Juridisko un Sociālo Zinātņu BALTIJAS ŽURNĀLS

Juridisko un Sociālo Zinātņu

BALTIJAS ŽURNĀLS

Baltic Journal
of Legal and Social
Sciences

Rīga:
Baltijas Starptautiskā Akadēmija
ISSN 2592-8813

IZDEVNIECĪBA
BALTIJA
PUBLISHING

Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences,
Number 4. Riga, Latvia : “Baltija Publishing”, 2025, 318 pages.

Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences is included
in databases ERIH+ and Index Copernicus.

Baltic International Academy is a co-publisher of this periodical.
Printed and bound in Riga by LLC Publishing House “Baltija Publishing”.
Journal is available: www.baltijapublishing.lv/index.php/bjlss
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813

Type of publication from the application:
Journal-Digital-Online
Issue ISSN 2592-8813

Contents

THEORY AND PRACTICES OF LAW

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-1

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF A SUSPECT FOR ESTABLISHING A PERSON'S GUILT IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE CRIME OF AIDING AN AGGRESSOR STATE

Andrii Heletei,
Lieutenant Colonel of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU),
Master of Psychology,
Postgraduate Student at the Postgraduate and Doctoral Studies Department,
National Academy of the Security Service of Ukraine (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0009-0002-3639-020X
andriy.geletey@icloud.com

Abstract. This article explores the significance of forensic psychological examination in establishing an individual's guilt in crimes of aiding an aggressor state, as introduced into the Criminal Code of Ukraine in 2022. It is determined that aiding, unlike collaborationism, implies the presence of direct, conscious, and voluntary intent aimed at causing harm to Ukraine. The intellectual (cognitive) and volitional (motivational) components of intent, which are internal mental processes manifested through external behavior, are investigated. It is substantiated that forensic psychological examination serves as a crucial tool for clarifying these components, evaluating an individual's beliefs, the motivational content of their behavior, and their ideological orientation, specifically the presence of anti-Ukrainian views, nostalgia for the Soviet past, or the ideology of the "Russian world". The article emphasizes that the expert's conclusion is an independent and decisive piece of evidence in criminal proceedings , particularly in complex cases where formal indicators are insufficient for the legal qualification of a crime against national security.

Key words: forensic psychological examination, aiding aggressor state, intent, national security, evidence, motivation, cognitive component, volitional component, psychological analysis, Criminal Code of Ukraine.

Problem Statement. Human and civil rights are fundamental values of a democratic society; however, in the conditions of the full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2022, the state faced the urgent need to effectively counter hostile actions not only at the front but also in the rear. The introduction of Article 111-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, "Aiding the Aggressor State," became a response to these challenges, requiring a high level of legal precision and a resolute defense of national sovereignty. The key problem in investigating such crimes is the establishment of direct intent, which is an internal mental process and has no immediate material manifestation. Proving this intent requires an in-depth analysis of the external behavior and internal beliefs of the individual, which makes forensic psychological examination an indispensable tool in criminal proceedings (Makhmurova-Dyshliuk O. P. 2024).

Research Aim. The aim of this study is to substantiate the role of forensic psychological examination as a central instrument in the investigation of crimes related to aiding the aggressor state, by demonstrating its capacity to uncover the internal content of criminal intent, to provide an objective assessment of the cognitive and volitional components of human behavior, and to ensure that criminal responsibility is grounded in a comprehensive understanding of both external actions and internal motivations.

State of Research. The issue of criminal liability for aiding the aggressor state is relatively new, considering the introduction of Article 111-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine on April 14, 2022. Scholarly sources, such as the works of O. P. Vashchuk, O. O. Dudorov, and R. O. Movchan, as well as scientific articles by A. M. Tymchyshyn, have already addressed the issues of forensic examination and liability for aiding the aggressor, and have also differentiated the concepts of aiding and collaborationism. Nevertheless, the issue of proving internal intent, which is the core of the subjective side of the crime, remains complex and requires further scientific reflection, especially in the context of applying forensic psychological examination as a key evidentiary tool.

Main Content. With the onset of the full-scale military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2022, the state faced the need not only to ensure defense at the front but also to properly regulate the legal mechanisms of countering hostile actions in the rear. One of the most important steps in this direction was the introduction, on April 14, 2022, of the new Article 111-2 into the Criminal Code of Ukraine – "Aiding the Aggressor State." Its adoption was a response to unprecedented challenges requiring a high level of legal precision, moral clarity, and resolute defense of national sovereignty. (Pysmenskyi Ye. O., Movchan R. O. 2022).

A key characteristic of such a crime is the presence of direct intent – that is, the person is aware of the nature of his or her activity, understands its consequences, and desires or consciously allows harm to be inflicted on Ukraine. This is not about passive observation but about active involvement in activities aimed at weakening the state (3, Dudorov O. O., Movchan R. O. 2022: 116).

In the criminal law context, aiding the aggressor state and collaborationism are related but distinct phenomena that require clear differentiation both in legal and moral dimensions. Collaborationism is a much broader concept. It encompasses various forms of cooperation with occupation administrations or the armed forces of the aggressor, which may be caused either by external pressure (coercion) or by personal motives: the desire to avoid persecution, to preserve property, to provide for one's family, or, regrettably, to obtain benefits, political patronage, or recognition from the aggressor. The motives of collaborators are often marked by opportunism, cowardice, or conformism, which, although not justifying them, legally require assessment taking into account the circumstances. (Khoroshun D. V. 2024).

Aiding, however, is a phenomenon of another level. It is a deliberate, deeply conscious participation in activities aimed at directly assisting the aggressor in its attempts to destroy the statehood of Ukraine. Such actions are often motivated by deeply rooted hostile beliefs – for example, the ideology of the "Russian world," nostalgia for the Soviet past, or hatred of Ukrainian identity. It is precisely this internal moral corruption, the criminal desire to serve the evil committed by the aggressor state, that makes aiding particularly socially dangerous (Mokina I. 2025). Thus, collaborationism may be conditioned by external circumstances, while aiding is a choice. A conscious, voluntary, and criminal choice, aimed not at adaptation but at active assistance to the enemy. Therefore, the legislator rightly provides for more severe sanctions for such actions, given the scale of the threat posed by the aider – as an agent of evil working from within against his or her own people with clearly formed intent.

Intent in criminal law is not an external but a deeply internal mental process, formed in the individual's consciousness as a reflection of his or her understanding, beliefs, and will. It is a legal category that has no direct material manifestation, but is revealed through external behavior: actions, statements, social connections, communication, and their consequences. Thus, intent is the core of the subjective side of the crime, which cannot be reduced to an assumption – it must be proven on the basis of a convincing set of objective and subjective factors.

The cognitive (intellectual) component of intent lies in the fact that the person clearly realizes the actual nature of his or her behavior, in particular that the actions are aimed at actually facilitating the implementation or support of the political or military decisions of the aggressor state, as well as the activities of its armed formations or occupation administration. Such actions include, in particular, the voluntary collection, preparation, and transfer of material resources or other property in favor of the said entities. The main motive and purpose of such actions is to undermine the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and defense capability of the Ukrainian state.

In the composition of the crime provided for by Article 111-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, socially dangerous harm is not interpreted as a mandatory consequence of the act that must inevitably occur. On the contrary, such harm is seen as the target orientation of unlawful behavior, expressed in the conscious and voluntary participation of a person in activities aimed at supporting the decisions or actions of the aggressor state, its military units, or occupation authorities. The content of this act also includes the voluntary material provision of these structures. Thus, harm within the framework of this crime is inherent in the very fact of aiding activity, which by its nature is aimed at weakening the state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and defense capacity of Ukraine, and is not defined solely by its consequences. (Chornyi H. O., Kostenko M. V. 2024).

The volitional (motivational) component of intent reveals a deeper level – the direction of internal will. It is about the presence in a person of the intention to assist the aggressor state, his or her purposeful anti-Ukrainian orientation, adherence to a hostile ideology that denies the very legitimacy of Ukrainian statehood. Often such hostility has distinct historical, cultural, or political sources – in particular, nostalgia for the Soviet Union, sympathies for the imperial doctrine of the "Russian world," or outright ideological aggression manifested in public rhetoric, participation in information operations, appeals, or financing of destructive structures. Since intent is an internal phenomenon, investigative bodies and the court cannot directly observe it, but are forced to infer it from the whole set of external manifestations of the individual's internal state. These include behavior, statements, the form and content of communication, financial or organizational actions, participation in certain networks and environments.

That is why forensic psychological examination (not to be confused with psychiatric) plays a significant role, as it makes it possible to assess the convictions of the aider-offender, the motivational content of his or her behavior, the inclination to ideological aggression or antisocial activity. Such conclusions are of great importance not only for establishing intent as a legal fact, but also for the objective qualification of a crime encroaching on the foundations of national security (Tymchyshyn A. M. 2020: 298).

Legal doctrine recognizes that intent has a dual nature – cognitive and motivational. The cognitive component lies in the awareness of the factual circumstances of behavior, in particular that certain actions contribute to the interests of the aggressor state. The motivational component, sometimes called volitional, lies in the desire to achieve or, at the very least, in the conscious admission of consequences harmful to Ukraine. In this context, forensic psychological examination acquires special importance: it is designed to clarify whether the person could realistically have been unaware of the state of war, of the aggressive policy of the occupying state, or, on the contrary, whether he or she was well aware of the situation and nevertheless consciously chose the side of the enemy.

If it is established that the individual's behavior was dictated by anti-Ukrainian convictions, emotional hostility, sympathy for the enemy, or contempt for Ukrainian statehood, then the conclusion about the presence of a clear, ideologically colored intention to cause harm becomes fully justified. (Dudorov O. O., Movchan R. O. 2022).

It is especially often found that the motivation of the aider is connected with nostalgia for the Soviet past, with identifying oneself with the "Russian world," with the rejection of the European civilizational choice and the denial of Ukrainian identity. All this is not merely markers of a personal position, but – from the point of view of law – factors that form a conscious volitional intention to assist the aggressor by implementing or supporting its decisions and/or actions, by supporting the armed formations and/or the occupation administration of the aggressor state. In the context of aiding, there are also considered the facts of voluntary fundraising, preparation and/or transfer of material resources or other assets to representatives of the aggressor state, its armed formations and/or occupation administration (Mokina I. 2025).

Psychological examination in criminal proceedings regarding aiding the aggressor state and/or collaborationism is a special type of scientifically grounded research, aimed at clarifying the psychological factors that determine the content, motivation, volitional structure, and dynamics of the behavior of the person suspected or accused of actions that could be aimed at undermining the national security of Ukraine.

According to Article 101 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine, an expert opinion constitutes a detailed presentation of the research conducted, as well as reasoned answers to the questions posed by the person or body that appointed the examination – the investigator, the investigating judge, or the court. In cases concerning encroachments on the foundations of national security, particularly in complex instances, an expert opinion may have decisive significance for the correct legal qualification of an act as a crime against the state. The final stage of expert research is the preparation of the opinion, which, according to the law, may have the status of an independent piece of evidence within criminal proceedings.

Pursuant to Part 2 of Article 84 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine, sources of evidence include, among others, expert opinions. In the context of investigating crimes related to aiding the aggressor state, expert opinions may be of substantial importance, since they allow, from a professional standpoint, to determine whether the examined person was aware of the nature of their actions, whether they could control them, and whether they acted under the influence of external factors such as coercion, deception, or dependence (Tymchyshyn A. M. 2020: 132).

Thus, an expert opinion in such criminal proceedings may play a key role in the formation of the evidence base, allowing the provision of a legal assessment of the person's mental state and their ability to consciously participate in criminal activity.

At the same time, from a procedural and practical perspective, forensic psychological examination performs an independent evidentiary function. Its opinion may serve as full-fledged evidence, either confirming or refuting the presence of intent in the composition of the crime, particularly in complex and borderline cases where formal features are insufficient for a clear legal conclusion. In certain cases, it is precisely the expert's determination of cognitive awareness, volitional intent, and ideological motivation that becomes the key factor allowing a lawful qualification of actions as a crime against the foundations of national security.

Therefore, the significance of psychological examination in cases of aiding the aggressor state is not auxiliary or optional. It acts as a central instrument in revealing the inner content of criminal intent, and hence as a guarantee of fairness in judicial proceedings and a safeguard against abuses in the sphere of freedom of expression (Vashchuk O. P. 2017: 20).

Forensic psychological examination in cases related to aiding the aggressor state is an exceptionally important tool for determining the motivation that underlies such acts. In practice, such an examination is appointed by the investigator, prosecutor, or court when it is necessary to determine whether the person was aware of the consequences of their actions in the context of open war. This may concern both the stage of pre-trial investigation and the trial itself, when it is necessary to determine the inner motives of the defendant.

Qualified psychologists holding the specialty of forensic psychological expert are involved in the examination; such activities may only be carried out by individuals included in the special register of forensic psychological experts. Accordingly, the expert must be independent and impartial, and their opinion must be based on scientifically grounded methods and be objective. The main task of the expert is to clarify the existence in the examined person of the cognitive component, that is, their ability to comprehend the real meaning of their own actions, to consciously control them to the fullest extent, and, taking into account their age, emotional state, individual psychological characteristics, and conditions of the microsocial environment (dependence, influence, pressure, deception, etc.), to assess the situation in which they acted (Tymchyshyn A. M., 2020: 133).

The expert must determine whether the person could understand the nature of their actions in the context of armed conflict, as well as whether they were able to realize that their actions could be used in the interests of the aggressor state. This does not concern the level of awareness or possession of knowledge in political or military matters, since legal qualification under Article 111-2 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine does not require the occurrence of specific consequences as a mandatory element of the crime.

An important part of the examination is the study of the volitional element of actions, namely the motivation behind the person's conduct. Psychological examination helps to establish whether the person's will was directed toward assisting the aggressor, or motivated by anti-Ukrainian beliefs. In such cases, the expert analyzes the person's attitude toward Ukrainian statehood, the aggressor's policies, as well as whether their support was reinforced by ideological convictions, for example, adherence to the "Russian world" or nostalgia for the Soviet past. Psychological analysis allows establishing whether the person's actions constitute conscious participation in undermining the sovereignty and security of Ukraine, or whether they are accidental or ill-considered deed (Vashchuk O. P. 2017: 23).

The final stage of the examination is the preparation of the expert opinion, which may serve as independent evidence in a criminal case. In complex cases, the expert opinion is crucial for the proper qualification of actions as crimes against the state. In particular, if the examination indicates the person's conscious intent to harm Ukraine due to ideological or political convictions, this substantially strengthens the prosecution.

Thus, psychological examination is not merely an auxiliary tool but a component part of establishing the truth in the case, allowing answers to questions inaccessible to purely logical and factual analysis. (Tymchyshyn A. M. 2021).

Conclusions. Forensic psychological examination should be viewed not as an auxiliary measure but as a central and indispensable instrument in the investigation of crimes related to aiding the aggressor state. Its primary importance lies in its ability to reveal the inner content of criminal intent, a latent and subjective element that cannot be established through material evidence alone. By offering an objective and scientifically grounded assessment of both the cognitive and volitional aspects of a suspect's intent, such expertise enables investigators and courts to determine whether an individual acted with full awareness of their conduct, the potential consequences of their actions, and whether their behavior was motivated by anti-Ukrainian convictions or ideological hostility. This makes the role of expert opinions especially decisive in cases where the available factual evidence is insufficient for clear legal qualification.

The significance of forensic psychological expertise extends beyond confirming guilt in individual cases. It also plays a vital role in safeguarding fairness and the rule of law, ensuring that criminal responsibility rests on a comprehensive understanding of both external behavior and internal motivation. In the context of a full-scale war, where the boundaries between coercion, opportunism, and genuine ideological alignment with the aggressor often blur, psychological expertise becomes even more critical for preventing judicial errors and protecting human rights.

From a broader research perspective, this field has substantial potential for development. Future directions include improving diagnostic methods and assessment techniques to enhance the reliability of conclusions, integrating knowledge from psychology, criminology, political science, and law to achieve a more holistic understanding of the mechanisms of aiding an aggressor, and analyzing comparative legal practices to harmonize approaches across jurisdictions. At the same time, ethical challenges must be addressed, particularly the balance between national security concerns and the protection of fundamental rights, especially where ideological convictions and freedom of expression intersect with criminal liability. Equally important is the practical task of establishing standardized protocols for the training, accreditation, and independence of forensic psychological experts to guarantee impartiality and consistency in their work.

In conclusion, forensic psychological examination represents not only a crucial evidentiary tool in criminal proceedings but also a promising field for scientific progress and interdisciplinary dialogue.

By strengthening its methodological foundations and ensuring its fair and consistent application, Ukraine and the broader international community can enhance their ability to address modern security threats while upholding the principles of justice and human dignity.

References:

1. Antoniuk P. Ye., Voloshyn O. H., Kondratiev I. M. (2024). Suchasna metodolohiia sudovoi ekspertyzy v Ukraini: pryvid dlia khvyliuvannia [Modern methodology of forensic expertise in Ukraine: a reason for concern]. Kryminalistyka ta sudova ekspertyza u KhKhI stolitti. Kyiv: DNDEKC MVS Ukrainy. pp. 19–24. [in Ukrainian]
2. Vashchuk O. P. (2017). Sudova ekspertyza v mezhakh kryminalnoho provadzhennia: psykhofiziolohichne doslidzhennia [Forensic examination within criminal proceedings: psychophysiological research]. Visnyk kryminalnoho sudochynstva. No. 2. pp. 19–24. [in Ukrainian]
3. Dudorov O. O., Movchan R. O. (2022). Vidpovidalnist za posobnytstvo derzhavi-ahresoru: problemy kvalifikatsii ta vdoskonalennia kryminalnoho zakonu [Liability for aiding the aggressor state: problems of qualification and improvement of criminal law]. Visnyk asotsiatsii kryminalnoho prava Ukrainy. Vol. 2, No. 18. pp. 95–117. [in Ukrainian]
4. Mokina I. (2025). Kryminalna vidpovidalnist za kolaboratsiinu diialnist ta posobnytstvo derzhavi-ahresoru [Criminal liability for collaboration activities and aiding the aggressor state]. Available at: https://www.hsa.org.ua/blog/kriminalna-vidpovidalnist-za-kolaboraciinu-diialnist-ta-posobnictvo-derzavi-agresoru (Accessed: 08 June 2025). [in Ukrainian]
5. Tymchyshyn A. M. (2021). Osoblyvosti poriadku pryznachennia i provedennia sudovoi ekspertyzy v umovakh chynnoho kryminalnoho protsesualnoho zakonodavstva [Peculiarities of the procedure for appointing and conducting forensic expertise under current criminal procedural legislation]. Pravova pozytsiia. No. 2(31). pp. 129–133. [in Ukrainian]
6. Makhmurova-Dyshliuk O. P. (2024). Mistse i rol Zhenevskykh konventsii u zabezpechenni prav, svobod i zakonnykh interesiv hromadian v umovakh rosiisko-ukrainskoi viiny [The place and role of the Geneva Conventions in ensuring the rights, freedoms, and legal interests of citizens in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war]. Naukovyi visnyk Mizhnarodnoho humanitarnoho universytetu. Seriia: Yurysprudentsiia. No. 69. pp. 169–170. [in Ukrainian]
7. Pysmenskyi Ye. O., Movchan R. O. (2022). Novely kryminalnoho zakonodavstva Ukrainy pro kolaboratsiinu diialnist [Innovations in Ukraine's criminal legislation on collaboration activities]. Yurydychnyi naukovyi elektronnyi zhurnal. No. 6. pp. 356–360. [in Ukrainian]
8. Khoroshun D. V. (2024). Psykholohichna ekspertyza poterpiloho u kryminalnomu provadzhenni: mozhlyvosti ta osoblyvosti pryznachennia [Psychological examination of the victim in criminal proceedings: possibilities and peculiarities of appointment]. Sotsiolohiia prava. Issue 1–2. pp. 109–113. [in Ukrainian]
9. Chornyi H. O., Kostenko M. V. (2024). Sudovo-psykholohichna ekspertyza: osoblyvosti pryznachennia v kryminalnomu sudochynstvi [Forensic psychological expertise: peculiarities of appointment in criminal justice]. Sotsiolohiia prava. Issue 1–2. pp. 87–97. [in Ukrainian]

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-2

THE CONCEPT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW

Natalia Hryshyna,
Candidate of Science in Law, Associate Professor,
Head of the Department of State Law Disciplines,
V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (Kharkiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6828-5338
grishinanavi@ukr.net

Abstract. The article examines the concept and properties of the principles of administrative law as a fundamental category that determines the content and development of administrative-legal regulation and guides the activities of public administration. The relevance of rethinking this issue is substantiated in the context of decentralization, the digital transformation of administrative procedures and services, and the implementation of good governance standards and e-government. Doctrinal approaches to defining the principles of administrative law are analyzed; common features and differences in their interpretation are identified; and a generalized understanding of these principles as universal provisions of normative, doctrinal, and judicial origin is formulated. The key properties of the principles of administrative law are outlined, demonstrating their system-forming, regulatory, and rights-protecting role in law-making and law enforcement. The article concludes that further theoretical elaboration of this category is necessary to improve the effectiveness of public administration.

Key words: principles; law; principles of administrative law; public administration; properties of principles; administrative-legal regulation; branch of law; good governance.

Introduction. Contemporary legal scholarship recognizes the principles of law as a key element that shapes the content of any branch of law by determining its structure, core concepts, functional purpose, and directions of development.

Given the significant changes taking place in Ukraine–particularly decentralization, the digital transformation of administrative procedures and services, and the implementation of good governance standards and e-government–there is a clear need to reconsider the essence of the concept of the principles of administrative law, as well as their features, functions, and system. Studying new approaches to their classification, normative consolidation, and practical application makes it possible to develop a more effective model of administrative-legal regulation that meets the requirements of a democratic society governed by the rule of law.

An indispensable prerequisite for the implementation and systematic development of Ukraine's administrative law is the formation of a clear and coherent understanding of its principles as foundational ideas that constitute the ideological basis of the entire field. The principles of administrative law determine the general orientation and development of administrative-legal regulation and serve as a methodological guideline for law-making, law enforcement, and scholarly research.

At the same time, despite the evident and far-reaching influence of principles on all levels of the functioning of administrative law, a lack of clear and systematic conceptual understanding can be observed both in national legislation and in academic literature. This necessitates an updated doctrinal analysis of the nature, essence, conceptual content, and characteristics of the principles of administrative law under contemporary conditions of state-building and legal practice.

Main Part. The purpose of the study is to provide a doctrinal clarification of the concept of the principles of administrative law and to identify their key characteristics as fundamental guidelines for administrative-legal regulation and for the functioning of public administration under the contemporary transformation of administrative law.

The research objectives are: to analyze the general-theoretical meaning of the category "principle" as it is used in administrative-law scholarship; to summarize and compare the approaches presented in academic literature to defining the principles of administrative law; to identify common features and differences among doctrinal definitions and to formulate a generalized definition of the principles of administrative law; and to characterize their properties and disclose their content.

The research materials consist of scholarly works and educational legal literature on administrative law and the theory of law, which reveal the content of the concept of the principles of administrative law, as well as their functions and characteristics.

The research methods include the formal-logical method (analysis, synthesis, generalization, classification) to systematize doctrinal definitions and distinguish the properties of principles; the systemic method to consider principles as an element ensuring the integrity of administrative law as a branch; the comparative method to compare scholarly approaches and identify their differences; the method of legal interpretation to clarify the content of definitions and ensure terminological consistency; and the doctrinal (dogmatic) method to assess scholarly positions and formulate the author's conclusions.

Results of the Study and Discussion. The term *"principle"* in its general-theoretical meaning is a category that encompasses both objective regularities underlying a particular phenomenon or system and subjective beliefs that determine the guidelines for the activity of an individual or a social institution. Within legal science, and in administrative law in particular, principles function as normative and value-based guidelines that ensure the internal orientation, coherence, and effectiveness of the system of legal regulation.

It should be noted that in Ukrainian legal scholarship the category *"principles of administrative law"* has still not received a sufficient level of systematic analysis, despite its fundamental significance for the functioning of this branch of law. The nature, features, and functions of the principles of administrative law are often presented fragmentarily and through different, sometimes contradictory, approaches, which complicates the development of a unified theoretical understanding of this concept.

Most academic definitions of the principles of administrative law demonstrate substantial differences in interpreting their normative content, significance, and essence. Some authors view principles as ethical guidelines of a recommendatory nature, while others regard them as legal norms of a higher level of abstraction that are imperative for law enforcement. Such diversity of scholarly positions does not contribute to the systematization of knowledge about administrative law and its principles; on the contrary, it complicates the formation of a coherent theoretical framework on which the modern doctrine of administrative law should be built.

For this reason, there is a particularly acute need to develop a unified and scientifically grounded approach to understanding the principles of administrative law. Such an approach should, on the one hand, rely on the achievements of legal scholarship and, on the other hand, correspond to the practical needs of public administration, serving as a guideline for both law-making and law enforcement.

An overview of academic sources shows that contemporary researchers propose a number of approaches to defining the principles of administrative law. For example, they are interpreted as fundamental ideas, provisions, and requirements that characterize the content of administrative law, reflect the regularities of its development, and determine the directions and mechanisms of administrative-legal regulation of social relations (Averianov, 2004). In this definition, V. B. Averianov emphasizes the fundamental nature of principles, their role in shaping the content of the branch of law, and in determining the vectors of its development.

In turn, V. Yu. Oksin defines the principles of administrative law as the basic, initial, objectively conditioned paradigms on which the rights and freedoms of the individual and citizen are based and ensured, as well as the normal functioning of civil society and the state (Oksin, 2016). A similar position is shared by V. V. Halunko and V. I. Kurylo, who stress that principles are the basic, initial, objectively conditioned foundations on which the activity of the subjects of administrative law is based, ensuring the rights and freedoms of the individual and citizen and the normal functioning of civil society and the state (Halunko & Kurylo, 2015).

A value-and-normative approach is reflected in the definition proposed by N. I. Didyk, who describes the principles of administrative law as fundamental, generally accepted norms that express the properties of law and possess the highest imperative legal force, acting as unquestionable requirements imposed on participants in social relations for the purpose of achieving social compromise (Didyk, 2011).

R. S. Melnyk, in turn, effectively combines substantive and functional approaches, viewing principles as ideas and requirements that reflect the regularities of the development of administrative law and the implementation of its mechanisms. In his study, R. S. Melnyk notes that the principles of administrative law are the main ideas, provisions, and requirements that characterize the content of administrative law, reflect the regularities of its development, and determine the directions and mechanisms of administrative-legal regulation of social relations. The principles of administrative law thus cover all directions and spheres of the functioning of public administration, including those manifested within it (internal organizational relations) (Melnyk, 2012).

The analysis of these definitions makes it possible to identify a number of common features that characterize the understanding of the principles of administrative law in Ukrainian legal doctrine. First, their fundamental character: all authors emphasize that principles are foundational elements of administrative law that shape its content and structure. Second, their objective conditioning, reflecting the regularities of the development of administrative law. Third, their regulatory function, which guides administrative-legal regulation of social relations. Fourth, their focus on ensuring human rights and freedoms, since most definitions highlight the role of principles in guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of the individual and citizen. At the same time, there are certain differences in approaches. For instance, V. B. Averianov and R. S. Melnyk emphasize the connection of principles with the regularities of the development of administrative law. N. I. Didyk (and, in related doctrinal discussions, other authors who stress this line) emphasizes the normative nature of principles, their imperativity, and their закріплення within legal norms, whereas other scholars treat principles as more abstract ideas or foundations.

Based on the conducted analysis, a generalized understanding of the principles of administrative law, reflected in academic textbooks, may be formulated as follows: they are foundational, objectively conditioned, and stable guidelines, recognized by scholarship and practice, закріплені in legal norms or derived through generalization of legal rules, which determine the content, orientation, and functioning of the system of administrative law; ensure the managerial activity of public administration entities; protect the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of private persons; secure the normal functioning of civil society and the state; and serve as a connecting link between legal prescriptions and the ethical and moral dimensions of social consciousness.

Thus, the principles of administrative law are of fundamental importance for the functioning of the entire branch–from normative regulation to law-enforcement activity. They should be viewed as a complex and meaningful category that combines regulatory, system-forming, rights-protecting, and institutional functions of administrative law. Therefore, further scholarly elaboration of this category remains an important task for contemporary administrative-law science.

Conclusion. Summarizing the definitions presented in educational legal literature, it can be concluded that the principles of administrative law are objectively determined, universally binding, and universal provisions of a normative, doctrinal, and judicial nature. They serve as the ideological, substantive, and functional basis of administrative-legal regulation, determine the direction of development of public administration and the foundations of its practical implementation, ensure the integrity of administrative law as a branch, operate as a measure of the lawfulness of the activities of public administration entities, and guarantee the realization of the rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests of the individual (Hryshyna, 2025: 267).

The main characteristics of the principles of administrative law include the following:

1. Fundamentality – the principles of administrative law are fundamental in nature, as they define the content, limits, and orientation of sectoral regulation and law enforcement. They constitute the starting point for the formation of administrative-law norms and the conceptual basis for the development of administrative law, affirming it as an independent branch of law.
2. Objective conditioning – the principles of administrative law do not arise arbitrarily; they emerge as a consequence of the regularities of social development, the needs of the functioning of public authority, and the evolution of legal systems in democratic states.
3. Universally binding character – the principles have universal effect for all subjects of public administration regardless of their organizational and legal status and are subject to mandatory observance in law-making and law-enforcement activities.
4. Stability – principles retain their significance and effectiveness over time, serving as guidelines for law-making, law enforcement, and the interpretation of administrative-law norms.
5. Universality – principles have inter-branch significance, often extending beyond administrative law and manifesting themselves in related areas of legal regulation, including constitutional, European, and international public law.
6. Normative and doctrinal nature – principles may be either legislatively закреплені (enshrined) or derived from law-enforcement practice or legal doctrine; at the same time, no principle has inherent superiority in legal force over others within their practical application.
7. Functionality – principles perform not only a declarative but also a constructive role: they shape the logic of administrative-law norms, influence the content of managerial and administrative procedures, determine the conduct of public authorities, and form the basis for structuring administrative law.
8. Value orientation – principles embody the basic legal values of a democratic society and the proper exercise of public administration.
9. Integrative character – principles function as an instrument for harmonizing national administrative law with European standards and facilitate the implementation of common approaches to proper governance and administration.

References:

1. Averianov, V. B. (Ed.). (2004). *Administratyvne pravo Ukrainy. Akademichnyi kurs* (Vol. 1, *Zahalna chastyna*) [Administrative law of Ukraine. Academic course (Vol. 1, General part)]. Yurydychna dumka. [in Ukrainian].
2. Didyk, N. I. (2011). Shchodo pytannia klasyfikatsii pryntsypiv administratyvnoho prava Ukrainy [On the classification of the principles of administrative law of Ukraine]. *Naukovyi visnyk Lvivskoho derzhavnoho universytetu vnutrishnikh sprav*, (3), 92–101. [in Ukrainian].
3. Halunko, V. V., Kurylo, V. I., Koroied, S. O., Drozd, O. Yu., Hyrenko, I. V., Yeshchuk, O. M., Ryzhenko, I. M., Ivanyshchuk, A. A., Saunin, R. D., & Yamkova, I. M. (2015). *Administratyvne pravo Ukrainy* (Vol. 1, *Zahalne administratyvne pravo*) [Administrative law of Ukraine (Vol. 1, General administrative law)] (V. V. Halunko, Ed.). Hrin D. S. [in Ukrainian].
4. Hryshyna, N. V. (2025). Poniattia pryntsypiv administratyvnoho prava ta yevropeiskykh pryntsypiv administratyvnoho prava: porivnialno-pravovyi analiz [The concept of the principles of administrative law and the European principles of administrative law: A comparative legal analysis]. *Yurydychnyi naukovyi elektronnyi zhurnal*, (4), 266–269. https://doi.org/10.32782/2524-0374/2025-4/60 [in Ukrainian].
5. Melnyk, R. S. (2012). Instytut pryntsypiv administratyvnoho prava u systemi Zahalnoho administratyvnoho prava Ukrainy [The institution of the principles of administrative law in the system of General administrative law of Ukraine]. *Publichne pravo*, (3(7)), 51–60. [in Ukrainian].
6. Oksin, V. Yu. (2016). Pryntsypy administratyvnoho prava: suchasnyi pohliad [Principles of administrative law: A modern view]. *Naukovyi visnyk publichnoho ta pryvatnoho prava,* (5), 190–193. [in Ukrainian].

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-3

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PROSECUTOR AND THE ACCUSED ON PLEADING GUILTY IN CASES OF CORRUPTION-RELATED CRIMINAL OFFENSES: THE PUBLIC INTEREST ASPECT

Oleksandr Ostrohliad,
Ph.D in Law, Associate Professor at the Department of Law and Law Enforcement Activity,
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University (Zhytomyr, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0003-3075
ostrohlyad@gmail.com

Yana Reshyvska,
Master's Graduate Student at the Faculty of National Security,
Law and International Relations,
Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University (Zhytomyr, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0009-0003-5186-8854
reshivska02@gmail.com

Abstract. The purpose of this article is to analyse the regulatory framework and judicial practice in Ukraine regarding the conclusion of plea agreements between the prosecutor and the accused in cases involving corruption-related criminal offenses. The article examines the provisions of current criminal and criminal procedural legislation governing the conclusion of such agreements, with particular attention to the circumstances that must be considered by the prosecutor when entering into a plea agreement. An important aspect discussed in this work is that a court decision to approve such an agreement should be evaluated through the lens of safeguarding public interests, which must be understood not merely as formal compliance with the law but more broadly, taking into account public opinion. This is particularly significant when concluding agreements in corruption cases, where public expectations are exceptionally high. Future research prospects may relate to balancing the recognition of transferring funds to state needs as a matter of public interest, as well as examining technical and practical issues concerning other mechanisms of recovering such funds through criminal law instruments, such as confiscation or special confiscation. The methods used in the study include: the method of system analysis (to examine judicial practice in conjunction with legal regulation and contemporary realities); the method of legal act analysis (to explore provisions of criminal and criminal procedural legislation governing plea agreements); and general scientific methods.

Key words: criminal proceedings, pre-trial investigation, corruption-related criminal offense, judicial review, High Anti-Corruption Court (HACC), judicial practice, judgment, prosecutor.

Introduction. In the context of war, the issue of combating crime seems to fade into the background; however, when it comes to corruption-related acts, the opposite occurs. Society is unwilling to tolerate manifestations that undermine the state's defense capability during this challenging time, and the demand for justice is extremely high.

Recent events have shown that Ukrainians continue to extend a degree of trust to anti-corruption bodies and expect effective cooperation from them at all stages of holding those responsible for corruption to account.

The purpose of this study is to examine one particular aspect of combating corruption in Ukraine – namely, whether the public interest is realized (observed) when concluding a plea agreement between the prosecutor and the accused in cases of corruption-related criminal offenses.

Since such agreements must be approved by a court–and in the case of criminal offenses under the jurisdiction of National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU), this refers to the High Anti-Corruption Court (Articles 33-1, 216 of the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine) – its practice will be the primary focus.

As Professor V. Tuliakov notes, Ukrainian judges today work under dual pressure:

1. Public demand for severity (martial law, corruption, violence) and increased judicial discretion (donations, service in the Armed Forces, volunteer activities);

2. European standards of proportionality, prohibition of automatic sanction enhancement, and predictability of punishment.

Tension arises between these two poles. A judge is often forced to explain not only what punishment he has imposed but also why he did not impose a harsher punishment (or, conversely, why he imposed a more lenient one) (https://www.facebook.com/share/17sH8dRS9n/).

Maintaining the balance between public expectations and judicial discretion is precisely the answer to the question of whether the public interest is realized (observed) when concluding a plea agreement between the prosecutor and the accused in cases of corruption-related criminal offenses.

The motivation for raising this question stems from the following information:

Under plea agreements concluded by prosecutors of the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office (SAPO), 44 million UAH has been transferred for the purchase of FPV drones for Ukrainian soldiers.

This was reported by the SAPO press service on Telegram, as cited by Ukrinform:

"As a result of the concluded plea agreements in SAPO and NABU cases approved by the HACC, 44 million UAH has been transferred to the charitable foundation 'Sternenko Community' for the purchase of FPV drones for the Armed Forces," the statement reads.

Overall, according to the press service, during the last three years approximately 2.9 billion UAH has been transferred for the needs of the Defense Forces under agreements concluded by SAPO prosecutors (Ukrinform, 2023).

While by no means disputing the necessity of supporting the Armed Forces of Ukraine through all available means–and fully supporting this in substance–we must ask whether such monetary transfers, in this particular context, respond to society's demand for combating corruption, and whether such transfers risk becoming a form of "indulgence."

We emphasize at the outset that it is unlikely that all questions can be answered within a single article, but outlining directions for future research in this field is indeed feasible.

Regulatory and Conceptual Framework

The regulatory framework is primarily composed of the Criminal Code of Ukraine and the Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine (CPC of Ukraine).

In the CPC of Ukraine, an entire chapter – Chapter 35, "Criminal Proceedings Based on Agreements" – is devoted to the issue of agreements. This study focuses only on those provisions concerning the notion of public interest, the procedure for determining it, and ensuring its observance.

A plea agreement between the prosecutor and the suspect or accused is provided for in Article 468 of the CPC of Ukraine.

According to Part 4 of Article 469 of the CPC of Ukraine, a plea agreement between the prosecutor and the suspect or accused may be concluded in proceedings concerning:

… 2) corruption-related criminal offenses and criminal offenses connected with corruption, provided that the suspect or accused discloses another person (persons) involved in the commission of any corruption-related criminal offense or an offense connected with corruption, and provided that the information about the commission of such an offense by that person (persons) is confirmed by evidence, and provided that the suspect or accused fully or partially (taking into account the nature and degree of the person's participation in the commission of the crime) compensates for the damage or harm caused (if such damage or harm was inflicted);

2-1) corruption-related criminal misdemeanours, non-serious or serious corruption crimes, as well as criminal offenses connected with corruption, in the absence of indications that these offenses were committed in complicity, as confirmed by the case materials, and provided that the suspect or accused fully compensates for the damage or harm caused (if such damage or harm was inflicted) … (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2013).

In accordance with Article 470 of the CPC of Ukraine, among the circumstances that must be taken into account by the prosecutor when concluding a plea agreement, it is specifically required to consider: 3) the existence of public interest in ensuring a faster pre-trial investigation and judicial proceedings and in uncovering a greater number of criminal offenses; 4) the existence of public interest in preventing, detecting, or stopping a greater number of criminal offenses or other more serious criminal offenses.

The court, pursuant to Article 474 of the CPC of Ukraine, must refuse to approve an agreement if, among other grounds, the terms of the agreement do not correspond to the interests of society.

Despite the similarity between the term "public interest" in Article 470 of the CPC of Ukraine and "interests of society" in Article 474 of the CPC of Ukraine, it is evident that these concepts cannot be equated. The interests of society constitute a broader notion, whereas Article 470 concerns public interest in a specifically defined context. Therefore, when approving a plea agreement, the court must be guided precisely by the interests of society.

Before proceeding to the analysis of these concepts, it is also necessary to mention the relevance of Article 75 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, since its current version raises many questions in society due to the possibility of releasing from serving a sentence with probation individuals who have committed corruption offenses. According to many, this is equivalent to effectively avoiding liability as such (a position often reinforced by certain media outlets), although probation is in fact one of the forms of criminal liability (Ostrohliad, 2021: 48).

In accordance with Article 75 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, in criminal proceedings concerning corruption-related criminal offenses and criminal offenses connected with corruption, the court shall decide on release from serving a sentence with probation in the event of approval of a plea agreement, provided that the parties to the agreement have agreed on release from serving a sentence of imprisonment for a term not exceeding eight years or another, more lenient punishment, as well as agreed on release from serving the sentence with probation (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2001).

It is now necessary to clarify what is meant by public interest (the interest(s) of society) as a precondition for concluding a plea agreement.

According to the Scientific and Practical Commentary to the CPC of Ukraine, more general non-personified criteria that determine the possibility and expediency of concluding or initiating a plea agreement include the presence of public interest in ensuring a faster pre-trial investigation and judicial proceedings, uncovering a greater number of criminal offenses, as well as the presence of public interest in preventing, detecting, or stopping a greater number of criminal offenses or other, more serious criminal offenses (paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Article 470 CPC). As a result, considering the practice of the European Court of Human Rights and the Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on simplifying criminal justice, the initiation of a plea agreement by the prosecutor **should be an exception** (emphasis added) to the general rule and must be based on sufficient evidence of the person's involvement in the commission of the criminal offense. Moreover, the grounds provided in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Article 470 CPC may be applied only cumulatively, and not treated as independent grounds capable of individually justifying the prosecutor's initiation of an agreement. That is, when deciding whether to initiate a plea agreement, the prosecutor must verify whether such initiation aligns with both the personified and non-personified criteria for the expediency of initiating a plea agreement as specified in Part 1 of Article 470 CPC. For example, a prosecutor cannot justify initiating an agreement on the basis of the need to uncover a greater number of crimes, since this would contradict the fundamental principles of criminal proceedings and the objectives of criminal justice as defined in Article 2 CPC. Given that the prosecution represents the interests of the state (Part 2 of Article 36 CPC), and it is the state's duty to prosecute crimes, impose punishment, and rehabilitate offenders, the prosecutor should not be the first to demonstrate unwillingness to investigate a case or present evidence of the accused's guilt in court. The authority to initiate plea agreements should instead be an exception for specific categories of cases that clearly do not require a full judicial trial (Protocol.ua, n.d.).

As emphasized by L. P. Krasnopolska, the terms of a plea agreement must correspond to the interests of society. A criminal offense is a socially dangerous act for which the law provides criminal punishment. However, in criminal proceedings concerning certain offenses, the legislator allows the participants of the criminal-law conflict to resolve it by concluding an agreement. The participants conclude such agreements to ensure their own interests (the prosecutor – for procedural economy; the victim – for rapid and full compensation for damage; the accused – for reduction of punishment). If these interests conflict with public interests (for example, if the punishment agreed upon by the parties is significantly lower than the punishment that would likely be imposed upon the accused if the trial were concluded without a plea agreement), the court must refuse to approve the agreement (Krasnopolska, 2015: 173).

S. O. Kovalchuk emphasizes that in the scholarly literature, public interest is understood as certain benefits for society as a whole, without the satisfaction of which it is impossible to ensure its comprehensive, stable, and democratic development. These interests are recognized by the state, guaranteed by law, and their satisfaction is a prerequisite for the existence and development of society in general. According to paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Article 470 of the CPC, when deciding whether to conclude a plea agreement, the prosecutor must consider such circumstances as the presence of public interest in ensuring a faster pre-trial investigation and judicial proceedings, in exposing a greater number of criminal offenses, and in preventing, detecting, or stopping a greater number of criminal offenses or other, more serious criminal offenses. At the same time, paragraph 2 of Part 7 of Article 474 of the CPC provides that the court shall refuse to approve an agreement if its terms do not correspond to the interests of society. It is evident that the legislator has assigned to the court the duty to determine the balance of interests in criminal proceedings. In particular, the conditions of a plea agreement will correspond to the interests of society when they comply with the requirements of current substantive and procedural law, and when the public interest in ensuring a faster pre-trial investigation and exposure of additional criminal offenses is proportionate to the public interest in achieving the objectives of criminal proceedings (Kovalchuk, 2024: 164).

P. Demchuk and A. Tkachuk also address the concept of public interest, noting that the mere acceleration of case consideration is not a sufficient ground for approving a plea agreement. The court must also assess a number of other factors, including whether the terms of the agreement correspond to the interests of society. When evaluating the public interest, it is necessary to establish a balance between the accused's interest in obtaining a lighter punishment and society's demand to receive something in return for such mitigation.

They further emphasize that judges of the High Anti-Corruption Court interpret the concept of public interest differently, since it is an evaluative category. Their practice diverges: some judges rely on the expectations of society, i.e., whether the decision they adopt will meet the demands of the public. Others rely on the need to resolve the case as quickly as possible with minimal expenditure of state resources, the need to uncover other criminal offenses, and other considerations. Such heterogeneity of approaches is a destructive factor in the process of approving plea agreements. Therefore, it is necessary to unify judicial practice in this regard, as the failure to ensure public interest is one of the main grounds on which the High Anti-Corruption Court often refuses to approve plea agreements (Demchuk & Tkachuk, 2023).

In their work, O. Harasymiv, O. Zakharova, and O. Riashko emphasize that the introduction of Chapter 35, "Criminal Proceedings Based on Agreements," into the CPC has undoubtedly significantly simplified the procedure for considering certain categories of criminal cases, reduced the duration of pre-trial detention, shortened overall procedural time limits for the consideration of criminal proceedings, and reduced the burden on the judicial and law enforcement systems. In practice, this institution has largely justified itself, and in general, the positive dynamics of the development of the plea agreement mechanism in criminal proceedings should be acknowledged (Harasymiv, Zakharova, & Riashko, 2021).

In contrast to this position, S. M. Mishchenko, Zh. M. Yelenina, and T. I. Slutska dispute the positive aspects of time-saving, noting that the materials of the proceedings indicate that the pre-trial investigation–despite the formal composition of the committed offenses and the admission of guilt by the suspect (accused) – is carried out in full, with the entire spectrum of investigative and search actions being employed. As a result, procedural time limits are not reduced, and the agreement in fact concerns only the measure of punishment, which will be examined in more detail below. Regarding public interest, they state the following: it is highly important to justify the balance between public interest and the private interest of the suspect or accused. In this case, the state's (society's) interest in imposing an appropriate punishment on the offender may be subordinated to the interest in increasing the efficiency of the pre-trial investigation. That is, in exchange for an agreed-upon punishment, the suspect (accused) should assist in exposing accomplices, disclosing the scheme of criminal activity, and so forth. Agreements in such cases, despite the fact that such arrangements are an optional (subsidiary) component of their content, do not correspond to the public interest in terms of their purpose, because they are directed exclusively at satisfying the private interest of the suspect or accused in mitigating punishment. For example, the Khmelnytskyi City District Court reasonably refused (on the grounds of non-compliance of the agreement with the interests of society and non-compliance with the requirements of the law) to approve a reconciliation agreement between the victim and the accused under Part 2 of Article 185 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine, because the parties, agreeing on a sentence with release from serving it on probation, failed to take into account that the accused had previously been repeatedly convicted of offenses considered to pose a high degree of danger to society (Mishchenko, Yelenina, & Slutska, 2014).

P. Demchuk and A. Tkachuk note that if one summarizes recent case law in high-level corruption cases, the court often considers the following circumstances when determining the existence of public interest:

— the nature and severity of the alleged offense;
— the accused's cooperation with the pre-trial investigation;
— the accused's disclosure of additional criminal offenses and perpetrators;
— the role and hierarchical position of the accused in cases involving complicity;
— the potential for encouraging other individuals to conclude similar agreements;
— full or partial compensation of damages by the accused.

An important factor they highlight is that since 24 February 2022, there have been cases in which judges take into account volunteering and support for the Armed Forces as circumstances that, in wartime, are directly connected to the well-being, stability, and security of Ukrainian society – that is, to the public interest. In their view, such circumstances may only be considered as personal characteristics of the accused when imposing punishment, because they are not directly related to the criminal proceedings or the evidence examined within them (Demchuk & Tkachuk, 2023).

This position is also referenced by other sources. For example, in the announcement titled "The Court Approved a Plea Agreement in the Case of an Odesa Lawyer's Influence on a Judge", it is stated that the court took into account "the existence of public interest, consisting in ensuring a faster pre-trial investigation and judicial proceedings; the making of a monetary contribution in support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine" (ADVOKAT POST, 2024).

The High Anti-Corruption Court, in some of its decisions, also points to the uncertainty of the concept of "public interest."

For example, it states as follows: the current criminal procedural law of Ukraine does not define the content of the category “public interest”, since this is inherently an abstract concept, understood as society’s attitude toward certain phenomena as a result of assessing them on the basis of established perceptions of their positive or negative nature. Analyzing the case law of the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) (for example, the judgment of 27 June 2019 in “Svit Rozvah LLC and Others v. Ukraine” – application No. 13290/11; the judgment of 20 October 2011 in “Rysovskyy v. Ukraine” – application No. 29979/04), one may conclude that according to its well-established practice, the concept of “public interest” is interpreted broadly, and maintaining the necessary balance between public and private interests is an essential requirement of a democratic society and a component of the rule of law. Furthermore, an analysis of the ECHR judgments of 12 May 2005 in “Öcalan v. Turkey” – application No. 46221/99 (paragraph 168); of 23 November 2000 in “Former King of Greece and Others v. Greece” – application No. 25701/94 (paragraph 89); and of 25 March 1999 in “Iatridis v. Greece” – application No. 31107/96 (paragraph 55) indicates that the Court considers the following to be components of the rule of law: the balancing of an individual’s interests with the interests of other members of society; the principle of proportionality; and the fair balance between the demands of the general (public) interest and the protection of fundamental rights of the individual (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 760/1279/19).

Although, in the subsequent analysis, the court’s position in this decision essentially reduces to compliance with statutory requirements.

As we can see, there is no uniformity in the understanding of these concepts. In such a case, it is appropriate to refer to the Comprehensive Explanatory Dictionary of the Modern Ukrainian Language in order to outline the general understanding of “public interest.”

Accordingly, “interest” is defined as something that benefits someone or something, or corresponds to someone’s needs or aspirations (Busel, 2001: 501); whereas “public” refers to that which concerns society (Busel, 2001: 1417).

Thus, when defining the concept of “public interest” or “interest of society,” two groups of factors should be considered: those that benefit society (which may include efficiency, saving resources, and achieving the overall objectives of criminal justice), and those that correspond to the aspirations of society (which today include, if not the complete elimination – since such a result is practically unattainable – then at least the reduction of corruption, including real punishment for at least some of the offenders).

Judicial Practice

To ensure the completeness of the analysis, it is also necessary to examine specific manifestations of the understanding of public interest in the decisions of the High Anti-Corruption Court.

A review of the last 50 judgments (as of 21 November 2025) revealed that in 33 of them agreements were approved (the figure may be higher, as some decisions are not available for review), and in most of the approved agreements Article 75 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine was applied – that is, release from serving the sentence with probation.

The following formulations appear rather frequently:

1. The terms of the agreement correspond to the interests of society. Approval of the agreement will allow for the swift completion of the judicial proceedings concerning the accused, thereby ensuring that the accused is held criminally liable for the committed corruption offense, with the imposition of a sentence of actual imprisonment. Concluding the agreement will fully contribute to achieving the goal, extremely important for society, of ensuring the inevitability of punishment for the committed crime” (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/10684/25).

2. References to ECHR case law are also often present. For example: “The criminal procedural law obliges the prosecutor, when deciding on the conclusion of a plea agreement, to take into account the existence of public interest in ensuring a faster pre-trial investigation and judicial proceedings,

in exposing a greater number of criminal offenses, and in preventing, detecting, or stopping a greater number of criminal offenses or other more serious criminal offenses (paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Article 470 CPC of Ukraine).

In paragraph 87 of its judgment of 29 April 2014 in the case of ‘Natsvlishvili and Togonidze v. Georgia’, the European Court of Human Rights noted its support for the idea that plea agreements, in addition to providing significant advantages related to the speedy consideration of criminal cases and reducing the burden on courts, prosecutors, and lawyers, may also serve as an effective tool in combating corruption and organized crime when properly applied, and may contribute to a reduction in the number of imposed sentences and, consequently, in the number of imprisoned persons.

The Court considers that the conditions of the agreement, taking into account the seriousness of the offenses imputed and the punishment prescribed for their commission, correspond to the interests of society, which lie in ensuring the possibility of fair and expedited resolution of criminal proceedings within a reasonable time with minimal expenditure of state resources, as well as in reducing the workload on prosecution bodies and courts. Moreover, the conclusion of a plea agreement will encourage other suspects or accused persons to conclude such agreements with the aim of facilitating the conduct of criminal proceedings and obtaining for themselves an agreed punishment or release from serving it, which will contribute to the rehabilitation of the accused and prevention of new criminal offenses, as well as influence others by reinforcing the inevitability of criminal liability and fostering the rejection of corrupt behaviour (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/10421/25).

Although in this situation the “inevitability of punishment,” when Article 75 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine is applied, will clearly not be perceived unambiguously.

3. It is now appropriate to provide several examples of voluntary monetary contributions as conditions for concluding plea agreements:

– During the court hearing, PERSON_6 confirmed that he had voluntarily undertaken the obligation to transfer funds in the amount of 100,000 UAH to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine through the Charitable Organization “Charitable Foundation ‘Code of the Nation 47’” into its special account (providing the respective payment receipt dated 21 October 2025 confirming the actual transfer of these funds), and that he had additionally undertaken the obligation to ensure personally and/or through other persons the transfer of an additional 400,000 UAH to the Armed Forces of Ukraine via the same charitable organization within four months after the approval of the plea agreement. He indicated that he had a real ability to fulfil these obligations. Therefore, the court considers that this condition of the agreement is not unreasonably burdensome for this party to the criminal proceedings (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 760/1279/19).

– The court also takes into account the fact that the accused PERSON_4 and PERSON_5 voluntarily undertook the obligation to contribute 211,960 UAH each to an account opened by the Charitable Organization “International Charitable Foundation ‘Come Back Alive’” to support INFORMATION_5, which, in turn, positively contributes to the implementation of state interests, especially under martial law (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/10401/25).

– In paragraph 5.2 of the judgment, concerning the compliance of the agreement’s conditions with the interests of society, it is noted, in particular: The court also takes into account that under the terms of the agreements, the accused undertook to fully compensate the damage incurred by the state and by a private individual during the pre-trial investigation in this criminal proceeding, namely 40,000 UAH and 15,000 UAH respectively.

Moreover, in the event the agreement is approved, PERSON_7 undertook to transfer two vehicles belonging to him for the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Under the conditions of the full-scale military aggression by the Russian Federation, this indicates an additional public interest – namely, providing the Armed Forces of Ukraine with financial and material resources to strengthen their capacity to resist the enemy and to safeguard Ukraine’s independence.

Thus, taking into account …the presence of such factors as the saving of procedural and material resources and the provision of financial support to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the court concluded that the terms of the agreements correspond to the interests of society (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/10819/23).

– The court also takes into account that, in the event of approval of the plea agreement, the accused undertook to ensure the transfer of a significant sum to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, namely a total of 2,000,000 UAH.

Under the conditions of the full-scale military aggression by the Russian Federation, this indicates an additional public interest–namely, providing the Armed Forces of Ukraine with financial resources to strengthen their capacity to resist the enemy and safeguard the independence of Ukraine (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/9232/25).

– In addition, public interest in this case is also ensured through the obligation set out in paragraph 8.3 of the Agreement and its subsequent fulfilment by the Suspect.

8.3. Within 30 days from the date on which the court decision approving the plea agreement enters into legal force, to make a contribution towards the partial compensation of the damage caused, in the amount of 200,000 (two hundred thousand) UAH, to the benefit of the state, using the following banking details: Recipient: HUK Kyiv Region/Bilogorod. rural/21080600; Account No. UA088999980313090102000010774; EDRPOU code 37955989 (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/9023/25).

– The testimony of PERSON_3 regarding the circumstances constituting the subject of proof in criminal proceeding No. 52023000000000068 makes it possible to ensure the prosecution of all accomplices and to take measures to initiate the issue of recovering damages in the amount of 128.2 million UAH. This, in turn, will contribute to restoring a fair balance in the distribution of material goods in the state.

…Moreover, the terms of the agreement provide for the obligation of the accused to compensate part of the damage caused by the criminal offenses in the amount of 54 million UAH (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/9343/25).

– 2. Regarding the compliance of the terms of the agreement with the interests of society

Under the terms of the Agreement, PERSON_5 undertakes the obligation to ensure the transfer of 50,000 UAH as charitable assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/8039/25).

– 9. Regarding the compliance of the terms of the agreement with the interests of society.

The Court took into account that the defence of the accused PERSON_2 submitted a motion to the High Anti-Corruption Court requesting a change of the preventive measure from bail to personal recognizance, along with a request–supported by the sureties–to transfer the bail amount of 805,200 UAH to the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

The Court also took into account that the accused undertook the obligation, within 5 days from the date on which the judgment approving the agreement enters into legal force, to transfer funds in the amount of 4,000,000 UAH to the needs of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to the following details: IBAN NUMBER_2, recipient – CO “CF ‘STERNENKO COMMUNITY’” (EDRPOU 45778792), bank – JSC “UNIVERSAL BANK” (EDRPOU 21133352), MFO 322001, payment purpose: Charitable assistance for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. This is significant given the acute need to provide financial assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine for supplying the military with all necessary equipment and weapons, which will contribute to repelling armed aggression.

Under such circumstances, imposing this obligation on the accused and taking these facts into account by the prosecutor directly indicates the presence of public interest in concluding such an agreement.

Thus, it can be stated that the terms of the agreement correspond to the interests of society (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/7947/25).

– (3) Public interest in concluding the agreement:

– …The terms of the Agreement stipulate the accused's obligation to compensate damage caused by the criminal offense in the amount of 3,835,143.70 UAH by ensuring the gratuitous and unconditional transfer (alienation) of an apartment located at ADDRESS_1 into the ownership of the state, represented by the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine.

Under such circumstances, PERSON_4 undertook the following obligations:

…(2) Financial support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

– PERSON_4 undertook to pay 750,000 UAH to the special account of the National Bank of Ukraine for the support of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (details: UA843000010000000047330992708, recipient – National Bank of Ukraine, recipient code – 00032106, purpose of payment – "Support for the Armed Forces of Ukraine") within 3 months from the date on which the court judgment based on this Agreement enters into legal force (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/4549/25).

– The Court also takes into account the voluntary obligation of the accused PERSON_6 to contribute 8,000,000 UAH to the special account opened by the National Bank of Ukraine to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, which in turn positively contributes to the realization of state interests, especially under martial law (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 760/10894/18).

– The Court also considers the fact that, before the issue of approving the agreement was resolved, the accused transferred funds to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine: PERSON_4 – 10,000 UAH; PERSON_5 – 60,000 UAH; PERSON_6 – 240,000 UAH; PERSON_7 – 60,000 UAH (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/4967/25).

– The Court further considers that, in the event of approval of the plea agreement, the accused undertook to ensure that the sureties transfer the bail posted on their behalf to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine, namely 49,620 UAH each.

Under the conditions of full-scale military aggression by the Russian Federation, this demonstrates an additional "public interest" – providing the Armed Forces of Ukraine with financial resources to enhance their capacity to resist the enemy and ensure Ukraine's independence (Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud, 2025, sprava № 991/7017/25).

Thus, an interim conclusion may be drawn that treating the transfer of funds to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine as an element of "public interest" has already become an established practice of the High Anti-Corruption Court of Ukraine.

Conclusions. The conclusions that may be drawn from this study are as follows:

– As elements of public interest, the High Anti-Corruption Court takes into account the factors provided in Article 470 of the CPC of Ukraine: 3) the existence of public interest in ensuring a faster pre-trial investigation and judicial proceedings, as well as in exposing a greater number of criminal offenses; 4) the existence of public interest in preventing, detecting, or stopping a greater number of criminal offenses or other, more serious criminal offenses;

– Quite often, the achievement of the objectives of criminal justice, as defined in Article 2 of the CPC of Ukraine, is also identified as a component of public interest;

– The proportion of plea agreements among the total number of judgments – particularly those involving the application of Article 75 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine – can hardly be considered consistent with the interests of society at the current stage of combating corruption-related offenses;

– The judicial practice of recognizing the transfer of funds for state needs as a manifestation of public interest requires further study, in particular: surveying citizens to determine public opinion on this matter; examining alternative mechanisms for recovering such funds through other legal instruments, such as confiscation or special confiscation; analysing a larger number of judgments using analytical tools to answer unequivocally whether this practice may constitute a means of avoiding real punishment.

References:

1. ADVOKAT POST. (2024, April 27). Sud zatverdyv uhodu pro vyznannia vynuvatosti u spravi shchodo vplyvu na suddiu odeskym advokatom [The court approved a plea agreement in a case regarding influence on a judge by an Odesa lawyer]. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://advokatpost.com/sud-zatverdyv-uhodu-pro-vyznannia-vynuvatosti-u-spravi-shchodo-vplyvu-na-suddiu-odeskym-advokatom/ [in Ukrainian].
2. Busel, V. T. (Ed.). (2001). Velykyi tlumachnyi slovnyk suchasnoi ukrainskoi movy [Comprehensive explanatory dictionary of the modern Ukrainian language]. Kyiv, Irpin: VTF Perun. [in Ukrainian].
3. Demchuk, P., & Tkachuk, A. (2023, June 26). Chy chas domovliatysia? Tendentsii VAKS shchodo ukladennia uhod v koruptsiinykh spravakh [Is it time to negotiate? Trends of the High Anti-Corruption Court regarding plea agreements in corruption cases]. Transparency International Ukraine. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://ti-ukraine.org/news/chy-chas-domovlyatysya-tendentsiyi-vaks-shhodo-ukladennya-ugod-v-koruptsijnyh-spravah/ [in Ukrainian].
4. Harasymiv, O., Zakharova, O., & Riashko, O. (2021). Uhoda pro vyznannia vynuvatosti u kryminalnomu provadzhenni [Plea agreements in criminal proceedings]. Pidpryiemnytstvo, hospodarstvo i pravo, (3), 249–253. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from http://pgp-journal.kiev.ua/archive/2021/3/42.pdf https://doi.org/10.32849/2663-5313/2021.3.41 [in Ukrainian].
5. Kovalchuk, S. O. (2024). Shchodo ukladennia u kryminalnomu provadzhenni pro koruptsiine pravoporushennia uhody pro vyznannia vynuvatosti, odniieiu z umov yakoi ye zastosuvannia st. 75 KK [On concluding a plea agreement in criminal proceedings regarding a corruption offense, one of the conditions of which is the application of Article 75 of the Criminal Code]. Pravovyi chasopys Donbasu, 2(4), 161–166. https://doi.org/10.32782/2523-4269-2022-81-4-2-161-166 [in Ukrainian].
6. Krasnopolska, L. P. (2015). Instytut uhod pro vyznannia vyny v kryminalnomu provadzhenni Ukrainy [The institution of plea agreements in criminal proceedings of Ukraine]. Vypusk, 28, 167–175. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://www.chasopys.law.npu.kiev.ua/archive/28/26.pdf [in Ukrainian].
7. Mishchenko, S. M., Yelenina, Zh. M., & Slutska, T. I. (2014). Uzahalnennia sudovoi praktyky zdiisnennia kryminalnoho provadzhennia na pidstavi uhod: rozghlianuto ta zatverdzheno na naradi suddiv sudovoi palaty VSSU 22 sichnia 2014 r. [Summary of judicial practice of criminal proceedings based on agreements: reviewed and approved at the meeting of judges of the High Specialized Court on January 22, 2014]. Podilskyi district court of Kyiv. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://pd.ki.court.gov.ua/sud2607/inshe/zakon/uzagal [in Ukrainian].
8. Ostrohliad, O. V. (2021). Osnovni polozhennia kryminalno-pravovoi polityky Ukrainy ta Kryminalnoho prava Ukrainy (Zahalna chastyna): navchalnyi posibnyk [Fundamental provisions of Ukraine’s criminal-law policy and Criminal Law of Ukraine (General Part): Textbook]. (3rd ed., revised and supplemented). Ivano-Frankivsk: Symfoniia forte. [in Ukrainian].
9. Protocol.ua. (n.d.). Stattia 470. Obstavyny, shcho vrakhovuiutsia prokurorom pry ukladenni uhody pro vyznannia vynuvatosti [Article 470. Circumstances taken into account by the prosecutor when concluding a plea agreement]. Kryminalnyi protsesualnyi kodeks Ukrainy. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://protocol.ua/ua/kriminalniy_protsesualniy_kodeks_ukraini_stattya_470/ [in Ukrainian].
10. Ukrinform. (2023, June 19). SAP pererakhuvala 44 miliony vid uhod zi slidstvom na zakupivliu droniv [SAP transferred 44 million from plea agreements for the purchase of drones]. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-economy/4057607-sap-pererahuvala-44-miljoniv-vid-ugod-zi-slidstvom-na-zakupivlu-droniv.html [in Ukrainian].
11. Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy. (2001). Kryminalnyi kodeks Ukrainy: Zakon Ukrainy vid 05.04.2001 № 2341-III [Criminal Code of Ukraine: Law of Ukraine of April 5, 2001 No. 2341-III]. Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, (25–26), Art. 131. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2341-14#Text [in Ukrainian].
12. Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy. (2013). Kryminalnyi protsesualnyi kodeks Ukrainy: Zakon Ukrainy vid 13.04.2012 № 4651-VI [Criminal Procedure Code of Ukraine: Law of Ukraine of April 13, 2012

No. 4651-VI]. Vidomosti Verkhovnoi Rady Ukrainy, (9–10; 11–12; 13), Art. 88. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/4651-17#Text [in Ukrainian].
13. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, June 18). Vyrok u spravi № 991/4549/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/4549/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/128217995 [in Ukrainian].
14. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, July 11). Vyrok u spravi № 760/10894/18 [Judgment in case No. 760/10894/18]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/128789194 (accessed: 21.11.2025). [in Ukrainian].
15. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, July 18). Vyrok u spravi № 991/4967/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/4967/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/128944560 (accessed: 21.11.2025). [in Ukrainian].
16. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, July 21). Vyrok u spravi № 991/7017/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/7017/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/128975116 (accessed: 21.11.2025). [in Ukrainian].
17. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, August 8). Vyrok u spravi № 991/7947/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/7947/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/129414331 [in Ukrainian].
18. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, August 22). Vyrok u spravi № 991/8039/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/8039/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/129685385 [in Ukrainian].
19. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, September 16). Vyrok u spravi № 991/9232/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/9232/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/130255028 [in Ukrainian].
20. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, October 7). Vyrok u spravi № 991/9023/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/9023/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/130789042 [in Ukrainian].
21. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, October 13). Vyrok u spravi № 991/9343/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/9343/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/130940424 [in Ukrainian].
22. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, November 3). Vyrok u spravi № 991/10401/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/10401/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/131481156 [in Ukrainian]
23. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, November 4). Vyrok u spravi № 991/10819/23 [Judgment in case No. 991/10819/23]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/131500473 [in Ukrainian].
24. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, November 10). Vyrok u spravi № 760/1279/19 [Judgment in case No. 760/1279/19]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/131671213 [in Ukrainian].
25. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, November 11). Vyrok u spravi № 991/10684/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/10684/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/131711163 [in Ukrainian].
26. Vyshchyi antykoruptsiinyi sud. (2025, November 14). Vyrok u spravi № 991/10421/25 [Judgment in case No. 991/10421/25]. Yedynyi derzhavnyi reiestr sudovykh rishen. Retrieved November 21, 2025, from https://reyestr.court.gov.ua/Review/131783397 [in Ukrainian].

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-4

CONTRACTUAL SUCCESSION LEGAL NORMS FUNCTIONALIZATION ISSUES

Edward Pilipson,
Riga Stradiņš University
e.pilipsons@privattiesibas.lv

Abstract. Contractual succession, in contrast to succession by law and testament, possesses with a combined structure which include contracts and legal deals with *mortis causa* intention. By this reason, norms, which establish future inheritance in different contracts and deals, do not possess with necessary functionality degree, required for contractual succession substantive law.

Contractual succession norms, which often contain in family law, testamentary law and in obligation law spheres, do not form future inheritance objects taking into account the requirements of these areas of legal regulation.

By this reason mentioned article subject matter related to analyze the impact of norms of different legal nature impact on the objects of legal regulation of contractual succession and, accordingly, problematic situations identification.

Key words: applicable law, contractual succession, inheritance, inheritance agreement, inheritance contract.

Introduction. Legal science distinguishes at least seven different concepts of functionalism across disciplines: finalism, a neo-Aristotelian functionalism based on inherent teleology, adaptionism, an evolutionary functionalism in a Darwinian tradition, classical (Durkheimian) functionalism, explaining institutions through their usefulness for society, instrumentalism, a normative theory of using law for social engineering, refined functionalism, a functionalist method that replaces certain postulates of classical functionalism with empirically testable hypotheses (Ralph Michaels, 2006).

Taking into account these imperatives category *contractual succession legal norms functionalization* firstly presented as the functional method application to clarify contractual succession structure in main essentials – *hereditatis futurae* and *hereditatis probabile*.

Secondly, mentioned category appears as an acceptable and correct abbreviation used to bring together concepts involved in discrete areas of contractual succession legal regulation.

According with mentioned legal science imperatives contractual succession legal norms functionalization means: understanding contractual succession general and private norms system, analyzing contracts, agreements and legal deals, drawing conclusions about the influence of the above-mentioned norms, contracts and deals on the problem of the emergence of contractual succession essential components.

At the present time, the functionalization of relations on contractual succession seems impossible – contractual succession and its leading concept *hereditatis futurae* in the modern sense do not allow this type of relationship to gain the opportunity to progress due to the lack of a correct definition of this legal regime essentials.

The main objective of this study is contractual succession subject matter analyze to give conclusions to minimize the risks for the testator and the heir, as well as for persons associated with them.

To pursuit this goal highlighted following categories:

1) Contractual succession legal structure as a system of contracts and legal deals definition.
2) The institutional structure of contractual succession requirements definition.
3) The individual legal status of persons participating in contractual succession definition.

In appropriate situations norms of *hereditatis futurae* concept must be cleared of risks emanating from the concept *hereditatis probabile*

Note: hereditatis probabile – probabilistic inheritance. (Senāta Civilā Kasācijas Departamenta Spriedumi, 1924).

In particular these risks present, in the possibility of recognition by a competent jurisdiction inheritance rights attributed to donations *inter vivos intentio mortis causa* by both participants in this deal – eventual testator, eventual heir, third parties status in these relations.

In this case, donation is understood as an essential component of *donatio* factor applied as the basis for the testator's expression of will for concluding an agreement with a general clause *mortis causa* with the heir and the subsequent development of legal relations within the framework of contractual succession between these persons.

Note: general clause *mortis causa* is an agreement or basis of agreement between the parties to a main or preliminary contract or legal deal regarding a future inheritance.

In a number of cases contractual succession complex nature also poses an obstacle – coupled with the concept of future inheritance, it creates obstacles to the expression of a person's will to conclude individual contracts.

In particular, Israeli Succession Law, 5725-1965 provides restriction on testamentary gifts (in fact – donation contract *mortis causa*) without this fact confirmation in the testament.

Combination of legal regimes of the *mortis causa* in contracts and a unilateral deal can have ambiguous consequences – in particular in the situation of the cancellation of a will, a gift agreement *mortis causa* will be deprived or, alternatively, may be deprived by a competent regulation.

However, according to the legislation of another state, the deed of gift for *mortis causa* case will be valid, recognized and executed, since the will of the legislator is aimed at creating not so much obligatory relations, but hereditary ones, as it follows from Israeli Inheritance Law.

The instability of this legal relationship described above also follows from the fact that donation is considered by law to be a unilateral deal (Civil Law of the Republic of Latvia, section 1915).

Meanwhile, contractual succession, due to the fact that the basis of this institution is the inheritance contract, is considered as a bilateral deal.

Discussion. Undoubtedly, the right of contractual succession in terms of recognizing a contract of gift of a future thing as a contract of inheritance (Civil Law of the Republic of Latvia, section 1926) will also be subject to instability due to the clash of norms of the law of gift as a "future" right of inheritance.

The main problem is to find the law applicable to contractual succession is the lack of a correct mechanism for linking the law applicable to the instruments of inheritance and the law of obligations through the prism of the legal regulation of the gift agreement as a "future" inheritance contract.

This is manifested in contractual succession, starting with the formation and definition of the subject of this legal relationship, ending with the consequences – the recognition and execution of instruments of contractual succession, both within the legal system of a national state and within the legal field of several states.

An additional obstacle to the correct determination of the applicable law is the dichotomy expressed in fact that the conflict of laws of inheritance and obligation law norms relates the applicable substantive law to the law of different states, or, sometimes, to different legal regulation spheres.

Thus, a situation is possible where, in the same legal situation, the inheritance law of one state and, correspondingly, the laws of obligations of another state are applicable. This situation appears impossible from the standpoint of teleological adequacy – legislators, acting within the national legal system, ensure the linkage institutional system only within individual spheres of legal regulation. The combination of the institutions of inheritance law and the law of obligations in situations where the laws of different spheres of legal regulation are applied within a single state or across several states will undoubtedly create an unmanageable process to determine the applicable law.

The formula for attaching the right applicable to contractual succession must fit into *the right of the place where the act is performed – the right of the place of the consequences of the act* complex concept categories and norms.

The concept of *act* should include and, where necessary, correlate both main agreement and possible discrete legal deals with a unilateral and bilateral nature.

It seems necessary to highlight the specific principles of contractual succession. Undoubtedly, the first principle of contractual succession should be the principle of maximum fulfillment of the testator's will.

Traditionally considered part of inheritance law, this principle will serve as the basis for finding the applicable law in situations involving the fulfillment of inheritance obligations *ex ante* and *ex post.* This principle reasonably limited by public policy, will ensure heirs and third parties future rights and legitimate their interests.

Note:

1) Execution ex ante – the fulfillment of rights and obligations before the moment determined by competent legal regulation before the opening of the inheritance

2) Execution ex post – the fulfillment of rights and obligations after the moment determined by competent legal regulation as the opening of the inheritance

The traditional and primary conflict-of-law principles for determining the applicable law in inheritance relations according the law and testament are the personal law of the testator, which includes citizenship and domicile. The inheritance of movable property and its accessories occurs precisely within these categories.

In turn, the inheritance of real estate occurs in accordance with the rules of conflict of laws *lex rei sitae* – according with location of the inherited property.

Inheritance law, in the case of inheritance by testament, enshrines the principle of the law of the place where the will was made as the applicable law.

This situation cannot be applied to contractual succession. In a situation of contractual succession, the applicable law must be determined differently – binding, applies to contractual succession contains *lex voluntatis* norms – norms, which prescribe the autonomy to choose the applicable law, based on the principle of the voluntarily expressed and realized will of the parties. It should be noted that in the absence of a choice of law clearly stipulated in a contract, the law of the state with which the contract or other instrument mediating contractual succession is most closely connected applies.

Based on the above, it seems necessary to establish a doctrinal and normative definition of the statute of inheritance rights and obligations, or the statute of contractual succession, with the creation of specific legal regulations.

To link the essential components with respect to contracts providing future inheritance norms or other deals containing a hereditary clause.

Since contractual succession involves an institution called with term *"future inheritance* appears that the conflict of laws clause which governs the law applicable to contractual succession contained in formula *lex loci coindentiae testatoris et heredes hereditarium commodum* – applicable law, connected with place or places where coincide the hereditary interests of the heir and the testator.

Introduction of the conflict formula *lex loci coindentiae testatoris et heredes hereditarium commodum* is a justified step due to its regulatory and ordination nature.

This introduction is justified by the fact that the norms of family, inheritance and obligation law are present in contractual succession in an indefinite form.

In turn, the question of the functional content of the formula *lex loci coindentiae testatoris et heredes hereditarium commodum* (ensuring prospective, primary, and restorative interests) is posed not only in theoretical but also in practical terms. The practical aspect of the above formula is that the legislator ensures priority the protection of the interests of the parties involved in contractual succession given case, reduces the degree of aleatory nature of contractual succession.

The inheritance statute, which ensures the issuance of title and executive documents to heirs, is currently subordinated to the categories of *persona loci sitae* and *rei sitae*.

Replacement of the rigid imperatives *persona* and *rei* on elastic collision binding *lex loci coindentiae testatoris et heredes hereditarium commodum* allows to solve many problematic situations.

In current situation of contractual succession in relation to the norms of inheritance and obligation law (in their broad sense), presents competition and subsequent conflict between the concepts *persona legalis intentiones* and *herediťas persōnam defuncti sustǐnet*. This conflict cannot be resolved by legal means of the formula *lex specialis derogat legi generali* in its relation to *inheritance is a legal person* concept.

Note: legi generali norms establish contractual succession on inheritance contracts' basis.

This conflict is possible due to the fact that the law applicable to contractual succession is *lex specialis* in relation to the law of inheritance and the law of obligations in regard to *inheritance is a legal person* concept norm.

An additional reason for the conflict between the above concepts lies in the multiplicity of grounds for contractual succession, the ambiguity of the qualification of concepts, and the obligation of law enforcement authorities to apply mandatory norms of substantive law without due reference to execute binding conflict of laws rules.

Seems that the creation and normative consolidation of the corresponding legal order – the right of inheritance obligations with the formula *lex loci coindentiae testatoris et heredes hereditarium commodum* accordance will remove conflict between concepts *persona legalis intentions* and *herediťas persōnam defuncti sustǐnet* substantive succession and obligation law norms.

The law of inheritance obligations will accordingly remove the imperatives of universal succession that are inconsistent with contractual succession, introducing into the legal relationship a justified singularity and criteria (markers) for the enforceability and fulfillment of obligations that arise within the framework of contractual succession.

The fundamental value of the law of inheritance obligations, mediated by *lex loci coindentiae testatoris et heredes hereditarium commodum* formula constituted as a sphere of legal regulation of contractual succession is to create a mechanism of justified and regulated singularity, which will allow to contractual succession parties to predict, take into account and implement appropriate rights and obligations strongly inherent to contractual succession.

The doctrinal and practical development of a universal contractual succession statute is also important due to the fact that the inheritance statute of private (civil) law states covers all consequences of the arising and opening of an inheritance.

In turn, the inheritance statute of common law countries concerns only discrete issues of the status of the heir, that is, who is the heir and shares' volume, is due to him, but not issues related to the stages of administration and probation (Haas Ulrich, 2008, 127-150).

By this, it is not possible to create a statute of contractual succession by simple combining its principles and institutes of inheritance and obligation law – a conflict of qualifications is possible.

Lex personalis and *lex rei sitae* bindings, which regulate and apply only to the consequences of inheritance, not regulate the law applicable to the legal deal as a contractual succession forms itself. For example, mentioned bindings not regulate the law, applicable to contracts and deals, mediating the contractual succession, not regulate interests of engaged parties.

The law applicable to inheritance contract is governed by general conflict of laws clause *lex voluntatis*, which leaves the determination of the applicable law entirely to will expression of the parties to the contract, often without taking into account the effect of conflict of laws *lex personalis* and *lex rei sitae* bindings.

Limits the effect of *the lex voluntatis* binding only public order of a national state.

This situation cannot be acceptable.

The meaning of priority in contractual succession is currently unclear. Legal doctrine as understood by Roland Krauze (Krauze Rolands, 1997) does not provide an answer to this question.

Modern legal regulation of contractual succession priority enshrines the provision that the priority of contractual succession is established by excluding inheritance by law and will – this is established by Civil Law of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter – Civil Law) section 389 provisions.

However, there is a problem with this provision: Civil Law section 642 establishes a provision that in inheritance contracts, the provisions on an integral share must be observed in relation to persons entitled to a compulsory share (Civil Law, sections 392, 399, 423).

Formally, Civil Law 390, 392, 399 and 423 sections' provisions do not directly relate to contractual succession – these sections are located in the section "Intestate Succession" of the Civil Law.

However, by virtue Civil Law section 642 provisions, subjects of the right to an inalienable share have the right to challenge the inheritance agreement.

Due to this circumstance, two questions arise:

1) Are mentioned above subjects of the right to an inalienable share an essential component of contractual succession;

2) Is an inalienable share an essential component of contractual succession;

These questions must be answered positively.

The obligation law established as the basis for priority by the inheritance contract – in this case the right of contestation, as well as the right of claim and the right of inheritance in the form of the presence in the contractual succession of persons entitled to an inalienable share – gives contractual succession, together with the discrete institutions of inheritance by law, a rather important role.

This role is called *organizational right* in this understanding by Robert Sitkov (Sitkoff Robert, 2004, 627-633), Henry Hansmann and Rainer Krakman (Hansmann, Kraakman, 2000, 388-440).

This legal provision results in both the contractual heir and the legal entities having an inalienable share of the inherited property's ownership. This statement balances the interests of the testator and the contractual heir. The testator demonstrates care for his family members, which is consistent with Civil Law sections 84 and 177 provisions.

It should be noted that the right of obligation in contractual succession arises both under the contract and under testament (Civil Law, section1672, Civil Code of the Netherlands section 4.5.3., article 130).

It seems that in this case presents a conflict within the normative act in the understanding by Richard Passler (Passler Richard, 1991, 409-435), Herma Hill Kay (Kay, Herma Hill, 1980, 577-617).

It is unclear what consequences this collision will have.

Category *priority of contractual succession* was adopted by the Civil Law from the Code of Local Laws of the Baltic Provinces.

However, in this normative act an important clarification was made in relation to the law of Kurzeme and Vidzeme (The Baltic Private Law Code, article 1701).

It was precisely in light of this clarification that the priority of contractual succession became truly effective. The second reason for introducing the category of *priority of contractual succession* was undoubtedly the presence of a variety of discrete contractual succession institutes in the Code of Local Laws of the Baltic Provinces (Code of Local Laws of the Baltic Provinces, articles 2481-2524).

With the disappearance of the first reason in the situation of the Civil Law, the category of *priority of contractual succession* acquires the qualities and significance of an evaluative category.

This category, despite the creation of a certain degree of stability and regulatory strength, due to uncertainty and the associated possibility of ambiguous interpretation and specification in the law enforcement process, requires the establishment of criteria for distinguishing between its institutes.

Otherwise, presents a risk of contradictions and conflicts in the application of mandatory norms of inheritance and obligation law in follows situations:

1) Simultaneous conclusion of an inheritance contract (or, contracts) and/or agreement (or, agreements)

2) Qualification and subsequent recognition of a mutual will as an inheritance contract or agreement.

3) Inheritance contract (Civil Law, section 639) essential part interaction with marriage contract (Civil Law, section 114, third part) essentials under situation of future inheritance objects formation.

3.1) mentioned marriage contract or its parts' recognition as an inheritance contract

3.2) mentioned recognized inheritance contract essentials interaction with inheritance contract, concluded firstly essentials

4). concluded or recognized contractual succession contracts' or deals' essential parts interaction with another contracts' or deals' essentials.

In the deontic characteristic of the category of *priority of contractual succession,* the basis for priority must be established. A rule that only establishes the cancellation of inheritance by law or will does not reflect the full nature of contractual succession.

In the modern situation, the priority of a specific form (or instrument of contractual succession) in the modern legal regulation is expressed in the following.

The right of contractual succession, essential to the contract of inheritance, may oppose the right of contractual succession, essential to the marriage contract *mortis causa* (Civil Law, sections 114, 639).

The right of contractual succession, which is essential for a mutual will, may oppose the right of contractual succession, which is essential for an inheritance contract.

The opposition of the norms of the law of contractual succession may also be mutual in the essential components of other contracts and legal deals of contractual succession, establishing the right of authorized subjects for future inheritance.

This confrontation must be resolved by the organic subordination of the legal impact of the essential components of one instrument of contractual succession to the legal impact of the essential components of another instrument of contractual succession.

Subordination must be carried out on the basis of the legal order that is most closely related to the inheritance interests of the persons participating in the contractual succession.

It is in this case formula *lex loci coindentiae testatoris et heredes hereditarium commodum* will ensure interests both under the inheritance agreement in its various forms of existence, and in mutual, corresponding and other forms of joint and mutual testaments that exist in modern inheritance and obligation law norms.

In this study, it seems reasonable to enshrine the priority of contractual succession in the following phrase:

the priority of contractual succession is ensured by the rights and obligations arising from the constituent parts of inheritance contracts that are essential for the future inheritance, as well as other agreements regarding the future inheritance, concluded and/or recognized by the competent law

The term *arising*, interpreted in relation to the term *hereditatis futurae* taken from the history of law (Ann Arbor, 2011, 154).

This term best characterizes the direction of legal regulation of *ex ante* execution, correlating this form of execution with the retroactive imperatives and complex of legal facts that are of fundamental importance for *ex post* execution.

The case law of Anglo-American law requires that retroactive imperatives be taken into account. This statement prescribed by case *James Cable Partners v. City of Jamestown* (Daniel E. Troy, 1998, 42).

In this light, it seems that the concept expressed by norm t*hree types of inheritance can exist together* (Civil Law, section 389) should be specialized for contractual succession objectives.

It is possible to amend Civil Law with section 389[1] and to fulfill this concept with concept as follows:

Three types of inheritance in contractual succession appropriate situations exist simultaneously

This phrase reflects the current state of affairs.

Firstly, persons entitled to an inalienable share exist as a complex concept and is present not only in inheritance by law, but also in inheritance by testament and inheritance contract, or, in prospective, inheritance agreement.

Secondly, inheritance agreement which factually presents in contractual succession as an inheritance contract with private law clauses, which ensure future inheritance norms and property law material objects for mentioned further contracts and deals and its combinations:

1) Marriage contract as an inheritance contract essential (Civil Law, section 114, part three, Civil Law, section 639);

2) Mutual will as an inheritance contract essential (Civil Law, sections 604, 606, 639);

3) A gift of future property which perceived as an inheritance contract and, because of this contains future inheritance clause (Civil Law, sections 639, 1925, 1926).

In case of necessary mentioned norms may be used in reverse functional compositions, alternative notations, appropriate generalizations (*de legi generali* norms formation – authors' note) and appropriate specialization (*lex specialis* norms formation – authors' note).

Note: private law clauses – family law, testamentary law and obligation law norms, which exist in contractual succession and in appropriate situations take part in future inheritance objects' origin.

Because of this mentioned institutes is characterized by a specific right of demand, the changes will ensure a correlation between the previous legal regulation and the introduced changes.

A similar situation existed with regard to the institution of inalienable heirs before changes.

It seems that the basis for the priority of contractual succession in relation to other institutions of hereditary alienation should be the combined expression of will of the testator and the heir, aimed at creating inheritance rights and obligations.

This provision must comply with the provisions on the will (Civil Law, section 1437. German Civil Code, paragraph 133), be specialized in relation to inheritance, and be enshrined in law in the Civil Code and other acts of substantive law in clarifying formulations.

To establish and substantiate the concept of contractual succession as a subject, introduce a category designated by the term *contractual succession – a person in legal intention* or by the term *inheritance by contract subject matter – a person in legal contemplation* (Wilson v. Estate of W. L. Kings. 131 Ind. App. 412 (1960). 170 N.E.2d 63).

The concept expressed by this term will allow the debtor, in the process of fulfilling obligations arising from an inheritance agreement or other contract or legal deal of contractual succession, to settle and execute his obligations before the testator and the testator's obligations to creditors in an optimal manner.

Despite the fact that the category *person* traditionally denotes an individual, this category is applicable for contractual succession.

By virtue *personam defuncti sustinet* principle category *persona,* enshrined in Roman private law, also stipulates the presence of a corresponding expression of will.

In the case of inheritance by law or by will, the heir expresses his will to accept or reject the inheritance. In the case of contractual succession, the heir cannot refuse the inheritance. Due to this circumstance, the legal intention, mediated by a limited expression of will, must be regulated by optimal for debtor law – by Civil Law section 1508 provisions.

Since the basis of contractual succession is an agreement, from the rules of which, firstly, no deviation is allowed, and secondly, through contractual succession during the validity of the agreement, not only rights can be acquired (Zekoll, Matthias, 2005, 286), but also property (Civil Law, section 646), the debtor must be insured against possible losses (Civil Law, sections 1593, 1594), such as a reduction in available property and other encumbrances.

The issue of the moment of transfer of ownership rights to movable property inherited in a situation of contractual succession has not been resolved.

From the point of view of inheritance law (in the situation of inheritance by law and by testament), the actual acceptance of the inheritance (Civil Code, section 691) occurs at the moment the debtor performs certain actions specified by law. Legal doctrine (Briedis, 1939) and legal practice (Judgment of the Department of Civil Cases of the Senate, case SKC-382/2007) in relation to inheritance, reasonably confirming the principle of continuity as it understood by Janis Zariņš (Zariņš Jānis, 1935), contribute to the consolidation of this interpretation.

This position is accepted and valid for both intestate and testamentary inheritance.

According to the inheritance agreement and other instruments of contractual succession, it is possible to acquire future inheritance (Civil Law, section 639, Israeli Inheritance Law, article 8) and, accordingly, its fruits (Civil Law, sections 855 and 856).

Due to this circumstance the principle of continuity must be respected in relation to things and rights that may not exist at the time of acceptance of the inheritance.

Such things may be shares, stakes in an enterprise, bills of exchange, bonds, interest for use, legal interest, and other objects, the issue and emission of which must be agreed by with the members of the company or, in some cases, with their majority (Commercial Law of the Republic of Latvia, section 87).

The heir, by virtue of the period specified in the Civil Law (Civil Law, sections 693, 701), does not have access to these objects. In this situation contractual succession acquires a specific nature, which regulation is determined by Commercial Law (Commercial Law of the Republic of Latvia, sections 191, 238, 238^1), and the Civil Law specific to inheritance agreement. Inheritance agreement in this case presents as an inheritance contract (Civil Law, section 639) and in private law norms addition, concerned in Commercial Law of the Republic of Latvia.

Thus, Civil Law sections 980, 991 and 1034, which regulate the commencement (Civil Law, section 980) and the termination of property rights (Civil Law, section 1034) cannot be used in this situation.

In contractual succession, developing its object and subject matter, seems necessary to use the Law of Requisite Variety, prescribed by William Ross Ashby.

Contractual succession is a complex, dynamically growing entity and, according to William Ross Ashby (Ross Ashby, William, 1957, 206), the entropy of a system of contractual succession can increase when the elements included in the system behave as independent random variables, and the unambiguity of the system control is lost (Ross Ashby William, Jeffrey Goldstein, 2011).

In the situation of contractual succession, this effect may manifest itself in the situation of inheritance of obligations arising from contracts that correlate with the main contract and with the unilateral legal deals.

The concept of contractual succession must take into account a specific institution called *contracts to leave property by will* (Sawyer Caroline, Spero Miriam, 2015, 142).

The complex nature of this legal phenomenon requires research using methods of deontic logic.

This reason is contractual succession private law norms often denote different legal basis to arise hereditary mass property law objects.

This moment is essential for inheritance contract or/and agreement consequences in regard for future inheritance ground.

Especially it important in Great Britain statute law: Richard Edwards and Nigel Stockwell points out that *Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975 article 11 are quite controversial*. This article rule allows the court *modify the consequences of the contract if the purchaser has not given or promised appropriate material satisfaction at the time of conclusion of the contract* (Edwards, Stockwell, 2005, 160-161).

Because term *contractual succession* implies a hereditary process, which beginning and end are not clearly defined, in order to select the necessary set of legal facts characteristic of the beginning and end of the legal relationship, it seems necessary to apply a criterion based on the category expressed by the term *correlation caused by differences in the determination of contractual succession priority in relation to applicable law* (Steinbuch Robert, 2008, 52).

This reason is *lex specialis* norms, which legally did not, established regulation regarding to contractual succession under situation of applicable obligation law private norms.

Note: lex specialis norms establish contractual succession on the inheritance contract basis simultaneously with private law norms, arising from discrete contracts, agreements and deals which exist as essential parts of norms, prescribing future succession.

Establishing *lex specialis* is carried out on the basis of the essential components of the norms that arise as a result of the qualification of the norms of contractual succession and the circumstances that are essential for the inheritance process – when analyzing *legi generali* norms and their application to *lex specialis* norms.

As a result of this process, a set of legal facts essential for contractual succession may arise both in inheritance and in other areas of legal regulation – family and obligation law.

By this reason the moment of commencement of the legal relationship mediated by above mentioned areas of legal regulation varies.

Due to this circumstance, dependence on the normative definition of priority for one of the areas of legal regulation, the correlation of *legi generali* must be determined in relation to *lex specialis*.

Accordingly, a model of harmonization of the law of obligations institutes corresponding to contractual succession in relation to succession law institutes should be derived by instruction, denoted above.

Otherwise, exists a risk of the emergence of non-corresponding, conflicting legal relationships with an uncertain legal nature and, accordingly, uncertain prospects.

In contractual succession, there is a need to emphasize the objective conditions of the formation, existence, and development of the subject matter and object of this institute.

Mandatory substantive law norms, lacking a uniform conflict-of-laws framework for contractual succession, and the incompleteness of existing norms – one set of conflict-of-laws frameworks governs the applicable inheritance law, another governs the applicable law of obligations – create a contradictory picture of the subject matter and object of contractual succession.

This is evident in all contractual succession agreements and deals, starting with the means of ensuring the interests of persons participating in contractual succession, ending with the problem of determining the closest connection between the essential components of a legal relationship and a specific legal order, the closest relationship and, simultaneously, in legality of the legal relationship itself.

To solve these problems, emphasis must be expressed in the normative definition of the moment of commencement of the application of the rules of substantive law inherent for a specific instrument of contractual succession, as well as the normative definition and consolidation of the termination of the effect of the rules of the applicable substantive law.

At present, in contractual succession exists an erroneous assumption that certain deals can be used to create objects of inheritance law.

This statement refers to the marriage contract *mortis causa*.

In this case, *lex personalis* introduces into contractual succession an additional element, in addition to *hereditatis futurae* concept, risk.

Lex personalis attributes the individual legal status of the testator to the law of the country of citizenship or residence. Because of this applicable inheritance law must take into account family law norms involved in the formation of the instruments of inheritance. If the testator holds dual or multiple citizenships, the issue of choosing the applicable family law is further complicated.

For the heir, these circumstances may entail unfavorable consequences in the form of a reduction in the size of the inheritance estate. The cause of which will be the effect of the imperative norms of family and inheritance law, affecting the formation and development over time of rights of claim on the part of persons included in the category of inalienable heirs and persons entitled to inalienable, additional and other forms of shares in hereditary mass.

In contractual succession is not observed *donatio* principle in its interpretation as a special relationship between the testator and the heir under agreement, contract or other contractual succession instrument.

Donatio as an instrument of the donation law has passed to contractual succession law must be objectified in the form of releasing the debtor (heir under contract or, in necessary cases, agreement) from the risks associated with the impact onward the object of contractual succession by influence *inheritance – a legal entity* concept norms in its temporal manifestation in regard to Civil Law sections’ 1508 prescripts.

Unstable, especially in the situation of mutual wills and marriage contracts *mortis causa* obligation law inevitably lead to the creation of situations which are not characteristic of the law of inheritance obligations in regard to Civil Law section 1508 claims.

Conversely, may arise situations and, consequently, objects characteristic of the law of obligations arising from family law which are inconsistent with *de lege ferenda* inheritance rights and interests of the parties involved in general process (Civil Law, section 639) and specific processes (Civil Law, section 639 impact onward to Civil Law sections 114, 606, in private cases – Civil Law section 1926) of contractual succession.

A special relationship (donatio) must contribute to the creation of the heir's prospective (supporting) interest. The heir fulfills inheritance obligations that have a monetary equivalent established as an essential component of the specific instrument of contractual succession.

Hereditary claims from third parties based on other laws and consistent with *inheritance – a legal entity* concept without mentioned above norms’ participating in future inheritance object creation leads to a substantive law conflict based on the competing interests of the parties involved in general and specific contractual succession processes. This example based on the various legal grounds application, necessitating conclusions regarding the legality of these claims.

The main issue in this situation is the problem of the grounds for recognition by the heir appointed by an agreement or other instrument of contractual succession.

In this case, the discussion about the grounds that require recognition as an heir appointed by an agreement or other instrument of contractual succession should be conducted on the admissibility and relevance of these grounds.

This argument additionally proofs, that in contractual succession, there is a need to emphasize the objective conditions of formation, existence and development of the subject matter and object of this institute.

Mandatory norms of substantive law, not provided with unified conflict-of-laws collision binding precisely for contractual succession, and the incompleteness of existing ones – *lex personalis* and *lex rei sitae*, force involved persons to divide applicable law norms, create dichotomy. This dichotomy sets to discrete contractual succession collision law regulation – one group of conflict-of-laws bindings regulates the applicable inheritance law, another – the applicable law of obligations.

This fact creates a contradictory picture of contractual succession subject matter and object.

This is manifested in the instruments of contractual succession, starting with allowed devices of ensuring the interests of persons participating in contractual succession, ending with the problem of determining the closest connection of the essential components of the legal relationship with a specific legal order, the closest relationship and the legality of the legal relationship itself.

To solve these problems, emphasis must be expressed in the normative definition of the moment of commencement of the application of the rules of substantive law inherent to a specific instrument of contractual succession, as well as the normative definition and consolidation of the termination of the effect of the rules of substantive law.

In contractual succession there is a misconception that certain instruments can be used to create objects of inheritance law.

This statement refers to the marriage contract *mortis causa*.

With regard to contractual succession, applies *inheritance a legal entity* concept. With regard to an heir under a contract or other instrument of contractual succession, the effect of this instrument must be specialized to norms, prescribed by Civil Law section 639 and, simultaneously, to norms, prescribed by Civil Law section 114 norms as a Civil Law section 639 essential part norms.

A solution that will limit the negative effect of the imperative *inheritance a legal entity* in relation to the heir appointed in accordance with the instrument of contractual succession by family law norms should be *hereditatis probabile* imperative.

This imperative, according to the proposed assumption, implies that the fruits and profits of the property, which recognized as a contractual succession instrument, prescribed by Civil Law section 114 norms as a Civil Law section 639 essential part norms may be subjected by hereditary mass, which regulation ensured by specific escape devices, essential for contractual succession family law private law norms, prescribed for Civil Law section 639 by Civil Law first section.

In turn, the transfer of fruits by the contractual heir to heirs on other grounds will not harm the inheritance rights and interests of the parties to the inheritance agreement or other contractual succession instrument.

Undoubtedly, *hereditatis probabile* imperative introduction will reduce aleatory and fiduciary degree nature of the agreement, based on Civil Law sections 114 and 639.

The second solution for problem mentioned above may be the allocation by the testator to the claimants on other grounds of a property provision, defined as a legate with an essential condition that the claimants nullificate and, in proper situations, renounce their claims in relation to the inherited property, defined as the object of a specific contractual succession deal.

In this case, it is necessary to define and interpret legates' content in relation to a specific norm of contractual succession.

The traditional legate definition as property allocated from testators' property is quite problematic and in a number of cases is unacceptable for mentioned contractual succession situations.

The heir under contract acquires inheritance rights, including the right to property, after a certain period of time, and the normative legate definition (Civil Law, section 500) will entail the allocation to claimants individually undefined testators' property.

This undoubtedly damages the inheritance rights and interests of the heir under the contract or other instrument of contractual succession, prescribed by Civil Law sections 114 and 639.

This may raise property conditional claims against claimants to compensate property contribution, which carried out by the heir and defined as an essential component of the contractual succession concrete agreement or deal.

The third option for resolving situation under *inheritance is a legal entity* concept norm is gift allocation to contractual heir ensuring simultaneous conclusion between him and testator for gift further allocation to satisfy claimants' legal interests.

This deal must be completed and executed during the lifetime of the testator. Otherwise, donation agreement may be classified as an inheritance contract (Civil Law, section 1926, second sentence).

Important in this situation is that donation *inter vivos to intent mortis causa agreement* deal will be acceptable for recognition and enforcement in certain jurisdictions which legal regulation doesn't contain contractual succession and contractual heir, respectively.

Summing up the issue of clarifying the role of inheritance and obligation law and their relationship in the formation of the legal regulation applicable to contractual succession, it seems necessary to cite the words of the French scientist, the founder of the classical theory of statutes, Bertrand d' Argentré *(d'Argentre Bertran)*.

These words quite accurately describe the situation that is currently developing regarding institutional interaction in the legal regulation of contractual succession:

coutume allowed to donate, bypassing the legal heir, no more than one third of the entire property. Any person with clear mind can donate a third of his property to another person (Bertrand d'Argentré, 1621).

In other words, individual legal status of the natural person, based on legal regulation within a certain territory, includes the owner's rights to perform only authorized actions of a certain nature – to dispose with his property only in a certain volume.

The standpoint of modern law, this possibility does not raise any doubts in a situation when property owner outstand its authorities as a subject of the right of inheritance by law or will.

A different situation exists if donor exists as a subject of inheritance right in the situation of a concluded inheritance agreement with donation *inter vivos to intent mortis causa agreement* clause or other contractual succession institute with similar or identical essential parts.

In this case, testator has voidable rights to alienate the property law objects' or, in some cases, testator does not have the right to alienate the property law objects' authorized his actions as a subject of inheritance law without heirs' consent.

However, discrete laws allow alienation. Civil Law states, that

an inheritance contract does not restrict the right of an estate-leaver, even though such may not have been separately contracted for, provided that he or she himself or herself has not directly relinquished such rights to act during his or her lifetime with his or her movable property and even, in reasonable quantities, to make a gift of it (Civil Law, section 648)

Swiss legislator allows in an identical situation inheritance agreement property law material objects' complete alienation. Swiss Civil Code stipulates that

the testator may, by contract of succession, undertake to another person to bequeath his or her estate or a legacy to that person or a third party. He or she is free to dispose of his or her property as he or she sees fit (Swiss Civil Code, article 494).

The term *dispose* applicable law can refer to paid or gratuitous property alienation.

For this reason, the rules of inheritance law, when concluding an inheritance agreement, are subject to the provisions of the Civil Law of the Republic of Latvia and the Swiss Civil Code, as burdened by obligation law norms, which application method onward the heir under agreement but also to third parties is not cleared.

This raises a dilemma regarding the status of the party in these contracts. The third party may be either the heir under the contract, or another person who has no relation to the heir under the contract.

This state complicates the legal relations arising as a result of the conclusion of an inheritance agreement fixed in this form.

The right of donation in this situation has a dichotomy with respect to the applicable rules of the law of donation.

The right of donation, defined as an essential component of the right of contractual succession, exists in the norms of this regulation in two forms:

1). donation made before the opening of the inheritance

2). donation made after the opening of the inheritance

The status of the persons involved in this form of donation, legal status of the subject matter of this donation, its content, name of the agreement, as well as its consequences are determined by these forms.

The complete or partial alienation of property by the owner is permissible only in the case of inheritance by will, when the will is revoked by the testator. In the case of an inheritance contract, such deal is impossible and requires its content correction. This content correction and contractual succession norm functionalization must be achieved by identifying specific legal regulation and implementing a specific legal statute – the statute of contractual succession.

This statute should establish specific legal regulations regarding donation law under situation of a concluded contractual succession contract or agreement.

Conclusions.

1. Contractual succession legal structure is a system of contracts and legal deals, the essential components of which are subject to legal regulation by norms that, by their legal nature, are intended to govern relations which mainly lie outside the scope of inheritance law. Mentioned system of contracts and deals possesses with open structure, in an appropriate situations contract and deals essentials may be combined and regrouped.

2. As a result of this circumstance, contractual succession norms contain significant discretion.

3. The institutional structure of contractual succession does not meet the requirements of the norms establishing entitled persons right to inheritance.

4. The individual legal status of persons participating in contractual succession cannot be clearly established.

References:

1. Israeli Succession Law, 5725-1965. With amendments.
2. Civil Law of the Republic of Latvia. Enacted: 28.01.1937. In force: 01.09.1992. Published: Valdības Vēstnesis, 41, 20.02.1937. With amendments.
3. Commercial Law of the Republic of Latvia. Enacted: 13.04.2000. In force: 01.01.2002.
4. Published: Latvijas Vēstnesis, 158/160, 04.05.2000. With amendments.
5. Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependants) Act 1975. 1975 Ch. 63. Enacted and in force: 12.11.1975. With amendments.
6. Swiss Civil Code. Adopted on May 28, 1904. Entered into force on December 10, 1907. Published: BBl 1904 IV 1, 1907 VI 367. With amendments.
7. Ralph Michaels. The functional method of comparative law. Duke Law Scholarship Repository // https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?params=/context/faculty_scholarship/article/2033/&-path_info=Functional_Method_of_Comparative_Law.pdf (09.12.2025).
8. Senāta Civilā Kasācijas Department Spriedumi // Tieslietu Ministers Vestneša pielikums . – Riga : Jūl. Petersona spiestuve, 1924.
9. Sitkoff Robert H. An Agency Costs theory of trust law // Cornell Law Review, 2004; Vol.89.
10. Hansmann Henry. Kraakman Reiner. The Essential Role of Organizational Law // The Yale Law Journal, 2000: Vol. 110.
11. Passler Richard G. Comparative Impairment: Louisiana's New Methodology for Resolving Conflicts of Law // Louisiana Law Review, 1991; Vol.52. Nr. 2.
12. Hay Herma Hill. The Use of Comparative Impairment to Resolve True Conflicts: An Evaluation of the California Experience // California Law Review, 1980; Vol. 68. Nr.4.
13. The Baltic Private Law Code. Article 1701. The right of contractual succession has priority over the right of inheritance by will. The two aforementioned rights of inheritance have priority over inheritance by law. In Vidzeme, these three inheritance rights may coexist on the basis that one specified portion of the entire estate (e.g., half, a third, a quarter, etc.) is due to the testamentary heirs, the second portion to the contractual heirs, and the third portion to the legal heirs. In Kurzeme, all three types of inheritance may also coexist simultaneously; however, statute inheritance combining is not permitted. The Baltic Private Law Code. Rīga, 1928.
14. Some Doubts and Questions in the Law especially of Scotland as well, some decisions of the lords of Council and Sessions. Ed. by Sir John Nisbet of Dirleton .– Ann Arbor, 2011.
15. James Cable Partners v. City of Jamestown. Tenn., 822 F. Supp. 476 (M.D. Tenn. 1993).
16. Daniel E. Troy. Retroactive Legislation. Washington: the AEI Press, 1998.
17. Wilson v. Estate of W. L. Kings. 131 Ind. App. 412 (1960). 170 N.E.2d 63.
18. Ross Ashby, William. An Introduction to Cybernetics. London: Chapman and Hall, 1957.
19. Zekoll Joachim., Reimann Matthias. Introduction to German Law. 2nd ed. Wolters Kluwer, 2005.
20. Briedis V. Mantojuma pieņemšana un mantojuma atraidīšana. Riga, 1939.g.
21. Judgment of the Department of Civil Cases of the Senate, case No. SKC-382/2007.

22. Zariņš J. Mantojuma dalīšana tiesas ceļā . Rīga , 1935.g.
23. Ross Ashby William (with an introduction by Jeffrey Goldstein). Variety, Constraint, and the Law of Requisite Variety// E: CO, 2011; Vol. 13.
24. Sawyer Caroline. Spero Miriam. Succession, Wills and Probate. 3rd ed. Abington: Routledge. 2015.
25. Edwards Richard., Stockwell Nigel. Trusts and Equity. 7th ed. Harlow: Longman, 2005.
26. Steinbuch, Robert. An Empirical Analysis of Reversal Rates in the Eighth Circuit during 2008 // Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review, 2009; 41(1).
27. Haas Ulrich: Die Europäische Zuständigkeitsordnung in Erbsachen. Jud/Rechberger/Reichelt, Kollisionsrecht in der Europäischen Union. Wien, 2008.
28. Bertrand d'Argentré. Commentaire des customs de Bretagne, Paris, 1621.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-5

THE WESTERN AZERBAIJAN ISSUE: IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND DIPLOMACY

Sefd Gülgün Mübariz Quliyeva,
PhD in Political Science,
Lecturer at the Department of Diplomacy and Processes Modern Integration,
Baku State University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0003-9754-3588
gulgun2004@mail.ru

Abstract. The issue of Western Azerbaijan is a complex historical and political problem shaped by consecutive waves of ethnic engineering, forced deportations and demographic manipulation carried out in the South Caucasus throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The complete expulsion of Azerbaijanis from Western Azerbaijan in four major stages 1905 1906, 1918–1920, 1948–1953 and 1988–1991 fundamentally altered the region's ethnic landscape and contributed to the establishment of a mono-ethnic Armenian state. These deportation processes deprived hundreds of thousands of people of their ancestral homelands, destroyed cultural heritage sites and caused profound social and psychological damage. International legal documents including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Refugee Convention, the European Convention on Human Rights and UNESCO conventions affirm the right of return, restitution of property and the prohibition of ethnic cleansing. Therefore, the issue is not merely a historical dispute but a clear case of violations of fundamental human rights. In the modern period, changing geopolitical realities in the region, new diplomatic dynamics between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the increasing involvement of international actors have further highlighted the relevance of the Western Azerbaijan issue. The Return Concept adopted by the Republic of Azerbaijan prioritizes a humanitarian and legal approach to the matter. Addressing the consequences of deportation, ensuring safe and dignified return and restoring cultural heritage are essential for building lasting peace and regional stability in the South Caucasus.

The analysis shows that resolving the Western Azerbaijan issue not only restores historical justice but also provides the foundation for a fair, stable and sustainable regional order for future generations.

Key words: Western Azerbaijan, deportation, ethnic cleansing, right of return, international law, cultural heritage, South Caucasus, regional security, peace process.

Introduction. The issue of Western Azerbaijan is one of the most complex and strategically important issues in the history of Azerbaijan. Formed at the intersection of historical, ethno-demographic and political processes, this issue is not only related to the historical memory of a people, but also has special relevance in the context of modern international law, regional security and diplomatic relations.

Western Azerbaijan, the territory of the present-day Republic of Armenia, was the ancient Azerbaijani lands where Azerbaijani Turks lived compactly for centuries, created a rich cultural heritage and shaped socio-cultural life. Historical sources, archival documents and demographic indicators clearly show the demographic superiority of the Azerbaijani Turkic population in the region until the end of the 19th century.

Political changes, inter-imperial competition and ethnic engineering policies taking place in the region in the 19th–20th centuries led to the systematic suppression of the Azerbaijani Turkic population, forced deportations and mass murders. The massacres of 1905–1906, the repressions carried out during the First Republic of Armenia, the planned deportation policy of 1948–1953, and finally, the last mass expulsions that took place in 1988–1991, radically changed the ethnic map of the region. As a result, hundreds of thousands of Azerbaijani Turks were deprived of their historical lands, and the region acquired a monoethnic character.

In the modern era, the issue of Western Azerbaijan has become a topical issue not only as a humanitarian tragedy, but also in terms of the rule of international law, human rights, the right to return to one's land, and the regional peace agenda. The Azerbaijani state and the international expert community approach this issue on legal, diplomatic, and historical grounds, and take steps to promote it at the level of international organizations.

The main purpose of the article is to analyze the historical roots of the West Azerbaijan problem, its international legal basis, the humanitarian consequences of deportations, and the mechanisms of discussion in a modern diplomatic framework. This approach is of particular importance both in terms of restoring historical justice and in terms of forming a sustainable peace and security architecture in the region.

As a result of the forced displacements, mass killings, and systematic ethnic cleansing policies carried out against Azerbaijani Turks starting from the 19th century and more intensively in the 20th century, the demographic map of this territory has been radically changed. It is not only historical facts that make this topic relevant today. Current political realities, the change in the balance of power in the South Caucasus, the new conditions that have emerged in the region after the Second Karabakh War, and the increase in Azerbaijan's diplomatic activity are among the main factors that have brought the West Azerbaijan issue to the international level. This issue is not only relevant for Azerbaijan is one of the main factors that brought the issue to the international level. This issue is of particular importance not only for Azerbaijan, but also for the entire South Caucasus region and in the context of international law. In the article, I will approach the issue from a historical, legal, humanitarian and diplomatic perspective, and analyze the role of international actors, the right of return and ensuring peace in the region. This issue is not only a humanitarian problem; it is also a strategic and legal priority. The right of return is not only a legal problem, but also a fundamental principle for restoring peace and stability in the region.

First of all, it should be noted that the Western Azerbaijan region has been one of the territories inhabited by Turkic-speaking tribes and the later formed Azerbaijani people for thousands of years. Since ancient times, these lands have covered regions such as Goycha, Zangezur, Daralayaz, Vedibasar and Garakils. The population living here was mainly composed of Azerbaijani Turks and the Turkic-Muslim culture was dominant in the region. Lake Goycha, the Araz River, the Zangezur Mountains, and the Alagoz Peak were all considered ancient natural and geographical treasures of Azerbaijan. This region was known for its rich water resources, fertile lands, and favorable climate. The Goycha district was especially famous for its fishing and agriculture. This geography was also of great strategic importance. The Zangezur region, which provided Azerbaijan with a connection to Nakhchivan, was especially important. This territory was later artificially annexed to Armenia, which led to the severance of direct communication between Azerbaijan and Nakhchivan. Medieval sources, Arab, Persian, and Armenian chronicles indicate that the following territories were dominated by the Kipchak-Turkic tribes, the Kangarli, the Karakoyunlu and Agkoyunlu Turkic states, and the Safavid administration.

The mass influx of Armenians into the region only occurred after the 19th century, especially during the Russian Empire. This fact reveals that the demographic transformation in the context of Western Azerbaijan was carried out artificially. Thus, Western Azerbaijan was not only a physical land, but also a carrier of national memory, culture and identity. Mosques, cemeteries, ancient monuments belonging to the Azerbaijani Turks existed in this geography for centuries, but at the end of the 20th century, most of these traces were purposefully erased. Thus, the history of the Western Azerbaijan issue should be understood not only as a process of deportation and violations of rights, but also as part of a process of changing ethnic relations and the regional balance of power. These historical processes are one of the important factors shaping the political architecture of today's South Caucasus.

Historical context. The formation of the West Azerbaijan issue is directly related to the political and ethno-demographic changes that took place in the region at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. During this period, the territory of the South Caucasus was located at the center of geopolitical competition between the Russian and Iranian empires, as a result of which systematic effects were created on the ethnic composition of the region. With the treaties of Gulistan (1813) and Turkmenchay (1828), a new administrative-political reality was formed in the region, and the process of mass resettlement of the Armenian population to the South Caucasus began. This process had a serious impact on the demographic structure of the region until the end of the 19th century.

Transformation of Yerevan into a province and sequential armenization

The Russian Empire created the Yerevan province in 1850 on the territory of the former Yerevan Khanate. The formation of the province strengthened the position of Armenians in the administrative structure and created conditions for a change in the ethno-political balance. Official statistics conducted at the end of the 19th century show that: In the city of Yerevan itself, Azerbaijani Turks were the majority for a long time (until the 1870s), but the Armenian population in the villages of the province rapidly increased due to resettlement, and Azerbaijani Turks were gradually forced out of the cities and into the villages. This process created a social basis for the subsequent violence.

The rise of the Armenian national movement and armed organizations. At the end of the 19th century, the idea of "Greater Armenia" began to spread widely among Armenian political circles. In the 1880s–1890s, Armenian political organizations (Hnchak, Dashnaktsutyun, etc.) considered the territories of Western Azerbaijan as part of their future state. During this period: The creation of armed groups, the formation of a centralized national ideology, and the policy of resettling Ottoman and Iranian Armenians to the Caucasus were unofficially supported. The great powers, especially Russia and the West, used Armenians as a geopolitical tool in the region, which led to the deepening of ethnic conflict.

Events of 1905–1906

Against the backdrop of deepening political crises in the Russian Empire at the beginning of the 20th century, a series of massacres and ethnic clashes occurred as a result of the mass targeting of the Azerbaijani population in the Zangezur, Iravan and Karabakh regions by Armenian armed groups. These events are considered to be the first large-scale examples of the policy of gradual displacement of the Azerbaijani population from the region.

At the beginning of the 20th century, the Russian Empire was experiencing a deep political crisis: the defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905, the strengthening of revolutionary movements, the loss of control of the central government in the regions, and the aggravation of interethnic relations in the Caucasus. Taking advantage of this weakness, Armenian nationalist organizations, especially the Dashnaktsutyun, began to expand their armed movement in the Caucasus. After the attack on Azerbaijani Turks in Tbilisi in February 1905, the clashes spread to the Ganja, Baku, Shusha, Nakhchivan and Western Azerbaijan regions.

In the Western Azerbaijan region. Zangezur, Iravan, Goycha, Vedibasar and Zangibasar became the centers of controlled violence. Sources indicate that the Dashnak groups had a strategic plan:

1. To reduce the demographic weight of the Turkish-Muslim population in the region,
2. To ensure Armenian dominance in Iravan and surrounding regions,
3. To create an “Armenian corridor” in Zangezur,
4. To form a “pure ethnic base” for future Armenian statehood.

These activities later became the starting point of the massacres of 1918–1920.

1918–1920s: The policy of the First Republic of Armenia

The First Republic of Armenia, which emerged as a new political actor in the region against the backdrop of World War I and the collapse of the empire, carried out violent measures against Azerbaijanis. Historical documents show that during this period, thousands of Azerbaijani villages were destroyed in the Iravan, Surmeli, Zangezur and Goycha regions, the population was expelled, and ethnic cleansing was widely practiced. As a result of this process, the compact living area of Azerbaijanis in the region was significantly reduced.

The Soviet period: deportations of 1937 and 1948–1953

The establishment of Soviet power did not eliminate ethnic oppression, but rather continued it on new ideological grounds. As part of the repressions of 1937, thousands of Azerbaijanis were removed from the region under the label of "nationalist elements".

The deportations of 1948–1953 were planned and massive. During these years, more than 150,000 Azerbaijanis were resettled from their historical lands in the Armenian SSR to various regions of Central Asia and Azerbaijan. Although the official justification for the deportation was "lack of land for agriculture," the process actually served to form a monoethnic Armenia.

1988–1991: The last wave of deportations

On the eve of the collapse of the USSR, the entire Azerbaijani population living in the territory of Armenia approximately 300,000 people was subjected to the last mass deportation. This stage of deportations is a classic example of ethnic cleansing in terms of its scale and consequences. Settlements belonging to Azerbaijanis were destroyed, mosques, cemeteries and historical monuments were systematically destroyed, and the region acquired a completely monoethnic character.

The successive deportations, massacres and ethnic engineering policies that continued from the 19th to the end of the 20th century radically changed the demographic map of the territory of Western Azerbaijan. These historical processes created both grave consequences from a humanitarian point of view and were accompanied by gross violations of international law. It is this historical background that is the main reason why the issue of Western Azerbaijan remains relevant in the modern era in the field of international law and diplomacy.

Legal and international assessment of deportation. The 1937 deportation is included in the category of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement in international law.

It is an important precedent in terms of human rights: the Soviet republics implemented mass deprivation of citizens based on their ethnicity.

The 1937 deportation: It constituted the initial stage of ethnic engineering in the territories of Western Azerbaijan. It limited the opportunities for Azeri Turks to live in the mono-ethnic Armenian republic. It laid the foundation for subsequent deportation and violence policies, especially the events of 1948–1953 and 1988–1991. During Stalin's repressions, thousands of Azerbaijani Turks were considered "unreliable elements in the border zone" and deported to Central Asia.

The 1948–1953 deportation: This deportation was already a mass ethnic cleansing carried out by official decision. By Resolution No. 4083 of the USSR Council of Ministers, more than 100 thousand Azerbaijani Turks were expelled from the Armenian SSR. This falls under the category of "forcible transfer" and "crime against humanity" under international law.

1948–1953: More than 150,000 Azerbaijani Turks were forcibly deported, leaving their land and property behind. This deportation was carried out by an official decision of the USSR Council of Ministers. The main goal: the formation of a mono-ethnic Armenian settlement zone on the border with Turkey.

1960–80s The Azerbaijani Turks were kept in a state of economic and political isolation in Armenia. There were almost no Azerbaijani Turk representatives in local government.

International legal framework

The right of the West Azerbaijani Turks to return to their homeland is established by a number of fundamental instruments of international law. These rights are reinforced within the framework of humanitarian law, human rights law, and refugee protection mechanisms.

1. Right of Return. The right of return is recognized as a universal principle in international law and is primarily established by the following documents:

Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): According to Article 13, paragraph 2, “Everyone has the right to return to his country” (18. United Nations. 1948. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*),

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966): The Covenant recognizes the right of individuals to leave and return to their country (20. United Nations. 1966).

1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees: Provides for the right of refugees to return safely to their homeland (21 UN General Assembly 2021).

Based on these documents, the return of West Azerbaijani Turks is a fully legitimate international legal principle. Academic studies also emphasize that the right of return is a restorative justice mechanism in cases of ethnic cleansing and forced displacement (Hathaway, 2005).

2. Prohibition of deportation and ethnic cleansing. The removal of the West Azerbaijani population from their homeland in four major waves of deportations in the 19th–20th centuries is considered illegal under international law.

Deportation and ethnic cleansing are strictly prohibited by the following documents:

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948): Recognizes acts of mass violence, expulsion, and “total or partial destruction” against an ethnic group as an element of genocide.

Geneva Conventions (1949) and their Additional Protocols: Define the forcible transfer of civilians as a war crime.

European Convention on Human Rights (1950): Prohibits the violation of the right to property, personal integrity and family life of individuals.

Researchers note that deportation has not only physical but also cultural, social and psychological consequences, causing long-term collective trauma.

3. Property rights and compensation. The forcible dispossession of Azerbaijanis from their property in Armenia between 1918 and 1991 falls within the scope of what the case law of the European Court of Human Rights has deemed “unlawful expropriation .

Under international law:

There is a right to restitution of property or fair compensation.

The right of forcibly displaced persons to own their property upon return is an obligation of states (Williams, 2015).

Protection of cultural heritage and prohibition of vandalism The destruction of mosques, cemeteries and other historical monuments belonging to Azerbaijanis by Armenia is contrary to international conventions:

UNESCO’s 1954 Hague Convention prohibits the destruction of cultural heritage.

ISESCO and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have declared the destruction of Muslim cultural monuments to be contrary to international humanitarian law.

In academic studies, the destruction of cultural heritage is considered “cultural genocide,

Humanitarian and social consequences. Ethnic cleansing and deportation decisions are not only legal violations, but also cause profound humanitarian disasters.

According to studies:

Thousands of people have lost their lives or been injured.

Families have been torn apart, communities have been destroyed.

Refugee status causes long-term social and psychological trauma.

For this reason, acts of deportation are among the most serious violations of both international criminal law and the human rights system.

Modern diplomatic context and Azerbaijan’s position

The issue of Western Azerbaijan has become more relevant in the context of the geopolitical dynamics of the region, approaches based on international law, and regional security architecture in the 21st century. The facts related to the transformation of Armenia into a monoethnic state, the complete deportation of Azerbaijanis from their historical lands in four stages, and the systematic destruction of cultural heritage have led to the issue taking a wider place on the diplomatic agenda.

Azerbaijan's official position is based on international law and the issue is approached not as a territorial claim against the other party, but as "recognition of the right of return, ensuring human rights, and restoration of historical justice" (Azerbaijan MFA.2023). This approach is being accepted by international actors as a more constructive framework.

State policy of Azerbaijan: Concept of Return. The institutional formation of the West Azerbaijan Community in 2022 and the adoption of the "Concept of Return" indicate that the issue is being addressed in a coordinated manner at the state level. The main elements of the concept are: International recognition of the facts of deportation, Safe, phased and monitored return of Azerbaijanis, Restoration of property rights, Fulfillment of Armenia's international obligations.

This model is consistent with the mechanisms referred to in contemporary conflict resolution studies as "peace-framed return strategies" (Williams, R. s56).

Azerbaijan-Armenia relations and the peace agenda. The new geopolitical reality that has emerged in the region since 2020 has brought the prospect of a peace treaty between the two countries to the agenda. Azerbaijan is bringing the rights of West Azerbaijani Turks to the agenda in peace negotiations within the framework of three main principles:

1. Recognition of deportation,
2. Ensuring return,
3. Restoration and protection of cultural heritage.

International studies note that peace agreements create long-term stability in cases of ethnic cleansing only when they include the restoration of rights (Cassese, 2001).

Approach of international actors

The issue of West Azerbaijan is not only in the focus of attention between Azerbaijan and Armenia, but also of international actors. The approaches of international organizations and states play an important role in assessing this issue at the legal and diplomatic level.

UN. The return of the population deported from conflict areas is recognized as a universal principle in UN documents (UN General Assembly.2021). Referring to these documents, Azerbaijan places the issue of West Azerbaijan in the context of humanitarian law.

European Union. The EU considers "property restoration and protection of human rights" a priority in peace initiatives in the Caucasus . EU representatives have repeatedly stated that the right of return of refugees should be taken into account in a peace agreement between the two countries.

OSCE. The OSCE supports the principle of "voluntary return" in conflict resolution and Armenia has been reminded of its obligations in this context (Council of Europe 1950).

Turkey and the Organization of Turkic States. Turkey considers Azerbaijan's right of return as a "natural right and international norm" (ECtHR 2005).

The Organization of Turkic States, in its statements on Western Azerbaijan, supported the protection of cultural heritage and the recognition of the rights of forcibly displaced people.

Armenia's position and international obligations. Armenia did not consider the return of Western Azerbaijanis possible for many years. However, against the backdrop of increasing international pressure and the actualization of the peace agenda, official Yerevan for the first time declared its openness to "discussing the issue within the framework of human rights" (Bevan, 2006). The main obligations incumbent on Armenia are: Elimination of the consequences of deportation, Ensuring security for the return of Azerbaijanis, Restoration or compensation of property, Protection and restoration of cultural heritage. These are fully consistent with international legal mechanisms (Cornell , 2017).

New geopolitical order in the region. After 2020, the weakening of the Russian factor in the region, the growing influence of Turkey, and the more active return of the West to the region have created new opportunities for resolving the issue of Western Azerbaijan (Cornell, 2015).

In this context, Azerbaijan is achieving progress on the basis of a model based on international legitimacy.

Diplomatic influence and humanitarian aspects. The positions of international actors determine the direction of diplomatic efforts and affect the restoration of peace in the region. Humanitarian issues, the situation of refugees and internally displaced persons, ethnic cleansing and the inviolability of civilian property are in the focus of international actors. These approaches support Azerbaijan's diplomatic strategy and contribute to the recognition of legal arguments. The approaches of international actors strengthen the legal, humanitarian and diplomatic framework of the West Azerbaijan issue. Different perspectives and diplomatic efforts play an important role in ensuring justice and peace in the region. As Azerbaijan's historical, legal and humanitarian arguments are recognized by the international community, the issue is discussed more widely within the framework of international law and the possibilities for a peaceful solution in the future increase.

Humanitarian, legal and psychological implications

The consequences of the deprivation of Western Azerbaijanis from their historical lands through successive waves of deportations in the 19th–20th centuries are not limited to demographic changes alone. The deportations caused long-term damage on humanitarian, legal, and psychological levels, leaving deep scars on the social structure, cultural memory, and collective identity of an entire society.

Humanitarian consequences. The deportations were always accompanied by massive human rights violations, violence, and social tragedies. Studies show that thousands of civilians died during the forced displacements, hundreds of settlements were destroyed, and the population was left in dire socio-economic conditions (Hunter, 2021).

The main humanitarian consequences are as follows:

Human casualties: The killings of Azerbaijani civilians in 1905–1906, 1918–1920, and 1988–1991 illustrate the scale of ethnic violence.

Mass displacement: Approximately 300,000 Azerbaijanis were completely expelled from the territory of Armenia in 1988–1991 and received refugee status.

Destruction of communities: Ancient settlements were evacuated, and socio-cultural life, which had been formed over hundreds of years, was destroyed within a few years.

Loss of cultural heritage: Mosques, cemeteries, historical monuments and other tangible and cultural heritage sites were systematically destroyed.

According to UNHCR, forced displacement results not only in physical spatial change, but also in long-term social disruption and the destruction of community structures.

Legal consequences. The deportation of Western Azerbaijanis is included in the category of grave crimes under international law. Deportation, ethnic cleansing and illegal confiscation of property are strictly prohibited in international humanitarian and human rights instruments (Cassese, 2001).

The legal consequences can be systematized as follows:

1.2 Violation of the right to return. According to UN documents, every individual has the right to return to his country. Preventing the return of Western Azerbaijanis is considered a violation of this fundamental right.

2.2. Violation of the right to property. During the deportation, houses, lands, farms and religious and cultural objects belonging to individuals were illegally confiscated. In the case law of the ECHR, such cases are assessed as "unlawful confiscation" and "violation of the right to property" (ECtHR.2005).

2.3. Crimes against cultural heritage. According to the 1954 Hague Convention of UNESCO, the destruction of cultural heritage is considered an international crime (Turkish MFA.2023).

2.4. Crimes of deportation and ethnic cleansing. The Genocide Convention and the Geneva Conventions define forced displacement and ethnic cleansing as war crimes and crimes against humanity. This legal framework shows that the return of Western Azerbaijanis is not only a humanitarian issue, but also an international legal obligation.

3. Psychological consequences. Forced displacement is a process that causes not only physical but also deep psychological trauma. Psychological effects last for several generations and shape collective memory.

3.1. Collective trauma. Studies show that communities experience a "collective trauma syndrome" as a result of deportation and violence (Cernea1997). This trauma causes the following: a sense of insecurity, social fragmentation, moral and psychological damage, and an identity crisis.

3.2. Refugee syndrome. The following psychological conditions were recorded in the hundreds of thousands of Western Azerbaijanis deported in 1988–1991: long-term stress and depression, forced adaptation difficulties, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and social isolation.

3.3. Intergenerational trauma. Forced displacement not only directly affects the generation whose life is changed, but also transmits psychological and social behavioral patterns to subsequent generations. This is one of the main factors affecting the long-term psychological state of an entire society.

3.4. Damage to cultural memory. The loss of historical and cultural spaces leads to a weakening of collective identity. This creates a deep gap in both individual and social psychology.

The Concept of Return and legal diplomacy. The "Concept of Return" adopted by the West Azerbaijan Community in 2023 serves as the main political and legal document of this strategy. The document emphasizes that the mass deportation of Azerbaijani Turks from Armenia is a violation of international law and the right of return should be considered as a redress for this violation (United Nations.1966).

The main legal arguments in the document: Reference to UN resolutions and conventions; The fact that forced displacement on ethnic grounds is contrary to human rights;

ecognition of vandalism against cultural heritage as a war crime.

Voice and diplomatic initiatives on international platforms. The Azerbaijani state and the West Azerbaijan Community have begun to raise the issue of West Azerbaijan on the agenda of various international organizations and platforms: The UN in 2023 presented the deportations from West Azerbaijan by representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the context of human rights violations. The OSCE discussed the trend of Armenia becoming a monoethnic state. The OIC condemned Armenia's policy against Muslim cultural heritage. The Council of Europe and PACE presented legally-based documents on the protection of cultural heritage and the right of return. The aim of these initiatives is to influence international public opinion, as well as to keep Armenia's political and legal responsibility on the agenda, and to present the peaceful return of Azerbaijani Turks as an internationally legitimate right.

Azerbaijan's modern approach is built on three main pillars:

Restoration of historical justice, Recognition of the right of return based on international law, Gaining international legitimacy through multilateral diplomatic initiatives. This strategy is supported not only by national ideological memory, but also by real legal and diplomatic mechanisms.

Formation and Organization of the Azerbaijani Diaspora. The establishment of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora after 2001. One of the most important steps for the systematic formation and organization of the Azerbaijani diaspora was the establishment of the State Committee for Work with the Diaspora in 2001. The main task of this committee is to strengthen the ties of Azerbaijani communities living abroad, unite them in the spirit of national solidarity and patriotism, and at the same time carry out coordination work to protect the interests of the Azerbaijani state at the international level. As a result of the committee's activities, cooperation between diaspora organizations has expanded, and information exchange and propaganda work have become more systematic.

Western Azerbaijan Community and other key diaspora structures. The Western Azerbaijan Community is of particular importance as a leading actor of the diaspora in bringing the issue of Western Azerbaijan to the international agenda. This community, established in 2022, works to protect the rights of our deported compatriots, convey historical truths to the world community, and ensure the right of return. The community's participation in international platforms and strengthening ties with Azerbaijani communities in various countries increase its influence. In addition, other diaspora organizations operating in various countries, such as the Congress of American Azerbaijanis, the Congress of European Azerbaijanis, and the Azerbaijani Diaspora in Canada, include the issue of Western Azerbaijan in their programs and play an active role in protecting national interests.

The position and diplomatic initiatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan regarding Western Azerbaijan, The Republic of Azerbaijan has kept the issue of Western Azerbaijan on the agenda for many years in the context of the humanitarian crisis and deportation, but after 2020 it began to approach this topic more openly and strategically. In particular, in the speeches of President Ilham Aliyev, this issue has begun to be expressed as "restoration of historical justice and peaceful return of Azerbaijani Turks". The Azerbaijani state approaches the issue from legal, historical and diplomatic aspects and addresses the international community with real facts and documents.

The main initiatives are as follows. The activities of the West Azerbaijan Community have been expanded and began to continue their activities in a new structure in 2022. The community addresses appeals to international organizations and states, submits documents related to deportations and conducts public diplomacy. The "West Azerbaijan Charter" was adopted, establishing the legal framework for the right of Azerbaijani Turks to return to these territories. This document was prepared with references to UN documents, the European Convention on Human Rights and the Geneva Conventions. Within the framework of the "Great Return" concept, the goal of the right-based, non-coercive and peaceful return of Azerbaijani Turks to their historical homeland was set. Azerbaijani diplomatic missions and diaspora organizations raise the issue of Western Azerbaijan at international events, disseminate information about it in the media and academic platforms. Azerbaijan's position is not revanchist, but rather rights-based and humanitarian. This issue has become an important element of the diplomatic agenda for the recognition of the right of return, Armenia's compliance with international obligations and the establishment of peace in the region.

World Congresses of Azerbaijanis and the Place of the Western Azerbaijan Issue There The World Congresses of Azerbaijanis, which are an important platform for the unity and coordination of the Azerbaijani diaspora, constantly keep this issue in the spotlight. The issue of Western Azerbaijan has been repeatedly raised at the Congresses held since 2001, and its legal and political aspects have been widely discussed. A number of decisions, calls and recommendations have been adopted through the Congresses, and contributions have been made to diaspora organizations in terms of mutual activity and information exchange. These platforms also play a key role in statements and appeals addressed to the international community, especially political and humanitarian institutions. The documents adopted at the congresses demand that the facts of deportation and ethnic cleansing be firmly condemned under international law and that solutions be found.

The Role of the Azerbaijani Diaspora and Information Diplomacy. The role of Azerbaijani diaspora organizations and information diplomacy in the process of raising the issue of Western Azerbaijan to the international level is becoming increasingly important. Diaspora organizations, which act as a complement to the official position of the state, have become an important tool in conveying both legal and historical facts to the world community.

Activities of diaspora organizations: The example of the USA, Europe and Turkey. Since the 2000s, Azerbaijani diaspora organizations have been engaged in campaigns and awareness-raising activities aimed at raising the issue of Western Azerbaijan to the international agenda. The activity is mainly manifested in the following regions:

USA: Azerbaijani diaspora organizations operating in the USA, especially the US Azeris Network and the Assembly of Friends of Azerbaijan, have raised the issue of ethnic cleansing of Armenia against Azerbaijani Turks at various panels, conferences and through the press. They have sent letters to the US Congress, submitted petitions, and documented the stories of families deported from Western Azerbaijan.

European Union countries: Diaspora organizations operating in Germany, the Netherlands, and France, especially the European Azerbaijanis Congress (EAC), have held lobbying and public events to raise the issue of Western Azerbaijan in the European Parliament and PACE. The event titled "Forgotten Deportations" held in Brussels in 2023 was an important step in this direction (Hathaway, 2005).

Turkey: Diaspora organizations in Turkey have presented the issue of Western Azerbaijan both in Turkish society and internationally, taking the slogan "one nation, two states" as a basis, and have played an active role, especially in media and expert platforms.

Media and communication policy: Information strategies for the restoration of historical justice. The issue of Western Azerbaijan is conveyed to an international audience through the media, which is an important tool of information warfare, in various ways:

Documentaries and graphic materials: Short films and animations depicting deportations from Western Azerbaijan in 2022–2023 were produced and published on YouTube and other platforms. At the same time, deportations are presented visually through interactive maps and timelines.

Additional communication channels: Statements are made to the international media through diplomatic missions, embassies and consulates, and press conferences are organized. This information both exposes Armenia's policy of creating a monoethnic state and justifies the right of return (Akçam, 2015).

Creation of academic and expert networks. In order to present the issue of Western Azerbaijan not only on an emotional and political basis, but also on an academic basis, networking activities have been strengthened in the following areas:

Conferences and symposiums: International scientific conferences and forums on Western Azerbaijan have been held since 2023. For example, ADA University and the Western Azerbaijan Community jointly held a scientific conference entitled "Deportations and International Law".

Formation of an expert base: Relations have been established between local and foreign lawyers, historians and political scientists, and groups such as the Western Azerbaijan Legal Advisory Group have been established in this direction.

Publications and scientific articles: The number of academic articles on topics such as deportation, destruction of cultural heritage, right of return and international legal framework is increasing, and their publication in international scientific journals is encouraged (Barakat, 2010).

General conclusion. Strengthening the activities of the Azerbaijani diaspora and basing information diplomacy on institutional foundations makes a significant contribution to the international recognition of the West Azerbaijan issue. This is of strategic importance both in terms of the promotion of cultural genocide and the acceptance of the idea of peaceful return by the international community.

Problems and Prospects. The West Azerbaijan issue at the modern stage acquires relevant geopolitical and legal shades in both the regional and international context. The future development trajectory of the issue depends on the interaction of a number of complex factors. Chief among these are the peace process with Armenia, the mechanisms for the application of international law, and changes in the regional security architecture.

Diaspora and the West Azerbaijan Community

The Role of the Azerbaijani Diaspora and Information Diplomacy. The role of Azerbaijani diaspora organizations and information diplomacy in the process of raising the issue of West Azerbaijan to the international level is becoming increasingly important. Diaspora organizations, which act as a complement to the official position of the state, have become an important tool in conveying both legal and historical facts to the world community.

The activities of diaspora organizations: the example of the USA, Europe and Turkey. Since the 2000s, Azerbaijani diaspora organizations have been engaged in campaigns and awareness-raising activities aimed at putting the issue of West Azerbaijan on the international agenda. The activity is mainly manifested in the following regions:

USA: Azerbaijani diaspora organizations operating in the USA, especially the US Azeris Network and the Assembly of Friends of Azerbaijan, have raised the issue of ethnic cleansing of Armenia against Azerbaijani Turks on the agenda at various panels, conferences and through the press. They have sent letters to the US Congress, submitted petitions, and documented the stories of families deported from West Azerbaijan.

European Union countries: Diaspora organizations operating in Germany, the Netherlands and France, in particular the European Azerbaijanis Congress (EAC), have held lobbying and public events to raise the issue of Western Azerbaijan in the European Parliament and PACE. The event titled "Forgotten Deportations" held in Brussels in 2023 was an important step in this direction (Əliyeva. 2021).

Turkey: Diaspora organizations in Turkey have presented the issue of Western Azerbaijan both in Turkish society and internationally, taking the slogan "one nation, two states" as a basis, and have played an active role, especially in media and expert platforms.

Media and communication policy: Information strategies for the restoration of historical justice. The issue of Western Azerbaijan is conveyed to the international audience through the media, which is an important tool of information warfare, in various ways:

Documentaries and graphic materials: Short films and animations depicting deportations from Western Azerbaijan in 2022–2023 were produced and published on YouTube and other platforms. At the same time, deportations were visually presented through interactive maps and timelines.

Additional communication channels: Statements are made to the international media through diplomatic missions, embassies and consulates, and press conferences are organized. This information both exposes Armenia’s policy of creating a monoethnic state and justifies the right of return (Akçam, 2015).

Creation of academic and expert networks. In order to present the issue of Western Azerbaijan not only on an emotional and political basis, but also on an academic basis, networking activities have been strengthened in the following areas:

Conferences and symposiums: International scientific conferences and forums related to Western Azerbaijan have been held since 2023. For example, ADA University and the Western Azerbaijan Community jointly held a scientific conference entitled “Deportations and International Law”.

Formation of an expert base: Contacts have been established between local and foreign lawyers, historians and political scientists, and groups such as the Western Azerbaijan Legal Advisory Group have been established in this direction.

Publications and scientific articles: The number of academic articles on topics such as deportation, destruction of cultural heritage, the right of return and the international legal framework is increasing, and their publication in international scientific journals is encouraged.

General conclusion. Strengthening the activities of the Azerbaijani diaspora and basing information diplomacy on institutional foundations makes significant contributions to the international recognition of the Western Azerbaijan issue. This is of strategic importance both in terms of the promotion of cultural genocide and the acceptance of the idea of peaceful return by the international community.

Problems and Prospects. The issue of Western Azerbaijan at the present stage acquires relevant geopolitical and legal shades in both regional and international contexts. The future development trajectory of the issue depends on the interaction of a number of complex factors. The most important of these are the peace process with Armenia, the mechanisms for the application of international law, and the changes taking place in the regional security architecture.

Application of international law and normative bases. Although the process of the return of Western Azerbaijani Turks is based on a number of fundamental documents of international law, the real application of this right requires serious mechanisms and international political will:

The legal basis exists, but the implementation mechanisms are weak: the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Convention on the Status of Refugees recognize this right, but there are no coercive instruments to ensure their application.

The problem of double standards: Although the same legal principles apply to other peoples (for example, Kosovo Albanians, Palestinians), the passivity of the international community is observed when it comes to Azerbaijani Turks.

The need for lobbying and legal campaigns: It is necessary to prepare individual and collective claims in international courts (European Court of Human Rights, International Court of Justice), and strengthen the portfolio of claims on the legal basis

Challenges and Prospects. Competition with the Armenian diaspora and information warfare. While the Azerbaijani diaspora, especially in the issue of Western Azerbaijan, is trying to be influential at the international level, the opposing side the Armenian diaspora – has been operating for a much longer period of time and with wider networks. The Armenian diaspora, especially in the USA, France, Russia and other countries, plays an active role in the information warfare by creating powerful political-lobby structures. This reduces the effectiveness of the Azerbaijani diaspora to a certain extent and makes it difficult for them to compete on international platforms. Within the framework of the information warfare, different, sometimes contradictory narratives are formed between the parties on issues of history, human rights and regional security. This competition both expands the scope of diaspora diplomacy and requires strategic planning to be carried out at a more professional level.

Conclusion. The Western Azerbaijan issue is a multidimensional historical-political problem that emerged as a result of geopolitical conflicts, imperial policies, ethnic engineering processes, and successive forced displacements in the South Caucasus during the 19th–20th centuries. The ethno-social structure of the region had a stable demographic environment dominated by Azerbaijanis for many centuries. However, the mass displacements carried out in the region after the Russo-Iranian wars, especially the transportation of the Armenian population to the Caucasus in 1828–1830, systematically changed this balance and laid the foundation for future conflicts.

The massacres of 1905–1906, the ethnic cleansing of 1918–1920, the Soviet totalitarian repressions, the deportations of 1948–1953, and finally the mass expulsions of 1988–1991, which continued throughout the 20th century, created a profound humanitarian tragedy for Western Azerbaijanis. As a result of this process, hundreds of thousands of people lost their connection with their native lands, entire villages and cities were evacuated, cultural and spiritual heritage was destroyed, and social tissues were broken. Each wave of deportations was not just a physical change of location these events were large-scale attacks targeting fundamental values of people such as identity, memory, lineage, and social cohesion .

From the perspective of international law, the right of Western Azerbaijanis to return to their native lands is not only a humanitarian demand, but also a legal obligation confirmed by international documents. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants, the 1951 Refugee Convention, ECHR precedents, and UNESCO conventions establish the return of deported people, the restoration of property, and the protection of cultural heritage as absolute obligations of states. From this perspective, Armenia's failure to ensure the return of Western Azerbaijanis should be assessed as a violation of international legal norms.

On the psychological level, the consequences of the issue are deeper and longer-lasting. The trauma of deportation is not limited to the first generation, but creates collective psychological trauma that is transmitted across generations. This trauma leads to consequences such as fear of identity, homeland loss syndrome, social adaptation difficulties, and damage to historical memory. This requires that the return process be accompanied not only by political and legal, but also by psychosocial support mechanisms.

In the modern era, the changing geopolitical landscape in the region, the weakening of the Russian factor, the growing regional influence of Turkey, and the active return of the West to the South

Caucasus have created conditions for the West Azerbaijan issue to be more seriously raised on the international agenda. Azerbaijan's official position prioritizes discussing the issue in the context of the right of return and humanitarian justice, not territorial claims. This approach is both consistent with international law and creates a constructive framework for peace negotiations.

At the same time, the attitude of international actors the EU, OSCE, UN and the Organization of Turkic States to the issue shows that the return of refugees is a universally recognized right and that Armenia has an obligation in this context. Conflict studies also confirm that peace in cases of ethnic cleansing can only be sustainable if rights are restored, property restitution and the safe return of forcibly displaced people are ensured.

In this context, a just solution to the West Azerbaijan issue should be based on the following components:

– Recognition of deportations and restoration of historical justice;
– Phased, controlled and safe return of West Azerbaijanis;
– Restoration of property rights, compensation mechanisms;
– Protection and restoration of cultural heritage;
– Psychological rehabilitation and community building;
– Implementation of Armenia's international legal obligations;
– Coordination of regional actors on peace and security platforms.

All this shows that the issue of Western Azerbaijan is not only a heavy burden of the past, but also has a decisive importance for the future security of the region. The resolution of the issue is the main condition for long-term peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia, a necessary element of the formation of a reliable security architecture in the South Caucasus. The restoration of historical justice, the elimination of the consequences of deportation and the return of people to their homelands are a necessary process from both legal and moral points of view. Ensuring return creates a strategic basis for the formation of a more inclusive, just and sustainable future order in the South Caucasus. The analysis based on the historical context and international law-diplomacy analysis shows that the issue of Western Azerbaijan, as a multifaceted and long-term problem, is of great importance for Azerbaijan from a historical, humanitarian and legal perspective. The following main conclusions should be emphasized:

1. Sequence of historical processes and demographic changes .

From the end of the 19th century to the end of the 20th century, the Turks of Western Azerbaijan were subjected to ethnic oppression, massacres and deportations at various stages. Starting from the massacres of 1905–1906, the policy of the First Republic of Armenia against Azerbaijanis, planned deportations during the USSR period and the recent mass resettlement of 1988–1991 radically changed the demographic presence of Azerbaijanis in the region. As a result of these processes, the compact living spaces of Azerbaijanis in historical lands were fragmented, villages were evacuated and hundreds of thousands of people became internally displaced persons.

2. Assessment from the point of view of international law.

Historical events and deportations can be assessed as ethnic cleansing, forced displacement and human rights violations from the point of view of international law. The UN Human Rights and Genocide Conventions, as well as other international normative acts, support Azerbaijan's legal claims.

3. Perspective of diplomacy and international relations

The Azerbaijani side strengthens its diplomatic position by presenting the issue of Western Azerbaijan on international platforms with historical and legal facts. International organizations and regional mediators assess the legal and humanitarian aspects of the issue. Diplomatic strategies aim at both legal recognition and the restoration of peace and justice in the region.

4. Humanitarian and social consequences

The forced expulsion and ethnic cleansing of the Turks of Western Azerbaijan resulted in human losses, displacement, and socio-cultural losses. The memory and humanitarian consequences of these processes are still preserved in the collective memory of the Azerbaijani people and play an important role in ensuring regional peace.

Overall conclusion

The issue of Western Azerbaijan is directly related to the national interests and legal position of Azerbaijan in both historical, legal, and diplomatic aspects. The ethnic, political, and demographic processes that have continued from the 19th to the end of the 20th centuries show that the changes taking place in the region cannot be explained solely by modern political conflicts.

In modern times, this issue: forms the basis of Azerbaijan's international legal claims, is one of the priority directions of diplomatic activity, is of strategic importance in terms of preserving humanitarian and historical memory.

Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of the West Azerbaijan issue should not be limited to the study of historical events, but should also be continuously examined in the context of international law and diplomacy. Such an approach creates a scientific and legal basis for ensuring regional peace and justice.

References:

1. Akçam, T. (2015). *Ethnic cleansing in the late Ottoman Empire*. Princeton University Press. 320 s. [in English]
2. Barakat, S. (2010). *Post-war recovery: Guidelines and strategies*. Palgrave Macmillan. 256 s. [in English]
3. Bevan, R. (2006). *The destruction of memory: Architecture and war*. Reaktion Books. 240 s. [in English]
4. Bell, C. (2019). *Peace agreements and human rights*. Oxford University Press. 400 [in English]
5. Cassese, A. (2001). *International law*. Oxford University Press. 592 s. [in English]
6. Cornell, S. (2015). *Small nations and great powers: A study of ethnopolitical conflict in the Caucasus*. Routledge. 512 s. [in English]
7. Cornell, S. (2017). *Energy diplomacy and regional influence: The case of Azerbaijan*. Palgrave Macmillan. 290 s, [in English]
8. De Waal, T. (2013). *Black garden: Armenia and Azerbaijan through peace and war*. NYU Press. 360 s. [in English]
9. Əliyeva, N. (2021). *Azərbaycanın sosial-iqtisadi inkişaf perspektivləri [Prospects for socio-economic development of Azerbaijan]*. Elm Nəşriyyatı. 280 s. [in Azeibaijan]]
10. Hathaway, J. (2005). *The rights of refugees under international law*. Cambridge University Press. (200 s. [in English]
11. Suny, R. G. (1993). *The revenge of the past: Nationalism, revolution, and the collapse of the Soviet Union*. Stanford University Press. 224 s. [in English)
12. Williams, R. (2015). *Post-conflict property restitution: A systematic review*. Oxford University Press. 320 s. [in English]
13. Cernea, M. (1997). The risks and reconstruction model for resettling displaced populations. *World Development*, *25*(10), 1569–1587. [in English]
14. Hunter, S. (2021). Security challenges in the South Caucasus. *CSIS Reports*, 1–25. [in English]
15. Human Rights Watch. (1992). *Bloodshed in the Caucasus: Human rights violations during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict*. Human Rights Watch. [in English]
16. United Nations. (1948). *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. [in English]
17. United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. [in English]
18. United Nations. (1951). *Convention relating to the status of refugees*. [in English]

19. United Nations. (1966). *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. [in English]
20. UN General Assembly. (2021). *Resolution on displaced persons and return rights*.
21. UNESCO. (1954). *Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict*. [in English]
22. UNHCR. (2001). *Global report on displacement*. [in English]
23. International Criminal Court. (1998). *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court*. [in English]
24. Council of Europe. (1950). *European Convention on Human Rights*. [in English]
25. ECtHR. (2005). *Case-law on property rights*. [in English]
26. European Court of Human Rights. (2001). *Property restitution case-law*. [in English]
27. OSCE. (2020). *Guidelines on voluntary return*. [in English]
28. Azərbaycan Respublikası Xarici İşlər Nazirliyi. (2020). *Qərbi Azərbaycan: Tarixi, hüquqi və diplomatik aspektlər [Western Azerbaijan: Historical, legal and diplomatic aspects]*. 200 s. [in Azerbaijan]
29. Azerbaijan MFA. (2023). *Statement on the rights of Western Azerbaijanis*. [in English]
30. European External Action Service. (2022). *EU position on South Caucasus peace process*. [in English]
31. Turkish MFA. (2023). *Statement on regional peace and return rights*. [in English]

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-6

THE GENESIS AND EVOLUTION OF NOTARIAL PRACTICE: HISTORICAL AND LEGAL ASPECTS, CONCEPTS, ESSENCE, AND LEGAL NATURE OF THE INSTITUTION OF NOTARIAL PRACTICE

Yevhen Shymansky,
Postgraduate Student,
Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs (Kharkiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-7344-1371
eshimanskiy@ukr.net

Abstract. The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the genesis and evolution of the notarial institution, focusing on its historical and legal foundations, essence, and legal nature. It traces the development of notarial activity from ancient civilizations, particularly the Roman Empire, where functions were performed by tabellions and scribes, to the establishment of the classical Latin notariat model in medieval Europe. Special attention is given to the reception of Roman law, which laid the foundation for modern notarial principles such as public trust, preventive justice, and documentary authentication.

The study examines the main stages of the notariat's development in Ukrainian territories, from the influence of Magdeburg Law in the cities of the 14th–17th centuries to the codification processes of the 19th century within various state formations. The Soviet period, when the notariat was integrated into the state justice system, is analyzed alongside the post-Soviet reforms of the 1990s, which introduced private notaries alongside state notaries.

The article defines and reveals the essence of the notariat as a unique legal institution combining public-law and private-law elements. Its legal nature is explored through the lens of international acts, including the 1961 Hague Convention, and a comparative analysis of Romano-Germanic and Anglo-Saxon systems. The paper substantiates that the notariat is an integral part of the mechanism of a modern rule-of-law state, ensuring a balance between the protection of private interests and the implementation of public control.

The conclusions emphasize the need for further harmonization of Ukrainian notarial legislation with European standards, improvement of professional requirements and control procedures, and preservation of historical and legal heritage as the basis for the effective functioning of this legal institution in the context of globalization and digitalization.

Key words: notariat, historical and legal aspect, evolution, legal nature, public trust, Romano-Germanic system, private notariat.

Introduction. Ancient origins of notarial functions: ancient Greek and Roman law. The formation of notarial functions as a special institution of legal reality dates back to ancient times. Although the institution of notary in its modern sense was formed much later, some of its features were already present in the practice of ancient legal systems, primarily Greek and Roman.

Main text. In ancient Greece, as early as the 5th–4th centuries BC, there were officials – γραμματεύς (grammatevs) – who performed the functions of registrars and clerks, drawing up public decisions, contracts, and community resolutions. They certified legally significant documents within the polis. Although this mechanism was not strictly notarial in the modern sense, it performed an important function of legal legitimization of citizens' actions.

In classical Roman law, the function of certifying legal transactions and keeping public records became systematic. Already in the 3rd–2nd centuries BC, tabularii, actuarii, and scribae appeared, acting as official intermediaries between the will of citizens and the state. According to Titus Livius and Cicero, they participated in the drafting of wills, agreements, and assurances (UINL, 2020: 43).

The figure of the notarius, first mentioned in the 2nd century CE during the Principate, is of particular importance. According to Gaius, a notarius was a person who recorded legal acts using short conventional symbols – notes (Tomaszek, 2020: 18). Over time, notaries began to form a separate class of officials who had delegated authority to draw up legal documents on behalf of the parties.

After the reforms of Augustus and during the reign of the emperors of the Antonine dynasty, legal transactions became significantly more complicated. In this regard, the official written form of legal transactions became mandatory for a number of legal actions, especially in the areas of inheritance, purchase and sale, and mortgages. Notary services became an integral part of civil transactions (SIGNO, 2023: 95).

The Digests of Justinian (Corpus iuris civilis) gave these officials legislative recognition. They stipulated that notaries who drew up a document were guarantors of the authenticity of its form and content, provided that their powers were confirmed by the state (Corpus Iuris Civilis, 1900: 204). This concept had a huge impact on the further development of notarial institutions in medieval Europe.

At the same time, notarial functions in Roman law were closely linked to the protection of public order, and not just to the confirmation of legal transactions. It was in Rome that the doctrine was established according to which an officially certified document has increased probative value, which became the basis for the subsequent tradition of Latin notarial practice.

In general, the ancient Roman notary system had the following features that became decisive for its further development: the official status of a notary, confirmed by the state; the certification of legal transactions in compliance with formal procedures; the mandatory maintenance of registers; and the legal validity of written acts concluded with the participation of a notary.

That is why most modern models of continental notarial practice (France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, Ukraine) are based on the Roman concept of public certification and "documentary evidence," where the notary is not just a witness or intermediary, but an active participant in legal regulation.

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD, the institutional development of the notary system did not stop, but transformed under the influence of the Christian church, city communes, and universities. It was in the Middle Ages that the institution of notaries acquired clear organizational features, its corporate structure was established, and the doctrine of independent legal authority was formed.

The first important center for the preservation of notarial functions in the early Middle Ages was the Catholic Church. Starting in the 5th century, the position of "notarius ecclesiae" (church notary) appeared in bishoprics, monasteries, and curias. Notaries recorded donation agreements, wills, acts of ordination, and marriage, and also gave legal force to documents through seals and the authority of the clergy (Brundage, 2008: 93).

The Church was the main bearer of literacy and legal tradition in the dark ages. It was through the church structure that the Latin understanding of form as a guarantor of legal significance was preserved. Already in the 8th–9th centuries, canon law actively used the institution of notarial certification in its procedural activities.

In the 11th–12th centuries, urban notarial corporations emerged, especially in Italy. Venice, Genoa, Bologna, and Florence became centers for the formation of a new type of specialist – the notarius publicus. This status was granted by local authorities or by imperial decree and allowed notaries to officially draw up documents that were binding on courts, banks, and churches (Reynolds, 1984: 77).

In Bologna in the 12th century, a school of notarial law emerged, associated with the names of Irnerius and Bartolus. For the first time in history, notarial practice became the subject of academic study, and the profession acquired clear educational and qualification requirements (Bellomo, 1995: 52).

1. In 1212, Emperor Frederick II, as part of the Holy Roman Empire, officially approved the imperial notarial system, which provided for the granting of licenses, the taking of oaths, and the jurisdiction of documents throughout the Empire (Kantorowicz, 1957: 19). Such a document was valid even outside the boundaries of a particular city, which became the basis for the cross-border recognition of notarial acts.

In the 13th–14th centuries, France developed a state notary system, where notaries became agents of the king. Their powers extended to the recording of agreements that were binding on all subjects. The decrees of Charles V (1372) and Louis XI (1471) clearly regulated the scope of a notary's powers and recognized a notarial act as having prima facie evidence (Beaumanoir, 1994: 109).

At the same time, university notaries operated in Auxerre, Toulouse, and Paris, providing document drafting services for students, teachers, employment contracts, and scholarship transfers. This further cemented the academic status of the profession.

At the same time, the municipal magistrate notary system developed. For example, in the cities of Prussia, Poland, and Bohemia, there were "consules notarii" who worked for city councils and were required to enter legal transactions into a public register.

The pan-European tradition of medieval notary practice had several characteristic features: the public nature of the notary as an official (even in private law), the certification of legal transactions in a strictly defined form, the recognition of notarial documents as legal evidence in court, the obligation of professional training and examination, and the transfer of notarial rights by license or imperial charter.

As a result, it was medieval Europe that laid the foundation for the Latin model of notarial practice, which has survived to this day in France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Austria, and was later adopted in Ukraine.

Notaries in the early modern period (16th–18th centuries): the emergence of national models and the reception of the Roman tradition. The period from the 16th to the 18th centuries was marked by a significant transformation of European legal systems towards centralization, formalization, and the reception of Roman law. It was at this time that the notarial profession finally crystallized as a legal institution of a public nature, with clear powers, formalized procedural rules, and professional ethics.

In France in the 16th century, the classical model of public notarial practice was formed, which has been preserved to this day. Francis I's decree "Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts" of 1539 established that notarial acts must be conducted in French, registered, dated, signed, and have evidentiary value in court (Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts, 1983: 112). Such an act was equivalent to a court decision in terms of facts.

In Germany (particularly in the southern Catholic states) in the 17th century, a mixed model was formed, where notaries acted as public servants but had private initiative. The statutes of the Imperial Chamber Court stipulated that a notary must be impartial, draw up a deed only with the consent of the parties, and be responsible for the legal correctness of its content.

In Italy, particularly in the Kingdom of Naples, notaries operated within a highly organized corporation controlled by the monarchy. The universities of Padua, Bologna, and Naples introduced special notarial courses, and the title of notary became an academic and licensed title.

At the same time, the Latin notarial system was adopted in Central and Eastern European countries through the influence of the Austrian Empire and the Kingdom of Poland. In 1588, the Polish Statute of Lithuania made written legal transactions mandatory for inheritance and land matters and required them to be certified by authorized clerks or notaries (Statut Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego, 2001: 75).

In Switzerland in the 18th century, the notarial profession acquired autonomous status within cantonal law. Each canton independently issued licenses, register books, and rules of ethics. This became a model for decentralized notarial systems in future federal states.

In Great Britain, the development of the notarial profession took a different course: in the 17th–18th centuries, the functions of a public notary were limited to certifying foreign documents, maritime protests, and translations. This narrow specialization distinguished the English approach from the continental one.

In the early modern period, notaries acquired the status of official representatives of the state, were subject to strict licensing and institutional control, were required to have a legal education or special training, and kept notarial books (registers) that had the force of official sources of evidence.

These features became the basis for the formation of national models of notarial practice, which, although they had common Roman origins, gradually adapted to the legal, political, and social conditions of the respective states.

The institutional legitimacy of notaries became particularly important. During this period, the notary became not just a clerk, but a professional figure of legal regulation with high social prestige.

This became the foundation for the formation of the Latin model of notarial practice, which in the 19th–20th centuries would be officially codified in the legal systems of France, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, and later in Ukraine.

The notarial institution in Ukrainian lands: from Kievan Rus to the 19th century. The history of the notarial institution in Ukrainian lands has a unique trajectory of development, which was shaped by the influence of the Byzantine tradition, canon law, the Lithuanian-Polish reception of Roman law, and the Austrian legal system. In different historical periods, these factors interacted, creating a hybrid legal model, which ultimately led to the introduction of the notarial institution in a form close to the modern one.

In Kievan Rus, there was no notary in the modern sense, but certain notarial functions were performed by clerks, deacons, clergy, and princely officials, who drew up contracts, deeds of sale, mortgages, and "row letters" (Gavrilenko, Kolesnikov, Logvinenko, 1999: 41).

Sources of law – in particular, Ruska Pravda – record the need for written formalization of a number of agreements, accompanied by witness certification. Thus, according to the Short Edition, in the case of a loan agreement, the parties had to call on witnesses and draw up a written "row" (Ruska Pravda, 1193: 29).

Although these actions were semi-formal in nature, they performed the same social functions as notarial certification: ensuring evidential value, legal certainty, and conflict prevention.

With the establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the adoption of the Lithuanian Statutes (1529, 1566, 1588), a regulated procedure for the registration of legal transactions through state clerks appeared for the first time. The Statute of 1588 required important legal acts to be registered in city and district courts, in the presence of witnesses and with proper written documentation (Lithuanian Statute, 2001: 91).

This period laid the administrative and procedural foundation for the further formation of the notarial profession, especially in the eastern provinces of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, including Volhynia, Kyiv, and Podolia.

During the period of Cossack statehood, clerks of military and regimental chancelleries appeared, who kept universal letters, letters of privilege, and land deeds, which had high legal force and were considered official documents. Their activities combined administrative, judicial, and notarial functions.

Regimental clerks certified agreements, deeds of sale, inheritance, and entered these documents into the books of the offices, which was in fact analogous to public registration.

After the final incorporation of Ukrainian territories into the Russian Empire, a system of "document certification" was introduced through provincial chancelleries, magistrates, and district courts. The decree of 1809 and the Civil Procedure Code of 1832 first established the possibility of certifying documents by special officials (Shevchuk, 2013: 154).

In the second half of the 19th century, the Austrian model of Latin notary was introduced in the Ukrainian lands that were part of Austria-Hungary (Galicia, Bukovina, Transcarpathia). According to Austrian law of 1871, a notary was an authorized representative of the state with mandatory legal education and had the right to certify agreements, conduct inheritance cases, and certify documents with probative value (Yasinska).

This system was characterized by a high level of regulation, professional control, procedural integrity, and significant public trust.

Thus, by the end of the 19th century, two parallel notarial models were operating on the territory of modern Ukraine:

– Austrian (Latin) – in the western lands,
– Clerical-bureaucratic (Russian) – in the eastern and southern lands.

This predetermined the further complexity of the unification of notarial legislation in the 20th century and necessitated the reception of the most effective institutions from each system.

Notaries in the 20th and early 21st centuries: from Soviet centralization to the modern European model. The 20th century was a period of dramatic change for notaries. Its development in Ukraine took place in three key areas:

1. The Soviet centralized system.
2. The transitional period of post-Soviet reform.
3. The modern stage – integration into the European model of notarial practice.

1. The Soviet model of notarial practice (1917–1991)

After the October Revolution of 1917, the Bolshevik government abolished the institution of private notarial practice. The Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR of May 14, 1918, provided for the transfer of all notarial functions to state bodies – people's courts, executive committees, and justice departments (Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR "On the Abolition of Private Notaries," 1918: 43).

In the Ukrainian SSR, a system of state notaries began to take shape in 1922, under which notarial acts were performed by state officials according to approved models. In the 1930s, the functions of notaries were further centralized – state notary offices were established, which operated under the justice authorities.

The main features of the Soviet notary system were: a complete lack of private initiative, notaries were state officials, strict procedural regulation of each action, no advocacy or consulting functions, and documents had no evidentiary value without court approval.

Although this model ensured equal access to services, it deprived the notarial profession of professional flexibility and development, reducing it to the technical level of clerical work.

2. Transition to the Latin model (1991–2000)

With Ukraine's independence in 1991, a profound reform of the notarial profession began. The adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On Notaries" (September 2, 1993) was a turning point: private notarial practice was legalized for the first time, the institution of the notarial chamber was created, and the differentiation of public and private powers began (Law of Ukraine "On Notaries," 1993: 148).

A presidential decree in 2000 initiated the gradual delegation of functions from the state to a self-regulating professional environment. This was in line with the principles of Latin notaries, which recognize notaries as public officials who are independent and financially autonomous (NPU, 2020: 91).

Gradually, private notaries were granted the right to keep registers, certify inheritance cases, and conclude legally binding agreements, which brought them closer to European standards (Medynska, 2025: 56).

3. The current stage: digitalization and European integration (2000–2024)

At the present stage, the notarial profession in Ukraine is undergoing active reform in the direction of digital justice and European integration. The main areas of focus are: the introduction of a Unified State Register of Notarial Actions, the use of electronic signatures, QR codes, digital seals, notary access to state cadastres and civil status registers, and the participation of notaries in the registration of businesses and property rights.

Ukraine is officially part of the Latin notarial system. Since 2008, the Notary Chamber of Ukraine has been a full member of the International Union of Latin Notaries (UINL), which confirms its integration into the European space (Union Internationale du Notariat, 2023: 7).

However, there are also challenges: unequal access to electronic tools, a high risk of cyberattacks on notarial registers, and non-standardized practices in crisis situations (in particular, martial law).

The response to these challenges has been pilot projects for remote identification, a virtual archive, and the creation of the concept of a "digital notary," which is to be included in the Ministry of Justice's reform strategy for 2025–2030.

Thus, the notarial institution in Ukraine has come a long way – from ecclesiastical and judicial formalities to a digital legal institution that performs preventive, verification, stabilisation and human rights protection functions in the state's legal mechanism.

The concept of the notarial institution reveals the legal nature of notarial activity and its place in the system of legal phenomena. In scientific literature, a legal institution is usually understood as a set of legal norms that regulate a homogeneous group of social relations that have their own purpose, subject, and structure (Shemshuchenko, 2002: 11). It is through this approach that the notary system can be viewed as a specialized legal institution that regulates the procedure for certifying legal transactions, confirming legal facts, and executing documents that have legal force.

The Law of Ukraine "On Notaries" does not directly provide a general definition of the notary system, but it does contain characteristics that allow it to be formulated. Thus, Article 1 states that notarial acts are performed by notaries in order to protect the rights and legitimate interests of individuals and legal entities by providing legal certainty to documents and facts (Law of Ukraine "On Notaries," 1993: 3).

Notary is an organized system of bodies, persons, and norms that provide legal certification of transactions, legal facts, documents, and actions and ensure their legal certainty.

Notary can be considered one of the mechanisms for implementing the principle of the rule of law, which functions at the intersection of public and private interests.

Within the continental legal system (in particular, in the Latin model of notaries), notaries perform functions similar to those of public officials, although they are not civil servants in the classical sense. This indicates the special nature of the notarial system as an institution that functions autonomously but with state legitimacy.

The International Union of Latin Notaries (UINL) defines the notarial institution as a guarantee mechanism of the legal order that ensures the legal authenticity of documents and legal certainty for citizens.

Based on scientific approaches and current legislation, we can formulate our own definition:

The notarial institution is an independent legal institution that encompasses a set of norms, subjects, and procedures aimed at officially confirming legal facts, legal acts, and documents, giving them legal force, with the aim of preventing legal disputes and ensuring legal certainty.

The following elements can be identified in the structure of the notarial institution:

– Regulatory framework – the Law of Ukraine "On Notaries," subordinate legislation, and international standards.

– Subjects – private and state notaries, judicial authorities, the Notary Chamber.

– Functions – certification of legal transactions, ensuring evidential value, protection of rights.

– Procedures – the procedure for performing notarial acts, maintaining registers, verifying the validity of documents.

At the same time, the notarial system is not a closed legal category – it constantly interacts with other institutions: civil, administrative, procedural, and registration. It is this inter-sectoral interaction that makes it dynamic and important for the functioning of the legal system.

As a result, the notary system as an institution is a fundamental guarantor of stability in the legal field, ensuring the prevention of conflicts, the protection of the interests of the parties, reducing the burden on the judicial system, and increasing trust in the law as a whole.

The essence of notarial activity: between public and private. Notarial activity occupies a unique place in the legal system, as it combines elements of public and private law. This dual nature is due to the fact that notaries, on the one hand, act in the interests of specific individuals in private matters, and on the other hand, are vested with public powers delegated by the state (Vdovichenko, 2024: 264).

In this sense, a notary is neither a fully state official nor simply a legal advisor. Their activities have legal force, officiality, and universal applicability, which is equivalent to the actions of the state in terms of certifying facts and documents (Fursa, 2001: 58).

This essential feature is emphasized by the International Union of Latin Notaries (UINL), which states that the notary profession is essentially “an instrument of legal stability that serves the interests of citizens but is exercised on behalf of the state” (Union Internationale du Notariat, 2023: 6).

From the perspective of public law, a notary: performs functions regulated by the state; acts in accordance with the law, in compliance with procedures; is responsible for the legality of actions; makes entries in official registers; ensures the legal security of document circulation.

These functions give notaries an official status that other lawyers – attorneys, consultants, mediators, etc. – do not have. In this sense, notaries become a “small-scale state” within the civil sphere (Schäfer, 2019: 36).

From the perspective of private law, a notary: acts only at the request of a person, does not represent the interests of the state in a conflict, works on a fee basis, protects the interests of the parties to a transaction, and advises on legal issues without favouring either side.

In this respect, he is closer to a trusted specialist whom a person voluntarily chooses to perform an important action with legal significance.

In practice, this manifests itself, for example, in the following situations:

– a person wants to sell an apartment – the notary checks whether all documents are legal, whether there are any encumbrances, and whether the transaction is valid;

– an inheritance is being formalized – the notary not only formalizes it, but also checks the order of succession, the existence of a will, and the correctness of the registration;

– a power of attorney is issued – the notary checks the legal capacity, scope of authority, and validity of the document.

These examples demonstrate that a notary always operates in a narrow corridor between the rights of the individual and the requirements of the law. This is the essence of notarial activity – verifying the legitimacy of an individual's will and giving it legal force through an official act.

The duality of the notarial profession (public and private) is not a contradiction, but a special feature that allows the notarial profession to function as an institution of trust: between the individual and the state, between citizens, between law and security.

Structural elements of the legal nature of the notarial profession. The legal nature of the notarial institution is revealed through its internal structure – that is, through structural elements that together form a single functional system. These elements are interconnected, interact with each other, and it is through them that the functions of the notarial system as a legal institution are realized.

The main structural elements include: the legal basis, organizational and subject composition, competence and functions, procedural form, instruments of control and responsibility.

Legal basis. Notarial activity is based on a set of regulatory and legal acts, among which the key one is the Law of Ukraine “On Notaries.” In addition, the provisions of the Civil, Family, Commercial, and Land Codes, as well as international treaties, orders of the Ministry of Justice, instructions, and methodological recommendations are applied.

This regulatory framework guarantees a uniform procedure, provides for a uniform form of documents, and unified requirements for notarial certification.

Organizational and subject structure. The notarial institution includes: state and private notaries, judicial authorities (as a supervisory body), the Notary Chamber of Ukraine (as a self-governing body), notary assistants, and state registries (which serve notarial actions).

Each of these entities has clearly defined powers. A private notary is not a civil servant, but acts on behalf of the state, so his powers are public.

Competence and functions. The competence of a notary is a list of actions permitted by law that he or she may perform. These include: certifying contracts, conducting inheritance cases, imposing restrictions on property, issuing certificates of ownership, maintaining unified registers, etc. (Fursa, 2020: 39).

The functions performed by notaries go beyond their competence–they include ensuring legal stability, preventing disputes, protecting rights, and providing legal expertise on documents. This confirms their role as an instrument of legal security in the state.

Procedural form. Each notarial action has a formal procedure: identification of the person, verification of documents, entry into the register, and execution of the deed. Without compliance with the procedural form, the notarial action has no legal force.

A distinctive feature of the notarial process is its unilateral nature – it is not adversarial, as in court, and does not involve the rendering of decisions, but only the recording of legal facts.

Control and responsibility. A notary is not completely independent – their activities are controlled by the state, in particular: inspections by the Ministry of Justice, mandatory maintenance of registers, compliance with documentation standards, disciplinary responsibility for violations of the rules (Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, 2022: 13).

In addition, notaries bear civil liability in the event of damage caused by unlawful actions. This creates a mechanism of balance between the independence of notaries and their responsibility for errors or abuse.

Thus, the legal nature of the notary system is manifested not only in a general description of its functions, but also in a specific, clearly structured model, where each element – from the regulatory framework to control – forms a balanced and effective legal mechanism.

Notaries as an institution of preventive law enforcement. One of the key functions of notaries, which defines their legal nature, is preventive. This means that notarial actions not only record legal facts or give documents legal force, but also prevent violations of rights, conflicts, and legal disputes in the future.

In this sense, the notary is a preventive legal institution – that is, one that acts before a dispute arises and aims to prevent it. This directly distinguishes a notary from a judge, who acts post factum (after a violation of the law), or a lawyer, who participates in the settlement of an existing conflict (Chernysh, 2021: 43).

The UINL (International Union of Notaries) defines a notary as “a public delegate of legal trust whose role is to establish reliable legal relations before a legal problem arises” (Union Internationale du Notariat, 2024: 4).

Preventive action in the content of a notarial act. When a notary certifies a transaction, they: verify the legality of the parties' expression of will, confirm their legal capacity and legal competence, verify the existence of rights to the object (e.g., real estate), and determine whether there are any encumbrances, disputes, or other risks.

In other words, the notary stops a potentially illegal or questionable action before it is committed. This is the essence of prevention – a proactive legal action.

Reducing the burden on the judicial system. Notaries take on some of the functions of the judicial system: resolving inheritance cases, certifying indisputable facts, certifying the authenticity of signatures, contracts, and documents.

Thus, a significant part of legal situations that could become the subject of litigation are settled directly at the notarial level. As A. Khrebtova notes, the notarial institution is a legal filter through which controversial or risky transactions do not pass (Khrebtova, 2025: 124).

Guarantee of legal certainty. The legal force of a notarial act provides the parties with a high level of trust in legal relations. When a contract is notarized, it: guarantees the authenticity of the parties' will, simplifies proof in court (if necessary), increases the legal "stability" of the document.

Therefore, notary publics contribute not only to the prevention of disputes, but also to legal predictability – which is one of the signs of the rule of law (Dolynska, 2012: 99).

The civilizational function of notaries. In developed countries of the world – in particular, France, Italy, Germany, Spain – notaries perform the function of legal stabilization of society.

This is especially important in periods of social instability – during war, crises, migration challenges.

In Ukraine, after 2022, notaries have become key links in protecting the rights of persons who have lost access to property, documents, and inheritance cases. It is the notary public that has retained its functionality in many critical situations where other institutions did not operate.

Therefore, the preventive role of the notary is its main functional difference among other legal institutions. It turns the notary into an active participant in legal protection, acting even before the dispute arises – that is, when legal risks are still only potential.

Differentiation of the notary from related legal institutions. The notary, as an independent legal institution, often overlaps in functional content with other industry institutions – in particular, the registration service, the court, the bar, mediation and local government bodies. In this regard, there is a need to clearly distinguish notarial activities from related legal mechanisms.

The notary and the court. The court resolves legal disputes – after the rights have been violated. The notary, on the contrary, acts before the conflict arises. He does not establish the truth, does not evaluate the behavior of the parties, does not apply sanctions. His function is to prevent a dispute through a legally formalized transaction. In court – adversarial, sometimes conflict. In the notary's – voluntariness and consensus. In addition, a notarial act is evidence in court, but the notary does not have the authority to establish the truth or resolve disputes.

Notary and lawyer. A lawyer represents one party, acts as its defender, consultant. A notary does not have the right to act in the interests of only one person – he is obliged to be impartial, even if one party addresses him (Chizhmar). A lawyer is a defender. A notary is an independent official who ensures the balance, legality and legal purity of a transaction.

Notary and state registrar. State registrars are officials who carry out the registration of an already concluded agreement (for example, the transfer of ownership). A notary: certifies the transaction itself, checks the completeness and authenticity of the documentation, imposes prohibitions or restrictions, enters data into registers. That is, the notary performs a broader legal function, and in many cases is also a registrar (for example, in the field of real estate) (Medynska, 2025: 121).

Notary and local government bodies. Until the 2000s, village and settlement councils could certify wills, powers of attorney, and inheritance. However, this practice gradually lost relevance – it was replaced by professional notary. Today, notarial actions can be performed by authorized officials of local government only in exceptional cases, mainly in the absence of a notary in the settlement (Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine, 2022: 19). This performs a social function, but does not change the essence: the powers of a notary are narrower in scope than those of a local government body, but deeper in legal content.

Notary and mediator. A mediator is a third party who helps the parties reach an agreement. He does not draw up documents, does not check their legal nature. His work is a soft settlement. On the contrary, a notary is a formalization of an agreement: he gives it legal force, checks its compliance with the law, records it in documents and state registers. Thus, unlike other legal figures, a notary has a unique function: impartial, authorized by the state, prevents conflicts, gives legal force to acts, maintains legal security and trust in the document, acts according to the law, and not in favor of the party. This distinguishes the notary from all other institutions, making it an indispensable element of the legal order in the state.

Conclusion. Notary as a legal institution has deep historical roots, dating back to ancient times. Its formation began with the Greek and Roman legal systems, where the first signs of notarial functions appeared. The Middle Ages became a period of crystallization of notarial as a professional institution with clear organizational features, and the early modern era consolidated national models of notarial, which were adapted to local legal conditions. In Ukraine, notarial developed under the influence of Byzantine, Lithuanian-Polish, Austrian and Russian legal traditions. After gaining independence, Ukraine switched to the Latin model of notarial, which involves a combination of public and private functions.

The essence of notarial lies in its unique role as a legal institution that combines elements of public and private law. Its main function is to ensure legal certainty, prevent disputes and protect the rights of citizens through official certification of legal acts and documents. One of the key features of notarial services is its preventive function. The notary acts before legal conflicts arise, checking the legality of transactions and documents, which significantly reduces the burden on the judicial system and increases the level of legal security.

In the 21st century, notarial services in Ukraine are actively reformed, integrating digital technologies and adapting to the requirements of the European legal space. The digitalization of notarial services, the introduction of electronic registers and remote work methods have become key areas of development. Notarial services are an important element of the legal system, which ensures stability, trust in the law and the effective functioning of civil proceedings. They act as a bridge between the private interests of citizens and the public requirements of the state.

References:

1. Beaumanoir P. (1994) Coutumes de Beauvaisis. Paris: CNRS Éditions, T. 2. P. 109.
2. Bellomo M. (1995) The Common Legal Past of Europe. Washington: Catholic University Press, P. 52.
3. Brundage J.A. (2008) The Medieval Origins of the Legal Profession. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, P. 93.
4. Chernysh V.M. (2021) Notarius yak subiekt pravozastosuvannia [Notaries as law enforcement agents]. Yurydychnyi chasopys. №2. S. 43. [in Ukrainian].
5. Chyzhmar K. Notariat ta advokat: osoblyvosti profesii ta mozhlyvosti spivpratsi [Notaries and lawyers: professional characteristics and opportunities for cooperation] – Notarius u Sviatoshynskomu raioni Kyieva – Hanna Manokhina. Notarius Sviatoshyno, Akademmistechko – Notarius u Sviatoshynskomu raioni Kyieva – Hanna Manokhina. URL: https://notarius-svyatoshino.com.ua/publications/347-notariat-ta-advokat-osoblyvosti-profesii-ta-mozhlyvosti-spivpratsi.html (data zvernennia: 18.06.2025) [in Ukrainian].
6. Corpus Iuris Civilis (1900). Digestorum libri L. Berlin: Weidmann, Vol. 1. P. 204.
7. Dekret RNK RSFRR "Pro skasuvannia pryvatnoho notariatu" vid 14.05.1918 [Decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the RSFSR "On the Abolition of Private Notaries" dated May 14, 1918]// Zb. uz. RSFRR. – 1918. – №32. – S. 43. [in Ukrainian].
8. Dolynska M. (2012) Osnovni pryntsypy ukrainskoho notarialnoho prava [Basic principles of Ukrainian notarial law]. Naukovyi visnyk Lvivskoho derzhavnoho universytetu vnutrishnikh sprav. Seriia: Yurydychna. № 1. S. 99–108. [in Ukrainian].
9. Fursa S.Ia. (2020) Notariat v Ukraini: orhanizatsiino-pravovi zasady [Notaries in Ukraine: organizational and legal principles]. Kyiv: Yurinkom Inter, S. 39. [in Ukrainian].
10. Fursa S.Ia., Fursa Ye.I. (2001) Notariat v Ukraini. Teoriia i praktyka [Notaries in Ukraine. Theory and practice]: navch. posib. dlia stud. zakl. vyshch. osvity. K.: A.S.K., S. 58. [in Ukrainian].
11. Havrylenko O., Kolesnikov S., Lohvynenko I. (1999) Kyivska Rus: polityko-pravovyi narys [Kyiv Rus: A Political and Legal Essay]. Kharkiv : UniVS, 72 s. S. 41. [in Ukrainian].
12. Kantorowicz E.H. (1957) Frederick II. New York: Frederick Ungar, P. 19.
13. Khrebtova A.A. (2025) Rol notariatu v systemi alternatyvnoho vyrishennia sporiv: teoretychni zasady ta praktychni aspekty [The role of notaries in the alternative dispute resolution system: theoretical foundations and practical aspects]. Naukovyi visnyk Uzhhorodskoho natsionalnoho universytetu. Seriia: Pravo. T. 4, № 86. S. 124-129. URL: https://doi.org/10.24144/2307-3322.2024.86.1.4.19 (data zvernennia: 18.06.2025) [in Ukrainian].
14. Lytovskyi Statut 1588 r. [The Lithuanian Statute of 1588] – Krakiv: Vydavnytstvo Akademii, 2001. – S. 91. [in Ukrainian].

15. Medynska A.V. (2025) Administratyvno-pravovyi status notariusa v Ukraini ta u zarubizhnykh krainakh [The administrative and legal status of notaries in Ukraine and other countries] : dys. … kand. yuryd. nauk : 12.00.07. Ternopil, 215 s., S. 56. [in Ukrainian].
16. Medynska A.V. (2025) Administratyvno-pravovyi status notariusa v Ukraini ta u zarubizhnykh krainakh [The administrative and legal status of notaries in Ukraine and other countries]: dys. … kand. yuryd. nauk : 12.00.07. Ternopil, 215 s., S. 121. [in Ukrainian].
17. Nakaz MIu Ukrainy №2967/5 vid 22.08.2022 «Pro zdiisnennia kontroliu za notarialnoiu diialnistiu» [Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 2967/5 dated 22 August 2022 "On the control of notarial activities"]. – S. 13. [in Ukrainian].
18. Nakaz MIu Ukrainy №2967/5 vid 22.08.2022 «Shchodo povnovazhen posadovykh osib mistsevoho samovriaduvannia na vchynennia notarialnykh dii» [Order of the Ministry of Justice of Ukraine No. 2967/5 dated 22 August 2022 "On the powers of local government officials to perform notarial acts"]. – S. 19. [in Ukrainian].
19. NPU (2020). Istoriia pryvatnoho notariatu v Ukraini [The history of private notaries in Ukraine]. Kyiv, S. 91. [in Ukrainian].
20. Ordonnance de Villers-Cotterêts, 1539. – Paris: Archives Nationales, 1983. – P. 112.
21. Reynolds S. (1984) Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900–1300. Oxford: Clarendon Press, P. 77.
22. Ruska Pravda [Russian Truth]. Kyiv: Naukova dumka, 1993. S. 29. [in Ukrainian].
23. Schäfer B. (2019) Efficiency of Legal Institutions in Civil Law Countries. Berlin: Springer, P. 36.
24. Shemshuchenko Yu.S. (2002) Yurydychna entsyklopediia [Legal Encyclopedia] (t. 3). Kyiv: InIure, S. 11. [in Ukrainian].
25. Shevchuk L. (2013) Notariat v Ukraini v skladi Rosiiskoi imperii [Notaries in Ukraine as part of the Russian Empire]. Visnyk Lvivskoho universytetu. Seriia: yurydychna. № 57. S. 154–162. [in Ukrainian].
26. SIGNO (2023) (España). Sistema Integral de Gestión del Notariado. Madrid: Consejo Notarial, P. 67.
27. Statut Wielkiego Xięstwa Litewskiego z 1588 roku. – Kraków: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 2001. S. 75.
28. Tomaszek T. (2020) Notariat w Polsce i krajach Europy. Warszawa: LexisNexis Polska, S. 46.
29. UINL (2020). Principes fondamentaux du notariat latin. Rome: UINL, P. 41.
30. Union Internationale du Notariat (UINL) (2022). La fonction préventive du notariat. Bruxelles, P. 4.
31. Union Internationale du Notariat (UINL) (2023). Rapport annuel. Bruxelles, 2023. P. 7.
32. Union Internationale du Notariat (UINL) (2023). Statut et fonctions du notaire. Bruxelles, P. 6.
33. Vdovichena L. I. (2024) Pravova pryroda notarialnoi dii: pytannia normatyvnoho rehuliuvannia [The legal nature of notarial acts: issues of regulatory control]. Naukovyi visnyk Uzhhorodskoho natsionalnoho universytetu. Seriia: Pravo. T. 2, № 85. S. 264-269. URL: https://doi.org/10.24144/2307-3322.2024.85.2.38 (data zvernennia: 18.06.2025) [in Ukrainian].
34. Yasynska L. Notariat v Halychyni za avstriiskym Polozhenniam 1871 r. [Notaries in Galicia under the Austrian Regulations of 1871]. http://radnuk.info/. URL: http://radnuk.info/home/24725-------1871----.html (data zvernennia: 18.06.2025). [in Ukrainian].
35. Zakon Ukrainy «Pro notariat» vid 02.09.1993 r. [Law of Ukraine "On Notaries" dated September 2, 1993] // VVRU. 1993. №39. S. 148. [in Ukrainian].
36. Zakon Ukrainy «Pro notariat» vid 02.09.1993 r. [Law of Ukraine "On Notaries" dated September 2, 1993] // Vidomosti VRU. 1993. №39. S. 3. [in Ukrainian].

THEORY AND INSTITUTIONS OF EDUCATION

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-7

AUTHENTICITY IN LANGUAGE PEDAGOGY: RETHINKING TEXT SELECTION FOR ESL LEARNERS

Javahir Aghayeva,
Postgraduate Student, Azerbaijani University of Languages
(Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-4576-3645

Abstract. The concept of authenticity has gained new relevance in contemporary language pedagogy, particularly in relation to selecting reading materials for ESL learners. As classrooms increasingly emphasize communicative competence and real-world language use, the limitations of highly simplified or decontextualized texts have become more evident. The purpose of this research is to determine how authentic reading materials can enhance ESL learners' reading skills by providing real linguistic exposure, meaningful content, and genuine communicative value.

To achieve this aim, a mixed set of research methods was employed, including analysis of psychological-pedagogical literature, classroom observation, experimental application of authentic reading materials, and qualitative-quantitative interpretation of outcomes. Literature analysis helped to identify theoretical foundations of authenticity, while experimental classroom work allowed practical exploration of learners' engagement, comprehension, and response to authentic input. The combination of observation and reflective student feedback provided insights into cognitive and motivational factors influencing the reading process.

The novelty of this study lies in reconsidering current text-selection practices and demonstrating how authentic materials, when appropriately scaled and methodologically guided, can function as an effective alternative to overly simplified ESL reading passages. Authentic input exposes learners to natural linguistic patterns, diverse discourse structures, and culturally meaningful contexts, all of which contribute to deeper engagement and improved comprehension. At the same time, the findings indicate that effective integration requires careful alignment with learners' proficiency levels, cognitive load, cultural familiarity, and instructional objectives.

The discussion highlights essential selection criteria such as thematic relevance, vocabulary density, discourse clarity, cultural transparency, and learner readiness. A balanced approach is proposed – one that maintains the richness of genuine language while ensuring pedagogical accessibility. By adopting such a framework, teachers can design reading environments that enhance motivation, encourage independent meaning-making strategies, and strengthen long-term development of ESL reading skills.

Key words: authentic materials, authenticity, ESL reading, text selection, learner engagement, communicative competence, real-life language input.

Introduction. In recent years, the role of authentic texts in English language teaching has attracted growing attention, as language classrooms have become more focused on real communication and meaningful input. Learners often encounter language outside the classroom through digital platforms, social media, news updates, and everyday interactions. Because of this, the contrast between textbook materials and real-life language has become more visible. In many cases, simplified passages fail to reflect the complexity, spontaneity, and cultural richness that actual communication requires. This situation creates a need to reconsider how reading materials are selected and used in the teaching process.

The purpose of the research is to clarify how authentic materials can more effectively contribute to the formation and development of reading skills in ESL settings, and to identify criteria for selecting texts that correspond to learners' cognitive, linguistic, and motivational needs. It aims to determine whether exposure to naturally occurring language enhances comprehension, cultural awareness, and learner engagement more effectively than traditional, simplified materials. The research also seeks to outline practical ways of integrating authentic texts into classroom instruction and to analyse how their use influences reading competence in secondary-school contexts.

Analysis of the latest relevant research and publications shows that authenticity in language pedagogy has been widely discussed by scholars such as Gilmore (2007), Berardo (2006), and Nuttall (1996), who highlight the role of real-life language in improving learners' reading comprehension and communicative competence. Recent studies emphasise that authentic material should not be understood as complex literary text, but as any naturally produced language created for genuine communicative purposes. Researchers also draw attention to the fact that difficulties arise not from authenticity itself, but from mismatched proficiency levels, lack of cultural familiarity, and inappropriate topic selection. Many publications underline that when learners engage with texts related to their interests, age, and experience, motivation increases and comprehension improves significantly.

Authenticity in language pedagogy continues to attract attention, as many learners and teachers feel that traditional textbook passages no longer reflect how English exists in everyday communication. Because of this, interest in authenticity grows not as an abstract concept but as a practical tool that brings real language into the classroom. Authentic material is understood as any text created for real-life purposes, whether a short message, a comment under a post, or a brief announcement. When such material is chosen with care, it gives learners the sense that English is a living system shaped by context, emotion, and intention. In this context, the process of selecting material becomes a key stage. It has been noticed that learners struggle not with authenticity itself but with mismatched difficulty levels and unfamiliar topics. When texts are chosen according to age, interests, and emotional connection, comprehension increases significantly.

Text selection becomes especially important. Many difficulties arise not due to the authentic character of the text, but due to poorly matched content. When passages reflect learners' age, interests, and real communicative needs, engagement increases naturally. Even very short pieces, a restaurant review, a weather update, a simple Q&A comment, can offer clearer models of real English than long artificial dialogues. These compact texts highlight natural phrasing, show how sentences flow in real usage, and present vocabulary as a part of meaning rather than a list to memorise.

The introduction of authentic input into the classroom creates a learning environment where language is meaningful, relevant, and connected to real communication. When materials are chosen thoughtfully, authentic texts become a strong tool for improving reading comprehension, developing cultural awareness, and supporting overall language growth. The following sections explore these ideas in detail and present the outcomes that emerged through this paper.

Methods and approaches. In the paper, special attention is given to the methods and approaches that support the use of authentic texts in English language teaching. Material is selected to develop not only comprehension but also the ability to navigate real communication. Several approaches are commonly applied, and each of them offers its own way of working with natural language input.

One of the leading approaches is the communicative approach. In this framework, authentic texts serve as a source of real linguistic patterns. During work with such materials, learners receive tasks that mirror everyday communication: predicting content, discussing ideas, and identifying subtle details. As a result, a learning environment is formed where language is perceived as a living tool rather than a set of isolated rules.

Another widely used approach is the content-based approach. Here, attention shifts to the meaning and thematic value of the text. Learners engage with the topic, identify main ideas, and connect information to broader contexts. This reduces anxiety around complex language, since understanding grows from general logic rather than from strict vocabulary control. In the end, interest in the text increases, and motivation becomes stronger.

Task-based learning is also applied when working with authentic texts. The emphasis moves to purposeful tasks that require using language to achieve an outcome. Activities such as preparing brief summaries, comparing viewpoints, or creating small projects offer a sense of real communication. This approach supports active involvement and gives space for learners to process authentic material in a more natural way.

A student-centered perspective is considered equally important. In this format, text choice aligns with learners' preferences, age, and goals. When the content feels relevant, engagement rises, and the learning process becomes more meaningful. It becomes easier to handle challenging language because each task is connected to something personally valuable for the learner.

Overall, a combination of these approaches enables a balanced work with authentic texts. Real language becomes more accessible, and reading activities feel closer to real-life communication, which strengthens both motivation and comprehension.

Different authors highlight authenticity as a key condition for meaningful language learning. H. G. Widdowson points out that authenticity is not only about the origin of the text, but also about the way it is used in the classroom. When tasks give a real purpose for reading, even a classroom text gains a more authentic character. This idea supports the communicative approach, where the main focus falls on purposeful interaction and real messages.

C. Nuttall underlines that interesting and slightly challenging texts help to build reading skills more effectively than oversimplified passages. According to this view, learners should work with materials that carry real information value and emotional impact. A text becomes a tool for thinking, not just an exercise for practicing grammar or individual words. In line with this, many authors stress that authentic texts can develop guessing strategies, tolerance to unknown vocabulary, and the ability to read for the main idea.

A. Gilmore pays attention to the gap between textbook language and real usage. It is noted that traditional teaching materials often present artificially clean and predictable language, while authentic texts reflect mixed styles, incomplete sentences, and cultural references. This contrast shows why communicative and task-based approaches receive so much attention: they help to integrate "messy" real language into classroom work without losing control over difficulty.

Publications on extensive reading also connect authentic input with long-term progress in reading skills. Day and Bamford emphasize that large amounts of relatively accessible texts, read for pleasure and general meaning, gradually increase speed, vocabulary, and confidence. This idea fits well with content-based and student-centered approaches, where personal choice and enjoyment are treated as serious factors in language development.

Result. In the paper, special attention was given to the role of authentic texts that function in real time and reflect language as it appears in everyday communication. These materials differ from traditional printed passages not only by origin but also by their dynamic nature, immediacy, and constant change. When the outcomes from different sources were compared, several patterns appeared, showing how real-time authentic materials influence engagement, comprehension, and language awareness.

One of the most noticeable results concerns immediacy. Real-time texts such as online news updates, live comments, social media posts, short public announcements, and messages from digital platforms introduce a sense of presence. These texts are not created to teach language; they exist to communicate something happening at the moment. Because of this, their use in the classroom creates a feeling that learning is connected to a living environment. Learners respond strongly to this type of content because it touches current events, daily routines, or trending topics. In many examples described in the literature, motivation increased when real-time materials were introduced, since every text carried information that mattered to someone right now. This sense of relevance encourages continued reading even in the presence of unfamiliar vocabulary.

A second result involves the natural fluidity of real-time language. Unlike controlled textbook texts, real-time authentic materials include spontaneous expressions, incomplete sentences, mixed registers, abbreviations, and emotional colouring. These features reflect the real functioning of language in society. Exposure to such variation encourages the development of flexible reading strategies. Instead of searching for perfect grammar or predictable structures, learners begin to focus on meaning, context, and tone. This shift strengthens global comprehension skills and reduces dependence on strict vocabulary control. It becomes easier to understand the overall message because attention moves to context clues and background logic. In consequence, readers become less afraid of unknown words and more confident in navigating unpredictable content.

The dynamic character of real-time texts also influences speed and processing ability. Many real-time materials are short, urgent in tone, and require quick interpretation-such as headlines, notifications, brief public messages, or platform alerts. These text types encourage learners to practise scanning, identifying the essential point, and recognising keywords. Skills of this type are essential for functioning in an information-rich society. After repeated exposure, learners begin to process information faster, which supports both reading fluency and general confidence. This outcome is often highlighted in works on authentic input, where real-world texts are described as catalysts for the development of natural reading habits.

Another pattern that became visible concerns cultural awareness. Real-time texts carry cultural references, humour, emotional reactions, and social attitudes that rarely appear in conventional textbooks. They document how a community reacts to events, expresses opinions, and communicates with one another. Through such materials, learners gain insight into contemporary cultural behaviour, social norms, and collective values. These cultural markers help learners understand not only the language but also the setting in which the language lives. In many cases, this awareness contributes to more accurate interpretations, since real-time texts often rely on shared cultural knowledge. Exposure to these elements creates a more holistic understanding of language and helps learners build connections between linguistic forms and social contexts.

Emotional involvement forms another important part of the results. Because real-time texts introduce relevant and often emotionally charged topics, learners tend to react more actively. Emotional engagement makes reading memorable and encourages participation in discussions or follow-up tasks. When a text touches daily life, social issues, or trending events, learners often feel compelled to share opinions and interpret the message in personal ways. Interaction becomes more dynamic, and the classroom atmosphere becomes more communicative. This effect is frequently mentioned in works on communicative competence, where emotionally meaningful content is described as a powerful motivator.

Another outcome relates to the level of unpredictability that real-time materials bring into the learning process. Since real-time texts change daily-or even hourly-the classroom becomes a flexible environment. New materials can appear at any moment, and tasks must adapt to the content rather than the other way around. This adaptability results in more creative instruction and supports a responsive teaching style. Lessons become less static and more connected to external reality. In many cases, learners enjoy this unpredictable element, because it mirrors real communication, where messages arrive without prior warning. This unpredictability trains learners to deal with complexity, ambiguity, and quick decision-making.

Along with positive outcomes, several challenges also emerged. One challenge involves the high density of unfamiliar vocabulary that appears in real-time texts. Social media posts may contain slang, abbreviations, or mixed registers. News updates may introduce formal expressions or topic-specific terminology. Although this variety supports authentic learning, it may cause hesitation among learners with lower proficiency. Because of this, many authors recommend presenting real-time materials with tasks that reduce pressure. Tasks focusing on gist, tone, or emotional message often help learners bypass unfamiliar elements and concentrate on essential meaning.

Another challenge concerns the rapid pace of change. Real-time texts may lose relevance within days, hours, or even minutes. For teaching purposes, this rapid turnover can become both an advantage and a complication. On the one hand, learners receive constantly updated material that mirrors reality. On the other hand, preparing tasks for such texts requires continuous adjustment. Despite this, the flexibility of real-time materials encourages dynamic thinking and prevents monotony in the classroom.

A further result appears in the comparison of approaches. Communicative and task-based approaches fit especially well with real-time materials, since both emphasise interaction, meaning negotiation, and purposeful activity. This view aligns with Harmer's (2007) perspective that reading activities should lead to communication rather than remain product-oriented. These approaches treat text as a springboard for discussion, problem-solving, and meaning-focused exchange. Real-time texts, by nature, evoke spontaneous reactions and questions, transforming reading into a dynamic communicative act rather than a silent decoding task. In contrast, purely grammar-oriented instruction receives less empirical support in this context, as real-time texts rarely follow controlled grammatical sequencing (Hadley, 2001). However, when grammar is noticed implicitly through contextual examples, learners attend to form more naturally, which reflects Grabe's (2009) argument that comprehension and structure awareness develop best within meaningful input.

Content-based instruction also benefits from authentic and real-time texts, since both approaches are grounded in meaning, topicality, and thematic coherence. When learners work with texts linked to subject matter or current events, ideas not structures-guide the learning process. This perspective is in line with Day and Bamford (1998), who stress that extensive and purposeful reading fosters deeper comprehension. Through such meaning-focused reading, learners strengthen connections between language, knowledge, and cognitive processing, building competencies that traditional materials rarely activate.

Real-time texts further contribute to digital literacy. Many authentic materials-social media comments, online reviews, short news updates or forum discussions—exist primarily in digital environments. Working with these materials exposes learners to multimodal features such as emojis, hyperlinks, visual layout cues, and interactive comment chains. These semiotic components influence meaning and require interpretation beyond standard text processing. The inclusion of such materials reflects Gilmore's (2007) assertion that authenticity encompasses not only linguistic content but also discourse mode, context, and communicative purpose. Developing literacy in this form becomes an essential skill in the contemporary communicative landscape, where online interaction dominates professional and personal spheres.

Another positive outcome concerns learner autonomy. Real-time materials frequently inspire students to explore English outside the classroom, especially when content aligns with personal interests. Learners begin reading short online posts, news fragments, and everyday texts independently, which extends language exposure beyond instructional time. Gilmore (2011) notes that authentic input motivates learners to engage with English in self-directed ways, increasing long-term retention and confidence. When reading becomes a routine part of daily life, gains in fluency and comprehension become more stable and sustainable.

In final synthesis, the findings indicate that real-time authentic texts bring vitality, variation, and communicative relevance into the learning environment. They enhance motivation, cultural awareness, digital competence, and the ability to interpret unpredictable discourse patterns. These outcomes reflect the broader pedagogical conclusions presented by Breen (1985), Garton and Graves (2014), and Harmer (2007), all of whom highlight authenticity as a driver of meaningful language development. When integrated into well-structured communicative tasks, real-time texts significantly support reading proficiency, engagement, and overall language competence.

Conclusion. In the course paper, several outcomes became noticeable after examining the role of authentic texts and the methods used to work with them. The results show that authentic materials influence learner engagement, comprehension, and overall classroom dynamics in several interconnected ways.

A consistent outcome is linked to learner motivation. When authentic texts were introduced in examples discussed in the literature, interest increased almost immediately. Real-life content, natural vocabulary, and meaningful topics created a sense of relevance, which reduced tension around unknown words. Motivation worked as a supportive factor that helped learners continue reading even when the text presented difficulties.

Another result appears in connection with comprehension. Authentic materials encouraged learners to rely more on general logic, context clues, and background knowledge. This shift strengthened global reading skills and helped learners focus on meaning instead of individual words. In consequence, learners developed greater tolerance toward unfamiliar language, which is highlighted in many works describing the benefits of authentic input.

The analysis also shows that task design plays a major role in the effectiveness of authentic materials. Tasks that focused on predicting content, identifying the main idea, or interpreting key points helped make authentic texts more accessible. In contrast, overly detailed or grammar-centered tasks sometimes increased the difficulty level. This contrast indicates that the success of authentic reading is closely tied to balanced task organisation.

A noticeable pattern was found in the comparison of approaches. Communicative and task-based approaches supported active engagement during reading activities. Learners used the text as a basis for interaction, discussion, and problem-solving. This approach created a natural learning atmosphere, where real language became part of meaningful tasks. Content-based instruction also showed positive results, as it directed learners' attention to topic-related understanding rather than isolated vocabulary.

Another important outcome concerns the balance between authenticity and accessibility. The materials described in the literature demonstrate that complete authenticity is not always necessary. Texts that remained authentic in origin but were appropriate in length, topic, and complexity produced better results. This balance allowed learners to experience real language without becoming overwhelmed, which helped maintain steady progress.

Overall, the results indicate that authentic texts contribute to more dynamic lessons, higher engagement, and improved reading strategies. Learners become more confident when working with real language, and their ability to interpret meaning grows stronger. In the end, authentic materials, when supported by suitable approaches and well-designed tasks, lead to noticeable improvements in both motivation and comprehension.

References:

1. Alptekin, C. (2006). Cultural familiarity in L2 reading and its effect on reading comprehension. *Language Learning*, 56(2), 153–185.
2. Berardo, S. A. (2006). The use of authentic materials in the teaching of reading. *The Reading Matrix,* 6(2), 60–69.
3. Breen, M. (1985). Authenticity in the language classroom. *Applied Linguistics*, 6(1), 60–70.
4. Day, R., & Bamford, J. (1998). *Extensive reading in the second language classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
5. Garton, S., & Graves, K. (2014). *Materials in ELT: Theory and practice*. Oxford University Press.
6. Gilmore, A. (2007). Authentic materials and authenticity in foreign language learning. *Language Teaching*, 40(2), 97–118.
7. Gilmore, A. (2011). "I prefer not text": Developing Japanese learners' communicative competence with authentic materials. *Language Learning*, 61(3), 786–819.
8. Grabe, W. (2009). *Reading in a second language: Moving from theory to practice*. Cambridge University Press.

9. Hadley, A. O. (2001). *Teaching language in context* (3rd ed.). Heinle & Heinle.
10. Harmer, J. (2007). *The practice of English language teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson.
11. Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and learning in the language classroom*. Oxford University Press.
12. Huang, H. (2006). Using authentic materials to enhance reading skills in a second language. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 3(2), 91–101.
13. İsmayılova, S. R. (2018). Xarici dilin tədrisində mətndən istifadə və onun idrak prosesinə təsiri. *Azərbaycan Dillər Universitetinin Elmi Xəbərləri*, 1(22), 45–52.
14. Məmmədova, M. F. (2016). Xarici dil kimi ingilis dilinin tədrisində kommunikativ yanaşma. *Pedaqogika və Təhsil Problemləri*, 7(2), 58–65.
15. Quliyeva, A. M. (2020). Orta məktəbdə ingilis dili fənnində oxu bacarıqlarının inkişafında mətn seçiminin rolu. *ADU Metodika Məcmuəsi*, 4(3), 112–119.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-8

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TEACHING PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Beylerov Elkhan Beyler,
Institute of Education of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6799-5511
el_4444@mail.ru

Samedova Sevinj Ragub,
Institute of education of the Republic of Azerbaijan (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0687-6412
sevinc.samedova.1988@mail.ru

Abstract. This article goes on to state that by using the advantages of neuropsychological and neuropedagogical approaches to teaching primary school students, a teacher helps students to optimally develop their abilities and potential. Each student has a unique learning style and different learning abilities. However, teachers often do not know that this diversity should be taken into account in the teaching process, or for some reason cannot do this. Too often, teachers prefer the same method, which they repeat over and over again when teaching any subject, and use the same teaching strategy. This approach reduces students' interest in learning. In order for students to learn more effectively, teachers need to identify their learning styles and take them into account when applying methods in the teaching process.

Key words: primary school student, student, thinking strategy, brain, teacher, right hemisphere, left hemisphere.

Introduction. Human learning is a complex process. Research conducted in the socio-cultural, economic and technological fields aims to clarify various aspects of this problem. The growing interest in the application of neuroscience approaches in education is related not only to the "learning" itself, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to the growth of the "interest in learning" of students. Although the interest in the application of individualized approaches in educational strategies implemented in schools is growing, a number of problems related to the learning difficulties of students still remain. If the content is taught in a way that does not correspond to the learning style of the student, then the student first has problems understanding the content and then loses interest in this content.

Main part. The use of neuroscience-based teaching methods is increasingly being used in schools. The goal is not only to transfer knowledge, but also to develop and increase the cognitive skills, attention, memory and self-regulation abilities of the student.

The effect of neuro-didactic training (NeuroGymnastics): A study published in the journal Frontiers in Education in 2025 shows that “neurodidactic” content and neurogymnastics programs significantly reinforced the verbal intelligence, logical thinking and self-regulation skills of young schoolchildren. The number of those who showed high results on the Wechsler test in the experimental group was 55%, and in the control group it was 40%; the corresponding indicators on the Raven test were 52% vs. 38%. (Zhumabayeva, Bazarbekova, Nurzhanova, Stambekova, Kalbergenova, 2025).

The main purpose of using neuroscience-based learning methods is to reveal students' own learning styles, develop their potential, and adapt them to the requirements of the information society and modern industrial dynamics. This will create a basis for maximum development of students' cognitive skills and rapid adaptation to changing environmental conditions.

The content/curriculum must have a flexible structure to match the speed of updating information. In the conditions of global competition, there is a serious need for methods and tools that maximally develop cognitive skills of students (Schetter, Romascano, Gaujard, Rummel, Denervaud, 2023).

Studies published in the journal Frontiers show that the use of neurogymnastics programs in the classroom significantly increases verbal and logical abilities (Gumbatova, 2018).

The use of teaching methods based on neuroscience in education brings diversity to pedagogical practice, focusing teachers' attention not on pedagogical rules, but on what and how students learn (Franceschini, Bertoni, Puccio, Gori, Termine, Facoetti, 2022). This also increases the teacher's sensitivity to the students' learning processes. It is very important to consider this factor when preparing future teachers to manage research and project activities of schoolchildren in the educational process.

By applying neurobiological methods, teachers can get acquainted with a wide range of teaching methods, which can improve the quality of assimilation of the material in the educational process and get the opportunity to approach traditional methods more critically (Parviainen, Helenius, Salmelin, 2010).

It is also necessary to consider that motivation is important for the development of the creative potential of students. "Motivation is a psychological manifestation of activity. In the psychological-pedagogical process, not only the student himself is important, but also his attitude to the work being performed" (Gumbatova, 2018: 98). The teacher must create motivation, using in the educational process tasks of different development orientations in accordance with the individual characteristics, interests and needs of his students.

As a result of research conducted in the field of neuroscience, methods were formed that stimulate the activity of brain cells of students in the educational process. Plasticity of the brain, extremely important for the processes of training and teaching, is studied with the help of neurobiological studies. It reflects the ability of the brain to grow/develop in the short-term and long-term perspective. This is related to how the brain reacts to the received experience and how its structure changes in response to changes in the environment (Eğitimsel Nörobilim, 2022).

Recent studies of children exposed to neglect in early childhood have sparked interest and emphasized the importance of this topic. The results of these studies show that the long-term absence of environmental stimulation can have irreversible negative consequences for the child's brain. Thus, even after several years of intervention programs in children who were deprived in early childhood, a weak progress in brain functioning is observed (Pınar, Öztürk, 2022). One of the reasons for this is the weak development of synaptic connections. The formation of these connections occurs in response to experience gained in childhood and adulthood (Cüceloğlu, 2018). This also affects the child's education in early childhood and school years.

One of the studies carried out in this area belongs to B. To Dragansky and his colleagues. In this study, adult volunteers learned juggling skills as part of a three-month regular training program. Brain MRI results were studied before and after training to determine structural changes associated with training. The analysis showed a statistically significant difference in the gray matter in the middle temporal region and the left posterior intraparietal sulcus between the participants who trained in juggling and those who did not. In another study of brain structural changes caused by training, E. Magwai and his colleagues (Karpicke, 2012) studied brain morphometry and found both structural and functional changes.

In these studies, it was studied how new skills acquired in adulthood can change the anatomical structure of the brain, especially its structural features, and results were presented on how learning increases neuroplasticity (Tamami, Makoto, Yusuke, Seishi, Shigeru, 2015). Comparing fMRI brain results of participants who can read and write and those who cannot, Dikhin and his colleagues (Duman, 2015) found that even learning to read affects the structure of the cerebral cortex at a later age and increases neuroplasticity. The brain consists of billions of neurons that form complex networks responsible for various functions and thought processes. Learning skills imply changes in these neural networks and the formation of new connections between neurons.

It is important to note that neuroscience-based methods are not only focused on language and logic, but also on aspects such as self-regulation, persistence of activity, and control of behavior in the classroom (Lee, Youn, Jang, Kim, Lee, Lee, Jung, Lee, 2023).

At the same time, it is important to note that neuroscientific studies have also identified structural and functional asymmetries in brain development. For example, MRI studies conducted in preschool and school-age children show that moderate lateralization in frontal-limbic regions (areas related to emotional and social functions) is already formed between the ages of 1 and 5. Asymmetries in the volume of the thalamus and the volume of cortical areas have been recorded in the brain. PubMed.

Neuroscientific studies have also recorded lateralization in the use of oral speech. fMRI studies have shown that in children aged 7 to 9 years, regions in the left hemisphere show strong activation in the perception of oral speech (e.g., the middle and superior temporal gyrus), which is similar to the speech lateralization in adults. JAMA Network+1 (Lyn, Balsamo, Benjamin, Cecile, 2002).

A study published in the journal Frontiers in Psychology in 2024 showed that game-based neuro-pedagogical and neuropsychological approaches applied in the learning process increased learning motivation and memory in students by 25-30% (Howard-Jones, 2023).

On the other hand, the results of the study published on the ScienceDirect (2023) platform confirmed that interactive digital learning environments play an important role in the development of attention and long-term memory in young schoolchildren (Bowers, 2024).

A report published by the OECD in 2023 notes that the proper use of the results of neuroscience in education also creates the basis for the formation of new methodological approaches in teacher training (Neuroscience and the Future of Education, 2023).

One of the most important areas where the results of neuroscience research in education should be applied is the field of teaching. Although it is not yet possible to talk about a pedagogical approach based on neuroscience, the connection of neuroscience with teacher training is important in many aspects. In the information age, it is essential for teachers to have knowledge about how learning and thinking processes occur in the brain and how this information can be used to improve educational processes.

Research on teacher training and pedagogical practices has shown that differences in cortical thickness asymmetry have been observed in the perception-related structures of the brain (temporal lobe area) of students between different pedagogical systems (e.g. Montessori and traditional methods). This indicates that educational methods have a long-term effect on brain structure (Schetter, Romascano, Gaujard, Rummel, Denervaud, 2023). This factor should also be taken into account when organizing teaching strategies.

For example, the neural network hypothesis proposed by D.O. Hebb provides a theoretical framework for how information is learned and remembered. In this context, knowledge of the mechanisms that directly affect learning processes, such as the strengthening and weakening of connections between nerve cells, neuroplasticity, and transmitters; expands teachers' understanding of how, for example, a student can go through affective and cognitive processes when he first encounters a topic.

The development of neuroscience has also contributed to the development of neuropsychology and neuropedagogy. For example, one of the well-known articles of neurobiology, neuropsychology and neuropedagogy is that the thinking process occurs on the basis of the activation of neuronal groups (Duman, 2015). The teacher must understand how the student can learn best, how he can use his thinking potential, keep this in mind and take it into account in the teaching process.

Neuropedagogy helps the teacher to understand the organization of the student's brain, how the brain is organized at the functional level and adapt teaching methods. The point is that although children are different, we apply the same learning method to them. Each student has his own “thinking nature” (Eğitimsel Nörobilim, 2022). Therefore, at the initial stage, students' learning abilities are different.

It should be noted that in some cases there are people who, referring to the results of neuroscience, put forward extreme ideas and approaches. For example, in some cases they mythologize ideas about the asymmetric development of the brain. In recent years, researchers have emphasized that ideas such as “left-hemisphere vs. right-hemisphere learning style” are often included in the myths of popular psychology. However, this approach is not sufficiently supported scientifically. In this regard, teachers should be careful not to try to build a teaching strategy based on the student's hemispheric dominance with this approach. This is a controversial issue from a scientific point of view. IBE – Science of learning portal+1, (Lee, Youn, Jang, Kim, Lee, Lee, Jung, Lee, 2024).

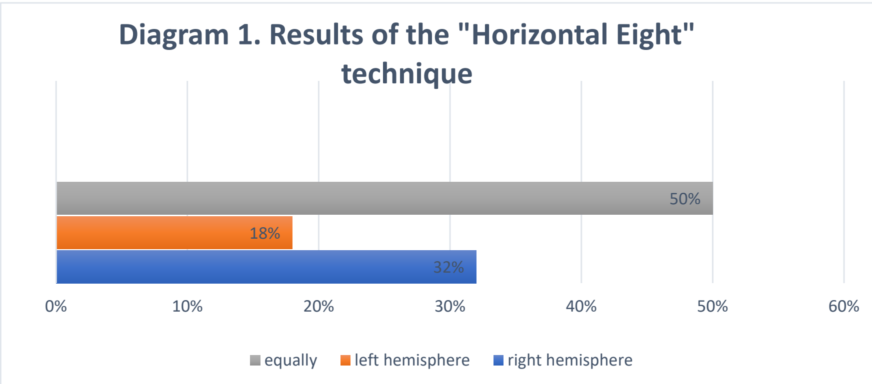
In order to teach effectively, one should be guided by the needs and abilities of the child and for this, it is necessary to carefully examine the student's thinking strategy. The point is that the essence of the methodological “contradictions” between teachers' teaching methods and students' learning styles is that for younger schoolchildren, the “left-hemisphere” teaching strategy and the “right-hemisphere” thinking strategy are preferred. To prevent this bias, it is necessary to know the characteristics of the child's mental activity and build a teaching technology based on it. For this, it is necessary to determine the dominant and non-dominant types of thinking activity among students in the classroom, and to compile a psychological and neurophysiological portrait of the class.

Methodology used. Neuroscience-based teaching methods focus on the individual learning abilities of students and are designed to increase their memory, attention, and cognitive strategies. For example, training programs such as "neurogymnastics" create significant development in language, logic, and visual intelligence.

During the study conducted for this purpose, the "Horizontal Eight" method was used to diagnose the symbolic expression of the integrity and harmony of the brain. In this method, the figure eight is drawn horizontally, and then the size of its two circles is considered. If the right side of the figure eight is larger, the left hemisphere is dominant; if the left side of the figure eight is larger, the right hemisphere is dominant. You can also draw perpendiculars to this figure eight and, by measuring the segments, determine the leading type of perception (visual, kinetic, and auditory).

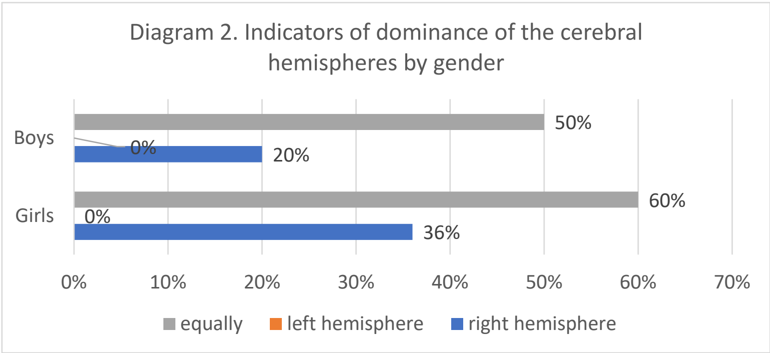
Analysis of the research results.

The research results showed that 55% of the students were ipsilateral (n=21), 29% were right-hemisphere (n=11), and 16% were left-hemisphere (n=6). As a result of processing the results obtained, it was possible to determine the following (Diagram 1).



Then, the results were statistically analyzed by gender. It turned out that the right hemisphere: 59% – girls (n= 11), 52% – boys (n= 10); right hemisphere: 35% – girls (n= 6), 24% – boys (n= 4); left hemisphere 6% – girls (n= 1), 24% – boys (n= 5). The results of the study are presented in diagram 2.

As can be seen, it turned out that the majority of students have equal hemispheres. This allows us to assume that the functions of the left and right hemispheres are coordinated and that difficulties in learning activities are not problems at the neurophysiological level. It is noteworthy that there are quite a few right-hemisphere students among both girls and boys. The main issue here is related to the educational problems of these students at school. Since school education is more focused on the left hemisphere, it can be assumed that students with the right hemisphere have difficulty learning new material, memorizing and perceiving information.



On the other hand, as can be seen from the diagram, the differences in the proportion of left-hemisphere children seem significant. In neurophysiology, the only significant difference in the neurophysiological organization of the brain in men and women is observed in the size of the corpus callosum connecting the left and right hemispheres. This can be explained by the lack of commissural connections – communication cells. In general, the coordination of left and right-hemisphere thinking is the basis of the child's intellectual development.

The child's brain is developed during the learning process. Any disruption in normal development can lead to functional deformation of the brain, even in a normal healthy child. Therefore, the teacher must know the student and "his brain" well. Special attention should be paid to the development of the child's forebrain, which is represented by two cerebral hemispheres that are "closely adjacent to each other like twin brothers." The presence of functional asymmetry of the cerebral hemispheres determines the variability or difference of thinking.

Depending on the specific activity of the child's cerebral hemispheres, the following types of development can be distinguished:

– the predominant manifestation of right-hemisphere development is the dominant left eye and ear with the left hand; this also applies to left-handed people and ambidexters (both ambidextrous hands);

– the predominant manifestation of left-hemisphere development is the dominant right eye and ear with the right hand;

– the mixed type is the right hand with the incompatible dominant eye and ear (Lee, Youn, Jang, Kim, Lee, Lee, Jung, Lee, 2024).

– When children start reading books, visual attention shifts to the left side, and this is associated with the development of attention and text-oriented habits (Franceschini, Bertoni, Puccio, Gori, Termine, Facoetti, 2022).

– If a school system (pedagogical method) encourages children to engage in more creative, game-oriented, or sensory-oriented activities, students' brain functions in other areas (visual, spatial, emotional) besides language lateralization and development of related structures may be more balanced (Howard-Jones, 2023).

In addition to the specific methods of processing the presented information, it is important to know that the left and right hemispheres are connected by the "corpus callosum". It allows both hemispheres to be integrated, recoded and included in the process. However, this "neural connection" is formed for a long time and slowly, especially in boys (Gumbatova, 2018). Thus, currently there are many schools in the world that offer to teach children to distinguish between the "right hemisphere type" as opposed to the "left hemisphere" method. The most optimal and productive from the point of view of neuropedagogy is synthesis learning. This technology means an appropriate combination of teaching methods and techniques, taking into account the neuropedagogical characteristics of students in a particular class. Based on the general diagnostic picture, it is proposed to synthesize correct methods that allow "entering the child's brain" by activating both hemispheres of the brain in different ways at different stages of the lesson. If the content is always easy, the brain stops working. It can be developed by gradually overcoming intellectual barriers.. Everyone should have the opportunity to test themselves in a difficult but feasible experience.

Conclusions.

– The synthesis of various teaching strategies in the learning process gives more effective results – the combined use of both traditional methods and neuroscience-oriented methods – is more profitable for teachers.

– The hemispheric dominance approach during training should not be completely rejected, but applying only a "left-hemisphere-oriented" or "right-hemisphere-oriented" teaching strategy to children based on it may not be justified, that is, it is a rather risky path.

– The most modern studies show that although asymmetries are formed in brain structures in the early period (1-5 years), the left hemisphere's advantage in specific skills such as functional lateralization and language becomes even stronger later, in the learning process at school.

– Teachers are advised to give more space to neuro-pedagogical exercises, neurogymnastics, active learning methods, the creation of an emotionally rich environment and components such as students' self-regulation skills in the learning process.

References:

1. Pınar, V. A., Öztürk, A. (2022) Öğrenme konuları üzerine, Nobel yayıncılık, 166 s.
2. (2022) Eğitimsel Nörobilim: Pedagoji İçin Çıkarımlar, Ankara: Nobel Akademi.
3. Cüceloğlu, D. (2018) İnsan ve Davranışı. İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi.
4. Duman, B. (2015) Neden Beyin Temelli Öğrenme? Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
5. Tamami N., Makoto K., Yusuke M., Seishi I., Shigeru K. (2020) Blink-related activation of the resting network.
6. Karpicke J. (2012) Retrieval-Based Learning: Active Retrieval Promotes Meaningful Learning.
7. Gumbatova A.A. (2018) On the development of intellectual potential of primary school students. Pedagogy and Psychology, Almaty, No. 3 (36)
8. Lee, G. Y., Youn, Y.-A., Jang, Y. H., Kim, H., Lee, J. Y., Lee, Y. J., Jung, M., Lee, H. J. (2024) Structural development and brain asymmetry in the fronto-limbic regions in preschool-aged children. Frontiers in Pediatrics.
9. Lyn M. Balsamo, MA; Benjamin Xu, PhD; Cecile B. Grandin, MD, PhD, et al. (2002) A Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging Study of Left Hemisphere Language Dominance in Children. 59; (7), pp.1168-1174.
10. Parviainen, T., Helenius, P., Salmelin, R. (2019) Children show hemispheric differences in the basic auditory response properties. Human brain mapping. 40(9), pp. 2699-2710.
11. Schetter, M., Romascano, D., Gaujard, M., Rummel, C., Denervaud, S. (2023) Learning by Heart or with Heart: Brain Asymmetry Reflects Pedagogical Practices. Brain sciences, 13(9), p.1270-1309.
12. Franceschini, S., Bertoni, S., Puccio, G., Gori, S., Termine, C., Facoetti, A. (2022) Visuo-spatial attention deficit in children with reading difficulties. Scientific reports, 12(1), 13930. https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-022-16646-w
13. Howard-Jones, P. (2023) Neuroscience and Education: Myths and Messages. Frontiers in Psychology.
14. Bowers, J. S. (2024) The practical and ethical challenges of applying neuroscience to education. ScienceDirect.
15. (2023) Neuroscience and the Future of Education. OECD Publishing. URL: https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2018/06/the-future-of-education-and-skills_5424dd26/54ac7020-en.pdf

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-9

LESSON OBSERVATION AND ITS EVALUATION IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

Aynur Budagova,
Doctor of Philosohpy, Associate Professor,
Azerbaijan University of Languages (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3734-7863

Abstract. There is much to be said for the term observation. Life is an observation in and of itself. In any sector, acquiring skills, information, conventions, and habits is a process that comes from observation. By following events, people pick up habits, customs, traditions, skills, and knowledge in all areas of life. Since the world is changing, foundational changes are taking place in education and this has its impact on education. Education fosters sustainable development, thus its quality is needed to enhance. The quality of education depends on the quality of its teachers. Monitoring and observation of lessons are the main quality indicators in education. Lesson observation is the most effective tool for the continuous development of new and experienced teachers. Lesson observation is a must for all subjects. However, each observation should be made and assessed by a specialist in that field. Lesson observations boost student and teacher efficiency in the classroom and foster a desire for lifelong learning in both groups. Regular lesson observation leads to the development of education and innovations. Every academic year brings up with innovations. Mutual scientific visions and discussions are needed to be aware of these innovations around. New technology affects every study area. Both positive and negative manifestations might be seen in this influence. The era of artificial intelligence's growth and proliferation is currently upon us. Artificial intelligence has been produced by the human brain, which results in a decline in human labor and an increase in unemployment. Some programs are still attempting to replace teachers. As a result, competition is growing, and we must struggle to meet the need for human labor. Teachers should work on their ability to be innovative, creative and use new technology.

Key words: lesson observation, teacher evaluation, quality assurance, innovative teachers.

Introduction. lesson observation is a proccess of a lesson progress and its evaluation. This proccess is usually overseen by the authority members, trainers, teachers or peer colleagues in educational institutions. The purpose of a lesson observation reveals impotance of teaching and learning style and the quality of education. A lesson observation gives an opportunity of analyzing mothods, resources and communicative manners with the class staff what teachers use. It plays an important role in ensuring justice and objective evaluation. Teachers learn their strengths and weaknesses in this way. This encourages them to advance their teaching careers. Improving the quality of teaching meets learners' better outcomes. This approach to education encourages teachers to use fresh approaches or strategies to improve their instruction. Teachers instill in their students a strong sense of responsibility and long-term growth in this way. Students encounter an effective learning environment as they strive to plan and reflect on their classes and improve their abilities.

A lesson observation procedure facilitates teamwork among the employees. That should not be viewed as a monitoring procedure because it promotes instructional excellence that lasts.

A lesson observation process helps the staff work in a team. That should not be considered as a monitoring process since it serves sustainable quality of teaching.

Supporting Professional Development. Currently, the globalization process and integrating are accelerating, and the important qualitative changes occurring in the socio-political, socio-cultural fields are also reflected in the area of science and education. Dinamic changes causes local or international reforms inside the countries. Modern changes occurring aroud the world accelarate the integration among world countries and nations. This global integration demands people a high level of communicative skills using various means of communication.

Surely, all transformations arise from the advancements in scientific development. Each start of any scientific change is related to education system and if that education system meets the needs of society so that means the system has been rightly laid down. In any case, a teacher is the responsible person who teaches and educates the society in various scientific disciplines. A properly desinged education system and instructors who teach forms a cohesive unity. The work of the teacher is pricless across all fields of study (Harmer, 2015, pp. 113–120).

Integration or communicative connections among nations primarily originates from advanced communication abilities. Therefore, there is a growing demand to include foreign languages in the curriculum. Among foreign languages English has gained the status of an international language and has become the most appropriate means of communication.

Andreas Schleicher who is Director for Education and Skills, and Specialist Advisor on Education Policy to the Secretary – General at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris staes that "the quality of an education system can never exceed the quality of its teachers" (Schleicher, 2012).

Continuous Professional Development. The main goal of the universities within pedagojical disciplines refer to educate or prepare real teachers. The students who are preparing to become teachers on specific subjects in future tend to be professional on their disciplines. The changes all around the world affects education system and this transformation refers to keep up with education curriculum or vice verse. Everyone can remember their past as nostalji today, however, we can not dress like the people who dressed in the 1970s, so that we can not use the same teaching process as it was in that period. If I do not transfrom my teaching methodology according to the needs of new generation, that means I do not work on my proficiency. If the education system is applied as traditonal, in that case the future life of new generation will be destroyed. Hence, that is teachers' responsibility to introduce innovative teaching methods to the society. There is such an important case that either a teacher or a doctor can not select their students or patients. For instance, many people apply to the banks for loans, however, there are some clients who can not take the amount from the banks which they want or wish because their living style does not allow them to owe big amounts to the banks. Based on this statement, it is easy to mention that bank workers can select their clients, whereas teachers and doctors do not have this option to choose their students and patients. Whoever the teacher teaches does not make a matter, that person is his or her student.

Every field has a different educational system, and each one has its own teaching style and educational strategy. E.g. teaching methods of physics, chemistry, geography, history and so on. The listed subjects broaden in accordance with their respective domains, creating opportunities for teaching several different subjects within one composition (Campbell, 2008, pp. 357–385).

The student's participation in pedagogical practice. There are some universities in Azerbaijan that prepares teachers for the future and these universities give chance to their students to practice their skills in the secondary schools. First of all, the university negotiates with some secondary schools and provides its students with some schools to attend. In real classes, students put their theoretical knowledge into practice. Based on the evaluation derived from observing the students' lessons, their pedagogical experience is evaluated. Following the observation, the students' lessons are evaluated by their university lecturers on methodology, pedagogy and psycology. The students that study to become teachers in future have to know these three areas of study most of all. The more they know these areas, the more they will know how to teach. Students enrolled in pedagogy-focused universities in Azerbaijan dedicate only one semester out of their four-year (eight-semester) bachelor's education to pedagogical experience. The rest of their education is focused on the theoretical coursework. The student is required to accumulate educational credits within 8 semester according to an approved education system. Last semester they carry on practicing their skills inside classrooms. If the student does not have enough credits on these subjects like methodology, pedagogy and psychology, he or she is not allowed to implement teaching practice at secondary schools. The advantages of this practice for students to realise themselves as teachers. Nevertheless, the limited duration of one semester for pedagogical practice is insufficient. As science evolves based on contemporary and existing changes and experiences, the students are better to improve their pedagogical skills not only within one semester, but rather throughout their final year of study. The first semester of the last academic year can consists of both university coursework and teaching experience. This implies that students can realize passive lesson observations by acknowledging theoretical lectures. Later, in the second semester they become active interns at the secondary schools. As mentioned above, the interns' lessons are observed by their supervisors from universities. These lesson observations will assist them in delivering high quality lessons to their students. The interns on teaching practice at secondary schools engage in peer observation or have their lessons observed also conduct academic research by analysing the process. Students in Azerbaijan present three demo -lessons for observation as part of their final teaching practice at schools, after which they are graded over their classes and attendance.

Impact of Lesson Observation on Teaching Quality. In my opinion, the practice of observing lessons should be implemented in all secondary and higher education institutions. As the students are graded on their teaching practice, the teachers are also needed to be evaluated for their lesson delivery. Constant inspection and observation of the lessons is a quality indicator in education. The goal of the lesson observation does not serve as they want to find faults in teachers or ascertain the strength or weaknesses of the pupils. The main purpose of this process is to find out shortages and discuss them with the teacher and find the ways out from the problems in soon (Müəllimin Pedaqoji Fəaliyyətinin Xüsusiyyətləri n.d.pp. 1–33).

We are aware that secondary and higher education institutions have quality control centers. The initial responsibility of these centers is assessing the educational institution's quality. The evaluation is based on the academic achievements of the students, the participation of instructors and professors in international conferences and training programs, and their scientific publications. After graduating from high school, graduates of the institution continue their education or work in a specialization in the field they studied, which serves as a quality indication of the institution. A graduate's ability to be employed in the workforce under specialty is a good measure of the caliber of his or her higher education. The quality indicator of an educational institution usually coincides with its quantitative indicator. The educational institution's lectures and semester tests or collecvium fulfill the subject teachers' objectives. The course syllabus's objectives ought to correspond with the subject's prerequisites. Learning objectives should align with the topic matter being taught. Subject matter and its constituent parts ought to be tailored to the demands of the contemporary job market.

Transferring the taught concepts and requirements to the pupils in an appropriate and courteous manner is one of the essential points. Therefore, a teacher who teaches any subject must always work on himself and be open to advances. It is important to remember that every generation brings up with new ideas, and educators work with a fresh group of students each year. That means they should meet thier needs and demands. Modern technology is the result of advances brought about by the upcoming generation in every industry. In the past, in order to change the channel while watching TV, one had to get up from their seat and move the side cap button to the right and left. However, with today's TV remote control, this task can be completed with just a quick glance or by waving your hand it can be done easily and once, in order to use home phones, it was necessary to turn the circular tool on the telephone base or to press the numeric keys on it, today we do this very easily by touching the screen. This example illustrates that it is essential for teachers to adapt their teaching methods to the requirements of the time. When a teacher employs outdated techniques in the face of a new generation, it indicates a lack of innovative openness or weakness (Həsənli, 2021).

The job market is impacted by changes in all domains, and this influence extends to the subjects taught in higher education. Educational standards and curricula are prepared according to the demand of the time. We live in a technological age. Observing lessons is different from typical teaching methods, and it will help us grow on our mistakes. Interactive or innovative teaching methods are multymanuvour. The lessons ought to be a student centered. A student centered lessons are much more interactive and innovative. However, traditional teaching methods do not have any maneuvers, as they are mostly teacher centred. While traditional education is a teacher centered, it is impossible to fully disclose the knowledge, abilities, and creativity of the student. Students only get better at memorization when their classes are provided in are monotonous way (Australian Professional Standards for Teachers, 2011).

However, every innovation that occurs in our lifetime is a product of the past. "We cannot effectively proceed into the future if we do not get lessons from the past." – Haydar Aliyev.

Creating a Supportive Observation Culture. Constant lesson observation is an important issue for the institutions. Observing classes is not always accepted by teachers partially. Instructors sometimes get worried that their knowledge, skills and expertise could come into question when their lessons are being observed. This mechanism raises the quality indicator of the educational institution, yet some teachers and professors are not willing that their lessons should be observed for not only identifying mistakes but also to learng from them. The quality of the educational institution is determined with the result of its students, and at the same time graduates getting a job in the labor market who are employed on their specialty (Penny, 2016, pp. 284–294).

The formation of society is regarding to the educational development. The teacher stands at the centre of any evolution. The teachers have to adhere to lifelong learning principle and demostrate endless initiatives to improve their skills and gained knowledge. While there are numerous various approaches to professional development in teaching, the lesson observation is still the most important issue. While talking about lesson observations, some are in the opinon of demo classes. Whereas demo classes are absolutely different from observing lessons. A demo class is a kind of master class where we take some notes for our professional development. Presently, demonstration classes are regularly provided at secondary schools. At this time some questions arise: 1) how do these demo lessons impact teachers' professional development in their specialty?

2) what do teachers or observing team learn from the lesson? 3) do teachers learn anything from the demonstration classes or is it a requirement imposed by institutions that all teachers have to organise a demonstration class for no purpose? 4) do we need such a process if there is no purpose what to learn or how to learn? This means that lesson observations contribute significantly to teacher professional development, internal institutional improvement for accreditation purposes, and ultimately, students' learning outcomes.

I am in the opinion that lesson observations are not connected to demostration lessons, it is such a procedure that either an observation team observe the lesson or it is a peer observation. In total, the main thing what the teacher learns from deficiences while teaching. On other hand someone from the observation team takes important notes over the lesson for his or her professional development. While observing, some observers focus more on identifying and commenting faults in teachers and students rather than on organising better teaching process and conductive student learning environment. In some cases, the purpose of lesson observations is to inspect or evaluate teachers only which leads to a subjuctive approach. In such an environment, teachers strive to impress the observation team by demonstrating themselves as productive and effective instructors rather than creating a positive *learning* environment for the students. This suggests that all the focus belongs to the instructor rather than the student and this type of an environment is indicated as a teacher-centered learning approach. Thus, it contradicts the student-based learning process (Campbell, 2008, pp. 357–385).

Professional Growth. In all cases, before entering the classroom, a teacher prepares a lesson plan and determines these questions: what has a student learnt and what have I taught? After setting these questions as his or her goals, the teacher determines whether he or she accomplished his aims at the end of the lesson. Such an objective approach enhances the teachers' productivity in their field. It is important to remember that lesson observation is a culture of education. To cultivate this culture in the education centers, both secondary school and university instructors should be proactive and seek to learn from each other's experiences. The essence of this process lies in judging neither teachers nor students, the main goal is to cultivate the mutual *learning* environment (Həsənli, 2021).

"Each teacher needs to learn something for professional growth. That does not mean they are inadequate teachers, instead it suggests that they can become even better". – Dylan Wiliam

The main goal of cunducting observations of teaching and learning process is uphold high standards within school, college, or training provider. It is useful to determine the standart and quality of teaching, learning and assessment that a provider offers (Penny, 2016, pp. 284–294).

Teachers' skills, competencies and attitudes are better assessed throughout lesson observations. The lesson observation is a type of the lesson itself which teachers learn from that they can identify areas of good practice and areas which may need developing. There is a set of criteria or standarts which have to be undertaken by observers to follow. These standarts will enable an observer how they are going to judge a teacher during the obsertion (Groundwater, 2009, pp. 45–21).

Most providers use different standards. For instance, the CIF lists the grading criteria below:

Grade One – Outstanding

Grade Two – Good

Grade Three – Satisfactory

Grade Four – Inadequate

The types of lesson observation:

– Graded observations (identifies quality)

It is often formal that establishes the standard, quality of teaching and learning and measures the capabilities of employees. This type of observation is conducted during appraisals or when setting objectives with employees. It is often provided in order to rise pay or set bonuses.

– Un-graded observations (identifies developmental)

A special, dedicated crew from the institution attends the lessons to observe and takes notes about ongoing educational process. After the lesson taken notes are discussed with the lesson teacher. During the next lesson observation, the observer will assess and compare the current lesson with the notes taken during the previous observation to evaluate the teacher's progress in enhancing their teaching skills. This shows the professional development of instructors.

– Peer observations

That means an informal type of observation, however it is more beneficial that refers a collaborative process. Firstly, an instructor feels less stressful while teaching and provides each other with constructive feedback. The purpose is to share teaching strategies and promote teaching development through peer learning and support.

– Learning Walks

Learning walks refer to share best practices among educators. They can assist school administrators in gaining understanding of general teaching methods and seeing patterns or trends that could guide efforts for school-wide enhancement (Shousha, 2015, pp. 131–143).

How to make lesson observations to be effective?

Effective strategies for conducting lesson observations

1. Clarification of the purpose and objectives
2. Observation form
3. Pre-observation meeting
4. Non-disruptive observation
5. Take detailed notes
6. Post observation meeting
7. Provide ongoing support (Observations of Teaching and Learning, 2017).

Importance of the lesson observation. Whether it is a school or university – based factor, the most important part of a student achievement is teaching quality. The other components like administrative stuff (e.g. leadership, teacher collaboration or curriculum) is 20% of this process. Strong teaching mechanisms start from; building knowledge, motivating teachers, developing teaching techniques, embedding practice. These mechanisms are made by Education Endowment Foundation (EEF). Teachers need to get professional development that includes a lot of mechanisms. (How Lesson Observation Supports Great Teaching: A Detailed Guide, 2025) For instance, in a 2018 survey, 38% of teachers in England agreed with idea that they have to do some range of training for their professional development which can enhance their instructional capabilities. Professional development in teaching is based on observation of lessons where feedback is important. Once to a SmartBrief poll: 70% of teachers state that traditional observation do not give them meaningful feedback that they need. 62% of school leaders declare that the evaluation system does not support the teachers' development. (How Lesson Observation Supports Great Teaching: A Detailed Guide, 2025).

Tom Kane, Professor of Education and Economics at Harvard's Graduate School of Education and leader of the MET project explains: Tom Kane –

"If we want students to learn more, teachers must become students of their own teaching. They need to see their own teaching in a new light."

"This is not about accountability. It's about providing the feedback every professional needs to strive towards excellence" (Luvinzu, 2023).

To maximize the impact of lesson observation feedback, it's essential to reflect on the entire lesson and shift the discussion from the teacher as an individual to the teaching itself. The focus should be on key elements of effective pedagogy rather than personal performance. Consider the professional development structures already in place at your school, such as lesson study, teaching triads, or peer coaching – where lesson observation likely plays a significant role. If it doesn't, incorporating observation into these programs can enhance their depth and effectiveness (Edmondson, 2025).

Breaking away from the routine, summative approach to classroom observations can be difficult. It demands a cultural shift and a clear commitment from school leadership to prioritize teacher development over mere supervision. A good first step is to evaluate how observations are currently being used in your school (Teachers' Standards, Department for Education, 2011).

Reflect on these eight key questions regarding lesson observation in your school:

– As a senior leader, what are your own perceptions of lesson observation practices?
– Do teachers feel confident and comfortable having their lessons observed?
– Are observations primarily tied to performance management?
– Is feedback based on rigid checklists, or does it encourage more meaningful, contextual discussions?
– Do teachers have regular opportunities to observe high-quality teaching across the school?
– Is there a fear of taking risks or trying out new teaching methods?
– Are examples of outstanding practice isolated, with limited sharing across the school?
– Are there structured opportunities for peer observation and self-review?

Let's be honest – lesson observation isn't easy.

Self-reflection, especially when reviewing our own performance on video, can feel uncomfortable. But that's precisely what makes it such a powerful tool for improvement.

Observations offer a direct window into what's really happening in the classroom. Teachers can only grow by confronting these insights and making intentional, informed decisions about their practice.

Supporting teachers to embrace this process may require a cultural shift. Resources like this guide can help reframe observation as a tool for growth. However, the real transformation happens when teachers see firsthand how observation feedback improves their teaching.

As Michael Fullan (Sanger, & Osguthorpe, 2011, pp. 569–578) put it:

" You can't force people to change, and relying on rewards or punishments is either ineffective or only produces short-term results. The key to lasting change lies in people's intrinsic motivation, which can only be influenced indirectly. What truly drives change isn't grand visions, moral appeals, or overwhelming evidence – it's the firsthand experience of being more effective that motivates people to continue and build on new behaviors."

Importance of Ongoing Observation and Evaluation. A lesson observation is not often just an individual lesson. Once an instructor might be asked for observing his or her lesson. Peer observation is just for collaborating and learning from each other. On the other hand, the purpose for lesson observation is to promote the instructor to another position or a pay-rise.

During lesson observation, it is needed to focus on specifics, nor generalizations. Instead than focusing on the session as a whole, developmental teaching observations should focus on particular tactics or components of a lesson. Each lesson is delivered by various teachers with different methods and approaches (Harmer, 2015, pp. 113–136).

Once observation is completed, the feedback from the lesson is given to an instructor in oral and written form. However, after the lesson observers and the teacher meet and discuss some points, later up to the end of the lesson the written feedback is given to the teacher. Feedback is given on the same day. The feedback that given two or three days after the observation loses its essence. Mostly the feedback should be done as soon as possible after the lesson.

There are a numerous training programs for teaching English efficiently. All these programs enhance English instructors' teaching skills and at the same time improve their language skills. There are some training programs which have fame and gives opportunity to teach this langauge legally and officially. They are: TKTs (Teaching Knowledge Test-all modules), TESOL & TEFL (TESOL stands for Teaching English to Speakers of Other Langaugues while TEFL stands for Teaching English as a Foreign Langauge), CELTA (Certificate of the English Language Teaching to Adults) and so on. These training courses mostly teach how to teach English better.

Lesson observation proccess mostly is done in CELTA courses where early in the course, trainees observe experienced CELTA trainers or qualified teachers delivering real English teaching lessons. These observations help trainees understand classroom management techniques, learn how to present language points effectively and see communicative teaching methods in action. Here, observations are usually guided, with checklists or focus questions. In CELTA, trainees teach real adult learners. Before lessons they prepare lesson plans that they are going to follow and CELTA trainers observe their lessons, evaluate lesson plans and trainees' teaching performance. After each lesson, the evaluation happens in several stages:

1. Self-evaluation

– What went well or badly
– What is needed to improve
– Students' learning

These points above encourage critical thinking and self-awareness.

2. Trainer feedback

– Trainers give **oral and written feedback** based on specific criteria (aligned with Cambridge's assessment standards).

– Feedback focuses on areas such as:

1. Lesson structure and clarity
2. Language accuracy
3. Student engagement
4. Classroom management

Trainers' feedback is **constructive**, highlighting both strengths and areas for development.

3. Peer Feedback

– Fellow trainees are also given a chance to feedback, that is for encouraging a collaborative learning environment

After the lesson observation, CELTA trainers formally assess the trainees' teacher practice through Cambridge criteria.

There are several approaches to arrange lesson observations for professional development. CELTA has been one of them above. Separate rubrics are used by each university and school to clarify the matter. The rublic should be listed in the observation blank to evaluate teaching process.

Here is one of the templates below that can be used to observe a lesson. This template is primarely beneficial for higher education such as colleges and universities. By removing the part at the top of the paper labeled with specialization, this document can still be utilized at schools as well.

Table 1

PAPER 1 ***Evaluation table of the lesson observation expert through the given criteria below:***

University: **Field of study:** **Lesson observation expert's/experts' full name:** **Teacher's full name:** **Subject name:** **Title of the course as listed in the syllabus:**	**Year of study and group number:** **Number of the students:** **Time and duration:** **Room number:** **Date of the observation:**

№	**Criteria**	**Evaluation score 1-10**	**Additional notes (if they are needed)**
1.	Taking notes on students' attendance at the start of the lesson and involving them in the learning process.		
2.	Designing the lesson plan (dividing it into sections or sequence and allocating time appropriately for each part)		
3.	Accurate identification of the lesson's goals and objectives		
4.	Extent of topic coverage during the lesson		
5.	Teacher's preparedness for the subject being taught		
6.	Appropriateness of the teacher's language to the group's/students' language proficiency level		
7.	Adaptation and implementation of selected teaching methods according to the topic		
8.	Clarification of tasks at each lesson stage, motivating students to complete them, ensuring their understanding, and assessing their performance		
9.	Implementation of classwork, group work, pair work, or individual work by the teacher, along with students' comprehension of the teacher's instructions (any or all of these methods can be applied during the lesson		
10.	Pronunciation clarity, appropriate intonation, and tone of voice		
11.	Effective use of teaching aids (such as games, visuals, object examples, listening materials, or technical tools like projectors and speakers		
12.	Alignment of the textbook and supplementary materials with the lesson topic and subject		
13.	The teacher's confidence, natural approach, and adherence to ethical conduct during the lesson		
14.	The teacher's feedback and assessment of students' mistakes based on their responses and activities relevant to the lesson topic		
15.	The extent to which the teacher accomplished the lesson objectives by the end of the lesson		
		Total score:	

The scores below represent the overall sum of the criteria listed above.

– Lesson evaluation should allow analyzing the teacher's ability by using the following criteria.

– The evaluation criteria is carried out using a scoring system ranging from 1 to 10:

10 = excellent
9 = very good
8 = good
7 = partially good
6 = satisfactory
5 = average
4 = fair
3 = poor
1 – 2 = very poor

– Final evaluation:

– The average grade for each criterion is determined by summing up the points awarded by the observer for that criterion and dividing the total by the number of criteria. This calculation yields the final score.

– If there is more than one observer in one lesson, the assessment will be conducted by aggregating the points awarded by all observers and then dividing the total sum by the number of observers. This calculation yields the final score.

– **10** = The lesson is executed at a commendable standard based on the specified criteria, it's advisable to share the experience with the teaching staff in the relevant field. Exceptional quality and performance is displayed.

– **9** = The lesson is conducted according to the mentioned criteria and meets the requirements. Although there are minimal issues, very high quality and performance is displayed.

– **8** = The lesson exceeds most requirements and expectations. Although there are minor issues that are addressed, high quality of performnace is displayed.

– **7 =** The lesson meets above average quality of performance and there are few minor issues and deficiencies.

– **6 =** The lesson mostly meets requirements and expectations. It is slightly above average quality and performance.

– **5** = The lesson meets minimum requirements and expectations. There are some minor issues and deficiencies.

– **4** = The lesson barely meets acceptable standarts. There are some deficiencies in quality and performance.

– **3 =** The lesson presents failure of performance and meets below acceptable standarts.

– **1– 2 =** The lesson meets many failures that impact overall effectiveness and demonstrates very low quality of performance.

(This table is applied to English lessons for SABAH groups (a project implemented within the framework of the Ministry of Science and Education, at Azerbaijan State Economic University and Azerbaijan University of Oil and Gas, Table source: Aynur Budagova)

(This table is applied to observation of the English classes for SABAH groups (a project implemented within the framework of the Ministry of Science and Education) at Azerbaijan State Economic University and Azerbaijan University of Oil and Gas, Table source: Aynur Budagova)

Table 2

PAPER 2 ***Instructor's Post-Observation Reflection Form***

University: **Field of study:** **Lesson observation expert's/experts' full name:** **Teacher's full name:** **Subject:** **Title in the syllabus:**	**Year of study and group number:** **Number of the students:** **Time and duration:** **Room number:** **Date of the observation:**
1.	Were the aims and objectives achieved while teaching?
2.	What did the students learn?
3.	Were the students involved in the lesson or how could they have been more involved?
4.	What stages of the lesson was I satisfied most with? Why?
5.	What stages of the lesson was I dissatisfied most with? Why?
6.	How were the lesson content, my readiness for the lesson, my language proficiency, and the appropriateness of the language level adapted to align with the learners' language competence?
7.	How would I do the lesson differently in future?

Table3

PAPER 3 ***Observer's post-observation feedback***

University: **Field of study:** **Lesson observation expert's/experts' full name:** **Teacher's full name:** **Subject:** **Title in the syllabus:**		**Year of study and group number:** **Number of the students:** **Time and duration:** **Room number:** **Date of the observation:**
S.	Area	Qualities & Skills
1	Achieving the aims and objectives set by the teacher throughout the lesson	
2.	Planning & preparation	
3.	Lesson implementation & management	
4.	Knowledge & Awareness (of the content)	
5	Additional comments and suggestions	

(This table is applied to observation of the English classes for SABAH groups (a project implemented within the framework of the Ministry of Science and Education) at Azerbaijan State Economic University and Azerbaijan University of Oil and Gas, Table source: Aynur Budagova)

The papers given above must be useful documents for conducting the lesson evaluation process.

Conclusion. In order to promote ongoing professional development and raise the caliber of instruction, effective lesson observation and teacher evaluation are essential. Observation becomes an effective tool for introspection, teamwork, and shared learning when it is viewed as a growing process as opposed to a judgmental one. Teachers are encouraged to interact with feedback, take chances, and improve their practice when the emphasis is shifted from performance control to meaningful discussions about pedagogy.

However, schools must foster a supportive environment where teachers feel empowered to learn from one another, constructive criticism is given, and trust is established if observation is to actually spur development. By embedding observation into professional development mechanisms such as peer mentoring and collaborative learning, schools may establish a learning environment where both teachers and students thrive. The most influential lesson observations are ultimately those that assist teachers recognize the importance of their own development and become more competent and self-assured in their work.

A true teacher is proved with his / her receptiev and reflective qualities.

Considering everything mentioned above, a list of some practical strategies for promoting an observational culture is concluded with these below:

1. Develop a collective understanding of what high-quality teaching and learning looks like.
2. Offer regular opportunities for peer observations to encourage collaborative learning.
3. Implement cross-department 360-degree observations to gain diverse insights.
4. Involve teachers in the observation process by asking what support they need.
5. Prioritize detailed, focused feedback rather than broad, generalized comments.
6. Use recordings of lessons to allow teachers to review and reflect on their practice.
7. Provide teachers with clear discussion frameworks to guide observation feedback.
8. Strengthen skills in delivering constructive, growth-focused feedback.
9. Encourage self-observation as a tool for personal reflection and improvement.
10. Expand professional learning networks to gain new perspectives and best practices.

References:

1. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL), (2011) Australian Professional Standards for Teachers. https://www.trb.nt.gov.au/system/files/upload s/files/2019/australian_professional standard for_teachers_final.pdf
2. Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies (2) 169 p. https://www.scribd.com/user/711403123/Azerbaijan-Journal-of-Educational-Studies
3. Beverly, G & Ela, S., (2024), Creating communicative learning spaces in initial teacher education (ITE) with observation-grounded co-mentoring practices. Professional Development in Education (3) p. 533-550 https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/19415257.2012.693119
4. Campbell, E. (2008). The Ethics of Teaching as a Moral Profession. Curriculum Inquiry, 38, 357-385. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2008.00414.x
5. Edmondson, S. (2025), How Lesson Observation Supports Great Teaching: A Detailed Guide, https://www.irisconnect.com/uk/blog/how-to-make-lesson-observations-most-effective/
6. Groundwater-Smith, S. & Mockler, N. (2009) Teacher Professional Learning in an Age of Compliance: Mind the Gap. Springer, p. 45-51, ISBN: 978 – 1-4020-9416-3, DOI:10.1007/978-1-4020-9417-0
7. Harmer, J. (2015), The Practice of English Language Teaching (5th Ed.), Pearson Education p. 113-136

8. Hattie, J, & Timperley, 1I. (2007). The Power of Feedback. Review of Educational Research, 771), 81-112.
9. Həsənli, İ., Dərs müşahidələrinin müəllimin peşəkar inkişafınd rolu, (2021) https://taim.edu.az/dersmusahide
10. How Lesson Observation Supports Great Teaching: A Detailed Guide, (2025) https://www.irisconnect.com/uk/blog/how-to-make-lesson-observations-most-effective/
11. Luvinzu, A., (2023). Crucial role of classroom observation in enhancing the quality of teaching. https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/education/article/2001442679/crucial-role-of-classroom-observation-in-enhancing-the-quality-of-teaching
12. Məhərrəmov Q., Fəttayev F., Piriyeva K., Məmmədov R., Mənsimov J. (Bakı – 2022) Müəllimin əl kitabı Sinfin İdarə Olunması, p. 137-145 https://tnetwork.az/public/uploads/photo-32.pdf
13. Muradli T., Shahmuradova G., (2024) Müəllimlərin Peşəkar İnkişaf Səviyyəsinin Təkmilləşdirilməsi Yolları / Ways To Improve Teacher Professional Development p. 1-8 https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/mllimlrin-pekar-inkiaf-sviyysinin-tkmilldirilmsi-yollari-ways-to-improve-teacher-professional-development/265523679
14. Müəllimin Pedaqoji Fəaliyyətinin Xüsusiyyətləri p. 1-33 https://adpuquba.edu.az/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mu%C9%99llimin-pedaqoji-f%C9%99aliyy%C9%99tinin-xususiyy%C9%99tl%C9%99ri.pdf
15. Observations of Teaching and Learning, (2017) https://www.educatinguk.com/observations-of-teaching-and-learning/
16. Penny, Ur., (2012), A Course in English Language Teaching, Cambridge University Press, p. 284-294.
17. Sanger, M., & Osguthorpe, R. (2011). Teacher education, preservice teacher beliefs, and the moral work of teaching. Teaching and Teacher Education, 27(3), p. 569-578
18. Shousha, A., (2015), Peer observation of teaching and professional development: Teachers' perspectives at the English Language Institute, King Abdulaziz University. Arab World English Journal, 6(2), 131-143. https://scholar.google.com/scholar?q=+Shousha,+A.+2015
19. Schleicher, A., (2012), Buliding a High-Quality Teaching Profession, https://vo.hse.ru/article/view/15504
20. Teachers' Standards, Department for Education,UK,(2011), https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-standards

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-10

METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE MODERN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Oxana Khmil,
Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation,
State University of Trade and Economics (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2304-2273
o.khmil@knute.edu.ua

Abstract. The article discusses the importance of fully substantiating methodological guidelines for deepening scientific understanding of the process of teaching foreign languages in the modern educational process in higher education institutions. The importance of relying on a comprehensive set of methodological approaches that ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis of this process is emphasised. Self-reflection on pedagogical experience has demonstrated the expediency of distinguishing between competence-based, personality-oriented, activity-based and systemic approaches as complementary methodological foundations that determine the effectiveness of modern foreign language teaching.

As a result of the pedagogical discourse, the essence of scientific approaches and their significance in the context of foreign language teaching has been clarified. In particular, the competence-based approach involves the formation of future specialists not so much in terms of knowledge and skills, but rather in terms of the development of key competences; the personality-oriented approach involves taking into account the individual needs and interests of each student, while the activity-based approach requires the active involvement of future specialists in educational and cognitive activities and the formation of the relevant ‘soft’ skills necessary for the constructive solution of professional tasks; a systematic approach involves considering the process of developing professional competence as a holistic pedagogical system.

Key words: methodology, methodological scientific approaches, higher education students, professional competence, foreign languages, teaching process.

Introduction. In today's world of globalisation, digital transformation and constantly changing educational standards, foreign language teaching is becoming increasingly important for developing competitive specialists. The intensification of international communication, the expansion of academic mobility and the need for intercultural interaction necessitate the improvement of methodological principles of language training. European integration opens up new opportunities for Ukrainian education, contributing to the improvement of the quality of language training, the implementation of modern pedagogical technologies and the use of advanced teaching methods that comply with European recommendations on language education. At the same time, it poses new challenges for the education system related to the need to adapt the educational process, modernise approaches to the formation of language competences and ensure a high level of professional readiness of applicants. Effective solutions to these tasks require a well-founded choice of methodological approaches that determine the content, structure and organisation of foreign language teaching in the modern educational process. In this context, it is particularly important to choose reliable methodological guidelines that ensure the formation of a high level of foreign language competence among students and meet the requirements of the modern educational space.

After all, the quality of language training largely determines not only the professional success of future specialists in an international environment, but also their ability to interact effectively in a multicultural space, maintain professional communications and integrate into global processes. Determining the optimal set of methodological approaches is a complex and multifaceted task that requires a comprehensive analysis of current trends in global language education, innovative technological solutions, international standards for teaching foreign languages, and best global practices in teaching.

Analysis of scientific research suggests that it is important to take into account the specific nature of foreign language learning, which is characterised by multidimensionality: the need to develop communicative, sociocultural, cognitive and professionally oriented competences, the development of critical and creative thinking, and the ability of learners to quickly adapt to a foreign language environment. The modern educational process involves the use of interactive methods, media technologies, authentic materials and project activities, which requires a high level of pedagogical skill, flexibility and the ability of teachers to work in a dynamic environment. That is why updating the methodological foundations of foreign language teaching is a key factor in improving the effectiveness of learning and ensuring the competitiveness of Ukrainian education in the international arena.

Purpose of the article. Based on the analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature and self-reflection on teaching experience, to clarify the set of methodological approaches that ensure the deepening of scientific ideas about the process of implementing methodological principles of foreign language teaching in the modern educational process.

Research material and methods. The research draws on the scientific work of scholars who study the methodology of scientific and pedagogical research. Given the specific nature of the aim of our scientific research, particular attention was paid to clarifying the basic provisions, in particular, the systemic, competence-based, personality-oriented and activity-based scientific approaches. The analysis, in particular, of monographs and dissertations covering the selected issues, made it appropriate to assume that the application of these approaches would contribute not only to a deeper understanding of the theoretical foundations of the research, but also to the concretisation of the uniqueness of scientific concepts and views.

Main part of the study. The formation of foreign language communicative competence in students is a complex and multidimensional process that requires clearly defined methodological guidelines and modern pedagogical approaches. In modern scientific literature, competence is viewed not as a static set of knowledge, skills and abilities, but as a dynamic, integrated process that involves continuous personal improvement, the development of the ability to learn independently, critical thinking and effective communication. A competent foreign language user not only has a command of lexical and grammatical material, but also knows how to apply it in real communication situations, adapt to a foreign language environment, interact in different cultural contexts and constantly expand their own language knowledge.

It is important to emphasise that foreign language competence is formed not only within the formal educational process, but also through the personal activity of the learner, their practical experience, self-development and ability to reflect. It is the combination of purposeful learning, practical language use, individual experience and internal motivation that creates the conditions for the formation of a high level of foreign language proficiency that meets the requirements of the modern educational paradigm and the globalised world.

Scientists I. Zavalnyuk, O. Zavalnyuk, and V. Nesterenko are right in believing that competence is not a static formation, but a dynamic process that has the property of constantly developing and improving. This refers to integrative personal development, which includes both a set of competencies (knowledge, skills, abilities) and personal qualities that contribute to successful activity; the latter includes motivation, responsibility, self-awareness, and the ability for self-development. It is important to note that competence manifests itself in a person's ability to perform activities effectively and successfully, achieve set goals and continuously improve professionally (Zavalnyuk, Nesterenko, 2021).

In research, professional competence has been understood as a pedagogical phenomenon that embodies a whole range of individual personality traits, as well as knowledge, abilities and skills that ensure the performance of professional functions.

As noted, we consider certainty in methodological approaches to teaching foreign languages in the modern educational process to be a guarantee of successful results in pedagogical activity. We proceeded from the assumption that in the context of researching methodological principles

The methodology of teaching a foreign language should be based on a systematic analysis of modern educational trends, the requirements of a competence-based approach, as well as the need to develop the communicative, sociocultural and strategic competences of learners. In this context, it is important to consider not only the content of teaching, but also the technological, organisational and assessment aspects that ensure the integrity and effectiveness of language training in the context of modernised education.

Results and discussion. Analysis of scientific and pedagogical literature shows that a systematic scientific approach is one of the key general scientific methodological approaches. In the context of higher education, it serves as an important paradigm for the accumulation of knowledge and development of skills that are important for the formation of students' comprehensive foreign language competence. The application of a systematic approach in foreign language teaching involves considering language training as a multi-component structure that includes linguistic, communicative, cognitive, sociocultural and strategic components. Each of them performs a specific function, but together they ensure the integrated development of the linguistic personality.

A systematic approach allows for the construction of a logically coherent teaching system, where the content, methods, means and forms of organisation of the educational process interact as elements of a single pedagogical model. Thanks to this, the formation of foreign language knowledge and skills does not take place in a fragmented manner, but within a holistic educational environment, which contributes to a deeper assimilation of the material and the development of the ability to apply the language in real communicative situations. In today's world, this is particularly relevant, as effective foreign language acquisition requires simultaneous work on various aspects of language activity, the integration of authentic materials and the use of innovative digital technologies.

Based on a review of scientific literature and reflection on teaching experience, we argue that the application of a systematic approach allows us to build the foreign language teaching process as a coherent, structurally organised system in which each element – the content of teaching, methods, forms of organising classes, means of control and assessment – are coordinated with each other and aimed at achieving a single pedagogical goal. This approach ensures the internal logic of the educational process, promotes the consistent development of key language competences, increases the effectiveness of material assimilation, and creates conditions for the integration of theoretical, practical, and communicative components of learning. It also helps students develop the ability to transfer their acquired language skills to new contexts, which is one of the key indicators of the quality of foreign language training.

In addition, the systematic approach allows this process to be viewed as a subsystem that contributes to the continuous professional growth of students, improving their qualifications and competence, which, in turn, has a positive impact on the quality of training of specialists and their competitiveness in the international arena. We agree with the existing research position, in particular that of O. Prokopenko, where a systematic approach is seen as the key to an effective educational process, ‘as it is based on qualitative characteristics (Prokopenko, 2021).

Therefore, the significance of a systematic approach in foreign language teaching lies in the need to form a holistic, interconnected structure of the educational process, where all its components function in close interaction. This involves clearly defined learning objectives, coordinated activities of the participants in the educational process, modern language education content, effective teaching methods and technologies, various organisational forms, a developed information and digital environment, and a well-founded system for monitoring and evaluating results. The integration of these components creates the necessary conditions for the consistent development of students' foreign language communication skills, which meets the requirements of modern educational standards, trends in the globalised educational space and the needs of professional activity in an international environment.

In our study, the competence-based general scientific approach was of particular interest, as its significance for solving the outlined problem is indisputable. The competence paradigm is the fundamental methodological basis of modern education, including the process of teaching foreign languages to students of higher education institutions. This approach focuses learning not only on the acquisition of knowledge, but above all on the development of the ability to apply it in specific, often professionally oriented situations. That is why it is particularly important in the training of specialists in various fields where effective foreign language communication is an important component of professional activity.

It should be noted that, thanks to its numerous advantages, the competence-based approach has gained a prominent place in scientific literature, where it is considered one of the most constructive methodological tools of modern pedagogy. Numerous studies emphasise that the competence-based approach is aimed at harmoniously combining the cognitive, activity-based and value-based components of learning, which ensure the student's ability to act professionally, responsibly, independently and creatively. In the context of foreign language learning, this means that not only language and speech skills are developed, but also the ability to interact effectively, solve professional tasks, navigate an intercultural environment and critically process information.

The competency-based approach allows us to view higher education institution applicants as active learners rather than passive recipients of knowledge. It promotes the development of autonomy, responsibility and self-regulation skills, which are extremely important for future professionals who will work in the rapidly changing conditions of a globalised world (Khodan, 2013). By learning a foreign language through the prism of the competence-based approach, students not only master language structures, but also acquire skills that allow them to use the language as a practical tool for professional activity: reading technical documentation, interpreting instructions, conducting business communication, working with digital platforms, presenting project results, etc.

In addition, the competence-based approach promotes the individualisation of learning, as it takes into account the learning needs, interests and level of preparation of each student. This makes it possible to adapt the educational process to the specifics of a particular speciality.

Thus, the competency-based approach ensures the methodological integrity and practical orientation of the educational process, creates conditions for the formation of foreign language communicative competence as an integrated education that encompasses linguistic, sociocultural, intellectual, and professional components. Its application in teaching foreign languages to higher education applicants is an important prerequisite for training highly qualified specialists capable of operating effectively in the modern information and professional environment.

Thus, researchers V. Mudryk, A. Kharkivska, and O. Shkola, studying the problem of learning and using the competency-based approach in education, emphasise that it provides a focus on the practical effectiveness of education, promotes the development of competitiveness among higher education seekers, and provides the appropriate potential for practical solutions to professional tasks. The competency-based approach focuses students' attention on the ability to use the knowledge they have acquired in practice and to apply successful experience in situations of educational and future professional activity, as it involves the formation not only of theoretical knowledge but also of the practical skills and abilities necessary for the successful performance of professional tasks (Kharkivska, Mudryk, Shkola, 2020).

For example, according to O. Khodan, the main goal of the competency-based approach in higher education is to train competitive high-level specialists who are ready to independently solve various problems (cognitive, communicative, worldview, moral, organisational, etc.), apply the acquired knowledge, skills and abilities in practical activities, as well as engage in continuous self-development and self-improvement.

Thus, the methodological guidelines of the competency-based educational paradigm are indisputable. Self-reflection on teaching experience requires analysis and the potential of a personality-oriented approach to foreign language teaching, as it is this approach that ensures the construction of individual learning trajectories, consideration of the educational needs and professional goals of learners, the formation of sustainable motivation and the development of critical thinking in the context of modern challenges. The educational process should be aimed at developing the personal qualities of learners, such as responsibility, initiative, independence, ability to cooperate and adapt to change; the concept of 'personality', according to psychologists, is much broader than the concept of 'profession' (Prokopenko, 2021).

According to S. Voloshinov, a person-centred approach to teaching is designed to ensure harmonious, cooperative relationships between all participants in the educational process. It is aimed not only at supporting the individuality of each student, but also at developing specialists capable of continuous self-development, self-realisation of their abilities and acquisition of relevant professional competencies (Voloshynov, 2019). In addition, this approach involves creating an educational environment in which each student has the opportunity to actively participate in learning activities, express their own opinions, initiate ideas, and choose the best learning methods according to their needs. It also promotes the development of creative potential, independence, and responsibility, ensuring the holistic development of future specialists.

In connection with attempts to expand scientific understanding of the pedagogical phenomenon under study, it was only natural to turn to the activity-based approach in foreign language teaching, since the process of forming foreign language competence cannot be considered outside the active, purposeful and motivated activity of the learner. It is the activity-based approach that emphasises that language skills are developed not through passive assimilation of information, but through practical tasks, modelling communicative situations, solving professionally oriented problem cases and interacting in realistic conditions.

In this context, the learning process takes on a collaborative nature, where the teacher acts as a facilitator, moderator and mentor, and the learner becomes an active participant and creator of their own educational trajectory. The combination of an activity-based approach with a competence-based paradigm is also important, as it ensures the integration of knowledge, skills, abilities and values into a single system of professional training. This synthesis allows not only to form foreign language communication competence, but also to develop critical thinking, creativity, teamwork skills, reflection and decision-making in conditions of uncertainty – key qualities of a future specialist in the field of electronic communications, maritime industry or any other professional field.

The application of the activity approach also contributes to the creation of a dynamic, interactive educational environment in which learners have the opportunity to try out different strategies of speech behaviour, analyse their own experience and improve it in conditions of constant feedback. Thus, the activity-based paradigm becomes the foundation for the comprehensive development of a personality oriented towards independence, responsibility and readiness for professional communication in a globalised world.

In his study (Synekop, 2017), the author notes that the activity-based approach is based on the belief that a foreign language is learned not as an abstract system of rules, but as an effective tool for real communication, requiring constant speech activity, the involvement of personal experience and the creative potential of each student. Within the activity-based learning paradigm, students are not passive recipients of information; on the contrary, they are active participants in the educational process, shaping their own language acquisition trajectory. An important feature of this approach is the development of learning strategies, both implicit and explicit.

The first manifests itself in the unintentional, natural assimilation of new models of activity through participation in speech situations. The second manifests itself in the conscious analysis of one's own actions, discussion of difficulties, search for ways to improve efficiency, and exchange of experience. When students are asked to share their personal learning or life experiences – for example, to talk about their previous contact with a foreign language, describe the difficulties they have encountered in the past, or demonstrate their own strategies for memorising and processing material – they not only activate their own knowledge, but also gain a sense of involvement in the learning process. This stimulates the development of metacognitive skills: self-control, self-assessment, predicting results, planning and adjusting one's own activities. As a result, students become more responsible for their own progress, and their ability to learn autonomously increases.

The activity-based approach also helps applicants to test various learning strategies in practice. They learn to choose the most effective methods of work, such as using visualisation, creating mind maps, applying semantic analysis methods, setting goals using the SMART model, keeping language diaries, etc. Such purposeful mastery of strategies is extremely important for future professional development, since in today's globalised world, specialists often have to learn new tools, technologies, standards, and instructions in English or other languages of international communication.

An equally important component of the activity-based approach is the widespread use of various forms of student collaboration. Collaborative and cooperative types of work are one of the most effective ways to model real-life professional communication situations. Pair, group or team interaction allows students not only to practise language structures, but also to learn to coordinate their actions, distribute responsibilities, plan collective activities and analyse the results of joint work.

In particular, cooperative learning involves an equal distribution of roles among group members: one student may be responsible for gathering information, another for analysing it, and a third for presenting the results. This form of work develops mutual support skills, the ability to listen, argue one's position, and take into account the opinions of others. At the same time, collaborative learning is based on the joint creation of a product, such as a collective project, poster, presentation, blog, or multimedia material. Each participant contributes to the common cause, which helps to develop a sense of responsibility and interdependence.

Project work is of particular importance in the activity-based approach. Projects can be of various types – research, creative, informational, applied – but what they have in common is that they are as close as possible to real-life and professional situations. During project activities, students not only use a foreign language as a means of communication, but also perform complex tasks that require planning, searching for sources, critical analysis of information, integration of knowledge from different fields, and a creative approach to presenting results.

It is important to emphasize that the activity-based approach involves not only completing tasks, but also planning them consciously. Students learn to define the purpose of a task, select appropriate linguistic and cognitive resources, predict results, and evaluate the process. Reflection plays a key role in this context. After completing a specific activity, learners analyze what they have achieved, what difficulties they encountered, and which strategies were most effective. This approach promotes the development of intrinsic motivation and forms self-regulation skills. The role of digital technologies cannot be overlooked. They significantly expand the possibilities of the activity-based approach: they provide access to authentic resources, allow for the organisation of virtual projects, joint editing of documents, creation of multimedia products, and simulation of real-life professional communication conditions.

Thus, the activity-oriented approach develops not only foreign language communication skills in students, but also a wide range of universal and professional skills. It promotes the development of autonomy, responsibility, critical thinking, decision-making, teamwork, creative problem-solving, planning, and reflection. All this makes it extremely valuable in the context of modern education and professional training.

Conclusions. The scientific approaches outlined by us – systemic, activity-based, competence-based, and personality-oriented – in their entirety, in our opinion, most fully reflect the modern vision of those methodological guidelines that ensure the positive dynamics of the process of teaching foreign languages in higher education institutions. Their integration creates a holistic basis for the organisation of the educational process, which takes into account the structure of the teaching material, the active participation of students, the formation of key professional competences, and the development of the individual potential of each participant in the learning process. It is the combination of these approaches that ensures the methodological consistency necessary for the development of effective teaching and learning materials that meet contemporary challenges, global trends in language education, and the needs of specific professional training. This methodological basis makes it possible to determine the optimal content of training, select relevant forms and methods of work, and ensure the differentiation and individualisation of the educational process.

Moreover, the synergy of these approaches contributes to the formation of foreign language competence as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes linguistic, speech, sociocultural, strategic, and professionally oriented components. It also creates a basis for the introduction of innovative educational technologies, interactive methods, digital resources and practice-oriented tasks that enhance the motivation of learners and ensure a high level of their readiness for real professional communication.

Thus, the methodological integration of systemic, activity-based, competence-based and personality-oriented approaches is a key condition for creating an effective educational environment capable of providing high-quality foreign language training for future specialists.

References:

1. Kharkivska A.A., Mudryk V.I., Shkola O.M. (2020). Kompetentnist yak faktor pidvyshchennia profesiinoi diialnosti maibutnikh fakhivtsiv fizychnoi kultury i sportu : monohrafiia [Competence as a factor in improving the professional activity of future specialists in physical culture and sports: a monograph]. Kharkiv : FOP O. V. Brovin, 185 s. [in Ukrainian]
2. Khodan O. (2013). Kompetentnisnyi pidkhid do pidhotovky maibutnikh fakhivtsiv u VNZ [Competence-based approach to the training of future specialists in higher education]. *Naukovyi visnyk Uzhhorodskoho natsionalnoho universytetu. Seriia: Pedahohika. Sotsialna robota*, (29), 232-235. [in Ukrainian].
3. Ohorodnyk N.Ie. (2020). Metodychni zasady formuvannia anhlomovnoi profesiinoi komunikatyvnoi kompetentnosti maibutnikh moriakiv. Ad orbem per linguas [Methodological principles of forming the English-language professional communicative competence of future seafarers. Ad orbem per linguas]. Do svitu cherez movy: materialy Mizhnarodnoi naukovo-praktychnoi konferentsii «Svit yak intertekst», 17–18 chervnia 2020 r. Kyiv: Vydavnychyi tsentr KNLU, S. 457–459[in Ukrainian].
4. Prokopenko O. (2021). Metodolohichni pidkhody do doslidzhennia pedahohichnoi kontseptsii edukatsii maibutnikh uchyteliv v umovakh didzhytalizatsii osvity [Methodological approaches to the study of the pedagogical concept of future teachers' eduction in the context of digitalisation of education]. *Naukovyi zhurnal Khortytskoi natsionalnoi akademii.* № 2(5) . https://doi.org/10.51706/2707-3076-2021-5-5[in Ukrainian]
5. Synekop O. (2017). Osobystisno-diialnisnyi pidkhid u anhlomovnomu dyferentsiiovanomu navchanni maibutnikh IT-fakhivtsiv [Personal-activity approach in English-language differentiated teaching of future IT specialists]. *Pedahohichnyi protses: teoriia i praktyka*, (3). 71-77. [in Ukrainian].
6. Voloshynov S. A. (2019). Metodolohichni osnovy formuvannia profesiinoi kompetentnosti maibutnikh morskykh fakhivtsiv [Methodological bases of formation of professional competence of future maritime specialists]. *Visnyk KrNU imeni Mykhaila Ostrohradskoho.* Vypusk 5(118). [in Ukrainian].
7. Zavalnyuk O, Nesterenko V., Zavalnyuk I. (2021). A key component of continuing professional development in the maritime context. *Seas of Transition: Setting a Course for the Future*, №19. p. 202-209[in English]

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-11

PROJECT BASED LEARNING INTO PRIMARY LIFE SCIENCE LESSONS

Machanova Javahir Isakhan,
Postgraduate Student, Azerbaijan University of Language
(Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8437-3693
cava_machanova@yahoo.com

Abstract. Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an engaging, student-centered approach that encourages active exploration, problem-solving, and collaboration. In primary science lessons, it helps students connect learning to real-world situations, fostering creativity, critical thinking, and independence. Through PBL, students work on meaningful projects, practice teamwork, develop communication skills, and integrate multiple subjects such as science, math, and art. The method typically follows five stages: problem identification, planning and preparation, implementation, reflection and evaluation, and sharing results. By experiencing these steps, students gain confidence, motivation, and the ability to transfer knowledge across contexts while discovering the joy of learning. PBL not only improves academic skills but also equips students with life skills such as perseverance, collaboration, creativity, and curiosity, preparing them for future learning and real-life challenges.

Key words: creativity, life skills, collaboration, problem solving, education.

Introduction. While teaching, the teacher uses several strategies to increase the effectiveness of learning. One of these strategies is the project-based learning method, which emphasizes the planned, step-by-step implementation of the subject. The goal of project-based education is to nurture creative, active children who are capable of learning independently throughout their lives. When planning projects, teachers need to consider the principles of consistency and didactic organization, ensure systematic presentation of material, and maintain clarity so that students can fully engage with the learning process and achieve meaningful outcomes.

During training, the teacher uses several strategies to increase the effectiveness of the lesson. One of these strategies is the project method. The main feature of this method is the planned implementation of the subject. The goal of project-based education is to raise creative, active children who are capable of learning throughout their lives. When planning projects, it is necessary to take into account the principles of consistency and didacticism, the systematicity of the material, and clarity.

The main provisions that must be decided before starting work are:

– which problem will cause the greatest interest of students;

– not to limit the freedom of students when making decisions;

– what the approximate results will be;

– determining the time for completing the project;

– selecting the necessary materials;

– taking into account what knowledge and skills students need before starting the project or during the project.

The main part. The project method is a method of understanding the world, since it involves the student's purposeful activity in researching, searching for and solving a real problem, which allows them to acquire new knowledge and skills. This is an active form of learning, which differs from passively acquiring information, as it requires independent research, analysis, synthesis, and presentation of results. Unlike purely scientific or philosophical learning, the project method integrates these into a practical task, linking theory with practice. (PBLWorks. (n.d.). Why PBL? 2025).

Scientific literacy is significant to follow the advancements in the 21st century. Science education enables raising scientifically literate individuals with educational approaches. One of the approaches that is used in science education is project-based learning (PBL). The aim of the study is to present the studies on PBL in terms of science education by using a comprehensive literature review. However, since that time, it has gained a following among classroom teachers, and the increasing attention of researchers and educators concerned about inclusion, earning loss, teaching language learners, and developing a 21st-century workforce with a high degree of science understanding and competence. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding students through inquiry-based learning processes (Machanova, 2025, p. 192).

About a hundred years ago, American scientist and philosopher John Dewey proposed that education should be based on purposeful activities that take into account students' personal interests and goals. For students to understand that knowledge is truly necessary, they should identify and solve problems that are meaningful to them and drawn from real life. In doing so, they apply existing knowledge and skills, acquire new ones they have not yet mastered, and ultimately achieve real, tangible results (Maçanova, 2023, p.142).

The goal of science education is to develop individuals who can recognize everyday problems, view them from a scientific perspective, make careful observations, think critically, and apply their knowledge to real-life situations (Kilinc et al., 2022). However, since the early 1990s, students' interest and comprehension in science have been declining (Krajcik, Blumenfeld, 2006); based science learning–where students actively engage with real-world problems and follow the methods that scientists use – has been proposed as an effective approach (Krajcik, Blumenfeld, 2006; Krajcik, Shin, 2014). In other words, PBL has been applied as a strategy to enhance students' motivation and deepen their understanding of science.

As more research has been undertaken, PBL has been shown to have an even wider influence on children's learning that its developers originally expected. Among many other benefits, it has been shown to contribute to language learning and science literacy, social-emotional learning, problem-solving in other subjects, and communication skills. Recent research has also shown that it helps decrease the learning gap for underserved populations.

Let's unpack what PBL is, how it works in the classroom, what the research says about its benefits, and some of the resources available to curriculum leaders who want to implement PBL in their school or district. One of the key benefits of PBL in primary science is that it sparks curiosity and motivation. Children are naturally inquisitive, and PBL encourages them to explore that curiosity through meaningful activities. For example, students might grow plants under different conditions to see how sunlight affects growth, mix colors to explore how new colors are formed, or create a simple baking soda and vinegar volcano to observe reactions. These activities give children a sense of ownership over their learning, encouraging them to engage actively rather than passively absorb information.

PBL also fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills. When students work on projects, they plan, test, and adjust their approach based on results. For instance, if a class project involves building a paper bridge to hold small weights, students must think creatively about structure, balance, and materials. They learn to experiment, analyze outcomes, and improve designs skills that strengthen logical thinking and resilience, even at a young age.

Another important advantage is the development of collaboration and communication skills. Most projects are conducted in small groups, which teaches students how to work together, share ideas, and solve problems as a team. Young learners practice explaining their observations, listening to peers, and giving constructive feedback. These social skills are essential for holistic development and enhance the learning process.

PBL also helps children connect scientific concepts to the real world, making learning relevant and meaningful. Primary students can observe everyday phenomena like why shadows change throughout the day, how magnets attract certain objects, or how seeds grow into plants, and link them to the concepts learned in class. Seeing these connections reinforces understanding, encourages curiosity, and promotes exploration beyond the classroom.

Additionally, PBL supports differentiated learning. Each child can participate according to their abilities, interests, and creativity. Some may enjoy building models, others prefer drawing diagrams, conducting experiments, or recording observations. For example, measuring ingredients to create a baking soda and vinegar volcano, observing plant growth, or experimenting with floating and sinking objects introduces basic math, observation, and reasoning skills. Recording results develops writing abilities, while creating visual models encourages artistic expression. This flexibility makes PBL inclusive and engaging for all students.

PBL encourages interdisciplinary learning. Science projects often involve elements of math, art, language, and technology. Measuring quantities strengthens math skills, writing about experiments develops literacy, and drawing or building models nurtures creativity. By combining these areas, students gain a richer, more integrated understanding of the world around them.

Project-Based Learning in primary science lessons does far more than teach scientific facts. It cultivates curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking, strengthens collaboration and communication skills, connects learning to everyday experiences, and supports differentiated, interdisciplinary education. Through hands-on, meaningful, and playful experiences, primary students not only learn science but also develop a lifelong love for exploration and discovery.

The main goal of life science lessons in elementary school was to increase children's worldview and introduce them to the world around them.

The main task of the teacher was to activate the topics taught to the students by presenting them both visually and in a game format, and to transfer new knowledge and skills to them.

Project-based learning in life science lessons helps students:

1) Develop students' creative thinking skills

2) Help them apply critical thinking skills

3)Encouraging students to work together

As might be expected, the impact on the classroom and the teacher's role is profound. Let's take a look at the way a typical PBL activity is structured.

Project-Based Learning, or PBL, is a fun and powerful way to learn. Instead of only listening to the teacher or reading from a book, students work on real projects that solve real problems. This kind of learning helps students stay interested and excited about school. It also gives everyone, no matter their background or learning style a chance to succeed.

In PBL, students don't just memorize facts. They ask questions, find answers, build things, and work together to solve challenges. Projects are often about topics that connect to the real world like helping the environment, learning about the community, or creating something useful for others. This makes learning meaningful and fun.

When students do projects, they practice important life skills. They learn how to:

- Think carefully and solve problems.
- Work in a team and listen to others.
- Share ideas and explain their thinking.
- Be creative and try new solutions.

These skills are very helpful, not only in school but also in life. For example, teamwork and communication are the same skills people need when they grow up and work with others in a job.

PBL also helps students in many subjects at the same time. A single project can include reading, writing, math, science, and art. Students learn to connect ideas between subjects, just like in real life. They also learn how to plan their work, manage time, and finish what they start.

When students work on projects, they become more confident and independent. They learn to take charge of their own learning, ask for help when needed, and keep trying even when something is hard. This builds determination, the ability to keep going and never give up.

Most importantly, students discover the joy of learning. When they finish a project, they feel proud because they have created something meaningful. They don't just get a grade but also, they see that their ideas can make a difference.

The application of the project method to life science lessons in primary grades helps students develop their creative abilities to work with difficult structured and open-ended problems that reflect the real world, preparing them for academic and workplace situations. Since they must take into account the assumptions and limitations of the scenario when formulating the problem, students learn to construct the problem themselves, improving their ability to transfer learning from one context to another In teaching life sciences and other subjects, the following sequence should be expected (Accelerate Learning. (n.d.). The benefits of project-based learning in science, 2025).

1) Problem identification – The teacher first poses a real problem for students, using the learning outcomes of the curriculum to select appropriate questions for their inquiry. Depending on the age of the students, the problem may be complex and require several stages of further work, or it may be relatively simple and can be solved or completed in a single class session. It may be related to a local, regional, or global problem or phenomenon. The teacher relates the problem to issues or everyday events that are familiar or attractive to the students and guides the class discussion about the nature and nuances of the problem until they understand what their boundaries and limitations are.

Unlike traditional science teaching strategies, following a PBL approach involves starting with a real-world problem or situation and then coaching the students through a scientific process of discovery toward potential solutions. There are few stages of this process are described below.

2) Planning and Preparation – Working in small collaborative groups, students think about how they will solve the problem. Their plan typically includes identifying the resources they will need to complete the project, as well as gathering information and conducting research. The teacher circulates among the groups, providing direction or assistance when needed, and assessing each group's readiness to implement their action plan.

3) Implementing – In this phase, students apply their knowledge and skills to carry out the steps of their plan. The teacher may provide logistical support, elicit higher-level or analytical thinking from students, or facilitate team interaction or project management, as well as encourage students to be creative, innovative, and take risks in finding solutions to the problem.

4) Reflection and Evaluation – After completing the project, students take time to reflect on what they have learned, evaluate their performance, and assess the effectiveness and impact of the project in relation to a real-world problem. The teacher then provides an objective assessment of their knowledge of the topic.

5) Sharing Results – The process typically ends with students presenting their work to their classmates, the school community, or others, sharing both what they have learned and the results of their work. The teacher will provide guidance on structuring the presentation, presenting information effectively, and formal communication skills.

The purpose of teaching life skills is the communicative activity of students, that is, life skills are necessary for both practical mastery and application. The observations once again showed that the teacher's task is to activate the activity of each student, to create conditions for creative activity in the learning process. The use of new pedagogical technologies opens up great opportunities for expanding the educational base, undoubtedly carries great motivational potential and promotes the principles of individualization of learning. The project method allows students to act as authors, increases creativity, expands not only their general horizons, but also helps to expand language skills, as well as develop independence in the learning process.

The project method has a number of advantages over traditional teaching methods as an independent type of work. The main advantages are: increasing students' motivation when learning life skills, visual integration of knowledge in various subjects of the school curriculum, the scope of students' creative and constructive activities, starting from elementary grades, gives a chance to build a new system of projects, based on modern requirements. The efficient and effective use of the project method in training also necessitates that it be a nationwide and state-level work carried out on the basis of family, school, and community unity.

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is a way of learning where students discover new ideas by working on real projects. Instead of only listening to teachers or reading from books, children actively take part in their learning. They ask questions, explore answers, create things, and share what they find with their classmates. This hands-on approach makes learning more exciting and meaningful for every student.

The idea of learning through projects has been around for a long time. Many early educators noticed that children learn best when they can explore, create, and solve problems instead of just memorizing facts. Over the years, this approach has been adapted to schools of all levels, and today, more and more teachers are using it to make learning interesting, fair, and effective for every child.

In modern classrooms, PBL helps students in many different ways. It encourages children to think carefully and creatively, work together in teams, and communicate their ideas clearly. Projects often connect to real-life situations, such as learning about the environment, helping the community, or creating something useful. This makes learning relevant and gives students a sense of purpose in their work. "The resulting trusting attitude will allow the social pedagogue to become a companion for their students. Students on the basis of the trust aroused and positive results reflected in their lives in all spheres, as improving their quality, will be able to openly perceive the teacher" (Nasibova, 2023, p. 20).

PBL also supports students with different learning styles. Some children learn best by seeing and doing, while others learn by listening or reading. Because projects allow students to explore ideas in many ways, everyone can participate and succeed. It also helps children who are learning a new language or who need extra support, giving them opportunities to practice and improve in a fun and interactive way.

One of the greatest benefits of PBL is that it builds important life skills that students will use in the future. Children learn how to plan a project, divide tasks, take responsibility, and help their teammates. They also develop problem-solving abilities, critical thinking, and creativity, all of which are useful in school and later in life. Through projects, students learn that making mistakes is part of learning and that persistence and effort lead to success.

PBL helps students connect different subjects in one project. For example, a single project might involve reading, writing, math, science, and art. Students can see how the subjects relate to one another and how learning in school can be connected to the world around them. This interdisciplinary approach prepares children to think about problems in many ways and to apply what they learn in different situations.

Research and classroom experiences show that PBL can also help close the learning gap between students who have many resources and those who may face more challenges. Because projects are interactive and collaborative, they provide opportunities for all students to participate equally. Children gain confidence as they share their ideas, contribute to teamwork, and see the results of their effort.

Finally, project-based learning helps students discover the joy of learning. When children complete a project, they experience pride and satisfaction, knowing they have created something meaningful. They learn that school is not only about grades, but also about exploring ideas, solving problems, and making a difference. PBL gives students the chance to become curious, creative, and confident learners who are ready to face new challenges and succeed in the world.

In conclusion research has shown that when pedagogical conditions are observed for the effective organization of creative activities of primary school students, the application of the project method has a positive effect on the development of learning motivation and interest in learning.

1. Project-based learning in the subject of life sciences significantly increases the ability of students to investigate environmental problems and propose solutions. Thus, the results of the experiment we conducted showed that students are able to present creative and practical solutions to these problems in their projects.

2. In order to ensure the all-round development of students, the application of project-based learning in the subject of life sciences develops cooperation and teamwork skills in students, forms a sense of responsibility (Maçanova, 2024, p 173).

3. The ability to use the project method is an indicator of the teacher's high qualification, his progressive teaching and development methods. When a teacher creatively uses the experience of other teachers to form the motivation of students in his work, it is possible to improve the quality of teaching.

4. In order to ensure the comprehensive development of students, the application of project-based learning in the subject of Life Sciences deepens the sense of ecological awareness and productivity in students, encourages them to be more attentive to nature and take steps to protect it.

5. Studies have shown that when the form of presentation of material in the project-based learning process is flexible, students' understanding opportunities expand and the basis for improving quality is created.

6. Working on a project is one of the ways for a student to enter socially normalized activity, during which the child learns to determine the boundaries of his independence, freedom and responsibility. This technology allows the child to cultivate such qualities as morality, communication, develops creative skills, instills the ability to do useful work for society, and adapts the future generation to modern life.

In **conclusion,** implementing project-based learning in life science classes can enhance students' understanding of the subject matter and enable them to approach real-world problems more effectively. However, trends emerging in the process of organizing young students' project activities indicate the need to regulate the emerging experience, positively affecting both the academic and socio-emotional development of students, creating the foundation for their future growth as successful individuals.

References:

1. Krajcik, J. S., & Blumenfeld, P. C. (2006). Project-based learning. In R. K. Sawyer (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences* (pp. 317–334). Cambridge University Press.
2. Accelerate Learning. (n.d.). *The benefits of project-based learning in science*. from https://info.acceleratelearning.com/benefits-of-project-based-learning-in-science (Retrieved November 08/11/ 2025,)
3. Buck Institute for Education. (n.d.). *Research summary: PBL and 21st century competencies*. https://www.pblworks.org/why-project-based-learning (Retrieved 08/11/2025)
4. Maçanova, İ. C. (2023). Layihə metodunun tarixi və mahiyyəti [The history and essence of the project method]. *Azərbaycan Dillər Universiteti, Elmi xəbərlər, 1*, 142–146.
5. Maçanova, İ. C. (2024). İbtidai siniflərdə xarici dil dərslərində layihə metodundan istifadə [The use of the project method in primary foreign language lessons]. *Azərbaycan Respublikasının Təhsil İnstitutu, Elmi əsərlər, 91*(1), 170–174.
6. Machanova, J. (2025). *Project-based learning in primary schools: A path to active learning. Pedagogical Sciences Series,* (1), 192–198.
7. Nasibova, S. (2023). Formation of inclusive competence of future special educators, Ways of modernizing education and improving the research skills of young people, Youth Voice Journal Vol. II, pp. 18-32. ISBN (ONLINE): 978-1-911634-96-6

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-12

APPLICATION OF A COMMUNICATIVE-ORIENTED LEARNING MODEL IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

Maharramova Leyla Tapdig,
Azerbaijan University of Languages (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6720-177X

Abstract. In the era of globalization and digitalization, the most common method of teaching foreign languages is the communicative method. This article discusses the types of teaching methods, their application in language lessons, the use of the communicative method in language lessons, as well as its pedagogical effectiveness and practical results. This approach develops students' four competencies: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Along with the positive aspects of this method, some disadvantages were analyzed: the level of teacher training, the psychological limitations of students, and the lack of technological tools in classrooms. The use of technological tools in lessons organized according to this method contributes to the development of students' speech skills. All these positive and negative sides were compared, and a general conclusion was drawn. According to this conclusion, properly planned and organized application of communication lessons can lead to positive results in English lessons.

Key words: communicative competence, audiolinguistic, synchronous, asynchronous, hybrid, artificial intelligence.

Introduction. In the modern era, the development of communication skills in a foreign language is one of the main issues of pedagogical approaches in the process of teaching this language. The process of language learning, as well as the emergence and development of methods of teaching foreign languages are based on various pedagogical theories. Since the end of the last century, the interpretation of language as a means of communication has been put forward.

Unlike Noam Chomsky, Dell Himes brought a communicative approach to science. Hymes, putting forward the concept of communicative competence, demanded that English be taught not only as an academic subject, but also as a means of communication. Chomsky, on the other hand, attached importance to teaching only grammar in foreign language lessons. Hymes believed that grammatical knowledge alone was not enough to learn a language. The student should also be able to use language in public life. He identified several components of linguistic competence (Dell, 1977: 20).

Main part.

Grammatical competence. The basis of this competence is the study of the composition and structure of the language.

1. Discursive competence. Logical connection of various sentences.

2. Sociolinguistic competence. The ability to use language in a social environment. 3. Strategic competence. Using strategies to help overcome difficulties in using language in social communication.

Based on these components, learning and proper use of language contribute to increasing students' interest in language lessons, motivation to use it, and the development of practical speaking skills (Littlewood, 2004).

The traditional method is based on structuralism. The lessons here are teacher-oriented. The teacher explains the rules, the students memorize the grammar rules, read and translate the text from the book and teach the language using training methods.

Training methods are designed to consolidate language units by repeating them in language lessons. This approach was proposed by American psychologists and linguists in the middle of the last century. Renowned methodologist Charles Frise and behaviorist B.F. Skinner played an important role in the development of this method. There are several types of these methods (Richards, Rodgers, 2014).

Repetition training. This type of method is widespread in traditional classrooms. So, in an English lesson in elementary grades, the teacher writes words, their pronunciation and translation on the blackboard. Then he says these words in English, and the students repeat them exactly.

1. Substitution exercise. In this method, a word or phrase in a sentence is replaced and repeated by the students.

2. An extension exercise. The student completes the sentence with additional information.

3. The transformation exercise. The sentence is changed and repeated from affirmative to negative, from affirmative to negative and vice versa.

4. A question-and-answer exercise. The teacher repeats all the topics studied, asking and answering questions.

In the 20-30s of the last century in the USA, the direct method was transformed into an audiolinguistic one. This method is based on the "stimulus → reaction → reward" model (Jeremy, 2015: 57). When using this method, students minimize mistakes when learning a foreign language by using exercises (repetition methods) suggested by English methodologists and psychologists.

In short, the main purpose of this method is to develop students' language habits. When using the language, attention is paid to the correct pronunciation of English words, and grammar is studied in practice.

The method of communicative translation is the most widely used method in language lessons nowadays. The main purpose of this method is to instill and develop students' communication skills in the language they are learning. Grammar is taught here in context, and the emphasis is on its proper use in oral speech.

Unlike the grammatical translation method, here the student is an active participant, and the teacher is an intermediary. In the grammar-translation method, the main issue is the translation and grammatical analysis of the text. In the communicative method, the key is the active use of language in the classroom.

In the communicative method, all four competencies are included in the lesson.

Innovative methods such as role-playing games, debates, and projects are used to motivate students in the classroom.

There are both positive and negative sides of communicative English language teaching.

First, let's look at the positive aspects:

1. In addition to reading and writing skills, the lesson also focuses on the development of speaking and listening skills. The main purpose of this method is to ensure the use of language as a means of communication. The communicative method also forms students' fluency in English.

2. A personality-oriented approach is one of the basic principles of the communicative method. During the lesson, students can freely express their opinions in the language they are learning, ask questions and answer them. Students completely move away from passive learning and become active participants in the lesson. This gives them confidence in communicating in English.

3. The use of communicative and innovative methods makes the lesson more interesting and interactive.

4. The lesson reflects integration with real life. This helps students express their thoughts in English and in extracurricular activities.

Taking into account all these positive aspects, the use of the communicative method in language lessons has become one of the most pressing problems of our time.

However, along with the positive aspects of communicative learning, there are also negative ones:

1. Communication-oriented lessons are conducted on the basis of communication. This can create difficulties in an objective assessment. For example, some students have excellent command of spoken English, but they do not know the subject well or remember it very well, but they do not speak English well. In these cases, it is difficult to assess.

2. Since the main purpose of the communicative method is communication, little attention is paid to teaching grammatical rules. This can lead to incorrect grammar usage, despite the fluency of spoken language.

3. The number of students in large groups is at least 40-50 people. This significantly weakens the interactivity and individual approach in the lesson. Therefore, interactive lessons can be more effective in small groups.

4. The best way to develop communication lessons is to use technological tools and innovative methods effectively. To do this, the classroom must be equipped with technological facilities. However, not all schools and universities have such resources yet. This weakens the use of the communicative method.

5. Some teachers are still trying to teach a foreign language using the grammar and translation method. Some do not know how to use technological means or do not attach importance to the use of innovative methods in the classroom. All this indicates that many teachers are not ready for the communicative method of teaching, both psychologically and practically.

We can achieve positive results by involving such teachers in trainings and seminars.

In fact, it is not difficult to eliminate these shortcomings that we have investigated and discovered. To do this, we need well-equipped classrooms, psychologically trained teachers with a high level of proficiency in language and technological means, and constantly improving.

The communicative method has a number of differences from other methods. In recent years, the most widely used method in teaching English is the communicative method. The traditional method has many disadvantages in foreign language lessons, so its use has decreased.

So what is the difference between the communicative method and the traditional one?

While the main goal of the communicative method is to improve the use of language not only as a subject, but also as a means of communication in real life, the main goal of the traditional method is to help students memorize grammar and translate sentences correctly.

The communicative method uses innovative methods to create a framework for students to actively participate in the lesson and interactively express their thoughts and questions. This method requires the simultaneous use of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills in the classroom. In traditional methods, writing and reading skills were given great importance.

One of the advantages of the communicative method is that it creates students' desire to learn a language. Now students can use the language not only in the classroom, but also in real life. This increases their self-confidence. With the traditional method, despite knowing grammar and words, students could not speak.

Let us compare the audiolinguistic method with the communicative method. The audiolingual method, supported by representatives of the behaviorist approach, is based on the technique of "memorization". Students memorize predefined template sentences by repeating them. That is, here the student cannot freely or spontaneously express his opinion on the topic. In the communicative method, the student can freely express himself on the topic and situation.

Let us compare it with the grammar-translation method. Thus, the grammar-translation method is based on the explanation of grammatical rules in the native language and the translation of texts. This method is considered a rule-based method. The communicative method is based on the usual knowledge.

Let us compare the communicative method with other methods and present the result in the form of a graph:

Method	Focus	Student Role	Skills	Activity
Grammatical-translation method	Grammar and translation	Passive	Reading and Writing	Poor
Audiolingualism	Repetition and drill	Passive	Speaking	Adequate
Communicative method	Communication	Active	Reading, writing, listening, speaking	Excellent

In the era of digitalization, learning international languages, especially English, has become one of the priorities. We can say that English has become the language of almost all important meetings and conferences. Therefore, we must teach English to our students using the right methods. Along with the correct methods, you should also use tools that make the lesson effective and interesting.

We must use a number of tools to instill communication skills in students in English lessons. The most relevant of these is the use of technological tools. In our era, the role of technology in education is undeniable. In this way, technology develops students' creative thinking, critical approach, and problem-solving skills. Therefore, the proper integration of technological tools into learning is a positive step for both teachers and students. Simply put, the digitalization skills of teachers and students must be developed.

Technology also plays an important role in properly instilling communication skills in students.

Communication skills include listening, reading, writing, and speaking skills, functional language use, and communication in real-life situations. Examples of technological tools used to develop communication skills include interactive applications, games, Duolingo, Speaky, Quizlet, Kahoot, and others. In addition, audio and video resources, English language teaching channels on YouTube, TED talks, podcasts, English-language films, songs, and English-language news channels can be mentioned.

Virtual classes developed with the help of technology provide students with opportunities for synchronous and asynchronous, hybrid learning. In the era of digitalization, the use of these learning models has expanded. They were especially widely used during the pandemic.

The synchronous learning model implies that teachers and students are connected to the lesson at the same time, through the same application (Ur, 2012: 235). Examples of this learning model include the most widely used platforms in Azerbaijan during the pandemic: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, as well as Google Meet and Webex.

These platforms have many advantages and disadvantages.

The positive sides:

In the synchronous learning model, it is possible to communicate in real time, ask questions and exchange information.

Since all the participants of the lesson are online, you can create a real learning environment.

No dependence on location. That is, there is no need to go to school or university to study.

Saving time.

The teacher can provide immediate feedback.

Increases student motivation. However, sometimes some students turn off the camera and do other things while online.

The negative sides:

Weak or missing internet connection. Based on our experience, we can say that some passive students deliberately and intentionally skip classes, using the Internet as an excuse. This reduces the effectiveness of classes.

Some students may join classes from different countries. As we know, there are differences in the time zones of different countries. These differences create difficulties for students to participate in classes.

It is very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to motivate students who are not enthusiastic about classes to study according to this model.

The asynchronous learning model is the exact opposite of the synchronous model. That is, communication does not happen at the same time here. The teacher sends the lesson materials to the students, and the students can use these materials at any time. For example, you can communicate via email, through learning management systems (LMS) such as Edmodo, Canvas, Moodle, etc.

LMS is a digital platform that implements the planning, organization and monitoring of online learning as a learning management system. Materials are exchanged here, student participation is monitored, communication between teacher and students is carried out, and an assessment is carried out.

In an Edmodo-type learning management system (LMS), in addition to parents, both teachers and students see the information sent.

Advantages of the asynchronous model:

Absence of space-time dependence. The teacher can send materials, check and evaluate the submitted assignments at any time and anywhere. In addition, students can receive information provided by the teacher or ask questions anytime, anywhere. This model is more convenient for students from different countries.

The advantage lies in the possibility of multiple viewing of the message window or online group and training.

In this case, a lot of responsibility falls on the students. They are more free to learn.

Disadvantages of this model:

Lack of live communication can distance students from social life and people.

In this case, students are given too much freedom. As a result, some students lose concentration in the lesson.

Since the teacher does not bear much responsibility, he may also postpone feedback and assessment (Ur , 2015: 237).

Another learning model is hybrid. This model was created by combining two other learning methods. In other words, the lessons are synchronous, but the resources are asynchronous.

As a result, models and methods of organizing lessons are selected depending on the purpose of the training, the level of language proficiency of students and the equipment in the classroom.

The use of a hybrid model in the modern learning system creates the basis for a more effective lesson organization.

Recently, the most relevant technological tools are those based on artificial intelligence. The most famous of them is ChatGPT. Almost everyone uses this application. We can use this app as an English-speaking friend, psychologist, teacher, and translator or assistant who sends you any information. In short, this app has become a close assistant for people. However, the disadvantage is that all the information we provide is stored in the data of this application.

Besides ChatGPT, there are also artificial intelligence-based tools such as Grammarly and SpeakPal.

Grammarly is an ideal tool for improving English grammar. It checks the text we have written and corrects grammatical errors. This tool can find synonyms for words. It can also check whether the article or dissertation we wrote is plagiarism. In addition, the application offers writing types such as academic, official, letter, etc.

Thus, by using this application, we can avoid many mistakes that we make in English.

SpeakPal is also a language learning platform based on artificial intelligence technology. Here, using a personalized approach, we can speak English with an artificial intelligence-based teacher and improve the pronunciation of words. In addition, the application can eliminate grammatical errors.

As a private teacher, SpeakPal can create an individual lesson plan based on the learning objectives and the student's language proficiency.

Another advantage of SpeakPal is the ability to instantly correct a student's pronunciation. This app allows you to communicate with a real person and have real dialogues. This contributes to the development of oral speech in English among students. It corrects students' pronunciation during conversation, as well as their grammatical errors.

Proper integration of this kind of artificial intelligence applications into the lesson increases students' interest in the language. They learn by having fun. However, learning is not limited to the classroom. They can develop their oral language anytime, anywhere.

Along with such technological tools, there are also modeling and role-playing game technologies. With the help of these tools, real situations come to life in the classroom.

Conclusions. As a result, it can be said that technological tools allow students to learn regardless of the environment and time. They also increase students' motivation and create a foundation for learning at a pace that is convenient for them. Proper use of technological tools makes the lesson more vivid, effective and memorable.

Based on the general content of the article, we can say that each method has its own place and its advantages. For language lessons to be effective, it is necessary to combine the communicative method with the positive aspects characteristic of other methods. In this case, students will be able to correctly use all the rules of the English language in oral speech.

References:

1. İsmayılova D.A. (2011) Teaching English as a foreign language. Textbook. Baku: Mütərcim, 316 p.
2. Karimov F., Shafiyev A. (2008) Methods of Teaching English in Azerbaijan. Baku.
3. Şirəliyev Ə. (2011) Xarici dillərin tədrisində innovativ yanaşmalar. "Xarici dillərin tədrisinin aktual problemləri" mövzusunda IV Respublika elmi konfransının materialları. s. 187-188.
4. Dell Hymes (1977) Foundations in socialinguistics. An ethnographic approach. Tavistock Publications. 235 p.
5. Jeremy Harmer (2015) The Practice of English Language Teaching. Pearson Longman.
6. Littlewood W. (2004) Communicative Language Teaching. An introduction. Cambridge University Press.
7. Richards J. C., Rodgers T.S. (2014) Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press, 270 p.
8. Richards J. C. (2006) Communicative Language Teaching Today. Cambridge University Press, 46 p.
9. Searle J. L. (1969) Speech acts. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
10. Ur P. A. (2012) Course in English Language Teaching. Cambridge University Press.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-13

CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE APPLICATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TRAINING FOR APPLICANTS TO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Iryna Malynovska,
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Foreign Philology and Translation,
State University of Trade and Economics (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0867-3715
iryna.malynovska10@gmail.com

Vladyslava Zinevych,
PhD in Philology, Associate Professor at the Department of English Philology,
Kyiv National Linguistic University (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID:0009-0001-6775-4857
zinevych71@gmail.com

Abstract. The article presents a theoretical justification of the conceptual foundations for the application of artificial intelligence technologies in foreign language training for higher education applicants. Based on an analysis of current research, the key capabilities of artificial intelligence in the field of foreign language communication skills development have been identified, including adaptive learning, automated speech skills assessment, modelling of authentic communication situations, and support for individualised learning paths. The advantages of using intelligent tools for teachers and students have been highlighted, namely the optimisation of the pedagogical process, access to high-quality digital resources, prompt feedback, and the expansion of opportunities for independent language learning. At the same time, a number of limitations and risks associated with the use of AI are outlined, in particular, issues of academic integrity, the lack of an emotional component, threats to data confidentiality, and the possibility of technological dependence. The article emphasizes the importance of ethical and pedagogically sound application of intelligent technologies. The results obtained are summarized in the form of structured conceptual principles that can serve as a basis for further scientific research and the development of innovative models of foreign language training in the context of the digital transformation of education.

Key words: higher education institutions, foreign language training, artificial intelligence, methodology, educational process.

Introduction. The rapid development of digital technologies and the spread of intelligent systems are significantly transforming the educational space, in particular foreign language training for higher education applicants. Artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer just a technical tool and is increasingly seen as an important resource for modernising language education. Its implementation creates the conditions for rethinking traditional pedagogical approaches, forming an adaptive educational environment and individualising learning trajectories, which meets the requirements of today's globalised information society. The relevance of this issue is due to the fact that foreign language training in higher education institutions (HEIs) is designed to provide students not only with language skills, but also with the ability to communicate effectively across cultures, work with authentic sources, and communicate professionally in a digital environment (Romanyshyn, Chukhno, Fyisa, 2023). At the same time, traditional teaching methods do not always fully meet the needs of the 'digital-native' generation of students, who are focused on interactivity, dynamism and personalisation of the educational process. Therefore, artificial intelligence emerges as an innovative tool that provides a flexible combination of individualised, blended, adaptive and project-oriented learning.

An analysis of scientific sources shows that the use of AI in the process of learning a foreign language opens up opportunities for automatic speech analysis, text recognition and generation, modelling real communication situations, and creating intelligent simulators that support the development of competencies at various levels – from lexical and grammatical skills to discursive and sociocultural competence. Artificial intelligence tools enable continuous feedback, identify individual student difficulties, and create personalised recommendations and learning paths, making the process of foreign language competence development more effective and scientifically sound. However, as scientific research shows, the introduction of AI into foreign language education requires a clear methodological basis. It is important to define the conceptual principles that regulate the use of intelligent systems: pedagogical expediency, ethical aspects, didactic principles, the role of the teacher, the degree of autonomy of learning, and the balance between technological support and live pedagogical communication (Kostrytska, Zuienok, 2013). The existence of such a conceptual framework makes it possible to ensure the quality of education, avoid the risks of mechanical copying of information, and guarantee the formation of conscious foreign language activity. It should be emphasised that artificial intelligence does not replace the teacher, but rather expands their capabilities. It serves as a means of optimising the learning process, a tool for diagnosing and correcting errors, and a platform for creating an innovative educational environment in which students acquire competencies in interacting with intelligent systems. Thus, the role of the teacher is transformed: they become a moderator, mentor, and designer of a digital learning space, capable of integrating AI into methodological technologies in accordance with the goals of foreign language training.

Summarising the above, we conclude that researching the conceptual foundations of applying artificial intelligence in foreign language training for higher education students is an important step in identifying new opportunities for the development of language education, outlining innovative pedagogical strategies, and forming competent, mobile, and competitive specialists in the context of the digital transformation of society.

The purpose of the study is to provide a theoretical justification and form conceptual foundations for the application of artificial intelligence in foreign language training for higher education students, as well as to identify the potential opportunities and limitations of using artificial intelligence in the process of developing foreign language communication skills.

Research material and methods. The methodological basis of the study consists of modern concepts of digital pedagogy, theories of foreign language communicative competence, and approaches to the implementation of artificial intelligence in education. The following methods were used in the work: analysis and synthesis of scientific sources to determine the theoretical basis of the study; systematisation and generalisation to form structured conceptual foundations.

Main part of the study. The current stage of development of digital civilisation is characterised by the active introduction of artificial intelligence technologies into all spheres of public life, including education. AI is rapidly becoming one of the most innovative tools capable of significantly changing approaches to learning, particularly in the field of foreign language training for higher education students. At the same time, given the novelty and dynamic development of such technologies, a number of conceptual, methodological and practical questions arise regarding their pedagogically sound use.

It is important to note that the Concept for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in Ukraine defines the directions for the implementation of intelligent technologies in key areas of the state's activities, in particular the economy, public administration, medicine, science and education. This document presents a vision of the potential of AI and outlines priority guidelines for its further integration into national innovation processes. The scientific basis for the formation of state policy in the field of artificial intelligence is described in detail in the monograph 'Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in Ukraine' edited by A. Shevchenko**.** (Shevchenko, 2023). The authors of the monograph analyse the conditions for the development of AI, methodological approaches to its deployment, and mechanisms for the effective implementation of technologies at various levels of socio-economic systems.

The requirements for modern foreign language education are clearly defined in the Action Plan for the creation of a single European indicator of leading competences (The European Indicator of Language Competence). In addition to linguistic competence (knowledge of grammatical rules, command of vocabulary and phonetics of a foreign language, as manifested in their use in speech), the importance of social competence (covering sociocultural, sociolinguistic and professional aspects that contribute to personal development and integration into the international community) and communicative competence (the ability to use language effectively in different situations, selecting appropriate linguistic means and communication strategies) is also emphasised. This component ensures the ability to interact with native speakers and effectively participate in interpersonal and intercultural communication.

The problems of defining the concept of 'artificial intelligence' and its conceptual content are revealed in the works of O. Baranov, who emphasises the multidimensionality of this term and the need for its interdisciplinary analysis (Baranov, 2023). The work of V. Redko, who studies the prospects of using AI in the educational process and issues of digital pedagogy, as well as S. Litvinova, who analyses the potential of intelligent technologies in creating adaptive educational environments and modelling personalised learning trajectories, is also significant for the study. The peculiarities of using artificial intelligence tools in the study of foreign languages by higher education students are considered by M. Burlak and Yu. Hrynova (Burlak, Hrynova, 2024). Their work highlights the potential of artificial intelligence to modernise teaching practices, improve the effectiveness of educational monitoring and support the development of key competencies in learners.

Artificial intelligence and the educational tools created on its basis require in-depth theoretical understanding, as their implementation in the field of foreign language education poses new tasks and challenges. Issues such as the interaction of AI with traditional teaching methods, the role of the teacher and the level of student autonomy, and the specifics of creating a safe, ethical and effective digital language environment require further research. Particular attention should be paid to the potential of intelligent technologies to improve the effectiveness of foreign language training, individualise learning trajectories, improve communication practices and develop key competencies of learners.

In addition, a thorough analysis of the methodological potential of AI tools is relevant: automatic assessment of oral and written speech, adaptive trainers, intelligent tutors, language situation generation systems, etc. These tools can not only increase the effectiveness of foreign language training, but also contribute to the transformation of the entire industry, creating conditions for flexible, personalised, and scientifically based learning.

It should be noted that the theoretical foundations for the formation of foreign language communication competences (FLC) in higher education institutions are based on a combination of modern pedagogical concepts and innovative technologies that ensure the effective implementation of information and communication technologies and artificial intelligence in the educational process. In the context of globalisation and rapid social change, foreign language proficiency is transforming from an additional skill into a necessary professional and life competence for specialists in various fields (Dereka, Kviatkovska, 2021). This poses new challenges for higher education, as it is at this stage that the key foundations for the future professional training of students are laid.

Foreign languages now serve not only as a means of everyday and professional communication, but also as an important factor in academic and social mobility, facilitating the integration of individuals into the modern multicultural space. The ability to use a foreign language opens up access to global information resources, broadens the horizons of international cooperation, and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth.

Results and discussion. The modern digital environment offers a wide range of tools and services based on artificial intelligence technologies that can significantly improve the effectiveness of the educational process and optimise approaches to teaching various disciplines, including foreign languages. These solutions are actively integrated into learning platforms, mobile applications, adaptive learning systems, and intelligent simulators, creating new opportunities for both teachers and students. One of the key advantages of artificial intelligence tools is their ability to perform comprehensive diagnostics of foreign language skills and abilities. Modern systems can analyse pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, sentence structure, speech rate, and even students' discourse skills. For example, automatic speech recognition (ASR) technologies can identify typical phonetic errors and suggest exercises to correct them. Natural language processing (NLP) tools can analyse students' written texts, identify stylistic errors, incorrect word usage, or violations of logical and grammatical connections. Intelligent educational systems such as Duolingo, ELSA Speak, Grammarly, and Write&Improve use machine learning algorithms to create adaptive learning paths that are tailored to the individual characteristics of each learner. For example, Duolingo analyses the success of previous tasks and, based on this, automatically selects the next exercises aimed at improving weak areas. ELSA Speak uses deep sound analysis technology to provide a detailed assessment of a student's pronunciation and offers individual training modules. Grammarly and Write&Improve correct grammatical, lexical, and stylistic errors, expanding students' written language skills. Chatbots and virtual personal assistants (e.g., Replika, ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot) also have significant potential, as they are capable of simulating real-life communication situations. They help students practise speaking and writing in conditions close to authentic ones. Such tools can reproduce dialogues of various genres – from everyday communication to professional and intercultural situations – which significantly expands the possibilities for developing discursive and sociocultural competence.

Another area is automated monitoring of learning outcomes. Artificial intelligence systems are capable of tracking the dynamics of foreign language competence development, making predictions about success, determining the level of risk of academic difficulties, and offering pedagogical recommendations for preventing them. For example, the Coursera and Canvas LMS platforms use learning analytics to determine the effectiveness of individual learning modules, the pace of material coverage, and the individual progress of learners.

Thus, artificial intelligence tools not only automate individual didactic functions, but also create a new pedagogical logic in which learning becomes flexible, personalised, and oriented towards the actual level of competence development. They help to increase student motivation, facilitate access to high-quality learning materials, provide individualised support, and significantly expand opportunities for independent foreign language learning.

Table 1

AI tools for foreign language training of higher education institution applicants

AI tool	Main functions	Educational effect
Duolingo	Adaptive lesson planning; automatic task selection; progress tracking	Personalised learning; increased motivation; development of lexical and grammatical skills at your own pace
ELSA Speak	Pronunciation analysis; identification of phonetic errors; recommendations for improving articulation	Improvement of oral speech; formation of adequate pronunciation; increased confidence in communication
Grammarly/ Write & Improve	Checking grammar, vocabulary and style; analysing the structure of written expression	Improving writing skills; developing academic writing; building editing skills
ChatGPT/ Copilot	Text generation; dialogue modelling; explanation of grammatical and lexical structures	Formation of communicative competence; development of discourse creation skills; training in intercultural interaction
Coursera/ Canvas AI Analytics	Monitoring of learning progress; learning analytics; predictive models of success	Improving the quality of assessment; early detection of difficulties; optimisation of teaching strategies

However, there are a number of drawbacks to using AI in the process of learning a foreign language. In particular, researcher T. Kosova emphasises the importance of introducing artificial intelligence, specifically the GPT chatbot, into English language teaching using interactive methods and the need to individualise teaching approaches for each student. However, she also acknowledges a number of disadvantages associated with this (Kosova, 2023).

Researchers (Burlak, Hrynova, 2024) believe that one of the key and most controversial issues accompanying the introduction of artificial intelligence technologies into the educational sphere is the question of academic integrity and the ethical use of intelligent systems. We cannot disagree with this, because as AI becomes an accessible tool for a wide range of students and teachers, there is a growing need to develop a responsible attitude towards its capabilities and limits of use. The educational process involves the development of independent thinking, creative abilities and the ability to solve communicative or professional tasks on one's own. However, excessive or incorrect dependence on intellectual services can lead to a violation of the principles of honesty, transparency and objectivity in assessment.

In our opinion, the issue of personal data security is no less important. Artificial intelligence functions by analysing large amounts of information, including students' personal data: test results, speech samples, behavioural characteristics, learning trajectories, performance statistics, etc. The processing of such data may give rise to potential risks related to confidentiality, unauthorised access or use of information by third parties. This requires not only technical protection measures, but also clear regulatory and legal regulation and increased digital literacy among teachers and students.

It is also important to consider the ethical aspect of creating and applying AI algorithms. In the case of foreign language training, the system analyses the applicant's speech, their individual characteristics, strengths and weaknesses. If such algorithms are created without taking into account ethical principles or without sufficient transparency of their work, there is a risk of bias, incorrect recommendations or unequal treatment of users. Therefore, it is particularly important to develop ethical standards for the use of AI in education, ensure the transparency of algorithms and foster a culture of responsible use of technology.

Summarising all of the above, we conclude that, along with its potential advantages, artificial intelligence also raises a number of sensitive issues that require systematic consideration and scientifically sound solutions to ensure that its implementation promotes academic integrity rather than undermining its foundations.

Despite the significant advantages of artificial intelligence technologies, researchers and practitioners highlight a number of limitations and shortcomings associated with the use of such tools in educational activities. One of the most common comments is the lack of a full-fledged emotional component in artificial intelligence. Since intelligent systems are not capable of empathy, interpreting the tone of communication or the emotional context of statements, their interaction with the user sometimes takes on a technocratic, limited or even cold character. This can lead to misinterpretation of the student's intentions, distortion of the meaning of the request, or creation of a response that does not correspond to the psychological state or communicative situation.

The lack of emotional intelligence in artificial intelligence limits its capabilities in situations where support, tact, ethics, or the ability to read non-verbal cues are important. For example, when learning a foreign language, learners often experience feelings of insecurity or fear of making mistakes. In such cases, the teacher can provide emotional support, motivation, hints, and individual recommendations tailored to the specific student. Chatbots, even the most advanced ones, remain tools that work primarily on the basis of algorithms, statistical models, and pre-formed data, and therefore are unable to reproduce human sensitivity and psychological delicacy. Another significant challenge is the risk of users becoming dependent on digital support. Students who regularly use chatbots and generative systems for translation, text analysis, grammar exercises, or language construction may gradually weaken their own cognitive and language skills. There is a possibility that students will become accustomed to ready-made answers and cease to make sufficient effort to independently search for information, analyse speech structures, or develop critical thinking. This creates a certain danger: technology that is supposed to support the educational process may, in the long term, slow down the development of the learner's autonomy.

This situation is particularly relevant in the context of foreign language education. Language learning requires active practice, repetition, creativity, and personal communicative initiative. Over-reliance on automated systems can reduce a student's ability to construct their own statements, use a variety of language strategies, understand context, and work with authentic sources. Therefore, it is important that chatbots function as an auxiliary tool rather than a complete replacement for natural communication and language practice.

In addition to emotional and cognitive aspects, scientific discourse highlights other shortcomings associated with the use of intellectual resources. These include possible errors in algorithms, partial or inaccurate understanding of linguistic constructions, generation of false or unverified information, and varying levels of quality of results depending on language, accent or task specificity. For example, speech recognition systems may incorrectly analyse a user's pronunciation due to individual phonetic characteristics. Text analysis services sometimes misinterpret ambiguous constructions or cultural allusions. All this requires constant improvement of algorithms and a critical attitude towards the responses of tools. Together, these factors create a broad field for scientific research and pedagogical exploration, highlighting the need for further study of the capabilities and limitations of artificial intelligence. Research in this area should include issues of ethical use of technology, prevention of technological dependence, data protection, analysis of the quality of learning outcomes, and the search for a balance between automation and traditional teaching methods.

Despite these shortcomings, chatbots and other generative artificial intelligence tools already demonstrate significant potential as an auxiliary component of foreign language training. They can act as personal trainers for students, provide access to instant feedback, simulate individual language situations, improve writing and speaking skills, and help increase the pace and effectiveness of learning.

For teachers, such systems can become a tool for preparing teaching materials, developing tasks, creating didactic scenarios, analysing student errors, or even forming simulated dialogues for practical classes. The use of AI significantly saves teachers' time and allows them to focus on activities where the human factor is crucial: mentoring, motivating students, interpersonal communication, evaluating creative work, etc.

The constant updating of the technological landscape makes artificial intelligence research extremely promising for the education sector. In the future, we can expect the emergence of systems capable of more accurately taking into account the personal characteristics of students, interacting on the basis of emotional analysis, creating more complex communicative situations, and ensuring full integration into the learning environment. Therefore, studying the potential, ethical challenges, and didactic possibilities of AI is an important step in the development of modern foreign language education.

Based on the analysis of scientific sources and pedagogical observations, we have identified the basic principles for the application of artificial intelligence in foreign language training for higher education institution applicants

1. *The principle of pedagogical expediency and scientific validity*. Artificial intelligence should be integrated into foreign language education not as an end in itself, but as a tool that enhances pedagogical methods. The use of AI should be based on clear didactic goals, taking into account the patterns of foreign language competence formation, cognitive mechanisms of language acquisition, and the scientifically proven effectiveness of digital solutions.

2. *The principle of individualisation and adaptability of learning*. Artificial intelligence provides the ability to create personalised learning trajectories that take into account the level of preparation, pace of learning, learning styles and communication needs of each student. Adaptive algorithms allow you to adjust the complexity of tasks, form author recommendations and perform accurate diagnostics of language skills.

3. *The principle of interactivity and modelling of authentic communication situations.* AI tools should provide a realistic language environment in which students can practise speaking and writing. Chatbots, virtual tutors, speech recognition and dialogue generation systems contribute to the development of discursive, sociocultural and pragmatic competences by modelling live communication.

4. *The principle of ethics, security and academic integrity*. The use of intelligent technologies must comply with the standards of academic integrity, personal data protection and ethical approach to educational activities. It is important to ensure that students are aware of the limits of AI use, to avoid replacing their cognitive activity with automated responses and to stimulate the development of critical thinking.

5. *The principle of transforming the role of the teacher and developing digital pedagogical competence*. In an AI environment, the teacher moves from the role of a knowledge carrier to that of a facilitator, consultant and designer of digital learning spaces. Therefore, it is important to develop their digital, methodological and analytical competences, which allow them to effectively integrate intellectual tools, analyse educational data and support students in the formation of foreign language skills.

Conclusions. The study found that the use of artificial intelligence technologies in foreign language training for higher education students has significant didactic, methodological and organisational potential that can transform traditional approaches to foreign language teaching. The basic conceptual principles of AI integration into the educational process have been identified, among which the key ones are the pedagogical expediency of using intelligent tools, ensuring the individualisation of learning, modelling authentic communicative situations, adhering to the principles of ethics and academic integrity, as well as rethinking the role of the teacher in the context of the digital transformation of education. It has been found that artificial intelligence tools contribute to the expansion of foreign language education opportunities by providing flexible access to educational resources, personalised recommendations, automated analysis of language skills, and the formation of adaptive learning trajectories. At the same time, issues of personal data security, responsible use of intelligent systems, and prevention of excessive dependence of learners on technology remain important. The results obtained confirm that AI cannot completely replace teachers, but it can significantly expand their pedagogical potential and increase the effectiveness of the educational process. Intelligent systems should serve as a support tool, not an alternative to live communication or creative cognitive activity. Thus, the conceptual foundations of artificial intelligence determine the directions of foreign language training in the modern digital educational ecosystem. Their implementation will contribute to improving the quality of language education, training competitive specialists, and creating an innovative learning environment that meets the challenges of a globalised information society. This study considers only the basic and potential possibilities for the application of artificial intelligence tools in foreign language education. At the same time, it is obvious that these technologies are in the stage of active development, constant improvement and expansion of functional capabilities. Given the pace of digitalisation of society and the expansion of the use of AI in education, this area requires further scientific research, methodological improvement and a thorough description of the practical possibilities of such tools in the study of foreign languages.

References:

1. Baranov O. (2024). Vyznachennia terminu «shtuchnyi intelekt» [Definition of the term ‘artificial intelligence *]. Informatsiia i pravo*, № 1(44), s. 32–49, berez. 2023. https://doi.org/10.37750/2616-6798.2023.1(44).287537 [in Ukrainian].

2. Burlak M., Hrynova Yu. (2024). Zastosuvannia instrumentiv shtuchnoho intelektu dlia vyvchennia inozemnoi (anhliiskoi) movy [The use of artificial intelligence tools for learning a foreign (English) language], *Visn. nauky ta osvity*, № 1(19), s. 713–724 [in Ukrainian]
3. Chetveryk V. (2024). Resursy zi shtuchnym intelektom u navchanni inozemnym movam: ohliad mozhlyvostei ta perspektyv vykorystannia [Artificial intelligence resources in foreign language teaching: an overview of opportunities and prospects for use]. Modern Information Technologies and Innovation Methodologies of Education in Professional Training Methodology Theory Experience Problems, (72), 205-219. [in Ukrainian].
4. Dereka K., Kviatkovska A. (2021). Osoblyvosti navchannia inozemnoi movy u zakladakh fakhovoi peredvyshchoi osvity [Features of foreign language teaching in professional pre-higher education institutions]. *Innovatsiina pedahohika. № 42.* https://doi.org/10.32843/2663-6085/2021/42.28 [in Ukrainian].
5. Kosova T.(2023). Rol shtuchnoho intelektu ta chatu GPT u navchanni anhliiskoi movy:pliusy ta minusy [The role of artificial intelligence and GPT chat in English language teaching: pros and cons]. *Innovatsiini tekhnolohii rozvytku osobystisno-profesiinoi kompetentnosti pedahohiv v umovakh pisliadyplomnoi osvity.* s.204–208 [in Ukrainian].
6. Kostrytska S. I., Zuienok I. I. (2013). Inshomovna pidhotovka maibutnikh fakhivtsiv novoho tysiacholittia: tendentsii, innovatsii ta perspektyvy [Foreign language training of future specialists of the new millennium: trends, innovations and prospects]. *Ekonomichnyi visnyk Natsionalnoho hirnychoho universytetu.* № 1. S. 151 – 160. URL: http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/evngu_2013_1_21[in Ukrainian].
7. Romanyshyn I. M., Chukhno T. V., Fyisa N. V. (2023). Transformatsiia metodiv navchannia y vykladannia anhliiskoi movy u vyshchii shkoli: vykorystannia shtuchnoho intelektu, analiz vplyvu, perspektyvy [Transformation of methods of teaching and learning English in higher education: use of artificial intelligence, impact analysis, prospects]. *Akademichni vizii*, №24. https://www.academy-vision.org/index.php/av/article/view/645 (data zvernennia 25.11.2025)
8. Shevchenko I. A. (2023). Stratehiia rozvytku shtuchnoho intelektu v Ukraini [Strategy for the Development of Artificial Intelligence in Ukraine]. Kyiv: In-t problem shtuch. intelektu, https://doi.org/10.15407/development_strategy_2023 [in Ukrainian].
9. Zahalnoievropeiski Rekomendatsii z movnoi osvity: vyvchennia, vykladannia, otsiniuvannia / nauk. red. S. Yu. Nikolaieva. Kyiv : Lenvit [Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment / ed. by S. Yu. Nikolaeva], 2003. 273 s[in Ukrainian].

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-14

PEDAGOGICAL INTERACTION IN HYBRID LEARNING: STUDENT EXPERIENCE, EXPECTATIONS, AND METHODOLOGICAL GUIDELINES

Alisa Marchuk,
Ph.D. in Education,
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Pedagogy, Foreign Philology and Translation,
Simon Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics (Kharkiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3694-9245
Marchukalice27@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the pedagogical specificities of hybrid learning within Ukrainian higher education in the context of ongoing crisis conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and military conflict. The study analyses how technological, organizational, and psychological factors shape pedagogical interaction in hybrid environments, drawing on contemporary theoretical frameworks and empirical data collected through a student survey. The results demonstrate that the effectiveness of hybrid learning depends on technological stability, clear communication, balanced participation of online and in-person students, and instructors' digital competence. While students reported numerous challenges–including technical instability and uneven instructor attention–they also identified significant advantages such as flexibility, accessibility, psychological comfort, and improved digital skills. Based on the findings, the article proposes methodological recommendations for enhancing pedagogical interaction and strengthening the resilience of hybrid learning models in modern higher education.

Key words: hybrid learning; pedagogical interaction; digital competence; higher education; crisis-responsive teaching; blended instruction; student engagement; instructional design.

Introduction. Contemporary higher education in Ukraine is marked by continuous transformation and the necessity to adapt rapidly to the complex conditions in which both instructors and students find themselves. Crisis situations require higher education institutions to revise and modernize educational approaches, taking into account labour market demands as well as the needs of educators and students who are compelled to function within challenging security environments while continuing their academic development. Such turning points often act as catalysts for the emergence of innovative and unconventional educational solutions. One such solution – enabling high-quality and resilient interaction between instructors and students under crisis conditions – is hybrid learning, or blended education, which ensures equitable access to the learning environment for all participants.

The aim of this study is to examine the specific features of pedagogical interaction within a hybrid learning format, identify student expectations, and determine methodological guidelines for enhancing instructional effectiveness. Accordingly, several research objectives were formulated:

– to analyse contemporary scholarly approaches to defining the essence of hybrid learning and its features in higher education;

– to determine the impact of global crisis factors (COVID-19, military conflicts) on the transformation of the educational process and the emergence of hybrid learning models;

– to outline the key characteristics of pedagogical interaction in a hybrid environment and identify factors that hinder or strengthen its effectiveness;

– to explore students' experiences, expectations, and perceived advantages and disadvantages of hybrid learning based on a targeted survey;

– to formulate methodological recommendations for improving pedagogical interaction within the hybrid format, grounded in theoretical analysis and empirical results.

Core section. The COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing military conflicts have profoundly transformed higher education systems worldwide, reshaping not only modes of instruction but also institutional policies, pedagogical priorities, and student experiences. One of the most visible consequences of these disruptions has been the unprecedentedly rapid transition to remote and hybrid learning. Universities across the globe were compelled to migrate to online platforms within extremely short timeframes, which, as noted in a global survey by UNESCO (2021), accelerated the integration of digital learning environments to the point where hybrid and remote modalities became routine components of academic practice. This shift redefined the spatial and temporal boundaries of education, making flexibility a structural rather than optional element of university teaching.

Another critical consequence of these crises has been the emergence of substantial learning losses. Prolonged school closures, displacement, instability, and interruptions caused by military actions have severely affected students' ability to engage consistently in the learning process. According to UNICEF (2023), more than 5.3 million children and young adults in Ukraine alone have experienced disruptions that hindered their educational progress, highlighting the urgent need for compensatory programs, remedial courses, and institutional strategies aimed at restoring learning continuity.

The pedagogical landscape has also undergone considerable transformation. Educators were required to redesign their teaching approaches by combining synchronous and asynchronous forms of instruction, integrating project-based learning, and adopting more flexible and adaptive assessment tools suitable for digital environments. These shifts, described in UNESCO's report on student perspectives during the COVID-19 crisis (UNESCO, 2021), not only altered traditional methods of instruction but also demanded a comprehensive rethinking of course design, evaluation methods, and student engagement strategies.

In parallel, the crises exposed and intensified the need for strengthening teachers' digital competences. Instructors were expected to rapidly acquire technological fluency: mastering online platforms, facilitating virtual discussions, maintaining student engagement across physical and virtual settings, and navigating an array of digital tools. This need is thoroughly documented in the European Students' Union Digital Education Readiness Report (European Students' Union, 2022), which emphasizes that the success of hybrid learning is directly linked to educators' ability to adapt to evolving technological demands.

The psychological dimension of education has also gained heightened attention. Prolonged stress, social isolation, uncertainty, and the emotional burden associated with war have significantly increased the demand for mental health and psychosocial support among both students and academic staff. UNICEF (2022) highlights that crisis conditions amplify vulnerability, making structured psychological assistance essential for sustaining student well-being and academic functioning.

At the institutional level, universities have been compelled to adopt more flexible and resilient policies. Many higher education institutions began to implement emergency teaching plans, develop hybrid instructional models, and establish digital quality assurance mechanisms intended to safeguard the continuity and quality of education under unpredictable conditions. These developments are reflected in UNESCO's analysis of resilience-building processes in higher education (UNESCO, 2022).

Finally, the global nature of these crises has stimulated an expansion of international cooperation and donor support. Organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF, and the World Bank have intensified funding initiatives, technological assistance, and training programs designed to sustain education in emergency contexts. The UNESCO & World Bank (2023) report underscores this multilevel global response as a crucial factor in stabilizing educational systems and enabling their long-term recovery. These changes stimulated the transformation of educational systems and reinforced the shift toward hybrid learning as a sustainable and flexible model.

Hybrid learning, as defined by Hamza-Lup and White (2018), is a combination of online and traditional instruction that provides a gradual transition towards technology-enabled education. Graham

(2013) describes hybrid (blended) learning as a system that “combines face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction.” According to Garrison and Vaughan (2008), it represents “a design approach whereby both face-to-face and online learning are made better by the presence of the other.”

Based on these scholarly perspectives, and considering the model implemented in Ukrainian higher education institutions today, hybrid learning can be defined as an educational system that integrates student–teacher and student–student interaction through both face-to-face and online modalities, supported by modern information and communication technologies and personal learning systems that provide real-time audio-visual participation and access to learning materials, practical tasks, tests, and digital resources. Such a system enables the creation of an inclusive learning environment in which all participants receive equal access to educational content, directly influencing the quality of pedagogical interaction.

Pedagogical interaction itself is widely explored in educational scholarship due to its vital role in shaping conditions for personal development. According to the Ukrainian Electronic Educational Encyclopedia, pedagogical interaction is a process of active cooperation among participants in the educational process aimed at achieving shared learning goals and facilitating personal development.

A. Marchuk (2019) defines pedagogical interaction as collaboration among all subjects of the educational process that organizes the efforts of students and academic staff to foster value orientations, professional competence, and social experience necessary for life success.

In Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher, Brookfield (2017) conceptualizes pedagogical interaction as a reflective dialogue grounded in four lenses – personal experience, student perspectives, collegial insights, and theoretical literature – which together enhance understanding and foster learner autonomy.

Drawing on these perspectives, pedagogical interaction can be defined as a purposeful socio-psychological process of joint activity between instructors and students, realized through communication, feedback, facilitation, and reflection. In hybrid learning, this interaction encompasses the organization of the learning space, management of tasks, and support for cognitive and personal development.

Hybrid learning combines face-to-face and online participation, creating a new multilayered model of pedagogical interaction. It requires instructors to simultaneously coordinate learning for both online and in-person groups, which significantly increases cognitive load. Instructors must deliver content, moderate discussions, maintain attention, troubleshoot technical issues, and ensure inclusivity.

As Garrison and Vaughan (2008) emphasize, interaction is the core condition for building a learning community, which is crucial for deep learning in hybrid environments.

The effectiveness of hybrid pedagogical interaction strongly depends on the technological infrastructure. Stable internet, high-quality audio and video, and access to digital platforms and LMS systems are essential (Hamza-Lup & White, 2018). Research by Vereshchahina, Liashchenko, and Babiy (2020) confirms that poor technological readiness and insufficient digital support significantly hinder interaction in hybrid courses.

Hybrid interaction demonstrates a number of significant advantages that collectively enhance the quality and inclusivity of the educational process. One of its core strengths lies in the integrated nature of communication, which enables the simultaneous involvement of students participating both in the physical classroom and online. This dual presence fosters a multidimensional learning environment where different modes of participation complement one another, enriching the collective learning experience. Furthermore, the hybrid model naturally supports a higher degree of personalization: students are able to choose the mode of engagement that best aligns with their individual circumstances, learning preferences, and psychological comfort. This flexibility contributes to improved academic accessibility, particularly for those who may face geographical, logistical, or health-related constraints that prevent consistent offline attendance. As a result, hybrid learning expands educational opportunities and supports a more adaptive, student-centred learning trajectory.

Despite these clear benefits, several challenges continue to impede fully effective pedagogical interaction within hybrid environments. Technical instability remains one of the most persistent obstacles, as fluctuations in internet connectivity, inadequate equipment, and software-related issues disrupt communication channels and fragment the learning flow. These technical barriers often exacerbate another problem – the uneven distribution of instructor attention between online and offline participants. When educators must simultaneously manage two learning spaces, it becomes difficult to maintain balance, which may result in online students feeling marginalized or less visible within the interactional dynamics of the class.

Organizational inconsistencies also contribute to the complexity of the hybrid format. Variability in scheduling, insufficient advance notice regarding changes, and the lack of unified procedural standards can create confusion and reduce the overall coherence of the learning process. Limited institutional resources, particularly outdated or insufficient classroom technology, further constrain the potential of hybrid formats, restricting both the quality of audio-visual communication and the possibilities for collaborative engagement. Finally, differing levels of digital competence among participants – including both students and instructors – can hinder effective communication, reduce confidence in the use of online tools, and ultimately diminish student engagement, especially among those attending remotely.

Taken together, these challenges highlight the necessity of comprehensive support systems and strategic improvements to ensure the stability, inclusiveness, and pedagogical effectiveness of hybrid learning environments.

Thus, hybrid pedagogical interaction is a complex, multifaceted process shaped by technological, organizational, communication, and psychological factors.

To understand students' experiences with hybrid learning and identify its perceived strengths, challenges, and expectations, a survey titled "Experience of Learning in a Hybrid Format" was developed and distributed among students who regularly participate in hybrid classes.

The questionnaire consisted of 12 items, including both closed (quantitative) and open-ended (qualitative) questions. It comprised three thematic blocks:

1. **Evaluation of hybrid learning organization**. This section of the questionnaire included both scale-based and multiple-choice items aimed at identifying the overall level of student satisfaction with the organization of hybrid classes, the availability and quality of technical support, the accessibility of the instructor, and the effectiveness of communication among participants. Students evaluated the quality of the hybrid format in terms of its convenience, the clarity and coherence of the lesson structure, as well as the degree of engagement demonstrated by both online and offline participants. In this way, the block made it possible to measure how well the hybrid model supports coordinated, structured, and inclusive interaction during the educational process.

2**. Identification of technical, pedagogical, and organizational difficulties**. The questions in this part were designed to reveal the barriers that complicate learning within a hybrid environment. Respondents were offered a list of the most common problems–such as unstable internet connection, poor audio quality, difficulties accessing course materials, or the uneven distribution of instructor attention–and were also provided with the opportunity to describe their own experiences in an open-ended format. This block made it possible to obtain deeper insights into the practical nuances of hybrid pedagogical interaction, highlighting both recurring obstacles and context-specific challenges that students encounter during hybrid participation.

3. **Suggestions for improving hybrid learning**. In the open-ended questions, students articulated their recommendations regarding the enhancement of lesson organization, the strengthening of interactive components, the improvement of technical stability, and the establishment of more equitable conditions for participation. These responses made it possible to identify specific directions for further refinement and development of the hybrid format, which are essential for formulating methodo-

logically grounded recommendations aimed at optimizing hybrid teaching and learning practices in higher education.

This approach enabled the collection of comprehensive data on cognitive, emotional, and organizational aspects of student interaction with hybrid learning.

Hybrid learning requires enhanced informational support, as the effectiveness of this model significantly decreases without clear and timely communication. Despite the considerable list of challenges noted by students, a portion of respondents expressed a positive attitude toward the hybrid format. The analysis of their answers revealed several positive characteristics of hybrid learning that contribute to improved accessibility, flexibility, and individualization of the educational process. Respondents emphasized that the combination of in-person and online participation creates more comfortable conditions for mastering material and allows diverse learning styles and student needs to be accommodated more effectively.

First, a significant number of students highlighted the convenience and flexibility of the hybrid format. The ability to join a class online when physical presence is not possible–due to transportation difficulties, health conditions, or personal circumstances–was viewed as a major advantage. Students stressed that this model prevents them from missing classes and helps maintain continuity in their studies, which is particularly important under external crisis conditions.

Second, respondents noted the psychological comfort associated with hybrid participation. Some students feel more confident in an online environment, which reduces anxiety during discussions and makes it easier to ask questions and express personal opinions. Thus, the hybrid model can enhance the engagement of students who are typically less active in the classroom.

Third, among the positive aspects, students pointed to the balanced combination of different learning formats, which enriches the diversity of their educational experience. Those attending in person appreciated the direct contact with the instructor, whereas online participants valued the accessibility of learning materials, the opportunity to revisit content, and the ability to maintain a pace suited to their individual needs. Respondents emphasized that simultaneous interaction across two environments creates a dynamic learning space that integrates traditional pedagogical communication with digital tools.

Fourth, students reported improvements in digital literacy and communication skills, as hybrid learning involves active use of online platforms, digital resources, shared documents, and virtual communication channels. This was viewed as an important component of preparation for the contemporary professional environment.

Finally, some respondents positively evaluated the opportunities for individual work created by the hybrid format. Online participants often find it easier to structure their time, quickly access learning materials, and use additional resources during class, which, in their view, enhances learning productivity.

In summary, the survey results indicate that hybrid learning possesses several significant advantages related to flexibility, accessibility, psychological comfort, and the development of digital competencies. These aspects can serve as the basis for developing methodological recommendations aimed at further improving the hybrid model, particularly through enhancing interactivity, personalization, and student support within the digital environment.

Taking into account all comments submitted by students in the survey, the findings provide an important point of reflection and a starting ground for improvement. At present, some of the shortcomings identified by students have already been partially addressed. For example, the issue of unstable internet caused by power outages has been partly alleviated by the installation of generators at the university, which ensure uninterrupted electricity supply, as well as by the adoption of fibre-optic networks that provide more stable connectivity. However, the lack of adequate technical resources among students remains an unresolved problem.

Organizational issues–such as schedule changes and late notifications–have been partially mitigated through the introduction of an electronic timetable. Nevertheless, the human factor remains significant, as it is not always possible to plan class cancellations or rescheduling in advance.

Concerns regarding fairness and transparency in assessment have also been partly addressed by transferring certain major test assignments into the field of independent work, which students can complete at a time convenient for them. In this way, the practice of hybrid learning allows instructors and students to better understand the specifics of this format, adapt to them, and find mutually beneficial solutions advantageous for both students, instructors, and the university administration.

Communication and informational support issues have been effectively addressed through the use of the messaging system in Moodle or external messengers, which may be more convenient for both instructors and students.

Drawing on the list of advantages and, especially, disadvantages identified by students participating in instructional activities within the hybrid format, it becomes possible to formulate methodological recommendations that may be useful for higher education institutions considering this format as a future-oriented educational model.

One of the key components for improving hybrid interaction is ensuring that classrooms are equipped with modern technical devices. For instance, boundary microphones and ceiling microphones, designed to capture sound throughout the room, may be used. Boundary microphones eliminate the need to mic each person individually or acoustically treat the entire room. Wide-angle cameras with autofocus and instructor-tracking functionality can support high-quality video delivery and allow online students to observe the learning process fully and participate seamlessly in all types of classroom activities.

Another factor supporting effective hybrid interaction is equipping classrooms with dedicated instructional laptops or computers configured specifically for hybrid lessons and creating a unified technical standard for all rooms. This minimizes technical differences and ensures stability during classes. Consequently, regardless of the classroom, both students and instructors can be confident that a change in location will not create additional challenges or inconveniences.

Enhancing the digital competence of instructors is also a critical component of effective hybrid education. Implementing hybrid teaching is impossible without systematic support for instructors in the area of digital technologies and without timely technical assistance during classes. This requires regular training sessions and workshops aimed at mastering synchronous and asynchronous teaching tools such as Zoom, Moodle, Google Workspace, interactive whiteboards, and other digital platforms. Such training should combine demonstration and practical elements, granting instructors the opportunity to practice skills under real conditions. These training activities help reduce anxiety associated with the use of digital tools, assist in overcoming barriers common among older faculty, and establish sustainable technological practices in everyday teaching.

Another essential component of support is providing access to immediate technical assistance during classes. The creation of a "hotline" or a special technical support chat allows for rapid response to issues such as connectivity problems, audio settings, camera malfunctions, or LMS errors, thus minimizing interruptions in the learning process. This mechanism strengthens instructors' sense of security and reduces the risk of class disruptions due to technical failures–a particularly important aspect in the hybrid format, where technological stability is critical.

The development of accessible instructional materials also plays a key role. Step-by-step video tutorials and concise guides serve as quick references that help instructors locate necessary information on tasks such as configuring online conferences, creating electronic assignments, or collaborating on interactive boards. This format substantially reduces the time instructors spend mastering new tools and decreases the load on technical support services through self-resolution of frequent issues.

The mentoring model is another important form of support, where instructors with higher levels of digital competence assist colleagues who are only beginning to adopt new technologies. Such mentorship facilitates the exchange of practical experience, builds supportive professional communities, and fosters a culture of mutual learning within the university. For instructors of older generations, this format is particularly valuable, as it allows them to receive help in a trusting environment without additional stress or formal pressure. Mentorship may include assistance in preparing for classes as well as support during real-time lectures or seminars.

Altogether, the combined use of these approaches not only improves digital literacy but also creates a stable environment for the uninterrupted functioning of hybrid education. As a result, instructors gain confidence in using technologies, while students benefit from higher-quality and more accessible communication regardless of their mode of participation. The overall quality of pedagogical interaction improves, its structure becomes more balanced and equitable, and the hybrid format becomes more predictable, manageable, and comfortable for all participants of the educational process.

To ensure equality among participants, the “dual addressing” approach may be implemented, allowing the instructor to repeat or duplicate information for both groups – online and in-person. Another effective technique is to periodically direct questions specifically to online participants, thereby maintaining balanced participation and ensuring that each student feels included. From a technological perspective, it is necessary to install a screen or monitor within the instructor’s direct line of sight, enabling continuous visual contact with online students and allowing instructors to respond promptly while integrating collaborative tools (Mentimeter, Jamboard, Padlet, Zoom Whiteboard) that connect all students regardless of attendance mode.

The uneven participation of online and in-person students in discussions can be resolved through clearly structured timing and discussion stages, following a sequence such as: classroom participants – online participants – joint summary; alternatively, online students may be invited to moderate discussions. Differences in control and academic integrity may be managed by combining oral and written assessments, designing assignments that include creative, analytical, or project-based elements (which are difficult to plagiarize), conducting brief oral checks after tasks, and implementing a “camera-on” rule during assessments.

One of the negative aspects highlighted in the survey was the inconvenience associated with the timetable. To reduce student workload, the schedule may be optimized by grouping hybrid-format classes into a single day or block, allowing students to choose their preferred mode of participation (in-person or online) with prior approval, and expanding the use of asynchronous materials such as lecture recordings, video instructions, and presentations.

Communication issues–which constitute a central part of effective pedagogical interaction–may be addressed by establishing a unified communication system for each group based on the learning platform or external tools. Such a space allows instructors to summarize sessions (learning recaps) and distribute materials or assignments. However, communication outside the classroom environment requires agreed-upon rules to ensure consistency and professionalism.

Conclusion. The results of the conducted theoretical analysis and empirical investigation demonstrate that, under contemporary crisis conditions, hybrid learning emerges not only as a necessary response to external challenges but also as a promising and pedagogically valuable model for organizing the educational process in higher education institutions. The study achieved its primary goal – to analyze the features of pedagogical interaction within a hybrid environment and to identify the factors that either enhance or hinder its effectiveness – by integrating conceptual examination with the analysis of student survey data.

Through a comprehensive review of scholarly sources, the research clarified the theoretical foundations of pedagogical interaction and outlined how these foundations are transformed within hybrid educational settings. This theoretical component made it possible to identify the structural, communicative, and technological characteristics that define interaction in hybrid formats. The empirical component, based on students’ responses, allowed for the practical verification of these assumptions and provided detailed insights into the real conditions, challenges, and benefits experienced by participants in the hybrid learning process.

The findings show that the interactional dynamics of hybrid learning are shaped by several critical dimensions: technological stability, the inclusiveness of communication, equitable access to participation, and the digital competence of instructors. The analysis also confirmed that the effectiveness of hybrid learning depends on the balance between online and face-to-face components, as well as on the clarity and consistency of organizational procedures. Importantly, despite the presence of technical and communicative difficulties, students identified numerous strengths of the hybrid model, including flexibility, psychological comfort, opportunities for individualized learning, and the development of digital literacy – all of which significantly expand the educational potential of this format.

The research also fulfilled the task of identifying the main obstacles to effective hybrid interaction. Students pointed to unstable internet connections, insufficient classroom equipment, uneven distribution of instructor attention, organizational inconsistencies, and varying levels of digital readiness among participants. Addressing these issues made it possible to outline concrete directions for improvement. Accordingly, the study formulated evidence-based recommendations related to the modernization of technical infrastructure, the establishment of unified communication systems, the enhancement of instructor digital competence, and the development of institutional mechanisms for technical and methodological support.

Thus, the study concludes that hybrid learning can ensure high-quality pedagogical interaction, provided that classrooms are adequately equipped, transparent and consistent rules of interaction are established, and instructors are supported at the institutional level. Key areas for further enhancement include the development of digital support systems, the standardization of organizational processes, the expansion of interactive tools, and the strengthening of balanced participation between online and in-person students.

In summary, hybrid learning can become an effective, sustainable, and inclusive model of modern higher education when supported by comprehensive technical, pedagogical, and communicative mechanisms aimed at improving the quality of interaction and ensuring equal learning opportunities for all students.

References:

1. Borova, T. A., & Marchuk, A. A. (2021). Pedahohichna vzaiemodiia u zmishanomu navchanni: Upravlinskyi aspekt [Pedagogical interaction in blended learning: Managerial aspect]. Modern Science – Moderni Věda, 1, 25–33.
2. Brookfield, S. D. (2017). *Becoming a critically reflective teacher* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.
3. European Students' Union. (2022). *Digital education readiness report*. ESU.
4. Garrison, D. R., & Vaughan, N. D. (2008). *Blended learning in higher education: Framework, principles, and guidelines*. Jossey-Bass.
5. Graham, C. R. (2013). Emerging practice and research in blended learning. In M. G. Moore (Ed.), *Handbook of distance education* (3rd ed., pp. 333–350). Routledge.
6. Hamza-Lup, F. G., & White, S. (2018). Design and assessment for hybrid courses: Insights and overviews. *arXiv Preprint*, arXiv:1811.07273. https://arxiv.org/abs/1811.07273
7. HNEU. (n.d.). *Znaiomstvo iz PNS* [Introduction to teaching staff]. Retrieved from https://hneu.edu.ua/news/znajomstvo-iz-pns/
8. Institute of ITT. (n.d.). *Pedahohichna vzaiemodiia* [Pedagogical interaction]. EduGloss. Retrieved from https://eduglos.iitta.gov.ua/index.php/%D0%9F%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%B0%D0%B3%D0%BE%D0%B3%D1%96%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%B0_%D0%B2%D0%B7%D0%B0%D1%94%D0%BC%D0%BE%D0%B4%D1%96%D1%8F
9. Marchuk, A. A. (2019). *Sutnist pedahohichnoi vzaiemodii vykladacha i studentiv v protsesi profesiinoi pidhotovky menedzheriv* [The essence of pedagogical interaction between teachers and students

in the training of managers]. In *Suchasni problemy upravlinnia pidpryiemstvamy: Teoriia ta praktyka* (p. 345). Kharkiv.
10. Podoliak, L. H., & Yurchenko, V. I. (2014). *Psykholohiia vyshchoi shkoly* [Psychology of higher education]. Karavela.
11. UNESCO. (2021). *New UNESCO global survey reveals impact of COVID-19 on higher education*. UNESCO.
12. UNESCO. (2021). *The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on higher education: Student perspectives*. UNESCO.
13. UNESCO. (2022). *Building resilience in higher education systems*. UNESCO.
14. UNESCO & World Bank. (2023). *Education in emergencies: Global response report*. UNESCO & World Bank.
15. UNICEF. (2022). *Supporting the mental health of children and young people in crisis settings*. UNICEF.
16. UNICEF. (2023). *War has hampered education for 5.3 million children in Ukraine*. UNICEF.
17. Vereshchahina, S. O., Liashchenko, O. I., & Babiy, O. V. (2020). *Pedahohichna vzaiemodiia v umovakh zmishanoho navchannia: Novi vyklyky ta mozhlyvosti* [Pedagogical interaction in blended learning: New challenges and opportunities]. Pedahohichni Nauky, 88(3), 45–52.
18. Zyazyun, I. A. (2000). *Kontseptualni zasady teorii osvity v Ukraini* [Conceptual foundations of educational theory in Ukraine]. Pedahohika i Psykholohiia Profesiinoi Osvity, 1, 11–24.

THEORY AND HISTORY OF CULTURE & PHILOSOPHY

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-15

ETHNIC AND NATIONAL VALUES IN THE ERA OF GLOBALIZATION

Aliyeva Dinara Nizami qizi,
Doctoral Student at the Department of Philosophy,
Baku State University (Baku, Azerbaijan);
Lecturer, Sumgait State University (Sumgait, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-9639-3878
dinaraliyeva94@mail.ru

Abstract. The article examines the problem of ethnic and national values in the context of globalization. Globalization has a dual impact on ethnic and national values: on the one hand, it contributes to their erosion and unification within the framework of global processes, and on the other, it stimulates the desire of peoples to preserve their identity and rebirth. A comparative analysis of the negative and positive effects of globalization on ethnic and national values is carried out. Negative manifestations include: blurring and loss of identity, threat to cultural identity and disregard for national mentality. The positive manifestations include: the strengthening of the desire to preserve identity, as well as national revival. Paradoxically, globalization can contribute to national revival, as nations look for ways to emphasize their uniqueness and defend their identity. In addition, the article separately describes ways to preserve national values. Values are part of culture and its benefits, and they are important for social and humanitarian studies. Value refers to common goals and the ways to reach them, and it works as a basic rule or standard. Because of this, it can be said that values are connected to a person or a subject, and there are no values that exist outside of people and society. Ethnic and national values are a set of spiritual, moral, and cultural rules that develop within a specific ethnic group or nation over time. These values help shape the group's growth and sense of identity. In the era of globalization, all countries of the world face a serious question: how to preserve their national values without losing their identity. Globalization undoubtedly brings many benefits: improved communications, technology development, and economic growth. However, along with this process, we also see some negative aspects, such as the unification of cultures and the loss of unique features inherent in individual nations. It is noted that modern society must be ready to protect its national values from the negative impact of globalization. This means the ability to distinguish useful cooperation and the exchange of cultural achievements from destructive cultural influences that can lead to the loss of the uniqueness of the nation.

Key words: ethnic values, national values, ethnic identity, cultural globalization, traditions, cultural identity.

Introduction. Globalization is a complex process of modern life that tries to make everything the same, standardize things, bring people together, and reduce differences, but at the same time it also wants to keep each group's own unique culture and traditions. In today's global world, there is a lot of pressure on different ethnic cultures to change or disappear because of the push for modern, uniform standards. This makes it harder for people to feel connected to their own cultural identity. Because of this, people are starting to feel more strongly about their own culture and national identity, which can lead to more separation between different groups. It's important to understand that the revival of ethnic culture is not just about copying old ways, but about having a deep inner sense of pride and belonging. Right now, there are some problems where people are mixing up ideas and using external symbols like pride and nationalism to show their identity. This often leads to more division between groups instead of bringing them together.

The degree of development of the problem. For many years, researchers have been trying to describe the concept of value, and everyone is doing it in their own way.

A. J. Toynbee, considering the problems of values, explores the spiritual world of the individual through interaction with society. "Values," according to the philosopher, "and above all spiritual values, are concentrated in people." In addition to spiritual values, Toynbee also highlights social, moral, aesthetic, and intellectual values. Consequently, Toynbee attributes values to the world of culture, and culture itself is already a value, since it has a system of spiritual, moral and aesthetic ideals. The existence of ethnic values is objective, as it follows from the objective reality of ethnic groups. For a person, value is everything that has a certain significance, personal or social meaning for him. We encounter value when we talk about our native, holy, dear, perfect, when we admire and resent, etc. These values can have both a universal and a specific historical character, i.e. they are of great importance for a particular ethnic community at a certain stage of its historical development (Toynbee,1962: 141–146).

Values are part of culture and its benefits, and they are important for social and humanitarian studies. Value refers to common goals and the ways to reach them, and it works as a basic rule or standard. Because of this, it can be said that values are connected to a person or a subject, and there are no values that exist outside of people and society. Ethnic and national values are a set of spiritual, moral, and cultural rules that develop within a specific ethnic group or nation over time. These values help shape the group's growth and sense of identity. They include general human values that apply to everyone, as well as values that are unique to a particular nation, like patriotism, respect for older people, family, work, helping each other, traditions, and cultural heritage.

In my opinion, the main problem lies in the fact that the above-mentioned researcher focuses on common values, thereby ignoring the structure of value as such. It is important to explore values from a pragmatic point of view. It's necesarry to understand that the revival of ethnic culture is not just about copying old ways, but about having a deep inner sense of pride and belonging. Right now, there are some problems where people are mixing up ideas and using external symbols like pride and nationalism to show their identity. This often leads to more division between groups instead of bringing them together.

The purpose of the research is to study the essence of ethnic and national values, taking into account the processes of globalization.

The methods include scientific approaches and research in the field of this problem.

The essence of ethnic and national values. Ethnic values are closely connected to the material and spiritual culture of a group of people. These values include things like everyday life, celebrations, art, the beliefs and hopes of the group, and their history. They help define who the group is and keep traditions alive from one generation to the next. Fredrik Barth argues that ethnicity is the result of the dynamic interaction of groups: the boundaries between "we" and "they" are maintained through the processes of inclusion and exclusion. He contrasts traditional ideas about ethnic groups as isolated entities with the idea of their constant intersection (Barth, 1969: 63–75). National values are formed over time through the history of a people and are important parts of their spiritual growth that shape the moral values of society. It's important to understand that values are not fixed; they change as history develops. Keeping and passing on national values helps maintain a strong sense of awareness and ethics within the group. Anthony D. Smith views nations and ethnic groups as united by myths, symbols, and collective memory. In his model, the "ethnonucleus" is the key ethnic values that bind people into a single socio-cultural organism. They play an important role in keeping people together (Smith, 1991: 102–108).

Even though ethnic and national values are related, they are not the same thing. Ethnic values are the special traditions and characteristics that make up the identity of a particular group. National values, on the other hand, are a wider set of ideas that have been developed over many years and shared by the whole people, often bringing together different ethnic groups (Sanders, 2002: 327–357).

Ethnic values:

– It is a set of elements of ethno-cultural existence, specific cultural traditions of an ethnic group, which are distinguished by the ethnic group itself as its distinctive features.

– They mark the historical and cultural identity of a particular ethnic group. National values: It is a system of principles that have been formed over the centuries and passed down from generation to generation in the way of life and spirituality of each nation.

– They may include national values such as patriotism, citizenship, a strong family, high moral ideals, as well as traditional religions, art, and nature.

– National values form the basis of civic identity and the unified cultural space of the country.

The difference between them:

– Ethnic values are a narrower concept, focusing on the uniqueness of a particular ethnic group.

– National values cover a wider field, uniting different ethnic groups within one nation (Seol, 2008: 333–364).

Ethnic identity in the era of globalization. Globalization affects how people see themselves. Identity is how someone feels about themselves based on certain steady traits. In today's world, one key type of identity is civic identity, which comes from someone's connection to their country and helps them fit into the bigger picture of society. So, as globalization spreads into different cultures, countries tend to focus more on keeping their own parts like language, religion, traditions, and culture. Basically, during times of big changes worldwide, issues about national identity become more important. These issues are closely tied to people's need to decide their own future and keep their unique identity, which they want to protect and continue passing on.

Currently, the discourse of the problem of ethnic identity is vague and poorly structured. This is due to the lack of a unified interpretation of the concepts of "ethnicity" and "ethnicity". Ethnic identity is a part of a person's social identity, the content of which is various kinds of ethno-social beliefs shared by members of his ethnic group. These ideas are the result of an awareness of common history, culture, traditions, place of origin and statehood. The images of one's own and other ethnic groups occupy a central place among ethno-social representations. This knowledge connects the members of this ethnic group and serves as the basis for its difference from others. The process referred to as "globalization" will obviously play a decisive role in the further development of mankind. This process has a major impact not only on international relations, but also on the attitude of nations towards themselves.

Globalization can be represented both as a trend of universalism and as the interaction of two opposing trends: universalism and particularism, strengthening cultural unity and increasing cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity. On the one hand, there is a rapid expansion of the global market, accompanied by the growth of communication and information systems crossing borders. On the other hand, the value sensitivity of local and group structures is becoming more acute. The apparent contradiction between these two aspects is becoming the most characteristic feature of the modern cultural and political landscape (Isola, 2010: 6).

The growth of objective integrative trends around the world leads to interaction in all spheres of society – economic, political and cultural, but this process is accompanied by an equally stable parallel process of countering the internationalization of the economy and the spiritual sphere. "Cultural globalization and homogenization, which are predicted in the future by interpreters of global convergence and unity of the world, remain nothing more than myths." Intellectuals in most developed countries have started talking about the negative consequences of globalization, including the crisis or transformation of ethnic identity. Let's focus on some aspects of globalization that have a negative impact on ethnic identity. A kind of "weapon" of globalization today is mass culture. With the help of mass media and communication, mutual penetration and enrichment of cultural patterns and common narratives on a global scale has become possible. But, on the other hand, all the shortcomings of mass culture in the era of globalization have manifested themselves in an even more acute form (Hall, 1997: 13–64). Leveling trends eliminate fundamental differences between people in all developed societies. A society conquered by mass culture turns into a consumer society. Values that do not fit into the commercial requirements of mass culture are being pushed out of the mass consciousness. And the preserved ethnic identity is exploited within the framework of popular culture (ethnic motifs in popular music, ethnic cinema), but only to make the "product" more attractive and exotic. As soon as culture became a market, it immediately lost the possibility of preserving cultural identity and with it ethnic identity as an inseparable part of it.

Another phenomenon of the era of globalization that threatens ethnic identity is mass migration. Unlimited migration to Western countries has created largely unpredictable challenges for both migrants and their host societies. Previously Western societies were mainly faced with problems of internal confrontation between the majority and ethnic minorities, but today the problems are increasingly associated with increasing tension caused by unresolved problems of integration into Western national communities of migrants of non-Western civilization (Salas & Gelfand, 2013: 735–738).

All developed countries have become more multicultural and focused on immigration. Uncontrolled movement of people is changing the makeup of national groups and making their social and cultural areas less clear. These changes have gotten stronger because of how people have moved in recent years, especially since the Muslim world is now the main source of workers and people seeking help. Because of this, different cultural and belief-based groups have formed in the countries where they settle. These groups live by rules that are shaped by religion, show behaviors that are new to others, and have a different way of looking at the world. This creates misunderstanding and feelings of being separate between the local population and the Muslim immigrants, especially in Europe, which is usually seen as secular. The decline in the values and spiritual beliefs of the local communities is also making it harder to build good relationships with these new cultural groups. The rise of an information-based society is not only changing how people behave but also how they keep their cultural and social identities (Sanders, 2002: 327–357).

The global economy, the development and expansion of communications lead to the fact that Westerners absorb a variety of behaviors, thereby expanding the range of assessments and ideas and creating the ground for a variety of identifications. The distinctive features of the individual identity of the era of globalization are dynamism, amorphousness and instability. As a result, the state of an atomized society is reproduced, and as a result, the inclusion of foreign cultural groups with stable values in its composition becomes problematic. The development of integration processes within the European Union and the change in public sentiment towards greater tolerance in the public sphere required a serious revision of migration policy. The policy of the "melting pot", which originated in the United States and prevailed until the second half of the 20th century, was replaced by the policy of multiculturalism. In general terms, multiculturalism can be considered as a political ideology and as a social practice that organizes and supports a common space of political and social communication for the nation-state, ensuring cohabitation and interaction of individuals, groups, communities of various cultural and religious orientations. The establishment of multiculturalism as the leading political and social practice in Western society has caused major changes in the ethnic identity of many immigrants in Europe and the United States. In the United States, as a result of the policy of multiculturalism, an increasing number of representatives of ethnic groups (Latinos, Chinese, etc.) have ceased to identify themselves with the American civic community. They began to create their own organizations and began to intensively infiltrate government bodies. The ethno-political factor has become one of the leading forces determining the political reality of many countries of the world.

It is expressed in various forms of mobilization activity of ethnic groups, interethnic conflicts, and the struggle of rival ethnic elites. A politically mobilized ethnic group significantly outperforms other social groups in terms of socio-political activity and group mobilization. The people, gaining a sense of unity, are able to generate the highest examples of self-denial, as well as blind rage and cruelty. Politicized ethnic identity becomes a condition through which ethnicity strives to overcome its fragmented existence and regain its temporarily lost sense of inner integrity and identity. That is why politicized ethnic identity can be considered as a protective function of the socio-ethnic. In the theoretical constructions of multiculturalists, we are talking about establishing mechanisms for combining different values, traditions, and lifestyles within a civil nation, openness to "others", and rejection of racism and discrimination in everyday communication. But in practice, the implementation of this doctrine has negative consequences for the ethnic identity of both the host community and migrants. The correct political rhetoric adopted in the official political discourse, the commitment to post–national values and the deliberate concealment of the role of Christianity in the development of European civilization – all this leads to a blurring of the cultural and ethnic identity of the host community. And for migrants, the political practice of multiculturalism results in the preservation of "exclusion." There is a kind of artificial cultivation and maintenance of "otherness". Members of an ethnic community do not always have the right to choose cultural landmarks; they are considered a priori as representatives of "special" groups, as objects of social initiatives aimed at maintaining such "specialness.

In "protected" ethnic communities, a breeding ground for religious fundamentalism is maintained. The reason for this radicalism is the lack of social foundations among Muslim groups in Europe, on which daily life in the Islamic states of the East is based. "Extraterritorial Islam," as a way of life divorced from its roots, can transform into radical religious fundamentalism with a misunderstood system of symbols and landmarks. Thus, in practice, multiculturalism as an ideology of interaction turns out to be an ideology of fragmentation and maintenance of social exclusion. Today we can talk about the crisis of multicultural doctrine. In the era of globalization, ethnic identity is undergoing complex and contradictory processes. On the one hand, there is an increase in ethnic identity. In migrant communities, this becomes a reaction to the unresolved problems of their integration into the host communities. Bursts of ethnic identity in host societies are possible only as a result of the influence of political forces of the right-wing radical spectrum and alarmist sentiments that reduce the level of tolerance (Jackman, 1977: 145–169).

These expressions show an exaggerated form of ethnic identity, which can be harmful to the healthy growth of an ethnic group and its ability to live peacefully with others. At the same time, ethnic identity is becoming less clear because of globalization, popular culture, and multicultural policies. Right now, many ethnic groups are facing ethnic marginalization, which is a risky situation in society. It can lead to instability and unpredictable actions within the group in the overall social structure. However, even with these challenges, ethnic identity still plays a strong role in shaping ethnic groups and their connections with others.

Ways to preserve national values. In the context of accelerated globalization, the question arises about the observance of national traditions and their role in preserving cultural diversity. Some aspects of globalization contribute to the blurring of borders and the merging of cultures, which may raise concerns about the loss of national identity. Nevertheless, there are several arguments in favor of preserving national traditions. Firstly, traditions play an important role in shaping the collective identity of the people. They serve as a kind of bridge between the past and the present, providing stability and continuity. In an era of rapid change, the preservation of national traditions can become a pillar that gives resilience to society. Secondly, traditions enrich the cultural heritage of mankind. The diversity of traditions contributes to the creation of a unique cultural landscape in which each nation makes its own unique contribution. This cultural diversity can serve as a source of inspiration and enrichment for everyone. Nevertheless, it is important to find a balance between preserving traditions and being open to new ideas that globalization brings. Interaction between cultures can foster innovation and progress. Therefore, instead of completely rejecting globalization, we should strive to respect and preserve traditions as an important component of the cultural wealth of mankind.

National values are the foundation on which society is built. These are culture, language, traditions, and customs that are passed down from generation to generation. It is important to understand that globalization should not mean the loss of these values, but rather provide them with the opportunity to flourish on the world stage.

One of the ways to preserve national values in the era of globalization is to support national culture at the state level. It is necessary to develop and finance cultural programs, support artists, writers, musicians and all those who contribute to the preservation and development of the national cultural heritage. States can also create educational programs that will introduce young people to the history and traditions of their country, instill respect and love for their cultural heritage (Murdock,1955: 13–14).

The second important aspect is the preservation and development of the national language. Language is a powerful tool for conveying culture and identity. States should take measures to protect their languages, promote their learning and dissemination. It is also important to actively use the national language in the field of information technology, media space and other areas so that it does not give way to international languages (Lauring & Selmer, 2010: 267–284).

The family also plays a significant role in preserving national values. It is in the family that we first get acquainted with the traditions, customs, language and culture of our people.

Parents should focus on raising their children with respect and love for their culture and history. They should share stories about national heroes, celebrate national holidays, and explain traditions. Globalization offers a great chance to share a country's culture and values with people around the world. We can see how different nations show off their culture through international events, festivals, and competitions. This helps keep national values alive and also adds to the richness and variety of world culture. At the same time, modern society needs to be careful and protect its own cultural values from harmful effects of globalization. This involves knowing the difference between good cultural exchanges and harmful influences that might make a country lose its unique identity. It is important to create rules and laws that help protect the nation's cultural heritage and to make sure these rules are followed properly.

Conclusion. In conclusion, it should be highlighted that the state, families, and society at large must all actively participate in order to preserve national values in the age of globalization. Instead of posing a threat to national identity, globalization can serve as a global platform for showcasing and enhancing national identity. It is crucial to keep in mind that each country is distinct, and maintaining this diversity contributes to the richness and diversity of our global community. One of the few that truly carry out the crucial tasks of value orientation and guaranteeing an individual's positive social well-being is ethnic structures. Furthermore, in a transitional society, they are the most crucial tool for establishing and destroying political authority.

The development of globalization will not be able to erase ethnic differences, and with them ethnic identities. It must be remembered that throughout history, people have adopted various innovations and technologies from each other without abandoning their own ethnic identity, and the introduction of new social institutions has always taken place with significant national specifics.

References:

1. Barth, F. (1969). Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference. (pp. 63–75). Oslo/Bergen: Universitetsforlaget; also reprinted in Long Grove, IL:Waveland Press (1998), 153 pages.
2. Hall, S. (1997). The Work of Representation. In S. Hall (Ed.), Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (pp. 13–64). London & Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications in association with The Open University,400 pages.
3. Isola, A. (2010). Cultural development, key to national growth. Sunday Punch, July 3, p. 6. Lagos, Nigeria: Punch Newspapers. (newspaper article)

4. Jackman, M. R. (1977). Prejudice, tolerance, and attitudes toward ethnic groups. Social Science Research, 6(2), 145–169. New York: Academic Press.
5. Kaldor, M. (2004). Nationalism and Globalisation. Nations and Nationalism, 10(1–2), 161–177. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
6. Lauring, J., & Selmer, J. (2010). Multicultural organizations: common language and group cohesiveness. International Journal of Cross Cultural Management, 10(3), 267–284. London: Sage Publications.
7. Murdock, G. (1955). Universals of Culture. In J. Jennings & E. A. Hoebel (Eds.), Readings in Anthropology (pp. 13–14). New York: McGraw-Hill.
8. Salas, E., & Gelfand, M. J. (2013). Introduction to the Special Issue: Collaboration in multicultural environments. Journal of Organizational Behavior, 34(6), 735–738. New York: Wiley.
9. Sanders, J. M. (2002). Ethnic boundaries and identity in plural societies. Annual Review of Sociology, 28, 327–357. Palo Alto, CA: Annual Reviews.
10. Seol, B. S. (2008). A Critical Review of Approaches to Ethnicity. International Area Review, 11(2), 333–364. Seoul: Hankuk University Press.
11. Smith, A. D. (1991). National Identity. (pp. 102-108). Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 320 pages.
12. Toynbee, A. J. (1962). The Modern Experiment of Western Civilization (pp. 141-146). London: Oxford University Press, 400 pages.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-16

ABU OSMAN AL-JAHIZ'S POLEMIC REGARDING CHRISTIANS IN IX

Jamila Damirova Vagif,
PhD, National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature named after Nizami Ganjavi (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0003-7502-4293

Abstract. During the Abbasid period, representatives of other nations also participated alongside the Arabs in the development of Arabic literature. Baghdad, as a cosmopolitan city, embraced various ethnic and religious communities. On the other hand, Muslim peoples living over a vast area stretching from the borders of France to China contributed their share to the common cultural heritage. But even though this contribution originated in the Arabic language and was in the spirit of Islam, each nation, each society added its ethnic shades to the all-Muslim culture, brought different notes to the Arabic literature with elements related to its past culture, religious customs and traditions, and way of thinking.

If in the first phase of the Abbasid period, non-Arab tendencies prevailed and criticized the past and traditions of the Arabs through satire, in the second phase starting from the third decade of the 9th century, Arab nationalists began to criticize the non-Arab peoples, especially the Persians, attempting to prove their ethnic superiority and ancient cultures. In religious-ethnic discussions, the attitude towards Christians had a special place. Thus, during the Abbasid era, inter-religious relations were not rooted only on the basis of tolerance, but sometimes moved to the level of heated discussions and even religious conflicts. These can be grouped as follows:

– The Arabic literature of the Middle Ages has acquired the character of the all-Muslim literature created by various ethnic and religious societies since the Abbasid period.

– Christian scholars and writers played an important role in the cultural life of the Abbasid period.

– Although some territories incorporated into the Arab-Islamic world as a result of the conquests belonged to Christians, who were considered “People of the Book”, a strong process of Arabization occurred in these regions, ultimately leading to the emergence of Arab-Islamic culture there.

Key words: Abu Osman al-Jahiz, ar-Radd ala-n-nasara, Christian population living under Abbasid rule, polemics of Arab authors regarding Christians, multicultural Abbasid society.

Introduction. The religious diversity of the Abbasid period was reflected in a number of works written at that time. One of these works is "الرد على النصارى (أبو عثمان عمرو بن بحر بن محبوب البصري) " (ar-Radd ala-n-nasara) – “Response to Christians” by Abu Osman al-Jahiz, one of the encyclopedic minds of the Middle Ages. Jahiz's appeal to this topic was related to the state of the Abbasid society. It is known that islam did not touch the religion of the Jews and Christians, who were the people of the book, they have come under the protection of Muslims by paying a life tax like ahlu-z-zimma (أهل الذمة). Since the Umayyads were satisfied with this tax, they were not interested in reducing the number of the Christian population at the expense of those who worshiped Islam. Before Islam, Christians of the eastern provinces were under the patronage of the Sassanids. In the West, there was the Byzantine Empire, which was ambitious in spreading Christianity. The emergence of the new religion led many Christians to accept the protection of the Islamic state. The Umayyads, who expanded the borders of this state to endless territories, did not have much interest in the conversion of the people of the book to Islam. During the Abbasid period, however, the situation changed: the socio-political and economic status of those who accepted Islam improved significantly. For this reason, many Christians converted to Islam, which caused concern among Christian religious leaders (Platt and Gibson, 2018). Such a concern, in turn, created polemics between Christians and Muslims.

It is known that al-Jahiz, who joined the Mu'tazili(المعتزلة) sect, created his own direction – al-Jahiziya (الجاحظية). The works of the writer, one of the ideologists of the Mu'tazila, reflect Mu'tazilism through their methodology. Thus, most of al-Jahiz's works are polemical in spirit. Throughout the work, the writer enters into a dispute with his opponents, expresses his opinion and thoughts. One of such question-and-answer and discussion works is "الرد على النصارى" (ar-radd ala-n-nasara) – "Response to Christians". Although the writer does not indicate a specific name, he enters into a dispute with supporters of Christianity. It turns out that the Christians with whom he is arguing oppose a number of provisions of Islam, claiming that these provisions do not convey the truth. In response, the writer opposes the fallacies of Christians from their books, stating that these fallacies lead to heresy. On the other hand, Jahiz stands as a defender of Islam and defends a number of provisions reflected in the Qur'an regarding Judaism and Christianity.

Discussion.

1. Al-Jahiz's views on Christians

The above-mentioned work of Al-Jahiz interests us from the point of view of reflecting the religious diversity of the Abbasid era. This diversity is reflected in attitudes towards various religious doctrines. Let's take a look at the excerpt directed against Muslims in the language of the following Christians:

"وذكرتم أنهم قالوا: زعمتم أن عيسى تكلم في المهد، ونحن على تقديمنا له، وتقريبنا لأمره وإفراطنا بزعمكم فيه، على كثرة عددنا وتفاوت بلادنا واختلافنا فيما بيننا، لا نعرف ذلك ولا ندعيه، وكيف ندعيه ولم نسمعه عن سلف ولا ادعاه منا مدع.

ثم هذه اليهود لا تعرف ذلك، وتزعم أنها لم تسمع به إلا منكم، ولا تعرفه المجوس، ولا الصابئون، ولا عباد البددة من الهند وغيرهم، ولا الترك والخزر ..." (Al-Sharqawi,1991)

" You (Muslims) claim that Jesus Christ spoke when he was in the cradle. We are not aware of such a claim, even though we are of the religion of Christ and are close to him. However, we as Christians are more in number and our countries are different from your countries. We have never heard such a claim from our predecessors. Such a claim is also unknown to the Jews. They say they heard it from you. The Magi, Sabeans, Buddhists, Hindus, Turks, and Khazars also know nothing about this".

This part of the work is of great importance and reflects the ethnic and religious diversity of the Abbasid society. Here, alongside the Muslim, Christian, and Jewish religions, we see the Magi (worshipers of Zoroastrianism), the Sabeans, and the Buddhists (عباد البددة). In addition, the writer mentions the Turks, Hindus, and Khazars as well. What is important is that all these communities started arguing and expressed their opinions about Jesus speaking in the cradle. The mosques of Baghdad come to life, where religious and philosophical debates are boiling before the eyes of man.

The relationship between Muslims and representatives of different religions in the work is interesting. Why were Christians treated better during the Abbasid period than Jews? What factors determine the relationship between individual religious communities? Jahiz turns to history and writes:

"فلما صار المهاجرون لليهود جيرانا، وقد كانت الأنصار متقدمة الجوار، مشاركة في الدار، حسدتهم اليهود على النعمة في الدين، والاجتماع بعد الافتراق، والتواصل بعد التقاطع، ومالئوا الأعداء والحسدة، فجمعوا كيدهم، وبذلوا أنفسهم وأموالهم في قتالهم، وإخراجهم من ديارهم، وطال ذلك واستفاض فيهم وظهر، وترادف لذلك الغيظ، وتضاعف البغض، وتمكن الحقد.

وكانت النصارى لبعد ديارهم، من مبعث النبي ﷺ ومهاجره، لا يتكلفون طعنا، ولا يثيرون كيدا، ولا يجمعون على حرب." (Al-Sharqawi,1991)

"The emigrants (who had migrated from Mecca) became neighbors to the Jews. They lived in the houses of the helpers. The Jews were jealous of the gift of Islam to them. It was not their eyes that the people who had once fallen apart should come together. They plotted and spent their wealth and lives in hostility against the Muslims. They tried to expel the Muslims (from Medina), and wrath, anger, and hatred filled their hearts. However, the Christians lived far from the areas where Islam originated and from the Prophet (PBUH). They did not insult the Prophet or devise malicious plans like the Jews, nor did they start fighting against the Muslims".

Thus, from the work of Al-Jahiz it can be seen that the attitude towards Christians at the time of his life was much better than towards the Jews. Al-Jahiz states that its roots are connected to the history of Medina after the migration of Islam. It is known that before the migration, the Jewish tribes in

Yathrib (Medina) held great power. They skillfully took advantage of the hostility between the Aws and Khazraj tribes.

O. G. Bolshakov indicates that after the Hijrah, the Jews from the Banu Nadir tribe allied with the Meccans and attempted to expel the Muslims from Medina. The Jewish poet Kab ibn Al-Ashraf (كعب بن الأشرف) was murdered for this reason (Gasimova, 2019). It is for this reason that Al-Jahiz declares that the hearts of Muslims were broken against Jews, and they were more gentle with Christians. He also does not forget to mention the migration of the Muslims to Abyssinia and how the Abyssinian ruler received them with kindness. In his view, as people's hearts become lenient toward one group, they grow hostile toward its enemies:

"...وكلما لانت القلوب لقوم غلظت على أعدائهم...."(Al-Sharqawi,1991)

Al-Jahiz shows that some people are looking for an expression of good attitude towards Christians in the Qu'ran:

كَلَّا ۚ سَيَكْفُرُونَ بِعِبَادَتِهِمْ وَيَكُونُونَ عَلَيْهِمْ ضِدًّا (28) أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّا أَرْسَلْنَا الشَّيَاطِينَ عَلَى الْكَافِرِينَ تَؤُزُّهُمْ أَزًّا (38) فَلَا تَعْجَلْ عَلَيْهِمْ ۖ إِنَّمَا نَعُدُّ لَهُمْ عَدًّا (48) يَوْمَ نَحْشُرُ الْمُتَّقِينَ إِلَى الرَّحْمَٰنِ وَفْدًا (58)

82. No! Those “gods” will deny their worship of them and will be against them opponents [on the Day of Judgement].

83. Do you not see that We have sent the devils upon the disbelievers, inciting them to [evil] with [constant] incitement?

84. So be not impatient over them. We only count out to them a [limited] number.

85. On the Day We will gather the righteous to the Most Merciful as a delegation (Quran, Surah Maryam 19)

But Al-Jahiz states that Christians are not meant as a people in the ayahs. In his opinion, this specifically refers to the Christians who had a positive attitude toward the Prophet during the period of his prophethood. Because already in the time of Al-Jahiz, Christians who entered into disputes with Muslims represented various branches of this religion. Al-Jahiz mentions the Nestorians (النسطورية), the Melkites (الملكانية), the Jacobites (اليعقوبية) (Al-Sharqawi,1991). This fact itself testifies to how different branches of Christianity itself were represented in the Abbasid society. Al-Jahiz continued and stated that at the time of the formation of islam, the two main rulers of the Arabs were Christians: These were the Lakhmids and the Ghassanids:

"كما ذكر اليهود أنه جاء الإسلام وملوك العرب رجلان غساني ولخمي، وهما نصرانيان، وقد كانت العرب تدين لهما، وتؤدي الإتاوة لهما، فكان تعظيم قلوبهم لهما راجعا إلى تعظيم دينهما".

(Al-Sharqawi,1991)

" Jews note that at the time of the formation of islam, the Arabs had two rulers: Ghassanid and Lakhmid rulers.Both of them were Christians. The Arabs obeyed them and paid tribute. Bowing to these people led to bowing to their religion".

Al-Jahiz mentions the spread of Christianity among Arab tribes before Islam. He states that Christianity was widespread among the Lakhm, Ghassan, Gudaa, Tayy, Rabia, and Taghlib tribes.

After mentioning all this, al-Jahiz returns to his time. It is known that the main opponent of the Abbasid state was the Christian Byzantine Empire. It was not just a competition, it was accompanied by constantly renewed battles. Notably, the Abbasid Caliph al-Mu'tasim Billah (المعتصم بالله) is known for his successful military campaigns against the Byzantine Empire (e.g., the conquest of Amorium). It is also known that during the early period of Abbasid rule, the Shu'ubiyya movement had gained strength. The Shu'ubiyya claimed to possess a nobler lineage, a more authentic heritage, and to be bearers of a richer cultural legacy compared to the nomadic Arabs. The Persians were proud of their ancient states, and the Greeks were proud of their philosophical works.

Apparently, during the time of Al-Jahiz, Christians were proud to be carriers of the ancient Roman-Greek cultural heritage. In this case, al-Jahiz counters their claims and points out to Christians that Greek culture has a different meaning than Roman culture:

"ولو علمت العوام أن النصارى والروم ليست لهم حكمة ولا بيان، ولا بعد روية، إلا حكمة الكف، من الخرط والنجر والتصوير، وحياكة البزيون، لأخرجتهم من حدود الأدباء، ولمحتهم من ديوان الفلاسفة والحكماء؛ لأن كتاب المنطق والكون والفساد، وكتاب العلوي، وغير ذلك، لأرسطاطاليس، وليس برومي ولا نصراني. وكتاب المجسطي لبطليموس، وليس برومي ولا نصراني. وكتاب إقليدس لإقليدس، وليس برومي ولا نصراني. وكتاب الطب لجالينوس، ولم يكن روميا ولا نصرانيا. وكذلك كتب ديمقراط وبقراط وأفلاطون، وفلان وفلان. وهؤلاء ناس من أمة قد بادوا وبقيت آثار عقولهم، وهم اليونانيون، ودينهم غير دينهم، وأدبهم غير أدبهم. أولئك علماء، وهؤلاء صناع أخذوا كتبهم لقرب الجوار، وتداني الدار، فمنها ما أضافوه إلى أنفسهم، ومنها ما حولوه إلى ملتهم. إلا ما كان من مشهور كتبهم، ومعروف حكمهم، فإنهم حين لم يقدروا على تغيير أسمائها زعموا أن اليونانيين قبيل من قبائل الروم، ففخروا بأديانهم على اليهود..." (Al-Sharqawi,1991)

" I wish people knew that Christians and Romans had neither wisdom (philosophy) nor declaration (art of words), nor foresight. Among them, only a man named Bizyun had exceptional skill in masonry, carpentry, painting, and weaving. I take them out of the ranks of philosophers and writers. They have no place in literature and philosophy. For it is Aristotle who is the author of books on logic, the universe, corruption, and celestial bodies. Aristotle was neither a Roman nor a Christian. Ptolemy, who wrote the Almagist, was neither a Christian nor a Roman. There is also the book of Euclid. Euclid was neither a Christian nor a Roman. In the same way, Democritus, Hippocrates, Plato were not Romans or Christians. These individuals have perished, but their intellectual contributions belong to a living nation. They are Greeks. Neither their religion nor their literature has any connection with the Christians. They were all artists and scientists. Christian Romans adopted their works when they lived next door to the Greeks. The Romans sometimes made additions to these books, sometimes they tried to change them. When they failed to do this, they claimed that "the Greeks are a branch of the Romans" and then boasted in front of the Jews.

The main thing in this passage is that al-Jahiz considered the Greeks to be a lost people. It is known that an important branch of ancient culture is associated with the name of the Greeks. The Romans rendered incomparable services in statecraft and the Greeks in philosophy. Apparently, in the ninth century Abbasid society, the Greeks were also presented as Roman-Christians. All of them collectively represented the Christian Roman-Byzantine Empire, the main political rival of the Arab Caliphate, for which al-Jahiz was a passionate advocate. Al-Jahiz's opposition to Christians was primarily due to this bigotry.

Another reason for al-Jahiz's opposition to the Christians was his Mu'tazilism. The Mu'tazilites were completely opposed to attributing human traits to God and the idea that humans are manifestations of God. Al-Jahiz states that "the religion of the Christians resembles the religion of the heretics. They even remind of materialists. Christians sow the seeds of doubt and wonder among people. You will not find a people more inclined to heresy than them". (Al-Sharqawi,1991).

Al-Jahiz opposes the doctrine of Christians that Jesus is the son of God. In this matter, he also reflects the opinion of the other side according to his own method. According to Christians, if Muslims accept Prophet Abraham as Khalilullah (friend of God), why do they not want to see Jesus as the son of God? (Al-Sharqawi,1991). According to al-Jahiz, the main mistake of Christians is that they literally understand that Jesus is called "the son of God" in the Bible, they do not understand that the word has a figurative meaning. Al-Jahiz reflects the Islamic worldview and states that God cannot have his own son, nor can God adopt someone as a son (Al-Sharqawi,1991)

قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ (1) اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ (2) لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ (3) وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ (4)

Say, "He is Allah, [who is] One

Allah, the Eternal Refuge.

He neither begets nor is born,

Nor is there to Him any equivalent." (Surah Ikhlas, 112)

On the other hand, the notion of considering Jesus as God is also condemned in the work. Al-Jahiz states that Jesus addresses the apostles as "my brothers" in the Gospels. If Jesus is God, then should the apostles be considered brothers of God, or are they Gods themselves?

Al-Jahiz states that the attribution of anthropomorphic adjectives to God originates from Jewish religious books. In Jewish literature, Ezra is called the son of God. It is stated that God's hands are tied (مغلوقة – maghlūqa). Under the influence of this, Christians also claimed that Jesus was the son of God:

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ عُزَيْرٌ ابْنُ اللَّهِ وَقَالَتِ النَّصَارَى الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ ۖ ذَٰلِكَ قَوْلُهُم بِأَفْوَاهِهِمْ ۖ يُضَاهِئُونَ قَوْلَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن قَبْلُ ۚ قَاتَلَهُمُ اللَّهُ ۚ أَنَّىٰ يُؤْفَكُونَ (03)

The Jews say, “Ezra is the son of Allah “; and the Christians say, “The Messiah is the son of Allah.” That is their statement from their mouths; they imitate the saying of those who disbelieved [before them]. May Allah destroy them; how are they deluded? (Surah Taubah, 9)

The condemnation of the Christian trinity in the Qur'an does not escape al-Jahiz's attention.

لَّقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ ثَالِثُ ثَلَاثَةٍ ۘ وَمَا مِنْ إِلَٰهٍ إِلَّا إِلَٰهٌ وَاحِدٌ ۚ وَإِن لَّمْ يَنتَهُوا عَمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَيَمَسَّنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ (37)

They have certainly disbelieved who say, “Allah is the third of three.” And there is no god except one God. And if they do not desist from what they are saying, there will surely afflict the disbelievers among them a painful punishment. (Surah Al-Maidah 5)

2. Jahiz's attitude to the role of minority Christians in Muslim society

All these polemics reflected in the work reflect the intellectual picture of the Abbasid society. This was a period when extensive discussions and debates were opened in Islam as a result of the translation of Greek philosophical works. These disputes also indicate the extreme convergence of different religions. The heretical movements arose precisely from the changes in religious concepts, which were influenced by other religions. Previous scientific studies note that heresy emerged under the influence of Zoroastrianism. Medieval Arab authors, while connecting the meaning of “zindiq” with Persian beliefs, emphasize that the root of the word is the word “zand”, which means an interpretation of the Avesta. Ibn Manzur points out that the Persians referred to the commentaries written on the Avesta as “zand”. These interpretations sometimes did not correspond with the general content and ideas of the Avesta and reflected distorted, heretical ideas. They referred to those who deviated from Zoroastrianism and engaged in heresy as يدنز (zandi). In this way, the interpreters who have misinterpreted the Avesta according to their own desires and distanced themselves from its true essence are meant. Later, the Arabs used this word, which they inherited from the Persians, to express those who worshiped dualism. Thus, the term that once referred to those who opposed Zoroastrianism transformed into an expression denoting those who did not adhere to Islamic laws in Abbasid society (Damirova, 2022).

The opening of such a polemic by the Islamic thinker against the Christian faith is of interest from the point of view of reflecting the mental picture of the time. From al-Jahiz's work, it can be inferred that although the Christians were associated with heresy and innovation in the Islamic context, they were able to hold high positions in the administrative system.

Christians served as secretaries to sultans and practiced medicine and pharmacy for those in positions of authority. For this reason, their influence in society was stronger. However, the Jews were, at most, engaged in tanning and butchery (Al-Sharqawi,1991).

Al-Jahiz considers entering into marriage of people of different religions as one of the main means of mixing people. In this area, he criticizes the Jews because they do not intermarry with other nations. Al-Jahiz considers it an abnormal case, far from humanity. Only animals such as camels, horses, donkeys, and so on mate with their own kind (Al-Sharqawi,1991). While the Jews distance themselves from other nations, Christians, despite remaining in their religion, give the impression of having fully embraced Islam.

وتسموا بالحسن والحسين، والعباس وفضل وعلي، واكتنوا بذلك أجمع، ولم يبق إلا أن يتسموا بمحمد، ويكتنوا بأبي القاسم. فرغب إليهم المسلمون، وترك كثير منهم عقد الزنانير، وعقدها آخرون دون ثيابهم، وامتنع كثير من كبرائهم من إعطاء الجزية، وأنفوا مع أقدارهم من دفعها، وسبوا من سبهم، وضربوا من ضربهم. (Al-Sharqawi,1991)

“Their names are Hasan, Huseyn, Abbas, Fazl and Ali. "Similarly, their kunyas are also like this. They quickly went from being named Muhammad to being called Abu al-Qasim.Therefore, they are liked by Muslims. Many Christians no longer wear the zunnar (belt), and if they do, they tie it under their private clothing (so that it remains unseen). Many Christians have refused to pay the jizyah (tax). If someone insults a Christian, they will respond with insults; if someone strikes them, they will strike back”.

In this passage, we see the means that a minority community in Islamic society resorts to in order to protect itself. They try to resemble Muslims both in their names and in their clothing so that they do not attract attention. Some even refrain from wearing the zunnar (Zunnar refers to the belt worn by non-Muslims, especially Christians, around their waist – Encyclopedia of Islam, Zunnar) in such a manner. It seems that their status as a minority compels them to protect themselves. They try to protect themselves from persecution by responding to insults with insults and to blows with blows.

Despite being a minority, they do not hesitate to attack the Islamic religion, its prophet, and the prophet's family. Al-Jahiz shows that Muslims did not experience the same evil from the Jews or the Sabians as they did from the Christians. Because the Christians distort Islam based on weak hadiths and sow seeds of doubt in the hearts of the common people.

According to Al-Jahiz, the main scourge of Islam is that every Muslim considers himself Mutakallim (the speaker ملكتم). However, it is not the common people but the scholars who should respond to the accusations and claims of the Christians.

"......ومن البلاء أن كل إنسان من المسلمين يرى أنه متكلم......"(Al-Sharqawi, 1991)

In the work “Response to the Christians” ىراصنلا ىلع درلا (ar-Radd ala-n-nasara) the issue of celibacy–abstaining from marriage–within Christianity is also addressed. Christian clerics do not marry, and those who marry enter into marriage only with one woman.

Al-Jahiz states that such a custom as the castration of male children also comes from Christians and condemns this custom. He calls this habit unmerciful (الرحم قلة) and “the corruption of hearts” (فساد القلوب) (Al-Sharqawi, 1991). And the worst thing is that Christians spread this hated custom among Muslims. In Al-Jahiz's opinion, the main misfortune of Islam is that every Muslim considers themselves a mutakallim (one who speaks or has authority). Then these boys convert to Islam and get rid of slavery (Al-Sharqawi, 1991).

After all this, Al-Jahiz states that although Christians wear clean clothes, they are, in terms of morality, the most vile people. He condemns the fact that Christians do not perform ablution, eat pork, and that Christian women do not bathe and purify themselves after menstruation. (Al-Sharqawi, 1991). It is also interesting that Christianity did not appear as a unified religion in Abbasid society. Nestorian, Jacobite, and Maliki Christians explain the same religious events and rulings in completely different ways. That is why, according to al-Jahiz, it is extremely difficult to understand the true nature of Christianity (Al-Sharqawi, 1991).

Conclusion. Thus, it can be said that Abbasid society was quite diverse in terms of ethnicity, religion, and culture. It seems that the Golden Age of Arab culture in the 8th to 10th centuries was a result of this diversity and multicultural system. This diversity was more evident in the Christian territories conquered by the Arabs, namely both in Andalusia and Sicily.

Al-Jahiz's work “Response to the Christians” الرد على النصارى (ar-Radd ala-n-nasara) serves as an important source for studying interreligious dialogue during the Abbasid period. The work testifies to the importance of religious dissociations in the intellectual environment of Baghdad. On the other hand, one can observe that, regardless of religious affiliation, educated individuals held high positions in the caliph’s court and in government administration. Despite the religious-ethnic diversity, the rapprochement of people with clothing and lifestyle is also striking.

In this work, it is clearly evident that a Muslim scholar opposes Christians, which stems from his Arab-Islamic zeal.

References:

1. Platt A. and Gibson N.P. (2018). Inquiring of 'Beelzebub': Timothy and al-Jahiz on Christians in the Abbasid legal system. Leiden, Brill, https://epub.ub.uni-muenchen.de/59778/7/Platt_Gibson_Inquiring_Beelzebub.pdf
2. Gasimova A. (2007). Mental-Spiritual Life of pre-Islamic Arabs. Baku, Elm, 235 p.
3. Gasimova A. (2019). Arabic Literature, V-XIII centuries. Baku, Elm, 677 p.
4. Damirova J. (2022). Freethinking in arabic-language classical oriental literature and Shuubiyya movement. PhD dissertation. Baku, National Museum of Azerbaijan Literature named after Nizami Ganjavi, 148 p.
5. Dr. Muhammad Abdullah Al-Sharqawi (1991). Al-Jahiz: al-Radd 'ala 'l-Nasara. Beirut, Dar Al Jeel المختار في الرد على النصارى | تراث
6. Encyclopedia of Islam, Yusuf Shevki Yavuz, Zunnar, (2013) ZÜNNAR – TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi (islamansiklopedisi.org.tr)
7. Quran, Surah Maryam 19, http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer/sura19-aya85.html
8. Quran, Surah Taubah 9, http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/tabary/sura9-aya30.html
9. Quran, Surah Al-Maidah 5, http://quran.ksu.edu.sa/tafseer/katheer/sura5-aya73.html
10. Quran, Surah Maryam 19, Surah Maryam [19] – Translation and Transliteration
11. Quran, Surah Ikhlas 12, Surah Ikhlas [112] – Transliteration and Translation – ٱلْإِخْلَاص
12. Quran, Surah Taubah 9, Surah Taubah [09] – Transliteration and Translation – My Islam
13. Quran, Surah Al-Maidah 5, Read Surah Maidah [05] – Translation and Transliteration – ٱلْمَائِدَة

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-17

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE PROBLEM OF RESPONSIBILITY: THE NEW BOUNDARIES OF ETHICS

Laman Garayeva Ahmad,
Lecturer at the Department of Social Sciences,
Azerbaijan State Agricultural University (Ganja, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0007-3180-2718

Tamilla Rzayeva Zahir,
Lecturer at the Department of Social Sciences,
Azerbaijan State Agricultural University (Ganja, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4638-6485

Abstract. The article philosophically analyses the issues of responsibility, morality, and ethical decision-making that arise in the context of the development of artificial intelligence (AI). The author focuses on the distribution of responsibility between humans and technological agents, as well as on the nature of intention and moral values. The main objective is to examine whether artificial systems are capable of making moral decisions and to show how this relates to the ethical position of the human being. The study compares the behavioural models of AI with the particularities of human consciousness and evaluates the integration of technology into ethical principles along with its social implications. The author notes that as AI advances, the concept of morality acquires not only an individual but also a systemic character; that is, responsibility becomes the joint product of human–machine interaction rather than belonging solely to a single agent. At the same time, adopting a posthumanist perspective, the article questions the central position of the human and explores the possibility of technological entities occupying a place within the moral order. Thus, artificial intelligence is presented not merely as a technical phenomenon but as a philosophical event that stimulates the emergence of a new moral paradigm.

Key words: artificial intelligence, responsibility, morality, ethical decision-making, philosophy of technology, posthumanism.

Introduction. One of the most significant turning points of twenty-first-century human civilization is the emergence and rapid development of artificial intelligence (AI). Machines' ability to learn, make decisions, and even engage in creative thinking has moved beyond the realm of science fiction and now produces tangible social, legal, and ethical consequences in real life. However, this rapid progress also gives rise to new questions: Who is responsible for the behaviour of artificial intelligence? Can the decisions of machines be evaluated through moral values? Do the boundaries of morality change with technology? Addressing these questions requires not only technological insight but also profound philosophical and ethical reflection. AI is no longer merely an instrument created by humans; it functions as an extension of human intellectual and cultural capacities. Through technology, the human expands cognitive possibilities while simultaneously facing the risk of distributing moral responsibility. Whereas human actions were traditionally judged based on intention, algorithmic decisions lack the very notion of intention. The nature of artificial intelligence is ethically and ontologically different from that of human consciousness. Machines evaluate the boundary between "right" and "wrong" on the basis of mathematical and statistical probabilities, whereas humans determine these boundaries through moral, historical, and cultural experience.

Thus, the problem of responsibility is not merely a legal issue but also a test of moral identity. Today, AI decision-making mechanisms directly affect human lives in areas such as healthcare, the judiciary, education, and the military. The management of this process requires the integration of ethical principles not only into human behaviour but also into technological systems. The fundamental question here is: Who bears responsibility for the outcomes produced by artificial intelligence–the programmer, the user, or the system itself? Consequently, the development of AI necessitates a re-evaluation of human essence, free will, and the concept of morality. This also reflects a form of metaphysical pressure exerted by technology upon human existence: the human has objectified their own intellect and transformed it into "another entity." As a result, the classical boundaries of morality are destabilized, giving rise to a new philosophical stage–the *techno-ethical era*.

Discussion.

The Philosophical Nature of the Responsibility Problem

In the history of philosophy, the concept of responsibility has been closely associated with human free will and the capacity for conscious choice. Aristotle's virtue ethics, Kant's deontology, and Hans Jonas's "ethics of responsibility" all demonstrate that human behaviour is evaluated through moral criteria because humans possess the ability to comprehend the consequences of their actions (Jonas, 1984). However, these principles become disrupted in the case of artificial intelligence: the algorithm lacks consciousness and moral intention. Nevertheless, it is able to make decisions that affect human life (Floridi, 2013). This situation renders the subject of responsibility ambiguous: who is accountable for a moral failure–the programmer, the user, or the algorithm itself? According to Kant, the moral worth of an action lies in the intention, not in the outcome. Yet AI decisions are outcome-oriented–they compute optimal scenarios but cannot evaluate moral motivations (Bryson, 2018). This creates a new philosophical condition referred to as the "responsibility gap." Jonas (1984) describes this gap as "the ethical problem of technological civilization" and warns that as humanity gains technological power, its sphere of responsibility must expand accordingly. Philosophers in Azerbaijan and Türkiye likewise emphasize the need to reassess responsibility in the context of advancing technology. For instance, Aliyev (2019) argues that the moral evaluation of AI decisions cannot rely solely on legal frameworks but must also incorporate human ethical and social responsibility. Similarly, Yıldırım (2021) notes that the rise of autonomous systems brings forth a "distributed responsibility" model, which requires an ethical analysis of human–machine interaction. Thus, responsibility must be evaluated not only individually but also in systemic, collective, and techno-cultural dimensions.

Nevertheless, the decision-making mechanisms of artificial intelligence still lack deep moral layers such as intention and empathy. Therefore, the classical philosophical meaning of responsibility must be reconsidered in light of the increasing role of technological agents–an issue that remains complex both legally and metaphysically (Floridi, 2013; Bryson, 2018; Aliyev, 2019; Yıldırım, 2021).

Artificial Intelligence and Moral Agency

In traditional ethical theories, moral agency is explained through the intentional structure of human consciousness. The key criterion here is that a human performs an action on the basis of a particular intention, purpose, and a considered attitude toward the anticipated consequences of that purpose. Kantian ethics links this to rational will and self-legislation, whereas in Aristotelian virtue ethics, agency is explained through the formation of moral character. What unites these perspectives is the assumption that consciousness, intentionality, and the capacity for moral judgement are necessary conditions for moral agency.

For this reason, the question of whether artificial intelligence (AI) systems can possess moral agency long appeared to be closed. Existing AI systems neither form their own intentions nor construct ethical criteria through conscious, experience-based decisions. However, in recent decades, the integration of AI into complex social environments has significantly increased its "practical impact." Coeckelbergh (2020) argues that grounding moral agency solely in internal psychological structures is no longer sufficient, as modern technological systems have begun to exhibit behaviours that produce real moral consequences in the world.

The Rise of Autonomous Systems and Functional Agency

In many contexts, the decisions of autonomous systems are formed outside direct human control. Autonomous vehicles make life-critical decisions in seconds; military drones can identify targets and carry out operations; medical diagnostic systems analyse patient data and generate clinical recommendations. In these situations, AI behaviour is not merely an algorithmic output but a decision with real implications for human life. Consequently, many philosophers and technology ethicists describe such systems as “functional agents.” Even without intention, the presence of effects and outcomes makes it necessary to keep them within the scope of moral evaluation.

Braidotti (2019) notes that technological agency is not merely a technical process; it is a unique mode of action that reshapes social relations, creates new power dynamics, and influences human behaviour. This perspective belongs to the posthumanist framework, which rejects limiting agency to humans alone. Social reality, in this view, is formed through a wide network of humans, machines, infrastructures, and information flows. Since AI produces social consequences within this network, it demonstrates a degree of “impact-based agency.”

Dialogical Agency and the Sharing of Responsibility

Coeckelbergh (2020) explains AI agency through a “dialogical agency” model. In this model, the human–machine relationship is not merely one of tool-use but a dynamic interaction in which outcomes are co-produced. The human assigns tasks to the machine, yet the machine’s behaviour and the resulting outcomes arise from both human input and the system’s own functional agency. Here, the question of shared responsibility becomes central: who is responsible – the programmer, the user, the system, or all participants collectively?

According to the dialogical agency model, conscious intentions are not a prerequisite for AI to be considered a moral agent. What matters is its capacity to generate outcomes within a social and normative framework. Thus, the moral value of operational results applies not only to the human but also to the system’s activity. However, this model has been criticized. Critics, including Hasanov (2021), argue that intention is a fundamental category in ethics, and evaluating agency solely based on outcomes can lead to flawed conclusions. In their view, moral agency cannot be grounded merely in functional results, since moral evaluation requires consideration of motivations behind choices.

The Agency Spectrum and Semi-Autonomous Systems

Contemporary ethical discussions reveal that agency is no longer understood through a binary model–either present or absent. Many scholars now conceptualize agency as a spectrum. At one end of this spectrum lie fully conscious humans; at the other, purely mechanical and deterministic systems. Artificial intelligence occupies an intermediate position – as “semi-autonomous agents.” These systems are neither fully autonomous nor fully under human control. They co-produce adaptive behaviours with humans, respond to new information, modify previous patterns, and thus do not follow a wholly predetermined operational trajectory.

Autonomous vehicle decision-making in crash scenarios is a clear example. In critical moments, a driverless car must decide whose safety to prioritize. Although such decisions are pre-programmed, real-world conditions are so variable that the system resorts to adaptive responses. This demonstrates that agency cannot be attributed solely to the programmer or the user.

Local Philosophical Perspectives

Azerbaijani philosopher Aliyev (2019) emphasizes that moral agency should not be defined solely through consciousness. In his view, if a system makes decisions that affect human life, it is inevitable that such activity carries a certain degree of moral significance. Thus, agency must be reconceptualized in a functional and outcome-based form. This approach also requires the creation of new normative models within legal systems. Three main criteria become central here: the distribution of responsibility, the system’s degree of influence, and its level of autonomy. If a balance is not established among these criteria, both legal and ethical gaps emerge.

The Shared Agency Model: The Ethical Framework of the Future

Yıldırım (2021) presents what he considers the most realistic future approach as the "shared agency model." In this framework, the human and the AI system function as two actors within the same operational structure. The human defines the normative framework, goals, and desired outcomes, while the AI generates optimal decisions aligned with those goals. This interdependence gives rise to a multilayered structure of responsibility. Responsibility is no longer attributed to a single agent but is distributed across the entire system's operation. This approach necessitates new regulatory mechanisms at legal, ethical, and technological levels. Such interaction also requires rethinking the role of the human as an agent. The human is no longer a controller or final decision-maker but becomes an actor who coordinates, frames, and defines objectives. While this may seem like a weakening of human agency, it is in fact the transformation of the human role within new technological networks.

It should be noted that whether artificial intelligence can be considered a moral agent remains a contested philosophical issue. However, it is clear that the real-world consequences, decision-making power, and social impact of AI systems do not allow them to be excluded from moral discourse. The notion of agency is shifting from a human-centered framework toward a distributed, multi-directional, and outcome-focused phenomenon embedded within technological networks. This indicates the necessity of new methodological and ontological inquiries within future ethical theories. The central ethical question is increasingly becoming: *How should we assign moral status to systems that do not require consciousness but nonetheless produce real effects?* The answer to this question will shape not only philosophical discourse but also technology policy, legal regulation, and the societal value system.

The Boundaries of a New Ethics: A Posthumanist Approach

Posthumanist philosophy critiques the anthropocentric worldview constructed within traditional humanism and re-evaluates the interdependence of humans with technological, ecological, and cybernetic systems from a new perspective. According to this view, ethics is not solely the product of human experience, intention, or reality; rather, moral responsibility must be reinterpreted within broader ontological networks – ecosystems, machines, information flows, and the relational structures linking human interactions (Coeckelbergh, 2020). From this standpoint, the ethics of the future may shift from "ethics for humans" to a "network-based ethics of responsibility." In this emerging ethical model, values shape not only individual behaviour but also the decision-making mechanisms of technological systems.

The Ontological Rise of Technological Entities

One of the central claims of posthumanism is that technological entities–artificial intelligence, robots, and cyber-physical systems–are no longer merely instrumental tools but "ontological partners" (Braidotti, 2019). This should not be interpreted as the loss of human superiority. On the contrary, this perspective expands the scope of human responsibility and calls for the sharing of moral obligations with new actors. Latour's (2005) "actor-network theory" demonstrates that social reality arises from the joint activity of humans, technical objects, infrastructures, data flows, and natural elements. Within this framework, ethics can no longer be restricted to interpersonal human relations. Posthumanist ethics forms a dynamic and mutually influential system composed of human–machine–nature interactions. In this system, the human begins to understand themselves not as a central being but as one element of a broader ecosystem – a "node of relations."

Infosphere and the Expanded Ethical Space

Floridi (2013) approaches posthumanist ethics through the lens of the philosophy of information and describes this process as the "expansion of the infosphere." The infosphere is the space in which all informational entities interact–humans, machines, data structures, platforms, and algorithms all participate in this domain. Within this framework, the role of ethics shifts from being a mechanism of control to becoming a "normative communication system" that organizes coordinated interactions. Responsibility is no longer an individual matter but assumes a systemic character: programmers, users, platform owners, policymakers, and even, to some extent, artificial intelligence agents become actors within the network of ethical relations.

In this expanded ethical space, human responsibility extends beyond regulating one's own behaviour; it also encompasses accountability for the social impacts of technological algorithms. For example, while human oversight is needed to prevent AI systems used in healthcare from making diagnostic errors, the system itself also generates moral value within the boundaries of its functional agency.

The Human as an "Ethical Node"

One of the most far-reaching interpretations of posthumanism describes the human not as a fixed biological being but as an "ethical node" composed of multilayered connections. From this perspective, technology is neither a mere extension of the human nor an entity that replaces it; rather, it is a partner that co-creates a new ontological reality alongside the human. As artificial intelligence becomes increasingly involved in decision-making processes in medicine, security, governance, and education, human responsibility is defined not only at the level of oversight but also at the level of co-creation. Today, the human is no longer a solitary decision-maker; they are a "co-actor" who develops decisions together with machines. This transformation does not weaken human agency; instead, it restructures and renders it more complex.

The Posthuman Subject and a New Moral Configuration

In her theory of the "posthuman subject," Braidotti (2013) argues that technological progress generates a new moral configuration on both bodily and cognitive levels. The posthuman subject is neither a fully autonomous human nor an entirely technical system; it is a hybrid entity emerging from the mutual synthesis of the human body, biology, algorithms, data flows, and emotional response models. According to Braidotti, the ethics of the future will not be determined solely by the preservation of humanist values. Moral systems will be enriched by new forms of empathy generated through technological partnership, cyber-social relations, and algorithmic reflection. This issue extends far beyond AI's ability to simulate empathy: in this context, AI is regarded as a "participant" in the ethical system, and its behavioural logic is linked to normative frameworks.

New Requirements of Posthumanist Ethics

Posthumanist ethics is not only a theoretical framework but also a set of emerging approaches with practical implications:

1. Development of algorithmic empathy models – the integration of emotional and social data into algorithms.
2. An expanded system of responsibility – responsibility for one's own behaviour as well as for the behaviour of technological systems one uses.
3. The principle of co-agency – the joint formation of decisions by humans and machines.
4. Integration of ecological and technological ethics – AI must consider not only social but also ecological impacts.
5. Cultural posthumanism – a new social and moral culture shaped through human–technology interaction.

Azerbaijani researcher Aliyeva (2022) emphasizes that although the moral status of the human changes in the post-humanist era, responsibility does not become obsolete. In her view, the most significant ethical model of the posthuman period is the "ethics of human–machine collaboration." This model demonstrates that in the future, artificial intelligence will carry not only technical functions but also social ones. This, in turn, requires both the development of new empathy models and the integration of emotional data into algorithms. Aliyeva notes that the transfer of part of the human moral burden to technological systems does not signify a loss of responsibility; rather, it reflects the redistribution of responsibility. Such redistribution necessitates the emergence of new structures in ethical, legal, and social regulation.

Cyber-Ethical Culture and the Normative Framework of the Future

The expanded posthumanist perspective indicates that the ethics of the future will be less a fixed set of rules and more a dynamic culture formed through continuous social negotiations among humans, machines, and ecosystems. Ferrando (2019) refers to this culture as "cyber-ethical culture." In this environment, technology functions not merely as an object of control but as a moral partner. Future societies cannot construct ethical reasoning solely on anthropocentric grounds, as technology already plays the role of an autonomous actor that transforms the essence of social relations. Therefore, the boundaries of future ethics will be shaped by principles of mutual empathy, distributed responsibility, and co-evolution.

Posthumanist ethics demonstrates that the ethics of the future will not take shape around rigid humanist structures but will emerge within the context of expanded ontological relations. This approach portrays the human not as powerless before technology, but as a responsible participant in technological processes. The new ethical framework co-created with artificial intelligence does not weaken human agency; on the contrary, it renders it more multidimensional, networked, and systemic.

Conclusion. The development of artificial intelligence expands the boundaries of ethics and redefines the essence of human responsibility. Whereas responsibility was traditionally associated solely with the conscious individual, today it has transformed into a complex structure distributed among technological systems, programmers, and users. From a philosophical perspective, the fundamental question remains unchanged: *What does it mean to be moral?* However, the answer is now sought not only in human behavior but also in the behavior of the artificial systems humans create. Contemporary technological reality demonstrates that artificial intelligence is not merely a technical instrument but is increasingly becoming an active participant in social and moral relations. Nevertheless, it is still impossible to attribute full moral responsibility to machines, as they lack qualities inherently tied to human moral agency–such as intention, empathy, and ethical reflection. Therefore, future ethical systems must aim to balance human oversight with technological autonomy. The principal challenge of the new era lies in the deep integration of ethical principles into artificial intelligence decision-making processes. Otherwise, technology risks drifting away from human values and turning into an unregulated source of power. Moral evolution is now measured not only through individual responsibility but through the formation of collective and systemic responsibility. This represents one of the greatest intellectual and moral challenges facing both philosophy and science.

Thus, the renewal of moral reasoning in the age of artificial intelligence is indispensable. The ethical role of the human being is no longer limited to making decisions but extends to serving as an "architect of values" who determines the moral direction of technology. This constitutes a fundamental philosophical and cultural task for shaping the humanist society of the future.

References:

1. Arslan, M. (2022). *Yapay zekâ etiği ve sosyal adalet sorunları*. İstanbul: Beta Yayıncılık.
2. Bostrom, N. (2014). *Superintelligence: Paths, dangers, strategies*. Oxford University Press.
3. Braidotti, R. (2013). *The posthuman*. Polity Press.229 p.
4. Braidotti, R. (2019). *Posthuman knowledge*. Polity Press.240 p.
5. Bryson, J. (2018). Patiency is not a virtue: AI and the design of ethical systems. *Ethics and Information Technology, 20*(1), 15–26.
6. Coeckelbergh, M. (2020). *AI ethics*. MIT Press. 248 p.
7. Əliyev, R. (2019). *Süni intellekt və məsuliyyət: Azərbaycan konteksti*. Bakı: Nurlan Nəşriyyatı.
8. Əliyeva, S. (2022). *Posthumanizm və etik məsuliyyətin transformasiyası*. Bakı: Elm Nəşriyyatı.
9. Ferrando, F. (2019). *Philosophical posthumanism*. Bloomsbury Publishing. 296 p.
10. Floridi, L. (2013). *The ethics of information*. Oxford University Press. 357 p.
11. Həsənov, E. (2021). *Texnoloji etik düşüncə və süni intellekt problemləri*. Bakı: Elm Nəşriyyatı.
12. Jonas, H. (1984). *The imperative of responsibility: In search of an ethics for the technological age*. University of Chicago Press. 263 p.
13. Latour, B. (2005). *Reassembling the social: An introduction to actor-network theory*. Oxford University Press. 301 p.
14. Yıldırım, S. (2021). *Otonom sistemler ve etik sorumluluk*. İstanbul: Beta Yayınları.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-18

INTERACTIVE STORYTELLING IN VR GAMES: REVISITING JANET MURRAY'S LEGACY

Olexander Poberailo,
Postgraduate Student at the Department of Art Studies,
Kharkiv State Academy of Culture (Kharkiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0009-0003-8259-4921
poberailo@gmail.com

Abstract. This article examines the prospects for interactive storytelling in virtual reality (VR) games through the theoretical lens of Janet Murray's foundational concepts: immersion, agency, and transformation. While Murray's work provided a seminal framework for digital narrative, the rapid evolution of VR technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) necessitates a critical reassessment of these ideas. Utilizing a narrative literature review, this study synthesizes theoretical extensions by scholars such as Marie-Laure Ryan and Hartmut Koenitz, while addressing ludological critiques regarding the tension between game rules and narrative structure. The analysis identifies three primary directions for future development: the integration of AI for real-time adaptive narratives, the use of VR for educational and empathetic "storyliving," and the emergence of collaborative storytelling in social VR spaces. The study argues that while VR amplifies the potential for embodied narrative experiences, it also introduces significant ethical and practical challenges, including algorithmic bias, accessibility barriers, and the risk of illusory agency. The conclusions suggest that the future of VR storytelling lies in hybrid models that successfully balance authored intent with procedural openness and social responsibility.

Key words: Interactive Storytelling, Virtual Reality (VR) Games, Janet Murray, Artificial Intelligence, Narrative Design.

Introduction. Interactive storytelling in digital media has undergone significant evolution since Janet Murray's seminal work, ***Hamlet on the Holodeck: The Future of Narrative in Cyberspace*** (Murray, 1997). Murray envisioned computational environments as participatory spaces where narratives emerge through user interactions, characterized by immersion (enclosure in alternate realities), agency (meaningful actions with feedback), and transformation (shape-shifting stories).

This framework has profoundly influenced virtual reality (VR) games, a medium that amplifies presence and enactment. However, as VR technologies advance in tandem with artificial intelligence (AI) and procedural generation, there is a need to reassess the prospects for interactive storytelling by building on Murray's legacy and the work of her followers.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study. The primary purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive analysis of the future prospects for interactive storytelling in VR games, extending Janet Murray's narratological approach to contemporary digital contexts. By integrating critical insights from her followers, the study aims to bridge theoretical foundations with practical innovations, justifying the topic's relevance beyond a purely historical review. This involves demonstrating how Murray's ideas enable hybrid models that address real-world complexities, such as ethical dilemmas and social issues, within immersive VR environments.

To achieve this purpose, the article first reviews and analyzes recent research on Murray's followers in interactive digital narratives (IDN) to identify thematic continuities that substantiate the focus on VR games. This foundational step is followed by a critical analysis highlighting extensions, critiques, and specific gaps in relation to VR storytelling, alongside a delineation of the methodology employed for synthesizing the literature. Subsequently, the study explores the main prospects for the field, including AI integration, educational applications, and ethical considerations. The analysis concludes by drawing inferences aligned with these objectives and offering recommendations for future research, ensuring a rigorous, evidence-based exploration of VR's unique affordances.

Main part. Recent scholarship extends Murray's foundational concepts by shifting the analytical focus from linear narrative structures to complex, procedural systems – a transition critical for understanding modern VR. Koenitz (2015) formalized this shift through the System–Process–Product (SPP) model, positioning interactive narratives not as static stories but as "protostories" realized only through user interaction. This systemic view parallels the adaptive nature of VR environments, where narrative meaning is co-constructed rather than passively received. Nack (2022) further argues that this hybridity makes IDN a unique medium for representing socio-technical complexity, suggesting that VR's affordances are best utilized not for simple escapism but for ethical simulation and "moral experimentation".

However, the application of Murray's concepts to VR is not without contention. Ryan (2001) refines the notion of immersion, critiquing Murray's holistic formulation by distinguishing between spatial, temporal, and emotional engagement. She posits that true immersion in virtual environments demands "active mental reconstruction" rather than seamless agency, a distinction that highlights the cognitive load inherent in VR experiences. Conversely, ludological critiques explicitly challenge the narratological bias. Aarseth (1997) prioritizes "ergodic effort," characterizing games as configurations of rules rather than stories, while Juul (2005) identifies an inherent "clash" between game rules and fiction. In the context of VR, this tension is exacerbated: the procedural constraints necessary to maintain a coherent virtual world often limit the "transformational" agency Murray originally envisioned. More recent studies, such as those by Cardona-Rivera and Young (2019), attempt to bridge this gap by focusing on narrative affordances and player cognition, treating Murray's legacy as a catalyst for emergent storytelling models rather than a rigid canon.

Murray herself has actively engaged with these evolutions, moving beyond her early hypotheses to address the "kaleidoscopic" nature of contemporary digital narratives. In later works, she reaffirms that immersion and agency remain foundational but must embrace complexity to simulate real-world systems (Murray, 2018). She explicitly critiques transmedia approaches tied to "legacy platforms," advocating instead for design strategies that leverage distinct digital affordances – a perspective that directly supports the development of "cyberdrama" as enacted stories in virtual environments (Murray, 2004; 2017). Furthermore, her responses to ludological critiques emphasize the hybrid potential of digital media, arguing that the perceived dichotomy between story and play overlooks the capacity of interactive environments to offer cathartic, agentic experiences (Murray, 2005; Jenkins, 2012).

Despite the rich international discourse, a targeted analysis of Ukrainian academic databases reveals a significant gap. Queries utilizing terms related to Murray's legacy or IDN theory on local academic domains yielded no direct results. The available literature focuses predominantly on technical aspects of computer graphics or general pedagogical approaches, lacking specific engagement with interactive narratology. This absence indicates a potential disconnect between global IDN theoretical frameworks and local academic contexts, highlighting a clear opportunity for future research to bridge this divide.

Methodology. This study employs a thematic, narrative literature review rather than a fully systematic review. The aim is to bring into dialogue key theoretical and applied works on interactive digital narratives (IDN), Janet Murray's legacy, and VR games, in order to trace conceptual continuities and emerging prospects. Sources were identified through targeted searches in academic databases (e.g., Google Scholar, ACM Digital Library) using keywords such as "interactive storytelling," "Janet Murray," "VR games," and "interactive digital narrative," as well as through citation chaining from foundational texts.

The selection prioritizes peer-reviewed articles and books published between 1997 and 2023 that explicitly address Murray's concepts (immersion, agency, transformation) or extend them in IDN and

VR contexts. In addition, a small number of industry reports and community or developer materials (e.g., market analyses, developer blogs, player discussions) are included to illustrate how theoretical ideas manifest in commercial practice; these are treated as contextual rather than primary analytical evidence.

Data synthesis follows a thematic strategy: sources are grouped into (1) theoretical extensions of Murray's framework (e.g., Ryan's typologies of immersion, Koenitz's SPP model), (2) critical responses (e.g., ludological critiques by Aarseth and Juul), and (3) applications and prospects (e.g., VR projects and AI-driven IDN). Within each theme, the analysis compares how authors conceptualize immersion, agency, and transformation, and evaluates their implications specifically for VR games. The resulting synthesis underpins the forward-looking assessment of prospects and ethical challenges.

Results and discussion. The theoretical underpinnings of interactive storytelling in VR have expanded significantly beyond Murray's original framework by incorporating cognitive narratology and systems theory. Ryan (2001) refines the concept of immersion, arguing that VR amplifies spatial, temporal, and emotional engagement through "embodied cognition," where the user's physical presence bridges virtual and real perceptual cues. This perspective aligns with phenomenological approaches, positioning VR as a space where bodily interaction is central to meaning-making. Parallel to this, Koenitz (2015) offers the System–Process–Product (SPP) model, which conceptualizes narratives as dynamic "protostories" realized through interaction—a structure that mirrors VR's procedural nature. Nack (2022) extends this by framing IDN as a tool for representing socio-technical complexity, suggesting that AI-driven loops can support reflective agency in ethical simulations. However, ludological critiques persist; scholars like Aarseth (1997) and Juul (2005) warn that strict game rules may clash with narrative fluidity, a tension particularly visible when procedural constraints limit the "transformational" potential of VR environments. To bridge this divide, Vallance and Towndrow (2022) propose "narrative storyliving," distinguishing VR from traditional storytelling by emphasizing active internalization and co-authorship over passive consumption.

Contemporary VR titles illustrate these theoretical concepts by operationalizing agency through distinct mechanics. *Half-Life: Alyx* (Valve, 2020) and *The Walking Dead: Saints & Sinners* (Skydance Interactive, 2020) exemplify "physics-based agency," where manual interaction with the environment reveals plot layers and forces moral choices, effectively grounding Murray's concept of transformation in tactile experience. In contrast, titles like *Lone Echo* (Ready at Dawn, 2017) and *Moss* (Polyarc, 2018) prioritize "emotional immersion," utilizing specific locomotion mechanics (zero-gravity) or framing devices (diorama perspectives) to foster empathy and believable character relationships. Collaborative possibilities constitute another frontier. *The Under Presents: Tempest* (Tender Claws, 2020) demonstrates how VR can function as a "cyberdrama" arena for multiplayer storytelling, though experiments like *The Invisible Hours* (Tequila Works, 2017) reveal the difficulty of balancing spatial freedom with narrative pacing – often resulting in passive observation that undermines the player's sense of influence.

Looking toward 2030, industry trends point to a convergence of AI and metaverse-like spaces. Emerging projects (e.g., from NeuroSyncVR) frame AI not merely as a production tool but as a mechanism for thematic personalization, addressing complex issues such as isolation or ethics through procedurally generated narratives.

However, these advancements bring significant risks. The heightened sense of presence in VR raises the stakes for "illusory agency," where algorithmic biases may perpetuate discriminatory storylines or manipulative behavioral feedback loops. Furthermore, issues of accessibility, ranging from hardware costs to motion sickness, threaten to limit these transformative experiences to a privileged demographic. Thus, while the potential for "storyliving" is evident, its realization depends on resolving the tension between procedural openness, narrative coherence, and ethical responsibility.

Table 1

Key Prospects for Interactive Storytelling in VR Games

Prospect Area	Murray's Concept	Strategic Implications & Critical Challenges
AI-Driven Narratives	Transformation	Enables real-time personalization but risks algorithmic bias and "illusory agency" without transparent design1.
Educational VR	Immersion	Facilitates experiential "storyliving" for social impact; limited by hardware accessibility and validity gaps2.
Ethical Design	Agency	Essential for safety in deep immersion; requires balancing procedural constraints with user consent norms3.
Multiplayer Hybrids	Cyberdrama	Fosters collaborative co-authorship yet challenges narrative coherence under real-time social interaction4.

From this systematization, distinct patterns emerge regarding the maturity and risk of these prospects. Immediate potential is most evident in educational VR and ethical design, which directly operationalize Murray's concepts of immersion and agency. However, these applications require rigorous empirical validation to avoid becoming elitist "empathy machines" accessible only to a privileged few.

In contrast, AI-driven narratives offer the most radical reinterpretation of transformation, yet they paradoxically amplify the risks of illusory agency and algorithmic bias; without transparent implementation, such systems threaten to simulate depth rather than deliver it. Similarly, multiplayer hybrids effectively demonstrate the cyberdrama ideal of co-authorship but expose the fragility of narrative coherence when subjected to unpredictable social interaction.

Taken together, these observations suggest that the central challenge is no longer the invention of novel storytelling techniques, but the orchestration of viable hybrids: balancing authored structure with procedural openness, and individual expression with social responsibility. Closing this maturation gap will likely depend less on technical innovation and more on interdisciplinary collaboration among narratologists, designers, and ethicists.

Conclusions. This study indicates that the evolution of VR games serves as a critical testing ground for Janet Murray's narratological framework, confirming that her concepts of immersion, agency, and transformation remain vital yet require significant updating in the age of algorithmic media. The analysis demonstrates that the "Holodeck" ideal is shifting from a purely technological ambition to a complex design challenge that must reconcile authored intent with procedural openness.

While early VR adaptations focused on spatial immersion, the emerging prospects identified pecifically AI-driven narratives and social "storyliving" suggest a transition toward systemic agency. However, this shift introduces a paradox: as technologies enable deeper transformation and personalization, they simultaneously amplify ethical risks regarding privacy, algorithmic bias, and illusory choices. Consequently, the realization of Murray's vision depends not merely on graphical fidelity or processing power, but on the development of "hybrid" narrative architectures that can support meaningful player action without compromising narrative coherence or user safety.

Ultimately, the future of interactive storytelling in VR lies in interdisciplinary collaboration. Future research must pivot from theoretical taxonomy to empirical validation, specifically focusing on how players cognitively process AI-mediated characters and the long-term social impacts of immersive simulations. The legacy of the Holodeck, therefore, functions less as a blueprint for escapism and more as a mandate for ethical, human-centric design in increasingly autonomous digital environments.

References:

1. Aarseth, E. J. (1997). Cybertext: Perspectives on ergodic literature. Johns Hopkins University Press.
2. Bailenson, J. (2018). Experience on demand: What virtual reality is, how it works, and what it can do. W. W. Norton & Company.
3. Camouflaj. (2024). Batman: Arkham Shadow [Video game]. Oculus Studios.

4. Cardona-Rivera, R. E., & Young, R. M. (2019). Narrative affordances in interactive digital storytelling. In R. E. Cardona-Rivera, A. Sullivan, & R. M. Young (Eds.), Interactive Digital Storytelling: 12th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling, ICIDS 2019 (pp. 45–58). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-33894-7_5
5. Grand View Research. (2024). Virtual reality in gaming market size, share & trends analysis report by component, by device, by region, and segment forecasts, 2024–2030. https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/virtual-reality-in-gaming-market
6. Jenkins, H. (2012, February 21). Inventing the digital medium: An interview with Janet Murray (Part One). Confessions of an Aca-Fan. http://henryjenkins.org/blog/2012/02/an_interview_with_janet_murray.html
7. Juul, J. (2005). Half-real: Video games between real rules and fictional worlds. MIT Press.
8. Koenitz, H. (2015). Towards a specific theory of interactive digital narrative. In H. Koenitz, G. Ferri, M. Haahr, D. Sezen, & T. I. Sezen (Eds.), Interactive digital narrative: History, theory and practice (pp. 91–105). Routledge.
9. Mateas, M., & Stern, A. (2005). Façade [Video game]. Procedural Arts.
10. Mateas, M., & Stern, A. (2005). Procedural arts: Building believable characters. In Proceedings of the International Conference on Entertainment Computing (pp. 1–12). Springer.
11. Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). Phenomenology of perception (D. A. Landes, Trans.). Routledge. (Original work published 1945)
12. Murray, J. H. (1997). Hamlet on the holodeck: The future of narrative in cyberspace. Free Press.
13. Murray, J. H. (1998). The plot thickens: Janet H. Murray on the interactive narrative. EDUCAUSE Review, 33(1). https://library.educause.edu/resources/1998/1/the-plot-thickens-janet-h-murray-on-the-interactive-narrative
14. Murray, J. H. (2004). From game-story to cyberdrama. In N. Wardrip-Fruin & P. Harrigan (Eds.), First person: New media as story, performance, and game (pp. 2–11). MIT Press.
15. Murray, J. H. (2005). Janet Murray responds in turn. Electronic Book Review. https://electronicbookreview.com/publications/janet-murray-responds-in-turn/
16. Murray, J. H. (2017). A forum on digital storytelling: Interview with Janet Murray. International Journal of Communication, 11, 1956–1960.
17. Murray, J. H. (2018). Research into interactive digital narrative: A kaleidoscopic view. In R. Rouse, H. Koenitz, & M. Haahr (Eds.), Interactive Digital Storytelling: 11th International Conference on Interactive Digital Storytelling, ICIDS 2018 (pp. 1–10). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-04028-4_1
18. Nack, F. (2022). Interactive digital narrative (IDN) a complexity case. New Review of Hypermedia and Multimedia, 28(3–4), 69–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/13614568.2023.2173385
19. Noble, S. U. (2018). Algorithms of oppression: How search engines reinforce racism. NYU Press.
20. Osoba, O. A., & Welser IV, W. (2017). An intelligence in our image: The risks of bias and errors in artificial intelligence (RR-1744-RC). RAND Corporation. https://doi.org/10.7249/RR1744
21. Polyarc. (2018). Moss [Video game]. Polyarc.
22. Ready at Dawn. (2017). Lone Echo [Video game]. Oculus Studios.
23. Ready at Dawn. (2021). Lone Echo II [Video game]. Oculus Studios.
24. Ryan, M.-L. (2001). Narrative as virtual reality: Immersion and interactivity in literature and electronic media. Johns Hopkins University Press.
25. Skydance Interactive. (2020). The Walking Dead: Saints & Sinners [Video game]. Skydance Interactive.
26. Slater, M., & Sanchez-Vives, M. V. (2016). Enhancing our lives with immersive virtual reality. Frontiers in Robotics and AI, 3, Article 74. https://doi.org/10.3389/frobt.2016.00074
27. Tender Claws. (2020). The Under Presents: Tempest [Video game]. Tender Claws.
28. Tequila Works. (2017). The Invisible Hours [Video game]. GameTrust.
29. Vallance, M., & Towndrow, P. A. (2022). Perspective: Narrative storyliving in virtual reality design. Frontiers in Virtual Reality, 3, Article 779148. https://doi.org/10.3389/frvir.2022.779148
30. Valve. (2020). Half-Life: Alyx [Video game]. Valve.
31. Vertical Robot. (2018). Red Matter [Video game]. Vertical Robot.

THEORY AND INNOVATIONS OF SOCIOLOGY & JOURNALISM

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-19

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORK IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN IN AZERBAIJAN

Gahramanov Aykhan Shahbaz oglu,
Doctoral Student at the Department of International Relations,
Azerbaijan University of Tourism and Management (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0002-2605-4771
ayxanshahbazoglu@mail.ru

Abstract. Although domestic violence against children in Azerbaijan has recently attracted greater public attention, it remains a serious social problem that continues to persist covertly within the depths of society. The exposure of children to physical and psychological trauma limits their opportunities for healthy development and places their future well-being at risk. Such instances of violence pose a threat not only to individual families but also to the overall social stability of society and the formation of future generations.

In this context, the role of social work is extremely important. Social work aims not only to respond to cases of violence but also to combat them through preventive and rehabilitative approaches. This article explores the functions of social work in preventing violence and providing psychosocial and legal support to children who have been subjected to violence. It analyzes the activities of social workers in early detection, preventive measures, joint interventions with families, rehabilitation programs, and public awareness efforts.

At the same time, the article draws attention to key challenges in the implementation of social work in this field in Azerbaijan – such as the shortage of professional staff, the weakness of institutional cooperation mechanisms, limited financial resources, and public indifference. Furthermore, the lack of coordination between state institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as the passive attitude of society toward this issue, are significant obstacles in combating violence.

The aim of the research is to identify the theoretical and practical foundations of social work in this area, to determine existing gaps, and to propose recommendations for the more effective implementation of social work. The article ultimately demonstrates that social work plays a decisive and strategic role in eliminating violence against children. Its systematic organization and implementation on a professional basis are essential for the development of long-term and sustainable solutions in this field.

Key words: social work, domestic violence, prevention, child rights.

Introduction. Relevance of the Problem. Violence against children is one of the most dangerous social problems faced by societies on both global and local scales in the 21st century. Violence not only severely harms the psychological, emotional, and physical development of children but also negatively affects their integration into society and future life prospects. Although family values are strong in Azerbaijan, cases of domestic violence – particularly against children are frequently observed and often remain hidden. The increase in such incidents and the lack of adequate intervention mechanisms further highlight the urgency of the problem. In this context, social work plays a special role in child-related strategies and intervention mechanisms.

Degree of Problem Development. Various international organizations – such as the UN, UNICEF, and WHO – have conducted extensive research on the issue of violence against children and have established legal frameworks in this field. In Azerbaijan, in recent years, certain projects and studies have been carried out by State Committees and some NGOs. However, the systematic study of the problem from the perspective of social work is still limited. The application of the theoretical foundations of social work in combating violence, its integration with institutional mechanisms, and the ways in which existing gaps can be addressed have not yet been comprehensively studied.

Purpose and Objectives. The main purpose of the article is to examine the role of social work in combating violence against children in Azerbaijan from both theoretical and practical perspectives, to analyze the current situation in this field, and to offer recommendations for its improvement. In order to achieve this goal, the following objectives are set:

– To investigate the scale and causes of the problem of violence against children in Azerbaijan;

– To identify the theoretical and practical foundations of social work in this field;

– To analyze the preventive, intervention, and rehabilitation activities of social work against violence;

– To assess the existing social service models and institutional cooperation opportunities in Azerbaijan;

– To propose solutions aimed at addressing the problem.

Methods. The article is based mainly on qualitative and analytical methods. Through analytical methods, existing statistical data and legal documents have been examined; with the comparative method, parallels have been drawn between international and local practices. In addition, secondary sources – such as reports of government agencies, studies by international organizations, academic literature on social work, and the current legal framework – have been used as the main references.

Legal and Social Aspects of Violence against Children in Azerbaijan. Violence against children remains one of the most serious and complex social problems of the modern era. Violence negatively affects the physical, psychological, and social development of children both globally and locally. According to the principles defined by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to live in a safe and violence-free environment. However, in practice, these rights are often violated, and children are exposed to risks even within the family. Particularly, cases of violence within the family often remain hidden, further deepening the scale and consequences of the problem (United Nations, 1989).

Although the family is regarded as a sacred institution in Azerbaijani society, there are still many cases of violence against children within this institution. Under the influence of social, cultural, and economic factors, domestic violence can sometimes be perceived as normal behavior, creating additional difficulties from both legal and social intervention perspectives. Low levels of parental awareness, the weakness of the social work infrastructure, and society's passive attitude toward the issue create grounds for the problem to grow (Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Statistika Komitəsi, 2021).

Violence against children is any form of behavior or neglect that negatively affects a child's physical, psychological, and emotional well-being, development, and safety. According to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, every child has the right to be protected from abuse and violence. However, sometimes violence becomes so routine and systematic that both society and the family itself perceive such behaviors as "disciplinary methods." This illustrates how deep the social roots of the problem are (Azərbaycan Respublikası, 2006).

Statistically, based on 2022 data from the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, more than 2,500 cases of violence or abuse involving children were recorded throughout the year. These figures reflect only detected and registered cases. According to experts, the actual numbers may be several times higher (Azərbaycan Respublikası Ailə, Qadın və Uşaq Problemləri üzrə Dövlət Komitəsi, 2022).

In a study conducted by UNICEF in Azerbaijan in 2019, 57% of participating parents stated that "physical punishment is necessary to discipline a child." This indicates that violence is still seen as a widely accepted and normalized behavior.

From a sociological perspective, violence is not just individual behavior; it is also a process that is stimulated or overlooked by social structures and culture. For example, beliefs like "beating a child is education" legitimize violence and weaken efforts to prevent it. The consequences of violence are not only physical but can also lead to long-term emotional and social trauma (United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2013).

Therefore, the concept of violence must be studied not only in terms of individual behavior but also in connection with societal norms, social relationships, and legal mechanisms. Only then will it be possible to form an effective and comprehensive approach in social work practice.

In light of these realities, it becomes clear that combating violence is not solely a legal issue but also a complex process that requires social and cultural transformation. In this struggle, social work can play an essential role – both in preventing violence through awareness and in supporting its victims.

The Role of Social Work in Combating Violence Against Children. Social work is a practical and theoretical field aimed at promoting social change, solving problems, and advancing social justice to improve the well-being of individuals, families, and communities. The main objective of this field is to support people in need of social protection, defend their rights, and create opportunities for them to realize their potential. The foundations of social work are based on principles of humanism, empathy, equality, and participation (International Federation of Social Workers, 2014).

In the context of combating violence against children, the theoretical foundations of social work become even more relevant. This is because violence is not only a form of individual behavior but also a problem that arises and is supported at social and structural levels. From this perspective, social work envisions intervention at individual, family, and institutional levels.

There are several key principles on which social work is based in combating violence (Payne, M, 2014: 34):

The principle of protecting human rights – The social worker considers defending the child's rights and protecting them from violence as one of their primary duties. In this case, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child serves as the main legal foundation.

Systems approach – The social worker analyzes not only the abused child but also their family environment, social surroundings, and living context as a whole system. This approach enables a deeper understanding of the root causes of the problem.

Intervention and support – In cases of violence, the social worker is not only a collector of information but also an intervener, supporter, and sometimes a participant in legal procedures. The social worker may work with the child and parents in both individual and group formats.

Awareness and prevention – To prevent violence, the social worker works with parents, teachers, and community leaders to increase society's knowledge and sensitivity on the topic. Awareness-raising is a key tool in preventing violence from being perceived as normal behavior.

Ethical responsibility and professional conduct – Social workers carry out their activities in accordance with ethical codes. When working with children, priority is given to their confidentiality, safety, and well-being.

Among the theories of social work, the ecological systems approach, psychosocial model, critical social work, and protective intervention model are particularly important in working with children. These theoretical frameworks allow social workers to approach violence from different perspectives (Bronfenbrenner, U, 1979).

Thus, the theoretical foundations of social work provide a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and humane approach to combating violence. This plays an invaluable role in protecting children's safety and shaping future generations in a healthier way.

The role of social work in combating violence against children is not limited to theoretical approaches; on the contrary, the role of the social worker in this field is based on practical activities, continuous intervention, and systematic support. Ensuring the physical and psychological safety of children who face violence, supporting their social adaptation, and implementing measures to reduce the risk of violence are among the main functions of social work. These activities must be carried out at multiple levels and in a coordinated manner. They include:

1. Early detection of violence – One of the key functions of social workers is to detect cases of violence as early as possible. Social workers in schools, kindergartens, healthcare institutions, and community centers can identify potential cases of violence by observing physical marks, behavioral changes, fear, and withdrawal in children. For this purpose, it is essential that social workers master professional observation methods and risk assessment tools.

2. Intervention at the individual and family level – One of the main tasks of the social worker is to assess the situation of abused children and their families and to develop an intervention plan. This includes:

– Post-trauma support programs
– Psychosocial counseling to restore family relationships
– Educational work with parents on discipline
– Temporary removal of the child from the family when necessary to ensure safety

In this intervention process, the social worker collaborates with psychologists, lawyers, educators, and other professionals, applying a comprehensive approach.

3. Institutional cooperation and referral – For social work to be effective, it is essential that it operates in coordination with law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, the healthcare sector, and non-governmental organizations. In Azerbaijan, there are some structural cooperation mechanisms in place. For example:

– Child and Family Support Centers under the State Committee for Family, Women and Children's Affairs
– Social services working with children and families under the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection
– Regional Social Rehabilitation Centers and their social workers
– Child protection officers under local executive authorities

These institutions work together with social workers to develop individualized protection plans for children and professionally assist child victims of violence.

4. Awareness-raising and working with the community – Social work aims not only to address the consequences of violence but also to combat its causes. Therefore, social workers should carry out extensive awareness activities at the family, school, and community levels. These activities include:

– Trainings for parents (positive discipline methods, child psychological needs, etc.)
– Meetings, trainings, and seminars with youth and adolescents
– Informing children about their rights
– Creating safe mechanisms to encourage reporting of violence

In Azerbaijan, several NGOs (e.g., Clean World Women's Aid Public Union, Azerbaijani Children's Public Union) carry out awareness-raising activities in cooperation with social workers. However, the scope of these activities is still limited and needs expansion.

5. Rehabilitation and reintegration – Child victims of violence need not only physical but also psychological and social rehabilitation. At this stage, the social worker creates opportunities for the child's emotional recovery, return to education, and reintegration into society. The rehabilitation process prioritizes removing the child from the abusive environment and connecting them with a safe social support network. Sometimes this involves referral to shelters or alternative family models.

Existing Problems and Prospective Approaches. Although the role of social work in combating violence against children is broad, there are several serious problems in this area in Azerbaijan. One of the main obstacles is the shortage and insufficient professionalism of social workers. Many social workers operate under difficult working conditions and lack financial and moral support. This negatively affects their motivation and professional performance.

Another problem is the weak institutional integration of social work. Cooperation with law enforcement, education, and healthcare sectors is not systematic or consistent. This reduces the effectiveness of the fight against violence and delays interventions.

Although a legal framework exists, there are gaps in its implementation. The connections between social workers and the legal system, the provision of legal assistance to victims of violence, and the organization of social services are weak. Furthermore, the absence of a unified system for collecting data and statistical analysis on cases of violence exacerbates the problems.

Awareness-raising efforts at the societal level are still insufficient. Violence is often perceived as normal or a method of discipline, which hinders preventive efforts. To increase public sensitivity on the issue, more extensive campaigns, trainings, and public dialogues must be organized.

At the same time, there are also development prospects in the fight against violence against children through social work. First and foremost, the preparation and continuous training of social work personnel is essential. As the number of professional and qualified social workers increases, the quality of interventions will improve.

Secondly, the development of multisector cooperation mechanisms is crucial. Effective synergy between law enforcement, education, healthcare, and the non-governmental sector can create a strong impact in combating violence.

Thirdly, the use of digital platforms can be an effective tool for identifying, registering, and coordinating interventions in cases of violence. The creation of databases and the implementation of analytical systems will help eliminate existing problems.

Finally, allocating more resources to preventive and awareness activities in social work, raising public awareness, and eliminating stereotypes related to violence will contribute to building a healthier society in the future.

Conclusion. The problem of violence against children remains one of the most serious and widespread social issues in Azerbaijani society. Research shows that violence severely harms not only a child's physical health but also their psychological and social development. Cases of domestic violence often remain hidden, creating significant challenges in protecting children's rights. In this context, the role of social work is irreplaceable.

Social work carries out multifaceted and complex interventions in combating violence against children. Early detection, individual and family support, institutional cooperation, awareness-raising, and rehabilitation are the core functions of social work. Although existing social services and legal mechanisms in Azerbaijan support this work to some extent, there is still a strong need for development and improvement.

The existing problems in the field of social work–staff shortages, weak cooperation mechanisms, financial limitations, and insufficient public awareness–undermine the effectiveness of the fight against violence. Therefore, steps must be taken to enhance the potential of social work in both education and institutional cooperation.

As a result, social work is not only necessary but also an effective means in combating violence against children. The continuous development and improvement of social work will play a significant role in ensuring children's rights, helping them grow up in a safe and secure environment, and contributing to the formation of a healthier future society.

References:

1. Azərbaycan Respublikası Ailə, Qadın və Uşaq Problemləri üzrə Dövlət Komitəsi. (2022). İllik hesabat. Bakı: Dövlət Komitəsi nəşriyyatı. https://family.gov.az/az/reports?page=3
2. Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Statistika Komitəsi. (2021). Sosial statistik göstəricilər. Bakı: Dövlət Statistika Komitəsi. https://retk.copat.gov.az/library/statistik-mecmue-baki-azerbaycan-respublikasinin-dovlet-statistika-komitesi-2021
3. Azərbaycan Respublikası. (2006). Uşaq Hüquqları haqqında Qanun. Bakı: Azərbaycan Respublikasının Hüquq Aktları Toplusu. https://e-qanun.az/framework/3292

4. Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). The Ecology of Human Development: Experiments by Nature and Design. Harvard University Press. https://raggeduniversity.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/1_x_The-Ecology-of-Human-Development-_-Experiments-by-Nature-and-Urie-Bronfenbrenner-Harvard-University-Press-Cambridge-Mass-1979-_compressed.pdf
5. Payne, M. (2014). Modern Social Work Theory (4th ed.). Palgrave Macmillan.
6. International Federation of Social Workers. (2014). Global Definition of Social Work. https://www.ifsw.org/what-is-social-work/global-definition-of-social-work/
7. United Nations. (1989). Convention on the Rights of the Child. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx
8. United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child. (2013). General Comment No. 13: The right of the child to freedom from all forms of violence. https://www.refworld.org/docid/51ef9e134.html

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-20

YOUTH READINESS FOR AI-DRIVEN HR PRACTICES IN THE BALTIC STATES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Veranika Khlud,
Postgraduate Student at the Regional Economy and Economic Policy Study Program,
Baltic International Academy (Riga, Latvia)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-0732-6463
veranikakhlud@gmail.com

Galina Reshina,
Dr.oec., Professor,
Baltic International Academy (Riga, Latvia)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2241-6261
reshinaganna@inbox.lv

Abstract. This study explores youth readiness for artificial intelligence (AI) applications in human resource (HR) and recruitment practices in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Based on a cross-country survey and qualitative interviews with individuals aged 18 to 30, the research examines digital competence, exposure to AI tools, and attitudes toward AI in hiring. The findings reveal significant differences across the Baltic states. Estonian youth demonstrate the highest readiness, supported by strong digital education and national AI initiatives. Lithuanian respondents show active use of AI in learning but report moderate institutional support. Latvian participants express interest in AI but indicate limited access and lower digital confidence. While most respondents view AI as a useful and efficient tool in HR, concerns remain regarding data transparency and fairness. The study offers evidence-based recommendations to support the integration of AI in education and employment services, aiming to improve youth adaptability to future AI-driven labour markets.
Key words: youth; artificial intelligence; recruitment; human resource; Baltic states.

Introduction. The rise of AI is transforming human resource management (HRM) and recruitment globally. Organizations increasingly use AI-powered tools to scan résumés, source candidates, and even conduct initial interviews. Studies highlight that AI can enhance efficiency, reduce human bias, and improve hiring decisions through advanced data analysis (Rai, Constantinides, & Sarker, 2019; Jatobá et al., 2023). For example, AI algorithms can rapidly match candidates to job profiles based on skill relevance and predictive analytics, often outperforming traditional methods in speed and scale (Chatterjee, Rana, Tamilmani, & Sharma, 2021). AI adoption in HR leads to better efficiency and decision-making (Tambe, Cappelli, & Yakubovich, 2019). However, scholars also point to ethical concerns. AI systems, when trained on biased historical data, may replicate or amplify existing inequalities (Binns, Veale, Van Kleek, & Shadbolt, 2018; Raghavan, Barocas, Kleinberg, & Levy, 2020). A comprehensive review emphasized the risk of algorithmic discrimination against certain demographics unless developers apply rigorous fairness checks and transparency mechanisms (Chen, Wu, & Wang, 2023). Well-publicized failures, such as Amazon's AI tool that downgraded female applicants (Dastin, 2018), illustrate the potential harms of unregulated AI in hiring. In response, regulatory frameworks such as the European Union (EU) Artificial Intelligence Act classify recruitment-related AI tools as high-risk systems, requiring audits, documentation, and bias mitigation measures (European Commission, 2021). These developments highlight the growing importance of AI literacy, digital ethics, and regulatory compliance for both employers and job seekers in the evolving labour market.

Recent research supports the Eurostat findings that young people in the Baltic states are highly digitally engaged, with daily internet use rates among the highest in the EU and widespread participation in online social networking activities (Madej-Kurzawa, Pieczarka, & Węgrzyn, 2021; Cino, Lacko, Mascheroni, & Šmahel, 2022). However, there are notable differences in digital skill levels: while 93% of youth in Estonia and Lithuania possess at least basic digital skills, only 75% of Latvian youth do, indicating a significant skills gap (Madej-Kurzawa, Pieczarka, & Węgrzyn, 2021). This disparity suggests that, despite nearly universal internet access, a substantial portion of Latvian youth may lack the fundamental digital competencies enjoyed by their peers in Estonia and Lithuania. Such differences in digital skills are important, as higher digital competencies are linked to greater professional opportunities and more effective participation in digital and AI-driven HR practices and recruitment processes (Madej-Kurzawa, Pieczarka, & Węgrzyn, 2021; Peláez, Erro-Garcés, & Ciriano, 2020). Research also highlights that digital skills – especially informational and problem-solving abilities – are strong predictors of how young people engage with online activities, including those relevant to employment and education (Cino, Lacko, Mascheroni, & Šmahel, 2022; Madej-Kurzawa, Pieczarka, & Węgrzyn, 2021). Therefore, while Baltic youth are generally well-connected and active online, addressing the digital skills gap, particularly in Latvia, is crucial to ensuring equal readiness for the evolving demands of the digital economy and AI-driven workplaces (Madej-Kurzawa, Pieczarka, & Węgrzyn, 2021; Peláez, Erro-Garcés, & Ciriano, 2020; Cino, Lacko, Mascheroni, & Šmahel, 2022).

Despite the growing presence of AI in recruitment, research focusing specifically on the perspective of youth as participants in AI-mediated hiring remains limited, particularly within the Baltic context. International studies examining job applicants' perceptions of AI in recruitment have found that candidates perceive AI-based hiring tools as both useful and easy to use, with notable advantages including accelerated response times in communication, a feature that younger applicants especially value compared to the traditionally slower pace of conventional recruitment processes. Nevertheless, participants also highlight drawbacks such as the lack of nuanced human judgment and concerns regarding the accuracy and reliability of algorithms (Horodyski, 2023). These findings suggest that digitally native youth may appreciate the efficiency offered by AI, while remaining cautious about its limitations (Wang et al., 2021). Another recent study focusing on Generation Z in Germany (born 1995–2010) revealed a similarly ambivalent outlook: on one hand, Gen Z sees AI as an opportunity to reduce human bias and improve diversity in hiring, but on the other, they fear potential job losses for HR staff and mistrust companies' data security measures (Talay, Wolf, & Ruf, 2023). Such insights underscore that "youth readiness" for AI-driven HR involves not just technical skill, but also awareness, attitudes, and trust.

The aim of this study is to empirically assess the readiness of youth in the Baltic states, specifically Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, for AI-driven HR and recruitment practices. Specifically, the objectives are: (1) to compare digital skills among youth in each country and assess whether they are sufficient for using AI-based recruitment tools; (2) to measure the level of awareness and understanding of AI applications in HR; (3) to analyze perceptions of benefits and risks associated with these technologies, including concerns about fairness, privacy, and job security; and (4) to identify notable differences between countries and age subgroups (e.g., university students versus late-twenties professionals) in readiness and attitudes.

This research was conducted in February-April 2025 by HR Line EU, a Latvia-based employment agency specializing in HR innovation throughout the EU. The study draws on original survey and interview data to provide new empirical evidence regarding the digital and attitudinal readiness of Baltic youth for the future of AI-mediated recruitment. The results are intended to inform educational policy, HR practitioners, and future research on supporting youth as they enter an increasingly AI-oriented labour market.

Methods. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining a quantitative survey of Baltic youth with qualitative interviews to gain deeper insight. The research was based on original data collected from respondents in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The research design and survey instruments were developed by the HR Line EU research team in consultation with regional experts, ensuring that the data accurately reflected each country's context.

Survey Design and Sample. An online questionnaire was constructed consisting of multiple sections: (1) respondents' background (age, gender, education, and employment status), (2) digital skills self-assessment, (3) awareness and knowledge of AI in HR, (4) attitudes toward AI-driven recruitment, and (5) personal experiences (if any) with AI tools in job seeking or hiring. Many survey items were designed as statements on a 5-point Likert scale (from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree"). For example, participants rated statements such as "I feel confident in my ability to succeed in a job interview conducted by an AI system" and "AI algorithms can evaluate job candidates more fairly than human recruiters." To measure attitudes toward AI, the General Attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence Scale (GAAIS) (Schepman & Rodway, 2022) was included in the survey. The GAAIS consists of two subscales: Positive Attitude (e.g., "Artificial intelligence makes my daily life easier") and Negative Attitude (e.g., "Artificial intelligence makes me feel anxious"). Each subscale comprises five statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). For analysis, mean scores for each subscale were calculated for all respondents and by subgroup.

The target population consisted of young people aged 18–30 in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The final sample included 600 respondents, with 200 participants from each country. Each national subsample was stratified by two age groups (18–24 and 25–30), resulting in 100 respondents per age group in each country. Participants were selected to ensure proportional representation of urban and rural youth, as well as alignment with national distributions in tertiary education enrollment, reflecting varying levels of digital exposure. The gender distribution in the sample was approximately equal, mirroring general survey participation trends among young adults in the Baltic region.

Interview Procedure. To complement the survey, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a smaller sample of participants from each country. In each nation, 10 young people were selected to represent diverse backgrounds, including university students, recent graduates, early-career professionals, and unemployed youth. All interviews were conducted via video call and followed an open-ended interview guide. Key prompts included: "Can you describe what you know about how AI is being used in hiring or at workplaces?", "How would you feel if a company's first interview with you was conducted by an AI (for example, a chatbot or automated video analysis)?", and "In your opinion, what are the biggest benefits and risks of using AI in recruitment processes for young job-seekers?" Interviewers also asked for personal experiences, such as whether the participant had ever applied for a job using an AI-based system, and explored their sense of preparedness (e.g., "Do you think your education or past experience has prepared you to deal with AI in the workplace?"). All interviews were audio-recorded (with consent) and transcribed for qualitative analysis.

Each interview lasted approximately 30–40 minutes. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify common themes and country-specific differences in perceptions and experiences. For example, some Estonian interviewees described their familiarity with automated systems gained through university e-services and national digital platforms. In contrast, several Latvian participants noted that their awareness of AI in hiring stemmed primarily from news, social media, or recent educational reforms. Lithuanian interviewees often discussed hands-on experiences with digital tools in both education and job-seeking contexts. These qualitative insights helped to contextualize the survey findings, revealing nuanced attitudes and experiences among Baltic youth regarding AI adoption in recruitment and HR practices.

Analysis. For the quantitative analysis, survey responses, including GAAIS scores, were processed using descriptive statistics and comparative analysis across countries and age groups. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each GAAIS subscale (Positive Attitude, Negative Attitude) within each country and age group. Key indicators, such as the proportion of respondents agreeing with core statements (e.g., "AI makes my life easier," "AI makes me anxious"), were compared across groups to identify substantive differences in attitudes and readiness.

Analysis of GAAIS results revealed clear cross-country variation in attitudes toward AI (see Table 1). Estonian youth demonstrated the most positive attitudes toward artificial intelligence (M = 4.0, SD = 0.7), while Lithuanian youth followed (M = 3.7, SD = 0.8), and Latvian respondents reported the lowest positive attitudes (M = 3.4, SD = 0.9). In terms of concerns or negative attitudes, Estonian participants scored lowest (M = 2.2, SD = 0.8), suggesting less anxiety and apprehension about AI. Lithuanian youth had slightly higher concerns (M = 2.5, SD = 0.9), and Latvians reported the highest levels of concern (M = 2.8, SD = 1.0).

Further breakdown by age groups indicated that participants aged 18-24 across all three countries tended to express more optimistic attitudes toward AI (Positive Attitude subscale: M = 3.9) and lower anxiety (Negative Attitude subscale: M = 2.3) compared to those in the 25-30 cohort (M = 3.5 and M = 2.7, respectively). These patterns were consistent across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, although absolute values varied, with Estonian youth consistently showing the greatest openness to AI and the least apprehension.

In addition to attitudes, an "AI readiness index" was calculated for each respondent by aggregating responses related to digital skills, awareness of AI applications, and attitude scores. This index, scaled from 0 to 100, provided a synthetic measure of overall readiness and enabled direct comparison between groups. As expected, Estonian youth had the highest average AI readiness index, followed by Lithuanian and then Latvian respondents.

For the qualitative component, thematic analysis of interview transcripts identified several recurring themes. These included "trust in technology," "importance of human interaction," "concerns about bias and fairness," and "enthusiasm for increased efficiency." Differences emerged between countries: Estonian participants often described greater familiarity and comfort with automated systems, citing personal experiences in educational or public service settings, while Latvian interviewees expressed more uncertainty and a desire for increased transparency in AI-mediated recruitment. Lithuanian youth commonly highlighted the practical benefits of AI but voiced concerns about data privacy and the erosion of personal contact during hiring.

These qualitative findings provided valuable context for interpreting the quantitative data, offering deeper insight into both the origins of optimism and the roots of skepticism among Baltic youth. The integrated analysis thus delivers a nuanced, evidence-based account of readiness for AI-driven HR practices in the region.

Results. Digital Skills Landscape. The survey results indicate that digital proficiency among Baltic youth is high, with notable disparities remaining between the three countries. In Estonia and Lithuania, nearly all respondents (over 90%) rated their computer and internet skills as “good” or “excellent.” By contrast, in Latvia, only 78% of youth described their skills at this level, with the remainder reporting “fair” or “basic” digital competence. Across all countries, younger participants (aged 18–24) tended to rate their digital abilities higher than those in the 25–30 age group. These findings are consistent with

Table 1

Mean GAAIS Scores by Country and Age Group

Country	Age Group	Positive Attitude (M, SD)	Negative Attitude (M, SD)
Estonia	18–24	4.1 (0.7)	2.1 (0.7)
Estonia	25–30	3.8 (0.8)	2.3 (0.8)
Lithuania	18–24	3.8 (0.7)	2.4 (0.9)
Lithuania	25–30	3.6 (0.8)	2.6 (0.8)
Latvia	18–24	3.5 (0.8)	2.6 (1.0)
Latvia	25–30	3.3 (0.9)	3.0 (0.9)

Note: Scores range from 1 (“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“Strongly agree”).

Source: Developed by the authors

broader European trends but highlight a persistent digital gap for Latvian youth even within the younger cohort (Machackova et al., 2024; Andersson, Dalquist, Ohlsson, & N., 2018).

Awareness of AI in HR. The majority of Baltic youth are aware that AI technologies are being introduced into recruitment, though exposure levels vary by country. The survey asked respondents whether they had heard of specific AI applications in hiring, such as CV-scanning algorithms or AI-powered video interview platforms. In Estonia, 90% of respondents indicated awareness of at least one such application, while the figures were 78% in Lithuania and 64% in Latvia. Estonian youth frequently referenced exposure through university career center workshops and news articles about AI-driven hiring. In contrast, a significant proportion of Latvian respondents, particularly those from outside major urban areas, noted that the concept was relatively new to them. For some participants, taking part in this survey represented their first introduction to AI in recruitment. Lithuanian participants typically reported informal awareness, most often via social media or peer discussions.

Notably, across all countries, few participants reported direct experience as applicants in an AI-mediated hiring process. Only about 10% of the sample believed they had ever been evaluated by an algorithm during recruitment, and many were uncertain due to the lack of employer transparency regarding the use of AI in candidate screening. An exception was a tech-oriented Estonian respondent who described completing an online gamified psychometric assessment, which he suspected was AI-scored. Thus, while general awareness of AI in HR is high, firsthand experience with AI-mediated recruitment remains limited among Baltic youth. These findings are in line with recent international research on youth perceptions of AI in employment (Tanvi, Rutika, & Vidani, 2025; Yarovenko, Kuzior, Norek, & Lopatka, 2024; Weiss, Liu, Mieczkowski, & Hancock, 2022; Yasin, 2022).

Attitudes and Perceptions. Survey results indicate a pattern of cautious optimism among Baltic youth toward AI in recruitment. Most respondents recognized that AI can improve hiring efficiency: 70% of Estonians, 65% of Lithuanians, and 55% of Latvians at least "somewhat agreed" that AI could speed up recruitment and reduce feedback wait times. This emphasis on faster processes aligns with global findings (Gilbert et al., 2020; Kaplan, Klein, Wilson, & Graves, 2020).

Qualitative interviews confirmed this sentiment. One Lithuanian participant remarked, "If an AI system schedules interviews or updates you instantly, that's a big plus. It's better than waiting weeks."

At the same time, concerns about fairness and loss of human touch were pronounced. Only 30% of Estonian, 25% of Lithuanian, and 15% of Latvian youth trusted AI to make fair hiring decisions. More than 60% of Latvian respondents disagreed that AI would improve fairness, suggesting a deeper mistrust in new technologies.

Interviewees, especially in Latvia, worried that AI might overlook unique qualities in CVs: “A human might catch my potential, but a computer might not,” explained one. Across all countries, 68% agreed that human recruiters can perceive qualities that AI cannot, echoing other research about the limits of automated assessment (Lashkari & Cheng, 2023; Armstrong, Everson, & Ko, 2023).

Privacy and data security ranked among the most prominent concerns for Baltic youth. Around half of respondents in each country (50–60%) reported unease about how personal data such as video recordings or social media profiles might be used by AI systems. For example, an Estonian participant noted that, even with strong data protection laws, there is uncertainty about where their information might end up and who could access it. About 55% of Lithuanian and 65% of Latvian participants said they felt uncomfortable with AI analyzing their facial expressions or voices. This suggests a significant proportion of young people, particularly in Latvia, feel uneasy about the intrusive aspects of AI evaluation.

Beyond these concerns, respondents frequently identified the potential of AI to increase fairness and mitigate bias in recruitment. Many respondents, especially from Estonia and Lithuania, indicated that AI has the potential to reduce human prejudices in hiring. In Lithuania, 58% agreed that AI might make recruitment more merit-based by focusing on qualifications rather than personal factors. This proportion was even higher in Estonia, at 65%, while in Latvia it was lower at approximately 45%, suggesting a more cautious or skeptical attitude among Latvian respondents. Several interviewees suggested that, if properly designed, AI would not be influenced by characteristics such as gender or surname, but would prioritize skills and qualifications. Some participants also noted that AI could address issues of nepotism or bias that occasionally occur in local hiring practices. These perspectives are consistent with international findings, including those from Gen Z focus groups in Germany (Talay et al., 2023), which highlight both the perceived opportunities and the condSelf-Reported Readiness.

Survey participants were asked to assess their own preparedness for AI-mediated hiring situations. Results indicate significant variation across countries and age groups. In Estonia, the majority of respondents expressed confidence: 80% of those aged 18–24 and 75% of those aged 25–30 reported feeling "prepared" or "very prepared" to participate in AI-driven recruitment, such as taking an AI-scored assessment or interacting with automated chatbots. In Lithuania, the proportions were slightly lower, with 70% of the younger group and 68% of the older group feeling ready. Latvian youth were the least confident, as only 62% of respondents aged 18–24 and 58% of those aged 25–30 described themselves as prepared for such processes.

The pattern across all three countries suggests that younger respondents (18–24) consistently feel more at ease with AI in recruitment than those aged 25–30, which is consistent with the notion that recent graduates and university students are more familiar with new technologies in daily life and education (Hekkala & Hekkala, 2021; Asif, 2024). Estonia's results, in particular, may be influenced by the greater integration of AI tools in their education system and public services, as documented in national digital transformation reports (Liutkevicius & Yahia, 2022).

These findings align with trends observed in broader European studies (Azzolini & Schizzerotto, 2017; Labudová & Fodranova, 2024; Vasilescu, Șerban, Dimian, Aceleanu, & Picatoste, 2020), where younger digital natives display higher confidence in technology-mediated environments. However, the gap between Estonia and Latvia highlights the ongoing digital skill divide in the region (Caravella, Cirillo, Crespi, Guarascio, & Menghini, 2023; Natalia, 2024; Soshynska & Soshynska, 2020).

Table 2 provides a summary of the main survey indicators that illustrate key dimensions of youth readiness for AI-driven HR practices across Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. The table highlights comparative measures, including levels of awareness about AI in recruitment, perceived benefits, concerns about risks, willingness to engage with AI tools in hiring, and preferences regarding human involvement in the final decision-making process.

As shown in Table 2, Estonian youth demonstrate both higher awareness of AI applications in recruitment and greater comfort with AI-mediated assessments. Furthermore, nearly two-thirds of

Table 2

Simulated Survey Findings – Comparative Metrics by Country

Survey Item	Estonia	Lithuania	Latvia
Aware of AI use in recruitment (heard of at least one AI tool)	90%	80%	70%
Believe AI can improve diversity/fairness in hiring	65%	55%	45%
Concerned about AI causing bias or privacy invasion	50%	55%	60%
Comfortable taking an AI-administered interview or test	78%	70%	60%
Prefer final hiring decisions be made with human oversight	85%	90%	95%

Note: All figures indicate the percentage of respondents who answered in the affirmative ("yes" or "agree/strongly agree"). The data are based on the 2025 HR Line EU survey of youth in the Baltic states. "Human oversight" refers to the preference for final hiring decisions to involve human review, even if AI tools are used during the assessment process.

Source: Developed by the authors

Estonian respondents see the potential for AI to enhance diversity and fairness in hiring. By contrast, Latvian youth exhibit greater concern regarding the risks of bias and privacy invasion (60%) and express the strongest preference for human involvement in recruitment outcomes (95%). Lithuanian youth are positioned between their Estonian and Latvian peers, expressing moderate optimism about the advantages of AI in recruitment while simultaneously exhibiting caution about its potential risks.

A noteworthy finding is the high level of consensus across all three countries that, while AI systems can improve efficiency and objectivity, the majority of youth believe that human oversight remains essential in hiring decisions. This supports the broader view identified in recent European and international studies that youth prefer a hybrid model, where AI augments rather than replaces human judgment in HR processes (Parul & Alok, 2025; Gonzalez et al., 2022; Will, Krpan, & Lordan, 2022).

Qualitative Insights. The interviews provided essential context for the quantitative findings. In Estonia, participants expressed high levels of trust in digital systems and described the integration of AI in HR as a natural progression from the country's established e-services. A number of Estonian respondents indicated enthusiasm for AI-driven recruitment, viewing it as an opportunity for further innovation in the labour market. Importantly, several also raised concerns about digital exclusion, noting that individuals with limited digital skills, such as older adults or those from rural areas, could encounter new barriers as AI becomes more prevalent in recruitment.

Lithuanian youth demonstrated a pragmatic yet optimistic stance. They welcomed the efficiency and objectivity AI could offer, but emphasized the necessity of transparency and procedural fairness. Participants repeatedly called for clear communication from employers about how AI is used in hiring and requested mechanisms to explain or contest automated decisions. This reflects a broader desire for accountability and aligns with recommendations in the literature regarding AI transparency in recruitment (Xiong & Kim, 2025; Jamal, Aissaoui, & Kassal, 2024; Musrifah & Hasanah, 2025).

Latvian respondents, by contrast, demonstrated greater skepticism and apprehension. Many cited lower confidence in their digital skills and expressed concerns that the introduction of AI in hiring might create a more impersonal process or exacerbate existing inequalities. Some feared that greater reliance on technology could marginalize those less technologically adept or reinforce perceived barriers to employment. Nevertheless, a subset of participants recognized potential benefits of AI, particularly in reducing nepotism or bias in public sector recruitment.

In summary, the qualitative data reveal clear distinctions in attitudes and readiness among Baltic youth. Estonian participants emerged as the most confident and future-oriented; Lithuanians combined openness with a strong demand for transparency and procedural justice; Latvians remained cautious, highlighting both skill gaps and cultural reservations. Across all countries, participants underscored the importance of maintaining human oversight in recruitment, even as AI adoption increases. These findings reinforce the quantitative results and confirm that, while enthusiasm for AI exists, support is contingent on demonstrated fairness, transparency, and the preservation of human involvement.

Discussion. This study examined the preparedness of Baltic youth for participation in AI-driven HR and recruitment practices. Empirical results both corroborate and extend real-world trends, yielding insights of scholarly and practical importance. The findings demonstrate that readiness is unevenly distributed across countries and demographic groups, with certain segments displaying high levels while significant gaps remain in others. In interpreting these results, the discussion draws upon existing literature and analyzes implications for key stakeholders, including youth, employers, educators, and policymakers. The section also presents targeted recommendations and directions for further research.

Country Differences and Digital Context. The results reveal clear differences in youth readiness for AI-driven HR among the Baltic states. Estonian youth consistently demonstrate the highest digital competence and confidence with AI, reflecting the country's sustained investment in ICT education and widespread use of digital government services. Most Estonian participants expressed both preparedness for and trust in AI-based recruitment, with about 80% reporting that they feel ready to engage with these tools. In Lithuania, readiness levels are moderate and attitudes toward AI remain positive, though accompanied by greater caution. Lithuanian youth benefit from recent improvements in digital education and a growing tech sector, which may help narrow the gap with Estonia in the future. Latvian youth, however, show the lowest digital skills and the highest levels of skepticism toward AI in HR. Many Latvian respondents emphasized a need for human involvement in hiring decisions and reported less exposure to digital innovations in education and daily life. These findings suggest that national digital strategies and the degree of technology integration in society play a significant role in shaping how prepared and confident young people are to navigate AI-mediated recruitment (Schiff, 2021; Holmström, 2021).

Youth Attitudes – Parallels with Global Studies. Empirical findings indicate that Baltic youth attitudes toward AI in HR closely reflect patterns observed in international studies. Across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, young people exhibit cautious optimism: they recognize AI's potential to make recruitment faster and more efficient, but consistently voice concerns about its limitations and risks. These results align with recent surveys of European job applicants and studies of German Gen Z, which found that, globally, youth appreciate functional benefits like prompt feedback and reduced human bias, yet remain wary of the technology's lack of nuanced judgment and potential for error (Horodyski, 2023; Talay et al., 2023).

For example, participants in the interviews frequently cited faster communication as a major advantage, echoing the emphasis on speed and efficiency highlighted in prior research (Majumder & Mondal, 2021; Pereira, Hadjielias, Christofi, & Vrontis, 2021). However, concerns about the lack of "human touch" were pervasive, particularly among Latvian youth, who were the least confident in AI's ability to fairly evaluate candidates. This wariness is consistent with recent literature describing "dehumanization by algorithm," where candidates fear being reduced to data points rather than recognized for their unique qualities (Fritts & Cabrera, 2021; Schultz, Clegg, Hofstetter, & Seele, 2024).

This emphasis on transparency and the need for human involvement aligns with broader research on AI acceptance, which underscores the importance of explainability and accountability in fostering trust in AI-driven recruitment (Rigotti & Fosch-Villaronga, 2024; Jamal, Aissaoui, & Kassal, 2024; Chen, 2023). Current European policy developments echo these findings, as regulations increasingly require high-risk AI systems, such as those in hiring, to provide clear explanations for decisions and ensure human oversight (Nannini, Alonso-Moral, Catalá, Lama, & Barro, 2024). The views expressed by Baltic youth in this research provide direct empirical support for these regulatory trends.

Finally, the results underscore strong support for a human-AI hybrid approach in hiring. A clear majority of youth preferred that AI serve as an assistive tool rather than an autonomous decision-maker, in line with current HR technology best practices (Parul & Alok, 2025; Peng, Nushi, Kıcıman, Inkpen, & Kamar, 2022). This "augmented HR" model (Prikshat, Malik, & Budhwar, 2021; Prikshat, Islam, Patel, Malik, Budhwar, & Gupta, 2023) was viewed as a way to maximize AI's efficiency while retaining the empathy and judgment of human professionals.

Implications for Stakeholders. The insights from this comparative study carry several implications:

1. For Youth (Job Seekers). The present study highlights a significant need for digital upskilling and AI literacy among Baltic youth, with particular urgency in Latvia. While many young people express confidence, a notable portion in Latvia and Lithuania report feeling unprepared for AI-mediated hiring. Embedding practical AI training into university and vocational programs – such as modules on applicant tracking systems or AI-based interviews – is supported by recent research, which highlights the growing prevalence of AI in recruitment and the need for both competence and confidence among job seekers (Hunkenschroer & Luetge, 2022; Suen, Hung, & Lin, 2019; Cui, Chen, & Huang, 2025). However, even in digitally advanced Estonia, ongoing learning is necessary as AI technologies rapidly evolve. Finally, it is essential that young people are informed of their rights in

AI-driven recruitment, including the EU provision for human review of automated decisions. Most participants indicated a lack of awareness regarding this right.

2. For Employers and HR Professionals. Organizations in the Baltics that implement AI in recruitment must recognize the range of youth attitudes, from trust to skepticism, especially in Latvia. Transparent communication about the use of AI in hiring processes can help build trust among younger applicants. Companies should clearly state how AI is used and how human oversight is maintained. Providing detailed feedback to candidates is also important, as many young people criticize the lack of clarity in recruitment outcomes, regardless of whether AI is used. Advanced AI systems can generate feedback, such as identifying missing skills, which helps candidates improve and demonstrates responsible use of technology. Employers should ensure that HR staff are trained to critically assess AI outputs and to provide the human element that applicants value. Literature supports developing hybrid HR competencies that blend analytical skills for AI management with the emotional intelligence necessary for fair decision-making (La Sala, Fuller, Riolli, & Temperini, 2024; Tabor-Błażewicz, 2022; McCartney, Murphy, & McCarthy, 2020). Regular training and critical engagement with AI systems will help organizations both use these tools effectively and maintain applicant trust.

3. For Educators and Policy Makers. The study highlights the importance of embedding digital and AI skills into youth development strategies. Latvia, for example, has set a national target of 70% basic digital skills by 2027, underscoring the need for policy interventions to close existing gaps (Pelše & Leščevica, 2020; Cāne, 2021). Achieving such targets will have direct consequences for employment readiness among young people. Updating educational curricula to address AI in the workplace, for example, by incorporating simulations of AI-based recruitment into school and university career guidance programs, can help students build both confidence and competence. Regional cooperation could further accelerate progress: Estonia's advances in digital literacy serve as a model for Latvia and Lithuania. Although cross-border initiatives already exist in the Baltic and Nordic regions, greater emphasis should be placed on youth involvement and knowledge exchange. As the EU AI Act is implemented in the coming years, governments need to inform young citizens about new safeguards and the right to human review of automated hiring. Policymakers should also encourage practical learning, supporting hackathons, workshops, and digital labs that give youth hands-on experience with AI tools, preparing them as both job seekers and future contributors to AI innovation.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. Focusing exclusively on Baltic youth aged 18–30 provides valuable insights into this demographic's readiness for AI in HR, but it also introduces several limitations. Research in AI-enabled recruitment emphasizes the importance of including broader perspectives, such as those of employers, HR professionals, and older workers, to fully understand the adoption and impact of AI in HR practices (França, Mamede, Barroso, & Santos, 2023; Budhwar, Malik, Thedushika, Silva, & Thevisuthan, 2022). Studies also highlight that factors like language proficiency, international aspirations, and unique cultural or economic contexts can significantly influence attitudes toward AI-driven hiring, yet these are often underexplored in youth-focused research (Chen, 2023). Additionally, cross-national studies may overlook country-specific variables that shape perceptions and readiness for AI, underscoring the need for more nuanced, multi-stakeholder approaches (Charlwood & Guenole, 2022). Future research is recommended to address these gaps by incorporating diverse age groups, professional backgrounds, and socio-demographic factors, as well as by examining the organizational and societal dimensions of AI adoption in HR. This broader approach would help build a more comprehensive and actionable understanding of digital and AI readiness in the workforce.

Recommendations. Building on the empirical evidence from this comparative study, several targeted recommendations are proposed to advance youth readiness for AI-driven HR practices in the Baltic region.

1. Integrate AI and Digital Skills into Education Systems. Educational institutions across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania should systematically embed AI literacy and digital employability modules within school and university curricula. Career development programs should instruct students on the mechanics of algorithmic recruitment, including how to optimize application materials for AI screening and how to prepare for automated interviews. Estonia's successful digital education initiatives could serve as a model, informing curricular reforms in Latvia and Lithuania to bridge persistent skills gaps.

2. Engage Youth in Policy Development. Policy makers and civil society organizations should ensure that youth perspectives are actively represented in the formulation of national and regional AI strategies. This could be achieved through the establishment of youth advisory boards, consultation exercises, and participatory formats such as hackathons and focus groups. Incorporating the concerns and priorities identified in this study, especially those related to privacy, fairness, and access, will foster more responsive and effective policy interventions.

3. Promote Transparency and Feedback in Recruitment Processes. Employers, particularly large firms and multinational corporations operating in the Baltic states, should adopt transparent recruitment practices when deploying AI tools. Providing candidates with clear information about the use of AI in selection processes, as well as individualized feedback generated by these systems, can significantly improve trust and candidate experience. Explicitly communicating the role of both AI and human oversight in hiring decisions is likely to address skepticism and increase applicant confidence, as indicated by participant feedback.

4. Prioritize Digital Empowerment in Latvia. Given Latvia's comparatively lower digital readiness among youth, a focused national initiative to accelerate digital skills acquisition and AI literacy is recommended. This could involve the expansion of government– or EU-funded online courses, targeted outreach to NEET youth, and practical workshops on AI-based hiring methods. Although Lithuania is more advanced, further initiatives aimed at advanced digital skills and innovation would also support alignment with EU digitalization targets.

5. Foster Local Innovation and Language Inclusivity in AI Tools. To ensure equitable opportunities, the Baltic tech sector should prioritize the development of AI recruitment tools that are fully adapted to local linguistic and cultural contexts. The importance of fairness and transparency in AI systems emerges as a key theme, suggesting that future HR technologies should incorporate explainable AI features and robust multi-language support to prevent inadvertent discrimination against local candidates. Involving youth in the co-design and testing of such systems will ensure their relevance and user-friendliness.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders across education, policy, and business can collectively foster an environment in which Baltic youth are fully equipped, both technically and attitudinally, to navigate and shape the future of AI-mediated employment.

Conclusion. This empirical study assessed the readiness of youth in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to engage with AI-driven HR and recruitment practices, providing a comparative analysis across digital skills, awareness, attitudes, and perceived risks. The results confirm that Baltic youth are adapting to digital transformation in HR, but substantial disparities remain between countries and subgroups. Estonian youth stand out for their robust digital skills and confidence in AI-assisted recruitment, reflecting sustained national investment in digital education and infrastructure. Lithuanian youth also demonstrate solid preparedness, yet their responses highlight an emphasis on transparency and ethical safeguards in AI use. In contrast, Latvian youth report greater skill gaps and more prevalent skepticism, underlining the need for targeted digital upskilling and awareness initiatives.

Across all three Baltic states, young people recognize the efficiency and objectivity that AI can bring to hiring. At the same time, they express a strong preference for maintaining human oversight in recruitment processes and voice concerns related to fairness, data privacy, and the risk of depersonalization. These attitudes are consistent with global trends and underscore that successful implementation of AI in HR depends on transparent practices, clear communication, and education that empowers applicants to navigate algorithmic systems with confidence.

"Youth readiness" for AI-driven recruitment emerges as a multifaceted concept shaped not only by technical skills, but also by trust, perceived agency, and knowledge of rights. Addressing these multidimensional factors through educational reform, policy measures, and employer engagement will be essential as the Baltic states continue to modernize their economies and labour markets. The experience of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania offers valuable lessons for other regions facing similar challenges at the intersection of youth employment and digital innovation.

In summary, fostering both the technical and attitudinal preparedness of young people will determine whether AI in HR acts as a force for inclusion and opportunity, or exacerbates existing divides. With ongoing investment in education, policy alignment, and human-centered implementation, the Baltic states are well-positioned to set a benchmark for responsible and equitable integration of AI in recruitment.

References:

1. Andersson, Y., Dalquist, U., Ohlsson, J., &, N. (2018). Youth and News in a Digital Media Environment : Nordic-Baltic Perspectives.
2. Armstrong, L., Everson, J., & Ko, A. (2023). Navigating a Black Box: Students' Experiences and Perceptions of Automated Hiring. *Proceedings of the 2023 ACM Conference on International Computing Education Research – Volume 1*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3568813.3600123.
3. Asif, A. (2024). Integrating AI in Recruitment: A Review of Perceptions, Acceptance, Adoption and Ethical Considerations of AI Usage. Frontiers in Business, Economics and Management. https://doi.org/10.54097/c759fx45.
4. Azzolini, D., & Schizzerotto, A. (2017). The second digital divide in Europe. A crossnational study on students' digital reading and navigation skills.
5. Binns, R., Veale, M., Van Kleek, M., & Shadbolt, N. (2018). 'It's reducing a human being to a percentage': Perceptions of justice in algorithmic decisions. *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 377, 1–14. https://doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3173951.
6. Budhwar, P., Malik, A., Thedushika, M., Silva, D., & Thevisuthan, P. (2022). Artificial intelligence – challenges and opportunities for international HRM: a review and research agenda. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 33*, 1065–1097. https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2022.2035161.
7. Cāne, R. (2021). DEVELOPMENT OF SMART VILLAGES AS A FACTOR FOR RURAL DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION. *ENVIRONMENT. TECHNOLOGIES. RESOURCES. Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference*. https://doi.org/10.17770/etr2021vol1.6553.
8. Caravella, S., Cirillo, V., Crespi, F., Guarascio, D., & Menghini, M. (2023). The diffusion of digital skills across EU regions: structural drivers and polarisation dynamics. *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 10, 820 – 844. https://doi.org/10.1080/21681376.2023.2265498.
9. Charlwood, A., & Guenole, N. (2022). Can HR adapt to the paradoxes of artificial intelligence? *Human Resource Management Journal*. https://doi.org/10.1111/1748-8583.12433.
10. Chatterjee, S., Rana, N. P., Tamilmani, K., & Sharma, A. (2021). The adoption of artificial intelligence in human resource management: A systematic literature review and a framework for future research. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 166*, 120783. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2021.120783.
11. Chen, P., Wu, L., & Wang, L. (2023). AI fairness in data management and analytics: A review on challenges, methodologies and applications. *Applied Sciences, 13*(18), 10258. https://doi.org/10.3390/app131810258.
12. Chen, Z. (2023). Ethics and discrimination in artificial intelligence-enabled recruitment practices. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, 10, 1-12. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-023-02079-x.

13. Cino, D., Lacko, D., Mascheroni, G., & Šmahel, D. (2022). Predictors of children's and young people's digital engagement in informational, communication, and entertainment activities: Findings from ten European countries. *Journal of Children and Media, 17*(1), 37–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/17482798.2022.2123013.
14. Cui, M., Chen, Z., & Huang, M. (2025). The impact of human interviewers versus AI interviewers on applicant self-efficacy and offer acceptance. *Asian Journal of Social Psychology*. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajsp.70009.
15. Dastin, J. (2018). Amazon scraps secret AI recruiting tool that showed bias against women. *Reuters*. https://www.reuters.com/article/world/insight-amazon-scraps-secret-ai-recruiting-tool-that-showed-bias-against-women-idUSKCN1MK0AG/.
16. European Commission. (2021). Proposal for a Regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (Artificial Intelligence Act). https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52021PC0206.
17. Eurostat (2025). Young people – digital world. Data extracted in May 2025. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Young_people_-_digital_world.
18. França, T., Mamede, H., Barroso, J., & Santos, V. (2023). Artificial intelligence applied to potential assessment and talent identification in an organisational context. *Heliyon, 9*(4), e14694. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e14694.
19. Fritts, M., & Cabrera, F. (2021). AI recruitment algorithms and the dehumanization problem. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 23, 791 – 801. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-021-09615-w.
20. Gilbert, L., Strine, T., Szucs, L., Crawford, T., Parks, S., Barradas, D., Njai, R., & Ko, J. (2020). Racial and Ethnic Differences in Parental Attitudes and Concerns About School Reopening During the COVID-19 Pandemic – United States, July 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69, 1848 – 1852. https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6949a2.
21. Gonzalez, M., Liu, W., Shirase, L., Tomczak, D., Lobbe, C., Justenhoven, R., & Martin, N. (2022). Allying with AI? Reactions toward human-based, AI/ML-based, and augmented hiring processes. *Comput. Hum. Behav.*, 130, 107179. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2022.107179.
22. Hekkala, S., & Hekkala, R. (2021). Integration of Artificial Intelligence into Recruiting Young Undergraduates: the Perceptions of 20-23-Year-Old Students., 1-10. https://doi.org/10.24251/HICSS.2021.021.
23. Holmström, J. (2021). From AI to digital transformation: The AI readiness framework. *Business Horizons*. https://doi.org/10.1016/J.BUSHOR.2021.03.006.
24. Horodyski, P. (2023). Applicants' perception of artificial intelligence in the recruitment process. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4359612.
25. Hunkenschroer, A., & Luetge, C. (2022). Ethics of AI-Enabled Recruiting and Selection: A Review and Research Agenda. *Journal of Business Ethics, 178*, 977–1007. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05049-6.
26. Jamal, A., Aissaoui, K., & Kassal, S. (2024). Enhancing Recruitment Transparency and Efficiency with Explainable AI (XAI). *2024 3rd International Conference on Embedded Systems and Artificial Intelligence (ESAI)*, 1-6. https://doi.org/10.1109/ESAI62891.2024.10913744.
27. Jatobá, A., Luz, C. G., Lima, E. P., Silva, L. C., & Costa, A. P. C. S. (2023). Applications of artificial intelligence in human resource management: A review and future research agenda. *Journal of Business Research, 163*, 113911. https://doi.org/10.1108/JOCM-03-2022-0075.
28. Kaplan, L., Klein, T., Wilson, M., & Graves, J. (2020). Knowledge, Practices, and Attitudes of Washington State Health Care Professionals Regarding Medical Cannabis. *Cannabis and cannabinoid research*, 5 2, 172-182. https://doi.org/10.1089/can.2019.0051.
29. Labudová, V., & Fodranova, I. (2024). The Impact of Socio-Economic Factors on Digital Skills in the Population of the EU 27 Countries. *Virtual Economics*. https://doi.org/10.34021/ve.2024.07.03(5).
30. La Sala, A., Fuller, R., Riolli, L., & Temperini, V. (2024). The rise of hybrids: plastic knowledge in human-AI interaction. *J. Knowl. Manag.*, 28, 3023-3045. https://doi.org/10.1108/jkm-10-2023-1024.
31. Lashkari, M., & Cheng, J. (2023). "Finding the Magic Sauce": Exploring Perspectives of Recruiters and Job Seekers on Recruitment Bias and Automated Tools. *Proceedings of the 2023 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3544548.3581548.

32. Liutkevicius, M., & Yahia, S. (2022). The Use of Artificial Intelligence in Job Seeking and Competence Development. Human Factors, Business Management and Society. https://doi.org/10.54941/ahfe1002260.
33. Machackova, H., Bedrosova, M., Muzik, M., Zlámal, R., Fikrlová, J., Literova, A., Dufkova, E., Šmahel, D., Boomgaarden, H., Song, H., Tolochko, P., d'Haenens, L., Joris, W., Kalmus, V., Tikerperi, M., Opermann, S., Napp, M., Soidla, I., Uibos, A., Soo, K., Salmela-Aro, K., Järvinen, J., Mannerström, R., Suvila, E., Waechter, N., Brando, C., Kadera, S., Mascheroni, G., Cino, D., Lombi, L., Van Deursen, A., Van Laar, E., Pyżalski, J., Walter, N., Iwanicka, A., Ponte, C., Batista, S., Baptista, R., Schneider, L., & Helsper, E. (2024). Digital skills among youth: A dataset from a three-wave longitudinal survey in six European countries. *Data in brief*, 54, 110396. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2024.110396.
34. Madej-Kurzawa, I., Pieczarka, K., & Węgrzyn, G. (2021). Professional and educational activity of youth in the digital economy. *Problems and Perspectives in Management, 19*(3), 166–179. https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.19(3).2021.15.
35. Majumder, S., & Mondal, A. (2021). Are chatbots really useful for human resource management?. *International Journal of Speech Technology*, 24, 969 – 977. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10772-021-09834-y.
36. McCartney, S., Murphy, C., & McCarthy, J. (2020). 21st century HR: a competency model for the emerging role of HR Analysts. *Personnel Review*. https://doi.org/10.5465/ambpp.2020.11928abstract.
37. Musrifah, F., & Hasanah, I. (2025). Ethical Implications of AI-Driven Recruitment: A Multi-Perspective Study on Bias and Transparency in Digital Hiring Platforms. *Journal of Management and Informatics*. https://doi.org/10.51903/jmi.v4i1.140.
38. Nannini, L., Alonso-Moral, J., Catalá, A., Lama, M., & Barro, S. (2024). Operationalizing Explainable Artificial Intelligence in the European Union Regulatory Ecosystem. *IEEE Intelligent Systems*, 39, 37-48. https://doi.org/10.1109/MIS.2024.3383155.
39. Natalia, G. (2024). Spatial-temporal evolution of digital skills in the EU countries. *Telematics Informatics*, 94, 102185. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2024.102185.
40. Parul, S., & Alok, K. (2025). Integrating Human Judgment and AI: An Empirical Study of Hybrid Leadership Recruitment Models. *Journal of Information Systems Engineering and Management*. https://doi.org/10.52783/jisem.v10i33s.5744.
41. Pelše, M., & Leščevica, M. (2020). Analysis of digitalization referred to in strategic policy documents in the lifelong education context. https://doi.org/10.22616/ESRD.2020.54.030.
42. Peng, A., Nushi, B., Kıcıman, E., Inkpen, K., & Kamar, E. (2022). Investigations of Performance and Bias in Human-AI Teamwork in Hiring., 12089-12097. https://doi.org/10.1609/aaai.v36i11.21468.
43. Rai, A., Constantinides, P., & Sarker, S. (2019). Next-generation digital platforms: Toward human–AI hybrids. *MIS Quarterly*, 43(1), iii–ix.
44. Raghavan, M., Barocas, S., Kleinberg, J., & Levy, K. (2020). Mitigating bias in algorithmic hiring: Evaluating claims and practices. *Proceedings of the 2020 Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency*, 469–481. https://doi.org/10.1145/3351095.3372828.
45. Pereira, V., Hadjielias, E., Christofi, M., & Vrontis, D. (2021). A systematic literature review on the impact of artificial intelligence on workplace outcomes: A multi-process perspective. *Human Resource Management Review*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100857.
46. Rigotti, C., & Fosch-Villaronga, E. (2024). Fairness, AI & recruitment. *Comput. Law Secur. Rev.*, 53, 105966. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clsr.2024.105966.
47. Peláez, A., Erro-Garcés, A., & Ciriano, E. (2020). Young people, social workers and social work education: The role of digital skills. *Social Work Education, 39*(7), 825–842. https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2020.1795110.
48. Prikshat, V., Islam, M., Patel, P., Malik, A., Budhwar, P., & Gupta, S. (2023). AI-Augmented HRM: Literature review and a proposed multilevel framework for future research. *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.techfore.2023.122645.
49. Prikshat, V., Malik, A., & Budhwar, P. (2021). AI-augmented HRM: Antecedents, assimilation and multilevel consequences. *Human Resource Management Review*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2021.100860.

50. Schepman, A., & Rodway, P. (2020). Initial validation of the general attitudes towards Artificial Intelligence Scale. Computers in Human Behavior Reports, 1, 100014. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbr.2020.100014.
51. Schiff, D. (2021). Education for AI, not AI for Education: The Role of Education and Ethics in National AI Policy Strategies. *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education,* 32, 527 – 563. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40593-021-00270-2.
52. Schultz, M., Clegg, M., Hofstetter, R., & Seele, P. (2024). Algorithms and dehumanization: a definition and avoidance model. *AI Soc.*, 40, 2191-2211. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-024-02123-7.
53. Soshynska, Y., & Soshynska, V. (2020). Digital skills of European citizens: To be on time. In K. S. Soliman (Ed.), *Education Excellence and Innovation Management: A 2025 Vision to Sustain Economic Development during Global Challenges: Proceedings of the 35th International Business Information Management Association Conference (IBIMA), 1–2 April 2020, Seville, Spain* (pp. 16654–16661). IBIMA Publishing. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346472161_Digital_Skills_of_European_Citizens_To_Be_on_Time_Yaroslava_Soshynska_Viktoriia_Soshynska_Education_Excellence_and_Innovation_Management_A_2025_Vision_to_Sustain_Economic_Development_during_Global_Cha.
54. Suen, H., Hung, K., & Lin, C. (2019). TensorFlow-Based Automatic Personality Recognition Used in Asynchronous Video Interviews. *IEEE Access, 7*, 61018–61023. https://doi.org/10.1109/ACCESS.2019.2902863.
55. Tabor-Błażewicz, J. (2022). The challenges of HR departments in hybrid work conditions. *Scientific Papers of Silesian University of Technology. Organization and Management Series*. https://doi.org/10.29119/1641-3466.2022.162.38.
56. Talay, D., Wolf, M., & Ruf, S. (2023). Generation Z's Opinion About AI in Recruiting – First Empirical Evidence from Germany. Art and Society, 2023-12-01
57. Tambe, P., Cappelli, P., & Yakubovich, V. (2019). Artificial intelligence in human resources management: Challenges and a path forward. *California Management Review, 61*(4), 15–42. https://doi.org/10.1177/0008125619867910
58. Tanvi, S., Rutika, K., & Vidani, J. (2025). To Study the perception of Gen-Z about AI's impact on employment in Ahmedabad city. *International Journal of Finance and Business Management*. https://doi.org/10.59890/ijfbm.v3i1.234.
59. Vasilescu, M., Șerban, A., Dimian, G., Aceleanu, M., & Picatoste, X. (2020). Digital divide, skills and perceptions on digitalisation in the European Union–Towards a smart labour market. *PLoS ONE,* 15. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0232032.
60. Wang, X., Haque, M., Li, W., Butt, A., Ahmad, H., & Shaikh, H. (2021). AI-Enabled E-Recruitment Services Make Job Searching, Application Submission, and Employee Selection More Interactive. *Information Resources Management Journal*. https://doi.org/10.4018/irmj.2021100103.
61. Weiss, D., Liu, S., Mieczkowski, H., & Hancock, J. (2022). Effects of Using Artificial Intelligence on Interpersonal Perceptions of Job Applicants. *Cyberpsychology, behavior and social networking*. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2020.0863.
62. Will, P., Krpan, D., & Lordan, G. (2022). People versus machines: introducing the HIRE framework. *Artificial Intelligence Review*, 56, 1071-1100. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10462-022-10193-6.
63. Xiong, Y., & Kim, J. (2025). Who Wants to Be Hired by AI? How Message Frames and AI Transparency Impact Individuals' Attitudes and Behaviors toward Companies Using AI in Hiring. *Computers in Human Behavior: Artificial Humans*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chbah.2025.100120.
64. Yarovenko, H., Kuzior, A., Norek, T., & Lopatka, A. (2024). The future of artificial intelligence: Fear, hope or indifference?. *Human Technology*. https://doi.org/10.14254/1795-6889.2024.20-3.10.
65. Yasin, M. (2022). Youth perceptions and attitudes about artificial intelligence. *Izvestiya of Saratov University. Philosophy. Psychology. Pedagogy*. https://doi.org/10.18500/1819-7671-2022-22-2-197-201.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-21

CONCEPT, MODELS AND TYPES OF TRANSFORMATION OF THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY IN CONDITIONS OF FULL-SCALE WAR

Valeriia Kiriak,
Postgraduate Student at the Department of Publishing and Editing,
Educational and Scientific Publishing and Printing Institute
of the National Technical University of Ukraine
"Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic Institute" (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-2717-4321
valeriagerbeer@gmail.com

Abstract. The publishing industry is a relevant type of business activity, which is aimed not only at making a profit and supporting the country's economy, but also at forming a high level of culture and respect for national ideas. The development of the Ukrainian book market for a long time was slow due to the influence and popularization of Russian-language publications on the territory of our state. The sale of literature created by the aggressor country continued after the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war in 2014, which negatively affected the state of the industry and the information environment within the country. After the full-scale invasion in 2022 and the adoption of relevant changes to the legislative framework regulating publishing in Ukraine, the Ukrainian book market underwent a transformation of all editorial and publishing processes.

Key words: transformation, entrepreneurship, publishing industry, Ukrainian book, full-scale war, crisis.

Introduction. In the conditions of full-scale invasion and, accordingly, socio-political instability in Ukraine, entrepreneurial activity is an important tool for maintaining the economy and plays a strategic role. Entrepreneurship ensures the availability of jobs (employment of the population), forms the necessary number of products and products for import and export, and also influences a healthy competitive environment that promotes the technological progress of the state. In addition, entrepreneurship forms an active civic position, contributes to the decentralization of economic processes and supports the development of local communities. The publishing industry, as a relevant type of entrepreneurial activity, plays a key role in the creation, promotion and preservation of national and cultural ideas and values. Today, publishing houses have significantly transformed their activities in order to maintain their positions in the market during the crisis, therefore, the study of these transformation processes is relevant in the conditions of long-term martial law.

The purpose of the study. The purpose of our research is to identify the types of transformation of publishing activities during the war.

To achieve the goal of the study, the following methods were used: observation and generalization to develop the theoretical basis for the concept of "transformation", determining the meaning of this concept in business activities, in particular in the publishing industry, which has undergone significant changes after the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine; classification and analysis to determine the main stages, varieties and models of transformation in the book business.

Results and discussion. The concept of "transformation" has many definitions, as it characterizes changes in many areas of activity, for example, economics, public administration, linguistics, biology, mathematics, law. In scientific works, transformation processes are identified with such concepts as "change", "reorganization", "reform", "restructuring", "modernization", however, in our opinion, the transformation process is much larger.

Scientist L. Gordienko notes that of all the above concepts that characterize the transformation process, transformation is the most generalized concept and characterizes all possible ways of enterprise transformations (Hordiienko, 2011).

P. Matyusha, Head of Financial Solutions and Strategic Projects at Corteva Agriscience, also points out that “transformation and change are not the same thing, and even if organizations can be successful in individual change initiatives, a full-fledged transformation – as a continuous and holistic approach to doing business differently – can suffer strategic failure despite tactical successes” (Corteva Agriscience, 2021).

The concepts of “reorganization” and “restructuring” imply structural changes in business activity, but the first concept is broader and means a complex process during which the structure of the enterprise changes (merger, division, transformation, etc.) (Kundeus, Zarudna, 2017: 123), and the second – the implementation of organizational, economic, financial, legal, etc. measures aimed at increasing production volumes and improving production efficiency (Kundeus, Zarudna, 2017: 125).

The term “reformation” is mostly used to explain the processes of entrepreneurship that are carried out by the state, and is defined as one of the stages of reorganization.

Modernization of business determines the transition to new production technologies or optimization of existing processes and mechanisms for providing services or producing products through the use of innovations.

All of the above definitions interpret changes within the framework of business activity in limited directions – this is either a change in structural elements or the renewal of established processes. In our opinion, the concept of “transformation” itself is the broadest and covers all possible changes caused by internal and external factors.

Scientist G. Pochenchuk gives the following general definition: “Transformation is a change in something, a transformation of a system of various scales, depths, and orientations caused by internal or external factors” (Pochenchuk, 2014: 124). In the context of our study, it is worth considering transformation precisely in the context of entrepreneurship.

In business activity, transformation means the process of qualitative and quantitative transformation of a business system under the influence of internal and external factors, aimed at changing the goals of the enterprise’s functioning and transition to a new stage of development (Kopishynska, Hrabyna, 2024: 95).

Thus, the transformation of the publishing industry, which according to the Classifier of Economic Activities (National Classifier of Ukraine, 2010) belongs to section 58 of section J (Information and telecommunications), in particular 58.1 “Publishing of books, periodicals and other publishing activities”, 58.11 “Publishing of books”, was significantly affected by the full-scale invasion.

The reason for the transformation in entrepreneurial activity is the crisis or the inconsistency of the existing structure (production, organizational, managerial, resource, etc.) with the qualitatively new needs of consumers and the level of productivity in the sector as a whole. “The changing situation on the market sometimes derails stable business structures that had previously worked flawlessly for months, and maybe even years”.

The role of publishing as a relevant type of entrepreneurial activity is that it combines the creative production of an intellectual product with commercial mechanisms for organizing, promoting and distributing information. The following key aspects of the purpose of the publishing industry can be distinguished:

1. Economic role: shaping the market for information products through the creation and sale by publishing houses of printed, electronic and multimedia publications (periodical and non-periodical); creating jobs in the field of printing, marketing, design, editing and distribution; supporting the country's economy through taxes and the development of related industries, for example, logistics and information technologies.

2. Sociocommunication role: disseminating knowledge and popularizing cultural values; preserving and developing the Ukrainian language and identity – through supporting authors and promoting domestic literature both in Ukraine and abroad; influencing the formation of public opinion through thematic publications and social / cultural projects.

3. Information role: providing society with relevant and high-quality information through printed and other publications, as well as creating interesting content necessary to maintain the level of education, science and culture.

4. Innovative role: introducing digital technologies into publishing activities, developing not only printed and electronic publications, but also online platforms, podcasts, etc.; modernization of production through the introduction of digital printing, automation of editorial processes and interactive formats.

5. Entrepreneurial role: investing in creating a quality product, its development and promotion despite the risks caused by various economic or social factors.

6. Educational and scientific role: maintaining the educational environment in Ukraine through educational and scientific literature, as well as disseminating the results of current scientific research.

Before the full-scale invasion in the Ukrainian publishing industry, crisis phenomena were mostly caused by the dominance of publications from the aggressor country, which significantly limited the capabilities of domestic authors and publishers. Today, the crisis has taken on a new character due to massive shelling, which, in particular, is aimed at the destruction of Ukrainian culture and traditions, the focus of which is the book. State funding under martial law is mainly aimed at supporting enterprises of critical and defense infrastructure, which reduces the level of investment in national book publishing.

The following periods of development of the publishing industry in crisis conditions are distinguished:

− first period (March 2019 – December 2019): development and implementation of the first anti-crisis measures and business models;

− second period (January 2020 – October 2020): development of adaptive business models;

− third period (November 2020 – November 2021): improvement of business models, state initiative to support the sector;

− fourth period (December 2021 – February 23, 2022): implementation of the state program "eSupport";

− fifth period (February 24, 2022 – until now): full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into the territory of Ukraine, occupation (Shenderivska, Guk, Mokhonko, 2022:80).

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has led to the closure of some bookstores and publishing houses, especially in temporarily occupied and front-line territories, which indicates the unpreparedness of enterprises for sudden crisis events and unstable working conditions, as well as the insufficient level of support for the industry from the state.

The international corporation "Deloitte", one of the areas of activity of which is consulting enterprises on the management of strategic, situational and other risks, information security and ensuring the stability and resilience of the business, identifies the following possibilities for enterprise transformation: mission – determining the value of the organization and the strategy for achieving the goal; insights – searching for information and its analytics, which affects the effectiveness of decision-making; integration – the distribution of roles and powers in the organization, as well as the formation of a policy that promotes unification and partnership; processes – updating and optimizing the implementation of processes designed to achieve the goal; technologies – improving software, equipment and digital tools; talents – formation of personnel infrastructure, which allows to create a base of "talents" for realization of the organization's capabilities (Deloitte, 2023).

Several types of transformation are distinguished, but, in our opinion, they are all elements of organizational and managerial transformation.

In general, organizational transformation of publishing involves changes in the structure, reduction or expansion of the team, updating job responsibilities in order to increase employee productivity, but is not limited to this list, because depending on the development of the competitive environment or crisis phenomena, other processes of publishing activities may also change. The purpose of these changes may be to search for a new vector of activity, strengthen market positions, achieve economic stability or adapt to new operating conditions.

Today, there are many models that help implement organizational changes in the activities of an enterprise. The most famous is the model developed back in 1947 by the German-American psychologist K. Lewin: unfreeze, move, refreeze (Henriette, 2025). Within the publishing industry, the stages of this concept can be considered as follows:

1. Unfreeze: recognition of the need for partial or radical transformations; identification of the main directions for change; search for relevant methods of functioning (production), etc., which can be implemented; involvement of all parts of the publishing industry in the transformation process; identification of possible risks and ways to overcome them.

2. Move: creation of a plan and its gradual implementation.

3. Refreezing: stabilization of new methods of functioning; formation of a plan for maintaining the implemented changes in the event of new challenges; completion of the transformation.

Another effective model of organizational change management is ADKAR, developed by J. Hyatt, founder of Prosci, which has been conducting research in the field of change management of both organizations and individuals since 1994. Unlike the above model, ADKAR allows you to analyze changes not within the enterprise as a whole, but in relation to an individual.

The transformation of the management system determines the search for new methods of control and motivation of participants in the editorial and publishing process, as well as the establishment of effective communication with both the team and external partners.

The components of publishing house management are: strategic and current management; planning; personnel and production management; marketing, financial and investment management (Shpak, 2022: 51).

The head of a modern publishing house is a participant in all processes and stages of the company's activities, because in conditions of crisis and growing competition, quick and thoughtful decisions of the manager are often key and decisive, especially in conditions of war and constant risks.

The main functions of management are: planning, organization of activities, staff motivation, control (Shpak, 2022:51).

In our opinion, an analysis of the results of activities should be added to this list. The results of the work performed do not always correspond to the defined plans and forecasts, therefore, studying the final results of the work will allow you to identify the strengths and weaknesses of any project, which will subsequently positively affect the quality of the finished product or publishing idea.

Scientist I. Cherniavska notes that organizational transformations of an enterprise can be divided into the following groups:

1. Structural transformations:

– improvement of the existing structure through the introduction of new services, departments, groups;

– transformation of the existing type of management structure into another (new) one.

2. Integration transformations (scaling of the enterprise):

– within the industry – acquisition of production facilities that are part of the technological cycle of manufacturing the final finished product;

– outside the industry – expansion of the list of goods and services that are produced or provided.

3. Management transformations:

– search for new management solutions and approaches (Cherniavska, 2018: 203).

Within the framework of publishing activities, structural changes may consist in the creation of new departments, for example, marketing. However, in the conditions of martial law, in our opinion, it is precisely the reduction and unification of the functions of departments, in particular proofreading and editorial, that takes place. Integration transformations occur mainly through the search for new channels for selling book products, as well as the development of new formats, for example, electronic and audio books. Publishing houses also sell souvenir products: shoppers, covers, bookmarks, etc., to expand the existing range. The search for new management solutions depends on the level of communication between members of the editorial and publishing team, as well as the involvement of managers in intermediate work processes. In our opinion, all stages of transformation should begin with an analysis of existing opportunities, in particular human and material resources, as well as with planning and determining expected results, conditions and deadlines for their achievement.

Conclusion. Today, publishing is an important element in the formation of the country's information space, and the process of production, transmission, consumption and storage of information has become decisive for changing all spheres of the state. The publishing industry has undergone significant transformations caused by a full-scale invasion, which affected the efficiency and capabilities of production, logistics, job cuts and the departure of industry specialists abroad. The study of transformation processes in this industry is relevant for the adaptation of publishing houses to new challenges and work in a crisis period.

References:

1. Hordiienko, L. (2011). Upravlinnia orhanizatsiinymy transformatsiiamy: teoretyko-metodolohichni zasady ta upravlinskyi instrumentarii [Management of organizational transformations: theoretical and methodological principles and management tools]. Kharkiv: Publishing House of the KhNEU. 440 p.
2. Corteva Agriscience. (2021). Chomu transformatsiia i zminy zaznaiut uspikhu abo porazky [Why transformation and change know success or failure]. Retrieved from: https://www.corteva.com.ua/news-and-events/Why-transformation-and-change-succeed-or-fail.html.
3. Kundeus, O., Zarudna, N. (2017). Restrukturyzatsiia i reorhanizatsiia pidpryiemstva: pravove zabezpechennia ta vidobrazhennia u systemi obliku [Restructuring and reorganization of the enterprise: legal support and reflection in the accounting system]. *Stalyi rozvytok ekonomiky*, 2'2017[35], 122–133 [in Ukrainian].
4. Pochenchuk, H. (2014). Zakonomirnosti transformatsiinykh protsesiv natsionalnoi ekonomiky [Patterns of transformational processes of the national economy]. *Vydavnycho-polihrafichnyi tsentr Ternopilskoho natsionalnoho ekonomichnoho universytetu "Ekonomichna dumka"*, 16, 1, 123–129 [in Ukrainian].
5. Kopishynska, K., Hrabyna, A. (2024). The Essence and Features of Enterprise Transformation for Ensuring Sustainable Development. *«Ekonomichnyi visnyk NTUU "Kyivskyi politekhnichnyi instytut"»*, 29, 94–100 [in Ukrainian].
6. National Classifier of Ukraine (2010). Classification of types of economic activity DK 009:2010: Order of the State Committee of Ukraine on Technical Regulation and Consumer Policy dated 11/10/2010 No 457. Retrieved from: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/rada/show/vb457609-10#Text.
7. Shenderivska, L., Guk, O., Mokhonko, H. (2022). Transformatsiia biznes-modelei vydavnytstv v umovakh viiny ta pandemii [Transformation of Business Models of Publishing House in the Conditions of War and Pandemic]. *Ekonomichnyi prostir,* 179, 79–85 [in Ukrainian].
8. Deloitte (2023). Thinking big with business transformation. Six keys to unlocking breakthrough value. Retrieved from: https://www.deloitte.com/mt/en/Industries/ technology/perspectives/six-keys-to-business-transformation.html.
9. Henriette, R. (2025). Change management model according to Lewin: Explained with example. Retrieved from: https://echometerapp.com/en/change-management-lewin/.
10. Shpak, V. (2022). Vydavnychyi biznes : navchalnyi posibnyk [Publishing business : educational manual]. Kyiv : SE "Expressad". 2nd ed. add. and processing. 292 p.
11. Smyrnova, N., Veselovska, O. (2024). Transformatsiia orhanizatsiinoi struktury upravlinnia pid diieiu innovatsiino-tekhnolohichnoho rozvytku pidpryiemstva [Transformation of Organizational Structure of Management for Innovation and Technological Development of Enterprise]. *Problemy systemnoho pidkhodu v ekonomitsi,* 4(97), 122–126 [in Ukrainian].

12. Cherniavska, I. (2018). Mekhanizmy vplyvu orhanizatsiino-upravlinskoi transformatsii na rozvytok promyslovykh pidpryiemstv [Mechanisms of Influence of Organizational and Administrative Transformation on the Development of Industrial Enterprises]. *Ekonomichnyi analiz*, 28, 2, 200–212 [in Ukrainian].
13. Hromyko, O. (2016). Zmist poniattia “transformatsiia” yak bazovoi naukovoi katehorii [The content of the concept of “transformation” as a basic scientific category]. *Efektyvnist derzhavnoho upravlinnia*, 1/2(46/47), 125–131 [in Ukrainian].
14. Yezhyzhanska, T. (2023). Knyzhkovi vydavnytstva Ukrainy v umovakh permanentnoi kryzy [Book publishing houses of Ukraine in conditions of permanent crisis]. *Visnyk Knyzhkovoi palaty*, 6, 29–35 [in Ukrainian].
15. Scott, D. (2016). What Do You Really Mean by Business “Transformation”? Retrieved from: https://hbr.org/2016/02/what-do-you-really-mean-by-business-transformation.
16. Matrunchyk, D. (2022). Teoretyko-metodolohichne zabezpechennia doslidzhennia transformatsii postvoiennoi ekonomiky: instytutsiino-terytorialnyi kontekst [Theoretical and Methodological Support for Investigating Transformation of the Post-War Economy: Institutional and Territorial Context]. *Ekonomika ta suspilstvo*, 46, doi: https://doi.org/10.32782/2524-0072/2022-46-57 [in Ukrainian].
17. Shaihorodskyi, Y. (2010). Poniattia “transformatsiia” yak instrument analizu sotsialnykh zmin [The concept of “transformation” as a tool for analyzing social change]. *Ukrainskyi naukovyi zhurnal “Osvita Rehionu”*, 4. Retrieved from: https://social-science.uu.edu.ua/article/323 [in Ukrainian].
18. Ierko, I. (2023). Cut poniattia transformatsii konkurentnoho potentsialu subiektiv turystychnoi industrii [The Content Features of the Concept of Transforming the Competitive Potential of Tourism Industry Subjects]. Skhidna Yevropa: Ekonomika, Biznes ta Upravlinnia, 4(41), 73–79 [in Ukrainian].
19. Yerokhin, S. (2005). Transformatsiinyi protses ta yoho strukturyzatsiia [Transformation process and its structuring]. *Aktualni problemy ekonomiky*, 2 (44), 4–12 [in Ukrainian].
20. Zahorui, A. (2022). Yak pratsiuiut ukrainski vydavtsi v umovakh viiny – opytuvannia. Chytomo. Retrieved from: https://chytomo.com/iak-pratsiuiut-ukrainski-vydavtsi-v-umovakh-vijny-opytuvannia/.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-22

THE ROLE OF DIGITAL VISUAL LITERACY IN MODERN MEDIA OF AZERBAIJAN

Almaz Nasibova,
Ph.D, Doctorate Student at the Department of Multimedia and Electronic Communication,
Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting CJSC
(Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0008-8731-5625

Abstract. This research is dedicated to the dominance of digital visual literacy in modern media, how it is used, and the problems associated with it. The study primarily highlights the mistakes made by journalists and media organizations in relation to visual literacy and offers solutions to these issues. The analysis shows that digital visual literacy is not just a skill, meanwhile it is a necessity in the digital age. It enables individuals to engage with the visual world of modern media in a critical, creative, and responsible manner. As technology evolves, digital visual literacy also develops and emerges in various forms. Today, as the media faces an overwhelming flow of information, it encounters more visual content than plain text. Therefore, verifying and analyzing the authenticity of this visual content has become one of the most crucial responsibilities of journalists. Otherwise, media ethics are compromised, and society receives false information. Media outlets must also know how to use the tools related to digital visual literacy, which are constantly evolving. Azerbaijani media is somewhat lagging in this area, mostly due to financial constraints. In short, this study outlines the problems and proposes solutions, while also providing examples from both local and international media cases.

Key words: Digital Visual Literacy, Visual Manipulation, Infographics, Media Literacy, Critical Thinking, Visual Communication, Technological Skills.

Introduction. In the 21st century, during a period of rapid development in Information Technologies (IT), journalism is no longer limited to text-based news reporting – it increasingly prioritizes visual content to attract audiences and convey stories. This is because audiences tend to prefer information that is more accessible, easier to understand, and quicker to consume. As a result, in today's world, all types of audiences give greater preference to digital visuals, which brings two key aspects to the forefront: accessible news and aesthetic visuals. In short, digital visual literacy (DVL) is considered one of the most crucial requirements of our time.

Speaking on the importance of visual literacy, renowned director Martin Scorsese emphasizes that visuality does not mean the same perception for everyone. Sharon Grey, a storytelling and marketing expert from West Africa, shared on her LinkedIn profile that she first encountered the term "visual literacy" while watching a two-hour filmmaking masterclass by Martin Scorsese. She notes that for anyone involved in brand communication and aiming to influence, visual literacy, much like language and its dialects has its own nuances.

Visual literacy is based on the idea that images can be 'read,' and that meaning can be derived through the process of reading. If, as communication professionals, we can analyze and understand the principles of design, only then can we achieve the main purpose of communication can be called mutual impact (Grey, 2020).

Unlike textual literacy, digital visual literacy refers to the ability to both create and interpret visual materials. and for this reason, innate talent plays a significant role. Today, it would not be wrong to say that digital visual literacy stands at the forefront of the major challenges facing modern journalism. Two essential skills lie at the heart of this challenge:

Visual reading skills

Critical thinking skills

If individuals working in any field of society are expected to improve and adopt the right approach in this area, then those who work directly with information, namely, journalists must be professionals without exception. Otherwise, the content they produce will be ignored, and as a result, they will either lose their audience or mislead them. In both cases, the damage will be felt not only by journalism but also by society; both today and in the future.

Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) for journalists and media professionals refers to the ability to create, analyze, and critique visual elements such as images, videos, infographics, and interactive media. This skill is essential not only for producing high-quality content but also for upholding journalistic ethics and integrity in an era of digital manipulation and disinformation.

Journalists with strong DVL skills can enhance storytelling, inform audiences more effectively, and help withstand the ethical challenges posed by digital media.

Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) is the ability to:

Critically interpret visual content in digital environments,

Create visual content,

Evaluate visual content.

(Hochstrasser, n.d.) In modern mass communications, DVL enables individuals and media professionals to understand the complexity of visual communication, uphold ethical standards, and engage effectively with their audiences (Hochstrasser, n.d.).

Key Requirements of Digital Visual Literacy (DVL):

Effectively convey visual messages and communicate clearly,

Create clear and impactful visual content,

Critically read, understand, and analyze information and messages presented in visual and digital texts,

Develop presentations that express visual messages, with the ability to choose and design them based on appropriate presentation methods.

Discussion.

How to detect manipulated visuals?

The rise and development of digital media not only bring benefits and positive outcomes but also lead to the emergence of various challenges and manipulations. In general, manipulated, misleading, or fake visuals can be found not only on social media platforms but also in traditional media. In a world where digital tools and videos can be easily altered, developing Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) is essential; both for media professionals and the public to critically evaluate the authenticity of visual content.

Digital media refers to "digitized content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks" (Sikarwar, 2016). Examples of digital media that have emerged in recent years include TV shows and movies available for streaming, radio programs distributed via podcasts, and books converted for e-reader access. Similar to traditional media, digital media serve as communication tools, but unlike the one-way communication of the past, they now facilitate interactions and exchanges between individuals and groups, online collaboration, and the creation of synergies that improve access to resources and services.

Commence to manipulation, in fact, is not something exclusive to the digital era or modern technologies, and it would be incorrect to view it as a recent innovation. History shows that manipulation has existed since the early days of photography and video. For instance, in the 20th century, manipulation became a tool of power, with many regimes using it to erase opponents from history. However, manipulation still exists today, from online scams to traditional mainstream media, appearing in many different forms. Detecting whether a digital visual has been manipulated is not always easy, even professional media outlets sometimes fall victim to deception and make mistakes.

Visual disinformation should be mentioned as well. (Messaris, 1994) Since the release of Vance Packard's The Hidden Persuaders (1957), discussions about advertising have often been shaped as a defensive response to advanced, scientifically developed methods intended to remain unnoticed. This perspective on visual persuasion is commonly found in mass-market publications, though it also appears in academic studies of advertising practices. Central to arguments based on this approach is the topic of subliminal persuasion, which is widely regarded as the classic example of how the public understands visual manipulation.

It should be noted that, Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini, Castro, Brezhnev, and many other dictators manipulated photographs related to themselves. Dr. Hany Farid, a specialist from the U.S.-based company FourAndSix, has presented various pieces of evidence on this topic. In particular, Joseph Stalin was especially prone to using this technique; erasing the victims of his political purges from the history of the Soviet Union.

The photo below is presented under the title "Stalin Erases Yezhov." In the first image (the original) Yezhov is present, while in the second, he is absent. The second image is a manipulated, doctored photograph.

Fig 1. Stalin purges Yezhov

Source: Pearce, A. (2016, September 26).

According to Weikmann and Lecheler (2023) another key concern with visual disinformation lies in its ease of circulation. Fake news stories are already known to spread widely on social media, which acts as their main distribution channel. They often attract significant engagement, particularly on Facebook, where they are repeatedly liked and shared, sometimes even surpassing genuine news in popularity. This tendency is likely even stronger with visual disinformation, since visuals generally draw more attention and interaction; for example, tweets containing images receive more clicks, likes, and retweets. Building on this, researchers argue that social media provide fertile ground for deepfakes and decontextualized visuals, as such content can be quickly spread to large audiences and may even influence mainstream media coverage. The core issue is that visual disinformation often circulates because it is difficult to detect and is therefore mistaken for authentic content. Overall, increased engagement on social media emerges as one of the primary consequences of visual disinformation for citizens.

Another example is the pair of images titled "Time Alters O.J. Simpson's Mugshot." These photos are considered one of the most well-known cases of modern visual manipulation, where Time magazine darkened the mugshot of O.J. Simpson (right), who at the time was accused of murder, and later had to issue an apology. James Gaines, the editor of Time at the time, explained the darkening of the image by saying that the photo had been "subtly shaped" and turned into a symbol of tragedy, and insisted that no other meaning should be inferred.

However, critics accused Time of racism over the darkened image. In contrast, Newsweek published the unaltered version of the same photo that same week, making the difference even more striking.

Fig. 2. Time alters OJ Simpson's mugshot

Source: Pearce, A. (2016, September 26).

Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) helps identify signs of digital manipulation, such as distorted images and videos, which, in turn, protects journalists, consumers, and the public from being misled by false information. On another level, understanding the consequences of using altered or distorted images, including video content, in any news report is crucial for upholding journalistic ethics and fostering public trust.

When it comes to interactive and multimedia-based approaches in media consumption, it should be noted that DVL plays a vital role in both the development and use of interactive content. This includes interactive maps, timelines, and data visualizations.

Ayten Abdulova, Chief Editor of Economic News at the Azerbaijan Television and Radio Broadcasting CJSC (AZTV), explains digital visualization as follows: "Data visualization is the graphical representation of information. That's why various infographics, diagrams, and maps are used. In short, data visualization enables a concise analysis of complex information without the need for long sentences."

Ayten Abdulova notes that they try to use infographics as much as possible in their daily news broadcasts and emphasizes its importance. This is because delivering news to the audience visually as well helps ensure that the content is remembered in greater detail.

Regarding the lack of infographics in most video reports, the chief editor explains:

"Presenting news with infographics takes more time compared to preparing a regular news segment. That's because we don't just transfer the news onto a sheet and display it as an image, we have to present the statistics visually in such a way that even if the viewer mutes the television, they can still understand what the story is about. Naturally, preparing that takes time."

She also points out that the Economics News team needs professional graphic designers, but such specialists are scarce in television, a problem the media representative attributes to financial constraints. Professional graphic designers often demand high salaries, which local TV stations struggle to afford.

Overall, the use of multimedia and infographic elements makes news content more memorable. It is also important for capturing the audience's attention and helping them absorb information more quickly.

Niyam Shirinov, Head of the Marketing Department at Report News Agency (Report.az), describes digital visuality as one of the key elements in presenting news content to readers and viewers in a clearer and more engaging way:

"Through our minimalist and corporate visual style, we aim to present news in a comprehensible and informative manner. In addition, digital visuality strengthens Report.az's brand identity. Having a unified visual style for our materials helps viewers become familiar with us more quickly and makes our content easier to recognize."

The Report.az multimedia team uses infographics and visual elements in its broadcast materials. This approach particularly helps present complex data, statistical indicators, or chronological events in a more understandable format for the audience. The multimedia team at Report.az consists of nearly 30 staff members, including designers, video editors, social media specialists, photographers, photo editors, editors, and reporters who work on infographics, video news, and other multimedia content.

The goal is to leverage the power of visual media to deliver news in a more engaging and easily digestible way. This also helps Report.az reach a broader audience on digital platforms.

As an eventual thought, it should be mentioned that over the past twenty years, research interest in virtual face manipulation has grown significantly. Among the early contributions, introduced Video Rewrite, an image-based technique designed to automatically generate new videos of a person with synthesized mouth movements. Similarly, Dale developed Video Face Replacement, one of the first automatic face-swapping methods, which reconstructs 3D models of two faces from single-camera videos and uses their geometric correspondence to map the source face onto the target. Building on this, Garrido created a system that replaces an actor's face while maintaining the original facial expressions. Another approach, VDub, applies advanced 3D face capture methods to realistically modify an actor's face so that it aligns with the mouth movements of a dubber (Rössler et al., 2019).

In conclusion all these are the strong examples for the modern manipulation techniques. Also, these prove the intensive activity of politicians, social media users and their purpose for themselves.

The Process of Creating Infographics

Infographic is data visualizations that present complex information quickly and clearly. Data visualization includes signs, photos, maps, graphics and charts, it presents complex data. The infographic is part of data visualization. The foundation of infographics is composed of three major parts. They are Visual, Content and Knowledge. Visual representations of data, information, and/or knowledge are:

Visual elements – colors, graphics, signs, icons, maps, etc.

Content elements –facts, statistics, texts, references, time frames, etc.

Knowledge –conclusion to express the stories or messages.

The infographic design is very significant. The designing process of infographic can help understand and implement the principles of the designs better than designing the web or documents as well. Nevertheless, graphics could fast persuade readers to disregard the article (Siricharoen & Siricharoen, 2015).

Studies show that the utilization of modern technologies in classrooms gives learners the opportunity to learn faster with better function and with more satisfaction from their class attendance. The attraction of infographics seems to be inherent within their nature, since people are drawn to the visualizations, colors, and images of the infographics itself. An infographic can transfer knowledge about a topic faster and more effectively than pure text; however, this condition is depending on the quality and presentation of the infographics (Naparin & Saad, 2017).

Infographics are mainly used in three formats:

1. Reminder posts for notable days (This Day in History) – Special infographics are created for anniversaries, national and international holidays, and historical events.

2. Visual support in video-photo news – Images, graphic elements, and animations are added to videos to make the news more dynamic and visually appealing.

3. Topical news, interesting quotes, and other content displayed with graphics. These can be adapted based on the specific context.

Creating infographics for Report News Agency is not a simple task; it requires time and effort from the editorial team. In particular, accurately visualizing statistical data or complex information demands detailed and careful work.

This process consists of several stages. First, information is collected and analyzed; statistical indicators or the key elements of the news are identified. Then, a design concept is developed. Decisions are made regarding which colors, graphic elements, and fonts will be used, and how the overall visual structure will be built. Finally, the design is executed and edited.

In the context of modern media, Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) enables journalists, content creators, and educators to create engaging experiences that allow audiences to actively explore content. For instance, interactive news websites or data visualizations give users the opportunity to delve deeper into a story, making the content more compelling and memorable.

Experts also identify the following as key components of Digital Visual Literacy:

– Recognizing visual biases, stereotypes, and manipulations in media
– Interpreting meaning by decoding symbols, colors, and design choices
– Understanding cultural and contextual nuances in visual communication
– Ethical awareness, including understanding the ethical implications of creating and sharing visual content, such as issues of privacy, copyright, and consent
– Technological skills, such as using software and platforms for editing, enhancing, and sharing visual content

"A picture is worth a thousand words", is the familiar phrase. "The human brain is more able to identify and comprehend relationships and patterns if data is encoded into visual forms".

For Journalism, there is the importance of information visualization which is adding in reporting the believable and trusted means context. As it mentioned "Infographics: Maximum Information in Minimum Space", this phase explains the main purpose of infographics design which is produced as helpful as they can in order to give as much detailed information as possible and it can save spaces (Siricharoen, 2013).

Eventually, infographics are crucial in achieving the goals mentioned in the prior section, as they effectively communicate intricate information and help achieve specific objectives (Bhat & Alyahya, 2023).

Improvement of RVS Media Literacy

Firstly, Media literacy is the term most commonly used in North America, especially in relationship to media education for youth. Its practice draws heavily on the key concepts, academic traditions, and field tested practices of media educators in Europe, Australia and New Zealand.

The concept of media literacy has long-standing roots in North American education. As early as 1933, Edgar Dale of Ohio State University advocated incorporating audio-visual and non-print media into public school curricula. His Cone of Experience, though later altered and widely misattributed, became a foundational tool for teaching media authenticity and authorship. By the 1960s, scholars and policymakers, including Marshall McLuhan, supported formal media literacy initiatives in Canada. Since then, media literacy has been applied across a wide range of disciplines; including arts, sciences, mathematics, and humanities both in formal and informal educational settings (Tyner, 2009).

(Jacques, 2024) Visual literacy fosters human creativity and innovation, going beyond protection against digital deception. It deepens our understanding of the visual world and honors the preservation of art, literature, and music as essential parts of our shared human heritage (Jacques, 2024).

Rasheva-Yordanova and Planska-Simeonova (2019) emphasize that “Digital Visual Literacy” as the ability to construct meaning from digital visual images. It is the ability to create and interpret computer-based visual materials effectively and has become a key aspect of virtually every field, from the sciences to commerce to communication and entertainment. Digital visual literacy is required in a wide range of tasks, both inside and outside the workplace. Computers have fundamentally changed the nature of visual communication, in part because the enable a powerful abstract encoding of visual images and models for the first time in history. Because visual information is represented mathematically, it can be replicated, modified, and shared in new ways.

In today’s era of rapidly developing digital media, Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) has become a vital element in promoting overall media literacy. Visual media has taken a dominant role in communication, and media literacy (including visual literacy) teaches individuals how to recognize and interpret visual messages. Visually literate media consumers are more equipped to question the reliability and authenticity of the visuals they encounter, especially in the digital space. This contributes to the formation of a more informed audience and helps assess the credibility of media sources.

Digital visuals have a significant impact on public opinion, shape certain social attitudes, and can even influence outcomes. Thus, journalists often search for photos, videos, or even infographics on the internet to match the stories, investigations, or analytical articles they publish. The visual elements they use add dynamism to their content and make it more engaging for the audience. However, visuals selected blindly or randomly can often lead to controversies, misrepresentations, or other issues.

“On November 7, 2024, the ships CMS Pəhləvan, CMS İgid, and CMS-3, operated by the Azerbaijani branch of Caspian Marine Services B.V. and sailing under the state flag, were forced to enter Eritrean territorial waters due to worsening weather conditions during their voyage from the Suez Canal toward Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (Vahid, 2025).”

This news was widely circulated across Azerbaijani media, and even the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan issued an official statement regarding the incident.

Meanwhile, some websites, prioritizing visual content, use random ship photos from their archives in related news materials. In this case, some media outlets that initially reported the incident mistakenly shared photos of ships belonging to the “Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping Company” CJSC (ASCO).

ASCO’s press secretary, Mehman Mehdiyev, immediately responded to this inaccuracy on his social media platform, addressing journalists with the following message:

“Yesterday’s news about a ship being detained off the coast of Africa once again highlighted how negligence can occur in the visual accompaniment of news. Although the detained ship has no affiliation with ASCO, unfortunately, some media outlets added images of ASCO ships operating in the Caspian Sea to their reports.

First and foremost, I must say that in such cases, we receive numerous messages of concern from sailors and their families. Just like false information, inaccurate visuals also cause confusion among them.”

Mehman Mehdiyev contacted the original source that published the news and succeeded in having the photo replaced. However, another issue reveals that Mehdiyev also pointed out, since the news had already been republished across multiple websites, it was not possible to reach all of them at once, and some sites continued to display the incorrect image.

Several important points emerge from this incident:

The websites that shared incorrect visuals violated basic journalism principles, they published a photo without verifying its authenticity. Their approach was also harmful and irresponsible. Journalistic codes of ethics emphasize that journalists should avoid publishing news that could damage individuals' lives or cause psychological distress. The core ethical principle of humanity and compassion was clearly ignored.

This mistake evidently caused significant concern among many families of ASCO employees, who contacted the company to inquire about the fate of their loved ones reportedly at sea. In short, due to the incompetence of some media outlets, several families experienced unnecessary psychological stress.

Fig. 3. Azerbaijan Caspian Sea Shipping Company" (ASCO) ship

Source: *Qafqazinfo.az (2025)*

Let’s take another look at the statement shared by the press secretary of “Azerbaijan Caspian Shipping Company” CJSC, Mehman Mehdiyev, on his social media platform regarding this issue. He emphasized that this is not the first time such an incident has occurred, in fact, it happens quite frequently.

In short, every time an incident involving ships takes place, some media representatives include photos they find online in their reports without any verification. Mehman Mehdiyev reminded journalists that this approach, ignoring the ship's company, country of origin, or type, violates the fundamental principles of journalism. On his page, he made the following public call to journalists and media organizations:

If there is no actual photo available for the subject, be sure to label the image as “symbolic photo” or “archive image.” Before publishing any material related to a ship, piece of equipment, or incident, contact official sources to verify the information. Visual elements enhance the importance of news, but incorrect visuals can undermine its meaning and accuracy.

Let’s not forget: a professional approach not only strengthens public trust in information but also helps preserve the media’s credibility.

As this incident illustrates, visual literacy among journalists has increasingly come into question in recent years, with a noticeable rise in errors. Media professionals must adhere to ethical standards when producing and sharing visual content. The concept of Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) demands that every journalist and media outlet make ethically sound decisions in this regard. This is especially critical when covering sensitive topics, such as vulnerable communities, criminal incidents, or similar delicate matters.

As digital platforms continue to evolve, so too will the role of visual content. In the future, Digital Visual Literacy will become an essential skill for understanding emerging technologies like virtual reality and AI-generated visuals. Both media professionals and consumers will increasingly rely on DVL to navigate this evolving media landscape. In this parallel, it no coincidence that the images in a news story can convey information and ideas to critical-minded students, and this basic knowledge of visual literacy allows them to gather the information and ideas contained in an image, place them in context, and determine whether they are valid before they can proceed to the next level of producing their own visual content (Jhaveri, 2010).

Corollary, digital visual literacy is the digital form of visual literacy and modern form of it. Beyond doubt relevant keywords "technology literacy," "digital literacy," and "visual literacy" were employed in a search query conducted on the Web of Science database to identify the academic domains focusing on research related to the subject. It also reveals the importance and development of considered perception for today and the future.

This study shows something pretty clear: digital visual literacy, DVL for short isn't just a nice skill in today's Azerbaijani media. It's essential, and honestly, the same goes for media everywhere. The problem? Even with all the tech advances, people still struggle to judge visuals critically. The core issue hasn't changed.

When you look closer, it's obvious this isn't just about technology. The real problem is built into the system. Big newsrooms in Azerbaijan often don't have graphic designers, their workflows are outdated, and everyone feels rushed to get the news out first. So, there's barely any time to check if an image or video is real or fake. That leads to more stories using old photos or random images from the internet. In the end, that chips away at both accuracy and ethics.

You can see the same pattern around the world. Researchers like Weikmann and Lecheler (2023) point out that visual disinformation spreads much faster than misinformation in text, no surprise, considering how the ASCO incident played out. Wrong visuals can bounce through news outlets before anyone gets a chance to fix things. And Messaris (1994) adds that most people don't even notice when visuals are manipulated, which puts even more responsibility on journalists to get it right. What makes the Azerbaijani situation trickier is the lack of training and education in DVL. Journalists just aren't getting the opportunities to learn better skills.

The consequences here are real. Without strong DVL skills, journalists can end up spreading misinformation by accident. That erodes public trust, and sometimes it even hurts people directly, as families of ASCO employees experienced firsthand. So, building up DVL shouldn't be seen as just another technical box to check. It's part of what makes journalism trustworthy. Adding visual literacy to journalism classes and running regular newsroom training would help prevent these kinds of mistakes.

Of course, this study has its limits. It's mostly descriptive and relies on what's already public, not new data. There's still a lot to learn. Future research can dig into how people in Azerbaijan actually read visual content, how common visual misrepresentation really is, or what happens when AI-generated images and deepfakes get mixed in.

All in all, the message is pretty urgent: Azerbaijani media needs stronger digital visual literacy, and fast.

Conclusion. Modern media is filled with images, videos, infographics, and other visual formats. Digital Visual Literacy (DVL) enables audiences to critically understand and interpret these visuals. It helps them recognize bias, intent, and key messages embedded in visual content.

Being able to identify visual bias involves recognizing techniques such as color psychology and photo editing, and understanding how visuals influence thoughts and behaviors. Today, many professional journalists still struggle to recognize visual bias, which highlights the need for ongoing improvement in their knowledge of digital tools. As digital tools become more accessible, the ability to create impactful visuals has become a vital skill. Therefore, the following recommendations are proposed at the conclusion of this research:

Media organizations should conduct training sessions and workshops on visual media literacy for journalists.

Courses on visual literacy should be integrated into journalism faculties and taught in a structured, systematic way.

In the process of developing Digital Visual Literacy, journalists use a wide range of tools to create, analyze, and verify images, videos, and other visual content effectively. These include:

Editing tools: Adobe Photoshop, GIMP, Canva

Video editing tools: Adobe Premiere Pro, Final Cut Pro, iMovie

Verification tools: InVID, TinEye, Google Reverse Image Search, FotoForensics

Data visualization tools: Tableau, Google Data Studio, Infogram

Fact-checking tools: PolitiFact, and others

It’s important to note that new tools are constantly emerging. That’s why media professionals and organizations must stay actively engaged in the digital world, otherwise, they risk falling behind the competition or making serious errors in digital visual literacy.

Eventually, digital visual literacy is more important than before because of several reasons. People could be convinced in term of manipulation in the context of interest. The development of digital visual literacy of population especially in Azerbaijan is a serious issue for the prevention to the dangerous occurrence and their own protection. Meanwhile, technologically globalized world requires an awareness society for improvement of their understanding. It is also connected with being a strong persona in society.

Certainly, this phenomenon – digital visual literacy and its standards would be changed. This consists of modern complications and technological developments, and also about the new threat factor.

In conclusion, digital visual literacy is an essential skill in today’s media-saturated environment, enabling individuals to critically interpret and evaluate visual content. Continuous training and education for journalists are vital to ensure they can recognize bias, use digital tools effectively, and maintain professional standards. As technology evolves, new tools and methods for creating, analyzing, and verifying visuals will continue to emerge, requiring ongoing adaptation. Developing digital visual literacy among the general population, particularly in regions like Azerbaijan, is crucial for personal protection and fostering an informed society. Ultimately, embracing and advancing digital visual literacy strengthens both individual agency and societal resilience in a technologically globalized world.

References:

1. Bhat, S. A., & Alyahya, S. (2023). Infographics in educational settings: A literature review. *IEEE Access*, *12*, 1633–1649.
2. Cullen, J. (2013). *A short history of the modern media*. John Wiley & Sons.
3. Emanuel, R., & Challons-Lipton, S. (2013). Visual literacy and the digital native: Another look. *Journal of Visual Literacy*, *32*(1), 7–26.
4. Fell, B. (2006). Visual literacy, journalism and the digital age. In *Joint Journalism Education Association (JEA) and Journalism Education Association (JEANZ) Conference* (pp. 1–16). School of Communication Studies, AUT University.
5. Grey, S. (2020, September 5). *The role of visual literacy in modern public relations*. LinkedIn. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/role-visual-literacy-modern-public-relations-sharon-grey/
6. Jacques, J. (2024, February 19). *The essential skill of visual literacy: A guide to understanding visual content*. Jesse Jacques Photography. https://www.jessejacquesphoto.com/post/the-essential-skill-of-visual-literacy-a-guide-to-understanding-visual-content
7. Jhaveri, A. (2010). Rethinking journalism education through visual literacy.
8. Manovich, L. (2001). What is new media. *The language of new media*, *6*, 1–15.
9. Messaris, P. (1994). Visual literacy vs. visual manipulation. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*, *11*(503), 181–203.
10. Messaris, P. (2012). Visual “literacy” in the digital age. *Review of Communication*, *12*(2), 101–117.
11. Naparin, H., & Saad, A. B. (2017). Infographics in education: Review on infographics design. *The International Journal of Multimedia & Its Applications*, *9*(4), 5.
12. Pearce, A. (2016, September 26). 10 famous photos that were manipulated. *Yahoo News UK*. https://uk.news.yahoo.com/the-story-behind-10-famous-doctored-photos-162819256.html?guccounter=1

13. Qafqazinfo.az. (2025, January 8). *Azərbaycanın 3 gəmisi heyətlə birgə girov saxlanılır? [Are Azerbaijan's 3 ships being held hostage along with their crew?]* Qafqazinfo.az. https://qafqazinfo.az/news/detail/azerbaycanin-3-gemisi-heyetle-birge-girov-saxlanilir-458350
14. Rasheva-Yordanova, K., & Planska-Simeonova, K. (2019). Conceptual framework of digital visual literacy. In *ICERI2019 Proceedings* (pp. 8035–8042). IATED.
15. Rossler, A., Cozzolino, D., Verdoliva, L., Riess, C., Thies, J., & Nießner, M. (2019). Faceforensics++: Learning to detect manipulated facial images. In *Proceedings of the IEEE/CVF international conference on computer vision* (pp. 1–11).
16. Siricharoen, W. V. (2013, May). Infographics: the new communication tools in digital age. In *The international conference on e-technologies and business on the web (ebw2013)* (Vol. 169174).
17. Siricharoen, W. V., & Siricharoen, N. (2015, May). How infographic should be evaluated. In *Proceedings of the 7th International Conference on Information Technology (ICIT 2015)* (pp. 558–564).
18. Spalter, A. M., & van Dam, A. (2008). Digital Visual Literacy. *Theory Into Practice*, *47*(2), 93–101.
19. Tyner, K. (2009). *Media literacy*. Taylor & Francis.
20. Vahid, F. (2025, January 8). Eritrea: 18 crew members of hijacked ships are Azerbaijani citizens, a note has been issued on the matter. *APA*. https://apa.az/xarici-siyaset/eritreyada-girov-goturulen-gemilerin-heyet-uzvlerinden-18-i-azerbaycan-vetendasidir-mesele-ile-bagli-nota-verilib-eksk-luziv-883764
21. Weikmann, T., & Lecheler, S. (2023). Visual disinformation in a digital age: A literature synthesis and research agenda. *New Media & Society*, *25*(12), 3696–3713.
22. Weimann, G. (1999). *Communicating unreality: Modern media and the reconstruction of reality*. Sage Publications.

THEORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF POLITOLOGY & HISTORY

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-23

INFORMATION WARFARE IN THE MODERN WORLD

Agasiyeva Elshana Aziz,
PhD in Philosophy, Associate Professor,
Baku Slavic University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-3931-5873
shanel_agasi@gmail.com

Abstract. The relevance of research in the field of information wars lies in the fact that every state has a need to ensure the security of the functioning of its information systems and to protect them from deliberate influence. Conflicts based on information warfare are becoming more and more frequent. The topic of information warfare is relevant today because it is one of the active instruments of modern geopolitics, which has an impact on the political, economic, and cultural life of a given society. Unlike the wars known to human history, the goals of information warfare are not the physical destruction of the enemy, but a negative impact on the adversary through the distortion of information in order to manipulate public consciousness. Information warfare in the 21st century is acquiring a more total character. The information sphere is also becoming an arena of interstate confrontation, and therefore it can threaten national security. At present, ideological-informational war also includes propaganda, which, by substituting historical facts, manipulates people's consciousness. For example, all of Facebook is teeming with pseudo-history about the so-called "Great Armenia". The history of Armenia is being falsified, and these fictitious narratives are accompanied by emphasis on the supposed long-suffering and special character of the Armenian people, who allegedly are unique. But no matter how much Armenian pseudo-historians and politicians praise themselves, sometimes all their information reaches the point of absurdity, since they resort to fantasies.

Key words: information warfare, religions, manipulate Armenian occupiers,

Introduction. In the modern world, the mechanisms for unleashing wars are linked to methods of information warfare, and this in turn is connected with the emergence of the Internet, which has raised all these mechanisms to a qualitatively new level.

The relevance of research in the field of information wars lies in the fact that every state has a need to ensure the security of the functioning of its information systems and to protect them from deliberate influence. Conflicts based on information warfare are becoming more and more frequent.

The topic of information warfare is relevant today because it is one of the active instruments of modern geopolitics, which has an impact on the political, economic, and cultural life of a given society. Unlike the wars known to human history, the goals of information warfare are not the physical destruction of the enemy, but a negative impact on the adversary through the distortion of information in order to manipulate public consciousness (Boisot, 1998).

This topic is also relevant because it is connected with the need to introduce a separate educational system on information security. The concept of "information warfare" includes the manipulation of information for the fulfillment of assigned tasks. In particular, with the advent of the Internet, it has become possible to spread both truth and lies on a global scale. The essence of information warfare leads to social consequences such as escalating contradictions within society and disorienting the population.

The purpose of the research. The purpose of the article is to show the role and significance of information wars in a historical context.

Analysis of the latest relevant research and publications shows that this topic has been widely discussed by scholars such as Nye J., Forno, R. and Baklarz, R., Boisot M.H. and etcs. Although as a term "information warfare" appeared in the mid-1970s, even in ancient times, when waging wars against a particular country, the leaders of the attacking side used various methods of information manipulation in the form of spreading false rumors to achieve their goals. For example, in Ancient Greece, during the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC), letters were used to spread rumors about their enemies in order to cause distrust among the population. Over time, when printed letters appeared, printed literature began to be used to spread false texts in order to mislead people. And with the development of technology, information wars became more extensive. In the 20th century, propaganda on radio and television became one of the key instruments accompanying conflicts. At present, broad propaganda is being conducted on Russian television with the aim of justifying military actions in Ukraine, drawing the image of an enemy out of the Ukrainian people in order to mobilize new recruits for the war. In fact, such suggestion is based not on logic, but on the ability of people to perceive the words of the speaker as an instruction.

Results. One of the first researchers to introduce the term "information warfare" was the American expert Thomas Rona in 1976. Information warfare is one of the problems of modern society. Any state needs to take measures aimed at strengthening the information culture of society as a whole. The informatization of modern society leads to the problem of information warfare, the main elements of which are news, messages, and various reports.

The use of disinformation takes place through psychological influence, and the most widespread device of information warfare used to influence society is the fake. In the mass media, fake news has lately become a dangerous method of influencing people's opinions. In general, information warfare uses persuasion for long-term shaping of attitudes in order to cause people to feel hostility toward this or that object of criticism. Psychophysiology is also used, that is, the right to be the first to report certain events, since the first report usually inspires the greatest trust. For older people, fictional stories are usually communicated in the morning, while for young people, the most effective time for planting false information is considered to be the evening. Most often, propagandists of false stories seek to evoke people's sympathy in order to manipulate their consciousness. Beneficial information is presented in more detail, while information that is unfavorable to the propagandist is reduced to a minimum. There is also such a method of suggestion when one and the same idea is repeated in different versions, or inserted at every opportunity; in this way, the adversary achieves the imposition of their ideology (The Treaty of Gulistan).

For example, Armenian politicians began their fake information, seemingly from something quite simple – from cooking – by advertising the national Azerbaijani dish "dolma" as Armenian, and this was done with the help of Russian cinema and television, starting from the end of the Soviet period. Yet the word "dolma" in Azerbaijani means "to fill" (that is, to fill a grape leaf or the leaf of another plant), while in Armenian this word has no meaning at all. Thus, Armenian false informers use methods of psychological influence on people's consciousness, as if they have especially exquisite cuisine, although most of the recipes of Azerbaijani cuisine are presented by them as their own. In addition, many musical works and songs whose authors many years ago were Azerbaijani composers are, in recent years, performed by artists in the Armenian language and passed off as their own. National clothing and dances have also been adopted in the Azerbaijani style, although there is evidence and photographs showing that when Armenians were resettled to the Caucasus with the help of Russia in the 19th century, they had completely different clothing.

During the rule of M. S. Gorbachev, beginning from the 1980s, an information war against the Azerbaijani population clearly began to manifest itself: Azerbaijanis began to be persecuted and expelled from Armenia and Karabakh, while on Soviet television everything was presented in the opposite way. Everything that was done by Armenian terrorists was attributed in television, radio, and the press to the Azerbaijani side. And when many Azerbaijani refugees who had been subjected to violence walked through mountains and steppes with exhausted children and settled in the city of

Sumgait, which is located several kilometers from Baku, the KGB of the Soviet Union staged events so that it would appear as if these refugees had killed several Armenians in Sumgait in one night, although the investigation later proved that this was done by KGB operatives with the support of Gorbachev's policies, in order to spread fake information about Azerbaijanis. At that moment, this fake was disseminated throughout the world, and everyone condemned the Azerbaijanis; it was very difficult to prove the true picture of events, because Armenian politicians and the Gorbachev government did this together in order to present everything to the world in a way that was beneficial for them. This was a genuine information attack – a planned campaign to spread false information, whose goal was to influence public opinion.

From the history of the settlement of Armenians in the Caucasus it is known that in the 19th century, as a result of the Russo-Persian war, the Russian Empire annexed several Azerbaijani khanates under the Treaty of Gulistan (The Treaty of Gulistan), the following Azerbaijani khanates passed to Russia: Karabakh, Ganja, Shirvan, Sheki, Derbent and others), and several other Azerbaijani khanates (Tabriz and others) went to Iran under the Gulistan and Turkmenchay peace treaties. There was an agreement to resettle thousands of Armenians from Persia and Ottoman Anatolia to the territory of the Russian Empire. Russia's policy pursued the goal of placing as much non-Muslim population as possible between Russia and Ottoman Turkey. And in 1828–1831, about 57,000 Armenians were resettled from Persia to what were then called "Aderbidzhan" lands, under the leadership of the Armenian Lazarev, and they were settled in the houses of Azerbaijanis who were forcibly evicted by representatives of the Russian Empire.

At that time, Armenian settlers began to be hired by more affluent Azerbaijanis for any work, and the hospitable Azerbaijani people, with understanding, allowed them to earn money, helped them with clothing and food, and they even received their surnames from the occupation or from the master whom they served. For example, Mirzayan – the one who serves Mirza (an Azerbaijani name), and from that time they acquired nicknames that gradually became their surnames: Azerbaijani surnames with the ending "-yan", which in Azerbaijani meant "the one who does" ("ne eliyen"). But when they had already settled in, a psychological struggle began through disinformation, carried out by representatives of the Russian Empire, who set the Armenian population against the Azerbaijani population in order to create divisions in society by instilling in them a sense of superiority over Azerbaijanis. That is, a method of manipulating information through false rumors was used to achieve certain goals.

During the collapse of the USSR, Armenian politicians, thanks to Russian weapons, managed to launch the Karabakh war, expelling a million inhabitants of the Azerbaijani population. For 30 years all these lands were kept by Armenian occupiers in a plundered state and, in parallel, they constantly spread false information throughout the world as if they were the most ancient people and that it all belonged to them. But the Azerbaijani people did not resign themselves to such injustice and, thanks to the wise policies of President Heydar Aliyev and, after his death, Ilham Aliyev, all these years attempts were made to return these lands by peaceful negotiations; but when the Azerbaijani people became convinced that the information war was continuing, they had to win back their lands from the Armenian occupiers by military means. In the national character of the Azerbaijani people there is such a trait – to try to resolve everything in a good way, but if they are not understood, then they show their strength. At present, infrastructure is being restored anew, houses are being built so that Azerbaijani refugees can return and live where their ancestors lived, on the returned primordial Azerbaijani lands.

Although at present Armenian false informers, who have been imbued with ideas about the greatness of their people, continue to wage information warfare on the Internet, spreading untrue information and disinformation, the Azerbaijani people are confident that sooner or later the truth will come to light.

Information wars in the modern world replace real wars, and therefore in the future information will play an even greater role. Under conditions of globalization, when many things in the world are interconnected, it is impossible to move toward total confrontation (Forno, Baklarz, 1999).

Under the Soviet regime, too, as it became clear after historical documents were opened in the archives, there was a great deal of false propaganda. For example, in Soviet times the image of Lenin was equated with that of the kindest person. But as it turned out, thanks to the archives, his telegrams were read in which the "great leader" Lenin ordered Baku to be burned in 1920 if the government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (which existed from 1918 to 1920) did not surrender, and therefore the 11th Red Army of the Russian Bolsheviks invaded and Soviet power was established by force. At the same time, leaflets were distributed containing texts urging the population to support the Bolsheviks who would help the poor. This was a method of spreading false information in order to create a certain public opinion in their own interests. The USSR was far from the first state to use propaganda subversion.

Information wars are often connected with wars between different religions. Usually, religious conflicts lead to the undermining of the value foundations of human existence. Today, anyone can participate in these information wars from their own home. Therefore, new concepts, new rules, new ethics, new laws, and a rethinking of freedom of speech are needed. People are gradually ceasing to trust the media, and in many countries people trust journalists less and less. Against the backdrop of a crisis of ethical values, people clearly see that the media increasingly highlight problems one-sidedly. Politicians have long tried to persuade people with facts and lies that resemble facts (Forno, Baklarz, 1999).

Democracy suffers from the abuse of freedom of speech, but people's well-being suffers even more from it. When new media appeared, the entire system of values and relationships began to change, just as it did with the emergence of radio and television. At first everyone is happy about the appearance of a new source of information, and then it falls into the hands of aggressors.

One of the methods of manipulation is the use of SEO techniques (search engine optimization), which make use of keywords. Manipulators can also use spam or create fake links in order to artificially raise the ranking of their site. Advertising also plays a significant role, and can be used to promote their content (Gao, Li, Clarke, 2008).

To cope with the challenges of information wars, it is necessary to develop and improve mechanisms for protection against information attacks. It is also important to raise public awareness about methods of manipulating information so that people can distinguish disinformation from truth. It is also necessary to restrict propaganda resources so that public opinion is based on reliable data. Such measures will make it possible to ensure political and social stability in the modern world. At the same time, if one has reliable information, it is better to know which rumors false informers are spreading around the world – as the saying goes, forewarned is forearmed (Forno, Baklarz, 1999).

Falsifiers of historical facts try to distort historical events in their own interests. The history of any country is very important for state integrity, and therefore, knowing the true history of their state, people can properly build their future. For example, the Armenian people were imposed with an invented history of their nation initially by Tsarist Russia when they were resettled to the Caucasus in order to create a Christian buffer between Muslim countries. Later, having adopted this idea as the national idea of the Armenian people, they put at the forefront the history of the "Armenian genocide", which allegedly took place on the territory of Ottoman Turkey, although, as archival documents prove, everything was the other way around. Books about the ancient origin of the Armenian people were published and distributed to every representative of this nation. Therefore, many of them came to believe these fantasies – that they were the first to appear on Earth and so on. The entire Armenian people were indoctrinated with the idea that they were a long-suffering nation that supposedly had to create their state "from sea to sea". This idea, which provided completely falsified "facts" of history, gradually began to infect all representatives of this nationality living around the world.

A large number of interested parties are engaged in falsification in order to implement their plans. In reality, any people has the right to its own history of formation, to the reliability of events of its history, and only by knowing the true history of its people can it have a future. But when the information war of the attacking side penetrates all areas of the cultural life of another people, in addition to the desire to seize foreign lands, a deliberate crime is being committed. For example, Armenian composers appropriate the authorial compositions of Azerbaijani composers, and many culinary recipes of national Azerbaijani cuisine are advertised as their own. The point is that the concentration of Armenian false reports about the history of Azerbaijan is growing, and this is no longer just some popular topics that are occasionally discussed – it is a continuous pumping that takes on politicized forms.

The falsification of history is not a phenomenon that exists by itself, but a weapon of new-type wars, which is also called a "mental war", the meaning of which is to change the mental foundation of society. In order to win the mental war against Armenian fantasists of history, it is necessary to talk about the national values of one's own culture and history.

The development of information and communication networks has increased the speed of information transmission. In fact, the information space often confuses people. And for the effective fight against fakes, it is necessary simply to raise the level of historical education through educational programs, because sometimes citizens themselves do not know the history of their Motherland and therefore, having read fakes, fall into delusion. To increase the effectiveness of information work with the population, it would be useful to develop theoretical principles that reveal the essence of falsification of history as an instrument of mental war (Military concept for NATO strategic communications, 2010).

In waging information warfare, opponents also use the method of neuro-linguistic programming – that is, synchronization and mutual adjustment of the bodily rhythms of the speaker to those of the person listening to the information. Intimidating information is also applied against the adversary, for example, statements that nothing will work out for them, that their situation is hopeless. In some cases, "zombification" is used – that is, psychological subjugation. In addition, there are such types of information-psychological weapons as energy-informational psychological weapons.

Television plays a major role in information warfare, creating the illusion of the dissemination of truthful knowledge, but in fact often fulfilling the orders of people interested in disinformation. Television makes it possible to feel involved in what is happening on the screen, and therefore trust in what is being said arises. The Internet occupies a special place in mass awareness, covering a worldwide audience where it is possible to plausibly depict real events in one's own way. Not only broad audiences are used but also means of virtual reality.

One of the tools of information warfare is an instrumental approach to history: facts that did or did not occur in the past are used to justify actions in the present. Usually, in turning-point moments of society, interest in its history is renewed. A significant influence on the formation of the historical consciousness of society is exerted by such a method as the falsification of history. Any historical event is a link in a causal chain that stretches from the past through the present into the future. But the history of a given country is not always presented truthfully. It is necessary to distinguish real events from falsified ones, which are later reflected in public consciousness.

In the modern world, under conditions of the development of the information society, we observe the strengthening of information that does not correspond to the natural character of the Armenian community. The continuous falsification of historical facts is a serious problem that exacerbates relations between the peoples of Azerbaijan and Armenia. Articles and comments are published on the Internet in which fragments of works are taken out of context and paraphrased, leading to the incitement of hatred between peoples.

The falsification of history is an instrument of real politics – that is, events and facts occurring in the life of society are distorted. Falsification of history is used as a tool of influence on the scholarly community.

At present, information wars are becoming increasingly complex. New methods and instruments of information wars appear in the modern world. These methods include fakes – false or unreliable news that most often has a sensational character in order to evoke emotional reactions among people. Usually, false information can be used to achieve political and economic goals and may also be presented in the form of forged documents. Another method of information wars is cyberattacks, which disrupt the functioning of computer systems and can create a serious threat to national security (Nye, 1990).

Mainly, manipulation of information and cyberattacks are used to influence public opinion. Disinformation is used to deceive recipients of information, which creates conditions for the emergence of conflicts. To cope with the challenges of information wars, it is necessary to create public opinion that is based on reliable data.

The falsification of history represents a great threat to modernity; therefore, a well-considered state policy toward falsifiers of history is needed. A policy of appeasing the aggressor sooner or later turns against its initiators. It is in our interest not to give grounds for new disputes on a historical basis, but, on the contrary, to initiate meetings of historians, international military-historical seminars, conferences, and to make them public, even though truth is born in disputes. A special thematic historical TV channel or a historical program broadcasting across the entire post-Soviet space could be very useful here. At the same time, Azerbaijani scholars should firmly adhere to historical accuracy so that any inaccuracies cannot be used by our ideological opponents. Under conditions of information warfare, it is necessary to be able to articulate an objective position that can form a truthful history of our country.

Information warfare in the 21st century is acquiring a more total character. The information sphere is also becoming an arena of interstate confrontation, and therefore it can threaten national security. At present, ideological-informational war also includes propaganda, which, by substituting historical facts, manipulates people's consciousness. For example, all of Facebook is teeming with pseudo-history about the so-called "Great Armenia". The history of Armenia is being falsified, and these fictitious narratives are accompanied by emphasis on the supposed long-suffering and special character of the Armenian people, who allegedly are unique. But no matter how much Armenian pseudo-historians and politicians praise themselves, sometimes all their information reaches the point of absurdity, since they resort to fantasies.

Information, by its nature, has two sides of the same coin – it can be both a blessing and a means of destruction. Journalism plays a major role in the information sphere, as a "fourth estate" called upon to deliver information with quality. It is also worth noting the fact that the struggle of ideologies in the world never stops (Military concept for NATO strategic communications, 2010).

Usually, wars are started in order to seize the natural resources of the places where they exist. As a result of war, certain damage is inflicted even on the victorious state, whereas in an information war there is no physical front in action. But as a result of a successful information war, the side engaged in false information expects to deceitfully win over the public opinion of other countries, so that, with the support of other states of the world, it can defeat the country that possesses rich natural resources. A clear example of an information war against Azerbaijan is the constant statements and stories about the "antiquity of the Armenian people", about the "Armenian genocide", which in essence did not take place, and so on. In the Internet space, beginning with a market seller who, giving an interview, presents, for example, Georgian churchkhela as an Armenian product, or a cook who wants to convince everyone that the Azerbaijani dish dolma is supposedly Armenian. Armenian pseudo-historians and political scientists try to convince everyone that they supposedly had a state "from sea to sea".

To misinform the peoples of the world about their "chosenness", Armenian disinformers also make use of religion – that is, relying on Christianity, they want to attract public opinion to their side. For this purpose, they write everywhere that they were the first to adopt Christianity, whereas Christianity was first adopted on the territory of Caucasian Albania and the first churches were built there, but they appropriated them, since the Albanian population, after the Arab conquest, was gradually forced to move from Zoroastrianism and Christianity to Islam. Taking advantage of the fact that in Europe and America the Christian religion is practiced, and in order to command respect and attract others to their side, Armenian bloggers and politicians suggest that they are almost the “fathers” of the Christian Church. At present, they have set themselves the goal of building a monument to Jesus of the largest size in the world so that everyone comes and worships this prophet, which is clearly the use of religious tactics for political purposes.

Conclusions. Many people are religious, and in the language of religion believers perceive and formulate social processes for themselves. In reality, religion is used by politics as a means of maintaining power; therefore, religious ideas are effectively used by politicians.

Information warfare comes in two forms: one is information-technical, and the other is information-psychological. The main objects of influence of information-technical warfare are radio, television, and the Internet. The objects of influence of information-psychological warfare are, above all, the human psyche and the system of forming public opinion.

References:

1. Boisot, M.H. (1998). Knowledge Assets. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. The Treaty of Gulistan. URL: https://mfa.gov.az/files/shares/Treaty%20of%20Gulistan.pdf. (accessed: 07.11.2025).
3. Gao, F., Li, M., Clarke, S. (2008). Knowledge, Management, and Knowledge Management in Business Operations. Journal of Knowledge Management, 12(2), 3-17.
4. Forno, R., Baklarz, R. (1999). The Art of Information Warfare: Insight into the Knowledge Warrior Philosophy. NY.: Universal Publishers.
5. (2010) Military concept for NATO strategic communications. URL: https://info.publicintelligence.net/NATO-STRATCOM -Concept.pdf (accessed: 24.01.2025).
6. Nye J. (1990). Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power. New York: Basic Books. 307 p.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-24

REFLECTIONS OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF GANJA CITY (9TH–17TH CENTURIES) IN HISTORICAL SOURCES

Turkan Ahmadova Yusif,
Doctoral Student, Lankaran State University (Lankaran, Azerbaijan);
Senior Lecturer, Azerbaijan State Agricultural University (Ganja, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9797-2716

Abstract. Ganja, considered one of the most ancient cities of Azerbaijan with a history of nearly three millennia, has repeatedly been destroyed and rebuilt as a result of earthquakes and devastations caused by foreign invaders. On several occasions, the city was even relocated and re-established. Despite these displacements, Ganja has mainly remained situated in the western region of Azerbaijan, in a picturesque area – the Ganja–Gazakh plain that connects the northwestern foothills of the Lesser Caucasus Mountains with the vast Kura–Araz lowland.

Archaeological research plays a crucial role in the study of Ganja's history. Taking into account that a considerable portion of the written records about the ancient history of our country in different languages does not accurately reflect historical reality, cultural monuments and archaeological materials undoubtedly serve as more reliable historical sources.

Located on the Great Caravan Route, Ganja was not only a center of international trade but also a hub of highly developed craftsmanship and architecture. According to written sources, in this period the city contained many monumental structures, including the ruler's palace, mosques, madrasas, markets, bathhouses, caravanserais, as well as well-planned residential quarters and numerous gardens. The remains of Old Ganja and the archaeological excavations conducted in its territory confirm the authenticity of these accounts to a significant extent.

Key words: "Capital of Arran," archaeological research, Mongol invasions, culture, economy, craftsmanship, trade.

Introduction. Having withstood the trials of centuries, the city of Ganja has long been one of the renowned centers of science and culture of the East, both economically and culturally. Although the majority of source materials on the foundation of the city are contradictory, archaeological findings suggest that the emergence of Ganja as a settlement dates back at least to the middle of the first millennium BC. In 859–860, during the governorship of Muhammad ibn Khalid over Azerbaijan and Arran, the city was enclosed with fortress walls, and in the mid-10th century, following the decline of Barda, Ganja rose to prominence as an administrative center.

The 11th–12th centuries are characterized as the renaissance period of Ganja. As one of the cultural centers of Azerbaijan, Ganja contributed to the treasury of world literature such eminent figures as Abul-Ula Ganjavi, Nizami Ganjavi, Mahsati Ganjavi, Qivami Mutarrizi, and others.

Archaeological investigations reveal that while craftsmanship already occupied a certain place in the economic life of Ganja in the 10th century, by the 12th–13th centuries it had reached a stage of significant development.

During the 11th–13th centuries, towers, mausoleums, fortress walls, mosques and madrasas, caravanserais, and other structures were erected in the city. These constructions attest to the presence of professional architects, builders, and other specialists in Ganja.

In the period of the Mongol invasions, the tall fortress walls of Ganja played an important role in its defense. While the Mongols failed to capture the city during their first assault, in their second attempt they employed more advanced weaponry of the time.

Although weakened during the Mongol incursions, Ganja regained its former significance in the Safavid era.

Archaeological excavations within the territory of Ganja provide evidence of an intensive life in the region during the early Middle Ages. Archaeological finds are also of great importance in studying the information pertaining to the medieval period.

Discussion. Historical sources play a significant role in the study of the history of Ganja, one of the ancient cities of Azerbaijan. There exist diverse historical considerations regarding the formation of Ganja as a city. Historians have put forward differing views concerning its foundation. Based on historical sources, it can be stated that Ganja initially existed as an ancient settlement and gradually developed into a city. The earliest written reference to the foundation of Ganja appears in the works of the 15th-century Iranian historian Mirkhwand. According to him, the establishment of the city was associated with the Sasanian ruler Kavad I. In his work *Rawżat al-Ṣafā*, Mirkhwand states that Ganja was founded by Kavad I (489–531). The source claims that Kavad ordered the construction of magnificent buildings and numerous cities, among which Ganja is mentioned.

However, Mirkhwand's account does not correspond with other historical sources. It seems that the narrative he presents reflects the popular memory of the Ganja of Southern Azerbaijan preserved in folk tradition. The 14th-century historian Hamdallah Qazvini wrote that Ganja was an Islamic city founded in the year 39 of the Hijri calendar (659–660 CE). A 16th-century source, *Darbandnamah,* records that the repeated incursions of the Khazars into Azerbaijan (late 7th–early 8th centuries) also reached Ganja. According to this source, neither Shirvan nor Ganja was adequately fortified to resist enemy attacks (Altman, 1991, p. 8). Although the author of *Darbandnamah* drew upon many sources, the exact identity of these remains unclear.

Academician V. V. Bartold suggested that in Hamdallah Qazvini's record the date "39" might have been a scribal error for "239," which corresponds to 853/854 CE. The orientalist Minorsky, academician Bartold, and Professor M. Sharifli all accept 859–860 as the foundation date of Ganja. In M. M. Altman's book *A Historical Sketch of the City of Ganja*, the emergence of the city, its earliest references, and its history up to the 17th century are briefly presented.

Archaeological research holds considerable importance in the study of Ganja's history. From the early 19th century onward, Russian and other foreign archaeologists showed interest in its exploration. However, their investigations were unsystematic and lacked scientific rigor. Systematic research on the city began only in the 1920s. The first systematic excavations in Ganja were conducted under the direction of archaeologist I. M. Jafarzadeh between 1928 and 1941, in connection with preparations for the 800th anniversary of Nizami Ganjavi's birth (Mammadov, 2014, p. 5).

The date of Ganja's foundation is given differently in various sources, and many contradict one another. The principal reason for the diversity of opinions is that the city was repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt as a result of foreign invasions, internal conflicts, and earthquakes. According to I. M. Jafarzadeh, Ganja developed from an ancient settlement with an already advanced culture. Y. A. Hagermeister believed that Ganja was older than both Barda and Beylagan.

The medieval fortifications of Ganja were constructed of alternating rows of mudbrick, raw brick, river stone, and baked brick. Excavations revealed that the city was surrounded by three concentric defensive walls (Dzhafarzade, 1949, pp. 35–39). Bartold emphasized that after the destruction of Barda, Ganja rose in power and became the center of Arran (Zahidov, 1994, pp. 58–59).

In the archaeological study of Ganja's history, the excavations carried out by I. H. Narimanov along the Ganja River and by H. Kasamanli on monuments situated along the Ganja–Dashkasan road are also of great significance (Narimanov, 1958). From the 10th century, when Barda lost its status as capital, Ganja became increasingly important in the socio-economic and cultural life of the country. Trade and the arts became vital elements of urban life, with favorable conditions for the flourishing of artistic activity.

In the 9th–10th centuries, during the weakening of the Arab Caliphate, several feudal states emerged in Azerbaijan, including those of the Shirvanshahs, Sajids, Salarids, Shaddadids, and Rawadids. By the mid-10th century, Ganja was under the rule of the Salarids. In 971, the Shaddadid state was founded with Ganja as its capital. Exploiting the decline of the Salarids, the Shaddadids captured Barda, transferring its economic, political, and commercial primacy to Ganja.

During the reign of Fadl I (895–1030), Ganja experienced one of its most powerful periods. Under the Shaddadids, fortresses, palaces, bridges, and caravanserais were constructed, and coin minting began in the city. In 1063, strong defensive walls were built around Ganja, and according to medieval writers, the city doubled in size. The surviving remnants of Old Ganja's fortress appear to date from these reconstruction works. The fortifications reflect the city's strategic importance, as situated in a wide intermountain plain, its defense system was always carefully reinforced (Qiyasi, 1991, pp. 17–18).

In the mid-11th century, faced with incessant Seljuk attacks, the Shaddadid ruler Fadl III, realizing the insufficiency of resistance, ultimately surrendered, later regaining power when circumstances permitted. In 1086, the Seljuk ruler Malik-Shah (1072–1092) dispatched his commander Bugha to Ganja. Despite strong local resistance, the Seljuks managed to capture the city, taking ruler Fadl III prisoner, thereby bringing to an end the century-long Shaddadid dynasty (Mövqe Newspaper, 2011, p. 10).

Following the fall of the Shaddadids, the Seljuks governed Arran from Beylagan, although control of Mughan, Arran, and Shirvan remained with the Yaqutids. Nevertheless, in 1086/87 Ganja was placed directly under the authority of the Seljuk sultan. Sultan Barkiyaruq, wary of the power of his uncle Ismail, entrusted the territories formerly belonging to the Shaddadids to his brother Muhammad Tapar (Najaf, 2024, pp. 181–182). From Malik-Shah's reign onwards, Azerbaijan was declared the "appanage" and heir territory of Seljuk princes destined to become great sultans. Muhammad Tapar and his sons Tughrul and Masud successively ruled in Azerbaijan, with Ganja as their center (Najaf, 2010, p. 9).

In this period, Azerbaijan developed in close connection with the flourishing culture of the Islamic world, often referred to as the "Muslim civilization." From the 11th century until the early 13th century, Ganja developed into one of the most important cities of the Near East. During the Seljuk era, alongside socio-political interactions, religious and cultural ties within the Islamic world intensified. The number of scholars visiting Ganja in the 11th century also increased. Some Arab authors who visited the city provided information about its mosques, libraries, educational institutions, hadith gatherings, and scholarly debates with local intellectuals (Aliyeva, 2015, p. 31).

Ganja also attracted the attention of Yaqut al-Hamawi, one of the most prominent geographers in Islamic cultural history. He emphasized that many renowned scholars hailed from the city. His works are of great value for understanding the cultural life of the period, as they provide unique information about Azerbaijani cities on the eve of the Mongol invasions, as well as about prominent scholars and cultural figures of the 9th–13th centuries not mentioned in other sources, and about the intellectual and cultural connections across different centers of the Islamic world (Aliyeva, 2020, p. 104).

In the first half of the 12th century, during the city's flourishing, Ganja suffered the destructive impact of a devastating earthquake with a magnitude estimated at 11 on the intensity scale. The 13th-century historian Kirakos Gandzaketsi writes that thick fog and mist covered the mountains and plains, and as a result of the terrible earthquake, Ganja, then the capital city, collapsed. The number of men, women, and children who perished could not be counted (Bunyadov, 1960, p. 182).

At the beginning of the 13th century, historians and geographers praised Ganja as a wealthy, strongly fortified, and beautiful city, referring to it as the "capital of Arran" and describing it as a populous and flourishing center. Hamdallah Qazvini, citing a quatrain, noted that among the prominent cities of the era, "in Arran, the treasury is Ganja; in Iraq, Isfahan; in Khorasan, Merv and Tus; and in Rum, Aksaray." This comparison suggests that the architecture of Ganja could be measured against that of the Seljuk capital cities named in the verse.

The Strategic Importance and Historical Development of Ganja

The location of Eastern Ganjabasar around the city of Ganja, as well as the passage of trade and caravan routes that both entered and traversed the city during the medieval period, significantly enhanced its importance. During attacks on Ganja, invading armies often stationed themselves in this area. For the purpose of withstanding such assaults, protecting the city, and ensuring the safety of the surrounding agrarian population, defensive fortifications were constructed in Eastern Ganjabasar (Mammadov, 1993, pp. 6–7).

It should be particularly emphasized that by the late 12th and early 13th centuries, Ganja had become a city with formidable fortifications. Zakariya al-Qazvini specifically notes Ganja's position on the frontier of the Muslim world, its strong fortifications, and the bravery of its inhabitants. For this reason, the Mongols were unable to capture Ganja during their first incursion into Azerbaijan in 1221 (Azadlıq newspaper, 2011, p. 13).

In 1225, Jalal al-Din, the son of Khwarazmshah Muhammad, seized Ganja and turned it into his residence. In 1231, however, a rebellion broke out in Ganja against Jalal al-Din's supporters, led by a certain Bandar. The uprising was brutally suppressed. Jalal al-Din Mangburnu, who had previously taken over all the territories of the Eldiguzids, continued his activities until 1231. However, he was unable to mount an effective resistance against the second Mongol invasion, and in August of 1231, while in Anatolia, he was killed by a nomad.

It is well established that the second Mongol campaign into Azerbaijan took place in 1231. The inhabitants of Ganja resisted for a long time, and the Mongols were only able to capture the city in 1235 after much difficulty. During this assault, Ganja suffered great destruction. In fact, following the Mongol conquest of Azerbaijan, flourishing centers of trade and craftsmanship such as Beylagan, Ganja, Shamakhi, Ardabil, and Khoy were left in ruins.

Only four years after this devastating assault, in 1235, Ganja was struck by another natural disaster – an earthquake. It was only after this event that the Mongol governor permitted the reconstruction of the city. However, this rebuilding was not the result of any benevolence on the part of the conquerors, but rather due to the military, political, and economic importance of Ganja, which necessitated its restoration after the earthquake.

During the Ottoman–Safavid wars of 1578–1590 (particularly 1585–1588), Ganja once again became one of the principal arenas of conflict. The city suffered considerable destruction as a result of attacks by Ottoman and Crimean Tatar forces. Consequently, one of the first measures undertaken by Ferhad Pasha, after seizing control of the city, was to strengthen its defenses. At this point, the urgent need to construct a powerful fortress became apparent. This task was accomplished by the Ottoman commander Ferhad Pasha in 1588.

Examining the available materials on the construction of the Ganja fortress, it may be stated that the foundation of the present-day city of Ganja was laid with the building of this fortress by Ferhad Pasha. Nevertheless, its development into a fully formed urban center is associated with the reign of Shah Abbas I.

Information regarding the city following its relocation to its present site remains approximate. The traveler Evliya Çelebi, who visited Ganja in 1647, reported that the city contained 6,000 houses. Based on an average of seven persons per household, A.V. Salamzade estimated the population at 40,000, which was not insignificant for that time (Ahmadov, 1998, p. 59). Thus, even after its relocation by Shah Abbas, Ganja remained an important settlement with a considerable population.

Throughout the periods of the Ilkhanids (13th–14th centuries), the invasions of Timur (1386–1400), and the rule of the Aq Qoyunlu, Qara Qoyunlu (15th century), and Safavid (16th–18th centuries) states, Ganja and its surrounding territories were repeatedly subjected to attacks by both internal feudal lords and foreign invaders.

Economic and Craft Production in Ganja

Written sources and archaeological excavations provide valuable insights into the economic life of early medieval Ganja. Like other contemporary cities, Ganja's economy was multifaceted. In addition to craftsmanship and trade – characteristic features of urban life – the population also engaged in various branches of agriculture.

Excavations in Ganja and its environs have uncovered agricultural tools, storage pits and jars for grain, as well as grinding stones and querns, which are analogous to finds from nearby areas such as Mingachevir and Barda. The natural and geographical conditions of Ganja and its surroundings – abundant rivers and fertile soils – created favorable circumstances for the development of agriculture since ancient times.

Historical accounts and archaeological discoveries also indicate that wool production expanded in Ganja and its environs during antiquity and the early medieval period.

In the 11th–early 13th centuries, pottery-making in Ganja reached a new stage of development. The abundance of similar-shaped vessels, together with wasters and slag, provides evidence for the existence of pottery kilns in the area.

The proximity of Ganja to metal deposits fostered the development of metalworking crafts.

The principal centers of the Arran school of architecture included Barda, Ganja, Shamkir, Beylagan, and Dabil. According to scholars, the origins of this architectural school appeared in Barda in the 9th century, developed in Ganja, Shamkir, Dabil, and Beylagan in the 10th–11th centuries, flourished in the 12th century, and lost its former significance after the Mongol invasion.

The Arran ceramic school – especially its Ganja and Shamkir branches – was characterized by red-polished, burnished jars decorated with ornamental bands applied by stamping. Complete examples of these vessels have been unearthed in Ganja.

Medieval craftsmen of Ganja and its surroundings often inscribed their names and professions on cultural artifacts. One such example is the celebrated "Gate of Ganja," bearing the inscription of the blacksmith Ibrahim.

With the development of trade in Azerbaijan, textile production also expanded significantly. The Arab authors al-Muqaddasi and al-Mas'udi, writing in the 10th century, note that Azerbaijani craftsmen produced wool, cotton, and silk fabrics and garments for sale. Woolen clothing from Ganja, the famed cloaks (chukhas) of Nakhchivan, the fine satin of Tabriz, men's outer garments, and the delicate linen textiles of Khoy were especially renowned during this period.

In the 11th–12th centuries, under Seljuk rule, textile production increased markedly in Azerbaijani cities, with Ganja's silk goods gaining particular fame. The textile patterns of this period were distinguished from earlier examples by their lighter, less rigid ornamentation. Unlike earlier times, craftsmen produced more delicate fabrics, decorating them with multicolored threads rather than a single one (Əfəndiyev, 1960, p. 11).

During the 11th–13th centuries, crafts such as woodworking, felt-making, dyeing, carpet weaving, and bone-carving also flourished in Ganja and its environs.

The glazed ceramics of Ganjabasar from the 9th–10th centuries reveal stylistic similarities in form, while displaying considerable variety in coloration and decorative motifs. By the early 11th–13th centuries, notable advances were made in stamped ornamentation used in glazed ware. In the 12th–13th centuries, vessels with incised designs overlaid with glaze predominated. In producing such ceramics, artisans attempted to harmonize colored and graphic designs.

Although extensive excavations have been conducted primarily in urban ruins (Gabala, Ganja, Beylagan, Shamakhi, Shabran, Kharaba-Gilan, Baku, Barda, Derbent, etc.), relatively few agricultural tools and implements have been discovered. Nevertheless, even these limited finds provide valuable evidence for studying the city's connections with its rural hinterland.

Archaeological research has confirmed that irrigation canals drawn from the Ganjachay River, which survived until recent times, were widely used in the medieval period to irrigate suburban farms, fields, orchards, and gardens (Jafarzadeh).

Architecture and Cultural Monuments

The architecture of medieval Azerbaijani cities served diverse purposes. The artisans of the time, endowed with creative imagination and extensive construction experience, achieved harmony and refinement in ornamental design and architectural elements.

The memorial monuments of Ganja and its surroundings consist mainly of mausoleums, bridges, and similar structures. All are built in the Arran architectural style, known in the archaeological literature as the "Ganja bond," consisting of rubble stone walls framed with baked brick. Notable examples include: the 11th-century mausoleum in the village of Ahmadli (Dashkasan district); the 16th-century mausoleum in the village of Qarasaqqal (Samukh district); the 19th-century mausoleums in Ashaghi Oksuzlu (Tovuz district); the 12th-century mosque-madrasa; the Xudu Baba mausoleum in Safikurd (Goranboy district); the Haji Babish and Tekgoz bridges (12th–13th centuries) near Buzlug and Todan villages; the 12th-century Gulustan fortress; the early medieval Kurekchay fortress; and bridges over the Shamkirchay dating to the 12th and 18th centuries (Mammadov, 2008, pp. 133–134).

A number of the memorial monuments in Ganja and its vicinity are mausoleums. These commemorative structures served as burial sites for notable figures of the time – scholars, travelers, poets, and others (Mammadov, 1992, p. 108).

Overall, the architecture of Ganja has always stood out. Despite destructive earthquakes and invasions, ancient Ganja preserved its beauty and distinctive architectural style. The surviving monuments testify to the skill of Ganja's master builders. The incomplete preservation of these monuments to the present day is attributable not only to natural disasters but also to invasions and warfare.

Most of the mosques, madrasas, caravanserais, and bathhouses of Ganja were constructed during the reign of Shah Abbas I (1587–1629).

Cultural Development

The emergence of independent states in Azerbaijan created favorable conditions for the development of culture. During the 9th–12th centuries, science and culture flourished at a remarkably high level throughout the Muslim East. In the 12th century, Abul Ula Ganjavi, Khagani Shirvani, Izzaddin Shirvani, Falaki Shirvani, Mujiraddin Beylagani, Nizami Ganjavi, and others introduced new styles and forms of expression into Azerbaijani literature, thereby laying the foundation for the Azerbaijani literary school that arose in Ganja and Shirvan.

Historical sources attest that the great thinker and poet Nizami Ganjavi never left his native city of Ganja. The homeland he cherished and glorified with particular affection – Ganja – was, in the medieval period, one of the most prosperous and renowned cities in the world, distinguished for its progress in science and technology, its economy and culture, and the quality of life of its inhabitants.One of the testimonies to the antiquity of Eastern Ganjabasar is the fact that the village of Hamdunya, gifted to Nizami Ganjavi by Muhammad Jahan Pahlavan and subsequently granted to him by his brother Qizil Arslan in fulfillment of that bequest, was located in this very region.The Mausoleum of Nizami Ganjavi stands 7 kilometers east of present-day Ganja, in the area known as "Shikh duzu," on the Ganja–Baku highway. For centuries, the poet's grave has borne witness to numerous violent events that unfolded in its vicinity. In 1231, near this cemetery, in the southwestern sector, Bendar – who led the uprising against the tyranny of Jalal al-Din – fought heroically in a bloody battle and ascended to the rank of martyrdom. The Arab traveler and geographer Ibn Haykal wrote of Ganja: "Ganja is a large, wealthy city with a considerable population. Its people live densely, and they are generous, of mild disposition, benevolent, courteous, and inclined to welcome foreigners and scholars." (Nizamisoy, 2013, p. 12) A significant number of neighborhood names (mahallas) from the medieval period have been recorded within the territory of Ganja. Some neighborhoods derived their names from the places of origin of their inhabitants – for example, Qazakhlar Mahalla, Jirdakhanlar (from Tovuz district), Qizilhajili Mahalla (from Qazakh), and others. Other neighborhoods were named in relation to crafts and professions – for instance, Ozanlar Mahalla, Kharratlar Mahalla, and Attarlar

Mahalla. Each neighborhood had its own mosque, which bore the name of the corresponding mahalla (Mammadov, 2008, p. 156).

Conclusion. In the modern period, there is a pressing need to study the cultural heritage of the past and to investigate more thoroughly the medieval cities of Azerbaijan. Archaeological evidence shows that the territory of ancient Ganja was continuously inhabited from early times until the first half of the 17th century. Following this period – during the reign of Shah Abbas I – the population of Ganja resettled in the location of the new city of Ganja.

Present-day Ganja was founded in the early 17th century, based on the architectural plan of the renowned architect Bahaddin Muhammad. Excavations conducted in the closing decades of the last century have unearthed a considerable number of archaeological materials. Among the surface finds collected from Ganja and its surrounding areas are remains of monuments representing different historical periods.

The archaeological materials uncovered from the ruins of the city provide broad opportunities for a comprehensive study of the history of Ganja, one of the most celebrated cities of the Near and Middle East. Findings from archaeological research conducted in Ganja and its environs allow us to conclude that, owing to its strategic location at the intersection of trade and internal routes of Azerbaijan, this region played a crucial role in the economic, political, and cultural life of the Azerbaijani people during the medieval period.

Today, Ganja – currently the second industrial and cultural center of the Republic after Baku, and historically one of the most prominent cities of the Caucasus and the Near East – has also gained worldwide fame as the homeland of the great Nizami, whose masterpieces adorn the treasury of world literature.

References:

1. Altman, M. M. (1991). *A historical sketch of the city of Ganja*. Tovuz Printing House.
2. *Azadlıq* newspaper. (2011, March 11).
3. Bunyadov, T. (1960). *Essays on the archaeology of Azerbaijan*. Baku: Azerneshr.
4. Ahmadov, Farrukh. (1998). *The historical memory of Ganja*. Baku: Shirvanneshr.
5. Afandiyev, Rasim. (1960). *Examples of Azerbaijan's material culture (Costumes)*. Baku: Azerbaijan State Publishing House.
6. Aliyeva, N. A. (2020). *Azerbaijan and the Caucasus in "Muʿjam al-Buldān"*. Baku: Elm va Təhsil.
7. Aliyeva, Nargiz. (2015). *Scientific relations and teaching activity of Azerbaijani scholars in the Middle Ages*. Baku: Turxan NPB.
8. Ganjavi, Alishir Nizamisoy. (2013). *Ilyas Yusif oghlu Nizami Ganjavi*. Ganja.
9. Mammadov, A. M. (2008). *Historical-archaeological research of Ganja and its surroundings*. Ganja: Elm Publishing House.
10. Mammadov, A. M. (2014). *Ancient Ganja (based on archaeological research)*. Baku: Teknur.
11. Mammadov, A. M., & Maharramov, A. M. (1992). *Goranboy in the Middle Ages*. Baku.
12. Mammadov, A. M. (1993). *Ganjabasar in the 4th–13th centuries (historical-archaeological research)*. Baku: Elm.
13. *Mövqe* newspaper. (2011, August 25–26). № 149 (2225).
14. Najaf, Akbar N. (2024). *The Seljuks of Azerbaijan: The Yaqutids (1043–1103)*. Baku: Chapar Publishing.
15. Najaf, Akbar N. (2010). *History of the Seljuk states and Atabegs (from the emergence of the Oghuz to the 14th century)*. Baku: Qanun.
16. Shukurov, Sadiq. (1998). *From the historical monuments of Ganja*. Ganja: Ganja City Lease Publishing & Printing Union.
17. Qiyasi, Jafar. (1991). *Architectural monuments of the Nizami era*. Baku: Ishig.
18. Zahidov, Asgar S. (1994). *Some toponyms of Azerbaijan*. Ganja.
19. Jafarzade, I. M. (1949). *Historical-archaeological sketch of Old Ganja*. Baku.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-25

MONEY CAN'T BUY INFLUENCE: WHEN LOBBYING FAILS IN U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

Aleskerova Sara Tahir,
Lecturer at the Department of Western Regional Studies,
Azerbaijan University of Languages (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-2073-5728
sara-aleskerova@mail.ru

Abstract. Lobbying and bribery are two terms that are often used interchangeably, but they are vastly different from each other. While both involve the act of influencing policy, one is considered a legitimate and legal means of advocacy, while the other is an illegal and unethical practice. The main differences between corruption and lobbying was investigated in this research for better understanding the consequences of these two practices. Additionally, to understand why one of these practise is considered acceptable while the other one is not. This power is shaped by more complex and multifaceted factors which are investigated in this article. The scientific novelty of the article is that this research is the first broader research on identifying that money can't buy influence in the USA congress.

Key words: lobbying, lobby, diaspora, bribery, foreign policy, "decision-making process" USA congress.

Introduction. One of the most important tools for influencing decision making process in the USA congress and to influence the foreign policy of the USA is lobbying. Lobbying has underestimated power in political field. Both domestic actors of country and foreign governments which use officially registered lobbying organizations in the US for promoting their own interests. Two main types of lobbying have influence on decision making proses in the US congress: ethnic and professional lobby groups. Professional lobbying uses the method of hiring a professiona lobbying organizations for promoting its interests. However, ethnic lobby is exercised through different ethnic groups with various backgrounds in American community. The most prominent examples for it are jewish, armenian and greek lobbying groups (Ari, 2015, p. 156–157).

Following the adoption of the Lobbying Disclosure Act in 1995, all those engaged in lobbying process must be registered under the control of the U.S Senate and submit reports about their activities and expenditures (Political parties of the USA, 2011). Lobbyists are using methods such as grassroots or investing voting campany for influencing law makers at all stages. Therefore, they usually do not pay directly to any official person or congressman for their contribution. If a diaspora or lobbying group has significant voting power in a certain state or district, their interests are taken more seriously for example, the strong Armenian community in California.

The main text. The purpose of study is to determine that the influence of lobbying in the decision-making process is not solely determined by a country's financial power.

The methodology of the research involves using content analysis, discourse anylysis methods and strong empirical background and descriptive method of study are used in this research.

The results and discussion

Lobbying: A Complex Political Instrument, Not Simply a Form of Corruption. A strong and effective lobby requires several interrelated components, among which organization and professionalism, electoral influence and voting power, as well as the ability to shape media narratives and public opinion are essential (Aleskerova, 2021). Well-structured and professionally managed lobbying organizations are better equipped to develop long-term strategies, maintain continuity, and build sustained relationships with policymakers. Electoral influence particularly through voter mobilization and campaign contributions enable lobbies to support favorable candidates and exert political pressure. Furthermore, the capacity to shape media discourse and influence public opinion allows lobby groups to legitimize their causes, raise awareness, and generate public support.

The Jewish and Armenian lobbies exemplify this model of effectiveness. Despite comparatively modest financial expenditures, they compensate through high levels of civic participation, professional organizational structures, and significant presence within the U.S. electorate. Their ability to mobilize voters, influence public discourse, and maintain consistent engagement with political institutions makes them among the most successful ethnic lobbies in the American political landscape.

On the contrary, a corruption more often occurs on an individual level. And it is anything but public. A bribing person gives corruption "under the table" for privacy. This could be paying a tax officer to clear reports with under-reported revenue or sending gifts without an invoice. That is why critics of lobbying claim that it can be considere “bribe in a suit”. But the majority of researchers in political field does not agree with this view. A bribe is usually given an offer of money "under the table", but a lobbyist tries to influence public opinion and get suggestion in his favor on decion making process. Lobbyists have traditionally been seen as "information providers," aiming to influence legislation and government decisions in favor of their interests. Lobbying involves organized efforts to persuade public officials, whereas corruption is a more direct, often illegal method involving payments or benefits to gain influence. A corruption can be taken the form of a donations or non-monetary assistance**.** For example, a company’s procurement manager might grant a contract to a supplier in exchange for an unfair personal benefit, despite company policies that require contracts to be awarded based on quality and price. Public officials may also be bribed to help individuals or companies avoid taxes and other legal obligations. In contrast, lobbying includes activities such as meeting with government representatives, negotiating the terms of proposed legislation, and advocating for or against presidential vetoes (Lobbying in the USA. Biggest spenders of foreign lobbying, 2018).

The bribe may be in the form of a donation or favor in kind. Lobbying examples include meetings and discussions with government representatives, influencing legislation by negotiating the details of a bill, and pushing for presidential vetoes. For example, a lobbying firm hired by a renewable energy company may meet with lawmakers to discuss the benefits of clean energy and advocate for policies that promote renewable energy sources.

Difference Between Lobbying and Bribery

Lobbying has always been considered as a dirty word in American community (Lester, 1963, p. 17–23). The crucial difference between lobbying and corruption is the legalization and ethical character of these two activities. Sometimes these two notions can seen complex to distinguish from each other. Lobby is a legal way of advocacy for influencing government policy by varios methods. Due to rules and strict laws adopted in the US, lobbying is transparent process (Primary Documents in American History. The Articles of Confederation, 2025). Donations are one of the most popular way of lobbying for supporting candidates who share their views. On the other side donations can cross the line into bribery. For instance, if one company donates money to a political campaign and its expectation is receiving a alterations in the decision on its favor, this action would be considered as a bribe. Giving bribe is an illegal and not considered to be ethical practice. Both lobbying and bribery is the way of trying for influencing officials for deciding in your favor, exception is that one is offering money, while the other offer property and support. As a result one is quite legal and ethical while the other is out rightly illegal.

High-Spending Foreign Actors in U.S. Lobbying: A Financial Perspective

An analysis of foreign lobbying through the Foreign Agents Registration Act, or FARA, compiled by the nonprofit watchdog group OpenSecrets.org shows that some countries spent much more money for making alterations U.S. policy in their favor (OpenSecrets, 2025). FARA law is only the tip of the iceberg. FARA makes some restrictions for foreign entities. Additionally, they face sharp penalties for breaking law. All lobbying process and its stages are under the control of laws and official acts.

Investing election campaigns for changing foreign policy in the US is strictly regulated, and there are more restrictions in this field than on employing U.S. based corporations in the economic field. The countries which are more succesfull in lobbying field are largely America's closest allies. They are considered to be more succesfull than countries that invest more money for lobbying.

The other high spenders on lobbying are South Korea and Japan which are America's closest allies, with including Canada, Germany and the United Arab Emirates. These countries can gain success in economical field rather than in political changes in the US foreign policy. China is a day-by-day growing rival to the America on the world's ranks. It also spends a lot of expenditure for lobbying in the US Congress. But Chinese lobby also is succesfull only in economical field for making alterations in the US Congress in favor of Chinese campanies. Some countries, particularly Russia, China and Iran, may believe their money is better spent on covert activity rather than publicly trying to shape American debates (Lobbying in the USA. Biggest spenders of foreign lobbying, 2018).

Rank	Country	Approx. Total Lobby Spend (USD)	Notes
1	China	$456 million	Long-term lobbying on trade, technology, education, and geopolitical policy
2	Japan	$411 million	Strong economic, tech, and defense-related lobbying
3	Liberia	$353 million	Massive 2023 spike; spent ~$183M in that year alone
4	South Korea	$322 million	Emphasis on U.S. security alliance and trade relations
5	Saudi Arabia	$310 million	High-profile spending on U.S. firms, including ex-officials; ~$45M in 2023
6	Marshall Islands	$285 million	Strategic use of shipping registry influence and foreign investment channels
7	Qatar	$256 million	Stepped up spending post-2017; $6.5M in 2024 on lobbying alone
8	UAE	$242 million	Focused on security, foreign policy, and economic outreach
9	Bahamas	$241 million	Lobbied on financial regulation and tax matters
10	Bermuda	$193 million	Heavy lobbying around corporate tax and offshore finance

High Budgets, Low Results

This is comparative overview of the foreign countries that spend the most on lobbying activities in the United States. The analysis is based on data from OpenSecrets.org, which tracks financial disclosures filed under the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) (OpenSecrets, 2025). The expenditures reflect the strategic priorities of these governments in influencing U.S. policy across areas such as trade, security, and foreign relations. Why do governments need lobbying? Simple answer is that companies lobby for getting "contribution" for their "investment." This contribution can take special policies being enacted as tax provisions or revenues.

Goverments need the further development of bilateral humanitarian ties, which served as a vivid example of strategic partnership between the republics in the new century, are noted (Efendiyeva, 2020, p. 27). The United States is currently the world's hegemonic power, and its foreign policy decisions directly and indirectly affect the role and positioning of other states in the international system. As a result, many countries seek to influence U.S. foreign policymaking in ways that serve their own national interests. This has made lobbying one of the primary tools through which foreign governments attempt to shape American policy agendas in their favor. The main purpose of lobbying process in the US is influencing government officials. However, the effectiveness of this influence depends on numerous other factors: the political context, U.S. national interests, public opinion, and the international standing of the lobbying country. For example, some states spend millions of dollars hiring lobbying firms, yet fail to achieve tangible results because their national interests conflict with U.S. foreign policy priorities.

Measuring Success Is Difficult

Defining what constitutes a successful lobbying activity is a complex and multifaceted question that does not lend itself to a simple or concrete answer. Success in lobbying can vary depending on numerous factors, including the specific goals of the lobbyists, the political context, the policy area involved, and the measures used to evaluate outcomes. Therefore, assessing lobbying effectiveness requires a nuanced approach that considers both tangible policy changes and broader influence on political agendas and public opinion (Tağıyeva, Hüseynova, 2022, p. 127–131). Success can be considered prevention of sanctions or increased military aid from the U.S. or the creation of a positive international image of country also can be due to success of lobbying.

Some countries spend relatively little on lobbying but manage to secure significant support through strategic partnerships with the U.S. such as Israel and certain NATO member countries. On the other hand, countries with large lobbying budgets may struggle to gain influence due to internal issues such as political instability, human rights violations, or widespread corruption. In many cases, the historical depth of diplomatic relations and strategic importance prove more decisive than lobbying expenditures alone. For instance, The United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia are among the top spenders on lobbying in the U.S. (Lobbying in the USA. Biggest spenders of foreign lobbying, 2025). While both have achieved certain policy outcomes, they continue to face criticism and restrictions on multiple fronts. On the contrary, Qatar has achieved notable diplomatic impact with comparatively fewer resources by leveraging smart public diplomacy and influential media platforms such as Al Jazeera.

A review of lobbying expenditures by foreign countries in the United States reveals an important discrepancy between financial investment and actual policy influence. For instance, China has spent approximately $456 million, Japan $411 million, and even smaller nations such as Liberia and the Marshall Islands have recorded surprisingly high lobbying expenditures (OpenSecrets, 2025). Despite this substantial financial commitment, these countries have not consistently translated their spending into significant long-term influence on U.S. policy. In contrast, lobbying groups such as the Jewish, Armenian, and Greek diasporas representing relatively small nations or communities have often achieved disproportionate impact with comparatively limited financial resources. Their success stems not from the amount of money spent, but from the strategic use of soft power, cultural capital, electoral leverage, and long-term relationship-building with U.S. policymakers (Aleskerova, 2021, p. 169).

This contrast demonstrates a crucial lesson in lobbying effectiveness: influence is not merely a function of expenditure, but of strategic engagement. A well-organized, message-driven, and politically integrated lobbying effort can outperform high-cost campaigns that lack grassroots support, credible narratives, or political resonance. Financial resources matter**,** but they are not sufficient on their own. Key drivers of lobbying power include (Lobbying in the USA. Biggest spenders of foreign lobbying, 2018):

- Strong organization
- Strategic value
- Media influence

– Electoral leverage
– Professional lobbying tactics

Conclusions. The decision-making process in the U.S. Congress does not operate solely on a "money talks" basis. If financial power were the primary determinant of influence, then wealthy Arab states would dominate the congressional agenda which is clearly not the case. Lobbying power in Washington depends not only on financial capacity but also on strategic alignment with U.S. interests, long-standing diaspora engagement, public opinion influence, and the ability to mobilize electoral leverage. These factors collectively shape the success or failure of lobbying efforts, regardless of how much money is spent. Therefore, it becomes clear that lobbying influence in Congress is multifaceted and deeply embedded in political, social, and ideological contexts – not just economic strength. Biggest Spenders of Foreign Lobbying in the U.S. Comes from America's Closest Allies. For instance, Azerbaijan has been using the services of professional lobbying organizations for years, such as BGR Government Affairs, Podesta Group, Skyline Capitol LLC. Additionally, Azerbaijan has spent millions of dollars for lobbying in the USA, despite spending a lot of money, they are unable to be effective in this field. For achieving greater effectiveness in the field of lobbying, Azerbaijan can draw valuable lessons from the strategies and organizational strength of the Jewish lobby, particularly in the United States. The Jewish lobby represents one of the most successful and influential lobbying forces globally. Its impact on U.S. foreign policy and public opinion regarding Israel is widely acknowledged across academic and policy-making circles. Azerbaijan, by developing narratives that emphasize its geopolitical significance, energy partnerships, and secular-democratic identity, can similarly align its messaging with the interests of powerful states and institutions. it is likely that Azerbaijani-Israeli relations will only increase in areas such as scientific cooperation, information technology, medicine, water purification, agriculture and so on. Successful lobbying groups such as Jewish or Armenian lobbies are highly organized and work with professionals in law, media, and politics. This gives them an advantage when influencing members of Congress (Feyziyeva, 2023, p.540-542). Although the Jewish and Armenian lobbies spend comparatively less money, they achieve greater success due to their active participation in election campaigns and the large number of U.S. citizens among their diasporas (Aleskerova, 2021). Their influence is rooted not only in financial resources but also in their ability to mobilize voters and establish strong political networks within the American political system. This civic engagement significantly enhances their lobbying effectiveness compared to many other ethnic interest groups.

References:

1. Aleskerova, S.T. (2021). Jewish lobby as an overlooked power which leads to political transformations in US foreign policy. *Politicus,* 4, 177-121. [in English]
2. Arı, T. (2015). Amerika'da siyasal yapı lobiler ve dış politika Türk, Yunan, Ermeni, İsrail ve lobilerinin ABD'nin dış politikasına etkileri. İstanbul: Dora Yayınları. [in Turkish]
3. Efendiyeva, A. F. (2020). Azerbaijani-Ukrainian relations in the sphere of art in the era of globalization. *Actual Problems of International Relations,* 1.143, 25-33. [in English]
4. Lobbying in the USA. Biggest spenders of foreign lobbying. URL: https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/articles/2018-08-17/biggest-spenders-of-foreign-lobbying-in-the-us-comes-from-americas-closest-allies (Data accessed: 27.05.2025) [in English]
5. Lester, W. M. (1963). Washington Lobbysits. Chicago: Rand McNally. [in English]
6. Feyziyeva, M.G. (2023). Azerbaijan-Israel relations during the reign of Heydar Aliyev (1993-2003). *Endless light in science,* April: 540-542. [in English]
7. OpenSecrets (2025). Foreign lobbying database. Center for Responsive Politics. URL: https://www.opensecrets.org/federal-lobbying/foreign (Data accessed: 04.07.2025) [in English]
8. Political parties of the USA. URL: https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/politics/story/2011-12-22/voters-political-parties/52171688/1 (accessed: 12.05.2025) [in English]

9. Primary Documents in American History. The Articles of Confederation. The Articles of Confederation. URL: https://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId= llsl&fileName=001/llsl001.db&recNum=127 (accessed: 12.05.2025) [in English]
10. Tağıyeva, T.M, Hüseynova, H.K. (2022). Beynəlxalq münasibətlərdə lobbizm. Bakı: Bakı Dövlət Univeriteti. [in Azerbaijani]
11. Aleskerova, S.T. (2021). Section 907 amendment to the freedom support act" as an unjustified result of lobbying. *The VII International Science Conference «Science, actual trends and perspectives of development*, November 01-03, Budapest, 168-171. [in English]

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-26

SUFISM IN AZERBAIJAN: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL INFLUENCE

Faiq Aliyev,
PhD in Historical Sciences,
Associate Professor at the Department of Human Sciences,
Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0000-1948-236X
faigaliyev@mail.ru

Aziza Aghayeva,
Lecturer at the Department of Human Sciences,
Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-4287-1758
aziza.iv@yahoo.com

Abstract. The article examines the history of the development and cultural influence of Sufism in Azerbaijan, from the early stage of the emergence of the mystical and ascetic trend in Islamic religiosity to its integration into social and cultural life and the modern situation. The initial manifestations of Sufism on the territory of Azerbaijan have been recorded since the 10th century, when figures such as Baba Kuhi Bakuvi and his contemporaries gained considerable authority in the Islamic mystical movement. During the Middle Ages, Sufi brotherhoods (tariqas) such as Khalvatiyya, Suhrawardyya, and later Safavidiyya were formed on the territory of Azerbaijan, influencing not only spiritual life, but also politics, culture, and architecture. Sufism has become an important component of the spiritual and cultural landscape of Azerbaijan: it is reflected in folk poetry, the Ashyghe tradition, the architecture of khanqahs and mausoleums, folklore and literature. For example, the influence of Sufi motifs on the work of Ashik Ashig Alyasgar is being investigated. In the modern context, Sufism is considered as an element of cultural identity and heritage, as well as an object of academic study and cultural policy. From the point of view of methodology, the article uses a historical and philosophical approach, relies on epigraphic and archival sources, as well as on recent research in the field of Sufism in Azerbaijan. The article shows that the Sufi tradition of Azerbaijan reflects the dialectic between mystical individuality and a general religious institution, between transcendent aspiration and cultural expression.

Key words: Sufism, Azerbaijan, tariqa, mysticism, culture, folk poetry, architecture.

Introduction. The study of Sufism (tasawwuf) as a mystical and ascetic trend in Islam has long occupied its place in the history of Islamic thought. In the context of Azerbaijan's spiritual and cultural history, it has a special significance: Azerbaijan has been one of the important distribution points of Sufi practices and orders since the early Middle Ages. This makes it necessary to consider not only the historical chronology, but also the ways of cultural impact: how the Sufi tradition manifested itself in poetry and folk art, how it was reflected in architecture, and how it was transformed in the context of political and social changes. The purpose of this study is to trace the stages of Sufism's development in Azerbaijan, identify key tariqas and figures, and assess the cultural influence of Sufism on literature, folk art, and architectural heritage of Azerbaijan.

Sufism is a mystical trend in Islam that focuses on seeking direct personal experience with God through love, meditation, and inner transformation. Sufi teachings can be found not only in Muslim countries, but also among people of various faiths, as they are universal in nature, calling for the purification of the soul and the search for the highest truth (Khalilli, 2023).

Sufism originated in the early centuries of Islam and developed as a reaction to the formalism of religious rituals. Sufis sought a deeper, inner connection with God through meditation, poetry, music, and dance. Some of the first Sufi thinkers were such famous personalities as al-Hallaj and al-Ghazali.

Sufism is based on the practice of dhikr, the repetition of God's names and meditation to purify the heart and soul. Sufis strive for a direct experience of the Divine through devotion, humility, and inner purification. An important aspect is the love of God and the all-encompassing love for all living beings.

The roots of Sufism in Azerbaijan date back to the 10th century. According to sources, already at the turn of the 9th–10th centuries, the first Sufi mentors operated on the territory of modern Azerbaijan. For example, Baba Kuhi Bakuvi and his brother Hussein Shirvani have earned wide recognition.

Many great Sufi thinkers expressed their spiritual ideas through poetry. An example is the famous poet Jalaladdin Rumi, whose poems about love and unity with God have become a symbol of the Sufi path. Sufi music, for example, in the form of "dervish" dances, is also an integral part of spiritual practice that promotes transcendental experiences (Demirzadeh, Allahverdiyev, 2024).

The first "hanegs" (Sufi monasteries) and the beginning of the formation of communities of murids (disciples) belong to this time. Already in the 13th century, the number of Sufi centers was significant: for example, the author of the 13th century, Muhammad ibn Munawwar, records more than 400 khanegh in Shirvan alone.

During this period, the intellectual and mystical form of Sufism ("irfan") prevailed – an emphasis on experiencing unity with God, rather than solely on external legal (Sharia) observance.

Among the orders active at this stage were Suhrawardyya and Khalvatiya. The appearance of such tariqas indicates that Sufism in Azerbaijan was not just a passive acceptance of alien forms, but developed as an independent movement (Gubadov, 2023).

The period of the 10th–12th centuries became the most important stage in the spiritual history of Azerbaijan, when the mystical and religious teachings of Sufism began to spread actively in the region. This process was inseparable from the general trends in the development of Islamic thought in the East, but in Azerbaijan it took on specific forms due to local cultural and ethnic characteristics, as well as close ties with Persia, Central Asia and the Arab world.

The origin of Sufism in Azerbaijan is connected not only with religious practice, but also with the formation of an original spiritual tradition, which had a huge impact on the development of literature, philosophy and public consciousness in the region..

After the Arab conquests of the 7th–8th centuries, Islam gradually established itself on the territory of Caucasian Albania and Atropatene. By the 10th century, Azerbaijan was part of various Muslim states – the Sajids, Rabbadids, Sheddadids, and later the Seljuks. These political structures created conditions for an active exchange of ideas between Azerbaijan, Iran, Khorasan and Baghdad, the centers of Islamic spiritual life.

During this period, Sufism was not only a religious, but also a philosophical movement aimed at the inner realization of truth (haqiqat), purification of the soul and unity with God. The spread of Sufi ideas was facilitated by traveling dervishes, sheikhs and poets who created the first khanaka – Sufi monasteries that served as centers of spiritual life and enlightenment (Corbin, 1993, p. 87).

In the X–XII centuries. Azerbaijan is becoming one of the significant regions where Sufism is becoming institutionalized. The city of Ganja, where the outstanding poet and thinker Nizami Ganjavi (1141–1209) was born, is becoming a center of spiritual and cultural activity. Although Nizami himself did not belong to Sufi fraternities, his work is deeply imbued with ideas of mystical knowledge and spiritual perfection, close to the Sufi tradition (Mammadli, 2023).

In Shirvan and Tabriz, the first schools and circles of Sufi students were formed, associated with the Malamati (Malamatiya) and Khalvatiya movements, which emphasized humility, inner purification and rejection of outward ostentatious religiosity (Schimmel, 1975, p. 63).

By the 11th century, representatives of such orders as the Sufis of Khorasan (influenced by Junaid of Baghdad and Bayezid Bastami) and early followers of the Khalvati way, who later gave rise to the Khalvatiya Order, which played a major role in the spiritual culture of the region in the 14th–15th centuries, were active in Azerbaijan (Trimingham, 1998, p. 78).

Important Sufi orders were formed and operated on the territory of Azerbaijan, which had both spiritual and religious, as well as socio-political influence. Among them:

Khalvatiya: her roots are connected with Azerbaijan. As noted: “the founders of Khalvatiya were Azerbaijanis ... the Shirvanshahs supported the Sufi sheikhs...”

Sufism in Azerbaijan combined elements of the Arab-Persian mystical tradition with local cultural archetypes and images. It developed as a spiritual teaching aimed at the harmony of man and the universe, at the inner comprehension of God through love (ishq) and knowledge (ma’rifah).

One of the key concepts of Sufism was fana – the “annihilation” of the ego, dissolution into God, which was reflected in poetic texts attributed to Azerbaijani mystics.

During the same period, Sufi symbols penetrated into folk art – songs, parables, legends, and also became the basis for the formation of spiritual and ethical ideals such as humility, virtue, brotherhood, and patience (Nazarova, 2023).

Early Sufism had a significant impact on the development of Azerbaijani culture. It became not only a religious movement, but also the philosophical basis of the humanistic thought of the region. Mystical poetry and philosophy paved the way for the flourishing of spiritual literature of the 13th–14th centuries, represented by such authors as Imadeddin Nasimi and Shah Ismail Khatai.

Thus, Sufism of the 10th–12th centuries laid the foundation for the formation of the national spiritual identity of Azerbaijan, in which religious experience was closely intertwined with aesthetics, philosophy and ethical principles.

Sufi brotherhoods (tariqas) have played an important role in shaping popular spirituality. Thanks to the preaching activities of the Sufis, Islam has become part of folklore traditions, and mystical ideas have been embodied in legends, songs and rituals.

Of particular importance were dhikr, the ritual of remembering God, and sama, mystical musical and dance practices symbolizing a state of unity with the Deity. These rituals became the basis for the emergence of unique musical and dance traditions, the most famous of which is the dance of the “swirling dervishes” of the Mevlevi order.

Folklore works dedicated to Sufi saints (awliya) such as Ahmad Yasawi, Bahauddin Naqshband, and Abdul-Qadir Gilani have preserved images of saints as intermediaries between the earthly and heavenly worlds. Thus, Sufism has become an integral part of folk religious culture, synthesizing elements of Islam with local beliefs and traditions.

Suhrawardyya: one of the most significant Sufi trends.

Safavidiya: an order that later became the ideological basis of the Safavid state (1501-1736) under Shah Ismail I; it also played a role as a political factor.

Such fraternities had their own monasteries, mentors, and a system of education, often combining spiritual and social functions. They contributed to the spread of Sufism through education, ritual practices, literature, and architecture.

Sufi orders (tariqas) are spiritual communities that follow specific teachings and practices. Among the most famous are the Naqshbandiyya, Meksumiyya and Shilviyya orders. Each order has its own characteristics, but they are all focused on achieving intimacy with God through worship, service, and inner work.

Today, Sufism continues to attract attention as a spiritual practice focused on inner harmony and self-development. Its values can be found in various cultural and religious contexts, attracting people seeking to find meaning in life and spiritual growth (Ismailova, 2025).

Sufism from Arabic Tasawwuf is a mystical tradition in Islam focused on personal, inner knowledge of God through love, self-knowledge and spiritual purification. Having emerged in the 8th–9th centuries in the Arab and Persian cultural centers, Sufism had a significant impact on the spiritual and artistic life of Muslim societies. Unlike the Orthodox movements of Islam, Sufism developed inner religiosity, emotional perception of faith and the pursuit of divine truth through symbol and metaphor. These features have found vivid expression in literature, folklore, and architecture.

Sufi symbolism, ideas of mystical unity (especially the concept of “wahdat al-wujud” = unity of being) have found their expression in Azerbaijani poetry and folklore. Thus, the study shows that Ashig Alyasgar’s work is full of themes such as divine love, existence, ethics, the heart and death, and that it is influenced by the Sufi tradition.

Sufi thought and literature were also studied in the context of the work of the philosopher-poet Nasimi: the reflection of the Sufi-Hurufite worldview was noted in his work.

Thus, Sufism enriched the literary tradition of Azerbaijan, contributing to the integration of Islamic mysticism into the national cultural context.

The influence of Sufism on the literary tradition was manifested primarily in poetry. The poetic language of the Sufis became a tool for conveying mystical experience, a symbol of divine love and the desire for spiritual unity.

The ideas of Sufism were most deeply embodied in Persian literature. Jalal al-Din Rumi (13th century) in his work Masnavi-yi Ma’navi created a poetic encyclopedia of Sufi philosophy, where the path of the soul to God is depicted through allegories of love, suffering and epiphany. In his poem “The Language of Birds”, Farid al-Din Attar presented the spiritual journey of the soul as a metaphor for understanding the truth. Hafiz Shirazi used traditional motifs of wine and love, turning them into symbols of mystical ecstasy.

In Turkish poetry, similar motifs were developed by Yunus Emre, whose poems were characterized by simplicity and popular accessibility, which contributed to the spread of Sufi ideas among the broad strata of society.

Sufi poetry has also influenced world literature. Through translations of the works of Rumi and Hafiz, Sufi symbolism penetrated the philosophy and poetry of European Romanticism, influenced the work of Leo Tolstoy, G. Hesse, H. L. Borges and other thinkers and writers..

Numerous monuments of Sufi heritage have been preserved on the territory of Azerbaijan: khanegas, mausoleums, sanctuaries. For example, khanega Pir Mardakan in the village of Geklyar in the Shamakhi region is one of such monuments.

The architectural forms of these monasteries reflect the role of Sufi mentors in society, as well as the connection of mystical tradition with material culture. This suggests that Sufism was promoted not only in texts or rituals, but also in a specific space – monasteries became cultural centers.

The architecture of Sufi buildings reflected the spiritual symbolism of the inner path and contemplation. The main types of buildings associated with Sufism were khanaka, tekke, and zawiya, monastic complexes that served as centers of spiritual communication, learning, and worship.

The architectural design of these buildings shows a desire for harmony, symmetry and light as a symbol of the Divine presence. Examples include the mausoleum of Ahmed Yasawi in Turkestan (14th century), erected by order of Timur, Tekke Mevlevi in Konya (Turkey), the center of the Rumi Order, as well as the mausoleums of Sufi sheikhs in Bukhara, Samarkand, Delhi and Shiraz. These buildings performed not only religious, but also cultural and educational functions, becoming centers of spiritual and artistic life of the regions.

Sufi ideas penetrated into popular culture, in particular, through the poetry of the Ashigs and music, through images of saints, through practices of memory and legends. This means that Sufism has become part not only of the religious elite, but also of a broad cultural tradition. This is confirmed by the data that Sufism in Azerbaijan was considered as an element of unification (unity) in folk art.

Sufism in Azerbaijan did not remain only a spiritual phenomenon: it had socio-political significance. For example, during the Safavid period, Sufism became a state-ideological factor.

The study also shows that in the 17th century, Sufi brotherhoods and their monasteries were influenced by transitional processes associated with changes in political regimes and religious paradigms.

In the modern era, Sufism is included in cultural policy, research programs, and education. Thus, a course on Sufism and cultural transformation has been introduced into the curricula of Azerbaijan.

In the 21st century, Azerbaijan's Sufi heritage retains its importance as a cultural resource, but it also faces challenges such as secularization of public life, changing religious practices, and globalization. The study shows that Sufism continues to be studied as an academic field ("Sufi studies"), for example, publications in 2023-2025.

In addition, the use of religious and mystical symbols as an element of national identity is noted in the field of cultural policy.

Thus, it can be argued that Sufism in Azerbaijan today acts more as a cultural and research phenomenon than as a mass religious movement.

Conclusion. The emergence of Sufism on the territory of Azerbaijan in the 10th–12th centuries was the result of complex historical, cultural and religious processes taking place in the region. It has become an integral part of the Islamic spiritual tradition, but at the same time it has developed in a unique form that reflects the identity of Azerbaijani culture.

Sufism has not only shaped new forms of religious experience, but has also had a lasting impact on philosophy, literature, and social life. It was during this period that the foundations of the spiritual worldview were laid, which later defined the face of the Azerbaijani civilization of the Middle Ages.

The study shows that Sufism in Azerbaijan has gone through a complex and multidimensional path: from an early mystical group in the 10th–11th centuries to integration into literary, architectural and folk culture, and further to a modern cultural and educational phenomenon. Sufi brotherhoods have played a significant role not only in religious life, but also in shaping Azerbaijan's cultural identity. Sufism has enriched the literary tradition, folk art, architectural heritage, and has also become an area of academic interest. Despite the changes of eras and regimes, elements of the Sufi tradition are preserved and adapted to modern conditions. Further research may be aimed at analyzing regional variations of Sufi practice in Azerbaijan, as well as comparative analysis with neighboring regions of the Caucasus and Iran.

References:

1. Corbin H. (1993). History of Islamic Philosophy. London: Kegan Paul. [in English]
2. Demirzadeh M., Allahverdiyev I. (2024). The Concept of Migration in Sufism. *"Metafizika" Journal. AcademyGate Publishing.* 7(3): 159-174. [in English]
3. Gubadov, G. (2023). The Sufism in Azerbaijan and Safaviyya Order (Tariqa). *Scientific Journal of Polonia University, 56*(1), 47-52. [in English]
4. Ismailov Kh. (2025). Sufism and sects in XVII century Azerbaijan. *Science, Education and Innovations in the Context of Modern Problems.* 8(3), 751-754. [in English]
5. Khalilli F. Azerbaycan'da Halvetîlik Arkeolojisi. Tasavvuf Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi 2, sy. 2 (Ocak 2024): 317-328. [in Turkish]
6. Mammadli N. (2023). The Influence of Sheikh Faridaddin Attar on Sufi Literature in Azerbaijan: a Study in the Context of Seyid Yahya Bakuvi's Works. *Path of Science*. 9(5): 7001-7009. [in English]
7. Nazarova A. H. (2023). Sufism and the concept of unity in Azerbaijani folk creativity (examples from the poetry of Ashiq Alasgar). *Актуальні питання гуманітарних наук*. 67(2): 343-349. [in English]
8. Schimmel A. (1975). Mystical Dimensions of Islam. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. [in English]
9. Trimingham J. S. (1998). The Sufi Orders in Islam. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [in English]

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-27

DEVELOPMENT TRENDS OF RELATIONS OF AZERBAIJAN-EUROPEAN UNION

Aliyeva Aygun Mehman,
Lecturer at the Department of History of Azerbaijan and Multiculturalism,
Baku Slavic University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3351-4425
aygunibrahimova@yahoo.com

Abstract. The development trends of relations between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan are of great importance in terms of monitoring the dynamics of the development of this international organization's relations with Azerbaijan as a whole. It is no coincidence that the joint statement adopted by the EU and its member states on December 31, 1991, recognizing the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan, revealed a more dualistic position of the EU in the initial stages. Thus, the European states initially treated the Republic of Azerbaijan, which had regained its independence, and the South Caucasus as a whole, as a territory within the sphere of influence of Russia. It is more clearly seen, especially in relation to the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict, which became more intense since the 1980s. It is not for nothing that, apart from Azerbaijani researchers, even Western researchers characterize the initial period of development of relations between the parties as "years of lost or costly failures".

Key words: Azerbaijan, European Union, The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, the strategic position of Azerbaijan, EU member states.

Introduction. In the first years of Azerbaijan's independence, all the documents adopted by the European Union on the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict were limited to condemning the conflict, and in humanitarian aid, Armenia was clearly given priority. Naturally, this factor also stemmed from Christian solidarity tendencies. During the presidency of the Great Leader Heydar Aliyev over the Republic of Azerbaijan, a new stage of cooperation with the EU and the Council of Europe was entered. In general, Heydar Aliyev's wisdom was that by bringing stability and peace to our country in the1990s, he eliminated the threats to the statehood of Azerbaijan, and was also able to protect our fledgling freedom and independence from very powerful foreign forces. At that time, the National Leader, who well appreciated the dependence of European states on energy resources such as oil and gas, developed an oil policy strategy against those who had always held the South Caucasus with the "Armenian card" throughout history, opened the East-West corridor, and managed to hold the International Baku Conference dedicated to the revival of the Great Silk Road (Mahmudov, 2002, p. 178). Not content with this, the great leader also began to implement the idea that *"the Azerbaijani state should follow the path of democratic state building by effectively using world democracy and universal values"* (Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti Heydər Əlirza oğlu Əliyevin Andiçmə mərasimində nitqi, 1993), which he declared at the inauguration ceremony, in a practical sense, against the background of relations established with the European Union. The signing of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the Member States of the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan in Luxembourg on April 22, 1996 was an indicator of the work to be done in this direction (Hüseynova, 2001, p. 156). This Agreement played the role of a legal basis in the relations between the parties and reflected the general provisions of cooperation.

The main text. The purpose is to examine the development trends of relations between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan, to characterize them from the point of view of monitoring.

The methodology of the research. In this article we relied on the comparative-contrastive method, in which we discovered a synthesis of experimental-empirical and scientific-theoretical data.

The results and discussion. When paying attention to the preamble of the Agreement, it becomes clear that the aim was to ensure cooperation between the parties in economic, cultural, social, and generally broader areas. The first part of the Agreement covered general principles, and Articles 1–4 reflected the principles of compliance with democratic principles and human rights based on the 1975 Helsinki Act, the 1990 Paris Charter, and cooperation with other independent states of the South Caucasus. The second part of the agreement was called “Political Dialogue”. This part covered Articles 5–8 (Vaqifqızı, 2017, pp. 33–34). The goal was to establish, develop, and activate a regular political dialogue as the initial trends in the development of relations between the parties. In the initial stage, it was indeed the political dialogue between the parties that strengthened the process of rapprochement of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the EU. As a result, the political and economic changes taking place in Azerbaijan were supported and favorable conditions were created for the development of new forms of cooperation. Article 5 states that “this dialogue may also be transferred to the regional level in order to prevent regional conflicts and tensions”. According to Article 7, which concerns political dialogue, the parties considered it necessary to use other diplomatic channels, including bilateral and multilateral relations with organizations such as the UN and the OSCE. The third part of the Agreement, entitled “Trade in Goods”, consists of 11 articles and covers Articles 9–19. This section defines the basic principles of trade in goods between Azerbaijan and the European Union. The articles of the section apply to the exchange of all types of goods, with the exception of textile products, coal, steel products and materials of nuclear weapons (Articles 17–19). According to Article 9 of the section, the parties provide each other with the most favorable regimes in each of the relevant areas:

– customs duties and charges applied to exports and imports, methods of such duties and charges;

– customs inspections, transport, warehouses and unloading of products;

– all types of taxes applied to imported products; methods of payment;

– rules for the sale, purchase, transportation, distribution and use of products on the national market.

According to Article 12 of the Agreement, no limits were imposed on the export of goods from the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Union countries. The only restrictions were imposed on textile products and goods related to the Treaty Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community. That is, Article 12 did not apply to these products. Article 13 provides for the realization of market prices between the trading parties. The most important provision of the Agreement regarding the known section was undoubtedly designed to protect its internal market. This was related to the possibility of the parties to apply security measures and anti-dumping rules in relation to goods imported from each other’s territory. So, according to Article 16, the Agreement contained some prohibitions and restrictions on the import, export and transportation of certain products.

The next, that is, the fourth section of the Agreement is entitled “Regulation on entrepreneurial activity and investments” and consists of 6 chapters. These chapters reflect the conditions for labor activity, the activity of enterprises and companies, cross-border provision of services between the Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan, current payments and capital, protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property and general issues.

According to separate clauses of this section, the members of the Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan undertook not to discriminate on the basis of citizenship in the hiring, working conditions, remuneration and dismissal of the other party within their territory. The same applies to enterprises, companies and their branches, with the exception of companies related to air and water transport. In cross-border services, the parties, namely the Republic of Azerbaijan and the member states of the European Union, support and recommend the gradual liberalization of this area (Vaqifqızı, 2017, pp. 35–36).

The Partnership and Cooperation Agreement also established articles on capital and payments between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union. According to Article 41, the parties undertake to "make any current payments between the Presidents of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Union in freely convertible currency". Chapter VI of Section IV of the PCA is related to the protection of intellectual, industrial and commercial property. This chapter aims to bring the level of provision of relevant rights in the Republic of Azerbaijan to the level of the Union's obligations. Section 5 of the Agreement is called "Cooperation in the Field of Legislation". This section envisages the improvement of legislative institutions between the parties. This process includes the following areas of law: Customs legislation, banking activities, company law, accounting and tax payment of companies, intellectual property, labor protection, financial services, competition rules, health law, legislation on environmental protection and exploitation of natural resources; technical norms and standards, legislation and regulatory acts in the field of transport, nuclear energy, protection of consumer rights. In order to achieve the afore-stated goal in the listed areas, the Agreement envisaged the provision of technical assistance to the Republic of Azerbaijan, such as the exchange of experts, the organization of seminars, the translation of legislative acts of the Union, and the transfer of specific information on relevant legislation. One of the most important sections included in the Agreement is "Economic Cooperation". The Agreement, which envisages large-scale economic cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Union in this section, consisting of 27 articles, proposes to take comprehensive measures to implement economic reforms in Azerbaijan, restore the economy, and promote sustainable development. In this section, the main attention is paid to the energy sector, food security, environmental protection, economic and socio-economic development, human resources development, agriculture, tourism, transport, and development of the regions. One of the interesting aspects was the inclusion of science, education, and technology in the framework of economic cooperation. Cooperation in science and technology is reflected in Article 52, which envisages the exchange of scientific and technical information and the implementation of joint activities in the field of scientific technological revolution (STR) (Vaqifqızı, 2017, pp. 37–38). In the field of education and vocational training, the main focus was primarily on improving the higher education system and personnel training in Azerbaijan, establishing higher education institutions and certification of higher education diplomas. Then, in priority areas in the public and private sectors, the focus was on training officials for state administration bodies, cooperation between higher education institutions, ensuring freedom of movement for young people, professional training of teachers, learning the languages of the Union member states, creating conditions for advanced training of simultaneous interpreters with higher education, supporting the improvement of the professionalism of journalists, and creating opportunities for teaching within the framework of relevant educational institutions, and it was intended to further increase the efforts made in this direction. It should be noted that the cooperation provided for in this article was also included in the framework of the TEMPUS program.

Cooperation issues in the field of agriculture and agro-industry are reflected in Article 54 of the Agreement. This cooperation envisages structural changes, modernization and privatization in Azerbaijan in the relevant areas.

The cooperation of the parties in the energy sector covered issues such as the development of energy policy, its establishment in accordance with the conditions of a market economy, increasing the quality of energy supply from an economic and environmental perspective, bringing the efficiency of energy supply and use into line with the Energy Charter Protocol, modernizing the energy structure, and transporting energy materials and products. This included the creation of a number of legal, institutional, and tax conditions to expand trade and investment in the energy sector (Vaqifqızı, 2017, pp. 39–40).

Cooperation in the energy sector also required the improvement of transport, including energy transportation. It is no coincidence that, according to Article 57 of the Agreement, it was planned to bring the management and operation of railway transport, ports and airports into line with modern requirements for the development of this sector. Besides, in accordance with the "TRACECA" project, the modernization of Trans-European Roads, the development of railway, water transport, highway, port, airport and air navigation infrastructure, the expansion of the scale of joint cargo transportation, and the development of a legislative and institutional framework for a more systematic implementation of transport policy were also emphasized as important points. Social issues were also included in separate sections of the Agreement, including "Cultural cooperation", "Cooperation in preventing and controlling illegal immigration", "Cooperation in the field of democracy and human rights", and "financial cooperation in the field of technical assistance". For the implementation of the Agreement, Section XI also stipulated the establishment of bodies such as the Cooperation Council, the Cooperation Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation Committee. The main obligation of the Cooperation Council was to hold meetings at the ministerial level once a year and monitor the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The Council examines issues arising in this direction, any bilateral and international issues, and gives certain recommendations to the parties in this direction (Vaqifqızı, 2017, pp. 40–41). The members of this Council consist f members of the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan and members of the Commission of the European Union. The leadership of the Council is carried out by representatives of the parties in turn. The obligation of the Cooperation Committee is to prepare the meetings of the Cooperation Council and ensure the implementation of the Agreement. Its members consist of high-ranking officials of the parties that signed the Agreement. Discussions of issues related to trade and investment are carried out in special subcommittees. Finally, the Parliamentary Cooperation Committee, as its name suggests, coordinates the joint activities of the Azerbaijani Milli Majlis and the European Parliament. The Committee ensures dialogue between these two institutions and is chaired alternately by members of the Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Parliament. This committee can also make recommendations to the Cooperation Council. Along with these institutions, the State Commission for Partnership and Cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the European Union has been established to coordinate the activities of state institutions of the Azerbaijani government. This commission represents interests of Azerbaijan within the framework of the PCA.

On the whole, the 1996 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, which shaped the main development trends of relations between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan, is not intended to dictate standards to the Union members. For example, Article 90 of the PCA states that no article of the present Agreement may prevent any of the parties from taking the following measures: "*preventing the dissemination of information that could harm the security interests of the country, imposing prohibitions on the production or trade of arms, ensuring peace and security in cases where there is a threat to the maintenance of law and order, and taking autonomous measures to control industrial products and technologies intended for dual use*" (Vaqifqızı, 2017, pp. 41–42). Since the procedure for ratifying the 1996 Agreement was lengthy, an "interim agreement" was signed between the parties in October 1997. The agreement came into force on July 1, 1999, after it was fully ratified by the participating states ("Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında Azərbaycan Respublikasının İttifaqın proqramlarında iştirakının ümumi prinsipləri haqqında Çərçivə Sazişi üzrə bir tərəfdən Azərbaycan Respublikası, digər tərəfdən Avropa Birliyi və onun üzvü olan dövlətlər arasında Tərəfdaşlıq və Əməkdaşlıq Sazişinin Protokolu"nun təsdiq edilməsi barədə Azərbaycan Respublikasının Qanunu, 2025; Həmidov, 2007, p. 144).

In the 21st century, it have arisen issues such as the renewal of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and the fact that some of its provisions have already been implemented, while others have become obsolete and have lost their relevance. However, it was this Partnership and Cooperation Agreement that shaped the development of relations between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan for many years and determined the main development trends in bilateral relations. On the basis of this agreement, Azerbaijan has continued cooperation with the EU in various fields within the framework of various programs and has created the basis for the development of bilateral relations to the highest level in modern times. However, the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), signed in 1996, no longer fully covers today's political, economic and geopolitical realities and has almost lost its relevance. Currently, the process of preparing a new strategic partnership agreement between Azerbaijan and the European Union is ongoing. Almost 95 percent of the agreement has already been agreed.

On July 11, 2018, during the visit of President I. Aliyev to Brussels, a document entitled "Partnership Priorities" was initialed between Azerbaijan and the EU. One of the most important points contained in that document was the expression of the parties' commitment to supporting the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of the countries, as well as the inviolability of state borders.

On July 18, 2022, a Memorandum of Understanding on a Strategic Partnership in the field of energy between the European Union and the Republic of Azerbaijan, represented by the European Commission, was signed between Azerbaijan and the European Union. The document was signed by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev and the President of the European Commission, Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen ("Azərbaycan ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında enerji sahəsində Strateji Tərəfdaşlığa dair Anlaşma Memorandumu imzalanıb" Azərbaycan Prezidentinin Rəsmi internet səhifəsi, 2025).

The main essence of the memorandum was to ensure stable and secure supplies of Azerbaijani gas to the EU. Thus, it was envisaged to transport natural gas from the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea to the EU and the Western Balkan countries in order to support the diversification of gas supplies in accordance with commercial feasibility and market demand.

The visit of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaya Kallas, to Azerbaijan in April 2025 is considered a turning point in mutual relations. Because the biased resolutions adopted by the European Parliament against our country in recent years, the statements made by the previous High Representative of the EU regarding Azerbaijan, the allocation of military assistance to Armenia within the framework of the European Peace Mechanism, the deployment of the EU observer mission along the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, and other such issues were the main factors that created stagnation in bilateral relations. It was during this visit that Kaya Kallas met with the President of Azerbaijan, I. Aliyev, which showed that trust between the parties had strengthened and that broad opportunities for future cooperation had opened up. The meeting also included extensive discussions on the development of Azerbaijan's cooperation with the European Union, especially on progress in the energy sector and security issues. The importance that the EU attaches to Azerbaijan as a reliable energy supplier was particularly emphasized. Thus, the Russia-Ukraine war has forced the EU to diversify its energy routes, and at the same time, trade tensions between the US and the EU may lead to an increase in the cost of exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) to Europe, so the EU has increasingly begun to give preference to partners that can provide pipeline gas at affordable prices. In this context, the Republic of Azerbaijan is currently in the EU's interest in terms of energy resources and transit opportunities (Avropa İttifaqı-Azərbaycan münasibətləri yeni strateji mərhələnin astanasında, 2025).

The Republic of Azerbaijan has signed a document on strategic partnership with 9 EU members. Out of 12 countries that purchase gas from Azerbaijan, 10 are European countries, and 8 of them are EU member states. 5 out of the 10 countries with the largest share in our country's foreign trade turnover are EU members, with Italy taking the first place in the ranking. According to the results of the first quarter of 2025, the share of trade with EU countries in the EU's total trade turnover was about 44 percent, which is 7 percent more than last year.

Conclusions. Thus, in modern times, the Republic of Azerbaijan gives more priority to bilateral relations in its relations with the EU in accordance with its foreign priorities. Along with participating in the regional projects of the EU, Azerbaijan, which is a leading state in terms of its share in the overall economic development of the South Caucasus, occupies a certain position in the foreign relations of the EU. Therefore, the Republic of Azerbaijan creates new formats of bilateral relations with the EU, develops all the institutions necessary for the expansion and diversification of strategic partnership relations with it, demonstrating the desire of the union to take a favorable position in the pan-European economic, political and security space. The strategic position of Azerbaijan, located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, also increases the interest of the EU member states in developing political and economic relations with our country. The formation of new and more progressive mutual relations, as well as the continuation of the work of building a democratic, legal state in our country, the confirmation, strengthening and development of the gained independence, and the development of civil society and the protection of human rights through deep reforms in this direction, open up wide opportunities.

References:

1. Avropa İttifaqı-Azərbaycan münasibətləri yeni strateji mərhələnin astanasında. URL: https://xalq.online/avropa-ittifaqi-azerbaycan-munasibetleri-yeni-strateji-merhelenin-astanasinda (accessed: 24.05.2025) [in Azerbaijani].
2. “Azərbaycan ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında enerji sahəsində Strateji Tərəfdaşlığa dair Anlaşma Memorandumu imzalanıb” Azərbaycan Prezidentinin Rəsmi internet səhifəsi. URL: https://president.az/az/articles/view/56689 (accessed: 07.07.2025) [in Azerbaijani].
3. “Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında Azərbaycan Respublikasının İttifaqın proqramlarında iştirakının ümumi prinsipləri haqqında Çərçivə Sazişi üzrə bir tərəfdən Azərbaycan Respublikası, digər tərəfdən Avropa Birliyi və onun üzvü olan dövlətlər arasında Tərəfdaşlıq və Əməkdaşlıq Sazişinin Protokolu”nun təsdiq edilməsi barədə Azərbaycan Respublikasının Qanunu. URL: https://e-qanun.az/frame work/28564 (accessed: 13.04.2025) [in Azerbaijani].
4. Azərbaycan Respublikasının Prezidenti Heydər Əlirza oğlu Əliyevin Andiçmə mərasimində nitqi. Bakı – “Respublika” sarayı, 10 oktyabr 1993-cü il. URL: https://lib.aliyev-heritage.org/az/4148127.html (accessed: 27.04.2025)
5. Həmidov, S.S. (2007). Avropa İttifaqında siyasi inteqrasiya problemi. *Siyasi elmlər üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dissertasiyası*. Bakı. [in Azerbaijani].
6. Hüseynova, H.K. (2001). Azərbaycan Avropa inteqrasiya prosesləri sistemində. *Siyasi elmlər doktoru dissertasiyası.* Bakı. [in Azerbaijani].
7. Mahmudov, Y.M. (2002). Azərbaycan tarixində Heydər Əliyev şəxsiyyəti. Bakı: Təhsil. [in Azerbaijani].
8. Vaqifqızı, L. (2017). Azərbaycan Respublikası ilə Avropa İttifaqı arasında əməkdaşlıq (1991-2008-ci illər). *Tarix üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dissertasiyası.* Bakı. [in Azerbaijani].

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-28

A NEW ERA IN THE SOUTH CAUCASUS AFTER THE SECOND KARABAKH WAR

Parvin Bayramova,
Doctoral Student at the Department of Political Science and Political Administration,
Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
(Baku, Azerbaijan)

Abstract. The South Caucasus region includes three countries: Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia. In this historically conflict-ridden region, the interests of many countries have been clashing since the beginning of the 20th century. Two countries in the region – Azerbaijan and Armenia – have been suffering from a conflict situation for more than 30 years. The conflict, which began with Armenia's overt territorial claims to Azerbaijan's historical lands, provocations on ethnic grounds and acts of terror in the late 1980s, resulted in military aggression against Azerbaijan. As a result of Armenian aggression, 20% of Azerbaijani lands were occupied, and more than a million refugees were displaced from their homeland. The first United Nations resolution No. 822 on the occupation of Azerbaijani lands was adopted on April 30, 1993. Later, resolutions No. 853, 874, and 884 were adopted, respectively. (Armenia-Azerbaijan confilict, 2025) Unfortunately, over the years, Armenia ignored UN resolutions and mechanisms established to resolve the conflict. Thus, for 30 years, the Armenia-Azerbaijan, Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remained unresolved and remained a frozen conflict until the Second Karabakh War.

Key words: confilict, war, peace, territorial integrity, communication.

Introduction. The Second Karabakh War is highly significant in the pursuit of ensuring the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan. The Patriotic War, which fundamentally reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the South Caucasus, also opened broad prospects for the long-needed peace, stability, and cooperative environment in the region. In other words, the Patriotic War and the resulting historic victory had an impact not only on Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus region, but also on global dynamics and the emerging world order as a whole. First of all, it should be noted that as a result of the Second Karabakh War, a part of the territories of Azerbaijan occupied by Armenia was liberated. On November 10, 2020, with the Joint Statement signed between Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Russia, Aghdam, Kalbajar, and Lachin were reintegrated into Azerbaijan. (Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation, 2020) Thus, new political and military realities emerged in the region. Despite being the victorious party in the war, Azerbaijan's decision to initiate a peace proposal was a pivotal step toward achieving lasting peace and stability in the South Caucasus. By doing so, Azerbaijan has paved the way for resolving the conflict that had remained frozen for many years. As a result, Azerbaijan has brought an end to the long-standing status quo in the region. It is no coincidence that, following the Patriotic War, during the meeting of the OSCE Minsk Group, attended by the co-chairs from France and the United States, President Ilham Aliyev specifically emphasized this: "We have shown that the status quo can be changed through force, and that we are right." (Ilham Aliyev received OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs from France and U.S., 2020) As a logical consequence of these developments, Azerbaijan's ability to influence regional affairs has increased. On the other hand, the liberation of the occupied territories has resolved the issue of refugees and internally displaced persons that has persisted since the 1990s. Citizens who were displaced from their homelands are now returning to their former places of residence within the framework of the Great Return program.

Discussion. The liberation of Azerbaijan's territories from occupation as a result of the Second Karabakh War also brought about fundamental changes in the geopolitical landscape of the region. It created opportunities for the opening of new communication lines. As a result of the restoration of the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, located at the junction of key transit routes, significant opportunities arose for the implementation of a number of international projects. In particular, the Zangezur Corridor project, initiated by official Baku and gaining relevance after the war, holds both regional and global importance. This corridor provides Azerbaijan with a direct land connection to Nakhchivan, and creates opportunities to expand and strengthen ties with Turkey and the Turkic world. It offers an opportunity for Armenia to overcome its economic blockade and integrate into a broader trade network connecting the Persian Gulf, the Black Sea, and the Eurasian corridors. This corridor will connect China and Central Asian countries with Turkey and Europe through Azerbaijan on a global scale. Against the backdrop of the growing importance of the Middle Corridor within the framework of China's Belt and Road Initiative, the Zangezur Corridor will become a crucial link in the Middle Corridor, officially known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route. This, in essence, promises substantial economic dividends not only for the South Caucasus region but also for Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and Europe. Thus, as one of the main transit countries of Eurasia, Azerbaijan stands at the center of East-West trade, energy, and transport and communication networks. This position continues to strengthen over time. It should be noted that the Zangezur Corridor project holds not only geoeconomic but also significant geopolitical importance. The corridor project, which fosters new cooperation opportunities in the region, is also of great significance for normalization between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the post-conflict period. The presence of the occupation factor resulted in the blockade of Armenia and its isolation from regional cooperation platforms. In addition to hindering Armenia's economic development, it led to its dependence on certain foreign political circles. This, in turn, provided opportunities for foreign political circles to intervene in the region to varying degrees. This also posed serious threats to the already fragile security environment both within the region and in the broader regional context. On the other hand, Armenia's aggressive policy hindered regional economic cooperation, the opening of communications, and, as a result, the further development of a region located in such a favorable and important strategic position as the South Caucasus. It should be noted that relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia have been on an upward trajectory throughout history. In particular, energy projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, Baku-Supsa, along with transport projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Kars, jointly implemented by the two countries, contribute to the development of bilateral cooperation. Following the Patriotic War, it is planned to advance regional cooperation, open transport and communication lines, and implement the Zangezur Corridor project, which will further increase the geoeconomic influence of the region. Both cooperation and reciprocal trade relations play crucial role in ensuring regional security. As noted in international relations theory, the likelihood of interstate conflict can be reduced by the emergence of a common interest in trade and economic cooperation amoung the countries of the region. It is no coincidence that following the First and Second World Wars, which resulted in the unprecedented disasters, destruction and loss of life, the former enemies, who came together in the European Coal and Steel Community in 1957, were able to bring permanent peace to the region through comprehensive cooperation. Historically, the South Caucasus has been a region marked by conflicting interests, particularly ethnopolitical and territorial conflicts. The conflict between the two states of the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan and Armenia, which lasted for more than 30 years was a negative factor for the security environment of the region. Today, however, broad opportunities have emerged for achieving stability in the region. The return of Baku and Yerevan to the negotiating table, along with the significant progress made towards achieving peace has had a positive impact on the regional security environment.

After the war, Azerbaijan's geostrategic position was further strengthened. As a key country in the region, Azerbaijan's political and economic influence also increased. The military operations launched by Russia in Ukraine in February 2022 once again brought to the forefront the European Union's energy dependence on Russia, particularly Russia's crucial role in natural gas supplies. From the early days of the Russia-Ukraine war, the increase in energy prices and the risks of supply disruptions exposed the European Union to energy shortages, including gas supply. This course of events prompted the European Union to reconsider its current energy policy. Thus, new alternatives began to be explored in order to reduce the continent's dependence on Russian gas. It should be noted that natural gas accounts for about a quarter of the European Union's energy consumption and is used in the production of heat and electricity and in industry. The total demand for natural gas in the Union countries is approximately 400 billion cubic meters per year. It should be noted that Russia held the leading position among the countries from which natural gas was imported. Until the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war in 2022, Russia annually supplied approximately 40% of the EU's natural gas needs. (Sariyya Bunyatova, Avropa İttifaqının növbəti enerji böhranı: Rusiya-Ukrayna münaqişəsi fonunda İttifaqın qaz təchizatı və alternativ axtarışları, 2022) After the Second Karabakh War, Azerbaijan entered the European Union's gas market with the commissioning of the Trans-Adriatic Gas Pipeline, the final segment of the Southern Gas Corridor, in December 2020. As early as 2021, Azerbaijan's gas exports to Europe reached 8 billion cubic meters. In response to the increased demand for Azerbaijani gas following the Russia-Ukraine war, a new cooperation agreement on gas transportation was signed between Azerbaijan and the EU in 2022. In 2022 alone, Azerbaijan exported approximately 12 billion cubic meters of gas to European Union countries. The commissioning of the Greece-Bulgaria Gas Interconnector in October 2022 enabled Azerbaijan's natural gas to reach Eastern Europe. Thus, at a time when the energy map of Europe was being redrawn, Azerbaijan emerged as a strategic player by increasing its role in Europe's energy security. Consequently, Azerbaijan has established itself as a reliable energy supplier to Europe. Ultimately, this signifies the strengthening of the country both regionally and internationally. Azerbaijan has enhanced its international standing by establishing itself as a reliable partner and strengthening its national economic and financial position. Among the main factors that positively influence the growth of Azerbaijan's geopolitical importance and its relations with foreign countries, notably its strategic geographic location and its status as a source of natural resources play an important role. However, it is not sufficient merely to possess natural resources such as oil and gas or to be situated in a favorable geographic location. It is not an easy task to establish strong relations with the leading states and major global power centers, to build a positive international image, even when such factors are skillfully used. This requires strong leadership, a pragmatic and far-sighted outlook, diplomatic skills, and abilities. Today, Azerbaijan is expanding its export opportunities by supplying gas not only to Europe but also to Syria, and is recognized as a reliable partner in the Middle East. This policy, pursued after the Second Karabakh War, has not only increased Azerbaijan's geoeconomic significance, but also further strengthened the country's position in the international arena.

The failure of the Armenian political leadership to comply with the conditions arising from the provisions of the Joint Statement of November 10, 2020, necessitated the launch of local anti-terrorist operations three years after the end of the war. Unfortunately, despite the end of the war and the commitments undertaken by Armenia, approximately 10,000 personnel from the remnants of the Armenian Armed Forces remained stationed in Azerbaijani territories. The self-proclaimed regime maintained its presence in Azerbaijan and conducted illegitimate elections in the territories of Azerbaijan. (Ilham Aliyev addressed the nation, 2023) Despite all warnings, Yerevan, which maintained the illegal junta regime, continued to finance it. For this purpose, hundreds of millions of dollars were transferred to the budget of the so-called regime every year. This support provided by the Armenian government encompassed not only the financial sector but also the military, political, ideological, and other areas. Those actions were completely contrary to the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, its sovereignty and security. At the same time, the opposing side was planting mines, that were produced in 2021, after the war, in the territories of Azerbaijan. (Ilham Aliyev has raised the flag of Azerbaijan in the center of the city of Lachin, 2022) These circumstances necessitated the launch of local anti-terrorist operations. The anti-terrorist operations, conducted on September 19–20, 2023 and lasted only one day, resulted in the Armenian separatists raising the white flag and surrendering. Thus, anti-terrorist operations were suspended. According to the agreement reached, the units of the Armenian armed forces stationed in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan, as well as illegal Armenian armed groups were required to lay down their weapons, withdraw from combat positions and military posts, and be fully disarmed. This process was successfully carried out. The Armenian army, illegally stationed on the territory of Azerbaijan were fully disarmed and withdrew from the country. (Azerbaijan-Armenia normalization process, 2024) The illegal junta regime in Karabakh was dismantled, and the principal leaders of the separatist movement were arrested. Thus, Azerbaijan fully restored its sovereignty across all its territories. As a result, the geopolitical landscape of the region has radically changed. The resolution of the 30-year-long and frozen conflict in Azerbaijan through the Second Karabakh War and local anti-terrorist operations has set an example for the ongoing and unresolved conflicts in other regions. Azerbaijan has demonstrated that it is possible to resolve a conflict through the combination of military and political means grounded in international law. The victory achieved in Karabakh has shown that even in long-standing conflicts, a peaceful resolution is achievable through diplomacy and negotiation. Although each conflict has its own unique features, in general, the peaceful resolution of the former Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict can serve as a source of hope for other conflicts. Achieving peace in the South Caucasus can contribute to peace in surrounding regions.

As ironic as it may seem, the Second Karabakh War brought the peace that the region had long needed. It resolved the conflict and opened new horizons for reconciliation, cooperation, and development. The peace negotiations, initiated by Azerbaijan in 2021, are now nearing completion. Azerbaijan and Armenia have already reached an agreement on the text of the peace treaty. On August 8 of this year, during a meeting in Washington attended by the presidents of Azerbaijan and the US and the prime minister of Armenia, the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia initialed the text of the peace treaty. (Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia initial peace agreement draft and sign joint appeal to OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, 2025) It was a considerably challenging task to achieve this in the South Caucasus region marked by a complex geography and long-standing conflicts. The presence of the U.S. President as a witness to the official document signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia, along with Donald Trump's direct involvement in the peace process holds great importance. On the fifth anniversary of the Patriotic War, we are closer than ever to achieving peace. Now, the only remaining obstacle on the path to signing a peace treaty and achieving lasting peace and stability in the region is the removal of territorial claims against Azerbaijan from the Constitution of Armenia. Peace in the region is of paramount importance. Achieving peace means ending the loss of life, sparing the country and the region from further hardships. To achieve this, the political leadership of Armenia must demonstrate political will and promptly undertake the necessary constitutional reforms.

Conclusion. As a result of the Second Karabakh War and subsequent local anti-terrorist operations, the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Azerbaijan have been fully restored. On the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for the first time, the norms of sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in the Constitution have been fully upheld across the entire national territory.

The Second Karabakh War between Azerbaijan and Armenia had a significant impact on Azerbaijan's foreign policy orientation and its relations with neighboring states. Azerbaijan, which achieved a complete victory in the war on its own strength, put an end to the occupation and the conflict itself, managed to gain international recognition for the new regional realities it established through successful diplomacy. The outcomes of the Second Karabakh War also had a positive impact on the directions of Azerbaijan's foreign policy. In the 21st century, with growing disagreements between global and regional powers, ongoing tensions in the system of international relations, including interference in the sovereignty and internal affairs of states, and double standards to the norms and principles of international law, Azerbaijan is developing comprehensively and dynamically, pursuing an independent, multifaceted and national interests-based foreign policy. All this ensures that Azerbaijan remains the most developed country in the South Caucasus region. On the one hand, Azerbaijan is taking consistent and systematic steps to ensure regional security by pursuing a well-considered foreign policy based on national interests. As noted above, the energy projects implemented by Azerbaijan and cooperation formats serving regional integration play a key role in ensuring stability in the South Caucasus. On the other hand, Azerbaijan actively participates in the peacemaking process not only in the South Caucasus, but also globally. Thanks to a foreign policy guided by national interests, Azerbaijan has established effective and mutually beneficial cooperation in both bilateral relations and within international organizations. It is no coincidence that Baku maintains high-level relations with major global powers, such as the United States of America and the People's Republic of China.

As a result, Azerbaijan, with its multi-vector and balanced foreign policy strategy, plays a central role in regional and global cooperation, in both of bilateral and multilateral context. This policy, while aligning with the country's national interests, also confirms the level of sovereignty of Azerbaijan and its independence from any external state or organization.

References:

1. Armenia-Azerbaijan confilict, 2025. https://president.az/en/pages/view/azerbaijan/karabakh
2. Statement by the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation, 2020. https://president.az/en/articles/view/45923
3. Ilham Aliyev received OSCE Minsk Group co-chairs from France and U.S., 2020. https://president.az/en/articles/view/48908
4. Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia initial peace agreement draft and sign joint appeal to OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, 2025. https://president.az/en/articles/view/69616
5. Ilham Aliyev addressed the nation, 2023. https://president.az/en/articles/view/61113
6. Ilham Aliyev has raised the flag of Azerbaijan in the center of the city of Lachin, 2022. https://president.az/en/articles/view/57293
7. Azerbaijan-Armenia normalization process, 2024. https://www.mfa.gov.az/en/category/end-of-the-conflict-in-november-2020-and-post-conflict-situation/azerbaycan-ermenistan-normallasma-prosesi#:~:text=A%20pivotal%20shift%20occurred%20after,Azerbaijani%20territory%20to%20disband%20itself.
8. Sariyya Bunyatova, Avropa İttifaqının növbəti enerji böhranı: Rusiya-Ukrayna münaqişəsi fonunda İttifaqın qaz təchizatı və alternativ axtarışları, 2022. https://top-center.org/az/tehlil/3394/avropa-ittifaqinin-novbeti-enerji-bohrani-rusiya-ukrayna-munaqisesi-fonunda-ittifaqin-qaz-techizati-ve-alternativ-axtarislari-1-ci-hisse

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-29

THE ISSUE OF BORDER REVISIONS BY THE KINGDOM OF HUNGARY IN THE 1920S AND 1930S: DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY CONTEXT

Oleksii Chukhomets,
Postgraduate Student at the Department of Ethnology and History of Ukraine,
Dragomanov Ukrainian State University (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5578-1527
aleksey8998@ukr.net

Abstract. The article analyzes key aspects of the domestic and foreign policy of the Kingdom of Hungary in the 1920s and 1930s in the context of territorial revisionism. It is noted that the harsh conditions of the Treaty of Trianon of June 4, 1920, under which the country lost two-thirds of its territory and population mainly to its neighbors–Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia–played a key role in bringing the issue of land return to the motherland. This sharp weakening led to the development of an internal theory of the desired territorial integrity of the country within the framework of the medieval concept of the «State of St. Stephen» – a multi-ethnic country, dominant in the Carpathian basin. At the same time, due to the lack of economic and military capabilities to implement this idea, the country was forced to rely on Germany as another party interested in revising the Versailles-Washington system. Hungary's attempts to raise the issue of the need to revise borders were noted among other influential countries in Europe and North America. However, these efforts had little significant result: France, Great Britain, and the United States generally perceived Hungarian revisionism as counteracting the development of economic relations in Eastern Europe, while Poland and Italy, which themselves sought territorial revision, did not have sufficient geopolitical weight as alternatives to the Third Reich. This leads to the conclusion that for Hungarian politicians, there was no alternative to a pro-German vector in the context of border revision, which allowed the leaders of the Third Reich to gradually draw the country into the orbit of the Axis powers and force it to participate in World War II. Defeat in the war only confirmed the terms of the Treaty of Trianon.

Key words: Hungary, Germany, Little Entente, Subcarpathian Rus, Treaty of Trianon, Eastern Europe, revisionism, border revision.

Introduction. The issue of revisionism in the geopolitics of states continues to be relevant both for studying human history and for analyzing the current principles of domestic and foreign policy in a number of countries. Closely intertwined with the related term "revanchism," it implies a change in the existing status quo by a party that considers itself to have lost in a past conflict, using both peaceful and military means to achieve its goals. The territorial aspect of revisionism, which involves the return of lands lost in previous wars, became a key reason for a number of military conflicts in the first half of the 20th century, caused by the dissatisfaction of a number of states with the terms of the Versailles-Washington system. One of these countries was the Kingdom of Hungary, for which the territorial issue became decisive in shaping domestic and foreign policy after the conclusion of the unfavorable Treaty of Trianon in 1920. As a result, during the 1920s and 1930s, the state sought opportunities to raise the issue of revision among other European countries, which ultimately led to an alliance with the Axis powers, participation in World War II, and the renewal of the unfavorable peace terms in 1945. An analysis of the reasons for this policy and the impact of revisionism on both Hungarian society and foreign policy relations is important for studying the history of Hungary and Eastern Europe in the first half of the 20th century.

Research status. The issue of border revisions by the Kingdom of Hungary in interbellum has been studied to one degree or another in the works of various scientists, among whom it is first of all appropriate to highlight the following: M. Ádám, N. Bardi, A. Czettler, M. Derzhaliuk, D. Dombrovskyi,

T. Kuprii, O. Lajos, M. Loewer, C. Matthew, É. Mathey, L. Ronai, A. Orde, L. Orosz, G. Péteri, A. Piahanau, R. Pomichal, P. Pritz, A. Purcsi, G. Réti and G. Tarján. However, a comprehensive comparative analysis of all aspects of the issue has not been carried out, which determines the novelty of scientific research.

Presenting main material. Post-war Hungary suffered almost the greatest economic, territorial, resource and human losses among all members of the Central Powers. This was due not only to the country's participation in the war as a member of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but also to other factors: the multi-ethnicity of the Kingdom of Hungary, which was home to significant Slovak, Romanian, German, Croatian and Rusyn minorities, many of whom were dissatisfied with the Magyarisation policy introduced in 1867–1918; the aspirations of neighbouring states – Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia – to strengthen their geopolitical influence in the region by dividing the kingdom's territories; and the fears of key members of the Entente – Great Britain and France – the creation of a potential German-Hungarian alliance that could weaken the influence of these countries in Eastern Europe; and the unstable situation in Hungary itself, where a Soviet republic was established in March 1919, which gave the Entente countries a cause to increase pressure on the country as part of the fight against communist ideas.

Under the terms of the Treaty of Trianon, signed on 4 June 1920, Hungary ceded many territories to other countries such as Slovakia and Transcarpathia to Czechoslovakia, Transylvania, Maramures and Bukovina to Romania, Croatia and Bačka to Yugoslavia, and Burgenland to Austria. The country's territory reduced from 327,750 square kilometres to 93,000 square kilometres. Also Hungary lost almost 13.4 million of its population, 3 million of whom were Hungarians. In addition to territorial and human losses, Hungary suffered severe economic damage. In economic terms the country lost 88% of forest resources, 43% of arable land, 83% of iron ore, and 38% of industry. And besides all that – Hungary's military potential was also limited to 35,000 troops without possibility to have armoured vehicles, tanks and military aircraft (Derzhaliuk, 2020: 124–130).

Under these conditions, revanchist sentiments spread among Hungarian society, which were embodied in various installations, cultural events and publications. The central leadership, headed by the regent of the Hungarian Kingdom M. Horthy, also played an important role in increasing this process. For example, in state schools children had to recite the Hungarian national prayer every morning and evening, which linked faith in God and Hungarian Christian values with the restoration of the territorial integrity of historical Hungary. The unofficial slogan of the territorial revision – the phrase «Nem Nem Soha», which translates as «No, no, never» – was written on pencils and on the back of notebooks, which were given to schoolchildren along with a map of historical Hungary and a list of raw materials that Hungary lost during its dismemberment (Loewer, 2016: 11–12).

It is worth noting that key components of interwar Hungarian revisionism developed continuously throughout the 1920s and 1930s, changing under the influence of internal and external factors. Among them, the elements that underwent the least change were the integral concept of uniting the country and its argumentation. Integral revisionism, unlike ethnic revisionism, focused on the need to completely annul the territorial restrictions of the Treaty of Trianon instead of just returning territories inhabited mainly by Hungarians. This idea was embodied in the concept of the «State of St. Stephen» (*Hungarian: «Szent István-i állameszme»*). Its main significance is the historical multi-ethnicity of Hungary, which ensured the strength and power of the country, which is clearly reflected in King Stephen's instruction to his son: «a country with one language and one set of customs is fragile and weak» (Matthew, 2005: 60). Leading Hungarian scholars analysed and partially adapted certain elements of this medieval concept to the post-war realities. Among them it is worth highlighting the scholars D. Sekfyu and L. Ottlik, who insisted on supporting Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries and other indigenous peoples living in the annexed territories in their works. The latter, for example, saw an option for implementing this idea in granting autonomous rights to local ethnic groups in Croatia, Transylvania and Transcarpathia, if they were to become part of Hungary again in the future (Purcsi, 2024: 194).

The key arguments of Hungarian propaganda for foreign policy purposes were developed in line with this concept. Given the country's economic and military weakness and its isolation by hostile states that had participated in the annexation of its territories, the Hungarian leadership sought support from other countries for the consideration of territorial revision. Hungarian researcher B. Nándor, analysing interwar Hungarian propaganda, highlighted its key arguments about the need to abolish the territorial restrictions of the Treaty of Trianon: the geographical and economic unity of the Carpathian Basin, based on the connection between the mountains and plains and the functions of Budapest as a key metropolis; a geopolitical deficit of powerful states in Eastern Europe that could counteract Germany and the Soviet Union, which could be filled by a territorially restored Hungary; the inability to resolve ethnic minority issues among neighbouring states that did not have many years of experience of coexistence with other ethnic groups; and the existence of «the historical virtues of Hungarian statehood and the cultural superiority of Hungarians», which were based on the thousand-year history of the Hungarian Kingdom (Bardi, 2008: 54–55).

Hungarian leaders placed a key role in restoring territorial integrity on Germany by a number of reasons. Both nations shared long common history because the Hungarian Kingdom was part of the Habsburg Empire for 400 years. Many educated Hungarians were acquainted with German culture; also both nations shared the recent military past. The economic factor was also important: the kingdom was interested in selling its agricultural products on the large German market. But the most important thing was the shared dissatisfaction with the terms of the peace treaties, which limited the influence of both states in Eastern Europe (Ronai, 2025: 254–255).

For Hungary, the significance of a potential alliance with Germany was further enhanced by the fact that in the 1920s, the state failed to convince the leading members of the former Entente – France, Great Britain and the United States – to revise the new borders in Eastern Europe. Initially, before the final adoption of the terms of the Treaty of Trianon, Hungarian political circles hoped for French support in limiting possible territorial losses. On the one hand, the Third Republic under the government of J. Clémenceau officially supported the harsh terms of the peace treaty, as it sought to create a single pro-French bloc in Eastern and Central Europe from Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia – states that considered Hungary an enemy (Loewer, 2016: 6–7). However, under the reign of O. Millier in 1920, the French leadership began to search an opportunity to gain a foothold in key sectors of the Hungarian economy.

A group of Hungarian businessmen led by S. Halmos, under the patronage of Hungarian Prime Minister I. Bethlen, tried to use these chance and began secret negotiations with the Secretary General of the French Foreign Ministry, M. Paléologue. The aim of these negotiations was to obtain official concessions from the Hungarian government for French businesses in the state railways, factories and port facilities in Budapest. In return, the French leadership, at the suggestion of the Hungarian side, was to facilitate the revision of borders or the holding of plebiscites in Southern Slovakia, Subcarpathian Rus, Transylvania, Bačka, Banat and Burgenland. However, the Miljéran government ultimately agreed only to assist in a possible future border adjustment as part of the work of the demarcation commission. This document, known as the «Milléran Letter», became for Hungarian society the embodiment of the empty promises of Western European countries to take Hungarian territorial issues into account (Orde, 1980: pp. 476–479).

Hungary's proposal to the French government in July 1920 to provide potential assistance in countering the possible incursion of Soviet troops through the Carpathians did not help the revision issue either. During this period, the troops of the Second Polish Republic were retreating under pressure from Soviet forces, and Hungarian political circles proposed using their forces to protect Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus. Although the French government suspected that this proposal unofficially envisaged the annexation of these territories. Nevertheless this possibility remained relevant until August, when after Poland's victory in the Battle of Warsaw the need for Hungarian assistance disappeared. In fact, this situation led to the opposite result – the formation of a military alliance between Czechoslovakia, Romania and Yugoslavia called the «Little Entente», directed against Hungary (Piahanau, 2018: 119).

The governments of Great Britain and the United States also did not view Hungarian revisionism favourably. For these states, the kingdom was primarily one of the markets of Central and Eastern Europe that needed to be stabilised through credit and loans in order to restore economic relations in the region, which had been destroyed by the First World War and the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Therefore, even unofficial manifestations of Hungarian revisionism, which provoked significant diplomatic opposition among the states of the Little Entente, were condemned by official politicians of both states. For example, in 1922-1924, Great Britain actively lobbied for a loan of £4 million to Hungary through the League of Nations, which was supposed to stabilise the country's economy, promote the restoration of local business and open the market to English capital (Péteri, 1984: 333–336). However, when on 21 June 1927 a member of the English House of Lords Harold Sidney Hemsworth, Viscount Rothermere published the propaganda manifest «Hungary's Place in the Sun», in which he openly called for the return to the Kingdom of Hungary of a number of territories belonging to neighbouring states populated by Hungarian minorities, the British government tried to downplay the impact of this scandal. In December of 1927 Foreign Minister Chamberlain had a meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Bethlen, during which the latter tried to portray the incident as a personal matter for the Viscount, to which his government had no connection (Pomichal, 2007: 73–75).

A similar situation existed in the United States, which after the First World War returned to the isolationist concept of the «Monroe Doctrine» and limited its intervention in European affairs to the economic sphere. A quite eloquently example of this approach was the unsuccessful attempts by the Hungarian Foreign Ministry to change the text of the country's separate peace treaty with the United States, signed in August 1921, so that it did not mention the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. The reasons for these actions were explained by the United States' plenipotentiary representative in Budapest from 1919 to 1922, Ulysses G. – S.: «The Hungarians want to formulate [the text] in such a way that the United States takes it for granted that the same restrictions and obligations regarding rights, privileges, compensation, reparations and benefits apply to them as to those who signed the Treaty of Trianon. Hoping to gain some advantage through our benevolent influence, the Hungarians clearly want to induce us to assume and fulfil the obligations in full» (Mathey 2014: 113).

Thus, for all Hungarian governments of the interwar period, attempts to establish strong contacts with their German counterparts were crucial for putting the issue of Hungarian revisionism on the European agenda. As D. Sekfyu noted, «We can only get out of our current predicament in the old way, by uniting with German Central Europe; this is one of the most striking lessons of our history» (Purcsi, 2024: 196–197). At the same time, German-Hungarian relations in the context of the kingdom's revisionist aspirations, in our opinion, remained somewhat inconsistent until 1939 in terms of the parties' plans regarding relations with other states, geopolitical concepts, and Hungary's subordinate status to Germany.

During the period 1923–1929, the issue of Hungarian revisionism played a predominantly negative role in relations between the countries. The Foreign Minister of the Weimar Republic at that time G. Stresemann sought to establish friendly relations mainly with Great Britain and France, striving to restore the country's prestige by supporting peace in Europe and easing the military and economic restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. In this situation, South-Eastern Europe, where the Hungarian government offered support for German interests, played a secondary role until the early 1930s: during this period, the governments of both states were unable to counter French influence in the region, which was supported by the Little Entente (Ronai, 2025: 259). Clearly understanding the weakened influence of both states on European affairs, Stresemann, although he supported official German-Hungarian relations, tried to distance himself from the issue of territorial revisions. In addition, the German diplomatic corps of the Weimar Republic at that time did not like Hungary's unofficial support for European figures and organisations interested in disrupting the post-war system. In particular, there were well-known meetings between Hungarian politicians who had contacts with the government and representatives of German Field Marshal E. Ludendorff, who in May 1920 proposed to unite military forces to seize power in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Prussia and support monarchist forces in the former Russian Empire in order to revoke the terms of the Versailles and Trianon peace treaties (Lajos, 2020: 97). Even more concern was caused by the fact that some members of the Kapp Putsch – an uprising by right-wing radicals and military circles against the Weimar Republic on 13–17 May 1920 – were hiding within the kingdom. In turn, the Hungarian government of I. Bethlen did not like German attempts to establish relations with the Little Entente: while for the Weimar Republic this alliance was a source of peace in Eastern Europe, for the kingdom it was a potential military and diplomatic threat. These problems led to a certain cooling of relations between the countries, which lasted until the death of H. Stresemann in 1929 (Orosz, 2019: 467–471).

The situation began to change gradually after the nationalists came to power in the Weimar Republic in 1929 – H. Brüning, who became Chancellor of the Republic, and J. Curtius, who took the post of Foreign Minister. In contrast to the previous leadership, the new government began to proclaim more open intentions to ease the restrictions of the Treaty of Versailles. In these circumstances, Hungary's importance to German government circles changed somewhat. Although the country was still considered secondary due to economic and military restrictions, its territorial claims on its neighbours, together with gradual German economic penetration, ensured the gradual transformation of the kingdom into a pro-German satellite. The change in priorities was evidenced by the meeting between I. Bethlen, G. Brüning and J. Kurtsiy in November 1930, at which the latter openly stated that «the goals of the new foreign policy on the most important issues of border revision and disarmament are parallel to the goals of Hungarian foreign policy» (Orosz, 2019: 475–476).

The Nazis' rise to power in 1933 was a harbinger of the spread of German influence in Eastern Europe for the Hungarian leadership of M. Horthy. In June of that year, Hungarian Prime Minister D. Gombos was the first European politician to visit the newly elected government. During his meeting with A. Hitler, he raised, among other things, the issue of revising the terms of the Treaty of Trianon. In turn, the chancellor drew attention to the priority of the Anschluss of Austria, to which the prime minister was not opposed, and to the focus on the destruction of Czechoslovakia, for which Hungary had to remove from the agenda the demands for the revision of borders in Yugoslavia and Romania. «The Hungarians can only count on German help against Czechoslovakia. Germany wants to gradually draw Yugoslavia and Romania into the sphere of interest of German capital and at the same time isolate them from France and Czechoslovakia», said A. Hitler during the visit (Tarján, 2017: 24–25).

This proposal did not satisfy the prime minister, as Hungary's official position was to maintain territorial claims against all three states as part of supporting the consensus on integral revision. These German demands continued to be made from time to time over the following years, sometimes in a humiliating manner. For example, H. Göring's speech at the funeral of Yugoslav King Alexander, who was killed in a terrorist attack, made a particularly negative impression. The Nazi official not only reiterated the Third Reich's lack of support for Hungarian territorial claims against Yugoslavia and Romania, but also condemned the situation of the German minority in the Kingdom of Hungary. This speech prompted Hungarian Foreign Minister K. Kányi to warn his German counterpart that if Germany clearly refused to support Hungary's position, there was a risk that the country would join the Danube Bloc promoted by Czechoslovakia, which would also include Austria. The latter could paralyse Germany's territorial expansion (Pritz, 1983: 35–41).

However, the Hungarian government was gradually forced to make concessions to its German counterpart. The reasons for this were not only economic and military dependence on the stronger Third Reich, but also the lack of equally powerful alternatives among other states interested in revising the geopolitical situation in Eastern Europe. This can be traced through an analysis of the country's relations with Italy and Poland, which also had territorial claims against their neighbours in Eastern Europe.

Political relations with the Kingdom of Italy were established by Hungary in 1927 after the signing of a peace treaty on mutual assistance. For the latter, this provided a number of potential advantages for supporting the revisionist programme. First of all, this alliance marked the country's effective exit from the diplomatic isolation created by the Little Entente and gave the government of I. Bethlen the opportunity to act as a mediator in Italian-German relations, strengthening the diplomatic status of his state (Ronai, 2025: 255). The next factor was that, at the time of signing the treaty, Italy had negative relations with Yugoslavia due to competition for influence in Albania. Accordingly, Hungary, which had territorial claims to the South Slavic country, appeared to be a reliable ally. Italy not only promised to provide support in the event of a potential war against a common enemy, but also secretly sent military weapons to Hungary, which contributed to the latter's remilitarisation. It should also be noted that in order to provide diplomatic support to its ally, Mussolini's government was engaged in spreading ideas among European states about the need to conclude a new treaty revising the post-war borders in Europe. This pact, the terms of which began to be discussed by representatives of Italy, Great Britain, France and Germany in March 1933, provided for the resolution of issues such as the elimination of the Polish Corridor, the preservation of Austria's independence, the resolution of disputes over influence in Albania and a potential correction of borders in favour of Hungary, mainly through the transfer of border areas of Slovakia and Subcarpathian Rus.

In practice, however, Italian-Hungarian relations did little to help Hungary's revisionist intentions. Because the new document sought to resolve a number of conflicts within the Versailles system, a number of states that benefited from the existing situation, including the countries of the Little Entente, Poland and even Germany, opposed its territorial provisions. In such circumstances, representatives of Great Britain and France also spoke out in favour of revising the planned conditions. Therefore, the terms of the document signed on 7 June, known as the «Four-Power Pact», amounted only to informal support for Austria's independence. It is characteristic that ten days after the agreement was initialled, D. Gembosz began his trip to Berlin for negotiations with A. Hitler (Piahanau, 2018: 271–276).

Hungary's attempts to maintain official claims against all members of the Little Entente continued until 1936. In the summer, preparations were still underway for a military invasion of Yugoslavia, which was to be carried out with Italy's support. However, after an appeal from the Hungarian side, Mussolini's regime offered only general support, emphasising the need to update its claims against Czechoslovakia. This situation reflected a change in the priorities of the Italian Kingdom. After the outbreak of the Italo-Ethiopian War in 1935 and its condemnation by the League of Nations, the state began to rely increasingly on the support of the Third Reich, as evidenced by the creation of the Rome-Berlin Axis in 1936 (Ádám, 1963: 89–91). The Italian government's gradual reassessment of its relations with the kingdom played an equally important role. The process of improving relations with Yugoslavia, which culminated in the signing of a neutrality treaty between the countries in 1937, removed from the agenda the key reason for signing the Hungarian-Italian mutual assistance treaty. In addition, representatives of the Italian fascist establishment were increasingly dissatisfied with Hungary's extensive territorial demands, given the inadequacy of its military potential to implement them. As the German spokesman in Rome, J. von Plessen, noted about the results of the Italian-Hungarian negotiations in July 1938: «When the Hungarian ministers summed up the results of their visit, they probably returned home with the feeling, which was noticeable at the time, that Italy's interest in Hungary had diminished... For Italy, the Rome-Berlin axis is of primary importance, the Anti-Comintern Pact and Italian-Yugoslav friendship are in second place, while Hungarian-Italian friendship is only in third place» (Réti, 1987: 587–588). As a result, Italian policy towards Hungary and Eastern Europe became dependent on Germany.

Relations with Poland, which began to actively develop in this direction after D. Gembosz's visit to the Polish leadership in Warsaw on 20–22 October 1934, were potentially more promising in terms of supporting Hungarian revisionist aspirations. Unlike Italy, in the 1930s the foreign policy priorities of the Second Polish Republic's leadership still corresponded to Hungary's revisionist demands regarding Czechoslovakia. The key reasons for the tense Polish-Czech relations were the territorial dispute over the region of Cieszyn Silesia, captured by the Czechoslovak military in 1919, and the pro-Soviet policy of the Czech government of E. Beneš, embodied in the 1935 mutual assistance treaty between Czechoslovakia and the USSR. In addition, an important role in the Polish-Hungarian rapprochement was played by the concept of the head of the Polish Foreign Ministry, J. Beck, to create an East-Central European bloc of states called «Between-seas» (*Polish: «Międzymorze»*), which, in a potential alliance with Italy and two democratic Western states, would be strong enough to counter the influence of the Third Reich and the USSR in the region. A prerequisite for the creation of this bloc was the collapse of multi-ethnic Czechoslovakia, which envisaged the creation of a pro-Polish Slovak state and the annexation of Subcarpathian Rus to Hungary, which was to ensure the creation of a Polish-Hungarian border between the allies (Czettler, 1990: 131–133). The latter was important for both states also because, by the end of autumn 1938, some representatives of the Third Reich unofficially did not rule out its transformation into the centre of a future Ukrainian state, which posed a threat to Polish rule in Ukrainian-populated Galicia (Dombrovskyi, 2012: 115–116).

The main focus of Polish-Hungarian cooperation was Subcarpathian Rus, where sabotage units from both countries were active from October to December 1938. The key objectives of these operations were to support local pro-Hungarian political forces, which were to hold a referendum on the region's accession to the kingdom, to cause material damage to military infrastructure in the region, and to spread anti-Czech propaganda. Their actions coincided with the failure of the Hungarian-Czechoslovak negotiations on 9-13 October 1938 in Komarno, at which the Hungarian side put forward its territorial claims. The Hungarian side involved the sabotage and terrorist groups «Free Detachments» *(Hungarian «Sobot Chopotok»)* and «Guard of the Broken» *(Hungarian «Rongyos Garda»)*, each of which numbered 300-500 people. These units were active in the south of the region, particularly in Borzhava, Mukachevo, Berehove, and Uzhhorod, destroying railway, telephone, and telegraph communications. (Kuprii, Tymish, Panasiuk, 2019: 78–79). Polish sabotage units, numbering 600 people, were divided into seven groups operating in the vicinity of the settlements of Svalyava, Perechyn, Maly Berezny, Olenyovo, Nyzhni Veretsky and Laturka (Dombrovskyi, 2012: 162–171).

However, as in the case of Italian support, Polish support had little impact on Hungary's key goal – the complete annexation of Subcarpathian Rus. During the First Vienna Arbitration, Hungary received only the northern parts of this region and Slovakia, inhabited mainly by Hungarians. Under these circumstances, the Hungarian government of K. Kányi began preparing for a military invasion in mid-November 1938 to completely occupy this Czechoslovak autonomy, for which it requested support from Poland and Italy. However, the Second Polish Republic refused to provide military support with regular units in this action, as it did not want to officially oppose the Third Reich's position on preserving autonomy (Czettler, 1990: 152–153). Although Italy promised to provide support in the form of aircraft and ammunition, it also expressed dissatisfaction with Hungary's possible violation of the terms of the recently concluded treaty, as it was its official guarantor together with the Third Reich (Réti, 1987: 608). The military operation was scheduled for 18 November, when the German leadership officially opposed it. Given the lack of support from other allies, preparations for the invasion were cancelled.

All these events meant that Hungary had no geopolitical alternatives to the Third Reich, which was at that time the only power in Eastern Europe capable of ensuring the success of Hungary's revisionist aspirations. As a result, after November 1938, the Hungarian side took a number of steps to fully switch to pro-German positions. In December, a government headed by I. Csáky was elected, which met German demands in the form of joining the Anti-Comintern Pact, withdrawing from the League of Nations, and deepening economic relations (Czettler, 1990: 157). These actions helped to support Hungary's territorial claims, thanks to which, in March 1939, the Kingdom of Hungary annexed Subcarpathian Rus after the collapse of Czechoslovakia, In 1940, under the terms of the Second Vienna Arbitration, it received Northern Transylvania from Romania, and after the capture of Yugoslavia by the Axis countries, it received Bačka and Baranya. However, these territorial changes came at the price of aligning foreign and domestic policy with German interests. For example, at the request of the Third Reich, the Hungarian authorities were forced to release and refrain from extraditing to Poland detained members of the Carpathian Sich, a pro-Ukrainian paramilitary organisation in Subcarpathian Rus that fought against the Hungarian invasion of the region. In addition, the German authorities insisted on granting Ukrainians cultural and religious rights, and emigrants the opportunity to return to the region and find work there (Dombrovskyi, 2012: 349). One can agree with L. Orosz's statement that German policy on the issue of Hungarian revision boiled down to a game of «push and pull» where certain concessions on territorial issues were expected to be «compensated» by support for German expansion in Europe (Orosz, 2019: 477).

Conclusions. Thus, the issue of territorial revision became particularly important in Hungary due to the excessive terms of the Treaty of Trianon, which turned the country into a secondary power in Eastern Europe with a significant diaspora in neighboring hostile countries. As a result, ideas about the need to revise the new borders with the potential for a return to pre-war territorial boundaries spread throughout Hungarian society and politics. Hungarian regime of M. Horthy, understanding the weakness of the country, prayed the key role in addressing this issue to other states that had influence in Europe. In this situation, Germany played an important role in actualizing Hungarian territorial claims as a former ally in World War I and an aggrieved party under the terms of the Treaty of Versailles. Despite a number of negative factors in German-Hungarian relations, such as the German government's distancing itself from Stresemann's revision of the post-war borders in the 1920s, the Nazi government's desire to control the scope of Hungarian territorial claims, and the Hungarian leadership's fear of losing its territorial claims, Germany played a key role in the revision of the post-war borders in the 1920s. Stresemann's government from revising the post-war borders in the 1920s, the Nazi government's desire to control the scope of Hungarian territorial claims, and the Hungarian leadership's fears about Germany's growing role in its own foreign and domestic policy, there were no alternatives to these relations for the kingdom. Western European countries were not interested in raising the issue of territorial revision due to their desire to maintain their influence on the post-war peace system and resistance from members of the Little Entente, as can be seen from Hungary's relations with France, Great Britain, and the United States. Contacts with other revisionist countries–Italy and Poland–did yield some positive results in the form of diplomatic and partial military support, they did not become an alternative to Hungarian-German relations due to the unwillingness to contradict the position of the Third Reich, as seen in the case of the preparation of the attack on Carpathian Ruthenia in November 1938. Paradoxically, the policy of submission to German influence with the aim of restoring the borders of the "State of St. Stephen" subsequently repeated the results of World War I – forced involvement in an unnecessary military conflict, defeat by rivals, and the conclusion of a devastating peace treaty.

References:

1. Ádám M. (1963) Documents relatifs à la politique étrangère de la Hongrie dans la période de la crise tchécoslovaque (1938-1939) (I ère partie). [Documents relating to Hungarian foreign policy during

the Czechoslovak crisis (1938-1939) (Part 1)]. *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 10, No. ½. 89–116 (in French).
2. Bardi N. (2008) Magyarország és a magyar kisebbségek az 1918 utáni első években: a magyar külpolitika revíziós céljainak megfogalmazása, a kisebbségi kultúra és politika támogatása [Hungary and the Hungarian minorities in the first years after 1918: formulating the revision goals of Hungarian foreign policy, supporting minority culture and politics]. *Kisebbségi magyar közösségek a 20. Szazadban*. Budapest. 52–59 (in Hungarian).
3. Czettler A. (1990) Ungarn zwischen Polen und der Achse. Die ungarisch-polnischen diplomatischen Beziehungen 1938/1939 und Józef Becks «Drittes Europa». [Hungary between Poland and the Axis. Hungarian-Polish diplomatic relations in 1938/1939 and Józef Beck's "Third Europe"]. *Ungarn-Jahrbuch*, 18, 129–168 URL: https://epa.oszk.hu/01500/01536/00018/pdf/UJ_1990_129-168.pdf (in German).
4. Derzhaliuk M. (2020) Trianonskyi myrnyi dohovir – dzherelo nestabilnosti v Tsentralno-Skhidnii Yevropi. (Chastyna 1). [The Trianon Peace Treaty – a source of instability in Central and Eastern Europe. (Part 1)]. *Проблеми всесвітньої історії: науковий журнал*, 3 (12), 118–151 (in Ukrainian).
5. Dombrovskyi D. (2012) Polshcha i Zakarpattia: 1938-1939. [Poland and Transcarpathia: 1938-1939]. Kyiv: Tempora, 392 (in Ukrainian).
6. Kuprii T., Tymish L., Panasiuk L. (ed) (2019) Subcarpathian Ruthenia in conditions of pre-war international crisis of 1938 and territorial encroachments of neighboring states (on regional press materials). *Skhid. Issue.* 164 (6). 2019. 75–82. DOI: https://doi.org/10.21847/1728-9343.2019.6(164).186957 (in English).
7. Lajos O. (2020) Tervek a Felvidék visszafoglalására 1920-ban [Plans to recapture the Highlands in 1920]. Közép– Európai Közlemények, 51. 89–114 [in Hungarian].
8. Loewer M. (2016) *Trianon: «Nem, Nem, Soha»*. [Trianon: «No, No, Never»]. accesat pe portalul academia. edu la 10 decembrie 2019. URL: https://www.academia.edu/30121622/Trianon_Nem_Nem_Soha_ (in Hungarian).
9. Matthew C. (2005) Et in Hungaria ego: Trianon, Revisionism and the Journal Magyar Szemle (1927-1944). *Hungarian Studies* 19(1). 51–104 (in English).
10. Mathey É. (2014) Az amerikai kormányzati körök és a magyar revízió kérdése a két világháború között. [American government circles and the issue of Hungarian revision between the two world wars]. *Aetas*. 29 (3), 109–126. URL: https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=426648 (in Hungarian).
11. Ronai L. (2025) Stanovlennia uhorsko-nimetskykh dyplomatychnykh vidnosyn pislia pidpysannia Trianonskoho myrnoho dohovoru do 1927 roku. [The Formation of Hungarian-German Diplomatic Relations after the Signing of the Trianon Peace Treaty until 1927]. *Scholarly Notes of the V. I. Vernadsky Taurida National University. Series: Historical Sciences. Volume 36 (75).* № 1, 253–262 (in Ukrainian).
12. Orde A. (1980) France and Hungary in 1920: Revisionism and Railways. *Journal of Contemporary History* Vol. 15, No. 3 475–492 (in English).
13. Orosz L. (2019) «Egy vak és egy béna, ha összefognak... » A weimari Németország és Magyarország együttműködésének kérdéséhez. [«A blind man and a lame man, if they join forces... » On the question of cooperation between Weimar Germany and Hungary]. Történelmi Szemle, 3. 2019. pp. 451–477 (in Hungarian).
14. Péteri G. (1984) «Tying up a Loose End» British Foreign Economic Strategy in 1924: The Hungarian Stabilization. *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 30, No. 3/4, 321–351. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/42555475?searchText=tying+up+a+loose+end&searchUri=%2Faction%2FdoBasicSearch%3FQuery%3Dtying%2Bup%2Ba%2Bloose%2Bend%26so%3Drel&ab_segments=0%2Fspellcheck_basic_search%2Ftest&refreqid=fastly-default%3Ad17614dde53d3fc3e835c6526480f9c2&seq=1 (in English).
15. Piahanau A. (2018) *Hungary's Policy Towards Czechoslovakia in 1918 – 36*. (PhD Thesis). Toulouse U niversity. URL: https://www.academia.edu/46634725/Hungarys_Policy_Towards_Czechoslovakia_in_1918_36 (in English).

16. Pomichal R. (2007) Csehszlovákia és Magyarország viszonya az 1920-as években. [Relations between Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the 1920s]. *Fórum Társadalomtudományi Szemle*. 9. évf., 2. 64–85 (in Hungarian). +
17. Pritz P. (1983) Das Geheimnis der auf mehreren Bahnen betriebenen deutschen Außenpolitik (Das deutsch-ungarische Verhältnis vom Herbst 1934 bis zum Herbst 1935). [The secret of Germany's multi-pronged foreign policy (German-Hungarian relations from autumn 1934 to autumn 1935)]. *Acta Historica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 29, No. 1. 35–55. URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/42555413?read now=1&seq=3#page_scan_tab_contents (in German).
18. Purcsi A. (2024) A revízió kérdése Szabó Dezső és Szekfű Gyula gondolkodásában. (The question of revision in the thinking of Dezső Szabó and Gyula Szekfű) POLGÁRI SZEMLE: GAZDASÁGI ÉS TÁRSADALMI FOLYÓIRAT, 20 (4-6). pp. 186-199. (in Hungary)
19. Réti G. (1987) Le relazioni ungaro-italiane dall'anschluss all'occupazione della rutenia subcarpatica, 1938-39. [Hungarian-Italian relations from the Anschluss to the occupation of Subcarpathian Ruthenia, 1938-39] *Il Politico*, Vol. 52, No. 4. 577–619 (in Italian).
20. Tarján G. (2017) Az 5. cseh(szlovák) hadoszlop nyomában. [In the footsteps of the 5th Czech (Slovak) military column] *Nemzetbiztonsági Szemle*, 2. 2017. 19–32. URL: https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu/index.php/nbsz/article/view/1720/1026 (in Hungarian).

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-30

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS FOR CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION IN THE CZECH-SLOVAK BORDERLAND

Myroslava Lendel,
Doctor of Science, Professor,
Professor at the Department of the Political Science and Public Administration,
Director of the Research Institute of Central Europe,
State University "Uzhhorod National University" (Uzhhorod, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8077-0421
myroslava.lendel@uzhnu.edu.ua

Abstract. This article explores the evolution, legal frameworks, and institutional structures of cross-border cooperation (CBC) between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic from the early 1990s through the 2020s. It addresses two central research questions: the emergence of dominant institutional formats for CBC, and the identification of best practices for cooperation among public institutions. Drawing on comparative legal analysis, empirical evidence from Euroregions and EGTCs, and recent academic literature, the study reveals the persistence of structural challenges alongside innovative local initiatives. While Euroregions have been instrumental in managing small-scale projects and fostering cultural and environmental ties, the establishment of European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) has introduced new strategic potential–albeit with uneven implementation. The findings highlight the influence of EU cohesion policy, national legal traditions, and administrative capacity on CBC outcomes. Recommendations emphasize the need for institutional reinforcement, sustainable financing, and closer coordination among regional stakeholders.

Key words: cross-border cooperation, Euroregions, EGTC, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, local government, EU Cohesion Policy, regional development.

Introduction. The national legislation in Central European countries, including Ukraine, permits various institutional forms for cross-border cooperation (CBC) among public institutions, which are the primary actors in this collaboration, in accordance with international norms. The institutions and practices of CBC, formed under different historical and political conditions, take into account the political, legal, socio-economic, and ethnocultural differences among various regions in Europe, including personal (ideological, technocratic, and mental) characteristics of the political leaders involved in these processes, and therefore can be perceived as unique. On the other hand, the international legal norms developed primarily by the Council of Europe (CoE) and the European Union (EU) aim to facilitate integration into the European market and other related areas and policies. This, in turn, could lead to a degree of unification among the various types of institutions involved in CBC. This trend is particularly pronounced in Central European countries, which have been confronting two key challenges since the 1990s and continue to do so today. Firstly, they are addressing the legacy of path dependency from the socialist era. Secondly, they are working towards integration into European common spaces and policies, including the Regional Cohesion Policy. Moreover, these efforts are made more complex by latent ethnic conflicts stemming from the presence of minorities in border regions, as well as the emerging threats posed by the rise of populism and conservatism.

Research goals. The primary objectives of this research initiative are to create a comprehensive institutional map of cross-border cooperation (CBC) between the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic, as well as to identify and analyze exemplary practices for effective interaction between public institutions in both countries. This involves a thorough examination of existing governmental structures, policies, and collaborative frameworks that facilitate transnational cooperation.

The first research question we seek to answer is as follows: *Has a dominant type of institution for cross-border cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Republics been formed during the 1990s to 2020s?*

The second research question can be formulated as follows: *What best practices for interaction between public structures can be identified in the Czech-Slovak cross-border area?*

State of the art and the methodology of cross-border institutional research. Without concentrating research efforts on analysing and systematising the diverse concepts of CBC, we will use the methodology only as a tool for analysing its institutional aspects. Researchers and practitioners commonly define *cross-border cooperation,* based on the CoE's definition of the "transfronier co-opetation" as the process of fostering and developing positive relationships between "communities, authorities or bodies exercising local and regional functions" from the different parts of the shared border (Council of Europe. (1980). European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation). This cooperation aims to address and prevent common challenges while promoting harmonious development in neighbouring communities, districts, and regions. Our research focuses exclusively on cooperation between regions and communities of the Czech and Slovak Republics.

The methodology of *Borderland studies* proposed in this research focuses on cross-border areas that require analytical exploration across four spheres. 1) economic and trade interaction; 2) political activities of various levels of government in territories adjacent to borders; 3) political influences exerted on the inhabitants of cross-border regions by various political actors; 4) the local political culture of the residents (Brunet-Jailly, 2005). In particular, from an academic perspective, a holistic view of cross-border development has been put forward by promoting the concept of *bordering,* which emphasises the socio-political aspects of borders. Bordering is a daily practice of constructing various kinds of borders between communities/groups, using ideologies, discourses, political institutions, relationships, and other political phenomena. Recognizing this reality, EU institutions consider the socio-political significance of reducing border effects in the formulation of Cohesion, Neighbourhood, and Enlargement policies (Scott, 2015).

The study of CBC draws on m*ulti-level governance, Europeanization theory, and regional development frameworks (*Perkmann, 2003; Scott, 1999). The *concept of soft spaces* (Allmendinger & Haughton, 2009) helps to understand the flexible institutional arrangements like Euroregions and EGTCs. Authors such as Böhm (2016) and Halás (2005) emphasize the adaptive capacity of post-communist states to EU spatial policies, especially in border zones.

Between 2014 and 2017, empirical research focused on organizing data for 61 active Euroregions and proposed a set of key institutional forms for cross-border cooperation at EU borders. The list is as follows:

1. *official contacts* between the governing institutions of communities/districts/regions as the subnational levels of governance;
2. *informal contacts* between the aforementioned governing institutions and other actors of cross-border cooperation;
3. *common events* for the actors of cross-border cooperation: conferences, seminars, round tables, fairs, and other promotional events;
4. *bilateral or multilateral agreements* on key areas of cooperation between the governing institutions of border territories of neighbouring countries and/or the establishment of joint management structures;
5. *institutionalised forms – organisations – of cross-border cooperation between public institutions*: Euroregions, European groupings of territorial cooperation (EGTC), Euroregional Cooperation Grouping (ECG);
6. *institutionalised forms of cross-border cooperation (organisations) between private actors or public-private partnerships*: cross-border clusters, industrial parks, hubs, cross-border functional areas, special economic zones, priority development areas (Durà et al. 2018; Noferini et al., 2019).

As it is evident from the above-mentioned list, public institutions of European countries (mainly governments of regions, counties, communes) apply or could apply the following advanced institutional cross-border cooperation formats:

1. ***Euroregions*** as associations of subnational authorities, sometimes with the participation of national governments. Euroregions are not a single legal entity but associations of legal entities – community/district/regional public authorities – that operate under the «umbrella» of the national part of the particular euroregion. These CBC institutions do not possess political authority but instead deal with the practical facilitation of cross-border activities and projects, including providing consulting services to the public authorities that are their founders. Euroregions function as cross-border organisations, equipped with a permanent secretariat and a technical and management team that has the capacity to secure its own resources. Cooperation within Euroregions occurs both vertically, with European institutions as well as regional and local authorities, and horizontally, among the organization's participants and similar structures.

Given the broad approach to understanding the essence of euroregions, there is a research perspective that this term encompasses both "classic" Euroregions and also includes Eurodistricts and Eurocities (Noferini et al. 2019; Rodil-Marzábal, 2022). The major international legal act that regulates the activity of Euroregions is already mentioned European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, the so called Madrid Convention, concluded on 21 May 1980 and two additional Protocols (Council of Europe. ETS – No. 159., 1995; Council of Europe. ETS – No. 169., 1998).

2. ***European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC)*** as a single legal entity with full legal responsibility established by public institutions (communal, county and regional self-governments, regional/local development agencies, public enterprises, universities and other public law entities) from different states. EGTC has to be registered on the territory of the EU member state. The rules for setting up and operating an EGTC were laid down by Regulations of the European Parliament and of the Council in 2006-2013 (European Parliament & Council (2006). Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC); European Parliament & Council (2013). Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006).

3. ***Euroregional Co-operation Grouping (ECG),*** similar to EGTC, is a type of cross-border cooperation institutional format; however, ECG is a CoE tool operating on the basis of the already mentioned European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation, mainly its additional Protocol No. 3 (Council of Europe. ETS – No. 206., 2009). Like EGTC, ECG is a legally recognised organisation and is subject to the national law of the state in which it is registered as a nonprofit. ECG must be registered on the CoE member state's territory. As of yet, no working ECG is present.

In one of the previous publications, it was argued that the primary political factor influencing the design of institutions and the politico-administrative practices of cross-border cooperation in Central European countries–both during their preparations to join the EU and after they became part of the single European space–is the conditions for obtaining and managing funding from European Union programs and funds (Lendel, 2024). This is especially relevant within the framework of the EU's Cohesion policy. This support is considered by local actors of cross-border cooperation as perhaps the main opportunity to reduce the effects of peripheral status in relation to national centres, which receive more public investments from the budget and are more attractive to private investors. Consequently, in some cases, local actors are more interested in collaborating with partners on the other side of the border rather than with national governments, which in turn raises concerns among the latter, especially in the context of Central Europe.

The division of Czechoslovakia created two separate legal and administrative frameworks for the Czech and Slovak Republics, leading to institutional fragmentation. Jerabek et al. (2021) emphasize that the initial decades after independence were marked by divergent legal interpretations and unsynchronized administrative procedures, complicating cross-border initiatives. Although both countries ratified international agreements such as the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation (their domestic legal adaptations remain only partially harmonized.

The effectiveness of CBC heavily depends on the capacity of local and regional institutions. Böhm (2016) and Jerabek et al. (2021) describe chronic issues related to limited staffing, lack of financial resources, and insufficient expertise in managing EU funding schemes such as Interreg. These shortages affect the ability to maintain project continuity and strategic planning, especially in smaller municipalities (Zenka, 2015). Moreover, frequent political turnovers lead to a loss of institutional memory, further weakening administrative performance (Böhm, 2016).

Halás (2005) points out that overlapping competencies among municipal, regional, and national bodies often cause delays and inefficiencies. This gap generates legal uncertainty for local and regional authorities aiming to establish joint projects and formal agreements. Perkmann (2003) notes that such challenges are common across European borders, where national sovereignty and complex multi-level governance structures often obstruct effective cross-border governance.

Results and discussion. The first research question we will seek to answer is: *Has a dominant type of institution for cross-border cooperation between the Czech and Slovak Republics been formed during the 1990s to 2020s?*

After the Velvet Revolution in 1989 and the peaceful dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, both countries retained cooperative ties across their shared border. Jerabek et al. (2021) note that, for example, the region between Moravia and Western Slovakia was historically cohesive and experienced uninterrupted socio-economic exchange even after the state split.

In both the Czech and the Slovak Republics, local and regional self-governments as public entities play a central role in cross-border cooperation (CBC). The legal foundation for CBC is based on already mentioned Madrid Convention which both countries ratified. Their legal authority to engage in such cooperation stems from national constitutional frameworks, specific legislative acts, and EU regulations. The decentralization processes following 1989 and EU accession in 2004 further enhanced the autonomy and legal competencies of subnational entities.

Specifically, the Constitution of the **Czech Republic** (1993), in Chapter Seven, recognizes the existence of self-governing regions and municipalities/communities. It establishes a framework for their autonomy in both domestic and international matters. Cross-border cooperation between subnational authorities operates within this framework, provided it respects national sovereignty and adheres to international treaties (The Constitution of the Czech Republic, 1992).

The primary legal framework governing cross-border cooperation (CBC) is Act No. 129/2000 Coll. on Regions (Regional Establishment). This law explicitly permits self-governments of regions (*kraje*) to engage in international cooperation, which includes the ability to enter into agreements with foreign partners, as stated in Section 66 (Zákon č. 129/2000 Sb. Zákon o krajích (krajské zřízení)).

Obce (municipalities, communities) operate under Act No. 128/2000 Coll. on Municipalities. Local governments may establish international partnerships, sister-city relations, or joint projects, particularly with towns across borders. They can also co-finance CBC initiatives (Zákon č. 128/2000 Sb. Zákon o obcích (obecní zřízení)).

Researchers highlight that legal provisions directly authorize regions and municipalities/communities to sign agreements with foreign partners and to join mutual public institutions. The legislation allows regions and municipalities to create a single legal entity in partnership with entities from other countries, provided there is a relevant international treaty ratified by the national parliament of the Czech Republic. In other situations, it is necessary to consult with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and obtain consent from the Ministry of the Interior. Additionally, there is a legal requirement for the Ministry of Regional Development of the Czech Republic to oversee the registration and approval of public authorities' and other public institutions' participation in European Groupings of Territorial

Cooperation (EGTCs). This requirement presents an extra challenge to the institutional development of cross-border cooperation (CBC) (Bohm, Drapela, 2021; Halás (2005)).

The Constitution of the **Slovak Republic** (1992), Title Four, guarantees the right of self-government to *obce* (municipalities, communities) and higher territorial units – *kraje* (regions), granting them legal personality and fiscal autonomy (Constitution of Slovak Republic, 1992).

The legal basis for CBC is provided through Act No. 369/1990 Coll. on Municipal Establishment that enables *obce (*municipalities, communities) to cooperate with foreign municipalities and regions, including the creation of cross-border associations, or signing agreements (Zákon č. 369/1990 Zb. Zákon Slovenskej národnej rady o obecnom zriadení).

The legal framework for CBC at the regional level was established a decade later due to the political challenges faced by the Slovak Republic until 1998. During this period, the central government was hesitant to allow decentralization, which is why support for paradiplomacy and other forms of CBC at this level of governance has been limited.. It was only in 2001 that it was established that the self-governance of higher territorial units (*kraje* – regions) could engage in cross-border relations, sign cooperation agreements, and participate in international organizations or projects that serve the public interest (Zákon č. 302/2001 Z. z. Zákon o samospráve vyšších územných celkov (zákon o samosprávnych krajoch).

The legal data shows that both countries have a strong foundation for local and regional cross-border cooperation. However, Czech legislation provides more explicit procedural mechanisms for agreements and oversight. In contrast, Slovak law focuses on functional autonomy, which is often complemented by guidelines from government ministries. Moreover, in Slovakia, inter-municipal and inter-regional cooperation is formally grounded in Article 66 of the Constitution, which supports associations focused on local and regional development. In practice, these partnerships include not only joint offices but also co-ownership arrangements, shared service agreements, and experimental formats such as SMART city collaborations (Hasprová et al., 2012; Hulst & van Montfort, 2017).

Between 1990 and the 2000s, local authorities in the Czech Republic and Slovakia used their administrative powers to establish three Euroregions along their shared border, one of which was in cooperation with the subnational levels of government from Austria *(Table 1).* As noted in the theoretical analysis, this represents one of the most institutionalized forms of CBC between public entities.

The establishment of Euroregions began in Czechia along the borders with Poland and Germany between 1991 and 1993. However, similar structures on the Slovak side of the border were only able to be formed after 1998 due to political and institutional delays (Halás, 2007). That is the reason why the first Euroregion Pomoraví – Záhorie – Weinviertel was under institutionalization for two years between 1997 and 1999.

Due to the absence of regions and a corresponding degree of self-governance in the Czech Republic during the 1990s, there were no Czech co-founders of Euroregions from public institutions of this nature. However, following the establishment of regional governance in 2000–2001, *kraj* (regions) were invited to engage in Euroregion activities, initially participating as observers.

Table 1

The list of Euroregions established on the Czech-Slovak borderland

Name of Euroregion	Year	States who subnational authorities are co-founders of Euroregions
Pomoraví **– Záhorie – Weinviertel (from 2021 – Pomoravi)**	1997–1999	The Czech Reoublic, the Slovak Republic, the Republic of Austria
Beskydy	2000	The Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic. The Republic of Poland
Bílé–Biele Karpaty	2000	The Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic

Source: Sites of Euroreions https://regionbeskydy.cz/euroregion-beskydy/euroregion-beskydy, https://www.regionbilekarpaty.cz/introduction, https://somjm.webnode.cz/

In terms of their legal status, the Euroregions functioning in this area operate as 'mirror' non-profit associations of municipalities. These associations are registered within the jurisdictions of the participating states and are governed by an agreement that establishes the Euroregion, along with its statutes and governing bodies. The entities involved in this context comprise the general assembly, the board of directors, the supervisory board, the secretariat, and the working groups (Euroregion Beskydy. Euroregion Bílé-Biele Karpaty, Euroregion, Euroregion Pomoravi).

After the formation of *kraj* (region) as the territorial level of administration in the Czech Republic in 2000, as well as the inclusion of the EGTC format into national legislation after EU regulations some regions took this opportunity to establish this institutional type of CBC (European Parliament & Council, 2006; European Parliament & Council, 2013).

As of May of 2025, according to the list of EGTCs, published by European Committee of Regions there were three EGTCs operating on the Czech-Slovak borderland (European Committee of Regions 14/05/2025 List of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Unfortunately, it was not possible to find a website about EGTC Spoločný región limited. Regarding the EGTCs TRITIA and Great Morava, both are registered in the Slovak Republic due to its more favourable legal environment for implementing European Community regulations concerning EGTCs.

According the Slovak legislature the members of EGTC can be the Slovak Republic, a self-governing region, a municipality, a legal entity under specific legislation with its registered office in the Slovak Republic, an association of legal entities made up of either of state, regions or municipalities (Act No. 90/2008 Coll. on a European grouping of territorial cooperation).

Euroregions in the Czech-Slovak borderland, as voluntary associations, are primarily composed of municipalities and communities. In contrast, EGTCs are established by regions. For instance, the EGTC Great Moravia was formed in 2022 through a collaboration between the South Moravian Region of Czechia and the Trnava Region of Slovakia. This initiative came nearly ten years after the creation of the EGTC TRITIA, which was also founded by the Moravian-Silesian region of the Czech Republic, the Žilina Self-Governing region of Slovakia, and the Silesian and Opole regions of Poland.

EGTCs (European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation) differ from Euroregions in several key ways. They possess legal personality, have dedicated staff, established budgets, and defined decision-making structures. Böhm (2014) provides a thorough analysis of the internal structure of EGTC TRITIA, highlighting its budgetary framework, which combines financial contributions from member regions and utilizes EU funds to implement joint initiatives. However, Böhm also points out the coordination challenges that arise due to differing national administrative traditions and legal systems. These differences necessitate ongoing negotiation and adaptation. Additional barriers persist in harmonizing national laws, simplifying funding processes, and addressing the varying strengths of institutions across member bodies.

Table 2

European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation with the participation of public institutions from the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic

Name of EGTS	Year	States who subnational authorities are co-founders of euroregions	Official websute
EGTC TRITIA limited	2013	Republic of Poland, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic	https://egtctritia.eu/en/
EGTC Spoločný región limited	2013	The Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic	https://www.spolocnyregion.sk
EGTC Veľká Morava/ Velka Morava/Great Morava	2022	The Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic	https://www.ezusvm.sk/

Source: European Committee of Regions 14/05/2025 List of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Retrieved from https://cor.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-11/Official_List_of_the_EGTCs.pdf

The second research question can be formulated as follows: *What best practices for interaction between public structures can be identified in the Polish-Czech cross-border area?*

The primary focus of this section is on best practices in addressing cross-border issues and responding to the opportunities and challenges faced by Euroregional institutions operating along the Czech–Slovak border.

Three Czech–Slovak Euroregions – Pomoraví–Pomoravie, Beskydy, and Bílé–Biele Karpaty – play pivotal roles in supporting local development, environmental cooperation, and cultural exchange (Halás, 2007; Jeřábek et al., 2024). The Euroregion Pomoraví–Pomoravie, connecting the South Moravian and Trnava regions, was among the pioneers in launching cross-border infrastructure and education projects, particularly under the EU programmes.

The Euroregion Beskydy, established in 2000, spans parts of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Poland, including cities like Frýdek-Místek, Žilina, and Bielsko-Biała. It is recognized for its initiatives in youth and cultural exchange, tourism promotion, and grassroots participation in regional development (Halás, 2005). The Euroregion Bílé–Biele Karpaty, also founded in 2000, brings together communities from the Zlín region (Czechia) and the Trenčín region (Slovakia). Its key focus areas are environmental protection, sustainable tourism, and balanced development.

By the end of the 1990s, Czech–Slovak Euroregions had established relatively efficient mechanisms to access EU funding, initially through the PHARE CBC programme (1994–2004) and subsequently via Interreg. These Euroregions became central actors in administering and distributing funds for small-scale cross-border initiatives. The Small Project Fund (SPF), managed by Euroregions, was particularly significant in supporting micro-projects in civic engagement and cultural cooperation.

Studies underline that Euroregions have played an important role in enhancing regional development and competitiveness by effectively utilizing Interreg resources (Chilla & Lambracht, 2022; Martín-Uceda & Rufí, 2021). For instance, Jerabek et al. (2021) report that over 70 micro-projects were implemented by Euroregion Bílé–Biele Karpaty alone between 2007 and 2015. In the case of the Beskydy Euroregion, public awareness of SPF activities reached 74%, with around 33% of residents participating in at least one project, reflecting their social and cultural significance (Wróblewski & Kasperek, 2019). Environmental cooperation, especially in protected areas like Bílé–Biele Karpaty, has also been a success story (Böhm, 2016).

Nevertheless, some critical evaluations also emerged. Zalt (2013) highlights challenges during the 2007–2013 Interreg CBC period, including administrative burdens, weak engagement of local governments, and overreliance on EU funds.

Under Interreg V-A Slovakia–Czech Republic 2014–2020, over 125 joint projects were funded with a total budget exceeding €90 million, including approximately €10 million for institutional cooperation. However, direct involvement of Euroregions in large-scale projects remained limited. For example, the Beskydy Euroregion implemented only three tourism-related projects during this period (Jerabek et al., 2021).

The current Interreg VI-A NEXT Slovakia–Czech Republic 2021–2027 programme has shifted toward systemic priorities such as disaster management, digitalization, and green transformation (Programme Interreg SK–CZ). Developed with broad stakeholder input, this programme also emphasizes cultural tourism and social innovation as strategic pillars. According to Jerabek et al. (2021), such initiatives are essential for strengthening soft integration and fostering cross-border social capital.

The broader use of Cohesion Fund instruments, including Interreg, has also led to the professionalization of Euroregion secretariats and better preparedness for potential transitions to European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs). The ex-post evaluation of Interreg Europe 2014–2020 confirmed strong programme outcomes and increased stakeholder participation.

Despite these advancements, Czech–Slovak Euroregions have demonstrated lower responsiveness and institutional capacity compared to their counterparts along the borders with Germany and Poland.

Typically operating with limited administrative resources, they nonetheless play a vital role in building regional identity, facilitating economic exchange, and fostering civic participation (Böhm, Boháč & Wróblewski, 2023). However, persistent legal and administrative barriers on the Slovak side – particularly in areas such as service provision, permits, taxation, and procedural regulation – continue to hinder the full potential of cross-border cooperation (Nováčková, Paškrtová & Vnuková, 2023).

The formation alongside with Euroregions of three EGTCs along the Czech-Slovak border – TRITIA, Spoločný región, Great Moravia – illustrates how EU Cohesion policy encourages subnational governments to seek ways to enhance cross-border collaboration.

Despite high expectations and initial institutional support, the practical outcomes in this case did not mirror the successes observed in other European border regions. One of the key ambitions was for the TRITIA association to manage the Small Project Fund (SPF) within the framework of Interreg programmes, following the model applied by Euroregions. Moreover, TRITIA sought to attain the status of a managing authority for an independent trilateral Interreg programme for the 2014–2020 programming period. Although this initiative initially received support from the European Commission, it was ultimately blocked by national governments, with the backing of established Euroregions (Böhm & Drapela, 2021).

Currently, no verified information is available regarding the activities of the EGTC Spolocny region, as its official website is non-functional. Similarly, the EGTC Great Morava, being a newly established entity, has not yet produced measurable results. However, in 2023, it adopted a strategic framework prioritising tourism and mobility, the protection of cultural heritage, environmental sustainability, and the exchange of professional experience among employees in social service institutions and secondary schools (EZUS Velká Morava).

Conclusions. Both the Czech and Slovak Republics possess a comprehensive legal framework for cross-border cooperation (CBC), aligned with European standards and regional development policy. Their legislation grants broad autonomy to local and regional governments for engaging in CBC, provides legal avenues for participation in Euroregions and European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), supports strategic planning and access to EU financial instruments.

However, the practical effectiveness of CBC depends on political will, institutional capacity, and coordination between administrative levels. Persistent challenges include legal asymmetries in administrative procedures between Czech and Slovak partners, a lack of stable co-financing mechanisms at the local level, and limited capacity in smaller municipalities to manage EU-funded CBC projects. These factors often limit engagement in larger-scale, long-term initiatives.

Euroregions have played an important role in fostering cultural and social cohesion, notably through Small Projects Funds (SPF), developing administrative linkages via working groups, and enabling multilevel governance involving regions, municipalities, and civil society actors. Nevertheless, their limited legal authority, fragmented institutional frameworks, and reliance on external funding continue to hinder their impact and sustainability.

Despite these challenges, CBC between the Czech and Slovak Republics has demonstrated resilience and adaptability over three decades. The shared language, administrative traditions, and EU integration have facilitated collaboration. The establishment of Euroregions and EGTCs has provided institutional frameworks for cooperation, while national legislation has generally supported local-level initiatives.

To enhance the long-term effectiveness of CBC, researchers recommend deeper institutionalization, the development of sustainable financing mechanisms beyond EU programming cycles, and improved coordination among regional stakeholders. Without such measures, CBC initiatives risk remaining fragmented and project-based, rather than evolving into durable, strategic partnerships.

References:

1. Act No. 90/2008 Coll. on a European grouping of territorial cooperation, supplementing Act No. 540/2001 Coll., as amended, as provided for in the amendments and supplements. Wording

effective at 1 July 2020. Retrieved from https://mirri.gov.sk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/EN_ACT-No-90_2008_on-EGTC_July-2020.pdf

2. Allmendinger, P., & Haughton, G. (2009). Soft spaces, fuzzy boundaries, and metagovernance: The new spatial planning in the Thames Gateway. *Environment and Planning A,* 41(3), 617–633. https://doi.org/10.1068/a40208
3. Böhm, H. (2014). Co-operation of Moravian-Silesian (CZ) and Žilina (SK) Regions in EGTC TRITIA. CESCI. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/26252626/Co_operation_of_Moravian_Silesian_CZ_and_%C5%BDilina_SK_Self_governing_Regions_in_the_EGTC_TRITIA
4. Böhm, H. (2016). New forms of cross-border co-operation governance as a tool of environmental protection strategies: Example from Czech–Polish–Slovak borders.

Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304268443

5. Böhm, H., Boháč, A., & Wróblewski, Ł. (2023). Evaluation of cross-border cooperation in Czechia since 1993: Euroregions on the way to authentic cross-border regions? *Geografický časopis*, 75(3), 253–267. https://doi.org/10.1515/geocj-2023-0021
6. Bohm, H., Drapela E. (2021) Country profile: Czechia. *Comparative analysis on the competencies of regional and local authorities in the field of CBC of the 5 countries With cross-border cooperation for the Europeanisation of Ukrainian borders*. Visegrad Fund, 8-20. Retrieved from: https://www.iepd.kiev.ua/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/CESCI-IVF_2021-Study-Comperative-analysis-authorities_EN.pdf
7. Brunet-Jailly, E. (2005). Theorizing borders: An interdisciplinary perspective. *Geopolitics*, 10(4), 633–649. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650040500318519
8. Chilla, T., & Lambracht, I. (2022). The evolution of cross-border cooperation in the EU: From Euroregions to EGTCs. *Geographia Polonica*, 95(1), 33–48. https://doi.org/10.7163/GPol.0227
9. The Constitution of the Czech Republic, 1992. Retrieved from https://constitutionnet.org.developmentzone.co/sites/default/files/Czech%20Republic%20Constitution.pdf
10. Constitution of Slovak Republic, 1992 Retrieved from https://www.google.com/search?q=Constitution+of+the+Slovak+Republic&rlz=1C1SQJL_ukUA883UA883&oq=Constitution+of+the+Slovak+Republic&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIICAEQABgWGB4yCggCEAAYgAQYogQyCggDEAAYgAQYogQyCggEEAAYgAQYogTSAQgzMzA4ajBqNKgCALACAQ&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
11. Council of Europe. (1980). European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities, Madrid, 21.V.1980 (ETS No. 106) Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680078b0c
12. Council of Europe. (1995). Additional Protocol to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation (ETS No. 159). Retrived from https://rm.coe.int/1680078b15
13. Council of Europe. (1998). Protocol Nos. 2 & 3 to the Madrid Convention (ETS Nos. 169 & 206). Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680078b1c
14. Council of Europe (2009) Protocol No. 3 to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Cooperation between Territorial Communities or Authorities concerning Euroregional Co-operation Groupings (ECGs) (ETS No. 206). Retrieved from https://rm.coe.int/1680084827
15. Durà, A., Camonita, F., & Berzi, M. (2018). Euroregions, excellence and innovation across EU borders. Publications Office of the European Union. Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/futurium/en/system/files/ged/recot_crii_catalogue_0.pdf
16. European Committee of Regions 14/05/2025 List of European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Retrieved from https://cor.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-11/Official_List_of_the_EGTCs.pdf
17. European Parliament & Council (2006). Regulation (EC) No. 1082/2006 on a European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC). Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006R1082
18. European Parliament & Council (2013). Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on a European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and functioning of such groupings Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2013/1302/oj/eng

19. Euroregion Beskydy. (n.d.). Euroregion Beskydy. Retrieved from https://regionbeskydy.cz/euroregion-beskydy/euroregion-beskydy
20. Euroregion Bílé-Biele Karpaty. (n.d.). Introduction. Retrieved from https://www.regionbilekarpaty.cz/introduction
21. Euroregion Pomoravi (n.d.), Retrieved from https://somjm.webnode.cz/
22. EZUS Velka Morava. Retrieved from https://www.ezusvm.sk/projekty/
23. Halás, M. (2005). Geographical aspects of cross-border cooperation. *Moravian Geographical Reports,* 13(2), 2–11. https://geografie.upol.cz/soubory/lide/halas/clanky/Halas-MGR.pdf
24. Halás, M. (2007). Development of cross-border cooperation and creation of Euroregions in the Slovak Republic. *Moravian Geographical Reports,* 15(1), 21–30.
25. Hasprová, K., Žárska, E., & Fáziková, M. (2012). Forms and limits of inter-municipal cooperation in Slovakia. In V. Klímová & V. Žítek (Eds.), *XXIV International Colloquium on Regional Sciences* (pp. 630–637). Masaryk University.
26. Hulst, R., & van Montfort, A. (2017). Inter-municipal cooperation in Europe. Springer. Science & Business Media, 238 https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/1-4020-5379-7
27. Jerábek, M., Havlíček, T., Dokoupil, J., & Anděl, J. (2021). Cross-border *Slovaca,* 37. https://www.sav.sk/journals/uploads/03280951Jerabek%20et%20al..pdf
28. Jerábek, M., Slavík, V., & Šindelář, M. (2024). Development of the Czech–Slovak border area and cross-border cooperation after 1993. *Geografický časopis,* 76(1), 77–94.
29. Lendel, M. (2024). Public Cross Border cooperation institutions on the Polish-Czech borderland. *Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences*, (4), 293-302. https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2024-4-31
30. Martín-Uceda, J., & Rufí, J. V. (2021). EGTCs in the Iberian Peninsula: Challenges for a stable cooperation. *Regional Science Policy & Practice*, 13(5), 1271–1287. https://doi.org/10.1111/rsp3.12315
31. Noferini, A., Berzi, M., Camonita, F., & Durà, A. (2019). Cross-border cooperation in the EU: European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs) and Euroregions. *European Planning Studies*, 28(1), 35–56. https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2019.1574110
32. Nováčková, D., Paškrtová, L., & Vnuková, J. (2023). Cross-border provision of services: Case study in the Slovak Republic. *Administrative Sciences,* 13(2), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.3390/admsci13020054
33. Perkmann, M. (2003). Cross-border regions in Europe: Significance and drivers of regional cross-border cooperation. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 10(2), 153–171. https://doi.org/10.1177/096977640301000202
34. Programme 2021–2027 Interreg SK–CZ Official programme document. Retrieved from https://www.sk-cz.eu
35. Rodil-Marzábal, A. (2022). Euroregions and spatial planning: Redefining cooperation mechanisms in the European Union. *Territory, Politics, Governance,* 10(1), 57–75. https://doi.org/10.1080/21622671.2021.1897847
36. Scott, J. W. (1999). European and North American contexts for cross-border regionalism. *Regional Studies,* 33(7), 605–617.
37. Scott, W. J. (2015). Bordering, Border Politics and Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe. In: F.Celata, & R. Coletti (Ed.), *Neighbourhood Policy and the Construction of the European External Borders*. Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-18452-4_2
38. TRITIA EGTC. (n.d.). European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation TRITIA, Ltd. Retrieved from https://egtctritia.eu/en/about-us/
39. Wróblewski, Ł., & Kasperek, A. (2019). Euroregion as an entity stimulating the sustainable development of the cross-border market for cultural services in a city divided by a border. Sustainability, 11(8), 2232. https://doi.org/10.3390/su11082232
40. Zákon č. 369/1990 Zb. Zákon Slovenskej národnej rady o obecnom zriadení Retrieved from https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/1990-369
41. Zákon č. 128/2000 Sb. Zákon o obcích (obecní zřízení) Retrieved from https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2000-128

42. Zákon č. 129/2000 Sb. Zákon o krajích (krajské zřízení) Retrieved from https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2000-129
43. Zákon č. 302/2001 Z. z. Zákon o samospráve vyšších územných celkov (zákon o samosprávnych krajoch) Retrieved from https://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2001-302
44. Zalt, I. (2013). Cross-Border Cooperation in Slovak-Czech Border Region under EU Programmes. European Countryside, 5(2), 133–145. https://doi.org/10.2478/euco-2013-0010
45. Zenka, J. (2015). Cross-border cooperation in Moravia–Silesia: Challenges and opportunities. Moravian Geographical Reports, 23(2), 12–24. https://doi.org/10.1515/mgr-2015-0002

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-31

ASSESSMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF THE USER IN REGULATORY ACTS GOVERNING LIBRARIES OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN AZERBAIJAN

Mammadova Sevda Israfil,
Lecturer, Baku State University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-9469-5744
sevdamammadova@bsu.edu.az

Abstract. One of the main structural elements of the library system is its users. The library collection and the services provided are based on providing users with prompt services. Therefore, it is important to design services based on user characteristics. It should be noted that terms such as 'reader,' 'customer,' 'member,' 'subscriber,' and "client" are widely used to describe the concept of 'user.' Currently, the functions of the traditional concept of 'reader' have changed significantly. Along with those who use the library, potential users are also considered users. The language used in connection with any process, the form of expression presented, and the expressions used shape perceptions and views. From this point of view, the form of naming library users is of great importance in terms of defining users' points of view. The aim of this study is to examine the concept of 'user' and other related concepts and approaches to them in the main legislative documents of university libraries in Azerbaijan, as well as in library statutes and instructions. Document and data analysis using a descriptive method was widely used to collect data for the study.

User definitions have emerged, and overall, comprehensive attention has been paid to the concepts of 'user,' 'participant,' 'reader,' 'university,' and 'student.' It was established that in the context of the modern approach, the concept of 'reader' is mainly defined as 'user,' and various expressions related to this term were also found. In general, definitions related to the user vary in form and expression. It is important for academic libraries to get to know their readers better and, accordingly, to serve them based on modern standards, especially by developing this topic from the users' point of view. It is believed that the results obtained can provide valuable information about the concept and perspectives of users in higher education libraries in Azerbaijan.

Key words: library as a social institution, information users, librarians, library science in Azerbaijan.

Introduction. In the 21st century, libraries are undergoing significant ideological changes. Nowadays, libraries are increasingly user-oriented. Whereas previously libraries focused mainly on meeting user needs, now users are at the center of all library services and processes, becoming active participants. In modern times, users are no longer passive participants in this service, using information services. In the changing pace of the 21st century, users have become an active part of any product or service. Historically, based on the results of genetic analysis, librarians around the world have concluded that a library consists of four elements: documents (books and other publications, including electronic media), readers (users), librarians, and material and technical resources. Without these elements, the existence and functioning of any library is impossible.

The founder of library science in Azerbaijan, prominent scientist and professor Abuzar Khalafov, in his scientific work "Introduction to Library Science" (Khalafov A. 2001) noted the important contribution of many outstanding scientists, especially American scientist D. J. Shira and prominent Russian librarian Y. N. Stolyarov, in defining the basic elements of a library, and gave a broad explanation of their scientific approaches to this issue. For example, J. Shira presented the structure of a library in the form of a triangle and said that its basis is the document, the reader and the librarian, while Y. N. Stolyarov suggested that it is a quadrangle – the document, the reader, the librarian and the material and technical base. Currently, modern scientific literature on library science notes that the structure of libraries mainly consists of five elements: buildings, finances, personnel, collections, and readers (users). Among these elements, it is the users who play an important role in shaping the library collection, which is the basis for the existence of libraries, in determining service categories and in planning.

In this sense, researcher E. Yilmaz (2005, p. 2) identified users as the first of five key elements that make up library systems. Renowned Indian scholar R. Ranganathan expressed his views on the role of users in librarianship in his book "The Five Laws of Librarianship" as follows: "...you should not impose your own thoughts on them... Unfortunately, we are all human beings, and in trying to prove ourselves right, we forget our real goal – to help the user find what he or she needs. You can guide them, but you cannot drag them along with you" (Ranganathan, 1963).

It should be noted that users, whose needs must be met, constitute the main target audience of the library. From this point of view, it became necessary to study users, determine their reading characteristics and analyse their needs. Currently, scientific research such as studying user needs for information services, determining the type of information, the relevance of existing services to modern needs, and developing optimal services in accordance with the tasks set, is defined as fundamental user research (Prytherch, 2000).

Metodology. It should be noted that users' information needs may vary and change depending on time and place. It should be borne in mind that in a changing world, information needs also change very quickly. If the category of library users is not the subject of research, it is impossible to predict the future activities of libraries.

The study used a descriptive method, as well as methods for collecting relevant information on the topic and scientific analysis of the information obtained.

Results and their discussion. In the dictionary, it is defined as "a user is a person who controls something or benefits from something." This term, used by specialists in various fields, has different meanings, areas of application, purposes and functions. A user is a person who uses the library's information resources for various purposes. This can be an individual, a group, etc. Considering the concept of a user as a term, we observe its use in various fields of science. In particular, this term has found wide application in the field of computer science as a suitable equivalent to the word user, which is translated from English as "user". In librarianship, the concept of 'user' has historically been used in various forms and expressed as "reader," "researcher," "client," "member", etc. It should be emphasized that in this area, such well-known scholars as Jennifer Rowley, Heidi Julien, Michael Gorman, B. T. Lallo, and others have attempted to identify alternative terms to "reader" in their research.

Among the concepts mentioned, the term "reader", which is traditional, has over time gone beyond its narrow interpretation and needed to be replaced by the term "user". As a result, people who use the library have been replaced by the concept of 'user' as a result of the transformation of the traditional concept of 'reader' caused by information technology (Özlük, 2006, p. 106).

Various sources in the field of librarianship have proposed different scientific approaches to the concept of a user. For example, researcher Yılmaz (2005, 1) defined the concept of a user in a general sense as "persons who benefit or are likely to benefit from information services". The definition states that, in addition to persons who probably use the library, it also includes persons who actually use it. In addition, Uçak (1997b, p. 20) in his scientific study "The behavior of scientists when searching for information and the reasons influencing it" determined that the concept of a user is not limited to persons who actively use information centers, but includes "all active and potential persons to whom information centers are obliged to provide services". Here, in addition to those who actively and specifically use the library, potential individuals who do not currently use the library but may use it at any time and in any form in the future should also be taken into account. Cribb, taking into account that people come to the library not only to read but also for various purposes, defined the user as follows:

1. For the use of auxiliary resources;

2. To obtain library resources;
3. For consultation with the librarian;
4. For copying library resources by photocopying;
5. For the use of video and audio documents;
6. For the use of other services offered by the library.

Consequently, a person who visits a library is not a “reader” but a “user” [Cribb, G. (1981).

The concept of “reader” in the initial approach was also clearly reflected in the following explanation by Professor A.A. Khalafov. In his monograph “Library and Society”, A. Khalafov explained that the word “reader” comes from the word “reading” and means “a person registered with a library, a member of a library, a person who uses a library” (Khalafov , A. 2011)

In another approach, Professor A.A. Khalafov notes: “In our opinion, users who visit the library by chance, only when they need to, are not readers. The word “reader” itself is understood as an intellectual, a person who loves books and knows how to appreciate them” (Khalafov, A. 2011). Thus, “the dictionary meaning of the term “reader” is a person who reads books and all kinds of printed material” (Khalafov, A. 2011, p. 9).

The above reasons show once again that it is more appropriate to develop the concept of a user rather than a reader.

Library users and their characteristics

Naturally, the fact that libraries of different typologies have their own user groups allows users to be classified differently. In addition, users can be classified in a general context. Ginchat and Menou (1990, p. 291) based their classification of user types on two criteria:

1. Objective criteria, such as the user's profession and area of expertise;
2. Social-psychological criteria, such as the user's approach and behaviour towards information and its search. Guinchat, C. and Menou, M. (1990).

The above criteria largely coincide with the reasons that influence information search. As a result, information demand generates information search, which in turn turns a person into an information user. In accordance with these criteria, various categories of information are distinguished:

1. Users who do not actively participate in economic life (students, etc.).
2. Those who need information related to their field of activity (production, management, services).
3. By field of activity or specialization (public administration, agriculture, industry, etc.)
4. Ordinary people who need information on general and social issues (Guinchat and Menou. 1990).

Lallo (2002, pp. 25–26) grouped users according to their work, the system in which they work, and other people. For example, by profession–civil servants, students, researchers, politicians, etc.; by the system in which they work: government agencies, scientific, cultural and religious organizations, industrial enterprises, etc.; other professional and non-professional individuals.

The user grouping proposed by Lallo is broader and covers most of society, including not only those who use the library, but also potential users who are likely to use it in the future. Users can also be grouped according to various criteria, such as age categories – children, young people, the elderly, people with visual impairments, etc.

Performing both research and educational functions, universities rank first among institutions that are fundamental to the scientific development of countries. University libraries also play an important role in this area. Each library provides services in accordance with the needs of its audience. It is more appropriate to identify individuals and organization that will use the services of the university library from a scientific point of view, or, accordingly, as users of the university library. Users of the university library can be grouped as follows:

– University students, lecturers, and staff of educational institutions.
– Administrative staff.

– Users of other library services.

– Independent researchers (only those who have permission to use library resources and library services based on membership).

Users of university libraries include registered students, staff, independent researchers, and guest users from other universities. In addition, students participating in bilateral agreements within national and international student exchange programmers, visiting researchers, etc. are also considered university users.

The user – one of the most important components of library activity or information business. This article presents alternative definitions of the term "user," their explanations, and various aspects.

Each reader has his own unique style of behavior, which is directly influenced by the surrounding society, cultural environment, values, demographic and geographical conditions. These factors, in turn, affect the process of searching for information by the user. From this point of view, specialists in the library and information field should plan and take into account various products and services for users. Considering that the main purpose of the services or products provided in the library is to meet the changing and rapidly growing needs of users, it can be understood that the quality of user service and products depends on a thorough study of their characteristics.

Conclusions and recommendations. One of the major problems facing libraries today is the lack of users, due to which, in this era of rapid development of information and communication technologies, many people are no longer visiting libraries. This problem can be solved by paying due attention to users, understanding their importance and appreciating them. Thus, considering that users are people who benefit from any products and services, their opinion about these services and products will allow them to be more closely connected with libraries.

– The concept of “user” includes such concepts as “user”, “‘member”, and “external user”.

– İn general, the concept of “user” is usually divided into four categories: “benefit-oriented user”, “legislation-oriented user”, “university-oriented user” and “member-oriented user”

-Currently, the term “user” is more commonly used to refer to the category of readers. However, alongside this concept, there are also traditional concepts such as “reader,” “researcher”, and “consumer”.

– the terms “user” are largely synonymous with each other, in addition to their general and limited meanings, they also have a very broad meaning

İn general, it can be stated that there is no limit to the standardized and unified approach to reader management, which is reflected in the statutes and instructions of academic libraries in Azerbaijan. From this point of view, it is advisable to put forward the following proposals:

– It is necessary to strive for the widespread dissemination of experience in working with users, based on modern approaches. In this regard, studying the relationship between university library management and users may yield more useful results;

– It is important to take certain steps to transform activities such as “reader service” in university libraries into ‘user observation;

– Improving the quality and quantity of user-oriented research can lead to greater awareness of this issue;

– At the same time, organizing courses and training in this area can yield more positive results;

– To recognize users and emphasize their importance, professional scientific events on the topic of “Users and research of users"” can be organized.

References:

1. Cribb, G. (1981). Kütüphanelerde Kullanıcı Eğitimi’nin önemi. Türk Kütüphaneciliği, 30 (2), 90–99. https://www.researchgate.net
2. Guinchat, C. və Menou, M. (1990). Bilgi ve dokümantasyon çalışma tekniklerine genel giriş (S. Taner, çev.). Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Kütüphaneler Genel Müdürlüğü.

3. Laloo, B. T. (2002). Information needs, information seeking behaviour and users. New Delhi: Ess Ess Publications, 2002
4. Özlük, H. K. (2006). Halk kütüphanesi kullanıcılarının bilgi arama davranışları. (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Ankara Üniversitesi, Ankara.
5. Prytherch, Ray, Comp. (2005). Harrod‟s Librarians‟ Glossary and Reference Book. Hampshire: Ashgate, P.351.
6. Ranganathan, S R. Five Laws of Library Science. Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1963.
7. Rzayev, S. (2009) Kitabxana xidməti. Dərslik. Bakı Universiteti Nəşriyyatı, 2009-337 s.
8. Uçak, N. Ö. (1997b). Bilim adamlarının bilgi arama davranışları ve bunları etkileyen nedenler. (Yayımlanmamış doktora tezi). Hacettepe Üniversitesi, Ankara.
9. Khalafov, A. A. (2001) Kitabxanaşünaslığa giriş. Bakı: 266 s.
10. Khalafov .A.A. (2011) Kitabxana və cəmiyyət. Monoqrafiya; Bakı: 348 s.
11. Əhmədov E.Y. (2016) Uşaq və gənclərin kitabxana-informasiya təminatı.Bakı: Sabah, 2016. 248 s.
12. Yılmaz, E. (2005). Kullanıcı hakları ve sorumlulukları: Bir standart denemesi. Türk Kütüphaneciliği, 19(3), 1–18. https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/815188

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-32

SHADOW ECONOMY OF UKRAINE UNDER MARTIAL LAW: INSTITUTIONAL DETERMINANTS, RISKS, AND MECHANISMS OF COUNTERACTION

Vladyslav Pustovar,
Doctoral Student at the Department of Political Science,
Mykhailo Drahomanov Ukrainian State University (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0009-0001-9790-0210
vvpustovar7@gmail.com

Abstract. The article examines the complex phenomenon of Ukraine's shadow economy under martial law, a period in which the scale of informal activity increases sharply due to infrastructure destruction, declining institutional capacity, and deep societal uncertainty. The aim of the study is to analyse the structural features of shadowing during wartime, identify the key factors contributing to its expansion, and assess the impact of the shadow sector on Ukraine's economic and national security. Particular attention is paid to the transformation of economic behaviour among actors who are forced to adapt to extreme conditions, thereby altering the nature of their interaction with state institutions.

The methodological framework combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, including the analysis of statistical data, econometric modelling, content analysis of legal acts, comparative studies of countries that have experienced armed conflict, and an interdisciplinary approach integrating political economy, institutionalism, and theories of economic security. This methodological design enables a comprehensive understanding of the multidimensional nature of shadowing under wartime conditions.

The article identifies the main drivers of shadow economy growth, including the sharp decline in state control, disruption of logistical chains, commodity shortages, increased reliance on cash transactions, migration processes, and institutional destabilisation. It is shown that informal employment, tax evasion, smuggling, corruption markets, and shadow logistics significantly expand their presence as a result of transformed economic incentives and heightened risks in the formal sector.

The findings demonstrate that the shadow economy has become one of the central factors undermining the state's economic resilience, as it erodes budgetary stability, impedes effective financial planning, exacerbates social inequality, and destabilises the labour market. Shadowing also reduces investment attractiveness, distorts competition for small and medium-sized enterprises, and creates a favourable environment for criminal networks that pose direct threats to national security.

The paper argues that effective counteraction to shadowing is possible only through strengthening the institutional capacity of the state, digitalising control mechanisms, modernising the tax system, implementing risk-based approaches to monitoring financial operations, and enhancing cooperation between the state, business, and civil society. International partners play an important role by supporting the modernisation of supervisory institutions and the introduction of technological solutions.

The conclusion emphasises that, in wartime, the shadow economy functions not only as an economic challenge but also as a systemic indicator of state resilience, its ability to uphold the rule of law, and its capacity to implement effective policy. Successful de-shadowing is possible only through an integrated combination of institutional, legal, technological, and social strategies aimed at strengthening trust, transparency, and the adaptability of economic governance during wartime and post-war recovery.

Key words: shadow economy, economic security, martial law, institutional capacity, corruption, market shadowing, economic policy.

Introduction. In the current context of large-scale military aggression against Ukraine, the problem of the shadow economy has acquired a new dimension, as periods of profound turbulence exert maximum pressure on economic and political institutions, exposing their systemic vulnerabilities. Spontaneous transformations of the market environment, the destruction of traditional production chains, the decline in households' purchasing power, and the limited capacity of the state to exercise control and regulate economic processes create favourable conditions for the spread of informal economic practices. Under such circumstances, the shadow sector becomes not only an economic phenomenon but also an important political-institutional factor influencing societal trust, state resilience, and the ability of public institutions to withstand external and internal threats.

The war significantly modifies the mechanisms underpinning the formation of the shadow economy, as security disruptions, mass population displacement, destruction of infrastructure, and changes in the structure of employment give rise to new forms of informal activity that are difficult to capture through traditional control mechanisms. The growing role of cash transactions, shortages of certain goods, external pressures on logistical channels, and heightened wartime risks create an environment in which economic actors are forced to adapt by resorting to unofficial mechanisms. These processes result in reduced state budget revenues and weakened fiscal and monetary policy, which in turn narrows the state's capacity to sustain defence capabilities and support the social sphere.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of Ukraine's shadow economy under martial law from the perspectives of political economy, institutional theory, and national security, and to identify key mechanisms that either contribute to its expansion or may enable its gradual reduction. Particular attention is given to identifying transformational changes in the behaviour of economic actors, analysing the institutional effectiveness of state economic security policy, and determining the factors that intensify the link between shadowing and wartime risks. The study also aims to assess whether war-induced transformations can be leveraged as a catalyst for further reforms and improvements to the institutional architecture of economic governance.

The research tasks include analysing the current state of the shadow economy in Ukraine and identifying the structural trends that emerged after the onset of full-scale aggression. The study also involves identifying the key sources of shadowing, assessing the impact of wartime risks on the behaviour of businesses and households, and evaluating the effectiveness of state measures aimed at combating shadow economic activity. A separate set of tasks concerns the analysis of legal, institutional, and organisational barriers that hinder the reduction of shadowing, along with the development of recommendations for enhancing economic security policy during wartime and post-war recovery.

The methodological basis of the research comprises a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods that enable a comprehensive assessment of the shadow sector. Quantitative methods include the analysis of statistical data, the calculation of shadow-economy indicators, and econometric tools for evaluating the dynamics of shadow processes. Qualitative methods involve content analysis of legal documents, the examination of scholarly approaches, comparative studies of countries affected by armed conflict, and the interpretation of behavioural patterns associated with actors' adaptation to crisis conditions. This interdisciplinary methodological approach ensures the comprehensiveness and objectivity of the findings.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in deepening the theoretical and methodological approach to analysing the shadow economy under wartime conditions by integrating its economic, political, and security dimensions. Novelty is also reflected in the attempt to conceptualise the shadow economy as an indicator of the resilience and adaptability of state institutions in periods of extreme disruption, as well as in the development of a new analytical model that accounts for the impact of wartime risks on economic actors' behaviour. The research also provides an assessment of the potential for using crisis conditions as an impulse for reforming the economic system and strengthening institutions responsible for combating shadow economic activity.

Main part. During the period of martial law, the shadow economy becomes an exceptionally important indicator of the state's institutional capacity, as its scale directly correlates with the level of governance transparency, the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures, and the quality of public policy implementation. Numerous studies indicate that the rise of shadow economic activity during crises is a typical response to declining trust in the state and its institutions, highlighting the need for a comprehensive analysis of the interrelationship between the wartime context, political stability, and the economic behaviour of citizens. It is precisely under wartime conditions that long-standing structural problems within the economic system become most visible, manifesting acutely following the radical disruption of the economic operating regime.

In scholarly discourse, the shadow economy is traditionally examined through the lens of rational choice theory, institutional economics, theories of state regulation, and social models of behaviour, all of which make it possible to develop a holistic understanding of the causes and consequences of its expansion. In the Ukrainian context, these approaches require significant reconsideration, as martial law reshapes not only the economic interests of market participants but also their behavioural strategies, altering the criteria of rational decision-making. Wartime conditions create a situation in which economic actors seek to minimise risks even if it requires shifting into the shadow sector, as uncertainty and danger strengthen the incentives to act outside formal regulatory mechanisms (Docenko, 2020).

At the same time, society increasingly perceives the shadow economy as a compulsory form of adaptation to extreme circumstances, complicating the state's efforts to restore legal economic practices. Under such conditions, the state must not only combat shadow activities but also create enabling conditions for economic actors to return to the legal sector by reducing regulatory burdens, digitalising procedures, increasing the transparency of tax mechanisms, and reforming oversight institutions. A crucial factor remains the strengthening of public trust, as trust constitutes the fundamental precondition for restoring legitimate economic relations in the post-conflict period.

In contemporary scientific literature, the shadow economy appears as a multidimensional phenomenon that encompasses a wide range of economic relations occurring outside formal accounting, control, and regulation. The essence of this phenomenon is further complicated by the fact that different academic schools interpret it through their own theoretical frameworks, emphasising economic, legal, or sociological dimensions. Economic approaches view the shadow economy as a means of cost optimisation and adaptation to excessive regulatory pressure, whereas the legal perspective focuses on violations of established norms and procedures that create an alternative space of economic activity beyond the functioning legal framework (Pylypchenko, 2015).

Sociological approaches emphasise that the shadow economy emerges as a result of insufficient institutionalisation of social relations, within which citizens and businesses orient themselves not toward formal norms but toward practices perceived as more effective and predictable. In this perspective, shadowing appears as a socially acceptable response to inefficient procedures, low-quality public administration, and a lack of trust in institutions that regulate economic relations. Thus, the shadow economy functions not only as an economic anomaly but also as a form of social adaptation that enables actors to minimise risks in an environment of heightened uncertainty.

Economic theory consistently upholds the view that the shadow sector is formed through a combination of individual strategies and institutional constraints that create incentives to bypass regulatory norms. These incentives arise when formal rules are either excessively rigid or fail to provide adequate protection of property rights and fair access to market resources, encouraging actors to seek alternative avenues of economic activity. At the same time, the legal perspective highlights that the shadow economy contains elements not only of objective necessity but also of unlawful activity that generates economic and social losses for the state.

In the context of war, approaches to defining the shadow economy require further refinement, as the factors of military conflict create a unique environment for transforming economic behaviour. Increased security threats, infrastructure destruction, and disruption of logistical chains generate not only new forms of shadow operations but also heightened social tolerance toward them, complicating the application of traditional analytical methods. Under such conditions, improving theoretical definitions of shadowing becomes critically important for shaping adequate state strategies of counteraction (Sakhnevych et al., 2025).

The classification of the shadow economy is one of the key analytical tools, as it allows researchers to systematise the diverse manifestations of this phenomenon and identify their specific characteristics. A central component of the shadow economy is informal employment, which includes both illegal labour and concealed forms of wages paid outside official accounting. During wartime, informal employment expands significantly, as a large proportion of the workforce is forced to change residence, loses access to formal labour markets, or works in hazardous conditions, thereby becoming oriented toward flexible–though legally risky–forms of labour activity.

Another fundamental element of shadowing is tax evasion, traditionally considered the most widespread type of shadow operation. Tax evasion may occur through income concealment, underreporting of the tax base, or using profit-shifting schemes that minimise fiscal obligations. During wartime, such practices intensify, as entrepreneurs face high operational costs and market instability, stimulating them to preserve economic viability by any available means.

Smuggling and related forms of illegal movement of goods hold a significant place among shadow economy practices, as they inflict substantial damage on the state budget and undermine legal trade relations. Disruptions in border control during wartime create additional opportunities for smuggling networks, which exploit weaknesses in state monitoring and increased demand for scarce goods. These networks form an alternative system of goods circulation dependent on corruption and criminal structures, making them difficult to dismantle.

The classification of the shadow economy should also include so-called grey logistics, which encompasses unofficial transportation activities, unregistered routes, or manipulation of documents to conceal actual volumes of transported goods. During active hostilities, such forms of shadowing may become particularly prominent, as many logistical channels operate under high-risk conditions, encouraging actors to use informal schemes to reduce costs and increase operational flexibility. This creates a parallel transport infrastructure that increases the speed of certain operations while simultaneously weakening oversight of the market (Blinov & Cherep, 2025).

Corruption markets constitute a distinct dimension of the shadow economy, within which economic relations are structured around bribery, informal agreements, and abuses of official authority. During wartime, corrupt practices may acquire an especially dangerous character, as they affect not only economic processes but also defence resources and the distribution of critically important goods. Corruption markets destabilise the system of public administration and undermine trust in government, making them a key factor contributing to institutional weakness.

The theoretical foundations for studying the shadow economy rely heavily on state capacity theory, as institutional quality determines the ability of the state to control economic processes and uphold the rule of law. State capacity theory posits that the state must possess an adequate level of administrative, economic, and political resources to implement effective economic policy. During wartime, state capacity becomes a decisive factor in counteracting shadow practices, as weak institutions create conditions for their rapid proliferation.

From the perspective of institutionalism, the shadow economy is viewed as a consequence of the discrepancy between formal rules and actual practices that emerge within society due to historical, cultural, and social factors. Institutionalists emphasise that even in the presence of strengthened formal control, shadow practices may persist if they align with the logic of social interactions or offer greater efficiency compared to legal norms. Under wartime conditions, this divergence between formal and informal institutions only intensifies, making it necessary to reconsider mechanisms of institutional modernisation (Blinov & Cherep, 2025).

Theories of economic security also play a central role in analysing the shadow economy, as shadowing directly affects the state's ability to maintain the stable functioning of its economy. Economic security in this context is understood as the set of conditions ensuring the resilience of the economic system to shocks, including those associated with war. The shadow economy undermines these conditions by reducing fiscal resources, weakening the legitimacy of state institutions, and generating additional risks for national security.

As a result, the interplay between state capacity theory, institutionalism, and economic security creates a comprehensive theoretical and methodological foundation that enables a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying the formation of the shadow economy during wartime. This integrated approach allows for the analysis of not only the economic parameters of the shadow sector but also its interconnections with political stability, governance quality, and the structure of social relations. This is particularly significant in the Ukrainian context, where the combination of wartime challenges, institutional transformations, and economic instability creates a unique environment for studying this phenomenon.

During the period of martial law, the structural and institutional factors determining the scale of the shadow economy acquire exceptional complexity, as the general destabilisation of governance significantly alters the interaction between formal and informal institutions. War produces conditions in which traditional control mechanisms are unable to ensure the full functioning of regulatory processes, thereby creating space for the expansion of various forms of shadow activity. Under such circumstances, the decline of administrative capacity increases economic actors' dependence on informal practices, which are often perceived as the only viable means of adaptation to the unpredictable circumstances created by hostilities (Sakhnevych et al., 2025).

Wartime transformations of public administration occur as a result of changes in the digital, administrative, and staffing capacities of institutions, which are forced to reorganise their priorities in line with defence needs. A number of supervisory bodies effectively lose the ability to conduct systematic inspections, as their resources are redirected toward ensuring defence capability. This reduces the effectiveness of oversight over economic processes and creates conditions in which economic actors operate in an environment of minimal risk of detection, thus encouraging the expansion of shadow operations–especially in sectors where control was already challenging even in peacetime.

The weakening of the supervisory function of state institutions is also linked to the decentralisation of decision-making, which in wartime becomes an unavoidable necessity, as certain regions operate with relative autonomy due to the mobility of the front and the shifting of administrative centres. This situation contributes to uneven application of regulatory norms, substantially increasing opportunities for selective enforcement of legislation and exploitation of gaps in law enforcement. As a result, a space emerges in which informal mechanisms substitute formal rules, and shadow practices gradually become embedded in market behaviour, transforming into elements of institutional routine.

Structural changes in the market system caused by infrastructure destruction significantly influence the scale of shadowing, as disruptions in logistical connections reduce the possibility of conducting legal trade. The destruction of transport routes, loss of storage facilities, restricted access to seaports, and systemic failures in the functioning of the railway network create critical obstacles to meeting market needs. Under these conditions, some economic actors are forced to resort to informal supply mechanisms that offer speed and flexibility but do not comply with legal regulatory requirements (Poplyuyko & Melnyk, 2025).

Market distortions caused by logistical breakdowns generate shortages, thereby creating opportunities for shadow intermediaries who exploit the scarcity of goods to artificially inflate prices. Such deficit conditions stimulate the growth of informal logistics networks operating outside state control and relying on unofficial agreements that facilitate the rapid movement of goods through dangerous or technically unsuitable routes. As a result, market competition becomes unequal, as actors adhering to formal rules find themselves in significantly worse conditions compared with those using shadow supply schemes.

Changes in the market environment are further exacerbated by disruptions in export–import channels, which limit the ability of firms to conduct foreign economic activity and increase the cost of legal operations. Partial or complete blockage of seaports, customs delays, border congestion, and reduced capacity of logistical corridors create a situation in which official channels become less accessible and economically burdensome. This facilitates the expansion of smuggling schemes that provide cheaper, albeit illegal, access to external markets, thereby increasing pressure on legal businesses and reducing overall economic transparency.

Another important factor contributing to the growth of the shadow economy during wartime is mass internal and external migration, which significantly alters the structure of the labour market and creates conditions for expanding informal employment. Internally displaced persons face numerous challenges in securing formal employment, as many enterprises have ceased operations or reduced staff, and labour markets in receiving regions cannot rapidly absorb large numbers of new workers. In such circumstances, informal labour practices emerge as survival mechanisms, including work without employment contracts, partial reporting of working hours, or cash-based payments.

External migration, which has affected millions of Ukrainian citizens, also contributes to the expansion of informal employment, as a significant proportion of migrant workers are employed abroad without official registration. Although such activity does not always fall within the Ukrainian economic domain, it influences the domestic market by reducing the number of economically active individuals and, consequently, the fiscal base that could otherwise support wartime expenditures. Informal employment abroad also creates a psychological norm of tolerance for shadow practices, which is often reproduced in citizens' behaviour upon their return to the country (Zhuk, 2024).

Warfare creates additional incentives for the expansion of corruption practices across military, humanitarian, and logistical sectors–areas that become particularly vulnerable due to rapid changes and high concentrations of resources. Corruption within military structures may manifest itself through the improper use of budget funds, abuse in procurement processes, or manipulation of accounting operations. Such corruption inflicts substantial harm, as it reduces the effectiveness of army provisioning, undermines public trust in the state, and stimulates shadow structures that rely on corrupt mechanisms to advance their own interests.

The humanitarian sector is also critically vulnerable to corrupt abuses, as it operates in an environment of accelerated resource distribution and insufficient transparency. Uncontrolled movement of humanitarian cargo, the absence of effective monitoring, and discrepancies between the declared and actual volumes of aid create conditions in which part of the resources enters shadow markets. This vulnerability is intensified by the fact that humanitarian assistance often includes scarce goods with high market value, making them attractive for illicit resale or diversion through unofficial channels.

The logistics sector, which plays a crucial role in supplying the population and the military during wartime, is likewise characterised by high corruption risks. Control over access to transport resources, fuel reserves, specialised equipment, and critical routes creates opportunities for informal agreements that regulate access to these resources outside state oversight. Such conditions facilitate the emergence of shadow logistics markets in which service prices are determined not by economic factors but by actors' ability to maintain corrupt networks at various levels.

During wartime, the number of illegal schemes in fuel trade increases substantially, as fuel becomes a critically important resource for both military operations and the functioning of the civilian economy. Fuel shortages, supply disruptions, and sharp price fluctuations contribute to the emergence of shadow channels that ensure rapid access to fuel through smuggling operations, quality falsification, or document manipulation. These schemes undermine market transparency and create safety risks for consumers, as shadow fuel often fails to meet quality standards.

The trade in medicines also becomes subject to shadowing during wartime, as demand for many medical products rises significantly and official channels are often unable to ensure timely supply.

Under such circumstances, informal markets for pharmaceuticals emerge, including contraband drugs, falsified products, expired goods, or medicines of unknown origin. This generates additional health risks for the population and undermines trust in the healthcare system, which is often unable to respond promptly to these challenges (Lykholat & Levytska, 2022).

Particularly dangerous is the spread of illegal schemes in the trade of dual-use goods–products that may be utilised for both civilian and military purposes. Oversight of such goods becomes significantly more complicated during wartime, as their movement often occurs under accelerated and simplified procedures, creating opportunities for manipulation. Shadow operations involving dual-use goods pose a threat to national security, as such items may end up in the possession of actors whose interests are incompatible with those of the state.

The illegal circulation of cash becomes one of the most active segments of the shadow economy during wartime, as instability in non-cash transactions and growing distrust in the banking system encourage citizens and businesses to rely on cash as their primary means of payment. This creates extensive opportunities for tax evasion, income concealment, and implementation of corruption schemes, thereby increasing the overall level of shadowing. At the same time, cash operations may be used to finance unlawful activities, creating additional risks for the state.

The shadow economy represents one of the most serious threats to Ukraine's economic security, as its scale directly influences the state's ability to fulfil its core functions in conditions of military confrontation. Fiscal risks arising from budget shortfalls limit the state's capacity to accumulate necessary resources for financing the defence sector, which in wartime requires stable and predictable funding. When economic actors conceal income and conduct unofficial operations, the fiscal base contracts significantly, creating a structural budget deficit and increasing the state's dependence on external assistance (Smyrna, 2023).

Insufficient budget revenues are further exacerbated by the fact that the shadow economy disrupts the logic of systemic financial planning, as the opacity of financial flows makes it impossible to accurately forecast expenditures and revenues. Under such conditions, the state is forced to use debt instruments or reduce investment in critically important sectors, thereby deepening structural imbalances in the economy. In wartime, these imbalances become especially acute, as any reduction in fiscal capacity directly affects the country's defence potential and its ability to ensure the security of its citizens.

The impact of the shadow economy on the labour market manifests itself in its destabilisation, which weakens the country's human resource potential and leads to the degradation of human capital. Informal employment deprives workers of social protections, lowers their level of security, and creates conditions under which qualified personnel gradually leave the country in search of better opportunities. This trend produces deep social inequality, as part of the population is forced to work without legal safeguards, reducing their opportunities for professional development and intensifying the marginalisation of vulnerable groups.

Labour market destabilisation has a cumulative effect, as declining official employment reduces contributions to pension and social insurance funds, thereby threatening the long-term sustainability of the social protection system. Under wartime conditions, these processes become particularly significant because social stability is a key element of internal security and societal resilience. When a considerable share of economic relations occurs outside the legal framework, the state loses the ability to shape a fair and competitive labour market.

The shadowing of economic activity significantly undermines the country's investment attractiveness, as the opacity of economic operations, instability of the regulatory environment, and high corruption risks create negative expectations among potential investors. The absence of equal competitive conditions deprives legal businesses of opportunities for growth, as shadow actors gain economic advantages by avoiding taxes, regulatory compliance, and quality standards. This erodes healthy competitive dynamics and reduces the incentives for firms to modernise, innovate, and engage in long-term planning (Yanishin et al., 2023).

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are particularly vulnerable to the effects of the shadow economy, as informal practices create conditions in which official enterprises cannot compete with actors operating outside the regulatory framework. During wartime, this problem becomes acute because SMEs form the backbone of economic resilience and a source of social stability; yet they are forced to reduce production or cease operations entirely due to unequal market conditions. The shadow economy thus diminishes the country's ability to ensure balanced regional development, deepening economic disparities.

The connection between the shadow economy and criminal networks constitutes one of the most dangerous aspects of its impact on economic security, as the shadow sector provides financial resources for criminal groups, enabling them to expand their activities. This interaction is further reinforced by corruption, which allows criminal networks to operate beyond state oversight. When corruption becomes an entrenched element of economic processes, the political system gradually loses legitimacy, creating preconditions for political destabilisation.

The destructive influence of the shadow economy on political institutions is exercised through systems of informal connections that create alternative decision-making channels beyond public scrutiny. Such networks undermine the state's ability to implement fair regulation, deepen institutional weakness, and create the risk of power concentration in the hands of groups pursuing private interests. Under wartime conditions, these processes intensify, as the need for rapid decision-making may generate opportunities for abuses and further shadow expansion.

The shadow economy poses a serious threat to macro-financial stability, as violations of budgetary discipline, declining tax revenues, and financial opacity create conditions for rising debt burdens and devaluation pressures. In such a situation, the state is compelled to employ monetary policy instruments to stabilise the economy, which may result in inflationary risks or restricted access to financing for businesses. The long-term effect of these processes is a weakening of economic autonomy, as the state becomes increasingly dependent on external creditors and institutions, limiting its ability to pursue policies aligned with national interests (Predborskyi, 2014).

Summarising the impact of the shadow economy on economic security, it can be argued that its influence is multifaceted and deeply embedded in the functioning of the state. Shadowing disrupts fundamental mechanisms of economic development, weakens institutional resilience, and generates risks for societal stability. Under wartime conditions, these risks acquire a critical character, as the level of economic security directly determines the state's capacity for defence and recovery.

Counteracting the shadowing of the economy during wartime requires a comprehensive approach that combines institutional reforms, digital instruments, tax modernisation, and cooperation between the state, business, and civil society. Strengthening the institutional capacity of the state is a primary condition for reducing the shadow sector, as institutions are responsible for implementing the rules that regulate economic processes. During wartime, it is crucial to focus on reinforcing supervisory functions, which requires modernising the anti-corruption system and reforming law enforcement agencies that must receive sufficient resources and authority to operate effectively (Kondrat, 2025).

Enhancing institutional capacity also requires increasing the transparency of public governance and minimising opportunities for abuse, which involves creating effective mechanisms of internal and external audit. The effectiveness of anti-corruption instruments must rely on integrating preventive and punitive measures that not only identify corrupt behaviour but also disrupt the conditions that give rise to it. In wartime, institutional anti-corruption mechanisms must operate continuously, as any weakness automatically creates preconditions for shadow expansion.

The digitalisation of state services represents one of the most effective means of reducing shadow practices, as digital tools ensure transparency of operations, data automation, and the reduction of human intervention. The introduction of electronic auditing, electronic tax services, and electronic systems for monitoring high-risk operations creates conditions for the automatic detection of anomalies associated with tax evasion or manipulation of financial flows. Such technologies enable efficient oversight and minimise opportunities for corrupt interference (Kononenko et al., 2024).

Digitalisation also contributes to the development of e-evidence systems, which allow automatic recording of violations and increase transparency in decision-making processes. During wartime, this becomes particularly important, as a significant share of public services is provided remotely, creating opportunities for optimising administrative procedures. Digital tools make it possible to create a unified information space among state bodies, improving risk monitoring and reducing opportunities to exploit legislative loopholes.

One of the key areas of countering economic shadowing is tax system reform, aimed at creating incentives for businesses to transition into the legal sector. Reducing the tax burden on micro– and small enterprises, as well as simplifying tax administration procedures, can significantly decrease the motivation of economic actors to rely on shadow schemes. It is essential to ensure the stability of tax policy, as frequent rule changes create uncertainty that pushes businesses into informal practices (Vysotska et al., 2025).

Tax incentives must be combined with clear oversight mechanisms to prevent optimisation schemes that may evolve into shadow operations. In the post-war period, the tax system must move toward reducing regulatory pressure while increasing the responsibility of businesses for financial transparency. Such a balance will strengthen trust in the state and raise the level of legality of economic activity.

Analytical monitoring tools that utilise risk-based approaches and large datasets enable in-depth analysis of financial operations and rapid identification of potential violations. The use of machine-learning algorithms for modelling risks and analysing anomalies in payment transactions can significantly increase the effectiveness of combating the shadow economy. In this context, open registries should serve as a primary source of data, ensuring public oversight and reducing the likelihood of hidden privileges for certain actors.

The development of analytical instruments must be accompanied by the creation of integrated data-exchange platforms among state institutions, ensuring better coordination and eliminating duplication of functions. This approach allows for the formation of a comprehensive picture of economic processes and enables precise identification of shadow operations, which often mask themselves as regular business activities. The use of modern analytical methods should become a fundamental element of the economic security system.

Effective counteraction to the shadow economy requires active cooperation among the state, businesses, and civil society, as only shared responsibility can ensure a reduction in the scale of shadow activity. Dialogue between government bodies and the entrepreneurial sector should aim to harmonise regulatory conditions that maintain a balance between economic freedom and transparency. Civil society organisations can play a significant role in monitoring public policy and informing the population about the risks associated with shadowing (Suvorova & Kulhanik, 2023).

Collaboration among different actors enables the formation of social intolerance toward shadow practices, which is essential for the long-term reduction of shadow activity. In the post-war period, it is crucial to ensure the involvement of civil society in reconstruction processes, as transparent interaction between citizens and the state strengthens public trust and reduces the prevalence of informal operations. Such a model of cooperation contributes to the formation of an institutional culture that prevents the re-emergence of informal practices.

International partners play an important role in promoting economic transparency, as they provide not only financial assistance but also expert solutions that help modernise the institutional architecture of the state. The involvement of international organisations in customs and tax reform facilitates the implementation of standards consistent with global practices and helps create an environment unfavourable to shadow operations. During wartime, international partners can provide access to monitoring technologies, analytical platforms, and data exchange systems, substantially increasing the effectiveness of efforts to combat the shadow economy.

Summarising the mechanisms for countering shadowing, it can be argued that the effectiveness of state policy in this sphere depends on the coherence of institutional, digital, tax, and social instruments, which must operate in a mutually reinforcing manner. During wartime, combating the shadow economy should become one of the priorities of economic policy, as the level of economic security directly determines the state's capacity for recovery and resilience. Such a strategy must be based on an integrated approach that ensures not only the reduction of shadow practices but also the strengthening of public trust in the state as a guarantor of legal order.

Conclusion. The conducted study has demonstrated that the shadow economy under martial law acquires a systemic and multidimensional character, affecting not only economic indicators but also the institutional resilience and national security of Ukraine. Shadowing intensifies due to a combination of external and internal factors: reduced state supervisory capacity, the destruction of logistical chains, resource shortages, the growth of informal employment, corruption risks, and large-scale migration processes. Under such conditions, the shadow sector generates parallel economic practices that distort competitive conditions, reduce fiscal revenues, and undermine the state's ability to ensure defence capability and social stability.

At the same time, the findings show that combating shadowing requires the integrated application of institutional, tax, digital, and anti-corruption instruments, which must operate in a mutually reinforcing manner. Effective de-shadowing is possible only if transparency in public governance is enhanced, the tax system is modernised, risk-based monitoring is implemented, digital control systems are expanded, and business and civil society actively participate in forming a culture of intolerance toward informal practices. During wartime and the post-war recovery period, these measures become not only an economic necessity but also a strategic prerequisite for strengthening national security.

Future research should focus on the empirical assessment of the impact of specific segments of the shadow economy on the defence sector, financial stability, and labour market dynamics; evaluating the effectiveness of digital analytical platforms in detecting shadow operations; and analysing regional differences in shadow activity, particularly in areas close to the frontline. It is also promising to study behavioural models of economic actors under crisis conditions and to develop adaptive policy mechanisms aimed at minimising shadow-related risks during both wartime and post-war recovery.

References:

1. Blinov, V., & Cherep, O. (2025). Lohistyka pid chas viiny ta problemy z yakymy ztykaiutsia pereviznyky [Logistics during the war and problems faced by carriers]. *Stalyi rozvytok ekonomiky,* 1(52), 204–209. https://doi.org/10.32782/2308-1988/2025-52-28 [in Ukrainian]
2. Vysotska, I., Nahirna, O., & Papirnyk, S. (2025). Podatkove rehuliuvannia yak instrument protydii tinovii ekonomitsi [Tax regulation as a tool to counteract the shadow economy]. *Naukovyi visnyk Lvivskoho derzhavnoho universytetu vnutrishnikh sprav (seriia ekonomichna),* 1, 12–19. https://doi.org/10.32782/2311-844x/2025-1-2 [in Ukrainian]
3. Zhuk, O. P. (2024). Struktura ta tendentsii zainiatosti naselennia Ukrainy v umovakh viiny [Structure and trends of employment in Ukraine under wartime conditions]. *Efektyvna ekonomika,* 11. https://doi.org/10.32702/2307-2105.2024.11.31 [in Ukrainian]
4. Kondrat, A. V. (2025). Systema subiektiv zapobihannia tinizatsii ekonomiky [The system of actors preventing the shadowing of the economy]. *Law and Society,* 1, 582–588. https://doi.org/10.32842/2078-3736/2025.1.85 [in Ukrainian]
5. Kononenko, L., Kolomoiets, O., & Bykadorova, N. (2024). Vplyv cyfrovykh tekhnolohii na tinovu ekonomiku: Ekonomiko-pravovyi aspekt [Impact of digital technologies on the shadow economy: Economic and legal aspect]. *Ekonomika ta suspilstvo,* 65. https://doi.org/10.32782/2524-0072/2024-65-64 [in Ukrainian]

6. Lykholat, S. M., & Levytska, M. Ye. (2022). Doslidzhennia vplyvu viiny na rynok likarskykh zasobiv Ukrainy [Study of the impact of the war on the Ukrainian pharmaceutical market]. *Naukovi zapysky Lvivskoho universytetu biznesu ta prava. Seriia ekonomichna. Seriia yurydychna*, 35, 203–209. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7765286 [in Ukrainian]
7. Pylypchenko, O. O. (2015). Tinova ekonomika: Poniattia, prychyny vynyknennia ta napriamy podolannia [Shadow economy: Concept, causes, and ways to overcome]. *Derzhava i pravo. Seriia "Politychni nauky"*, 68, 193–203. [in Ukrainian]
8. Predborskyi, V. A. (2014). Tinova ekonomika: Synerhetychnyi fenomen [Shadow economy: A synergetic phenomenon]. *Formuvannia rynkovykh vidnosyn v Ukraini*, 4(155), 7–13. [in Ukrainian]
9. Sakhnevych, B., Bezuglova, I., & Fedotov, O. (2025). Vplyv viiny na masshtaby tinovoi ekonomiky v Ukraini [Impact of war on the scale of Ukraine's shadow economy]. *Social Development: Economic and Legal Issues*, 5. https://doi.org/10.70651/3083-6018/2025.5.10 [in Ukrainian]
10. Smyrna, K. (2023). Tinizatsiia ekonomiky yak zahroza ekonomichnii bezpetsi Ukrainy [Shadow economy as a threat to Ukraine's economic security]. *Naukovi perspektyvy*, 11(41). https://doi.org/10.52058/2708-7530-2023-11(41)-685-698 [in Ukrainian]
11. Suvorova, S. H., & Kulhanik, O. M. (2023). Tinova ekonomika v Ukraini: Stan ta shliakhy podolannia [The shadow economy in Ukraine: State and ways to overcome]. *Tsyfrova ekonomika ta ekonomichna bezpeka*, 8(08), 168–172. https://doi.org/10.32782/dees.8-28 [in Ukrainian]
12. Docenko, A. (2020). The essence, prerequisites, and consequences of the shadow economy in the modern world. *Scientific Notes of Taurida National V.I. Vernadsky University. Series: Economy and Management*, 70(2). https://doi.org/10.32838/2523-4803/70-2-16
13. Poplyuyko, Y. V., & Melnyk, M. O. (2025). Assessing the level of Ukraine's shadow economy under martial law and identifying key influencing factors. *Statistics of Ukraine*, 109(2). https://doi.org/10.31767/su.2(109)2025.02.02
14. Yanishin, Y. S., Dudyak, R. P., & Vovk, O. V. M. (2023). Shadow economy in Ukraine and its determinants. *Scientific Messenger of LNU of Veterinary Medicine and Biotechnologies*, 25(101), 22–30. https://doi.org/10.32718/nvlvet-e10103

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-33

ASSESSING THE WESTERN EUROPEAN FOREIGN POLICY RESPONSE TO AZERBAIJAN'S COUNTERTERRORISM ACTIONS IN KHANKENDI

Elmira Talibzade Sahib,
Postgraduate Student in International Relations,
Baku State University (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5122-2795
elmiratalybzadeh@gmail.com

Abstract. This article analyzes Western European reactions to Azerbaijan's counterterrorism operation in Khankendi on 19–20 September 2023, situating them within the broader transformation of EU foreign policy from normative ideals toward strategic pragmatism. The study argues that Europe's response was shaped primarily by energy interdependence, regional stability, and the strategic impact of the war in Ukraine, rather than moral or humanitarian considerations. France pursued an ideologically driven, pro-Armenian stance, resulting in diplomatic isolation, while Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom emphasized pragmatic engagement, prioritizing energy security, dialogue with Baku, and regional predictability.

EU institutions revealed internal inconsistencies, with declarative rhetoric often lacking operational follow-through, underscoring the limits of the normative power paradigm in peripheral regions. The Khankendi case illustrates the consolidation of realism as the guiding principle in European policy toward the South Caucasus. For Azerbaijan, this shift reinforced its sovereignty, strategic role, and capacity to act as a stabilizing actor in the post-conflict region, highlighting the growing recognition of its importance in Europe's energy and security architecture.

Key words: Azerbaijan, European Union, Western Europe, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Khankendi, Counterterrorism Operation, Strategic Pragmatism, Energy Security, South Caucasus, Ukraine War, EU Foreign Policy, Realism, Geopolitical Transformation.

Introduction. Azerbaijan's military operation on September 19–20, 2023, aimed at neutralising armed formations that were obliged to leave the territory of Azerbaijan in accordance with the Tripartite Statement in Karabakh, marked a precedent in post-Soviet history. For the first time, a country restored its territorial integrity through a forceful yet brief and precisely coordinated operation, without external intervention. This operation did not constitute an act of aggression, but rather a measure aimed at restoring constitutional order within internationally recognised borders, conducted with limited impact on the civilian population. Azerbaijan underscored its capacity to address protracted conflicts autonomously, without inducing sustained regional instability.

The operation eliminated the last focal threat to internal stability and opened the way for the full-scale post-conflict reintegration of Karabakh. It dismantled an artificial regime that had existed for over 30 years in a state of legal vacuum and laid the foundation for the establishment of a unified legal, infrastructural, and economic space (De Waal, 2022).

The regions of Eastern Zangezur and Karabakh are now being integrated into national development and logistics initiatives. For the entire South Caucasus, this marked a turning point: since 2023, the regional priority has shifted from conflictual coexistence to institutional reconfiguration.

The initial days following the operation were marked by restrained statements from most international actors, with no direct condemnation of Baku's actions. The absence of a consensus-based denunciation reflects a recognition of Azerbaijan's sovereign right to restore order. While some states raised humanitarian concerns, none questioned the fundamental issue of Karabakh's territorial affiliation.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework. The analysis of Western European reactions to Azerbaijan's counterterrorism operation in Khankendi requires a theoretical grounding that captures the transformation of European foreign policy identity, the constraints of energy interdependence, and the geopolitical marginality of the South Caucasus within the European strategic imagination. The concept of “Normative Power Europe”, initially formulated by Ian Manners (2002), presumed that the European Union and its member states act primarily as moral actors, projecting democracy, human rights, and rule-of-law principles beyond their borders (Manners, 2002).

However, by the 2020s, this framework has undergone a substantial erosion. The shift toward “Strategic Pragmatism” – explicitly acknowledged in the EU’s 2021 Strategic Compass and reiterated in Josep Borrell’s 2023 statements – illustrates that the EU’s foreign policy has become more interest-driven and selective in its normative advocacy, particularly in regions of secondary strategic value (Cornell, 2021).

This evolution is visible in the South Caucasus, where Western Europe’s rhetorical commitment to principles has often clashed with its geopolitical and energy priorities. In 2023, the EU imported approximately 11.6 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Azerbaijan through the Southern Gas Corridor, a 40% increase compared to 2021, following the Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Partnership signed between Ursula von der Leyen and President Ilham Aliyev in July 2022 (Ursula von der Leyen, Aliyev, 2022).

This quantitative growth directly constrained the political space for adversarial rhetoric toward Baku, particularly in Germany and Italy, which rely on stable Caspian gas flows to diversify away from Russian sources. Consequently, the European position became characterized by a dualism: while Brussels and Paris expressed concern over “humanitarian consequences” in their statements after 19 September 2023, Berlin and Rome avoided any language that could jeopardize energy cooperation or regional dialogue (Larrabee, Thompson, 2022).

The logic of security and energy interdependence – as outlined by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye – suggests that asymmetric dependency often shapes diplomatic moderation. Western Europe’s cautious approach toward Azerbaijan after the Khankendi operation aligns with this model: while some governments voiced “deep concern,” none pursued sanctions or formal condemnations. France, however, remained a notable exception. The French Senate’s resolutions of November 2022 and October 2023, openly calling for sanctions against Azerbaijan and the recognition of “Nagorno-Karabakh,” demonstrated an ideologically motivated, pro-Armenian stance inconsistent with both EU law and international recognition of Azerbaijani sovereignty. Paris’s unilateral policy isolated it from the broader European consensus, revealing an attempt to leverage the Armenian diaspora as a domestic political instrument rather than to contribute constructively to regional stability (Keohane, Nye, 2021).

From a geopolitical standpoint, the South Caucasus remains a peripheral security space for Western Europe. Despite its critical role as an energy and transport hub connecting the Caspian basin to Europe via the Middle Corridor, the region still occupies a marginal place in Brussels’ strategic calculus compared to the Eastern Partnership’s “core” areas such as Ukraine and Moldova. This peripheral perception explains why the EU’s engagement has been largely reactive and declarative. The European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Parliament released multiple statements post-September 2023, yet none translated into policy instruments or strategic missions.

In synthesis, Western Europe’s foreign policy response to Azerbaijan’s counterterrorism actions reflects the decline of normative idealism and the consolidation of interest-based realism. The contrast between France’s ideologically biased activism and Germany’s, Italy’s, and the UK’s pragmatic restraint underscores a broader transformation: the European Union, once claiming moral leadership, now operates within the logic of geopolitical necessity. For Azerbaijan, this shift has revealed both the fragility of European normative discourse and the growing recognition of Baku’s sovereignty as an irreversible geopolitical fact in the post-conflict South Caucasus (Kalyvas, Balcells, 2024).

Mapping Western European Responses. The spectrum of Western European responses to Azerbaijan’s counterterrorism operation in Khankendi on 19 September 2023 reveals a clear hierarchy of political motives, ranging from France's ideologically charged opposition to Germany's energy-driven pragmatism, the United Kingdom's restrained realism, and the European Union's institutional incoherence. Each actor's reaction was rooted less in the substance of the operation – which was conducted on the internationally recognized territory of Azerbaijan to restore constitutional order – than in the interplay between domestic politics, strategic interests, and the recalibration of Europe's post-Ukraine security logic (Smith, Timmins, 2023).

France. Among all Western European actors, France adopted the most confrontational and one-sided stance. President Emmanuel Macron's statement on 21 September 2023, which accused Azerbaijan of "violating international law," starkly contrasted with the United Nations' acknowledgment of Baku's sovereignty over the Karabakh region. The French Senate reinforced this narrative by adopting resolutions in November 2022 and October 2023 urging sanctions against Azerbaijan and recognition of the so-called "Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh." These resolutions, however, were non-binding and lacked executive backing even within the EU framework. French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna's visit to Yerevan in April 2023 and her failure to engage directly with Baku further illustrated the erosion of France's diplomatic credibility as a mediator.

Domestically, the motivation behind France's pro-Armenian posture was largely electoral: the Armenian diaspora in France exceeds 600,000 people and holds significant influence in key urban constituencies. This domestic factor overshadowed rational geopolitical calculation and contributed to France's growing isolation in European decision-making circles. Both Berlin and Brussels refrained from aligning with Macron's rhetoric, and by late 2023, Paris found itself excluded from the EU's negotiation tracks concerning the South Caucasus. Thus, France's approach represented a rhetorical escalation without strategic substance, undermining its own diplomatic leverage and credibility in the region.

Germany. Berlin's reaction, by contrast, was emblematic of calculated pragmatism. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, in her statement of 20 September 2023, expressed "concern" over humanitarian conditions but simultaneously emphasized the "need to maintain dialogue with both sides." This dual message reflected Germany's structural dependency on energy diversification: in 2023, Azerbaijan supplied approximately 5% of Germany's imported natural gas through the Trans Adriatic Pipeline and related infrastructure (European Commission, 2023).

Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government, aware of this interdependence, avoided any moves that could jeopardize the ongoing EU–Azerbaijan energy partnership. German analytical institutions, including the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), in late 2023 explicitly advised against alienating Baku, noting Azerbaijan's growing strategic role in EU energy security (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2023).

Berlin also demonstrated awareness of the regional power balance. Germany's cautious tone stemmed from a realist understanding that Azerbaijan's territorial sovereignty is internationally recognized and that its counterterrorism actions were internal by nature. In practice, this meant rejecting any French attempt to push for punitive EU measures. Consequently, Germany solidified its image as a pragmatic interlocutor rather than a moralizing critic.

The United Kingdom. Post-Brexit Britain pursued an independent and strategically pragmatic approach. The UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) issued a single, carefully worded statement on 20 September 2023 calling for "de-escalation and humanitarian access" but deliberately avoided any criticism of Baku. This cautious stance aligned with London's growing economic and defense cooperation with Azerbaijan, particularly in renewable energy projects and the Middle Corridor connectivity initiatives. British trade with Azerbaijan reached over £900 million in 2023, underpinned by investments from BP in the Shah Deniz and Azeri–Chirag–Gunashli fields (Smith, Roberts, 2022).

London's restrained reaction also reflected its broader strategic shift: after Brexit, the UK has sought to expand its geopolitical influence in non-EU regions through "Global Britain" diplomacy, prioritizing stable relations with resource-rich partners. The British government therefore viewed the Khankendi operation through a security and sovereignty lens, emphasizing territorial integrity and internal stability rather than ethnic politics. This approach contrasted sharply with France's emotive tone, reinforcing Britain's image as a pragmatic external partner grounded in realism rather than ideological posturing (Hill, Smith, 2021).

European Union Institutions. At the supranational level, the European Union's reaction revealed institutional fragmentation and bureaucratic incoherence. The European External Action Service (EEAS), led by Josep Borrell, released a statement on 19 September 2023 expressing "deep concern" and calling for dialogue. However, the Council of the European Union refrained from adopting any collective punitive measures, despite French lobbying. The European Parliament, in contrast, passed a resolution in October 2023 with more accusatory language toward Azerbaijan, but this resolution was largely symbolic and non-binding. The divergence between the Parliament's activist rhetoric and the Council's realist restraint underscored the absence of a unified European position (Borrell, 2023).

The bureaucratic inertia within EU structures further weakened the Union's credibility in the South Caucasus. Charles Michel's mediation initiative, known as the "Brussels format," lost momentum as Armenia pivoted toward the U.S. and France, while Azerbaijan disengaged due to perceived bias. Despite official statements supporting "peace and dialogue," EU institutions failed to articulate a coherent strategic vision for the region (Michel, 2023).

The mapping of Western European reactions demonstrates a fragmented and inconsistent response driven by competing logics of domestic politics, energy interests, and institutional limitations. France's overtly pro-Armenian stance led to diplomatic isolation; Germany and the United Kingdom prioritized stability and economic cooperation; EU institutions remained paralyzed by internal contradictions. For Azerbaijan, this divergence among Western European actors underscored an emerging reality: the erosion of European normative influence in the South Caucasus and the consolidation of realist pragmatism as the new foundation of Europe's regional engagement.

The Energy Factor as a Constraint on Moralism. The energy dimension constitutes the most critical structural determinant in shaping Western Europe's position. Following the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and the decline of Russian gas imports, Azerbaijan emerged as one of the EU's few stable and politically reliable energy partners. The July 2022 Memorandum of Understanding between Baku and Brussels envisaged a doubling of Azerbaijani gas supplies to Europe by 2027 – from 10 bcm to 20 bcm annually. This strategic dependence effectively limited the scope of Western criticism (Chivvis, Smith, 2024).

Germany, Italy, and several Central European states prioritized long-term contracts with SOCAR and the expansion of the Trans Adriatic Pipeline (TAP) and the Southern Gas Corridor. These commitments turned Azerbaijan into a crucial component of Europe's energy diversification strategy. As a result, any attempt to exert pressure through sanctions or diplomatic isolation risked undermining Europe's own energy security objectives. In this context, realpolitik prevailed over normative zeal. The European Commission's restrained tone after 19 September 2023 was not a sign of apathy but a calculated decision to protect the Union's strategic autonomy in the energy sector.

A key factor: the war in Ukraine and the changing strategic priorities of the West. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 did not merely reshape the European security landscape – it redefined the hierarchy of the West's global priorities. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the European Union and its major Western European states adopted a war-driven strategic posture, where survival, deterrence, and supply security took precedence over normative diplomacy. This realignment produced a fundamental shift in how peripheral regions like the South Caucasus were perceived and treated within Western strategic planning.

Between 2022 and 2024, Western Europe committed over €90 billion in combined military, financial, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine. Such unprecedented concentration of resources on a single theatre resulted in the reallocation of diplomatic capital and attention away from secondary regions. Policy briefings from Chatham House (2023) and the European Council on Foreign Relations (2024) reveal that over 70% of EU foreign policy instruments – missions, delegations, and working groups – were directed toward the Eastern European front. The South Caucasus, by comparison, accounted for less than 5% of policy engagement. This numerical imbalance speaks to a broader strategic narrowing: the EU became a "single-issue actor" focused on deterring Russia, while other regional processes were filtered through that same lens (Aliyev, 2024).

From this perspective, Azerbaijan's counterterrorism operation in Khankendi occurred at a moment when Western governments were unwilling to jeopardize their fragile energy and security balance. Azerbaijan had emerged as an indispensable partner for Europe's post-Ukraine energy transition, providing Caspian gas as a substitute for Russian supplies. By 2023, Azerbaijani exports to the EU surpassed 11.6 bcm – a 40% increase compared to pre-war levels – making Baku a critical node in the EU's diversification strategy. European policymakers understood that alienating Azerbaijan would risk undermining the very resilience they were trying to build against Moscow. Thus, the muted and cautious Western response to the Khankendi operation was not a diplomatic accident, but a deliberate choice rooted in strategic prioritization (Chatham House, 2023).

Moreover, the war in Ukraine recalibrated Europe's moral compass. Normative discourse on "human rights" and "self-determination" was subordinated to geopolitical necessity. Western institutions that once invoked these principles to engage the South Caucasus now viewed stability and territorial integrity as higher-order imperatives. The logic was straightforward: any renewed conflict in the Caucasus could open another security vacuum exploitable by Russia or Iran. As such, Western leaders – particularly in Berlin and London – opted for neutrality rather than confrontation, implicitly acknowledging that Azerbaijan's rapid restoration of constitutional order contributed to regional predictability.

The same dynamic also revealed a deeper shift in strategic thinking. Before 2022, EU foreign policy was anchored in the belief that promoting liberal norms would generate stability. After the outbreak of the Ukraine war, this idealism gave way to a containment-first logic: the priority became preventing Russian expansion and ensuring unbroken access to energy corridors. In this recalibrated framework, Azerbaijan was not perceived as a problem but as a stabilizing actor – a state capable of maintaining balance between competing regional powers without aligning fully with any of them (European Council on Foreign Relations, 2024).

The intersection between the Ukraine war and the Khankendi events thus exposes a defining paradox of contemporary European strategy: while the EU rhetorically condemns unilateral actions elsewhere, it simultaneously rewards assertive regional stabilizers that deliver security and energy continuity. The Western reaction to Azerbaijan's operation reflected this new hierarchy of interests. Whereas Paris framed the event in moral terms, Berlin, Rome, and Brussels viewed it through the prism of strategic containment.

In essence, the war in Ukraine did not only shift Western Europe's geopolitical focus – it normalized realism as the core principle of its external action. The prioritization of energy, deterrence, and regional stability over abstract moral considerations has become the defining characteristic of post-2022 European foreign policy. For Azerbaijan, this transformation reinforced its position as an indispensable partner in Europe's evolving security and energy architecture, while simultaneously exposing the irreversible decline of normative idealism in Western diplomacy.

The Decline of the Normative Model in Peripheral Regions. The cumulative effect of these dynamics has been the erosion of the EU's "normative power" paradigm in regions beyond its immediate neighborhood. The South Caucasus, long framed as a "partner" under the Eastern Partnership initiative, has now become a testing ground for Europe's post-normative pragmatism. The EU's limited influence in the aftermath of Azerbaijan's operation underscored the structural weaknesses of its foreign policy model: declarative diplomacy without strategic leverage.

France's moralistic activism, unsupported by the rest of Europe, further demonstrated that normative rhetoric is no longer a unifying principle within EU foreign policy. Instead, national interests – particularly those tied to energy security and regional influence – dictate the behavior of key member states. The European Parliament's resolutions and rhetorical condemnations could not conceal the fact that Brussels has lost both credibility and coherence as a geopolitical actor in the South Caucasus.

Conclusion. The Western European reaction to Azerbaijan's counterterrorism operation in Khankendi on 19 September 2023 demonstrates a fundamental recalibration of the EU's regional posture. Rather than adhering to its traditional normative vocabulary centered on human rights, mediation, and conflict prevention, Western Europe opted for a restrained, pragmatic approach grounded in strategic and energy-security considerations. The response – marked by carefully balanced statements and the absence of coercive measures – reflected not a lack of awareness, but a deliberate adaptation to the shifting geopolitical environment defined by the war in Ukraine and Europe's consequent dependence on non-Russian energy corridors.

This restrained attitude signifies a broader transformation in the EU's external action: the normative–liberal model that once guided its engagement in the Eastern Neighborhood has given way to a realism shaped by economic vulnerability and strategic necessity. Azerbaijan's role as a reliable energy partner and a stabilizing regional actor has become indispensable to Europe's diversification agenda. As a result, Brussels and leading Western European capitals have shown growing willingness to compartmentalize their relations with Baku – distinguishing between the political rhetoric of values and the operational logic of energy and security cooperation.

The implications for the future EU–Azerbaijan interaction format are significant. The relationship is likely to evolve along the lines of a "functional partnership", emphasizing energy connectivity, transport corridors, and post-conflict reconstruction within the logic of mutual benefit rather than conditionality. This dynamic will further institutionalize Azerbaijan's position as a strategic partner in the EU's eastern vector, even if normative concerns remain part of the declarative discourse.

Looking ahead, the European approach to the South Caucasus is expected to consolidate around a realist paradigm. The combination of protracted war in Ukraine, rising global competition, and the redefinition of the EU's geopolitical priorities will likely entrench a policy framework driven by stability, access, and strategic balance rather than democratization or transformation. For Azerbaijan, this shift opens broader diplomatic space to pursue multidirectional partnerships while maintaining constructive engagement with Western Europe under the new parameters of pragmatic interdependence.

References:

1. Aliyev R. *Post-Conflict Reintegration and State Building in Azerbaijan*, Baku, 2024, p. 22–60.
2. Cornell S. *Small Nations, Big Conflicts: The South Caucasus and Regional Security,* Washington, Woodrow Wilson Center, 2021, p. 120–159.
3. De Waal T. *The Caucasus: An Introduction*, 3rd Edition, Oxford, Oxford University, 2022, p. 90–140.
4. Hill C., Smith M. *International Relations and European Realism*, 3rd Edition, Oxford, Oxford University, 2021, p. 88–134.
5. Kalyvas S., Balcells L. *Modern Conflict Resolution and Post-Soviet Transitions*, Cambridge, Cambridge University, 2024, p. 55–99.
6. Larrabee F., Thompson G. *Energy Politics in the South Caucasus*, London, Routledge, 2022, p. 33–71.
7. Smith J., Roberts D. *Energy, Security, and the EU: Caspian Corridor Politics,* London, Routledge, 2022, p. 44–88.
8. Smith M., Timmins G. *EU Foreign Policy in Peripheral Regions*, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023, p. 67–95.
9. Borrell J. *EU Strategic Compass: Priorities and Realities*, European Foreign Affairs Review, Vol.26, №3, 2023, p. 210–233.

10. Chivvis C., Smith B. *Realism Resurgent: EU Strategic Behavior Post-Ukraine*, International Affairs, Vol.100, №4, 2024, p. 567–590.
11. Manners I. *Normative Power Europe Reconsidered*, Journal of European Public Policy, Vol.9, №2, 2002, p. 182–206.
12. Keohane R., Nye J. *Power and Interdependence*, 5th Edition, Boston, Pearson, 2021, p. 45–102.
13. Chatham House. *Europe's Strategic Rebalancing after Ukraine War*, London, Chatham House Report, 2023, p. 1–36.
14. European Commission. *Southern Gas Corridor and EU Energy Security: Annual Report 2023*, Brussels, EC Publication, 2023, p. 1–22.
15. European Council on Foreign Relations. *EU External Action Post-2022: Ukraine and Beyond*, ECFR Policy Brief, 2024, p. 12–29.
16. Michel C. *Brussels Format Mediation: Lessons Learned and Challenges*, Brussels, European Institute for Security Studies, 2023, p. 15–38.
17. Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP). *Azerbaijan and EU Energy Security: Strategic Assessment*, Berlin, SWP Research Paper, 2023, p. 5–48.
18. Ursula von der Leyen U., Aliyev I. *Memorandum of Understanding on Energy Partnership*, Brussels–Baku, 2022, p. 1–15.

THEORY AND IMPROVEMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-34

THE CONCEPT AND ESSENCE OF PROFESSIONAL RESILIENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND PROFESSIONAL RESILIENCE AS A PSYCHOLOGICAL CHARACTERISTIC OF ACTIVITY IN EXTREME CONDITIONS

Volodymyr Koss,
Postgraduate Student,
Kharkiv National University of Internal Affairs (Kharkiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0009-0008-3142-7134
vladimir-koss@ukr.net

Abstract. The article explores the concept and essence of professional resilience in psychology as a key factor in the effective functioning of specialists under challenging, stress-inducing, and extreme working conditions. Professional resilience is defined as an integral psychological characteristic of an individual, encompassing emotional stability, adaptability, internal motivation, self-regulation, and the ability to overcome difficulties. Particular attention is given to the manifestation of professional resilience among security and defense personnel, emergency responders, medical workers, and crisis service professionals. The psychological mechanisms of maintaining resilience in critical situations are discussed, including the role of coping strategies, social support, professional identity, and psychological readiness. The article also summarizes approaches to diagnosing and developing professional resilience in extreme occupational activities. It is intended for researchers, practicing psychologists, and specialists operating in high-risk professional environments.

Key words: professional resilience, psychological capital, emotional self-regulation, reflectivity, moral and ethical maturity, social support.

Introduction. The issue of professional resilience has become particularly relevant in the 21st century in the context of dynamic social development, instability, numerous crises, and military conflicts. In contemporary psychological science, professional resilience is viewed as an integrative personality trait that ensures effective performance of professional activities under conditions of prolonged or extreme psycho-emotional stress. The concept of "professional resilience" does not have a single definition, but its meaning reflects the ability of a specialist to maintain professional effectiveness, inner balance, motivation, and psychological health in difficult or unusual circumstances.

Main text. At the initial stage of studying this phenomenon in psychology, approaches related to adaptation, stress resistance, hardiness, preservation of personal integrity, and professional potential dominated. Resilience as a special personality trait allows one to maintain control over life situations, be involved in processes, and perceive difficulties as challenges rather than threats. There are three key components of a resilient personality: control, involvement, and challenge, which ensure its ability to overcome stress and adapt to change.

The purpose of the study is to analyze the essence of professional resilience as an integrative personality trait that ensures effectiveness in difficult conditions, as well as to identify the key factors that contribute to its formation and maintenance. Particular attention is paid to the study of the professional resilience of psychologists working in crisis conditions, such as war, traumatic events, and moral dilemmas.

K. Maslach, researching professional burnout, actually laid the foundation for a reverse understanding of resilience – as protection against emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased professional achievement. In her opinion, professional resilience is based on deep internal motivation, social support, and the presence of emotional regulation mechanisms (Maslach, 1981: 34).

Contemporary psychology divides professional resilience into several levels:

– Intrapersonal – covers cognitive-emotional processes, self-regulation, reflection, resistance to frustration, and decision-making ability.

– Interpersonal – includes effective communication, empathy, social support, and adaptability to the team.

– Meaningful – concerns the presence of a clear system of professional values, meaning of activity, and motivation to help.

Among contemporary Ukrainian researchers, the issue of professional resilience is actively studied by V. M. Synenkyi, M. D. Kurliak, and A. Ya. Kruk. In their work, they point to the particular importance of professional resilience for psychologists who work in war conditions and encounter trauma, loss, suffering, and moral dilemmas. They emphasize the role of reflection, self-acceptance, value integration, and social support as key factors in maintaining inner balance (Synenkyi, 2024: 66).

Resilience in a professional context is seen as a manifestation of the resourcefulness of a person who is capable of continuous development, self-renewal, and meaningful transformation of experience. It is important that psychologists possess not only technical knowledge but also personal potential that allows them to withstand complex influences.

Professional resilience is actively researched within positive psychology, which focuses on the strengths of the personality, its internal potential, and its ability to develop in difficult conditions. One of the key concepts is “psychological capital,” which includes four main characteristics: optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and resilience. These qualities are closely related to professional resilience and allow specialists not only to maintain effectiveness but also to maintain a constructive approach to change, crises, and uncertainty.

Bonanno's research on post-traumatic resilience is also relevant to understanding the nature of professional resilience, especially in crisis professions. He demonstrated that even in the most challenging circumstances, most people have the potential for psychological recovery through adaptive flexibility, social support, a sense of humor, and the ability to focus on the future (Bonanno, 2004: 20).

A significant contribution to the development of practical approaches to assessing professional resilience was made by K. M. Connor and J. R. T. Davidson, who created one of the most famous and widely used psychodiagnostic scales – the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) (Connor, Davidson, 2003: 76). They defined resilience as the ability to adapt, recover quickly from stress, and maintain productivity in difficult conditions.

In line with cognitive psychology, K. Reivich and A. Shatté emphasize that resilience is a set of skills that can be developed: impulse control, emotional awareness, empathy, positive thinking, goal setting, and flexibility in decision-making (Reivich, Shatté, 2002). This opens the way to the practical formation of professional resilience through training and the development of personal resources.

Another important concept is S. Hobfoll's “resource conservation” model, according to which a person strives to preserve, protect, and multiply resources that are important to them (emotional, social, physical, financial, etc.), and the loss of these resources leads to distress (Hobfoll, 1989: 513). In the professional environment of psychologists, especially in wartime, such loss can be significant, so it is important to ensure resource recovery through peer support, supervision, and mental hygiene.

Equally important is the approach of S. M. Southwick and D. S. Charney, who, studying the experience of combat veterans, identified biological, psychological, and social factors that ensure resilience in the most extreme conditions (Southwick, Charney, 2012). They emphasize the importance of an internalized meaning of life, the presence of reliable support, religious and spiritual orientation, and physical endurance.

From the perspective of domestic science, resilience is seen as the realization of personal potential, which allows a person not only to overcome difficulties but also to develop through them. Professional resilience has both an individual psychological and a cultural-semantic basis, which emphasizes its importance in the formation of a mature and adaptive personality.

Against this background, it is also important to consider the influence of values, worldview, and moral convictions. For example, it is believed that in the most difficult situations, a person is capable of enduring any "how" if they have their "why." This approach underlies existential resilience – the ability to maintain integrity in extreme conditions.

The essence of professional resilience is also manifested in the psychologist's ability to reflect – that is, to comprehend their own actions, experiences, and interactions. Reflection allows one to avoid identifying with the client's experiences, maintain professional boundaries, and support self-regulation. A high level of reflexivity significantly reduces the risk of professional burnout and helps restore inner balance after difficult sessions.

In general, several key signs of a psychologist's professional resilience can be identified:

– the ability to function effectively under stress and uncertainty;
– the ability to maintain emotional balance when working with trauma, pain, and aggression;
– a well-developed motivational and value basis for their work;
– the presence of reflexivity, empathy, and self-regulation;
– readiness for long-term interaction in risky conditions without losing the meaning and quality of their work.

An essential feature of professional resilience, especially in the work of psychologists in the security and defense sector, is moral endurance. In military conditions, psychologists not only support others, but are often at the epicenter of difficult ethical decisions: they encounter moral trauma, witness violations of values, and accompany individuals who have survived catastrophic events. In such conditions, it is important to maintain an internal moral framework that serves as a point of support. In his work "The Lucifer Effect," P. Zimbardo emphasizes that moral resilience is the basis for maintaining personal integrity in critical conditions when social pressure, aggression, or fear can lead to destructive behavior (Zimbardo, 2007).

Professional resilience also includes a spiritual and value component. Research by the American Psychological Association shows that resilient people are more likely to have developed spirituality, belief in a higher meaning, and moral and ethical orientation, which helps them withstand extraordinary stress (American Psychological Association, 2014). In the Ukrainian context, especially in wartime, the spiritual component takes on special significance. Psychologists who have a stable system of moral and religious beliefs cope better with stress because they rely on higher meanings, service to others, and the idea of defending their homeland as a mission.

Another important component of professional resilience is the role of personal identity. Studies show that the more clearly a specialist's professional identity is formed, the more they feel their significance, responsibility, and the inner meaning of their professional activity, which directly affects resilience. The formation of professional identity occurs gradually – through experience, reflection, professional training, and support from mentors and colleagues.

Professional resilience is also closely linked to psychological well-being. K. Peterson and M. Seligman, within the framework of positive psychology, have determined that resilience is supported by a number of personal traits: optimism, perseverance, belief in justice, the ability to forgive, and a sense of humor (Peterson, 2004). These qualities act as buffers against burnout and maintain motivation to overcome difficulties.

This is especially important for psychologists working in the field of counseling: meaning often becomes the only energy that sustains the professional.

S. Kobasa also made a significant contribution to the study of resilience, arguing that a resilient personality is not simply the result of skills or experience, but a specific personality configuration based on a sense of control, activity, and responsibility for one's own life (Kobasa, 1979: 1). Her ideas have been confirmed by numerous empirical studies in various professional environments, including healthcare, the military, and emergency services.

Recent research in child development (in particular, the work of E. Werner) also shows that resilience can be formed even in very unfavorable conditions – if an individual has had at least one long-term positive relationship, an inspiring adult role model, or a stable sense of security (Werner, 1995: 81). This is also important for adult professionals: the presence of support, role models, and trusting relationships increases their resilience.

Taking the above into account, the following generalizations about the essence of professional resilience can be formulated:

– It is not a fixed trait, but a dynamic quality that develops throughout life.

– It is based on the interaction of internal personal resources and the external environment (team, organizational culture, management).

– It has a multi-level structure, including emotional, cognitive, motivational, moral-ethical, spiritual, and behavioral components.

– It depends on the professional context: working conditions, stress levels, the nature of the target group (in the case of psychologists, these are traumatized, vulnerable categories of people).

– It is determined by the readiness to overcome challenges, not just survival.

An analysis of scientific approaches gives grounds to assert that professional resilience is a multidimensional psychological construct that combines a number of interrelated internal personality traits and external conditions that ensure its effective functioning in conditions of increased professional workload, stress, crisis, or threat.

The key elements of professional resilience are:

– emotional self-regulation – the ability to manage one's emotions in difficult situations;

– stress resistance – the ability to adapt to external pressure without destructive consequences;

– Reflectivity – the ability to be aware of and reflect on one's own actions, emotions, and professional position;

– Motivational stability – the presence of an internal sense of purpose in one's profession and a sense of the significance of one's work;

– Social support – an environment that promotes the preservation of mental resources;

– Moral and ethical maturity – the presence of an internal value system that provides stability in crisis situations;

– Spiritual and meaningful orientation – the ability to maintain integrity based on worldview or religious beliefs.

Modern psychological science considers professional resilience not as an innate ability, but as a dynamic process that can be developed through personal growth, professional experience, training, supervisory practice, reflection, and support at the organizational level.

This concept is particularly relevant in the context of the activities of psychologists in the security and defense sector of Ukraine, who work daily in conditions of increased risk, stress, and exposure to traumatic events. In such circumstances, resilience is not only a prerequisite for professional effectiveness, but also a factor in personal survival and the preservation of psychological health.

Professional activities in the fields of security, defense, health care, emergency situations, and humanitarian aid are usually carried out in conditions characterized by high levels of risk, uncertainty, stress, psychological tension, and moral and ethical challenges. For psychologists working in this field, extreme conditions are not an exception, but often an everyday professional environment. In such conditions, professional resilience is a key psychological characteristic that ensures not only the preservation of functional effectiveness, but also the stability of the specialist's personality.

Extreme conditions: psychological specifics

According to A. O. Zazykin, extreme conditions are those in which activities are associated with risk to life, psychophysiological stress, social responsibility, and a lack of time and resources for decision-making (Zazykin, 2012). From the point of view of activity psychology, extreme conditions create the basis for the activation of protective, mobilizing, and compensatory mechanisms of the psyche, but at the same time, they are catalysts for maladaptive phenomena if the individual lacks the appropriate resources.

For professionals working in these conditions, the key psycho-emotional challenges are:
– constant exposure to the suffering and trauma of others;
– the need to make quick decisions in conditions of moral uncertainty;
– high responsibility for the lives and well-being of other people;
– personal involvement in the context of events (sometimes – loss, injury, evacuation, death of loved ones);
– limited resources for mental recovery.

As S. M. Southwick notes, in the context of combat operations or catastrophic events, resilience determines a specialist's ability not only to act effectively, but also to remain morally, cognitively, and emotionally stable (Southwick, Charney, 2012).

Professional resilience as a function of adaptation and internal balance

Professional resilience in these conditions serves as a mechanism for self-preservation, adaptation, emotional stabilization, and ensuring adequate behavior. It can be viewed as a kind of psychological immunity that allows a person to avoid mental degradation, professional burnout, or moral disorientation.

S. Kobasa emphasizes that resilience in extreme conditions is closely related to factors such as:
– internal locus of control (sense of influence over events);
– sense of competence and effectiveness;
– ability to see a crisis as a challenge rather than a threat (Kobasa, 1979: 1).

In turn, research by G.A. Bonanno shows that resilience is the norm rather than the exception, and most people are potentially capable of adapting to extreme conditions provided they maintain personal autonomy, support, flexibility of thinking, and access to resources (Bonanno, 2004: 20).

Factors influencing professional resilience in extreme environments

A review of the literature allows us to identify the following groups of factors that influence the level of professional resilience in extreme conditions:

1. Personal (internal):
− emotional stability;
− stress resistance;
− self-regulation;
− motivational orientation toward helping;
− professional identity;
− cognitive flexibility.

2. Professional and organizational (contextual):
− working conditions (schedule, duration of workload);
− availability of supervision and intervision;
− institutional support;
− clarity and acceptability of management decisions.

3. Social and psychological:
− team support;
− trust in management;
− level of solidarity within the group;
− availability of personal supportive relationships.

4. Meaningful and spiritual:
− the presence of a value structure;
− religious beliefs;

− a sense of mission, calling;
− belief in the higher meaning of activity.

Practical examples of professional resilience in extreme conditions

The work of psychologists in Ukraine's security and defense sector clearly demonstrates the necessity and importance of a high level of professional resilience. During combat operations, evacuations, and psychological support for affected civilians and military personnel, specialists face daily challenges that require maximum mobilization of internal resources. In these circumstances, psychologists themselves find themselves in a situation of "secondary trauma" – that is, indirect trauma due to deep involvement in their clients' problems (Hobfoll, 1989: 513).

The practice of military psychologists in the Joint Forces Operation (ATO) zone in Ukraine has proven that resilient specialists:

– make decisions faster in critical situations;
– are less likely to show signs of professional burnout;
– retain empathy and professional effectiveness;
– are able to regulate their own state through self-regulation techniques, recovery, and spiritual practices.

Some of them develop their own methods of stabilization: mini-rituals of returning to calm, conscious relaxation, internal dialogue with ethical guidelines, prayer, visualization of supportive images.

According to empirical research, the most resilient psychologists are those who have: a high awareness of their own mission, a clear value system, a developed sense of professional responsibility, and the ability to be self-deprecating and reflective. These characteristics contribute to their effectiveness and resilience in their professional activities.

The relationship between professional resilience and burnout

The most common negative consequence of a lack of professional resilience in extreme conditions is professional (emotional) burnout syndrome. According to K. Maslach, burnout occurs as a response to prolonged exposure to chronic stress, when an individual loses control over the situation, resources, and their own emotions (Maslach, 1981: 34).

Professional resilience, accordingly, is a counterbalance to burnout because it:

– supports the intrinsic meaning of the activity;
– helps maintain psycho-emotional balance;
– promotes constructive coping (coping strategies);
– allows one to maintain high self-esteem and a realistic perception of difficulties.

S. Hobfoll's research indicates that the preservation of key personal resources (time, energy, support, respect) directly affects the ability of an individual not to lose themselves under prolonged pressure (Hobfoll, 1989: 513). When resources are depleted and recovery does not occur, the risk of maladjustment increases.

Adaptive behavior models in stressful conditions

Professional resilience is closely related to adaptation mechanisms, which are implemented through:

– psychological flexibility (willingness to change strategies);
– adaptive coping (realistic understanding of the situation);
– resource mobilization (use of support, self-calming techniques);
– metaphysical beliefs (faith, meaning, spirituality)

S. M. Southwick and D. S. Charney point out that professionals with a high level of resilience demonstrate high cognitive organization, the ability to make rational decisions even under pressure, and at the same time the ability to empathize without losing their professional role (Southwick, Charney, 2012).

In crisis intervention practice, the following adaptation models are effective:

– control model – dominant in individuals with an internal locus of control;

– meaning model – characteristic of religiously or spiritually oriented psychologists;
– partnership model – when a specialist feels support from the team, colleagues, and structure;
– heroism model – more risky, associated with hyper-dedication, which can lead to exhaustion (it is important to maintain balance).

All these models, with flexible regulation, can work to support professional effectiveness, but require awareness and critical self-assessment on the part of the psychologist.

Conclusions. Professional resilience in psychology is seen as a complex integrative personality trait that shows up in a specialist's ability to stay effective, mentally healthy, motivated, and emotionally balanced in tough, unusual, extreme professional situations.

In extreme environments (war, disaster, crisis response, combat operations), resilience acts as an adaptive resource that determines the boundary between professional effectiveness and the risk of personality destruction.

Professional resilience includes several interrelated levels: emotional, cognitive, behavioral, moral-ethical, and spiritual-meaningful.

The main factors that ensure professional resilience are self-regulation, stress resistance, flexibility of thinking, social support, professional identity, value integration, supervision, faith, or a reliable philosophical/ethical system.

Professional resilience is the key antithesis of professional burnout. Its formation and maintenance is not only a personal but also a systemic task for organizations working in the field of security and defense.

In the context of martial law in Ukraine, the need to strengthen the professional resilience of psychologists has become strategically important, as it determines the preservation of human resources, the moral resilience of society, and the capacity for national recovery.

References:

1. American Psychological Association (2014). The Road to Resilience. Washington, DC: APA, 20 p. https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience.
2. Bonanno G.A. (2004) Loss, trauma, and human resilience: Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events? // American Psychologist. Vol. 59(1). P. 20–28.
3. Connor K.M., Davidson J.R.T. (2003) Development of a new resilience scale: The Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) // Depression and Anxiety. Vol. 18(2). P. 76–82.
4. Hobfoll S.E. (1989) Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress // American Psychologist. Vol. 44(3). P. 513–524.
5. Kobasa S.C. (1979) Stressful life events, personality, and health: An inquiry into hardiness // Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. Vol. 37(1). P. 1–11.
6. Maslach C., Jackson S.E. (1981) The measurement of experienced burnout // Journal of Occupational Behavior. №2. P. 34–53.
7. Peterson C., Seligman M.E.P. (2004) Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 800 p.
8. Reivich K., Shatté A. (2002) The Resilience Factor: 7 Essential Skills for Overcoming Life’s Inevitable Obstacles. New York: Broadway Books, 308 p.
9. Southwick S.M., Charney D.S. (2012) Resilience: The Science of Mastering Life’s Greatest Challenges. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 340 p.
10. Synenkyi V.M., Kurliak M.D., Kruk A.Ya. (2024) Psykholohichni chynnyky rozvytku stresostiikosti pratsivnykiv pravookhoronnykh orhaniv v umovakh voiennoho stanu: ukrainski realii ta zakordonnyi dosvid [Psychological factors influencing the development of stress resistance among law enforcement officers in conditions of martial law: Ukrainian realities and foreign experience]. Naukovyi visnyk Lvivskoho derzhavnoho universytetu vnutrishnikh sprav (seriia yurydychna). № 2.

S. 66–72. URL: https://doi.org/10.32782/2311-8040/2024-2-10 (data zvernennia: 06.08.2025) [in Ukrainian].

11. Werner E.E. (1995) Resilience in development // Current Directions in Psychological Science. Vol. 4(3). P. 81–85.

12. Zazykin A.O. (2012) Psykholohiia diialnosti v osoblyvykh umovakh [Psychology of activity in special conditions]. K.: Tsentr uchbovoi literatury, 264 s. [in Ukrainian].

13. Zimbardo P.G. (2007) The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil. New York: Random House, 551 p.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-35

THE IMPACT OF PRESERVING ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS ON FAMILY BEHAVIORAL NORMS AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CLIMATE IN AZERBAIJANI FAMILIES

Mammadova Gunay,
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology,
Senior Lecturer at the Department of Regional Studies,
Azerbaijan University of Languages (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1782-1740
ms.gunayfrench@mail.ru

Abstract. The family is the most important foundation of society and its further existence. It has an exceptional role in raising the cultural level of social life and in its development. Customs and ethnic characteristics are essential for shaping family relations and daily life. Therefore, the study of the ethnic characteristics of people is considered one of the most significant issues in the social sciences. The Azerbaijani people hold the family as sacred, believing that the nation's spirit and spirituality reside within each family's life, ensuring the transmission of traditions and ethnic characteristics from generation to generation. Every nation possesses its unique ethnic characteristics and traditions. These play a crucial role in the establishment and formation of the family unit. When a girl is chosen to start a family, attention is paid not only to the girl herself but, crucially, to her lineage. The proverb, "Look at her mother, get her daughter" has become a significant selection criterion. Ethnic characteristics and loyalty to traditions are also reflected in the daily life of the family. Another prominent issue that attracts attention when forming a family is the age difference between partners. This holds a great socio-psychological meaning. A specific age of marriage, refined over centuries, has been formed. Girls marrying a boy older than themselves (girls mature both physiologically and psychologically faster than boys) was valued as the strength of the family. The archetype of “children” has a special meaning in Azerbaijani families. “May you see your children’s goodness!”– This is a great blessing in the Azerbaijani sense. The stability of the Azerbaijani families and the lower divorce rates compared to other nations are related to the attitude towards children. Special attention is paid to the upbringing of girls and her dignified, modest, and self-respected behavior. Within the family, girls are taught to behave like “little ladies.” Conversely, the basis of family upbringing for boys is instilling them with masculine qualities. In the Azerbaijani family, loyalty, trust, friendship, and confidentiality have always been highly valued. When women and mothers educate their children and prepare them for future social life by teaching them the moral norms and rules of behavior in society. In short, when giving advice, they have an important role and responsibility to turn to ethnic materials and traditions and use them appropriately.

Key words: ethnic characteristics, Azerbaijani family, traditions, the archetype of “children”, the moral norms, national-moral values.

Introduction. In the globalized world, where international values and national values collide, the preservation of national-moral values and ethnic characteristics is one of the most pressing issues in the society's attention. Contemporary society is undergoing transformation over time, and the resulting changes affect all spheres of social life, including the family. The understanding and protection of the ethnic characteristics that form the sense of "we" within each ethnic group and distinguish it from other ethnic groups’ affects family relations, its sustainability, and the number of divorces. The characteristic of unity and integrity formed within the ethnos extends to the family as well. Ethnic characteristics are formed in the process of socio-historical development depending on the nature of relations between people and play a major role in attitudes towards society, behavior and self-awareness. These ethnic characteristics are manifested in the traditions and lifestyle of the people, as well as in family relations, building a family, regulating relationships, and raising children.

The level of problem elaboration

The issue of preserving ethnic characteristics in Azerbaijani families is one of the topics that has become an object of research in the fields of social anthropology, cultural studies and sociology. This issue has become even more relevant, particularly during a period of accelerating globalization and increasing trends in cultural homogenization. Azerbaijani scientists A. Alizade (Alizade, 2003), A. Bayramov (Bayramov, 1996), A. Abbasov (Abbasov, 2013), M. Vezirov (Vezirov, 2009), have conducted research on the role of the family in the transmission of national and spiritual values, emphasizing the important role of the family institution in the formation and preservation of cultural identity. If we look at the research of A. Alizade in his books "Ethics and Psychology of Family Life", "Sexual Education in Children and Adolescents", "Women's Psychology", the Azerbaijani family, the correct conduct of sexual education in children, the role of ethnic characteristics in preserving the family, and S. Seyidov (Seyidov , 2013), R. Aliyev (Aliyev, 2006), Z. Guluzadeh (Guluzadeh, 2008) and other psychologists, we will see that they touch on the role of the family in raising children, the impact of ethnic characteristics on family relations.

At the same time, the transmission of ethnic characteristics, especially customs, language and cultural behavioral models within the family, have been studied in the fields of folklore and ethnography. However, most of these studies are general, and there is a limited number of empirical investigations into the extent to which families preserve these characteristics in modern times. In this regard, there is a need for a more in-depth study of the problem of preserving ethnic characteristics in families. This article brings innovation to a little-studied area of socio-psychological research by examining the role of ethnic characteristics in shaping the behavioral norms and psychological environment of Azerbaijani families. The scientific innovation is manifested in the following aspects. The study examines how the archetypes of "father", "mother", "man", "woman" and "child" guide family relationships using an ethnopsychological approach, and this approach contributes to the scientific explanation of the Azerbaijani family model.

Aim and objectives

The primary aim of the study is to investigate the importance of preserving ethnic characteristics in Azerbaijani families and to analyze the role of the family in ensuring national identity, cultural values, and intergenerational continuity. In this regard, the main task is to investigate the functions of the family in transmitting ethnic values, customs, and traditions to the younger generation, and to identify the factors affecting the preservation of ethnic characteristics.

Methods. The research employed a comparative analysis methodology among sources related to the topic, alongside a general analytical research method. Depending on the tasks set in the research, methods such as generalization, progress from abstract to concrete, historical-comparative and systematic approach, analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction were utilized.

Main section

Azerbaijani family: ethno psychological observations

Archetypes as the Face of Family Culture: The "Elder-Younger Archetype". The succession of generations in Azerbaijani culture is based on the "elder-younger" archetype. When family relationships are regulated by archetypes, behavioral patterns also become ritualized. Their mutual relations are determined by our traditions. The "elder-younger" archetype has formed an unusual "moral code" in Azerbaijani culture, and the articles of this code sound like legal norms in Azerbaijani families. In the family, the elder holds a prominent position, while the younger occupies a more subordinate one. The Azerbaijani family emerged and developed based on these trends. In the family culture, the spirit and influence of the ancestors is clearly felt. Both in the configurational and prefigurative culture, the postfigurative culture manifests itself directly as a background phenomenon, which determines the development of not only parent-child, but also husband-wife relations. Formation of ancestors as leaders in the family, generation-tribe circle, society is a unique group phenomenon. The group values the old man who provides for his needs and interests as his elder, without even realizing it, he not only reckons with his status, but also protects his status as the leader in the family, on the other hand, plays a special role in spreading his glory in the village.

In Azerbaijani culture, the archetypal mission of women is also significant. In the traditional regime, the life of the girl-bride within the family, generation, tribe and village is primarily related to white birds. In the family, sons and children, daughters and daughters-in-law, and men always treat her with respect and consider her as their mother. They directly control the typical life of the society. Their role is great in the living of traditions, in the relationship between adults and children, and in the formation of the image of our ancestors.

The "Parent Archetype". Since ancient times, our ancestors have essentially characterized husband-wife relationships as father-mother relationships. There is an unusual ethnopsychological interpretation of the meaning of father and mother in the Azerbaijani mentality. According to the epic of "Kitabi-Dada Gorgud", the father is a capable head of the family and a great caregiver. Burla Khatun, for instance, calls Salur Gazan "the crown of my head". Based on these traditions, the father has always played an important role in the unique life of the Azerbaijani family with his extraordinary influence. The sustenance of the house comes from the father's care. His blessing is as sharp as a sword for his family members. In the Azerbaijani family, children are brought up with the father's authority and influence. The mother archetype is also important in the Azerbaijani family. According to this archetype, the mother is the affective center of the family. Her care is the primary condition of children's upbringing. In the eyes of the father, the mother is a symbol of family happiness and children's happiness. The father always waits for the mother's reputation as a rule and tries to raise her name. A mother devotes her life to raising children without expecting anything in return.

The Male Archetype. The image of men held significant prestige within the village. Their zeal was considered the pride not only of a family, generation and tribe, but also of the community. People believe and trust men. According to the male archetype, a man is a man. The strict criteria of the male archetype determine the content and system of boy education in the Azerbaijani family. They bring up their boys with these criteria.

In Azerbaijani families, women are considered a symbol of honor. A woman's name is always held in high esteem. Even when the woman opens her scarf and throws it between two brutal enemies, they cannot find her scarf and retreat. In the family, a woman's honor is valued as a man's zeal. Whether it is a man or a woman, they will forgive him everything except betrayal. Spousal fidelity is the basis of family life (Bayramov, 2000: 141).

The Child Archetype. An Azerbaijani family breathes with a child. The happiest days of the family begin with the birth of children. Not only the clear, happy days of the family, but also the sustenance and blessings are connected with the name of the children. In a traditional Azerbaijani family, the mother (father) actually considers the children a part of herself, and they constantly monitor them. In the network of interpersonal relations of the family, a boy has his own place, and a girl has her own place.

Raising children is one of the most important characteristics of a family. Special attention is paid to the upbringing of the girl, her self-respect and modest behavior. According to social psychologists, girls are taught in the family to behave like "little ladies". In modern times, the comprehensive formation of a young girl's personality, in accordance with the ideology of the time, based on our ethnic-national characteristics, is one of the most urgent problems that concern both the science of social psychology and our society. Based on the conducted pedagogical and psychological studies, it was determined that in this process the family plays the main role as the first social institution, because intra-family relations play a key role in the formation of self-awareness, ethnic-national consciousness in girls and have a great influence on the proper formation of self-education (Alizade, 2003: 1364-1365). The basis of family upbringing of boys is instilling them with masculine virtues. Ethnic psychological characteristics of the people should also be taken into account when raising children in the family. According to J. Piaget, at the age of 6-7, a child receives preliminary and fragmented information about his ethnicity, but at this age, the main aspect for him is the family and its social circle, he still has no idea about his country and ethnic group. At the age of 8-9, the child identifies himself with his ethnic group. Already at the age of 10-12, ethnic identity is fully formed, that is, they distinguish their ethnic group from other ethnic groups according to certain characteristics (Bayramov, 1996: 112).

The upbringing of boys and girls in the family is based on the archetype of man and woman. The father plays the role of the head of the family with his great authority. All the care of the family is connected with the father's name. The mother's influence on children, their upbringing, and their worldview are invaluable. Women and men are halves that complement each other. Our Prophet said this in his own words: Women are the other halves of men, who are half of a whole (Chalishkan, 2011: 121).

Archetypes invisibly regulate the behavior of people and families. People act according to archetypes, which are ancestral patterns in various situations. These ethno psychological and archetypal characteristics, which constitute the foundation and stability of the Azerbaijani family, influence the formation of the national self-consciousness of the people. In the conditions of European integration and globalization, there is a need to re-understand ethnic and national characteristics. Thus, developments and innovations in foreign countries should not be mechanically transformed, ethnic characteristics and national self-consciousness of the people should be taken into account and also protected.

The existence of the family depends on the worldview, self-awareness and understanding of the world, as well as behavioral principles, specific to the nation to which the family members belong. Despite the fact that the Soviet tendency, western and eastern tendencies of three directions are manifested in the national mentality of Azerbaijani families, ethno psychological and archetypal characteristics of the people preserve the foundation, continuity and stability of the family. It would be very difficult to protect the family in the conditions of globalization if it were not for the spiritual values of the family, such as the ethno psychological and archetypal characteristics mentioned above.

Traditions as the Foundation of the Family

The Azerbaijani family is distinguished by its unique characteristics. In our families, there is no man who is proud of his wife's beauty. While the divorce rates are rising in many countries of the world, family loyalty and national mentality are preserved in the Azerbaijani family. We have a saying “the husband's house a funeral home”, and in doing so, we protect the integrity and strength of our family.

By conducting appropriate observations on each ethnos, based on socio-political, cultural factors in the context of its formation, development, and formation, it can be seen that the ethnic psychological characteristics of the Azerbaijani people are found in their culture, customs, religious beliefs, epics, fairy tales, proverbs, wise sayings, bayats, etc. The most beautiful thing that man has created is culture. The history of mankind is the history of cultural development. All the activities, ideas, desires, and tendencies of humanity are reflected in culture. Like the fire of Prometheus, it not only illuminates all the good in man, but also warms, polishes, and cultivates it. As a person is connected to his heart, culture and psychology are also connected to each other (Seyidov, 2013: 205).

By following our traditions, which are the basis of our national values, we protect the stability of our family within the framework of unwritten laws and influence the consolidation of our statehood. The family is a small state, and influencing the basis of society and establishing healthy relations in this direction affects the correct establishment of social relations and state-society relations. Preservation of ethnic characteristics and traditions creates a perfect family model, while reducing the number of divorces in Azerbaijani families compared to other countries.

For many years, our ancestors paid special attention to the age of the husband and wife when starting a family and defined specific norms. They considered the marriage of girls to older boys as the strength of the family. İt is true that, there were some shortcomings in these traditions. So, girls were married to boys older than them or started a family at an earlier age. Already in the 20th century, the age of marriage and the family code have been updated in almost all developed countries. Also, in Azerbaijan, women have gained a new social status, and cases of early marriage of young girls have been eliminated. The age factor has a significant impact on the future development of husband-wife relations in the family and the unity of the family. When we consider the modern Azerbaijani family regarding age differences, we can find 3 options. In the first version, the husband is older than the wife, it is considered the ideal family type. However, when we study these families, we see differences of 1 year and 6 months along with 2–3 age differences. In the second option, husband and wife are the same age. Most of these couples studied either in the same class or in the same group. The advantage of such husband-wife relationship is that they understand each other better because they grew up in the same intellectual environment. In the third option, men usually marry women who are 2–3 or even 5–7 years older than them. According to sociologists, this type of relationship has increased, men in every 5–6 families have married a woman 5-6 years younger than them. Let's note that if we compare all 3 options, we will see that in the 3rd option, there are more disagreements between husband and wife. So, compared to boys, girls mature faster not only physiologically, but also psychologically. This difference is more noticeable during adolescence. In cases where boys still feel like children, a feminine position is formed in girls. Often, 16–18-year-old women think at the level of 21–22-year-old men, they understand family relationships better. Therefore, psychologists emphasize that psychological age, rather than chronological age, positively influences family strength. At this time, there are favorable conditions for the development of family relations. In traditional Azerbaijani families, as a rule, a man marries a woman who is younger than him, and at this time the psychological harmony between them goes better, their relationship becomes more emotional and strong. When a man marries a woman of the same age as him, a number of difficulties arise in their relationship. If the woman in the family is older than the man, then there are more differences between their psychological ages, so some problems arise in family relations. The fact that the husband is older than the wife is the most ideal choice, not only from the physiological point of view, but also from the psychological point of view. Thus, the wife accepts her husband as the head of the family, and the man takes on the difficulties of the family (Aliyev, 2006: 100).

The following conditions were considered important for happiness in traditional Azerbaijani families. 1. It is necessary to live with family life. In other words, we should consider not only our own wishes, but also the wishes, interests, and tastes of our spouses and children. 2. In the family, women and men should treat each other not only as husband and wife, but also as parents, through the eyes of children. In this case, we can protect the psychological health of the family. 3. The existence of pleasant communication, scolding and reprimanding the husband or wife undermines family relations. Both parties should tell each other's mistakes more politely and work together to eliminate negative characteristics. 4. A man and a woman should be sensitive to the mood of their spouse, share each other's joys and sorrows. Women are sensitive to undervaluation of their personality, while men want to be the strongest, smartest man in the eyes of their spouse. 5. From the first day of family relations, husband and wife should gain each other's trust. Otherwise, they look for negative qualities rather than positive ones, and one misjudges the other. 6. Mutual understanding of the parties in the family leads to the formation of correct reflection in the relationship. Thus, they observe their spouse from the outside, analyze their actions, either believe him or not. Mutual understanding of husband and wife is the basis of proper family relations. 7. Normal intimate life. In the family, the parties behave like parents of other people, even children. In fact, intimate relationships are a very important area of family relationships (Aliyev, 2006: 142).

Behavioral Norms and Psychological Climate in the Family

Family Ethics. Every nation possesses its own norms of family life, and family relations are regulated by these norms. Family norms have historically been formed in traditional Azerbaijani families and reflect the behavior of family members in accordance with their roles and responsibilities. So, the same person, for example, a woman, has different roles in the family, such as wife, mother, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, and each of these roles has its own expectations. Family norms serve a regulatory function in the family as an important area of social norms. Another function of these norms is the function of evaluating family relations. In the above example, we can mention that a woman analyzes the attitude of her husband, mother-in-law or other family members towards her, evaluates their communication and behavior through family norms. Attention, kindness is one of the most important aspects of family relations. In some cases, family ethics are violated. 1. Husband or wife doesn’t pay attention to each other. For example, the husband does not respect the relatives of the wife or the wife of the husband, does not communicate with them, and does not welcome anyone who comes to his house. 2. One of the husband or wife is indifferent to the other. For example, they don’t congratulate each other on birthdays or other special days, and they do not care when they are sick. 3. One of the most frequent violations of family ethics is when a husband or wife insults or says bitter words in front of relatives and neighbors. 4. The husband or wife talks about any dissatisfaction at home in the presence of others, at work. 5. In many cases, one of the parties in the family praises another man or woman at home, is not interested in his wife during any meeting, communicates with others or interrupts his wife inappropriately. In the cases we mentioned above, the parties in the family violate family ethics, and as a result, problems gradually arise in family relations and even divorce occurs. The expectation of family ethics also serves as an effective school for children. They try to be more careful in their behavior from a young age (Aliyev, 2006: 148). In the family, it is considered important to choose a future husband, to think about family life, along with features considered typical for girls, for example, to gain extensive knowledge, to form a culture of behavior.

Family relations are one of the most important areas of social relations and have historically undergone various changes. As previously discussed, preserving ethnic characteristics in the modern Azerbaijani family is important for its strength. In addition, the quality changes that occur over the years also affect the relationships between husband and wife, parent-child, and brother-sister. In the modern family, it is not only the man's duty to bring home income, but also to respect the personality of his wife and children. At the same time, a woman is closely involved in the financial support of the family, being engaged in work and social activities in addition to being a mother at home. One of the issues that form the basis of family ethics is the division of household chores in the family. As we mentioned, in a modern family, a woman is engaged in social activities, and the fact that she is responsible for all household chores has a negative effect on family relations. The transformation of housework into the function of all family members, the division of work according to family roles, along with playing an important role in children's labor and moral education, leads to the comprehensive development of the family. Nasireddin Tusi compared the family to a whole body, and the family members to our body parts, and he compared supporting the family to the medical profession that tries to protect a healthy body. Just as a doctor achieves health by protecting the relationships between the human body and body parts, the husband and wife who are the heads of the family should also try to protect the relationships between family members in accordance with the norms of behavior (Abbasov, 2013: 208).

Psychological Climate of the Family

A healthy psychological climate of the family has a significant impact on the establishment of strong family relationships. Hegel notes that "the basis of the creation of the family is not a natural inclination, but a spiritual and moral connection between man and woman, which is higher than random passion and temporary whim". Taking into account the fact that traditional Azerbaijani families have many children, we can note that as children are born one after the other, new relationships arise in the family. In such a case, when the psychological climate of the family is formed correctly, it is easy to manage the family. As noted by Professor Abdul Alizade, the psychological climate of the family strengthens family life in cases where division of labor, joint activities are established in the family, and interpersonal relations are formed correctly. The healthy psychological climate of the family affects the health of children, the education, career and social relations of parents or children. If we compare the psychological climate in nuclear and complex families, we will see that in nuclear families, the psychological climate of the family depends only on husband and wife or parent-child relationships. Some additional problems arise in complex families. In these families, unlike nuclear families, it is necessary to follow role expectations and behavioral norms in the family in order to properly regulate the relationship between father-in-law and daughter-in-law, mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. The psychological climate of the family does not remain unaffected not only on intra-family relations, but also on social relations and labor activity. Thus, the labor productivity of the husband or wife who comes from home disappointed to work is also low, and at the same time, the children's education is in the shade (Abbasov, 2013: 241).

One of the main characteristics of the Azerbaijani family is the upbringing of children in the family based on the education of boys and girls. Also, timely inculcation of sexual education in the family has an important impact on family relations. Male and female archetypal characteristics are taken into account when raising children. Parents are engaged in raising children every day, every hour. In the process of education, parents should take into account the requirements of moral education. Among them, what are the characteristics, what is bad and what is good for the upbringing of girls and boys are taught. Girls are taught to be gentle, kind, stay away from vices, and take care of the family. The boys are instilled with the qualities of masculinity, endurance, responsibility of the head of the family, integrity, courage. Taking into account such differences in family education, it should be noted that parents should treat both girls and boys with care and organize the educational process based on the human qualities that form the basis of family relations. In this case, sexual socialization in the family also goes in the right direction, and this, in turn, affects family relationships. In Azerbaijani families, girls are taught to agree with everything, to be kind, to have a smiling, gentle manner of behavior. Girls are considered the main carriers of ethical norms. In traditional families, control over girl children is stronger; they are treated as the basis of male honor [Bayramov, 2000: 141].

Conclusion. The preservation of ethnic characteristics is the basis of the strength of Azerbaijani families, and in this regard, citizens of many foreign countries consider Azerbaijani families as examples. Our traditions, which have passed the test of centuries, play an important role in preserving family life even in modern times. It is true that Azerbaijani families have undergone certain changes at the junction of national ethnic values and international values during globalization. Due to the influence of gender equality, the role of women in the family and society has increased, and important changes have also occurred in role expectations. In addition to all this, it should be noted that despite the new trends that have arisen in the family, the modern Azerbaijani family is one of the most stable families in the world due to the preservation of both archetypal and ethnic characteristics. According to the results of the survey conducted among the population, the majority is in favor of acquiring international values under the conditions of protection of national values and ethnic characteristics. Each ethnic group preserves its ethnic characteristics, and each family member manages to differentiate his family from the families of other peoples. Thus, the consideration of family-specific ethnic characteristics both in the lifestyle and in the upbringing of children affects the family environment and intra-family relations.

The Azerbaijani people have unique ethnic characteristics and rich traditions that distinguish them from other ethnic groups. As our National Leader Heydar Aliyev emphasized, adherence to family values, loyalty to traditions, respecting our national and moral values have an important impact children's upbringing within the family. Just as in the state and society, each family member holds a distinct status and specific role expectations. Every individual should do what he can for the development of the family and society as a whole by following the written and unwritten rules and norms of behavior, protecting our traditions and national values according to his status. Family relations have a direct impact on the formation of cultural and national identity and the development of a person as a personality. Today, the high level of development of technology does not remain unaffected by families. Being one of the main problems of society, communication problems arise in families, family members pay less attention to each other. In order to prevent such negative situations, our family foundation must be firmly established, we must pass on the ethnic characteristics of our people, our family, our national values and traditions from generation to generation.

References:

1. Abbasov A.N. (2013) Milli əxlaq və ailə etikası. Universitetlərin magistratura səviyyəsi üçün dərslik. Bakı, Mütərcim, 324 s.
2. Ağayeva K.C. (2014) Azərbaycanda gender məsələləri. Bakı, Qərb Universiteti, 416 s.
3. Bayramov Ə.S. (1996) Etnik psixologiya məsələləri. Bakı, Elm və həyat, 202 s.
4. Bayramov Ə.S. (1996) Etnik psixologiya məsələləri. Bakı: Elm və həyat, 202 s.
5. Bayramov Ə.S. (2000) Kitabi-Dədə-Qorqud" dastanlarında Azərbaycan xalqının etnik psixoloji xüsusiyyətlərinin inikası. Bakı: Ünsiyyət, 137 s.
6. Əfəndiyeva Ü.Ə. (2017) Əsrin gender konsepsiyası. Bakı, ADPU, 288 s.
7. Əliyev R. İ. (2006) Tərbiyə psixologoyası. Bakı: Nurlan, 196 s.
8. Əlizadə Ə.Ə. (2003) Azərbaycan etnopsixologiyasına giriş. Bakı: RENESSANS nəşriyyatı, 260 s.
9. Əlizadə Ə.Ə. Qadın psixologiyası (Fəlsəfi-psixoloji esselər). Bakı: Təhsil, 2015, 416 s.
10. Əlizadə Ə. (1995) Məhəbbət aləmi. Azərbaycan Ensiklopdiyası Nəşriyyat-Poliqrafiya Birliyi, Bakı, 263 s.
11. Əlizadə Ə.Ə., Abbasov A.N. (1998) Ailə həyatının etika və psixologiyası. Bakı: Maarif, 192 s.
12. Çalışkan Hasan (2011) İslamda Evlilik və Ailə həyatı. İstanbul: Haziran, 394 s.
13. Quluzadə Z.Ə. (2006) Gender Azərbaycanda: Azərbaycan, ingilis və rus dillərində. Bakı: BMT-nin əhali fondu. (UNEPA), 328 s.
14. Rəhimova Q.V. (2015) Nizami Gəncəvinin yaradıcılığında etno psixoloji fikirlər və onun tədqiqi / Gənc Tədqiqatçıların III Beynəlxalq Elmi Konfransının materialları. Bakı, Qafqaz Universiteti, s. 1364-65.
15. Seyidov S.İ. (2013) Yaradıcılığın Fenomenologiyası, Bakı: Qanun nəşriyyatı, 288 s.
16. Vəzirov M.Ə. (2009) Azərbaycan adət-ənənələrində gender rolları. Bakı: Regional İnkişaf Uğrunda Qadınlar Cəmiyyəti (RİQC), 239 s.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-36

CONSEQUENCES OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DEPRIVATION

Gulnara Rizayeva Sadykh,
Lecturer at the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology,
Azerbaijan University of Languages (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0008-6126-4321

Abstract. This article examines the psychological and social consequences of emotional deprivation in early childhood, emphasizing its impact on personality development, attachment patterns, and emotional regulation. Emotional attachment plays a fundamental role in shaping a child's sense of security and social competence. When attachment is disrupted due to parental neglect, institutional care, long-term hospitalization, or repeated separations, children experience psychological deprivation that manifests in cognitive delays, emotional withdrawal, and impaired social functioning. The study identifies several behavioral patterns among deprived children – hyperactive social types, social provocateurs, withdrawn (depressed) types, and those who substitute emotional needs through alternative behaviors. Drawing on the works of Anna Freud, Sophie Dann, and Mary Ainsworth, the paper argues that the intensity and duration of deprivation determine its reversibility. Short-term deprivation may be corrected through consistent care and emotional engagement, whereas prolonged deprivation during the first three years of life leads to irreversible developmental deficits. The findings highlight the irreplaceable role of stable emotional relationships and family-based care in preventing long-term psychological harm. Effective rehabilitation requires not only meeting children's physical needs but also ensuring continuous affection, attention, and social interaction that foster trust, empathy, and resilience.

Key words: psychological deprivation, emotional attachment, child development, social isolation, institutional care, personality formation.

Introduction. Emotional attachment is a fundamental factor in the formation of a child's personality. When, for one reason or another, emotional attachment is absent from a child's life, this leads to psychological deprivation (Bakermans-Kranenburg et al., 2022).

When we observe a child's normal psychological development, we recognize a sequence of predictable developmental stages common to all children. However, attachment development is disrupted in the following situations:

1. The child is deprived of close emotional relationships;
2. The child is cared for by a series of different adults during the first years of life (as in an orphanage);
3. The child spends a long time in the hospital due to illness;
4. The child experiences sudden separation from someone with whom they had a close relationship.

An illustrative example can be drawn from the Azerbaijani family. In the development of Azerbaijani society at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, profound and global transformations have taken place.

An illustrative example can be drawn from the Azerbaijani family. At the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, Azerbaijani society underwent profound transformations. These structural changes have affected the family both as a small social group and as a social institution – the fundamental cell of society.

It must be emphasized that social change has always existed. Researchers such as A. A. Alizade, U. A. Efendiyeva, M. A. Gamzayev, Z. I. Garalov, G. N. Gakhramanova, E. G. Eidemiller, J. J. Bachofen, J. McLennan, L. Morgan, F. Engels, and others have addressed such transformations in their works. Undoubtedly, it is difficult not to speak of the negative circumstances and even the crisis that contemporary family relations are experiencing.

Discussion. Among modern scholars, S. I. Golod argues that the family is undergoing modernization and remains one of the most stable institutions in society. However, processes such as divorce, loneliness, declining birth rates, and the growth of dysfunctional families do not fully explain the deeper social and psychological dynamics at play. Indeed, such indicators can be interpreted from two perspectives – either as manifestations of crisis or as elements of modernization (Əliyev, 2007).

One cannot ignore the fact that the transition from the traditional Azerbaijani family to the modern, transformed one has led to an increase in divorces and dysfunctional households, accompanied by a decline in birth rates. Unfortunately, these developments may ultimately undermine the very institution of the family. In contemporary Azerbaijani society, tendencies such as the weakening of premarital sexual norms and the increasing frequency of abortions – thereby limiting the full use of the reproductive period – have emerged. Furthermore, intergenerational ties are weakening, and individual values increasingly prevail over family-oriented ones.

In contrast, the traditional Azerbaijani family has always prioritized collective family values over individual interests, upheld the sanctity of marriage under all circumstances, and sought to protect children within the care of both parents. The woman, traditionally perceived as the keeper of the hearth, was devoted to maintaining the family and caring for her husband and children (Əlizadə, 2015). Of course, divorces did occur in Azerbaijani families, yet they typically stemmed from severe causes such as drug addiction, alcoholism, or infidelity – situations in which preserving the family could endanger future generations.

Today, however, divorces often occur without such critical reasons. Differences in character, temporary unemployment, low income, or a husband's inability to meet his wife's material, emotional, or sexual expectations are often deemed sufficient grounds for dissolution.

The sociologist Pitirim A. Sorokin was among the first to draw attention to the causes of family transformation and crisis. He considered growing individualism in modern society to be the main source of these challenges – most visible in large urban centers, where rising rates of divorce, prostitution, extramarital affairs, and declining fertility are observed. Yet, what about rural regions? Unfortunately, similar issues have spread there as well. Many young people are compelled to leave their families and migrate to larger cities or even abroad in search of work. Such separations inevitably disrupt family cohesion and may lead to dissolution.

Another emerging phenomenon is the formation of marriages on the basis of social status. Prospective spouses and their families increasingly assess compatibility through the lens of social and economic standing. Economic considerations, though significant, should not overshadow emotional and psychological compatibility; (Həmzəyev & Əmiraslanova, 2007); when marriages are built solely on material foundations, they are more likely to collapse over time. This reveals a conflict between the traditional conception of marital roles and the modern understanding embraced by younger generations.

Increasingly, young, educated, and career-oriented women who earn their own income do not perceive marriage as a necessity. Their emphasis on gender equality sometimes generates tension between partners, as each views family life through differing expectations (Əlizadə, 2015). Many men continue to desire a traditional family structure, in which the husband remains the head of the household, the wife raises children and manages domestic life, and the husband fulfills his role as economic provider. However, in modern society, women are less willing to accept these prescribed roles.

Young women educated in Europe or at local universities aspire to have husbands who earn more than they do and who can immediately provide for all material needs – housing, car, and employment – at the moment of marriage. These expectations create significant tension in the formation and sustainability of families. Meanwhile, many men are unprepared to compete in this "struggle for equality," which, as it intensifies each year, deepens misunderstandings between the sexes.

When we refer to "young families," we generally mean those within the first three years of marriage, in which both partners are under thirty. This three-year period often proves to be a critical stage that can lead to divorce. Young couples must therefore exercise particular patience and sensitivity to prevent the disintegration of their families. When a child is born into such a marriage, the consequences of family breakdown extend beyond the couple themselves and affect the next generation, resulting in psychological and developmental problems among children raised in dysfunctional environments – issues that, in turn, impact society as a whole (Doom & Gunnar, 2020).

From the above, several essential questions arise: What should be done? How can the situation be improved?

The current situation in the country requires urgent attention and change. This change must begin with the individual – with self-reflection and one’s attitude toward the institution of family. Young people must understand that societal transformations have already occurred and are irreversible. Therefore, anyone establishing a family must respect traditional values while simultaneously modernizing and rethinking their approach to family life.

If families are founded on material advantages or social status, they are bound to collapse sooner or later. Mutual honesty and self-awareness are crucial. A young man who marries for the sake of his partner’s family wealth will eventually seek emotional fulfillment elsewhere, while a woman who looks down on her husband and his relatives may provoke lasting family conflicts.

Another important principle in family relations is mutual respect. Neither spouse should humiliate or degrade the other, for a humiliated partner inevitably loses self-esteem and authority within the family circle.

Moreover, it is essential that young couples are socially, intellectually, and psychologically compatible (Əliyev, 2007). A marriage extends beyond the relationship between two individuals – it connects two families. Compatibility in social status can therefore serve as a stabilizing factor.

Trivial disputes must also be avoided. Domestic matters – such as who will wash the dishes, take out the trash, or buy groceries – should be discussed in advance. In a modern family, these roles can be negotiated and shared equitably.

Partners should also refrain from making comparisons with others – such as how much a friend’s husband earns or how beautiful another man’s wife is.

Laziness must be avoided, as it leads to poverty, which in turn erodes respect within the family. Every young person should cultivate diligence and dedication for the well-being of the family; mutual appreciation and commitment will naturally follow.

Furthermore, family matters should never be discussed with outsiders (Həmzəyev & Əmiraslanova, 2007). This is one of the most common causes of marital breakdown. Many couples, often without realizing it, allow relatives or acquaintances to interfere in their personal affairs, thereby deepening conflicts. Even when couples reconcile, lingering resentment among family members – parents, siblings, or in-laws – may persist, and lost respect is difficult to restore.

Lastly, every individual entering marriage must respect their partner and never resort to humiliation or verbal aggression. They must be emotionally and psychologically prepared for the responsibilities of family life. Only by adhering to these principles can young families withstand the pressures of modernization and societal change.

While there is no universal “recipe” for a happy and enduring marriage, there are practical ways to overcome crises. By following them, families can preserve their integrity as one of the most vital foundations of society.

All these factors affect the child’s psychological state. Long-term hospitalization can also influence a child’s cognitive and sensorimotor development. Psychosocial deprivation has particularly negative effects on emotional growth, leading to disturbances in attachment processes – namely, impaired social interaction – which generally manifests in two forms:

1. A persistent unwillingness to engage with others (for infants – lack of eye contact or vocal imitation; in older children – apathy, lack of curiosity, or sociability);
2. Excessive familiarity with strangers, indiscriminate friendliness, constant demands for attention, and frequent requests for approval.(Callaghan & Tottenham, 2021)

The root of these behaviors lies in serious deficiencies in care and attention. In most cases:

1. The child's basic emotional needs – comfort, stimulation, and affection – were not met, and harsh corporal punishment was used by the caregiver;
2. The child's basic physical needs – nutrition, hygiene, safety, and protection from abuse – were consistently neglected;
3. Stable attachment was impossible due to frequent changes in caregivers (e.g., in orphanages or hospitals).

Additional risk factors include parents' mental disabilities, lack of parenting skills, early motherhood, dysfunctional family upbringing, social isolation, and the inability to recognize or respond to a child's needs. When parents' personal needs dominate over the child's, or when the family frequently changes residence, the child's attachment reactions become disrupted. As a result, the child may develop an inability to experience well-being.

Such children often appear passive, withdrawn, and apathetic. They look sad and distressed. Many children who have lived in orphanages and were later adopted display fearful and wary behavior. They are often undernourished, with low body weight compared to peers, pale skin, and poor muscle tone, though their height corresponds to their age. These physical symptoms reflect not only psychological deprivation but also physiological consequences.

Socially, these children are characterized by reduced spontaneity and diminished initiative in communication. A child may show indifference to separation from the mother, which may seem paradoxical. Older children often show little interest in people or toys, even when encouraged. Yet they may begin to engage with caregivers over time. However, due to staff limitations, caregivers cannot form emotionally close relationships with every child. The lack of mutual emotional feedback between caregiver and infant disrupts social interaction and emotional expression (McLaughlin et al., 2021). Consequently, the child withdraws inward, suppressing cognitive and emotional functions, which may lead to personality disorders. Such children often lack guilt, disregard rules, and fail to develop a natural need for affection. They may later become individuals with emotionally detached personalities.

A well-known study by Anna Freud and Sophie Dann illustrates this phenomenon. They observed six three-year-old children who had been separated from their mothers and imprisoned in concentration camps during World War II. After liberation, the children were placed in a family-type care home in England. The researchers found that the children bonded closely with one another but remained unresponsive to outsiders. When another girl from a concentration camp joined them, they accepted her into their group, showing care and solidarity, but continued to distrust others. Their recovery required long-term, patient emotional support before they could change their attitudes toward others (Humphreys et al., 2022).

Deprived children can generally be categorized into several types:

1. The Hyperactive Social Child. These children easily interact with strangers and behave confidently in social situations, but their relationships are superficial and inconsistent. They are curious but participate passively. They lack aggression and show social interest but underperform academically relative to their intellectual capacity. Teachers often find them distracting because they demand much attention yet achieve little.
2. The Social Provocateur. This type of child emerges by the first year of life. They dominate adult attention through crying or tantrums. If denied something, they respond with aggression or jealousy and constantly seek special attention. They provoke conflicts with peers and are often labeled as "difficult." Yet in one-on-one situations, they may appear affectionate and mild. Boys of this type often become increasingly defiant and oppositional with age. Interestingly, they behave more calmly among older children or adults.
3. The Withdrawn (Depressed) Type. These children are passive, apathetic, and may exhibit signs of intellectual disability or autism. Transitions between institutions cause deep sadness and withdrawal. They

interact minimally with adults or peers and show little interest in toys or social interaction. However, when shown consistent care, they can gradually adapt. In adoption settings, they may silently seek closeness – leaning on an adult's shoulder or holding hands – displaying a subtle desire for attachment. For such children, abrupt environmental changes or separation from established bonds are especially harmful.

4. Children with Substitutional Satisfaction of Affective and Social Needs. These children compensate for emotional deprivation through alternative behaviors. Those raised in orphanages from birth often eat well and gain weight normally. However, children who enter institutions later suffer from depression, poor appetite, and slow adaptation. Some overeat as a substitute for maternal affection. Others, especially school-age children, display tattling behavior as a substitute for genuine social interaction. Such compensatory behaviors reflect regression to more basic biological needs – eating, self-stimulation, or manipulation of objects instead of meaningful human contact.

Research shows that the later children enter institutional care, the milder the deprivation effects, and the better the chances for correction with the help of teachers and psychologists (Menezes et al., 2023). However, deep-seated consequences of social deprivation at the personality level are rarely fully reversible. These children often remain distrustful, envious, critical, and ungrateful toward others, expecting betrayal and rejection.

Conclusion. Studies of children in institutional settings demonstrate that socially isolated children rarely achieve full rehabilitation. The most effective corrective environment remains a family or family-type institution, where consistent emotional bonds can form. The long-term effects of deprivation reduce a child's vitality and capacity for social engagement.

According to American psychologist Mary Ainsworth, the reversibility of deprivation depends on its duration and intensity:

1. If deprivation is brief and isolated, its effects can be reversed, though increased sensitivity and fear of separation often remain.
2. The younger the child, the greater the chance of recovery, though speech delays may occur.
3. Severe, prolonged deprivation – especially from birth to age three – leads to lasting intellectual and emotional damage that is extremely difficult to correct.

Thus, social and psychological deprivation in childhood is a profoundly detrimental condition that resists correction and leaves enduring marks on personality development and emotional life.

References:

1. Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., van IJzendoorn, M. H., & Juffer, F. (2022) *The science of attachment and early child development: Recent advances and applications.* Annual Review of Developmental Psychology, 4, 119–141.2022.
2. Bennett, K., Kerns, K. A., & Brumariu, L. E. (2021) *Emotion regulation as a mechanism linking attachment insecurity to depression and anxiety in childhood and adolescence.* Development and Psychopathology, 33(2), 618–632.
3. Əlizadə Ə. Ə. (2015) Qadin psixologiyasi. Bakı, Təhsil
4. Həmzəyev M. Ə. ,Əmiraslanova S. F. Unsiyyətin psixologiyasi (2007) Bakı; Nurlan
5. Əliyev R. İ. Etnopsixologiya; qloballaşma və millilik.(2007). Bakı; Nurlan
6. Callaghan, B. L., & Tottenham, N. (2021). *The neuro-environmental loop of plasticity: A cross-species analysis of parental deprivation and child neglect.* Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews, 127, 675–691
7. Doom, J. R., & Gunnar, M. R. (2020). *Stress physiology and developmental psychopathology: Past, present, and future.* Development and Psychopathology, 2020, 32(5)
8. Humphreys, K. L., King, L. S., Choi, P., & Gotlib, I. H. (2022). *Childhood neglect and amygdala–prefrontal connectivity: Implications for emotion regulation.* Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience, 54
9. McLaughlin, K. A., Sheridan, M. A., & Nelson, C. A. (2021). *Neglect as a violation of species-expectant experience: Neurodevelopmental consequences.* Biological Psychiatry, 89(2), 150–159.
10. Menezes, C. B., Moura, R., & Lopes, R. (2023). *Attachment insecurity, emotional neglect, and the development of personality pathology in young adults.* Personality and Individual Differences, 212

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-37

EMBODIED-MEANING INTEGRATION AND THE DYNAMICS OF MEANING FIELDS IN THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL AFTER COMBAT EXPERIENCE: A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF WORLDVIEW RECONFIGURATION

Yevheniia Zhuravel,
Postgraduate Student at the Department of Personality Psychology and Social Practices,
Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University (Kyiv, Ukraine)
ORCID ID: 0009-0002-0004-1964
y.zhuravel.asp@kubg.edu.ua

Abstract. The article substantiates an integrative theoretical model of embodied-meaning integration and the dynamics of meaning fields in the consciousness of military personnel after combat experience, conceptualized as a holistic process of reconstructing the internal worldview. The methodology includes theoretical-analytical, comparative-conceptual, and structural-functional approaches, as well as theoretical and visual modelling. The results demonstrate that meaning transformation unfolds across five key levels – embodied-somatic, cognitive-narrative, moral-value, social-identity, and existential – forming a coherent system of reorganization. The proposed structural and flow models describe both the architectonics of meaning and the mechanisms of its integration following war-related extreme events. It is concluded that the meaning dynamics of military consciousness is multilayered and can serve as a foundation for developing psychocorrectional programs focused on embodied-meaning integration during veterans' post-war reintegration.

Key words: embodied regulation, meaning fields, moral integration, narrative transformation, existential perspective, social identity, combat experience, meaning-making.

Introduction. In global psychological science, the problem of meaning transformation after traumatic events is viewed as a multilayered process encompassing the bodily, emotional, cognitive, and value systems of the individual. Research confirms that combat experience induces profound disruptions in basic world assumptions, destabilizes established self-narratives, and creates a need for reconstructing psychological integrity (Janoff-Bulman, 2022; Park, 2010; Adler et al., 2021). Within body-oriented and neurophysiological approaches, particular attention is paid to the role of interoception, proprioception, and autonomic regulation as mechanisms that enable access to the meaning processing of traumatic experiences (Payne et al., 2015; Porges, 2011; Mehling et al., 2023).

A significant contribution to understanding meaning-making processes has been made within meaning-making research, which demonstrates that interpreting traumatic events is a key mechanism for restoring coherence in one's life story and for renewing value structures (Park, 2010; Neimeyer, 2001; Gillies & Joseph, 2022). Models of posttraumatic growth emphasize the possibility of generating new meanings and life orientations following encounters with extreme events (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Tedeschi, 2023). A separate line of contemporary research focuses on the phenomenon of moral injury, where transformations in the moral dimension of experience and the restoration of moral integrity are considered critical components of posttraumatic adaptation (Williamson et al., 2021; Litz et al., 2022).

In the Ukrainian scientific discourse, interest in meaning-making under wartime conditions is rapidly increasing. Empirical studies demonstrate substantial shifts in value orientations, self-awareness, responsibility, sense of community and belonging, and future perspectives among military personnel returning from combat (Reva, 2024; Pohorilska et al., 2024; Zakharina, 2023). Within the existential-systemic paradigm of consciousness proposed by S. Kalishchuk, meaning is conceptualized as an integral unit of psychic organization and the structural foundation of human interaction with the world. The architectonics of meaning includes bodily, emotional, cognitive, value-based, and existential components that together form a coherent system of lived experience (Kalishchuk, 2020; Kalishchuk, 2023).

Despite considerable progress in international and Ukrainian research, the relationship between bodily regulation, affective processes, and meaning fields after combat experience remains insufficiently described. The mechanisms through which bodily-sensory activation, interoceptive sensitivity, and affective processing contribute to the renewal of meaning structures and the integration of combat experience into a coherent worldview remain understudied. There is likewise a lack of theoretical models that combine meaning architectonics with embodied-meaning integration.

The aim of this article is to articulate a theoretical and methodological model of embodied-meaning integration and the dynamics of meaning fields in the consciousness of military personnel after combat experience, explaining the mechanisms of worldview reconfiguration following extreme wartime events.

Main Part. In accordance with the stated aim, the following research tasks were identified:

1. to analyse international and Ukrainian concepts of meaning-making, posttraumatic growth, moral-value integration, and body-oriented approaches;

2. to formulate the theoretical foundations of embodied-meaning integration in the context of combat experience;

3. to conduct a structural-functional analysis of meaning fields in the consciousness of military personnel;

4. to substantiate a conceptual model of worldview reconfiguration and develop its graphical representations.

Materials and Methods. The material for this study consists of a corpus of Ukrainian and international scholarly works devoted to the meaning paradigm of consciousness (Kalishchuk, 2020; Kalishchuk, 2023), post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Tedeschi, 2023), meaning making (Park, 2010; Neimeyer, 2001), moral injury (Williamson et al., 2021), and body-oriented and neurophysiological models of regulation (Payne et al., 2015; Porges, 2011; Mehling et al., 2023), as well as recent Ukrainian research on meaning transformation among veterans (Pohorilska et al., 2024; Reva, 2024).

The methodological framework includes theoretical–analytical and comparative-conceptual analyses, the structural-functional approach, the method of theoretical modelling, and visual modelling techniques. These methods made it possible to construct both structural and processual (flow) models of embodied-meaning integration.

Results and Discussion. The results of the theoretical and methodological analysis demonstrated that the dynamics of meaning structures in military personnel after combat experience have a systemic, multilayered, and bodily rooted character. Within the meaning paradigm of consciousness (Kalishchuk, 2020), meaning structures function as integrative formations that unify bodily-somatic reactions, emotional codes, cognitive schemas, moral-value orientations, identity positions, and existential meanings. Combat experience, as an extreme existential and bodily event, initiates the process of their reorganization – a process described in contemporary literature as a transition from fragmentation to integration, and from chaos to an ordered meaning system (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Park, 2010; Wong, 2023).

Based on the integration of these theoretical approaches, five key blocks of meaning transformation were identified, each representing a distinct level in the dynamic reconfiguration of meaning structures after combat exposure. These blocks reflect the sequence through which meaning reconstruction unfolds-from bodily-sensory reactions to the formation of an updated life perspective. A structured presentation of each level follows.

1. Bodily-Somatic and Affective Foundations of Meaning Change

Recent Ukrainian psychophysiological studies (2023–2025) confirm that combat experience primarily affects the bodily-sensory and affective levels, which serve as the «entry channel» for experiencing trauma. Research by M. Hryniova (2023) demonstrates pronounced markers of autonomic hyperactivation among service members following deployment, including disrupted respiratory rhythms, instability of cardiorespiratory regulation, and changes in interoceptive sensitivity. Studies by O. Malyshevska (2023), along with analytical reports from the Military Center for Mental Health of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine (2023), confirm the presence of somatic traces of combat events-muscle rigidity, micro-alarms in the body, and reactive bodily responses – that function as sensory triggers within the meaning system of the service member.

In body-oriented models of trauma (Payne et al., 2015; Porges, 2011; Kuhfuß et al., 2021), it is emphasized that restoring bodily regulation, as well as interoceptive and proprioceptive sensitivity constitutes a fundamental condition for accessing the emotional and meaning-related content of traumatic experience. Findings from systematic reviews and randomized trials (Andersen et al., 2021; Kuhfuß et al., 2021) demonstrate that somatic stabilization reduces hyperactivation, supports the integration of fragmented sensory memory traces, and enables cognitive–narrative processing of events. These findings align with Ukrainian empirical observations highlighting the bodily nature of disrupted meaning coherence during the initial post-rotation period and the importance of embodied-meaning integration in restoring service members' capacity to make sense of their experience (Pohorilska et al., 2024; Reva, 2024).

Thus, the bodily-affective layer forms the primary contour of meaning system reorganization, creating the conditions for transitioning to higher levels of processing-cognitive, narrative, and reflective. It is at this stage that fragmented experience becomes available for structuring and embedding within meaning schemas.

Gradual reduction of bodily dysregulation opens access to cognitive and reflective processing, forming the second mechanism – cognitive-narrative reconstruction. At this level, chaotic or fragmented elements of experience acquire causal-temporal structure, initial meaning links emerge, and the event becomes «embedded» into the personal life narrative.

2. Cognitive-Narrative Changes and the Reconstruction of Life Meaning

Cognitive-narrative transformations manifest as shifts in interpretations, reconstruction of meanings, and renewal of the internal autonarrative. Research by Park (2010) and Neimeyer (2001), along with contemporary Ukrainian studies (Reva, 2024; Pohorilska et al., 2024), demonstrates that meaning recovery among military personnel is associated with forming coherent connections between wartime events, personal responsibility, experiences of loss, feelings of guilt, acquired strengths, and future life perspectives.

In this context, the cognitive-narrative mechanism acts as a structural integrator of the meaning system: it restores temporal continuity, establishes causal connections, forms the «framework» of an updated life story, and ensures the alignment of experiences with value positions. This corresponds to the concept of meaning universals described by S. Kalishchuk (2020), within which meaning integration occurs through constructing links among experience, thought, moral evaluation, and narrative reflection.

Such reconstruction restores the individual's sense of internal continuity and agency, laying the groundwork for engaging with deeper moral and value-related dimensions of experience.

Once the basic temporal-meaning structure is restored, the meaning system transitions to the level of moral-value integration – the third mechanism, during which service members reconsider responsibility, justice, guilt, and moral integrity. Harmonizing the autonarrative opens the space for processing the moral and ethical dimensions of wartime experience, forming the next layer of meaning transformation.

3. Moral-Value Shifts and the Phenomenon of Moral Injury

Contemporary Ukrainian studies (Kovalov, 2023; Yatsenko, 2024) confirm that moral dilemmas, witnessing destruction, the necessity of making decisions under threat, as well as encounters with borderline situations of war, become central determinants of meaning changes in military personnel. These findings are consistent with international work within the framework of moral injury (Williamson et al., 2021), which describes the disruption of basic moral orientations, the loss of moral-value integrity, and the emergence of an internal conflict between values and compelled actions.

Within the meaning paradigm of consciousness, this process is viewed as a change in moral-value universals – deep meaning structures that define conceptions of good and evil, responsibility, duty, humanity, the limits of what is permissible, and the value of human life (Kalishchuk, 2020). Under the impact of combat experience, these universals undergo deformation, which is manifested in experiences of guilt, shame, ambivalent feelings about one's actions or inaction, and in difficulties maintaining moral-value integrity.

The moral-value mechanism performs a critically important function in the structure of meaning reorganization: it determines how a service member integrates the experience of war into their value system, and whether they are able to construct an updated moral position without self-destructive self-blame. In this process, a key role is played by acknowledging responsibility, accepting vulnerability, rethinking the boundaries of humanity, and restoring connection with social identity, which corresponds to Ukrainian data on the importance of moral support from comrades and society (Kovalov, 2023; Yatsenko, 2024).

Once the service member restores a basic sense of value integrity, the next dimension of meaning dynamics becomes the rethinking of social bonds and one's role in different communities – that is, the process of socio-identity changes.

4. Identity Transformations and Social Embeddedness

War radically reshapes the socio-identity structures of military personnel. Ukrainian studies (Zablotska-Zhytka, 2023; Demchenko, 2024) show that after rotation there is a complex process of re-negotiating the relationships between civilian, military, and veteran identities. These shifts directly influence the meaning system, as they determine how the service member interprets their role, responsibility, scope of influence, and belonging to various social communities.

Research by Pohorilska and colleagues (2024) emphasizes that meaning making under conditions of war is formed in interaction with others: through the support of comrades, engagement in communities, experiences of solidarity, and collective coping. Social ties thus function as a stabilizing factor for the meaning system after traumatic events and contribute to restoring the sense of «self-in-the-world».

In the model of meaning architectonics developed within the meaning paradigm (Kalishchuk, 2020), the identification level serves as the «social framework» of the meaning system: it aligns internal experiences with the context of group norms, roles, and values. This level determines whether a service member will be able to integrate combat experience into their life story and construct a new agentic position after returning to civilian life.

Once socio-identity stability has been re-established, meaning dynamics shift to the deepest level – existential-transcendent changes, where the service member rethinks issues of life, death, freedom, responsibility, and the personal meaning of what has been lived through. Once social identity becomes rooted, the meaning system transitions to the level at which the most fundamental questions of existence are addressed – the existential-transcendent dimension.

5. Existential-Transcendent Changes and the Reconsideration of Life

Ukrainian studies from 2023-2025 (Zablotska-Zhytka, 2023; Reva, 2024) confirm that for many military personnel, the experience of loss, encounters with existential limit situations, and direct contact with mortality become catalysts for profound existential transformations. Veterans reconsider fundamental questions of life meaning, their presence in the world, and the boundaries of personal responsibility, freedom, dignity, and humanity.

These findings are consistent with the principles of existential positive psychology 2.0 proposed by Wong (2023), where suffering is seen not solely as a destructive factor but as a source of deep growth, opening possibilities for renewing value orientations and expanding one's life perspective. International empirical studies emphasize that service members often form a new level of life meaning through reflection on loss, survival, responsibility toward comrades, and duty to society (Cox et al., 2023), which fully corresponds to Ukrainian data.

Within the meaning paradigm (Kalishchuk, 2020), the existential-transcendent level is the «upper horizon» of the architectonics of meaning. It enables the integration of bodily reactions, affective states, cognitive reconstructions, moral evaluations, and identity changes into a coherent, structured, and personally significant worldview. At this level, an updated life perspective is formed – the capacity to envision a future despite traumatic experience.

In summary, the five mechanisms described – bodily-emotional, cognitive-narrative, moral-value, socio-identity, and existential-transcendent – constitute a unified dynamic system of reorganization of meaning structures in military personnel. Each mechanism reflects a specific level of the architectonics of meaning, but it is precisely their interaction that ensures the transition from fragmentation and disintegration to coherence, agency, and a renewed life perspective.

This approach makes it possible to view meaning change not only as a consequence of traumatic impact but also as a process of gradual restoration and reconfiguration of the inner world – a process that is crucial for psychological resilience, moral-value integration, and the post-war reintegration of military personnel.

Further analysis of the obtained results requires integrating the identified mechanisms into a coherent theoretical-methodological framework. Since meaning changes in service members are formed at different levels of experience – from bodily-somatic to existential – there is a need for a model capable of simultaneously representing the structure of these levels and the dynamics of their interaction. This need is consistent with the principles of the meaning paradigm of consciousness developed in the works of Kalishchuk (2017, 2020), where meaning structures are conceptualized as a multilevel system that includes cognitive contours, mnemonic contexts, meaning universals, and mechanisms of reorganizational action.

On the basis of this paradigm, as well as contemporary international approaches to post-traumatic change (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Park, 2010; Wong, 2023), the article proposes an original integrative model of the architectonics of meaning in military personnel with combat experience. It includes two complementary visual representations – structural and processual (flow) –which together make it possible to trace both the internal organization of the meaning system and the process of its reorganization after combat exposure.

The first element of the model is a structural representation (Table 1), which displays nine levels of meaning architectonics – from somatosensory and affective to cognitive, identity, existential, and integrative. The table summarizes stable meaning formations described in the works of Kalishchuk (2017, 2020) and presents architectonics as a multilevel system of interrelated elements that respond to the extreme experience of war.

Based on the table, a structural model of the architectonics of meaning was developed (Figure 1). It graphically depicts the hierarchical configuration of levels, showing how bodily-somatic, emotional-affective, cognitive, moral-value, and existential structures form an integrated meaning framework of the service member's subjective reality. The figure highlights that the meaning system is not static but functions as a coordinated architectonics in which each level influences the others.

The combined structural and processual models demonstrate that the meaning system of a service member is multilayered, dynamically changing, and embodied. The reconfiguration of the worldview after combat experience unfolds through a series of interconnected mechanisms – bodily-somatic experiencing, emotional organization, cognitive–narrative interpretation, moral reevaluation, socio-identity transformations, and existential integration. This sequence shows that meaning dynamics is inherently processual and develops through the ongoing alignment between bodily reactions, emotional experience, values, social forms of belonging, and life perspective. It is this integrative movement that enables the emergence of a coherent, renewed worldview.

Table 1

Structural Architectonics of Meanings in Combat-Experienced Military Personnel

Level	Psychological Content	Key Mechanisms	Manifestations in Service Members
Somatosensory	Primary bodily sensations, sensory traces of experience	Regulation, autonomic stabilization	Tension, hypertonus, threat scanning
Affective	Tension, hypertonus, threat scanning	Emotional differentiation, validation	Emotional differentiation, validation
Cognitive	Evaluations, interpretations, meaning constructions	Reappraisal, reframing	Catastrophizing, fragmentation of meanings
Imaginal	Images, scenarios, internal representations of events	Imagery integration	Surges of imagination, flashbacks
Moral-Value	Ethical orientations, moral meaning of events	Moral integration	Moral injury, shifts in values
Identity	Social role, belonging, self-identification	Conflict between civilian and military identities	Conflict between civilian and military identities
Reflective	Meaning-making, self-observation	Reflection, metacognition	Search for meaning, re-evaluation
Existential	Questions of life, death, and limits	Existential meaning-making	Experiences of loss, profound re-evaluation of life
Integrative	Synthesis of levels, a new worldview	Meaning integration	Restoration of coherence and the capacity to act

Note: The model synthesizes the principles of the meaning paradigm of consciousness (Kalishchuk, 2020) in combination with the concepts of post-traumatic growth, existential positive psychology 2.0, and contemporary approaches to embodied meaning integration (Payne et al., 2015; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Wong, 2023).

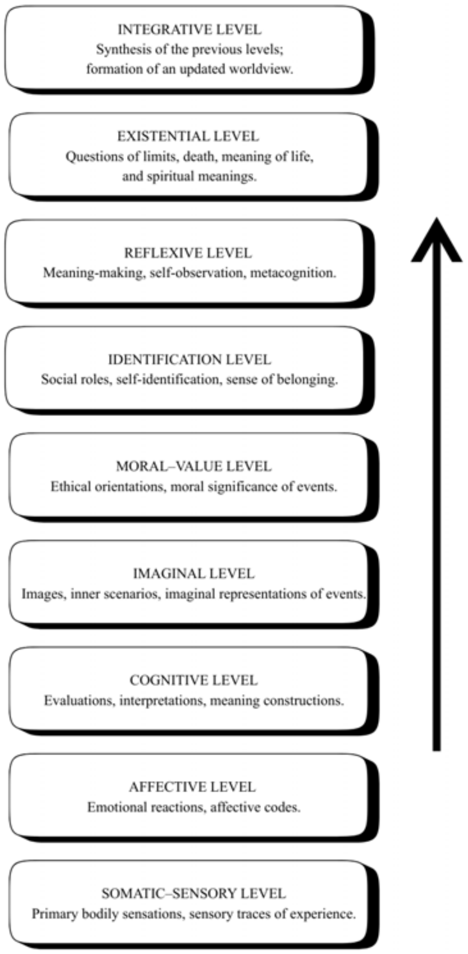


Fig. 1. «Structural Model of the Architectonics of Meaning in Combat-Experienced Military Personnel»

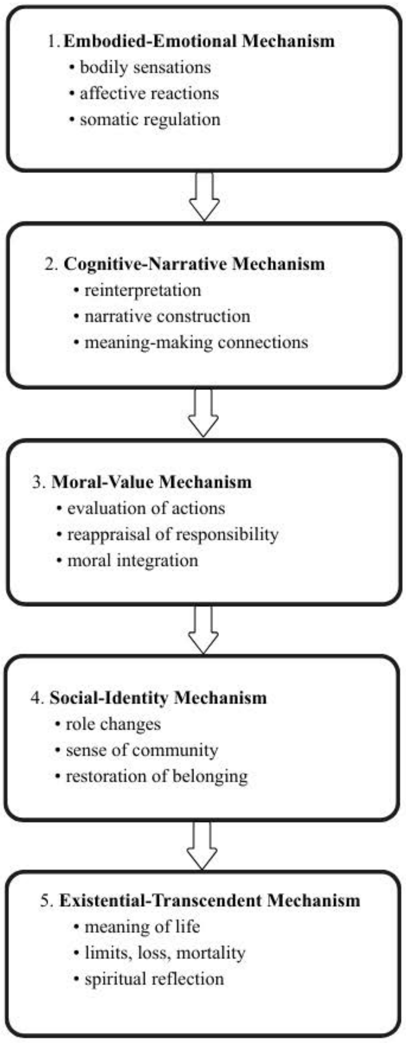


Fig. 2. «Levels of Psychocorrective Processing of Meaning Dynamics in Combat-Experienced Military Personnel»

Discussion. The results demonstrate that the meaning dynamics of military personnel after combat experience cannot be reduced to symptomatic changes or adaptive reactions; rather, they constitute a profound reorganization of meaning structures. In this context, the proposed model of meaning architectonics conceptually aligns with the meaning paradigm of consciousness (Kalishchuk, 2020), in which meaning functions as an integrative factor that unites bodily, affective, cognitive, moral, socio-identity, and existential levels.

A comparison of the findings with contemporary international theoretical models reveals several important correspondences. The concept of post-traumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996; Tedeschi, 2023) emphasizes that positive changes arise from active cognitive and existential work with the content of traumatic experience – corresponding to the cognitive–narrative and existential levels of our model. Moral injury models (Williamson et al., 2021) correlate with the identified moral-value shifts and the need to restore moral integrity as a precondition for integrating the experience. Body-oriented approaches (Payne et al., 2015; Porges, 2011; Kuhfuß et al., 2021) confirm the importance of somatosensory and interoceptive regulation, which our model identifies as the foundational basis of meaning change.

At the same time, the results reveal a distinct Ukrainian specificity in meaning-making processes among service members. Recent Ukrainian studies (Reva, 2024; Hrynova, 2023; Kokhan, 2024; Pohorilska et al., 2024; Military Center for Mental Health, 2023) show that meaning transformations unfold in interaction with collective identity, experiences of community, a sense of service, and responsibility toward the state. This amplifies the significance of the socio-identity level, which is often peripheral in Western models.

An important analytical result is that the structural and processual models allow meaning dynamics to be conceptualized not as a set of separate mechanisms but as a unified process with its own internal logic and sequence. A service member does not merely «experience» trauma – they reconfigure their lived world. In this sense, meaning architectonics emerges as a system capable of self-organization and renewal, fully consistent with the concept of reorganization action within the meaning paradigm (Kalishchuk, 2020).

The practical value of the proposed model lies in its potential use for designing psychocorrective and psychotherapeutic programs focused on bodily-meaning integration. Understanding that meaning changes unfold across levels – from bodily to existential – enables psychologists, psychotherapists, and veteran service specialists to build interventions that correspond to a client's internal readiness at each stage. This is particularly important when working with veterans for whom not only stabilization but also the restoration of subjectivity, moral integrity, and a coherent worldview is crucial.

Overall, the results confirm that the meaning dynamics of military personnel constitutes a multidimensional process in which bodily, affective, cognitive, moral, social, and existential components form a unified system. This underscores the need for a multidisciplinary approach and opens perspectives for further theoretical and empirical investigations.

Conclusion. The conducted theoretical analysis has enabled the substantiation of an integrated model of the architectonics of meaning in combat-experienced military personnel and the description of the dynamics of its reorganization under extreme wartime conditions. It has been shown that the meaning system of service members is multilayered, embodied, and dynamic, and that meaning changes encompass somatosensory, affective, cognitive, imaginal, moral-value, socio-identity, reflective, and existential levels.

The proposed structural and processual models demonstrate that the reorganization of meaning structures unfolds as a sequential process of experiencing, interpreting, and integrating combat events, within which bodily regulation, cognitive reconstruction, ethical reflection, and social support play central roles. Within this framework, psychological support acts as a catalyst for transitioning from fragmented experiences to an organized meaning system and contributes to the restoration of internal coherence.

The scientific novelty of this work lies in integrating the meaning paradigm of consciousness, contemporary international approaches to post-traumatic change, and Ukrainian empirical studies, which has made it possible to construct a model relevant both for analyzing worldview dynamics and for developing psychocorrective interventions for veterans.

Future research directions include empirical validation of the proposed model, developing reliable tools for assessing meaning dynamics, and creating psychological support programs oriented toward bodily-meaning integration and veteran reintegration after war.

References:

1. Adler, A. B., Bliese, P. D., McGurk, D., Hoge, C. W., & Castro, C. A. (2021). Battlemind training: Transitioning home from deployment. Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 89(2), 95–107. https://doi.org/10.1037/ccp0000601
2. Andersen, S. B., Karstoft, K.-I., Bertelsen, M., & Madsen, T. (2021). Randomized clinical trial of body-oriented therapy for trauma-related disorders. European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 12(1), Article 1875500. https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2021.1875500

3. Cox, K. S., Litz, B. T., Smigelsky, M. A., & Kachadourian, L. (2023). Understanding posttraumatic growth in veterans: Relationships with resilience and functioning. Journal of Traumatic Stress, 36(2), 365–377. https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22954
4. Gillies, J., & Joseph, S. (2022). Meaning in life in the aftermath of trauma: An updated systematic review. Clinical Psychology Review, 95, Article 102167. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2022.102167
5. Greenberg, N., Williamson, V., & Murphy, D. (2021). Understanding moral injury: A systematic review. The Lancet Psychiatry, 8(6), 453–455. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00113-9
6. Kalytychka, M. (2023). Psykhofiziolohichni indyvidualni reaktsii veteraniv pislia boiovykh dii [Psychophysiological individual responses of veterans after combat deployment]. Ukrainian Journal of Military Medicine, 4(2), 45–56. https://doi.org/10.32751/ujmm.2023.2.06 [in Ukrainian]
7. Kalishchuk, S. (2020). Geneza smyslovoi arkhitektoniky svidomosti maibutnikh psykholohiv-konsultantiv [The genesis of the meaning architectonics of consciousness of future psychological counsellors]. Spolom. [in Ukrainian]
8. Kalishchuk, S. (2023). Smyslova paradyhma svidomosti v praktytsi psykhokorektsii [Meaning paradigm of consciousness in psychocorrection practice]. Psychology & Personality, 2(12), 33–48. [in Ukrainian]
9. Kuhfuß, M., Maldei, T., Hetmanek, A., & Flor, H. (2021). Somatic Experiencing – effectiveness and mechanisms: A systematic review and meta-analysis. European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 12(1), Article 1870000. https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2020.1870000
10. Malyshevska, O. (2023). Somatychni markery travmatychnoho dosvidu u viiskovosluzhbovtsiv pislia rotatsii [Somatic markers of traumatic experience in service members after rotation]. Journal of Ukrainian Clinical Psychology, 5(1), 72–85. [in Ukrainian]
11. Mehling, W. E., Stewart, A., Silva, E., Millon, G., & Saron, C. (2023). Interoception and autonomic regulation in trauma recovery. Frontiers in Psychology, 14, Article 1123456. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1123456
12. Neimeyer, R. A. (2001). Meaning reconstruction and the experience of loss. American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10386-000
13. Park, C. L. (2010). Making sense of the meaning literature: An integrative review of meaning-making and its effects on adjustment to stressful life events. Psychological Bulletin, 136(2), 257–301. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0018301
14. Payne, P., Levine, P. A., & Crane-Godreau, M. A. (2015). Somatic Experiencing: Using interoception and proprioception as core elements of trauma therapy. Frontiers in Psychology, 6, Article 93. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00093
15. Pohorilska, N., Naidonova, H., & Karpiuk, A. (2024). Resursy posttravmatychnoho zrostannia ukraintsiv v umovakh viiny [Resources of posttraumatic growth of Ukrainians in wartime conditions]. Applied Psychology: Professional & Organizational Psychology, 4, 57–70. [in Ukrainian]
16. Porges, S. W. (2011). The polyvagal theory: Neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation. W. W. Norton.
17. Reva, M. (2024). Osoblyvosti posttravmatychnoho zrostannia uchasnykiv boiovykh dii iz riznym stavlennyam do maibutnoho [Posttraumatic growth in combatants with different future orientations]. Psychology & Personality, 1(25), 129–139. [in Ukrainian]
18. Tedeschi, R. G. (2023). The post-traumatic growth approach to supporting trauma survivors. World Psychiatry, 22(1), 16–17. https://doi.org/10.1002/wps.21050
19. Tedeschi, R. G., & Calhoun, L. G. (1996). The Posttraumatic Growth Inventory: Measuring the positive legacy of trauma. Journal of Traumatic Stress, 9(3), 455–471.
20. Ukrainian Military Mental Health Center. (2023). Analytical report on the psychophysiological state of Ukrainian service members after rotation. Ministry of Health of Ukraine. [in Ukrainian]
21. Williamson, V., Murphy, D., & Greenberg, N. (2021). Moral injury: The effect on mental health and implications for treatment. The Lancet Psychiatry, 8(6), 453–455. https://doi.org/10.1016/S2215-0366(21)00113-9
22. Wong, P. T. P. (2023). A new science of suffering and the existential positive psychology 2.0. Frontiers in Psychology, 14, Article 1280613. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1280613

THEORY AND PERSPECTIVES OF PHILOLOGY

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-38

THE CLASSIFICATION OF THE GERMAN LEXICON ACCORDING TO PARTS OF SPEECH: STRUCTURAL, SEMANTIC, AND PEDAGOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Khuraman Asgarova Salim,
PhD, Associate Professor at the Department of Lexicology and Stylistics of the German Language, Azerbaijan University of Languages (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 000-0003-2362-0360

Abstract. This study examines the classification of the German lexicon according to parts of speech from structural, semantic, and pedagogical perspectives. It provides an overview of how the German language organizes its vocabulary into grammatical categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and particles. Each category is analyzed in terms of its morphological features, syntactic roles, and semantic functions, revealing how linguistic form and meaning interact within the system of the German language. The research argues that the division of words into grammatical classes is not only a grammatical phenomenon but also a cognitive and communicative process that reflects how speakers conceptualize the world through language. It emphasizes the dynamic nature of the German lexicon, where new words emerge through derivation, composition, and borrowing, and where traditional boundaries between categories may shift depending on context and usage. Methodologically, the paper combines descriptive and comparative approaches that connect classical grammatical theory with modern perspectives from morphology and lexical semantics. It also highlights the pedagogical importance of understanding word classes in the teaching and learning of German as a foreign language, demonstrating that awareness of grammatical categories strengthens both vocabulary development and communicative competence. The study presents the German lexicon as a living, evolving system in which structure, meaning, and function are closely interrelated, and where analysis and synthesis methods were applied to ensure a comprehensive linguistic interpretation.

Key words: German lexicon, parts of speech, morphology, grammatical classification, lexical semantics, linguistic structure, language pedagogy, word formation.

Introduction. Language functions as a complex system in which lexical, grammatical, and semantic elements interact to produce meaning. One of the most essential organizing principles of this system is the classification of words into grammatical categories, commonly referred to as parts of speech. In German linguistics, the study of word classes holds a particularly important place because it reveals the deep relationship between linguistic form and communicative function. Understanding how the German lexicon is distributed among these categories not only clarifies the internal logic of the language but also contributes to more effective language teaching, translation, and lexicographic analysis. The classification of the German lexicon has developed alongside major changes in linguistic theory. Traditional grammar relied mainly on morphological and syntactic features to distinguish nouns, verbs, adjectives, and other classes. Modern approaches, however, integrate semantic and functional criteria, recognizing that word classes are not rigid structures but flexible, context-dependent entities. This broader perspective allows researchers to explain how grammatical categories emerge, overlap, and evolve in response to communicative needs and cultural change.

German, as a member of the Indo-European language family, displays both typological similarities and unique structural traits. Its rich morphology, particularly inflection and derivation, offers fertile ground for examining how lexical items shift across grammatical boundaries. For example, processes like compounding and affixation show how meaning and structure interact to create new forms. Moreover, analyzing the German parts of speech within this framework provides a comparative basis for understanding related languages such as English and Dutch, and for contrasting them with more analytic ones like Turkish or Azerbaijani.

From a pedagogical viewpoint, mastering the classification of word classes is essential for learners of German as a foreign language. It enables them to grasp the principles of sentence construction, word formation, and the link between grammatical form and communicative intent. Therefore, this study seeks to explore how the German lexicon is systematically organized according to parts of speech, what features define each category, and how this understanding can be applied in linguistic research and language teaching.

In exploring the classification of German word classes, it becomes increasingly clear that this topic extends far beyond the purely structural descriptions found in traditional grammars. The way lexical items are grouped and interpreted reflects deeper cognitive principles that guide how speakers perceive, categorize and communicate experience. German, with its rich morphological system and layered semantic relations, offers a particularly illustrative case for understanding how linguistic form and conceptual organization interact. The emergence of new lexical units, the shifting boundaries between categories and the semantic reorientation of existing words all demonstrate that grammatical classification is a dynamic phenomenon shaped by both internal linguistic mechanisms and broader cultural developments. As learners, teachers and researchers engage with these patterns, they encounter not only a set of grammatical rules but also the linguistic embodiment of how German speakers construct meaning, negotiate nuance and encode complexity within the lexicon.

In summary, the classification of the German lexicon is not merely a descriptive grammatical task but a key to understanding how structure, meaning, and function converge in human language. The present study aims to contribute to a clearer theoretical and practical comprehension of the mechanisms that shape the organization of vocabulary in modern German.

Discussion. The classification of the German lexicon according to parts of speech remains one of the key questions in linguistic research, as it determines how words interact, acquire meaning, and form grammatical structures. Every language develops its own internal logic for organizing vocabulary, and in German this system is particularly rich and precise. The study of word classes in German reflects not only grammatical regularities but also how human cognition connects thought, meaning, and linguistic form. In the German linguistic tradition, words are usually divided into several main categories such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, conjunctions, and particles. Each class fulfills its own morphological, syntactic, and semantic role in communication. What distinguishes German from many other languages is its combination of morphological transparency and flexibility. For instance, the noun das Laufen originates from the verb laufen, yet while the grammatical function changes, the core semantic meaning remains closely connected. This fluidity shows that categories in German are not strictly fixed; rather, they shift according to communicative and contextual needs.

Morphology plays a central role in this process. The German language has a strong tendency toward word formation and derivation. Nouns usually carry endings that indicate gender and number, such as -e, -er, or -en. Verbs, on the other hand, display a wide range of endings that mark tense, person, and mood. Affixes like ver-, be- or ent- are highly productive in creating new verbs, while suffixes such as -heit, -keit, and -ung often transform adjectives or verbs into nouns. These patterns reveal how word formation and grammatical classification operate as interconnected systems within the structure of the language (Eisenberg, 2013; Dudenredaktion, 2020).

Syntax provides another layer of evidence for the classification of words. In German, word order is not arbitrary but follows strict grammatical principles. The finite verb typically occupies the second position in declarative sentences, while adjectives generally precede the nouns they modify. Even a minor change in word order can alter emphasis or meaning, illustrating how syntax works together with morphology to maintain clarity and logical coherence. Semantics adds further depth to this discussion. In German, words often transcend their grammatical form and convey meanings that shift depending on context. A noun expresses an entity, a verb an action, and an adjective a quality, yet many words can operate across categories. For example, das Gute (the good) turns an adjective into a noun, while lesen (to read) becomes das Lesen when nominalized. These examples demonstrate that grammar in German is not a closed system but a living, adaptive one shaped by creativity and thought (Lehmann, 2011; Asgarova, 2024).

Modern linguistic theory treats parts of speech as dynamic categories rather than fixed boxes. A word may exhibit the main characteristics of one category while temporarily adopting the features of another. For instance, laufen functions primarily as a verb but can easily be reinterpreted as a noun in das Laufen. This flexibility reflects cognitive mechanisms through which speakers use language not as a static code but as a responsive tool of expression and interaction (Asgarova, 2023).

The vitality of the German lexicon is further illustrated through compounding, one of the most productive processes in the language. Words such as Lebensmittel, Hochschule, or Freizeitpark combine existing elements into new, meaningful units. Through these mechanisms, the German vocabulary expands while preserving grammatical consistency and semantic transparency. Derivation serves a similar function, allowing the transformation of arbeiten into Arbeiter or klar into klären. Both compounding and derivation demonstrate the language's capacity for self-renewal and structural balance (Asgarova, 2022; Eisenberg, 2013).

The influence of other languages has also played an important role in shaping the modern German lexicon. Borrowed terms such as downloaden, chatten, or der Computer have entered the language naturally and are fully integrated into German morphological and syntactic systems. This adaptation shows the language's openness and ability to harmonize external elements with internal grammatical logic. From a pedagogical perspective, understanding the classification of the German lexicon is crucial for both teachers and learners. Awareness of how words are categorized enables students to predict grammatical behavior and grasp the logic behind sentence construction. When learners recognize regular patterns in suffixes or prefixes, such as -ung for nouns or ver- for verbs, they not only memorize words but also learn to use them productively. Teaching that emphasizes these structural regularities supports deeper comprehension and communicative fluency (Schellhardt & Schroeder, 2015).

The evolving nature of German word classes becomes especially evident when examining how frequently words move beyond their prototypical functions in actual communication. Speakers often adapt lexical items to new contexts by extending or narrowing their semantic scope, and this flexibility challenges rigid categorizations. Instances of nominalization, adjectival reinterpretation or verbal shifts illustrate how grammatical roles are negotiated in real time depending on emphasis, discourse function or stylistic intention. This fluidity suggests that parts of speech in German operate along a continuum influenced by context rather than as isolated boxes, and it also reflects broader cognitive strategies that prioritize efficient expression over strict morphological boundaries. As a result, the German lexicon reveals a balancing act between systemic regularity and pragmatic adaptability, which helps explain its capacity to both preserve historical structures and incorporate innovative forms.

Another important dimension in this discussion is the interaction between grammatical classification and language acquisition. Learners of German frequently encounter complexity not only due to inflectional patterns but also because many words behave differently across communicative situations. Understanding the mechanisms behind these shifts allows learners to see the logic behind transformations rather than treating them as arbitrary irregularities. When learners grasp how semantic motivation drives derivation, compounding or category switching, they develop a more intuitive sense of how meaning is constructed in German. This insight strengthens their overall communicative competence and reduces reliance on rote memorization. Moreover, it shows that the classification of the German lexicon is pedagogically significant not simply as a descriptive tool but as a conceptual framework that supports deeper linguistic awareness and more confident language use.

Ultimately, the classification of word classes in German connects structure, meaning, and cognition. It reflects how linguistic systems evolve while maintaining balance between order and flexibility. The German language exemplifies how a grammatical framework can remain stable yet dynamic, adapting to new contexts without losing its internal harmony. In this sense, studying parts of speech in German offers insight not only into linguistic structure but also into the cognitive and cultural mechanisms that shape human communication.

Conclusion. The classification of the German lexicon according to parts of speech reveals how structure, meaning, and function interact within a single linguistic system. Through the integration of morphological, syntactic, and semantic perspectives, it becomes clear that word classes in German are not fixed entities but flexible categories that reflect both grammatical logic and cognitive processes. Morphology plays a decisive role in this organization, as inflection, derivation, and composition serve not only to indicate grammatical relationships but also to create new lexical and conceptual meanings. The German language demonstrates an exceptional ability to balance systematic structure with creative adaptability. Words move across grammatical boundaries while maintaning semantic coherence. For example, the shift of verbs into nominal forms or the creation of complex compounds shows how the language continuously renews itself without loosing its internal harmony. This process illustrates the interdependence of linguistic form and human cognition, emphasizing that the grammar of German mirrors the flexibility of human thought.

At the same time, the semantic system of German provides a conceptual framework that connects linguistic categories to real-world experience. Meaning and structure are interrelated, shaping and being shaped by each other. The ability of the German lexicon to express abstract and concrete ideas with precision reflects a deep integration of cognitive and linguistic functions. From a pedagogical standpoint, the classification of the lexicon according to parts of speech contributes directly to language learning and teaching. Awareness of word categories helps learners understand sentence construction, predict grammatical patterns, and build vocabulary more efficiently. Teaching based on these principles develops both grammatical competence and communicative awareness, linking linguistic knowledge with practical language use.

The broader implications of this analysis show that the classification of German word classes is inseparable from the way speakers engage with meaning, structure and communication in everyday language use. As linguistic patterns shift in response to social change, technological development and cultural contact, the German lexicon continues to evolve while maintaining its internal equilibrium. This ongoing transformation highlights that grammatical categories must be understood not as static labels but as interpretive tools that illuminate the relationship between form and thought. By approaching word classes through an integrated structural and semantic perspective, researchers and learners gain a clearer understanding of how language reflects cognitive habits and communicative priorities. Ultimately, this reinforces the idea that studying the German lexicon is not only an exploration of grammar but also a window into the dynamic processes through which speakers shape and reshape linguistic meaning.

In conclusion, the classification of the German lexicon is not a mere grammatical exercise but an exploration of how language organizes human experience. It reflects the interaction between tradition and innovation, rule and creativity, form and meaning. German, with its morphological richness and systematic structure, stands as an example of a language that evolves while preserving balance and clarity. In preparing this research, analysis and synthesis methods were applied to reveal the interconnected nature of form, semantics, and pedagogy, offering a holistic understanding of how the German language functions as both a structural and cognitive system.

References:

1. Asgarova, K. (2024). A paradigmatic and syntagmatic description of lexemes in German language. Universidad y Sociedad, 16(1), 435–442.
2. Asgarova, K. (2024). Semantics and philosophical characteristics of lexical units. Istanbul: Akademisyen Kitabevi.
3. Asgarova, K. (2023). Concept of sign and meaning in linguistics: Division of language signs into semantic fields. Alatoo Academic Studies, 339–347.
4. Asgarova, K. (2022). The Concept of Structure in Modern Linguistics and Its Main Characteristics. Sharq Mash'ali Conference Proceedings, Uzbekistan.
5. Askerova, X. S. (2023). Problems of Meaning in Linguistics. In: New Challenges of a New Science: Experience of Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, Moscow: Nauka Press.Dudenredaktion. (2020). Duden – Die Grammatik: Unentbehrlich für richtiges Deutsch (10th ed.). Berlin: Dudenverlag.
6. Eisenberg, P. (2013). Grundriss der deutschen Grammatik. Band 1: Das Wort (4th ed.). Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Verlag.
7. Ergin, R., & Uyanık, A. (2021). Almancada açık türetme ile sözcük yapımı. Alman Dili ve Kültürü Araştırmaları Dergisi, 3(5), 54–66.
8. Lehmann, C. (2011). The nature of parts of speech. In F. Masini & R. Simone (Eds.), Word classes: Nature, typology, computational representations (pp. 1–25). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
9. Maharramova, M. A. (2018). Word formation in German linguistics: Theoretical and methodological analysis. Open Journal of Modern Linguistics, 8(5), 143–150. https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2018.85015
10. Schellhardt, C., & Schroeder, C. (Eds.). (2015). MULTILIT: Manual, criteria of transcription and analysis for German, Turkish and English. Universität Potsdam, Philosophische Fakultät.
11. Weske-Heck, G., Zaiss, A., Zabel, M., Schulz, S., Giere, W., Schopen, M., & Klar, R. (2002). The German specialist lexicon. Proceedings of the AMIA Annual Symposium, 883–887.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-39

CONTEMPORARY AZERBAIJANI–GEORGIAN LITERARY RELATIONS: LEILA ERADZE AND DILARA ALIYEVA

Mushvig Chobanov,
PhD in Philology, Institute of Literature named after Nizami Ganjavi of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0008-8684-2722

Abstract. Beginning from the mid-twentieth century, the literary friendship between Azerbaijan and Georgia – particularly in the field of poetry – entered a new stage within the framework of comparative literary studies. There were, evidently, certain factors that gave rise to this development. Above all, the popularity of Samed Vurgun among Georgian poets and writers, his frequent visits to Georgia, his reputation across the Soviet Union, and the active participation of Azerbaijani poets and writers living in Georgia all contributed to the intensification of these literary ties. Within the scholarly sphere, this cooperation reached a new phase through the interaction between the Georgian literary scholar Leila Eradze and the Azerbaijani literary scholar Dilara Aliyeva. The poet, translator, and literary critic Leila Eradze became one of the most dedicated translators of Azerbaijani literature into Georgian. Dilara Aliyeva, for her part, not only studied the Georgian version of the *Koroghlu* epic but also actively promoted Azerbaijani–Georgian literary friendship. She rendered invaluable services in translating Azerbaijani literature into Georgian. During the 1970s and 1980s, Leila Eradze was well known in the Azerbaijani literary community. She was awarded the honorary title of *Honored Worker of Culture of Azerbaijan*. Eradze actively participated in numerous cultural and literary events held in Azerbaijan and made special efforts to strengthen and expand the cultural and literary relations between the two neighboring and friendly peoples. She translated and published into Georgian the poetry collections of prominent Azerbaijani poets such as Samed Vurgun, Suleyman Rustam, Nabi Khazri, Nariman Hasan-zade, Jabir Novruz, and Isa Ismayilzade. Leila Eradze also translated into Georgian a number of prose works by Azerbaijani writers, including Mirza Ibrahimov's *Parvane*, Ismayil Shykhly's *Mad Kura*, Ilyas Afandiyev's *The Willow Trench*, and Hasan Seyidbeyli's *The Telephone Girl*, as well as collections of short stories by Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, Isa Huseynov, and Alaviya Babayeva, thus introducing them to Georgian readers.

Key words: Azerbaijani–Georgian, contemporary, literary relations, artistic translation, *I Love Georgia, Songs of Friendship*, Leila Eradze, Dilara Aliyeva, Madad Chobanov.

Introduction. Since the mid-twentieth century, literary friendship between Azerbaijan and Georgia – particularly within the sphere of poetry – has represented a new stage in the scholarly study of comparative literature. There were clear reasons for this development. Above all, Samed Vurgun's popularity among Georgian poets and writers, his frequent visits to Georgia, his recognition throughout the Soviet Union, as well as the participation of Azerbaijani poets and writers residing in Georgia, all contributed to the deepening of these literary connections.

In the field of literary scholarship, these ties reached a new stage of development through the work of the distinguished Georgian poet, translator, and literary scholar Leila Eradze (1930–1998) and the prominent Azerbaijani literary scholar and translator Dilara Aliyeva (1929–1991). Eradze became one of the most devoted translators of Azerbaijani literature, while Aliyeva, in addition to studying the Georgian version of the *Koroghlu* epic, also acted as an ardent promoter of Azerbaijani–Georgian literary friendship and mutual cultural exchange. She rendered exceptional services in translating Azerbaijani literature into the Georgian language.

Until the end of her life, Leila Eradze remained a passionate advocate for Azerbaijani literature. Born in Tbilisi in 1930, she defended her doctoral dissertation on Georgian–Azerbaijani literary relations. She was the author of two monographs and about one hundred scholarly articles on the subject. Her research also addressed the life and work of Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, who graduated from the

Gori Seminary and for some time lived and wrote in Tbilisi. Eradze also translated his short story *The Lost Donkey* into Georgian.

Discussion. Leila Eradze was a laureate of the State Prize of Georgia named after I. Machabeli and received her Doctor of Philological Sciences degree in 1990. Beginning in 1995, she worked as the First Secretary of the Embassy of Georgia in the Republic of Azerbaijan, where she was responsible for the development of cultural and scientific relations between the two countries.

Leila Eradze consistently took an active part in numerous literary and cultural events held in Azerbaijan and devoted special effort to the expansion of cultural and literary cooperation between the two neighboring and friendly nations. From the 1970s to the 1980s, she was well known not only in Georgia but also in Azerbaijan, where she enjoyed great respect and recognition within the Azerbaijani literary milieu. In acknowledgment of her significant contributions, she was awarded the honorary title of “Honored Worker of Culture of Azerbaijan.”

Leila Eradze translated and published in Georgian nearly thirty poetic and prose works by leading representatives of Azerbaijani literature, including the poetry collections of Samed Vurgun, Suleyman Rustam, Nabi Khazri, Nariman Hasan-zade, Jabir Novruz, Isa Ismayilzade, and others. She also translated into Georgian numerous prose works by Azerbaijani writers, such as Mirza Ibrahimov’s *Parvane*, Ismayil Shykhly’s *Mad Kura*, Ilyas Afandiyev’s *The Willow Trench*, Hasan Seyidbeyli’s *The Telephone Girl*, as well as collections of short stories by Jalil Mammadguluzadeh, Isa Huseynov, and Alaviya Babayeva, thus introducing them to Georgian readers.

The chairman of the Writers’ Union of Georgia, Grigol Abashidze, emphasizing the strong interest in Azerbaijani literature in Georgia, highlighted the significant role of Leila Eradze as one of the key architects of Azerbaijani–Georgian literary relations:

“Many of our writers have translated, with true affection, the works of their colleagues from the fraternal republic. Among these translations are the poetry collection of Suleyman Rustam and, translated by conference participant Leila Eradze, Mirza Ibrahimov’s novel *Parvane*, which will soon be published” (Abashidze, 1980, p, 2).

One of the first poets translated by Leila Eradze was Samed Vurgun. It is well known that the theme of Georgia occupied an important place in Vurgun’s creative work. In his speeches, reports, and articles, he often referred to Georgian literature and to both its classical and contemporary representatives. Eradze not only translated his poetic works but also conducted in-depth research on the Georgian motifs in his oeuvre. She particularly examined how the history and contemporary life of the Georgian people were reflected in Vurgun’s writings. In her view, the Georgian theme appeared not only in his poems *The River Kura* and *Salute to the Leader* but also in his dramas *Vagif* and *Khanlar*. In these works, the poet praised the Georgian land and its natural beauty.

In her article “An Unknown Poem by Samed Vurgun,” Eradze concluded:

“If Samed Vurgun, in the above-mentioned poems, glorified the Georgian land, its rich and enchanting nature, and the friendship of nations, then in his plays he succeeded in creating Georgian characters who vividly express the psychology and temperament of the Georgian people” (Eradze, 1970, p. 6).

Her analysis of the characters Shaliko in *Vagif* and Koba in *Khanlar* once again demonstrates her deep knowledge of and profound engagement with Vurgun’s creative heritage.

In addition to being a distinguished poet and translator, Leila Eradze was also a skilled researcher who studied numerous problems of Azerbaijani literature. During her research in the Samed Vurgun archives, she discovered two important documents related to Georgian literature. The first was a 21-page typewritten manuscript dedicated to the Georgian poet David Guramishvili, and the second was the autograph of the poem “Rustaveli.”

The manuscript on Guramishvili’s life and works demonstrates that Vurgun had thoroughly studied the Georgian poet’s creative legacy in preparation for his jubilee. It is also known that Samed Vurgun not only translated Shota Rustaveli's *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* but also frequently referred to Rustaveli in his speeches and articles. Therefore, when Eradze discovered the poet's unpublished poem "Rustaveli," she did not conceal her deep excitement:

"The second interesting document we found in Samed Vurgun's archive is the autograph of the poem *Rustaveli*. This poem was not included in the published collections of the poet's works" (Eradze, 1970 ,p. 6).

Eradze argued that the poem was written on the eve of Rustaveli's jubilee, possibly to be recited at one of Vurgun's public appearances. Both the discovery of the poem and Eradze's commentary on it were a novelty for Azerbaijani literary scholarship. She noted:

"The poem, written in syllabic verse with lines of sixteen syllables, ends with the half-line this world is my empty dish,' indicating that the poem remained unfinished. From the general tone and style, it is evident that Vurgun intended to continue revising the poem, which likely explains why it was never published" (Eradze,1970, p. 6).

In her article "Samed Vurgun and Georgia," Eradze further expanded her research by determining the date of the poet's first visit to Georgia at the beginning of his literary career. Referring to Vurgun's 1929 poem *The River Kura*, she concluded that the poet celebrated the unity of the Azerbaijani people and their Georgian brothers. The choice of the title *The River Kura* was not accidental, as the river symbolizes both a physical and spiritual bond between the two nations. This symbolism is vividly reflected in the lines:

"Behind Tbilisi, on Gazakh's ridge,
Both belong to you – lands of friendship."

Building upon this poem, Eradze concluded that the Georgian motifs in Samed Vurgun's creative work were not accidental but were profoundly connected to his ideals and humanistic worldview (Eradze, 1970, p. 198).

The researcher also turned to Samed Vurgun's drama *Vagif*, focusing particularly on the characters Shaliko and Tamara. In her view, the Georgian characters created by the poet in this play are especially noteworthy. Shaliko is portrayed as a valiant son of the people, a courageous fighter who does not spare his blood in the struggle against the enemy. The scholar emphasized that the theme of friendship, which occupies a central place in Vurgun's creative work, stems from the historical traditions of both nations:

"Samed Vurgun often wrote about the unity of the political interests of the Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples. During the Great Patriotic War, in his article *Our Oath*, the poet spoke about the joint struggle of the Transcaucasian peoples against the German invaders and their historical heroism." (Eradze, 1970, p.1980) In her research on Samed Vurgun, Leila Eradze also explored the poet's personal friendships with Georgian writers and poets, particularly highlighting his close relationship with Giorgi Leonidze. She believed that there existed a profound creative kinship between Vurgun and Leonidze – one that transformed their personal friendship into a symbol of interethnic unity. Their letters to one another reveal the warmth of their mutual admiration and artistic respect.

As an example, Eradze refers to Leonidze's poem *Portakhala*, published in the journal *Druzhba narodov*, and to Samed Vurgun's letter written in response to this poem. She sought to uncover the reasons why the image of the Mother created by Leonidze had moved Vurgun so deeply, concluding that the theme was emotionally close to him as well. Citing the poet's letter, she wrote:

"It is difficult to express in a letter the deep impression your poem made on me You call it a lyrical poem, but as the philosophy of your work itself confirms, I regard this beautiful lyric as a true epic – about the great Georgian people, who for centuries have lived by honest labor, suffered greatly, and at last have earned immortality and eternal dignity through their moral courage and devotion to work" (Eradze, 1970, p. 201). According to Eradze, one of the main reasons why *Portakhala* left such a profound impression on Vurgun was the image of the Mother. As the poet's letter suggests, this image of a noble Georgian woman remained indelibly imprinted in his memory.

Beyond her translations, Leila Eradze also undertook literary research on Azerbaijani prose that contained Georgian themes. Alongside her translation of Ismayil Shykhly's novel *Mad Kura* (*The Wild Kura*), she analyzed the Georgian motifs in Azerbaijani fiction, offering valuable critical reflections on its themes and characters. Her interpretation represents an important example of external literary criticism of Azerbaijani literature.

It is well known that *Mad Kura* contains extensive descriptions of the Gori Seminary, and Eradze rightly emphasized its crucial role in the cultural and educational life of the Caucasian peoples:

"In these schools (such as the Gori Seminary established by Tsarist Russia in the Caucasus), alongside the agents of colonial policy, there also worked democratic educators armed with progressive ideas" (Eradze,2015, p. 12).

Providing Georgian readers with detailed information about Ismayil Shykhly's life and creative path, Eradze accurately identified the main idea of the novel:

"The idea of the work is the gradual disintegration of an old and doomed society and its inevitable tragic end. The writer generalizes the tragedy of one family against the background of class conflict, giving it broad social significance" (Eradze, 2015, p. 12). The scholar devoted particular attention to the character of Jahandar Agha, analyzing the processes taking place within his family and assessing him not only as a representative of the landowning class but also as a complex individual. Jahandar Agha instinctively senses that everything is changing and nothing will remain as before; he contemplates the need to adapt to this transformation:

"In this feudal-patriarchal order, where the idea of changing the traditional world and its rigid laws seemed unimaginable, the first sparks of renewal arise, prompting Jahandar Agha to send his son to the Gori Seminary to receive an education" (Eradze, 2015, p. 12).

Eradze grasped the spirit of the novel well and correctly identified the true reasons behind Jahandar Agha's defense of Göytəpə (Goytapa) from the Tsarist Cossacks. Jahandar Agha refuses to conform to new norms, yet he also realizes that time will not allow life to continue under old laws. She also noted the writer's use of the restless, impetuous Kura River as a powerful symbol of time and change. Eradze regarded *Mad Kura* as one of the most significant works of modern Azerbaijani prose and lamented that Georgian literature had not yet produced a comparable novel reflecting similar social processes. Throughout her entire creative life, Leila Eradze demonstrated herself to be a true friend of the Azerbaijani people and a devoted promoter of Azerbaijani culture. In her foreword, *"Instead of a Preface,"* written for the poetry collection *You Are Dear to Me, Baku*, she expressed her affection and deep connection to Azerbaijan:

"I have spent a large part of my conscious life among you – studying your literature and culture, translating your writers' works, falling asleep and waking up with them. I am captivated by your ancient culture and centuries-old literary heritage" (Eradze, 1990, p. 5).

Leila Eradze expressed her love for the Azerbaijani people not only through her translations and scholarly works but also in her own poetry. In her poem *"You Are Dear to Me, Baku"*, she called Baku her second homeland – a city as dear and beloved as her first. Each time she came to Baku, she wrote, the city welcomed her with open arms, embracing her as one of its own.

Arriving at ancient Bilajari,
This is old Keshla, we have passed it too –
And there you are, my dear, kind Baku.
Everyone is kind to me,
All are my own, familiar faces,
Everyone speaks
The language I know best. (Eradze,1990, p. 12)

From her youth, Leila Eradze's lyrical self had loved Baku and found harmony with its spirit. Each time she came to the city, she would wander through its streets, converse with its warm-hearted people, and relive cherished memories. Yet every encounter felt as if she were meeting the city for the first time. In Baku, the lyrical heroine carries a thousand tender memories:

You are the faith
That burns in my heart,
You are my second,
My own dear mother.
You are my dearest place
In all this life –
Bright in destiny,
And love without stain.
You are my second
City of fate,
As sacred and beloved
As my first (Eradze, 1990, p. 12)

It should be noted that the academic study and promotion of Azerbaijani–Georgian literary relations began in earnest in the second half of the 20th century. Alongside prominent Georgian Turkologists such as Venera Jankidze, Elizbar Chavlelidze, Georgi Shagulashvili, and Mikheil Chinchaladze, Leila Eradze maintained continuous scholarly contact with Professor Madad Chobanov – a distinguished Azerbaijani scholar, doctor of philology, author of more than 60 books and hundreds of scholarly and publicistic articles, and long-time lecturer in the Azerbaijani Department of the Faculty of Philology at the A. S. Pushkin (later S. S. Orbeliani) Tbilisi State Pedagogical University.

Professor Madad Chobanov devoted considerable effort to the development of Azerbaijani–Georgian literary relations. He was among the first to conduct systematic linguistic and literary research on the mutual influence between the Azerbaijani and Georgian languages and published dozens of studies on the subject. Among his notable articles are:

– "A. Bakikhanov and the Tiflis Milieu" (Qələbə Bayrağı, 21 June 1969),
– "A. Hagverdiyev and Georgia" (Qələbə Bayrağı, 16 May 1970),
– "Azerbaijani Poets and Georgia" (Qələbə Bayrağı, 23 May 1970),
– "The Epic of Koroghlu in the Georgian Language" (Gürcüstan, 15 July 1972),
– "A Georgian Scholar Studies Fuzuli" (Gürcüstan, 19 August 1972), and many others.

For the first time in the history of the South Caucasus peoples, Professor Chobanov, together with Mikheil Chinchaladze, compiled the Short Azerbaijani–Georgian Phrasebook, which was published three times – in 1977 and 1991 in Tbilisi (Qanatleba Publishing House) and again in 2000 in Baku (Borçalı Publishing House). This dictionary has played a significant role in bringing the Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples closer together culturally and spiritually.

As N. Abdurahmanov and F. Khubanov noted in their review,

"Lexicography has also played no small part in the cultural and spiritual rapprochement of the Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples. In 1977, the Qanatleba ('Maarif') publishing house in Tbilisi issued the Short Azerbaijani–Georgian Phrasebook. This book, the first step in the lexicography of the two brotherly nations, was compiled by associate professors M. Chobanov and M. Chinchaladze of the A. S. Pushkin Tbilisi State Pedagogical Institute. It serves as a valuable resource for both Azerbaijani and Georgian readers." (Azərbaycan Müəllimi, No. 40 (6822), 24 May 1989).

In addition to his lexicographic work, Professor Madad Chobanov compiled and edited the anthologies I Love Georgia (Sevirəm Gürcüstanı, Baku: Azərnəşr, 1977) and Songs of Friendship (Dostluq nəğmələri, Tbilisi: Merani, 1978), which represented the first major anthological efforts to expand Azerbaijani–Georgian literary collaboration. Both books were warmly received by readers in both countries.

Reviews of the anthology I Love Georgia (Baku: Azərnəşr, 1977) emphasize:

"The friendship and brotherhood between the Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples are ancient. The book I Love Georgia, a poetic expression of this affection, presents examples of poems by Azerbaijani poets dedicated to the brotherly land of Georgia – its enchanting nature, its cheerful and kind-hearted people. The compiler of the collection is Madad Chobanov." (Ədəbiyyat və incəsənət, No. 2, 7 January 1978).

The "ancient land of Georgia," its hospitable people, "Tbilisi – the Paris of the Caucasus," and the Kura River – the lifeline of the Caucasus – have, from ancient times to the present day, remained subjects to which Azerbaijani literature has repeatedly and enthusiastically turned. It would be difficult to find an Azerbaijani writer or poet whose creative work does not contain motifs related to Georgia.

As the poet Məmməd Araz once expressed, "Poetic affinity is the most sublime form of relationship No nation can offer another a gift more precious, more sacred than this." In this regard, the recently published volume *I Love Georgia* (*Sevirəm Gürcüstanı*) by "Azərnəşr" (Azerbaijan State Publishing House) may be considered a worthy gift to the Georgian people. The book was compiled by Madad Chobanov, a lecturer at the A.S. Pushkin State Pedagogical Institute.

/ Səfalı Nəzərli, poet and editor at the Department of Fiction, "Azərnəşr", *I Love Georgia, Soviet Georgia* newspaper, No. 63 (7748), May 26, 1977. /

"The roots of the cordial brotherhood and good-neighborly relations between the Azerbaijani and Georgian peoples are ancient... Both nations fought side by side for years against foreign invaders, offering each other steadfast support. The echoes of this shared struggle are inscribed in many unforgettable pages of history. The recently published book *I Love Georgia* contains poems extolling the unshakable friendship between our brotherly peoples. The anthology was compiled by Madad Chobanov, with a preface written by the poet Məmməd Araz."

/ Dilsuz Musayev, *I Love Georgia, Golden Banner* newspaper, No. 122 (3804), October 11, 1977; *Literature and Art* newspaper, No. 9, February 25, 1978./

A review by Candidate of Philological Sciences Həmid Vəliyev, along with an image of the book, appeared in *Molodyozh Gruzii* (*Youth of Georgia*), published in Russian in Tbilisi (No. 63 (8078), May 26, 1977); in the Armenian-language *Sovetakan Vrastan* newspaper (No. 66 (11856), June 2, 1977); and in a comprehensive review by Y. Bobokhidze, accompanied by the book's image, in *Qələbə Bayrağı – Gamarjvebis Drosha* (The Flag of Victory), a bilingual Azerbaijani–Georgian newspaper published in Bolnisi (No. 55 (4679), April 26, 1980). Information from *I Love Georgia* was also cited in the article "Georgian SSR" in Volume VI of the *Azerbaijan Soviet Encyclopedia* (Baku, 1982, vol. VI, p. 135).

The book *I Love Georgia*, compiled by Madad Chobanov and published in Baku in 1977 by "Azərnəşr," brings together the heartfelt emotions and reflections of classical Azerbaijani poets on Georgia and its people, dating back to the 12th century. The distinguished Georgian scholar and poet Leyla Eradze, who highly valued this publication, translated into Georgian another anthology compiled by Chobanov – *Songs of Friendship* (*Dostluq nəğmələri*) – which includes poetic works by contemporary Azerbaijani poets dedicated to Georgia. The book was published in 1978 by the Georgian State Publishing House "Merani" in Tbilisi.

Reviews of *Songs of Friendship* (Georgian edition, compiled by Madad Chobanov, translated by Leyla Eradze, *Contemporary Azerbaijani Poets on Georgia*, Tbilisi: "Merani," 1978) observe:

"In this anthology compiled by Madad Chobanov, nearly fifty poems by contemporary Azerbaijani poets about Georgia are collected. The spirit of these poems resonates closely with Georgian poetry and, as a result, has been warmly received by a wide readership. The book *Songs of Friendship* should be regarded as a commendable contribution to the literary relations between Azerbaijan and Georgia."

/ V. Cangidze, A. Ismayıllı, *Songs of Friendship, Soviet Georgia*, No. 139 (7979), November 21, 1978. /

Indeed, Georgia has, since ancient times, been one of the recurrent themes in our poets' works. As early as the 12th century, Afzaladdin Khagani declared, "The gate of the Bagrations is open to me." It is natural that such sentiment found vivid expression in the creative works of Azerbaijani poets, who have consistently used the theme of Georgia as a symbol of friendship, fraternity, and benevolent neighborliness. The recently published anthology *Songs of Friendship*, issued in Georgian by the "Merani" Publishing House in Tbilisi, brings together Azerbaijani poems dedicated to Georgia. The contribution of its compiler, the distinguished scholar Madad Chobanov, deserves special recognition.

/ Şurəddin Məmmədov, *As a Symbol of Brotherhood, Literature and Art* newspaper, No. 1 (1876), January 4, 1980. /

Similarly, in the sphere of Azerbaijani–Georgian literary relations, Doctor of Philology and Professor Dilarə Əliyeva – like Leyla Eradze – became a devoted promoter of Georgian literature and culture in Azerbaijan. She dedicated her conscious life to this endeavor, serving as a bridge between the two nations' literary worlds.

Dilarə Əliyeva was born in 1929 in Tiflis (now Tbilisi). After completing her studies at Azerbaijani-language secondary school No. 97 in Tbilisi (now the M.F. Akhundzadeh Azerbaijani Secondary School No. 73), she entered the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Azerbaijan State University (now Baku State University). After enrolling in the postgraduate program of the Institute of Language and Literature named after Nizami at the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan, she was sent to the Institute of Literature named after Shota Rustaveli at the Academy of Sciences of Georgia. There she prepared her candidate dissertation in Russian on the topic *"Reflection of Azerbaijani–Georgian Literary Relations in 19th-Century Literature,"* which she successfully defended in 1954.

At the Institute of Language and Literature named after Nizami of the Academy of Sciences of Azerbaijan (now the Nizami Ganjavi Institute of Literature), Dilarə Əliyeva served in various academic and administrative capacities – as a junior research fellow, senior research fellow at the Nizami Museum of Literature, head of the Department of Ancient and Medieval Literature at the Museum, senior research fellow at the Department of Literary Relations, senior research fellow at the Department of Nizami Studies, and later as leading research fellow and head of the Department of Literary Relations at the Institute. In 1984, she defended her doctoral dissertation in Russian on the topic *"Nizami and Georgian Literature."*

Doctor of Philology and Professor Dilarə Əliyeva was active both as a literary scholar and as a translator. As can be seen from the subjects of her defended dissertations, Georgian literature held a central place in her scholarly research. Alongside her continuous academic work, she also translated works by Georgian writers and poets. Her first translation publication appeared in 1972 – a collection of Georgian short stories translated into Azerbaijani under the title *Brothers* (*Qardaşlar*, short stories, Baku: Azərnəşr, 1972, 122 pp.).

Conclusion. Subsequently, Dilarə Əliyeva's own collection of short stories, *The Joy of a Night* (*Bir gecənin sevinci*, Baku: Gənclik, 1977, 82 pp.), was published. Thereafter, translations from Georgian literature once again became prominent in her creative activity. Among her notable translations are Archil Sulakauri's *Up and Down* (Baku, 1978, 188 pp.); Mikheil Javakhishvili's *The Land Calls* (Baku: Yazıçı, 1980, 248 pp.); Ilia Chavchavadze's *The Beggar's Life* (Baku: Yazıçı, 1987, 152 pp.); as well as the anthology *The Kura Flows into the Caspian* (*Kür Xəzərə qovuşur*, selections from Georgian literature, Baku: Yazıçı, 1988, 384 pp., co-authored). Through these works, she helped to define a significant stage in the development of Azerbaijani–Georgian literary relations. In recognition of her contributions, she was awarded the honorary title of *Honored Cultural Worker of Georgia*.

In Leyla Eradze's creative work, Azerbaijani literature occupied a central role, just as Georgian literature did in Dilarə Əliyeva's research. Their reciprocal studies not only revealed the cultural and spiritual heritage of both nations but also reflected the multifaceted nature of their literary relations, accelerating the processes of mutual influence and enrichment, and elevating the ancient tradition of friendship between the two peoples to a new stage. The embodiment of Azerbaijani–Georgian friendship in artistic literature found scholarly expression in the academic thought of these two distinguished figures. Both scholars, through their research, sustained and transmitted this intellectual tendency into a new era.

References:

1. Abashidze, G. (1980, November 4). *Ümumittifaq konfransı haqqında*. *Kommunist*, p. 2.
2. Aliyeva, D. (1975). “Koroğlu”nun gürcü variantı. *Elm və Həyat*, (11), 28–29.
3. Aliyeva, D. (1978a). Nizami əsərləri gürcü dilində (“Xosrov və Şirin”). *Azərbaycan SSR EA Xəbərləri: Ədəbiyyat, Dil və İncəsənət Seriyası*, (4), 8–20.
4. Aliyeva, D. (1978b). “Xosrov və Şirin” gürcü ədəbiyyatında. *Elm və Həyat*, (12), 26–27.
5. Aliyeva, D. (1981a, October 2). Nizami və gürcü ədəbiyyatı. *Ədəbiyyat və İncəsənət*.
6. Aliyeva, D. (1981b). *Ürək bir – dilək bir*. Baku: Yazıçı.
7. Aliyeva, D. (1984). *Nizami və Gürcüstan* [Doctoral dissertation]. Institute of Literature named after Nizami, Azerbaijan SSR Academy of Sciences.
8. Aliyeva, D. (2006). Şota Rustaveli və onun “Pələng dərisi geymiş pəhləvan” əsəri. In Sh. Rustaveli, *Pələng dərisi geymiş pəhləvan* (pp. 4–8). Baku: Avrasiya Press.
9. Eradze, L. (1970a, July 18). Səməd Vurğunun naməlum şeiri. *Ədəbiyyat və İncəsənət*, p. 6.
10. Eradze, L. (1970b). Səməd Vurğun və Gürcüstan. *Azərbaycan*, (10), 197–203.
11. Eradze, L. (1990). *Mənə doğmasan, Bakı*. Baku: Gənclik.
12. Eradze, L. (2015, January 4). Azərbaycan nəsrində gürcü mövzusu. *Üç Nöqtə*, p. 12.

DOI https://doi.org/10.30525/2592-8813-2025-4-40

THE TRANSFORMATION OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND CULTURAL MEMORY IN POSTCOLONIAL BRITISH LITERATURE

Ilaha Guliyeva Nuraddin,
PhD in Philology, Senior Lecturer at the Department of Languages,
Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan
(Baku, Azerbaijan)
ORCID ID: 0009-0004-0833-6147

Abstract. The article examines the transformation of the concepts of national identity and cultural memory in British literature during the postcolonial period. Beginning in the second half of the twentieth century, alongside the collapse of the British Empire, the notion of *Britishness* began to be redefined. The inclusion of diverse ethnic and cultural groups within the literary space transformed national identity into a more multifaceted, dynamic, and memory-based construct. The study offers a comparative analysis of postcolonial theories (E. Said, S. Hall, H. Bhabha) and the role of folklore and collective memory in the preservation of national identity (M. Kazimoglu-Imanov, B. Anderson). Analyses of the works of writers such as Salman Rushdie, V. S. Naipaul, and Zadie Smith reveal that postcolonial British literature presents national identity not as a fixed category, but as a dynamic process reconstructed through memory, language, and cultural experience.

Key words: postcolonialism, national identity, cultural memory, British literature, collective consciousness, cultural transformation, folklore.

Introduction. The problem of national identity in British literature has been closely intertwined with ideological, political, and cultural transformations at different historical stages. In the nineteenth century, the concept of *Britishness* was constructed as a symbol of imperial power and cultural superiority. However, from the mid-twentieth century onwards, this notion acquired a multicultural and hybrid character in the postcolonial context. With the dissolution of the Empire, British literature shifted its focus from the center to the periphery – to the voices of the colonies, their collective memories, and historical experiences. New literary tendencies emerging in the postcolonial era present the concepts of cultural memory and national identity as mutually interactive. In this literature, identity is no longer perceived as fixed and homogeneous, but as a multilayered, fluid, and dynamic process shaped by the recollections of the past. The role of cultural memory in preserving national identity can be compared to that of folklore. As M. Kazimoglu-Imanov notes, *"oral literature created in the native language of a people is the most significant indicator of national identity and serves as the carrier of collective consciousness"* (Kazimoglu-Imanov, 2019, p. 5). This approach demonstrates that language, memory, and tradition constitute the foundation of a nation's self-awareness.

A similar tendency can be observed in British literature. In works such as Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*, issues of memory, cultural trauma, and identity are depicted as elements of a complex cultural system where diverse ethnic experiences intersect. As Gunay Nadirova remarks, *"British postcolonial literature reflects the interdependence between the center and the periphery of the Empire, as well as the mutual transfer of cultural codes"* (Nadirova, 2019, p. 42).

The purpose of this article is to analyze the interrelation between national identity and cultural memory in British literature during the postcolonial period, and to demonstrate how these two concepts are transformed within literary discourse.

Discussion. The research is grounded both in postcolonial theory (Said, 1978; Hall, 1996; Bhabha, 1994) and in theoretical approaches to folklore and collective consciousness (Kazimoglu-Imanov, 2019). These frameworks allow national identity to be interpreted not merely as a historical or political category, but as a spiritual system continuously reconstructed through cultural memory.

Folklore and Cultural Memory: A Mechanism of National Identity Formation

National identity is the primary indicator of a people's self-awareness and its ability to preserve historical and spiritual existence. This identity is shaped not only by political or geographical boundaries but also by cultural memory and collective thought. Among the strongest carriers of cultural memory is folklore, which transmits a people's historical experience, value system, worldview, and linguistic consciousness from generation to generation. According to M. Kazimoglu-Imanov, "the most evident indicator of national identity in folklore is the native language; since oral literature created in one's own language and transmitted across generations is the most vivid expression of national consciousness" (Kazimoglu-Imanov, 2019, p. 5). This observation reveals that language is not merely a medium of communication but also a fundamental pillar of cultural memory. Consequently, folklore and literature share an intrinsic connection through their memory systems: both preserve a nation's identity by means of symbolic images, myths, and archetypes. Jan Assmann was among the first scholars to systematically conceptualize cultural memory. In his view, cultural memory is built upon symbols, ritual forms, and memorable texts that ensure the continuity of collective identity (Assmann, 1992, p. 39). Thus, the function of folklore is not only to preserve the past but also to transmit it into the present consciousness – making it a dynamic and transformative mechanism rather than a static repository.

In the British literary tradition, the interaction between folklore as a form of memory and literature as a medium of expression is equally evident. Since the twentieth century, symbols of the past, folk beliefs, and cultural codes have become essential instruments in the reconstruction of national identity. As B. Anderson notes, *"the nation is an imagined community; its unity is sustained not by real boundaries but by shared memories and collective imaginations"* (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). In this sense, folklore serves as the core memory resource of this "imagined community."

Ultimately, folklore functions both as a guardian of historical continuity and as an active cultural mechanism for the reformation of national identity. It idealizes the past to stabilize collective memory while simultaneously generating new meanings within modern literature, thereby contributing to the transformation of identity.

Reconstructing British Identity in the Post-Imperial Era

The collapse of the British Empire led not only to the disintegration of political and economic structures but also to the destabilization of the spiritual foundations of British identity. For centuries, *Britishness* represented the unifying force, values, and cultural superiority of the Empire. However, decolonization, migration, and the emergence of a multicultural society fundamentally altered this notion. "Being British" was no longer defined by a single culture, religion, or ethnicity; instead, it became a hybrid space where multiple identities intersected and interacted. As Nadirova observes, *"in the postcolonial period, British literature eliminates the boundaries between the center and the periphery of the Empire and represents identity not as a unified whole but as a process of interaction and exchange"* (Nadirova, 2019, p. 44). Thus, in the post-imperial context, identity is perceived as an evolving "process" – not a fixed category, but a product of ongoing social, cultural, and psychological interactions. This transformation is vividly reflected in the works of Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi, Zadie Smith, and Andrea Levy. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie portrays the generation born at India's independence as a metaphor for the conflict between empire and colony. Identity in this novel is constructed through both personal and collective memory – a fusion of recollections, mythic images, and historical contradictions that together create a new "post-imperial self." In *White Teeth*, Zadie Smith presents the everyday lives of London's multicultural communities, emphasizing the polyphonic and fluid nature of identity. Her characters cannot define themselves through a single belonging; they inhabit a space shaped by both the colonial past and contemporary urban reality. This generates a new sense of belonging – fragmented yet creative. Stuart Hall reinforces this idea, stating that *"national identity is no longer a fixed or unified structure but the outcome of continuous* *negotiation between past and present"* (Hall, 1996, p. 613). Hence, British identity no longer embodies imperial triumph but rather reflects a newly emerging moral space shaped by the convergence of multiple cultural memories.

Memory and Identity in Contemporary British Writers

In the postcolonial era, British literature evolved into a diverse map of identities voiced by writers of different origins. Through the interplay of personal and collective memory, these authors redefined national belonging. For them, "being British" is no longer the emblem of a single culture but a spiritual space where various histories, memories, and languages intersect.

Salman Rushdie stands as one of the pioneers of this tendency. In *Midnight's Children,* India's independence is symbolically portrayed as both a personal and national birth. The protagonist's memory becomes the vessel of historical experience. For Rushdie, memory is not merely recollection but a creative reconstruction – a means of rewriting and redefining identity. As he asserts, *"for the postcolonial subject, identity is a continuous dialogue between past and present"* (Rushdie, 1981, p. 211).

In V. S. Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*, the remnants of the past manifest as individual solitude amid a disintegrated culture. Naipaul's characters, displaced within the post-imperial world, embody the sense of *unbelonging* – they fit neither the imperial nor the national frameworks, symbolizing the psychological fragmentation and rootlessness of postcolonial existence. Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* offers a more polyphonic and ironic exploration of memory. Through the lives of immigrant families in London, Smith demonstrates how each generation constructs identity differently: the first clings to the past, the second strives to escape it, while the third remains trapped between the two. Her language is vibrant and multilayered, capturing the fluidity of identity. As she writes, *"you cannot escape the past, because it lives in your voice, your behavior, your thoughts"* (Smith, 2000, p. 389). Andrea Levy's *Small Island* continues this dialogue, portraying Jamaican immigrants arriving in post–World War II Britain. For her characters, London embodies both hope and disillusionment – a city of belonging and alienation. Through their stories, Levy reveals the contradictions of "Britishness" as a multicultural reality. In these works, memory functions not only as an individual experience but also as the repository of historical and cultural traces. For these writers, memory preserves the past while simultaneously shaping the future of identity. As Homi Bhabha argues, *"identity is never complete; it is always in the process of becoming"* (Bhabha, 1994, p. 1). Thus, in contemporary British literature, identity emerges as an ever-evolving construct – reborn in every generation and refracted through multiple memories.

Conclusion. In the postcolonial period, British literature introduced a new perspective on national identity. Whereas during the imperial era *Britishness* symbolized cultural dominance and authority, in the modern context it has transformed into a multilayered, dynamic, and memory-oriented process. In the works of diverse authors, national identity appears not as uniform or stable, but as a space of encounter where different languages, memories, beliefs, and life experiences converge. Folklore and collective memory play central roles in this transformation. Cultural memory not only preserves a people's historical experience but also reinterprets it, thereby enabling the continual evolution of national identity. As Kazimoglu-Imanov emphasizes, language and memory constitute the essential pillars of identity, serving as the most enduring means of preserving a nation's spiritual existence (Kazimoglu-Imanov, 2019, p. 6). In British literature, the interrelation between memory and identity is explored on both individual and collective levels. For Rushdie, Naipaul, Smith, and Levy, memory is not merely an act of remembrance but a form of reckoning – a creative act through which new identities are forged. Through their protagonists, readers come to understand that for the postcolonial subject, identity is not a "finished self" but an ongoing process of formation.

Ultimately, postcolonial British literature presents national identity not as the product of a single culture, but as a dynamic phenomenon emerging from the dialogue of multiple cultural memories. This literature builds a bridge between the legacy of the past and the realities of the present – not by rejecting the past, but by reinterpreting it. Hence, national identity is simultaneously preserved through memory and renewed through cultural interaction. In this sense, British identity in contemporary literature belongs neither to one history nor to one nation, but exists as an open cultural space where diverse memories intersect and reshape one another.

References:

1. Anderson, B. (1991). Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso. 224 p.
2. Assmann, J. (1992). Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen. München: C.H. Beck. 344 p.
3. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). The Location of Culture. London: Routledge. 440 p.
4. Hall, S. (1996). "Introduction: Who Needs 'Identity'?" In S. Hall & P. du Gay (Eds.), Questions of Cultural Identity (pp. 1–17). London: Sage Publications.
5. Kazımoğlu-İmanov, M. (2019). Folklorda milli kimlik və bəşəri genişlik. Bakı: AMEA Folklor İnstitutu nəşriyyatı. 30 s.
6. Nadirova, G.N. (2019) Britaniya postkolonial mədəniyyəti və ədəbiyyatı. Bakı: Müqayisəli Ədəbiyyatşünaslıq, № 1, s. 16-20
7. Rushdie, S. (1981). Midnight's Children. London: Jonathan Cape. 446 p.
8. Naipaul, V. S. (1979). A Bend in the River. London: André Deutsch. 278 p.
9. Smith, Z. (2000). White Teeth. London: Penguin Books. 480 p.
10. Levi, A. (2004). Small Island. London: Headline Review. 530 p.
11. Said, E. W. (1978). Orientalism. New York: Pantheon Books. 368 p.

Baltic Journal of Legal and Social Sciences. Number 4 (2025).
Publicētie materiāli ne vienmēr atbilst redakcijas viedoklim.
Par skaitļu, faktu pareizību un sludinājumiem atbild autori.

Izdevniecība “Baltija Publishing”
Valdeku iela 62-156, Riga, LV-1058
Iespiests tipogrāfijā SIA “Izdevniecība “Baltija Publishing”