

Issue 2

June 2024

Vitascope

ENGLISH PHILOLOGY PROGRAMME



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone
involved for their contributions in bringing Vitascope's
second edition to life.



5

**Onomatopoeia: Can Speakers
of Other Languages Understand
What “Meow” Means?**

Ketevani Lomidze

10

**Francisco Goya and His Descent into
Madness**

Dachi Danelia

15

**The Impact of Music on
Listeners**

Mariam Sarkiashvili

Life Without Colour: The
Momentousness of Assembling
Your Own Personality

Mariam Lagvilava

19

Eliminating Bias: Culturally
Relevant Teaching

Ana Osipov

21

From Thunderbolt to
Tranquility: Unveiling the
Paradoxical *Vajra*

Ananya Atri

25

28

The ABCs of Romanticism in
Literature
Lizi Svanidze

32

Pizza and the Big Mac
Ana Photelidze

35

Tailoring ESL Teaching:
Key Tips for Personalized
Learning
Anano Kazeishvili

Verses in Harmony: The
Evolution of Poetry in Music
Ana Ruadze

39

The Complicated Truth about Social
Media Influence
Ana Markoidze

43

Exploring Cognitive
Parallels: Reconsidering
the Distinctiveness of
Human and Animal Minds
Elene Panchvidze

47

Onomatopoeia: Can Speakers of Other Languages Understand What “Meow” Means?

Ketevani Lomidze



A photograph of a cat yawning, by IBSU student, Ketevan Vanadze

While reading this sentence, does it occur to you how these clusters of letters and sounds convey meaning? How does the word “cat” resemble the specific animal it refers to? It certainly does not, and according to Saussure (1916), it is already well established in linguistics that word forms and their meanings are arbitrary. Then, how does the word “meow” imitate its meaning? What about the word “pop” makes you immediately imagine a bubble bursting? In every language, these sound-imitative words, onomatopoeias, make up a large part of the vocabulary. The term onomatopoeia comes from the Greek, meaning “name-making.” It is symbolism in a phonological context, as the meaning is depicted by the imitation of natural sounds. Even if we do not know the word, we can easily guess (and imagine) the meaning of onomatopoeias like “buzz”, “moan”, “hiss”, or “plop” based on the sounds

they imitate. Then, as the sounds in the natural environment never change, can onomatopoeias be a bridge between the speakers of different languages? To what extent can sound imitations like “achoo” or “gulp” be understandable to speakers of other languages?

Onomatopoeias are not created by chance. When humans hear a sound in nature perfectly, they mimic it according to the phonological system of their language (Marchand, 1959). A language is not able to imitate sounds that cannot be represented by its phonemes. Therefore, imitations are not flawless due to language constraints (Anderson, 1998). As an illustration of the variety of sound combinations used in different languages, the notion of speaking very softly is expressed by the onomatopoeias “whisper” in English,

“flüstern” in German, “susurro” in Spanish, “suttog” in Hungarian, and “ჩურჩული” (churchuli) in Georgian.

Speakers of languages from different family trees will find comprehending onomatopoeias harder if they do not have similar sounds in their own language. The more phonemes a language has, the more different and colorful sound correlations it can create to imitate a sound. Languages that have the sound [z], can use it to depict the notion of vibration or sounds like “buzz”. However, Asian speakers, who most definitely have heard the sound of a bee, will be puzzled as they will not be able to understand the meaning of “buzz”. It is all due to the fact that they just do not have the phoneme [z] in their languages. Asian languages, instead, use nasal consonants [ŋ] and [ɲ] to depict the sound of a bee; e.g., “buzz” is expressed by “bungbung” and “wing-wing” in the Korean language and “wēng wēng” in the Chinese language.

Cross-linguistically, language as a living being develops through time and this makes understanding onomatopoeias even more difficult. Some onomatopoeias that were exact sound imitations and could be recognized by native speakers, may now have become arbitrary during lexicalization. Sound imitative words have a more vivid connection to the natural sound they are depicting until they adapt their forms according to the rules of language and the pressure of time. That is how the word “laugh” has lost its original sound-imitative form “lahjan” and how “oule” became “owl”.

Apart from the language systems, cross-linguistic differences in onomatopoeias occur due to various factors. Tsoi Wai Chuen & Chung Hoi Wa (2004) pointed out that the sound of a fire engine is expressed by the primary onomatopoeia “bibubibu” in Chinese but “tatutata” in German. And what could possibly be the reason? The fire engines just have different sirens in each country!

Nevertheless, speakers of other languages are not fully oblivious to the onomatopoeias of languages other than their own. The notion of universal onomatopoeias expresses that similar sound imitative patterns can be found across languages. While onomatopoeias may not be exactly the same, they still share similar characteristics that are enough for speakers of other languages to guess their meaning. Tsur (2001) investigated the sound imitation of “cuckoo” and found that [ʊ] and [k] were frequently used across languages. Closely listen to the sound of cuckoo and try to depict which sounds they are producing. You can probably guess that the sound [ʊ] is certainly pronounced, but they do not exactly produce [k]. Therefore, it is questionable why the [k] sound is used in onomatopoeias of “cuckoo” across languages. Consider these examples: “koekoek” (Dutch), “kukavica” (Croatian) and “cuculo” (Italian), and consider their resemblance to your own language.

While cross-linguistic research on onomatopoeias is quite scarce, the existing materials still show that monolingual speakers can understand foreign onomatopoeias to some extent. Tsoi Wai

Chuen & Chung Hoi Wa (2004) analyzed different onomatopoeias in 12 languages and found striking similarities in onomatopoeias of animal sounds. If you look at the list of calls of animals in foreign languages, you can comprehend what “meumeu” (Cantonese), “miaomiao” (Mandarin), “მიაუ” (miao) (Georgian), or “miyav” (Turkish) means- “meow!” Even the Korean version “ya-ong” belongs on this list because if you do not focus on the missing [m] sound, the cat’s imitative [aʊ] sound is clearly present. On top of that, an interesting experiment conducted by Kanerva & Häikiö (2022) illustrated that monolingual Finnish speakers could guess Russian onomatopoeias without any knowledge of Russian; and if they were given extra clues, their guesses were more precise.

Onomatopoeias belong to an open word class and they are created by different word formation processes cross-linguistically even now. In hopes of overcoming the language barrier, rather than learning them like other words, viewing them from the perspective of creativity is a must. Unlike other words that are created by morphemes (a word or part of a word that has meaning), onomatopoeias are just a combination of sounds (Katamba, 1994). Therefore, it is possible to guess their meaning without much prior knowledge of a language. Just look at the environment around you and imagine what the sound could possibly be imitating! Now famous onomatopoeias were invented out of creativity. James Joyce invented “tattarrattat” in “Ulysses” to resemble the sound of knocking on a door and Ubisoft’s XIII comics created “boom”, “bam”, “wham” for gunshots

in the 1960s Batman TV series.

Then, do you really need to know English to understand what “meow” means? It is not a must. While almost every word in a language is arbitrary, onomatopoeias create a small way out for speakers of different languages. When it comes to sound-imitating words, foreign language speakers can use creativity and a little knowledge to put the pieces together and guess their meaning. If given context, as experiments showed, guessing the meaning of onomatopoeias can be quite easy. And in case of getting it wrong, it may not be your fault. You should check if that language even has the same sound phonemes as your own!

Onomatopoeia Challenge for English Speakers

Are you ready to experiment on your own? Try answering the questions below and observe to what extent English speakers can understand Georgian onomatopoeias.

1. Which Georgian sound-imitating word matches “soft laughter, giggling”?
 - a. ბუბუტი (but’but’i)
 - b. კისკისი (k’isk’isi)
 - c. დუდუნი (duduni)
2. Describe what sound might კაკუკაკუ (k’ak’uk’ak’u) be imitating?
3. Which Georgian sound-imitating word matches “bang”?
 - a. გრუხუნი (grukhuni)
 - b. ბახ (bakh)
 - c. წკაპწკუპი (ts’k’ap’ts’k’up’i)

4. Which sound imitation of the animal kingdom does “სისინი” (sisini) belong to?

- a. Birds
- b. Mammals
- c. Fish
- d. Amphibians
- e. Reptiles
- f. Insects

5. Which sound imitation of the animal kingdom does “ბზუილი” (bzuili) belong to?

- a. Birds
- b. Mammals
- c. Fish
- d. Amphibians
- e. Reptiles
- f. Insects

Answers:

1. b 2. Knock-Knock 3. b 4. c 5. b

Onomatopoeia Challenge for Georgian Speakers

Are you ready to experiment on your own? Try answering the questions below and observe to what extent Georgian speakers can understand English onomatopoeias.

1. Which sound imitation of the animal kingdom does “oink” belong to?

- a. Birds
- b. Mammals
- c. Fish
- d. Amphibians
- e. Reptiles
- f. Insects

2. Which sound imitation of the animal kingdom does “caw” belong to?

- a. Birds
- b. Mammals
- c. Fish
- d. Amphibians
- e. Reptiles
- f. Insects

3. In your opinion, which one of the following means “ღიღინი” (ghighini)?

- a. yahoo
- b. whisper
- c. snort
- d. hum

4. In your opinion, which one of the following means “ბუტბუტი” (butbuti)?

- a. grumble
- b. murmur
- c. moan
- d. thump
- e. whistle

5. In your opinion, what does “tick-tock” make you think of and how can you define it?

Answers:

1. b 2. a 3. d 4. b

5. წიკწიკი (tsik'tsik'i) - the sound of a clock.

References

Anderson, E. R. (1998). *A grammar of íconísm*. Associated University Presses.

- Benczes, R., & Szabó, L. P. (2022). Onomatopoeia and metonymy. *Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, 20(1), 195-209. <https://doi.org/10.1075/rcl.00107.ben>
- Kanerva, O., & Häikiö, T. (2022). Sound symbolic potential of Russian onomatopoeias: Evidence from eye-tracking. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, 48(3), 432-445. <https://doi.org/10.1037/xlm0001114>
- Katamba, F. (2004). *English words: Structure, history, usage*. Routledge.
- Marchand, H. (1959). Phonetic symbolism in English word-formation. *Indogermanische Forschungen*, 64, 146-168. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110243062.146>
- Saussure, F. (1916). *Course in General Linguistics*. Duckworth.
- Tsoi Wai Chuen, T., & Chung Hoi Wa, C. (2004). *Characteristics of onomatopoeia*. [Unpublished linguistics research paper].
- Tsur, R. (2001). Onomatopoeia: Cuckoo-language and tick-tocking the constraints of semiotic systems. *Iconicity in Language*.

Francisco Goya and His Descent into Madness

Dachi Danelia



La Romería de San Isidro / *The Pilgrimage to San Isidro* / by Francisco Goya, 1819-1823, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_romer%C3%ADa_de_San_Isidro.jpg). In the public domain.

Paintings are much more than just a simple combination of images, shapes, and colors. They each carry a unique meaning and are often windows into the creator's soul. Understanding the significance behind them can help us better comprehend the artist's personal beliefs, morals, struggles, victories, and overall worldview. Perhaps, it would be challenging to find paintings as complementary to the creator's ideals, attitude, and mental psyche as Goya's famous series of 14 paintings we now refer to as The Black Paintings.

Created between 1819 and 1823, The Black Paintings portray a variety of subjects relevant to Goya's life and the atmosphere of his homeland, Spain, in the 19th century. Upon hearing the name of this series of paintings and then, actually, seeing them, it should be rather simple to understand the

meaning behind the title they've received. The paintings are other-worldly, portraying intense, dark, and haunting scenes, leaving you fascinated and bewildered. The most notable characteristics unifying these paintings are the frequent use of dark undertones and the mystical, almost alien-like creatures. The paintings are devoid of color, giving them a nearly lifeless expression, but Goya's masterful usage of shadows brings life back into them and makes the themes of the paintings even more intense and almost unbearable.

However, this dark style and subject matter were not always indicative of Goya's work. In 1786, Goya became a royal court painter for the Spanish Crown and in the following years, he mostly created portraits depicting Spanish royalty and aristocracy. The beginning of his career is marked by glossy,

colorful, and lively paintings and tapestries done in the Rococo¹ style, which were designed for the royal palace. A few years later, in 1793, Goya suffered an undiagnosed illness, which left him deaf in both ears. This moment marks a shift in Goya's life, both mentally and also in his artwork, leaving the impression that Goya's life is divided into two very distinct stages, pre- and post-illness. Around this time, we witness the acute transition from light to darkness in all aspects of Goya's life - in the technique and subject matter of his paintings, as well as in his perspective and in the issues that intrigued him (Madrid Academy of Art, 2023).

Following this alteration in his mindset, Goya stopped painting for the Spanish royal family and moved into a farmhouse nicknamed "La Quinta del Sordo" or "The Deaf Man's House", located on the outskirts of Madrid (Searle, 2022). This farmhouse became Goya's safe place, almost like his personal palace. Around this time, he started to alienate and isolate himself from the rest of the world and began his descent into madness.

During this time, Goya's work was also impacted by two major events in Spain's history: the Spanish Inquisition and the Napoleonic Wars. The desperate attempt by the Catholic Church to gain control in Spain and Napoleon's occupation of the country created major religious, political, and social upheaval, resulting in numerous tragedies

that had a significant influence on Goya and his artwork. He became pessimistic, and almost cynical, and began to create dark paintings that showcased his bleak and tragic outlook on life and death. Disturbed by the horrors he witnessed, he channeled his pain and disappointment in mankind into his paintings. These works, Goya explained, were meant "to occupy my imagination, tormented as it is by contemplation of my sufferings."



Plate No. 3 from "Los desastres de la guerra" (The disasters of war) by Francisco Goya, 1810-1814, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Prado_-_Los_Desastres_de_la_Guerra_-_No._03_-_Lo_mismo.jpg). In the public domain.

Because he was no longer working for the palace, these works were not intended for public display but rather served as a private reflection of Goya's innermost fears and anxieties. Goya's physical and psychological trauma is palpable in the dark and disturbing imagery that characterizes these paintings. Removed from the constraints of the public eye, Goya unleashed his creative energies with unparalleled intensity, producing some of the most visceral and psychologically complex works of his career. (Andreae, 2003). Taking all of this into account, it's understandable that "black," as a part of the

[1] Furniture and architecture characterized by elaborate late baroque style decoration, popular in 18th-century Europe

title given to these paintings, refers to much more than just the composition of the artwork.

One of the key themes, underscored by Goya's Black Paintings, is his personal views on the Bourbon Monarchy and the Catholic Church. While the rest of Europe moved forward into The Age of Enlightenment, Spain was unstable and isolated. Goya was rather disturbed by this because he believed that Spain was falling behind. In The Black Paintings he rages against the church and the royal house, who, in his own opinion, were dragging Spain back to the Medieval Ages. Yearning for political and religious reform, Goya used these paintings to showcase his personal disdain for the evil and blatant displays of injustice, terror, and the social decay that existed in Spain at that time.



Goya, 1819-1823, Wikimedia Commons

(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Viejos_comiendo_sopa.jpg).
In the public domain.

Other prominent themes in The Black Paintings are madness and mental anguish. In works such as "Witches' Sabbath" and "Two Old Ones Eating Soup," Goya explores the darker recesses of the human mind, depicting scenes of chaos and delirium. These paintings blur the boundaries between

reality and nightmare, inviting viewers to confront their own inner demons and fears. Goya's use of chiaroscuro (an effect of contrasted light and shadow) and dramatic lighting accentuate the psychological tension, creating an atmosphere of unease and foreboding.

One of Goya's most unique and simple, yet captivating, paintings is "The Dog." The painting depicts a large black dog standing on a barren landscape, staring out into the void with a sense of melancholy and resignation. The dog appears to be isolated and dejected, with a solemn expression that conveys a deep sense of loneliness and existential despair. The background is dark and featureless, adding to the sense of desolation and emptiness. "The Dog" is often interpreted as a reflection of Goya's own psychological state and his commentary on the human condition. Some art historians suggest that the dog may symbolize the artist himself, facing the abyss of mortality and contemplating the futility of existence (Hughes, 2003). Others view it as a metaphor for the universal experience of isolation and alienation.

Social and political commentary also permeates The Black Paintings, albeit in a more subtle and allegorical manner. In "The Third of May 1808," Goya depicts the brutal suppression of the Spanish uprising against French occupation, condemning the atrocities of war with raw emotion and moral outrage. Similarly, in works like "The Pilgrimage of San Isidro" and "The Madhouse," Goya critiques the hypocrisies and injustices of contemporary society,

exposing the corruption and moral decay that plagued Spain during his lifetime (Unearthing the enigma: Exploring the Black Paintings Goya, 2023).



El Tres de Mayo 1808 [The Third of May 1808] by Francisco Goya, 1819-1823, Wikimedia Commons (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:El_Tres_de_Mayo,_by_Francisco_de_Goya,_from_Prado_thin_black_margin.jpg). In the public domain.

Except for the inner and outer demons that plagued Goya, two more facts contribute to the mysterious and remarkable nature of the Black Paintings. Goya did not name or date any of the paintings. The dates, titles, and meanings behind them are just speculations made by art historians attempting to decipher what Goya's real intentions were while creating them. Further, Goya originally painted the Black Paintings as murals on the walls of his house. This underlines the painter's tragic life as it seems that the trauma he underwent and the horrors he witnessed were always surrounding him, both figuratively and literally. After Goya's death, the next owner of "The Deaf Man's House," Baron Frédéric Émile d'Erlanger, ordered the murals to be removed and attached to canvases. They now reside in the Museo del Prado in Madrid (Lubow, 2003).

The Black Paintings have garnered widespread acclaim and fascination and have influenced generations of artists and thinkers. The existential themes and allegorical imagery of The Black Paintings resonates deeply with the Romantic sensibility of the 19th century and has earned them recognition as masterpieces of Western art (Thomas, 2021). As we contemplate the enigmatic beauty of Goya's Black Paintings, we are reminded of the enduring power of art and its ability to provide a glimpse into the abyss of the human psyche - challenging us to confront our own mortality, madness, and moral frailty. The Black Paintings continue to captivate contemporary audiences with their timeless relevance and universal significance. In an age marked by uncertainty and upheaval, Goya's dark exploration challenges us to find meaning and redemption amidst the chaos and despair of the world.

References

- Andreae, C. (2003, December 30). *Goya's unparalleled visión*. The Christian Science Monitor.
<https://www.csmonitor.com/2003/1230/pl15s01-bogn.html>
- Du Plessis, A. (2023, September 30). *Francisco Goya "Black Paintings" - examining Goya's dark paintings*. Art in Context.
<https://artincontext.org/francisco-goya-black-paintings/>

Heardman, A. (2022, November 29). *Decoding Goya's Black Paintings*. Mutual Art. <https://www.mutualart.com/Article/Decoding-Goya-s-Black-Paintings/5A997DD5FCBAB85D>

Hughes, R. (2003, October 4). *The unflinching eye*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2003/oct/04/art.biography>

Lubow, A. (2003, July 27). *The secret of the Black Paintings*. The New York Times Magazine. <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/07/27/magazine/the-secret-of-the-black-paintings.html>

Madrid Academy of Art. (2023, January 28). *Goya's darkest masterpieces: A look at his famous black paintings*. <https://www.madridacademyofart.com/blog/goyas-darkest-masterpieces-a-look-at-his-famous-black-paintings>

Phelan, S. (2019, January 30). *Goya's Black Paintings: 'Some people can hardly even look at them.'* The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2019/jan/30/goya-black-paintings-prado-madrid-bicentennial-exhibition>

Searle, A. (2022, June 8). *Goya's horrific Black Paintings are brought to life - La Quinta del Sordo review*. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/jun/08/goyas-horrific-black-paintings-brought-to-life-la-quinta-del-sordo-review>

Thomas, T. (2021). *Art-Voids: Contemplating emptiness in contemporary art* [Doctoral dissertation, Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts]. Digital Maine Repository.

Unearthing the enigma: Exploring the Black Paintings Goya. (2023, November 3). Your Creative Escapes. <https://www.yourcreativeescapes.com/blog/the-black-paintings-goya>

Web Gallery of Art. (n.d.). *"Black Paintings" in the Quinta del Sordo (1820-1823)*. https://www.wga.hu/html_m/g/goya/9/index.html

The Impact of Music on Listeners

Mariam Sarkiashvili



An illustration of a woman immersed in the tranquility of a musical world

Do you listen to music often? If not, after reading this article you will want to grab your headphones! Music is a universal language that unites people and evokes a wide range of emotions regardless of age, gender, or nationality. Research shows that music improves our emotional, mental, and physical health.

The Effect of Music on Emotional Health

Leonard Meyer carried out one of the first studies on the connection between music and emotions in 1956. Meyer analyzed the fifth movement of String Quartet in C-Sharp Minor, op. 131 by Ludwig van Beethoven and found that when listeners' expectations for what was coming next were incorrect, it triggered a greater emotional response (Pandora CloudCover, n.d.). As Phillip Ball (2018) put it, "You might think that if music is

constantly violating our expectations, we'd find listening irritating and unpleasant. But music is constantly meeting our expectations too . . . if our expectations are momentarily foiled and then met, the payoff is greater than if gratification is instant." Hence, this research proves that one of the outcomes of listening to music is emotional satisfaction. Finding a song that relates to your current psychological state is very comforting.

Not only can music validate your present emotional condition, but it can also influence your emotional destination. The 2012 Ferguson & Sheldon study published by the Journal of Positive Psychology, found that individuals who listened to energetic music managed to uplift their moods and enhance their happiness in only two weeks (Boothby, 2017). A method in music therapy known as the iso principle involves listening to songs

that complement your present feelings and gradually changing the songs to reach the desired emotional state. For instance, starting with a sad tune, such as “Glimpse of Us” by Joji, and ending your playlist with “Don’t Stop Me Now” by Queen can boost one’s emotions. Therefore, music is a great way to relieve negative emotions and improve your mood. It is the best distraction when you are under stress and pressure.

The Effect of Music on Mental Health

Music has positive effects on overall mental health and can even impact mental illness. Neurological researchers have found that listening to music activates a release of neurochemicals, such as dopamine and serotonin, that play an essential role in brain function and mental health (Stanborough, 2020). One significant benefit of music is its ability to reduce anxiety and nervousness. A 2013 study (Thoma et al.) showed that listening to music after a stressful occurrence can calm your nervous system, which is beneficial for an individual’s mental well-being. Research from 2017 highlighted that listening to music, especially jazz and classical genres, had a positive impact on symptoms of depression (Leubner & Hinterberger, 2017; Stanborough, 2020). While certain genres may have specific benefits, it still depends on the individual. Some may find acoustic pop songs calming, while others might prefer classical music. Hence, listening to any type of music is a great way to unwind and mentally rest at the end of a long day.

The Effect of Music on Physical Health

Listening to music can improve your heart health – change your heart rate, breath rate, and blood pressure. Songs, especially if they are rhythmic, will compel you to move and dance. And we all know how beneficial physical activity is for our health. Music shifts your attention from the difficulty of a workout to the catchy tunes blasting in your headphones, motivating you to exercise for a longer period. Listening to music can also ease pain. The author of recently published research from McGill University in Montreal, Canada, Darius Valevicius, shared, “We can approximate that favourite music reduced pain by about one point on a 10-point scale, which is at least as strong as an over-the-counter painkiller like Advil [ibuprofen] under the same conditions” (Davis, 2023). Music shifts one’s focus from the pain to a mentally engaging activity, distracting the listener, while also relaxing their body and relieving tension.

Let Music Become Your Companion

Embracing music in our daily lives is simpler than we think. Create a playlist for every situation:

- Working out – Working out at home in silence can be unexciting, while too much noise at the gym can be overwhelming. However, with some upbeat music, exercising won’t seem so unappealing anymore.
- Traveling – One might dread going on a lengthy journey since it can be quite

tedious. That can easily be fixed with pop songs, especially from the 80s and 90s. Nostalgic music can excite an individual and, at the same time, allow them to relax.

- Motivation – You might have come across some Lofi beats on the internet. This type of music is surprisingly useful when it comes to completing tasks, such as: doing homework and cleaning the house. It can motivate you to keep working.
- Relaxation – Classical music can be of great help in terms of relaxation. Since it has no lyrics, it allows your brain to rest and enjoy the melody.

Continue the list on your own and find the perfect music for any situation, purpose, or mood.

To summarize, music has a positive effect on our emotional, mental, and physical health. Whether you want to boost your mood, relieve some anxiety, or get motivated for a workout, listening to music makes everyday life more enjoyable, enhancing our lives.

References

Ball, P. (2018, July 13). *What science says about the mood of music*. Science Museum.

<https://blog.sciencemuseum.org.uk/what-science-says-about-the-mood-of-music/>

Boothby, S. (2017, April 13). *Does music affect your mood?* Healthline.

<https://www.healthline.com/health-news/mental-listening-to-music-lifts-or-reinforces-mood-051713>

Davis, N. (2023, October 25). *Listening to moving music may reduce pain, study says*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/science/2023/oct/25/listening-to-moving-music-may-reduce-pain-study-says#:~:text=Now%2C%20researchers%20say%20there%20is,ibuprofen%5D%20under%20the%20same%20conditions>

Ferguson, Y. L., & Sheldon, K. M. (2012).

Trying to be happier really can work: Two experimental studies. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 8(1), 23–33.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2012.747000>

The iso principle: Alter your mood with music.

(2021, July 29). Health & Bass.

<https://www.healthandbass.com/post/the-iso-principle-alter-your-mood-with-music#:~:text=According%20to%20Music%20Therapy%20Time,%2C%20%26%20That%2C%202008>

Jernigan, C. (2021, January 17). *5 ways music therapy can improve your mental and physical health*. Incadence.

<https://www.incadence.org/post/5-ways-music-therapy-can-improve-your-mental-and-physical-health>

Leubner, D. & Hinterberger, T. (2017).

Reviewing the effectiveness of music interventions in treating depression. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8.

<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.01109>

Pandora CloudCover. (n.d.). *How music affects the mood*.

<https://cloudcovermusic.com/music-psychology/mood#:~:text=Listening%20to%20music%20has%20been,the%20body%20and%20promote%20relaxation>

Stanborough, R. J. (2020, April 1). *The benefits of listening to music*. Healthline.

<https://www.healthline.com/health/benefits-of-music#mood-boost>

Thoma, M. V., La Marca, R., Bronnimann, R., Finkel, L., Ehlert, U., Nater, U. M. (2013). The effect of music on the human stress response. *Plos One*.

<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0070156>

Life Without Colour: The Momentousness of Assembling Your Own Personality

Mariam Lagvilava

Visualise an artist who is standing in front of a canvas, holding a palette of different colours. Every stroke of the brush mixes and blends the colours to create a masterpiece. Throughout our lifetime we are similar to artists; we continuously unite experiences, fears, interests, and values to shape our personality. Our “paintings” depend on the decisions we make, the paths we choose, the people who surround us, and our purposes in this life. However, you may be wondering what makes every single person so distinct. Our personality, consisting of diverse features and characteristics, is a unique tool that distinguishes one person from another. While growing and learning we are creating our own personalities. It is essential during this time to consider individuality, self-awareness, and future goals.

How Conformity Kills Humanity

Conservative society usually imposes certain limitations on individuals. Conventional norms often mean unequal gender roles, strict rules, and high expectations of each person. Any unconventional ideas, ways of life, or unusual clothes are considered to be eccentric. This discourages people from doing or wearing what they adore. In the eyes of conservative people, a perfect world would consist of a monotonous job, a conventional dress code, and a lack of ambition. Watching black-and-white movies



A black and white photograph of a person walking on a bridge, by IBSU student Tamar Tedoradze

is the equivalent of what a non-liberal society is willing to create. To be more precise, conformity kills creativity and passion, causing life to lose its vibrancy and the colours on the paintbrush to dull.

Is It That Important To Be Self-Aware?

Developing genuine self-awareness is not merely beneficial but vital for personal fulfilment and community connection. According to Dr. Tasha Eurich (2023), 95%

of people who were interviewed considered themselves to be self-aware. However, only 10-15% of those interviewed actually fit the criteria for recognizing who they truly are. When we are conscious of our downsides, upsides, fears, and potential, we boost our self-esteem and improve our communication with the community around us. Confidence, leading to stronger communication, is a key quality of our personality that helps us to stand out in a crowd and make a meaningful impact.

The Power of Personality in Goal Achievement

A clearly defined personality encourages one to set and pursue goals. Personal aims drive people to become better versions of themselves, improve their financial state, and build a comfortable space around them. However, strong competition in the current world of employment makes achieving one's goals tremendously hard. Therefore, it is essential to demonstrate the determination to overcome any challenges that we might face. Having a developed personality contributes positively to the pursuit of a successful career. Freddie Mercury, who was a British singer and a member of one of the most prominent bands ever to exist, is a perfect example. His mesmerising personality and his ability to engage with a crowd created electrifying atmospheres during his performances. Despite the fact that his music was initially rejected and misunderstood, he found the courage to push the boundaries and continued to incorporate new elements into his music, making confidence one of his main trademarks. Mercury's persistence and

unusual approach cemented the status of Queen as the most influential band in the world.

Life's Canvas

Ultimately, personality is a painting that allows one to create something exceptional and captivating. By embracing our individuality, being self-aware, and pursuing our goals with determination, we create meaningful experiences and better our future. So, don't hesitate to mix colours or enrich your paint set because this is the one and only path to finding yourself.

References

- Asendorpf, J. B. & Wilpers, S. (1998). Personality effects on social relationships. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(6), 1531–1544.
- Cherry, K. (2023, May 1). *How personality impacts our daily lives*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-personality-2795416>
- Furnes, D., Berg, H., Mitchell, R. M., Paulmann, S. (2019) Exploring the effects of personality traits on the perception of emotions from prosody. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 10. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.00184>
- Sirgy, M. J. (2021) Effects of personality on wellbeing. In *The psychology of quality of life: Wellbeing and positive mental health* (pp. 207–221). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-71888-6>

Eliminating Bias: Culturally Relevant Teaching

Ana Osipov



A photograph of Schoolgirls sitting in the girls' section of a school outdoors, Capt. John Severns, U.S. Air Force, 2007, [h\(https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/99/Schoolgirls_in_Bamozai.JPG\)](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/99/Schoolgirls_in_Bamozai.JPG), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

In this era of globalization, international communities, which are comprised of people from different cultures who hold a variety of values and customs, are shaped by a multitude of factors. One of these factors is the appeal of job opportunities worldwide that may cause families to migrate. Consequently, the children from these families are placed in new environments and have to adjust to unfamiliar settings to get an education. This leads to culturally-mixed classrooms, composed of students from different ethnic backgrounds, where intercultural interaction can be problematic at times. Challenges might include miscommunication and disruptive behavior, creating a chaotic atmosphere. Apart from that, teachers themselves may not have enough training or experience to treat such students appropriately, encourage inclusion,

or solve conflicts, such as bullying or harassment. Overall, this is an important issue in contemporary education that requires awareness and culturally relevant teaching methods.

Without a doubt, the learner is one of the most important figures in an academic setting. A teacher's role, however, is also vital as they are key adults in a student's life. Beyond the subjects taught in schools, teachers are responsible for helping students navigate the whole learning process, which includes regulating their emotions and guiding them toward success. Implementing equity pedagogy practices can help teachers help all students. Equity pedagogy is an approach to education in which teachers develop teaching strategies and cultivate classroom environments that better support

all students, especially those who have been disadvantaged in both school and society (McGee Banks & Banks, 1995).

A teacher must be aware of students' cultural and ethnic beliefs and attitudes and be attentive to the possibility of discriminatory content in the study materials. All resources, including books and video or audio recordings used during the study process, must be free from stereotyping and labelling. Culturally relevant teaching is also deeply connected to students' home lives, communities, and cultural funds of knowledge (essential cultural practices and entities embedded in the daily routines of families). Scholars propose that true culturally relevant teaching is an important method to reduce achievement gaps and promote positive ethnic-racial identities for students of colour (Dickson et al., 2015; Sleeter, 2012). Progressive educators are familiar with the basic principles of equity pedagogy and try to be flexible in the classroom. Flexibility, for instance, may be expressed through initiating debates, so that all students can express their opinions freely, without having a fear of being judged.

Mental scaffolding is another vital aspect of building a community. This concept is intertwined with the idea of social constructivism. Social constructivism, a social learning theory developed by psychologist Lev Vygotsky, posits that individuals are active participants in the creation of their own knowledge (Schreiber & Valle, 2013). Through social interaction, children learn how to build relationships and absorb various backgrounds and

experiences to better relate to their peers and feel connected and protected. An example of a classroom activity that targets these goals is the jigsaw activity. It aims to unite group members so that they become interdependent. Each of them has equal rights in terms of expressing their opinion, their actions are interrelated, and last but not least, the final product is the result of cooperative work. For instance, the teacher may group the students, give them a topic for research, and assign each of the members a specific role, such as the speaker (the one who presents findings), the gatherer (the one who is responsible for collecting information), and the writer (the one who takes notes).

Another effective tool to cope with prejudice and provide multicultural education is to implement "a hidden curriculum" in the study process. A hidden curriculum "is an implicit curriculum that expresses and represents attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours, which are conveyed or communicated without aware intent" (Jerald, 2006, pp.125-128). It is a plan, according to which educators integrate elements of moral education into their teaching practice. Even though these plans are not a part of the official curriculum, teachers set goals at the beginning of an academic year and integrate suitable strategies to achieve increased tolerance, more empathy, and a sense of unity in the classroom.

It is clear that culturally relevant teaching practices are needed in the classroom but which entities are responsible for their implementation? Teachers, first of all, as central figures, have to be flexible. They have

to recognize the differences between mainstream school students and the ones who are not from the dominant culture. Teachers need to act and think without labelling and stereotyping and create a classroom environment that ensures democracy and freedom of speech. Secondly, educational institutions should also contribute to the integration of all students. They should provide academic personnel with educational workshops on ethnic differences, cultural backgrounds, the importance of tolerance, and acknowledging differences among students. Overall, all parties involved in the learning process should be equally interested in creating inclusive surroundings for students.

On the whole, the classroom should be an environment where every single student is valued, protected, loved, and appreciated. All races, nationalities, customs, traditions, views, and perceptions must be tolerated. Especially when it comes to education, there is no room for discrimination, prejudice, or bias. All learners deserve love and equity. Culturally relevant teaching is therefore important in achieving a safe environment where all students can succeed.

References

- Dickson G. L., Chun H., Fernandez I. T. (2015). The development and initial validation of the student measure of culturally responsive teaching. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 41, 141-154. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534508415604879>
- Fallon, L. M., Cathcart, S. C., Johnson, A. H., Minami, T., O'Keeffe, B. V., DeFouw, E. R., & Sugai, G. (2023). A teacher self-assessment of culturally relevant practice to inform educator professional development decisions in MTSS contexts. *Assessment for Effective Intervention*, 48(2), 100-112. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15345084221111338>
- Gay, G. (2018). *Culturally responsive teaching: Theory, research, and practice*. Teachers College Press.
- Hoytt, K., Hunt, S., & Lovett, M. A. (2022). Impact of cultural responsiveness on student achievement in secondary schools. *Alabama Journal of Educational Leadership*, 9, 1-12.
- Jerald, C. D. (2006). *The hidden costs of curriculum narrowing. Issue brief*. Center for Comprehensive School Reform and Improvement. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED495013>
- Ladson-Billings, G. (2023). "Yes, but how do we do it?": Practicing culturally relevant pedagogy. In J. Landsman & C. W. Lewis (Eds.), *White teachers/diverse classrooms: Creating inclusive schools, building on students' diversity, and providing true educational equity* (pp. 33-46). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003448709>
- McGee Banks, C. A., & Banks, J. A. (1995). Equity pedagogy: An essential component of multicultural education. *Theory Into Practice*, 34(3), 152-158. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405849500954367>

Schreiber, L. M., & Valle, B. E. (2013). Social constructivist teaching strategies in the small group classroom. *Small Group Research*, 44(4), 395-411.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1046496413488422>

Sleeter C. E. (2012). Confronting the marginalization of culturally responsive pedagogy. *Urban Education*, 47, 562-584.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085911431472>

From Thunderbolt to Tranquility: Unveiling the Paradoxical *Vajra*

Ananya Atri



A photograph of the closed prongs *vajra* in the Georgian National Museum, by IBSU student Ananya Atri,

The Georgian National Museum houses a wide range of fascinating artifacts from numerous cultures. One such Buddhist artifact, "An Attribute of Buddhist Deity," or *vajra* is widely acknowledged as a symbol of peace and harmony. However, the *vajra* was exhibited as a Buddhist "weapon" in the museum. This article postulates that the purpose of the *vajra* in Buddhism has nothing to do with combat and instead is an artifact of ritual and meditation practices (Yeh, 2006). While unveiling the paradox of the *vajra*, its history, chronology, and the provenance of this specific artifact will be examined.

The Buddhist *vajra* had its origin in Tibet, where it is referred to as *dorje*. O'Brien (2018) contends that the *vajra* is the emblem of the Tibetan Vajrayana school of Buddhism, whose rites can enable practitioners to

become enlightened or achieve Nirvana. Hamilton-Blyth (2013) explains that Nirvana is the Buddhist concept of attaining a state of self-satisfaction, away from all worldly suffering. This state is often considered to be the goal of Buddhist people and practicing monks. Watt (2022) claims that Vajrayana is the final meditation a monk practices before achieving ultimate enlightenment. The three most significant ceremonial artifacts in Vajrayana Buddhism are the *vajra*, the bell, and the *mala* (prayer beads). In the practice of deity meditation, a cornerstone of Vajrayana Buddhism, the practitioner is urged to envision their mind changing into, or manifesting as, a *vajra* (Watt, 2022).

Zwalf (1985) also elaborated on the ritual aspect of the *vajra*. During meditation, the bell, thought of as female and signifying knowledge, is held in the left hand while the

vajra, which represents 'male' skill, is held in the right hand (Britannica, 2019). When the *vajra* and the bell were combined, they formed a unity of coefficients for salvation (Zwalf, 1985). Through the interaction of the two (the *vajra* and the bell), humans can finally reach enlightenment. The *vajra* is also an aid of visualization in this ritual procedure (Watt, 2022). Hence, the *vajra* is a part of the ritual process in Buddhism where monks, who are at the upper level of social stratification (i.e. the ranking of people or groups of people within a society), and even those who are at a lower level of social stratification, use the artifact for concentration and meditation (Kerbo, 2006).

The *vajra*, however, is not merely a Buddhist concept that originated in Tibet. The concept of the *vajra* appeared in Hindu literature before it appeared in Buddhist literature, so the Hindu understanding precedes the Buddhist understanding of the concept. According to Louise (2017), the *vajra* was not always a symbol of meditation and peace. It was the primary weapon of the Hindu God of Rain, Indra. According to the *Rigveda*, an ancient Indian text, Indra's *vajra* once had open prongs (Apte, 1956). According to Buddhist mythology, Shakyamuni, the Buddha himself, took the *vajra* from Indra and compelled its prongs to close, turning it from a terrible weapon into a nonviolent scepter (Louise, 2017). Hence, the *vajra* is not a weapon in Buddhism but a "peace scepter" with closed prongs, as it is depicted in the photo above of the artifact at the Georgian National Museum.

The history of how this artifact, dating back

to the 1800s, arrived in Georgia and ended up in the National Museum begins with General Zurab Kobiashvili (1864–1931), who was an admirer and connoisseur of weaponry and oriental culture. During his military service, he was frequently stationed in Europe and Asia. Over the years, this allowed him to collect military equipment and Buddhist artifacts, of both historic and artistic significance. There were over 400 items in his collection, including Hindu and Buddhist objects as well as ethnocultural samples from India, China, Japan, and Mongolia. Since Zurab and Tamar Kobiashvili had no heir, they decided to sell their collection to the museum after returning to Tbilisi in 1926. This collection was an important addition to the museum due to the fact that Georgia had traded with countries in the Far East as early as the Middle Ages via the "Silk Road" (Kapianidze, 2018).

In order to unveil the paradox of the *vajra*, this article has examined its path, exposing a complex web of metamorphosis and symbolism. This artifact originated in Tibet in the 19th century, where it was collected by Kobiashvili, and appeared in Georgia in the 20th century. In Buddhism and the culture of Tibet, the *vajra* represents peace and salvation; however, it represents war in Hinduism. Thus, the paradoxical nature of the *vajra* - a Buddhist "weapon" symbolizing peace - is what makes it so fascinating.

References

Apte, V. M. (1956). Vajra in the Rgveda. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, 37(1/4), 292-295.

Britannica (n.d.). Vajra. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved February 20, 2024, from <https://www.britannica.com/topic/vajra>

Ghosh, B. (1997). The concept of vajra and its symbolic transformation. *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, 10-11.

Hamilton-Blyth, S. (2013). *Early Buddhism: A new approach: The I of the beholder*. Routledge.

Kapianidze, M (2018). Study of the arms collection at the Georgian National Museum. *Bulletin of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences*, 12(4), 167–171.

Kerbo, H. R. (2006). Social stratification. In C. D. Bryant & D. L. Peck (Eds.), *21st century sociology: A reference handbook* (pp. 228-236). Sage Publications.

Louise, R. (2017, July 24). *The vajra: An ancient weapon of war*. Ancient Origins. <https://www.ancient-origins.net/artifacts-ancient-technology/vajra-ancient-weapon-war-008467>

O'Brien, B. (2018, September 26). *The vajra (dorje) as a symbol in Buddhism*. Learn Religions. <https://www.learnreligions.com/vajra-or-dorje-449881>

Watt, J. (2022). *What's in a symbol? Vajra: Indra's lightning bolt in Vajrayana ritual and art*. Tricycle. <https://tricycle.org/magazine/vajra-buddhism/>

Yeh, T. D. (2006). The way to peace: A Buddhist perspective. *International Journal of Peace Studies*, 11(1), 91-112.

Zwalf. (1985). *Buddhism: Art and Faith* [Exhibition]. The British Museum, London, England. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/A_1948-0716-11-b

Appendix A

The Difference Between Open and Closed Prongs Vajra

Figure A1: Closed prongs vajra [Photograph], by Ananya Atri, 2024.



Figure A2: Open prongs vajra [Photograph], by The Metropolitan Museum of Art.



The ABCs of Romanticism in Literature

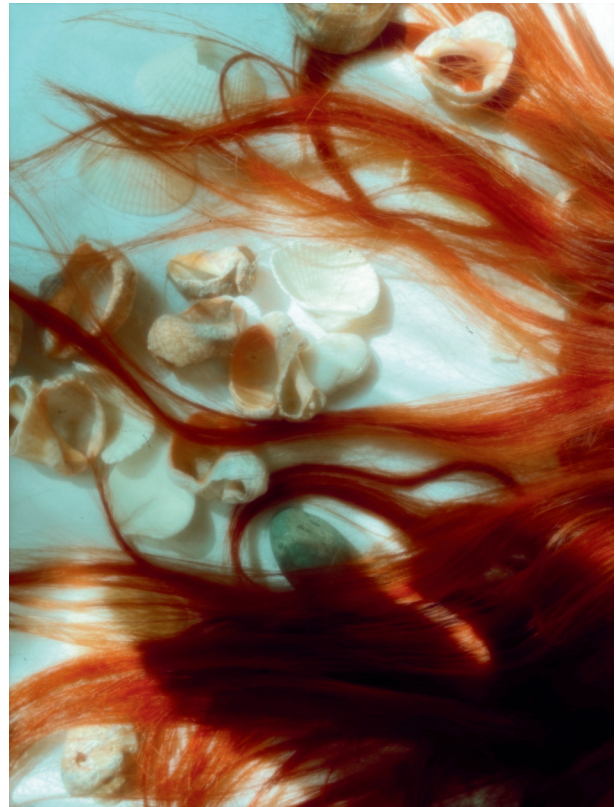
Lizi Svanidze

Romanticism is a literary movement that began in Great Britain and Germany in the 18th century and spread to other European countries in the 19th century. Romanticism introduced a new type of lyric hero in literature: a person with deep feelings; a passionate temperament; and a restless, unruly, and slightly confused relationship with reality. It was a unity of thoughts and principles that characterized the majority of creators of that era. It changed the view of men and the world, stating that each person is a special being.

The term "romanticism" originated from the word "romance," but from the 18th century on, the term expanded to encompass fantastic, strange, and fabulous content. Romanticism, instead of directly reflecting reality, paints what is invented by dreams, desires, and the conflict between real life and human ideals. Romantics were dissatisfied with reality and so they created a surreal, romantic world of dreams. Quoting Novalis, Gaarder (1991/1994) wrote, "The world becomes a dream, and the dream becomes reality." The main themes of this dream or the ABCs of romanticism in literature are:

Striving for an ideal, eternal world

One essential sign of Romanticism is the assumption of two worlds: the real and the ideal. Man does not like the reality around him, which is ever-changing, finite, transitory,



A photograph of red hair intertwined with seashells, by IBSU student Nutsa Jokhadze

and basic. The ideal, desired world is eternal, sublime, and divine. It is this ideal world that the romantic strives for.

Extreme individualism and subjectivism

The most important thing for Romanticism is the individual person– their inner world, and their spiritual feelings. Before, in Classicism, moral-ethical values were more important than what a person felt or experienced. Romanticism puts a person's feelings, subjective views, and inner world above everyone and everything. A person can act as they want. Thus, Romanticism is considered the manifestation of human

freedom at the highest level.

The global sadness of the past

Romantics are characterized by a tragic feeling relating to the passage of time and the fleeting nature of life. They deeply feel the impermanence of everything around them, including beauty, youth, and happiness. This awareness of transience often fills them with a sense of melancholy and longing for an ideal, eternal world that contrasts with the temporary nature of reality. For example, William Wordsworth's (1807) inner feelings are emphasized in his poem "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud:"

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Protestant, rebel hero

The romantic hero is not happy with the existing mortal world. He is a rebel fighting against the idea that everything changes and ends. He wants to overcome this reality and connect with something eternal. A romantic hero seeks immortality and in his search, he tries to change the world around him. Romanticism created more rebellious heroes than any other literary movement before it.

Idealization of the past

For Romantic authors, the current reality is unacceptable and boring. Romantic writers idealize the past and view the present as a mere ghost of past glories. The poem, "Ode

on a Grecian Urn" by John Keats (1819) represents this view; reflecting on how the urn will remain even after the current generation has passed away, serving as a timeless link to the past which is still unchanged:

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou
say'st,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to
know."

Attitude towards nature

Nature is a manifestation of the infinite and spiritual universe. Nature provides a window to the ideal world, allowing man to be a part of it. Romantic authors have a deep reverence for the natural world as it serves as a source of inspiration, solace, and spiritual nourishment. In "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey," William Wordsworth (1798) reflects on the profound influence that nature had on his life:

These waters, rolling from their mountain-
springs
With a sweet inland murmur. —Once
again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
Which on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and
connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.

Exploration of a world spirit

Romantic writers created the concept of a

“world spirit” that can be sought both in nature and in one’s own mind. “The mysterious way leads inwards,” meaning man bears the whole universe within himself and comes closest to the mystery of the world by stepping inside himself (Novalis, 1797-1799/1997). The world spirit is an idea that a universal essence or spirit connects everything in the world. This spirit is present in nature, people, culture, and art. Romantics believed that by looking within themselves and exploring their feelings, they could understand and connect with this universal spirit.

Idealization and mystification of love

Romanticism is characterized by the idealization and mystification of love. In this transitory world, love is a manifestation of the eternal, so the lover is often an ideal, divine being, or even a mysterious phantom that does not exist in reality. Romanticism depicts ideal, spiritual connections and an aspiration to the sublime over the earthly, everyday love of people. A classic example of the mystification of love is the illusory (imaginary) image of a dead or lost soulmate - the tragic feeling of love. *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë vividly explores this kind of tragic love that is shared between Catherine and Heathcliff.

Romanticism was a transformative literary movement that emerged in response to the limitations of reality. It emphasized the importance of individual feelings, the idealization of nature and the past, and the pursuit of a transcendent world. By prioritizing subjective experience and the inner life, Romanticism celebrates the unique

spirit of each person and the profound connection between humanity and the natural world. Through art and imagination, Romantic poets and writers sought to bridge the gap between the real and the ideal, creating a legacy of beauty and introspection that continues to inspire.

References

Delaney, D., Ward, C., Fiorina, C. R. (2003). *Fields of vision: Literature in the English language, volume 1*. Longman.

Gaarder, J. (1994). *Sophie's world: A novel about the history of philosophy* (P. Moller, Trans.). Berkley Books. (Original work published 1991)

Keats, J. (1819). *Ode on a grecian urn*. Retrieved from <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/44477/ode-on-a-grecian-urn>

Novalis. (1997). *Novalis: Philosophical writings* (M. M. Stoljar, Trans.). State University of New York Press. (Original work published 1797-1799)

Somers, J. (2024, May 2). *Romanticism in literature: Definition and examples*. ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/romanticism-definition-4777449#:~:text=Romanticism%20is%20a%20literary%20movement,embrace%20of%20isolation%20and%20melancholy>

Sullivan, W. (2015, June 22). *BBC The Romantics - 1 - Liberty* [Video]. YouTube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0sJLCztC_r8

Wordsworth, W. (1798, July 13). *Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey*. Retrieved from
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45527/lines-composed-a-few-miles-above-tintern-abbey-on-revisiting-the-banks-of-the-wye-during-a-tour-july-13-1798>

Wordsworth, W. (1807). *I wandered lonely as a cloud*. Retrieved from
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/45521/i-wandered-lonely-as-a-cloud>

Pizza and the Big Mac

Ana Photelidze



An illustration of a burger and French fries

Food is an integral part of a culture that reflects a society's traditions, values, and tastes. As a result, it plays a crucial role in shaping our collective identity. The foods we consume often become symbols of cultural significance, influencing not only our dining habits but also our societal norms and cultural expressions. Two stand-out examples of such culinary icons are pizza and the Big Mac. These foods have transcended their original culinary contexts to become broader cultural phenomena. In their roles as cultural ambassadors, pizza and the Big Mac not only impact pop culture but reveal the complex relationship between people, culture, and food.

Pizza originated in Italy and today it is the most popular international dish. There is an opinion that the history of pizza actually began when yeast and sourdough appeared

in ancient Egypt several thousand years ago (Ovadia, 2008). Regardless, pizza's cultural journey began in Italy, and from there emigrants introduced its recipe to the whole world. Eventually, it became an everyday food in America. At first, it was only considered food for the poor, but over time, it was adopted by the cultures of many countries, adapted to local tastes, and is still considered a cherished dish (Helstosky, 2008). Pizza reflects the fusion of tradition and innovation because different variations of it can be found across the world. It can be said that pizza, as a global phenomenon, also allows for cultural expression, as it ranges from a classic Margherita in Italy to pizzas with unconventional toppings, such as pineapple in Canada.

Pizza has had a huge impact on pop culture and promotes a sense of social connection

and cultural identity. You will often come across scenes in films when friends fight over the last piece of pizza. In the popular film, *Home Alone* (1990), the main character often indulges in pizza (you might remember him enjoying a giant box of pizza while taking a limo ride). However, the most memorable scene is when the whole family orders pizzas before setting off on their holiday trip. This scene illustrates the sense of gratification and comfort that pizza provides, no matter in chaos or in the pleasant context of family gatherings. These scenes emphasize the importance of pizza to American culture and, moreover, they depict the shared social experience that pizza promotes.

One of the reasons pizza has become an international treasure is its ability to easily integrate itself into multiple cultures with a simple change of its toppings! On the other hand, the Big Mac is one specific fast food item that has managed to become a global phenomenon. The Big Mac, an emblem of American fast food culture, is a symbol of consumerism and globalization that carries specific meanings and influences an individual's self-perception and identity. It reflects the increasing interconnectedness of society and the spread of Western consumerism around the world. From a humble beginning of being advertised in *The Evening Standard* in 1967 ("only 45 cents!"), it has since become a source of daily enjoyment, a symbol of instant gratification, and a fast-paced life.

We can track the impact the Big Mac has had on culture through its representation in films such as *Pulp Fiction* (1994), *Lost in Translation*

(2003), and *Jiro Dreams of Sushi* (2011), among others. Its consumption can be seen as an act of assimilation into a globalized consumer culture, an expression of the possibility of social acceptance and belonging. In the film, *Jiro Dreams of Sushi*, Jiro visits a Michelin-starred restaurant in Tokyo that serves both Western and national dishes. This shows that even cultures that are more traditional are ready to adopt the culinary practices of the West and assimilate into the globalized consumer culture. The Big Mac evokes various psychological associations, such as pleasure, comfort, convenience, and nostalgia - it elicits familiar memories and emotions within and among societies. Consequently, Big Mac consumption is often associated with shared social experiences. At the beginning of the film, *Pulp Fiction*, the two main characters are driving around and talking about the difference between cultures and how the Big Mac is the same in Paris and in the USA. This dialogue highlights the ability of the Big Mac to impact sociocultural experiences. The fact that the Big Mac is the same in Paris as it is in the USA creates a commonality that allows people to experience a sense of stability and consistency amid cultural diversity in an ever-changing world. In the film, *Lost in Translation*, the two main characters, who are Americans in Tokyo, often eat Western fast food to feel a connection and consistency while in a different culture. Its consumption evokes psychological satisfaction and a sense of nostalgia in the main characters.

The Big Mac has made its way around the world and has become a symbol of the

changing culinary landscape. Although the Big Mac prides itself on the ingredients that make it a standard across the world, McDonald's has also been flexible in allowing regional variations and adaptations. These adaptations allow countries to maintain their cultural identity while also embracing global culture. In some cultures, local ingredients and additives are used to meet local preferences. For example, as beef is banned in India, McDonald's (2016) introduced a new version where they replaced beef with chicken. In Egypt, McDonald's offers a Chicken Big Mac, a Fish Mac, and in 2001 they introduced the McFalafel sandwich. These adaptive mechanisms allow the concept of the Big Mac to adapt to various cultural sensitivities while maintaining market appeal.

Today, you can find pizza and Big Macs on menus across the world. Pizza easily adapts to different tastes and diets by adding different toppings. "It crossed certain geographic and cultural boundaries: it became less standardized, as consumers around the world have embraced pizza by redefining it according to their tastes" (Helstosky, 2008). Similarly, the Big Mac adapts to the local market while maintaining its core identity. McDonald's operates in 118 countries, including countries where people don't eat beef, and the Big Mac is still McDonald's most popular product. These dishes clearly show how food can cross borders, adapt to local preferences, and become symbols of cultural exchange. We can imagine these foods as a bridge that connects people with their cultural roots, but at the same time, offers integration into a

new cultural context.

References

- Agate, J. (2020, January 15). *The incredible history of the Big Mac*. Love Food.
<https://www.lovefood.com/gallerylist/91684/the-incredible-history-of-the-big-mac>
- Helstosky, C. (2008). *Pizza: A global history*. Reaktion Books.
- International availability of McDonald's products*. (2024, June 2). In *Wikipedia*.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_availability_of_McDonald%27s_products
- McDonald's. (2016, November 8). *Chicken Maharaja Mac: The Indian answer to Big Mac*.
<https://mcdonaldsblog.in/2016/11/chicken-maharaja-mac-the-indian-answer-to-big-mac/>
- Ovadia, D. (2008). A history of pizza. In G. M. Campbell, M. G. Scanlon, & D. L. Pyle (Eds.), *Bubbles in Food 2: Novelty, Health and Luxury* (pp. 411–423). 10.1016/B978-1-891127-59-5.50043-2
- The Evening Standard. (1967, April 21). [An image from a page in the newspaper].
<https://www.newspapers.com/newspage/27959874/>

Tailoring ESL Teaching: Key Tips for Personalized Learning

Anano Kazeishvili



A photograph of colorful books on a shelf

As English is perceived as the world's lingua franca, when people start learning English they work hard to excel at it. Learners, whether adults or children, should be taught with appropriate methodologies and approaches that consider their diversity. Educators must implement needed techniques and tailor their teaching to help students achieve their goals and advance in English. Several factors should be taken into account when teaching students from different backgrounds.

First of all, when you begin teaching a new group of students, you should understand their specific learning style. People receive and process information in distinct ways and being aware of a student's learning style can inform how they cope with different tasks and understand and memorize new information. Consequently, being aware of

students' learning styles allows you to tailor your teaching methods and achieve targeted goals. Because English language students have to critically analyze some topics (i.e. grammar) and remember things in a rote manner (i.e. new terminology), it's important to consider the learning styles when presenting new information. The four main learning styles are visual learners, who need the support of pictures or graphics; auditory learners, who are comfortable just listening; reading/writing learners, who may need to take notes; and lastly, kinesthetic learners, who learn by being hands-on and involved (Hramiak & Hudson, 2014).

So how do you accommodate a classroom full of differing learning styles simultaneously? Imagine you are explaining the present simple tense to your students. If you simply tell your students the grammar

rule, they may not fully understand or be able to apply the information. Instead, you should consider how to effectively combine various strategies to present the information. For example, while explaining the topic, use visual support such as a presentation or notes written on the blackboard. For the kinesthetic learners, provide tangible flashcards or shuffled sentences for them to put in the correct order. To engage the reading/writing learners, have students come to the blackboard and write sentences in the target tense (Hallifax et al., 2020). Small adjustments and considerations are all you need to tailor your activity to accommodate the different types of learners.

In addition to distinct learning styles, all students have different knowledge levels. Every time someone new comes to your classroom (no matter if it is a virtual classroom, a room in your house, or a traditional school classroom), you should identify the learner by looking at them in three dimensions. You should view their behavior beyond the surface level and try to understand underlying factors such as cultural or social influence (Mercer, 2019). You must then assess their current knowledge and determine their language level to decide what tasks to assign. It is important to meet each student at the level they are at. You should not begin teaching your AI students from the BI level or your BI students from the AI level. The material you cover should not be too hard to master, but not so easy that it becomes boring. Using a diagnostic test is a great way to assess students' current knowledge. Additionally, you may ask them to provide feedback on

their own language level. However, do not rely solely on the information they provide, as students tend to misjudge their language level (Hramiak & Hudson, 2014).

Identifying students' skills is different from assessing their prior knowledge and presents further challenges. You should get to know what skills your students excel at and what their weaknesses are. For instance, if they struggle with writing, you as the teacher should try to improve their writing skills step-by-step, otherwise, they will be overwhelmed and frustrated. An experiment that was conducted in the accounting department of a small university found that students were able to improve their writing skills over the course of a semester if they were given limited assignments, clear evaluation criteria, and received timely feedback from the faculty (Christensen et al., 2004). The same approach can be applied when practicing listening, reading, or speaking skills.

One last but also very important thing for teachers to consider is to learn what motivations your students have for learning the language. If you focus on the goal they have in mind, you can achieve much more together. For example, if your student simply wants to pass a national exam that does not include speaking tasks, but you continue to focus only on making speeches, then your aims and expected outcomes do not align with the student's and this can cause problems. Therefore, before planning your lesson, you should identify what you want your students to know at the end of the lesson and consider how that knowledge aligns with their overall language goals.

Identifying goals is just as important for students. Teachers should guide students to make realistic goals and reevaluate them throughout the semester to prevent problems or frustrations from arising (Koruklu, 2023).

Finally, teachers should always be open to and looking for new approaches and research in the field of education. Incorporating individualized approaches into your lessons is something you should work on constantly. Try to observe everything in your classroom. Attentively listen to your students when they are working in groups or discussing something. Create rapport that will foster your understanding of their skills and goals. Show that you are interested; as a result, students will be more open to sharing their ideas and concerns. This will help you to identify and fulfill their needs (Scrivener, 2012).

To sum up, you, as a teacher, should diversify your approaches and tailor them to meet the individual needs of your students. Considering the different learning styles, knowledge levels, strengths and weaknesses, and motivations of your students is essential to helping them feel comfortable and interested in learning and excelling at the English language. Being open to applying new techniques and researching new methods will ensure you are the best teacher for your students.

References

- Christensen, D. S., Barnes, J. N., & Rees, D. (2004). Improving the writing skills of accounting students: An experiment. *Journal of College Teaching & Learning (TLC)*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.19030/tlc.v1i1.1902>
- Hallifax, S., Lavoué, E., & Serna, A. (2020). To tailor or not to tailor gamification? An analysis of the impact of tailored game elements on learners' behaviours and motivation. In I.I. Bittencourt, M. Cukurova, K. Muldner, R. Luckin, E. Millan (Eds.), *Artificial intelligence in education: 21st international conference, AIED 2020, Ifrane, Morocco, July 6–10, 2020, proceedings, part I* (pp. 216–227). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-52237-7_18
- Hramiak, A., & Hudson, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Understanding learning and teaching in secondary schools*. Routledge.
- Hull, R. E. (1973). Selecting an approach to individualized education. *The Phi Delta Kappan*, 55(3), 169–173. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20297480>
- Koruklu, J. (2023, April 27). *Setting clear and achievable goals in language learning*. LinkedIn. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/setting-clear-achievable-goals-language-learning-jolita-koruklu>
- Mercer, S. (2019). Language learner engagement: Setting the scene. In X. Gao (Ed.), *Second Handbook of English Language Teaching* (pp. 643–660). Springer.

Osewalt, G. (n.d.). *Individualized instruction vs. differentiated instruction*. Understood.
<https://www.understood.org/en/articles/individualized-instruction-vs-differentiated-instruction>

Scrivener, J. (2012). *Classroom management techniques*. Cambridge University Press.

Verses in Harmony: The Evolution of Poetry in Music

Ani Ruadze



A photograph of roses atop a sheet of music next to a small violin

Poetry and music are two separate art forms that have captivated audiences since ancient times. Poetry is well-known for its use of symbols, expressing the deepest of human emotions. The rhythm in music, which gives it structure and movement, can alter how we feel while listening. For example, classical music might have a steady beat, while jazz might have a more complex form, but both can equally move their listeners. Poetry and music touch people's souls and may even leave scars on people's hearts.

When poetry is added to music the impact is even greater. What is it about the combination of poetry and music that makes it so unique? When harmonic melody meets metaphorical lines, it can create something even more heart-touching and will take people to different worlds. Poetry in music is like painting with words and melodies.

"Emotion moves within and takes shape in words. Words are not enough, and so one sighs it. Sighing it is not enough, and so one draws it out in song" (Fuller, 2018, pp. 51-52). Examining how these two art forms have evolved together can help us appreciate their deep connection and the emotions they inspire.

Everything has its start, so when did these two meet each other? It is hard to determine a specific time, though some of the earliest examples of poetry in music can be traced back to ancient civilizations such as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were brought to life through melodic chants and captivated audiences with their imagery and emotional depth (Britannica, 2021). In ancient China and Japan, poetry such as the Chinese *Shijing* and Japanese *tanka* were known as songs.

The *Shijing* or “The Book of Songs,” a collection of Chinese poems dating back to the Zhou dynasty, combined lyrical beauty with natural imagery and metaphors to express emotions associated with daily life (Behan, 2022). Meanwhile, *tanka* (“short song”), a traditional Japanese poetic form similar to a sonnet, is known for its elegant verse (*Tanka*, n.d.).

As civilizations evolved, so did the relationship between poetry and music. During the Renaissance period, which is known for ‘rebirth’, poets and composers pushed the boundaries of artistic expression. One composer of the time, John Dowland (1600), left an impact with his melancholic lyrics and melodies. His song, “Flow, My Tears,” is considered one of the most widely known English songs of the early 17th century and still amazes people today (Buja, 2015):

Flow, my tears, fall from your springs!
Exiled for ever, let me mourn;
Where night’s black bird her sad infamy
sings,
There let me live forlorn.

Through his lyrics, Dowland conveys a sense of sadness and hopelessness. The music, in a minor key, reinforces this feeling, “the opening melody descends, providing a musical portrayal of falling tears” (*John Dowland: “Flow, my tears,”* n.d.). Another significant milestone for poetry and music that started in the 17th century was the beginning of the opera. In 1607, Claudio Monteverdi’s *L’Orfeo* became the first opera to be staged. His technique of integrating dramatic verse with musical accompaniment

gave rise to a new form of theatrical storytelling (English National Opera, n.d.).

During the Romantic era, which was characterized by a focus on emotion, imagination, and individualism, the world of music witnessed the emergence of influential composers such as Franz Schubert and Robert Schumann. These composers gave rise to the German *lied* or “song” an art form of the 18th century that was characterized by the setting of German poetry to music. Schubert’s “*Erk König*,” (“Elf King”) based on a poem by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, is a great example of the genre, with its vivid narrative, contrasting vocal lines, and dramatic piano accompaniment conveying the intensity of the story. Similarly, Schumann’s “*Dichterliebe*” (“A Poet’s Love”), a song cycle based on poems by Heinrich Heine, explores themes of love and longing with its beautiful melodies (Serenade, 2024). One of the defining features of Romantic music was its emphasis on emotional expression and self-analysis. Composers from that era evoke a wide range of emotions, from profound sadness to pure joy, through their music. They frequently drew inspiration from poetry, using literary texts as the basis for their compositions or imbuing their music with the same emotional depth and complexity found in poetry (String Ovation Team, 2019).

The modern era has seen the emergence of new genres and artistic movements that continue to blur the boundaries between poetry and music. From beat poetry to hip hop, artists of the 20th century have found innovative ways to combine language and

rhythm, using music as a platform to amplify their poetic voices and convey powerful messages to global audiences. Today, one of the most popular modern musicians is Taylor Swift. Her albums *folklore* and *evermore* contain magical storytelling and mature songwriting. The songs on those albums are about self-discovery, love, loss, escapism, and nostalgia. She is known for her poetic lyricism, often using detailed metaphors and vivid imagery in her songs. In “Champagne Problems,” the lines, “Your Midas touch on the Chevy door,/ November flush and your flannel cure” create a feeling of intimacy and nostalgia, showing a moment of care and warmth (Swift, 2020). The mention of a “Midas touch on the Chevy door” is used to describe the power of love, while the “flannel cure” represents comfort and security in uncertain times. Another of her masterpieces is “All Too Well,” and its poetic lyrics are filled with rich metaphors and observations. The song uses autumn as a sad season and a scarf to represent the narrator’s innocence which was taken away. It has a captivating melody and poetic words that represent love, loss, and the pain of a broken heart.

Although impactful on their own, the combination of music and poetry has a unique ability to express the deepest of human emotions and touch people’s hearts. Artists have combined these art forms across the centuries and into the present day. Poetry in music has enriched our lives and shown the limitless creativity of the human spirit and the power of art to change hearts and minds.

References

- Arkenberg, R. (2002, October). *Music in the Renaissance*. The Met’s Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History.
https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/renm/hd_renm.htm
- Behan, M. (2022, May 21). *The book of songs*. By Arcadia.
<https://www.byarcadia.org/post/the-book-of-songs>
- Britannica (2021). Homer summary. In *Encyclopædia Britannica*.
<https://www.britannica.com/summary/Homer-Greek-poet>
- Bruce, A., Dumaraog, A., & Papadopoulos, C. (2024, June 20). *What Taylor Swift’s all too well 10 minute version lyrics mean*. Screen Rant. <https://screenrant.com/taylor-swift-all-too-well-lyrics-meaning-explained/>
- Buja, M. (2015, June 19). *Flow my tears: Weeping with Dowland*. Interlude.
<https://interlude.hk/flow-tears-weeping-dowland/>
- Colby, J. P. (2022, April 18). *Taking a page from poetry to understand the music*. Univeristy of Rochester.
<https://www.rochester.edu/newscenter/eastman-music-theorist-lines-and-lyrics-book-on-poetry-song-519702/>
- Dowland, J. (1600). Flow, my tears [Song]. *On The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres* [Album].

English National Opera. (n.d.). *Claudio Monteverdi*.

<https://www.eno.org/composers/claudio-monteverdi/>

Fuller, M. A. (2018). *An introduction to Chinese poetry: from the canon of poetry to the lyrics of the song dynasty*. Harvard University Asia Center.

John Dowland: "Flow, my tears.". (n.d.). In E. M. Morgan-Ellis (Ed.), *Resonances: Engaging music in its cultural context*. University of North Georgia Press Dahlonega, Georgia.

Matthews, C. (2016, June 7). *Poetry and music are more closely related than we think*. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jun/07/cerys-matthews-poetry-and-music-closely-think>

Milopoulou, A. (2021, July 1). *Music and poetry, a timeless relationship*. Radio Art.

<https://www.radioart.com/blog/music-and-poetry,-a-timeless-relationship>

Serenade. (2024, June 20). *Romantic song: How Schubert and Schumann perfected the art of lieder*.

<https://serenademagazine.com/how-schubert-and-schumann-perfected-the-art-of-lieder>

String Ovation Team. (2019, 20 March). *The Romantic Period of Music*. Connolly Music.
<https://www.connollymusic.com/stringovation/the-romantic-period-of-music>

Swift, T. (2020). Champagne problems [Song]. On *evermore* [Album]. Republic.

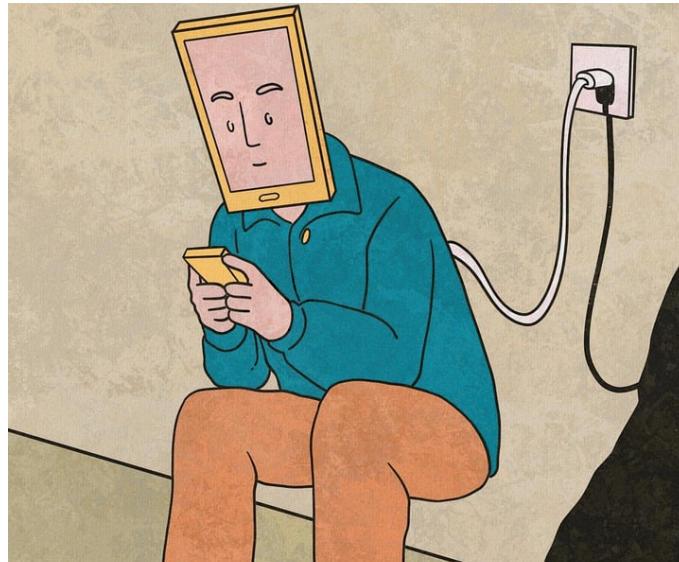
Swift, T. (2021). All too well [Song]. On *Red (Taylor's Version)* [Album]. Republic.

Tanka. (n.d.). poets.org.

<https://poets.org/glossary/tanka#:~:text=The%20tanka%20is%20a%20thirty,7%2F7%20syllable%20count%20form.>

The Complicated Truth about Social Media Influence

Ana Markoidze



An illustration depicting people's addiction to smartphones

Over a decade ago, Rory Cellan-Jones (2010), a BBC reporter, shared his concern regarding social media influence: "Earlier this year, a study from Ofcom showed that we spend nearly half of our waking hours using the media, often plugged into several things at once." Today, our social media use has grown dramatically. At the start of 2024, there were "5.04 billion social media users" which equates to "62.3 percent of the world's total population" (Kemp, 2024). It is virtually impossible to imagine our lives without social media in this day and age. This was made especially apparent after the onset of the pandemic when people had to move to a virtual lifestyle. Social networking sites (SNS) provide access to information on an infinite variety of subjects by allowing people to connect and exchange information. Although people have benefited from this opportunity, SNS can also have negative

effects on our mental and physical health. Widespread issues related to social networking site use include addiction, social comparison, and cyberbullying.

Addiction

First and foremost, one of the major issues of social media use is the possibility of going a step too far and becoming addicted. Checking notifications and scrolling through social media has become an increasingly popular activity over the last decade. Even though the majority of people don't think they have a problem with social media, many may engage in excessive or compulsive use of it. In other words – they become addicted to it. This behavioural addiction, characterised by devoting too much time to social media, is directly linked to its features, such as notification sounds and the content that pops

up. Many features of social media lead to an increase in dopamine levels, which contributes to the phenomenon of social media addiction. As David Greenfield, a psychologist and assistant clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Connecticut describes it, "When we hear a ding or little ditty alerting us to a new text, email, or Facebook post, cells in our brains likely release dopamine, one of the chemical transmitters in the brain's reward circuitry. That dopamine makes us feel pleasure" (Douceff & Aubrey, 2018). As it turns out, notifications trick the brain by putting users in constant fear of missing out on something. Thus, we are easily stimulated to check our newsfeed obsessively to ensure we're always in the know.

Social Comparison

Social comparison is another negative impact of social media. These days, mainstream media frequently presents ideal versions of beauty in the form of photo-shopped celebrities or fashion models, which provokes social comparison. Jasmine Fardouly describes this situation which affects young people, especially women, by stating, "People are comparing their appearance to people in Instagram images, or whatever platform they're on, and they often judge themselves to be worse off" (Oakes, 2019). People are immersed in virtual reality, spending more than half of their days daydreaming about the ideal bodies, faces, and personalities that they come across online. However, little do they know the effort people on social media put into faking their images just to grab viewers' attention. Social

media deteriorates people's self-esteem by making them believe that the outside world is perfect, unlike them. Take a moment and reflect on a time you, as a young person, compared yourself to the beautiful images of people online and became a victim of social comparison. Although deep down our subconscious might realize it's all an illusion, our eyes can still be deceived by those fake images, causing us to hate ourselves for not being as beautiful as others on SNS.

Cyberbullying

Social media is the most problematic when it comes to cyberbullying. Cyberbullying can include spreading lies or gossip, posting embarrassing photos or videos, or sending threatening messages (UNICEF, 2024). One of the biggest things that people in online communities tend to overlook is the fact that words do hurt. With more than half the world's population online, anyone can easily become either a bully or a victim. Regarding this issue, Dr Nicholls, from Imperial College London said, "In cyber-bullying, even your bed is not a safe place" (BBC, 2019). Feeling as though there is no escape from this situation or a possible solution, victims may isolate themselves and fall deep into depression. However, not speaking out about the problem whilst it's continuing may lead to fatal results such as pushing someone to suicide and collapsing the lives of their close ones forever.

Unfortunately, anyone can be a victim of cyberbullying, despite their social status: from ordinary schoolchildren to worldwide celebrities. A vivid example of this comes

from South Korea, which is famous for its high rates of suicides (Lee et al., 2022). In 2019, Sulli, a popular 25-year-old K-pop artist, tragically committed suicide after being maliciously harassed online. Speaking about her death, K-pop columnist, Jeff Benjamin said, "K-pop artists are called 'idols' in Korea... [beings] that must be ideal, perfect people and performers at all times even in their personal lives," (Tan & Kim, 2019). Although people view celebrities as untouchable idols and demand perfection from them, in reality, they are vulnerable and the words on a screen can have real consequences. The perpetrators of cyberbullying indiscriminately harass and attack people from all walks of life which can lead to tragic consequences.

In conclusion, as we are already living in the Information Age, it would be illogical to think about getting rid of SNS. There are many people who use social media on a daily basis with no problem. However, some suffer from social media addiction, making them more susceptible to other issues such as social comparison and cyberbullying. Luckily, social media addiction is very treatable. One of the best ways to break an addiction to social media is to set boundaries: limit the time spent on unnecessary scrolling, disengage from useless online discussions with anonymous users, or unfollow celebrities whose fancy lives might trigger envy and make you doubt whether you are good enough or not.

References

- BBC. (2019, August 14). *Social-media use 'disrupting teen sleep and exercise'*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-49330254>
- Cellan-Jones, R. (2010, October 22). *Unplugged: Living without the media*. BBC. https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/ro-rycellanjones/2010/10/unplugged_living_without_the_m.html
- Douclev, M. & Aubrey, A. (2018, February 12). *Smartphone detox: How to power down in a wired world*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2018/02/12/584389201/smartphone-detox-how-to-power-down-in-a-wired-world>
- Kemp, S. (2024, January 31). *5 billion social media users*. Data Reportal. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-deep-dive-5-billion-social-media-users?utm_source=Global_Digital_Reports&utm_medium=Analysis_Article&utm_campaign=Digital_2024&utm_content=Digital_2024_Analysis_And_Review
- Lee, M., Jhone, J. H., Kim, J. B., Kweon, Y., & Hong, H. J. (2022). Characteristics of Korean children and adolescents who die by suicide based on teachers' reports. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(11), 6812. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19116812>
- Oakes, K. (2019, March 12). *The complicated truth about social media and body image*. BBC. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20190311-how-social-media-affects-body-image>

Tan, Y., & Kim, W. (2019, October 18). *Sulli: The woman who rebelled against the K-pop world*. BBC.
<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-50051575>

UNICEF. (2024, February). *Cyberbullying: What it is and how to stop it*.
<https://www.unicef.org/end-violence/how-to-stop-cyberbullying>

Exploring Cognitive Parallels: Reconsidering the Distinctiveness of Human and Animal Minds

Elene Panchvidze



A photograph of man communicating with two chimpanzees, Robert I.M. Campbell, Nat Geo Image Collection

There are many differences between humans and animals, though they also have a lot in common. Like humans, animals eat, sleep, act and communicate. Even in bodily function, we share many similarities with these members of fauna. What, then, makes humans unique? Many argue that the primary distinction lies in our ability to reason, use complex language, and solve intricate problems. The most notable difference is our capacity for introspection; to recognize and label our own feelings and thoughts. Research indicates that expressing emotions like joy and sadness is uniquely human. But have cognitive abilities parallel to these been observed in animals?

Studies that have been conducted show and reinforce the idea of animals as beings that do not have a psyche. This fact is recognised in psychology and other sciences, even

though scientists admit that it is still quite difficult to single-handedly prove that, for example, a worm does not have "feelings." Experiments focusing on animal behaviour are often designed with human expectations in mind, conditioning us to anticipate that animals will behave similarly to humans. A good example of this is Gordon Gallup's behaviourist experiment conducted in 1970. The experiment involved anaesthetizing chimpanzees and then painting an area on their body that they normally would not see. For example, red paint was applied to a chimpanzee's forehead, and when it woke up, a mirror was placed in front of it. One hypothesis of this experiment was that if this chimpanzee could perceive itself as a whole, it would understand that this red paint was not characteristic of itself and would try to remove it somehow. That is, the experiment began with the preliminary assumption that

the chimpanzee should behave like a person. However, when the chimpanzee did not attempt to remove the red paint, the experiment was terminated prematurely. However, just because the monkey did not act like a human does not mean that it cannot recognize itself. In fact, in most cases, animals identify their surroundings by smell (Gallup, 1977).

At the same time, other experiments and observations show us very interesting discoveries. For example, prairie dogs (მდელოს ძაღლი) have a rather complex language. According to Professor Slobodchikov (1991), they can express alarm and communicate important information such as the size, speed, colour, and appearance of their prey. Why aren't these prairie dog signals considered language? What is language if not a means of communication? Just because humans can't hear animals "speak" doesn't rule out the fact that animals have their own, unique language (Slobodchikov et al., 1991).

Other studies have shown human-like traits in animals. Gorillas and chimpanzees can draw birds and attempt to mimic language to explain their drawings. Experiments on Caledonian crows also show one important fact: animals can solve problems. When given tasks of varying difficulty, scientists observed that the crows were able to complete multi-step tasks. It is obvious that these animals have the ability to create and the ability to understand their own thoughts. Many other observations and experiments also show that animals experience emotions. The best example of this is a grieving dog,

which is undoubtedly suffering from the death of its owner (Raby et al., 2007).

So are we really that different from animals? The above examples allow us to realise that we humans are probably not as unique and different from animals as we think. Experiments have shown that animals possess all the essential elements through which the psyche arises - they can think, communicate, and are capable of introspection.

References

- Gallup, G. G. (1977). Self-recognition in primates: A comparative approach to the bidirectional properties of consciousness. *American Psychologist*, 32(5), 329–338. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.32.5.329>
- Raby, C. R., Alexis, D. M., Dickinson, A., & Clayton, N. S. (2007). Planning for the future by western scrub-jays. *Nature*, 445, 919–921. <https://doi.org/10.1038/NATURE05575>
- Slobodchikov, C. N., Kiriazis, J., Fischer, C., & Creef, E. (1991). Semantic information distinguishing individual predators in the alarm calls of Gunnison's prairie dogs. *Animal Behaviour*, 42(5), 713–719. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0003-3472\(05\)80117-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0003-3472(05)80117-4)

Meet the Authors

**Ketevani Lomidze is a senior in English Philology at
International Black Sea University**

"Languages have always fascinated me. I have always wondered how humans can group words, create sentences, communicate, or even dream. Unanswered questions led me to dive deep into this field and find clues that would satisfy not only me but other curious people, too. As an English Philology student, I have tried perfecting myself and developing not only through learning English but also by writing articles, research, and creative pieces of work. My short stories, unlike my articles, express human struggles, inner turmoil, and doubts by portraying the characters and scenes that live in my imagination. In addition, my close relationship with languages includes written and spoken translation, which I aim to master as a profession. Acquiring other languages like Korean, Chinese, and Russian, helped me to broaden my point of view and make cross-linguistic observations. I have also been an active member of Vitascope's editing team for two years and obtained valuable knowledge in editing and helping other authors to make their voices heard and reach an audience."

**Dachi Danelia is a senior in International Relations at Caucasus
International University**

"Art has always been one of my main areas of interest, as I am genuinely amazed by its impact on humankind and the purpose it serves. Among the myriad of artworks I have encountered, only a few have resonated with me as deeply as Francisco Goya's "Black Paintings." These paintings, originally created as murals, are a window to Goya's soul, often depicting his own struggles and disillusionment with human nature and society. The "Black Paintings" explore themes that are still relevant today, such as mortality, injustice, mental well-being, and the dark corners of the human spirit. Given the enduring significance of Goya's work, I found it intriguing to delve deeper into his personal convictions, ideals, and creative process."

Meet the Authors

**Mariam Sarkiashvili is a freshman in English Philology at
International Black Sea University**

"I've been singing for as long as I can remember and music has always had a special place in my heart. Though, as one doesn't have to be a musician to enjoy it, I decided to write this article to show everyone how important it is to welcome music into your life."

**Mariam Lagvilava is a freshman in English Philology at
International Black Sea University**

"Since our early childhood, we explore this world, trying to find our true selves. When I was a teenager, I tried many things, before I figured out what I was passionate about. In my article, I emphasize the importance of this process. We are the artists of our lives, mixing colors and creating different patterns all to better understand ourselves. I am pleased to share my article with you and wish you luck as you also learn how to express yourself."

**Ana Osipov is a sophomore in English Philology at International
Black Sea University**

"I am extremely passionate about teaching and studying the information covered in my ESL and pedagogy courses. My article aims to make readers aware of the basic principles of culturally relevant teaching, considering its importance and the role of equity in pedagogy in contemporary educational settings."

**Ananya Atri is a senior in International Relations at
International Black Sea University**

"Although my major is IR, my article on "vajra" springs from my passion for cultural studies and exploring museums. Through this article, I pay homage to my cultural roots and express my love for my home country, India."

Meet the Authors

Lizi Svanidze is a senior in English Philology at International Black Sea University

“My studies in English Philology helped me to understand the power of words and storytelling. Mythology has also fascinated me, and I always carry a notebook to write down local myths. These myths often inspire me to write short stories. Art, in all its forms, inspires me. Whether it’s a painting, a piece of music, or a beautifully picked outfit, I find inspiration everywhere. That is why I enjoy exploring different styles and trends in fashion, and I appreciate all music genres for their uniqueness.”

Ana Photelidze graduated from Tbilisi Ivane Javakhishvili State University in the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences

“During my time at university, I took a class on culture and psychology. At the end of the semester, we had to write an essay. Our professor, Lado Gamsakhurdia, provided some themes to choose from. When I read the title “Pizza and the Big Mac,” I felt both confused and excited. I wasn’t sure what to write about them, but I knew I loved both of them. Ultimately, writing this essay turned out to be a great opportunity for me to make some discoveries, not only about the topic but also about myself.”

Anano Kazeishvili is a sophomore in English Philology at International Black Sea University

“The field of education interests me because I teach English as a private tutor. During my lessons, I was driven to search for new methods and tips to enhance my teaching skills and adapt each lesson to individual students. That is why I decided to write an article to share some of the important techniques that helped me improve.”

Meet the Authors

Ani Ruadze is a freshman in English Philology at International Black Sea University

"I cannot imagine my life without music. It does not matter what I am doing, I am always listening to some music. It helps me to travel to an imagined world and makes me work more effectively. Furthermore, I also love poetry, and the combination of the two is simply captivating. Yes, music is great on its own, but can you imagine music with poetic words? It's like holding a winning bingo card, bringing you joy and a sense of accomplishment. Music and poetry together create a symphony of emotions, and I can't imagine a day without their presence."

Ana (Anko) Markoidze is a senior in English Philology at International Black Sea University

"I have been channeling my love of writing as both a writer and editor for the second edition of IBSU's student magazine, Vitascope. My Bachelor's degree research delves into the linguistic peculiarities of online communication, examining how language evolves and adapts in the digital age. This has given me a unique perspective on the ways social media shapes our interactions and influences our perceptions. In this article, I wanted to tackle the complex and often dark aspects of social media."

Elene Panchvidze is a freshman in the European Integration and Employment Relationships Masters program at Georgian American University

"My interest in exploring the cognitive parallels between human and animal minds stems from my curiosity about the fundamental similarities and differences that define our understanding of intelligence and consciousness. The topic challenges traditional views of human uniqueness and prompts a deeper examination of how animals perceive, think, and interact with their environment."

Meet the Vitascope Team

Editor-in-Chief

Ani Papava

Supervising Editor

Kyla McMillan, English Fellow, USA
Embassy

Graphic Designers

Ana Markoidze
Elene Manoshvili
Nato Mamadashvili

Senior Editors

Amini Dalivalovi
Ketevani Lomidze
Nato Mamadashvili
Elene Manoshvili
Ana Markoidze
Ana Osipov
Liza Patchkoria
Lizi Svanidze

Junior Editors

Eliko Bajiashvili
Ani Gadelia
Tako Kharebashvili
Tekle Machiadze
Keti Mikava
Ani Ruadze
Mariam Sarkiashvili

