INTEGRATING THE STUDY OF FAMILY HISTORY IN THE PROCESS OF LEARNING THE LATVIAN LANGUAGE

Kristiāns Jakubovskis[1], Anna Vulāne[2]

[1] Zemgale secondary school, Latvia
[2] University of Latvia, Latvia

ABSTRACT

Latvian language and literature, like the history of the nation and country, is an essential basis of national and cultural development, and an important part of civic education. One of the problems we face daily is related to the fact that many of young people do not perceive the Latvian language as a value, and do not want to learn some part of the curriculum, because it seems to them too far from reality, useless and irrelevant. To create more interest in language learning content, it should also include topics that may be personally meaningful to students or should be viewed in a context that is engaging to them.

The purpose of the paper is to justify the need to include the study of family history in the learning content of the Latvian language, ensuring the connection between subjects, and to characterize the developed linguo-didactic material. The author's experience in creating family trees and involving students in this work in interest education classes shows that this not only creates interest in young people in the set of personal names of their family and the motivation of their choice but also promotes the desire to more fully learn the history of the Latvian language and the language as a system, to develop their language and communication skills.

The research was conducted in the 10th grade using the methods of document analysis, case analysis, pedagogical observation, and pupil's survey. The research concluded that the study of family history can be successfully included in Latvian language lessons. The students were interested in lessons related to the topic of family history, admitting that they find the lessons more interesting, where it is possible to acquire not only theoretical knowledge of the Latvian language but also additional information about their family members. For the work to be more successful, students should already at the stage of primary education develop persistent habits, the skills of independent work, information acquisition, compilation, and analysis, as well as age-appropriate linguo-cultural tasks should be included in the curriculum, which would promote the study of language learning as a cultural phenomenon.

Keywords: education, family history, Latvian language, linguo-didactics, personal name.

Introduction

Family history research is becoming increasingly popular in Latvia and worldwide. There is a wide variety of ways to research roots, from interviewing family and friends, to using online resources, looking at church books or going to the Latvian State Historical Archives and researching the documents there. There are also several groups of like-minded people who work together to find their ancestors and help each other with family tree research. Often people do not think about the fact that they are related to each other by kinship, or that understanding family history could help to understand the processes of personality formation and linguistic development more successfully. It has long been recognised that knowledge of the historical context is essential for a deeper understanding of literary and artistic works, for a more detailed awareness of social and cultural developments, for the cultivation and continuous improvement of the sense of life (Lukaševičs, Mickeviča & Sokolova, 2007, 18), and for the strengthening of local and national identity. The Guidelines for National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy 2012–2018 state that national identity is "a part of a person's identity that unites them with other persons who share similar national and cultural characteristics. Language, values, behavioural patterns, cultural symbols, social memory are the basis on which a person's belonging to a nation is built and maintained, and the unity between people belonging to a nation. National identity includes the idea of the uniqueness but not the superiority of each nation, the idea of difference from other nations, the idea of interdependence between people belonging to a nation and the idea of the continuity of the nation" (Nacionālās identitātes…, 2012, 5, 4). Language is the spiritual cultural phenomenon of a nation, the embodiment of values, therefore "in the process of learning the mother tongue and other languages, students need to combine the concepts of language–culture–personality" (Gavriļina & Vulāne, 2008, 4). The exploration of family history, in connection with the study of Latvian language, could become an integral part of teaching, stimulating students' interest in the learning process of both Latvian language and social sciences, the formation of a unifying understanding of social memory in society. Family history research is one way of strengthening family ties and contributing to the development of national identity. In the process of learning Latvian, it provides an opportunity to ensure inter-subject links.

The aim of the article is to justify the need to include family history research in the Latvian language curriculum, ensuring cross-curricular links to develop students' linguistic, cultural and research competences.

The relevance of family history research in teaching

Learning about family traditions is not only the responsibility of the entire education system, but also of the family and society to promote empathy and correct abnormal behaviour (Nha, 2022). In today's world, where the interaction of different cultures and peoples plays an important role, it is essential that not only school-age children, but also adults who are the bearers of their family traditions, develop an in-depth understanding

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

617

of them and a desire to preserve them by involving the younger generation and thus promoting their transmission. The development of traditions, customs and rituals is a time-consuming and complex process (Klepar, 2017). Family traditions aim to maintain order within the family and the transmission of folk experiences from generation to generation. For this to happen, it is important that the pupil knows how not only his current family was formed, but also the families of both his parents, and what historical events and places it was connected to. This can contribute to the pupil's self-directed cognitive processes, learning, interest in the events of his/her community and country, and raise the need to link the topics covered in lessons to the pupil's family history (Noble, 2018). Family history research is an interdisciplinary field, as not only biographical information about one's ancestors is obtained, but also different aspects of geography, history, linguistics are studied in order to solve problematic situations that arise during the research process (Hart, 2018; Hershkovitz, 2012). Family history research contributes to the understanding of life, enriches the researcher's life experience, and allows one to discern solutions to various life problems through ancestral experiences (Bottero, 2015; Darby & Clough, 2013; Fulton, 2016). This activity is becoming increasingly important for those who want to strengthen a sense of belonging to a place, a country, a nation (Ball, 2016; Bottero, 2015). The study of family history contributes to the development of students' cognitive processes (Noble, 2018), analytical thinking, self-discipline, patience, attentiveness, purpose, and develops skills that can be used in other subjects. As research into Arnon Hershkovitz's family history as a subject shows, most students tend to apply the insights gained from their research to other subjects (Hershkovitz, 2016). It also fosters an interest in language learning, as in order to work properly with the historical documents of our people, one needs to know German, Russian, Polish and Latin, to be able to decipher the various handwritings, to be familiar with Cyrillic, Fraktur and antique letters. This activity is a successful example of lifelong learning, as it can be undertaken by people of different ages (Darby & Clough, 2013; Fulton, 2009; Hershkovitz & Hardof-Jaffe, 2017).

One can agree with Arnon Hershkovitz that the inclusion of family history research in general education is an understudied aspect (Hershkovitz, 2012, 2016). He raises the idea that the research community should develop it as a subject and proposes a taxonomy of six components for its implementation: "Each of the first five components is a research unit. These units – namely, people, families, communities, representations, and data – refer to the core building blocks of traditional genealogy studies. [..] The sixth component, bird's-eye view, suggests an extension of genealogy beyond the traditional scope of its daily practice, hence, highlighting the potential contribution of such research to the field, academically. All together, the taxonomy suggests reciprocal relationships between the practiced field and its academic level." (Hershkovitz, 2012, 7) These thoughts are to some extent in line with the idea of pervasive skills described in the *Skola2030* project (2022), which is embedded in subject standards. They also point out that nowadays we need to think more about the integration of curriculum content rather than the isolated learning of subjects. This idea was already

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

618

raised last year. For example, Zenta Anspoka pointed out that integrated curriculum content links differentiated subject content, promotes the development of skills according to real-world problems and tasks, and the conduct of learning in which the goal, means, process and outcome are closely interrelated and both are equally important (Anspoka, 1999, 4).

Ausma Špona insight that "the content of education is knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, habits, which are formed into values in the process of action, correlates with the awareness of family history as an important value for the individual and the community. Things, facts, phenomena that a person experiences as essentially significant for him or her and that contribute to the development of his or her personality are pedagogical values." (Špona, 1996, 4) This indicates that the correlation of content with the needs of personal development, the interests of the pupil, plays an important role in the formation of these pedagogical values. It is necessary to create favourable conditions for the development of a creative, cultured, interested and inquisitive personality. To achieve this, it is necessary to think carefully about the content of teaching, which, as Irēna Žogla points out, "is not just about what is in textbooks, but is a much broader concept. The content covered in a textbook is not to be seen as complete, nor as the only possible content. Therefore, the teacher must also offer a choice of content not only within the textbook but also from other sources. Sources chosen by the pupil should also be respected." (Žogla, 1997, 59) This means that it is essential to design both content that includes material chosen by the teacher and content that emerges during teacher-pupil collaboration, because "teaching becomes meaningful when it stimulates, intensifies and enriches the pupil's learning" (Žogla, 1985, 9).

Summarising pedagogical knowledge on curriculum integration, it can be concluded that integrated curriculum is the content of differentiated subjects arranged in a comprehensible, logical, pedagogically sound system, which ensures differentiated acquisition of knowledge, skills in context and unity, formation of socially significant attitudes, resulting in an education that enables self-realisation, further development and influence its further direction (Anspoka, 1999, 32).

This means that it is possible to integrate family history research into the Latvian language curriculum by assessing the links with the topics covered in history. This process would develop not only the pupil's linguistic and communicative competence, but also his/her historical and linguacultural competence. It should be noted that the *Skola2030* project in the social and civic field has also developed a model programme for 72 lessons of a specialised course "Regional Studies" in secondary school (Grūbe, Ķipurs & Ozoliņa, 2021), in which a teacher can also integrate the content of family history research.

Methodology

Qualitative and descriptive research methods were used to investigate whether and how family history research can be integrated into Latvian language teaching (Charmaz, 2006; Mārtinsone, Pipere & Kamerāde, 2016) at secondary school. In genealogical

research, it is very important to obtain reliable factual information as accurately as possible in order to build a family tree. Document analysis – the systematic examination of various types of published documents available in public and/or private archives – is an important part of this process (Bowen, 2009). When creating the family history research programme and teaching materials, the following resources were identified and analysed: the website of the Latvian State Historical Archive project "Raduraksti" (Geneology), where one can find scanned church books of various denominations until the beginning of the 20th century, documents of the All-Russian census of 1897, 18th–19th century audits of souls and other documents. It was pointed out to the secondary school students that family archive documents, albums, letters, newspapers, inscriptions on tombstones and other materials can also provide documentary information for family history research and family tree building.

But to develop high-quality curricula, teachers must:

- understand the requirements set out in the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations on the standards governing the learning of the subject (in this case, the students learning outcomes in Latvian language and social and civic learning) in order to know what outcomes to achieve at each stage of education (Noteikumi par valsts..., 2019 [Regulations Regarding the State...]),
- the expert perspectives on how to achieve these outcomes in the model curricula (Lazdiņa et al., 2021),
- explore the material available in teaching resources and other sources
- be familiar with the rules on data protection (Fizisko personu datu…, 2018 [Personal Data...]),

Therefore, an analysis of these documents and materials was carried out in the context of the research questions using the method of contingent analysis (Krippendorff, 2004; Neuendorf, 2017).

Other qualitative research methods were also used in the study, as analysing the same phenomenon requires combining methodologies to obtain information from multiple sources of evidence (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). In addition to document analysis, a questionnaire survey, a pedagogical observation, a case study, and a descriptive study were used.

A questionnaire was developed for the students involved in the pilot activity, using open-ended and Likert scale questions.

The questionnaire contained 9 closed questions. Respondents were asked to rate the statements on a five-point scale (1 – strongly disagree to 5 – strongly agree).

The pupil survey, which involved 26 young people participating in the pilot activity, was conducted on paper. The questionnaire was designed using open-ended and Likert scale questions ranging from 1 to 5, where "1" indicates negative, "2" rather negative, "3" neutral, "4" rather positive and "5" positive. Young people were asked to answer 9 questions, which were selected with the aim of finding out:

motivation for learning and attitudes to learning in general (questions 1–4),

- attitudes towards the subject "Latvian Language" (questions 5–6),

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

620

- links with family members and attitudes towards family history research (questions 7–9).

The integration of family history research into the Latvian language learning process was conducted as a case study in combination with pedagogical observation (Mārtinsone, Pipere & Kamerāde, 2016; Neuman, 2003) in order to obtain data on the usability of the developed material. The results of the analysis of the content of the documents, respondents' opinions and the learning process were summarised and interpreted using the descriptive method.

Results

Survey results

The survey data shows that only six students are motivated to learn, nine students have a neutral attitude, and 11 young people are not motivated to learn. Comparing these results with the average scores of students in all subjects, a correlation can be seen between grades and motivation to learn. Students cite study overload as a major reason for demotivation. During the pilot work, it was also found that some students have difficulties with following a regime and developing sustainable habits. Some said that they go to bed well after midnight and are unable to get on with their daytime work because they spend all night playing computer games. Typically, students often submitted their independent work in the e-environment after the set time, late in the evening, after 23.00. Unfortunately, students have not developed a strong habit of planning their work, but habits are known to reduce cognitive load – smaller tasks are done automatically, allowing them to channel energy and internal resources into larger tasks. In other words, when the mind is overloaded and unable to respond fully to what is happening, habits provide an automatic response to specific external stimuli, which is particularly important because stress weakens willpower, causing people to focus on their habits (Wood, 2017, 392, 394; Heitler, 2012). Such stress also encourages the opposite process: the emergence or reinforcement of unhealthy habits (Cummins, 2013).

The answers to questions about young people's sense of purpose, their willingness to study topics that interest them in depth, show that 18 students consider themselves to be purposeful, five are neutral and only three think they are not purposeful. Typically, students in this class organise and run school events, take an active part in various competitions and are active in the school parliament. The willingness of the students to study in depth the subjects they are interested in is also a sign of their interest in learning more about them, as 18 young people attested. Only one pupil did not want to do anything extra, while four respondents indicated that they were rather reluctant. The response to this question shows that it is important to interest students in this class in order to encourage them to do in-depth research on issues of interest to them outside their studies. This conclusion is reinforced by the response to the next statement: 'I believe that learning should be linked to issues that are relevant to me'. Only one pupil indicated that

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

621

he/she rather disagreed with this, five students have a neutral attitude, while 20 students have a positive reaction.

15 students like Latvian language lessons, but 7 do not, while only 7 students have an interest in Latvian language outside the learning process, while 17 young people have no such interest. These attitudes indicate that the teaching process at school needs to be more interdisciplinary, and the content of the curriculum needs to be such that it creates interest in the "life" of the language outside lessons and promotes understanding of its importance in society.

The next questions were aimed at finding out about students' relationships with family members and attitudes towards family history research. The analysis of the data showed that:

- 17 respondents have close relationships with family members, while four do not,
- 19 students think it is important to know who their ancestors were, while five are not interested,
- 20 respondents think that schools should pay more attention to family history research, and only three think it is not necessary.
- The students' interest in the topics covered by the pilot project and their willingness to research their family history in more depth is also confirmed by the fact that several of them have already attended family history research interest education classes in the previous school year. Summarising the results of the surveys and assessing the persistence of the students' interest generated by the interest education classes, it can be concluded that the young people's answers correlate with the results of the public survey and confirm that the authors' idea of linking family history research with the Latvian language curriculum is justified and feasible.

Description of the series of lessons on family history

In order to implement the idea of integrating family history research into the Latvian language teaching process, original linguistic material was developed, as so far no teaching materials or other resources for language learning have included such topics. In the development of the linguadidactic material, special attention was paid not only to the content, but also to the choice of teaching methods and methodological techniques, as well as the forms of work organisation. The pedagogical aim of the approbation of the linguistic material was not only to create in students a desire to learn about their family history, while deepening their understanding of the Latvian language anthroponym system and thus developing their linguistic and cultural competences, but also to contribute to raising the general level of knowledge by creating teaching situations related to the development of analytical thinking and students' research competences. In order to achieve the pedagogical goal, set out above, the entire teaching process, as well as each individual lesson, was subordinated to the logical thinking progression developed by Johann Friedrich Herbart – clarifying – associating – systematising – methodising, which was also recognised by D. Laiveniece as a very valuable principle of Latvian language

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

622

learning (Herbart, 1806, 69; quoted from Laiveniece, 1997, 8). The teaching methods and methodological techniques chosen for the implementation of the teaching content correspond to the classification of teaching methods proposed by Voldemārs Zelmenis: verbal methods (narration, teaching dialogue), written methods (outline, searching for answers to questions, etc.) and direct cognitive methods (demonstration) (Zelmenis, 2000). It was within this framework that the teaching work was designed, being aware of the purposefulness of the methods and of each form of organisation of the teaching work:

the frontal form of learning organisation "is used when the main core content of the programme is covered. It is particularly valuable when the teacher guides the acquisition of new knowledge through inquiry" (Albrehta 2001, 92),

1) the individual form of learning organisation "is carried out by students to learn to apply knowledge, to build skills and abilities, to fill gaps in knowledge and skills, to deepen them" (Albrehta, 2001, 93),

2) group learning is "particularly useful for the acquisition of new knowledge through inquiry, reinforcement and creative application" (Albrehta, 2001, 93), because pedagogical observation showed that students are often passive in lessons, reluctant to answer the teacher's questions, and much more likely to do tasks in pairs or groups. It should be noted that some of the students who continue their education in secondary school have completed their primary education in a curriculum designed for students with learning disabilities. It was also important to recognise that the content of the language material should be related to the adolescent's interests (the emergence of which can also be facilitated by the teacher), age-appropriate topics and problems that he or she understands, "the development of linguistic, logical, critically constructive thinking and the possibilities of forming a sense of language" (Laiveniece, 2003, 266), so that students' ability to critically evaluate different sources of information, the material offered, as well as to form and express their opinions, to argue them, is improved.

22 lessons were devoted to the content. In the first lesson, students did diagnostic work. The first module was devoted to an introduction to family history research, systematisation of information known in the family, interviewing relatives. During the practical part of the research, the students focused on researching personal names in different contexts:

- find out the origin and distribution of their first and last name in Latvia, to gain experience in working with dictionaries and linguists' research;
- create a narrative about their name;
- interviewed relatives about their family names, surnames, hypochoristics and nicknames;
- write a biography of yourself or a relative;
- researched what is written in the Cabinet of Ministers' regulations on the use of personal names, spelling of personal names of other languages;
- recalled the rules of orthography and punctuation that apply to the spelling of personal names;

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

623

- researched posts in the *Facebook* Family Researchers group and created their own post asking for advice when searching for information about a relative;
- worked with various databases of deceased persons, looking for information about their relatives;
- find out how public authorities can help with family history research;
- studied various original documents – censuses, church books, manor audits, corpora of ancient texts – to gain insight into how the spelling of personal names has changed over time.

In the final part of the third module, students carried out a scientific investigation, presented the results and answered questions from the audience.

Some of the learning took place using smart devices – mobile phones, laptops. During the work, it was realised that some students' ability to use modern technical devices was weak, so many basic skills were developed by completing tasks in Latvian language lessons. During the pilot work it was also observed that in the first lessons a large number of students were inactive, did not engage in discussions and tried to avoid giving answers.

As a result of this extensive learning activity, the students not only developed their language and speaking skills, their communicative and research skills, but also acquired biographical information about their relatives, some of which was previously unknown in the family. For example, one pupil found out where his grandfather was actually buried by working with a database of the deceased. Of particular interest to the students was finding out the etymology of a word, interviewing relatives; several students admitted that they talked very little to family members on a daily basis and that this exercise had also prompted them to consider studying journalism.

Reading ancient documents, students learnt that in the past people wrote in neat, calligraphic handwriting, which is incomparable to their own difficult-to-read handwriting; they increased their knowledge of Russian and got a brief insight into how family members are called in German, their occupation, date, age, etc. The students also learnt about the spelling of the Latvian language, how place names and personal names were formed, and the influence of German and other languages.

Assessing students' learning achievements is an essential component of the learning process. The lessons dedicated to family history used diagnostic, formative and summative assessment. At the end of the lesson cycle, students' performance was assessed in terms of:

- work in lessons and independent tasks at home;
- the quality of a relative's interview about family names, surnames and nicknames;
- the results of the test on scientific language style posted on uzdevumi.lv or reflections on what you heard at the 81st International Conference "Language and Literature in the Context of Education" at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Psychology and Art, University of Latvia;
- the results of a study on an aspect of Latvian anthroponymy;
- the results of the research work and its defence.

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023

624

K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

Students scored an average of 14.5 points, or 60.42%, on their homework and homework in family history lessons. The students' performance could have been higher if the discipline had been observed and the homework had been completed as required and handed in on time.

Only 14 out of 26 students interviewed a relative. Several interviews were carefully planned, well thought out and met the interview design criteria. It was particularly interesting to listen to a pupil's interview with her stepfather – he knew the etymology of his first and last name and spoke at length about the origins of his nicknames. 12 students did not complete the task, so the average score for the interview was 4.36 out of 10 possible points, or 43.6%.

14 students completed the extensive test designed by the teacher, while 7 students attended the conference as listeners and 5 students did not complete the task at all. At home, students wrote about the conference, the scientific language style of the presentations, and the lessons learned. They appreciated the opportunity to participate in a scientific conference, to learn many new and interesting things, to gain experience in presenting a scientific paper and answering questions from the audience. The students found the experience very valuable and will certainly be useful in their lessons and in the future. It is also likely that students' participation in conferences, especially when their teacher is presenting the results of their teaching, is important in terms of the perception of the teacher as a researcher. The results of the two tasks were summarised and students scored on average 5.57 out of 10, or 55.7%.

The scientific research and its presentation highlighted not only achievements but also challenges for future learning. As the experience of colleagues and the results of national examinations (see, e.g., Gavriļina & Špūle, 2018) show, many of them are relevant across the country. The biggest difficulty for students was that, on the one hand, they had no experience of how to conduct a scientific investigation, on the other hand, they had not yet developed the habit of reading the rules of the tasks with understanding and doing the work according to the requirements. Although students have been familiarised with the nature of the scientific style already in primary education and have carried out various mini-researches in a number of subjects, the ability to formulate a precise topic, to set a specific research aim and to set corresponding tasks is still not sufficiently developed. The development of the theoretical basis showed that 18 young people had not taken into account what scientific sources were and how they should be used, as they had produced compilations of content copied from various non-scientific sources such as wikipedia.org. In order to prevent this type of situation in the future, it is important to establish uniform rules for the development of scientific literacy in schools and to consistently apply the principles of information acquisition and processing, selection and use of theoretical literature sources (including citation and referencing, bibliographic presentation) in all subjects, both in the development of teaching materials and in students' research work. These skills will help students to avoid disproportionate risks of error and will contribute to the quality of their education and research activities at all stages of their education.

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

625

Students also found it difficult to collect, structure and analyse the results. The evaluation of the research papers showed that most students were trying to produce a research paper to meet the minimum requirements, i.e., just to get a pass grade, rather than to achieve the highest possible grade. This attitude correlates with the low motivation level of the students. This approach to research work is, of course, unacceptable, as it aims to promote students' understanding of the nature of research work, to develop their skills in searching for, analysing and interpreting information, and to teach them to express their thoughts and conclusions clearly, precisely and in accordance with the requirements of their chosen language style and speech genre, rather than to obtain the lowest possible pass mark in the easiest possible way. At the secondary stage, it is important to reinforce in students the understanding that the quality and value of research depends on the relevance of the topic chosen, the accuracy of the research methodology and data analysis, and the logic and validity of the conclusions. Students should see research as an opportunity to acquire new skills and knowledge and not just as a compulsory task to be completed in order to achieve a grade. Research and stylistic competence should therefore be developed progressively, according to the level of students' learning, already at the primary stage.

Despite the fact that students were not only informed about the research criteria in several lessons, but also analysed them together with the teacher, most of them were not followed in the work. This only confirms once again the existence of a very serious problem in the modern education system: the teaching process does not purposefully develop regular study habits for students. As experience shows, most homework is done at the last minute before it is due. Consequently, the average grade in class for the research was 40.57 out of 80, or 50.71% (the lowest grade was 18 out of 80, or 22.5%; the highest grade was 68 out of 80, or 85%). For the presentation of the research, students received an average of 13.43 points, or 67.14% (the average score is well below the theoretical possible score, as four students chose not to present their work).

Overall, the assessment of students' written work showed that many of them lacked independent learning, planning, information gathering, summarising and analysis skills. A significant disadvantage is the lack of knowledge of the historical and cultural context. Consequently, additional tasks had to be undertaken to develop both the necessary skills and knowledge and to foster more sustainable learning habits. This is, of course, work that needs to be carried out regularly in the next phase of learning.

However, when comparing the students' initial level of knowledge with the results of the pilot activities, it is clear that all students have improved their knowledge and also improved several skills. While the class average in the diagnostic work was 40.85 per cent, the lesson cycle resulted in 54.46 per cent. The biggest difference between the diagnostic work and the classroom performance assessment was 34 and 35 per cent, because the two students who showed such a strong performance dynamic were very interested in the topic of family history research and worked enthusiastically. One pupil's performance score was 1% lower than in the diagnostic work because he did not submit a relatives' interview, which could have changed the results by about 8–9%.
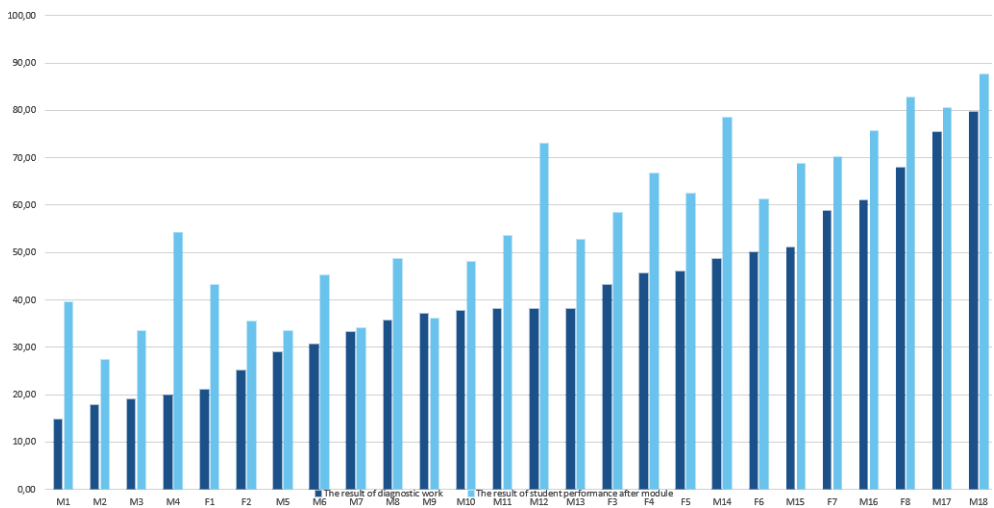
HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

626

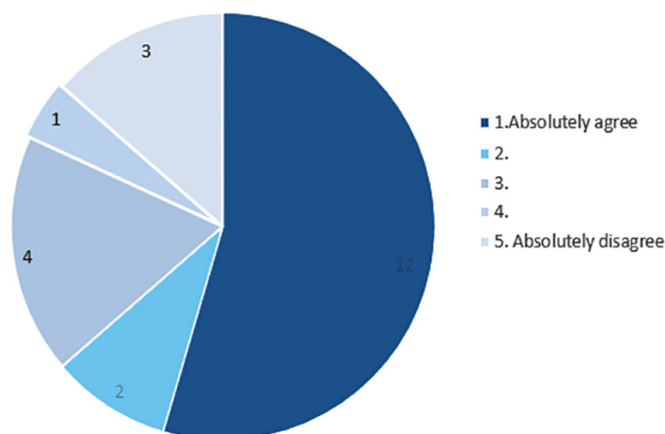**Figure 1**   Comparison of diagnostic work and students' performance

Figure 2   Students' interest in the specialised course "Family History Research"

At the end of the Integrated Curriculum, 22 of the 26 young people took part in a questionnaire survey. The responses to all questions were similar in terms of gender, which confirms the relevance of the topic for both genders. In response to the first question, whether they found the Latvian language teaching process related to the topic of family history more interesting than the everyday content, 77.3% of young people said that the teaching content had become more interesting. 86.4% of students stated that they had learnt many interesting facts about their own name during their studies. Half of the students felt that the exercises improved their contact with family members. 68% of students agreed with the statement that the topics covered in the lessons were related to the topics covered in Latvian in terms of research on personal names and family history. One pupil stated that his family did not support the fact that information about

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

627

the pupil's ancestors was obtained in the teaching process. All students agreed that it is important to be able to find information about one's own name and family in various resources. In addition, 64% of students said that the integrated content of family history research covered in Latvian language lessons encouraged them to consider choosing the specialised secondary school course "Family History Research" (see Figure 2). The students' survey shows that diversifying the curriculum and fostering learning motivation is an essential part of the educational process needed to maintain or enhance students' interest in a particular subject.

Conclusions

Today, it is essential to implement content in every education course that contributes to the development of a proficient learner, ensuring that knowledge is acquired in a purposeful, motivated way, skills and habits are developed, and the ability to apply the theoretical and practical experience gained in learning to a variety of life situations is built. "Therefore, one of the key challenges in revising the curriculum is to reduce fragmentation and fragmentation, as well as passive learning, disconnected from real-life situations, and the development of isolated skills. Continuity, systematicity and integrity are the guiding principles on which the new content is based." (School2030)

The integration of family history research into the Latvian language learning process is one of the ways to promote the formation of students' regional and national identity, deepen their understanding of family and national values, traditions and history, create interest in the Latvian language, as well as in the developments in their own community and country.

The results of the surveys show that there is a positive attitude towards family history research in society and the introduction of such material or even a separate course in education would be welcomed.

The integrated learning process can better motivate students to learn Latvian, because during the pilot activity they were more interested in lessons related to family history, admitting that they find more interesting lessons where they can acquire not only theoretical knowledge of Latvian and practical skills, but also additional information about their family and family members. In addition, the students' language and speech skills were developed, their historical and cultural knowledge was broadened, their communicative and research skills were improved, and they acquired useful biographical information about their relatives.

To be more successful, students need to develop strong habits of independent work and the skills of acquiring, collecting and analysing information, as well as age-appropriate linguistic and cultural tasks that promote the exploration of language as a cultural phenomenon, as early as at primary level.

For family history research to be scientifically correct, students need knowledge of history, which is why the subject of history needs to pay much more attention to learning

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

628

about Latvian history. The Latvian language curriculum, on the other hand, should include much more linguistic and ethno-linguistic information.

The usefulness of the integrated curriculum module is also demonstrated by the fact that 14 students wished to continue researching the origin and distribution of their family names and expressed a wish to take a specialised course in "Family History Research" in the 11th year of secondary school. 77.3% of young people said that the content of the course had become more interesting. 86.4% of the students indicated that they had learnt many interesting facts about their own name during their studies. Half of the students felt that the assignments improved their contact with family members.

REFERENCES

Albrehta, Dz. (2001). *Didaktika.* [Didactics] Rīga: Raka.

Anspoka, Z. (1999). *Integrēts latviešu valodas mācību saturs un tā metodika sākumskolā* [*Integrated Latvian language teaching content and methodology in primary school*]. Promocijas darbs. Rīga: Latvijas Universitāte. https://dspace.lu.lv/dspace/bitstream/handle/7/31290/Anspoka_Z_Integrets_Latviesu_valodas_macibu_1999.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Ball, R. (2016). Visualizing Genealogy through a Family-Centric Perspective. *Information Visualization, 16*(1), 74–89. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473871615621592

Bottero, W. (2015). Practising family history: 'Identity' as a category of social practice. *British Journal of Sociology, 66*(3), 534–556. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12133

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method', *Qualitative Research Journal, 9*(2), 27–40. https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. Los Angeles, London: Sage Publications .

Cummins, D. (2013). *How to Boost Your Willpower. Psychology Today.* https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/good-thinking/201306/how-boost-yourwillpower.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) (2011). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Darby, P. & Clough, P. (2013). Investigating the information-seeking behaviour of genealogists and family historians. *Journal of Information Science, 39*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0165551512469765

Fizisko personu datu apstrādes likums [*Personal Data Processing Law*]. (2018). https://likumi.lv/ta/id/300099-fizisko-personu-datu-apstrades-likums

Fulton, C. (2009). The Pleasure Principle: The Power of Positive Affect in Information Seeking. *Aslib Proceedings 61*(3), 245–261. https://doi.org/10.1108/0001253091095980861

Fulton, C. (2016). The Genealogist's Information World: Creating Information in the Pursuit of a Hobby. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 8(1), 85–100.

Gavriļina, M. & Špūle, I. (2018). *Tekstveides rezultāti un ieteikumi 9. klases mācību valodas eksāmenā.* [*Text-formation results and recommendations for the grade 9 in the language exam*].Rīga: Valsts izglītības satura centrs.

Gavriļina, M. & Vulāne, A. (2008). *Valodā veldzējas tautas dvēsele…* [*The soul of the people is refreshed in the language...*]. Rīga: Mācību grāmata.

Grūbe, A., Ķipurs, R. & Ozoliņa, L. (2021). *Novadu mācība. Specializētā kursa programma un metodiskie ieteikumi* [*Regional learning. Specialised course programme and methodological recommendations*]. Rīga: Valsts izglītības satura centrs.

Hart, D. (2018). Other Ways of Knowing: The Intersection of Education when Researching Family Roots. *Genealogy*, 2(2). https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy2020018

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

629

Heitler, S. (2012). Changing Habits Beats Reliance on Willpower. *Psychology Today.* https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/resolution-not-conflict/201202/changinghabits-beats-reliance-willpower.

Herbart, J. H. (1806). *Pedagogía general derivada del fin de la educación.* [General pedagogy derived from the purpose of education] Madrid: Ediciones de La Lectura.

Hershkovitz, A. (2012). A Suggested Taxonomy of Genealogy as a Multidisciplinary Academic Research Field. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 4*(3), 5–21.

Hershkovitz, A. (2016). Editorial: Genealogy and Family History through Multiple Academic Lenses: An Introduction to the Special Issue. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Research 8*(1), 5–10.

Hershkovitz, A. & Hardof-Jaffe, S. (2017). Genealogy as a Lifelong Learning Endeavor. *Leisure/ Loisir, 41*(1), 1–26. https://doi.org/10.1080/14927713.2017.1399817

Klepar, M. (2017). The value of family traditions in the education of the individual in modern society. *Journal of Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University, 4*(1), 173–177.

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology,* 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage.

Laiveniece, D. (1997). *Metodes būtības analīze* [*Analysis of the nature of the method*]. Rīga: LPA.

Laiveniece, D. (2003) *Valodas mācības pusaudzim* [*Language learning for teenagers*]. Rīga: Raka.

Lazdiņa, S., Murinska, S., Šalme, A. & Urbanoviča, I. (2021). *Latviešu valoda I. Pamatkursa programmas paraugs vispārējai vidējai izglītībai* [*Latvian language I. Programme for secondary education*]. https://mape.skola2030.lv/materials/V4NekGgKBXhJnenMAtgYmg

Lukaševičs, V., Mickeviča, S. & Sokolova, I. (2007.) *Aktuāli literatūras teorijas jautājumi. Literatūra vidusskolai*[*Current issues in literary theory. Literature for secondary school*]. https://valoda.lv/wp-content/uploads/docs/E-Gramatas/29-Aktu%C4%81li%20literat%C5%ABras%20teorijas%20jaut%C4%81jumi%20.pdf

Mārtinsone, K., Pipere, A. & Kamerāde, D. (eds.) (2016). *Pētniecība* [*Research*]. Rīga: RaKa.

Nacionālās identitātes, pilsoniskās sabiedrības un integrācijas politikas pamatnostādnes 2012.–2018. gadam [*The Guidelines for National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy 2012–2018*]. (2012).

https://www.km.gov.lv/sites/km/files/media_file/lv_pamatnostadn1.pdf

Nha, D. L. (2022). Vietnamese children and adults' perceptions of genealogy's role in family tradition education. *Journal for Educators, Teachers and Trainers, 13*(1), 231–236.

Neuendorf, K. A. (2017). *The content analysis guidebook.* 2nd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781071802878

Neuman, W. L. (2003). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Noble, M. (2018). *Genealogy as a Solution in Education.* Preprints.org *2018,* 2018020181. https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints201802.0181.v1.

Noteikumi par valsts vispārējās vidējās izglītības standartu un vispārējās vidējās izglītības programmu paraugiem [*Regulations Regarding the State General Secondary Education Standard and Model General Secondary Education Programmes*]. Rīga: Latvijas Republikas Ministru kabinets. https://likumi.lv/ta/id/309597

Skola 2030. (2022). *National Centre for Education. Project School 2030.* https://www.skola2030.lv/lv

Špona, A. & Tomsons, V. (1996). *Vērtē studenti* [*Assessed by students*]. Rīga: Ogres tipogrāfija.

Zelmenis, V. (2000). *Pedagoģijas pamati* [*Foundations of pedagogy*]. Rīga: RaKa.

Žogla, I. (2001). *Didaktikas teorētiskie pamati* [*Theoretical foundations of didactics*].Rīga: RaKa.

Žogla, I. (1985). *Skolēniem par izziņas aktivitāti.* [*For students about their cognitive activity*]. Rīga: Zvaigzne.

Wood, W. (2017). Habit in Personality and Social Psychology. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 21*(4), 389–403. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868317720362.

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History inthe Process of learning the Latvian ..

630

About Authors

Kristiāns Jakubovskis, Bc. paed., is a teacher of Latvian and literature at Zemgale secondary school.

Anna Vulāne, Dr. philol., is a professor of the University of Latvia, leading researcher at the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia, expert in linguistics at the Council of Sciences of the Republic of Latvia.

HUMAN, TECHNOLOGIES AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION, 2023
K. Jakubovskis, A. Vulāne. Integrating the Study of Family History in the Process of learning the Latvian ..

631