



DIFFERENCES IN THE PERCEPTION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES BY MGIMO STUDENTS

Alisa Virolainen, Maria Kuvarina & Kristina Levchuk

MGIMO University
76, Prospekt Vernadskogo, Moscow, 119454, Russia

Abstract. This article presents a sociological study aimed to determine the differences in the perception of foreign languages by students who are considered polyglots and those who are not. The aim of the study is to identify the differences in the attitude of these groups of students to the language learning process in order to draw conclusions that could be useful in both teaching and learning foreign languages. The researchers used the focus group method. As a result, it was found out what reasons are behind the students' choice of foreign languages they study, what difficulties arise when learning languages, why some students give up learning a particular language, and what can serve as a motivation to learn foreign languages. The object of the study is MGIMO students who, due to the traditions of the university, are characterised by "unconscious polyglottery", a phenomenon associated with multilingualism as part of the daily life of this social group. The object was divided into three groups: polyglot students, non-polyglot students and the so-called intermediate group (those who are not polyglots, but can be regarded as students taking joy in learning languages). The results showed that the examined students from all the three groups face the same challenges in the language learning process: fatigue from routine tasks, an excessively voluminous curriculum, general workload at the university, and lack of time. The key difference is that the polyglot students have inner motivation to keep up their studies. The intermediate group has also managed to find non-external motives in the course of language learning, such as career prospects, a personal interest in culture, and personal beliefs. However, those considered non-polyglots did not succeed in finding an internal motivation of this kind and decided to give up studying their second foreign languages.

Keywords: polyglottery, foreign language teaching, motivation, qualitative research, sociological phenomenon, focus group

For citation: Virolainen, A., Kuvarina, M., & Levchuk, K. (2023). Differences in the perception of foreign languages by MGIMO students. *Linguistics & Polyglot Studies*, 9(3), pp. 22–32. <https://doi.org/10.24833/2410-2423-2023-3-36-22-32>

РАЗЛИЧИЯ В ВОСПРИЯТИИ ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКОВ СТУДЕНТАМИ МГИМО

А. В. Виролайнен, М. С. Куварина, К. Р. Левчук

Московский государственный институт международных отношений (университет) МИД России
119454, Россия, Москва, пр. Вернадского, 76

Аннотация. В настоящей статье представлено социологическое исследование, посвящённое определению различий в восприятии иностранных языков студентами-полиглотами и студентами, которые не относятся к числу полиглотов. Целью исследования было выявление различий в отношении указанных групп студентов к процессу изучения языков для получения прикладных выводов, которые могли бы быть полезными как в преподавании, так и в изучении иностранных языков. Исследователи использовали метод фокус-группы. В результате было установлено, по какому принципу студенты выбирают иностранные языки для изучения, какие возникают сложности при изучении языков, почему некоторые студенты отказываются от изучения того или иного языка, а также что может послужить мотивацией к изучению иностранных языков. Объектом исследования явились студенты МГИМО, которые, в силу традиций университета, характеризуются «неосознанной полиглотией» – явлением, связанным с тем, что многоязычие является частью повседневной жизни для данной социальной группы. Объект был разделен на три группы: студенты-полиглоты, студенты, не являющиеся полиглотами, и так называемая промежуточная группа (те, кто не является полиглотами, но получает удовольствие от изучения языков). Результаты проведённой фокус-группы показали, что опрошенные студенты из всех трёх групп сталкиваются с одинаковыми проблемами в процессе изучения языка: усталостью от рутинных заданий, слишком объёмным учебным планом, общей загруженностью в университете, а также нехваткой времени. Ключевое отличие между тремя группами заключается в том, что у студентов-полиглотов есть внутренняя мотивация продолжать учёбу. Промежуточной группе студентов также удалось найти подобные внутренние мотивы в процессе изучения иностранного языка, например, перспективы карьерного роста, личный интерес к культуре, личные убеждения. Однако группа, не связанная с полиглотией, так и не смогла найти подобную мотивацию и решила отказаться от изучения второго иностранного языка.

Ключевые слова: полиглотия, преподавание иностранных языков, мотивация, качественное исследование, социологическое явление, фокус-группа

Для цитирования: Виролайнен А. В., Куварина М. С., Левчук К. Р. (2023). Различия в восприятии иностранных языков студентами МГИМО. *Филологические науки в МГИМО*. 9(3), С. 22–32. <https://doi.org/10.24833/2410-2423-2023-3-36-22-32>

For a long time, the phenomenon of polyglottery has been viewed mainly from the perspective of psycholinguistics and methodology of teaching foreign languages [9, p. 104–105]. However, as the modern polyglot movement is developing as a social phenomenon, and the scientific interest in this topic is growing, another approach to polyglottery has been fostered, that of statistical and sociological methods. One of the first attempts to view polyglottery from this new perspective was made in 2022 [10].

The present study is a logical continuation of this sociological approach. The paper was presented at the round table *Psycholinguistic Problems of Research on Polyglottery* on April 5, 2023 as part of the conference *Language, Consciousness, Communication: Problems of Information Society*. This event was devoted to a wide variety of polyglottery related topics: the hyperintensive method of language learning, polyglots' cognitive skills, self-monitoring instruments and learning strategies. The perceptions of foreign languages discussed here thus made part of the underlying theme of conscious vs. unconscious elements in language acquisition.

Empirical basis of the study

The present research builds on the sociological theory and tools in order to make a contribution to polyglot studies from a perspective different from that of psycholinguistics. In order to comprehend and perceive this phenomenon more deeply, we have chosen qualitative methods, namely the focus group. This was due to the fact that qualitative methods provide for a more personal insight into the issue whereas quantitative methods focus mainly on generalisations and span large socio-demographic groups. So, we have decided to follow the former of these approaches in order to shed light on polyglots' behaviour as quantitative methods cannot give answers to our more personal questions, closely connected with human psychological traits and behaviours. The aim of the study is to identify differences in the attitudes and perceptions of different groups of Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) students to the study of foreign languages.

We have chosen to look into the perspectives of MGIMO students as the object of our research. MGIMO University is renowned for its extensive language-teaching programs, having been recognized in the Guinness Book of Records as the most multilingual educational institution in the world for teaching 53 languages¹. The chance of coming across a polyglot is rather high at MGIMO as the majority of the students study at least two foreign languages, with many taking up other additional languages on an extracurricular basis. However, there are also students who have given up studying their second foreign languages, thus keeping on studying English only. Thus, MGIMO students are characterised by the phenomenon of “unconscious polyglottery” associated with the fact that multilingualism is part of the daily life for this social group.

Both polyglots and those studying only one foreign language are in the limelight of our research as two extremes. Moreover, we have decided to look at one more group – the so-called intermediate group – in order to see whether these students show any different approaches to the language learning process. The focus group was conducted in April 2023. We gathered nine individuals, who are all students of MGIMO University. Three of them are considered polyglots as they speak five or more foreign languages [3]. Three of them are learning two languages at the university and can be regarded as pertaining to the intermediate group. Three more students are learning only one language at the university as they have decided to give up studying the second foreign language (see Table 1).

¹ Most languages taught in an academic institution. The Guinness World Records, [guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/most-languages-taught-in-an-academic-institution](https://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/most-languages-taught-in-an-academic-institution) (assessed 16 May 2023).

	Polyglot students	Intermediate group	Non-polyglot students
Number of foreign languages studied	5 and more	2	1
Number of participants	3	3	3

Table 1. Sampling plan of the focus group

The respondents were invited to the focus group. The focus group is a method of qualitative sociology that involves a group of people discussing a specific topic or issue, led by a moderator. It is common in market research and social sciences for gathering insights into and opinions on a particular subject. This method is extremely widely used in qualitative sociology, that is, it is not aimed at conducting a large-scale multi-thousand survey, but rather an in-depth interview, at a more personal level, so the number of focus group participants usually does not exceed ten. The main goal of the focus group studies is to gather needed information through a personal talk in order to get truthful, sincere responses from the respondent.

One advantage of using focus groups to study polyglottery is that it allows in-depth exploration of the participants' experiences and perspectives. Polyglots can share their personal stories and insights into their language learning journeys, including the challenges they faced and the strategies they developed to overcome them. This information can be particularly useful for educators and language learners looking for effective language learning strategies.

Focus groups can also provide a platform for comparing and contrasting the language learning experiences of different participants. Another advantage of focus groups is that they can generate ideas for future research. Participants may raise questions or suggest avenues of inquiry that the researcher has not considered. This can help to generate new research questions or hypotheses for testing in future studies.

Overall, focus groups can be a valuable tool for studying polyglottery. However, researchers should be mindful of potential limitations when using this method and should ensure that the participants' experiences are adequately represented [4]. By using focus groups to study polyglottery, one can gain a deeper understanding of this unique phenomenon and its implications for language education and policy.

The focus group typically consists of 6–10 participants who are selected on the basis of specific criteria, such as demographics, past experiences and sometimes even age or gender. During the session, the moderator will guide the discussion by asking open-ended questions and encouraging group members to share their thoughts and feelings on the topic [5].

The renowned American sociologist Robert K. Merton introduced this method and summarised its key points, which we strictly followed throughout our research.

First of all, the interviewees must be participants in a certain situation [6]. All our respondents study at MGIMO University; they all perceive foreign languages, but each group (polyglots, the intermediate group, and non-polyglots) has their own special features. These unique perceptions are at the heart of our research.

The second point is that the general structure of the situation must be analysed by a sociologist beforehand. In fact, we believe this point must be relevant for all sociological studies, but it is extremely important in the focus group method. We have to know the respondent's background and their characteristics in order to ask the "right" questions, i.e. the questions that would shed more light on the aim of the study.

The third point is that the sociologist must draw an interview plan [4]. This rule is closely connected with the previous point. In the focus group, the moderator is of primary importance. The moderator guides the conversation, asks questions and makes sure that every participant has a say. The moderator can foster the discussion, but must also ensure that the focus group follows its sociological aims, not boiling down to ordinary chatter.

Last but not least, the interview focuses on the individuals' subjective experiences. This is the key point for the whole qualitative sociology and its main difference from quantitative sociology [1]. This entails focusing not on the number of participants, but on examining their personal opinions and emotions. It takes more time if compared with quantitative methods, but allows a completely different depth of the answers, helping the sociologist to get to the heart of the situation.

To sum up all the above, focus groups are able to provide valuable data and insights that may not be obtainable through other methods like surveys or interviews. They allow for in-depth conversations and the exploration of multiple perspectives, which can lead to a deeper understanding of complex social issues.

As we have mentioned above, in every focus group, the moderator controls the process and sometimes makes notes, understands subtle gestures and facial expressions, and, obviously, directs and leads the focus group in the right direction.

The sociologist plays a critical role in the success of a focus group. As the discussion leader, the sociologist is responsible for guiding the conversation and facilitating a constructive and productive discussion. He must, therefore, be skilled in the art of active listening, questioning, and facilitating the dialogue as he manages the group dynamics in the focus group.

One of the primary responsibilities of a sociologist-moderator is to set a positive tone for the focus group. He must build trust and rapport with each participant, establishing a non-judgmental and open environment [5]. To do this effectively, the moderator must have a strong understanding of social dynamics and the ability to relate to people from different backgrounds and perspectives. A moderator must be able to communicate effectively and be an active listener, capable of detecting nonverbal cues such as body language, intonation or facial expressions. Additionally, he should be skilled in asking open-ended questions that invite participants to share more about their experiences, thoughts, and opinions. The goal is to create a relaxed atmosphere where conversation flows freely, and ideas are exchanged among participants [6].

Additionally, the sociologist-moderator must ask thoughtful and open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their thoughts and opinions. By asking follow-up questions and seeking clarification, the moderator can probe deeper into the responses and gain a more profound understanding of the participants' views. He must also be alert and quick on his feet in case the conversation strays off the topic or if participants become overly emotional. He must be able to distill the many conversations into key themes and develop insights that are relevant and meaningful for the research objectives. Strong analytical and critical thinking skills, coupled with a deep understanding of social sciences, are essential in this regard. The main role of the researcher is to control the dynamics of the conversation, while not disturbing its natural course [8].

The focus group method can be rather costly for the researcher, both in the monetary sense and in terms of the extent of the efforts involved [2]. It is necessary to have at least two sociologists simultaneously working in one focus group session. One is the moderator and the other is the recorder. The role of the recorder in a focus group is equally important. The recorder is responsible for capturing the discussion and making detailed notes on specific issues and points raised during the conversation. This enables the researcher to refer back to the conversation later and get an accurate sense of what was said by the participants. The recorder must remain impartial and focused and to ensure that he does not inadvertently influence the direction of the conversation.

During the focus group, the recorder should take comprehensive notes, paying close attention to the participants' quotes that capture their sentiments and tone. They should summarize and highlight significant points and ensure accurate representation of the overall flow of the discussion. The recorder's notes provide valuable material for the researcher to analyze and understand the themes, patterns, and perspectives related to the topic.

The first responsibility of any member of a focus group is to bring their unique perspective and experiences to the table. Each participant is chosen because they are believed to have valuable insights and opinions related to the topic being investigated. It is essential to be open and honest, sharing personal experiences and opinions in a respectful manner. They should also actively listen to the other participants and engage in a productive and respectful discussion.

In our study, we mainly aimed to analyse the differences between the advanced language learners (polyglots) and those who are not associated with polyglottery. Within the framework of our research, we compare the perspectives of the polyglot students with those of the students who have decided to give up studying their second foreign language, even if they do not have to additionally pay for the classes as the curriculum includes studying two languages.

Concerning polyglots proper, we wanted to comprehend the way they perceive languages and why they have chosen to learn so many of them. Moreover, it was interesting to examine this particular focus group as polyglots are mixed with ordinary students. To put it simple, the main question that runs through our whole research can be formulated as follows: why do some students prefer to give up studying their second foreign language whereas other students go to great lengths to take up as many languages as they can and learn them on the functional level of fluency?

During the focus group, respondents were asked four main questions. Naturally, there were also clarifying questions, so the discussion remained lively throughout the entire 30–40 minutes of the session.

Review of the answers

We asked respondents a number of various questions, ranging from their linguistic choices to the reasons why they do or do not give up one particular language or another. It is important to remember that the questions are aimed at identifying the underlying reasons.

Fortunately for us, our respondents were sincere and open-hearted, everyone was eager to share with us his/her personal story. Thus, we were provided with full and profound answers to all our questions.

The first question concerned the reasons why the respondents had chosen each particular language. So, the participants were asked to present their motives of taking up studying foreign languages and, as the method entails, to discuss it with their “colleagues”.

It came to light that the choices of many respondents are influenced not by their independent wishes but by the decisions their parents or their school had made when the respondents themselves were too young.

This reason is especially true for English, German and French as they are among the most common languages that are taught in Russian schools. One of the focus group members (who is considered as a polyglot) named one of the reasons “*the hand of God*”, meaning that it was not his own choice but something independent from his will.

Sometimes students get a language at the university regardless of their wishes. That is why students at MGIMO often joke: “*You do not choose your language, the language chooses you*”.

Among other factors that were mentioned by the polyglots is the interest in the culture of the country or in the language itself. This is particularly relevant for the languages like Japanese or Chinese as more and more people become interested in these cultures.

As for the interest in the culture of the country, one of the respondents said, “*The culture of the East has always been interesting to me. It is about both the greatness of history and the prospects for the future. That is why I decided to take up Chinese and Hindi. As for the European languages, I also study German and English. I think it is the right decision as these languages are at the heart of Europe. Therefore, I consider it very useful to study them, primarily for understanding the positions of partners, especially in these difficult times*”.

Speaking of the interest in the culture, one of our respondents (a polyglot) told us about her love of the Middle Eastern culture, which was encouraged by her family heritage. Speaking about the reasons of taking up Arabic, she said, “*My grandmother knew Quran. That is why Arabic is close to my heart. It is the language of my grandmother. Via speaking Arabic or reading in Arabic, I feel like I have a special connection with my predecessors. It helps me feel in touch with them, even if I have never known or seen them in person*”.

The next question to the respondents was about their motivation. We were interested in what reasons are behind their enthusiasm in the language learning process. Many respondents mentioned career prospects. In today’s global economy, the ability to speak multiple languages is increasingly valued by employers, particularly by transnational companies. Bilingual or multilingual individuals are often regarded as

valuable assets because they can help to bridge communication gaps and facilitate effective relationships with international clients or partners. That is why many MGIMO students take up various languages based on their plans for a future career.

Learning a new language can be an exciting and enriching experience, but it can also be challenging and frustrating. For many people, facing problems in the process of learning a new language is an inevitable part of the journey. That is why the next question was also connected with the respondents' motivation and was intended to shed light on the strategies of coping with the difficulties arising in the language learning process. We formulated it the following way: *Have you ever felt tired of learning languages and wanted to quit?* This entailed many follow-up questions about the reasons and the ways of coping with the challenges.

All the respondents regardless of their group (i.e. polyglots, the intermediate group, and non-polyglots) noted that they had problems in the process of learning languages. One of the most common problems that they face is a lack of time. Many students have busy lifestyles, juggle languages with other university subjects, work, family, tight schedules, and other commitments, which allows them little time for language learning. However, with proper planning and dedication, it is possible to overcome this challenge and make language learning a part of your daily routine.

We have found out that both polyglots and non-polyglots get exhausted of monotonous student's books and grammar tasks. *"There is too much tedious work,"* one of the respondents mentioned. However, what differentiates the non-polyglot from the polyglot students is that the latter tend to have stronger motivation, which enables them not to quit when they face challenges. Polyglots say that they *"feel an emotional connection with the language"*, that is why they cannot give up learning.

The "intermediate group" of students has also shown high motivation to learn two foreign languages, even though they mentioned some obstacles they had to overcome. One of them said: *"Once I thought to give up studying German. It was very hard for me at the beginning. The pace of our learning programme is too fast, which makes it difficult to understand all the grammar topics profoundly. But I decided to give another try to our relations [with the language] and now I feel it was the right decision. I see the benefits this knowledge gives me and I really take joy in our classes"*. Another respondent from the intermediate group also shared some comments about his journey: *"At first, everything was fine. But then, maybe after a month or two, I felt that the classes became really hard for me. I did not manage to catch the topics as fast I wished. I can say that I really struggle with Spanish. I know that at least one of my classmates had the same issue, but we both decided to persevere and it was a winning strategy"*.

A student who gave up learning a foreign language at MGIMO said he got fatigued from the same type of grammar tasks and textbooks. He felt overwhelmed by complex grammar rules and amounts of vocabulary to learn. Many of the respondents (from all analysed groups) believe that language learning programmes are too focused on grammar exercises instead of boosting up speaking skills.

To sum this topic up, polyglot students were found to have an increased motivation that kept them focused even during the times of despair. That is in contrast to the non-polyglots who did not manage to overcome the challenges or to find the motivation they needed. The polyglot students latch onto so-called inner motives, such as an emotional connection to the language, a personal interest and career prospects. By contrast, the non-polyglot students were forced to study the language, which can be regarded as an external motive.

The next section of the focus group was devoted to the perennial issue of what is primary: talent or effort. The respondents were asked the following: *Do you think that the ability to study and speak foreign languages is innate or it depends on personal efforts, commitment and endeavor?* The non-polyglots said that intrinsic traits are of primary importance and it is possible, but very hard, to develop an aptitude for foreign languages with no innate traits for this.

The polyglots and the intermediate group did not share this point of view. One of the polyglots said, *"Everything is possible and everything can be achieved with the due effort and desire to move forward"*. However, no respondents dismissed the natural factor, saying it undoubtedly plays a role. Yet, the majority agrees that, as one of the polyglots said, *"any talent without labor is mediocrity, therefore, titanic work is needed"*. Another said that talent works only if accompanied by effort.

We were also interested in what the respondents had to say about the practical aspect of learning foreign languages. The students were asked: *How did the knowledge of foreign languages help you in life? What else do you think it can be useful for?* Respondents from all the three groups noted the importance of language skills for their future career. However, many students already work as tutors, which, naturally, requires fluency and an advanced level of foreign language speaking skills. One of the respondents said she was recruited thanks to her knowledge of English.

Another aspect is that foreign languages enhance communication, not necessarily in terms of career. Many have friends or just acquaintances abroad and the possibility to communicate with them in their own language is very valuable. That is what two respondents said, adding they are happy to be given such an opportunity. The participants also noted that they had acquired valuable contacts and found like-minded people.

Another interesting point that only polyglot students shared is that the knowledge of the foreign languages opens opportunities for self-fulfillment and self-awareness. One of the polyglots said, *“Thanks to foreign languages, I got to discover myself from the inside. It is more than just a hobby for me. I feel that I can never be tired of practicing foreign languages”*.

Conclusions

Having taken into consideration and analysed all the above answers, we have come up with a table showing key differences that characterise polyglot students in comparison to non-polyglot students and the so-called intermediate group (see Table 2).

	Polyglot students	Intermediate group	Non-polyglot students
Motives of taking up a foreign language	The choice of additional languages is voluntary in addition to the languages assigned by the university	The choice of languages is determined by the decision of the school or university	
Attitude to the prospect of learning more languages	Strive to learn more languages	Strive to learn languages, but not in large numbers	Do not seek to learn languages
Attitude to the process	Enjoy the process	With time, managed to see advantages and enjoy the process	Could not find motivation for themselves, refused to study

Table 2. Key differences in attitudes of the three groups

The polyglot students tend to have more motivation to language learning and their interest is voluntary, driven by internal motives, while non-polyglot students and the so-called intermediate group usually have less motivation and are often forced by external reasons.

Polyglot students take joy in language learning. This confirms the point that polyglots are “obsessed” with this process [7, p. 73]. The intermediate group is also able to see the advantages of language learning and enjoy the process, but students who learn only one language do not demonstrate a particular passion for language learning. This process seems to them boring and unexciting.

The polyglot students endeavor to learn more and more foreign languages. They see this process as their hobby and a part of their lives. It is natural for such students to take up a lot of foreign languages to learn because they perceive it as a vital part of their existence. The non-polyglot students do not usually seek to learn a lot of foreign languages and stop at one or two languages.

In conclusion, the focus group conducted at MGIMO University provided valuable insights into the world of polyglottery. The participants revealed interesting information on their language learning experiences, including the challenges they faced and the strategies they found to be effective. The discussion also highlighted the importance of early language exposure and practice in developing proficiency in

multiple languages. The findings of this study can inform language policies and teaching methods and offer guidance to language learners. The results may also inspire new research to explore other aspects of polyglottery, for example, the impact of multilingualism on different areas of cognition. The focus group was a powerful qualitative research tool that effectively explored the topic of polyglottery, confirming its importance in today's globalized world.

Taking everything into consideration, learning a new language is a challenging, yet rewarding experience, which can leave learners with skills and meaningful insights into other cultures and cognitive abilities. Through the examination of the focus group we organized, we discovered certain differences in the perception of foreign languages by various categories of MGIMO students. As we identified three groups of the students according to their relevance to the polyglot community, we managed to get insights for every analysed category. Although there are a lot of differences in students' approaches to foreign languages, as well as in their perception of the study process, our analysis argues that all three groups may have something in common.

The respondents from all categories said that their choice of studying particular languages partly depended not on their own decision, but on the so-called "coercion". Those not associated with the polyglot community say that they were assigned a foreign language without the university taking into consideration their own preferences. Some of the polyglots say their parents influenced their decision or strongly advised them to take up at least one foreign language.

Moreover, the polyglots' choice of learning a particular foreign language depended on a variety of reasons. The primary reason for the polyglots is their own desire and interest in the process. Many see the language learning process as a way to get to know the culture of the language. Others think foreign languages are a significant asset to their career potential, which will help them to obtain more attractive job offers.

In contrast to the polyglots successfully managing the study of numerous foreign languages, non-polyglot students also shared their opinions on why they decided to give up learning the foreign language that was assigned to them by the university. In many ways, their choice was influenced by the lack of motivation (or an insufficient level of it) and by a pressed work/study schedule.

The intermediate group between polyglots and non-polyglot students has also showed some interesting revelations. This category can be regarded as the midway between the two "extremes", having certain similarities with both groups. The students of this intermediate group, like the non-polyglots, were not given a choice of the language. However, these students managed to find motivation to keep studying. All of them say they are happy with their decision not to have given up the language learning process, as they now take joy in learning their language and believe this could be beneficial for their career prospects.

There is a common misconception that the language learning process is much easier for polyglots than for "ordinary" people. Obviously, we cannot dismiss biological and genetic predispositions, but it is worth mentioning that both polyglots and non-polyglots have difficulty in learning languages. Here lies the main difference between the attitudes of the three groups. Polyglots are aware of the advantages of proficiency in a variety of foreign languages, which can be both external (career prospects, communication facilitation) and internal (self-knowledge, study of ancestral culture). Thus, we can conclude that strong internal motives are a distinctive feature of the polyglot community. The opposite group (in our classification) lacks internal motives, whereas the intermediate group with time develops certain reasons to keep on studying the foreign language.

It seems possible to argue that our research lays foundations for further studies of polyglottery based on qualitative sociological methods. We hope our work can be useful for practical purposes as well. The paper may help professors teaching foreign languages to find approaches to their students and to help them progress. On the other hand, it may be useful for students themselves, especially during the times when they feel upset or troubled by the challenges they face.

Polyglottery remains a promising area for research as many aspects of polyglots' social life have not yet been analysed closely. Thus, we propose to continue a deep and comprehensive study of this social group. Due to the rising interest in polyglots, we strongly believe that more studies are to come and to be discussed at further conferences and panel discussions, which are also rapidly developing.

References

1. Bourdieu, P. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. 280 p.
2. Giddens, A. *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 227 p.
3. Kazakov, G. What experimental polyglottery tells us about. Polyglot Gathering 2017 in Bratislava, University of Economics, 1 June 2017, youtube.com/watch?v=vL1oUpOwvcY (accessed 29 July 2023).
4. Kvale, S. *Interview Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996. 326 p.
5. Maslova, S. Roli moderatora fokus-grupp. *Vozmozhnosti i granitsy* [Focus group moderator's roles. Possibilities and limitations]. *Prakticheskiy Marketing*, 2001, 9, cfin.ru/press/practical/2001-09/index.shtml (assessed 16 May 2023).
6. Merton, R.K. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1949. 703 p.
7. Nikulicheva, D. Izucheniye lingvodidakticheskikh strategiy poliglотов – k razrabotke teorii poliglottii i praktike ee primeneniia [Studying language learning strategies of polyglots: the theory of polyglottery and its practical application]. *Journal of Psycholinguistics*, 2018, 2 (36). P. 70–83. DOI: 10.30982/2077-5911-2-70-83
8. Ritchie J., & Lewis, J. *Qualitative Research Practice. A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers*. London: Sage Publications, 2013. 336 p.
9. *Rossiiskaia Psikholingvistika: Itogi i Perspektivy (1966–2021)* [Russian Psycholinguistics: Results and Prospects (1966–2021)] (I. Sternin et al. eds.). Moscow: Institute of Linguistics – Moscow International Academy, 2021. 626 p. DOI: 10.30982/978-5-6045633-7-3
10. Virolainen, A., et al. The image of a polyglot through the eyes of MGIMO students. *Linguistics & Polyglot Studies*, 2022, vol. 8, no. 3. P. 47–57. DOI: 10.24833/2410-2423-2022-3-32-47-57

Список литературы

1. Bourdieu P. *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998. 280 p.
2. Giddens A. *Central Problems in Social Theory: Action, Structure, and Contradiction in Social Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. 227 p.
3. Kazakov G. What experimental polyglottery tells us about. Polyglot Gathering 2017 in Bratislava, University of Economics, 01.06.2017. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL1oUpOwvcY> (дата обращения 29.07.2023).
4. Kvale S. *Interview Views: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1996. 326 p.
5. Маслова С. Роли модератора фокус-групп. *Возможности и границы* // Практический маркетинг, 2001, №9. URL: <https://www.cfin.ru/press/practical/2001-09/02.shtml> (дата обращения 16.05.2023).
6. Merton R.K. *Social Theory and Social Structure*. Glencoe: Free Press, 1949. 703 p.
7. Никуличева Д.Б. Изучение лингводидактических стратегий полиглотов – к разработке теории полиглотики и практике её применения // Вопросы психолингвистики, 2018, №2 (36). С. 70–83. DOI: 10.30982/2077-5911-2-70-83
8. Ritchie J. *Qualitative Research Practice. A Guide for Social Science Students and Researchers* / J. Ritchie, J. Lewis. London: Sage Publications, 2013. 336 p.
9. Российская психолингвистика: итоги и перспективы (1966–2021) / научн. ред. И. А. Стернин, Н. В. Уфимцева, Е. Ю. Мягкова. М.: Институт языкознания – ММА, 2021. 626 с. DOI: 10.30982/978-5-6045633-7-3
10. Virolainen A. The image of a polyglot through the eyes of MGIMO students / A. Virolainen, N. Kovalenko, D. Komarov // Филологические науки в МГИМО, 2022, т. 8, №3. P. 47–57. DOI: 10.24833/2410-2423-2022-3-32-47-57

About the authors:

Alisa Virolainen is a student at the Faculty of International Journalism, MGIMO University. Research interests: political discourse, media discourse, polyglottery, language learning, translation studies.

E-mail: al.virolajnen@my.mgimo.ru

Maria Kuvarina is a student at the Faculty of International Journalism, MGIMO University. Research interests: polyglottery, language learning, gender studies, translation studies. E-mail: ma.kuvarina@my.mgimo.ru

Kristina Levchuk is a student at the Faculty of International Journalism, MGIMO University. Research interests: sociology of underground music, linguistics, polyglottery, feminism. E-mail: kr.levchuk@my.mgimo.ru

Сведения об авторах:

Алиса Витальевна Виролайнен – студентка факультета международной журналистики МГИМО МИД России. Сфера научных интересов: политический дискурс, медиадискурс, полиглоссия, изучение иностранных языков, переводоведение. E-mail: al.virolajnen@my.mgimo.ru

Мария Сергеевна Куварина – студентка факультета международной журналистики МГИМО МИД России. Сфера научных интересов: полиглоссия, изучение иностранных языков, гендерные исследования, переводоведение. E-mail: ma.kuvarina@my.mgimo.ru

Кристина Ратмировна Левчук – студентка факультета международной журналистики МГИМО МИД России. Сфера научных интересов: социология музыки андеграунда, лингвистика, полиглоссия, феминизм. E-mail: kr.levchuk@my.mgimo.ru

* * *