

# The Use of Digital Media in the Russian Language Classroom: An Empirical Research Project Conducted in Austria, South Tyrol (I) and Germany.

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## 1. Current state of research

- Publication of primarily theoretical scientific works that focus on using digital media in teaching Russian as a foreign language to students at Russian universities.
- Few empirical studies available in this field concerning the school subject Russian and targeting adolescent learners of Russian or non-L1 teachers of Russian. Some current empirical studies deal with ...
  - the development of media literacy skills among future Russian teachers at three German universities, (Drackert et al. 2019)
  - the use of learning apps and (online) video sequences in Russian classes in Austria (Aulinger 2018, Kaltseis 2014)
  - and the impact of blogs on Russian lexis development. (Kaytaynen 2013)

## 2. Problem formulation

- The question is not *whether* or not digital media should be used, but rather *how* they should be implemented to provide for an added value to the language learning process. (Roche 2008: 60)
- School syllabi and educational standards require Russian language teachers to implement digital media into their teaching and to critically reflect upon their use in class. (BMB 2018, KMK 2012)
- The omnipresence of digital media in our everyday life does not automatically lead to their implementation into the foreign language classroom. (Biebighäuser 2012: 7 and 2013: 59; Bos et al. 2016: 29, 82; Feierabend 2017: 52, 53)
- The mere presence of digital devices at schools does not guarantee that teachers will (meaningfully) integrate them into their teaching. (Zierer 2016: 180)
- Only interactive whiteboards (31%) and computers (22%) are regularly used (i.e. at least several times a week) at German schools. (Feierabend 2017: 53)
- There appears to be a lack of professional development courses in rural areas regarding the use of digital media. (BMBF 2014: 1, Nizovaya 2012: 138)

## 3. Research questions

- RQ1: What kinds of digital media are used in the Russian language classroom and what purposes do they serve?
- RQ2: How do teachers and learners of Russian assess their own digital literacy skills?

## 4. Research design

### 4.1. Participants

- L1- and non-L1 teachers of Russian working at different secondary schools in Austria, South Tyrol and Germany
- Learners of Russian aged 12-19 attending different school types in the German-speaking area

### 4.1. Empirical methods and data analysis

#### Triangulation of quantitative and qualitative research methods (Caspari et al. 2016, Doff 2012, Gräf 2010, Mayring 2015)

##### Research instruments

Online-questionnaires for teachers and learners of Russian containing mostly closed answer-formats

Semi-structured teacher and learner interviews with special emphasis on open questions

##### Data analysis

Descriptive (and inferential) statistics

Qualitative content analysis

## 5. Results from the online-questionnaires

### 5.1. Online-questionnaires for Russian teachers

#### Demographic data

N: 103  
Austria: 55, South Tyrol (I): 6,  
Germany: 41, no answer: 1  
m: 12, f: 82, no answer: 9

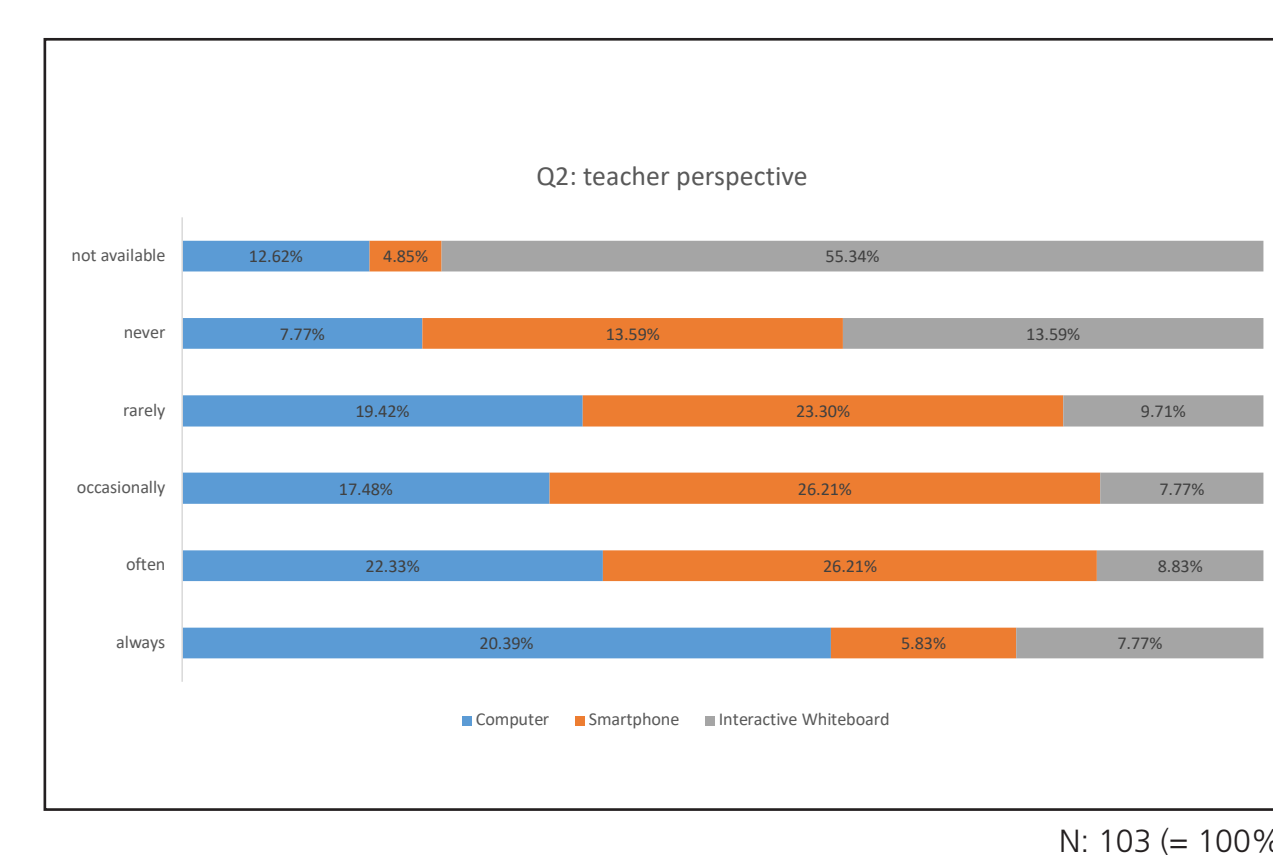
### 5.2. Online-questionnaires for learners of Russian

#### Demographic data

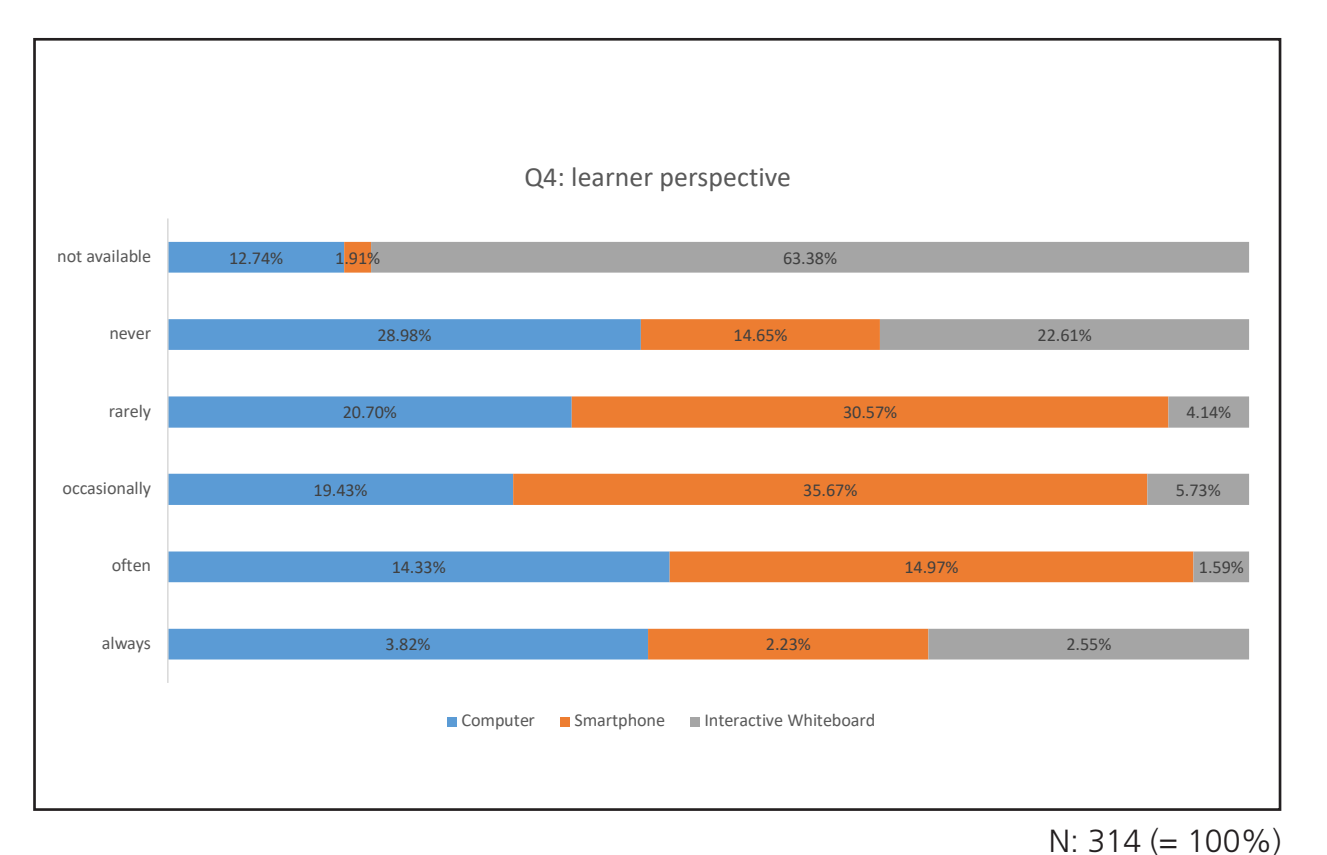
N: 314  
Austria: 142, South Tyrol (I): 119,  
Germany: 47, no answer: 6  
m: 93, f: 211, no answer: 10

## RQ1

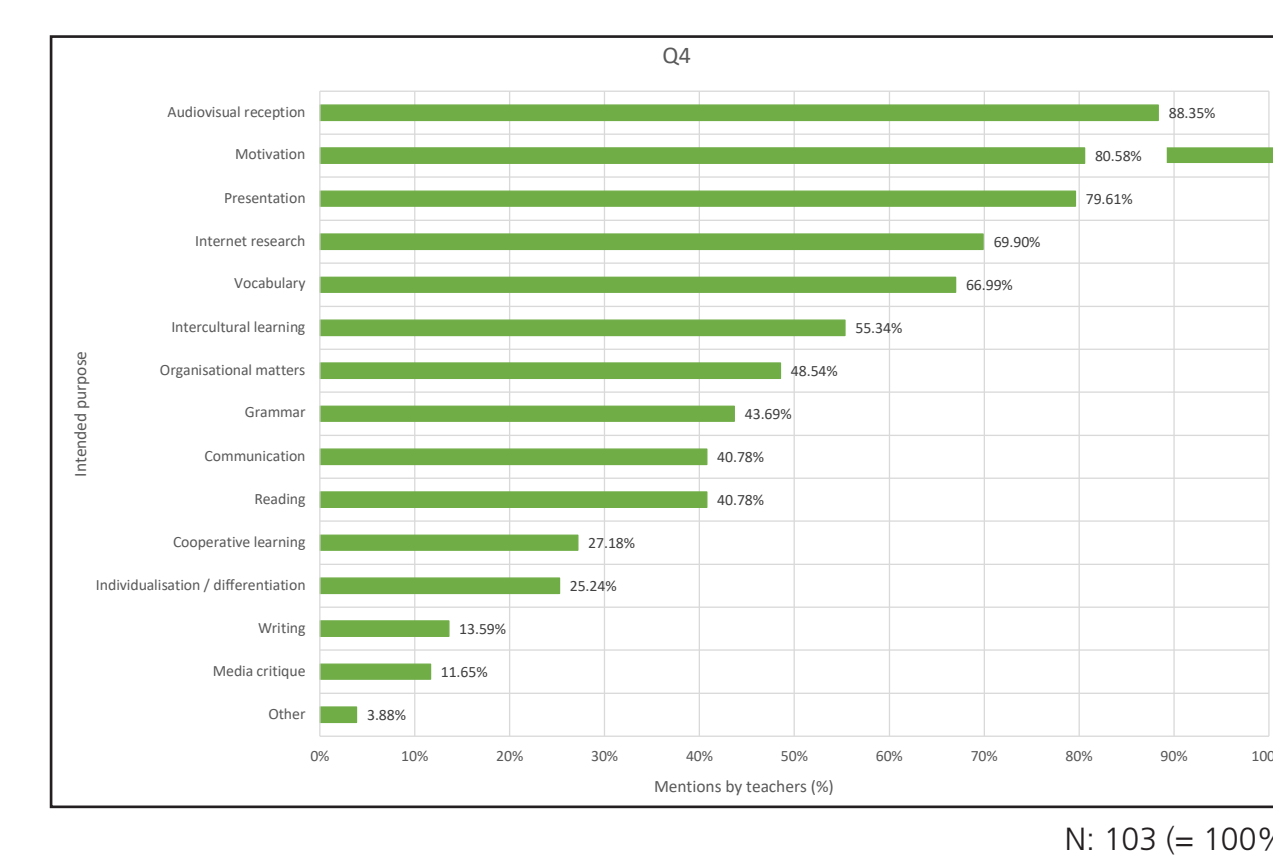
Q2: How often do you use the following digital devices in your Russian classes? [computer, smartphone, interactive whiteboard]



Q4: How often do you use the following digital devices for learning purposes in Russian classes? [computer, smartphone, interactive whiteboard]



Q4: For what purposes do you use digital media in your Russian lessons? [multiple answers possible]

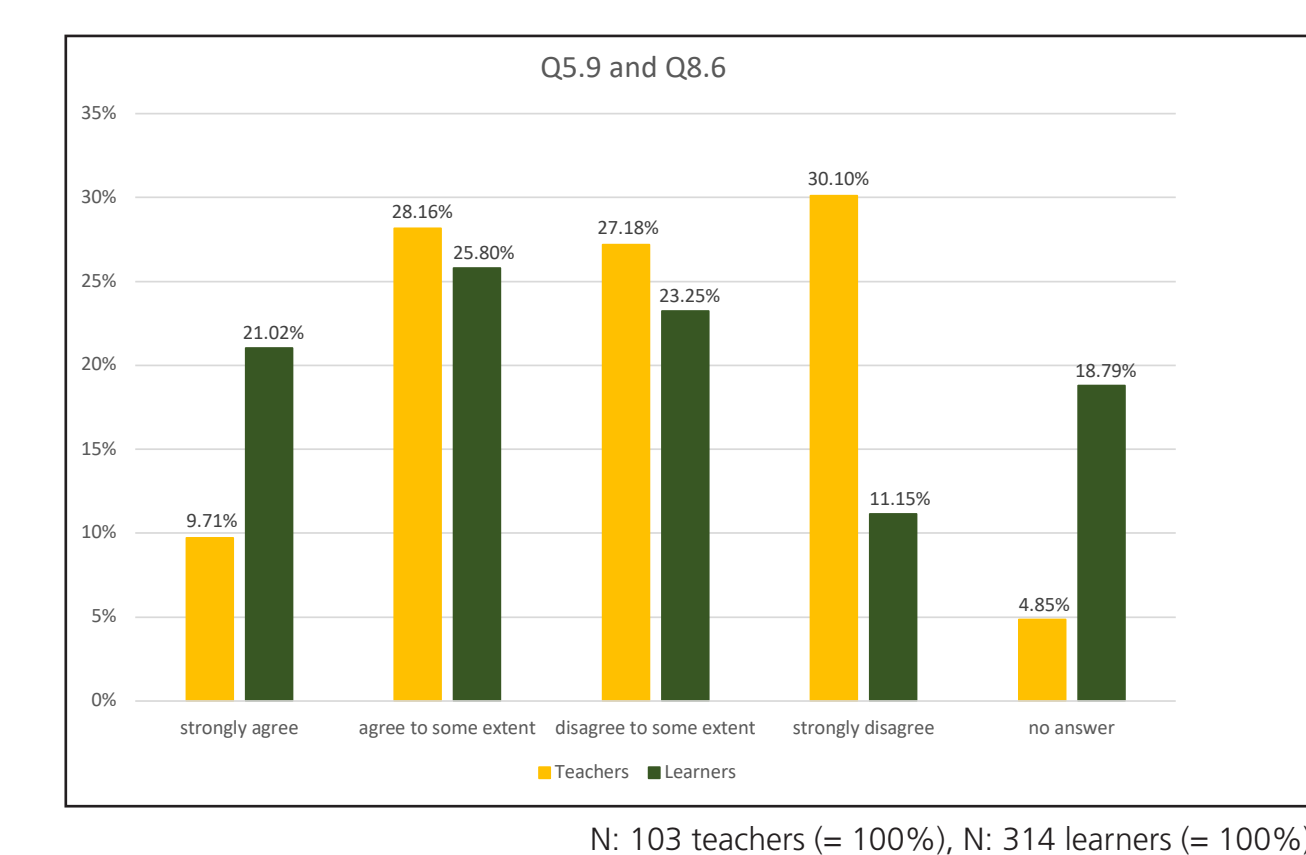


Q8.1: The use of digital media in Russian classes motivates me.

- Q8.1
- 19.11% of the pupils strongly agree
  - 48.41% agree to some extent
  - 15.92% disagree to some extent
  - 2.55% strongly disagree
  - 14.01% left the question unanswered

Q5.9: Using the Russian keyboard (letters) sometimes causes difficulty in dealing with digital media.

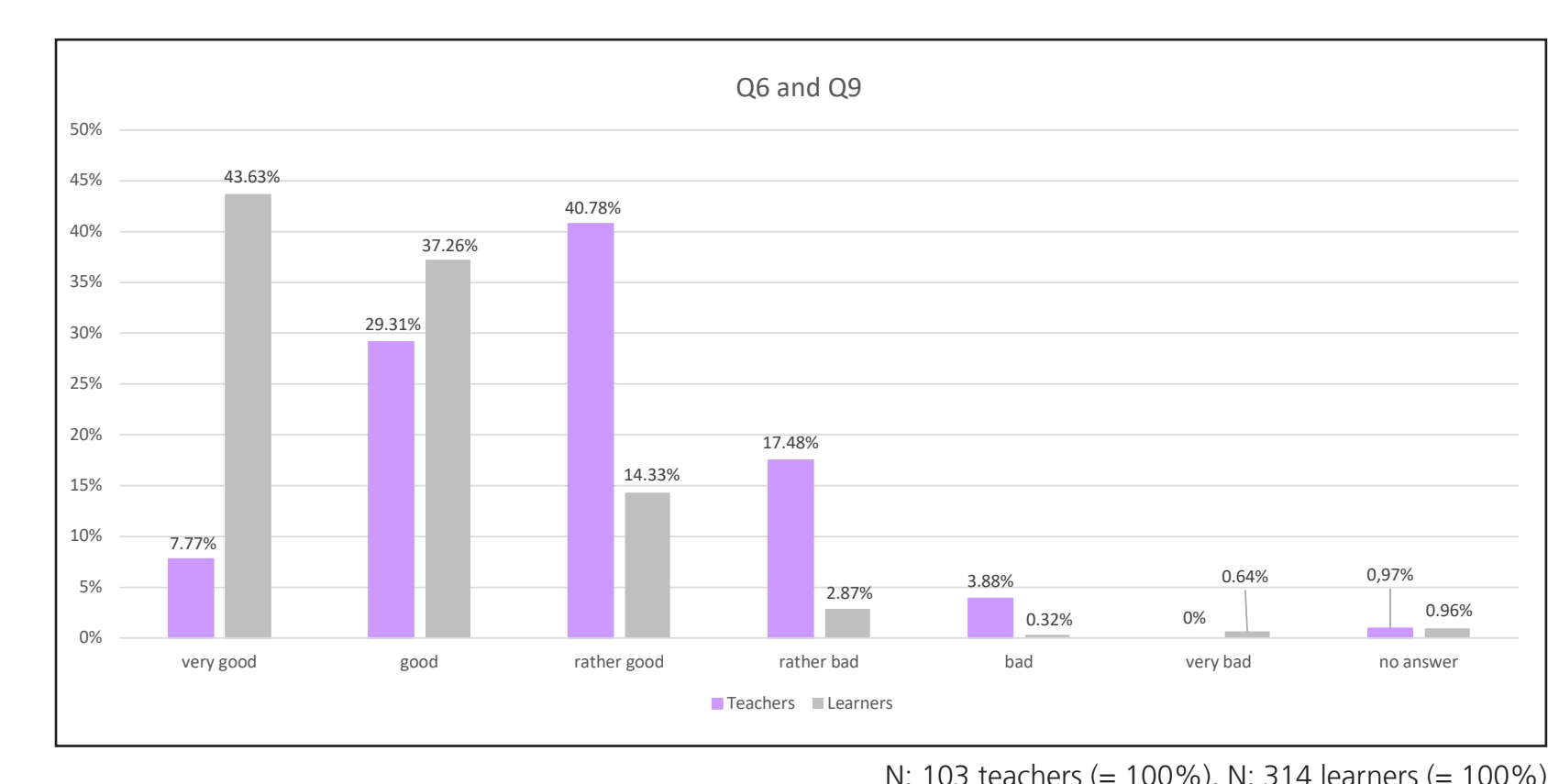
Q8.6: Using the Russian keyboard is difficult for me.



## RQ2

Q6: How would you in general assess your digital literacy skills? Choose the corresponding answer.

Q9: How well can you handle digital media? Assess yourself by choosing the corresponding answer.



## 6. Preliminary conclusions and future implications

- Need for better digital learning equipment at some schools that should not go without a specific media concept and technical support (cf. Bos et al. 2016).
- Need for professional development courses dealing amongst other things with online task design (e.g. tasks fostering critical reflection on digital media contents or pupils' writing skills).
- Pointing out further research desiderata in this field.

## 7. References

