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Sergei Gnitiev: "Because two languages live in me at the same time"  
The relationship between language and identity among Russian immigrants in Hungary  
Alkalmazott Nyelvtudomány, XXI. évfolyam, 2021/2. szám, 80–95.  
doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.18460/ANY.2021.2.006>

**"Because two languages live in me at the same time"  
The relationship between language and identity among Russian  
immigrants in Hungary**

*"Knowledge of languages is the doorway to wisdom"*  
Rogen Bacon

Identity is generally not an essential factor in the individual's life until the point of migration when belonging is disrupted. As a result of migrating to a second language (L2) environment, the use of the first language (L1) is often restricted to a limited number of domains (e.g., family, friends, relatives in the homeland, social media, etc.). More often than not, these linguistic and cultural changes result in the re-definition of the identity. This paper aims to investigate the extent to which language is used not only for communicative purposes but also to construct identity. The present study includes 20 Russian speakers living in Hungary whose age ranges from 22 to 72. The Social Personal Background Questionnaire (Schmid 2004) and personal interviews were used to elicit data about their language use and identity. Based on the results, all informants consider themselves bilingual; they all expressed that another language leaves its mark on their personality. Some participants believe that they have fully integrated into the new society. Others could not accept a foreign culture, although they consider themselves bilingual. The rest of them are trying to integrate into the Hungarian society, maintaining their Russian identity. The results clearly show that the participants use their two languages for different purposes and in different contexts, which confirms Grosjean's Complementarity Principle. The findings show a diversity in how language affects the participants' identities which is in line with previous findings (Grosjean 2010; Pavlenko 2006).

Keywords: bilingualism, identity, cross-linguistic influence, integration

## **1. Introduction**

The topic of *identity change* has received considerable attention in various disciplines, such as psychology, linguistics, anthropology, etc. Changes in language use and language environment are considered crucial factors in identity formation and alteration (Bátyi, 2020; Víg-Szabó 2017). Several studies have explored the relationship between language and identity (e.g. Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2007; Meaders, 1997; Dewaele, 2015; Smari & Navracsics, 2019; Navracsics, 2016), providing a deeper insight into the complex relationship between the two concepts. However, it is essential to note that more studies are necessary to have a more objective picture due to the qualitative nature of research this area requires. This paper intends to explore the extent to which language is

used not only for communication but to construct identity among Russians living in Hungary.

### **1.1. Language, identity and migration**

The concept of "language" includes symbolic, semantic, verbal components, and philosophical meaning. "Man is human because he can say so" was stated by Lieberman and Crelin (1971: 222). Through language, a person learns the world around him, the culture he creates, preserves, and passes on to descendants. Besides, languages can form and shape a person and determine their behavior, lifestyle, worldview, mentality, character, ideas, perceptions, cultural perception models, and personality. Misztal (2003: 132) argues that "People use it [language] to make sense of themselves, of their activities, of what they share with others and how they differ from them." Consequently, language is an integral part of the complex concept of identity (De Fina, 2016), which comprises multiple elements, such as gender, culture, religion, social network, etc.

The concept of "identity" is being described as a "result of (inter)subjective memories, present events, and emotional resonance that change over time and constantly provide new configurations as well as periodic repetitions" (Haviland-Jones & Kalbaugh, 2000: 301). Identity is generally not an essential factor in the individual's life until the point of migration when belonging is disrupted. As a result of migrating to a second language (L2) environment, the use of the first language (L1) is often restricted to a limited number of domains (e.g., family, friends, relatives in the homeland, social media, etc.). More often than not, these linguistic and cultural changes result in the re-definition of the identity (Bátyi, 2020; in press). Bi- and multilingualism, culture, identity, and migration are all flexible and dynamic constructs that interact with each other in the new environment. How are these concepts shaped in the new environment? *Bi- and multilingualism* is affected by many extralinguistic factors, often leading to a change in language dominance and resulting in language attrition (Köpke & Schmid, 2004). *Culture* is the beliefs, values, and norms of a specific sociocultural group (Brumbaugh 2002). Bicultural individuals are bilinguals who have internalized the two cultures, which affect their feelings, thoughts, ideas, etc. (Ramirez-Esparza et al. 2006). It is important to note that not all bilinguals are bicultural (Grosjean, 2015); however, individuals living in an L2 environment are affected by the host culture to some extent. Economic and technological advancements have considerably altered *migration* in the last century, which created transnational communities. It is not a one-way process anymore because ties can be maintained with the country of origin more than before, bringing about new forms of identities and practices (De Fina, 2016).

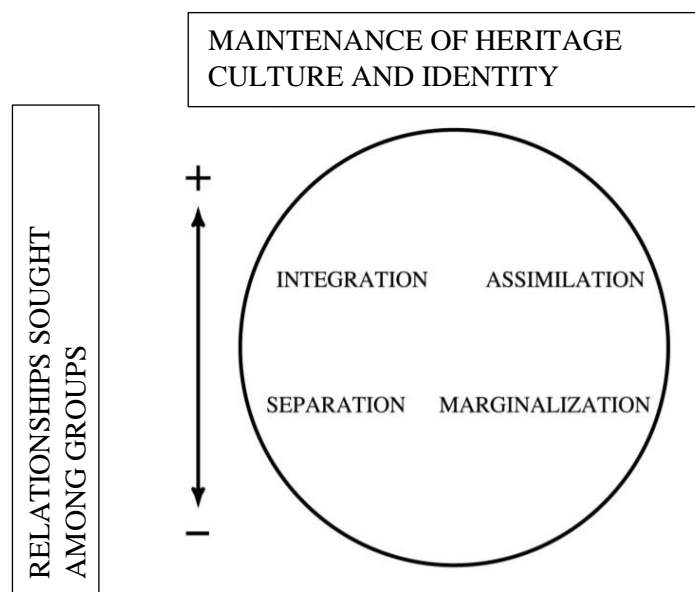
The (re)definition of identity in the new L2 environment goes through several stages and is influenced by the individual's relationship with the home and the host environment. Schumann (1986) proposed the link between successful integration and a higher level of target language proficiency, explaining that the host society and the environment will replace the original culture and language. From a more psychological point of view, Yoshizawa Meaders (1997) proposed three stages in the process of transcultural *identity building*.

1. Immersion stage: a dynamic stage of second language development, and losses are extremely noticeable.
2. Recognition stage: reflecting on the aspects of the old and the new culture;
3. Transcultural stage: the development of flexible multiculturalism.

The strategies of a migrant group in the host environment are described by Berry (2001) as depicted in Figure 1. However, these strategies are also applicable to individual migrants.

- Assimilation – developing interest in the culture of the new country while neglecting the heritage culture and identity;
- Separation – maintaining heritage culture and avoid interaction with members of the new society;
- Integration – maintaining heritage culture and developing interest in the new culture simultaneously;
- Marginalization – reduced cultural interest in their own and other cultures as well.

**Figure 1.** Intercultural Strategies (adapted from Berry, 2001)



## 1.2. Bilingualism and identity

The study of identity change, formation, and (re)definition of bi- and multilinguals is a crucial topic as it is a widespread phenomenon. No official figure is available about the number of bi- or multilinguals; however, one of the most convincing pieces of data is the difference between the number of languages (7,139, according to [www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)) and the number of states (206). Individuals who speak two or more languages on an everyday basis are considered to be bilingual speaker-hearers (Grosjean, 1989). Grosjean (1985), in his Wholistic view, proposes that bilingual speakers use both of their languages separately or together, based on the communicative needs. Bilingual language use is domain-specific, that is, the bilingual individual can use his/her different languages in different areas of life (work, home), with different people, in different situations, etc. (Grosjean, 2015). This poses the question of whether language can cause a change in identity or not. Grosjean (2015) mentions that there is no direct cross-effect between language and identity. Based on the domain-specificity, he claims that the culture, interlocutors, and environment cause a change in the individual's identity and/or personality. Even though there are examples of individuals experiencing differences while using their mother-tongue and the foreign language, for instance: *"I find when I am speaking Russian I feel like a much more gentle, 'softer' person. In English, I feel more 'harsh,' 'businesslike'"* (Grosjean, 2015). The importance of language use context has been emphasized by Fogle (2012), who argues that the individual will adapt to the comfortable situation, including the changes in their identity, way of thinking, and behavior.

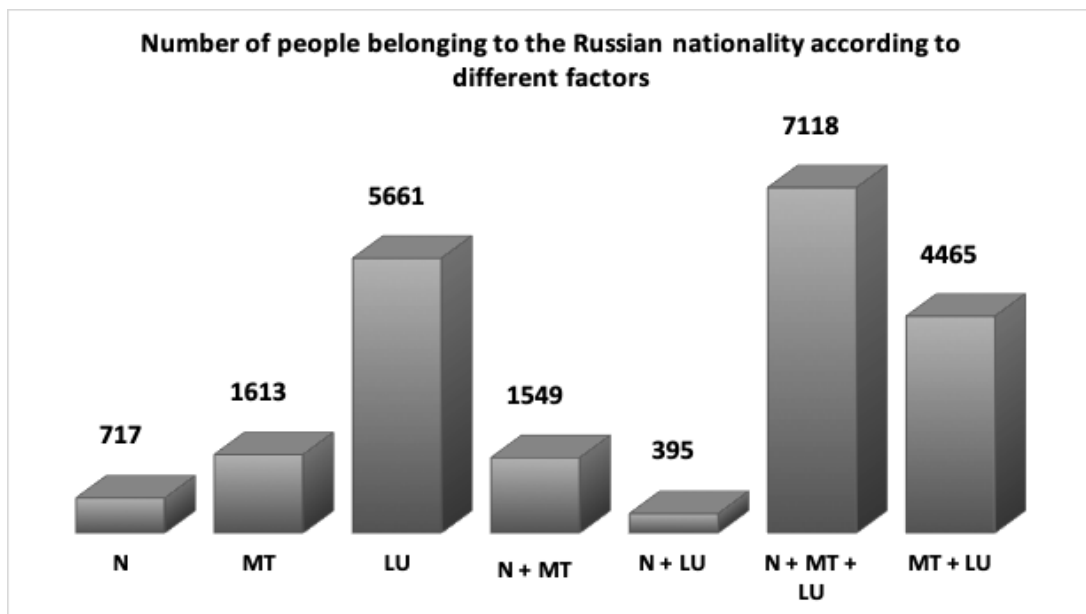
Identity shapes the individual over their lifespan and is affected by political opinions, morality and beliefs, and language itself. For instance, the migration process may substantially impact the individual's life, ensuing the changes in the identity. Studies conducted by Pavlenko (2006) and Grosjean (2010) with bilinguals found that their participants perceived themselves depending on the language code and linguistic situation. Both studies concluded that bilinguals change their "identity" according to the new environment, adapting to the situation. However, in some cases, the change in the identity was described by respondents giving "own unique explanations, linking feelings of difference to conscious or unconscious behaviors" (Dewaele, 2015).

The present study investigates identity patterns and changes due to increased use of L2 and the presence of L1 attrition, affecting not only their language proficiency in the mother tongue, but the shift in identity perception of the participants (Russian or Hungarian identity).

### 3. The Russian community in Hungary

The Russian minority is not officially recognized in Hungary, even though its size is considerable (21 518 people). Data on the demographic characteristics of Russians in Hungary was not available until the 2016 micro-census, which, for the first time, included non-official minorities (Chinese, Korean, Arabic, and Russian) living in Hungary. The survey asked questions about the nationality, mother tongue, and language use of the minorities (Figure 2). According to the census results, Russians by nationality comprise 0.2% of Hungary's whole population and 1.6% of those who speak Russian (retrieved from [www.ksh.hu](http://www.ksh.hu)). A large part of the Russian-speaking population is not ethnically Russian, even though the numbers are very diverse in terms of the length of residence, citizenship, and Russian use in the family. One-third of the Russian population (7118) living in Hungary considered themselves as Russian based on the sum of three factors (nationality, mother tongue, and language use), 5661 people identified themselves as Russian based on language use, and only 4465 respondents identified themselves as Russian based on mother tongue and language use.

Figure 2. micro-census 2016



N – nationality, MT – mother tongue, LU – language use

## 4. Methods

### 4.1. Participants

The study involves twenty Russian-speaking participants who moved to Hungary, and their age ranges between 22 and 72, 7 males and 13 females. The group is ethnically diverse: 13 Russians, 2 Ukrainians, 2 Udmurts, 1 Jew, and 2 Tatars.

The participants were contacted through Russian clubs and communities. The "snowball" approach was used to gather as many participants as possible.

According to the questionnaire results, all participants have Russian nationality and speak Russian as an L1, while Hungarian is their L2. They all learned foreign languages (English, German or French) in school but have not used them since that time. Seventeen participants completed higher education, and three partakers accomplished secondary education.

According to the survey, 14 participants are married, 8 of them are married to Hungarian partners, 2 participants are divorced, although they were married to Hungarians. Among the participants, 12 have children, and 10 participants reported that they use Hungarian to speak with their children even though they consider the Russian language as dominant in their conversations. Seven participants have grandchildren, and only 2 of them use Hungarian to speak with them, while 5 tend to maintain the conversations in Russian.

## **4.2. Instruments**

The **Social Personal Background Questionnaire** (SPBQ) was used to collect data from the participants. The questionnaire includes sections on:

- participants personal background (age, sex, education, language history, and emigration length);
- language choice (use of L1 and preferred language);
- language contact (frequency of L1 use within the country they live in and their homeland);
- language attitude (importance of L1 maintenance and its use).

The questionnaire was translated into Russian to preserve the original content and was administrated in an online format for efficient data collection. It includes Likert scale questions, yes/no questions, and open-ended questions.

Interviews were conducted with the informants to have a deeper insight into their attitudes towards the Russian language and culture. The interview was conducted using social platforms or in a personal meeting, for example, in a café. The length of the interview ranged between 15 and 30 minutes. The purpose was for the interviewee to elaborate and expand on the questionnaire elements. The recordings were transcribed and analyzed to determine the extent to which language is used not only for communication but also to construct identity among Russians living in Hungary.

## **5. Results**

### **5.1. Domain specificity**

None of the participants has ever learned Hungarian before moving to Hungary. The first encounter with the language is connected to meeting their new (Hungarian) partner, getting a job, etc. Most of them learned the language because



they wanted to integrate into society. Both the questionnaire and the interview results confirmed that the majority of the participants are bi- or multilingual. Only one participant reported on the difficulties he/she faced in learning foreign languages. The participants acquired English, German, French as foreign languages in or out of school besides Russian and Hungarian.

During the interview, the participants have reported the professional necessity to maintain their Russian. They have also highlighted the frequent 'code-switching' in the professional domain (see [1, 2, and 3]). As seen from interview excerpt 1, the participant is in the phase of relearning English, so the frequency and salience of the language interfere with the other two languages, which is not a rare language learner experience.

[1] *Я сейчас учусь английский, моя ... мои мозги все настроены на английский в основном. Так что, может быть, поэтому я часто смешиваю. До этого, давно, когда я начала учить венгерский .... у меня английский как то стерся, поэтому заново надо было.... Ну конечно, базовые такие ... знания. А вот сейчас хочу уровень повыше, все таки и для работы нужно.*

(I'm learning English now, my ... my brains are all set to English mostly. So maybe that's why I mix often. Before that, long ago, when I started to learn Hungarian .... my English somehow worn out, so I had to [learn] again .... Well, of course, basic ... knowledge. But now I want a higher level, I still need it for work.)

In example 2, the participant is a lecturer at a university in Hungary; therefore, she is more fluent in this domain in Hungarian. This experience coincides with Grosjean's (2010) Complementarity Principle, which claims that the bilingual uses his/her languages for different reasons, with different interlocutors, and in different situations. Consequently, there will be domains (e.g., work) in which the bilingual will be more fluent and proficient in one of the languages.

[2] *Если нужно переводить с одного языка на другой, то начинается смешивание языков. Это есть. Профессионально мне проще на венгерском, легче конечно. Все профессиональные выражения, термины это я уже не знаю как сказать по русски. Если мне нужно будет делать лекцию или читать лекцию русскоговорящим, то мне нужно будет очень сильно подготавливаться.*

(If you need to translate from one language to another, then the mixing of languages begins. It is there. Professionally, it's easier for me in Hungarian, easier of course. All professional expressions, terms I do not know how to say in Russian. If I need to give a lecture or presentation to Russian speakers, I will need to prepare very much.)

Interview excerpt 3 below also confirms the complementarity principle where the participant's L3 (English) is also used in the work domain along with Hungarian, while the personal domain is Russian.

[3] *Родной язык использую для повседневного общения. На работе – венгерский, общаюсь с коллегами, в магазине тоже венгерский, но на работе еще и английский. Документация, письма...*

(I use my native language for everyday communication. At work - Hungarian, I communicate with colleagues, in the store it is also Hungarian, but at work also English. Documentation, letters ...)

These examples show how the languages of bi- and multilinguals play different roles in different domains and interact, which is the natural outcome of multilingualism. All respondents emphasized that it is complicated to adapt to the target society without knowing the country's language. Most of them have a positive attitude towards Hungarian and try to expand their vocabulary and apply different speech styles. The respondents reported that their proficiency level in L1 and L2 depends on the frequency of use, the place of use, and the interlocutors. The languages spoken by the respondents are deliberately used for different purposes in order for communication to be successful. As an outcome of the constant interaction between these languages, their language system is dynamic and used in different social spheres.

## 5.2. Integration to the host society through L2

The interview was conducted in Russian at the participants' request because they desired to communicate in their native language (e.g.: [4]). As shown in example 5, the participant did not manage to master Hungarian to a high degree. However, his motivation is low, while the anxiety is relatively high. This example supports Norton's (2000, 2001) assertion that negative self-perception can lead to the non-use of the language.

[4] **Question:** *Вы считаете, что для Вас важен русский язык? Как для общения так и для сохранения русской личности [...]* Do you think the Russian language is important for you? As for communication and maintaining Russian identity [...]

**Answer:** *Очень важен. Я работала на многих фирмах. Я работала как переводчик, так что .... Я работала и в Эстонии как переводчик с людьми, так что использовала русский и хочу использовать. Не всегда есть возможность использовать. Вообще-то каждый день использую, так как сейчас двадцать первом... первый веке Скайп, Вайбер. Я с родственниками часто разговариваю. [...]*



Very important. I have worked for many firms. I worked as an interpreter, so .... I also worked in Estonia as an interpreter with people, so I used Russian and I want to use it. It is not always possible to use. Actually, I use it every day, since now is the twenty-first ... first century Skype, Viber is available. I often talk with my relatives. [...]

[5] *Я до сих пор не освоила Венгерский. Но в основном я пользуюсь русским. Я ленивая к языкам, они не вызывали у меня интерес. Я не получаю от этого удовольствие. Я стесняюсь говорить на венгерском, считаю что либо говорить очень хорошо, либо никак.*

I still haven't mastered Hungarian. I mostly use Russian. I am lazy to languages; they did not interest me. I don't enjoy it. I am embarrassed to speak Hungarian; I think that you either speak it very well or not at all.

The current findings go along with Schumann (1986), who noted the link between successful integration and a higher proficiency of target language knowledge.

[6] *Но вообще у меня много работы было, так как мы много переезжали. Из-за мужа у меня много работ было. И я работала и в **Minőségügyi**<sup>i</sup>, ну это в качестве ... за качество ответственность было. У меня муж сейчас, он уже как **Minőségügyi vezető**<sup>ii</sup> работает. Ну это наша профессия, за этим ... за качеством.*

But in general, I had a lot of work, since we moved a lot. Because of my husband, I had a lot of jobs. And I also worked in **Minőségügyi**, well, this is in quality ... for I was responsible for quality. I have a husband now; he is already working as **Minőségügyi vezető**. Well, this is our profession, for this ... for quality.

[7] *Много раз пыталась начать изучение... Везде необходимо знание языка, пойдешь в **gyógyszertár**<sup>iii</sup> или даже в **busz**<sup>iv</sup>... **kórház**<sup>v</sup> опять же...*

Many times, I have started learning... The language is required everywhere, **gyógyszertár**, or even **busz**... **kórház** as well...

Respondents recognize the importance of their native language as a personal identifier that confirms their belonging to the Russian community. This confirmation emphasizes the importance of linguistic influence on personality. The native language as a marker of identity connects belonging to the Russian community and at the same time distinguishes the country of residence from the society. However, when discussing work, the respondents emphasize the importance of knowing the Hungarian language as a necessary factor in finding and applying for a job. Moreover, the respondents switch to Hungarian when it comes to job-related topics.

### 5.3. Another language – another identity

People fluent in two languages switch from one to the other in different ways when expressing their feelings, interacting with different people, or being in different places. Fogle (2012) mentions the importance of the context. For example, what language they use in various domains., e.g., at work, in school. Individuals adapt to what they find comfortable. Grosjean (2016) also discussed it in the Complementary Principle when describing the behavior of bilinguals in everyday life. He claims that personality change is simply a shift in attitudes and behavior that correspond to a shift in situation or context, regardless of language.

Dewaele and Pavlenko (2002) interviewed about a thousand bilingual people and asked them if they feel like someone else when they speak a foreign language. About 2/3 of all respondents answered yes. Fogle (2012) mentioned that language mirrors the identity, although the personality can change depending on the people perceiving the speaker in the target language. Different languages shape our thinking, and they contribute to changing emotions or even affect memories."

Most respondents in the present study reported that using different languages changes their thoughts, feelings, and personality.

- [8] *Я на родном языке необщительный человек, но разговорчивый на других ...*

I am an uncommunicative person in my native language, but talkative in others ...

- [9] *Я говорю на русском, английском и венгерском, заметила, что от того на каком языке я говорю, меняется мое восприятие и поведение...*

I speak Russian, English and Hungarian, I noticed that the language I speak changes my perception and behaviour ...

- [10] *Не знаю ... что это, но замечаю, что часто говорю на одном языке, а думаю на другом. Почему, не понимаю. Может, это вторая личность во мне?!*

I don't know ... what it is, but I notice that I often speak one language and think in another. I don't understand why. Maybe this is the second person in me?!

- [11] *Замечала за собой не раз, но мне кажется, причина не в смене языка ... Может быть, в культуре? I noticed it more than once, but it seems to me that the reason is not in the change of language ... Maybe in culture?*

- [12] *Часто такое ... Думаю, когда меняю язык, наш мозг думает, что мы в другом месте и с другими людьми, другими правилами и традициями.*

Often this ... I think when I change the language, our brain thinks that we are in a different place and with different people, different rules and traditions.

The respondents emphasize the role of another country's culture, immersed in reaching a certain level of learning a second language, which contributes to integration into a new society. Indeed, the study by Pavlenko (2008) confirmed

this by the acquaintance of students with a new culture, which helps to acquire new ways of expressing emotions and a new perception of cultural aspects.

In the interviews, the language switching often occurred when expressing emotions.

- [13] *Жаль, что не получилось остаться жить там, szép hely<sup>vi</sup>, но ... не сложилось...*

It's a pity that we didn't manage to stay and live there, **szép hely**, but ... it didn't work out...

In this example, the participant switches from Russian to Hungarian to positively describe where she lived and then switches back to Russian. Recalling a pleasant place in Hungary where she lived, the respondent makes a value judgment in Hungarian.

- [14] *Ах, как мы провели там время ... и дети. móka volt<sup>vii</sup> и мы были boldog<sup>viii</sup>*

Oh, how we spent time there ... and the kids ... **móka volt** and we were **boldog**...

In example [14], the respondent uses two languages, Russian and Hungarian, choosing Hungarian for a specific function. The examples highlight the pattern of language choice for positive emotions.

The following examples illustrate the choice of language concerning a person:

- [15] *Наш tanár<sup>ix</sup> требовал много всего, но я справлялась.*

Our **tanár** demanded a lot, but I managed.

The respondents, communicating in Russian, suddenly switch to Hungarian as soon as it comes to significant people.

It can be concluded that the respondents' languages are not used arbitrarily. It is possible to trace a pattern associated with social or cultural values powerful enough to influence identity, confirming Grosjean's (2010) theory of context influencing identity change. This is supported by examples of interview excerpts, where participants noted changes in their behavior and social skills, even their way of thinking.

#### **5.4. Successful integration and assimilation as the factor to develop a new identity**

Various indicators have been developed to assess the success of adaptation to another society. One of the many is *integration* with maintaining L1 and cultural aspects while adding another language, culture, and *assimilation*, where the shift happens from L1 to the language of a new culture in a new society through

language. It should be noted that language cannot be considered only as a practical tool of communication; language plays an essential role in creating social and cultural differences. Therefore, the study and use of the host society's language is of practical importance and helps the individual's self-identification.

[16] **Question:** *Вы считаете, что для Вас важен родной язык сохранения русской личности.*

Do you think, Russian is important for preserving your Russian identity?

**Answer:** *Да. Я стараюсь поддерживать контакт с родным языком, родной культурой. Я не могу привыкнуть к Венгрии. Меня здесь все устраивает, но в душе я русская.*

Yes. I try to keep in touch with my native language, my native culture. I can't get used to Hungary. Everything suits me here, but at heart I am Russian.

[17] *Совершенно нет, с венгерской культурой нет. Вот сейчас я с дочерью пойду на концерт венгерской группы. Но мне как то ... не цепляет это. Хотя это плохо...*

... Absolutely not, with Hungarian culture not. Right now, my daughter and I will go to the concert of the Hungarian band. But somehow ... it doesn't catch me. Although this is bad ...

The participant is experiencing the separation process and identifies herself as a Russian, even with Hungarian citizenship. However, she expresses her regret for not being able to assimilate entirely. She mentions that the Hungarian culture is acceptable for her, even though she cannot picture herself developing in the Hungarian way of life.

Overall, it may be said that the identity has not been influenced wholly by having Hungarian citizenship. All of our participants describe themselves as Russians first.

### **5.5. Going back to Russia**

The current study included the question of whether our participants regret their decision to leave the country. All of them expressed their opinion on making the right decision. The answers to having nostalgic feelings included 12 participants feeling nostalgic, while eight concluded the opposite. Besides, one of the participants added that his country does not exist anymore because he was born in USSR.

- [18] *Я родился в СССР, моей страны нет с 1991 года, никакой ностальгии по РФ или СНГ у меня нет.*

I was born in USSR, and my country does not exist since 1991, so I have no nostalgia for RF or CIS.

- [19] *Тут не скажешь однозначно. Жалеть не о чем. Могу ведь вернуться в любой момент. Но зачем? Мне вроде и здесь хорошо. Привыкла...*

You can't say for sure. There is nothing to regret. I can come back at any moment. But why? I feel good here too. I got used to ...

- [20] *Я привыкла. Спасибо. Но пришлось не легко.*

I got used to it. Thanks. But it was tough.

- [21] *Жизнь может и не сложилась так как хотелось бы... Но уезжать не хочу. Чтобы привыкнуть тут нужно время и силы. Муж венгр, дети... Как я это все оставлю? Дочь считает себя венгеркой.*

Life may not have worked out as I would like ... But I don't want to leave. It takes time and effort to get used to it. Hungarian husband, children ... How can I leave it all? My daughter considers herself Hungarian.

- [22] *Нет смысла жалеть о чем-то или не жалеть. Все нет так плохо, нет только друзей. Они ам ... их приобретают в молодости.*

There is no point in regretting or not regretting anything. Everything is not so bad, just there are no friends. They are ... they are acquired in youth

- [23] *Не жалею .. Я не покинула Родину, а приобрела ее.*

I don't regret... I didn't leave Motherland, I found it.

- [24] *Я так скучаю ... Может .. – вернусь? Ностальгия накатывает по друзьями, родственникам, а я в душе русская.*

I miss it so much ... Maybe I will return? Nostalgia gets me about my friends, relatives, and in the soul, I am Russian

- [25] *Я и готова вернуться, но сомневаюсь, смогу ли начать сначала? И не жалею, но и не радуюсь ...*

I'm ready to go back, but I doubt if I can start over? And I don't regret it, but I'm not happy either ...

Even though the participants have identified themselves with the Russian language and culture more dominantly, none of them highlighted the desire to move back to Russia. The answers were supported by the fact that they find life in Hungary more pleasant than in the country of origin. They would move only due to economic situation or personal issues — the highlights mentioned above the developing assimilation/integration of the participants into the Hungarian society.

## **6. Discussion and conclusions**

The main aim of this study was to observe what is happening to Russians' identities living in Hungary, including the process of integration to the new community, attempts to integrate and maintain the Russian language and culture at the same time. Their life experiences are expressed through their opinions and views on their new home country's life and culture. The significance of the study



is that it shows how diverse bilingual identities can be in the context of another culture.

The data were elicited by the Social Personal Background Questionnaire, previously compiled by Schmid (2004), including 67 questions and personal interviews with the participants. The main factor for migration to Hungary was mainly Hungarian spouse, and less frequently a job opportunity.

The study aimed to determine the extent to which participants have built a new identity due to migration to the new society. Berry (2011) proposed the model and strategies used to identify the four strategies in identity development and social integration. According to elicited data, the participants are not fully integrated into Hungarian society. All informants consider themselves bilingual and associate their bilingualism with the fact that they have different personalities when they speak different languages. This result is in line with Pavlenko's (2006) findings, who found that bilinguals perceive the world differently, making gradual changes based on their language. Some believe that they have successfully combined two cultures and become part of a new society, fully integrating into it. Others, not wanting to move away from their Russian roots, could not accept a foreign culture, although they consider themselves bilingual. Some informants are trying to integrate into Hungarian society, maintaining their Russian culture and language. However, they all expressed that another language leaves its mark on the personality, whether they like it or not.

The participants reported a shift in their identity, which can be explained by a change in the environment, such as work/home. The findings are in line with Grosjean's (2010) claims that the change is not caused by the influence of language but the environment and context. The qualitative data reports low diversity in the participants' answers. They emphasize the necessity to switch the language at their workplace or other public places, and as a consequence, their identity changes due to the environment. An interesting pattern of identity change has emerged from the interviews; personality may impact one's identity (e.g., integration for a sociable person is easier). It goes along with Fogel's (2012) claim that identity changes occur based on the interlocutor's perceptions of the person in language-use situations.

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We acknowledge the financial support of Széchenyi 2020 under the **EFOP-3.6.1-16-2016-00015**.

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- <sup>i</sup> Quality
  - <sup>ii</sup> Quality manager
  - <sup>iii</sup> Pharmacy
  - <sup>iv</sup> Bus
  - <sup>v</sup> Hospital
  - <sup>vi</sup> Beautiful place
  - <sup>vii</sup> It was fun
  - <sup>viii</sup> Happy
  - <sup>ix</sup> Teacher