

**Языковая дифференциация
при обучении гуманитарным дисциплинам
на иностранном языке учащихся средней школы**
**Linguistic differentiation in teaching Humanities
to secondary school students in a foreign language**

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Аннотация

Проблема дифференциации в группах со смешанным уровнем владения иностранным языком является одной из наиболее острых в билингвальном образовании. Актуальность работы обосновывается нехваткой практических исследований применения языковой дифференциации в билингвальной образовательной среде, так как значительное количество исследований дифференцированного обучения фокусируется исключительно на неязыковых формах ее применения. Целью написания статьи стало обсуждение положительных результатов применения транслингвации, а также дифференциации целей обучения, которые способствуют преодолению определенных проблем в процессе преподавания гуманитарных дисциплин группам со смешанным уровнем владения иностранным языком. Методология данного исследования включает в себя предметно-языковое интегрированное обучение, лингводидактику и личностно ориентированный подход. Языковая дифференциация в данном исследовании представлена в форме транслингвации. Разработка системы оценивания проведенной опытной работы основана на теориях когнитивного и речевого развития. Экспериментальная часть включает в себя применение стандартизованных тестов и методов математической статистики. Опытная работа, описанная в статье, показала, что большинство проблем, снижающих эффективность обучения, возникало в результате индивидуальных различий обучающихся в уровнях освоения иностранного языка и, соответственно, в их образовательных запросах. Среди основных методов повышения эффективности учебного процесса были выделены языковая дифференциация в форме транслингвации и дифференциация целей обучения, также разделенных на предметный и языковой уровни. Результаты анализа развития предметной компетенции показали, что сочетание различных форм дифференциации, используемых в процессе обучения, способствовало обеспечению устойчивого прогресса в изучении учебного материала у большинства обучающихся как с более высоким, так и с более низким уровнем владения иностранным языком. Теоретическая значимость исследования заключается в доказательстве эффективного применения транслингвации как формы языковой дифференциации обучения. Практическая значимость статьи выражается в описании ряда конкретных проблем, возникающих в группах со смешанным уровнем владения иностранным языком в процессе развития предметной компетенции при обучении на иностранном языке и подборе определенных методов дифференциации, которые помогают решить указанные проблемы и могут эффективно применяться в аналогичных ситуациях другими преподавателями и методистами.

Ключевые слова

языковая дифференциация, транслингвация, дифференциация в группах со смешанным уровнем владения иностранным языком, предметно-языковое интегрированное обучение, развитие предметной компетенции в билингвальном образовании, билингвальное образование в Китае

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Abstract

The problem of differentiation in groups with a mixed level of foreign language proficiency is one of the most acute in bilingual education. The relevance of the work is justified by the lack of practical research on the use of linguistic differentiation in a bilingual educational environment, since a significant number of studies on differentiated learning focus exclusively on non-linguistic forms of its application. The aim of this article was to discuss the positive results of using translanguaging, as well as the differentiation of learning goals that help overcome certain problems in the process of teaching Humanities to groups with a mixed level of foreign language proficiency. The methodology of this research includes content and language integrated learning, lingual didactics and a person-oriented approach. Linguistic differentiation occupies a central place of the study and is presented in the form of translanguaging. The development of a system of assessments in the experimental work is based on the theories of cognitive and speech development. The practical part of the study includes the application of standardized tests and methods of mathematical statistics. The outcomes of the experimental work described in the article showed that most of the problems that reduced the effectiveness of learning arose as a result of individual differences in students' levels of learning a foreign language and, consequently, in their educational needs. Among the main methods of improving the effectiveness of the educational process were identified: linguistic differentiation in the form of translanguaging and differentiation of learning objectives, also subdivided into subject and linguistic levels. The results of the analysis of the development of subject competence showed that the combination of various forms of differentiation used in the learning process contributed to ensuring sustainable progress in learning educational material for the majority of students with both higher and lower levels of foreign language proficiency. The theoretical significance of the study lies in proving the effective use of translanguaging as a form of linguistic differentiation of instruction. The practical significance of the article is expressed in the description of a number of specific problems that arise in groups with a mixed level of foreign language proficiency in the process of developing subject competences in teaching in a foreign language and the selection of certain differentiated instruction methods that help solve these problems and can be effectively applied in similar situations by other teachers and methodologists.

Key words

linguistic differentiation, translanguaging, differentiated instruction in groups with a mixed level of foreign language proficiency, content and language integrated learning, development of subject competences in bilingual education, bilingual education in China

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Введение / Introduction

The distribution of students into groups according to the level of proficiency in a foreign language (L2) within a non-linguistic subject course is often the key to noticeable learning progress. However, not every educational institution can adopt a model that distributes students in this way. This fact poses certain problems for subject teachers, the solution of which often ignores the use of translanguaging as a form of linguistic differentiation.

The relevance of this work can be justified by the lack of research on the use of translanguaging as a form of linguistic differentiation in teaching groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency. Currently, bilingual education is dominated by the opinion that it is necessary to have an exclusive use of L2 in the learning process, which should ensure the fullest immersion of students in the target language. However, the presence of groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency inevitably leads the teacher to some forms of differentiated instruction.

The main purpose of writing this paper was to solve the problems of ineffective teaching in groups with mixed L2 proficiency in a bilingual educational environment, aggravated by the problem of communication barrier between the teacher and students. The range of objectives for achieving this goal includes: description of the list of problems that arise in these conditions; preparation of a methodological framework and selection of adequate methods to solve the problems that have arisen; testing of selected methods in the learning process; analysis and publication of the results obtained.

Despite the fact that this study is based on the relatively well-established foundations of bilingual education, translanguaging as a form of linguistic differentiation has not become widespread. Modern bilingual education often denies the benefits of using students' native language (L1) in teaching a subject discipline in a foreign language, however, this method can be effectively applied, including groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency. Moreover, as the conducted experimental work has shown, this method can be used by a teacher who does not speak students' L1, as well as without any help of bilingual teacher's assistant.

Consideration of linguistic differentiation as an aspect of personality-oriented approach can contribute to the development of research in this area, as well as lead to the inclusion of this form of differentiated instruction to an established range of subject, psychological and pedagogical forms of differentiation. At the same time, the experimental work described in the text can serve as a basis for teachers, course designers and methodologists who face and urged to find solutions to communication problems in groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency, often relying only on non-linguistic forms of differentiated instructions.

Обзор литературы / Literature review

Despite the long history of bilingual education dating back to the time of the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, the beginning of the modern, scientifically based stage can be attributed to the 1960s. S. Pokrivčáková defines this stage with the development of the Canadian model of "immersion", the British and American LAC (language across the curriculum) and WAC (writing across the curriculum) systems respectively, as well as the further emergence of the content and language integrated learning (CLIL) in the early 1990s [1].

According to C. Baker and N. Hornberger, there is a number of learning models in bilingual education that can be distinguished, based on various theories and including a variety of methods and means [2]. The experimental work described in this article is based on the strategies and methods of the previously mentioned CLIL, as well as theories of contextual learning, lingual didactics and theory of developmental learning. However, the main

focus of the study was the use of various methods of differentiated instruction, including translanguaging, as well as differentiation of learning objectives by subject and language categories, the use of which in bilingual education is not widespread enough.

In the design of the experimental work, the author of the study relies heavily on the rich global experience of using CLIL, which includes a number of developments and approaches that, according to one of the founders of CLIL, D. Marsh, imply simultaneous teaching of subject content and language development [3]. When building the methodological base, special attention was paid to the implementation of CLIL in the development of linguistic and subject competencies in the context of teaching humanities, which were described by P. A. Nozdrov in earlier publications [4].

Despite the abundant and proven effective period of using CLIL, as shown by S. Vogel and O. Garcia, there is a certain prejudice in bilingual education regarding the use of translanguaging in the form of application of students' L1 [5]. However, as these authors and the present study show, this method can be of significant help in cases where linguistically differentiated instruction is necessary – in groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency.

Thus, the experimental work described in this article was preceded by a study of different forms of differentiated instruction. Special attention was paid to the research of M. Pozas and C. Schneider, who considered strategies and methods of differentiation in educational process, and compiled their classification in the context of heterogeneous groups [6]. However, as the analysis of this study has shown, a significant part of the work on differentiated instruction focuses only on the levels of cognitive development or the formation and development of subject competencies. At the same time, the development of language competencies is often ignored if they are not specialized areas of study, such as philology or linguistics. Yet, in the context of bilingual education, this aspect may be one of the defining ones.

J. Cenoz and D. Gorter in their research have shown the successful application of various forms of translanguaging in bilingual education [7]. Taking this factor into account helped to solve the communication problems that arise during instruction of students with a less developed level of L2 proficiency, as well as the communication barrier between the teacher and the students. Thus, the author considers translanguaging to be one of the categories that can increase the effectiveness of differentiation in groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency, especially in the form of using students' L1 in the educational process.

The study is based on other forms of differentiated instruction, based on the classification published by the Center for Teaching and Learning at Stanford University, which includes: assignment differentiation, group work, peer-to-peer learning, non-verbal support for students, objectives differentiation, and self-learning [8].

At the same time, as mentioned above, the differentiation of learning objectives is often carried out only in the context of cognitive development, or the level of development of subject competencies. However, according to the strategies described in the practical guide for the use of CLIL by D. Coyle, F. Hood and D. Marsh, it was found necessary to differentiate objectives by the level of linguistic competencies development as well [9]. In addition, it was decided that it was necessary to inform students about the levels of achievement of educational objectives in those categories. This conclusion was based on a series of academic research. Thus, the University of Cambridge has published the results of a number of studies confirming the positive educational effect of increasing students' awareness of the content of the syllabus and the gradation of levels of achievement of learning objectives [10].

The methodology of this research is largely based on a personality-oriented approach. According to I. S. Yakimanskaya, differentiation is one of the key principles of this approach,

as it helps to reveal the intellectual potential and personality of students, as well as contributes to the creation of optimal conditions for their development [11]. However, the issue of linguistic differentiation in general, including teaching humanities in a foreign language, is not given due attention by the majority of researchers. Thus, O. V. Agoshkova, in the analysis of differentiated instruction in the context of personality-oriented learning, comes to a conclusion that there are significant contradictions and gaps in the methodological aspects of the implementation of this approach, including the lack of ways to identify typological groups of students, as well as the lack of development of pedagogical technologies in certain disciplines [12].

Modern academics and teachers working in the field of personality-oriented approach are invited to carry out personal, psychological and pedagogical differentiation in addition to the subject. In turn, the inclusion of aspects of linguistic differentiation in education can complement these areas. These statements are based on the personal and cultural concept developed by E. V. Bondarevskaya. According to this concept, personality-oriented approach should be based on the principle of cultural conformity, which implies treating students as cultural bearers capable of cultural development and change [13]. Accordingly, language, as a key aspect not only of the learning process, but also of culture in general, should be considered by teachers and researchers in the context of differentiation.

Unfortunately, modern studies on the issues of differentiated instruction often do not include the linguistic aspect. Thus, E. N. Ermosh, conducting a retrospective analysis in her study on the implementation of differentiated instruction in the educational process, does not single out linguistic differentiation in a separate category [14]. In this case, a particularly noteworthy work is done by L. H. Urusova and M. H. Shigalugova, who consider the advantages and disadvantages of differentiated instruction from the perspective of personality development, and also include the category of linguistic differentiation in the analysis, however without a separate study of its application [15].

Nevertheless, a certain number of studies related to this issue are being published. Thus, L. P. Khalyapina and E. V. Shostak consider plural-lingual and trans-lingual approaches as new trends in teaching foreign languages. These scholars analyze approaches in the context of the internationalization of higher education, highlighting the principles of their functioning and application [16]. Another study that worth mentioning is made by E. Rubinov. The researcher examines various forms and methods of applying translanguaging, including group work, language portfolio, work with vocabulary and grammar in the context of multilingual classes, i.e. heterogeneous classes in which students' L1 is different [17].

As mentioned above, at the time of publication of the article, there are few studies on the use of translanguaging in schools, especially in teaching humanities. However, this method can be of a significant help to teachers, methodologists and course designers. As shown by P. A. Nozdrov, the level of subject terminology and concepts, as well as an understanding of concepts when teaching humanitarian disciplines in L2, require a relatively high level of development of L2 communicative competence, which in turn requires consideration of various forms and approaches to teaching [18].

In addition to linguistic differentiation, the formulation of the development of linguistic competencies as learning objectives implied the use of lingual didactics methods. In this study, the author relied on the description of the general linguistic competence specified in the tutorial by N. D. Galskova and N. I. Gez [19]. The source of lingual didactics assignments, such as gap-filling, comparing terms, various forms of reading, defining terms, listening and writing assignments, was the tutorial written by A. N. Shchukin [20]. As L. K. Veretennikova shows, in bilingual education, the use of lingual didactic methods can

often be ignored by teachers, but it is a significant help in developing differentiated assignments for heterogeneous groups [21].

The experimental work described in the study implied an assessment of the development of subject and linguistic competencies. The content of general subject competence was based on the provisions of M. Mulder, who considers this type as the ability to perform certain specialized activities. The researcher concludes that the development of subject competence is inseparably linked to its implementation in the context of solving communicative problems [22]. This position is confirmed by the studies of I. L. Bim and A.V. Khutorskoy, from which it can be concluded that the use of lingual didactics methods in order to consolidate the studied material has a positive impact not only on the development of linguistic, but also subject competencies [23].

According to A. E. Smale-Jacobs and her colleagues, there is still a lack of research that would focus on a complex range of problems that arise in groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency in the process of developing subject competence, solved using differentiated instruction methods [24]. This work is based on the study of the determinants of bilingual learning by K. Cheng, which were used to determine the priorities of differentiation [25]. Among the most significant determinants for the scholar were the features of bilingual education models, as well as the subject vocabulary necessary for learning.

The teaching methods used in the experimental work, as well as the design of an assessment system and setting course objectives, are based on the results of research conducted by J. Cummins on the division of language proficiency into CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency) and BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) levels [26]. The levels of mastery of subject competence were determined in accordance with B. Bloom's taxonomy of learning objectives, which identifies various levels of cognitive operations [27]. These theories are the basis of CLIL, and, as L. P. Tarnayeva and G. A. Baeva show, they contribute to the formation and objective assessment of the development of L2 communicative and subject competencies [28].

Another factor requiring methodological support was the motivation of students, which, as shown by the results of the diagnostic work described in the study, tended to decrease. As R. Moallemi shows, the degree of influence of intrinsic motivation on the effectiveness of bilingual education varies depending on the educational level [29]. However, many scholars, including the author of the study, P. A. Nozdrov, agree that this factor is important in bilingual education [30].

The maintenance of students' motivation described in the article occurred, among other things, due to a high learning rate, as well as an increase in the level of complexity of learning tasks. These conclusions are based on the research of V. V. Davydov's theory of developmental learning and correspond to the implementation of a personality-oriented approach [31].

Maintaining the intrinsic motivation of the students who participated in the study, in addition to the principles of developmental learning, also implied the development of assignments based on the theory of contextual learning by A. A. Verbitskiy [32]. The methods of this type of training, as shown by P. Hallinger and R. Wang, largely correspond to studies in the field of simulation-based learning [33]. The main idea of these areas, according to O. Chernikova and her colleagues at the Technical University of Munich, is the gradual preparation and imitation of professional activity [34]. The methods of contextual learning and simulation-based learning in combination with L2 teaching have demonstrated significant efficiency, which was shown by A. N. Krupchenko and A. K. Kuznetsov, who laid them in the foundation of vocational lingual didactics [35]. In turn, the author of the current study

argues that the development of communicative vocational competencies is at least didactically close to the development of communicative subject competencies in lower stages of educational system.

In summary, the experimental work described in the study is based on the classical theories of CLIL, the theory of contextual learning, lingual didactics and the theory of developmental learning. However, considering the results of the literature review, the author of the study concludes that there is a certain shortage of publications concerning the use of translanguaging and the expansion of educational goals into subject and linguistic categories as methods of differentiated instruction, caused by the prevailing distrust of the use of students' L1 in bilingual education. In addition, the author of the study finds significant to classify the problems of effective learning that arise in groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency.

Методологическая база исследования / Methodological base of the research

This article identifies a specific set of problems that arise in heterogeneous classes – particularly groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency, which are aggravated by the communication barrier between a non students' L1-speaking teacher and the students. This problem is not widespread in education in general, but it is quite typical for bilingual education. Since the study covers a wide range of problems and due to certain factors that hinder an objective assessment, it was decided to conduct experimental work rather than a typical experiment, which, according to V. A. Slastenin, does not include a reference group, but provides a detailed description of the applied pedagogical methods and observations [36].

The experimental work was conducted during the 2023/2024 academic year in a natural environment – with no changes to the curriculum or learning processes – at a bilingual school in China. The school was part of a larger educational institution, the “Sendelta” International Academy (Shenzhen, China), which consisted of middle and high schools. The school courses were conducted according to the programs of the University of Cambridge (Cambridge International Assessment) and the American Advanced Placement (AP), which, as previously established, have significant differences in content, but not in the choice of educational objectives and ways to assess their achievement (in the context of teaching humanities) [37]. The participants in the experimental work were exclusively Chinese citizens, and their native language was Chinese (Mandarin). 83 secondary school students (grades 6, 7, and 8) aged 12-15 were selected for the experiment. In total, two groups of 8th graders with a total of 41 students participated; two groups of 7th graders with a total of 24 students; and one group of 6th graders with a total of 18 students. The level of proficiency in English was assessed using the Cambridge Standardized English Language Tests [38], which divided students into 5 levels: 1 is the lowest and 5 is the highest. The average level indicators were as follows: 8th grades – 3.05; 7th grades – 2.33; 6th grade – 1.6 (see Table 1).

Table 1

The number of students and the distribution by level of proficiency in a foreign language (English) participating in the experimental work

<i>Grades/Number of students</i>	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>Level 4</i>	<i>Level 5</i>
Grades 8	2	11	14	9	5
Grades 7	8	6	4	6	-
Grade 6	12	3	2	1	-

Since all three classes had different curricula and corresponding course objectives, it was decided not to use these results to determine the correlation between a specific proficiency level and academic performance. In this study, the test results were used solely to confirm the presence of students with different levels of L2 proficiency in specific groups, who, accordingly, required the application of methods of differentiated instruction.

The educational institution suggested bilingual courses with some subjects solely in Chinese and some solely in English. Thus, an objective study of the development of language competence in a separate course was impossible. The development of L2 proficiency could be influenced by many factors, including a distinct number of L2 courses, different teachers, and an unequal number of hours spent on classes related to the development of linguistic competencies. Considering this fact, it was decided to include only the development of subject competencies in the research results.

The "HASS" course was related to various fields of humanities: for the first two years, students had to study the basics of geography, as well as various countries and cultures of the Eastern and Western hemispheres. In the third year of study (8th grade), the early periods of US history were studied, as well as an in-depth study of basic knowledge in economics, politics, and geography. Thus, it can be argued that the applied measures that were tested in the course of experimental work were not limited to just one specific subject or academic field, although they corresponded to the humanities in general.

The necessary educational materials included textbooks, notebooks, stationery, a computer and a projector. The classes were held in the auditorium and lasted 40 minutes.

The development of subject competencies formed the basis of the assessment system. It included a demonstration of knowledge of the course material, practical skills related to a particular subject field, learning skills and critical thinking skills such as comparison, synthesis, analysis, etc., as well as the ability to work with infographics – visual sources of information related to the subject (maps, graphs, diagrams, etc.). The formative and summative assessments were compiled according to the Cambridge Classification of Assessment Methods, and included five types of tasks [39]:

- a) Multiple choice questions;
- b) Matching or gap-filling tasks;
- c) Short answer questions;
- d) Extended answer questions;
- e) Infographics-related tasks.

The assessment of cognitive and linguistic development levels was based on J. Cummins' CALP and BICS language levels, as well as B. Bloom's taxonomy, according to which 50% of tasks accounted for lower- and 50% for higher-order thinking skills. Lower-order thinking skills and basic vocabulary (according to BICS) were used in tasks of types "a", "b" and part of "e". The other half assessed higher-order thinking skills and included academic vocabulary (according to CALP).

A total of 5 main assessments were conducted during the academic year, which are shown in the table below (see Table 2).

Since it was decided to abandon the idea of creating a reference group, the classes were not artificially divided. Thus, the results of the experimental work were based on the indicators of standardized tests and calculated using the arithmetic mean. However, to assess the progress of students, it was necessary to use the G-criterion of signs (sign test), which confirms the validity of the data shift in a given direction. Other types of statistical analysis methods were not used.

Результаты исследования / Research results

For the first two weeks of the 2023/2024 academic year, students were taught in a relatively traditional for humanities subjects way. New knowledge and concepts were transmitted mainly orally, via teacher-students lectures or individual work with a textbook. Most of the tasks were aimed at understanding new information and acquiring the meanings of terminology. The course materials also included the development of subject competencies using various forms of infographics (maps, diagrams, digital sources, etc.) and general learning competencies. There have also been attempts to teach using "case studies" and other problem-solving learning methods, such as discussions in pairs and groups. However, those assignments did not have a significant educational effect due to problems with understanding the teacher's instructions. Based on the results of the interviews and the reduction in the number of completed tasks, it had been concluded that students lost motivation due to an unproductive learning environment.

All teaching materials were authentic, designed for native English speakers, which created an additional learning burden. The teacher did not speak the students' L1 and could not understand most of the questions or requests they asked.

After the first few lessons and, eventually, the first diagnostic work, it became obvious that the chosen teaching strategies and methods were ineffective. The students had difficulty understanding the teacher, despite the fact that attempts were made to establish more effective communication: some students who spoke L2 at a higher level took on the roles of experts and translators who helped the teacher. However, the number of completed tasks was decreasing, and any positive progress was demonstrated only by a few more experienced L2 users.

It was decided to analyze and identify the main educational problems that prevent students from achieving the goals of the course. Among the most significant, the following six were identified:

- The presence of students with different levels of L2 proficiency and, accordingly, different educational needs in the same group;
- Communication barrier between the teacher and the students;
- Lack of adequate subject content and language integrated materials for the course;
- The lack of a differentiated assessment system for different groups of students within the same group;
- Lower motivation among students with a lower and higher level of L2 proficiency;
- Lack of adequate objectives (either overestimated or underestimated).

The problem of groups with mixed level of L2 proficiency probably aggravated, and in some cases was the cause of the remaining problems of the ineffective educational process. However, as stated, at that time it was not possible to distribute students according to their level of development due to the established educational model of the institution. The question of using the help of a bilingual teaching assistant for those classes was also not raised at that time.

As a result, certain steps have been taken to solve or mitigate these problems. One of the key issues, obviously, was the problem of communication between the teacher and the students, as well as between the students themselves, which was supposed to be carried out in L2. The idea of assigning more experienced students to translate/assist in certain tasks remained, but more drastic changes were required.

The presence of students with mixed L2 proficiency encouraged the teacher to search for methods of linguistic differentiation. It was decided to apply a certain form of

translanguaging, which included a partial translation of the lesson content into the students' L1. This decision was made due to the lack of course materials suitable for most students specifically in relation to the development of L2 communicative competence. To do this, it was proposed to use an information carrier, the data on which could be easily modified in accordance with the needs of students. The most obvious way was to use digital presentations in the form of ppt-files and printed handouts. The original textbooks, however, were still applied, but their use was limited to studying infographics, necessary vocabulary, and working with short texts.

As mentioned, the opportunity to use the help of a teaching assistant proficient at both L1 and L2 was not suggested in all classes at that time, so the results of the study included cases that did not involve such assistance. The study of the effectiveness of teacher's assistant help, as well as the organization of such cooperation, are separate issues that are not the subject of this study.

Another differentiation issue worth mentioning was the adjustment of the course objectives and, consequently, the assessment system. The initial objectives, as a rule, were related to the studying of target vocabulary and the development of certain subject and learning skills. The presence of people with a lower level of L2 proficiency automatically transferred this part of the group to the category of underachieving students. At the same time, as mentioned earlier, the school's educational model did not involve dividing students in non-linguistic subjects in accordance to their level of L2 proficiency. Therefore, it was decided to limit the threshold of grades required to move on to the next stage of training to assessments that involve less use of L2 and shorter answers. In order to check the academic performance in the subject, which does not depend on the level of L2 proficiency, the assessment tasks were also translated into the students' L1. However, all the answers, as well as the options in the assessments with a choice of answers, were given in L2.

It was suggested to solve the problem of lowering students' motivation by the mentioned methods of overcoming the communication barrier and differentiating educational material and grades. Nevertheless, other methods of increasing motivation remained, such as group and pair work, project work activities, and case studies. The use of these methods, however, eventually pointed to certain opportunities for their further improvement, which is discussed in more detail at the end of the article (see Conclusion).

As mentioned earlier, it was decided to change the initially developed syllabus, as well as the strategies and methods of achieving its objectives, after observing the low effectiveness of initial instruction. Subsequent diagnostic evaluation confirmed the objectivity of these observations. The general assessments of the course were compiled according to standardized tests that were used to monitor students' progress and achieve course objectives.

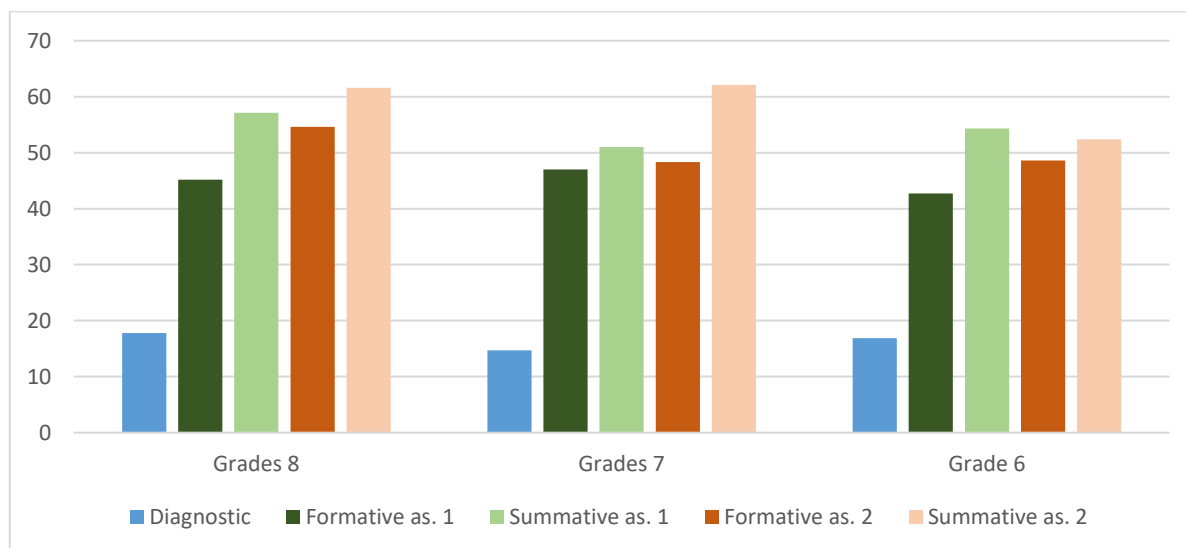
Table 2

**The results of the general assessments for the 2023/2024 academic year
for the "HASS" courses**

<i>Grade/ Type of assessment</i>	<i>Diagnostic (%)</i>	<i>Formative 1 (%)</i>	<i>Summative 1 (%)</i>	<i>Formative 2 (%)</i>	<i>Summative 2 (%)</i>
Grades 8	17.8	45.2	57.1	54.6	61.6
Grades 7	14.7	47	51	48.3	62.1
Grade 6	16.9	42.7	57.3	48.6	52.4

In the table indicated above (see Table.2) the results of the general assessments, which consisted of a series of formative and summative assessments, are presented. The academic

year was divided into two semesters, which included one intermediate assessment (formative 1 and 2) and one final (summative 1 and 2). Diagnostic work was conducted two weeks after the start of the school year, and the first formative assessment was conducted approximately six weeks later.



Results of the development of subject competencies during the 2023/2024 academic year in the "HASS" courses

To make a conclusion about whether the applied measures were effective or not, it was enough to use the arithmetic mean. All the students from the sample showed higher results compared to the results of the diagnostic assessment (see Figure).

Despite the progress in relation to diagnostic assessment, by the end of the second summative assessment, some students showed lower results compared to the first one. Thus, in order to verify the objectivity of the conclusions about the effectiveness of the applied methods and progress in learning, the method of the G-criterion (sign test) was applied. This method of mathematical statistics is used according to the formula: $G(\text{Cr.}) > G(\text{Emp.})$ to verify the validity of the shift in a typical direction. $G(\text{emp.})$ indicates the number of atypical shifts, and $G(\text{Cr.})$ is determined by the table of critical values.

Hypotheses (H) were: H_0 – the predominance of the typical shift is random and is not caused by changes in the learning process; H_1 – the predominance of the typical shift is non-random and is caused by changes in the learning process.

Of the 83 students, 7 showed an atypical shift, which means that their results in the summative assessment 2 were lower than in the formative assessment 1. 76 students showed higher results, and the shift was qualified as typical: the result $G(\text{Emp.})$ was lower than $G(\text{Cr.})$, in the table of critical values it is equal to 26 at $p=0.01$.

Thus, it can be noted that the effectiveness of the changes made has led to obvious educational progress. It should also be noted that the students showed gradual progress between formative and summative assessments during one semester.

A slight decrease in results between the summative assessment 1 and the formative assessment 2 could be caused by a number of factors, including a long break for winter holidays, which that year were about 5 weeks. However, finding out the cause of fluctuations in academic performance is not the subject of this article, nor does it affect the indicators of overall learning progress demonstrated by the majority of students.

Заключение / Conclusion

The conducted experiment was the result of solving problems of the communication barrier between a teacher who does not speak students' L1 and students – L1 native speakers, and the corresponding difficulties of differentiated instruction for groups with a mixed level of L2 proficiency. The results of the study showed the effectiveness of the applied methods and contributed to progress in the development of subject competencies throughout the course.

One of the main factors that affected the solution of communication problems between a teacher and a heterogeneous in the context of L2 proficiency class (some students were only at a basic level of L2 that was insufficient to solve simple communicative tasks) was translanguaging. The experimental work, as well as interviews with students, have shown the obvious educational benefits of using the students' L1. Having digital sources of information, as well as the possibility of online translation excluded any significant problems with creating educational materials, even with the teacher who did not speak students' L1.

The objectives of the course have also been expanded and supplemented with the inclusion of the development of linguistic competencies, with a corresponding change in assessment tools and elaboration of levels of achievement of educational results.

In addition, it was noticed that both students with higher academic performance and less successful students need regular revision of the studied material, and this revision was also presented in various forms. For one group of students, this could be the execution of linguistic and didactic tasks, for another – the application of the studied material in more complex and creative ways, such as designing, performing and presenting research or writing an essay. Those actions contributed to progress of educational outcomes.

Awareness of the syllabus content and set of learning objectives was another factor that could have led to some progress in outcomes. It is assumed that such a measure, applied in classes requiring differentiated instruction, can help improve the effectiveness of teaching in groups with a mixed L2 proficiency. During the experimental work, students received printed lists of requirements that included questions, vocabulary, and infographics that were learned during the course and could be used in general assessment. Those lists of requirements were presented in both L1 and L2, and divided into specific categories that corresponded to the learning levels, so that students with lower levels of L2 proficiency could focus only on less difficult tasks, while being able to move on to the next stage of learning, and students with higher levels could demonstrate their depth of skills and knowledge.

Based on the results of the first diagnostic work, which was carried out two weeks after the start of the school year, a certain range of problems was identified that needed to be solved to improve the effectiveness of instruction. Among the most acute problems were: the diversity of students' educational needs and, consequently, the lack of adequate learning objectives; the communication barrier between the teacher and the students; the lack of adequate teaching materials and assessments; and decreased motivation.

The original objectives of the course, as mentioned above, had to be revised and adapted to the needs and capabilities of the students. However, the general direction of development and the general objectives that were planned before the start of the course, including the development of subject and general academic skills, remained the same.

The final results were checked with the help of formative and summative assessments. The latter were designed in such a way that students with a lower level of L2 proficiency could score the minimum required level of points to move on to the next stage of education. Differentiation was expanded with inclusion of a linguistic level.

To provide additional support for students with a lower level of L2 proficiency, the learning process was additionally filled with lingual didactics tasks. Despite the obvious advantages for the group of students, as well as the fact that there has been general progress in mastering the courses, it is still a matter of discussion whether students with a higher level of L2 proficiency have received a comparable level of educational benefit, or whether that time could have been used more effectively for them. Nevertheless, the overall progress was significant compared to the beginning of the academic year.

The communication barrier was partially overcome with the assistance of students with a more developed level of L2 proficiency, who acted as experts and translators. However, this method was not enough to facilitate the course in general. In the end, it was decided to include the use of the students' L1 in the learning process. The teacher was not proficient in students' L1, so the presentation slides and some handouts were duplicated in both languages.

As was pointed out by D. Marsh, indicators of cognitive abilities do not correlate with the level of L2 proficiency. Thus, the questions and tasks (in addition to the target terminology, which had to be learned only in L2) were translated into L1 so that the language barrier would not affect the demonstration of the development of subject competencies. Nevertheless, all the answers in the assessments had to be given exclusively in L2.

The lack of adequate content and language integrated materials was also solved by developing digital presentations and printed handouts with translation into L1. Students had the freedom to choose the most appropriate recording strategy in terms of language out of the following three: 1) notes are taken only in L2; 2) notes are taken in L2 with the necessary translations into L1; 3) notes are taken primarily in L1 with the required vocabulary in L2.

After creating a more favorable language learning environment, the problem of student motivation was solved in a rather traditional way, typical of initial planning. The methods of a personality-oriented approach were applied, which included the case study, project work and other forms of creative and group assignments. In order to motivate students with both lower and higher academic performance, a gradual differentiated increase in the complexity of tasks was also carried out, developed in accordance with the theory of developmental learning.

The described set of methods has led to obvious positive progress in the learning process. However, an analysis of the results also showed that some areas could have been applied more effectively. First of all, this course should have paid more attention to developing higher order thinking skills and completing assignments that require a deeper understanding of the course material, since a significant number of students' low grades were associated with demonstrating the use of subject skills and providing extended answers to questions. Most of the students were able to show better results during the course, but there was an assumption that further development of productive skills – oral and written speech – could lead to better results and a better understanding of the course materials.

In the current 2024/2025 academic year, it was decided to enrich the learning process with tasks related to productive forms of using L2, such as discussions, debates and writing short essays. Students are allowed to use both languages in oral communication, but the final outcome of their work must be in L2. The preliminary results obtained at the beginning of the 2024/2025 academic year have already demonstrated higher learning outcomes compared to last year's results in tasks requiring extended answers to questions. However, a longer series of studies is required for objective conclusions.

In conclusion, it is necessary to mention the directions and areas of possible further research that this article touched upon. In addition to studying the effectiveness of the introduction of lingual didactics methods for the development of subject competencies among students with higher and lower academic achievement, there is still a lack of data on the ratio of the effectiveness of using students' L1 in relation to the use of a certain form of translanguaging. According to the author of the article, it is necessary to conduct a series of experiments to measure the effectiveness of using such form of translanguaging as the translation of basic educational materials, as well as the possibility of verbal discussion between students in their L1. Although conversations with students and general observations have confirmed the idea of the benefits of these methods, the extent of their impact on students with higher and lower academic performance is still questionable.

Such detailed studies may require experiments with reference groups, which, however, were not used in this study. Conducting experimental work without comparing the collected data with the reference group had ethical grounds. The teacher needed to quickly analyze the causes of poor results and immediately develop another training program that could help eliminate these causes. Nevertheless, the results demonstrated some educational progress, and also created the opportunity to continue studying various methods of differentiated instruction in groups with mixed L2 proficiency.

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