



EJLS

EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE STUDIES

May - August 2019

Volume 5, Issue 2

ISSN 2411-9598 (Print)

ISSN 2411-4103 (Online)

ISSN 2411-9598



REVISTIA
PUBLISHING AND RESEARCH

EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE STUDIES

May - August 2019

Volume 5, Issue 2

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Address: 11, Portland Road, London, SE25 4UF, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 2080680407

Web: <https://ejls.revistia.org>

Email: office@revistia.org

ISSN 2411-9598 (Print), ISSN 2411-4103 (Online)

Indexed in Elsevier's Mendeley, WorldCat, RePEc & Ideas, Google Scholar, Index Copernicus, Crossref

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New Trends in the Teaching of the Intercultural Competence as Part of the Process of Teaching Foreign Languages in the Context of Higher Education in Spain.

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Abstract

Today we live in the era of globalization. We define our world by the coexistence of various different cultures. The present article seeks to clarify the concept of intercultural competence when teaching foreign languages and the new trends in the context of Higher Education in Spain. We will start with a short introduction on the various studies and research on the relationships between language and culture. However, the main aim in this article will be to point out the new roles played by teacher and learners in the process, the creation of new materials to support the intercultural dimension and the new types of activities that could be done inside and outside the classroom, such as the use of tele-collaboration, social networks and others. In other words, the elements that make up and give meaning to a new methodology for language teaching and learning and that help language teaching to be an open window towards other cultures and to develop a new and open-minded attitude towards diversity. Therefore, we will try to study some of the main current methodological approaches, stereotypes and contents linked to that intercultural competence.

Keywords: Interculturality - language learning and teaching - teacher training/development – new roles for teachers and learners

1. Introduction

Globalization is nowadays and more than ever a reality and the educational environment is no exception to this. With the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) initiated in the context of the European Union as early as 1999 with the so-called Bologna Process, many countries agreed on their joint educational efforts and policies. The main aim was then harmonise the very different education systems in the different nations in Europe and to generate more effective and efficient educational systems. Politicians and experts agreed then that the new system of Higher Education in Europe would be much more flexible than the previous one. In other words, they would try to create a new and modern educational system, which would offer university students greater opportunities for training and employment by recognising the various degrees and postgraduate degrees obtained in the different countries.

The beginning of the implementation of the EHEA was not too easy at all, and the truth is that the old and somewhat rigid and conservative models of the previous Bachelor degrees and Diplomas had to coexist with the new Bachelor, Masters and Doctorate degrees in the educational space of Higher Education for years.

As far as Higher Education in Spain is concerned, the situation required the establishment of an own schedule or plan for adaptation to the EHEA. The traditional studies such as Philology, Translation and Interpreting Studies and others coexisted for a short while with the new degrees implemented in Europe. It was only after multiple and consecutive educational reforms, when the country could finally make the final commitment that by 2010 all university courses in Spain would already be definitively adapted to the new European educational system.

That also led to significant changes in the academic and educational management of students within the different Spanish universities. In the 40's, language teaching was merely based on grammar, syntax, translation and acquisition of vocabulary without paying much attention to the concept of "culture" itself. In the 50's, experts used to link that concept of "culture" to the one of "civilisation" and it dealt with different aspects related to the history, literature, religion, geography, and many other cultural aspects of a country. It was only in the 60's when we had the first relevant changes in the methodology concerning language teaching happened, and in the 70's, an authentic revolution in the traditional methodology of language teaching took place. Traditional methods based on grammar and linguistics became less relevant, and the relationship between language and a social context became the real protagonist of language teaching and language learning. Experts

realised then that it was impossible to learn a foreign language without keeping an eye on the foreign culture. Moreover, they also realised how important it was to keep both the culture of origin and the foreign culture(s) and language(s) connected during the whole process of learning. Applied Linguistics and the modern approach to languages with an outstanding focus on the communicative function of languages also played an important role in the whole process. Languages were no further understood as abstract disciplines; language teachers tended to link them to cultures in all different aspects. Experts thought about them as tools for communication but also as tools for the required social interaction with others at all different levels (i.e. familiar, professional, social, political, economic, etc.) (Byram and Morgan, 1993). Because of that, language teaching and language learning started to change in the educational panorama in Spain. Teachers integrated then both language and culture closely to each other (Buttjes and Byram, 1991; Byram, 1997; Byram and Risager, 1999; Byram and Fleming, 2001; Kramsch, 1993). The main goals of language teaching and learning were no longer focused on languages themselves, but also in the processes of learning how to live and coexist with different life styles and traditions or values representative of other foreign countries. That would not only enrich the linguistic competence of students or prepare them to pass any of the traditional certificates based on language competences, which were traditionally issued by the institutes of culture or by universities. It could enrich the students' intercultural and social competence and would enable them to live in a globalised society and in a much more tolerant world.

European academic institutions and authorities also played a very relevant role in that new challenge of acquiring that intercultural competence in the language courses. They focused many of their academic regulations and programmes such as the ones done by the European Council or the European Union on the promotion of the cultural diversity and on the development of a new intercultural and multicultural generation. An example of this can already be found in the article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty, later adapted in the article 149 of the Union Treaty of the European Commission. We can read in that article that the main aim of education is then to "develop the European dimension of education, especially through the learning and dissemination of the languages of the Member States, promoting community actions - and specific ones - in the field of education".

That same idea was presented and defended in the so-called "European Commission White Paper on Governance" approved by the Commission in 1995. The emphasis was then set on the acquisition and learning of at least two foreign languages and on the linguistic diversity as one of the main challenges for future education. The aim was to improve the economical and professional opportunities for future learners as well as to try to develop the consciousness of identity versus alterity and to improve the education of the future European citizens.

In addition to that, the globalisation of the academic university programmes also implied an increasing importance of the various international exchange programmes such as the ERASMUS+ programme among universities. This also had a very high and interesting impact on the academic design of many degrees linked to foreign languages such as the Degree in Modern Foreign Languages, Culture and Communication, the Degree of Translation and Interpreting or the Degree in English Studies, etc.

University teachers and professors also had to make a considerable effort teachers to strengthen the language training in foreign languages, and they also had to work hard on the design of a new curriculum of all the different subjects, and not only in the ones concerning language teaching or language learning. At the same time, teacher also combined that effort with the urgent need to investigate and to innovate in new methodological approaches that could have an impact on the implementation of new and much more practical learning models. In comparison to the previous and more traditional educational approaches linked to the teaching of foreign languages in Higher Education, the emphasis was now set in the introduction of other educational approaches. Those would be approaches much more focused on the acquisition of the so-called 'fifth competence', that is, the 'intercultural competence' that would facilitate a better and greater immersion – not only linguistic, but also cultural – in a different country.

2. Trends in the teaching of the intercultural competence when teaching foreign languages. New roles for language teachers and language learners.

After the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) initiated in the European Union in 1999 and with the gradual adaptation of Bachelor and Masters Programmes at Spanish universities to the EHEA, teaching foreign languages started to change too. The scene in Europe was drastically different; students had to face different needs and to confront a new globalised world, which demanded them to be critical and tolerant towards diversity. Language teachers and professors also had to face that challenge and to educate their students on intercultural and social aspects and not only linguistic or grammatical skills. Classrooms were no longer the only places where teachers could develop their

teaching activities; a new type virtual scenario also became present and necessary in order to have a deeper contact with the foreign culture and the foreign language. Teachers and specialists started replacing the traditional manuals and materials by communicative activities and digital resources, which enabled students and teachers a deeper contact with cultural diversity, etc.

One of the most significant changes within language teaching and language learning in the actual context of Higher Education after the implementation of the Bologna process - not only in Spain but also in all the other different countries abroad - was the change of the roles traditionally played by teachers and learners in the classroom. Some of the contents in the language programmes might still be the same, but language teachers started emphasizing their own intercultural teaching and also the learning of the intercultural and social competence, as well as all the other competences concerning a language (i.e. grammatical competence and others) that had been taught in the past. That new approach to teaching and learning seriously affected the work done by the two main agents involved in the process, that is to say, the teachers and the learners.

We will start now by focusing on the new role played by language teachers, paying a close attention to their performance inside and outside the classroom, being not only the instructor but also the evaluator of the whole process, and somehow also the designer of his/her own teaching programme. As far as the Spanish Higher Education is concerned, the teacher's role has changed drastically in the last three or four decades. It was not that long ago when language teaching at university or even at high school was extremely traditional. Most teachers entered their classrooms, placed themselves in front of a very large group of students and started teaching in a very traditional and frontal way. They used the conventional language methods at the time, methods in which they mainly focused on the acquisition of grammatical structures. They tried to improve all the different skills that one was supposed to have when learning a foreign language, that is to say, the writing, listening, speaking and reading skills. They offered their language students lots and many exercises, drills and huge lists of vocabulary, so that they could try to master the foreign language and probably use it in a near professional future. They came in the classroom and left it without having that much interpersonal contact with their students. In fact, they were merely instructors in charge of evaluating their students' progress and giving them a note at the end of the semester or the year.

The implementation of a new system in Higher Education and the adaptation of our universities and institutions to the new education space represented by the ECTS and the Bologna Process, made things change very quickly. A new emphasis was then placed on the education of global citizens who could then live immersed in a new Europe and become citizens of the world. Foreign languages would of course be the necessary tools to communicate in that new world and with all sorts of people from all over the world, but the approach to them in the classroom and also within the educational context in general would have to be drastically different. They did no longer put the emphasis on teaching the language itself, but on teaching the so-called '*cultural awareness*'. Students would then have to become aware not only of the specificities of their own culture and to see it with critical eyes. They should also become aware of other cultures around them. How could they face that new challenge? How could language teachers facilitate them that new type of learning?

This became then the challenge for them and this is how language teachers started playing a crucial role in the education of students immersed in the new globalised world. They were not only in charge of facilitating them the necessary linguistic tools to communicate with people from other cultures and countries, but they were also responsible for growing up students ready to face a new educational and professional challenge, that is to say, the challenge of dealing with others and learning how to be tolerant towards diversity. Many specialists and researchers have already written much on that new role played by language teachers within the current framework of Higher Education. The main aim was then:

"[...] to introduce the students to multiple perspectives (such as the internal variety existing within their own culture and the foreign culture), in order to promote a dynamic vision of both cultures and to help them to understand how all cultures are continually influenced by other cultures and cannot be considered in a 'territorialized' way, as being linked to a particular geographical part of the world or as enclosed within the boundaries of a nation" (Sercu, 2002: 69).

However, how are language teachers supposed to face that challenge? Are they really prepared for that? I would like to say that institutions such as universities or culture institutes, as well as the Ministry itself or even the national and regional governments have already made a big effort to help them with the fulfilment of that hard task. A very big investment has been made on language policies within education in the last few years. Most high schools in Spain are nowadays promoting very good exchange programmes for students as well as cooperating with foreign institutions in order to offer their language students the possibility of learning with native teaching assistants or learning with other international students abroad with

the aid of ICTS and e-learning programmes. The situation has also been continuously improving at universities since the Bologna process started back in the year 2010. International mobility programmes such as Erasmus +, Swiss European Mobility Programmes, CEAL and others are increasing and most language teachers and institutional coordinators at Spanish universities are working hard on the promotion of a bigger participation of Bachelor and Masters Students in those programmes. For those who still cannot afford to spend an academic year or even a semester abroad, institutions are trying to create other immersion programmes. They could offer them an alternative way or a sort of internationalisation at home; incoming international students are getting immersed in regular classes of all disciplines, students associations such as the Erasmus Student Network are being promoted, mentoring and tutoring programmes are being developed, lots of intercultural workshops are being organised by professors and students on a daily basis, etc. All those activities are mere examples on how institutions – and mainly language teachers and language learners are nowadays facing that new internationalised challenge.

This is not only a challenge that affects language students or the teaching staff in BA Programmes such as English, German or French Studies, Translation and Interpreting or others. Most BA and MA Programmes are affected by that, since the mobility programmes are being implemented and highly advised for students of very different disciplines.

The thing is that we do not only have to struggle and fight to improve and implement the foreign language teaching. Language competence is necessary, of course, and it is still the main tool to communicate with people from other cultures. Nevertheless, language competence is not enough in this modern world. One may prove his/her language competence by presenting an official certificate of one of the main examination centres all over the world, but it does not necessarily mean that one is competent enough to live immersed in a global world. We all – that is to say, teachers and learners – need to be competent in an intercultural and social way. We all need to achieve a new goal, the goal to be able to establish relationships between different cultures, between our own culture and the cultures abroad. We need to learn how to be critical towards our own culture, how to get away from the very frequent stereotypes which are usually associated with all diverse cultures. It is in this sense that the traditional language teacher's role has had to be revised and modified. Language teachers are no longer only supposed to make students familiar with the linguistic structures of the foreign language. Language is not only the tool to communicate with others; it goes far beyond that. It is also a tool to teach the ability on how to establish the relationship between different cultures and lifestyles. Students should not only learn more about the language but also about cultures, that is to say, their own culture but also the cultures of others. They will then act as mediators between cultures and should be able to wake up the students' motivation and curiosity towards different realities. Their new approach to teaching should then be based on not only the linguistic competence and the communicative skills; they should work on the education of new citizens, of learners willing to confront different realities and trying to be enriched by that contact and contrast. Learners should be familiarised with intercultural contexts that show different sides or perspectives of a same reality, being critical not only towards their own culture but also towards the culture of others. In order to do so, it is also important to mention that educational authorities – not only in Spain but also in the complete European context – are nowadays implementing teacher training with many different actions and programmes. If language teachers play the key role of mediators between different cultures, it is extremely important for them to have an updated knowledge about them. The contact between them and representatives of the foreign culture is essential. Some institutions have therefore reinforced the exchange programmes for students and teachers, whereas others have bet on the internationalisation at home and have changed most of their daily routines and activities in the classroom. Language teachers have then become counsellors and guides in the whole process of language teaching trying to focus on new methods and approaches. Apart from teaching the required language skills, they face the challenge of implementing a critical awareness and a comparative approach to all the different cultures and languages in the world. Most language teachers have nowadays replaced individual homework and activities by other tasks in which social debates and group work are essential. Students have therefore acquired a much more active role; students are getting used to being the real protagonists of the whole teaching and learning process. Their participation in debates on intercultural situations opens up their minds and makes them grow up and become tolerant and open-minded citizens, they grow up thinking that the world around them is a good example of the cooperation and coexistence of many different life styles, ideologies, languages and cultures. There have been enormous changes in methodology, objectives and evaluation in the traditional language courses for about three or four decades. Language teaching is much less strict or traditional than it used to be, but it has enhanced a much more active and critical participation of teachers and learners. Not only the knowledge of other cultures has to be continuously updated with the attendance to courses abroad and in land on language teaching and interculturality; the permanent contact to the foreign culture is also a 'must' for teachers and learners, and so is the implementation of the use of ICTs Tools. Those tools are nowadays a very motivating learning strategy for learners of different ages and cultures and

they enable students of different nationalities, languages and cultures to get in touch with each other without having to travel abroad and even without having to spend any additional funds on learning. Social networks and applications such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and others are nowadays part of the learners' daily routine, and it is easy for them to focus on intercultural aspects as it certainly was just a few years ago.

La comunicación apela al ser humano en su totalidad... Como agente social, cada individuo establece relaciones con un amplio conjunto de grupos sociales, superpuestos que unidos definen la identidad. En un enfoque intercultural, uno de los objetivos fundamentales de la educación en la lengua es el impulso del desarrollo favorable de la personalidad del alumno y su sentimiento de identidad, como respuesta a la enriquecedora experiencia que supone enfrentarse a lo diferente en los ámbitos de la lengua y de la cultura. (Instituto Cervantes, 2002: 12)¹

It was not only the teacher's nor the learners' roles that had to be changed and adapted to this new model of education concerning foreign languages. Most activities inside and outside the classroom were modified too and the teaching programmes and guidelines for evaluation had to be adapted too. Traditional approaches to education such as the frontal class structure where the teachers played the leading role and presented the theoretical concepts of their subjects were then partially abandoned and general tuition moved forward to a new much more communicative model in which the continuous interaction between teacher and classmates played a very significant role. That does not mean that the grammar contents within the teaching programmes was abandoned, but it was simply presented in a completely different way. When we come to think about language courses, grammar contents started to be presented and implemented through context. Often the language learners had to deduce the use of language and its most relevant aspects on grammar basing themselves on given texts, communicative activities or simulations. They did not get the grammatical input directly from their language teachers, but they also had to learn to be critical towards a foreign language and its structure and to be able to find out the similarities and differences between the use of their mother tongue and of the language learnt.

The increasing and necessary presence of the intercultural elements in language learning also had a deep impact in the types of different materials, which were daily used in the classrooms. Lots of different teaching and learning materials of all sorts soon replaced traditional methods and manuals. Publishers started working hard on that, so that they could offer language teachers new very attractive and motivating materials where interculturality played a very significant role. On the one hand, most manuals included a large amount of authentic texts from very different and actual sources such as websites, media, literature, etc. trying to sort them out into the different levels of language acquisition without missing their authenticity and intercultural character. They also cared for the presentation of an updated information on all sorts of cultural aspects of the foreign country. At the same time, publishers and editors – together with specialised teams of language teachers and trainers – worked on the development of new activities and tests so that the language learners could then acquire the required *cultural awareness* and learned how to be critical not only towards other cultures but also towards the own culture. From the very first levels within the language learning process, students were faced to real face-to-face situations where they had to play different roles and try to solve problems concerning intercultural situations, like for example, how to introduce themselves or how to talk to others in the most appropriate way. Their role became much more active than in the previous language teaching models, and the teacher's role changed. Teachers left their frontal position as the only authority in front of the classroom, and somehow they became mediators of the new communicative space created among the students.

The implementation of a large number of very creative and motivating materials has been relevant within those new trends in the teaching of the intercultural competence in the foreign language classroom. Nowadays, it is relatively easy to find materials in all sorts of formats – i.e. texts, videos, games, apps, blogs... -, and language teachers are gradually leaving behind the traditional materials for language learning. The presence of the new technologies and ICTS tools is also growing fast, and tele-collaboration projects between institutions is improving and helping to develop a much bigger language and intercultural competence not only among language learners but also among language teachers and institutions.

When thinking about the actual context of Higher Education in Spain in general and about language teaching in particular, we would then affirm that collaborative learning is getting more and more important and it is somehow replacing the previous methodology concerning language learning and teaching. That does not mean that the student's individual work or tasks

¹ Communication appeals to the human being as a whole... As a social agent, each individual establishes relationships with a broad set of social groups that together define identity. In an intercultural approach, one of the fundamental aims of education in the language is the impulse of the favorable development of the personality of the student and of his sense of identity, as a response to the enriching experience that confronts the different in the fields of language and culture".]

have to disappear completely. They are and will always be important within the process of learning; working with grammatical drills, writing essays, making oral presentations in class will of course continue in the future methods of language learning and they will help us (teachers) to evaluate the individual progress on learning. However, we still need to implement and reinforce all those individual tasks by the use of other much more collaborative tasks and with interactive projects dealing with social abilities and group work. Negotiating with other students, not only from the own country but also from the foreign country, will help them to become critical and open-minded citizens in this new globalised world.

Language teachers are now implementing all sorts of new activities in their language lessons trying to focus in the acquisition of that required intercultural competence and on the internationalisation of their students. Many institutions have reinforced their international exchange programmes with schools in/or universities abroad and they are also enhancing the mobility of their students. For those who still cannot travel abroad, they are also working on a new type of what they usually call '*internationalisation at home*'. In other words, they are implementing methods and activities that facilitate the contact of their language learners at their home universities or institutions with the culture abroad. In that sense, we could mention many different actions such as the following examples: the cooperation with language assistants and lecturers within the regular courses, the integration of incoming international students in the lessons or the creation of social networks and tandem programmes to facilitate the communication and intercultural exchange between native speakers and international students. Besides, we could also mention here the organisation of a huge amount of workshops and activities dealing with intercultural aspects (such as workshops on traditions, cinema, music, gastronomy, tourism and many others), the creation of extracurricular courses or activities to prepare students for an hypothetical Year Abroad experience lived within the mobility programmes such as the ones offered in the framework ERASMUS+ or others.

Il est possible d'inscrire toutes les nuances de cet objectif général dans un continuum encadré d'une part par l'idée de curiosité et d'ouverture d'esprit et d'autre part par celui d'empathie pour l'autre. Entre ces deux extrêmes, il y a des invitations à une plus grande tolérance, à une plus grande ouverture aux valeurs d'autres, au dépassement des stéréotypes, à l'acceptation de l'autre dans leurs différences. L'acquisition de valeurs tels que la solidarité ou même l'adoption d'attitudes positifs à l'égard des valeurs européennes est également présente dans certains programmes. (Eurydice, 2001: 167)

3. Conclusions

To conclude, and after having analysed some of the new and more outstanding trends in language teaching nowadays, we would like to highlight in this article that the intercultural approach and the intercultural competence linked to the current teaching and learning processes has to be an essential part of the new linguistic curriculum at every single level of education. That intercultural competence and the development of a cultural awareness should then be included in the main educational policies not only in Spain but also in the other member countries of the European Union. Living in a dynamic and changing world where borders are blurred and do not seem to exist any longer, or at least where they are not as rigid and insurmountable as they used to be, we – language teachers, but also language learners – have to focus our tuition on the real needs of others. We need to mediate in conflicts arising from rigid and false stereotypes about different cultures, and we have to deal with new ways, methods and approaches concerning about our own personal ways of teaching.

Language teaching and acquiring an excellent and outstanding linguistic competence should not be then our last aim or goal. We should use the foreign language or languages mainly as tools to communicate with people from other cultures. Mediating between identity and alterity, which is between the definitions of our own culture and of the characteristics and definition of other lifestyles and other traditions, will only help us and our language learners to be more tolerant and respectful in the future. It will also prepare us – citizens of a new global world – to care for others and to act in a responsible way. Our language learners have now become or are trying to become "intercultural speakers"; in other words, they are working hard on achieving the ability to understand and interact with people from other cultures and to accept the alterity and confront it to their own experience and culture (Byram, Nichols and Stevens, 2001). After a few years of hard work and of a very big effort on the teacher's side, but also on the educational policies and on the students' attitude towards the learning processes, we can now finally affirm that the intercultural approach is a relevant and decisive element in the current language teaching. It allows both teachers and learners to reflect upon themselves, their own culture, and their personal lifestyles and upon other cultures and diversity.

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Travel and Disease in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*

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Abstract

Thomas Mann's novella, *Death in Venice* (*Der Tod in Venedig*, 1912), presents a story of an artist, Gustav von Aschenbach, suffering from the writer's block who travels to Venice to look for inspiration and where he eventually finds his death. In the meantime, he suffers from depression strengthened by feasts of febrile listlessness, pressure in the temples, heaviness of the eyelids that make discontent befall him. The putrid smell of the lagoon hastens his departure, but a strange coincidence makes him change his mind. He returns to the hotel drawn by the enthrallment for the young lad, Tadzio, he had spotted there. Wandering through the streets of Venice, he ignores the health notices in the city, only later learning that there is a serious cholera epidemic in Venice. But he does not escape, nor does he warn the boy's family of the fatal danger. He dies in his beach chair, looking at the boy on the beach. The aim of this paper is, therefore, to explore the relationship between travel and disease as juxtaposed with a growing passion for a youth, unmistakably, a sign of life affirmation in a sickly body and burnt-out mind. Thomas Mann's novella has been a subject of extensive commentaries and criticisms for over a century since it was published in Germany, first, in serial form in 1912 and 1913 and, then when it was translated into the French and English in the 1920s, thus introducing it to the rest of the world. The peak of critical interest in Mann's oeuvre may be pinpointed to the 1970s when Luchino Visconti's film, *Morte a Venezia* (1971), was released and Benjamin Britten's opera composed and first staged (1973).

Keywords: Travel and Disease in Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*

Introduction

The early criticism, however, concentrated on biographical elements alongside psychological theories as a background. Interestingly, homoerotic elements were either completely ignored, repressed or at least largely marginalized until the mid-1970s, and the novella's reception was conditioned on the reviewers' views on homosexuality (Shookman 2003: 5).

Nicklas and later Ritter propose to divide the approaches to *Death in Venice* into several categories, the most often applied would include, among others, individualistic readings of Aschenbach's psyche, ontological interpretations that regard him as an artist doomed to death, sociological approach that view him as a typical product of the German bourgeoisie after Bismarck, or formal readings that stress stylistic and structural elements. On top of these, there are the obvious late twentieth-century ideas of reading this text as a symbol of decadence, moral dilemmas, Eros, seduction, pedophilia, mid-life crises, the image of a foreign city, etc. As a rule, however, they lack a serious literary refinement and, to a considerable degree, misinterpret Freudian psychoanalysis in taking Mann's fiction for facts or misunderstanding his elaborated irony and purposeful ambiguity. Further, Visconti's cinematic or Britten's operatic interpretations are often taken as if they were Mann's original ideas, while it is self-evident that Mann did not write what Visconti showed or Britten produced on stage.

In more recent scholarship of the last two decades of the 21st century, however, the attention has been refocused on the idea of travel in the context of a growing interest in illness as narration. Of particular interest for us is here Ann Jurecic's *Illness as Narrative* (2012), where the stress is meaningfully and remarkably laid on the intersection of literature and literacies, the aesthetic and the rhetorical. In treating illness as a continuous story (or stories), Jurecic endeavours to connect the usually disconnected two parts of oneself: the professional as a writer and the narrative of the ill as a patient, with an aim to find and develop practices that would allow for a critical and compassionate analysis of both the patient's psychic states and the ways of their textual articulation. As a result, these narratives are supposed to produce meaning of what constitutes human fragility and mortality, and what makes sense of human pain and suffering.

Thus, this paper is an attempt to explore Mann's text in the context of the above and to uncover the stylistic and aesthetic complexities of his discourse that make *Death in Venice* so remarkable as the voice of decaying, sick Europe at the brink of the Great War.

The Nietzschean traces in Thomas Mann's famous novella are obviously conspicuous and virtually impossible not to be recognised, even bearing in mind Mann's masterly handling of free indirect discourse, but the atmosphere he is able to create in his prose reflect the existential and artistic worries of his great predecessor philosopher and philologist, Friedrich Nietzsche.

The novella starts with the protagonist's "another solitary walk," the walk so characteristic of Nietzsche's quiet and thoughtful contemplation he contained in his various philosophical writings:

Gustav Aschenbach, or *von Aschenbach*, as his official surname had been since his fiftieth birthday, had taken another solitary walk from his apartment in Munich's Prinzregentenstrasse on a spring afternoon of the year 19.., which had shown the continent such a menacing grimace for a few months. Overexcited by the dangerous and difficult work of that morning that demanded a maximum of caution, discretion, of forcefulness and exactitude of will, the writer had been unable, even after lunch, to stop the continued revolution of that innermost productive drive of his, that *motus animi continuus*, which after Cicero is the heart of eloquence, and had been thwarted trying to find that **soothing slumber** which he, in view of his **declining resistance**, needed so dearly. Therefore he had gone outside soon after tea, hoping that fresh air and exertion would regenerate him and reward him with a productive evening. (Ch. 1)

The atmosphere of excitement mingled with danger of the work, which demands from von Aschenbach "forcefulness and exactitude of will" further reinforces the Schopenhauerian and Nietzschean voluntarism present in the opening passage. The focus on power of the will (the Nietzschean *Wille zur Macht*) is the *modus vivendi* of a productive and creative life the protagonist wishes to continue ("that innermost productive drive" – *drive* – a Freudian term, most likely a sex drive leading to death drive). A recipe for a regeneration of the mind and body in both Nietzsche and Mann is fresh air, which is what Aschenbach needs for a productive evening.

What strikes as odd in the above opening passage is an immediate reference to the factual developments in Europe ahead of the outbreak of the bloodiest military conflict in human history that took over 30 million lives (WWI – around three million less), which Mann contained in a phrase "the year 19.., which had shown the continent such a menacing grimace," suggesting the presence of immediate danger – ominous, sinister and alarming. According to the *Norton Anthology of Western Literature*, Mann wrote *Death in Venice* during the 1911 Moroccan Crisis, which caused Germany and France to negotiate. As it seems, Mann purposefully included the hint of the date to demonstrate the beginning of the collapse of Europe as a whole and, from our perspective, the start of the process of disintegration of the body – the community – and its gradual decay leading to death and annihilation, its total spiritual and physical destruction.

Chapter 1 also inaugurates the motif of travel in the novella, which basically has its beginnings at home, in Munich, in a cemetery, where he spotted a bizarre-looking foreigner:

Not very tall, thin, beardless and strikingly round-nosed, the man belonged to the red-headed type and had its milk-like and freckled skin. Obviously he was not Bavarian: the broad and straight-rimmed bast hat which covered his head gave him the air of the foreign and far-traveled. Of course he wore the common kind of rucksack strapped on his shoulders, a yellowish suit of loden fabric, as it appeared, a gray coat over the left underarm, which he had stemmed into his side, and in the right hand a stick with an iron tip, which he had pushed diagonally into the ground and on which he, feet crossed, leaned with his hip. With raised head, so that on his scrawny neck which stuck out from his sport shirt the Adam's apple projected forcefully and well-defined, he looked into the distance, with colorless, red-lashed eyes between which there were two vertical, definite furrows, which strangely complemented his short and stubby nose. His demeanor—and perhaps his elevated and elevating standpoint contributed to this impression—was that of cool survey, audacious, even wild; because, be it that he was grimacing against the brightness of the setting Sun or that it was a more permanent physiognomic disfigurement, his lips seemed too short, the teeth were entirely uncovered, so that they, quite long and bare to the gums, gleamed white between his lips. (Ch. 1)

The stranger's role in the above passage is at least two-fold: first, his figure is supposed to be an odd-out one in the background of the homely Bavaria – an "unhomely" one, uncanny, a red-haired type regarded as evil. Secondly, the fact that he had "the air of the foreign and far-traveled" invoked in Aschenbach a strong desire (again a psychoanalytical term) to travel, the urge that completely overpowered him and his thoughts:

If it was the wayfarer-like air of the foreigner working on his imagination or some other corporeal or mental influence that caused it: a strange distention of his soul unexpectedly made itself known, a sort of roving unrest, a juvenile thirst for the distant, a feeling, so novel and yet so long-forgotten that he, hands on his back and his eyes fixed at the ground, stood

transfixed to probe that emotion and its nature and aim. It was wanderlust, nothing more; but verily coming in the form of a fit and ardently intensified, even to the point of an illusion. (Ch. 1)

This kind of a mental fit leading to an illusion has been well documented in psychoanalytical literature, going far beyond the rational in the direction of the primeval, original, preconscious – a modernist yearning for the genuine, embryonic source of the human. All this demands a radical change of the setting, the environment, the scenery. And in a hallucination, he saw, as a sample of all those wonders and horrors of the diversity on Earth which his desire was suddenly able to imagine, an enormous landscape, a tropical swamp under a moist and heavy sky, wet, lush, and **unhealthy**, a primordial wilderness of islands and **mud-bearing** backwaters that men avoid. The shallow islands, the soil of which was covered with leaves as thick as hands, with enormous ferns, with juicy, macerated and wonderfully flowering plants, ejected upwards hairy palm trunks, and strangely formless trees, whose roots sprung from the trunks and connected to the water or the ground through the air, formed disorienting arrangements. On the brackish, glaucously-reflecting stream milk-white, bowl-sized flowers were floating; high-shouldered birds of all kinds with shapeless beaks were standing on tall legs in the shallow water and looked askance unmoving, while through vast reed fields there sounded a clattering grinding and whirring, as if by soldiers in their armaments; the onlooker thought he felt the tepid and mephitic odor of that unrestrained and unfit wasteland, which seemed to hover in a limbo between creation and decay, between the knotty trunks of a bamboo thicket he for a moment believed to perceive the phosphorescent eyes of the tiger—and felt his heart beating with horror and mysterious yearning. Finally the hallucination vanished, and Aschenbach, shaking his head, resumed his promenade along the fences of the stonecutters.

The tropical landscape Mann presents is, as the narrator admits, “unhealthy” but, at the same time, “a primordial wilderness of islands and *mud-bearing* [emphasis added] backwaters” that are supposed to be *life-bearing*, the source of human life. What is, then, the sense of travel? Aschenbach answers it promptly:

He had, as far as he had possessed the means to enjoy the benefits of sojourn to far-off countries, regarded travel as a *hygienic necessity* [emphasis added] which had to be observed *against will and inclination* [emphasis added]. Too much occupied with the duties imposed by his ego and the **European soul**, too overburdened with the duty of production, too little interested in distracting himself to be a faithful lover of that gay outside world, he had contended himself wholly with that knowledge of the Earth’s surface that can be gained by anyone without ever having to abandon his circle and was never even tempted to leave Europe. (Ch. 1)

Unexpectedly to himself, feeling an approaching end of his life and prompted by the sight of the stranger, Aschenbach decides to travel in order to find himself, to discover the heart of his being:

The more so since his life was approaching its conclusion, since his artist’s fright of **not being able to finish his work**, that fret that **his time had run out**, could no longer be called purely a delusion, so that his life had mostly been limited to the beautiful city, which had become a home to him, and the spartan country house, which he had erected in the mountains and where he spent rain-soaked summers. It was a **desire to flee**, he had to admit to himself, this yearning for the distant and the novel, this **desire for liberty**, for being free of burden, for being able to forget—the desire to escape his work, the commonplace location of a rigorous, frigid, and ardent duty. (Ch. 1)

Since Being [Sein] is always in time with time it terminates. Thus, what counted for Aschenbach was the precious time: he wanted to live the time of his life in order to uncover his genuine self. So he chooses Venice, which is symbolical here in that it is a sinking, decaying city built upon a small lagoon with swampy surroundings. There is very little structural support, so the city is slowly sinking and crumbling. The same can be said of Aschenbach. He is decaying in morals, mental focus and health, particularly in this hot and humid environment.

Death is also symbolized in the story several times in the story, such as the “coffin black” gondola. There is also more Greek mythology referenced by the gondola and gondolier to Charon and the River Styx, the Greek entrance to the Underworld. According to Ignace Feuerlicht, Tadzio can be seen as the Greek god Hermes, who helps leads souls to death. At first, Aschenbach interest in Tadzio is first from an artistic appreciation, and then later he argues that Tadzio could be inspirational. As the story progresses, Aschenbach becomes more and more obsessed with Tadzio. There are signs that Aschenbach’s morals are sinking into decay. In the later chapters, though not specifically stated, there is a certain homosexual overtone that is displayed for the boy by Aschenbach (Meyers, 183)(Shookman, 98-101).

Finally, when Aschenbach dresses up and allows the barber to change his hair color and apply make-up to his face he then becomes the very image of the old man he saw in chapter three on the boat that he was disgusted by. The barber's remark to Aschenbach raised the question of truth vs. artifice. This represented the vain and deceitful side of art, art was used to conceal the truth and seduce others. This is just like the disinfectant the authorities used to cover the odour of the disease in Venice while its atmosphere seduce its tourist. The scene where he loses his way in the city streets represents the state of his soul, the garbage and the overgrown weeds symbolize decay. While the berries symbolize the "forbidden fruit" like the sinful love Aschenbach had for Tadzio in which he takes in order to please his dying thirst.

The disease symbolizes the obsession and sickness that has taken over him for the young boy Tadzio. The Italians go on to deny the rumors of the disease and the denial of the rumors stand for Venice being a place of artifice, deceit, and corruption. The pomegranate juice he drinks during the performance in the terrace of the hotel is symbolic for: its red color, that is the standard color of passion which is tied to the strawberries he eats closer to his death, so, too are the red-haired devil like figure disguised as the musician that gets close to him and the red tie that Aschenbach wears when he dresses up for Tadzio at the end of the novella. The red in the story also symbolizes depravity. The pomegranate also represents a mythical significance; in Greek mythology, Persephone is abducted by the god of the underworld. While in the underworld not thinking she goes to eat a seed of a pomegranate that is known as the food of the dead, and it binds her to spend almost half a year in Hades. Aschenbach being in Venice and following the young boy in the soldering heat can signify him being in the underworld (hell). The cholera becomes significant because it has an Asian origin with this information the jungle and his dream becomes a triply loaded motif. It was a jungle landscape that he pictured when he first felt the impulse to travel and enjoy the warmer climate. This symbolizes where the disease originated from. India is also symbolic to the dream he has because mythologically Aschenbach first worships Tadzio as an Apollonian symbol of intellectual beauty and art, but now he worships him as a god. Tadzio is progressed and seen as gone from Apollonian to Dionysus in the mind of Aschenbach.

The fundamental error people commit is that they imagine that humans are born harmonious, well constructed, orderly, with their minds functioning correctly according to a set pattern, and only later do they start to decay due to external conditions and/or hostile environment, forgetting that illness is very much a health condition like any other condition. All human are basically ill, the difference being the degree of sickness and its intensity. What really counts are the defensive mechanisms our body is able to produce and develop. Aggression, in most cases, is not the problem of aggressive environment but rather a certain inability to produce something instead, some other kinds of behaviour that would overcome aggression. Aggressive behaviour, as it seems, is to a large extent form of illness, a health condition, a sickness of the mind to satisfy its needs otherwise, also due to specific diet deficiencies or excess of some foods, hence the problems with food processing by specific bacteria with which our body is abundant. We are all mad, as Michel Foucault wisely observed in *Madness and Civilization*, which basically means we are all ill, so illness is very much a normal, standard human condition resulting in eventual death sooner or later.

And this "soothing slumber" of which the narrator speaks in the opening passage and of which the protagonist dreams is only to be found in the deck chair on the beach, but it is an everlasting sleep from which he will never wake up. The illness really started at home, in Munich, in familiar surroundings, in a very "homely" (*Heimliche*) setting and then the travel to Venice, to an "unhomely" (*Unheimlich*), exotic surroundings, developed it, strengthened it, acting, as if it were, on the will (*der Wille*) of the protagonist, assuming a form of a voluntary death, an honourable, ancient-style suicide.

From a postmodernist and poststructuralist point of view, we may speak here of the Derridean gift of death, the notorious "donner la mort" (Derrida 1999, 2008). As he puts it, "se donner la mort [one gives oneself death] also means to interpret death, to give oneself a representation of it, a figure, a signification or destruction of it" (12), and this representation of death in Mann's novella is an illness-turn-plague.

THE OLD MAN AND DEATH. One may well ask why, aside from the demands of religion, it is more praiseworthy for a man grown old, who feels his powers decrease, to await his slow exhaustion and disintegration, rather than to put a term to his life with complete consciousness? In this case, suicide is quite natural, obvious, and should by rights awaken respect for the triumph of reason. This it did in those times when the leading Greek philosophers and the toughest [toughest] Roman patriots used to die by suicide. Conversely, the compulsion to prolong life from day to day, anxiously consulting doctors and accepting the most painful, humiliating conditions, without strength to come nearer the actual goal of one's life: this is far less worthy of respect. Religions provide abundant excuses to escape the need to kill oneself: this is how they insinuate themselves with those who are in love with life. Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, #80

Prevention of suicide. There is a justice according to which we take a man's life, but no justice according to which we take his death: that is nothing but cruelty. #88

Relatives of a suicide. The relatives of a suicide resent him for not having stayed alive out of consideration for their reputation.

#322

The value of illness. The man who lies ill in bed sometimes perceives that it is usually his office, business, or society that has made him ill and caused him to lose all clear-mindedness about himself; he gains this wisdom from the leisure forced upon him by his illness.

#289

Advisor to the ill. Whoever gives an ill man advice gains a feeling of superiority over him, whether the advice is accepted or rejected. For that reason, irritable and proud ill people hate advisors even more than their illness.

#299

There is certain non-German elitism both in Nietzsche and Mann in regards to class structure of pre-First World War German society. Both were admirers of then non-existent – at least formally – Polish nobility: Nietzsche – falsely – claimed that he was a descendent from the von Nietzsche kinfolk, and Mann has chosen the boy from the Polish aristocratic family for a model of Tazio (Władysław Moes), which may be indicative of their low assessment of the native nobility, also in terms of poor, meagre health.

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Language Through Communicative Activities in Upper-Level Students (Case Study: “Turgut Ozal” High School Tirane)

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Abstract

This study focuses on teaching and learning the English language through communicative activities and real-life context. Well-known scholars present the communicative approach as an effective in the process of language acquisition. This study examines problems that students encounter the most and the obstacles to language acquisition, such as problems with idioms, vocabulary, and grammar. This study also analyses some of communicative activities and instructions how to make these activities parts of their lesson plan, such as role plays, interviews, discussion and group work that have as a main focus teaching the English language inductively. The students and teachers were asked at “Turgut Ozal” High School of Tirana to complete the survey questionnaire related to communicative activities. The students and teachers gave their opinions related to the challenges that students encounter to participate in these activities. The results of the survey show that how much the students want to participate and learn the English language through communication, to talk about topics of interest and real-life context.

Key words: Teaching, learning, communicative approach, role play, discussion, group work, and interview

Introduction

This study analyses the effect of communicative activities and tasks in the process of learning the English language. It focuses on the communicative principles, implementation, tasks that are given to students in order to achieve language acquisition. Another important factor pointed out is also the process of acquisition in itself. Considering the differences between the Albanian and English language, there are a considerable number of difficulties with idioms, collocations, grammar and so on. The focus of this study is the process of teaching and learning by using communicative activities, also to mention some of the difficulties that students encounter. The study will present some of the findings done by different scholars about teaching speaking through communication with high school students. The result of the study may encourage teachers to use methods that are student-centred, giving the students the opportunity to express their thoughts in the target language, self-correct and learn by their peer's errors, in order to be able to use the English language outside of the classroom. This study deals with the use of communicative activities in order to help students learn better the English language. These activities will help students learn in an inductive way with the focus on using English in a real-life situation rather than learning it in a traditional form.

Method of the Study

In this study, the qualitative and quantitative methods are both used. The qualitative method is used in terms describing the results of the questionnaire, the interpretation of the graphs and also by analysing the textbook focused on speaking activities. The qualitative method is used by collecting data, analysing and after that the findings are conducted. Based on this data the conclusions are made and recommendation for future studies as well.

Communicative approach

Teachers from different countries and in different periods of time tend to use different teaching methods according to their students' needs. The Communicative approach is one of the most used methods and it gives students the opportunity to use language in real-life situations.

According to Richards the communicative approach is "Set of principles about the goals of language teaching, how learners learn a language, the kinds of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the roles of teachers and learners in the classroom" (Richards, 2006, p. 2).

The focus of this approach is that the students have the ability to use language in terms of communication, to learn how to use the language to reach their purposes, to learn to use it correctly according to the people that they are communicating with, or to know to write different types of texts.

Seheri presents some of the principles of this approach. It gives a strong emphasis on learning how to communicate by using the target language, the use of authentic materials to promote communication. Learners should focus on learning the process, and they should have intrinsic motivation. This approach is also focused on the personal experiences of students and in the way they use the target language outside the classroom. This approach has its focus on improving learners' communicative competence. Communicative competences can be divided into grammatical competence in terms of usage of grammar rules. The second one is sociolinguistic competence, to continue with discourse competence and the last one is strategic competence (Sreehari, Communicative Language Teaching: Possibilities and Problems, October 19, 2012).

Hamid claimed that this approach is not only focuses on the grammatical rules of the target language, but it focuses mainly on the way that learners choose to use these rules. Learners have to develop their communicative skills by relating the structures of the target language with communication outside the classroom. The communicative approach gives also teachers the opportunity to work with students meaningful tasks to create real-life situations (Hamid, anuari 1990).

Sociolinguistic level of a language is also important in this approach. In order to develop communicative skills, learners should also have knowledge about the culture and social norms of that country. Some of the activities are individual work, group work, role-play and discussion, and the teachers' role should be as a facilitator (Communicative Approach to The Teaching of English as a second language). Tasks like this would help students learn the English language inductively.

Teaching the English language based on oral communication

Methods that have the focus on the communication use practical techniques and are out of the boundaries of a traditional way of a lesson hour. Teachers should help students to understand the language as a system, so the students can have the opportunity to use even their background knowledge in order to build new concepts.

Teachers should explain to their students that language cannot be learned by learning words by their literal meaning and standing alone, because as we mentioned before language is a system, may be words that have more than one meaning, figurative meaning, it may be phrasal verb or idiom. Also, a student should be aware of the social meaning of the words, like for example the cases and the specific words that the student has to use during a formal or informal speaking activity.

Form Kuivamaki work it is cited that according to Folse, a teacher should take into consideration some facts before planning activities that encourage communication:

The students, the objectives and their language proficiency.

The curriculum and the program of the school.

The themes.

The specific kind of activity and task. (Kuivamäki, 2015, p. 16).

Even that is often mentioned that the focus should be communication, does not that mean that the teacher should not give importance to grammar, like taking into consideration if a teacher is planning to have a discussion upon water resources, first the learners should have acquired the new vocabulary and also the grammatical part, like sharing their last time of vacation. They should know how to use the past tenses.

Kuivamäki mentions in his work as Folse cites that: "When teachers design an oral communication activity, class or teaching in general, they should make a distinction between fluency and accuracy" (Kuivamäki, 2015, p. 17).

What Folse is transmitting is that knowing in a perfect way the target language does not make a teacher a good teacher. A good teacher should have the ability to make the lesson interesting for the learners, to manage well the speaking activities and the teacher must be the focus on the activities promoting fluency rather than accuracy. Before designing such tasks a teacher should think about topics that they have prior knowledge or some pieces of information given by the textbook, the second is that they have enough time to prepare the task and the teacher should also have as a principle to ask questions that promote critical thinking not just text comprehension.

Problems that influence language acquisition

Let us consider some of the problems that students encounter learning a second language. First of all, a teacher should consider the fact that not all students are alike, they have a different way of learning, different memory, different background knowledge, etc.

In order to understand why some students learn better a second language than other students, it should be taken into consideration the aptitude, motivation learning strategies, and learning style.

Aptitude is considered to be as one the cognitive ability; it may be included from the phonetic acquisition to grammar.

Motivation is another aspect that makes a difference in learning a new language. Motivation may be considered as the willingness of doing something. Lack of motivation is one of the problems why the learners have a problem with language acquisition.

Learning styles are considered to be as the styles that students prefer to learn. Each student is different and each of them has a different way of learning. The problem that is encountered in language acquisition is if a teacher's style and strategies are according to their style. Learning strategies are considered to be actions that a learner uses in order to have an appropriate acquisition of that language, such as writing new vocabulary, completing exercises related to grammar, and performing role plays (Benati, 2010, p. 528).

It is the responsibility of a teacher to teach, and give instructions on different strategies if a teacher doesn't do that, the students will have problems to acquire the second language. Students have difficulties in different components of a language, such as grammar, syntax, morphology, semantics, etc. Firstly, it is because of the lack of quality and quantity of the information input. The environment outside of the classroom offers more to a student compared with what the student has taken inside of the classroom. Secondly, the lack of interaction with a native speaker. It helps more than the practice of language with their peers. Thirdly the influence of native language phonemes, sound and stress affect the second language (Alessandro G. Benati, 2010, p. 531)

Interview, discussions, role plays and group work

6.1. Interview

A teacher should be very careful in explaining what an interview is, after showing the examples, and then it is very necessary that the teacher check their grammatical competence of how well students know to form questions.

After having the first step, the second one is to help students be organized about what they are interested to know. It is very important to make students understand their goal and stay focused on their goal during all interview.

Students should prepare questions related with the topic, without taking in consideration if their questions are cleared or not, after having all the questions they may have a classification of the questions, taking in consideration different aspects, like the number of questions or if the questions are naughty. Part of their questions should be informal ones, in order to start a conversation and make it friendlier. At the end of an interview, it is the part of open-ended questions that require from the students to give their own opinion. Interviewing helps students develop their critical thinking, students who are good at answering questions are good at asking questions.

A very important part of the interview is the manner, the way of greeting, speaking and standing. The purpose of the teacher while having an interview as classroom activity is not just to develop their language level, also to develop the way the students answer, the way they organize their ideas and the way students deal with emotions. Interviews are very important as they present real-life situations, taking in consideration a job interview if the student does not know the way it is organized, questions that may have to answer, manners; he is not prepared for the world of work and will not be successful. Allocated time for an interview depends on teachers purposes. Before a teacher plans to have an interview in order to make it successful should be focused on:

Administrative procedures and make the students clear the procedures at the very beginning.

A teacher should be focused on the validity of the interview, so focused on the questions.

A teacher should give importance to the best performance.

Also a very important one, to create a scale in order to help a teacher assess the interview and be reliable with the scoring (Brown, 2003).

The challenge that teachers encounter to make interviews as part of the lesson plan is, because it requires a lot of time and during this time a teacher is only focused on two students, while the rest of class is passive.

6.2. Discussions

Discussions are the most used methods that a teacher tends to use nowadays, especially with upper-level students. One of the main aims of the teachers is to promote critical thinking and to help students organize ideas. Also through discussions, students learn how to listen and appreciate others opinions seen from a different point of view. By discussion, students help each other learn better by completing each other's gaps in knowledge.

In order to have an effective discussion, there are some strategies that teachers need to know if they want the discussion as part of their lesson plan. First of all, a teacher needs to set objectives, to be clear in a way what students need to achieve by the end of the activity. Secondly, a teacher should give the students the topic in order that they may be familiar with the topic and if it is needed to have any extra material. Lastly, a teacher must be careful to give the new vocabulary and new concepts to students.

During the discussion, a teacher should encourage students to ask questions and to be very careful to involve all students, as not everyone is comfortable to express their thoughts in public. The group work is very productive in discussions, as for example, the class may be divided into two groups one group supporting the topic and the other group not supporting. A discussion is a great tool for assessing students about their speaking skills. (Brown, Language Assessment Principles and classroom practices, September 2003, p. 175)

6.3. Role plays

Teachers make as part of their teaching methods, the role plays in order to use the English language as in everyday life. Role plays can be organized in different forms by the teacher, beginning as from a simple dialog and students read aloud by roles, presentation, theatrics performance, a performance of different English songs and so on. While performing a role play in a target language, this makes students easier to practice that language without being interrupted and help also to be more flexible and more collaborative with their team members. This makes also them take responsibilities for their team members and for the result at the end, each student should be responsible in order that their work to be appreciated by the audience, that may be the teacher, other teachers, the principal, etc.

Taking into consideration the fact that this study is focused on upper-level students, role plays organized may be like theatrics role plays. It is very important that students like the character that is going to present. The very beginning of the role-play starts from the script. Students should understand the script, having a deep comprehension of the script and what they can add something that belongs to them, this develops their creativity too.

Role plays may be of a different level of difficulties may be on different lengths but in each case, students must be instructed to involve in the cultural aspects, not only about the target language but also on gestures and everything that has to do with nonverbal communication. (Brown, Language Assessment Principles and classroom practices, September 2003, p. 174).

There are a lot of benefits from role plays; first of all, students have a better language acquisition as they use language in real life context. They improve their reading and comprehending skills as they are working with the script, they improve their vocabulary, use language fluently without being interrupted, this make a student be more confident while they speak in the target language. Communication is not isolated with just only one aspect; it is focused on spelling, intonation and all the gestures in order that the message can be transmitted up to perfection. Secondly, they learn to work and give feedback to other team members help each other improve themselves. Lastly, role plays promote cultural exploration, using gestures in a way that will not create misunderstanding.

6.4. Group work

Grouping students on different tasks have a lot of benefits, some of the benefits are like students reach a higher academic achievement through group works, it improves their collaborative skills, help them take responsibilities, help to develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, help students make decisions, empower the individual and learn how to communicative softly for reaching a common purpose (Effective Use of Group Work, 2010).

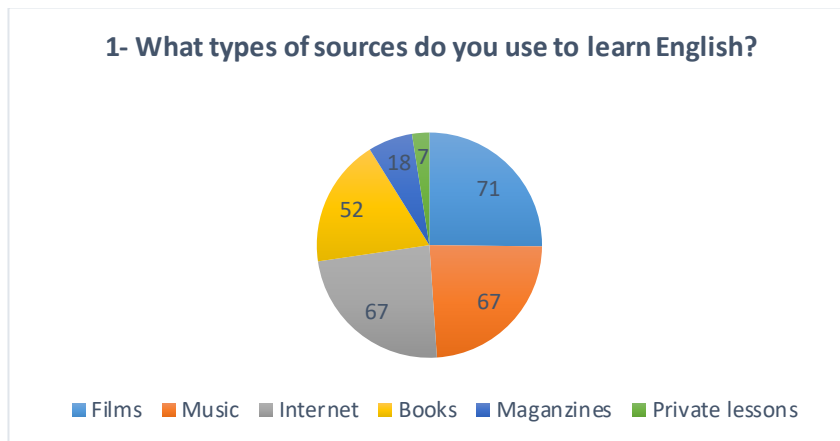
Burkel cited in his work that there are several numbers of advantages in using group work such as groups can find and resolve more quickly the tasks given rather than an individual, students by working in groups become more creative. Another advantage is also that students probably remember more a topic that has been discussed rather one just be told by the teacher. By working in groups students learn by doing and have responsibilities, this makes them be focused and not distracted during the lesson. Students become better by working in groups, they appreciate their team members' critics and they try to improve themselves. And the last and most important one that they learn how to work in groups, they know the strengths and limitation of the groups and help each other in order to achieve the best (Burke1, 2011).

There are also some challenges that teacher encounter when grouping students, such as the difficult management of the classroom, students may talk loudly, another disadvantage is that students start to discuss in a native language. For the students who are not talkative, may be difficult to express their thoughts in a group. The last one is that not all members are involved equally while completing a given task.

A task given as a group work might be problem-solving tasks, solving exercises, preparing timelines, sharing experiences, creative tasks, like cooking something, creating a poster, etc. It is very important that the teacher explains the task properly

in order not to become misinterpreted, make clear the procedures, time limitation if it will be as an assessed task and how it will be assessed.

The survey was conducted related to communicative activities, the survey was done through questionnaires. The participants were four English teachers of "Turgut Ozal" high school and with 84 students of the 10th and 11th grade, from four different classes. There were 42 females and 38 males from the age of 15-18 years old. The classes were chosen randomly. The questionnaires for the students and teachers were directly connected with the topic. Each of the participants was given a paper in which the aim of the research study was explained. The main goal of the survey was to understand better the methods used in a classroom, the student's needs and challenges in order to facilitate the process of learning. L



Let us see the students answers about the survey questions.

Figure 1. In order to understand the sources that students use to learn the language from their response the results were that 71 students prefer to learn the English language through films, 67 students prefer to learn by music, 67 students use the internet as their source of information, 52 students prefer to learn by books, 18 students learn from magazines and 7 students from private courses.

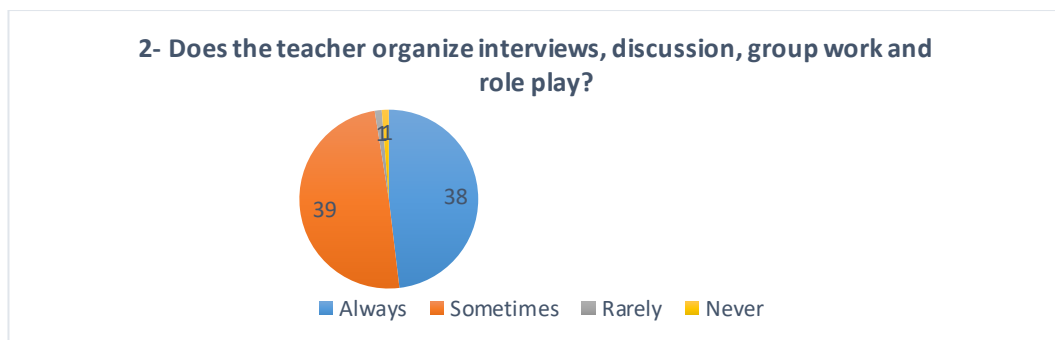


Figure 2. Students claimed that discussion, interviews, group work, and role play were part of their lesson, 39 of the students claimed that the teachers organize sometimes these activities, 38 of the students claimed that the teachers always organize these types of activities, 1 student claimed that rarely the teacher does and also just one student claimed that the teacher never organizes such activities.

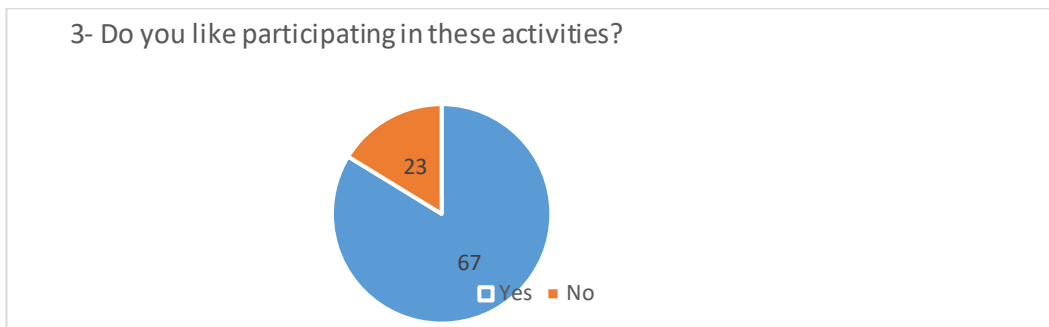


Figure 3. The results of the questionnaire present that 67 students like to participate in communicative tasks and 23 of the students claimed that they do not want to participate in these tasks. The teacher's perspective is also very important, the graphs present their responses.

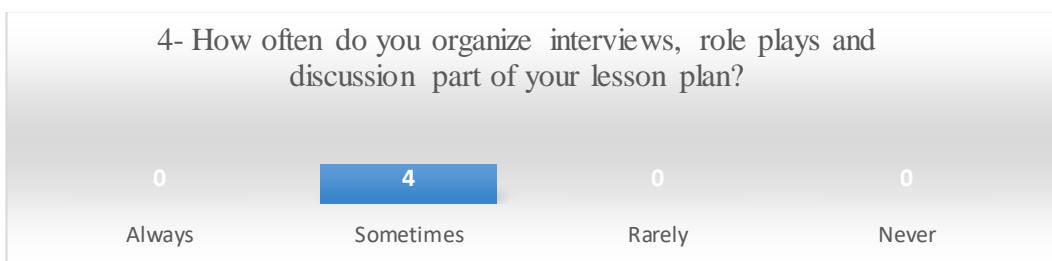


Figure 4. Through the teachers' point of view that they were asked to answer a question about the frequency that they organize communicative activities such as, interviews, role plays, and discussions. All four teachers claimed that they sometimes organize these activities.

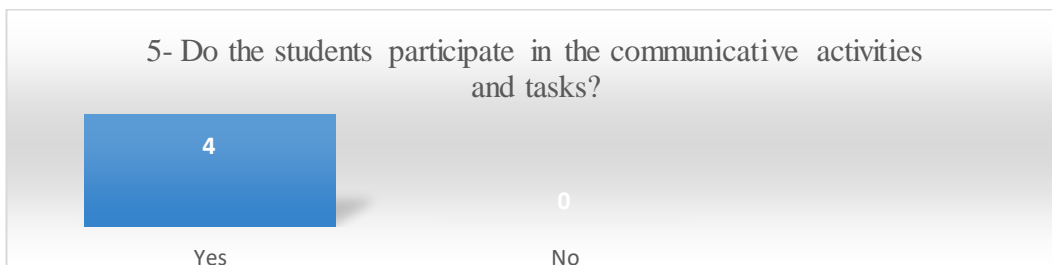


Figure 5. All four teachers claimed that students always participate in these activities.

Result of the Study

84 students and 4 teachers of "Turgut Ozal" High School of Tirana took part in the survey and interview. The results of the survey according to students perspective were that first of all they prefer and find entertaining to learn the English language inductively. Students claimed that discussion, interviews, group work, and role play were part of their lesson, and the teachers organize such activities very frequently. Most of the students like to participate in these activities and, some of the reasons of students that like to participate were that by participating in these activities they have the opportunity to know each other and build relationships inside the classroom. Communicative activities encourage students to do new things and improve themselves when they are talking in front of the audience. Some other reasons were that communicative

activities are entertaining and give the opportunity to learn about culture too. Some other reasons were that communicative tasks help develop student's critical thinking, build confidence.

Seeing from a teachers' point of view, the teachers were asked about the frequency that they make part of their lesson plan communicative activities; all four teachers asked that sometimes they organize these communicative activities. Four teachers claimed that students participate in these activities but some of the difficulties that they encounter are first of all to deliver ideas, the organization of thoughts, dictation so choosing the right words to express their thoughts and respecting time limitation. Students also find difficulties with public speaking; sometimes they read in a mechanical way and do not use non-verbal communication. Lack of fluency and vocabulary skills are a challenge too.

Discussion of the Result

Students answers were mostly they like communicative activities but also they list some of the difficulties that they encounter to participate in these activities were sometimes their classmate's bad behavior, problems with public speaking, and problems with English and organization of ideas. Some other difficulties were shyness, afraid of not being listened, lack of creativity, emotions, and interaction with other members of the group. 67 out of 80 students claimed that they would like that the teacher organizes communicative activities as that helps that they know each other better, they feel encouraged to do new things, improve their speaking skills, are entertaining. Some other reasons were that these activities help them improve their public speaking skills, built confidence, and are less tiring.

According to the teachers' perspective, 3 out of 4 teachers claimed that the exercises of the textbook were enough and one of the teachers claimed that some more extra materials are needed. All the teachers claimed that grouping students help them learn better and they organize often group work. While during the interviews, and role plays they claimed they sometimes they organize, while a discussion is always a part of their lesson. According to the teachers, the students like to participate in these activities. Some of the challenges they encounter are to deliver and organize their ideas, dictation, and timing. Some other challenges are talking problems before the audience, lack of fluency, vocabulary skills, fear of competitiveness, and fear of being judged.

Recommendations:

It is very important that students learn and practice it in meaningful tasks and real-life situation, so the teachers should always organize communicative activities such as discussion, role plays, and interviews.

Teachers should be very careful when organizing communicative activities. They should choose topics of their interest and authentic tasks.

Conclusion

The data collected by the survey shows that students like to have part communicative activities such as interviews, role plays, and discussions part of their lesson. Students claim that through these types of activities they practice the English language and learn it better and in an entertaining way. Students think that these activities help them be more socializing and help them speak without fear and emotions in front of an audience. As a result, they will be more confident. These activities are very important because it promotes critical thinking, require creativity and learn more about culture and places of different countries.

Students claimed that they encounter difficulties in participating in these activities such as the bad behavior of their friends such as the noise, and if they do not take their responsibilities on a given task. Problems with public speaking and shyness were very common. Problems related to language such as vocabulary, and dialect. Some other difficulties of the students are lack of creativity, the way of organizing ideas and respecting time limitations.

Teachers also claimed that communicative activities were part of their lesson plan and have the main focus. Students like to participate in these activities and some of the challenges were public speaking, delivering ideas, timing, lack of fluency, fear of competition and fear of being judged.

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Somatic Lexemes in the Kartvelian Linguistic Space

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Abstract

Comparative-historical study of languages makes it possible to represent the diachronic process of structuring the world and forming the corresponding concepts. The abovementioned process is inherently integral and reflected in such socio-cultural areas of human life as language, art, religion, farming, ethno-traditional customs, culture (in its broadest sense), etc. The proto-language reconstructed as a result of the comparative-historical study and the picture of its diachronic development provide some information about the genetic relations between the people speaking the corresponding related languages, about their original homeland and the directions of their historical migrations, about their knowledge, ideas and representations. This time we have analyzed the semantic field of the lexemes denoting the human body parts, which are reconstructed at the Proto-Kartvelian language and exist in the contemporary Kartvelian languages (Georgian, Megrelian, Laz, and Svan) and some dialects (notably, Gurian, Rachian, Xevsurian, and Kiziqian). Our goal is to reveal the semantic structure of the mentioned field, to analyze the respective concepts as well as to outline processes of the development and the establishment of corresponding tokens (resp. lexemes). Vocabulary denoting a human body (resp. Somatic lexemes), its parts and inner organs is a constituent part of the basic core vocabulary of a language and presumably ought to be fixed in the ancient times' reflecting data. Analysis of the lexical units, which have been reconstructed either at the Common-Kartvelian or Georgian-Zan level on the basis of regular sound correspondences between the Kartvelian languages, allows us to highlight the main course of forming and developing the linguistic units we are concerned with; namely, the accumulation of "knowledge" had been carried out due to the process of differentiation and detailed elaboration of the human body anatomy and respectively, the corresponding semantic field, somatic vocabulary, had been underway to be enriched based on the relation of cognitively interpreted markedness. Language changes and development, formation of new categories and concepts, and consequently, creation of new linguistic units is mainly carried out as the result of detailed elaboration, further specification and partition of **unmarked** categories: an unmarked category undergoes the division-differentiation on the basis of formally marked oppositions that leads to the formation of new linguistic units and structures and reflects the dynamic picture of enhancement of linguistic cognition of the universe. Dialectic material enriches the semantic space even more and specifies and fills the meanings of lexemes to be studied.

Keywords: Somatic Lexemes in the Kartvelian Linguistic Space

I. Introduction

„Ihre Verschiedenheit ist nicht eine von Schällen und Zeichen, sondern eine Verschiedenheit der Weltansichten selbst.“ Wilhelm von Humboldt

Language is one of the means of reflecting 'reality'. Reality is a whole that is structuralized according to specific linguistic structures. During the process of conceptualization various linguistic entities are defined as linguistic categories. This is a

way of creating a specific linguistic picture of 'world view'. The main goal of linguistic studies is to 'discover' universal and specific features defining such processes. The goal can be achieved by the typological, cross-linguistic investigations based on the method of comparative linguistics. Comparison of languages traditionally gained ground along two directions: Diachronic (Comparative-historical linguistics) and Synchronic (Typological linguistics). Comparative-historical linguistics makes it possible to represent diachronic changes of conceptualization and linguistic structuring of reality. Changes of a language system mirror changes within various social-cultural spheres of human being such as art, religion, ethnic traditions, economy, civilization, culture, and so on. On the basis of the comparative-historical methodology, reconstructed proto-language and its diachronic development help us to get some information about the historical existence of the speakers, which includes the ecological environment (fauna, flora, geographic surrounding, climate) and human habitation, and migration in the environment as well as culture in the broadest sense (including both, material and spiritual culture).

II. Defining objectives

This time we are aimed at studying the semantic field of the lexemes denoting the human body parts reconstructed at the Kartvelian linguistic space. Vocabulary denoting a human body, its parts and inner organs is a constituent part of the basic core vocabulary of a language and presumably ought to be embedded in the ancient state reflecting data. Our goal is to reveal the semantic structure of the mentioned field (resp. Somatic vocabulary) and to analyze the respective organizing concepts. The research is based on the data presented in the *Etymological Dictionary of the Kartvelian languages* (Heinz Fähnrich, Zurab Satjveladze, Tbilisi: TSSOS Un. Press. 2000)

III. Main tasks

Our main tasks are: Forming the Corpus of target data; Systematizing and grouping the data according to the Gerhard Deeters's scheme of the diachronic development of the Kartvelian languages:

Comparing the Common-Kartvelian and Common Georgian-Zan reconstructed lexical entities in order to reveal the mainstream of diachronic processes reflecting the human body parts conceptual articulation and new terms formation; Generalizing observations and offering some possible theoretical interpretation of linguistic tendencies and regularities;

Answering the question: **What did a human being "look like" in the Kartvelian linguistic space?**

IVa. The data: Common-Kartvelian linguistic space

On the basis of sound correspondences existing between the all Kartvelian languages 17 lexemes are reconstructed at the Common-Kartvelian level which represent the following concepts corresponding to the human body parts:

ARMPIT, EYE, FACE/MOUTH, FOREHEAD, GENITALIS (MAN), HAIR, HAND, HEAD, LEG, NECK, NOSE/NOSTRIL, PENIS, (EYE) PUPIL, RIGHT-HAND, SHOULDER, TONGUE, VEIN.

If some sound correspondences between Georgian and Svan are taken into account and, respectively, are reconstructed for the Common-Kartvelian level the following concepts can be added to the above given list as well:

EYE (VISIBLE), CROWN (OF HEAD), CHEEK, CHEEK (ROCKY), CHIN, PENIS, LARYNX, LEG, JAW, EAR, FOREHEAD, CALF.

Thus, totally, there are 25 concepts that are realized by 29 lexemes, among which 4 entities marked by red color have doublet forms.

IVb. The data: Common-Georgian-Zan linguistic space

Sound correspondences existing between the Georgian and Zan languages make us possible to reconstruct 28 additional concepts reflecting the human body parts terms:

ARM/BONE, BEARD/POINT, BOSOM, BREAST (OF WOMAN), CALF, CHIN, EAR, ELBOW, EYEBROW, FINGER, FINGERNAIL/TOENAIL, GUM, (THICK) HAIR, HEAD, HEEL, HUMP/BIG STOMACH, (ANAT.) JOINT, KNEE, LARINX, LIP, LITTLE FINGER/TOE, NAVEL, NOSE/BILL, PENIS, THIGH (INNER SIDE), THROAT, TOOTH, WINDPIPE.

Some observations

The data analysis shows more (compared to the Common-Kartvelian data) detailed description of human body; especially, the further articulation of the area of **LARYNX: WINDPIPE, THROAT, LARYNX**, and others; Differentiation of **MAN** and **WOMAN** organs: **BOSOM/CHEST/BREAST~ WOMAN BREAST**; The doublet lexemes reveal different origins of body part terms formation; e.g.: **NOSE ← NOSTRIL//NOSE ← BILL, BEARD ← BEARD POINT**.

V. Conclusions: generalization and theoretical interpretation

Analysis of the lexical units, which have been reconstructed either at the Common-Kartvelian or Georgian-Zan level on the basis of regular sound correspondences between the Kartvelian languages, allows us to highlight the main course of forming and developing the linguistic units we are concerned with; Namely, the accumulation of “knowledge” had been carried out due to the process of differentiation and detailed elaboration of the human body anatomy and, respectively, the corresponding semantic field (resp. somatic vocabulary) had been underway to be enriched based on the relation of cognitively interpreted markedness.

Language changes and development, formation of new categories and concepts, and consequently, creation of new linguistic units is mainly carried out as the result of detailed elaboration, further specification and partition of unmarked categories; An unmarked category undergoes further division-differentiation on the basis of distinguishing cognitively marked categories and establishing formally marked oppositions. The process leads to the formation of new linguistic units and structures and reflects the dynamic picture of enhancement of linguistic cognition of the universe.

What did a human being “look like” in the Kartvelian linguistic space?

Project: “Main models of information structures in the Georgian dialects: Gurian, Rachian, Xevsurian, Kiziqian” (2016-2019)

The main goal of the project is to investigate information structures in Georgian dialects. Eight field sessions were organized in regions of Racha and Guria (Summer, 2017) and Kiziqi and Xevsureti (Summer, 2018). The spoken texts corpora were created on the basis of experimental tasks.

Gurian: Parallel form for Standard Language lexemes:

lak'ap'urč'i-loq'a–“cheek”; *p'op'ori-tuči*–“lip”; *c'imk'ina-lavici*–“collar-bone”; *čimčimi-tvalis up'e*–“eye socket”; *čomp'o-γipi*–“(pot) belly”; *q'ia-k'iseri*–“neck”

Specific forms of lexemes (arisen as a result of phonetic processes characteristic for the dialects):

zrugj←*zurgi*–“back”; *dunči*←*drunči*–“snout, muzzle”; *γliavi* ←*γlia*–“ampit”; *t'olpi*←*terpi*–“sole (of foot)”; etc.

Derivatives:

amo-čagvi-eb-a–“putting (sth.) under one's arm”; *ga-k'uč'-eb-a*–“getting angry”; *mo-k'ut'ur-eb-a*–“loading (onto back)”; etc.

Racha: Parallel forms for Standard Language lexemes:

k'ančaya-k'anči–“lower leg, shin”; *k'onk'oraxi-k'epa* – “back of (human) head”; *k'unsubo-k'udusuni* – “back of (human) head”; *q'i'q'ap'o-γababi* – “double-chin”

Specific forms of lexemes (arisen as a result of phonetic processes characteristic for the dialects):

k'lavi←*mklavi* –“arm”; *ulaši*←*ulvaši* – “moustache”; *paši*←*pašvi* – “paunch”; *pxari*←*mxari* – “shoulder”; *xiximali*←*xexemali* – “spinal column”; etc.

Derivatives:

a-k'ančur-eb-a–“lifting of painful leg”; *a-čliav-eb-a* – “carries smth. under one's arm”; *mo-byunz-ul-i* –“bent”; *p'iraoši* – “saying (sth) to sb's face”; etc.

Xevsureti: Parallel forms for Standard Language lexemes:

kuri-loq'a–“cheek”; *qint'o-nest'o*–“nostril”; *č'ip'č'ora-č'ip'i*–“navel”; *q'inč'ara // q'iranč'a ~ q'anq'rat'o*–“windpipe”.

Specific forms of lexemes (arisen as a result of certain phonetic processes characteristic for the dialects):

daq'vi←*idaq'vi*–“elbow”; *pirčxili*←*prčxili*–“fingernail”.

Derivatives:

sa-lak'e–“sole (of foot)”; *sa-varcx-al-i*–“back part of foot/hand”; *sazalt'e-maž'a*–“wrist”; *sa-lik'a*–“index finger”.

Kiziqian: Parallel forms for Standard Language lexemes:

batki-t'epi–“sole (of foot)”; *bolkveni~bokveni*–“small stomach below navel”; *iogio-k'ut'(u)*–“pennis”; *yinci-k'iseri*–“neck”.

Specific forms of lexemes (arisen as a result of certain phonetic processes characteristic for the dialects):

barzaxi←*barzaqi*–“upper leg”; *dlaq'vi* // *nidaq'vi*← *idaq'vi*–“elbow”; *p'ili*←*p'iri* “mouth”; *p'c'k'ili*←*prčxili* –“fingernail”; *č'link'i*←*č'lik'i/č'liki* “front part of foot”.

Conclusions:

Only few really new Somatic Terms were documented in the dialects reflecting further, more concrete lexicalization of human body parts.

Rachian: *mk'vlivi*–“bone of calf”; *γvirk'i*–“back part of knee”; *č'iyvi*–“back part of shin”;

Xevsurian: *k'višt'avi*–“up part of knee”; *nac'q'li*–“cunnus//penis(in Pshavian)”; *čerani*–“back part of shin”; *ž'yirt'i/ž'yirt'a*–“solidified flesh between a flesh and a skin”;

Kiziqian: *k'enxa*–“the crown (part of skull covered with hair)”; *k'ubača, k'uk'uznak'i*–“the bone where vertebra is located”; *mqrik'ic'i*–“the part of body where shoulder meets arm”; *sasalak'i*–“hanging part of soft palate”; *t'laq'vi*–“the naked leg with rump(in poetry)”; *t'ut'ua*– “girl's sexual organ”; *č'ana*– “low part of jaw”; *č'iyvi*–“the shoulder's joint”.

All other specific lexemes have arisen either as a result of certain phonetic processes characteristic for these dialects or, having an absolutely new forms, have given dialectic doublet lexemes for the Standard Georgian terms.

Sometimes the lexical meaning of a somatic term varies slightly; e.g., in Xevsurian: *gvami* “body=corpse(SG)”; *ku(r)sl'i* “sole=heel(SG)”; *č'ip'i* “paunch=navel(SG)”; *q'ba* “beard=jaw(SG)”.

Derivatives make a productive device for a generation of new lexical, especially, emotionally “colored” units.

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The (Mis) Education of Immigrant Children in Today's America

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Abstract

In today's America, not every child starts on a level playing field, and very few children move ahead based solely on hard work or talent. Generational poverty and a lack of cultural capital hold many students back, robbing them of the opportunity to move up professionally and socially. Children of immigrants are especially at-risk because, in addition to facing poverty, race, geographical location or economic disadvantages, they are also confronted with failure due to their limited or non-existent English proficiency. This study focuses on the degree to which teachers in a mid-sized urban school district take into consideration the individual needs of immigrant children in the process of their education. The study also examines the preparation teachers have had to equip them with knowledge of best practices in teaching immigrant children, and the relationship between teachers' practices, beliefs, and their demographic and personal characteristics (age, gender, years of experience, level of education, etc.). Quantitative data was collected via a survey. Interviews with teachers and one central office administrator provided data for the qualitative section of the study. The findings revealed that teachers, in general, appeared to lack knowledge of specific policies for mainstreaming immigrant students into general education classrooms; their use of effective teaching practices for working with immigrant children were limited; and most of the teachers had not participated actively in professional development that focused on teaching immigrant children.

Keywords: immigrant children, education of English Language Learners, non-English speaking students

Introduction

Much is known today about the challenges of learning a second language. Researchers generally agree that three factors are of vital importance for educating linguistically diverse students. First, academic language learning takes a long time – between 5 and 7 years – and this is a much longer period than some adolescents will spend in school (Collier, 1992; Krashen, 1996). Second, the background knowledge of second language learners (content knowledge and first language literacy) is extremely important (Cummins, 1998; Hurley, 2001; Krashen, 1996; Lucas, 1994). Third, certain approaches have been shown to facilitate learning better than others, yet these modes of instruction may not be widely available to English Language Learners (ELLs) (Echevarria, 2004; Linquanti, 1999).

Those in the educational business frequently talk about immigrant children needing to “acculturate,” or “accommodate” to the American public education system. Do educators, however, acknowledge their responsibility to “adapt” and meet the needs of a multicultural student population? Community, language, and cultural groups are not homogenous and unvarying. Effective instructional programs demand enough flexibility to accommodate diversity within all at-risk groups. Stereotyping children leads to rigid programming that offers all students the same remedy, regardless if they need it or not. Effective instruction should presume variability within groups and require assessment of individual needs, as opposed to simple classification by language, family income, race, or geographic location (Tharp, 1982).

This research focuses on the degree to which teachers in a mid-sized urban school district consider the individual needs of second language in their teaching and assessment. The notion of “specialized” or “individualized” instruction motivated this study to look at how students from different language backgrounds are being educated three decades after *Lau v. Nichols* provided the direction for their education rights.

Background of the Problem

Traditionally, America has been a country of immigrants. Even with today's high levels of anti-immigration xenophobia, hostile (and borderline illegal) policies, and much-restricted immigration benefits, USA's public schools' enrollment continues to be transformed by a large number of students who bring with them the richness of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Contrary to the belief that earlier immigrant groups managed without special programs, most immigrant children are more likely to sink than swim in English-only language classrooms (Cummins, 1996). Throughout American education's history, language minority students have been somewhat accommodated at certain times, repressed at others, and most often – ignored. If done correctly, bilingual education might be the only way to make it possible for linguistically diverse children to achieve the same challenging academic standards required of all children enrolled in America's schools (Brisk, 1998).

In general, public school districts seem ambivalent about accepting newly arrived immigrant children. The provisions of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015, reauthorizing the 50-year-old *Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, places considerable pressure on schools to meet federal and state accountability targets measured by standardized tests. Because all children are subject to annual testing, schools are torn between keeping a semblance of equity by enrolling non-English speaking students and the goal to meet academic targets, while balancing shrinking budgets.

ELLs are disproportionately less successful in school than native-born speakers of Standard English. According to the Office of English Language Acquisition statistics, 66% of immigrant students drop out of school without a high school diploma. Nationally, ELLs are three times more likely to be low achievers, and 30% of ELLs are usually retained at least one grade compared to 17% of native speakers.

Lack of financial and human resources prevent school districts to use ELLs' native language for teaching. Even school districts that welcome large bilingual populations follow the English as a Second Language (ESL) model that does not capitalize on the students' first language. However, students who master their first language and then make a transition to English do as well or better academically than most of their English-only counterparts (Cummins, 1998; Lucas, 1994). Because integrating ELLs with native speakers is a federal mandate (Title VI, upheld by the Civil Rights Act of 1964), the non-English speaking students are placed in some classes that include native English speakers. While in some districts there is a constant effort to provide specialized training to mainstream teachers working with language learners, in other districts teachers have little or no formal education in teaching "bilingual" students. Some mainstream teachers do not have a clear understanding of what a bilingual student is, assuming the "bi" means their students are proficient in both English and their native language, and therefore making modest efforts to accommodate them.

Researchers of assessment issues for language learners are concerned with standardized tests because they fail to consider the students' cultural background. This is true not only for ELLs, but also for African-American, Alaska Native, and American Indian students (Ball, 1997; Estrin & Nelson-Barber, 1995). Differences in cultural backgrounds, non-mastery of the English language, and the extent of their prior educational experiences often place ELLs at a disadvantage in mainstream classes.

This research focuses on the degree to which a selected mid-size urban school district considers the individual needs of second language learners in the process of their assessment. Because of the interconnectedness between assessment and instruction, this research also describes instructional practices of ELL teachers in mainstream classrooms in this particular school district. Finally, this study examines the preparation teachers have had to equip them with knowledge of best practices in teaching ELLs in regular classrooms, and the relationship between teachers' practices/beliefs and their demographic characteristics. The following research questions were addressed in this study:

- What types of assessment practices are used with ELLs in this mid-sized urban school district?
- How are decisions about mainstreaming made in this school district? What role does assessment play in mainstreaming decisions? Do formal ELL assessments alone adequately measure the readiness of students to be mainstreamed?
- How do general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms indicate they have been prepared to provide instruction to these students?
- To what extent do general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms use specific teaching practices?

- Is there a correlation between general education teachers' use of specific ELL teaching practices related to their demographic characteristics?

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework grounding this research is aligned with the goal to look at best practices in assessing, mainstreaming, and teaching English Language Learners (ELLs). Three key scientific disciplines, along with their respective learning paradigms and theorists, provide a foundation to this study: the field of linguistics – specifically, Vygotsky's zone of proximal development; that of psychology – particularly, Bruner's scaffolding theory; and the field of philosophy – advanced by Dewey's constructivism theory.

The zone of proximal development has been defined as “the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance, or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). According to this theory, the learning process is supported by three components:

- The presence of someone with a better level of understanding, knowledge, and skills than that of the learner (a more knowledgeable other);
- Social interactions with a skillful instructor who might model behaviors, provide directions to the student, and allow the child to observe and practice new skills (cooperative or collaborative dialogue); and
- Scaffolding – a term introduced by Wood, Bruner, and Ross in 1976 – consisting of activities provided by the teacher to support the student as s/he is guided through the zone of proximal development. Support is withdrawn when not necessary, allowing the student to complete the task again on his/her own.

In his study, *The Process of Education*, Bruner (1961) builds on John Dewey's (1938) theory about the significance of previous experience and prior knowledge in the development of new understandings, emphasizing the role of students as active learners who construct their own knowledge. For Bruner, the role of education is to facilitate thinking and problem-solving skills in students, with the expectation that those skills will then transfer to a range of new situations.

This theoretical framework supports the complex and challenging process of educating ELLs. The review of the literature on this topic indicates that their learning can be influenced by a multitude of factors, including: student's background knowledge and prior schooling experiences; placement in mainstream, general curriculum classes; parents' level of education; student's linguistic and cognitive development; a positive school and classroom climate; use of student's native language; use of effective instructional strategies; a challenging curriculum; use of alternative assessments; individualized instruction; and increased parental involvement (Braunger & Lewis, 1997; Short, 1994; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Tharp, 1982; Thomas & Collier, 1997).

In an era of educational accountability governed by *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) of 2015, evaluating ELLs' progress moves from the arena of educationally sound practices and becomes an issue of compliance with federal and state mandates. While recognizing the importance of including ELLs in standardized tests, researchers also caution against the use of such assessment instruments as sole indicators of their knowledge and skills (Abedi & Diemel, 2004; Thomas & Collier, 2002). In a study for the National Center for Research on Evaluation, Standards, and Student Testing (CRESST/UCLA), Abedi and Diemel (2004), found that certain factors could negatively influence the validity and reliability of standardized test results for ELLs:

- Historically low performance and slow improvement for ELLs;
- Instability of the student subgroup; and
- Factors outside the school's control (e.g. educational level of ELLs' parents; socioeconomic status; years and quality of schooling in the native country; subgroup diversity; ELL identification).

Although the ESSA legislation provides certain test accommodations for ELLs, there are some major concerns regarding high-stakes tests' use with ELLs – specifically in terms of validity and feasibility. Each standardized test measures English language proficiency in addition to content area knowledge; therefore, the internal validity of such tests is questionable (Heubert & Hauser, 1999). For a more accurate picture of ELL's skills and knowledge, researchers recommend the use of multiple measures of assessment, including alternative assessments. Stiggins (1987) suggests that an alternative assessment is authentic if it reflected tasks common to everyday activities in a classroom, in addition to reflecting real-life

situations. O'Malley and Pierce (1996) add the integration of a language skills component to the definition and specify that alternative assessments could include teachers' observations, self-assessments, as well as performance assessments (such as essays, portfolios, interviews, observations, work samples, and group projects).

In relationship to mainstreaming, ELLs' placement into regular, general curriculum classes is a complex process that needs to consider several factors: adequate timing; placing students in classes where they could engage in authentic English conversations; teachers' preparation in working with ELLs; the level of academic and language development of students; sociocultural factors; and types of mainstreaming models (Faltis & Arias, 1993; Gersten, 1996; Lucas & Wagner, 1999; Thomas and Collier, 1997; Valdes, 2001).

The present study builds on prior research to determine general education teachers' perceptions of the use of specific instructional practices and assessment strategies in working with ELL students who are mainstreamed in their classes. Additionally, this study examines the extent of teacher preparation in evidence-based and place-based strategies and interventions for teaching ELLs in regular classrooms, and the relationship between teachers' practices/beliefs and their personal and professional characteristics.

Methodology

Research Design

The research questions could be best answered by engaging in a combination qualitative-quantitative study. Face-to-face interviews with seven teachers and one central office administrator in the targeted school district provided data for the qualitative component of the study.

Following qualitative research with a quantitative measure, corroborating results, brings strength to the findings (Spradley, 1980). This research incorporated a quantitative measure with some elements of a case study. The primary data collection tool for the quantitative component was an original survey developed by the researcher to obtain specific information regarding teachers' perceptions of instruction and assessment for English Language Learners.

Setting for the Study

A mid-sized school district located in an urban area was used as the setting for the study. The school district enrolled 11,039 students in 14 elementary, 4 middle schools, 2 high schools, and 1 alternative education program. Approximately 800 teachers provided instruction for a multicultural student population that included: African American (62.9%), Hispanic (17.5%), Caucasian (14%), Asian/Pacific Islander (4.6); American Indian/Alaska Native (0.4%), and multi-racial (0.6%). The majority of students (74.0%) were considered economically disadvantaged as determined by their qualifying for free or reduced lunch programs. A relatively large percentage of students (19.4%) had disabilities. Overall, proficiency rates were 64% for reading and 49.1% for mathematics – lower than the state's averages for reading (77.3%) and mathematics (63.8%). A total of 969 students in the school district were identified as ELLs at the time of the study, representing 12 different native languages.

Participants

The participants were 23 teachers and 1 central office administrator working in the targeted school district. The teachers taught in general and ESL classes in the elementary, middle, and high schools.

Instruments

Two types of instruments were used to collect data for the study: an original survey and an interview protocol.

Surveys

The primary data collection instrument was developed to obtain specific information regarding the experiences of teaching ELL students in mainstream general education classes. Twenty-five questions were included on the survey, with a combination of forced choice and short answer response formats. Twenty items rated using a 6-point Likert-type scale were used to determine the frequency with which teachers used specific teaching and assessment practices. The forced choice questions obtained factual information on demographic characteristics of teachers, students, and teachers'

participation in professional development (PD) for working with ELL students. The fill-in questions provided a qualitative component, giving teachers opportunities to describe their experiences with ELLs.

The Likert-scaled items were grouped by type. The numeric ratings for the items on each subscale were summed to obtain a total score that was then divided by the number of items on the scale to obtain a mean score, reflecting the original unit of measurement. The use of a mean score allowed interpretation of outcomes in terms of the original Likert-type scale and direct comparison among the subscales.

Interviews

The researcher developed an interview protocol that was used with seven teachers. A separate interview questionnaire was used with the central office administrator to obtain information on school district policies regarding ELL students. The teacher interview included questions about teachers' educational background and experiences teaching bilingual students; classroom composition; types of support for ELL students; changes in teaching because of the inclusion of ELLs in classrooms; instructional strategies used; grouping students for instruction; ELL student assessment practices; mainstreaming decision making; participation in professional development on teaching ELL students; administration support; and additional comments.

The interview with the central office administrator included questions about the demographics and features of the ELL programs, as well as the alignment of district policies with federal and state mandates.

Data Analysis Procedures

Teacher survey data sets were analyzed using SPSS – Windows, ver. 15.0. The quantitative analysis was divided into two sections. The first section provided a description of the sample and their teaching practices using frequency distributions. The second section used frequency distributions, t-tests for one sample, and correlational analyses to address the research questions. In addition, the interview responses were summarized to provide information for two of the research questions. All decisions on the statistical significance of the inferential statistical analyses were made using an alpha level of .05. Figure 1 presents the analysis used to address each research question.

Figure 1. Statistical Analysis

Research Question	Variables	Analysis
What types of assessment practices are used with ELLs in this mid-sized urban school district?	Interview data Survey items 22, 23, 24	Content analysis was used to determine if patterns emerged from the teachers' comments regarding the types of assessments that were used in their classrooms.
How are decisions about mainstreaming made in this school district? What role does assessment play in mainstreaming decisions? Do formal assessments alone adequately measure the readiness of students to be mainstreamed?	Interview data from the central office administrator	The summary of the interview questions was presented to answer this research question.
How do general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms indicate they have been prepared to provide instruction to these students?	Survey questions 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 21	Frequency distributions were used to provide information on how the general education teachers were prepared to teach ELL students in their classrooms.
To what extent do general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms use specific teaching practices?	Survey question 25	t-tests for one sample were used to determine if teachers used specific instructional and assessment practices in their classrooms. The test statistic for this analysis was the midpoint of the 6-point scale (3.5). Scores that were

Research Question	Variables	Analysis
		significantly below 3.5 indicated that teachers were using the teaching practice, while scores that were significantly above 3.5 indicated the particular test statistic was not being used.
Are general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms use of specific teaching practices related to their personal demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, years teaching classes that include English Language Learners, and educational preparation for teaching ELLs)?	Survey question 25 – Teaching practices Age Gender Years teaching ELLs Educational preparation for teaching ELLs	Correlational analysis using point-biserial and Spearman rank order correlations were used to examine the relationships between teaching practices used by general education teachers with ELL students and their demographic characteristics.

Results and Interpretation

Description of the Participants

A total of 23 teachers participated in the study, from elementary to high school grade levels. The teachers had ELLs in their mainstream general education classrooms. The age and gender of the teachers were summarized using frequency distributions (Table 1).

Table 1, Frequency Distributions, Age and Gender of the Participants

Age and Gender	Frequency	Percent
Age		
22 to 30	5	21.7
31 to 40	5	21.7
41 to 50	10	43.6
51 to 60	3	13.0
Total	23	100.0
Gender		
Female	17	73.9
Male	6	26.1
Total	23	100.0

Almost half of the teachers reported they were between 41 and 50 years of age. Five each reported to be from 22 to 30 years of age and between 31 and 40 years of age. Three teachers were over 51 years of age. Approximately three quarters of teachers were female, with the remaining teachers being male.

The teachers were asked to indicate the number of years they had been teaching classes that included ELLs (Table 2).

Table 2. Frequency Distributions, Years Teaching ELL Students

Years Teaching ELL Students	Frequency	Percent
0 to 4 years	8	34.8
5 to 9 years	12	52.3

10 to 14 years	1	4.3
20 to 24 years	1	4.3
25 to 29 years	1	4.3
Total	23	100.0

More than a half of the teachers had been teaching ELL students in their general education classrooms from 5 to 9 years, with approximately one third indicating they had taught ELL students from 0 to 4 years.

The teachers were asked to describe their current teaching assignment. Teaching assignments included art, music, language arts, Spanish, social studies, mathematics, and science.

The teachers were asked how they perceived research in the field of second language acquisition. They were provided with a list of possible responses and asked to indicate all that applied. As a result, the number of responses exceeded the number of teachers in the study (Table 3).

Table 3

Frequency Distributions

Perceptions of Research in the Field of Second Language Acquisition

Perceptions of Research in the Field of Second Language Acquisition	Frequency	Percent
Difficult to understand	4	17.4
Impractical	2	8.7
Too theoretical	4	17.4
Easy to understand	1	4.3
Interesting	10	43.5
Practical	6	26.1

The largest group of teachers reported that research in the field of second language acquisition was interesting, and approximately one quarter considered it practical. In contrast, another quarter considered it to be either difficult to understand or too theoretical. Two teachers considered the research on this topic to be impractical and 1 thought that it was easy to understand.

Research Questions

Research question 1. What types of assessment practices are used with ELLs in this mid-sized urban school district?

The survey qualitative items were examined to determine the assessment practices used with ELLs. The teachers' responses were examined to determine patterns, similarities and differences among the seven teachers who participated in the face-to-face interviews. Information from the open-ended items on the survey was also presented to further show how teachers use best practices and assessment techniques in their classrooms.

The quantitative analysis revealed that teachers with ESL/bilingual college preparation were more likely to use evidence-based, place-based practices and interventions in providing individualized instruction to ELL students than general education teachers. A closer examination of the qualitative data provided information regarding teachers' perceptions of their teaching and feelings of preparedness. There was considerable agreement between two teachers who had several years of experience with, and training in teaching ELLs. These teachers stated that they "always" include accommodations

for ELLs in their lesson plans (Survey Q17) and they use many of the “best practices” in ESL teaching: activating prior knowledge, building background knowledge, checking for understanding, modifying their speech in addressing ELLs, etc. Nevertheless, there were some differences of beliefs among the teachers trained in ESL methods who have had extensive experience teaching ELLs.

First, in response to survey question 18, neither felt that ELLs should be held to the same English language standards as the English-speaking students, but for different reasons. Teacher 1 pointed out that the timeline of *ESSA* is unrealistic, suggesting that although the goal may be realistic, more time would be required than the legislation allows. Teacher 7 qualified her answer saying that children enroll in the American schools often having come from a culture and school that had much different requirements, and therefore, these students have differing degrees of adjustment to make once entering the American classroom. Thus, she felt uncomfortable holding the ELLs to the same language standards as the native speakers of English. This same teacher felt that the same applied to the standard for learning *content* in the American public-school curriculum. Teacher 1, however, felt strongly that the students must be held to the same content standards as their English-speaking peers. Her rationale was that it is the school's “duty to find methods, materials, and teachers who can teach the content of the curriculum, regardless of language” (Survey Q19, #17). For her, there was no excuse for lowering the learning expectations in the content knowledge of the ELLs. Something particularly striking in the responses of the two teachers were their well-defined opinions about teaching ESL and their rationales. In fact, throughout the interviews and consistent with their survey answers, both Teacher 1 and Teacher 7 distinguished themselves from the other teachers in the study. This phenomenon encouraged a closer look at their background and teaching experiences.

There were two areas of contrast when comparing these two teachers' backgrounds with those of the other teachers in the study. First, both teachers had either an ESL endorsement or a bilingual education minor among their credentials. Having read and researched the field, these teachers felt confident and prepared for teaching ELLs.

Another interesting factor setting them apart is that they both learned another language during their lifetime and participated in a study abroad program as part of their college preparation. The question becomes, which is more influential in the preparation of teachers for teaching ELLs? Is it the academic coursework? Is it their life experience and the fact that they have acquired a second language themselves? Their expressions of empathy for the students were markedly more evident in their words and teaching approaches.

Even though some differences were found in the perspectives of the two ESL-endorsed teachers, there was an even more significant contrast between the interview answers of the monolingual teachers and the answers of the bilingual ones. Their comments were in contrast in all areas of inquiry: instructional methods, assessment, expectations, professional development/training attended, and their understanding of how mainstreaming of ELLs takes place.

A look at the backgrounds of three monolingual teachers in the study gives these questions considerable importance. Teachers 2, 3, and 4 do not have the ESL or bilingual endorsements. Although all three had college courses in multicultural education, none learned a second language or participated in a study abroad program. In their interviews, they referred to having had a multicultural education course that never addressed language learning.

More disconcerting was the attitude expressed by some of the monolingual teachers. When asked about how teachers might modify their teaching or assessment of ELLs, Teacher 4 commented, “I don't teach them differently.” When asked about actual accommodations, she remarked, “I lessen their work. I give them less content. Now they make good grades.” Although Teacher 2 also said, “I teach everyone the same way,” when asked specifically about accommodations, she added, “I differentiate when I assess for writing; I evaluate them mostly orally.” This seems like an unlikely approach to assessing writing. Another comment made by Teacher 2 was about adapting the instructional materials to the Spanish-speaking students. “The science curriculum in Spanish can be downloaded from the Internet, but I don't do it. That defeats the purpose of having them learn English. This is an English-speaking country.” (Interview Q8) The last sentence seems to be making a point that denies the value of native-language instruction that supports the learning of content.

One other teacher (Teacher 3) claimed that she did indeed modify instruction for her ELLs. “I modify things for them. I give them their exam ahead of time; I give them the responses so all they have to do is memorize the answers.” (Interview Q3) It is doubtful that this would be viewed as a “best practice” in the instruction of ELLs. Not only is it relegating their learning to the lowest rung on Bloom's Taxonomy (memorization), but it is also not supporting their language learning. In other

comments, this teacher indicated that she would welcome training “in understanding what the district wants us to do with these kids. I think we’re supposed to teach content.” (Interview Q9)

When asked about administrative support, Teacher 3 remarked that she couldn’t “think of any [administrative support] other than those people showing up in my classes [the paraprofessional staff].” (Interview Q8)

The qualitative findings have implications for ESL teaching and assessment practices, and validate the preparation offered in the bilingual or ESL endorsement programs.

Research question 2. How are decisions about mainstreaming made in this school district? What role does assessment play in mainstreaming decisions? Do formal ELL assessments alone adequately measure the readiness of students to be mainstreamed?

Upon enrollment, students take a Home Language Survey. Based on answers indicating that the child might speak a language other than English, the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) screener for placement is administered. This test measures English language proficiency (academic and social language) in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and comprehension. For each grade level assessed, proficiency levels include basic, intermediate, and proficient categories.

Following the test, students are placed either in general education or in ESL classes. The District provides native language instruction for absolutely zero-English students. ELLs in ESL classes are taught by ESL or bilingual education teachers. Students remain in the ESL classes until they score above the 40th percentile on the ELPA screener. Once they exit, ELLs placed in mainstream classes are given support commensurable with the District’s ability to secure resources, and not their needs. The school district has a few native language tutors, and these are deployed to schools based on their availability, and not as necessary.

According to the Central Office administrator, bilingual children in the District usually achieve at or above grade level in math and science (two subjects less dependent on English), while general education students might not reach that level. The success of the ESL and bilingual programs is due to the motivation and preparation of the District’s bilingual teachers, and to programs supporting bilingual families. The District’s biggest challenge has been to maintain the gain ELL students made while in the ESL program. When mainstreamed, ELL students fall back within 6 months due to the culture shock; lack of an intense support system (with no bilingual teachers); and reduced communication between mainstream teachers and parents.

From responses provided to interviews and surveys, it appeared that regular education teachers were unfamiliar with the District’s process and policies on mainstreaming.

Knowing how and at what point ELLs should be placed in regular, general education classes and how to advance their academic and language gain could contribute to better academic results and their more rapid cultural and language integration. Teacher training in mainstreaming, along with clear understanding of the District’s policies, could lead to better support for transitioning students.

Research question 3. How do general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms indicate they have been prepared to provide instruction to these students?

The participants were asked to indicate the professional preparation they had to prepare them teach ELL students. Teachers were given a list of options and told to indicate all that applied; therefore, the number of responses exceeded the number of respondents (Table 4).

Table 4, Frequency Distributions, Professional Preparation for Teaching ELL Students

Professional Preparation for Teaching ELL students	Frequency	Percent
Advanced degree in ESL	2	9.1
Major in bilingual education	2	9.1
Minor/Endorsement in ESL	4	18.2

Minor/Endorsement in bilingual education	3	13.6
Coursework in ESL	5	22.7
No formal coursework in ESL	6	27.3
No formal coursework in Bilingual education	7	31.8
Other	1	4.5

Approximately 60% of the total number of teachers reported they had no formal coursework in bilingual or English as a Second Language. The majority of the remaining teachers reported a minor/endorsement in ESL/bilingual education or completion of coursework in ESL. One teacher indicated that she had a major in Spanish.

Teachers provided responses to some questions regarding their educational backgrounds. More than half of the teachers did not speak a language other than English and did not study abroad as part of the college education. Approximately two-thirds of the teachers indicated their college education included multicultural studies.

The teachers were asked to indicate their involvement in professional development (PD) that was focused on teaching ELL students. The responses were summarized in Table 5.

Table 5. Frequency Distributions, Professional Development for Teaching ELL Students

Professional Development for Teaching ELL Students	Frequency	Percent
Recency of attendance at professional development on teaching ELL students		
During the past three months	1	4.3
During the past six months	2	8.7
Within the last year	4	17.4
More than a year ago	9	39.2
Never	7	30.4
Total	23	100.0
Number of district-sponsored professional development activities pertaining to language learning or multiculturalism and diversity		
None	3	13.1
1	3	13.1
2	5	21.8
3	1	4.3
4	1	4.3
5	1	4.3
More	23	100.0
Total		
Number of articles, journal studies, or books read pertaining to language learning and language acquisition		
0 to 1	5	21.7
2 to 3	5	21.7
4 to 5	3	13.2
6 to 7	5	21.7
More than 7	23	100.0
Total		
Number of articles, journal studies, or books read pertaining to best practices in education		
0 to 1	3	13.1
2 to 3	6	26.1
4 to 5	4	17.4

6 to 7 More than 7 Total	9 23	39.1 100.0
Recency of observing a bilingual instructor teach ELL students		
During the past six months	7	30.4
During the previous school year	2	8.7
Over 2 years ago	5	21.7
Never	9	39.2
Total	23	100.0
Recency of observing a general education instructor teach classes that included ELL students		
During the past six months	3	13.6
During the previous school year	3	13.6
Over 2 years ago	13	59.2
Never	22	100.0
Total Missing 1		

The largest group of teachers had attended professional development for teaching ELL students more than a year ago, with approximately one third of the teachers reporting they had never attended professional development for teaching ELL students. Only 4 teachers attended ELL-specific PD within the last year; 1 within the past three months; and 2 within the past six months.

When asked to report the number of district-sponsored professional development activities pertaining to language acquisition or multiculturalism and diversity, almost 40% of the teachers reported none, with 21.8% indicating they had attended three activities pertaining to language learning or multiculturalism and diversity. These two categories represent more than half of the total number of teachers surveyed.

The teachers were asked to report the number of articles, journal studies, or books they had read pertaining to language learning, language acquisition, and best practices in education. Responses were similarly distributed among the choices with respect to language learning and acquisition. More than half of the teachers indicated they read between 6 or more articles on best practices during the past year.

A large group of teachers (39.2%) reported that they had never observed bilingual instructors teaching ELL students, and approximately 30% indicated they observed a bilingual teacher within the past six months. Two teachers had observed a bilingual instructor within the previous school year. Five teachers reported it had been more than 2 years since they had observed a bilingual instructor who taught ELL students.

The teachers were asked to report the recency of observing a general education instructor teach classes that included ELL students. The majority of the respondents indicated they had never observed a general education instructor teach classes that included ELL students.

Research question 4. To what extent do general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms use specific teaching practices?

The teachers rated the frequency with which they used specific teaching practices in their classrooms with ELL students using a 6-point Likert-type scale. Lower scores on these teaching practices indicate more frequent usage of the practice. The mean scores for each of these teaching practices were compared to the midpoint (3.5) of the scale using t-tests for one sample (Table 6).

Table 6. t-Tests for One Sample. Teaching Practices

Teaching Practices	Number	Mean	SD	DF	t-Value	Sig
Use lecturing as the primary method of teaching	23	3.39	.84	22	-.62	.541
Activate prior knowledge	23	1.83	.98	22	-8.16	<.001
Build background knowledge	22	1.91	.97	21	-7.68	<.001
Engage students in the teaching of a new lesson	23	1.83	.94	22	-8.57	<.001
Check for understanding	23	1.57	.95	22	-9.82	<.001
Use acting out a problem/concept	23	2.48	.95	22	-5.17	<.001
Use audio-visuals in teaching and assessment	23	2.61	1.12	22	-3.83	.001
Translate information in students' languages	22	3.73	1.61	21	.66	.515
Abbreviate/adapt text	23	3.00	1.41	22	-1.70	.104
Use the services of a paraprofessional that speaks the students' languages	23	2.83	1.56	22	-2.08	.050
Allow ELLs to use dictionaries during class time	23	2.87	1.71	22	-1.76	.092
Give ELLs more time to think/respond to a question	23	2.26	1.51	22	-3.93	.001
Modify speech when addressing ELLs	23	2.65	1.37	22	-2.97	.007
Use authentic assessments (portfolios, presentations, projects) with students	23	2.26	1.25	22	-4.75	<.001
Allow students to work in collaborative groups	23	2.04	1.02	22	-6.84	<.001
Use flexible groupings	23	2.26	1.14	22	-5.23	<.001
Use graphic organizers in explaining concepts	23	2.57	1.34	22	-3.34	.003
Allow students to respond to oral or written questions in their native language	23	3.26	1.57	22	-.73	.474
Correct students' use of the English language	23	3.17	1.27	22	-1.24	.230
Have specific language and content objectives for a lesson	22	2.00	1.23	21	-5.70	<.001

Fourteen of the teaching practices differed significantly from the midpoint of 3.50. Each of these differences was in a negative direction, indicating the teachers were using these teaching practices either always or often. As an example, the first statistically significant result was for "activate prior knowledge". The comparison of the mean of 1.83 (sd = .98) for this item differed significantly from the midpoint of 3.50, $t(22) = -8.16, p < .001$. The other items that produced statistically significant results included: build background knowledge, engage students in the teaching of a new lesson, check for understanding, use acting out as a problem/concept, use audio-visuals in teaching and assessment, use the services of a paraprofessional who speaks the students' languages, give ELLs more time to think/respond to a question, modify speech when addressing ELLs, use authentic assessments (portfolios, presentations, projects) with students, allow students to work in collaborative groups, use flexible groupings, use graphic organizers in explaining concepts, and have specific language and content objectives for a lesson.

Research question 5. Is there a correlation between general education teachers' use of specific ELL teaching practices related to their demographic characteristics (i.e., age, gender, years teaching classes that include ELLs), and educational preparation for teaching ELLs?

Spearman rank-order correlations and point-biserial correlations were used to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the frequency with which general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms used teaching practices related to instruction, assessment, accommodations, and monitoring learning and their personal and professional characteristics. The results of the correlation analyses were not statistically significant. These findings indicated that general education teachers' personal characteristics were not associated with the frequency with which they used specific teaching practices related to ELL students' instruction, assessment, accommodations, and monitoring learning.

Implications for Practice

Continuing professional development in culturally responsive pedagogy, language acquisition, and best practices for teaching ELLs would elevate teachers' preparedness and efficacy levels. Building level administrators should be knowledgeable of district policies and procedures regarding placement of ELL students. Investing human and financial resources in the teaching of ELLs and training of their teachers would lead to improved academic results for schools.

Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted in a mid-sized urban school district. The results may have been different if a suburban or rural school district were used. The small number of teachers included in the quantitative portion of the study may have reduced the power of the statistical analyses. Although t-tests for one sample were appropriate for small samples, a larger sample could have been more representative of general education teachers with ELL students in their classrooms. The results of this study provide a basis for continuing research for helping ELL learners become mainstreamed into general education classes.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine the methods used by general education teachers to instruct and assess mainstreamed ELL students. The general education teachers appeared to lack knowledge of specific policies for mainstreaming ELL students into general education classrooms. Their use of specific teaching practices for working with ELL students also appeared to be somewhat limited, although they used good teaching practices with all students. Most of the teachers had not participated actively in professional development that focused on teaching non-English speaking students. This may have been because of unavailability of district-provided PD on these topics. Training was available for ESL and bilingual teachers. All teachers are held accountable for the progress of their students, but some may be at disadvantage without the tools and skills needed for being effective with language minority children. Additional research is needed using a larger sample to obtain information regarding the teaching and assessment of ELL students who are mainstreamed into general education classrooms. The role of professional development and educational opportunities for teachers to increase their skills and knowledge needs further investigation.

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Overview of the Usage of Some Turkicisms from Albanian Language Students at the University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren

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Abstract

The Albanian language, as well as the other Balkan languages, have received a large number of Turkish language elements, first of them being the acceptance of Turkish words. These words, respectively the Turkicisms, have penetrated in almost all spheres in the fields of social life. In Albanian, there are many words in these social spheres: religious spheres, administrative spheres, military spheres, crafts, construction, home environment, names etc. The historical and linguistic conditions of the borrowing of Turkicisms are known. Albanians and Turks (Ottomans) got into contact in the wars and battles between them, as well as during the reign of the Turkish Empire in the Balkan Peninsula, and in the Albanian territories as well. Turkicisms began to enter the Albanian language from the time the Turks deployed military officers and clerks in several Albanian cities. The ruling period of the foreign invaders and the typology of the communicating languages had a huge influence on linguistic borrowings. The Albanian language is typologically quite remote from Turkish and has therefore assumed relatively few Turkicisms compared to the long period of Turkish rule in the Albanian area. For this purpose, this research and analysis method has been used: A survey was carried out with 60 students of the Department of Albanian Language and Literature at the University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren, with first year students of the second semester and with second year students of the second semester. In the analysis of the tests, graphical presentations of the use of some Turkish words (Turkicisms) have been created, which are used by students in conversations with each other, in the family and in society, in the city and around Prizren.

Keywords: Albanian language, borrowings, Turkish borrowings, Turkicisms in the Albanian language.

Introduction

In order to realize this paper we used the works of some Albanian linguists, who have published works on Orientalism's and Turkish loanwords, in national and international conferences in the Albanian language. Many Albanian and foreign linguists have been studying Orientalism's and Turkish loanwords: K. Ashta, A. Kostallari, E. Çabej, M. Samara, T. Dizdari, Xh. Lloshi, L. Mulaku, L. Latifi, U. Harri, F. Miklosich, N. Boretzky and others. We also used Albanian language dictionaries such as: "*Fjalor i gjuhës shqipe (Albanian Language Dictionary)*" (1954), Tirana, "*Fjalor i gjuhës së sotme shqipe (Contemporary Albanian Dictionary)*" (1980), Tirana and "*Fjalor i gjuhës shqipe (Albanian Dictionary)*" (2006), Tirana.

Based on T. Dizdari's "*Fjalor i Orientalizmave (Dictionary of Orientalisms)*" [Harri 2015: 5], the Albanian language has borrowed about 4,406 words, of which about 1,800 were included in the "*Fjalor i Gjuhës së Sotme Shqipe (Contemporary Albanian Dictionary)*" (1980). Studies on Turkish borrowings in the Albanian language began in the second half of the 19th century [Harri 2015: 7]. Gustav Meyer, points out that 1180 Turkish loanwords are in his Dictionary of 5140 words. In the "*Fjalor i orientalizmave (Dictionary of Orientalisms)*" of the Albanian scholar T. Dizdari there are 4406 direct Turkish

borrowings, which is one of the most important scientific works in the field of Turkicisms, not only in the Albanian area but also in the whole Balkans. Dizdari gives for every Turkish borrowing the correspondent word in the Turkish language, as well as the origin of the word following the traces of Turkish connection with other Oriental languages (Arabic, Persian).

Orientalisms or Turkish borrowings?

It is a fact that there is disagreement between the terminologies used by some authors. Before the 1960s, a part of Turkish scholars and Balkan linguists tried to use the term "*turqizma* (Turkicisms)" for all words taken from the Turkish language, regardless of their Arab, Persian, or Turkish etymology [Harri 2015:18]. The researcher L. Latifi considers the use of the term "*orientalism*" instead of the term "*turqizma (Turkicisms)*" as an error; starting from the fact that Balkan people have never had direct contact with the Arabs or Persians. The Balkan people have lived together for 500 consecutive years with the Ottomans, so the Turkish language was the language of communication within the Ottoman Empire. The words taken from Turkish were transmitted into the languages of Balkan as they were used in Turkish by altering and ultimately wiping out the features of Arabic or Persian languages.

Because of the already known historical circumstances, the Balkan languages first have borrowed words that previously expressed unknown meanings and notions. These words have been accepted and have begun to be absorbed in mass as they were used in the everyday social and administrative life; therefore the words introduced in the Albanian language, but also in other Balkan languages, are taken from the Turkish language.

Turkish borrowings in the Contemporary Albanian Dictionary

In the "*Contemporary Albanian Dictionary*" (*Fjalori i Gjuhës së Sotme Shqipe*) of 1980, about 1800 Turkish borrowings are included. A number of Turkish loanwords are classified as part of conversational speech, while another number are active only when used for literary purposes. Below we mention some borrowings that contain the largest number of Turkish loanwords:

- a) **Denomination by professions:** argat, bakërxihi, berber, bojaxhi, çifçi, hamall, kafexhi, kazanxhi, kundraxhi, padishan, qatip, sahlepçi, tenekexhi, tuxhar, vezir etj.
- b) **Military terminology:** allie, asqer, barut, bashbozruk, bedel, bylykbash, çaush, çifte, dyrby, gjyle, janiçer, jatagan, kobure, kundak, nagan, nishan, nishanxhi, patllak, saçme, topuz etj.
- c) **Terminology of household appliances:** bardak, çanak, çarçaf, divan, dollap, dyshek, fener, fitil, gygym, ibrik, jastëk, jorgan, kandil, legen, mangall, qilim, sahan, saksi, sepet, shilte, sofa, tabaka, tepsi, xhezve, zinxhir etj.
- d) **Terminology of various foods and meals:** ashure, bakllava, bostan, boza, çaj, çorba, jahni, musaka, paça, pastërma, qofte, reçel, sheqer, turshi etj.
- e) **Clothing terminology:** astar, basma, çadër, çanta, çizme, çorap, dimi, gjerdan, jaka, jelek, mendil, shami, xhamadan etj.
- f) **Religious terminology:** abdest, Allah, bajram, dervish, dua, haxhi, haxhillëk, hoxha, iftar, imam, kuran, minare, namaz, ramazan, sure, syfyr, teqe, tespih, tyrbe, xhami, xhenet etj.
- g) **Terminology on the qualities of the individual:** adash, asgan, beqar, dallaverexhi, dilenxhi, effendi, hajdut, jaran, kopuk, matuf, merakli, muhaxhir, sarhosh, tamahqar, topall etj.
- h) **Terminology with social life:** amanet, haber, hajër, hallall, haram, hile, hyzmet, kasavet, kimet, mukajet, myzhde, peshqesh, qejf, ryshfet, selam, sevap, zarar, zor etj.
- i) **Administrative terminology:** haraç, kanun, kaza, mahalle, mylk, pashallëk, post, sanxhak, vergi, vilajet, yshyr, zarf etj.
- j) **Construction terminology:** ahur, baxha, bodrum, çardak, çati, çeshme, dysHEME, karabina, kat, konak, kubbe, mazgall, mertek, oda, oxhak, penxhere, qerpiç, qilar, qireç, shadërvan, tavan, trapazan, tullauluk, xham etj.

Turkicisms at the old Albanian authors

In the first book in Albanian, "Meshari" (1555) of Gj. Buzuku five Turkish loanwords are used [Pllana 2017: 80], in P. Budi (1618) a bit more, and in F. Bardhi (1635) about 75 Turkicisms [Pllana 2017: 86-97]. In P. Bogdani (1685) there are more Turkish loanwords used than in the works of his predecessors [Mulaku 2017: 92]. The second period of Turkish borrowings is during the 18th and 19th centuries until 1912.

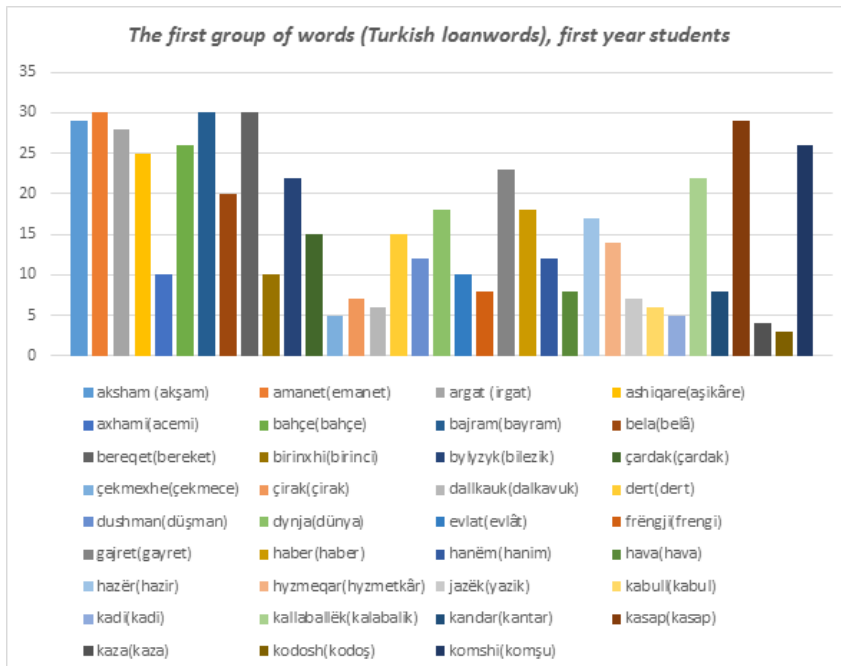
Research Methodology

The Analytical Method: This method was used for the survey carried out with 60 students of the Department of Albanian Language and Literature at the University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren, with first year students of the second semester and with second year students of the fourth semester. In order to have an idea about the use of Turkish loanwords, students of the Department of Albanian Language and Literature at the University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti" in Prizren, 60 (sixty) students helped by filling in surveys. This way we collected the data presented in this research for the 2018/2019 academic year, the 2019 summer semester for the number of Turkish loanwords (we have selected 70 Turkish loanwords for this research, which we have considered as more frequently used, usually used during family and friends conversations.

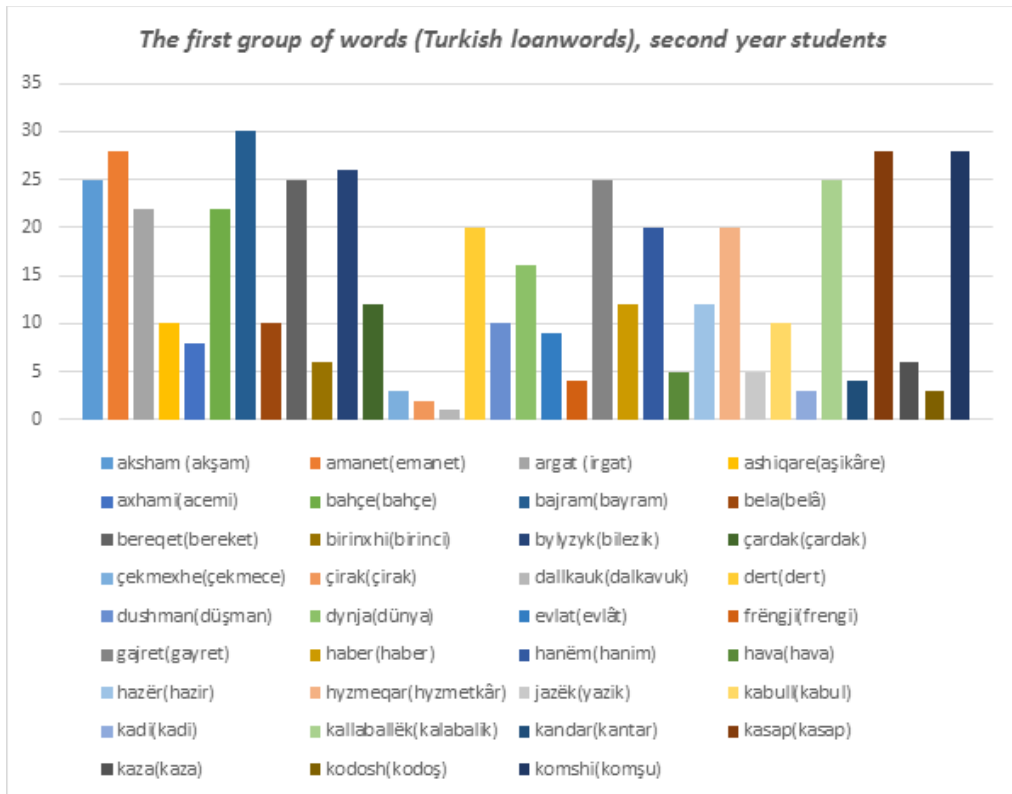
The first group of words (Turkish loanwords):

aksham (akşam)	çekmexhe(çekmece)	hazër(hazir)
amanet(emanet)	çirak(çirak)	hyzmeqar(hyzmetkâr)
argat (irgat)	dallkauk(dalkavuk)	jazëk(y azik)
ashiqare(aşikâre)	dert(dert)	kabull(kabul)
axhami(acemi)	dushman(düşman)	kadi(kadi)
bahçe(bahçe)	dy nja(dünya)	kallaballëk(kalabalik)
bajram(bay ram)	ev lat(ev lâat)	kandar(kantar)
bela(belâ)	frëngji(frengi)	kasap(kasap)
bereqet(bereket)	gajret(gay ret)	kaza(kaza)
birinx hi(birinci)	haber(haber)	kodosh(kodoş)
by ly zyq(bilezik)	hanëm(hanim)	komshi(komşu)
çardak(çardak)	hava(hava)	

Research results of 30 (thirty) **first year** students, during the 2018/2019 academic year, 2019 summer semester, **for the first group of words (Turkish loanwords):**



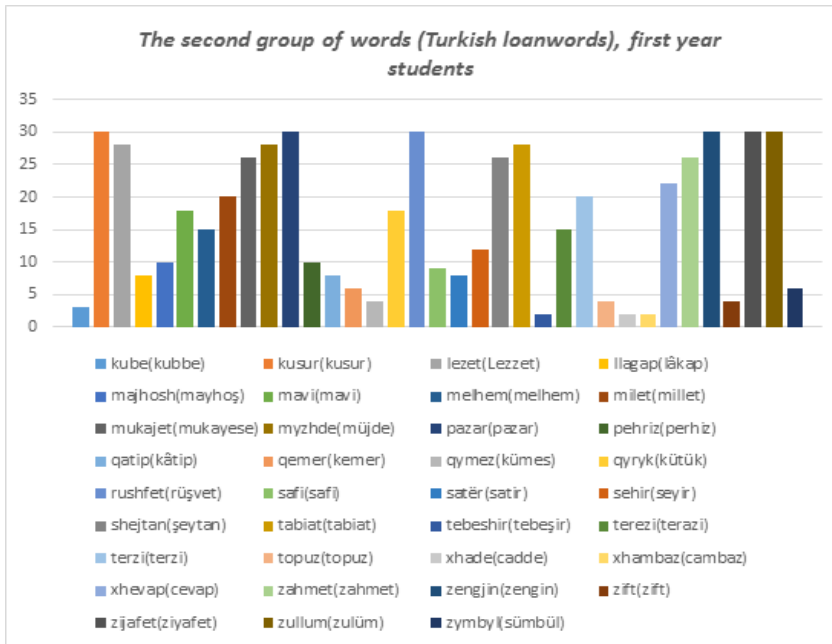
Research results of 30 (thirty) **second year** students, during the 2018/2019 academic year, 2019 summer semester, **for the first group of words (Turkish loanwords)**:



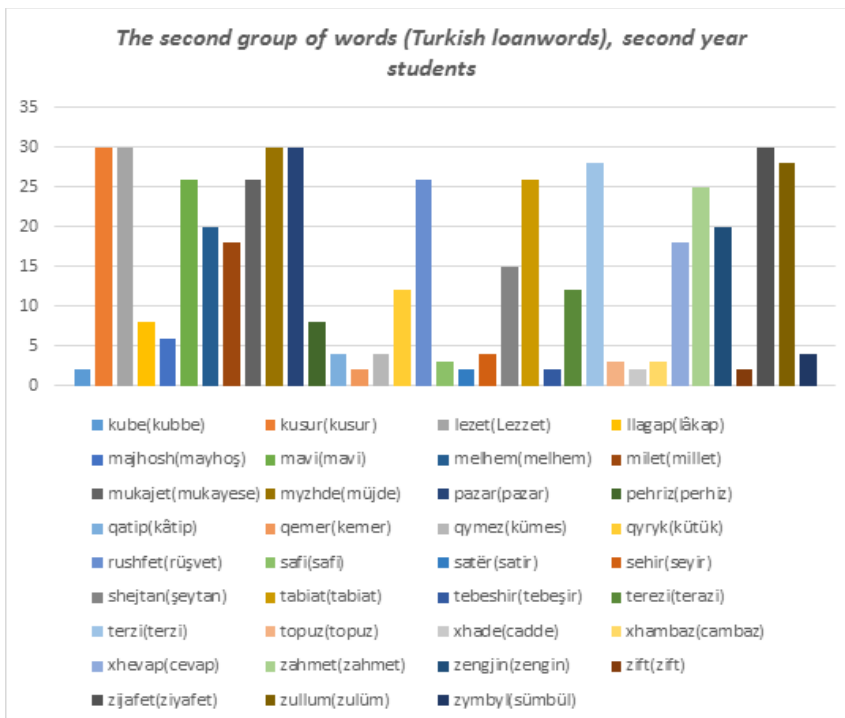
The second group of words (Turkish loanwords):

kube (kubbe)	qatip (kâtip)	terzi (terzi)
kusur (kusur)	qemer (kemer)	topuz (topuz)
lezet (Lezzet)	qy mez (kümes)	x hade (cadde)
llagap (lâkap)	qy ryk (kütük)	x hambaz (cambaz)
majhosh (may hoş)	rushfet (rüşvet)	x hev ap (cevap)
mavi (mavi)	safi (safı)	zahmet (zahmet)
melhem (melhem)	satër (satır)	zengin (zengin)
milet (millet)	sehir (seyir)	zift (zift)
mukajet (mukayese)	shejtan (şeytan)	zijafet (ziyafet)
my zhde (müjde)	tabiat (tabiat)	zullum (zulüm)
pazar (pazar)	tebeshir (tebeşir)	zy mbyl (sümbül)
pehriz (perhiz)	terezi (terazi)	

Research results of 30 (thirty) **first year** students, during the 2018/2019 academic year, 2019 summer semester, **for the second group of words (Turkish loanwords)**:



Research results of 30 (thirty) **second year** students, during the 2018/2019 academic year, 2019 summer semester, **for the second group of words (Turkish loanwords)**:



Conclusion

It is generally known that the Turkish language has been one of the most important sources of enriching the vocabulary of the Balkan languages during the five centuries of the Ottoman rule, so the Balkan languages have given and taken words from each other.

Turkish borrowings are so uniformly distributed in Balkan languages that a considerable number of them can be defined as "*Balkan Turkish loanwords*." The borrowed words, got attached to literature, religious language, administrative documents and other written texts.

The initially borrowed words through the spoken language were in fact borrowed from Turkish dialects spoken in the Balkan region. It was not a pure Turkish language usage and there were significant differences from Istanbul Turkish, on which the Turkish literary language was raised.

In the "*Fjalori i Sotëm i Gjuhës Shqipe*" (*Contemporary Albanian Dictionary*), about 1800 Turkish loanwords have been included. A number of Turkish loanwords are classified as part of conversational speech, while another number are active only when used for literary purposes.

The research results of 30 (thirty) students of the first and second year, during the 2018/2019 academic year, the 2019 summer semester, for 70 words (Turkish loanwords) used in everyday life, are presented in the diagrams.

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A Comparative Analysis of the Albanian and British English Vowel System

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Abstract:

Analyzing the complexity of the articulatory process of the vowels in Albanian and English language is of crucial importance in distinguishing their unique phonetic and phonological properties. The standard Albanian vocalic system includes seven vowels, unlike the standard British English vowel system which consists of five vowels. Drawing points of similarity and differentiation between the vowel systems of the two languages requires detailed analysis regarding the degree of opening and the position of the tongue in the vowel tract. Therefore the purpose of this paper is to highlight differences and similarities of the vowel system (monophthongs) between standard Albanian language and British English. The seven Albanian vowels considerably differ from their five English counterparts, not only by their degree of opening but even by their placement concerning the horizontal movement of the tongue, which can be observed by examining the two vowel charts of both languages. The Albanian vowel system is displayed through a triangle, meanwhile the English vowel system is a schematic arrangement of vowels into a quadrilateral. Thus analyzing their properties by using a comparative approach regarding vowels articulation in both languages would help in generating a clear picture of their common and distinguishing characteristics.

Keywords: comparison, vowels, system, differences, similarities

Introduction

Human species converse, they ask questions, they give orders, they provide instructions, they sing songs, they show excitement, refusal through utterances etc., often without paying too much attention to the sounds and their various combinations that the speech mechanism articulates when fulfilling these speech activities during linguistic discourse in a variety of contexts. "Languages worldwide do come and go" (Ladefoged & Disner, 2012, p. 2); Shakespearean English was not as sophisticated and elaborated as it is English language today. Buzuku and Bogdani's Albanian language went through fundamental transformations phonetically and phonologically until reaching today's contemporary version of the Albanian language. However, besides these linguistic modifications, there is one element that constitutes and provides the basics of speech of any language, that is *sound*.

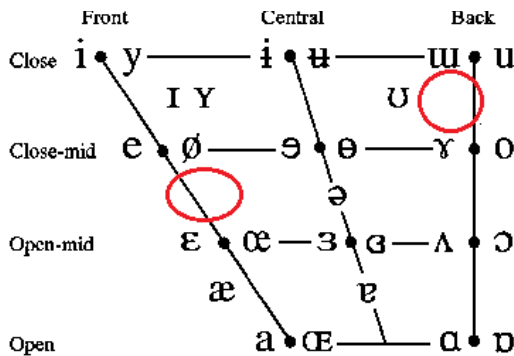
The complexity of the articulation of speech sounds in any language is not an easy process. Its articulatory sophistication often provides difficulty in drawing conclusions concerning their physiological properties in the vocal tract. The articulation of sounds requires a coordination of muscles' movement during in-breathing and out-breathing of the air from the chest cage. As Roach says "all the sounds we speak are the result of muscle contracting. The muscles in the chest produce the necessary flow of the air that is needed for almost all speech sounds." (2009, p.8-9) Depending on this mass of air coming out from the lungs, and the vibration created between the vocal folds, there is generated a broad variety of vowel and consonantal sounds in English and Albanian language too, besides the alphabetical vowel and consonant letters the two languages possess.

The traditional classification of sounds is the one that groups them into two distinctive categories: *vowels* and *consonants*, a classification mainly based on the level of constriction created during airflow, may this airflow be lateral or central. This division of sounds is characteristic of all languages in the world not only English and Albanian language. "Vowels, which constitute the focus of this paper, are articulated in a manner different from that of consonants. The articulators, both active and passive are far apart to allow the airflow to exit unhindered, that is with open approximation. Given this fact, the manner of articulation classifications used for the consonants are inappropriate for the vowels. Moreover, vowels are produced in a smaller area of the vocal tract, mainly the palatal and velar regions, which means that the consonantal place specifications

are also inappropriate.” (Davenport, 2005, p.38) Furthermore, vowels differently from consonants are voiced sounds, with a strong vocal folds’ vibration, excluding the classifying consonantal criterion of voicing.

As mentioned above, the primary focus of this contrastive research paper is the comparison of the English and Albanian vowel system, a comparative analysis which is going to be treated mainly in terms of three criteria:

- *localization* (Memushaj, 2011, p.53) (horizontal position of the tongue in the vocal tract)
- *degree of opening* (tongue height or vertical position in the mouth cavity)
- *lip rounding* otherwise known as “lip posture” consisting of all the large number of postures this articulator can take during articulation. (Ogden, 2009, p.59)



However, “part of the problem in describing vowels is that there are no distinct boundaries between one type of vowel and another in any kind of language. When talking about consonants, the categories are much more distinct. A consonantal sound may be a stop or a fricative, or a sequence of the two. But it cannot be half way between a stop and a fricative. Considered from this point of view, vowels are quite different. It is perfectly possible to make a vowel that is halfway between a high vowel and a mid vowel. (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011, p.87)

- Fig.1 Cardinal Vowels (Ogden, 2009, p.59)

In theory it is to be emphasized that it is possible to make a vowel at any specified distance between any two other vowels, as illustrated in the above chart through the small red circles.” (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2011, p.87)

The three articulatory criteria mentioned above will be analyzed and described in details in the following part of the paper pointing out characteristics of similarity and difference between the British English vowel system and the Albanian one.

English and Albanian vowel system comparative analysis

■ Localization / Position of the tongue in the vocal tract

In terms of localization, it is to be emphasized that vowels in English and Albanian language depending on their articulatory position can be classified under the following headings: front, central and back. The reason why the English vowel chart (Fig.3) includes short and long English vowels is that the duration in English represents an important distinguishing element concerning the semantic aspect of words, meanwhile in Albanian language it is mainly a dialectic feature, rather than one which distinguishes words from one another.

In Albanian language unlike English one, there is a new nearly front vowel /y/ (dyer, lyer etc.), which the English language does not recognize as such.

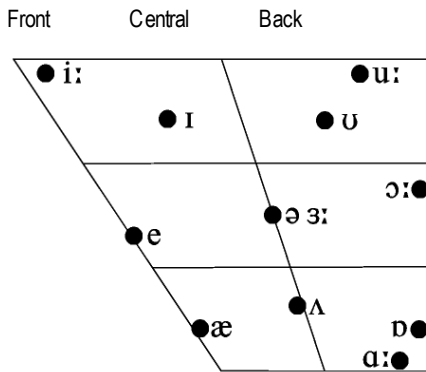


Fig.2 Albanian vowels (Beci, 2004, p.31)

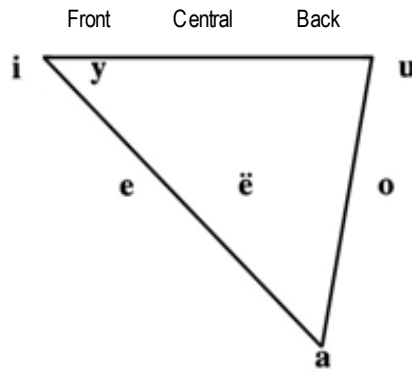


Fig 3. English short & long vowels
(Davenport, 2005, p.38)

In English the /y/ sound is either pronounced as a consonant mainly when encountered in an initial position, such as: Yard / ja: d /, Young / jʌŋ / etc. In other circumstances, when the sound is found in a medial position or final position (by /baɪ/; hardly /'ha: dli / etc.) it bears the features of a front /i/ or diphthong /ai/.

Analyzing the rest of the sounds, it can easily be observed that the localization of the vowels in both languages differs considerably from one another. The English /i:/ is closer to the Albanian one in terms of their articulatory positioning. Meanwhile the English short /ɪ/ in comparison to the Albanian /i/ seems to be closer to the center than front.

The English front vowel /e/ (let, bed, etc) phonetically matches the articulation of the Albanian /e/ (det, mes, etc). A difference provides the English front vowel /æ/ which requires the Albanian learners of English language to try to articulate an opener version of their /e/ during which both sides of the tongue go down, accompanied by a broader opening of the jaws in order to guarantee a correct articulation of the vowel and correct pronunciation of words, such as cat /kæ/.

The two central English sounds ə/ɜ positioned in the middle of the quadrilateral differ quite considerably from the Albanian /ɛ/ placed in the middle of the triangle. The Albanian /ɛ/, may it be in a middle or final position in a word (such as: tavolinë, përmasë, etc.) does not cause problems during articulation and pronunciation of the words. Meanwhile the two central English sounds ə/ɜ:, due to their degree of duration often cause problems for the English foreign learners, not only during articulation but even in the pronunciation of the English words, for example: bird /bɜ:d/, trainer /treɪnə/ etc. In such cases, the distribution of the vowels, whether they have a medial or final position can undoubtedly help during pronunciation.

Back vowels constitute another classification based on the positioning of the tongue. In both languages Albanian and English one, the articulation of the back vowels is accompanied by a back movement of the body of the tongue. However, it often depends on the distribution of these vowels within words, that is whether they might have an initial, medial or final position.

- Degree of opening (tongue height in the mouth cavity)

The degree of opening, otherwise known as the tongue height or vertical movement of the tongue in the mouth cavity provides another essential criterion when it comes to the classification of vowels in English and Albanian language too. Unlike the previously mentioned classification of vowels according to the horizontal positioning of the tongue, the Albanian vowels seem to share more common characteristics with the English long vowels rather than the short English ones.

For instance, in the following group of words we can notice that for the pronunciation of the English word "duck" and the Albanian one "takim", the degree of opening during articulation for their common vowel is similar. Meanwhile in the word dark /da:k/ the duration of the vowel requires a broader opening of the jaws, identifying a different vertical positioning of the vowel in the English quadrilateral.

(English) Duck / dʌk /

(English) Dark / da:k /

(Albanian) Takim / takim /

If we go back to Fig.3 and observe the position of the English short vowels in terms of their degree of opening it seems that they create a smaller quadrilateral inside the big one, corresponding with the appropriate vertical position of each vowel. Therefore the degree of opening in the articulation of vowels is different not only when comparing English and Albanian language, but even within one single language, taking as reference the short and long vowels of that language.

■ Lip rounding

Lip rounding is otherwise recognized as the lip posture, the third basic criterion of the vowel description in English and Albanian language. Lips are considered to be active articulators, holding a number of postures. They can be spread, rounded, protruded, open, etc. (Ogden, 2009, p.59)

Both languages' vowels can easily be classified into rounded and unrounded vowels. In English the rounded vowels are / u, o, ʊ, ɔ / as it can be observed in figure nr. 4. The rest of the vowels are unrounded. The rounding of the lips of these sounds can also be observed in the pronunciation of different words such as *book, pull, drew, computer* etc.

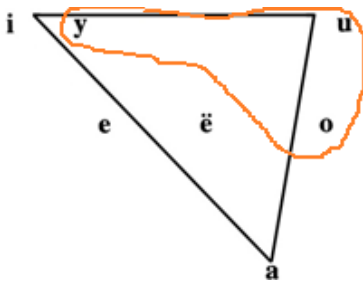


Fig.4 English rounded vowels

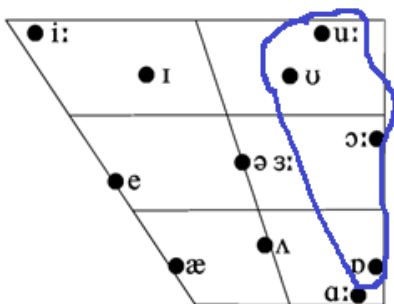


Fig. 5. Albanian rounded vowels

In Albanian language there are 3 rounded vowels y / o / u, meanwhile the four other ones are unrounded vowels. The lips' rounded posture of the vowels' pronunciation can also be observed in Albanian words such as *druri, buka, kunadhe, dora, loja, tynel, byrek*, etc.

What needs to be emphasized and pointed out as a common similarity between the two languages, English and Albanian one, concerning lip posture, it is to be said that the rounded vowels are found and easily articulated in a variety of words regardless of their distribution, whether they have an initial, medial or final position.

Conclusion

Analyzing the vowels of the two languages, English and Albanian in terms of their articulatory features, is interesting and challenging at the meantime, considering the fact that the two languages differ considerably from one another.

English and Albanian language do not share the same spelling-pronunciation rule. English spelling does hardly match the pronunciation, with the exception of some one syllable words such as for / fɔ: / , desk / desk / , task / ta: sk / , etc. Meanwhile in Albanian language, the spelling and pronunciation perfectly match together, which means that words are pronounced in the same way as they are written.

The vowels of the two languages were mainly analyzed and compared regarding their physical features during their articulation in the vocal tract. Three criteria were taken into consideration when conducting the comparative analysis: *the horizontal movement of the tongue, the vertical movement of the tongue, and lip rounding.*

Referring to these comparisons it can be said that the English long and short vowels displayed in the quadrilateral do differ considerably from the Albanian vowels displayed in the triangle. Regarding the horizontal movement of the tongue, the English and Albanian vowels tend to share certain features, however, the Albanian vowels seem to reach the edges of the triangle more, unlike the English ones. According to the degree of opening or vertical movement of the tongue, English language offers more sound varieties, articulated in different positions differently from the Albanian language.

Finally, according to the criterion of lip rounding both languages seem to share common properties, despite their distribution in words or phrases, whether they might be found in an initial position, medial or final one.

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An Algorithm Describing the Verb Valence Changes in the Kartvelian Linguistic Space

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Abstract

The four vowel-prefixes of the verb, which are distinguished in the South Caucasian (resp. Kartvelian) languages, represent various verb forms, such as: transitive, causative, reflexive, reciprocal, deponent, passive, potential, subjective and objective version. Such polyfunctionality of the prefixes leads us to suppose that they should have more general, common function. Based on a semantic and functional analysis of these prefixes the certain generalization is proposed; and the whole process of prefixes choices is presented as an algorithm with four implicational rules. The algorithm reflects a hierarchically organized optimal generating/dynamic process of linguistic structuring of the verb valence changes continuum both in the Proto-Kartvelian and in the contemporary Kartvelian languages. Such a dynamic approach clarifies why these vowels are poly-functional in the whole Kartvelian linguistic space: Georgian, Svan, Megrelian and Laz (id. modern Kartvelian languages) and their dialects; and describes the main direction of diachronic changes in the functions of valence markers, which turn into (co)markers for various derivational verb categories.

Keywords: Kartvelian languages, verb valence, verb derivational categories, semantic roles, algorithms in grammar.

I. Introduction

There are four verbal pre-root vowel prefixes in the South Caucasian (resp. Kartvelian) languages. Based on the Comparative-Historical methodology they can be reconstructed for the Proto-Kartvelian level: **a-*, **i-*, **e-*, **u-*.

Table 1: Correspondences of the vowel prefixes

Proto-Kartvelian	Georgian	Megrelian/Laz	Svan
<i>*a-</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>o-</i>	<i>a-</i>
<i>*e-</i>	<i>e-</i>	<i>a-</i>	<i>e-</i>
<i>*i-</i>	<i>i-</i>	<i>i-</i>	<i>i-</i>
<i>*u-</i>	<i>u-</i>	<i>u-</i>	<i>o-</i>

According to the Georgian grammatical tradition, these prefixes are the markers of the main categories, such are: Voice – **i-* (monopersonal passive) and **e-* (bipersonal prefix); Causative – **a-*; and Version – **i* (subjective version), **u-* (objective version), and **a-* (neutral version) (Shanidze, 1973), but they can represent also different semantics and, therefore, verb categories as well: transitive, reflexive, reciprocal, potential, deponent and some other so-called middle forms (Asatiani, 2001; Ivanishvili, Soselia, 2001; Holisky, 1981; Nozadze, 2015; Tuite, 2002). Thus, they are poly-functional and occupy one and the same position in the string of verb morphemes, never appearing simultaneously in the structure of verb forms. All this complicates their unequivocal interpretation. Reconstruction of these categories for the Proto-Kartvelian level is also problematic (Asatiani, 2013 and 2017; Machavariani, 2002), while diachronic reconstruction of the prefixes themselves is quite transparent. To solve such problems it is assumed that they should have one common, more general function.

Form more sufficient analysis we turned on new theoretical approaches (e.g. functional approach – Harris, 1981; theory of semantic roles – Dowty, 1991) and metodological devises (e.g. tree-structures – Berg, 2009; algorithms in grammar – Rieber, 1992; conceptual frames – Shibatani, 2006).

II. Semantics and functions of the prefixes

An exhaustive analysis of concrete prefixes shows (See examples below in the appendix):

***a-** marks out an increase of verb valence: when Agent-Actor and/or Agent-Initiator of an action appears in a verb argument structure, additionally, specific suffixes arise in a verb form: ***-(ev)in** (in case of Causative) or the specific thematic marker of Present Tense forms ***(-eb)** (in case of Transitive); while when Locative appears, only ***a-** presented in a verb form.

***u-∞j-** marks out an increase of verb valence when Recipient/Benefactive appears in a verb argument structure (resp. Objective Version).

***i-** marks out a decrease of verb valence when disappears either an Agent (resp. so-called Monopersonal Passive sometimes expressing Potential), or Recipient/Benefactive (resp. Subjective Version expressing Reflexive as well).

***e-** marks out the more complicated case: simultaneously, Agent's disappearance and Recipient/Benefactive's appearance (resp. Bipersonal Passive sometimes expressing Potential as well).

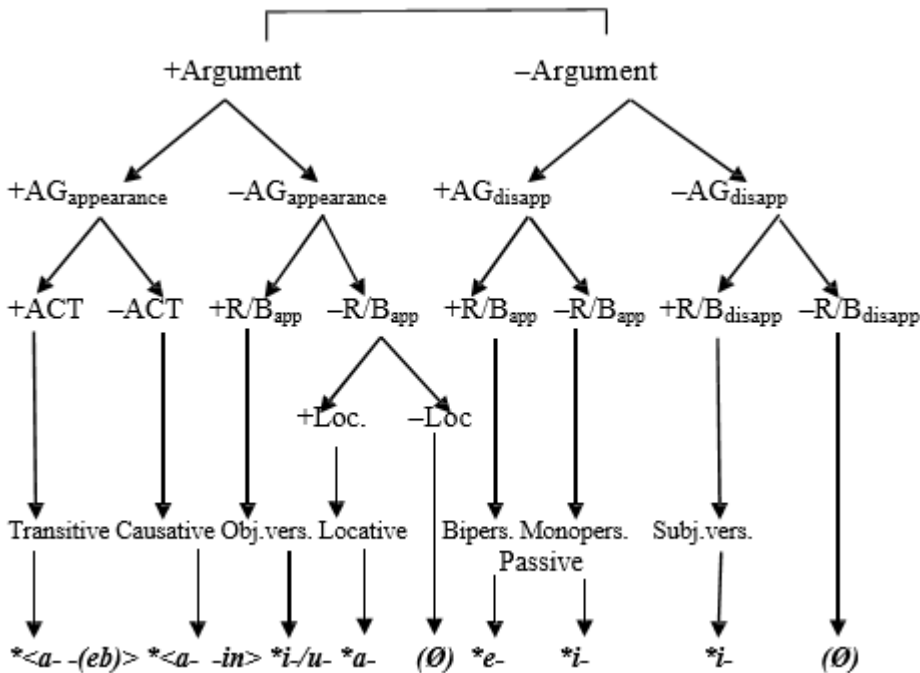
III. New interpretations: general function of the prefixes and the tree-structure describing various verb derivatives

Based on semantic and functional analysis of vowel prefixes, the following generalization is proposed:

*The main function of verbal vowel prefixes is to represent conceptual changes resulting from **an increase and/or decrease** of verb valence implying either appearance or disappearance of semantic roles in a verb argument structures.*

Various possibilities of verb valence changes can be summarized by the scheme, which reflects generalized functions of verbal pre-root vowel prefixes mainly preserved in all Kartvelian languages (Georgian, Svan, Megrelian and Laz) and their dialects.

Figure 1.

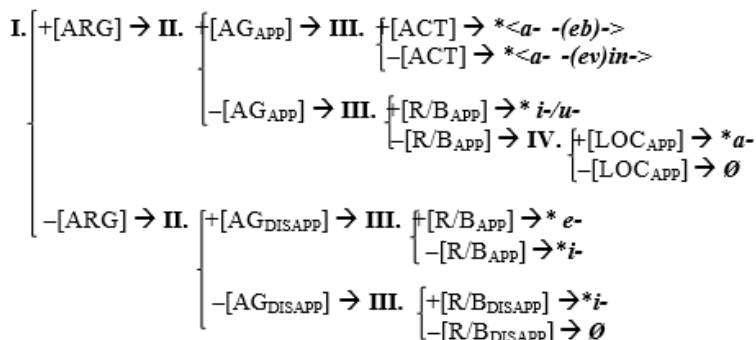


A generative strategy of verb forms creation is based on either appearance and/or disappearance of decisive Semantic Roles: +/[ARGUMENT], +/[AGENTAPPEARANCE], +/- [AGENTDISAPPEARANCE], +/[AGENT-ACTOR], +/- [RECIPIENT/BENEFACTIVEAPPEARANCE], +/- [RECIPIENT/BENEFACTIVEDISAP], +/- [LOCATIVEAPPEARANCE].

IV. Algorithm describing the valence changes

The whole process can also be reinterpreted and represented as an algorithm with the four stages of implicational rules where critical features for choices of the vowel-prefixes are adding or/and removing of certain semantic roles.

Figure 2.



Additional rules: if there is neither +/[AGAPP] nor +/-[AGDISAPP] (the case: {-[AGAPP] and -[AGDISAPP]}), then +[REC/BENAPP] is formalized by the prefix *e-* representing semantics of Reciprocals, while +[REC/BENDISAPP] is formalized by the prefix *i-* representing so called Deponent verbs. If REC/BEN and PATIENT have the same referent, *i-* prefix represents Reflexive, while if +[AGDISAPP] is 'generalized, indefinable' argument, *i-* and *e-* prefixes represent semantics of Potentials.

V. Conclusions

The four vowel prefixes, which traditionally were considered as markers of the categories of voice, version and causative, being polyfunctional, are reinterpreted and qualified within more general conceptual frames as the markers of valence changes.

The tree structure shows that the choices are hierarchically organized.

The generation of different verbs forms is represented as the algorithm with four implication rules.

The proposed algorithm has the universal character: above given changes of a verb valence, defined by 'adding' and/or 'removing' of semantic roles in the verb argument structures, exist in every language; and the algorithm differs only in strategies of formal representation of the changes that determine the specificity of grammatical systems of various languages.

The algorithm reflects the hierarchically organized optimal generative/dynamic process of linguistic structuring of a verb valence changing continuum that is characteristic as for the Proto-Kartvelian so for the modern Kartvelian languages and dialects.

Development of the Proto-Kartvelian language system is considered and interpreted as a diachronic process showing that the vowels, expressing changes of verb valence, step by step have specified their own self-semantics and functions mostly by definite suffix endings and have been transformed into the co-markers of various categories: Voice, Version, and Causative. Additionally, preserving the "old", general function, they can represent semantics and functions of Locative, Reflexive, Reciprocal, Potential and Deponent forms as well.

Such dynamic (both diachronically and synchronically) approach clarifies why these vowels are poly-functional in the contemporary Kartvelian languages (Georgian, Svan, Megrelian and Laz) and dialects and why the reconstruction of the categories of voice and causation is so problematic for the Proto-Kartvelian level.

Appendix

Table 2: Examples from Georgian

Initial verb form	Valence changing	Derived verb forms and argument structures
<i>is c'ux-s</i> 3.SG.NON be.sad-PRS.S.3.SG 'S/he is sad.'	Adding: {+[ARG], +[AGAPP], +[ACTOR]}	<i>is ma-s a-c'ux-eb-s</i> 3.SG.NON 3.SG-DAT TRN-be.sad-THM-PRS.S.3.SG 'S/he bothers him/her' TRANSITIVE
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Adding: {+[ARG], +[AGAPP], -[ACTOR]}	<i>is ma-s a-c'er-in-eb-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON 3.SG-DAT CAUS.1-write-CAUS.1-THM-S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he has him/her w rite the letter.' CAUSATIVE
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Adding: {+[ARG], -[AGAPP], +[R/BAPP]}	<i>is ma-s u-c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON 3.SG-DAT OV-w rite-PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes him/her the letter.' Note! R/B is Ill person OBJECTIVE VERSION
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Adding: {+[ARG], -[AGAPP], +[R/BAPP]}	<i>is me m-i-c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON 1.SG-DAT IO.1.SG-OV-write-PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes me the letter.' Note! R/B is I or II person OBJECTIVE VERSION
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Adding: {+[ARG], -[AGAPP], -[ADAPP], +[LOCAPP]}	<i>is xel-s a-c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON hand-DAT LOC-w rite-PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he signs the letter.' LOCATIVE
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Removing: {-[ARG], -[AGDISAPP], +[R/BDISAPP]}	<i>is i-c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NOM SV-write-PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter for her/himself.' SUBJECTIVE VERSION
<i>is ban-s k'at'a-s</i> 3.SG.NON wash-PRS.S.3.SG cat-DAT 'S/he washes the cat.'	Removing: {-[ARG], -[AGDISAPP], +[R/BDISAPP]}	<i>is i-ban-s</i> 3.SG.NOM SV-wash-PRS.S.3.SG 'S/he bathes (her/himself).' Note! P=R/B REFLEXIVE
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Removing: {-[ARG], +[AGDISAPP], -[R/BAPP]}	<i>c'eril-i i-c'er-eb-a m-is mier</i> letter-NOM PASS-write-THM-PASS.PRS.S.3.SG 3.SG-GEN by 'The letter is w ritten by him/her.' PASSIVE (MONOPERSONAL)
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Removing: {-[ARG], +[AGDISAPP], -[R/BAPP]}	<i>c'eril-i advilad i-c'er-eb-a</i> letter-NOM easily PASS-write-THM-PASS.PRS.S.3.SG 'The letter is w ritten (/can be w ritten) easily.' Note! AG is 'generalized' POTENTIAL
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Removing: {-[AGAPP], -[AGDISAPP], +[R/BDISAPP]}	<i>is ceril-s i-c'er-eb-a sopl-idan</i> 3.SG.NOM letter-DAT PASS-write-THM-PASS.PRS.S.3.SG village-from 'S/he writes the letter from the village.' DEPONENT
<i>is c'er-s c'eril-s</i> 3.SG.NON write- PRS.S.3.SG letter-DAT 'S/he writes the letter.'	Removing and Adding: {-[ARG], +[AGDISAPP],+[R/BAPP]}	<i>c'eril-i ma-s e-c'er-eb-a</i> letter-NOM 3.SG-DAT IO.3.PASS-write-THM-PASS.PRS.S.3.SG 'The letter is w ritten (by him/her) for him/her.' PASSIVE (BIPERSONAL)
<i>is sv-am-s q'ava-s</i> 3.SG.NON drink-THM-PRS.S.3.SG coffee-DAT 'S/he drinks coffee.'	Removing and Adding: {-[ARG], +[AGDISAPP],+[R/BAPP]}	<i>q'ava ma-s e-sm-eb-a</i> coffee.NOM 3.SG-DAT IO.3.PASS-drink-THM-PASS.PRS.S.3.SG 'Coffee is drinkable for him/her //S/he may (w/out harm) drink coffee.' Note! AG is 'generalized'

		POTENTIAL
<i>is cek'v-av-s</i> 3.SG.NON dance-THM-PRS.S.3.SG 'S/he dances.'	Adding: {-[AGAPP], -[AGDISAPP], +[R/BAPP]}	<i>is ma-s e-cek'v-eb-a</i> 3.SG.NOM 3.SG-DAT IO.3.PASS-dance-THM-PASS.PRS.S.3.SG 'S/he dances together w ith him/her // they dance together.' RECIPROCAL

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Andrew Taylor: Australia's Poet of the (Extra)Ordinary

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Abstract

Andrew Taylor (1940-) has been regarded as one of the most significant living Australian poets largely due to the fact of his unusual use of the poetic language and the selection of topics. He undoubtedly belongs to the group of the poets, like John Kinsella, who create mastery in their so-called 'niche' market, quietly continuing to produce compositions of remarkable quality, and receiving national and international recognition for their achievements. Andrew Taylor's *Impossible Preludes (Poems 2008-2014)* is a unique and beautiful retrospective on life, love and everything in between, with its full array of extraordinariness embedded in the ordinariness of everyday life. Each line is a story within itself, painting a picture for the reader to follow as vividly as one might expect in an art gallery. Every poem is full of colour and weight as it takes you on a journey into the mind of this creative and talented individual. Therefore, the aim of this paper is to disclose these elements in Andrew Taylor's poetry that make it so extraordinary in its ordinariness and find out possible sources of this idiosyncrasy.

Keywords: Andrew Taylor, Australian poetry, extraordinary, ordinary

Introduction

Born and bred Australian, Taylor has developed an interest in the world within and without his homeland. In his previously published volumes of poetry, such as *Travelling* (1986) or *Sandstone* (1995), his attention concentrates upon the homely landscapes, either big Australian cities like Sydney, Melbourne or Adelaide and Perth or he travels along country paths, in bushland or the beach.

However, later volumes, such as *Götterdämmerung Café* (2001), *Rome* (2005), *Regret about the Wolves and Other Poems* (2006) or *The Unhaunting* (2009), take the reader to the world outside Australia, particularly to Germany (Wiesbaden), Italy (Rome) or Poland (Opole). "Two Dates," from the volume *Impossible Preludes*, is certainly a very unusual poem not only because these "two dates" denote two different times – though close to each other – but rather because they indicate two different spaces situated in two different geographical and climactic zones, one in Europe, Wiesbaden in Germany, the home town of Taylor's wife, and the other in Australia, Perth, W.A. where they spent two decades together.

The first part starts on the date marking the beginning of Northern hemisphere winter, 22 December:

"Two Dates"

1. 22 December 2011, Wiesbaden

So this is the official

start of winter.

Was that what Tuesday's snow

was all about, not some meteorological mistake

or an over-eager Frau Holle

plucking her goose too soon?

Its tatty remnants still spread

like a picnic's leftovers
on the lawn, a robin
warily inspecting them, while busy
as usual blackbirds hop and pose.
Even our squirrel is out
a fluent darting redcoat
in the rain. Parsifal
go back to your shelter, your hoard
of hazelnuts, before you catch
cold. This is officially
winter, you're supposed to snooze. (13)

The poet seems to be amazed at the sight of snow, so uncharacteristic of Australian landscape, particularly at that time of the year, when the Aussies prepare for Christmas at the beach and suffer from the heat. In contrast, the native German animals and birds prepare themselves for the winter sleep whereas patches on snow on the lawn recall the picnic leftovers in the poet's mind.

The other part of the poem takes us back to Australia in time to celebrate Australia Day not so much as the political or national holiday, but rather as a stunning summer contrast to European winter:

2. Australia Day, Perth, 2012

You'd think the lawn would melt
in this heat and trees
burst into incandescence,
the flippy tails of wagtails wilt
and dangle and ants under paving
too hot to touch would coalesce
into tiny deposits of coal.
People on the beach
would bleach and generations hence
children would scuff their ossified
iPhones a few bones and a towel.
Seven more days of this
while Queensland's flooded
again! This is Australia
and we accept thee
for hotter and for colder
for dryer and for wetter

Until death ... ah well/ it's not so terminal yet (14)

The beach, the symbol of Australian lifestyle, democracy and personal freedom, serves here as a sharp contrast to European wintery lawn, itself full of life and scorching heat. Northern December and Southern January are poles apart even though they are close to each other in the calendar. They can also be read – metaphorically – as death and life, winter and summer, frost and heat, sleep and activity, night and day.

The next poem from the volume, "River," is still different. This time, river, a geographical feature, is a starting point for the poet's philosophical reflection of the nature of passing time:

How can we measure

a reflection's depth

how can we figure

what my kayak inscribes

on what it means

to be a universe's mirror?

The river sleeps

its face sleeps

it's a sheen of perfection

as I dig my paddle in it

stirring at all that deeper

is not asleep

How can one define a river?

A thin downhill of water

a living a fishing a swimming

a highway that never finishes

a place for walking

a place for reflection?

You're on the opposite bank

of my dream

you're wading waist deep

into the current

that's sweeping us further and further

together (26-27)

Written in couplets, the poem seems to be a reflection on reflections, embedded deeply in transcendental, Emersonian philosophy of nature, to which Andrew Taylor gave a specifically Australian pragmatism of everyday objects, like a kayak, alongside simple activities like paddling and swimming. His ability to define simple phenomena like a flowing river ("a thin downhill of water," "universe's mirror") is absolutely amazing and extraordinary. He uses simple vocabulary to speak of

great things, universal problems and dilemmas just in order to get his message across to his readers who need simplicity and straightforwardness in the times of complexity and perplexity.

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Bio-note

Ryszard W. Wolny is Professor and Director, Institute of English and American Studies, University of Opole, Poland. His interests focus largely on British and Australian literature and culture. He is an author of about a hundred scholarly publications which include, among others, *The Ruinous Anatomy: The Philosophy of Death in John Donne and the Earlier Seventeenth-century English Poetry and Prose* (Perth, Western Australia, 1999), *A Cry over the Abyss: The Discourse of Power in the Poetry of Robert Browning and Algernon Charles Swinburne* (Opole 2004), *Australia: Identity, Memory, Destiny* (Opole 2008), *Crosscurrents: Culture, Literature and Language* (Kielce 2008), *On Time: Reflections on Time in Culture, Literature and Language* (Opole 2009), *Culture and Postcolonial Studies* (Kielce 2012).

Within the last five years, he completed a monograph entitled *Patrick White: Australia's Poet of Mythical Landscapes of the Soul* (Wrocław 2013) and edited (or co-edited) *Evil Ugliness Disgrace in the Cultures of the West and East* (Opole 2013), *The Masks of Ugliness in Literary Narratives* (Frankfurt 2013), *Poisoned Comucopia: Excess, Intemperance and Overabundance across Cultures and Literatures* (Frankfurt 2014), *Outlandish, Uncanny and Bizarre in Contemporary Western Culture* (Wrocław 2016), *Disease, Death and Decay* (Opole 2018) and *Redefining Australia: Historical Heritage and Contemporary Perspectives* (special issue of *Anglica*, Warsaw 2019). Currently, he is working on *Littoral Modernism: Patrick White's Theatre of Australia* (Frankfurt 2019). He is a co-editor of Peter Lang series *Silesian Studies in Anglophone Cultures and Literature* (with Ewa Kęłbowska-Lawniczak).

Ryszard W. Wolny is member of ESSE (European Society for the Study of English), EASA (European Association for the Study on Australia) and IAUPE (International Association of the University Professors of English, Chair of Australian Panel). In 2017, he was elected President of Polish Association for the Study of Australia and New Zealand and, in 2018, Vice-President of Polish Association of the Study of English. In the years 1992-2000, he undertook postgraduate studies at Edith Cowan University, Perth, Western Australia. In 2019 he was a Visiting Professor to Edith Cowan University, Western Australia.

Charles Bukowski – America's Poet of the South

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Abstract

One of the most expressive trends in American culture of the 1950s and 1960s, manifested by the treatment of travel as a motive of life in both the mental and creative spheres, can be confidently attributed to the Beat generation. Their consumption lifestyle, crazy undertakings, love and moral fights, in which they entered without any moderation, led them to living problems and, consequently, to being lost. This generation almost automatically brings to mind the portrait of young, vulnerable Americans, rebellious and lost, oppressed and radical, wanting freedom and falling into trouble. The myth of the Beat generation is one of the most distinct myths of American culture of the twentieth century. We know very little about Beat in Poland. Admittedly, there have been several studies concerning the literary output of Beat writers, but they do not fully reflect the complexity of the phenomenon and contexts in which they were shaped. We are constantly looking at them in terms of mythologized rebellion. Associated with beat, Charles Bukowski is the best example of a person whose work was inspired by his own experiences related to sex, alcohol, poverty and human weaknesses.

Keywords: Bukowski, America's South, Beat Generation

Introduction

Bukowski was born on August 16, 1920 in Andernach, Germany, and the family moved to Los Angeles when he was two years old. Bukowski endured a brutal, unhappy childhood. Rejected by girls due to his acute acne and often severely beaten by his disciplinarian father and other peers, Bukowski first discovered alcohol at the age of thirteen. For most of his literary career, Bukowski drank heavily, writing that "I have a feeling that drinking is a form of suicide where you're allowed to return to life and begin all over the next day. It's like killing yourself, and then you're reborn. I guess I've lived about ten or fifteen thousand lives by now." The abuse Bukowski endured from his father, along with the isolation and extreme self-consciousness concerning his appearance, directly influenced Bukowski as a writer. Although he wrote in a language full of profanity, his work captures sensitivity and a deep understanding of human nature. Bukowski himself was known for his life full of scandals, so his protagonist is a man living on the margins of society, skeptical of people, and at the same time looking for closeness with them.

Bukowski's style can be sensed at a distance, from the first paragraph. It is not only original, but also unmanageable. His texts are short, concise and at the same time captivating and fun. Bukowski enjoyed a sound reputation as a prolific underground writer who explored the dissolute underbelly of skid-row America—specifically the Los Angeles lower-classes—in both fiction and poetry. Bukowski's short fiction concentrates on uncontrite drinking and generally anti-social behavior, employing a scatological idiom which serves to mock academe and animate his idiosyncratic style and ideology, while also contributing to Bukowski's often harsh critical reception. Bukowski is praised for imbuing his stories and characters with an empathetic humanity and self-deprecating, absurdist black-comedy, avoiding maudlin sentimentality, and instead relying on experience, direct language, and imagination to balance his writing. Bukowski's work helped give rise to the "dirty realism" prominent in literature of the 1970s and 80s, most famously in the short fiction of Raymond Carver. Bukowski is known for depicting violent and sexual imagery in his hard-edged prose. This graphic usage has led some critics to dismiss Bukowski's work as superficial and misogynist in nature; yet others contend that Bukowski merely satirizes this macho stance through his employment of sex, drunkenness, and violence as primary plot devices. Bukowski seldom commented on his own work, as most of his readers know that virtually all the novels, short stories, and poems are thinly veiled approximations of his actual life. Indeed, his highly acclaimed novel *Ham on Rye* (1982) is not only his autobiography but also an American portrait of the artist as a young man. This is a story about the author's childhood and youth, presenting

a sensitive boy who, despite poverty, an autocratic father and the pressure of conformist environment, fights against obstacles in order to follow his own way of life.

Literary critics find his work difficult to interpret because it so closely resembles the actual day-to-day routine of an unapologetic, hard-drinking, womanizing gambler who loves playing the horses and brawling in barrooms. His work records the despairing lifestyles of the poor and infamous in Los Angeles in unrelenting detail. In Hollywood, his alter ego, Henry Chinaski, announces himself as “a historian of drink” who has no peer and wryly adds that he has outlived his drinking companions principally because he “never gets out of bed before noon”.

Charles Bukowski in his novel *Women*, devoted nearly three hundred pages to descriptions of encounters with numerous women, who used their power to deprive men of not only common sense but also self-preservation instinct. He would take any risks in order to achieve carnal intercourses with a woman, spending his time in bars. *Post Office* is a very interesting novel in Bukowski's literary output. It is a dramatic proof of the fact that we are not always able to make own decisions in our life and we not always can do what we like. *Post Office* dramatically criticizes all those who worked several or more years, doing a job, which they sincerely hated. Charles Bukowski makes us realise that life is neither colourful nor pleasant, as we are frequently told by films, television or press. However, he adds fun and joy, which can be experienced against all odds. The world presented in *Post Office* is not grey. The novel is full of life thanks to the descriptions of days wasted on sorting out parcels. Another working day is full of frivolous jokes and life slowly goes on. The novel is sometimes closer to reportage than fiction.

The great French playwright and novelist Jean Genet called Bukowski “the best poet in America,” words of high praise from an artist who rarely commented on another poet's work and is considered the archetypal “underground” writer of the twentieth century. Bukowski's themes are the same in most all of his poetry, novels, and short stories: violence, despair, poverty, hopelessness, alcoholism, suicide, madness, and how alcohol, sex, gambling, and, most important, writing can intermittently relieve the agony of these lives of dramatic desperation. Bukowski owed allegiance to no one for the success of his work except the persistent integrity of the small presses that first published his work and especially Black Sparrow Press. The only literary assistance he ever received was from the books he read in his local public library. What motivated Bukowski's commitment to the life of the imagination was his unflinching realization that without it, his life would be as meaningless and absurd as the rest of the trapped creatures he writes about. Wallace Stevens, one of the most important poets of the twentieth century, defined the imagination as the “violence within that protects us from the violence without.” There is little doubt that Bukowski viewed its function in exactly the same terms, yet in an even more profoundly personal way. He survived on the mean streets of Los Angeles, after all, not (as did Stevens) in the comfortable safety of the office of vice president of one of the United States' largest insurance companies. Critics often compare Bukowski to several of the so-called Beat writers (such as Jack Kerouac, William S. Burroughs, and Allen Ginsberg) but fail to mention that Bukowski's is a working-class background. He never had the opportunity to attend such prestigious universities as Columbia or Harvard, as did the other three writers. A number of his public school friends' fathers committed suicide during the Depression, while many others drank themselves into early graves. Though Kerouac emerged from a working-class New England background, he attended Columbia University on a football scholarship, while Allen Ginsberg and William Burroughs came out of college-educated families with traditions of reading and culture. Though Bukowski is frequently compared to Henry Miller in his graphic depiction of drinking and sexual freedom, one never feels that Bukowski is in any way romanticizing that lifestyle. Miller's characters could, if they chose, move on to an economically more rewarding life and, because of their intelligence, charm, or sexual prowess, find any number of amorous partners in countless cafés of the Latin Quarter of Paris during the 1930's.

One of the more compelling poems from what is perhaps Bukowski's best-known collection of poetry, *The Days Run Away Like Wild Horses over the Hills*, concerns the plight of a poor man who discovers his beloved wife's infidelities and proceeds to castrate himself in her horrified presence, flushing his testicles down the toilet yet continuing to drink his wine while holding a bloody towel between his legs with a look of utter indifference on his face. The ruling passions of the poor, the ugly, and the hopeless are, in Bukowski's view, much more significant to them than those of the wealthy are to them, simply because they are all that the poor have. In one of Bukowski's finest collections of poems, “It Catches My Heart in Its Hands,” he presents a world in which the young are “fenced in/ stabbed and shaven/ taught words/ propped up/ to die”—an existence in which “you and I ain't living well! enough.” In a poem titled “The Tragedy of the Leaves,” he talks about the necessity for laughter in spite of depressing circumstances:

what was needed now was a good comedian, ancient style, a jester with jokes upon absurd pain; pain is absurd because

it exists, nothing more;and I walk into the dark hall where the landlady stood execrating and final, sending me to hell waving her fat sweaty arms and screaming for rent because the world has failed us both. (page???)

There is also in these lines an empathetic quality of the poet as spokesman for all members of his tribe of down-and-outers, the losers in this world. The cadences are reminiscent of a bardic voice. One could certainly view Bukowski as the bard for his people in the poorer sections of Los Angeles where he originated. Bards have traditionally been viewed as the voices of their people but always of people in a very specific physical locale. Allen Ginsberg and William Blake project bardic voices and attempt to reconnect their readers to the truth of their own experiences. Bukowski's bardic voice, like that of William Carlos Williams, functions in a much more specific geographical place using the energies of the local, depleted though they may be, to generate utterance.

Bukowski is a phenomenon. He has established himself as a writer with a consistent and insistent style based on what he projects as his "personality," the result of hard, intense living. He sees himself as what he appears to be—a tough, old, funky, ugly, macho, cynical bastard, with just an occasional hint of compassion, usually reserved for himself.

I keep searching the streets for that
 blood-wine battleship she drives
 with a weak battery, and the doors
 hanging from broken hinges
I drive around the streets
 an inch away from weeping,
ashamed of my sentimentality and possible love.
 a confused old man driving in the rain
 wondering where the good luck went.

Despite what some criticize as prose in Bukowski's poetry, there is in much of his work a poetic sensibility that, though arrogantly smart-ass and self-protective as well as self-promotional, is also sometimes poignant, emotionally revealing. If you read his stories and poems, you get the impression that he is not a human being. It is a lonely beast that screams out of despair that suffers, waiting for love but defined differently. Which one must help but no one knows how. This is what connects all his works. Loneliness and unbelievable pain. He is probably the only American writer whose books have been available in bookstores in Poland for over twenty years.

He is among the United States' South best-known existential writers and, many would claim, the most influential and imitated American poet. Bukowski was heavily addicted to alcohol, however this has not impaired his health. He died of leukaemia at the age of 73 in California. The epitaph on his grave says: „Don't try." His wife, Linda Lee Bukowski, claims that its meaning is: „If you spend your whole time trying, then all you do is try. So do not try. Just do it..."

