

## Introduction

Language fossilization has raised a lot of interest during the last few decades and has been given a number of definitions. Most generally, it is defined as a propensity for language behaviours lacking appropriate forms and features generated, among other things, by the amount and quality of input being exposed to.

Explanations of the very phenomenon, followed by numerous manifestations and most possible causes of fossilization are presented in Chapter One. What is being emphasized here is the nature of fossilization, namely its unpredictability, and usability manifested by a variety and wide scope of occurrences to be observed in any language produced, both in speaking and writing.

How languages interact and influence each other is described in Chapter Two. What is at issue here constitutes cross-linguistic influences. Special attention is given to the stages of fossilization, characterized by different levels of language skill, and competences each.

Chapter Three opens with an overview of studies on fossilization, presenting the examples of what, how, and under which circumstances can be researched with respect to the fossilized language competence. Given the approaches, types of study and language focus, the evidence is presented that Polish has not undergone any examination of that type so far. In order to fill the research gap in the area of language fossilization, the research proper, organized around 146 learners of Polish as a FL attending the Polish course at the School of Polish Language and Culture at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, is presented in Chapter Four. In particular, it includes the research structure, involving the research questions, sample description, research tools and the course of the study.

What follows in Chapter Five is questionnaire data presentation and analysis, an emphasis being put on learning outcomes, evaluation of the Polish language material learnt, learning preferences, mistakes and language problems, and exposure to input. Having shown the subjects' experiences and opinions on the above-mentioned, their real language production is presented. A qualitative and quantitative analysis of both spoken and written discourses produced by the sample in the course of three measurements is thoroughly described and commented upon in Chapter Six. Finally, a cross-measurement perspective is presented and the chapter attempts at suggesting most popular fossilization tendencies and qualities the very phenomenon has been marked by.

The concluding Chapter Seven offers answers to the research questions, and solutions to language problems experienced by the advanced learners of Polish as a FL. The former are informative and conclusive in nature, based on the study results. The latter constitute a series of poetry-based exercises to be introduced in the form of supplementary materials into the course of the Polish language. The poems in question are selected from the author's books of poetry, and, structurally, are meant to cater for linguistic difficulties examined in the present study. What is more, both the structure and the content of the tasks recommended are believed to influence language change in a positive way, making the learners work on language (here: grammar) more frequently and more efficiently touching the sense of beauty and the sense of art ascribed to poetry at the same time.