

LINGUISTIC CAPITAL AS A KEY FACTOR OF SOCIAL INCLUSION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN THE GLOBALISED CONTEXT

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Abstract: *With regard to the general trends associated with globalization and other aspects of contemporary society, linguistic capital has come to play an increasingly important role in ensuring social integration and improving the resilience of communities. Following the ideas put forth by Pierre Bourdieu, it is possible to regard linguistic capital as an element of cultural capital and one that exerts considerable influence on people's access to education, work, and social life. This paper aims at investigating the part played by linguistic skills in helping people integrate into society and improve their ability to respond to changes generated by globalization. To achieve the stated purpose, the study draws upon insights offered by linguistics, sociology, and socio-economic science in order to analyse the connection between linguistic diversity, occupational mobility, and sustainable social development. According to the empirical evidence provided by the analysis of questionnaires, multilingualism appears to have a positive impact on the job-related success of respondents, including their chances of finding employment and earning more money. At the same time, it should be noted that differences in access to language training programs may help maintain existing social disparities. Overall, linguistic and intercultural skills contribute both to economic success and effective intercultural communication and social integration. Therefore, promoting language education and recognizing linguistic diversity may become powerful tools for increasing social inclusiveness and improving the resilience of societies to global problems.*

Keywords: *linguistic capital, multilingualism, social inclusion, employability, academic mobility, community resilience, globalisation, intercultural competence, linguistic diversity.*

Classification JEL: *I25, J24, Z13.*

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1. Introduction

Within the context of accelerating globalization, economic activity, labour markets, and social interaction are increasingly shaped by intercultural communication and cross-border exchange. However, widely known factors of social economic outcomes such as education, skills, and work experience remain important, growing attention is being paid to the role of language as a strategic resource. In this regard linguistic capital become a key factor that influence individuals access to academic and professional opportunities, and the capacity of communities to adapt to complex and dynamic environments. Regardless of the expanding relevance of language in globalised societies, its role is often underexplored in socio-economic analysis. Currently, research tends to examine human capital primarily in terms of formal education and technical skills, while the contribution of language skills to employment, income, and social integration remains insufficiently integrated into mainstream conceptual frameworks. In a context characterized by high mobility, cultural diversity, and increasing demands on intercultural communication, this gap is particularly important.

Within this framework, the present study examines linguistic capital as a factor of social inclusion and community resilience and aims to analyse how language competences

influence individuals' integration into the labour market and their ability to access economic opportunities, as well as how they contribute to the adaptive capacity of communities in a globalised environment. With reference to the theoretical framework and empirical data from previous studies, the present paper tests the following hypotheses: (1) Higher levels of linguistic competences correlate with greater employment prospects and higher earnings. (2) Linguistic capital has a positive impact on community resilience by promoting adaptive capacity, cooperation and social cohesion in the context of globalization. (3) Multilingualism is positively associated with stronger social inclusion, greater academic mobility, and improved labour market integration.

In terms of methodology, the paper uses an interdisciplinary approach, combining theoretical concepts from sociolinguistics and economic sociology with empirical evidence derived from survey data. This allows for a comprehensive analysis of linguistic capital as both – an individual and a systemic resource. The originality of the study lies in the integration of linguistic, economic and social approaches to understanding linguistic capital not only as a means of communication, but also as a strategic resource influencing inclusion and sustainable development. By analysing micro-level outcomes such as employment and income in correlation with macro-level effects, including social cohesion and community adaptability, the study deepens our understanding of the role of language in the functioning of modern societies.

The present article is structured as follows: the next section presents the theoretical framework and literature review, followed by a description of the methodology. The Results and Discussion section discusses the results in the context of existing theories and proposed hypotheses, and the final section presents conclusions, implications, and directions for future research.

2. Literature Review

The concept of linguistic capital that originates in the sociological theory of capital was developed by a prominent French sociologist and anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu in 1991. The researcher distinguishes between economic, social, and cultural capital as key determinants of individuals' position within the social structure, considering language to be a form of symbolic and cultural capital. Within this framework, language competencies represent socially valuable resources that influence individuals' access to education, academic mobilities, employment, and participation in institutional life. In this regard, the value of linguistic capital depends on its recognition within a given social field, reflecting broader mechanisms of societal inclusion and exclusion.

Building on Bourdieu' foundation, within the current research, the comprehension of linguistic capital has been expanded beyond its symbolic dimension, highlighting its practical and economic significance in a globalized world. International academic and professional mobility, migration, and the expansion of global markets have intensified intercultural interaction and the necessity for multilingual communication. According to Hirbu and Dombrovski (2025), the globalization has transformed the circulation of linguistic resources, correlating language competencies more closely with social and professional mobility, and economic outcomes. Therefore, linguistic capital can be defined as a strategic resource that facilitates the integration of individuals into the transnational economic and social space.

In contemporary sociolinguistics, the functions of language aimed at identity and supporting social initiative and community solidarity are gradually expanding. As Deardorff (2006) and Heller (2007) note, the use of languages is a reserve part of the process of active interaction and influence on interaction in social settings. Language skills become standards for building a cohesive society in a multilingual environment, as they ensure dialogue between different communities. Given linguistic capital, the growth of community resilience in the context of globalization, characterized by uncertainty and dynamic change, is of great importance. The importance of multilingualism and intercultural dialogue as control components of the identity principle is again demonstrated by recent studies by Hirbu (2024; 2025), as they play a decisive role in the coexistence of social cohesion and leadership within Europe and beyond. Thus, the coexistence of different languages can be understood not only as a cultural diversity but also as a factor contributing to social cohesion and economic sustainability.

Despite the existence of many studies on the subject, the inclusion of language assets into mainstream socio-economic analysis is still not widely explored. Previous works have mostly focused on studying either economic or cultural dimensions separately, without recognizing the fact that language as a strategic asset has an interdisciplinary nature.

In response to this limitation and to synthesize all perspectives, this study proposes an expanded conceptualization of linguistic capital emphasizing its multidimensional nature. Within this study, it is considered as a multidimensional construct composed of knowledge, competencies, value and economic dimensions. As a complex and dynamic set of linguistic, discourse, communicative, and pragmatic competencies and knowledge, coupled with intercultural competence, linguistic capital functions as a strategic resource for economic development, career advancement, and social integration. By integrating these dimensions, it operates simultaneously at the both – individual and systemic levels. Thus, linguistic capital is understood not only as a personal resource but also as a structural mechanism linking micro-level opportunities to macro-level processes of integration and sustainability in globalized societies.

3. Methodology

The research design employed in this study is a mixed-method approach where quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used to examine how language capital contributes to social inclusion and labor market opportunities in a globalized environment. This research design highlights the importance of capturing objective trends and subjective experiences regarding the use of language in the economic sphere.

Objectively speaking, data was obtained using a survey from 134 subjects through a questionnaire that included close-ended questions as well as open-ended questions to allow the subjects to explain their experience. The questionnaire helped capture the information related to four major dimensions including (1) sociodemographic characteristics such as education and workplace, (2) language capital including number of languages spoken, frequency of language use, and self-perceived level of language ability in non-native languages, (3) labour market effects on employment, promotion, and earning potential, and (4) institutional effects through language training by employers.

The quantitative data was subjected to descriptive statistical analysis (frequencies and distribution), while qualitative data was analysed using the thematic method, which

identified recurring themes regarding the perceived usefulness of linguistic capital. The application of such an analysis considering both quantifiable measures and perceptions demonstrates the multi-faceted nature of linguistic capital and its significance to social integration and sustainable communities.

4. Results and Discussion

The analysis starts with a description of the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants, providing a necessary background for interpreting the results. According to our data, the sample reflects a heterogeneous group, a significant portion of which has working experience in an international environment.

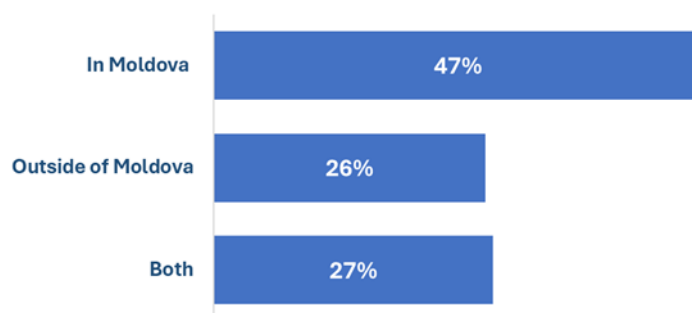


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents by employment location

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data

Regarding the information on employment location, as shown in Figure 1, 47.0% of respondents are professionally active in the Republic of Moldova, while 26% work in an international environment, and 27% report hybrid forms of working arrangements. This distribution indicates that more than half of the respondents are fully or partially involved in international professional activities, which is particularly significant for assessing the role of linguistic capital in the globalized labour market.

Before examining the impact of linguistic capital on careers, a brief overview of the respondents' professional profiles is in order, as shown in Figure 2. The sample is dominated by respondents from the education and science sectors (34.6%), followed by representatives of business and finance (19.4%) and the IT and technology sectors (13.4%).

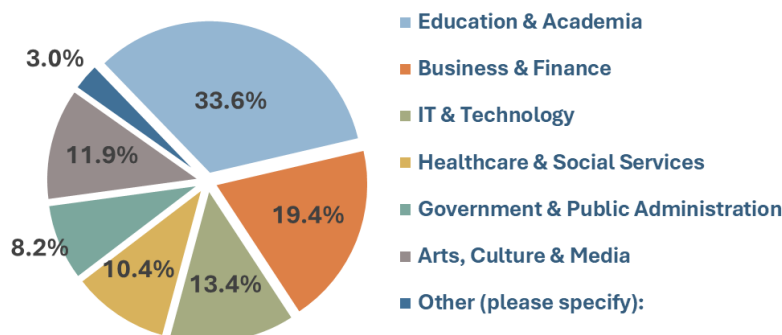


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents by professional field

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data

Others were represented in the arts, culture, and media (11.9%), healthcare and social services (10.4%), public administration (8.2%), and other areas (3.0%). The preponderance of education and service-related sectors may point to the relevance of linguistic capital in professional fields where communication skills are important.

Speaking about the level of education, it should be mentioned that all categories are well-represented, as seen from Figure 3 below. Those respondents who obtained only a high school diploma account for 30.6%. Those with a master's degree represent 26.9% of respondents, while a bachelor's degree is acquired by 21.6% of respondents. A considerable number of people (20.9%) have a doctorate.

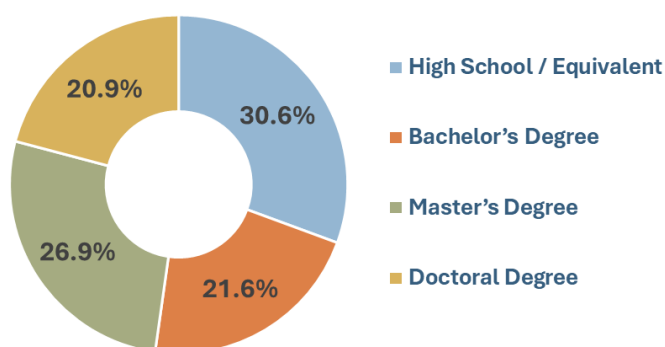


Figure 3. Distribution of respondents by educational attainment

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data

The collected data help ensure the validity of the study by allowing researchers to examine the effects of language capital across different levels of human capital. In general, the sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents provide a suitable starting point to explore the impact of language capital on employment, earnings, and social integration within different environments around the world.

Having analysed the sociodemographic data, the discussion is now shifting to the linguistic capital characteristics of the respondents, which serve as the key independent variable in the study. The sample appears to have a high degree of multilingualism in terms of the data gathered. A significant number of respondents are familiar with at least two foreign languages, while some can speak three or more languages. This demonstrates that the respondents have a solid linguistic background, considering their relative exposure to international situations shown in Figure 1.

More than anything else, the frequency of language use is important because it provides necessary information about the way linguistic capital is utilized. Over 50% of the respondents claimed to use foreign languages very frequently or even constantly when performing their professional duties. This means that, in this group of people, language skills are viewed not only as knowledge but also as tools. Therefore, in such a way, it can be assumed that linguistic capital is quite developed and relevant for practical purposes, proving the hypothesis that language skills provide opportunities to participate in the globalized job market. In addition, the results of this study prove that linguistic capital is a practical and strategic advantage that should be considered in addition to being a simple attribute of education or formality.

As far as the evaluation of the benefits of linguistic capital and international experience for career growth is concerned, the results show that respondents find these factors to be positive, although their significance and influence differ among various indicators (see Figure 4).

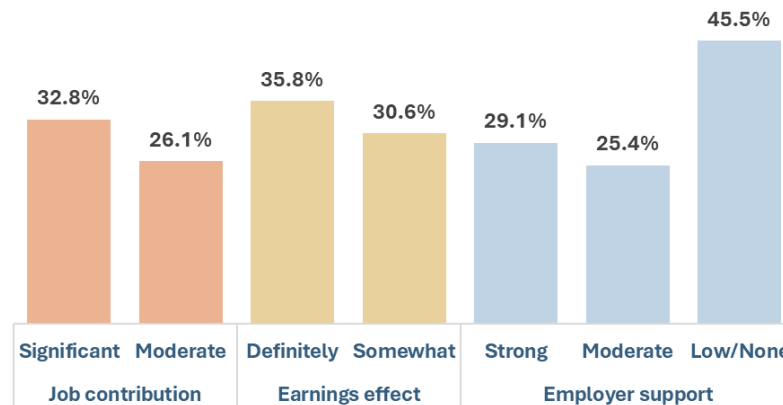


Figure 4. Impact of Linguistic Capital on Career Outcomes

Source: Author's elaboration based on survey data

In regards to the employment implications as well as work performance, 32.8% of respondents stated that the contribution of their language and intercultural skills towards their employment was significant, whereas 26.1% said it was moderate. This means that these skills make a considerable contribution to employment or performance of professional tasks for a large number of respondents. The obtained results prove the hypothesis according to which language capital functions as an important factor that makes individuals employable.

Similarly, the positive effects were seen when considering respondents' opinions about the implications of their language capital on their incomes. Almost one-third of respondents, 35.8%, claimed that they had a positive effect on their income, whereas another 30.6% thought that there was some kind of effect in this area. As we can see, respondents are not only aware of the fact that their language and intercultural skills improve their employment chances, but they also perceive these skills as those that help them earn more money. In other words, language capital may be viewed as human capital.

Regarding corresponding responses to questions concerning employer encouragement, a more nuanced picture of institutions emerges. In particular, 29.1% of respondents identified their employers as supportive, 25.4% mentioned employer support in various degrees, whereas the biggest share – 45.5% – stated that their employers did not encourage them much or at all. Thus, one can conclude that there is another interesting ambiguity here: despite evident individual benefits from linguistic capital, organizational recognition and institutional support are quite inconsistent. The fact that the effects of linguistic capital on professional performance and salary are relatively high yet a significant number of people perceive it as inadequate indicates that its professional value becomes tangible due to individual efforts but not because of long-term employer engagement. Such findings can form a solid foundation for more profound research into the interdependence of linguistic capital, employment, and social integration, which will be conducted in subsequent studies.

Lastly, there was an attempt to interpret the responses to the last open-ended question, which read: "In your opinion, how do language proficiency and multilingualism promote social

inclusion and social resilience of communities under the conditions of globalization?" It appears that language proficiency contributes to both individual integration into society via education, employment, career progress, and higher salaries. At the same time, multilingualism is seen by the respondents as a tool for fostering communication and cooperation between social groups. All of these considerations allow us to speak about language capital as both a resource for individual success and a driving force of social integration.

5. Conclusions

The current research clearly demonstrates that linguistic capital is an important factor that determines the degree of social inclusion and resilience in the globalization age. According to the findings, language skills play an important role in providing people with better job opportunities and greater earnings, while helping to obtain access to education and effective social interaction. At the same time, linguistic capital performs certain social functions by helping develop social ties between different cultures via dialogue and cooperation. In other words, the phenomenon under investigation proves to be beneficial for the society rather than the individuals.

Despite that, the research shows that there is a lack of state policy to encourage language development. Consequently, all advantages that result from linguistic capital may fail to be fully implemented, thus aggravating social inequity. Overall, the paper highlights the importance of language learning for creating an environment of inclusion and resilience in modern society.

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