

In Memoriam

NATELA IMEDADZE – RESEARCHER AND PEDAGOGIST

Irakli Imedadze¹

Natela Imedadze (1929-2024), a prominent representative of the Georgian psychological school, passed away. She was a candidate of psychological sciences (1958), a doctor (1972), and a professor (1986). She was a member of the Academy of Educational Sciences of Georgia. N. Imedadze studied psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy of Tbilisi State University and took the postgraduate program of the D. Uznadze Institute of Psychology. In 1957 she began working at this same institute, initially at the genetic psychology department and later at the educational psychology department. From 1973 to 2006, she headed the psychology department at Tbilisi Pedagogical Institute (which later gained the status of university), delivering fundamental courses in general, child, and educational psychology. Until the end of her life, the main focus of her courses was the psychology of foreign language teaching. Also, she lectured and provided consultations at higher education institutions in Tbilisi and other cities of Georgia. Since 2010, she held the title of Professor Emeritus at Ilia State University. N. Imedadze was a member of the International Association for the Study of Child Speech and regularly participated in congresses of this association (Budapest, Krakow, Vienna, Cologne, Istanbul, Warsaw, San Sebastián) and various scientific forums of different levels. She represented Georgia at several international congresses of psychologists (Moscow, Tokyo, Leipzig). N. Imedadze's works have been published in Georgian, English, and Russian. Under her supervision, about 30 dissertations have been defended in general, educational, and child psychology.

N. Imedadze's main research directions included: pedagogical and child psychology, child speech, specifically bilingualism and second language acquisition; emotions, particularly anxiety and stress.

N. Imedadze's candidate dissertation focused on the psychological mechanisms of early bilingualism. The empirical material presented in the dissertation was obtained as a result of implementing the "one person – one language" model; the stages of forming two language systems were confirmed: mixed speech and the differentiation of the two languages, which are interpreted in terms of D. Uznadze's general psychological theory of disposition. As she herself remarked, the model of disposition as an unconscious readiness for behavior logically aligned with the observational material she collected. Through experimental study of second language acquisition, she conceptualized bilingualism as a developing system of the interrelationship between two languages. N. Imedadze continued to investigate the problems of bilingualism, this time in the context of the assimilation

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of the Georgian language by national minorities living in Georgia (Armenians, Azerbaijanis) and the preparation of teachers for them.

Meanwhile, N. Imedadze was researching the emotions of preschool and school-aged children, specifically anxiety. She developed a projective methodology for measuring anxiety in children, which is widely used both in Georgia and beyond. The empirical study also focused on the peculiarities of the coping strategies for overcoming anxiety among adolescents. In this context, the research aimed to clarify how stress affects the personality traits of adolescents. N. Imedadze, along with colleagues, conducted extensive research on stress coping strategies among adolescents from displaced families. The study showed that these adolescents tend to adopt more effective stress coping strategies at an earlier age. The findings of the research were presented at the European Congress on Adolescent Research in 2010.

Since the 1980s, N. Imedadze participated in several international projects focused on cross-linguistic research of children's speech (in collaboration with the Universities of Berkeley, Vienna, and Cologne). She identified psychological laws governing the acquisition of Georgian as a native and second language by children. Between 2001 and 2003, N. Imedadze took part as a co-director in a large cross-cultural project with psychologists from the University of Bern titled "The Daily Engagement of Georgian, Swiss, and Norwegian Students", with the collaborators participating in the project as well. The results were discussed at several congresses on adolescent psychology (in Milan and Porto). N. Imedadze delivered courses of lectures on the psychology of bilingualism (in Budapest) and psycholinguistics (at the University of Cologne). The study of fundamental psychological mechanisms of bilingualism and age-related regularities in the acquisition of a second language brought Professor N. Imedadze an international recognition.

In a book published in 2017, N. Imedadze generalized the research conducted over 20 years regarding the cross-linguistic analysis of the speech development of Georgian children. The book presents both general and specific characteristics of the speech development of Georgian-speaking children, such as the early emergence of ergative constructions against the backdrop of the child's manipulative activity, the abundance of verb prefixes in motion verbs, and the influence of grammatical and lexical features of the language on the differential perception of objects. The author termed this phenomenon "the verbal determination of non-verbal behavior."

Natela Imedadze dedicated over seven decades to serving science and education. She made a significant impact on psycholinguistics and nurtured several generations of specialists. Everyone who knew her will remember her as a person endowed with rare personal qualities, full of kindness and benevolence.

Main Works

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