. Joyce erased Homeric names of episodes because of the scientific focus on allusions to *Odyssey*.

The return motif in *Ulysses* serves as a plot. Wandering nature of Bloom, wandering son of wandering people, Wandering Jew, is presented in his status of a diambulist (the one, who wanders in the day-time, Bloom is called diambulist during his conversation with Stephen), although he is a somnambulist too, floating kidney, carrying a wandering soap, which "<...> has a "little Odyssey" all to itself" [9: 152]. Wandering nature of Stephen, Wandering Aengus, is realized in his status of a noctambulist (the one, who wanders in the night), in his last name, Dedalus, the escaper from the Minos palace, his ash stick. They both loose the keys from their home, both suffer from the aggressor, who occupied their houses, Boylan and Mulligan [13: 444].

Bloom has complicated and discordant feeling about returning home. It is his strong belief that «<...> the coming back was the worst thing you ever did <...>» [5: 568], "(Molly — Y. V.) Could never like it again after Rudy. Can't bring back time. Like holding water in your hand. Would you go back to then? Just beginning then. Would you?" [10: 213]. Bloom doesn't give the answer to the last question. Also during the

day he doesn't want to come back because he fights his feelings about Molly, who is going to cheat him at 4 p.m.

He has reflections about the "resurrection" of Parnell, Irish patriot and Leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, who lost his career because of his love affair with a married woman. Bloom delights Parnell, although he is convinced that his return is "<...> highly inadvisable <...>", "<...> you were a lucky dog if they didn't set the terrier at you directly you got back. <...> you came up against the man in possession and had to produce your credentials <...>" [10: 754—755] "<...> you would feel out of place as things always moved with the times" [10: 757]

Bloom like to dream about journeys, coming back to "the Promised Land": "Agendath Netaim: planters' company. To purchase vast sandy tracts from Turkish government and plant with eucalyptus trees. <...> north of Jaffa" [10: 72]. But at the same time he admits he wouldn't do that: "No, not like that. A barren land, bare waste. <...> A dead sea in a dead land <...>. It bore the oldest, the first race. <...> Wandered far away over all the earth, captivity to captivity, multiplying, dying, being born everywhere. <...> Now it could bear no more" [10: 73]. He also dreams about vendetta to his offenders: "<...> obey the summons of recall. <...> a wrecker of justice on malefactors, a dark crusader, a sleeper awakened, with financial resources (by supposition) surpassing those of Rothschild or the silver king" [10: 858].

Pub serves as a place where Bloom comes to terms with his fate, at the same time Molly is seeing Boylan. Till that moment he was fantasizing about coming back home and prevention of betrayal. The finish of Bloom's journey is returning home. «<...> the childman weary, the manchild in the womb. Womb? Weary? He rests. He has trevelled» [10: 642].

The images of a tram and a bicycle in *Ulysses* symbolize the increasing mechanization of human's life. Bloom wonders, if it is possible to run the line to the cemetery for the municipal funeral trams [10: 79—80]. The bicycle appears many times in *Ulysses*, although Bloom doesn't use it at all. On that day there is a College cycling race [10: 106], Bloom watches a passer-cyclist, who looks like G. Russell, one of the Irish Literary Revivals, who was acquainted with J. Joyce, he meets cyclists in the nighttown. Mananaan in the "Circe" episode "<...> smites with his bicycle pump the crayfish in his left hand" [10: 627]. A crayfish may symbolize cancer of Stephen's mother. In the "Ithaca" episode Bloom and Stephen "<...> reveal a third connecting link between them? Mrs Riordan (*Riordan may be allusion to Jordan River, Mrs Riordan may symbolize Israel — Y. V.*), a widow of independent means, <...> a constant informant of Bloom who resided also in the same hotel <...>. He had sometimes propelled her <...>, in her convalescent bathchair with slow revolutions of its wheels <...> where she had remained for a certain time scanning through his onelensed binocular fieldglasses unrecognisable citizens on tramcars, roadster bicycles, equipped with inflated pneumatic tyres, hackney carriages, tandems, private and hired landaus, dogcarts, ponytraps and brakes passing from the city to the

Phoenix park and *vice versa*. <...> Because in middle youth he had often sat observing through a rondel of bossed glass of a multicoloured pane the spectacle offered with continual changes of the thoroughfare without, pedestrians, quadrupeds, velocipedes, vehicles, passing slowly, quickly, evenly, round and round and round the rim of a round and round precipitous globe" [10: 796]. The cyclicity and eternity of movement of mankind is emphasized here.

The aim of Stephen's wandering is to find himself and spiritual father, a patron. He leaves his Church, family and home. He rents the Martello Tower. His reconsidering of the Hamlet theme gives a key to his inner need of father: "<...> consubstantiality, in the literal sense of identical in substance, is a theme of this book: Stephen, the son, is or will be Bloom, the father" [14: 138]. So searching for the father is searching for himself. This to some measure is the reason Stephen rejects Bloom.

As well as Bloom, Stephen doesn't want to come back home, where he is not quite at home, because he is bereft the key and because he in some way wants to come back to his previous house. But as well as Bloom, he can't do it because of the tragic events that depress him.

The ways of Bloom and Stephen do not lead to their reunion as father and son. Stephen doesn't return home, he is going further.

Thus, the motif of return in *Ulysses* represents the *Odyssey's* return matrix and finishes with Bloom's returning. Bloom and Stephen, exiles and wanderers, don't unity because of the complicated, ambivalent feelings about returning and a traumatic past, they don't want to return in. Bloom's wanders are cyclical what is reflected to some extent in the image of a bicycle.

The motif of return in *More Pricks Than Kicks* (1934) by S. Beckett also serves as a plot. Belacqua Shuah, the main character of the novel, lame on both feet, enjoys travelling and admiring the scenery of Ireland. His name is borrowed from *The Divine Comedy* by Dante Alighieri, which he reads in the original in the novel. Belacqua in *The Divine Comedy* is staying in the Purgatory for not praying for his life and postponing it until his last confession before death. Now he will sit under the mountain for as many years as he has lived on earth,

<...> there were persons in the shade  
behind the rock, in posture people take for negligence.  
And one of them, who seemed weary, was sitting  
embracing his knees, holding his face down low  
between them.

<...> "look at the fellow: he  
appears more negligent than if Laziness were his

sister.”

“<...> First it is necessary for the heavens to turn around me outside here as long as they did in my life, since I delayed my good sighs until the end <...>” [7: 71].

A Russian researcher L. Yu. Makarova, in her Ph.D. thesis, *“A Genre Experiment In Early Prose By S. Beckett (More Pricks Than Kicks)”* (2008), notes that on the other hand Belacqua’s position is notable, “The character is not in hell, where he had to end up as an unrepentant sinner, and not in paradise, which he could not reach because of his negligence, and not in the main part of purgatory, where everything is covered with movement, but on the first ledge, at the bottom of the mountain < ... >” [11: 75]. It is also noted that “<...> Beckett emphasizes the cyclicity manifested in Belacqua’s turn to Dante and his return to his original position” [11: 76].

Unlike Dante’s Belacqua, Beckett’s Belacqua constantly wanders, travels. Although he is inherently “< ... > sinfully indolent < ... >” [3: 31], however, he considers this world to be the result of his imagination and brings liveliness to his life “<...> preferring one place to another <...>” [3: 31]. He could thus “<...> give <...> the Furies the slip by merely setting himself in motion” [3: 31], from the blues.

Belacqua’s wanderings are repeatedly emphasized: when he “<...> that uneasy creature <...>” [3: 72] felt lonely, wanderings are shown in quaint thoughts: he thinks that “<...> only luminous, <...> in radiance, or words to that effect, <...> to take notice that sweet style is Belacqua’s <...>” [3: 38], and finally, for his funeral hearse comes “<...> hearse, black as Ulysses’s cruiser <...>”. [3: 173].

Belacqua does not refuse from moving constantly, despite the significant physical problems that make walking painful, “his feet were in ruins, he suffered with them almost continuously.” [3: 10], “His feet pained him so much that he took off his perfectly good boots and threw them away <...>” [3: 72]. The road is associated for him with “<...> the deep weal <...>” [3: 95]. A tramp whom Belacqua finds under a cart in a field seems to him “<...> real man at last” [3: 96].

Belacqua’s wandering is also cyclical. He marries three times and brings his wives three times to his home: Lucy, Thelma and Smeraldina. The first two wives die shortly after the wedding notably while travelling. Lucy, riding, goes to meet Belacqua, thinking if she is in a hurry to get married because she is worried about his secrecy and quirkiness, gets under the wheels of a car and becomes disabled, they marry, and a year later she dies. And Thelma dies during the honeymoon in Connemara. Essentially, Belacqua puts Lucy’s wedding ring on her finger, which even has the minting “Mens mea Lucia lucescit luce tua” [3: 128] “Lucia, your light enlightens my mind” [1: 353]. The wedding ring here also emphasizes cyclicity, serves as a sign of the recurrence of Thelma’s destiny to Lucy, shows that Belacqua walks in a circle. Another Belacqua lover, Alba, dies during her way home after Belacqua and Thelma’s

wedding. The motif of return is thus combined with the thanatological one: all Belacqua's beloved women, except Smeraldina, die. It should be noted that to some extent their deaths are related to Belacqua. However, they are not the only ones who die while coming back home: Belacqua becomes a casual witness of a girl's death under the wheels of a bus she was hit by. Women are connected with death. They make Belacqua move and die.

Significantly, Smeraldina does not like travelling, "I hate walking" [3: 144]. She is not included in this circle of Belacqua's travel companions, where Belacqua is a particular center.

Cyclicity is emphasized in his meeting with a mentally ill woman in a pub. A woman who is described as a woman without a hat, what can indicate that it was unusual and that, figuratively, no one is above her, her mind is free, slowly heading in his direction: her boots, too big and awkward for her, it gives him a negative impression. This may mean that the boots were not purchased for her and got to her by accident. The face of a woman that Belacqua calls "full of light" [3: 37] radiates "her face, ah her face <...> it was so full of light" [3: 37] and testifies that "<...> have come a long way <...>" [3: 38]. The woman talks to him, whirling her arm, "Heaven goes round <...> and round and round and round and round and round <...> getting more of a spin into the slogan <...>" [3: 38]. This can emphasize the cyclical nature of Belacqua, which attracts a woman, actions, words, and most importantly, whose thoughts are constantly rotating in a circle. Moreover, she does not belong to herself but to this spin of her thinking. Her look, her words impress Belacqua so much that he finds himself in her power, "He was altogether disarmed, unsaddled and micserable. <...> he was at her mercy" [3: 38]. A mentally ill woman sells him tickets to paradise, which may be an allusion to the image of Homer's Circe, who sent Odysseus to Hades so that he would learn his fate from the seer Tiresias.

In addition, the pub as a place where the character accepts his fortune in *Ulysses*, is imitated in *More Pricks Than Kicks*, where Belacqua suddenly realizes that he does not feel the usual miraculous influence of the pub, he is overwhelmed with a passionate desire to move, but is kept in one place by an unknown force. It may be a reaction to a girl's death under the wheels of a bus he saw.

Cyclicity is also evident in the episode of Belacqua being beaten by a police officer (Stephen is beaten by soldiers in *Ulysses*). It does not hurt him, on the contrary, makes him feel " <...> amiable weakness" [3: 62]. He speculates that the place of his fall has become the place from which he rose up " <...> at its most agreeable point" [3: 64], comes to a conclusion that " <...> the drink-line looped the loop like an eight <...>" [3: 64]. But this idea is not in a simple return for Belacqua, but a meeting with himself, " <...> coming down you met yourself going up" [3: 64].

It is worth noting that Belacqua seeks death: he almost commits suicide by finding an accomplice in the face of his friend Ruby, whose doctors predicted a short life because

of an incurable disease. But then their suicide plan is not realized because of the sudden physical mutual attraction that encompasses them.

The image of a bicycle, as a symbol of mechanization, is manifested in *Dante and the Lobster*, when Belacqua on his way to his aunt, at the crossroad sees “<...> a horse was down and a man sat on his head. <...>, lamplighter flew by on his bike, tilting with his pole at the standards, jousting a little yellow light into the evening” [3: 14].

If for J. Joyce the final of journey is “exile”, then for S. Beckett it is “begging”. According to Belacqua, “No man could settle down to scrounge properly in a foreign land. The Wanderjahre were a sleep and a forgetting, the proud dead point” [3: 78]. (*Wanderjahre* (Germ) — years of wandering. An allusion in J. W. Goethe’s novel *Wilhelm Meister’s Journeyman Years* (translator’s note)).

So, wandering and return for Belacqua is a way of life, a cure for the blues. It is significant that his whole life is haunted by pain in his legs that does not stop him. Women close to Belacqua are drawn into his gravity, go through a certain cycle, for someone shorter, for someone longer, and die. It is important that women die while coming back home. Even a girl who crosses the road gets under the bus right in front of Belacqua is going home. And Smeraldina, Belacqua’s third wife, who does not like traveling, ‘survives’ and becomes a widow. In the finale Belacqua dies instantly and painlessly. On the same day his house is set on fire by a servant who goes crazy.

Murphy, the main character of the Beckett’s novel with the same title, strives for static, apathy, but at the same time believes that life is “<...> a wandering to find home” [4: 3]. Murphy, for whom static, immobility, is the goal, the desire, is, in essence, the final embodiment of Dante’s Belacqua. Thus, the image of Belacqua, presented in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women, More Pricks Than Kicks*, acquires a definitive development in Murphy’s novel. His teacher and fellow student calls him “<...> a knight-errant <...>” [4: 33]. Murphy’s wanders are motivated by his search for a home and escape from his ex-girlfriend Counihan and former teacher Neary. He chooses to live in a “small world”, the world of the mentally ill, Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, where he works, but in the finale he intends to return to his beloved Celia. Despite his desire for numbness, calming the body and freeing his mind, that Murphy gets in his rockig chair, Murphy strolls through the city all the time in search of work, “Goaled by he thought of losing Celia <...> to drag <...> among the agencies, a dog’s life without a dog’s prerogative” [4: 46—47]. Murphy’s wanders can be considered as an escape from the real world, where he is haunted by his ex lover Counihan, a former teacher Neary and a classmate Wylie. They almost catch the fugitive, but Murphy slips out of their hands.

In Murphy’s wanders there is also a certain cyclical nature. From June to October, Murphy looks for a job every day and returns home at the same time, deviating only “<...> a few seconds from day to day” [4: 43]. Celia is amazed at how careless someone

can be “<...> inhuman regularity in this one instance” [4: 43]. Murphy explains it with his love for Celia, which demands “<...> the product of love which forbade him to stay away from her a moment longer than was compatible with duty <...>” [4: 43], and trying to cultivate a sense of time. Celia’s thoughts keep coming back to Murphy “<...> everything led to Murphy <...>” [4: 41]. At the Psychiatric Hospital, Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, playing chess with a patient Endon, he performs his duties and returns to the board from time to time to make his move, “<...> throughout the day” [4: 112]. During fatigue attacks, Murphy dreams of returning to his chair “would willingly have waived his expectation of Antepurgatory for five minutes in his chair” [4: 47]. After Murphy’s death, he is identified by his birthmark, and in a way it is the emblem of his birth and death and closes the cycle of his life. Thus the motif of return is combined with thenatological one. Eventually, Murphy returns to the “bosom” he seeks, Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, “<...> M.M.M. stood suddenly for music, music, MUSIC <...>” [4: 141], where soft upholstery of the wards which creates a certain bosom metaphor and gives “<...> bowers of bliss” [4: 109].

However, he plans to return to Celia, “It continued to divide him, at witness his deplorable susceptibility to Celia <...>” [4: 108], in the ending of the novel he is “<...> dimly intending to <...> go <...> to Celia <...>” [4: 151], but that very morning he dies in the fire. The motif of return is combined with thanatological one. Notably, in *More Pricks Than Kicks*, Belacqua’s house is burned after his death by a gardener who loses his mind, rapes a maid, sets a fire, and locks himself in a locker room, awaiting arrest.

The pub as a place where the character accepts his fortune at *Ulysses* is also inherited at Murphy, where his ashes, which he orders to drop in the toilet of the Abbey Theater in Dublin, are scattered on the floor of the bar and at dawn he is swept along with cigarette butts and other debris. Also, Murphy and Celia live on Brewery Road.

The image of a bicycle here is the image of a rocking chair. Murphy refuses to move quickly in favor of moving in one place, rocking in a chair.

Thus, the motif of return in *Murphy* performs a structuring function. Murphy escapes Ireland from his pursuers who make him abandon his home. In London, where he moves, Murphy is forced to look for a job under Celia’s pressure.

## Conclusion

Thus, in *Ulysses* the motif of return serves as a plot and a compositional guideline. In S. Beckett’s early novels *More Pricks Than Kicks* and *Murphy* it is also the compositional structure of the novel, and the playing up the wanders of Odysseus through the prism of *Divine Comedy* of Dante Alighieri.

In *More Pricks Than Kicks* and *Murphy*, the Ulysses motif of return is inherited and reconsidered, seen through the lens of absurdity, and has another ending. Bloom is trying to escape from Molly’s betrayal, Stephen — his faith, family and past, Belacqua

— from the “Furies’ raid”, the blues, Murphy — from the persecutors. Belacqua and Murphy die in the end of the novels. Lucy, Alba, a girl in the street die on their way home. The return motif is combined with the thanatological one.

S. Beckett rejects J. Joyce’s ‘exile’ and chooses ‘scrouning’ which is possible only in homeland. S. Beckett’s refusal from movement derives from the Ulysses philosophy of the movement, after all, his character chooses to move on the spot and return to the other side. The development of this tendency can be traced in S. Beckett’s two novels: Belacqua is delighted with bicycles, movement is presented as meaningless, Murhy is delighted with his rocking chair, movemet is absurd, the one, that immerse in a trance, sleep.

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# Mind Maps Contributions in Enhancing the Teaching Process of Arabic Literature Courses in UPSI

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## Abstract

Literature is an arty expression either in poetry or prose forms. In Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Components of Arabic literature were introduced to introduce to the students the beauty of Arabic Literature. Based on result of BAS3123, it shows the level of students' achievement in the literature subject is moderate. Therefore, this study aims to introduce the using of mind maps and its' contributions in teaching Arabic literature courses in UPSI. The library approach is used in this study to gather and analyse the information from various sources. The study found that Arabic literature courses can be taught by using mind maps. It is because the mind maps are a form of multiple intelligence. On the other hand, the mind maps has relations with technology applications as well as it can be a teaching aid.

**Keywords:** mind map, Arabic literature, UPSI, contribution

## 1. Introduction

Literature is an arty expression of beautiful language, either in poetry or prose forms. There are two types of Arabic literature forms. They are *al-Adab al-Wasfiy* (descriptive literature) and *al-Adab al-Insha'i* (creative literature). Khafajiy (1986) defines *al-adab al-wasfiy* (descriptive literature) as a discussion on *qasidah* or *risalah* descriptively and critically. Therefore, *al-adab al-wasfiy* covers history of literature, literary criticism and theory of literature. The history of literature focuses

on situation of literature and its growth, literary criticism explains the advantages and disadvantages found in any literary works of *al-Adab al-Insha'i* (creative literature). However, theory of literature is a group of strong thinking and consistent opinion based on theory of knowledge or philosophy on literature genesis, its characteristics and functions. On the other hand, *al-Adab al-Insha'i* (creative literature) is a literary type in poetry or prose. It is about feeling and occasion related to environment that affects in writer (Khafajiy: 1986). The poetry in *al-Adab al-Insha'iy* is sentences bound with prosody and rhythm. However, the prose does not have the prosody and rhythmic as a characteristic.

In Sultan Idris Education University (UPSI), Components of Arabic literature were introduced in the list of courses for the Arabic Language Minor Program that began in the second semester of the 2003/2004 session (Zarima dan Taj Rijal: 2015). The component is taught in one course only; *BAS2053 Introduction to Arabic Literature (Academic Guide Book, Faculty of Languages, 2006/2007 Session: 2006)*. This course is an introductory course on Arabic literature, covering the growth and development of Arabic literature (poetry and prose) from pre-Islamic era to Abbasid era (Muhammad Bukhari: 2015).

In 2008, undergraduate program for Arabic programme is introduced. In this program, four courses are offered under the components of Arabic literature. They are *BAS3013 Arabic Culture and Literature*, *BAS3033 Literature in Islamic Culture*, *BAS3053 Study between Islamic Arabic and Malay Culture* and *BAS3063 Travelogue (Academic Guide Book, Faculty of Languages, 2008/2009 Session: 2008)*.

Towards strengthening the components of Arabic literature in undergraduate programs, Arabic literature courses are undergoing some revision. *BAS3013*, *BAS3053* and *BAS3063* courses were replaced with new courses; which are *BAS3123 Literature in Pre-Islamic and Islamic Era*, *BAS3133 Literature in Abbasid and Andalusian Era* and *BAS3093 Literature in Mamluk, Ottoman and Modern Era (Academic Guide Book, Faculty of Languages and Communication, 2014/2015 Session: 2014)*.

The teaching method used is based on the lecturer who teaches the subject. In other words, it is up to the lecturer's choice whether to use grammar and translation method, direct method and switch method. Based on result of *BAS3123 (Literature in Pre-Islamic and Islamic Eras)* in semester 2. 2015/2016, there are 14.1% of students got C- and below. In addition, there are 3.4% students got C- and below in semester 2, 2016/2017. These results show the level of students' achievement in the literature subject is moderate. Therefore, this research aims to introduce the using of mind maps in teaching Arabic literature courses in UPSI. It states the contributions of the mind maps in enhancing teaching process, in addition to engage the students in teaching and learning process.

## 2. Research Method

The library approach is used in this study. The choice of this approach is to collect information related to the mind map and its shapes. In addition, this approach is used to find the findings of previous scholars on mind maps, its shapes and functions.

## 3. Discussion and Findings

To keep up with the changing trends in education, efforts need to be intensified to keep pace with the current situation of the educational world. This is certainly to ensure the continuity of a course or subject that students continue to enjoy to study. Among these efforts is the application of mind maps in teaching Arabic literature courses.

There is a contribution of mind maps in an effort to enhance innovation in teaching this Arabic literature course. It is closely related to the feature of the mind map with visual intelligence. In addition, the mind map can be integrated with technology applications, and can be used as a teaching tool in Arabic literature courses.

### a) The mind map is a form of multiple intelligence

Nachiappan S., Jantan R., & Abdul Shukor AA (2008) revealed that Multiple Intelligence was a theory introduced by Howard Gardner in 1983. This theory introduces a variety of ways to know, learn and produce what is known, and then serve as a guide to stimulate learning and encourage students to build the future based on the advantages the students have (A. Rashid N., Ying BP., Syed Ahmad SF.: 2015).

A. Rashid N., Ying BP., Syed Ahmad SF. (2015) lists eight (8) multiple intelligences. The domains of Gardner's intelligence are Linguistic Intelligence, Logical-Mathematical Intelligence, Spatial Intelligence, Music Intelligence, Kinesthetic Intelligence, Interpersonal Intelligence, Intrapersonal Intelligence and Naturalist Intelligence.

The mind map is put into Visual-Space Intelligence (Spatial) where students create a mind map that summarizes important content related to topics in Arabic literature. Therefore, this ability in visual intelligence can contribute to innovation in education, especially in Arabic literature education. This is because the use of this mind map is able to diversify into conventional Arabic literary teaching methods.

On the other hand, the shape of the mind map is not limited to the eight commonly used forms; Circle Map, Bubble Map, Double Bubble Map, Bike Map, Tree Map, Water Map, Multi-Flow Map and Bridge Map, and many other forms can be generated based on individual creativity. This is based on the purpose of helping students to understand the course of Arabic literature.

## b) Mind maps and technology applications

Teaching in this century should be in keeping with the current situation; which is towards the Industrial Revolution 4.0. This will require all parties to work together to ensure that the education world is in line with these changes. Therefore, the resulting mind map must be integrated with technology applications, such as the production of e-books or Arabic literature e-modules in the form of mind maps.

As a starting point, the Microsoft Powerpoint application can be deployed using all the facilities available in the application; like *hyperlink, transitions and animation*. This is intended to make the presentation of the mind map more interesting. For mind mapping by integrating technology, the process requires expertise from the field of technology applications to make the effort successful.

## c) Mind map as a teaching aid

The teaching and learning process is definitely a three-way relationship between teacher, student and teaching material. In these three-way relationships, mind maps can be grouped into “teaching materials”. The teacher will generate ideas about the topic being taught and present it in the form of a mind map as an innovation in teaching the course. In this regard, teachers also need to be more creative in providing teaching materials in the form of mind maps. In other words, teachers do not need to limit the shape of the mind map to the eight known forms; which is a Circle Map, a Bubble Map, a Double Bubble Map, a Great Map, a Tree Map, a Water Map, a Multi-Flow Map and a Bridge Map, but teachers can create more forms of mind maps.

In addition to the creative ability of teachers to create a mind map, teachers can also take advantage of the *SmartArt* found in Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint. This *SmartArt* provides a variety of mind maps that require only teachers to enter information into the space provided. Here's an example of the *SmartArt* form of *Jugrafiya al-Andalus*.

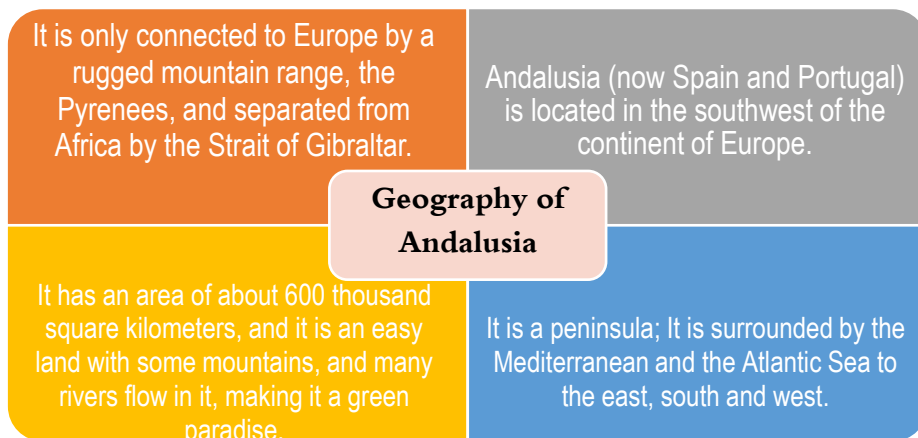
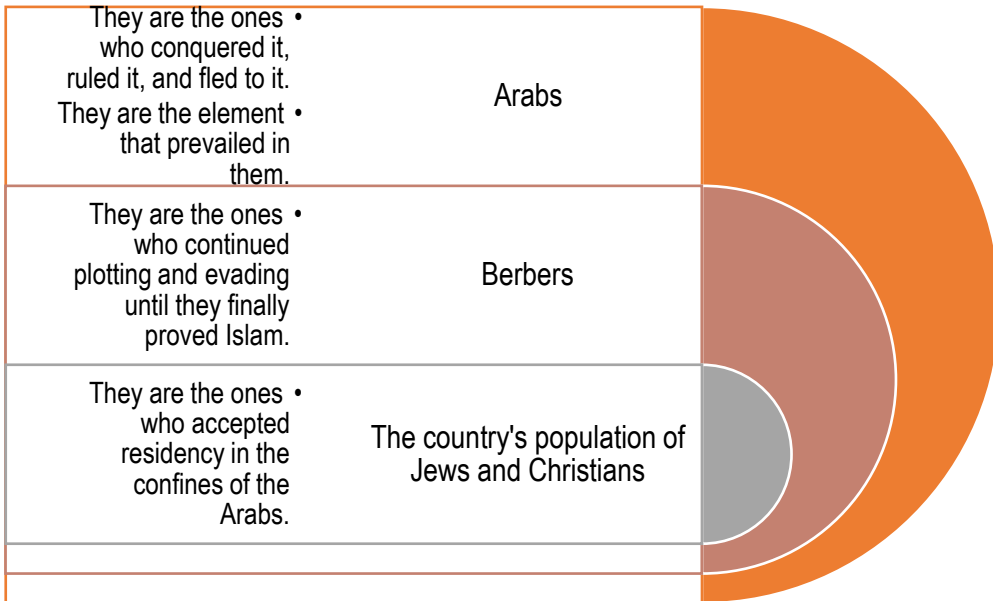


Figure 1: *SmartArt* Forms of *Jugrafiya al-Andalus*

Other forms of *SmartArt* are as shown in the diagram below of *al-'Anasir fi al-Andalus*:



**Figure 2** the *SmartArt* Forms of *al-'Anasir fi al-Andalus*

### Conclusion

Arabic Literature can be taught by using mind maps. It is because the mind maps have big contributions as its function as a form of multiple intelligence. On the other hand, the mind maps has relations with technology applications as well as it can be a teaching aid. Therefore, perception that Arabic literature is a difficult course can be erased among Arabic non-native speakers. This is by finding the solution, whether it is related to the teaching method and teaching aids used. Therefore, applying mind maps is one of the attempts to eliminate perceptions about the difficulty of Arabic literature courses. This is because of the use of mind maps can stimulate students' interest because of its attractive shape, while also being presented in simple form. This makes it easy for students to know the content of a topic in the form of a simple mind map.

### Acknowledgement

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# Methodical Practice of Teaching Croatian Language and Literature During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## Abstract

In exceptional circumstances, such as those that have been caused by the COVID-19 virus pandemic, when schools were closed in order for the protection of human health and teaching were moved to an online environment, the implementation of methodological practice proved to be particularly challenging. Distance learning disabled the usual ways of implementing methodological practice, which automatically encouraged the design and application of new ways and methods of implementation. This allowed the students to realization methodical practice even in extraordinary circumstances, such as those caused by COVID-19. The goal of these new ways and methods, despite the extraordinary circumstances, environment and ways in which teaching is being implemented, is to enable students to acquire the practical knowledge, skills, experience and competencies that are necessary in the teaching profession. The paper deals with the methodical practice of students the Department of Croatistics who have mandatory methodological practice within their university study program of the Croatian Language and Literature at the graduate level. Under normal circumstances, these students, under the guidance of a university professor and a mentor teacher in training schools, implement methodical practice in primary and secondary schools where they get acquainted with the work of teachers and actively participate in the teaching process. Among other things, the students follow pilot mentoring classes, prepare and conduct classes and actively participate in analyzing the same, which is all part of the methodological practice.

**Keywords:** methodical practice, teaching Croatian Language and Literature, distance learning, students, Croatistics

## 1. Introduction

In a general sense, methodical practice is a compulsory element of the higher education system which is indispensable in the process of acquiring competencies by

applying knowledge in practice. However, individual methodical practice refers to a specific teaching subject, and is taking place in primary and secondary schools. The purpose of this practice is to acquire competencies for teaching a particular subject. In individual methodical practice, such as the methodical practice of students of Croatian studies as part of the single-major educational graduate study program in Croatian Language and Literature, students acquire competencies for teaching Croatian Language and Literature, which is the focus of this paper. This practice integrates, shares and demonstrates the means of transferring language and literature-related knowledge according to the requirements of philology, Croaticistics and lietary science, i.e. Croatian Language and Literature. Usually, under normal circumstances, methodical practice requires students visiting primary and secondary schools, where they, under the guidance of a university professor and mentor, actively participate in the organization and realization of the teaching process. The extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have directly affected the ability to perform methodical practice in the usual manner. Given that schools closed and that the usual way of conducting classes was replaced with online classes, it was necessary to design and implement new ways of methodical practice under these changed circumstances. In addition to the elaboration of methodical practice performed by students of Croatian Language and Literature, which has not yet been sufficiently explored in scientific literature, the aim of this paper is to demonstrate and define possible means and methods of methodical practice in exceptional circumstances.

## 2. Previous research

A certain paradox can be observed when looking at the position and status of methodical practice in higher education institutions where it is a compulsory part of study programs on one hand and the fact that, on the other hand, methodical practice is rarely the focus of scientific research. Even though the relevance of methodical practice is unquestionable, which is also why it is legally binding, scientific research on this subject can be rarely found. It is only recently that projects have been launched with the theoretical framework assuming that work-based learning enables the students to expand their acquired competencies and develop the skills necessary to better cope in the working environment, be more independent and to easier find employment. As part of the implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds in the Republic of Croatia in the 2014–2020 financing period, the Ministry of Science and Education, as the first-level intermediate body in the project selection process within the grant awarding procedure and following the call titled “Development, advancement and implementation of professional practice in higher education” (URL 1), adopted the *Funding Decision* (URL 2) regarding multimillion projects of the European Social Fund implemented as part of the Operational Program for Effective Human Resources 2014 – 2020”. Following this *Funding Decision* (URL



2), several higher education institutions<sup>1</sup> in the Republic of Croatia have been granted 28 projects with the common objective of developing investments in four key areas: employment and labour market, social inclusion, education and lifelong learning as well as supporting public administration and thereby contributing to employment growth and strengthening social cohesion in Croatia.<sup>2</sup>

The target groups of this project include teaching and non-teaching staff in higher education institutions, students of undergraduate, graduate and integrated undergraduate and graduate study programs. The project aims at improving the quality of professional practice as a compulsory or elective part of the study program, strengthening the competencies of higher education staff to develop a work-based learning model and enabling students to gain work experience by increasing the share of professional practice as a compulsory or elective part of the study program (URL 1).

Regarding the methodical practice of students of Croatian Language and Literature, theoretical reflection thereon can be found in the book titled “Uvod u metodiku, intepretaciju i recepciju književnosti” (“Introduction to Methodology, Interpretation and Reception of Literature”) where in the chapter on methodical practice the authors<sup>3</sup> define and distinguish three types of methodical practice by scientifically observing their essential and distinctive characteristics: methodical, teaching and school practice.

Methodical practice is the process of acquiring methodical experience which can take place during but also outside class, i.e. during methodical practicals as part of a methodics subject and as a simulation of the teaching process, i.e. a simulation of class segments.

Teaching practice can take place at any level of education: primary, secondary or higher education – it can regard faculty, university or polytechnic teaching as well.

School practice is the process of acquiring methodical experience that takes place in primary or secondary schools (Musa et al. 2015: 281).

Given the insufficient literature on methodical practice, this paper is, inter alia, based on the author's ten years' experience in the organization and implementation of methodical practice of students of Croatian Language and Literature at the Department of Croatian Studies, University of Zadar as well as on the implementation

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<sup>1</sup> Titles of approved projects, names of higher education institutions to carry out the approved projects and their partner institutions involved in the research covered by the projects in question can be found in the *Funding Decision* (URL 2).

<sup>2</sup> More information available in: “European Social Fund – Operational Program Efficient Human Resources 2014–2020” <https://strukturnifondovi.hr/wp-content/uploads/natjecaji/razvoj--unapredenje-i-provedba-strucne-prakse-u-visokom-obrazovanju-8809/Upute-za-prijavitelje.pdf>. (Accessed 5/7/2020).

<sup>3</sup> In the chapter on methodical practice, Šimun Musa, Mirela Šušić and Marko Tokić present summarized examples of possible methodical practice records for university students to keep during methodical practice in primary and secondary schools as well as examples of written lesson plans for a Croatian Language class.

of methodical practice during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the students were unable to fully perform the methodical practice in the standard manner. Even though schools closed, classes in Croatia continued to be held remotely, via the Internet and television programs, which encouraged the development of new means and methods of implementing methodical practice which will be presented in this paper and which may be useful in the same or similar situations in the future.

### 3. General features of methodical practice

The broad lines of methodical practice implemented in primary and secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia are defined in the legislation. Methodical practice is implemented through study programs in higher education institutions in the Republic of Croatia through compulsory methodics subjects. Methodical practice performed in primary and secondary schools is directly or indirectly regulated by three basic regulations as follows: *Primary and Secondary School Education Act* (Official Gazette Nos. 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, 105/2010, 90/2011, 5/2012, 16/2012, 86/2012, 126/2012, 94/2013, 152/2014, 07/2017, 68/2018, 98/2019 and 64/2020), *Ordinance on practice-schools in primary education* (Official Gazette No. 40/199) and *Ordinance on practice-schools in secondary education*(Official Gazette No. 11/1994).<sup>1</sup>

The fact that the position of methodical practice in the educational system of the Republic of Croatia is regulated by law is the best proof of its relevance. Consequently, one of the legal requirements for a person to establish an employment relationship in a school institution as a subject teacher in a primary school and as a subject teacher in a secondary school is the acquired pedagogical, psychological, didactic and methodical education and a minimum of 55 ECTS credit points, i.e. pedagogical competencies<sup>2</sup> which, inter alia, in its “methodical” component require the

<sup>1</sup> At the end of this paper, in the references, the names of laws, regulations and decisions, as well as all other Croatian sources used in the paper, are listed first originally in Croatian, and then in English.

<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to provisions of Article 105 (6) of the *Primary and Secondary School Education Act* (Official Gazette Nos. 87/2008, 86/2009, 92/2010, 105/2010, 90/2011, 5/2012, 16/2012, 86/2012, 126/2012, 94/2013, 152/2014, 07/2017, 68/2018, 98/2019 and 64/2020), the duties of a subject teacher in a primary school may be performed by a person who has completed:

- a) an educational study program of the appropriate subject at a graduate university level or integrated undergraduate and graduate university study program,
- b) an appropriate study program at the graduate university level or an integrated undergraduate and graduate university study program or an appropriate specialist graduate tertiary education study program and acquired the necessary pedagogical, psychological, didactic and methodical education and obtained a minimum of 55 ECTS credit points (hereinafter: pedagogical competencies), if the person referred to in point (a) of this paragraph does not apply for this position,  
- four-year undergraduate specialist study program of primary education with an intensified program of the relevant subject or integrated undergraduate and graduate university study program of primary education with a teaching module of the appropriate subject, if the person referred to in point (a) of this paragraph does not apply for this position.
- c) - an undergraduate university study program or tertiary education study program where 180 ECTS credits are obtained and acquired pedagogical competencies, if the person referred to in points (a) and (b) of this paragraph does not apply for this position.

Pursuant to the provisions of Article 105 (7) of the aforementioned *Act*, the duties of a subject teacher in a secondary school may be performed by a person who has completed an appropriate graduate university study program or a graduate specialist tertiary education study program and has the necessary pedagogical competencies.

completion of a methodical practice as part of compulsory methodics subjects in higher education institutions.

The broad lines of methodical practice implemented in primary and secondary schools certainly are practice-schools, mentors and university methodology professors. The procedure which a school, either primary or secondary, undergoes in order to become a practice-school where the students will carry out the methodical practice, i.e. the procedure which a teacher undergoes in order to obtain the status of a mentor who will guide the students through the practice is also regulated by law.

Schools become practice-schools upon a proposal by higher education institutions which prepare the students for educational work involving pupils. In the administrative procedure, the Ministry of Science and Education verifies and determines if the proposed school fulfills the requirements and work modes to become qualified as a practice-school. Pursuant to the *Ordinance on practice-schools in primary education* (Official Gazette No. 40/1991), to be declared as a practice-school, a primary school must fulfill the following requirements:

- be in the same location as the faculty
- have a space in which up to 25 pupils and up to 15 students can work at the same time
- have specialized classrooms, offices, space for demonstration and performance of various forms
- and contents of educational and rehabilitation work in single-class and multi-class
- departments as well as for student counseling and other activities
- have sufficient didactic and rehabilitation aids and equipment, an office with
- IT and other modern equipment for carrying out educational work
- have developed forms of extracurricular activities and other forms of public and cultural activities
- have the appropriate staff. A primary school or other organization is declared as a practice-school
- by the Ministry of Education and Culture, upon a proposal by the Institute for Education and the Faculty.
- Pursuant to the *Ordinance on practice-schools in secondary education* (Official Gazette No. 40/1991), to be declared as a practice-school, a school must fulfill the following requirements:
- one or more faculties in the field of education submitted a proposal for the school to become a practice-school

- have the possibility of performing methodical exercises in at least one subject,
- have designated mentors for particular subjects,
- have the necessary equipment, space and teaching aids for the subjects referred to in indent 2 of this paragraph and
- is willing to fulfill the tasks of a practice-school.

The fulfillment of the requirements referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall be determined by the Institute for Education of the Ministry of Culture and Education. If it stops fulfilling any of the requirements referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, the Minister shall annul the decision declaring the school a practice-school.

Upon the completion of the procedure and the verification, the line ministry issues an approval decision and defines the financing criteria or, in the case of non-fulfillment of these requirements, issues a rejection. Schools are declared practice-schools for a certain period of time. Schools which have successfully undergone the procedure obtain an approval from the Ministry of Science and Education declaring them practice-schools.

In schools which become practice-schools, and upon the proposal of higher education institutions, the line ministry appoints individual teachers as students' mentors. In order to become a students' mentor, a teacher must meet the criteria of professional expertise and have gained affirmation in their educational work. Students' mentors in secondary schools can only be those teachers who have become mentors or advisors as part of a special procedure and have a formal document<sup>1</sup> attesting that, which is issued by the competent institution for a certain period of time, and is regulated by the *Ordinance on the promotion of teachers, professors, professional associates and principals in primary and secondary schools and student dormitories* (Official Gazette No. 68/2019).

Every methodical practice carried out in primary and secondary schools aims at enabling the students to gain practical experience by actively taking part in the teaching process. Active participation in the teaching process means including the students in all forms of educational and rehabilitation work provided in the curriculum of the higher education institution which can be carried out in the practice-school. The purpose of methodical practice is achieved through enabling the students to use their didactic, methodical, pedagogical, psychological and defectology knowledge in practice in the immediate educational work and instructing them how to carry out the individual phases of educational work in practice. Special attention is

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<sup>1</sup> Article 8 of the *Ordinance on practice-schools in secondary education* (Official Gazette No. 11/1994) stipulates the following: "Mentoring tasks and tasks in practice schools shall be performed by mentors and advisors. Exceptionally, when the practice-school does not have a mentor or advisor for the subject in which the methodical exercises will be performed, the principal may conclude an employment contract with a mentor employed in another school or, in agreement with the methodology professor, temporarily entrust the mentoring tasks to a teacher who does not have the title of a mentor, however, for a maximum of one school year."

given to introducing the students to planning and organizing teaching content and choosing the means and methods to carry it out. Preparing and teaching units as well as monitoring and evaluating educational work play an important role in methodical practice. The purpose of methodical practice is also achieved through introducing the students to the application of innovations and modern teaching technologies in educational work, developing their interest for and professional attitude towards educational and rehabilitation activities and developing specific professional abilities required for the work in extracurricular activities. The particular significance of methodical practice also lies in introducing the students, as future teachers, to laws and ordinances regulating the entire educational process, which enable them to familiarize themselves with the context of rights and obligations of all the stakeholders in the educational process.

Each individual methodical practice carried out in primary and secondary schools must bring together all the aforementioned broad lines.

#### **4. Organization and performance of methodical practice in normal circumstances**

In addition to its general features regulated by legislation, methodical practice has its very specific characteristics depending on the study program and subject in question.

When it comes to methodical practice of students of Croatian Language and Literature in the educational study program, methodical practice is carried out in primary and secondary schools, preceded by complex organization. The methodical practice is organized by a university methodology professor, who, depending on the number of students which changes yearly as well as the needs of the study program, communicates the need for a certain number of practice-schools and mentors to the administrative body of their higher education institution. After that, the higher education institution initiates the procedure of proposing practice-schools and mentors, which is previously determined in the broad lines of the methodical practice. Due to the length of the procedure, taking care of time management is especially important in order to achieve compliance with all legal regulations before starting the practice. After appointing practice-schools and mentors, the university methodology professor organizes students into smaller groups and coordinates their visits to practice-schools and their meetings with the mentors.

At the beginning of the academic year, and in accordance with the curriculum of the study program, a specific time period is determined within the academic year, in which the methodical practice is carried out. The university issues a verified referral to each student and thus refers a student to the methodical practice at the appointed practice-school with the specific mentor. The referral prescribes a precise time period within which the student must carry out the practice. Following the conclusion of the practice, the practice-school verifies the referral as proof of a properly and successfully performed practice.

The methodical practice of the students of Croatian Language and Literature in the educational study program is aimed at familiarizing the students with the practice of teaching Croatian language, literature, linguistic expression and media culture, as well as training them to teach the aforementioned.

**The main content of the methodical practice refers to familiarizing oneself with teaching duties and responsibilities as well as curricula (bases of teaching), textbooks, acts, ordinances and school documentation. Observing mentors' lessons and other teaching duties. Participating in analyses and evaluation of teaching hours, creating a monthly implementation plan for the subject Croatian Language. Independent creation of written tasks for testing and evaluating the knowledge, achievements and abilities of pupils in primary and secondary schools. Written lesson plans. Teaching classes (lectures).**

At the beginning of methodical practice, the students must observe a determined number of demonstration lectures held by their mentors. Since the subject Croatian Language has three educational areas<sup>1</sup>, a mentor from each area performs multiple demonstrational lectures that serve as an example of how students should teach a lesson. During the methodical practice, students keep a methodical practice record in which they record demonstrational lectures, make notes on the lessons, familiarize themselves with the duties of a teacher, note all relevant observations, own analyses, records of their own and their colleagues' attendance at the methodical practice, as well as all their performed duties. Following the conclusion of the practice, mentors verify methodical practice records, and the students are obliged to submit their records to the university methodology professor.

Mentors and students coordinate the schedules for observing methodical lessons, students' lessons (trial and demonstrational) and other obligations, and the schedule states how many lessons the students have to observe and actively participate in, that students have to prepare and carry out the lessons, actively participate in the analyses of the lessons, keep a methodical practice record, carry out all duties and set tasks within the methodical practice (lectures at the faculty).

In accordance with the instructions from the university methodology professor, the students, together with their mentors, write their lesson plans for the practice and give special attention to it. For the purpose of trial and demonstrational lessons, students write lesson plans, which represent a certain scenario planned for the lesson. The plan includes all relevant segments of the lesson, such as lesson type, educational area, unit, methodical system, motivation, methods and ways of realization, aims, objectives and learning outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> Pursuant to the *Decision on the adoption of the curriculum for the subject Croatian Language* for primary schools and grammar schools in the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette Nos. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10 - correction, 90/11, 16/12, 86/12, 94/13, 152/14, 7/17 and 68/18), the subject *Croatian Language* is organized in three interrelated subject areas: Croatian language and communication, literature and creation, culture and media.

After the students have observed mentors' demonstrational lectures, they carry out their own trial lessons that enable them to gain experience by directly teaching a lesson that is not graded, the aim of which is to prepare students for the demonstrational lesson and their future independent work. During the trial lessons, if necessary, mentors can intervene and comment on the students' lesson performance. Demonstrational lessons are carried out independently, without mentor's interventions, and after the end the lesson, comments and analyses are provided. Students are obliged to observe and analyze trial and demonstrational lessons of their colleagues because group work is necessary to evaluate and analyze particular segments of the lesson together. Therefore, group work is inevitable for establishing the conditions for this kind of collaborative learning. Students analyze demonstrational lessons together with the mentor, university professor and other colleagues from their group.

During the methodical practice, students create their personal portfolio in which they collect professionally relevant documents on the increase of their own teaching competence, such as methodical practice record, samples of lesson plans, mentor's assessment of the quality of the student's independent lesson, self-evaluation of each carried out lesson and achieved teaching competence, copies of independently made, written lesson plans and other teaching materials.

Within the methodical practice, students become familiar with creating a monthly and yearly implementation plan for the subject Croatian Language. They create written tasks to independently test and assess the knowledge, achievements and abilities of pupils in primary and secondary schools. They create a number of written lesson plans and get acquainted with textbooks, curricula, and the processes of their creation, as well as with acts, ordinances and school documentation with all relevant pedagogical documentation which regulates teachers' duties and obligations.

Students are obligated to regularly and actively comply with the schedule of mentors' lessons, observe, prepare and carry out the planned lessons, actively participate in the analyses of their and their colleagues' lessons, keep a methodical practice record, carry out the tasks set within the practice (faculty lessons) and fulfill all obligations within the methodical practice.

The control of the success of the methodical practice is expressed in the final grade, which is based on the continuous monitoring of the students during methodical practice, and which is derived from several elements such as: quality of lesson plans for demonstrational lessons, practice record, participation in lesson analyses, carrying out tasks within the practice, regularity of methodical practice attendance, active participation in practice which includes practice record analyses and lesson simulation (university lectures) and participation in the analysis of these lessons, and attitude towards work, pupils, as well as all participants in the educational process.

The mentor and the university methodology professor together evaluate the demonstrational lesson of each individual student, and the final methodical practice grade is decided on by the university methodology professor, based on the mentor's report on each individual student and their own insight into the activity of each individual student during the methodical practice, as well as the personal portfolio of each individual student.

After successfully completing the methodical practice, students are able to:

- independently plan, perform, analyze and evaluate a Croatian Language and Literature class in primary and secondary schools
- independently create teaching units in the field of literature and language in a methodical manner by integrating literary, literary and historical, literary-theoretical and linguistic contents within different teaching systems
- make substantiated decisions on selecting appropriate teaching materials, teaching methods and practices, teaching equipment and tools, and social forms of work in accordance with the teaching context
- describe and explain each individual component of communicational, referential instruments relating to teaching language and literature in primary and secondary schools
- substantiate current requirements and needs regarding the teaching of Croatian Language and Literature in primary and secondary schools
- connect the teaching of literature with other areas of artistic work
- analyze examples of interdisciplinarity in literature teaching
- analytically and critically evaluate the process of teaching Croatian Language and Literature
- independently create teaching materials
- consider and design the Croatian Language and the Croatian Literature class from several points of view
- synthesize achievements of certain schools of methodology and actively apply different methods when teaching literature.

## **5. Means and methods of implementing methodical practice in extraordinary circumstances**

The period of participating in methodical practice, even in normal conditions, was shown to be stressful for students, based on the ten-year experience in the organization and implementation of methodical practice at the University of Zadar, Department of Croatian Studies, during which approximately 400 students were referred to practice, guided and observed. In the largest number of students, positive



excitement was present because they had the opportunity to try out their abilities in the real school environment. However, stage fright was present in a smaller number of students because of the exposure to practical teaching work which implies a direct exposure of the student in front of the pupils, mentor and university professor. A certain pressure in students is created by being aware that during a literature class, they can clearly demonstrate the total accumulation of their previously (not) acquired knowledge. In such cases, stage fright is regularly and successfully eliminated by collaborative learning<sup>1</sup> and application of affirmative methods and means. However, in addition to this usual phenomenon of emotional dimension present during methodical practice that can be successfully controlled, methodical practice, as a complex process which includes numerous different institutions and a large number of participants, is also disrupted by the COVID-19 virus.

Since schools and higher education institutions had to be closed to stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, classes were no longer held in person. They were held in an online environment and via television programs, in a completely different manner and in a completely different social context. Distance learning prevented students of Croatian Language and Literature, who in the period of the pandemic were in the process of carrying out methodical practice, from finishing their ongoing practice in schools. Such a new situation has encouraged reflection and raised the question of how to complete the implementation of students' methodical practice, i.e. how can the practice be compensated without endangering the academic standards or compromising the defined objectives of methodical practice learning. Quickly, it became evident that online learning, i.e. learning by using different applications, can be challenging to the most experienced and computer literate teachers considering that this is a completely new teaching method, and that this new method is surprisingly very familiar to students. In addition, using certain applications and online learning tools alone is a way of acquiring knowledge on teaching in methodical terms.

An idea was found to include students through their mentors in all components of remote learning so that they could acquire pedagogical competences by participating in the class process as it actually was at the given moment – online! It was noticed that this way, students can be useful to society at the same time, because through their own learning process, they will help their mentors<sup>2</sup>, pupils' parents who also had to

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<sup>1</sup> Collaborative or cooperative learning is the joint learning of pupils in pairs or small groups with the aim of solving common tasks, examining and exploring a common topic or building onto their insights to create and develop new ideas, new combinations or a unique innovation (Meredith et al., 1998). Collaborative learning is one of the fruitful areas of theory, research and practice in education, and it implies joint activity of pupils with the aim of achieving common educational objectives (Johnson and Johnson, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Mentors showed a special fondness of this way of cooperation because students have proved themselves to be responsible, diligent, enthusiastic and innovative during the methodical practice that had started in the normal circumstances, which showed their mentors that they were serious, and because engagement of the students proved to be an immense help in online learning.

be included in the teaching process, and especially the pupils, who also found themselves in the same situation as the students, which created social empathy.

An important feature of methodical practice realized through online learning is social distancing, thanks to which the students and all other participants of the learning process are protected. Using the previously agreed upon application, either by the university or practice-school, students can observe demonstrational classes held by their mentors. Own trial and demonstrational classes can be carried in several ways, either online, in real time, directly including the pupils, mentors and university professor, or by recording a video and uploading it to a platform, i.e. a previously agreed upon channel. A huge advantage of conducting the evaluation of demonstrational classes online, which is done by the mentor and university professor, is the elimination of physically going to school, which is significantly less time-consuming. The distribution of all teaching materials between all participants of the methodical practice was accelerated, and the availability and storing of the materials (written lesson plans, quizzes prepared for the class, questionnaires and surveys, motivational materials, practice materials, literary texts, linguistic analysis materials etc.) were simplified. For the purpose of covering certain teaching units and in agreement with their mentor, students can design methods and implement them into remote learning and suggest solutions for certain segments of the language and literature class, thereby helping their mentor to prepare classes and gaining experience. Students can upgrade mentors' existing lesson plans with images, audio, animations and video. The possibilities are endless, and they depend solely on the activity and creativity of each student and the openness of mentors. It often happens that a student is familiar with teaching tools and applications that can advance and improve the class, and thus motivate pupils. Including students to help in carrying out pupils' projects is an excellent method for interaction and encouraging pupils' creativity and independence, as well as for extracurricular activities which contribute to general growth and development.

Students can be a great help to their mentors in technical sense as well, by uploading their already prepared materials for teaching, as well as recorded classes. The fact that students find materials and content on the internet, when libraries are closed due to the pandemic, helps teachers and contributes to the quality of the work. Checking pupils' homeworks under mentors' supervision enables students to gain experience in the area of evaluation. The students' help in the supervision of pupils during online exams is of great significance.

Carrying out the methodical practice online has its advantages. The university methodology teacher has an insight into students' and mentors' performance in a quick and efficient manner, and this information is collected on the university's internet platform that was specified, approved or recommended. Reaction time regarding any potential irregularities is prompt, and the insight into the implementation of methodical practice is absolute because everything that

“happens”, happens in an online environment, in whose nature it is to record everything, and the insight is not conditional on time. The ability to attend multiple practice-schools at once gives a completely new significance to methodical practice and provides completely new opportunities giving the integrational and correlational methodical system a prominent role. The ability to store all processes of methodical practice could be useful for university lectures in methodics subjects, as well as for scientific research.

## **Conclusion**

In the Republic of Croatia, in all programs of Croatian Studies of the Educational Study Program, methodical practice is represented through compulsory subjects in the field of language methodology and literary methodology. In normal conditions, students from the Department of Croatian Studies of the University of Zadar carry out their methodical practice in a real environment – when they physically visit a primary or secondary school, organized and guided by the university professor in cooperation with the mentor teacher in the practice-school. According to the program of the compulsory methodics subject within which the methodical practice is carried out and organized, students have a prescribed schedule for methodical practice. The obligations of students and mentors which need to be fulfilled during the practice are precisely defined. Students visit primary and secondary schools to practice because they are studying to become subject teachers in primary schools, and teachers in secondary schools.

When organizing and implementing methodical practice for the students of Croatian Language and Literature, there are constant efforts to upgrade and advance the practice. However, when the conditions arise that prevent such practice from realization, it is necessary to be open to new possibilities, and if there are not any, to create them under given conditions.

The motivation inspired by the desire not to deprive students of the practical part of their education and of their right to complete their task in real time, without having to make up the lost time, which is already uncertain due to the nature of the pandemic, resulted in the organization, implementation and realization of methodical practice through online classes. The awareness of the potential help that students can and want to provide to mentors, pupils and pupils' parents, at the same time gaining teaching competences without safety concerns, has contributed to the decision to start a different method of methodical practice realization, which maintains academic standards and achieves the planned teaching objectives regardless of the new way of implementation.

In addition to the fact that such new approach to methodical practice enables students to carry out their methodical practice in extraordinary circumstances, being useful to society at the same time, it will certainly be a significant supplement and upgrade to the study program.

After the initial demanding processes involving the organization, implementation and realization of methodical practice as part of online classes, thus affirming highly useful and practical methods and means enabled this way, as well as the potential for university teaching and scientific research, in contrast to the standard methodical practice, one thing remains. It is the unshaken awareness of the most important methodical fact that the spoken word of a teacher, social contact and the emotion provoked by the real school environment are irreplaceable!

Based on the experiences and insights gained from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is possible and necessary to think about the possibility of combining methodical practice in its standard form performed in normal circumstances with methodical practice realized through online classes, depending on the circumstances.

To conclude, methodical practice in online classes, which began due to the COVID-19 pandemic, can be seen as a supplement and upgrade to methodical practice in a general sense, as well as a possible solution to each individual practice carried out in primary and secondary school in extraordinary circumstances. The purpose of such methodical practice is to, in extraordinary circumstances regardless of their cause, enable students to start applying theoretical knowledge acquired during their studies in practice, and to train them to convey their knowledge to pupils. Working directly in classes with pupils and a mentor, continuous collaboration and consulting with a university methodology professor, spending time in a real school environment where the teaching process happens live and in a real environment and real time all encourage more complex reflections on class performance and provide the opportunity for students to directly compare themselves to a professional mentor and colleagues with the same level of education and experience. Regardless of the method of its implementation, methodical practice is an indispensable segment of the higher education system. Therefore, it is important that there are defined and different ways to implement methodical practice in extraordinary circumstances regardless of their cause, in addition to the existing, standard way of its implementation, i.e. by students visiting primary and secondary schools in normal circumstances.

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# A Contrastive Analysis of English and Albanian Somatic Idioms - A Cognitive Perspective

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## Abstract

In this paper we try to make a cognitive comparison between phraseological expressions originating from body-part terms in English and Albanian (taking English as our starting point). Although these languages are distant in space they do have similarities. This similarity / difference is seen better than nowhere else in the way how they conceive of the world (and the way this is expressed linguistically). They are at different stages of their linguistic cultivation where English is in a dominant position (remember here that every technological innovation has knock-on linguistic effects that affect every language including Albanian) and Albanian is in a defensive position since it has to cope with a host of concepts and realities that in one way or another have to be made tangible to Albanian speakers as well. Phraseological expressions are conceived as the tip of the iceberg of a process grounded upon transformational mechanisms (the best known of which are metaphors and metonymy) with emotional coloring adding to the mix. By way of illustration we give the following example: get blood from/out of a stone - nxjerr dhjamë nga pleshti, nxjerr ujë nga guri (*extract fat out of a flea, extract water from the stone*) Albanian literal translation in italics and brackets. From what we see, Albanians associate the equivalent of the English phraseological unit with *water* (since they are a Mediterranean country with dry summers), or with *fat* and *flea* (Albanians are known for their animal husbandry and meat-related terms).

**Keywords:** somatic idiom, cognition, metaphor, English, Albanian, culture

## Introduction

A unique tool that we have at their disposal and that enables us to interact with other people and get our message across, is without doubt our ability to utter words, i.e. language. By default, we use language to express ourselves and respond to various situations in uniquely infinite and creative ways, but we are also economical in our use of language, i.e. whenever we find ourselves in situations that follow a certain

pattern our linguistic response acts accordingly. In such cases our language production ability avails itself of “ready-made” or “prefabricated” word combinations (of different kinds) which are stored in our brains and used whenever the need arises. In fact, these “prefabricated” word combinations make up a large part of our language (this is true, to varying degrees, of all the languages spoken around the world) and estimates go as high as 80% (Nattinger 1988: 76). So, even though at first we would think that we speak in words and such ready-made word combinations merely ornament or embellish our language “Rather than being peripheral to the ‘core’ of a language, it is possible to argue that such idiomatic expressions *are* the core (Taylor 2002: 541). This goes to show that when speak we do not start from scratch every time but rely on these “ready-made” word combinations. One thing that such combinations have in common is the fact that their meaning cannot be inferred from individual words but rather they have a global meaning with varying degrees of motivation.

When it comes to categorizing them or giving them names, opinions differ and there is a multitude of designations which still in use today. Some of them are 'phraseological units', 'word-combinations', and 'phrasal lexemes' (Cowie 1998:1), to name but a few. This plenitude of designations owes its existence to many factors and it is not the aim of this paper to provide a detailed explanation of each and every one of them due to limitations of space. To attest to their complicated nature and why it has proven so difficult to come up with clear-cut categories we would like to mention the fact that many scholars have attempted this task based on different criteria and the issue is far from settled. The Russian tradition, with such representatives as Vinogradov, Amosova, Koonin, Arnold, has been very influential in this field and has inspired other Western scholars primarily because “Its principal legacy is a framework of descriptive categories that is comprehensive, systematic, and soundly based.” (Cowie 1998: 4). One such scholar that has been influential because of its categorization principles is Vinogradov. He categorized such word combinations according to the semantic principle. “Within the general class of nominations (for which he used the term 'phraseological unit'), Vinogradov (1947) drew a distinction between 'phraseological fusions' (also called 'idioms'), 'phraseological unities', and 'phraseological combinations’.” (Cowie 1998: 4-5). Now, of course, their degree of motivation of meaning is also different ranging from the least motivated ones the 'phraseological fusions' where we can mention *neck and crop-* altogether, entirely; 'phraseological unities' where the meaning of the whole can be guessed from the meanings of its components, but it is transferred (metaphorically or metonymically), for example, *to lose one's head* - to be at a loss what to do/to be out of one's mind; *to show one's teeth*- to show that you are angry; 'phraseological combination' units consisting of two open-class words, such as *meet the demand*, they have one component used in a literal sense, and the other is used figuratively. So, as see the degree of semantic transparency or a lack of it serves as



a kind of linguistic common denominator or unifying theme of phraseological units including idioms.

As regards the issue of motivation of idioms we want to say that there are two views. The *traditional view* according to which “all there is to idioms is that, similar to words, they have certain syntactic properties and have a meaning that is special, relative to the meanings of the forms that comprise it” KÖVECSES (2010: 231). And the *Cognitive Linguistic View* according to which “Many, or perhaps most, idioms are products of our conceptual system and not simply a matter of language (i.e., a matter of the lexicon). An idiom is not just an expression that has a meaning that is somehow special in relation to the meanings of its constituting parts, but it arises from our more general knowledge of the world embodied in our conceptual system. In other words, idioms (or, at least, the majority of them) are conceptual, and not linguistic, in nature.” KÖVECSES (2010: 233). Here we see fit to give some context regarding the use of the term *somatic idiom* or *somatism*. First, we would like to say that the word ‘*soma*’ comes from Greek meaning ‘*body*’. Estonian scholar F. Vack was the first who introduced the term “**somatic**” to linguistics. Researchers frequently make use of this term when they want to talk about body-part term idioms. Among such researchers we can mention F. Cermák (1998: 109-119) with his article “Somatic Idioms Revisited”, Sabina HALUPKA-REŠETAR, Edit ANDRIĆ with their article “Somatisms with the Lexeme *Láb* in Hungarian, *Noga* in Serbian and *Leg/Foot* in English” (2016: 21-34), etc.,

The framework upon which the analysis of the somatic idioms in these two languages rests has been developed by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in their groundbreaking study *Metaphors We Live By* (George Lakoff and Mark Johnson 1980). In it they claim and show that contrary to being a property of the lexicon and poets and writers, metaphor (in all its manifestations) is wired into our brains as part of our (linguistic) evolutionary journey. This has profound implications when it comes to idioms as they are the most colourful and vibrant part of our vocabulary and motivated in large part by metaphors. However, idioms as we will try to show are not only motivated by conceptual metaphors but also by conventional knowledge and conceptual metonymy (more on these later).

Our sample contains 4 body parts, the eye, the nose, the heart, and the hand. First we give the English idiom followed by the Albanian equivalent and then the Albanian literal translation in brackets, all idiomatic expressions are given in italics, non-idiomatic ones in normal and body-part terms are in bold face. Now, of course we will not analyse each and every one of these idiomatic expressions one by one (maybe this is the topic of another paper) we will limit ourselves to some of them just to give an idea of the cognitive mechanisms behind their motivation. Here is our small corpus:

*bad/poor* **hand** *at sth* -dorëngathët, s'i vjen ndoresh (clumsy-handed, not to be good at)

*force sb's **hand*** - detyroj (shtrëngoj) dikë të veprojë pa dëshirë (force sb to act without will)

*bite the **hand** that feeds one* -shkel bukën me **këmbë** (trample the bread under the feet)

*lend sb a (helping) **hand** with sth* - jap një **dorë** (give a hand)

*keep a tight **hand**/rein on sb* -mbaj nën kontroll (keep under control)

*cap in **hand*** - me nderim, plot respekt (përlulje, përunjësi) (with reverence, full of respect, humility)

*hat in **hand*** -gjithë servilizëm (përlulësi, temena) (full of obsequiousness)

*play into sb's **hands*** - bëj lojën e dikujt, çoj ujë në mullirin e dikujt (make sb's game; take water into sb's mill)

*bind sb **hand** and **foot*** - lidh **këmbë** e **duar** (bind feet and hands)

*catch sb red-**handed*** - kap me presh në **dorë** (catch with leeks in the hand)

*at first **hand*** - drejtpërdrejt, nga burime të drejtpërdrejt (directly, from direct sources)

*take one's courage in both **hands*** -marr **zemër** (take heart)

*take matters into one's own **hands*** - i marr vetë punët në **dorë** (take myself matters in hand)

*Rub your **hands***- fërkon **duar** (rubs the hands)

*Hand in **glove***- si mishi me **thuan** (like the flesh with the nail)

*Out of **hand***-jashtë kontrollit (out of control)

*Someone's right **hand***- **dora** e djathtë (right hand)

*The upper\whip **hand*** – the position of power or control- pozita dominuese (dominant position)

*Wait on **hand** and **foot***- i shërbej me të gjitha mënyrat (serve with all the ways)

*Someone's **hands** are tied*- i ka **duar** të lidhura (has hands bound)

*Have one's **hands** full*- jam i zënë (I am busy)

*Out of someone's **hands***- **out of or beyond someone's control**: jashtë kontrollit të (out of the control of)

*Sit on one's **hands*** – lidh (kryqëzon) **duar** (ties (crosses) the hands)

*Cross someone's **palm** \ **hand** with silver*- i ka lyer rrotën (**dorën**) dikujt (has greased the wheel (the hand) sb)

*have an **eye** for* - ka ndjenjën e, ia thotë për ( has the sense of, is good at)

*all ears/eyes -gjithë, tërë sy e veshë* (all eyes and ears)  
*apple of one's eye -drita e syve* (the light of the eyes)  
*close one's eyes to - mbyll sytë para* (close the eyes in front of)  
*turn a blind eye to sth -bëj një sy qorr* (make a blind eye)  
*catch sb's eye -shihem sy më sy, kryqëzoi shikimin* (look eye to eye, cross the look)  
*feast one's eyes on - kullot sytë* (graze the eyes on)  
*believe one's ears / eyes – u besoj veshëve (syve)* (believe the ears, eyes)  
*do sb in the eye - i'a hedh sy për sy* (deceive sb, cast it eye to eye)  
*cry one's eyes out - shkrihem së qari, shkrihem në lot* (melt while crying, melt in tears)  
*cast an eye/one's eye(s) over sb/sth - hedh një sy* (cast an eye)  
*Out of the corner of one's eye – me bisht të syrit* (with the tail of the eye)  
*Not bat an eyelid\eye- nuk i trembet syri* (the eye is not scared)  
*Cannot take one's eyes off – mu bë syri gozhdë* (the eye turned into nail)  
*With one's eyes closed – me sy mbyllur* (with closed eyes)  
*Remove the scales from one's eyes- i hapi sytë* (opened his/her eyes)  
*In the twinkling of an eye- sa hap e mbyll sytë* (how open and close eyes)  
*Keep a \one's weather eye open- i bëj sytë katër* (make the eyes four)  
*Pull the wool over someone's eyes- i hedh hi syve* (cast his /her ashes at the eyes)  
*cut off one's nose to spite one's face - në vend që t'i vinte vetulla, i nxori sytë* (instead of putting him/ her eyebrows, gouged his/ her eyes out)  
*blow one's nose - shfryj hundët* (blow the noses)  
*keep one's nose to the grindstone -punoj pa pushim* (work tirelessly)  
*Plain as the nose on your face- shumë e qartë* ( very obvious)  
*One's nose is in the air- me hundën përpjetë sillem mendjemadh* (with the nose up)  
*bloody someone's nose- i ra hunda* (his /her nose fell)  
*follow one's nose- eci drejt* (walk stright)  
*have a nose for- ia zë hunda* (his/her nose catches it)  
*(always) have one's nose in a book- lexues i apasionuar* (avid reader)  
*Keep one's nose clean- qëndroj larg telasheve* (stay away from trouble)  
*Lead by the nose- tërheq për hunde* (lead by the nose)

*Look down one's nose-* e sheh nën **hundë** dikë, e sheh me përçmim (look at under the nose, look scornfully)

*On the nose* – egzaktësisht (exactly)

*Pay through the nose-* paguaj shtrenjtë (pay dearly)

*Poke\push\stick one's nose into-* fus **hundët** në (put the noses in)

*Put someone's nose out of joint-* ofendoj dikë (offend someone)

*(Right) under someone's (very) nose-* **hundë më hundë** (nose to nose)

*(Right) under someone's (very) nose-* përpara **hundës** (in front of the nose)

*Be no skin off someone's nose* – not to be someone's concern, responsibility, etc – shih punën tënde (mind your own business)

*break one's heart* - i'a thyej **zembrën** dikujt (break his/ her heart)

*hand over heart* -me dorë në **zemër**, çiltërsisht, ndershmërisht (with hand on the heart, frankly, honestly)

*take heart* - marr **zemër** (take heart)

*after one's own heart-* si ma do **zemra** (as my heart likes it)

*have a corner in sb's heart* -ruaj të gjallë në **zemër** (save alive in the heart)

*cry one's heart out* - qaj me ngashërim (sob)

*eat one's heart out* -ligështohem, ha veten përbrenda, vuaj përbrenda (droop, suffer from the inside, eat myself from the inside)

*have a heart* -tregoj mëshirë (show mercy)

*have a heart of gold* -e ka **zembrën flori** (he /she has the heart gold)

*have a heart of stone* -e ka **zembrën gur** (he/she has the heart stone)

*pluck up (one's) heart* - marr **zemër**, bëhem trim (take heart, become brave)

*a change of heart* -ndryshim në qëndrim, në gjendjen shpirtërore (change in attitude, in state of mind)

*From the bottom of one's heart* – nga fundi i **zembrës** (from the end of the heart)

*Can find it in one's heart-* to be ready or willing (to do smth): më bën **zemra** (the heart does)

*Have one's heart in one's mouth* – i shkoi (i ra) **zemra** te thembra (his /her heart fell on the heel)

*Put one's heart and soul into-* - me mish e me shpirt (with flesh and soul)

*Have one's heart in one's boots* – me **zemër** të dridhur (with shaky heart)

*Pull\ tug at \one the \someone's heartstrings – mē dhemb zemra* (my heart aches)

Before venturing the analysis of the somatic idioms we would like to elaborate a bit (at the same time try to be concise) on these cognitive mechanisms underlying them. First we start with metaphor “In the cognitive linguistic view, metaphor is defined as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain... A conceptual metaphor consists of two conceptual domains, in which one domain is understood in terms of another” KÖVECSES (2010: 4). The two domains which interact or rather the two halves of a conceptual metaphor are respectively called *source domain* and *target domain*. The conceptual domain which helps us understand the other conceptual domain is the source domain, this is usually more concrete while the conceptual domain that is understood through it is the target domain, and this is usually more abstract.

Since in our daily practices we find ourselves in different situations we might have to provide information related to space, existence or other dimensions so the metaphors we use also have to be used accordingly. Thus, conceptual metaphors are further subdivided into: structural, ontological, and orientational. However, despite the kind of metaphor we are dealing one crucial element pertaining to them and unites them all is mappings or systematic correspondences, these enable the transfer of meaning from one domain to the other and help us gain an insight into what has motivated the relationship between the respective part of the body and the situation.

However, most of the time, idioms have more than one basis or motivation underlying them, other such motivations are respectively metonymy and conventional knowledge. Differently from metaphor, metonymy is a relationship of the type in which one kind of entity “stands for” another kind of entity or one thing. Unlike the metaphor a metonymy is made up of a vehicle and a target. And unlike metaphor which is a matter of similarity, metonymy deals with contiguity and they vary from culture to culture as Niemeier (1998: 123) says “the conceptual contiguity of metonymy is based on extralinguistic experiences and connotations and is therefore culture-dependent”. “It is a basic feature of metonymically related vehicle and target entities that they are “close” to each other in conceptual space” KÖVECSES (2010: 173). Metaphor and metonymy are theoretically clearly distinct from one another but in reality it is quite difficult to distinguish between them. A good rule of thumb to keep in mind when we are faced with them is to apply the “is like” test proposed by Ray Gibbs (1994) KÖVECSES (2010: 174), in fact sometimes they are so intertwined that Goosens (1990; 2000) claims “that there is not always a clear demarcation between metaphor and metonymy. Some figurative items could be both a metaphor or metonym according to the context so that the two concepts may then become intertwined. This has led to the coining of a new term *metaphonymy*, i.e. metaphor and metonymy being interwoven”.

And the third motivation is conventional knowledge. Simply put it is the totality of our ideas, beliefs, fears, hopes, and patterns, i.e. basically all the information that we possess about the world around us. It is inherent in all of us and permeates every domain of our existence and we make use of it unconsciously, i.e. whenever we use an idiom grounded in conventional knowledge we take it for granted that the people we are talking to already know what we are talking about.

Let us illustrate the interaction of the abovementioned motivations by analysing the idiom: *keep a tight hand/rein on sb* which means *keep under control* we see that *hand* stands for *control* so as we said if something stands for something else and based on what we said previously, we would obviously treat this as a case of metonymy, but this is not the only lexical unit participating in the sentence. So we turn to the other lexical unit *tight*, now going by the dictionary we know that *tight* means *fixed, fastened, closed firmly; hard to move, undo or open* and conventional knowledge tells us that if we keep something tight it does not go away so by combining these two motivations we have the final idiom. Now, as we saw the Albanian equivalent *mbaj nën kontroll* (keep under control) does not involve the word *hand* at all, the reason for this according to our interpretation as a native Albanian is that Albanians do not see a connection between the body-part *hand* and *control*, as we mentioned before different peoples decode the world around us in different ways.

Let us analyse another idiom *catch sb's eye* whose real meaning is *to attract someone's attention*. First we know that if we are looking at someone or something (as a prerequisite we have to use our eyes) we direct our gaze towards someone or something an implied element is that we do this while paying attention, so *eye* stands for *attention* and *catch* is a substitute for *attract*, so we see that the motivation underlying this is metonymy. The Albanian equivalent on the other hand is *-shihem sy më sy, kryqëzohj shikimin* (look eye to eye, cross the look) and it is not an idiom, again we see that there is a difference in the way we think.

Our next idiom is *One's nose is in the air* meaning *one is acting conceited or aloof* – the first layer of this idiom is conventional knowledge which in this case tells us that one of the tell-tale signs regarding someone's bearing is the parts of the body which are the most noticeable ones, hence the position of the nose, here we move to idea of active zone (LANGACKER, R.W. 1984) moving further into the convoluted reality of meaning we say that *nose* stands for *bearing*. Another layer would be *being in the air* is *being excessively proud of oneself* so here we are dealing with a metaphor, because as we said "Metaphor allows people to understand one thing as another, without thinking the two things are objectively the same" Sweetser (1990: 8) thus we have a combination of the three cognitive devices contributing to the global meaning of the idiom. The Albanian equivalent is *me hundën përjetë* (with the nose up). So, this is one of those cases in which the way peoples think coincides.

## Conclusions

Contrary to being on the periphery of the language idioms are central to the way we think and speak. They enrich our language, make it more colourful and vivacity. They are woven into the very fabric of our language, in the way we try to interpret reality, try to digest it and store it into our minds. Such a linguistic feat cannot be pulled off without the mental machinery wired inside our brain and more precisely the active participation of finer cognitive devices which construe, process and interpret this interaction, sometimes alone sometimes in close cooperation with each other. As we saw from our sample (almost 80 idioms) both languages are highly idiomatic but English expresses itself more idiomatically than Albanian, a possible explanation for this would be that where English comes into contact with a situation where our cognitive devices are triggered the outcome is an idiom which makes a dent in the mental lexicon and this is repeated whenever a similar situation occurs, this apparently does not happen in Albanian.

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