


# Research of national identity in Georgian as a second language textbooks for ethnic minorities in the context of global education

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## ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of national identity in textbooks designed for teaching Georgian as a second language (GSL) to ethnic minority students, situating the analysis within the framework of global education. Using a mixed-methods design, the research combined textbook analysis with qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. Twenty-four teachers and one educational expert were interviewed, and 283 graduates of Armenian- and Azerbaijani-speaking schools completed a questionnaire. The study explored how textbooks present national identity, how teachers incorporate cultural elements in instruction, and how students perceive their own identities and educational experiences. Findings reveal that many textbooks are misaligned with students' linguistic competencies, often being either too difficult or too simplistic. Teachers highlighted the shortage of qualified staff and the need for additional bilingual and culturally relevant resources. Students reported mixed levels of interest in GSL lessons and identified language as a central marker of belonging, though many emphasized hybrid or primarily ethnic identities. The results underscore tensions between fostering Georgian national identity and respecting minority heritage. This study makes an original contribution by linking textbook analysis with perspectives from both teachers and students, offering evidence-based recommendations for curriculum reform, textbook development, and teacher training. It argues for a transcultural and inclusive approach to language education that supports both integration and diversity, thereby strengthening civic belonging in Georgia's multi-ethnic society.

**Keywords:** Ethnic minorities, Georgian as a second language, national identity, transcultural education, global education, bilingualism, multiculturalism.

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### **Highlights of this paper:**

- Examines representations of national identity in Georgian as a Second Language textbooks for ethnic minority learners.
- Analyzes the findings within the framework of global education and multicultural integration.
- Contributes to understanding how language education influences cultural identity formation and social inclusion.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Ethnic minorities are among the most socially and economically vulnerable groups in Georgia. According to the 2014 census, ethnic minorities constitute 13.2% of Georgia's population. The majority of these minorities are ethnic Azerbaijanis (6.3%) and Armenians (4.5%) (Bibileishvili, 2023).

Due to the policies chosen by the state, the level of proficiency in the state language among ethnic minorities in Georgia has not changed significantly over the past 30 years. According to two 2022 studies by the Institute for Social Research and Analysis, 63% of ethnic minorities cannot speak Georgian, and 84% cannot read literature (Chalaganidze & Asker, 2018; Forker & Botkovelevi, 2025).

Another important factor is that ethnic minorities have 2.7 times less access to preschool education than the rest of the population. Meanwhile, the number of teachers in ethnic minority schools is only half the required number. However, access to bilingual textbooks for teachers and students, as well as the development of bilingual support resources, etc., remain a challenge (Gorgadze, 2016; Tabatadze, 2019).

Naturally, the above-mentioned issues largely affect not only the acquisition of Georgian language competence by ethnic minorities living in Georgia but also their formation as conscious citizens and their national belonging to the state. We believe that it is especially important for post-Soviet countries to study the transition stage, namely, the issue of national identity transformed from the Soviet stage to the post-Soviet era, since, on the one hand, Soviet ideology was to some extent based on a common Soviet identity, which was to some extent formed by national icons and symbols, thereby strengthening the understanding of a Soviet person as a Soviet citizen. The ideological transformation had to change the citizen's perception of the past based on Soviet identity, destroy the issue of collective identity, and strengthen national consciousness, which first of all required the reconstruction of national icons and symbols, both in textbooks and in the physical environment of cities. Places of remembrance of the past, where Georgians fought for national freedom and independence, had to be created and reinforced. The environment where human identity is formed such as schools, homes, streets, textbooks, etc., had to be completely reconstructed (Office of the State Minister of Georgia for Reconciliation and Civil Equality, 2014).

The research question of the present study is the examination of national identity within the context of global learning in Georgian as a second language school textbooks in the post-Soviet era.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The process of national awakening, which has been ongoing in Georgia in a latent or explicit form since the beginning of the post-Soviet period, has led to the activation and representation of historical memory. National identity is defined as a set of concepts and emotions that are reflected in the individual's relationship with the nation (Mikeladze, 2023) as part of social identity that reflects the individual's self-esteem and self-difference as part of a certain national group, characterized by a common historical and cultural background, values, and beliefs (Open Society Foundation of Georgia (OSGF), 2022). It is defined as the perceived congruence of the concept of self-identity and the concept of the nation (Piranishvili & Barbakadze, 2022). Whether viewed subjectively or as a social, or collective, construct, national identity includes the following distinctive components: a) the individual's subjective

belief that he or she belongs to a particular nation; b) the sense of national belonging; c) attitudes and emotions toward the nation; d) stereotypes about the typical characteristics and traits of people who belong to one's own national group and to other national groups; e) the experience of inclusion and self-perception similar to that of other members of the national group; and f) the individual's desire and readiness to internationalize national culture, values, and norms of behavior (Davadze, 2025).

It is also interesting to note that collective memory is also defined in terms of transculturalism and pluralism. Collective memory, in the traditional sense, is based on the continuous production of representational forms. The French sociologist (Halbwachs, 2007) proposed the concept of collective memory in the early 1950s, distinguishing it from individual memory and defining it as a shared memory that is constructed and transmitted by a group (Barrett & Davis, 2008). Assmann (1999) also developed the term cultural memory (Brubaker, 1994). According to Welsch (1995), collective memory is memory that is conditioned by various, primarily historical, stories and narratives (Hodgins, Moloney, & Winskel, 2016). Relevant texts (annals, chronicles, school textbooks, etc.) are considered instruments of collective remembrance.

According to Nora (1989), collective memory is history precipitated in the active experience of communities; memory is in constant evolution, representing a dialectical unity of remembering and forgetting (Barrett, 2005).

Bilingual education and minority language teaching have been widely discussed in recent scholarly literature. Previous studies in Georgia highlight both opportunities and challenges in integrating minority students into the mainstream education system. Tabatadze (2019) emphasizes that bilingual educational policies can support social integration while preserving linguistic diversity. Similarly, Gorgadze (2016) points out that dual ethnic and cultural identity plays a crucial role in students' educational outcomes. Bibileishvili (2023) argues that early bilingual education provides a foundation for social integration, particularly for ethnic minority communities. Forker and Botkveli (2025) demonstrate how minority language communities use language to maintain cultural identity, highlighting the complex interplay between education, identity, and integration. Finally, Chalaganidze and Asker (2018) show that language policies strongly influence the consolidation of national identity in Georgia.

In the German-language discussion of postcolonial criticism, as well as in foreign-language didactics, the concept of transculturality initially became influential. In his article, Welsch (1995) develops a view of contemporary cultures that "no longer correspond to the old ideas of closed and unified national cultures" but are "internally characterized by a pluralization of possible identities and externally reveal borderline contours" (Hodgins et al., 2016). Cultures are highly intertwined and permeated with each other - with this assumption, the concept of transculturality should be distinguished from the concepts of interculturality and multiculturalism, which traditionally understand cultures as or spheres that come into contact with each other (in a conflictual way), even within a society (Hodgins et al., 2016).

In the matter of German as a foreign and second language, the concept of transculturality is often included as an extension or addition to the concept of interculturality, currently also in the design of textbooks that are oriented towards the new textbooks of the Council of Europe (2020) and, in particular, towards their multiculturalism and diversity.

In various publications, Hille and Schiedermaier (2021) point out the potential for global learning in German as a foreign and second language subject and emphasize the importance of perceiving "German" literature and culture, as well as its present and historical contexts, in their global interrelation. She focuses on global citizenship as a goal of teaching and learning (Halbwachs, 2007) and advocates for a different interpretation of global and ecologically oriented literature.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODS**

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of how national identity is represented in Georgian as a Second Language (GSL) textbooks for ethnic minorities. The decision to adopt a mixed-methods approach was guided by the principle of triangulation, which enhances the validity and reliability of research findings by combining different data sources and analytical perspectives. This approach allowed for a nuanced examination of textbook content, teachers' pedagogical practices, and students' experiences and perceptions, providing a multi-layered understanding of the complex interplay between language education and national identity.

The research design was developed to ensure both breadth and depth in capturing perspectives on national identity in GSL education. The qualitative strand relied on semi-structured interviews with 24 teachers working in non-Georgian-language schools and one methodologist with long-standing experience in minority education. Interviews lasted between 45 and 70 minutes and were conducted in Georgian, with transcripts later coded thematically. Key questions included: How is national identity represented in current GSL textbooks? How do students respond to these representations? What strategies do teachers use to balance linguistic instruction with cultural integration?

In parallel, the quantitative component consisted of a questionnaire distributed to 283 graduates from Armenian- and Azerbaijani-speaking schools who were enrolled in a one-year preparatory program at Ilia State University. The survey contained 32 items, including both closed and open-ended questions. It covered four main areas: (1) attitudes toward Georgian language lessons at school, (2) perceived difficulty and accessibility of textbooks, (3) students' self-identification with national identity categories, and (4) recommendations for improving education policy and curriculum design. Responses to closed-ended questions were measured on five-point Likert scales, while open-ended responses provided qualitative depth to the statistical patterns.

Triangulation of data sources allowed for greater reliability and validity. By combining perspectives from teachers, methodologists, and students, the study was able to capture both top-down and bottom-up views on GSL textbooks. Furthermore, integrating content analysis of textbooks with participant testimonies provided a richer understanding of how the written materials interact with classroom realities. Ethical approval was obtained from the university's research ethics board, and informed consent was secured from all participants.

### **4. QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

The qualitative component focused on the perspectives of teachers and educational experts, aiming to uncover the subtleties of classroom practices and instructional strategies. A total of 24 teachers working in non-Georgian-language schools and one methodologist specializing in minority education were interviewed. Teachers were selected based on purposive sampling to ensure representation across different regions and ethnic communities, including Armenian- and Azerbaijani-speaking schools in the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Kakheti. The teachers had between 5 and 20 years of professional experience teaching GSL. The methodologist was a senior educational consultant at the Center for Minority Education at Ilia State University.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews lasting between 45 and 70 minutes, conducted in Georgian. The interview protocol included open-ended questions designed to elicit detailed responses about:

1. How national identity is integrated into current GSL textbooks.
2. Challenges faced in teaching GSL to ethnic minority students.
3. Strategies used to balance language instruction with cultural and civic education.
4. Perceptions of student engagement and comprehension.

Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using thematic coding. Themes were identified both deductively, based on existing literature on national identity and transcultural education, and inductively, emerging from participants' narratives. To enhance credibility, coding was conducted independently by two researchers, and discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

## **5. QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY**

The quantitative component was designed to complement qualitative insights by capturing broader patterns across a larger sample. A questionnaire was administered to 283 graduates of Armenian- and Azerbaijani-speaking schools from eight specific schools in Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, who were enrolled in a one-year preparatory GSL program at Ilia State University, Tbilisi. Participants were between 17 and 22 years old, with 52% female and 48% male.

The survey consisted of 32 items, including both closed- and open-ended questions, addressing four key areas:

1. Attitudes toward Georgian language lessons.
2. Perceived difficulty and accessibility of textbooks.
3. Self-identification with national identity categories.
4. Recommendations for improving education policy and curriculum design.

Responses to closed-ended questions were measured using five-point Likert scales, providing quantitative indicators of students' perceptions and experiences. Open-ended responses were analyzed thematically to provide explanatory depth to the statistical trends.

### *5.1. Integration and Triangulation*

Triangulation was achieved by integrating three data sources: interviews with teachers and methodologists, content analysis of GSL textbooks, and student survey responses. This approach ensured that the findings reflect both top-down perspectives (teachers and policymakers) and bottom-up experiences (students). Ethical approval was obtained from the university's research ethics board, and informed consent was secured from all participants. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained.

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of Ilia State University, Georgia, dated 05.2025. Informed verbal consent was obtained from all participants, and all data were anonymized to protect participant confidentiality.

## **6. RESEARCH RESULTS**

### *6.1. Qualitative Findings*

Analysis of the interviews revealed several key themes:

1. Need for Additional Learning Resources

Teachers highlighted the necessity of supplementary materials. Existing textbooks often failed to match students' proficiency levels, either being too challenging or too simplistic. Teachers suggested incorporating authentic texts, multimedia resources, and culturally relevant content to engage students more effectively. Some recommended using bilingual materials as a bridge between the minority language and Georgian.

2. Alignment of Textbooks with Student Competence

Teachers reported a significant mismatch between textbook expectations and student abilities. While some students could cope with the material, the majority struggled, indicating the need for differentiated instruction and

adaptive curriculum design. This gap suggests a systemic issue in textbook development that does not adequately consider the heterogeneous backgrounds of learners.

### 3. Integration of National Identity

Teachers consistently emphasized the importance of fostering a sense of belonging to the Georgian national community. Strategies included:

- Introducing Georgian history, literature, and cultural traditions.
- Organizing intercultural events and field trips to historical sites.
- Encouraging dialogue between ethnic minority and Georgian-speaking students.

However, some teachers, especially from Azerbaijani schools, stressed the importance of maintaining students' ethnic identity. They argued that promoting respect for Georgian culture should not come at the expense of students' own heritage, reflecting a nuanced understanding of transcultural identity formation.

### 4. Shortage of Qualified Staff

A recurrent concern was the lack of trained personnel in minority-language schools. Teachers cited staff shortages as a critical barrier to implementing effective GSL instruction and integrating national identity into the curriculum.

## 6.2. Quantitative Findings

The survey data provided insights into students' experiences and perceptions of GSL instruction:

### 1. Interest in Georgian Lessons

Only 25.8% of respondents found GSL lessons interesting, 13.4% found them uninteresting, and 60.8% were ambivalent. This indicates a need for more engaging and culturally relevant teaching materials.

### 2. Attendance Patterns

Students reported varying levels of attendance: 21.7% often missed lessons, 43.5% occasionally missed them, and 34.8% never missed lessons. Attendance patterns may reflect both engagement levels and structural challenges such as scheduling or school resources.

### 3. Textbook Comprehension

When asked about textbook difficulty, 30.9% found the material difficult, 29.2% easy, and 39.9% moderately understandable. These results underscore the mismatch between student proficiency and textbook design.

### 4. Teaching Clarity

Students reported that 25.8% found the material explained clearly and engagingly, 13.4% disagreed, and 60.8% found explanations occasionally interesting, depending on the topic.

### 5. Perceptions of National Identity

Students provided rich, qualitative responses about what national identity means to them. Themes included:

- Shared cultural values, traditions, and heritage.
- Language as a central marker of belonging.
- Collective consciousness linking culture, history, and national pride.

Ethnic Armenian students primarily identified with Armenian national identity, whereas Azerbaijani students expressed hybrid identities, balancing ethnic and emerging Georgian national affiliation.

### 6. School Activities Related to National Identity

Students reported limited exposure to school activities promoting national identity: 34.7% said no activities were held, 39.4% reported a few activities, and 25.9% reported frequent activities. This indicates a need for **structured** cultural programs within schools.

7. Suggestions for Strengthening National Identity Students emphasized:

- Promoting national culture and history through interactive and multimedia formats.
- Organizing traditional festivals, educational tours, and youth projects.
- Leveraging media, arts, and technology to make national identity more tangible.
- Reforming textbooks to integrate culturally relevant and engaging content.

6.3. Quantitative Research Results

The quantitative study involved 283 ethnic minority students currently enrolled in a preparatory program at Ilia State University, which prepares students for undergraduate studies after successfully completing this one-year program. They graduated from non-Georgian-speaking schools in various regions of Georgia one year ago.

The results of the quantitative research are as follows: We were interested in how Georgian was taught to students as a second language at school. How would they rate the Georgian lessons? How interesting were the Georgian lessons for them?

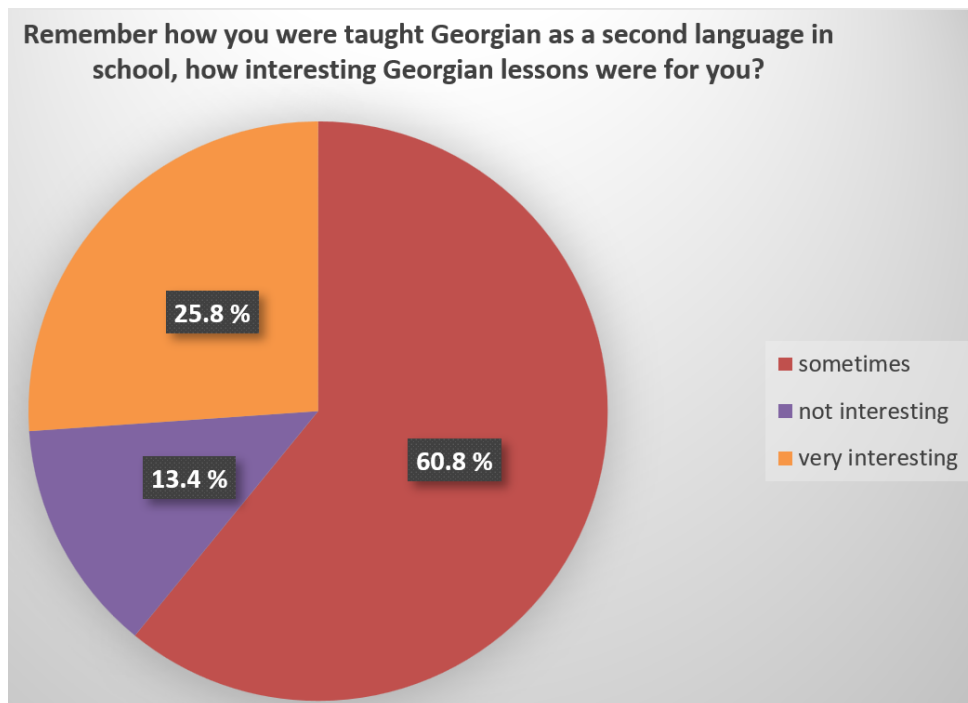


Figure 1. Interest in Georgian-as-a-second-language lessons at school.

Figure 1 illustrates that only 25.8% of respondents found Georgian lessons interesting. 13.4% believe that Georgian lessons were not interesting for them, while the remaining 60.8% found them sometimes interesting and sometimes not.

We were interested in how often Georgian as a second language lessons were missed during school. 21.7% of respondents stated that they often missed these lessons. For 34.8%, Georgian lessons were not missed, while 43.5% stated that they were sometimes missed.

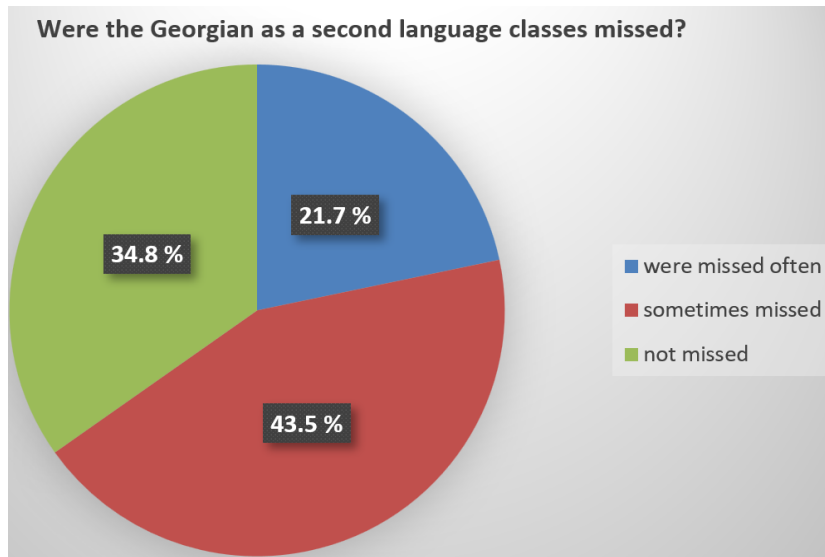


Figure 2. Attendance patterns in Georgian as a second language classes.

As Figure 2 shows, Attendance in GSL lessons is as follows:

- 21.7% reported frequent missed lessons.
- 43.5% stated lessons were occasionally missed.
- 34.8% reported no missed lessons.

For our research, it was crucial to understand how students evaluated the Georgian as a Second Language textbook: how difficult or easy it was for them to comprehend the material. The responses are illustrated in the diagram:

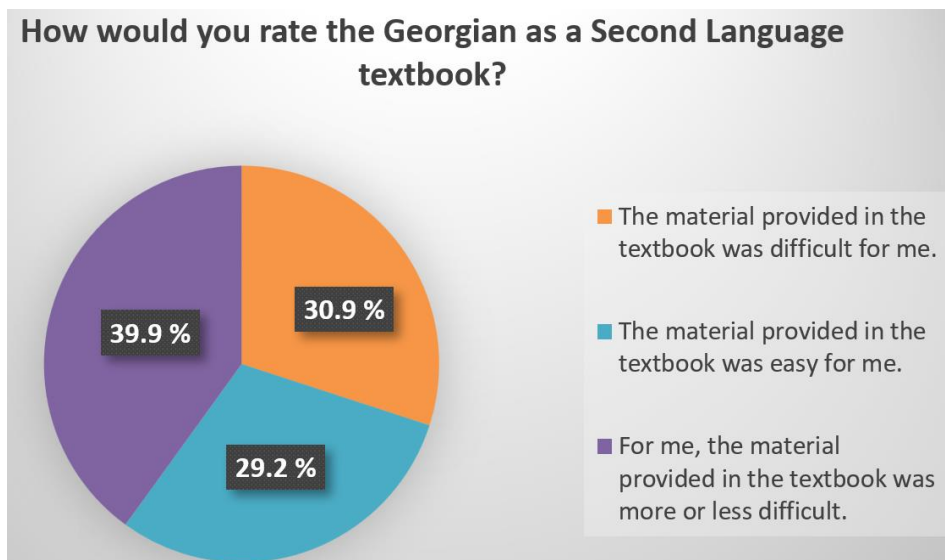


Figure 3. Evaluation of the Georgian-as-a-second-language textbook by students.

Figure 3 illustrates that 30.9% considered the material in the textbook difficult, 29.2% found it easy, and the remaining 39.9% found the material more or less understandable.

The next question that we were interested in from the students was the following - how Georgian was taught at school as a second language; how clearly and interestingly the teacher explained the material:



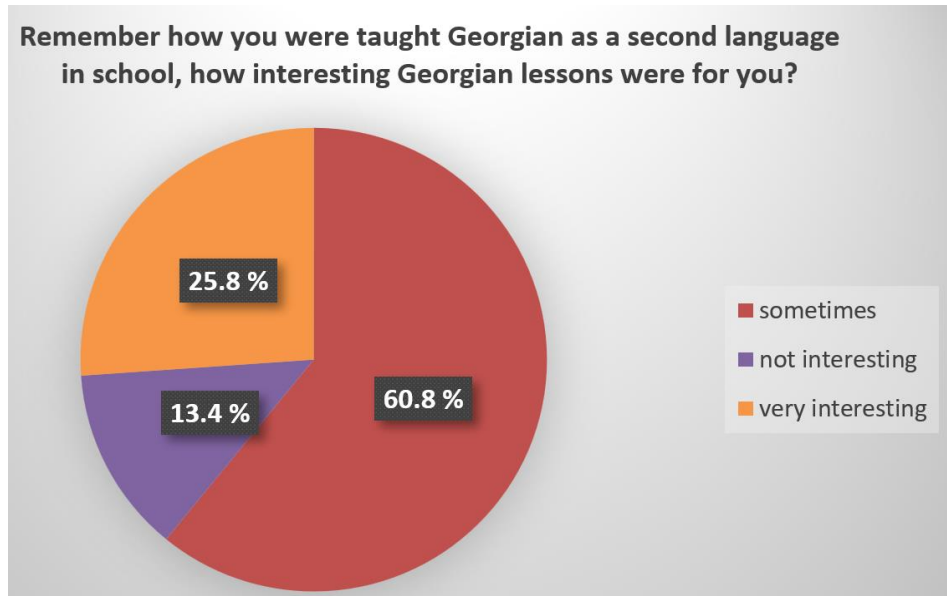


Figure 4. Students' perceptions of how Georgian as a second language was taught in school and how interesting the lessons were.

Figure 4 illustrates that for 25.8% of the respondents, the teacher explained the material in an interesting way; for 13.4%, the material was not interesting; and 60.8% believe that it was sometimes interesting and sometimes not, depending on the topic.

Given the research topic, we were very interested in the respondents' attitudes towards national identity and which national identity they attributed to themselves. The students' answers to this open-ended question turned out to be very interesting:

As the results of the study showed, for them, national identity mainly represents:

- The common values, traditions and cultural heritage of society.
- National identity is when a person considers himself a member of a particular nation and shares its language, traditions and culture.
- National identity is a common consciousness of people, which combines culture, history, language, traditions, and values. It is a sense of belonging to a certain society a society that has a common heritage and a vision of a common future.
- National identity is the self-awareness and self-perception of people that they belong to a particular nation or nationality.
- National identity for me is a set of cultural, historical, linguistic, and social values that connect a person to a particular nation and country. It is an inner feeling of belonging to a particular society, sharing its traditions, language, rules, and values.
- I feel the identity of the nationality in whose culture I grew up, whose language I think and speak, and whose history, successes and difficulties are important to me. This can be one nation or several, if a person lives in a multicultural environment and shares more than one identity.
- National identity for me is unity around language, culture, and common values, which form my belonging to the nation.

It is noteworthy that ethnic Armenian students stated that they are Armenians and feel a sense of belonging only to the Armenian national identity. While the answers of Azerbaijani students indicate that they are ethnic Azerbaijanis, they also feel a sense of belonging to the Georgian national identity.

We were interested in the extent to which the school (subject teachers) planned various activities within the framework of national identity. The answers were distributed as follows:

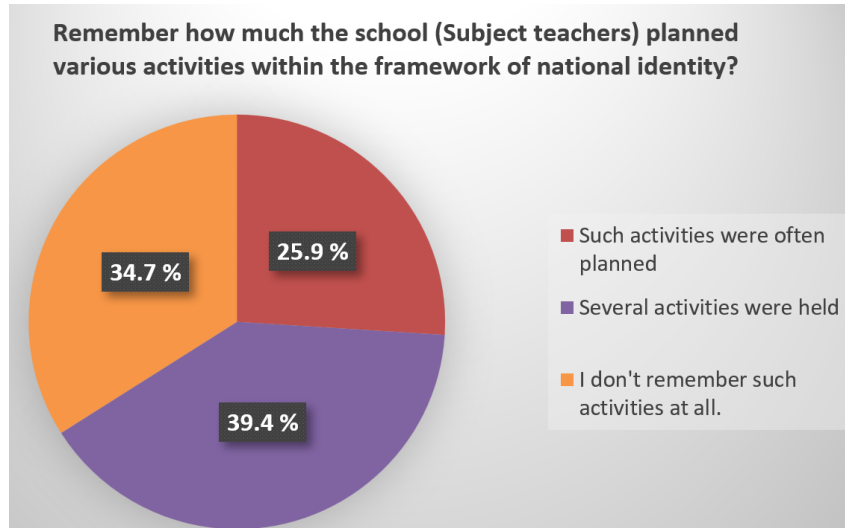


Figure 5. Extent to which schools organized activities within the framework of national identity.

Figure 5 illustrates that, according to 34.7% of respondents, such activities were not held at school at all. According to 39.4%, several activities were held, and 25.9% recalled that such activities were planned often.

The next question we asked the students was: What does Georgian national identity mean to you, and to what extent do you consider yourself to belong to the Georgian national identity?

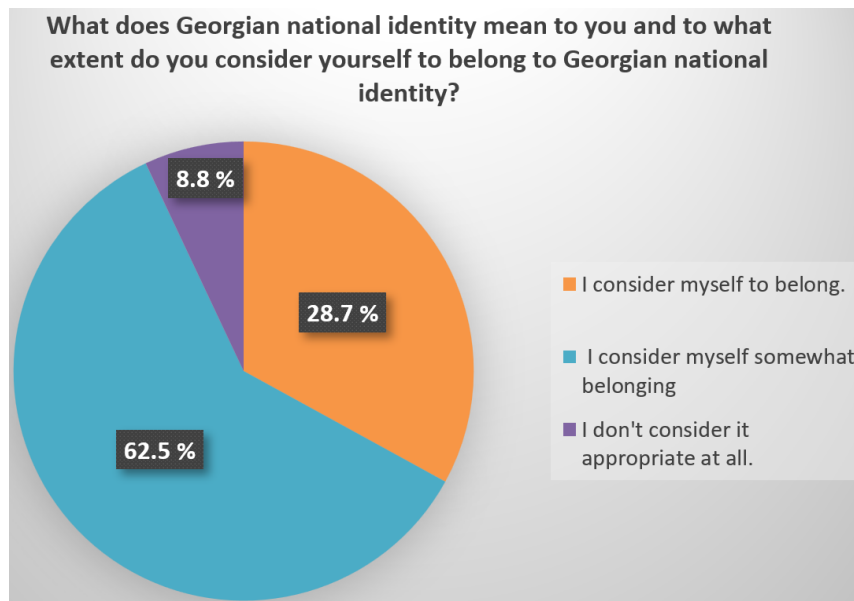


Figure 6. Students' understanding of what Georgian identity means to them.

As we can see, Figure 6 illustrates the following: 28.7% consider themselves connected to the Georgian national identity, 62.5% consider themselves somewhat connected, and 8.8% do not consider themselves connected.

To the question of what should be done/planned in the state to better understand/bring closer to the national identity? The answers are as follows:

Students believe that it is necessary to promote national culture, traditions, and history more in schools and public spaces in interactive and interesting forms for young people.

In their opinion, to strengthen national identity, it is necessary to:

1. Place more emphasis on history and culture in education.
2. Plan traditional festivals and projects for young people.
3. Media and art should become carriers of identity.
4. Appreciating and presenting the cultural characteristics of all regions.
5. More opportunities for interaction.

Some of them believe that more activities and tours should be planned to better understand the Georgian national identity. This includes trainings, events, and concerts. Providing information about these events is necessary through all platforms, and online trainings are also welcomed to improve the learning of the Georgian language.

Some students believe that the basis for a better understanding of national identity is replacing current school textbooks with new ones. It is necessary to reform education and improve curricula, focusing on more youth initiatives, which will contribute to the organic assimilation of identity in a modern context.

Finally, to summarize the opinions of the students, the state should take several important steps to better understand and promote national identity. According to the respondents, it is necessary to:

1. Strengthen education.
2. Supporting cultural events.
3. Engaging youth.
4. Promoting national heroes and historical figures.
5. Planning public festivals and celebrations.
6. Bringing history lessons to the forefront.
7. Holding national events.
8. Involvement of Media.
9. Strengthening Georgian language teaching in non-Georgian-speaking schools.
10. Recognizing diversity in national identity.
11. Supporting regional tourism.
12. Using technology to preserve national heritage.

All of this will help people not only learn about national identity but also feel its importance in everyday life.

Given the research topic, we were interested in how much students would want to feel closer to Georgian national identity.

We can see the answers in the diagram:

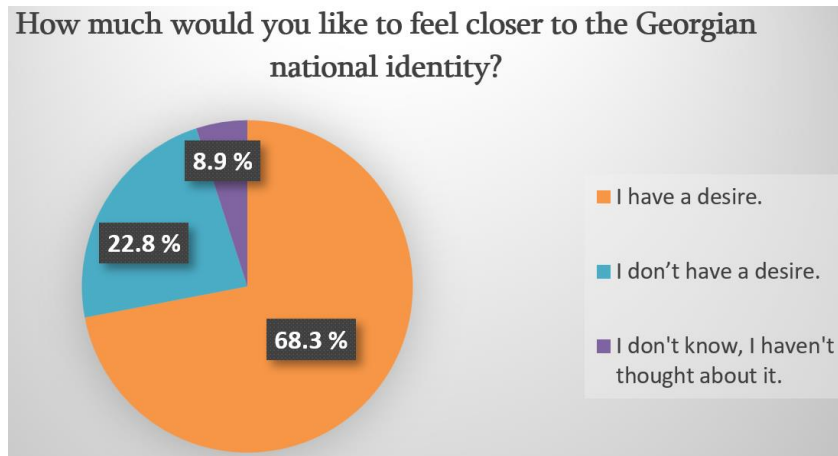


Figure 7. Students' willingness to feel closer to the Georgian national identity.

Figure 7 illustrates the issue about Georgian identity. When asked "Would you add anything else?", the students made a very interesting suggestion that could form the basis for a new research question: "It's interesting how we manage to learn Georgian in one year of university preparatory programs, while we couldn't learn Georgian in school for 12 years. This is the main problem and question." We believe this topic truly deserves discussion and consideration.

## 7. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underscore the central role of language education in shaping national identity within multiethnic societies such as Georgia. Both qualitative and quantitative data reveal that while Georgian as a Second Language (GSL) textbooks attempt to serve as instruments of linguistic integration, they often fall short of meeting the diverse needs of minority students. This outcome is consistent with theoretical perspectives that view language not merely as a communicative tool but also as a carrier of cultural memory, civic values, and collective identity (Anderson, 1991; Smith & Smith, 2010).

### 7.1. Alignment of Textbooks with Student Competence

The mismatch between textbook content and student proficiency levels was one of the most prominent findings. Teachers and students alike reported that materials are either too complex or overly simplified, making them ineffective in fostering meaningful learning. Such discrepancies highlight a systemic problem in curriculum development, where the sociolinguistic realities of minority students are insufficiently considered. This aligns with Cummins (2000) emphasis on the importance of scaffolding in second-language acquisition, suggesting that differentiated instruction and adaptive materials are necessary to promote both language competence and cultural inclusion.

### 7.2. National Identity and Transcultural Education

The integration of national identity into GSL education emerged as both a strength and a point of tension. Teachers actively attempt to instill a sense of belonging by introducing Georgian history, traditions, and cultural values, while students often articulate hybrid identities that balance ethnic and Georgian elements. This reflects Welsh (1999)'s notion of transculturality, where identity formation occurs not through assimilation or isolation but through dynamic cultural exchange. The Georgian case illustrates how transcultural education can strengthen civic

cohesion while also respecting minority heritage a balance particularly critical in post-Soviet contexts navigating globalization.

### *7.3. Role of Teachers and Structural Constraints*

The shortage of qualified teaching staff represents a major barrier to effective implementation of GSL education. Without adequately trained professionals, efforts to align instruction with both linguistic and civic goals remain constrained. This challenge resonates with international findings in multilingual education, where teacher preparedness is consistently cited as a determinant of success in fostering intercultural understanding (Banks, 2009). Professional development, combined with institutional investment, is therefore essential to address gaps in both pedagogy and cultural mediation.

### *7.4. Student Engagement and Cultural Relevance*

Survey data indicate that student engagement in GSL lessons is generally low, with many respondents reporting ambivalence or lack of interest. This can be attributed to the limited cultural relevance of textbooks and the absence of interactive, multimedia-based learning opportunities. As noted by Kramersch (1993), language learning becomes meaningful when it is embedded in cultural narratives that resonate with learners' identities and lived experiences. Students' suggestions—ranging from educational tours to the integration of festivals and youth projects point toward the need for a curriculum that goes beyond linguistic mechanics to foster active civic participation.

### *7.5. Implications for Global Education*

By situating the Georgian case within broader debates on global citizenship education, this study highlights the dual responsibility of language pedagogy: to promote communicative competence and to cultivate civic and intercultural awareness. The findings align with UNESCO's (2015) call for education systems to embrace diversity while fostering inclusive national belonging. Georgia's experience demonstrates both the challenges and opportunities of implementing such an approach in societies marked by ethnic plurality and post-Soviet transformations.

### *7.6. Original Contribution*

This research is the first systematic analysis of national identity in GSL textbooks in Georgia. Its originality lies in linking textbook analysis with both teacher and student perspectives, thereby providing a holistic view of how national identity is mediated through education. By employing a mixed-methods approach, the study not only identifies systemic shortcomings but also offers pathways for reform, including the development of adaptive, transcultural resources and the strengthening of teacher training.

The analysis of the sources and the research results discussed in the paper have shown that national identity, along with various distinguishing components, includes an objective belief in belonging to a certain nation; national identity, as part of social identity, reflects an individual's self-esteem and self-difference as part of a certain national group, which is characterized by a common historical and cultural background, values, and beliefs (Assmann, 1999).

This study examined the representation of national identity in Georgian as a Second Language (GSL) textbooks and explored how teachers, experts, and students from ethnic minority backgrounds perceive the role of education in fostering national belonging. The findings reveal both opportunities and challenges for strengthening Georgian national identity in the context of global education.

### *7.7. National Identity as a Multifaceted and Contested Concept*

The results confirm that national identity remains a complex and multifaceted construct in Georgia. While many students and teachers view belonging to the Georgian national identity as important for integration, others stress the importance of maintaining strong ethnic identities. For example, Armenian students primarily identified with Armenian national identity, whereas Azerbaijani students expressed hybrid belonging, balancing Azerbaijani heritage with an emerging Georgian national identity. These findings reflect theoretical perspectives on national identity as both socially constructed and fluid, shaped by historical, cultural, and transcultural experiences.

### *7.8. Tensions Between Integration and Preservation of Identity*

Teachers emphasized the importance of introducing students to Georgian history, culture, and traditions while also respecting their ethnic backgrounds. Azerbaijani teachers, in particular, expressed caution against artificially imposing Georgian identity. This tension illustrates a broader challenge in post-Soviet nation-building: how to balance integration into a shared civic space with the recognition of cultural diversity. The findings resonate with Welsch's concept of transculturality, where identities are not exclusive or fixed but interconnected across cultural boundaries.

### *7.9. The Role of Textbooks and Educational Resources*

The study revealed widespread dissatisfaction with current Georgian as a Second Language textbooks, which are often perceived as either too easy or too difficult for students' proficiency levels. Teachers and students alike expressed the need for alternative or supplementary resources that are more authentic, culturally relevant, and inclusive of minority perspectives. In line with global education frameworks, textbooks should not only promote linguistic competence but also foster global citizenship, intercultural dialogue, and mutual respect.

### *7.10. Structural and Pedagogical Challenges*

Both teachers and students highlighted systemic barriers to effective Georgian as a Second Language education, including the shortage of qualified staff, limited bilingual support, and insufficient extracurricular activities related to national identity. Strikingly, many students reported learning more Georgian in one year of a university preparatory program than in twelve years of schooling, suggesting fundamental weaknesses in school-level Georgian as a Second Language teaching. This raises questions about teacher training, curriculum design, and the allocation of resources in minority schools.

### *7.11. Implications for Policy and Practice*

The findings carry important implications for policymakers, curriculum developers, and educators:

- Curriculum reform is needed to align textbooks with principles of transcultural and global education, integrating diverse cultural perspectives while reinforcing shared national values.
- Teacher training should prioritize intercultural competence, differentiated instruction, and innovative strategies for fostering both linguistic and civic integration.
- Educational equity requires addressing structural barriers in minority schools, including staff shortages, inadequate teaching resources, and limited opportunities for cultural exchange.
- Youth engagement through festivals, media, technology, and interactive projects can strengthen the relevance of national identity for new generations.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Overall, this study demonstrates that while national identity is valued by many ethnic minority students and teachers in Georgia, the current system of GSL education does not fully meet their linguistic, cultural, or civic needs. The findings highlight the urgent need for textbooks and teaching practices that are inclusive, adaptive, and transcultural, enabling ethnic minority students to participate as equal members of Georgian society while also maintaining pride in their heritage.

### 8.1. Summary and Conclusion

This study represents the first academic attempt in Georgia to investigate the issue of national identity in Georgian as a Second Language (GSL) textbooks for ethnic minorities within the framework of global education. Using a mixed-methods design, the research combined textbook analysis, teacher and expert interviews, and student surveys to explore how national identity is represented in learning materials and how it is perceived by ethnic minority communities.

The findings demonstrate that:

- Current GSL textbooks often fail to match students' actual proficiency levels and do not sufficiently integrate authentic, culturally relevant, or transcultural content.
- Teachers and experts unanimously emphasize the need for additional and alternative resources that better support language acquisition and national integration.
- Students hold diverse views on national identity: while many express a desire for a closer connection to Georgian identity, others prioritize their ethnic belonging. Azerbaijani students, in particular, reveal hybrid identities, suggesting potential pathways for transcultural integration.
- Structural barriers such as staff shortages, lack of bilingual resources, and limited extracurricular initiatives further hinder the effectiveness of GSL education.

These results highlight both the importance and the difficulty of fostering national identity through education in a multi-ethnic, post-Soviet society. In the context of global learning, the study underlines the need to approach national identity not as a fixed or imposed construct, but as a dialogical and transcultural process that balances shared civic values with respect for diversity.

### 8.2. Contribution and Implications

The study makes an original contribution by linking the analysis of GSL textbooks in Georgia with theoretical frameworks of national identity, interculturality, and transculturality. The results provide evidence-based insights for curriculum reform, textbook development, and teacher training. They also point to the necessity of strengthening educational equity for ethnic minority students and creating more inclusive strategies for building national identity in line with global citizenship education.

By recognizing the multiplicity of identities and the lived experiences of ethnic minority students, Georgia can move toward an education system that supports both linguistic integration and cultural diversity helping to form citizens who are at once rooted in national traditions and engaged in global society.

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