Language teaching methodology
Методика

ATTITUDES OF BULGARIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO DIGITAL COMPETENCE

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Abstract. *Significance of the research problem*: In their communication outside school, students often come across multimodal texts in forums, sites, blogs or texts integrating visual, sound, and animation components. The ever-increasing interest in communication, not only through language but also through multimodal texts, raises the question about studying the second type of texts in first language teaching and about their influence on the first key competence under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. In order to find an answer we seek the productive link between multimodal texts and digital competence. For this purpose we examine the attitudes of Bulgarian language teachers from secondary school to digital competence and its relation to Bulgarian language education.

Theoretical Ideas: They are based on the Framework for Developing and Understanding Digital Competence in Europe.

Research question: What is the attitude of Bulgarian language specialists to the digital literacy of secondary school students?

*Participants in the Survey***:** Bulgarian language teachers, linguists, BA, MA and PhD students, teaching Bulgarian language trainers.

Procedures: We make an expert assessment of criteria and indicators for digital literacy through Google forms assigning values related to Bulgarian language teaching by the following scale: very important (2), important (1), minor (0)), insignificant (-1).

Working hypothesis: There exist criteria and indicators for digital literacy in direct relation with Bulgarian language teaching and the first key competence that can be explicitly explained. Zero hypothesis - there are no criteria and indicators for digital literacy in direct relation with Bulgarian language teaching**.**

Keywords: attitudes; Bulgarian Language Teachers; digital competence

In their communication outside school, students often come across multimodal texts in forums, sites, blogs or texts integrating visual, sound, and animation components.

The ever-increasing interest in communication, not only through language but also through multimodal texts, raises the question about studying the second type of

texts in first language teaching and about their influence on the first key competence under the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. In order to find an answer we seek the productive link between multimodal texts and digital literacy. For this purpose we examine the attitudes of Bulgarian language teachers from secondary school to digital literacy and its relation to Bulgarian language education. The study of attitudes allows us to construct an adapted framework for self-assessment of the teacher in Bulgarian language and literature, taking into account the specificity of the socio-cultural context in Bulgarian education in secondary school. The implementation of the Framework will support the self-reflection of the Bulgarian teacher as a professional. The further application of this framework will allow differentiating the levels of teachers' education in view of the professional development of the teacher in Bulgarian.

In constructing the study design, we were guided by the desire to have adequacy between the objectives of the study and the preferred research methods and procedures. At first we can point out the ideas that are the theoretical basis of our study.

This study is based on the following **theoretical ideas** from: A) Framework for Developing and Understanding Digital Competence in Europe; B) Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and C) Constructivism as an educational philosophy.

So we will present DIGCOMP: A Framework for Developing and Understanding Digital Competence in Europe. The output of this project was based on a data collection phase (including a literature review, case study analysis, and an online survey) and an intensive stakeholder consultation (including workshops, interviews, reviews by experts, presentations at seminars and conferences). It consists of: A) A self-assessment grid comprising five areas of digital competence across three proficiency levels; B) A detailed framework with in-depth description of different aspects of digital competence. Each of the 21 identified competencies are presented in a table and include: a short definition of the competence, descriptors for three proficiency levels, examples of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to the competence, and two examples showing how the competence could be applied to specific purposes, i.e. learning and employment.

At first we can have a look at the short explanation of five areas of digital competences.

1. *Information*: identify, locate, retrieve, store, organize and analyze digital information, judging its relevance and purpose.

2. *Communication*: communicate in digital environments, share resources through online tools, link with others and collaborate through digital tools, interact with and participate in communities and networks, cross-cultural awareness.

3. *Content-creation*: Create and edit new content (from word processing to images and video); integrate and re-elaborate previous knowledge and content;

produce creative expressions, media outputs and programming; deal with and apply intellectual property rights and licenses.

4. *Safety*: personal protection, data protection, digital identity protection, security measures, safe and sustainable use.

5. *Problem-solving*: identify digital needs and resources, make informed decisions as to which are the most appropriate digital tools according to the purpose or need, solve conceptual problems through digital means, creatively use technologies, solve technical problems, update one's own and others' competences.

Before the implementation of the Framework it is necessary to investigate attitudes, opinions of Bulgarian educators to conceptualize digital literacy and its relation to Bulgarian Language teaching.

So **the research question** in this study is: What is the attitude of Bulgarian language teaching specialists to the digital literacy of secondary school students?

As this is the first phase of the survey, the following specialists were invited to participate in the survey:

Participants in the Survey*,* as follows: Bulgarian language teachers – 18 persons; linguists - 3 persons; specialists in teaching Bulgarian language (teacher trainers) - 5 persons; BA students of Slavic Philologies – 12 persons; MA students of Bulgarian Philology - 11 persons; PhD students from humanitarian subjects – 7 persons. We are going to include additional number of participants at the second phase of the study.

With this selection of participants, we aim to find out whether there are any coincidences and differences in attitudes of specialists who are engaged directly or indirectly in Bulgarian language teaching. As research procedures we make an expert assessment of criteria and indicators for digital literacy through Google forms assigning values related to Bulgarian language teaching by the following scale: very important (2); important (1); minor (0); insignificant (-1). The criteria and indicators of the European Framework have been evaluated through the scale mentioned above. For the purposes of the study, they were translated into Bulgarian. These criteria and indicators are described below in detail

1. Information

1.1. Browsing, searching and filtering information

To search and access to online information, to articulate information needs, to find relevant information, to select resources effectively, to navigate between online sources, to create personal information strategies

1.2. Evaluating Information

To gather, process, understand and critically evaluate information

1.3. Storing and retrieving information

To manipulate and store information and content for easier retrieval, to organize information and data.

2. Communication

2.1. Interacting through technologies

To interact through a variety of digital devices and applications, to understand how digital communication is distributed, displayed and managed, to understand appropriate ways of communicating through digital means, to refer to different communication formats, to adapt communication modes and strategies to specific audience

2.2. Sharing information and content

To share the location and content of information with others, to be willing and able to share knowledge, content and resources, to act as an intermediary, to be proactive in the spreading of news, content and resources, to know about citation practices and to integrate new information into an existing body of knowledge

2.3. Engaging in online citizenship

To participate in society through online engagement, to seek opportunities for self-development and empowerment in using technologies and digital environments, to be aware of the potential of technologies for citizen participation

2.4. Collaborating through digital channels

To use technologies and media for team work, collaborative processes and co-construction and co-creation of resources, knowledge and content

2.5. Netiquette

To have the knowledge and know-how of behavioral norms in online/virtual interactions, to be aware of cultural diversity aspects, to be able to protect yourself and others from possible online dangers (e.g. cyber bullying), to develop active strategies to discover inappropriate behavior

2.6. Managing digital identity

To create, adapt and manage one or multiple digital identities, to be able to protect one's e-reputation, to deal with the data produced by a person through several accounts and applications

3. Content creation

3.1. Developing content

To create content in different formats including multimedia, to edit and improve content that s/he has created or that others have created, to express creatively through digital media and technologies

3.2. Integrating and re-elaborating

To modify, refine and mash-up existing resources to create new, original and relevant content and knowledge

3.3. Copyright and Licenses

To understand how copyright and licenses apply to information and content

3.4. Programming

To apply settings, programme modification, programme applications, software, and devices, to understand the principles of programming, to understand what is behind a programme

4. Safety

4.1. Protecting devices

To protect own devices and to understand online risks and threats, to know about safety and security measures

4.2. Protecting personal data

To understand common terms of service, active protection of personal data, other people privacy, to protect yourself from online fraud and threats and cyber bullying

4.3. Protecting health

To avoid health-risks related to the use of technology in terms of threats to physical and psychological well-being.

4.4. Protecting the environment

To be aware of the impact of ICT on the environment

5. Problem solving

5.1. Solving technical problems

To identify possible problems and solve them (from troubleshooting to more complex problems) with the help of digital means

5.2. Identifying needs and technological responses

To assess own needs in terms of resources, tools and competence development, to match needs with possible solutions, adapting tools to personal needs, to critically evaluate possible solutions and digital tools

5.3. Innovating and creatively using technology

To innovate with technology, to actively participate in collaborative digital and multimedia production, to express oneself creatively through digital media and technologies, to create knowledge and solve conceptual problems with the support of digital tools

5.4. Identifying digital competence gaps

To understand where own competence needs to be improved or updated, to support others in the development of their digital competence, to keep up-to-date with new developments.

Probable answers to the research question provoke the following working hypothesis, decomposed into the following micro-hypotheses**.**

Working hypothesis

There exist criteria and indicators for digital literacy in direct relation with Bulgarian language teaching and the first key competence (CEFRL) that can be explicitly explained.

We can formulate the following micro-hypotheses:

The first and second criteria are expected to have the closest connection with Bulgarian language training. The specificity of speech communication implies that the mastery of language means that you also have to acquire an acceptable use of language means in online communication.

The following micro-hypothesis is related to the assumption that digital content creation will have a weaker relationship with Bulgarian language learning. It is generally accepted that these activities - programming, integration and processing, further development, development, refinement of new, original and knowledge-relevant content - are implemented in ICT and mathematics classes.

The third micro-hypothesis relates to the link between problem solving and Bulgarian language teaching. It is suggested that there should be more data for a direct link on this criterion, since the relationship between language and thinking has been scientifically grounded long time ago.

Zero hypothesis – No one field and criterion for digital literacy are in direct relation with Bulgarian language teaching.

Results

Zero hypothesis has not been confirmed.

But we should note that some of the indicators are rated at -2, -1, 0, which means that the null hypothesis is partially thrown aside. For example: the indicator 5.1. *solving technical problem* gets only zeros and -1. See. Tab.1. That is, it is not relevant to Bulgarian language teaching. Among the indicators that get negative values and zeros is also 4.4. *protecting the environment* – only zeroes, 4.3. *protecting health* - only zeroes. The result about the indicator is surprising – 4.1 *To protect own devices and to understand online risks and threats, to know about safety and security measures*: - 0, -1 0 -1. It is obvious that the training about safe use of technical means on Internet is not considered to be a task of Bulgarian language teaching (See Table 1).

All participants believe that the relationship between digital competence and Bulgarian language education is very important. See Fig.1. 90% of teachers believe that the first and second areas (information and communication) of digital competence are most closely related to Bulgarian language teaching. See for details distribution of opinions below.

With regard to the third area, there is no consensus in attitudes; there is no consensus that this is an important area.

With regard to the fourth area, 85% of the participants agreed that it is important for the Bulgarian language teaching

In the fifth area the attitudes are quite different – for PhD students this area is the most important, for masters of art it is less important and for teachers it is of least importance.

Not surprisingly, the participants indicate that indicators such as *protecting health* and *protecting the environment*, have no direct link to Bulgarian language teaching. Curiously, *the engaging in online citizenship* indicator does not get positive ratings. There are only zeros and -1.

Distribution of opinions
1st Qtr Information –22+2 =**24** (total sum from mark 2 and mark 1)
2nd Qtr Communication – 16+9 = **25** (total sum from mark 2 and mark 1)
3rd Qtr Content Creation – 7+16= **23** (total sum from mark 2 and mark 1)
4th Qtr Safety – 20+5= **25** (total sum from mark 2 and mark 1)
5th Qtr Problem Solving –7+17= **24** (total sum from mark 2 and mark 1)

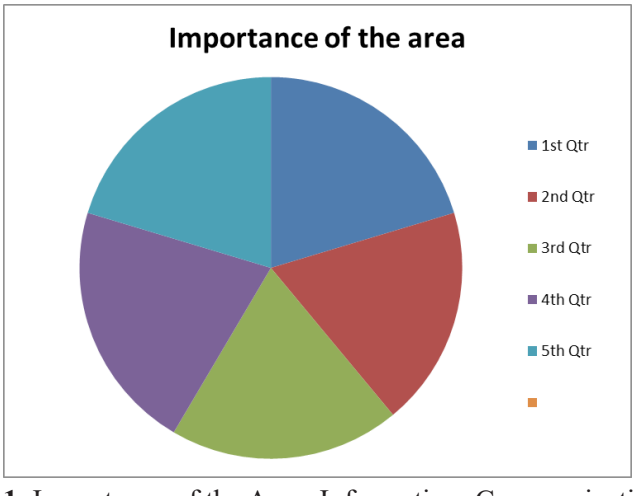

Fig1. Importance of the Area: Information; Communication; Content Creation; Safety; Problem Solving

Tabl.1. Distribution of Indicators

INDICATORS	INFORMATION Number of marks Total 24	COMMUNICATION Number of marks Total 25	CONTENT CREATION Number of marks Total 23	SAFETY Number of marks Total 25	PROBLEM SOLVING Number of marks Total 24
(2)	**22/**	**16/**	**7/**	**20/**	**7**
(1)	**2/**	**9/**	**16/**	**5/**	**17**
(0)	2.1/ 2.3/		1/	1/ 4.3/	1/ 5.4/ 5
(-1)		2.6/		4.1./	
(-2)		2.3/	3.4/		5.3. /

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can summarize that the study of attitudes to digital competence of Bulgarian language specialists, especially teachers, is a productive approach

which could be used in teacher education. We should put an accent on problem-solving criteria and indicators 5.3. Innovative and creative use of technology (-2, 0, 0); 5.4. Identifying gaps, deficits in digital competence (5 zeros) that get negative ratings. Often, there is no consensus in terms of integrating ICT into education as a whole, not only in Bulgarian language teaching.

NOTES

1. DIGCOMP: A Framework for Developing and Understanding Digital Competence in Europe. https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/digcomp-framework-developing-and-understanding-digital-competence-europe?search Last visited Sept. 6th 2019.
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НАГЛАСИ НА УЧИТЕЛИТЕ ПО БЪЛГАРСКИ ЕЗИК КЪМ ДИГИТАЛНАТА КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТ

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Резюме. Интересът към мултимодалните текстове повдига въпроса за нагласите към изучаването им в обучението по първи език и за тяхното влияние върху първата ключова компетентност съобразно Общоевропейската рамка за изучаване и преподаване на езици. За да отговорим на въпроса, ние изследваме нагласите на учители – българисти от средното училище към дигиталната компетентност и нейното отношение към обучението по български език. С помощта на гугъл формуляри правим експертна оценка за отношението на критериите и индикаторите за дигитална компетентност към обучението по български език чрез следната скала: много важен критерий/показател (2), важен (1), маловажен (0), неважен (-1).

Резултати: потвърждава се допускането, че съществуват критерии и показатели за дигитална компетентност, пряко свързани с обучението по български език.

Ключови думи: нагласи; учители българисти; дигитална компетентност