Language processes in contemporary Ukraine deserve scholarly attention for several reasons. First, the very transition from Soviet to post-Soviet state and society facilitates contestation and change of statuses and functions of different language varieties, first and foremost the new “national” language, Ukrainian, and the former “imperial” one, Russian. Rather than an outright reversal of the two varieties’ roles as High and Low languages in Ukrainian society, the two decades of independence have been characterized by a contradictory mixture of change and continuity, with different situations in different regions and social domains. Second, both post-Soviet change and Soviet ambivalence of policies and discourses have led to a considerable mismatch between language beliefs and practices. That is, people do not always prefer to speak those varieties which they value and which they would like to see more widely used by other people and supported by the state, in particular (Standard) Ukrainian. Adding to this mismatch is a lack of correspondence between the linguistic and the ethnic identification of many Ukrainian citizens, which paradoxically coexists with a widespread belief in the desirability and even naturalness of such correspondence. The ambiguous structure of ethno-linguistic identities and a lack of clearly defined language groups clearly distinguishes Ukraine from most European countries whose nation-state model it has sought to implement, and therefore contributes to the inconsistent and conflict-ridden nature of this implementation. Third, while the relationship between Ukrainian and Russian primarily determines the nationwide dynamics of language practices and beliefs, other languages come into play in some parts of the country. This pertains most notably to Hungarian, Romanian, and Crimean Tatar, which are spoken and/or identified with by a considerable share of the population in the southwestern regions of Zakarpattia and Bukovyna and the Crimean peninsula in the south, respectively. Last but not least, contradictory dynamics of language statuses are accompanied by a complex process of reassessment and modification of their corpuses. This process has most vividly
manifested itself with regard to Ukrainian, as its elevation to the status of the sole official language of the new independent state is widely believed to require purification and de-Russification of its orthography, dictionaries, stylistic norms, and other aspects.

The articles in the present volume deal with all these issues. Written by anthropologists, linguists, and political scientists from the United States, Sweden, Poland, and Ukraine itself, the articles analyze processes in various regions and social domains, paying attention to both practices of language use and beliefs about nature and use of language(s) that reflect and influence these practices. Although not all contributors call such beliefs language ideologies, the term primarily used in anthropology, they share the perception originating from this discipline, of these beliefs as context-specific, dynamic, contested, and at the same time, not always explicitly manifested or even consciously held. Using a broad range of methods, from surveys to in-depth interviews to participant observation of everyday language use to discourse analysis of political documents and media products, the authors seek to register and possibly explain declarations and omissions, connections and contradictions, general patterns and particularities. One aspect of language beliefs/ideologies that most authors pay attention to is what patterns of behavior in any given context are considered the norm, and thus taken for granted.

The first three articles present different regional patterns of language interaction between members of various groups and their perceptions of this interaction. Margrethe Søvik analyzes reported practices and beliefs of young residents of Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city, which is located in the eastern part of the country, close to the Russian border. She amply demonstrates that the dominance of the Russian language in the city is perceived as the norm, notwithstanding the sole official status of Ukrainian and its support by many young respondents as their “native” and/or “national” language. Given that social change is usually associated with younger generations, the spread of such perception among the youth indicates that, at least in that part of the country, continuity is likely to prevail. In contrast, Anna Wylegala’s study of identification patterns of young members of the Russian-speaking intelligentsia in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv shows a radical change of perceived norm. For this group, the norm has come to include the view of Russian speakers’ accommodation toward Ukrainian as the only viable mode of language behavior in that city, and accordingly, of private communication as the only appropriate domain for the use of Russian. While these texts reveal two rather stable, if radically different from each other, models of interaction between the country’s two main languages which are largely determined by the relative strengths of language groups (Russian
speakers predominate in Kharkiv, but are a clear minority in Lviv), the third article focuses on context-specific beliefs and patterns of behavior and shifts attention to other languages/varieties. Jennifer Dickinson demonstrates that in the multilingual southwestern region of Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia), different ideologies prescribing different ways of behavior are contextually applied to guide one’s choice of language variety and the evaluation of the choice by one’s communicative partners. In that region, Standard Ukrainian competes for popular recognition and use not only with Russian and languages of ethnic minorities and their transborder kin states (Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia), but also with local dialects of Ukrainian and a non-standard Rusyn variety, whose supporters seek to establish it as a separate Slavic language.

The next two articles deal with the media, which has lately come to be recognized by scholars as one of the most important domains for the maintenance and transformation of language beliefs and patterns of usage. Both texts primarily pay attention to the choice between, and combination of, Ukrainian and Russian, as well as language ideologies that guide it. My own text covers media usage in a variety of genres in the print and broadcast media and juxtaposes it with presentation of language behavior by other social actors, most notably in the news. While in the latter Ukrainian is usually presented as the national language of the country, the former employs various patterns of combination of the two languages revealing the perception that both of them are equally acceptable, or normal (according to the concept of normality, which distinguishes it from normativity). Laada Bilaniuk focuses on television talk shows and game shows and demonstrates how their patterns of combining Ukrainian and Russian in one program establish non-accommodation as a legitimate pattern of language behavior in the country, which, accordingly, gets presented as inherently bilingual. By normalizing such non-accommodating bilingualism, television, in a sense, teaches its viewers to adhere to their “true” identities, with a paradoxical consequence of essentializing these into two unilingual poles at the cost of various mixtures that individuals might embrace.

The last two articles explore further domains where language beliefs are articulated, contested, and carried on. Stanislav Shumlianskyi analyzes how competing political discourses present different versions of language grouping in Ukrainian society, which have supposedly less to do with putative members’ identities than with the politicians’ own interest in protecting and supporting particular languages. He argues that political competition and confrontation does not reflect diverging interests of language groups so much as it creates these interests and the very groups. While his analysis focuses on ideologues lesser known among the general
public, Shumlianskyi believes that the stances and statements of major political forces are influenced by discursive patterns produced by those seemingly marginal figures. Galina Yavorska, in the volume’s only text primarily dealing with the corpus, rather than status, studies the manifestation of language ideologies in practices of Ukrainian language standardization over the course of the last two centuries. She discerns what she calls cultural models informing the choice on orthographical, lexical, and stylistic levels, and shows that the most influential of them have been those underscoring the particularity of the Ukrainian language, which since the twentieth century has meant first and foremost its distance from Russian.

In addition to the authors, the presentation of this volume has been made possible by the effort of some other people to whom I would like to hereby express my gratitude. Dominique Arel helped me to decide on the content of this issue and, together with his collaborators at the Chair of Ukrainian Studies, University of Ottawa, worked on the language of several texts. Nykolai Bilaniuk translated the last two articles of the volume from Ukrainian into English. Matthew Jennings meticulously proofread all texts by non-native speakers of English at the last stage of their preparation for publication. Finally, I would like to thank Joshua Fishman for the honor he did me by inviting me to edit this issue and the encouragement he has provided along this surprisingly long road.
Language practices and the language situation in Kharkiv: examining the concept of legitimate language in relation to identification and utility

MARGRETHE B. SØVIK

Abstract

This article analyzes perceptions of the language situation and reported language practices in the Eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv. The article utilizes Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of legitimate language to analyze a complex language situation in which several languages may be designated as legitimate. This term may not only refer to a language that is endorsed by state institutions, but also to a variety that one is expected to use in certain settings, i.e., the language variety that is seen as constituting the norm. The article demonstrates that the Ukrainian language can be a salient marker of national identification, but that Russian is considered appropriate in most domains. The concepts of identification and utility are introduced, as they may add to an understanding of how the notion of a legitimate language is constructed.

Keywords: legitimate language; language utility; identification; accommodation; Kharkiv.

1. Introduction

When studying the language situation in contemporary Ukraine, one must take into consideration the coexistence of two main languages in the lives of many Ukrainians. Since 1989, Ukrainian has been recognized as the only state language, as well as the “national language,” as it is considered to represent the Ukrainian nation in ethnic, cultural, and political terms. Russian, the previous lingua franca of the Soviet Union, is still widely used in certain domains and in some specific regions of the country. It is now legally designated as one of several minority languages in Ukraine, but also enjoys a high informal status due to its previous
position as the politically and culturally dominant language in both the
tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union.

In this article, I will analyze perceptions of the language situation and
reported language practices among a segment of the population in Kharkiv,
Ukraine’s second largest city. The focus will be on the language situ-
ation in Kharkiv; hence, I will not discuss the general legal statuses or
representations of languages in post-Soviet Ukraine. I aim to examine
the language situation with reference to Pierre Bourdieu’s (1991) concept
of the legitimate language. I will use an extended definition of this concept
in order to make it applicable in a context where more than one language
may be designated as a legitimate language, where there is not a single
unified linguistic community, and where the general language situation
may be characterized as dynamic or changing. My point of departure is
that several languages may coexist as legitimate languages, and that there
may be several ideologies which account for an alternative legitimacy, for
instance if a language other than the state language is used in the infor-
mal sector or in the mass media and advertising.

One of the issues that I will address relates to how different linguistic
identifications may be expressed, e.g., through support of the Ukrainian
language as “native” on the one hand, and of Russian as the primary
language of everyday interaction on the other. This article will examine
language practices and attitudes with reference to identification and utility
as dimensions of the construction of the legitimate language. First, I will
briefly present some of the concepts which relate to discussions concern-
ing the language issue in Ukraine, and second, I will introduce the
concepts to be used in the analysis. Following this, I will present the em-
pirical material and the site of the study. Finally, I will analyze certain
tendencies and issues concerning language use and language attitudes in
Kharkiv.

2. The role of language in relation to identification

Scholars have discussed whether to label Ukraine a bi-ethnic (Ukrainian
and Russian) state, whether the Ukrainian language law should be de-
scribed as exclusionary and part of forced Ukrainianization, and whether
nation building in Ukraine should be seen as “nationalizing” (Arel 1995;
Kuzio 1998; Golbert 2001; Kulyk 2001). The Ukrainian language can be
regarded as occupying a special position among the population, as it is
one of the features that signifies distinctiveness vis-à-vis Russians, since
both Russians and Ukrainians are Slavic, mainly Orthodox, and share
a common history (Kuzio 1998). In many cases, a certain language has
been associated with the formation of a nation-state to the degree that having its own language has become a primary rationale for groups claiming independence or at least more self-government. In Ukraine, this principle has been one of the reasons many have argued that it is important to maintain Ukrainian as the sole state language and to support it in this capacity in an effort to consolidate the nation (Masenko 1999). Therefore, the Ukrainian language is a salient marker of national identification, and to some degree, has assumed the role of a symbol of the Ukrainian nation, separate from the Russian nation, as well as a symbol of an independent Ukrainian state.

Regarding the conceptualization of ethnic identities in Ukraine, Paul S. Pirie (1996: 1080) has criticized assumptions which avow that “one is either a Russian or a Ukrainian,” believing that this “has fed an unfortunate tendency to assume the national consciousness and homogeneity of the Russian minority and the Ukrainian majority” (cf. Kulyk 2001). Oxana Shevel (2002: 387) has argued for linking the concept of national identity first and foremost to “reactions to policies in areas such as citizenship and state language.” Thus, in Shevel’s terms, national/non-national is primarily a political distinction, where non-national is indicative of a primary political allegiance to something other than the national ideal community or the existing state. This relates to a hierarchy of identities and the question of which identity is recognized as primary, potentially challenging the idea of, and loyalty to, the nation/state. However, this is not to say that regional or ethnic identifications other than Ukrainian are necessarily incompatible with a Ukrainian national identity.

Terms like native language and mother tongue are, at times, used ambiguously or are regarded as synonymous (cf. discussion in Marshall 2002; Baker and Jones 1998). Native language most often signifies the language of an ethnic group, and in this sense Ukrainian is regarded as the native language of a large part of the population in Ukraine. However, when it comes to actual language use, the numbers differ greatly (see Khmel’ko 2004). Ukrainians who use Russian in a majority of daily interactions may claim Ukrainian as their native language, since this is the language of the ethnic group or of the nationality with which they identify, even if they are not fluent in Ukrainian (cf. Arel 2002).

Thus, whereas identifying with a particular group through a certain language is one thing, language practices are another matter. A certain language may be associated with an ethnic group or a nation (whether in ethnic or civic terms), but language may also be connected to personal identity, meaning that linguistic identification is associated with the language one was raised in, grew up with, the one used within in the family and with friends. Consequently, an individual may possess several
linguistic identifications. Some are related to the language used on a regular basis or in specific settings, for instance, within the family or at work. Other linguistic identifications may be called symbolic, given that they encompass languages that one may not use on a regular basis, or even master, but which are nevertheless perceived to represent oneself as member of a specific collectivity.

3. Constructing the legitimate language through identification and utility

In everyday talk, references are often made to the language of a certain group or state, concealing that there may be more than one accepted norm or standard.¹ The result of such practices, also among linguists, is a normative model of “correct” usage. The variety, which is associated with the elite and is backed by state institutions, becomes the standard that may be labeled the legitimate language (Bourdieu 1991). The notion of one legitimate language and a unified linguistic market has been criticized by scholars studying complex language situations in contexts where more than one language can be defined as a legitimate language, and the linguistic market is not unified, or institutions are weak (Woolard 1985; Woolhiser 2001; Stroud 2002). In the Ukrainian context, legitimacy is first and foremost associated with the standard varieties of Ukrainian and Russian, whereas the substandard variety called surzhyk is considered illegitimate by influential language ideologies, which consider it an impure language (Bilaniuk 2004, 2005). Furthermore, and of particular relevance to this article, the claim has been made that Bourdieu’s “framework fails to address the issue of change or dynamism in linguistic markets” (Stroud 2002: 249).

As Kathryn Woolard (1985: 743) indicates, “[a]uthority and hegemony cannot be mechanically read out from institutional dominance.” Even if a certain language is the institutionally dominant language, another language may be considered of greater importance or be more widely used within society in general, as can be seen in various fields such as business and/or pop culture. Stephen May (2001: 151) also holds that the “legitimation of a language is not, in itself, enough to ensure a central role for that language variety within the nation-state […] Crucially, what is needed, in addition, is the institutionalisation of the language variety within civil society” since by this, “the language variety comes to be accepted, or ‘taken for granted’ in a wide range of social, cultural, and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal.” The term legitimate language may thus not only refer to a language that is endorsed by state institutions, but also to a variety which one is expected to use in
certain settings, i.e., the language variety that is seen as constituting the norm. By refusing to accept the language constructed as legitimate in a given context, one may also be seen as challenging the “normal order” or contesting the authority of an institution or a certain person, as exemplified in Monica Heller’s (1996) study of a French-language school in Toronto.

Two central concepts that will be discussed in this article are identification and utility, as these may add to an understanding of how the notion of a legitimate language is constructed. This relates to how both actual and potential users (irrespective of ethnic or linguistic background) evaluate languages in terms of emotional attachment, prestige, or usefulness. The first aspect refers to the role a language may play in identification, which may be ethnic, national (civic), or personal. As outlined above, it is assumed that an individual may have mixed or overlapping linguistic identifications, which may or may not coincide with ethnic identification. However, language is more than a marker of ethnic or national identity; it can also be considered a form of economic and cultural capital (Bourdieu 1991; Loos 2000; Pomerantz 2001). The concept of utility refers to this aspect, given that languages may be perceived as having both economic and social utility. Utility then, in this sense, is coupled to an understanding of language as a means, e.g., by facilitating access to the labor market. The notion of utility may also have a noneconomic character, e.g., if it facilitates travel, opens cultural horizons, and provides access to modern communications media (O’Keefe 2001). These concepts will be examined below, but first I will present a discussion of the material and methods employed in this study.

4. Material and methods

The survey, upon which the material presented in this article is based, was conducted during 2004. It was conducted in written form and the questionnaires were available in both Ukrainian and Russian. The total number of respondents was 800. The majority of respondents declared to be Ukrainian (74.8%), speak Russian at home (72.1%), to be Orthodox (72.9%), to have grown up in cities (79.2%) and in Eastern Ukraine (74.5%). The survey focused on a specific segment of the population and, due to the sampling methods, it cannot be considered a representative study of the Ukrainian population.

Quotations in this article are taken from group interviews with students that were conducted in October 2003. The interviews lasted 45–60 minutes and all interviewees were approached with the same initial question.
of how to describe the language situation in Kharkiv. The interviews thus treated a common theme, but the interviewees were encouraged to speak as freely as possible on the subject. The group interviews were not only question–answer sessions between interviewer and interviewees, as the students also challenged each other’s views. My role as interviewer was thus somewhat toned down. Still, my presence not only as a foreigner, but also as a researcher asking about issues that may not have been previously discussed, may of course have accentuated some of the views that were expressed by the participants. Obviously, a discussion concerning the construction of opinions or attitudes is relevant also with respect to the questionnaire (Potter and Wetherell 1987), but because of the scope of this article, these methodological questions will not be discussed in further detail (but see Søvik 2007).

All group interviews were conducted in Russian, but the interviewees were told that they were free to communicate in Ukrainian if they wished to do so. Apart from some single utterances in Ukrainian, none of the students used Ukrainian during the interviews. This may be seen in light of the fact that these students had most of their lectures in Russian and that it was also the language of communication among students outside classes. Yet another factor which may explain why Ukrainian was not used was revealed implicitly through stories which were told by the students on the theme of Russian as the norm, and the usage of Ukrainian as unusual. This particular issue will be discussed further below. All interviews have been transcribed by persons fluent in Russian and Ukrainian, but the author is responsible for the translation of quotes into English.

5. The site of the study

Kharkiv, the site of the fieldwork, is a city of roughly 1.5 million people and the second largest city in Ukraine. It is located approximately 40 kilometers from the Russian border and it is part of a Russo-Ukrainian historical borderland, Slobid’ska Ukraina or Slobozhanshchyna (Magosci 1998; Zhurzhenko 2004). Today, this area is divided by the state border, but people continue to cross the border for work, trade, or for visiting relatives (on implications of the state border in this region, see Zhurzhenko 2004). The population in Kharkiv is of both Ukrainian and Russian origin, and in the 2001 census, 61% declared to be ethnic Ukrainians and 34.2% ethnic Russians, 70.7% and 25.6%, respectively, for the entire Kharkiv oblast, or province (Naselennia 2003).

In general, Kharkiv can be described as a “Russian-speaking” city. By this, I mean that the Russian language is used predominantly in a major-
ity of domains, not least in people’s everyday affairs. Russian dominates the cityscape both visibly and audibly; it is the language most frequently seen and heard in the streets, in newsstands, in shops and restaurants. Students at different universities in Kharkiv told personal stories which illustrated that Russian is considered the linguistic norm, while Ukrainian is seldom used among friends or at the university, even if one uses Ukrainian at home. Furthermore, the Kharkiv City Council has a history of being pro-Russian language. For instance, concurrently with the 2002 parliamentary elections, a referendum was carried out proposing to grant the Russian language status on par with the state language in the city (Khar’kovchane 2002). Eighty-three percent voted in favor of the proposal. In addition, the council manifested strong support for the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages before it was ratified, on the grounds that it might strengthen the position of the Russian language in this part of the country (Deputaty 2001).3

According to data from the 2001 census, among the population of Kharkiv oblast, 53.8%, declared Ukrainian as their native language and 44.3% stated Russian. Thus, the Ukrainian language is considered the native language of a majority, but the primary language (L1) of most of the Kharkiv population is, by all accounts, Russian. Ukrainian may thus be designated as a second language (L2) for those for whom it is not L1 or those who are functionally bilingual. When the two demographic measures of ethnicity and native language are put together, they display some incongruence. In the oblast’, 74.1% of the Ukrainians stated Ukrainian was their native language, leaving 25.8% of Ukrainians with Russian as their native language. In the urban population, the figures are higher for Ukrainians claiming Russian to be native, 33.2%. This reflects an urban/rural divide as more Ukrainians and Ukrainian speakers are found in rural areas, while urban areas have a greater amount of Russian speakers. Among ethnic Russians, 95.6% stated Russian as their native language, while 4.3% stated Ukrainian (Naselennia 2003).4

6. Language in education

Official data state that the percentage of students instructed in Ukrainian in institutions of higher education has risen from 8.5% in 1992/93 to 59% in 1999/2000 (Janmaat 2000; Kharkiv’s’ka oblast’ 2000), which is clearly a substantial change.5 However, the degree to which these figures are reflected in actual language practices is an empirical question. According to the author’s interviews with both students and teachers at different
universities in the city, Russian is still predominantly used in higher education in Kharkiv. One reason cited why university teachers do not teach in Ukrainian was that they do not have the linguistic competence to do so, and further, they are not willing to take the steps necessary in order to achieve competence in this area. In addition, some teachers expressed opinions about Russian being the most suitable language for science. A few university teachers I interviewed teach in Ukrainian, but some of them would do this only insofar as the students demanded it. Seemingly, most students do not ask to be instructed in Ukrainian, or they would not think about asking for it. Some described how Ukrainian-speaking students arrived in Kharkiv — either from the countryside or from other regions in Ukraine — and rapidly converted to speaking Russian in an effort to more easily blend in. Thus, a kind of “peer pressure” may be a reason why the Ukrainian language still is underrepresented in the city.

As one student described, he usually speaks Ukrainian with former classmates on the local train (the elektrichka) on the way home to the village, but has lately realized that he is starting to forget words and expressions because he rarely uses the language in everyday life. Still, the situation in higher education might change rapidly, as increasingly more university students have gone through school with the instruction in Ukrainian. Furthermore, change may also come about when a new generation of teachers enters higher education, if they are used to and perceive of Ukrainian as an appropriate language in higher education, and also have the necessary training and confidence in their own language skills. Thus, this is one case of potential dynamism in the linguistic market.

However, education is closely interlinked with the labor market, and general developments also depend on perceptions of demands there.

The question concerning languages of instruction in schools appears to be a main field of contestation in Kharkiv (e.g., Bor’ba n.d.). According to 2003 data from the oblast administration, 21.7% of the schools in Kharkiv city had instruction in Ukrainian (18.7% of the total number of pupils), and 37.3% had instruction in Russian (34.5% of the pupils). Forty-one percent of the schools had instruction in both languages (46.8% of the pupils); however, these figures do not indicate how the languages were used in these schools (Kharkiv oblast administration, personal communication, November 2003). Moreover, as other research has shown, even though children go to school with instruction in Ukrainian, they continue to speak Russian to their friends (at recess, etc.); “It, thus, seems that the particular language environment of a city […] is a much more powerful factor in shaping the language children speak with their friends than the language of instruction” (Janmaat 2000: 150; cf. Pirie 1996).
7. Identification and utility: language patterns and language attitudes in Kharkiv

Kharkiv is located in a border area, and “[b]order regions usually create overlapping and mixed identities” (Kuzio 1998: 160). The survey that is analyzed in this article asked for self-identification according to categories acknowledging the existence of mixed identities (cf. findings in other studies, i.e., Pirie 1996; Shulman 1998; Khmel’ko 2004). I will discuss in the following section, first, the relationship between identification and language; second, the notion of utility in relation to language of instruction; and finally, attitudes toward language policies. Following this discussion, there will be a more detailed examination of patterns of language use with a focus on the concept of legitimate language in relation to accommodation and language practices.

7.1. Identification and language in Kharkiv

Since my study focuses on language practices and attitudes, no question about native language was asked. Instead, a question was asked pertaining to the language(s) one speaks/spoke with one’s parents.7 The survey asked several questions related to identification, but this article will focus on a question which asked the respondents to describe their subjective identification, i.e., who the respondent claimed to feel like. This question was included in order to avoid the conception of either-or, in which mixed identities are not considered possible. It does not necessarily refer exclusively to ethnic identity, as it may also relate to notions of citizenship. Thus, claiming a “mixed identity” could include identifying as ethnic Russian, considering such factors as culture and actual language use, while simultaneously identifying as Ukrainian in relation to political allegiances, i.e., one might claim allegiance to the state and the language as a symbol of independence and a particular perception of Ukrainianness. Together, these various factors may engender a self-identification that is both Russian and Ukrainian. As seen in Table 1, a framework allowing for mixed identities should be taken into account in research focusing on language and identification.

Half of the total respondents (50.5%) claim to feel both Ukrainian and Russian and say they use Russian as their home language, and an additional 11% claim to feel Ukrainian and speak Russian. Only 14.1% of these respondents may be categorized as either Ukrainian-speaking self-defined Ukrainians (5.3%) or Russian-speaking self-defined Russians (8.8%). Thus, the data in Table 1 sustain the claim that defining “pure”
ethnolinguistic groups should be seen as problematic and that mixed identifications may be preferable for respondents, when they are permitted (cf. Pirie 1996; Shulman 1998; Wilson 2002).

Even though the respondents were primarily Russian speaking, this did not necessarily mean that identification related to the Ukrainian language was irrelevant. Ukrainian, being the national language, may also be important for Russian-speaking persons and hence may be a symbol they support. This theme was touched upon in several interviews, and as explained by this student, the Ukrainian language holds a specific position as the national language and as a symbol of the Ukrainian independent state:

“If the state already exists, then it is necessary to develop its language, because it is an indispensable part [. . .] [There is] a Ukrainian independent state with its history and culture and with its language. Whether we speak in Russian, Ukrainian, or the mixture surzhyk, pure Ukrainian will always pass for the national language.”

(student, choreography, October 2003)

This student expressed the notion that the Ukrainian state, its independence and national characteristics are somehow linked to the Ukrainian language notwithstanding other languages spoken in Ukraine. This is related to the conception of a symbolic linguistic community in the sense that even though one does not speak the language on an everyday basis, one may still feel part of a community based on Ukrainian as the national language. As the student cited above implied, the titular language may be seen as an important aspect of Ukrainian identification encompassing a range of mixed ethnic categories. This is one area where changes and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Ukrainian only</th>
<th>Both Ukrainian and Russian</th>
<th>Russian only</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both/Surzhyk</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>50.5</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>529</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>100</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
<td>751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The question on identification asked: “Would you say about yourself, that ‘I feel’: 1. Ukrainian (only), 2. Both as Ukrainian and Russian, but more Ukrainian, 3. Equally Ukrainian and Russian, 4. Both as Ukrainian and Russian, but more Russian, 5. Russian (only), 6. Other (please write it down).” The three middle alternatives have been recoded into one. “Other” is treated as missing.
potential dynamism can be assumed to come about in independent post-Soviet Ukraine. Ukrainian may be perceived as important by the population because it is the “native” language of many people, but also because it serves as Ukraine’s only state language.

7.2. The utility aspect and expectations for the future

As discussed above, the notion of utility is related to economic and cultural capital in the sense that a language may be perceived as having both economic and social utility. An L2, in distinctive ways, may be an important language for a community (cf. Coulmas cited in O’Keefe 2001: 15) and, therefore, the status and function of a language in a society should not be assessed or described from a purely demographic point of view, i.e., where the main measure is the community’s L1. In the case of Kharkiv, this means that even though Russian is the L1 of a predominant part of the population, Ukrainian may assume an important position, not only in terms of identification as outlined above, but also in terms of utility. Second-language use is a significant aspect of language spread and function. This is an important point to make in the Ukrainian context, since expectations of broader use is one dimension of the construction of a legitimate language.

Since Ukrainian is the only state language in Ukraine, it is supposed to be the only one used in certain domains, e.g., state administration, hence requiring at least second-language use from some part of the population. For instance, some of the interviewees claimed that Ukrainian would be indispensable for their future careers. Even though this may not be the case, if people believe so, this will provide them with incentives to learn or keep up knowledge of the language. This may also be considered in light of the fact that expectations about the future often have a self-reinforcing effect. That is, if one believes that a language will be (widely) used in the future, knowledge of the language becomes an asset, creating incentives for learning it, or at least ensuring that one’s children learn it. The educational system interacts with the labor market in upholding (or promoting) the value of one or more languages (Bourdieu 1991; Loos 2000). This aspect concerns not only how the aforementioned relationship works at present, but also how people expect or assume that the labor market may change or put forth new demands in the future. As Shevel (2002: 403) points out, Ukrainian’s status as the only state language “is about creating a set of social opportunities linked to the Ukrainian language and thereby connecting personal choices to the future of the state” rather than “dictating which language is used in the vain hope that doing
so would immediately create a national community.’’ For the individual, Ukrainian may thus be seen as an asset while, at the same time, it may also be connected to one’s national identity.

Table 2 presents the responses to a question about language of instruction for one’s (future) children. Clearly, having both Ukrainian and Russian as languages of instruction, combined with the study of a foreign language, was seen as the most attractive alternative for one’s (future) children. This alternative was chosen by 60% of the respondents. A generational divide may be detected, as there was less interest among the younger cohort (18–24), in comparison with the older age group (25+), in the alternatives covering Russian only (3.7% vs. 13.9%) or Russian together with a foreign language (4.3% vs. 7.9%). This could be a reflection of changing perceptions about which languages are necessary for the future, which may again influence the perception of the utility of languages.

Those with Ukrainian as their home language saw Ukrainian only or with a foreign language as an alternative to bilingual education, with Russian being the additional language of instruction. The number of respondents in this category was relatively low, so it is not possible to draw firm conclusions; however, this may indicate that a belief in Ukrainian as a (future) important language is more central to those with Ukrai-

Table 2. In which language would you like your (future) children to be instructed? (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>U only or with foreign language</th>
<th>Both with U predomination</th>
<th>Equally U–R and foreign</th>
<th>Both with R predomination</th>
<th>R only or with foreign language</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>54.7</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>48.4</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both/surzhyk</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>64.6</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>61.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defined identification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>497</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The question asked for preferred language(s) of instruction, and the addition of “foreign language” was phrased the following way: “with a deepened study of a foreign language” (with no further specifications). The four response categories Ukrainian only/Ukrainian with foreign language and Russian only/Russian with foreign language have been recoded into two.
nian as their home language. This might be the case because they have the linguistic competence to help their children with homework, a point that was mentioned in interviews. This may otherwise be a concern for parents who feel that their knowledge of Ukrainian is inadequate. Furthermore, none of the respondents in this subcategory chose any of the alternatives where Russian was the only or predominant language. This may reflect a mixture of linguistic competence within the family, a linguistic identification favoring the Ukrainian language, and perhaps also wishful thinking amounting to a lack of belief in the utility of Russian as the language that may secure social and economic mobility in the future.

When examining answers to a question on expectations regarding the extent of use of Russian and Ukrainian in twenty years as compared with the present, it is evident that these assumptions persist. In Table 3, we see that those with Ukrainian as their home language had a tendency to hold, or wish, that Russian would be used less in the near future, and that Ukrainian would be used more. Still, the low \( n \) indicates that one should be careful about pointing to sharp differences between categories. Nevertheless, it is interesting that such a high proportion of the total said that Ukrainian will be used more in the future than it is presently and that Russian will be used less (for further discussion of this issue, see Søvik 2007: 169–171).

In Table 2, a stated preference for either Ukrainian-dominated or Russian-dominated education was noticeable in certain subcategories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home language Ukrainian ((n = 63))</th>
<th>More Ukrainian in 20 years than today</th>
<th>Less Ukrainian in 20 years than today</th>
<th>More Russian in 20 years than today</th>
<th>Less Russian in 20 years than today</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>73.0</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>60.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language both/ surzhyk ((n = 164))</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language Russian ((n = 542))</td>
<td>61.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>35.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total ((N = 770))</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The questions asked “If you should imagine the nearest future, for instance in 20 years, how do you believe the [Ukrainian/Russian] language will be used?” Response alternatives have been recoded from five alternatives to three. The alternative “nothing will change” is not shown in the table. Home language “other” treated as missing. This table presents the responses to two different questions but I have accounted only for the lowest \( n \) in all categories, which means that the total does not represent the sum of \( n \) indicated for each category.
Those who identified as Ukrainian only and Russian only were rather polarized regarding this point, as illustrated by the fact that in both categories, more than 30% opted for Ukrainian and Russian, respectively. However, 16% of self-defined Ukrainians said they would prefer Russian only or with a foreign language. This may be explained by a lack of linguistic competence as well as a wish to transmit the use of Russian to the next generation, e.g., as part of the family’s cultural heritage, even though one considers oneself to be Ukrainian. However, it could also be linked to a belief that I encountered among some in Kharkiv who claimed that Russian-language education is of higher quality, Russian-language schools have better educated teachers, and that parts of the labor market demand knowledge of Russian rather than Ukrainian. Additionally, as long as local authorities and political forces in Kharkiv continue to work for the possibility of using Russian on a par with Ukrainian in a variety of domains (in practice, allowing for the substitution of Russian for Ukrainian), the position of Ukrainian as an important language for future careers is not established as obvious and/or natural.

7.3. Attitudes toward state support

I examined attitudes toward state support for Ukrainian and Russian through three statements that the respondents could disagree or agree with, and they were asked to indicate this on a five-point scale, where 1 equaled “fully disagree” and 5 equaled “fully agree.” At this point, we return to the aspect of identification, since the questions asked here may also relate to emotional attachments to the Ukrainian and Russian languages. This is especially true in the second statement in Table 4, which refers to Ukrainian as entitled to state support, since it is a language specifically tied to Ukraine, thus appealing to “national sentiment.”

Most striking is the general agreement on these issues, albeit the total mean is higher for the statement concerning the state as being obliged to maintain the Russian language in Ukraine. As discussed above, in the city of Kharkiv, and also among the respondents of this survey, the Russian language is largely dominant. This being known, support for the idea that the state should help to preserve the Russian language in Ukraine is not unexpected. After all, the Russian language is part of the background and personal identities of a large part of the population. Although people understand Ukrainian, not all may feel confident enough to use it, and may thus support the notion that they should be able to use Russian freely. Nevertheless, the relative agreement seen in Table 4 also points to an acceptance of the Ukrainian language as a language that should oc-
ocupy a specific position in this territory. This idea may also be endorsed among Eastern Ukrainians or Russian speakers, particularly if they perceive Ukrainian as their native language and identify with a symbolic linguistic community based upon the Ukrainian language (cf. Shulman 1998).

These results may be explained by mixed identifications in this region, which increase the chance that one may answer in the affirmative to the support for both Ukrainian and Russian. This also reflects the two aspects of normality with respect to language policies, as Kulyk (2006: 306) discussed, holding that normality has been based both on “the primacy of the Ukrainian ethnocultural tradition and the legitimacy of both Ukrainian and Russian languages and cultures.”

As a category, only self-defined Russians responded negatively toward the statement regarding more support for the Ukrainian language, with a mean of 2.7, thus being non-national in Shevel’s (2002) terms. If, as Shevel holds, non-support for the Ukrainian language can be understood as an expression of refusal to accept the state, the attitudes accounted for here show that the majority of the respondents are pro Ukrainian state, irrespective of home language or self-defined identification.

### Table 4. **Attitudes toward state support for languages (means)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>The state must support the Ukrainian language more.</th>
<th>Ukraine is the homeland of the Ukrainians and the Ukrainian culture. Therefore, the Ukrainian culture and language must receive special support from the state, both on a legislative and financial level.</th>
<th>The state must ensure the preservation also of the Russian language in Ukraine.</th>
<th>n</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Home language</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both/Surzhyk</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-defined identification</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukrainian</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* The response alternatives were the following: 1 = fully disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither disagree nor agree, 4 = agree, 5 = fully agree with the statement.
Yet, self-defined Russians express somewhat stronger support for the contextualized statement about Ukrainian, with a mean of 3.1, which is also a demonstration of how the wording or contextualization of a question may influence respondents. The other category that responded more negatively toward one of the statements consists of those whose home language is Ukrainian, with a mean of 2.7 regarding state support for the Russian language. These respondents may then be designated as more national in Shevel’s terms, perceiving of support for the Russian language as possibly undermining the Ukrainian state.

When it comes to generational differences, the two cohorts are similar with regard to state support for the preservation of the Russian language, but the younger group was more positive toward statements regarding the Ukrainian language. This could be an indication that the idea of Ukrainian as the language of the eponymous state and nation is to a higher degree internalized within the younger age groups, who have lived most of their lives in independent Ukraine. This was also reflected in interviews, where several of the younger interviewees were preoccupied with securing the use and survival of the Ukrainian language through more extensive state language politics (see Sovik 2007). This difference according to age also corresponds to figures in Table 2, where the younger cohort showed stronger support for their children to study in both languages. These results then interlink with the previous discussion of the potential utility of Ukrainian, indicating that an acceptance of both languages as useful, and Ukrainian as an object of more attentive state policies, is more widespread in the younger age group than among the older respondents.

8. Language use and accommodation norms

In this part, I will examine reported language use in certain settings, primarily related to the workplace, in order to link the concept of the legitimate language to the so-called accommodation norm, i.e., that a person chooses the language he or she expects the interlocutor to speak. For instance, the accommodation norm means that “strangers should always be addressed in the politically dominant language” (Woolhiser 2001: 117).

8.1. The impact of surroundings on language practices

Figure 1 outlines reported language use in situations that the respondents perceived as dominated by either the Russian or the Ukrainian language,
and shows how they described their own language practices. These data clearly indicate the dominant position of the Russian language. A total of 96.1% claimed to speak only or mostly Russian in what they deemed to be Russian-speaking surroundings, and 32.2% reported to speak only or mostly Russian in Ukrainian-speaking surroundings. The dominant position of the Russian language was also indicated by the fact that few of the Ukrainian speakers claimed to speak Ukrainian in Russian-speaking surroundings. Eighty percent of those for whom Ukrainian is their home language reported to speak Russian in an environment they considered to be Russian speaking.

These data thus demonstrate the degree to which language use may be marked by accommodation toward Russian speakers, since even Ukrainian speakers tend to claim that they choose to speak Russian. It is not plausible that accommodation in most cases is due to actual problems with understanding, as most people claimed to have at least passive knowledge of both languages. In the Kharkiv context, however, the Ukrainian language is experienced rather as inappropriate or unusual in certain circumstances, e.g., in domains of higher education or in an urban environment, and therefore some interviewees experienced informal barriers to using Ukrainian in certain domains as rather high (Søvik 2007). Judging by the respondents’ self-reported language practices, the data

Figure 1.  *Reported language usage in Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking surroundings (%)*

Note: The questions were phrased in the following way: “When you are in [Russian/Ukrainian-] speaking surroundings, do you speak: [alternatives]?”

and shows how they described their own language practices. These data clearly indicate the dominant position of the Russian language. A total of 96.1% claimed to speak only or mostly Russian in what they deemed to be Russian-speaking surroundings, and 32.2% reported to speak only or mostly Russian in Ukrainian-speaking surroundings. The dominant position of the Russian language was also indicated by the fact that few of the Ukrainian speakers claimed to speak Ukrainian in Russian-speaking surroundings. Eighty percent of those for whom Ukrainian is their home language reported to speak Russian in an environment they considered to be Russian speaking.

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presented in Figure 1 sustain the impression of Kharkiv as a predominantly Russian-speaking city. Relatively many reported to be ready to use Ukrainian if in a Ukrainian-dominated environment; however, this may not be obvious from observing everyday life in Kharkiv, since situations that are dominated by the Ukrainian language ostensibly seldom occur. Woolhiser (2001: 117) points out that “[o]ne byproduct of the accommodation norm is the frequent feeling of speakers of the dominant language that ‘no one speaks the local language’, since they themselves are almost never addressed in it.” This observation seems to be applicable to the language situation in Kharkiv as well.

Figure 1 serves as an illustration of the hegemonic position of Russian as the “most legitimate,” or the language that is considered appropriate in most domains. Since it represents the perceived norm in many settings, it is the language one is most often expected to communicate in. Apparently, those whose home language is Ukrainian also choose to speak Russian, signaling that the specific language situation is taken for granted, goes largely unnoticed, and therefore is not questioned. Even though interviewees claimed that it does not matter which language people use, it seems that using Ukrainian in a Russian-dominated setting may be perceived as breaking the norm, for better or for worse. In cases when interviewees talked about the choice of language as a conscious act, language use was discussed in terms of positive or negative. Thus, “for better” might be if one actually wants to draw attention to oneself and one’s message, as explained in the following quotation:

> When you speak Russian, you talk and talk, and then, when you want to underline something, get people’s attention, you say a word in Ukrainian, and they immediately listen more carefully. Then you go back to Russian and say something, and later again you want to underline something and you go over to Ukrainian, again people listen carefully (student, ecology, October 2003)

Conversely, “for worse” might be if this involves making a connection between speaking Ukrainian and certain social stigmas. For instance, being ashamed of revealing a rural upbringing was a theme rather frequently mentioned in interviews with the students. Accordingly, choosing to speak Russian will, in some cases, be a conscious act, in order not to attract attention or to feel out of place by using the language that one believes is abnormal. Some of the students described the choice of language as a way of conforming to “society” even though they talked about Ukrainian as their “native language” as seen in the following two examples:
[Ukrainian] is like your native language, but you stand there and think, which language to speak, so that you would be accepted in society. Well, that is a problem (student, museum management studies, October 2003)

I cannot say that I do not know my native language [Ukrainian], but I speak Russian, that is, the society speaks Russian, and then I do too, of course (student, museum management studies, October 2003)

This section has outlined that there is a tendency to accommodate Russian speakers, or as the interviewees put it, to conform to language practices that are perceived to be dominant in society. Thus, given that Russian is constantly reproduced as the predominantly used language, it appears as though surroundings have an impact on the language situation as seen in the city of Kharkiv. However, respondents also reported that Ukrainian is, to some degree, used simultaneously. In the following section, these issues will be examined further, regarding use in the workplace.

8.2. Language use at work

The accommodation norm again becomes relevant when examining reported language use at work. Table 5 shows how respondents reported to communicate when approached by Russian-speaking and Ukrainian-speaking clients. These figures are quite similar to those shown in Figure 1, except that the number of persons who claimed to speak surzhyk drops.

Compared to the findings presented in Figure 1, where 32.2% claimed to speak Russian in Ukrainian-speaking surroundings, here, an even higher percentage declared to speak Russian to Ukrainian-speaking clients. This again underlines that accommodation is, in general, not

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language spoken . . .</th>
<th>Only/ mostly in Russian</th>
<th>Equally in Russian and Ukrainian</th>
<th>Only/ mostly in Ukrainian</th>
<th>In surzhyk</th>
<th>Total (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>with Russian-speaking clients at work</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>723</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>(778)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with Ukrainian-speaking clients at work</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>42.6</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>314</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>331</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>(777)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The questions asked “At work, when you are approached by a client, customer, or a person whose problems you are supposed to solve in the capacity of your position, who speaks [Ukrainian/Russian], you answer: [alternatives].”
directed toward Ukrainian speakers, supported by the fact that 40% of the respondents held that they answer in Russian, even though they are approached in Ukrainian. Since the opposite is much less likely, i.e., that the response would be in Ukrainian if one were approached in Russian, it may be claimed that Russian is reproduced as a legitimate language and as constituting the norm, which reinforces the perception that widespread use of the Russian language is “normal.” An additional explanation why Russian is apparently more used in conversation at work may be related to convenience, as work-related jargon might be associated with the Russian language, and one is more used to and more “comfortable” using Russian in that specific setting. Here, we also notice how a disregard for the client’s language practices or preferences is reproduced as a norm.9

A difference was noticed, however, when respondents were asked about written language at work, and here Ukrainian was generally used much more than it was in speech. Of the total number of respondents, 38.3% claimed to use only or mostly Russian in writing at work, 22.4% claimed to use both languages, and 39.3% claimed to use only or mostly Ukrainian. Thus, this serves as an indication of the perceived utility of the Ukrainian language, since it is used in specific contexts. Two tendencies noticed in Figure 1 and Table 5 merit comment. It is remarkable that even many of those for whom Ukrainian is their home language stated to speak Russian in settings where the use of Ukrainian is sanctioned, such as at work (judging from the fact that respondents claimed to use more Ukrainian in writing). Furthermore, since many interviewees held that people generally have no problem understanding Ukrainian, being understood should not be considered a major obstacle. On the other hand, 42.6% of the respondents said they use only or mostly Ukrainian when they are approached in Ukrainian, which is more than the part of the respondents having Ukrainian (or both languages) as their home language. These figures also point to potential dynamism in the linguistic market, where predominantly Russian speakers stated that they use Ukrainian, thus reflecting at least a declared acceptance or awareness of an attitude holding that bilingualism is a required principle. Yet, as this study has shown, so far this principle has not been put into practice. At present, this means that the language situation dominated by the Russian language is maintained.

9. Conclusion

This article has examined language practices and language attitudes in a context where more than one language may be designated as the legiti-
mate language, where there is not a single linguistic community or a uni-
ified linguistic market, and where, I will argue, the general situation may
be characterized as potentially dynamic and undergoing change. Both
Ukrainian and Russian may be labeled legitimate, but Russian is the pre-
dominant language in everyday life, and frequently used in higher educa-
tion, local politics, and in the workplace. Teachers and state officials are
not forced to use the state language, Ukrainian, and in that way, the
mechanisms of educational and labor markets in Kharkiv still sustain
the position of Russian both as the dominant and the most appropriate
in many domains. Russian is, therefore, still hegemonic in many spheres,
and is in that sense, the “most legitimate” language. The utility of Rus-
sian may be linked to its usage in the city as well as in relations with
Russia. Furthermore, Russian is the home language of many of the re-
spondents, and thus it may be related to personal identification or part
of one’s cultural heritage.

The legitimacy of the Ukrainian language rests upon its statuses both
as the sole state language and as the national language for the major
part of the population, whether in ethnic or civic terms. Yet, in spite of
this, interviewees and respondents report that Ukrainian is quite rarely
used in Kharkiv. It may, however, be important for identification as a
Ukrainian, including predominantly Russian speakers and persons with
mixed identification, who declare to feel both Ukrainian and Russian.
Judging from differences between the two age groups, the younger cohort
seems to feel more positive toward the current position of the Ukrainian
language. Yet, so far, Ukrainian does not offer more than Russian in
terms of economic or social utility. In Kharkiv, it may even be the oppo-
site, so perceptions of the normality and legitimacy of the use of the Rus-
sian language seem to be rather stable. Even though the Russian language
in many ways seems to have kept its position as the dominant language in
society, to a degree that it is still considered the linguistic norm, the recent
status of Ukrainian as the sole state language will potentially bring about
changes in patterns of language use. Even though changes in actual prac-
tices may not be detectable, there may be prerequisites for this change to
come about. Declaring support for certain principles or stating certain
attitudes is not the same as being ready to act upon them; however, it
does illustrate an awareness of what is expected. Hence, even though one
may not use Ukrainian, one may be aware of a potential future demand
of competence in Ukrainian.

Therefore, an examination of expectations is also important, as the
legitimate language may also be constructed through expectations on util-
ity. The question remains, however, who accepts these expectations and
whether acceptance is expressed in words (stated intentions) or in deeds
(actual practices). Yet changes in the linguistic market may be directed toward more widespread bilingualism, as the Ukrainian language is increasingly associated not only with a symbolic linguistic community, but also with economic and cultural capital and social mobility. To which degree or when such changes will manifest remains a question for future research.

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**Notes**

1. For example, the statement that Norwegian is the language in Norway does not reveal that there are two written varieties of the language as well as a wide range of spoken varieties. Likewise, saying that I learned English in school does not say whether this was according to British or US standards.

2. The survey was conducted in cooperation with sociologist Olga Filippova. The research project has been financed by Östersjöstiftelsen (Baltic Sea Foundation). The Swedish Institute (through the Visby Program) has granted generous funding for fieldwork. The questionnaire was conducted during the first half of 2004, i.e., before the presidential campaign and the Orange Revolution.

3. On 6 March 2006 the Kharkiv City Council decided to recognize the Russian language as a regional language, this time with the reference to the European Charter, which entered into force in Ukraine on 1 January 2006.

4. These data are not available for the city of Kharkiv alone.


6. In the Kharkiv oblast, the figures are higher for schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction; 66.4% are schools with instruction in Ukrainian (44.1% of the pupils), 15.5% are schools with instruction in Russian (19.4% of the pupils), and 18.1% of the schools have instruction in both languages (36.4% of the pupils).

7. In this article, “home language” refers to the language(s) spoken with both parents. These two variables have been recoded into one variable. *Surzhyk* refers to a mixture of Ukrainian and Russian, and this category is based solely on the respondents’ assessments of whether the variety they speak can be labelled *surzhyk* or not. As mentioned above, *surzhyk* may be referred to as an “illegitimate” language in relation to both Russian and Ukrainian. Thus to include this as a category is problematic in the sense that it has negative connotations and therefore may have not been chosen as an alternative by certain respondents. However, from the interviews, it appeared that among some of the students, *surzhyk* also had positive connotations, designated as “our language,” representing the mixture of languages some of them experienced in every-day life. I thus decided to include *surzhyk*, simply to see if this would be used as a designation of own language usage by more than some single respondent, in spite of its negative connotations.

8. This may also be seen as confirming a belief in the utility of learning a foreign language, e.g., English.
9. A part of the respondents are state officials and should be obliged to respond in the language of their clients, whereas other respondents work in the service sector and might be expected to accommodate customers on commercial grounds. Yet such is apparently not the case. State officials, however, reported to use Ukrainian more often than those in the service sector; among the former 30% reported to use only/mostly Russian and 53.4% reported to use only/mostly Ukrainian (n = 90) while among the latter the figures were the opposite, 62.0% and 24.0%, respectively (n = 150). An examination of self-reported linguistic competence showed that this also could explain the use of Russian rather than Ukrainian for some of the respondents. See Søvik (2007) for more details.

References

Basingstoke: Palgrave.
Minority language as identity factor: case study of young Russian speakers in Lviv

ANNA WYLEGAŁA

Abstract

This article presents the results of qualitative research conducted among representatives of young Russian-speaking intelligentsia in Lviv. After introducing the historical background and the current language situation of the city, it examines the role and status of the minority and majority languages in the language practices of the interviewees. Other issues addressed in this text are cultural and ethnic/national identifications, and their relationship with language practice and language identification. The results of the research illustrate that in this particular group of interviewees, there was a tendency to integrate into the majority Ukrainian culture, and in some cases, to change identification. For some, cultural identification was double and did not always correspond with an ethnic or national identification; however, another part of the group preserved both language and ethnic distinction. Also of importance was the existence of a group with a marginal identification, in this case those who felt neither Russian nor Ukrainian.

Keywords: national identity; language assimilation; language practice; bilingualism; Russians in Lviv.

1. Introduction

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the issue of a new Russian diaspora in the former Soviet republics became a focus of attention for many scholars. Among other issues of ethnic and civic identity, attitudes toward new national states (or nationalizing states, according to Brubaker [1996]) and language accommodation were addressed. Since the highest absolute number of the Russian and Russian-speaking population among all successors of the USSR lived in Ukraine, many works dealt
specifically with this country. However, most of the researchers focused on areas where the percentage of Russians and Russian speakers was considerably high, namely Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Western Ukraine, in particular Lviv, was rarely the subject of separate case studies. Instead, it was usually mentioned in comparative research covering several regions or main cities in Ukraine. Due to a relatively low number of Russians and Russian speakers and a strong position of the Ukrainian national movement, Western Ukraine was considered less likely to experience problems with the largest ethnic minority, and was therefore a less attractive location for conducting fieldwork.

This region was considerably privileged in terms of the development of the Ukrainian language and national culture, both during the period of nation building under the nineteenth-century Austro-Hungarian rule and during Polish rule in the interwar period. Because of these relatively favorable conditions, Western Ukraine was more likely to remain a refuge for “Ukrainianness” in the Soviet period, while other territories were forced into linguistic and cultural Russification. As a result, Lviv is today probably the only major Ukrainian city whose residents’ language of convenience is primarily Ukrainian and where both the Ukrainian language and culture are dominant. Also, the city is often imagined (in popular understanding and in literature) as a bastion of Ukrainian culture, based on the myth rooted in Austro-Hungarian times of Lviv as the Galician Piedmont, with its tradition of struggle in an effort to gain independence. The end result is a tendency to consider Lviv as “purely” Ukrainian.

Nevertheless, it is exactly for this reason that Western Ukraine, and particularly Lviv, as its main city, serve as extraordinarily interesting sites for research on the Russian and Russian-speaking minority after 15 years of Ukrainian independence. In no other Ukrainian city have Russians and Russian speakers appeared after 1991 in a situation so close to that of an imperial minority (Payin 1994), that is, a quantitative minority ethnic group, which previously occupied the dominant position both politically and socially, and subsequently was deprived of privileges and demoted to a common status of a non-titular ethnic group in a national state. Also of importance is the fact that the issue of Russians and Russian speakers in Lviv still seems to be very much alive in the city, as is seen in discussions pertaining to the status and evaluation of the group and its language or culture as such issues emerge in the local media.

The main aim of this article is to examine the current situation of the youngest generation of Russians and Russian speakers in Lviv; namely, to describe the functioning of the Russian language among them and to analyze how this situation influences the language and the ethnic and cul-
tural identifications of members of this minority group. Evidence for this article was gathered in September 2005 during fieldwork in Lviv, which included 22 in-depth semi-structured interviews integrated with observation. The selection of respondents occurred in two ways. First, I used a formal path, finding respondents with the help of organizations which were somehow associated with the Russian minority. Second, I used my own contacts and connections, which was, in fact, the easier way, since I spent more than a year in Lviv.

The twenty-two narrative interviews utilized a qualitative approach. The target group was people aged 18–34, that is, those whose identity would have been formed, at least partially, during the period following the collapse of the Soviet Union. I interviewed current or recent university students, since I wanted to examine people who already were, or would likely be in the future, among the opinion-forming intelligentsia. The reason why this group in particular was chosen for the research had to do with the fact that these people were more likely to pay attention to their identity and to be more reflective when discussing the issue. Also, they were better educated and more culturally sensitive than the minority group as a whole. Of course, this decision affects the results of the research, as this particular group’s opinions were presumably different from that of the general population, which was less sensitive to the subject of identity. Thus, the results can be applied only to this particular group of Russian speakers in Lviv and not to the general population. My interviewees were mainly born in Lviv or had lived in the city since their early childhood. Approximately half of them came from “purely Russian” families, the other half from mixed marriages. The aforementioned selection of respondents resulted in a sample that, in fact, changed the preliminary topic of research, as those who were labeled externally as Russians turned out to be Russian speaking, while their ethnic identification was not necessarily Russian. Instead, three possible types of primary identification were distinguished among interviewees: Russian (ethnic type), Ukrainian (civic type), and marginal.

The remainder of the article is divided into three main sections. In the first one, I briefly present the historical background of the language situation in Lviv and an overview of the current situation. The second section focuses on the language practices and spheres of language usage, as well as on the language beliefs and the responses of the Lviv Russian speakers to the politics of Ukrainianization. It also outlines the dominant perceptions toward the Russian-speaking population and future language strategies of the Russian speakers. In the third section, I examine the role of language as an identity factor and its relationship with the ethnic and cultural identifications of the three subgroups found among the interviewees:
persons with Russian, Ukrainian, and marginal identifications. The last part of the article presents conclusions.

2. Historical background and overview of the contemporary situation

In the past, Lviv was an example of a multiethnic and religiously diverse city. Even if one denies the reality of multiculturalism as the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic and religious communities, one cannot refute that indeed the city of Lviv was created by various ethnic groups (Hrycak 2003). However, with the occurrence of World War II, the situation in Lviv changed. Lviv became a much more homogeneous city in terms of ethnicity and language, i.e., its population became mostly Ukrainian and Ukrainian speaking. However, a completely new minority appeared which shortly gained a special status and considerable size: the Russians. To properly understand the current situation of this group, it is important to present a brief overview of how they appeared in Lviv.

Before the war, the Russian national group in Lviv was virtually absent. According to the data of the last pre-war census conducted in 1931, the city’s population was comprised of 50% Poles, 32% Jews, and 11% Ukrainians, as well as several small, mostly assimilated ethnic groups: Armenians, Germans, and Belarusians (Siudut 1998: 271). The census revealed just 417 persons of Russian nationality. After the German occupation and the Holocaust, this multicultural Lviv ceased to exist. The first (1939–1941) and second (since 1944) Soviet occupations primarily affected the intelligentsia (mostly Polish and Ukrainian) and proprietors, while during the German occupation (1941–1944), almost all the Jewish population perished, with no more than 2000 Jews surviving the Holocaust in Lviv (Ther 2002: 268). Then in 1944–1946, a mass “repatriation” of the Polish population was conducted, over the course of which 78,000 of the remaining Poles left Lviv (Makarchuk 2002: 408).

After the war, there not only began a migration from Galician villages, but also a large-scale and state-organized migration of people from other parts of Ukraine, Russia, and other Soviet republics. Russian or Ukrainian-speaking migrants from Soviet Ukraine were mostly young professionals from urban areas. Migrants from Russia and other Soviet republics can be described as party, military, and technical intelligensia, coming to Lviv because of the regime’s need for rapid Soviet modernization and strong ideological control over the city (Terliuk 1997; Matyukhina 2000). As Åberg (2002: 288) stated, during the first three post-war years alone, more than 16,000 technical specialists came to Lviv from various parts of the USSR. In later decades, migration flows from other
republics decreased and migration from Galician villages rose, but since migrants from other republics did not assimilate readily, the absolute number of Russians and Russian speakers in Lviv remained high. According to censuses conducted in 1959, 1970, and 1989, the share of Russians in the population of the city was 27%, 21.7%, and 15.8%, respectively. During this time, their absolute number rose from 110,000 to 124,000 (Åberg 2002: 294; Ther 2002: 271). The percentage of people considering Russian their native language was higher, at 25.7% in 1970 and 19.9% in 1989 (Drul’ 2002: 183). Regardless of how one interprets these data, one conclusion should be clear: at the end of Soviet rule, Lviv was a city in which a fifth of the population was Russian speaking and only slightly less were of Russian nationality.

The contemporary situation can be estimated on the basis of a census conducted in independent Ukraine in 2001, but also on the basis of opinion polls. According to the census, 8.9% of Lviv’s inhabitants declared Russian as their nationality. An opinion poll showed that 12% of Lviv’s population consider themselves Russians, and 20% speak Russian in everyday life (Drul’ 2002: 182–183). However, minority organizations in Lviv estimate these numbers to be much higher, up to 20% Russians and 30% Russian speakers. The Russian minority seems to be quite well organized in Lviv; there are a number of Russian organizations and associations in the city, with the biggest one, the Alexander Pushkin Center of Russian Culture, having various sections dealing with culture, social issues, education, etc. One of the most active branches of this center is the Russian Youth Society, which has more than 100 active members. Russian is the language of instruction at five public schools, in the Department of Russian Philology at the Ivan Franko National University, and also in a parish of the Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate, whose members are mostly ethnic Russians and/or Russian speakers. Moreover, mass culture in Lviv is predominantly in the Russian language, as it is all over Ukraine. Not only music, popular literature, and cinema (including the vast majority of Western movies), but also newspapers, TV, and radio are often presented in Russian. Many of these products are imported from Russia because it is cheaper than to produce them locally. State regulations only partly ensure the presence of the Ukrainian language in this sphere. Under such conditions, the needs of Russians and Russian speakers for materials in their first language are relatively satisfied.

However, several complaints from the minority can be heard, and certain tensions between minority and majority groups (both in terms of language and nationality) are visible. Minority organizations claim that the number of schools where the students are taught in Russian is insufficient, that Russian speakers are discriminated against in the workplace, and
that Russians are oppressed in everyday life. They claim that five schools cannot satisfy the needs of a populace that census results confirm to be 8.9% of the city’s total population, approximately 60,000 people. Polish speakers, by contrast, comprise only 0.9% of the population of Lviv according to the census data, yet they are served by two Polish-language schools. In the 1988/89 academic year, 24% of schools in Lviv used Russian as a language of instruction, while after 1991, the percentage of pupils studying in Ukrainian rose from 88% to 98.1% (Janmaat 1999: 486). In addition, there are complaints about “everyday discrimination,” i.e., negative reactions to the use of the Russian language on the street, acts of vandalism around the Russian Cultural Center, and t-shirts with an inscription offensive to Russians, “Thank you God that I was not born a Muscovite,” sold in the main market with souvenirs.

Of course, statistical data and general assessments or impressions are not sufficient to describe any group in terms of its language situation. The formal character of census data fails to paint a complete picture of who uses the language, how, when, and why. It is in this way that the results of the interviews prove valuable.

3. Language practice, language beliefs, and response of the majority group

3.1. Language practice

A feature that was common to all of my interviewees was that they spoke Russian as a first language and had learned it at home. There were many differences in the group, but the notion of Russian as being the first, the most “natural,” and the easiest language to express their thoughts, was repeated by all respondents, even if they came from mixed marriages. Very often, people said that they thought in Russian and that for them it was a language of convenience, the language they preferred to speak. However, all of them stated that they knew Ukrainian, and most said that they were fluent in it. As all but four of the interviews were conducted in Ukrainian, I had no reason to doubt the truth of their statements. The process of learning Ukrainian was different among my interviewees. Some claimed that they had learned Ukrainian from an early age, almost simultaneously with Russian, while playing with their Ukrainian-speaking peers in kindergarten and on the playground, and then at school with Ukrainian as the language of instruction. Many said that it was their parents who had encouraged them to use Ukrainian
when meeting Ukrainian-speaking children, and who had decided that they would attend a school in which they were instructed in Ukrainian.

I attended a Ukrainian school. It was my parents who made this decision — because we live here, in Lviv. My mum went to a Russian school, and I was already sent to a Ukrainian one, I don’t know why exactly, I guess she wanted to make it all easier to me. I began to speak Ukrainian in kindergarten, when I was about three. I had to, so I learned, from the very beginning. (Female, 21)

It is interesting that such people came mainly from “purely Russian” families, which sought to preserve Russian traditions and pass (successfully, judging by the identity choices of my interviewees) a strong feeling of belonging to the Russian ethnic community on to their children. Examples of these families somehow contradict, or at least shed new light on, the results of Janmaat’s (1999) classical research on the Russian response to the new language policy in Ukraine. Janmaat stated that in Lviv, the pattern of integration (Russian language at home, Ukrainian at school) would be more likely for mixed families, and the pattern of retention (Russian language at home and at school) would be more likely for families with both parents of the same nationality. However, all but one of my respondents from same-language and same-nationality Russian families follow the pattern of integration. They also seem to be comfortable and confident with both language usages and their identity choices. This can partially be explained due to the fact that these respondents come from a younger generation, but also that they belong to a particular social group: the intelligentsia. It is possible that their parents were less afraid of sending their children to schools with Ukrainian as the language of instruction, because more attention was paid to conscious cultivation of nationality at home.

Of course, not all of my interviewees so seamlessly adjusted to the majority language. In several cases, the process of learning Ukrainian started much later and was not so successful. An interviewee from a mixed family told that his Ukrainian-speaking parent had only begun to use Ukrainian with him after he reached a certain age. Some interviewees mentioned Ukrainian-speaking friends who had introduced them to the Ukrainian culture, and thus, their language. For people who grew up in a purely Russian-speaking environment, learning Ukrainian was a quite difficult process and often more compulsory than voluntary.

In my childhood I was strongly isolated from Ukrainian speakers, I went to a Russian school, all my friends spoke Russian . . . Then, at the university, I found myself in an environment which required using Ukrainian, switching to
Ukrainian, because all the lectures were in Ukrainian. The first year, that was really difficult for me. (Female, 24)

Whatever the process of learning, for most interviewees it was quite successful, as out of 22 people, only one could be considered unable to speak Ukrainian. This respondent declared that she understood the language but that she had never been forced to practice it in any meaningful way, and hence, she could not speak it. She came from a purely Russian family, her grandparents and parents were military or party officials, and her profession did not require knowledge of Ukrainian (she was a ballet dancer at the opera theater), so all her life she lived in a kind of Russian-language ghetto. All the other interviewees spoke Ukrainian to some extent, either fluently or with enough competence to use it. A related question of importance is whether and when they did.

Some assumptions considering spheres of language usage can be made from the very choice of Ukrainian as the language of the interview, particularly given that the respondents were presented the choice of speaking in either Russian or Ukrainian. All but four of the interviews were conducted in Ukrainian, and when I asked why, I was told that first, it was an official situation and second, I am a foreigner. These details — in addition to the fact that before and after the interview, most of the interviewees spoke with me in Russian — indicate a division of language usage in the private and public sphere, with Russian assigned to the former and Ukrainian to the latter. Of course, there were many variations of this model; however, most interviewees confirmed the existence of certain patterns of language division in their language practice. Most common was the use of Russian at home and in certain friendly circles, while converting to Ukrainian in the street and in the workplace. Several people also indicated using Russian in the workplace (student, part-time worker of call center; Russian consulate worker; city guide specializing in groups from Russia; private real estate agent), but it was most often connected with specific types of work, either private or individual, or associated directly with the Russian state. Another noticeable variation was the restriction of Russian to the familial sphere, with Ukrainian being utilized in all other areas:

We are a completely Russian-speaking family. That means, when I come back home, I speak Russian. Home is just a little Russian-speaking world. Outside, I speak Ukrainian all the time, at the university, with friends, because they are mostly Ukrainian speaking, few of them are Russian speakers . . . [ . . . ] A lot of Russian families live like mine. They go outside of their little private world and find themselves in the middle of Ukrainian reality. And there you speak Ukrainian if only you are able. (Female, 21)
It seems that despite some differences, the language usage of my interviewees have a kind of functional diversity, with certain spheres of life being assigned to a certain language. Although the private sphere can be broadened to include the workplace, or narrowed to include only the family circle, the borders established individually by each person are quite stable. Interestingly, the languages are divided not only in terms of social context, but also in terms of grammatical and lexical purity; in other words, there is no surzhyk (mixture of Ukrainian and Russian) in the respondents’ speech. The explanation can probably be found in the strong position of both languages in the repertoire of the interviewees, albeit in different spheres. One interviewee told me that he often feels embarrassed because he forgets or cannot keep up with switching back and forth between the two languages when he is outside of Russian-speaking circles. Another stated that when she is abroad, she never reveals that she is a Russian speaker, because it is outside the country, and outside, you should be speaking Ukrainian. In this case, the division of private versus public spheres is transferred into a domestic versus abroad dichotomy. Another explanation of why my interviewees do not use surzhyk can be found in the specific social group from which they come. As many authors have stated, surzhyk is less likely to be used by people who are better educated and therefore know and use both languages more consciously (i.e., Bilaniuk 2005).

All the examples indicating functional diversification of the language usage would lead one to view the use of Russian and Ukrainian by these young Russian speakers in Lviv as a kind of diglossia. To be sure, this is not classical diglossia, as no single pattern of the language division exists for the whole social or national group, but some similarities can certainly be observed. However, specific features of this language behavior make it closer to a certain kind of bilingualism rather than to diglossia. According to Francescato (1986), diglossia is spontaneous (the second language is learned spontaneously, not at school or according to some program), simultaneous (both languages are learned at the same time), collective (language division patterns concern groups, not individuals), and non-dynamic (the language division does not change during the life of the individual), while bilingualism is rather directed, successive, isolated, and dynamic. Obviously, these characteristics cannot be perceived as the only way to describe and distinguish the two processes; however, it can be useful in the case of my interviewees. The term bilingualism is probably a better description of the language practice of my interviewees, as they mostly learned Ukrainian at least slightly later than Russian, usually in kindergarten or at school, and built their own patterns of language division, which change as they change jobs, social circles, etc. For some of
the respondents, their bilingualism is more balanced, and for others it is much less so, but as long as they can easily switch language codes, it can be considered to exist (Dodson 1986). Nevertheless, such a situation can, in certain circumstances, lead to diglossia — the question is, in which generation and under what circumstances.

3.2. Language beliefs, language oppression, language strategies

In addition to practice, the issue of beliefs is of great importance in analyzing language situations. How do people evaluate the languages which they use and how do they describe them? What is their opinion regarding the language situation in Lviv? This issue often emerges when one speaks about her/his first language. After stating that Russian was his first language, one interviewee admitted that upon reflection, maybe his first language was actually Ukrainian — maybe after studying in Ukrainian, marrying a Ukrainian woman, and speaking Ukrainian at home, Russian was no longer his first language. Another respondent declared that his first language was Russian, but that in his adult life, his primary language of communication was Ukrainian, so much so that many were not even aware that he had been originally a Russian speaker.

The term “native language” was much more complicated, as in Ukrainian (ridna mova) it has a quite special meaning: it is commonly understood not only as the first language (the mother tongue of the person), but also in symbolic terms as the language of the nation that the person belongs to. A survey by Larysa Aza (1995) shows that for most ethnic Ukrainians, the term “native language” is associated with nationality, while for Russians in Ukraine, it more often denotes the primary language of use. Since gaining independence in 1991, the nation-building process in Ukraine has been based on, among other values, the Ukrainian language as the language of the titular nation (Kuzio 1999), and hence, those Russian speakers who were entering the national community encountered the problem of their native language not corresponding to their new nationality. In eastern regions, it might not have been perceived as an issue at all; however, some of my respondents did report that it was problematic for them. They faced a decision either to consider Russian as native and risk symbolic exclusion from the national community and subsequent lack of approval, or to personally redefine the meaning of native language as the language of one’s nation and thus declare Ukrainian as their native language.

This dilemma was not experienced by the totality of Russian speakers in Ukraine, but it was the experience of some of those whom I inter-
viewed. This can possibly be attributed to the fact that the interviewees live in Western Ukraine, where Russian speakers are a clear minority, or possibly because of their social backgrounds, which inevitably has made them more sensitive to identity dilemmas. However, other qualitative research shows that such redefinitions also take place in Eastern Ukraine. Sovik (2007) notes examples of young people claiming that Ukrainian is their native language, even if they only have a limited proficiency. It seems that the same situation takes place in Lviv among young Russian speakers who have chosen Ukrainian as their national identity. They do not deny Russian being their first language, and often their language of convenience, but concurrently they consider Ukrainian as native, i.e., as the language of their chosen nation.

In fact, now Ukrainian has become my native language, mainly because I live here, in Lviv. […] Ukrainian as native means my attachment to Ukraine, to the national idea. However, I cannot deny that I feel also attached to the Russian-speaking community and unlike some Ukrainians here, I don’t treat them as betrayers. I would say that I’m Ukrainian-Russian speaking [ukraïno-rosiis’komovnyi]. (Male, 18)

Claiming Ukrainian as one’s native language results in a certain attitude toward it. One interviewee said that she spoke Ukrainian in public places (i.e., when she goes outside of her home) because she considered it a form of expressing respect for the culture and language of the nation that she has chosen as her own. She underlined that it was easier for her to speak Russian, but still she tried to use Ukrainian during the interview with me, because she did not want to be counted as a person of Russian nationality. The same person also stated that, in her opinion, it is somehow inappropriate for people to consider themselves Ukrainian and at the same time speak Russian; that to do so is an inconsistency and an irregularity which is a result of history, and that they, as a generation living now, must try to amend the practice.

Clearly, such a hyper-willingness to assimilate to the language practice of the majority, and thus to the majority identity, was an exception rather than a rule. Many of the interviewees stated that they respect the Ukrainian language and its rights, whether they claim it as native or not, but at the same time they often feel oppressed and uncomfortable as Russian speakers. One of the respondents recalled a situation when she entered a shop with her Russian-speaking friends and “forgot” to switch to Ukrainian. The shop assistant pretended that she did not hear her question, and reacted only after she repeated it in Ukrainian. My interviewee stated that she understood the behavior of the shop assistant and even agreed that
she was wrong to use Russian, but maintained that the reaction was offensive. Another respondent told a story about being offended on the tram while speaking Russian. However, most of the people emphasized that those kinds of incidents happened mostly during the period of the Orange Revolution when the tensions were extraordinarily amplified, almost as they had been in the mid-1990s, when the language situation in Lviv was similarly tense. Many interviewees said that in fact the Ukrainian–Russian conflict in Lviv, both in terms of language and nationality is, to a great extent, exaggerated and politicized. One woman stated that she had never experienced any trouble due to language or ethnic background, even though she spoke mostly Russian, went to the Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, and did not hide her Russian nationality. In everyday life, if words like “You Russian, you Muscovite” are used, they are insults used during a quarrel, but not the cause of it. Another interviewee noticed that it is much more of a problem among Russian speakers than Ukrainian speakers. In his words, some parts of the Russian minority isolate themselves in the ghetto, which incites conflict and increases hostilities. Indeed, among my interviewees, there was one person whose behavior could be described as aggressive provocation:

There was no case when those who offended me didn’t get what they deserved. That is a provocation, indeed, but don’t I have rights to do it in our free country? That I’m wearing a Russian flag on the lapel, that’s nothing comparing with the Orange Revolution period, when I was walking in the university covered in white and blue flag with the inscription “Youth for Yanukovych.” […] It is, for some reason, taken for granted here in Lviv that you should speak Ukrainian and I don’t want to and I have my rights. And if there is something wrong happening in here, if they push us too much, I have someone to protect me, it is enough to write or call certain people … After all, I am Russian, am I not? (Male, 25)

This attitude is directly associated with Brubaker’s (1996) triangle of national minority, nationalizing state, and external homeland, as the interviewee saw the Russian state as a guarantor of his minority language rights and, in his further statements, considered using this guarantee regardless of the costs. However, it must be underlined that there was only one person who expressed this particular attitude. All other statements considering negative response to the language accommodation were rather subdued. For example, one interviewee said that sometimes she spoke Russian on purpose because she was fed up with endless political correctness which required her to use Ukrainian. If she is agitated in this way, she often stops speaking Ukrainian and switches to Russian.
Cases like the ones mentioned above are definitely accidental: the average language strategies of Russian speakers in Lviv are much more cautious. A few years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Bremmer (1994) put forth three strategies for minorities left in the newly established states: exit (on the individual level, leaving for the external homeland, and on the group level, demanding autonomy), voice (actively fighting for language and ethnic rights within available legal means), and integration (the decreasing role of the minority identification, the increasing role of state identification, and the assimilation of the group). Ten years after Bremmer conducted his research, it seemed that the language strategies of young Russian speakers in Lviv were located somewhere between voice and integration. Many of those who sought to preserve a Russian ethnic identity did so by cultivating their minority identification in the private sphere, while adopting a civic Ukrainian identity in the public sphere, directly influencing language usage. Others, although more infrequently, sought to preserve a minority identity through becoming actively involved as members of an association, youth society, etc. However, it has not transferred to their language practice, as they more often speak Ukrainian in public.

The language strategies of both groups strive first and foremost to preserve the use of Russian within the family, i.e., in the private sphere. One interviewee said that it troubled her that Russian-language schools were being closed (transformed into Ukrainian-language schools), because she had attended one and would like to send her child to such a school to make sure that he/she learned proper Russian. The respondent also admitted that she had reservations about marrying her Ukrainian fiancée because she worried that bringing up a child in a mixed family would inevitably lead to having a “purely” Ukrainian child. All of the interviewees with Russian ethnic identification stated that obviously they would like their children to know and speak Ukrainian, but also they did not want them to forget their roots, language, and culture. The most suitable term for both strategies would indeed be integration, however, understood slightly differently than in Bremmer’s theoretical framework; that is, it would mean accommodation to the majority language usage, with preservation of the minority language and identity primarily in the private sphere. The strategies of interviewees with Ukrainian identification could fit Bremmer’s understanding of integration; however, I would instead call it assimilation. Most of them declared that they would send their children to Ukrainian-language schools and would not make any effort to pass Russian on to them. The example of the woman who already has a child shows that this scenario is likely to occur.
At home I speak with my child in Ukrainian, because he goes to a Ukrainian school, and he already doesn’t know Russian well. My mother used to speak Russian with him. I sent him to a Ukrainian school, because his future will be in this country, not in Russia. His first language is Ukrainian, and in fact, I don’t regret it. I could say that I did it for him; I didn’t want him to be called names at school. (Female, 34)

4. Language, cultural, and ethnic/national identifications — crossing, corresponding, contradicting?

4.1. Language versus ethnic/national identification

The first question which must be asked in this section is whether language can be considered an identity factor. In other words, when it comes to cultural and ethnic/national identity, does language matter? It is clear from the previous section that the answer is undeniably yes. However, it matters only as a complex and crucial factor and not as a direct determinant.

As stated in the introduction, there were three identifications distinguished among interviewees: Russian, Ukrainian, and marginal. For people with a Russian ethnic identification, language was, in fact, a key value upon which their identity was constructed. Among other values were origins, the feeling of having a common past (with the Russian rather than the Ukrainian nation), culture, and traditions. Things that were important in determining the shape of identity divided easily into two groups, the first being “objective proofs” of belonging, i.e., having Russian ancestry. The second is things that are of an evocative nature, such as the past, history, traditions, and culture. Language, as part of this system, serves as a medium for memories and culture, and a value passed from generation to generation. As a core element of identity, language was often referred to as something fragile and to be taken care of. One interviewee stated that for her, being Russian in Lviv necessitated preserving and passing down her language and an awareness of identity and origin to her children. She expressed what she understood as an obligation to keep the language pure, and consequently, she would not speak any kind of surzhyk when using it. In other statements, themes of preserving the language were also repeated. One interviewee said that he had decided to start the Russian Youth Society when he noticed that he was beginning to think in Ukrainian rather than in Russian. At the same time, he reminded me on several occasions that I should not think that he was a disloyal citizen of Ukraine. He is not: he pays taxes, supports Ukrainian independence, and feels attached to the country.
It is clear then that the Russian identification of my interviewees is based solely on ethnic components and represents a rather ethnic type of nationalism. Simultaneously, the civic loyalty toward the Ukrainian state, as demonstrated by these people, leads one to assume that the situation of this particular minority — young Russians in Lviv — can be understood as what Kymlicka (2001) calls *multicultural citizenship*, or *diversified citizenship*, that is, when integration into a common civic identity is combined with preservation of ethnic identities. Although this pattern originates from societies with historical backgrounds very different from that of Ukraine, several similarities can, nevertheless, be observed. Also of issue is that to some extent this model of diversified citizenship is non-reciprocal, as it is experienced by many Russians in Lviv; i.e., their will to access civic community is evident, but approval of the state is often nebulous. This leads us directly to the group for which this approval is most necessary, yet noticeably less apparent: Russian speakers with Ukrainian identification.

For interviewees with Russian identification, language was a crucial feature on which their identity was based, but for those with the Ukrainian identification, language was not found as a determining factor of their identity. However, language does play an important role in the sense that it must be somehow overcome as a distinctive feature of the individual. None of the interviewees had “inherited” a Ukrainian identification, i.e., none stated that they had acquired it from their family. All members of this group were born into Russian or mixed families and for each of them, Russian was the first language spoken at home. However, despite their origins and first language, each of these interviewees had developed a sense that they did not feel Russian, but Ukrainian.

This conviction manifested in different ways. For some interviewees, it came as a result of self-reflection concerning their own identity during a period in which it could be consciously approached. Under the influence of different factors, many discovered that they consider themselves Ukrainian. One interviewee said that it became clear to him that he was not Russian when he voted — for the very first time in his life — during the presidential elections. When it came to political choices, he felt that his parents’ attitude toward the country in which he lives was unacceptable, and he recognized that this disparity was indicative of his feelings that he was more Ukrainian than Russian. Another interviewee remembered that his awareness of his Ukrainian identity developed when he began to read Ukrainian literature and made Ukrainian-speaking friends. Additionally, he began to speak Ukrainian with his father, who was Ukrainian. Some stories concerned traveling abroad, and there, in immediate proximity to a foreign language and a foreign national environment, one acquired the
sense that the national community with which one identified was not Russian, but Ukrainian. All of these narratives have one aspect in common, namely that before understanding or discovering their Ukrainian identification, these individuals were not attached to a Russian identity. Either they were too young to reflect consciously on the issue, or they did not care about it. But still, admitting that they felt Ukrainian as opposed to Russian remained a complicated task:

I had some problems with understanding who I am, because how can you be Ukrainian if your parents are Russian and your native language is Russian? But in the end, I decided for myself that I am Ukrainian, because it is my country, Ukraine. And abroad I never said that I am Russian or that I am from Russia. I always say that I am Ukrainian, from Ukraine, that we have our language, and what language I speak in private at home, that’s my business. (Female, 24)

A common problem among the interviewees was understanding or explaining for themselves the discrepancy between the language they spoke and their identity. As Ukrainian national identity is traditionally based on language and culture rather than civic values, being unable to claim Ukrainian as their first language was treated by my interviewees as the main obstacle, which made justifying their Ukrainian identification problematic. To decrease this dissonance, at least partially, they redefined the significant elements of the identity they chose to join, as language became less important, and in its place, there was a feeling of attachment to the country, civic loyalty to the state and, not least, a subjective belief in belonging to the national community.

However, even if they were successful in convincing themselves, it was not always enough to make their compatriots accept them. It was particularly difficult if “becoming” Ukrainian came at the expense of giving up a fully developed Russian identification, which was the case with the second group of interviewees. Several described a process similar to religious conversion, as it was necessary to first leave their former national community if they genuinely desired to enter a new one. The story of one interviewee was as follows: she grew up in a “purely” Russian family with her aunt and grandmother involved as Russian minority activists. She attended a Russian-language school and entirely shared her relatives’ views on national issues, until she was 16. Then she went to Russia, and she was offended when someone called her a khokhol (an offensive term about a Ukrainian) and she realized that her real homeland was Ukraine, and that she could no longer identify with the Russian ethnic and national community or with Russia as a homeland. Then she understood that she in fact was Ukrainian, albeit a different kind of Ukrainian than her peers in Lviv.
Such choices are challenging because they often result in a worsening relationship with friends and particularly family, as they cause tension and conflict between “new Ukrainians” and those who refuse to accept this change in attitude, perceiving it as a betrayal of the family and national tradition. Moreover, neophytes are often not accepted in the group of which they aspire to become a part. The Ukrainian majority does not recognize them as “true” Ukrainians because of their Russian origins. This is a result of different understandings of a nation and a national community. All respondents spoke about the domination of a traditional vision of the Ukrainian nation in Lviv, one based on ethnic and cultural principles. This type of nationalism hardly allows new members to enter the community if they were not born into it, as none of my interviewees were. Many of them felt disappointed and somehow embittered by the fact that they were not fully accepted as Ukrainians by other people and that “native” Ukrainians were suspicious and distrustful of their conversion.

For me, language is not a marker of nationality, but for most people here, it is. What will it change if I tell my boyfriend’s parents that I’m Ukrainian? In any case, they will not believe it, they will not accept me. Because for them language is still this marker, it decides who you are. That I tell you now that I’m Ukrainian — that is my choice and my personal feeling, and if you ask anyone about me, even here in the office [the interview was conducted in the workplace of the interviewee], they will definitely say that I’m Russian. They even won’t say “Russian speaking,” just Russian. I don’t understand it and I can’t accept it. (Female, 24)

For those people, language sometimes becomes a kind of stigma making it impossible for them to freely choose their identity, a burden that cannot be overcome. If the national community is defined by a person in such subjective terms as a feeling of belonging and common understanding of being part of the nation (which leads directly to Anderson’s [1985] notion of imagined community), then not being recognized or permitted rightful membership by others in the community can in fact ruin the identification as such. Some interviewees stated that despite disapproval on the part of other Ukrainians in Lviv, they still maintained their identity choice, while for others, the adversities were too serious. In the cases of those who are more sensitive to social exclusion, the lack of recognition and support from both national communities — the former and the pursued one — can result in marginal identification, relinquishing both Russian and Ukrainian. This type of identification is characteristic of people who experienced particular opposition when trying to enter the Ukrainian national community. Because the choice turned out to be too difficult or,
in fact, impossible to make, they state that they feel neither Russian nor Ukrainian. They have chosen the local identification of Lvivite, not as a result of deep attachment to the city, but because of the impossibility of achieving acceptance with any other identification.

I’m kind of Russian, but when I go to Russia, I’m called khokhol [derogatory to a Ukrainian]. Here, they like to call me muscovite [derogatory to a Russian]. So neither for them nor for those I’m a real fellow. Maybe because of that more and more often I think about myself as an inhabitant of Lviv, at least nobody is picking on me. (Male, 27)

Interviewees that expressed this dilemma sought to escape to the marginal identification of a city inhabitant because it proved to be the safest one — nobody could deny their identity because of language or origin.

4.2. **Language versus cultural identification**

As shown in the previous section, language is an important factor in various ways when it comes to ethnic and national identification. How does it look with cultural identification? What is the relationship between ethnic/national and cultural identification in the context of language?

It can be inferred from the research that the interviewees assigned culture (understood mostly as literature, art, music, and ideas) to language much more than to ethnic or territorial group. The fact that they speak more than one language and are members of a minority group leads to the question about the status of cultures which are assigned to those languages. In the case of people who identified themselves as Russians, this status was not problematic, as the first language which is at the same time regarded native, i.e., language of one’s ethnic community, was consequently the language of the culture they considered their own. Although they knew the culture based on the Ukrainian language, the interviewees did not feel that it was their own culture; rather it was something that had been properly learned, but still foreign. My interviewees said that they had studied Ukrainian literature at school and had learned it, but that it was not their own culture. The situation becomes more complex when one feels most comfortable in the field of Russian-language culture, but at the same time declares being a member of the Ukrainian national community. Many admitted that this created a problem for them, due to a lack of consistency not only between language and identification, but also between identification and the culture with which one is most familiar. Even if they had to accept this situation in their personal circumstances,
many thought it would be better if these matters were “simpler and more regular.”

I cannot do anything about it — the Russian-language culture will be always closer to me, because Russian is my first language, it’s easier for me to read a Russian book than a Ukrainian one, and it’s unlikely to change. But I also know the Ukrainian culture, I went solidly through the curriculum at school, because I feel that I am Ukrainian, not Russian. (Female, 24)

Of particular interest were those interviewees who admitted their bilingualism and biculturalism, but emphasized that it did not result in a double national identification. This statement of one interviewee is particularly useful:

How can I say that Russian culture is not my own, if during almost all of my conscious life, reading Russian literature has been an important experience for me? Nothing ended when I realized that I view myself as Ukrainian, I just received one more culture I am fluent in, one more language to speak. For example, for my generation, Russian rock music was very important in the middle of the nineties. In Ukraine, very few bands played rock at that time, and even fewer were singing in Ukrainian. Even bands in Kyiv were singing in Russian. And because of that it is very hard to say that it is not my culture. […] It is a very strong feeling of closeness, so strong that I can call it my second native culture … But it doesn’t mean that I am Russian or that I support some ideas attached to that culture, like Eurasianism or imperialism. It’s one thing to say that Russian language and culture are native for me, it’s another to love Pushkin, cry about the collapse of the USSR or believe in a great mission of Russia among Slavic nations. These things are strange to me and not mine at all, and in this sense, it is not my culture. (Male, 25)

People similar to the interviewee cited above are examples of particular double cultural identification combined with single national identification. As Polish cultural anthropologist Antonina Klóskowska (2005) noticed, such cases are common for people considered ethnic minorities, or for those who, as adults, experienced national conversion. Klóskowska underlines the distinction between ethnic/national and cultural identifications and distinguishes several subcategories within each. Ethnic/national identification can thus be integral, double, ambivalent, or cosmopolitan, while cultural identification — which she calls valence — can be unitary, double, ambivalent, and multiple. My interviewees had integral or ambivalent (marginal) ethnic/national identification, and unitary or double cultural identification. Interviewees with Russian ethnic identification had mostly unitary valence with good command of a second culture,
Ukrainian, while interviewees with Ukrainian national identification had unitary or double valence, and interviewees with marginal identification had mostly unitary valence, Russian. The fact that after losing ethnic/national identification they still feel attached to a certain culture confirms the assumption that those identifications are disjunctive: one can preserve cultural identification and not have an ethnic/national identity because they are not necessarily interrelated. Thus, if I were to answer the question which emerges from the section title, whether language intersects, corresponds, or contradicts ethnic national and cultural identifications, I would say that each of these relationships is somehow represented among the experiences of the young Russian speakers in Lviv.

5. Conclusions

This article aimed to present the language situation of young Russian speakers in Lviv and link it with the issues of their ethnic/national and cultural identifications. Because of the qualitative methodology of the research, the results can be applied only to a particular part of this group, namely the intelligentsia, and are intended to show and explain in detail certain individual processes rather than to establish general rules. Choosing this particular stratum as a target group has evidently influenced the results of the research, as presumably people coming from the intelligentsia pay more attention to the issues of their language as well as their cultural and ethnic/national identification, thus experiencing dilemmas which would have most likely never been experienced by members of other groups.

Language practices of young Russian speakers tend to divide language usage into private and public spheres with varying ranges, with the minority language being used mostly in private and the majority language in the public sphere. Although language codes are often switched, they are not mixed, which can be again interpreted as a result of the social background of the interviewees. Moreover, a considerable tendency toward language integration is evident, which is significantly extended into future language strategies. The latter depends to a great extent on the identification of the person, as people with Russian identification tend to preserve language distinctness and people with Ukrainian identification are more likely to assimilate, to give up practicing the minority language. An important observation is also that cultural identification does not always correspond with nationality, as culture is assigned more often to a language than to an ethnic/national group and that it can be double. It seems that cultural identification is less fragile and considered most im-
important in comparison to ethnic/national identification, as the structure of this identification changes only through adding a second identification of varying strength, but never by losing the first identity.

Processes of linguistic, cultural, and national integration experienced by my interviewees should be linked with the specific ethnodemographic and political circumstances in Lviv, which is, as stated in the introduction, a city where the position of the Ukrainian language and culture has been traditionally stronger than in other regions of Ukraine. In other regions, Russian speakers may constitute a majority of the population, but in Lviv, Russians and Russian speakers remain a clear minority. This situation presumably shapes their language strategies and facilitates integration more often than in other regions of Ukraine. Additionally, in the city of Lviv, integration into Ukrainianness, both in terms of culture and national identity, is perceived as more attractive than in other regions of Ukraine. Ukrainianness in Lviv is associated with many positive qualities, as it is linked with the tradition and history of the city, seen as “more European,” and therefore, more sophisticated and valuable. The accessibility of rich Ukrainian culture and also local Galician tradition make it easier to acquire a second, Ukrainian cultural identification, and also, in some cases, a new national identification.

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Notes
1. For works on the Russian minorities in the former Soviet Union, see Shlapentokh et al. (1994), Kolstoe (1995), and Solchanyk (2001).
2. For discussion on defining this population, see Poppe and Hagendoorn (2001).
4. For the most current discussion on “what good have Russians done for Lviv,” see the Web site of regional Internet news agency Zakhid.net: http://www.zaxid.net/article/3828/, last accessed on 10 August 2007.
5. For the census results, see Pro kil’kist’ ta sklad (n.d.).
6. For more information on the status of the Ukrainian and Russian languages in Ukraine and their role in mass culture, see Masenko (2004).

References


Pro kil’kist’ ta skaln naselennia Ukraïny za pidsumlamy Vseukraïns’koho perepysu naselennia 2001 roku [On the number and composition of Ukraine’s population according to the


Languages for the market, the nation, or the margins: overlapping ideologies of language and identity in Zakarpattia

JENNIFER DICKINSON

Abstract

The Zakarpattia region in southwestern Ukraine is stereotyped as an area of great linguistic diversity, with a number of discrete ethnic groups speaking their eponymous languages, as well as a range of local Slavic varieties that are variably perceived as dialects of Ukrainian or deployed as evidence of long-standing links to another Slavic language, Rusyn. In this article, I focus on the ways in which different language ideologies mediate language use, and perceptions of that use by Zakarpattia residents. In the first half of the article, I focus on the conceptualization of language and ethnicity as being in natural alignment as one of the key ideological positions that unite differing political orientations toward the classification of languages in Zakarpattia. In the second half of the article, I describe a set of local language ideologies and consider how these ideologies govern the interpretation of everyday language use between members of groups that are variably defined as similar or different depending on context.

Keywords: language ideology; Ukraine; Transcarpathia; multilingualism; dialect identity; Rusyn.

1. Introduction

This article considers how multiple language ideologies come into play in the realm of social interaction in Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia), an ethnically and linguistically diverse region in the southwestern corner of Ukraine. Zakarpattia is unusual within Ukraine, with relatively high percentages of ethnic minorities who speak their eponymous language. In addition, the region is also known for its unusual and varied Slavic dialects, some of which are specific to quite small territories within the region, while others represent the edge of larger dialect groups from neighboring

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regions of Ukraine. As a result of this linguistic diversity, many different kinds of interactions may involve code and dialect choices on the part of the participants, choices which can then be reevaluated in secondary frameworks of reported speech in subsequent interactions that take place in different contexts and with different participants. In this sense, everyday discourse in Zakarpattia serves as a living demonstration that language ideologies, while often shared, are neither homogeneous nor fixed across contexts of interaction, and furthermore that they form an essential element of the frames of interpretation utilized by interlocutors to evaluate language use in conversation.

In this article, I explore two related aspects of language and identity in Zakarpattia. After a general discussion of language ideology and introduction to key features that make Zakarpattia interesting from the point of view of understanding language ideologies in a multilingual setting, I offer a discussion of the historical and contemporary development of categories of language and identity in Zakarpattia, including debates over whether the language of the native Slavic population is Ukrainian or Rusyn. In the following section, I identify and offer, against this background, an analysis of three language ideologies which commonly provide the interpretive framework for Zakarpattia interactions, particularly those between speakers of different languages or local varieties. I argue that while they may seem mutually exclusive on the surface, they do function together to form a set of beliefs about how language choice performs social functions of inclusion and exclusion at different levels of identification. Although linguistic diversity is at the core of many representations of the Zakarpattia region as a place of hybrid languages and identities that render it wild and unknowable, these conceptualizations in fact ignore the ways in which language ideologies allow for the management of multilingual and multidialectal interactions on an everyday basis. When examined closely, Zakarpattia residents manage linguistic diversity to create not Babel, but differently defined spheres of interaction, a demonstration of how important language ideologies can be in coordinating interlocutors’ interpretations of language use.

This article has two goals for exploring the language situation in Zakarpattia: first, to consider how linguistic ideologies and debates about local and national identity intersect with elements of institutional power in this region, and second, to identify and describe key ideologies of language at work in everyday Zakarpattia interactions. In combination, these two perspectives on language ideology in Zakarpattia can provide us with a greater depth of perception when analyzing social and political issues such as the status of interethnic relations in the region or local attitudes toward Rusyn or Ukrainian nationalism.
2. The value of ethnography for studying language ideologies

In the past twenty years, language ideology has emerged as a leading theoretical conceptualization of how ideas about language contribute to or even structure language use. As Woolard and Schieffelin (1994) have demonstrated, language ideology has been variously defined by scholars studying different aspects of language. However, their discussion of language ideologies as “cultural conceptions of language — its nature, structure, and use” (1994: 55) has proved to be an enduringly comprehensive and useful formulation. The definition captures both the need to acknowledge the multiplicity of ideologies inevitably at play in a given linguistic situation, and the range of ways in which these “cultural conceptions of language” influence linguistic choices in various domains. Thus, language ideologies encompass not only overt attitudes toward particular languages or linguistic varieties and their speakers, but also underlying culturally defined notions of language purity, the hierarchical ranking of different languages or dialects, and the relationship of language to ethnic, national, and regional identities. As such, language ideologies offer scholars interested in the social aspects of language use a set of powerful tools for modeling how and why linguistic choices, and the social valuations of those choices, vary across contexts. As Irvine and Gal (2000: 35) note, “[W]e call these conceptual schemes ideologies because they are suffused with the political and moral issues pervading the particular sociolinguistic field and are subject to the interests of their bearers’ social position.”

As Bilaniuk (2005) has demonstrated in her study of language politics in Ukraine, language ideologies must be seen as always in the process of being developed and maintained through evaluations of linguistic behavior as either adhering to or deviating from various “standards.” Bilaniuk terms these “ideologies of correction,” a legacy of Soviet language policies that emphasized “pure” and “correct” language usage, and furthermore incorporated cultural conceptions of linguistic rankings that validated literary language over spoken (dialect) language, denigrated linguistic varieties perceived as “mixing” Russian and Ukrainian, and in most cases elevated Russian over Ukrainian. Kulyk (2006) discusses the centrality of language politics and ideologies in recent debates over the nature of citizenship and models for the post-Soviet Ukrainian state. Given the radical shifts in language policies and politics in Ukraine over the past century and a half, it is important to emphasize again that such ideologically based judgments of correct language use do indeed rely on perceived, rather than fixed standards, since these standards are actually highly variable in their stringency and the way in which they are applied.
In Zakarpattia, the politics of language are entwined with ongoing debates about the nature of local, regional, and national identities, debates that variably invoke images of the region as either linguistically diverse, as a region united by historically demonstrable Ukrainian identity, or in contrast to either of these, as the homeland of the Rusyns, a Slavic-speaking minority group. In the case of the three language ideologies I explore in the final section of this article, the same conversation between two local dialect speakers from different districts within the region might be variably interpreted as a conversation between two speakers of different Ukrainian (or Rusyn) dialects, two speakers both using a unitary Ukrainian (or Rusyn) language, or one speaker using a Ukrainian dialect and one speaker using Rusyn. In each of these cases, analysis of the formal linguistic features of each interlocutor’s speech would still fail to illuminate the ideological determinations of what language is being spoken, or the subjective evaluation of each person’s speech by participants. Yet in each case the linguistic, political, and ethnic identities ascribed to or by the interlocutors would be somewhat different. Thus while ideologies of language entail what might be called subjective evaluation of linguistic behavior, they also organize those subjective evaluations, elevating them beyond the level of individual taste or values. This conceptualization of language ideologies fits with my analysis that the invocation of different language ideologies in different Zakarpattia contexts is an interactional tool that emphasizes sharedness of linguistic features and interpretations as a form of shared identity.

The study of language ideologies has been approached from a range of perspectives varying from ethnography to survey research, as can be seen from the articles comprising this volume. In this article, I focus specifically on ethnography as a methodology ideally suited to capturing the ways in which language ideologies function as frameworks for the interpretation of linguistic behavior in specific contexts. Thus while survey research can elicit a broad range of information regarding language attitudes and reported code choice, it is only through observation of naturally occurring speech in a broad range of situations that a sense of the organizing principles of language choice in a multilingual setting can be gained.

The Zakarpattia region of Ukraine presents an excellent locale for such ethnographically based study of language ideologies. In addition to significant populations of Hungarian, Romanian, and Slovak speakers located in border areas with these countries, Zakarpattia is also an area in which a number of Slavic varieties overlap and are variously defined by their speakers as Ukrainian dialects, dialects specific to particular villages or districts, or as Rusyn dialects. In many different contexts and types of
interactions therefore, speakers may implicitly or explicitly negotiate language use, defining not only the terms, but identifying their own or others’ speech as belonging to a particular linguistic category. As I note in my analysis of particular instances of language use, the interpretation of these linguistic choices can then be recontextualized by the application of other language ideologies as the interactions are reported or discussed later by other speakers.

In this analysis, I offer ethnographic examples collected during my linguistic anthropological fieldwork in Zakarpattia, where I have been conducting research since 1995. This research has involved long-term immersion in the language of Zakarpattia, including some regional dialects, as well as extensive interviewing and participant observation in urban and rural areas. Although most of my research has been in the regional center of Uzhhorod and the easternmost Tiachiv and Rakhiv districts, I have also done research in several other parts of the region. Most of the examples discussed here come from naturally occurring conversations recorded as part of my research, or field notes in which I wrote down examples related to the negotiation of language and dialect use during the course of my fieldwork.

Here, I utilize these data as evidence that speakers routinely apply language ideologies in formulating and expressing their perceptions of linguistic behavior as either adhering to or deviating from various standards of expected language use in different situations. For example, language variability or use of multiple languages may be fully accepted in the context of the market, but denigrated in other contexts; dialect speech can support extremely local identities in one context, yet be classified by the same speakers as “bad” language in the context of comparing it to idealized Standard Ukrainian. In taking this approach, I move beyond studies which focus on language choices and language attitudes as particular to individuals or even to linguistic or ethnic communities. To focus exclusively on fixed identities and attitudes ignores the realities of linguistic behavior: that the contexts of linguistic interaction structure how utterances are produced and interpreted.

3. Language and identity categories in Zakarpattia

Located at the geographic rim of the Carpathian basin, Zakarpattia is wedged into a crossroads of borders on the southeastern corner of Poland, the easternmost side of Slovakia, northeastern Hungary, and northwestern Romania. This location, at the edges of politically and geographically defined zones, is characteristic of Zakarpattia’s borderland
history, and it has contributed to stereotypes of Zakarpattia life and language as “marginal” in comparison to those of the ruling elite, whether they be Hungarian nobles, Soviet bureaucrats, Ukrainians from other regions, or now, European employers hiring migrant laborers. Zakarpattia residents live in an area long defined by its proximity to shifting and variably defined political, social, and linguistic borders. Throughout this article I emphasize the importance of these borders as contributing at the macrolinguistic level to the development of historical and contemporary social interactions in Zakarpattia.

The region is often stereotyped elsewhere in Ukraine as “wild,” “mountainous,” “uncivilized,” and *hlukhyi* ‘deaf’, meaning backward and lacking communication with the outside world. Stereotypes of the local Slavic varieties spoken there also incorporate notions of lawlessness and incomprehensibility, generally emphasizing, somewhat paradoxically, both the chaotic influences of neighboring languages and the isolation of local varieties. These conceptions of Zakarpattia as a dangerously mixed area are compounded by its very high rate of ethnic diversity, as significant Hungarian and Romanian populations, as well a lesser and more concentrated Slovak population, all with cultural, economic, and linguistic ties to their eponymous countries, create a more complex picture of potentially divided loyalties. The linguistically and socially marginal status ascribed to Zakarpattia by residents of other areas of Ukraine reflects the region’s history as always sitting on the edge of the empire that controlled it,¹ as well as fears that this marginality contributes to its potential detachability. In this way, Zakarpattia embodies for some Ukrainians a concentrated form of all the things that they claim not to be: of unspecified origins, historically subject and culturally backward, much as Stewart (1996) argues that Appalachia represents an “other space” for Americans. I argue here that the perceived linguistic features of Zakarpattia dialects are ideologically linked to this characterization of otherness, marginality, and incomprehensibility through processes of iconization (Irvine and Gal 2000). Yet within Zakarpattia itself, the ideologies of language that I encountered correspond often to overlapping images of the region and its residents in the new Ukraine that differ considerably from the imaginings of outsiders.

Before discussing more recent trends that I have seen in terms of the interaction between language, politics, and ideology in Zakarpattia, I will first offer a brief historical overview of these elements, focusing on the twentieth century. Over the course of the past hundred years, all or part of what is now the Zakarpattia region has been controlled by Hungarian, Czechoslovak, Romanian (briefly), and German governments, in addition of course to the Soviet Union and now, independent Ukraine —
each with its own policies on language and even differing names for the local Slavic population. The consequences of these policies, and local adoption of or resistance to them, is still evident in local ideas about identity and perceptions of language use.

From a linguistic perspective, the Slavic varieties spoken in Zakarpattia are closely related to those spoken in Western Ukraine and Eastern Slovakia. Indeed, with the exception of what Zakrevs’ka et al. (1984) term the Zakarpattia dialect group, covering the territory that some identify as Rusyn, several of the varieties spoken at the edges of the region are part of clearly identified (Lemko, Boiko, and Hutsul) linguistic groups that range across into the Western Ukrainian administrative regions of Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk and across political borders into neighboring countries. Nonetheless, as I will discuss further below, it is not structural, but lexical oddity and intradialectal diversity, also elements that can be traced to Zakarpattia’s unique history, that both local speakers and those outside the region identify as separating the region’s language from that of other Ukrainian dialects.

Discussing Ukrainian literary standards at the start of the twentieth century, Shevelov (1989: 25) notes: “The smallest and the most backward Ukrainian land, Transcarpathia, made no contribution to the standard Ukrainian language — in fact, Ukrainians there were little acquainted with it.” The isolation of the local Slavic-speaking communities, while of course not complete, did contribute to relatively low levels of literacy in any of the already standardized East Slavic varieties. In addition, Hungarian rule imposed overt policies of Magyarization, under which most schooling was conducted in Hungarian and local intellectual and economic elites were encouraged to adopt Hungarian (Magocsi 1978, 1979). The heavy promotion of Hungarian in educational and intellectual life, to the exclusion of local Slavic varieties, continued until the end of Hungarian rule of the region in 1918, and in some areas, reemerged when the region returned to Hungarian hands in the late 1930s. At the same time, an active local intelligentsia continued to struggle to define their linguistic and national identity within the Slavic-speaking world.

Magocsi (1979) demonstrates that by the twenty-year period of Czechoslovak rule beginning in 1918, these debates centered around three potential linguistically based identities: Russian, Ukrainian, or Rusyn, with adherents of each of these identities positing different historical and cultural narratives of incorporation of the local population into, or its exclusion from, these larger nationality groups. In each case, the narrative of shared nationality was based on a “feature cluster” (Blommaert and Verschueren 1998: 192) of shared history, culture, and language. Each of these movements, Russophile, Ukrainophile, and Rusynophile, developed
different narratives of Zakarpattia identity, but in each case the arguments relied on implicit understandings of the natural links between language and identity. In one narrative, Russian language and identity represents the development of all East Slavic peoples from the roots of Kievan Rus, and thus all these peoples should be consolidated as a greater Russian nationality. The Ukrainian narrative posits a different history, in which Ukrainians have struggled to maintain a separate cultural and linguistic identity despite years of discrimination and division among different governments. In this perception, the Slavs of Zakarpattia are Ukrainians separated from Ukraine by historical forces of political borders and government ethnonyms, but Ukrainian speakers nonetheless. Finally, the Rusyn narrative presents evidence for the existence of a linguistic and ethnic identity distinct from either Ukrainian or Russian, one based on the unique linguistic features, cultural origins, and in particular the population’s long history of living in the areas of eastern Slovakia, northern Hungary, and the area now called “Zakarpattia.”

As Gal (1998) argues, it is not simply Anderson’s (1991) “communities” which had to be imagined for modernity’s national identities to emerge, but also languages. Through processes of selective erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000), some kinds of difference must always be deemed insignificant, or at least rendered acceptable by using the idea of “dialect” to fit variation under the larger umbrella of an overarching language. At the same time, Irvine and Gal also outline processes of iconization, through which certain linguistic forms are taken to embody deep differences or affinities between linguistic groups. The principle of iconicity can be seen operating in the ideology of Zakarpattia as an “other” space by Ukrainians outside the region; virtually everyone I met who had visited the region told me about some ridiculous or indecipherable word they heard used to refer to an everyday object. These items, incomprehensible and seemingly disconnected from the understood influences of Russian and Polish on contemporary Ukrainian, stand as icons of Zakarpattia’s incomprehensibility and disconnection from the understood historical narrative of Ukrainian development.

In this same vein, it is important to note that as with any of the nationalistic identity projects that developed in Europe over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and have come to serve as models for contemporary nation building, there was in fact no clear-cut choice between these three options of Russian, Ukrainian, or Rusyn national identity from the point of view of linguistics alone. Rather, adherents of each of these positions had to, and indeed continue to, selectively erase or highlight linguistic differences across varieties. For those who argued that local dialects were part of a broadly conceived Russian language, these differences were very
large, but they were also extensive across the smaller range of dialects spread throughout Central and Eastern Europe that are now ideologically incorporated into contemporary Ukrainian. Even a Rusyn identity could not provide a direct link between shared language and shared identity, as variations in syntax, phonology, and lexicon were significant across different parts of the Zakarpattia region and are in fact large over the whole range of varieties identified as Rusyn in other parts of Central and Southern Europe (see Magocsi 1996b).

By World War II, the growing influence of the Soviet Union in Zakarpattia contributed to the dominance of a Ukrainianist ideology which Makara (1995a) and others have directly linked to a broader Soviet plan of joining the territory to Ukraine. To justify this move, the local population was logically cast as Ukrainian, and the joining of Zakarpattia to Ukraine became eminently justifiable as part of the construction of a Ukrainian Soviet Republic out of pieces of former empires. The effects of early Soviet development policies had long-term consequences for local perceptions of nationality and linguistic identity in the local Slavic-speaking populations. During the Soviet period, while oppressive anti-Ukrainian language policies were contributing to a growing nationalist movement in other parts of Western Ukraine, wide-scale Slavic-language education was beginning in earnest for the first time in many parts of Zakarpattia (Makara 1995a). Furthermore, official Soviet policy dictated that “Rusyn” was a subethnic group and that the indigenous Slavic-speaking population would be classified as Ukrainian (Myhovyych and Makara 2000). The consequences of this policy were wide ranging, in part because as several authors have noted, the nationality policy coincided with an array of other social and political programs like Ukrainian language-based literacy programs, collectivization of agriculture, and the promotion of Russian Orthodoxy in the region combined with a dismantling of Greek Catholicism (Dyrud 1992; Makara 1995a, 1995b; Magocsi 1978, 1996c; Rusinko 2003).

These factors must be taken into account when evaluating the differences that emerged between Zakarpattia and Galicia (Western Ukraine), both of which were joined to Soviet Ukraine after World War II, but whose populations in general developed contrasting perceptions of Soviet rule. While Galician Ukrainians often remained hostile to Russian rule in the form of Soviet power, many Zakarpattia residents adopted Ukrainian national identity and viewed the Soviet Union as a Slavic liberator from years of Hungarian oppression. This positive orientation toward the Soviet Union as a force in the modernization and promotion of social equality in Zakarpattia prevailed over the years, even in the face of the trauma of food shortages and forced collectivization in the late 1940s. In
addition, after the establishment of Uzhhorod State University in the 1940s, local students gained unprecedented opportunities to pursue advanced degrees. Within the university, studies of the language, history, and folklore of Zakarpattia did not deviate from established Soviet teleological narratives designed to underscore the inevitability of Zakarpattia’s joining to Soviet Ukraine in the 1940s. In this way the study of local Slavic varieties became the study of Ukrainian dialects, and studies of local history and traditions the study of Ukrainian culture of the Carpathians (see, e.g., Bevzenko 1962; Nimchuk 1962; Dzendzelivs’kyi 1960). This idea of Zakarpattia language and culture went from being in contention at the start of the twentieth century, to being hegemonic at the end of it (see, e.g., Dzendzelivs’kyi 1993; Myholynets’ 2002; Sabadosh 1994).

Thus, during the Soviet period, the ideology of state institutions encouraged the alignment of Zakarpattia identity with Ukrainian identity. Education policies placed a strong emphasis on achieving high literacy rates in both Ukrainian and Russian, but, as elsewhere in Ukraine, Russian was clearly recognized as the language of power in the region, and rapidly became the lingua franca for interaction between members of the region’s diverse linguistic groups (including extensive Romanian, Hungarian, and in urban areas, Russian-speaking populations). Russian was also emphasized in institutions of higher education, especially in fields such as medicine and law, in which an independent Ukrainian vocabulary was not promoted. In addition, as throughout the former Soviet Union, an emphasis on Russian-language media programming encouraged the development of passive fluency in Russian.

Since Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, a policy of “re-Ukrainization” of Ukraine, and in particular of non-Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians, has been under way. Despite the increasing acceptance of the Ukrainian language, the resurgence of not one, but two Rusyn nationalist movements during glasnost and after Ukrainian independence indicates that for some residents, the idea that Zakarpattia Slavic speakers are not ethnically Ukrainian did survive the Soviet period. Indeed, Myhovyh and Makara (2000: 13) cite results from a sociological survey conducted in the fall of 1991 that found that only 55% of people whose “passport nationality” was Ukrainian identified as Ukrainian, while 18% identified as Rusyn. In addition to a resurgence of interest in Rusyn identity, Ukrainian nationalism also gained strength in Zakarpattia.

Figures from the 2001 Ukrainian national census confirm that post-Soviet Zakarpattia remains an ethnically diverse region, reflecting both historical shifts in boundaries and Soviet-sponsored in-migration, particularly of ethnic Russians. Ukrainians comprise an ethnic majority (80.5%),
while significant populations of Hungarians (12.5%), Romanians (2.6%), Russians (2.5%), and Slovaks (0.5%) contribute to the region’s ethnic diversity. Census data confirm continued multilingualism in the region, with 44% of the Slovak population, 97% of the Hungarian population, and 99% of the Romanian population claiming their eponymous language as their *ridna mova* (mother tongue). Here again a close ideological alignment of language and national identity is evidenced in an overall matching of nationality with “mother tongue” in the census results for the region, with an overall 97% agreement between nationality and language for the region. This general trend is consistent with other areas of Ukraine (Arel 2002b).

Although the Hungarian population is much more numerous than the Romanian population, several factors contribute to the relative social integration of these two groups with the Ukrainian population. In the course of my fieldwork, Hungarians, Ukrainians, and Romanians frequently told me that intermarriage between Hungarians and Ukrainians is higher than between Romanians and Ukrainians, and many of the children of these marriages are bilingual in Hungarian and Ukrainian. This higher incidence of intermarriage may be because there is a longer history of villages where Hungarians and Ukrainians lived side by side (Myhovych and Makara 2000). The Romanian population stands apart somewhat from the other populations in the region in other ways as well. During the Soviet period, Romanians largely transitioned from agriculture to a range of commercial activities within and outside of the Soviet legal system, and this prosperity continued after Soviet independence (Myhovych and Makara 2000). Although economic success set them apart, Romanians also stand apart linguistically. In the 2001 census, 46% of ethnic Hungarians indicated that they were fluent in Ukrainian, and 30% in Russian, while only 24% of Romanians indicated that they were fluent in Ukrainian, and 37% that they were fluent in Russian.

Census data also provide insights into the continuing debate over the legitimacy of a Rusyn national identity. After considerable debate prior to the 2001 census as to whether Rusyns would be included as a separate nationality or recorded and then recoded during the processing of census data as Ukrainians, it was decided that they would remain a subethnic group of the Ukrainian census category, along with those who identified themselves as Boiko, Hutsul, Lemko, and so forth. According to results summarizing recoded data for those who identified themselves as subethnic groups of the Ukrainian census category, 10,090 people identified their nationality as Rusyn. Of those, 67% cited Rusyn as their mother tongue, while 31% identified Ukrainian as their mother tongue. Although more people identified themselves as Rusyn in urban than in rural areas,
the percentage of those citing Rusyn as their mother tongue as well as their nationality was significantly higher in rural areas, 75%, than in urban areas, 61% (Derzhavnyi Komitet Statystyky Ukrainy 2007).

The efforts of Rusyn activists to reverse the early Soviet policy of counting Rusyns as Ukrainians (see, e.g., Bodyzhar 2000) also focused on increasing awareness of Rusyn national identity in the period leading up to the census (Dickinson forthcoming). For those involved in debates over the recognition of an independent Rusyn language and nationality, the “Rusyn question” has come to focus on issues of history, identity, and power as they relate to language, and in particular to the name “Rusyn,” which has been actively debated by both Western and Ukrainian scholars. Scholars arguing for the legitimacy of Rusyn claims to an independent national identity have focused on nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century texts both demonstrating linguistic characteristics typical of the local language, and also on concerted efforts by “Rusynophile” groups to establish a successful national movement and achieve a measure of political independence (see, e.g., Magocsi 1978, 1999; Makara 1995b; Rusinko 2003). On the opposing side, works such as Nakonechnyi’s (2004) argue that “Rusyn” is an ancient name for the groups now called Ukrainians.3 In this interpretation, Rusyns are merely Ukrainians who were never renamed, and indeed some argue that to support Rusyn nationalism is tantamount to supporting attempts to divide the Ukrainian people and thereby obliterate Ukrainian identity (for a range of points of view, see, e.g., Rudnytsky 1987; Sen’ko 1996; Tyvodar 1995).

The relationship of Rusyn activists to Ukrainian language demonstrates the ideological tension that surrounds the question of Rusyn’s status as a language or as a dialect of Ukrainian. When I interviewed Rusyn activists, some in fact preferred to speak to me in Russian rather than Ukrainian, and those that did noted that they had felt less victimized by the Soviet regime (as represented by Russian language use) than by Ukrainian nationalism (as represented by Ukrainian language use). This choice of Russian as ideologically “more neutral” than Ukrainian is significant, particularly in light of later political developments. As I discuss further below, this perceived neutrality may contribute to the continued use of Russian, not Ukrainian, as a common regional lingua franca.

At the same time, other Rusyn activists were eager to align with national and regional political interests that might increase their chances of official recognition by the Ukrainian state. During the Orange Revolution, the Rusyn Congress in fact chose to back Viktor Yushchenko’s party, which had heavy support in Galicia, the center of Ukrainian nationalism, as well as among other constituencies, including some in Zakarpattia. Furthermore, in March 2007, the Zakarpattia regional gov-
ernment officially recognized Rusyns as a distinct nationality, affording them rights to funding from the regional government for cultural and educational activities on a par with other ethnic minorities (Zakhidna Informatsiina Korporatsiia 2007a). This represents a distinct political shift on the part of the regional government, and it remains to be seen whether official recognition will lead to altered perceptions of Rusyn and its relationship to local linguistic varieties. After the announcement of Rusyn recognition, a flurry of editorials in local news outlets praised the decision or condemned it using language familiar to this long-running debate (Zakhidna Informatsiina Korporatsiia 2007b).

It is important to note that while almost all of present-day Zakarpattia falls into what Magocsi (1996a, 1997) has mapped out as the Carpatho-Rusyn homeland at the start of the twentieth century, the Rusyn question is remote from the lives of most Zakarpattia residents, particularly those living outside the westernmost raiony of Zakarpattia (i.e., the administrative districts of Uzhhorod, Mukacheve, Svaliava, and Khust). Indeed, when I discussed my fieldwork in Tiachiv and Rakhiv further to the east of these areas, speakers were classified by both Ukrainian-centered and Rusyn-centered scholars and activists as irrelevant to the debate; these scholars stated that these Zakarpattia residents’ speech represented Hutsul or even Boiko dialects of Ukrainian. Even though they fit the primary definition of korinni zhyteli, ‘native inhabitants’, often applied by Rusyn activists to distinguish Rusyns from Ukrainians or Russians who did not have ancestral roots in the area, and had experienced the same oppressive Hungarian language policies, their lack of interest in Rusyn identity was taken to be natural, because their language reflected membership in a different cultural group. Interestingly, rejection of the dialects of eastern Zakarpattia as not Rusyn coincides with the current geographic distribution of majority Orthodox Christian and Hungarian Catholic populations, while Greek Catholicism has over time become associated with Rusyn nationality and is more widespread in western and central Zakarpattia (Dyrud 1992; Magocsi 1997).

Outside the region, all of Zakarpattia has sometimes been stereotyped as being on the brink of a battle over language and identity that could result in secession, a stereotype that rose again in negative reactions to news that Rusyns had been recognized by the regional government. However, within the region, significant portions of the population consider themselves, and may be considered by others, as ineligible for membership in a Rusyn community. Even setting aside those populations considered more marginal to the Rusyn debate, such as the speakers from the easternmost Rakhiv district I will discuss in the next section of this article, it is still notable that despite the increased acceptance of
Rusyn identity that publicity and activism have created over the past ten years or so, many Zakarpattia residents remain firm in their identification as Ukrainian, not Rusyn.

The Ukrainian language has undergone a remarkable transformation in its status since 1989, the year it was made the official language of the Ukrainian Republic, and even more so, since 1991, the year Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union. Bilaniuk (2003) recalls the atmosphere of intense linguistic scrutiny and in many cases, linguistic insecurity that accompanied the elevation of Ukrainian from “second-class citizen” to the national language. Importantly, she notes that this linguistic insecurity was experienced by both native and non-native Ukrainian speakers during the period in which a new standard and status for Ukrainian were being negotiated in public and private realms:

The books and television programs aspired to define a prestigious Ukrainian language, while in daily discussions people struggled to assert their social position by demonstrating control of the “correct” language. In these processes, the legitimacy and value of various linguistic forms were being redefined, and thus access to power was being reconfigured. (Bilaniuk 2003: 50)

This early post-Soviet period was also characterized by an upsurge in Rusyn activism, bolstered in part by the movements’ successes in other parts of Europe, particularly in Slovakia (Duleba 2000; Magocsi 1996b). Ukrainian nationalists reacted strongly to these efforts in part because the Ukrainian language, and in particular “reclaiming” people who identified as Ukrainian but who did not speak the language, was placed in such a central position in the struggle for Ukrainian independence. Speaking Ukrainian, and the perceived “health” of the Ukrainian language as measured by number of speakers, Ukrainian publications, and perceived purity or quality of the Ukrainian used by speakers became ideologically linked to the “health” of Ukraine as an independent nation. As Fournier (2002) has argued, a repudiation of Ukrainian language by ethnic Ukrainians, or refusal by Russians to learn Ukrainian, were and sometimes still are perceived as threats to the viability of Ukrainian language, as such, also as threats to the viability of the Ukrainian nation.

Bilaniuk’s (2005) seminal study of ideologies of language purity in Ukraine discusses debates over the purity of language and the judgment of Ukrainian–Russian language mixing as “bad” or “damaging” to the Ukrainian nation. This work focuses primarily on ideologies associated with the use of different forms of Ukrainian and Russian language; for example, forms perceived as closer to the literary standard as opposed to forms associated with rurality or with non-native speakers. As such, it
presents an interesting case for comparison to perceptions of Ukrainian-identified speakers in Zakarpattia, who routinely compare their own language use both to that of “good” Ukrainian (as represented by literary Ukrainian and spoken Ukrainian used in the media or in institutional settings) and to that of non-Ukrainian speakers in the area (primarily Hungarian and Romanian speakers).

In this section, I have focused on linguistic diversity in the region and the political and ideological debates over classification of local Slavic varieties as Rusyn or Ukrainian. As I turn to the question of how multiple ideologies of language interact in given contexts, I will largely leave aside the question of Rusyn identification and focus on rural dialect speakers who identify as Ukrainians. Nonetheless, the linguistic ideological positions I discuss below, particularly with regard to nationalist ideology, cannot be divorced from broader discussions of linguistic diversity in the region and the perceived importance of Ukrainian civic and ethnic identity in this region. Indeed, I argue that among these Zakarpattia speakers, Ukrainian identity is reinforced through the interpretation of language use, both in interactions between people who perceive themselves as speaking different Ukrainian dialects, and in the opposition of Ukrainian as the national language of Ukraine to other languages spoken in the region.

4. Ideologies of language in Zakarpattia: lingua franca, nationalism, and local identity

In the final section of this article, I analyze how linguistic ideologies contribute to the negotiation of multilingualism and ethnic diversity in Zakarpattia, drawing on my own fieldwork in rural and urban areas throughout the region, and in particular in the Tiachiv and Rakhiv districts on the eastern side of Zakarpattia, those same areas generally excluded from debates over Rusyn language and identity. In my analysis, I emphasize the multiplicity of notions about language that inform local standards for judging linguistic behavior, such as language choice or dialect speech. These standards in turn correspond to varying ideologies that carve out radically different identity groupings based on perceived linguistic, economic, ethnic, or political ties. Focusing primarily on the metalinguistic commentary that characterizes discussions of intergroup relations in this region, I emphasize here how the variable application of these linguistic standards enables speakers to slide easily from one ideological framework to another. I argue that while linguistic cues play a crucial role in how Ukrainian Zakarpattia residents identify speakers as members
of particular groups, these identifications are contextually bounded, and therefore neither permanent nor mutually exclusive. It is precisely this kind of contextually variable data that I feel is the greatest contribution that ethnographic research can make to research on the relationship of language ideologies to identity formation, by adding shading and subtlety to representations provided by opinion polling or other elicited, rather than observed, data forms.

My analysis here centers around three common beliefs about the role of language in shaping interactions between the variously delineated linguistic populations that I observed during my fieldwork. The first one focuses on the utility of lingua francas, and emphasizes the social and/or material benefits of forwarding communication between populations through mutually intelligible language usage. The second ideology that I will discuss is linked to some aspects of Ukrainian state building, centering on how the uniting power of a shared language can help form a "Western-style" post-Communist state (Arel 2002a; Bilaniuk 2005; Fournier 2002; Kulyk 2006). Finally, a local ideology prevalent in the Zakarpattia region both emphasizes the differences between Zakarpattia populations and the rest of Ukraine, and locates one source of that difference in the perceived wide range of variation between different village or area-specific linguistic varieties. In each of these cases, contextually situated language use fits into an idealized notion of the social importance of language, and at the same time enacts particular social relationships. Each ideology also has a historical basis, respectively, in the multiethnic traditions of Zakarpattia, in the history of Ukrainian nationalism and independence, and in folk and academic emphasis on dialect diversity as the hallmark of the Zakarpattia linguistic landscape.

As I discussed at the outset of this article, language ideologies are perpetuated in part through their application in the evaluation of linguistic behavior, and selective variability in the application of standards for linguistic behavior is a central point in my argument. To illustrate this, I offer an example of a closely linked series of interactions that I observed one afternoon. My research assistant and I had taken my car to the house of a mechanic in a village about ten kilometers to the east of my primary field site in the village of Apsha. In the mechanic’s yard, two Romanians from a nearby Ukrainian town, the owners of a sleek new Mercedes, joked amiably with the Ukrainian mechanic in accented Russian. When the Romanians left, the mechanic turned to my more modest Russian-built conveyance and began to talk with us in a local Ukrainian dialect about Romanians, commenting with amazement that an American can learn Ukrainian, but Romanians who were born in Ukraine say it’s too hard to speak. Later, when we returned home, my research assistant re-
counted the whole adventure to the great amusement of her audience, describing the rich Romanians who set off in search of a new three-hundred-dollar steering wheel for their Mercedes, and then laughing over the mechanic’s vowels: “Chip, he said!”, she declared. “What’s that?” inquired her audience. “Chip, that’s chup,” she answered, offering an Apsha variant of chop.4

In each part of this event at the mechanic’s and its discussion later, the participants relied on linguistic iconicity to identify speakers as members of particular populations. Thus in his interactions with the Romanians, the mechanic first conversed with them as co-members of an inclusive economically interdependent community, then later when discussing them with Ukrainian speakers, placed them among groups of, in his view, voluntarily non-Ukrainian-speaking local residents. Finally, in recounting the experience, my research assistant distinguished all of the people we had interacted with as belonging to ethnic and dialect groups based on linguistic cues as broad as choice of language, and as narrow as a small phonological variation.

One interpretation of this series of interactions might be that the last recontextualization of the interactions, in which my research assistant differentiated her own speech from that of both the mechanic and the Romanians, is the most “authentic,” somehow revealing her “true” feelings about these people. Yet to choose one set of standards that participants used to interpret these interactions, particularly to choose the most exclusive, is to also engage in processes of erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000) and ignore the different language ideologies which my research assistant clearly applied at different points throughout this series of interactions. Furthermore, each of these interactions proceeded smoothly; they were not fraught with interethnic tensions, nor did my research assistant laugh at the mechanic’s pronunciation to his face. In fact, no one ideology can explain this set of interactions. Rather, we can see here examples of three major linguistic ideologies in Zakarpattia that interact in variable applications of the linguistic standards speakers use to make and interpret linguistic choices in situations such as the one just described.

The first ideology, which I term a “lingua franca ideology” or a “market language ideology,” prioritizes communication and emphasizes the social and economic utility as well as the political neutrality of “convenient” language usage. This ideology allows for the common practice of nonreciprocal bilingual conversations, also frequently seen in Central and Eastern Ukraine, where some participants speak only Russian during an exchange, while others speak only Ukrainian (Bilaniuk 2005). In discussions about these nonreciprocal bilingual conversations, I noted two different rationales for this usage: one which relied on Soviet propaganda
about equality between nationalities, and one which relied on metaphors of the free market.

The Soviet version of this ideology argues for the equality of all peoples and languages, once a basic clarion call of Soviet nation building (Slez- kine 1994). Most attempts on my part in interviews or in conversation to ask direct questions about differences between ethnic or linguistic groups were met with statements such as “we don’t have a nationalities problem here” or “all people are equal under our legal system.” A few people, in particular non-Ukrainians, mentioned the value of Russian as a lingua franca expressive of Soviet-era goodwill between the different nationality groups of Zakarpattia, and stated that switching over to Ukrainian as a lingua franca would be a waste of energy expended for solely political purposes. Again, this point of view validates Russian as the most politically neutral choice for a lingua franca, since some people I spoke with perceived Ukrainian as too politically charged to serve in this capacity. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the shift from the Soviet system to a market-based economy, the post-Soviet version of the lingua franca ideology emphasizes accommodation, or the combined usage of mutually intelligible languages, not as an expression of the primacy of communication between peoples, but rather as an enabler of the efficient exchange of goods and services, or a “market language ideology.” Thus in local bazaars exchanges between merchants and customers may take place in any of the local languages which they both understand, and I have frequently witnessed situations in which a merchant carries on two simultaneous conversations with customers, one in reciprocal Hungarian, and the other in nonreciprocal Russian (used by the merchant) and Ukrainian (used by the customer). The difference between the Soviet ideology motivated by a perhaps illusory emphasis on equality, and the post-Soviet free market ideology is expressed by statements such as one made by a welder, when I recounted to him the mechanic’s denigration of Romanians who refuse to learn Ukrainian. “What’s the difference,” he shrugged, “as long as they pay?” When applied to interactions between speakers of different languages, lingua franca ideologies underscore local understandings of how to manage linguistic and ethnic diversity in a range of settings, both strictly commercial, as in the buying of eggs at the market, or in contexts of both social and commercial interaction, as in the conversation between the Romanian Mercedes owner and the Ukrainian mechanic discussed above.

The contexts for application of these Soviet and post-Soviet lingua franca ideologies may overlap, however, with the second ideology that I have identified, one that has emerged out of a Ukrainian nationalist discourse defining Ukrainian as the language of the Ukrainian state. In
Zakarpattia, many people judge their language usage harshly compared to “correct” Ukrainian, characterizing their own Ukrainian speech as “bad” or sometimes “uncultured,” while at the same time validating local varieties by saying they speak po-nashomu ‘our way’. The perceived distance between local and standard forms is considered important in the context of Ukrainian nationality and in institutional contexts in which performance of standard Ukrainian is part of establishing an air of appropriate formality and proper conduct. For example, at wedding ceremonies in the local town hall, a local schoolteacher regularly enacted the voice of the state, reading a formal statement about marriage in which key lexical items and phonological features differed from everyday local usage. In these institutional contexts, “good” Ukrainian represents the power and viability of the state, as well as the power of the state as the arbiter of formal proceedings, and as an evaluator of language quality (as, for example, when students are required to take exams in Ukrainian language for entrance into universities). For this reason, despite this recognized “gap” between local and literary forms of Ukrainian, Zakarpattia residents who identify as Ukrainian often emphasize language use as a badge of willingness to participate in the Ukrainian state-building project, what I term a “Ukrainian nationalist” ideology.

Rather than valorizing a linguistically pure form of Ukrainian as a commitment to the nationalist project, this ideology instead contrasts local dialect speech as “Ukrainian” against “Russian” speech, particularly when Russian is used with the expectation that it will be received as a lingua franca. The differences between local dialect forms and institutional Ukrainian undergo erasure in this frame of interpretation, as it is Russian language use, not dialect Ukrainian, which is of immediate concern. In this ideological frame, Russian language use is interpreted as a form of resistance, as the impolite refusal to learn Ukrainian and, by extension, refusal to recognize the change in regime from the Russian-dominated Soviet Union to the developing Ukrainian nation-state. It is important to note that in Zakarpattia, the right of members of individual ethnic groups to speak “their own” language in conversations among themselves is rarely questioned, and indeed Rusyn claims to a separate ethnicity and therefore the right to speak a separate language rely implicitly on the essentialization of linguistic behavior as part of ethnic identity. Thus while Romanian and Hungarian are frequently used reciprocally by members of those ethnic groups, I never heard this behavior criticized or interpreted as a rejection of Ukrainian civic identity in the way that the use of Russian as a lingua franca sometimes was.

While the Ukrainian nationalist ideology as deployed in the Zakarpattia settings just described erases or minimizes differences among dialects
in order to achieve an ideological contrast between using Ukrainian and
using Russian, in other contexts, a third Zakarpattia dialect ideology
instead maximizes attention to differences among local dialects. This ide-
ology, evident in the final episode of the multilayered example I gave
above, is one typical of Zakarpattia: an exclusivist language ideology
shapes the notion that “every village in Zakarpattia speaks its own dia-
l ect,” at once separating Zakarpattia dialects as a group from the rest of
the Ukrainian language, and emphasizing variations across the different
dialect-speaking populations of Zakarpattia. This ideology motivates the
assignment of speakers to particular populations now primarily distin-
guished by dialect variation. The development of this ideology has been
helped along by the academic focus on the dialectology of Zakarpattia,
focusing attention on small differences between villages and in document-
ing the subdivisions of smaller dialect groups within the larger collection
of Zakarpattia dialects (see, in particular, Dzendzelivs’kyi 1960, 1993).

The ideology of Zakarpattia as, in fact, non-Ukrainian, is perhaps best
expressed in the use of the word “Ukraine” as an area excluding Zakar-
pattia, as for example when a young woman leaves the village to seek
work “in Ukraine.” Indeed, the Rusyn nationalist movements, asserting
that the language of Zakarpattia is not a Ukrainian variant, but rather
an independent language, emphasize both linguistic and cultural di-
ferences (such as food preparation) that divide the Zakarpattia region from
the rest of Ukraine and its Slavic-speaking population from the Ukrai-
nian population. These movements, which have met with limited success
in the far eastern district of Zakarpattia where I did my fieldwork, have
had to contend not only with opposition from Ukrainian nationalist
groups, but also with the local emphasis on dialectal diversity within the
region as a basis for presenting the region as a diverse population distinct
from the rest of Ukraine rather than as a linguistically unified population.

At the same time, local identity is bolstered through media such as
the sale of cassette tapes and CDs of local music, usually with names
like Zakarpats’ka zabava (‘Zakarpattia party’) or Zakarpats’ke vesillia
(‘Zakarpattia wedding’). The lyrics of this music often displays features
typical of Zakarpattia dialects, such as the use of the past-participial clitic
(e.g., Jakbym bula ‘If I were’) or dialect items such as kucha for ‘house’.
Although some lexical items particular to the region are quite widespread
(for example, obolok for ‘window’ and the use of io to mean ‘yes’), lexical
variants play a key role in the differentiation of local dialects that typifies
the application of a Zakarpattia language ideology to a given context.
This is best expressed in the oft-repeated expression “Every village has
its own dialect,” a perception that speakers can emphasize by calling atten-
tion to features that they consider unique to their community.
On several occasions, I participated in conversations between Apsha villagers and residents from other villages whom they did not know. In these cases, lexical differences often came up in conversation as participants from one side or another would initiate clarification of a particular word. For example, a woman discussing stockings with some peddlers from a Boiko dialect area framed a request in this way:

(1) *U vas ne ie taki ia na nykh hovoriu shtremfli taki kolhotky* …

‘You don’t have any of those, I call them “shtremfli”, like stockings …’

Here, the speaker does recognize that her word *shtremfli* is likely a regional variant unknown to these visitors, and avoids confusion by offering a description of them. In another conversation I witnessed, two groups of people from the neighboring Tiachiv and Rakhiv districts compared their local names for an intoxicant popular with older rural women (formally referred to as *efir*). Occasionally, confusion arises over homonyms such as the word *kohutky*, which in some Zakarpattia dialects means ‘chickens’ and in others ‘earrings’, or *krislo*, which means ‘armchair’ in standard Ukrainian but ‘umbrella’ in some dialects.

The application by villagers of highly localized standards for evaluation of linguistic behavior by dialect speakers from other villages can focus most narrowly on particular phonological features. In the village of Apsha, located on the border between the Hutsul and central Zakarpattia dialects, one such focal point is the reduction of the affricate *shch* to *sh* as in *sho* instead of *shcho* for the word ‘what’. In Apsha, joking imitations of Hustul speech will include liberal or exaggerated use of *sho*, and I once witnessed a mother scold her toddler by saying:

(2) *Shcho tse za shokannia. Ne ies z Bychkova.*

‘What’s with this “sho-ing”? You’re not from Bychkiv.’

Here the mother was referring to the next town to the south, where the reduction of the affricate is an established feature of the dialect. Other features that speakers focus on in drawing boundaries between local varieties include distinctions in the realization of various vowels, including the alternation of ‘i’ and ‘u’ as a divider between the Hutsul variety and varieties spoken further to the west, as seen in the example of *chip* versus *chup* my research assistant pointed out in her reenactment of the mechanic’s speech.

Most non-Zakarpattia residents outside the region are totally unaware of these differences, which play a central role in the most basic of population divisions in Zakarpattia. In fact, these linguistically based divisions draw on, and contribute to, an ideology that defines the whole region as...
not only distinct from the rest of Ukraine, but also internally divided into dialect groups, and then, into village-based micro-dialects. However, this ideology of language and identity is, like the other two ideologies I have already discussed, not necessarily appropriate for application in all social contexts. Thus while dialect differences are an acceptable topic of polite conversation between people from different villages, imitation of another’s accent to his or her face would not be acceptable. Language use speaks to larger ideologies of belonging; just as some scholars argued to me that it was natural for people in eastern Zakarpattia to refuse Rusyn ethnic identification, the Zakarpattia language ideology entails the assumption that it is natural for people to speak different dialects if they come from different villages. To reinforce this perception through the iconization of differences between varieties is to validate local notions of belonging, just as much as a Ukrainian nationalist language ideology, as applied in the ways discussed above, validates belonging in a shared Ukrainian state, and a lingua franca ideology validates belonging in a shared goal of communication as a means to an end.

Each of the three ideologies I have outlined in this article corresponds to particular contexts of interaction. To return to the threefold example at the beginning of this section, it is clear that different standards for behavior were being applied in each context, highlighting different elements of identity and different understandings of the goals and consequences of each interaction. Rather than elevating one linguistic identity as being more authentic or closely held (for example, a locally based dialect identity) than other forms of identification (as ethnically Ukrainian, as a member of a multi-ethnic community, etc.), I have argued for a consideration of how speakers make linguistic choices across contexts of interaction, and how those choices then influence both the ensuing interactions, and participants’ later evaluations of those interactions in different contexts.

5. Conclusions

This article has focused on the role of language ideologies in different constructions and interpretations of linguistic diversity in Zakarpattia. In exploring language ideologies as a macrolinguistic phenomenon tightly entwined with contextually shifting understandings of power, difference, and similarity, I have argued that the long-standing influences of historical debates over the political and linguistic identity of Zakarpattia residents as well as Soviet nationalities discourse have continued to shape
conceptualizations of the region’s languages both by residents and non-residents. Thus political debates over the Rusyn or Ukrainian character of the region incorporate much larger issues of Zakarpattia’s place within the Ukrainian nation-building project, as does the accompanying invocation of language as an essential aspect of identity, inseparable from history, politics, and ethnicity.

These larger issues, however, are also negotiated in interactions between Zakarpattia residents in ways that allow for contextually based alignments with different groups, from Ukrainian citizens, to members of ethnic groups, to speakers of a local variety. Indeed, the variable application of different ideological orientations that invoke longstanding, locally based regional identities, as well as more recent ideologies of the free market economy and Ukrainian nationalism, serve as a means of integrating a range of possible identity alignments that residents shift between as they move through the diverse social world of Zakarpattia. These factors combine to create complexly layered, overlapping understandings of linguistically defined groups in a rapidly developing, multilingual and multiethnic situation. My analysis of ethnographic examples of language use conforming to these different ideological stances emphasizes the situational element in how speakers invoke and apply the ideological frames in interaction. It is my contention that understanding the social and cultural context of the interaction is essential to participants’ understanding and evaluation of language use. When examined within this system, it is difficult to recognize the Zakarpattia of stereotypes, the wild and unruly territory in which no linguistic rules apply. Instead, contextually dependent frameworks for understanding language use allow for multiple, but not unruly or wild, interpretations of and responses to linguistic diversity.

In Zakarpattia, as in almost any linguistic setting, it cannot be said that people have one opinion of their own language or the language use of others. Rather, their evaluations of linguistic forms rely precisely on their expectations for the kind of interaction in which they are participating, and each of these interactions may carry with them particular ideologies for interpreting language. On a concluding note, I wish to emphasize that a more subtle and variegated approach to understanding how ideas about language and language use create socially salient groupings is important for scholars researching the political implications of language choices and identification with emerging or enduring social groups. Rather than being unitary, or tied to a particular political orientation, linguistic identities may be multiple, contextually defined, and more fluid than even speakers themselves recognize. Examination of this “ideological flexibility” should not be taken as an attack on linguistically based identities. Quite the opposite: recognition that both language use and evaluations
of that use vary across contexts of interaction is a key step in negotiating the complex language politics of post-Soviet Ukraine.

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Notes

1. I heard these comments from both Russian and Ukrainian speakers.
2. Roma made up 1.1% of the regional population in 2001, however unlike the Slovak, Hungarian, and Romanian populations located primarily along the border with Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania, this population is widely dispersed throughout the region.
3. Evaluating the historical validity of either of these claims is beyond the scope of this article. Here I am presenting them as examples of the ways in which all aspects of language use continue to be caught up in basic issues of identity in the region.
4. Indeed, the isogloss delineating alternation of [o] with [i] instead of with [u] is about five kilometers west of Apsha (Dzendzelivs’kyi 1993). The word chop is used locally to mean ‘a stopper’, a ‘crossroads’ or ‘a fork in the road’, perhaps derived from the name for the large Hungarian customs checkpoint Chop, now the busiest customs checkpoint on Ukraine’s western border.

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Ideologies of language use in post-Soviet Ukrainian media*

VOLODYMYR KULYK

Abstract

The media is a crucial site of the articulation, contestation, and inculcation of beliefs about language, or language ideologies. In media discourse, these ideologies are not only represented in actors' and journalists' judgments about language matters, but also realized in the actual use of language. This article analyzes ideologies of language use which are articulated and embodied in contemporary Ukrainian media discourse. By examining both the presentation of language processes in society and the language practices of the media itself, I show how this discourse presents a rather ambivalent idea of the actual and appropriate language use in post-Soviet Ukraine. On the one hand, Ukrainian is assumed to be the only/primary language of the state and society, a symbolic marker of the nation, and a language that (all) citizens identify with; on the other, Russian appears to be an (equally) acceptable language of virtually all social practices. Thus the media both reflects an ambivalent normality that Ukrainian citizens inherited from the Soviet times and reproduces it in the interests of the dominant political and media elites.

Keywords: language ideology; media discourse; normality; ambivalence; Ukraine.

1. Introduction

Language issues in Ukraine have mostly been studied, both by Ukrainian and Western scholars, in terms of state policies on the one hand and popular attitudes toward those policies on the other. In the former case, scholars have increasingly paid attention to the inconsistency and ambiguity of the policies which were intended, in particular during the presidency of Leonid Kuchma (1994–2004), to minimize the opposition of
different parts of the population and thus ensure social stability and enable consolidation of the presidential power (Arel 1998; Wilson 2000; Kulyk 2006a). In the latter, some authors pointed not only to ethnocultural or regional differentiation but also to ambivalence of the popular attitudes, that is, a “contradictory combination of mutually exclusive orientations” within individual consciousness (Holovakha 1992: 27–28). Such combination is characteristic of contemporary Ukrainians’ views of many issues, such as foreign policy, economy, history, and language (Riabchuk 2003; Kulyk 2006a, 2006b). Much of the ambivalence results from a rather abrupt transition from Soviet to post-Soviet social conditions and ideological slogans, which has made people, to some extent, accept both the old and the new (Holovakha 1992). Yet it is also partly inherited from the Soviet past and preserved by post-Soviet practices, which is why it — or at least some aspects of it, including the attitudes toward language use — does not fade away with the passage of time (Kulyk 2006b). As is well known, state policies both take into account and shape popular attitudes. Therefore, not only does the ambivalence of these attitudes limit the range of possible political courses in a given domain, effectively preventing radical steps in either direction, but also it enables the authorities to manipulate the contradictory attitudes for their own purposes, such as sabotaging economic or political reforms that would have run counter to their interests (Riabchuk 2003).

However, the state is far from the only agent influencing — as well as responding to — popular attitudes. A number of non-state institutions and organizations, such as political parties, churches, or cultural establishments, contribute significantly to mass perception of the actual and appropriate situation — what does and should take place — in various social domains. At the same time, it is not only consciously held attitudes of the masses that such elite actors are supporting or transforming but also those deep-rooted, often unconscious beliefs which usually remain unnoticed by their holders and even scholars. This pertains, in particular, to beliefs about language which many scholars (first of all linguistic anthropologists) call language ideologies. In this article, I will analyze the role in the reproduction and transformation of language ideologies played by one of the most powerful ideological institutions in the contemporary world, the media, paying particular attention to its reflection, use, and support of popular ambivalence.

I will begin with a theoretical discussion of language ideologies and the media’s role in their (re)production. Then, I will examine and classify ideologies of language use which are embodied in public discourses in post-Soviet Ukraine. In particular, I will show how two of them, which I call Ukrainophone and Russophone ideologies, highlight some of the
contradictory beliefs of the population, those supposedly reflecting the true interests of their respective linguistic groups, while downplaying other parts. In contrast, the so-called centrist ideology seeks to represent the interests of the entire population and, accordingly, fully accepts its ambivalent views and preferences. Finally, I will analyze the embodiment of language ideologies in mainstream media discourse and show how centristism prevails over its rivals, and thus helps reproduce popular ambivalence, which, in turn, justifies contradictory practices of the media.

2. Language ideologies and the media

In calling both conscious and unconscious language-related beliefs language ideologies, I (and those scholars whose choice I follow) manifest the preference for a broad use of the term ideology in the sense of all kinds of beliefs and conceptions which are socially situated and experientially derived. In other words, “these ideological concepts or notions are viewed as derived from, rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests of a particular social position, although they may be presented as universally true” (Woolard 1992: 237). As Woolard (1992) explains, this inherent emphasis on the social origin of thought is the principal reason why ideology was chosen as a key concept for the emerging field of the study of beliefs about language, notwithstanding the well-known fact that there are many alternative understandings of this concept. Such combination of inclusiveness and attention to social origin largely bridges the gap between a neutral and a critical understanding of ideologies. While the neutral understanding encompasses all cultural systems of representations of (various aspects of) the world, the critical understanding limits the use of the term ideology to those systems rooted in particular social positions (first and foremost, those of the dominant classes) and functional in the legitimization and protection of these positions. In Woolard and Schieffelin’s (1994: 58) words, the “recognition of the social derivation of representations does not simply invalidate them if we recognize that there is no privileged knowledge, including the scientific, that escapes grounding in social life.” Instead of asking whether a particular belief is true or false, scholars can thus analyze how it functions, i.e., is generated, disseminated, and sustained or transformed.

Since I intend to analyze not only those beliefs perceived by people holding them as ideologies but also those considered to be mere common sense, of particular interest to me is the Gramscian view of the relationship between the two phenomena and the contribution of naturalized
ideologies to the sustainability of unequal power relations. According to this view, ideological statements are often presented as common sense and thus as universally true. In this way they arguably stand a better chance of being accepted by a respective audience, since they are less likely to be perceived as serving somebody’s interests. As Fairclough (1989: 77) puts it, “the effectiveness of ideology depends to a considerable degree on it being merged with this common-sense background to discourse and other forms of social actions.” In this perspective, “ideology can bolster existing power structures by presenting contingent social relations as being natural or inevitable ones” (Billig and Sabucedo 1994: 127). The result of this ideological work is what Gramsci (1971) called hegemony, meaning consensual, rather than coercive, domination over subordinate classes and groups. That is, the latter are “directed to negotiate reality within what are ostensibly the limits of ‘common sense’ when, in actuality, this common sense is consistent with dominant norms, values and beliefs” (Allan 1998: 109). However, the hegemony never becomes complete; it remains an “unstable equilibrium” (Fairclough 1992: 92), a focus of constant struggle between the supporters of dominant beliefs presenting them as common sense and their opponents striving to reveal historical contingency and social origin of these beliefs. Although originally developed by Gramsci for class domination, the notion of hegemony has since been extended to include many other established beliefs such as those pertaining to race, sex, ethnicity, and language (e.g., Lawrence 1982; Billig 1995).

An important feature of common sense is, in my view, that it does not so much prescribe one option, a norm, as accepts a range of possible options deemed to be normal. In my use of the notion of normality, I follow Link (1999) who conceptualizes it as a Gaussian distribution on the spectrum of possible values of a given variable, where probability means the degree of normality which is the highest in the middle and decreases toward the limits. In other words, what is perceived as normal is widespread and therefore acceptable, not requiring any intervention.1 This feature of common-sense thinking is used in those ideological representations seeking to merge with the supposed common sense and thus influence it. In particular, what is not problematized is assumed to be normal, which is how these representations may contribute to the legitimization of those phenomena they do not seem to have a stance on or even to deal with.

As far as language ideologies are concerned, a crucial factor that needs to be taken into account is that these ideologies are embodied both in judgments about language and in its usage. Moreover, while all ideologies are at the same time descriptive and prescriptive, here we should pay attention not only to beliefs on what does take place and what should take
place but also to the *embodiment* of the two in language practice, that is, the speakers’ choice of language varieties and forms and their reaction to the choice of their interlocutors. As with other kinds of behavior, language use does not necessarily correspond to people’s declared beliefs about what is appropriate in a given context. This discrepancy may occur either because people are unaware of the true motives of their behavior or because these motives do not seem worth revealing to others, due to their inconsistency with the established norms of a group and, accordingly, to social risks the revelation might involve. Besides, language behavior depends on the speaker’s definition of the context of a communicative act and his/her purpose in it, while the interlocutors’ reaction reflects their perception of the appropriateness of behavior according to their own views of context and the speakers’ purpose, which may differ from those of the speaker him/herself. In any case, it is reasonable to believe that a systematic pattern of speaking in a particular type of context demonstrates the speaker’s conscious or unconscious belief about its appropriateness. At the same time, the partners’ lack of noticeable reaction to that pattern (that is, their reacting to the content rather than form of speech, which usually is a precondition for effective communication) can be seen as evidence of their perceiving such behavior as acceptable, normal in this context.

Of the three aspects of language that language ideologies deal with — nature, structure, and use (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994: 55) — I will only be preoccupied with the third. However, I am aware of an intrinsic connection between the beliefs regarding the actual/desirable use of specific language varieties and forms, on the one hand, and their identifying, communicative, aesthetic and other values, on the other. Those varieties and forms perceived to be valuable due to their nature and structure (authentic, generally understandable, beautiful, etc.) are generally considered worth using and vice versa, those used by the individual him/herself or people he/she views positively are imbued with some values justifying their use. Although in practice they are intertwined, one can analytically separate the assessments of different values and isolate ideologies that prioritize certain values over others, thus creating a value-based typology of language ideologies.

My typology includes ideologies of identification, understanding, and purity. The first of them stresses the role/value of language as an important marker of group identity, first and foremost a national one, and presupposes/prescribes a one-to-one correspondence between nations and “their” (eponymous) languages. This relationship is vividly presented in the metaphor of language as a treasure, which emphasizes the imperative for an individual to use the supposed language of his/her group,
which can thus be preserved and passed on to future generations. In contrast, the ideology of understanding (or communication) sees language primarily as a conduit for conveying information and thus prescribes the use of a language that is best understood for all participants in a given communication act, or the use of translation if there is no such common language. To these two, I add the ideology of purity, which translates the notion of identity/authenticity into the imperative of correspondence of language varieties and forms to a standard seen as an embodiment of the nation’s true essence. In particular, some varieties called languages are deemed to be legitimate and valuable means of self-expression of respective nations, while others’ lesser value and lack of legitimacy is reflected in their statuses as dialects, mixtures, or impure speech. The ideology of purity is prominent in beliefs dealing with the evaluation of the quality of speech and attitudes toward perceived dialects and mixtures, such as Ukrainian–Russian mixed speech called *surzhyk*, which is rather widespread in contemporary Ukraine. As my focus here will be on beliefs pertaining to the choice between those varieties thought of as languages, I will only deal with the ideologies of identification and understanding.

The media is a crucial site, on the one hand, of the *overt articulation* of various ideologies and the competition between them (e.g., in opinion articles and talk shows) and, on the other, of the *covert embodiment* and the naturalization of dominant ideologies (e.g., in news reports and entertainment programs). In particular, the media produces normality by presenting ever new events, while generally portraying them neither as manifestations of problems nor, in some cases, even as results of anybody’s actions. By reporting on something briefly and immediately proceeding to something else, the media discourse presents such events as normal, not requiring the audience’s reflection, to say nothing of intervention. In so doing, this discourse contributes to the naturalization of dominant ideologies and the legitimization of an established social order (Gitlin 1979; Hall 1981; Fairclough 1995). An important aspect of a thus reproduced order is the “nationness” of societies and the national organization of the world, that is, the existence of a given community as a “nation among nations” (Billig 1995) and the primacy of individuals’ identification with “their” nation (Edelman 1972; Desaulniers 1986; D’hondt et al. 1995). Moreover, each nation is assumed to speak “its own” language, which is common to all members and different from those of other nations (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992).

In the case of language ideologies, their embodiment in the media becomes more complex, due to their above-mentioned dual location in judgments about language and its usage. Moreover, both judgments and usage can stem either from social actors who are represented in media
texts, or from their authors/editors themselves. While representing judgments and language use of actors, journalists may or may not articulate their views thereof, and my argument is that the lack of such articulation implies acceptability/normality of the presented beliefs and practices. As for the language usage of journalists themselves, it is particularly important for my analysis to take into account the following aspects. First, this usage is usually oriented toward standard versions of respective languages, thus embodying the ideologies of purity and identification. It is with the standard that the audience is invited to identify rather than with dialects, mixtures, or professional jargons which are only used for this purpose in certain practices, even if those varieties are actively used by the audience. Second, by using only one language, as is the case with mainstream media in most nation-states, the media identifies with it as the language of its audience and, by implication, its community/nation. At the same time, the use of this language may be perceived as caused primarily by the editors’ awareness that all members of the audience (best) understand it, although this perceived fact is, of course, (re)created by its use in the media and other domains. Therefore, both ideologies of identification and understanding are at work in this practice, competing for the meanings to be attributed to particular languages and patterns of use. Third, when several languages are used, which often happens in broadcast media in multiethnic countries, they are all presented (usually implicitly) as acceptable for the audience/community, but hierarchal relations are established between them due to unequal scopes of use which both reflect those languages’ social statuses and influence them (cf. Spitulnik 1992). Here again, both ideologies of identification and understanding are drawn upon and reproduced. In my view, what determines the primacy of identification or understanding is the use of each language in the media products, either for a segregated audience of its native speakers who are believed/made to identify with it, or for a wider audience of those who are believed/made to understand that language. In the following sections, I will show these effects in the language practices of the Ukrainian media.

3. Language use and language ideologies in contemporary Ukraine

Ukraine can be considered a rather atypical country, at least for Europe, in view of a discrepancy between linguistic and ethnic identities of the population and between each of these identities and patterns of everyday language use. Ethnically, it is similar to East-Central European countries...
such as Romania, Slovakia, or Lithuania, where the respective titular
group is a clear majority but other groups constitute a considerable share
of the population. According to the results of the first post-Soviet census
conducted in 2001, 77.8% of Ukrainian residents declared their ethnic
origin to be Ukrainian, 17.3% Russian, and 4.9% other. Given that the
former Soviet definition of “nationality” as an inherited and fixed charac-
teristic of an individual is losing its prevalence due to the Ukrainian
state’s refusal to continue its institutionalization in internal passports,
ever more people define their ethnonational identity as tautological to
citizenship. In the 2001 census, the number of people defining themselves
as Russians dropped by more than a quarter in comparison with the last
Soviet census of 1989 (Derzhavnyi komitet n.d.; see also Arel 2002;
Kulyk 2005).

This identity shift is not accompanied by a similar change of identifica-
tion with Ukrainian as “native language.” In the last Soviet decades, an
increasing number of those categorized in passports and censuses as Ukrai-
nians had declared their native language to be Russian, the language of
social prestige and political loyalty in the Ukrainian SSR and most other
parts of the Soviet Union. Many more people continued to consider
Ukrainian their native language but switched to Russian in everyday
use, sometimes to a point of little knowledge of the supposed language
of their group (Szporluk 1981; Kulyk 2001). While the number of self-
declared native speakers of Ukrainian somewhat increased in the 2001
census (to 67.5%, with the share of those of Russian dropping to 29.3%) (Derzhavnyi komitet n.d.), a gap between this increase and that of
self-declared ethnic Ukrainians means that a percentage of those Ukrai-
nians who considered Ukrainian their native language actually slightly
decreased.

However, the discrepancy between ethnic and linguistic identifications
is not nearly as big as between the latter and everyday language pref-
erences of the population. These preferences, which had steadily changed
toward greater use of Russian in the Ukrainian SSR since the 1930s, have
been very slowly, if at all, reversing after the proclamation of Ukraine’s
independence. According to a series of surveys that have been conducted
annually since 1991 by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology using
the category of a respondent’s “language of preference,”78 the percentage
of people preferring Ukrainian in their everyday use is lower than one-
half of the population. For example, the series’ average data for the years
of 2000 to 2003 put the share of Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians at
45.4%, with those of Russian-speaking Ukrainians at 30.9%, Russian-
speaking Russians at 16.5%, and others at 7.2% (Khmel’ko 2004). Thus
up to a quarter of Ukrainian citizens combine an attachment to Ukrai-
nian as their “native language” and the preference for Russian in their everyday use.

Language policies of the post-Soviet Ukrainian state contributed to the preservation or even widening of the gap between the citizens’ identities and practices. If anything, Ukraine’s independence made its citizens identify increasingly with the titular nation and language, but the new state did not significantly change language preferences developed under the old regime. Although Ukrainian was declared the only state language and Russian was legally demoted to a minority status equal to that of languages having many times as few speakers, actual policies made it possible for Russian to be used nearly as widely as in Soviet times. Not only was there little pressure on the citizens to switch to the state language in the workplace, in communication with the authorities, or in other public domains, but also the continued presence or even dominance of Russian in many social practices resulted in its high prestige and strong pull on the younger generations. This explains why the use of Ukrainian was hardly increasing with the passage of time. It is true that the state policies differed by region, largely in accordance with the preferences of the population, and by social domain, e.g., gradual transition to Ukrainian in education coexisted with a laissez-faire approach to the print media resulting in the dominance of Russian (Kulyk 2006a; cf. Arel 1995; Janmaat 2000; Riabchuk 2001). However, the moderate Ukrainianization policies did not so much change Russian-speaking citizens’ actual usage as they made many of them believe that the state discriminated against them; at the same time, the marginalization of Ukrainian in other domains was perceived by some Ukrainian speakers as evidence of the state’s indifference to the fate of “its” nation and language. Along with the very transformation of the Ukrainian Soviet republic into an independent Ukraine, the new state’s contradictory policies contributed to the transformation of language beliefs of the elites and (largely under the influence of elite-controlled discourses) the masses. Unlike under the ideological uniformity of Soviet times, publicly articulated beliefs became much more diverse and actively contested under more democratic conditions.

My typology of influential language ideologies in Ukrainian public discourse is based on the groups whose rights and interests they overtly or covertly defend. Each of these group-defined approaches can employ one or more ideologies of the value-based typology I presented in the previous section. I call two of the group-defined ideologies Ukrainophone and Russophone, but the terms do not imply an automatic correspondence between the ethnolinguistic identity of ideologues (politicians, writers, scholars, journalists, etc.) and the group they seek to represent. The Ukrainophones assume the priority of ethnicity in an individual’s
identity and, accordingly, refer to “Ukrainians” rather than “Ukrainian speakers.” However, Ukrainians are assumed to unanimously speak their eponymous language, or want to “revert” to it if they happen to use mostly Russian due to the former policies of Russification. Therefore, this ideology calls for the status of Ukrainian as the sole official language and its dominance in all public fields, with a purely minority scope of the use of Russian. In contrast, the Russophone ideology considers the language of everyday use to be the primary determinant of ethnocultural identity and, accordingly, speaks on behalf of the “Russian-speaking population” regardless of its “nationality” or “native language.” This ideology assumes/prescribes that the entire such population wants to retain its language of everyday use and opposes any policies intended to enhance the communicative (rather than purely symbolic) use of Ukrainian, to say nothing of making it mandatory. The Russophones call for virtually equal statuses of the two languages and deny their opponents’ argument that, given the advantageous starting conditions of the Russian speakers, such formal equality would perpetuate this advantage and the actual discrimination against the speakers of Ukrainian (Kulyk 2004a).

Each of these ideologies highlights one part of the contradictory beliefs of the population while downplaying the other part.9 It is particularly evident with regard to the mixture of beliefs within the consciousness of those people who consider Ukrainian their native language, but prefer Russian in their everyday use. Ukrainophones only recognize the legitimacy of the ideology of identification which makes these people retain their attachment to Ukrainian, while denying the acceptability of preference for understanding, to say nothing of any identification with Russian. Instead, the Russophones prioritize the ideology of understanding which justifies many Ukrainian citizens’ continuing preference for Russian in their everyday life; at the same time, they encourage these people to move beyond mere habit and retain or develop an identification with Russian as their first language and, moreover, one which is “not alien” to Ukraine in general. Not only are the two ideologies guided by radically different norms but even their limits of normality do not seem to overlap. That is, the Ukrainophones are ready to accept more-than-minority use of Russian in Ukrainian society but not the extension of its use, which they label Russification, while the Russophones admit the status supremacy of Ukrainian but flatly reject what they perceive as the state’s discrimination against a half of its citizens (Kulyk 2004a).

However, the two above-described ideologies have been largely marginalized due to the growing influence of the so-called centrism, which presents itself (that is, it is presented by its proponents, often implicitly) as a non-ideological position based on common sense and, thus, shared
by virtually all members of society. This ideology, which is by no means limited to language issues, defines itself through the self-assumed centrality and normality of its position, that is, through its contrast with the allegedly marginal and peculiar views of its opponents whose very adherence to some clear principles makes them, for centrists, at odds with common sense (Kulyk 2006b). Unlike their ideological rivals, the centrists do not seek to defend the interests of one particular group but rather of the entire population whose interests they do not see as determined by linguistic, ethnic or, indeed, any other group identity. In other words, they consider the population to be ideologically homogeneous even if socially or culturally diverse. This makes the post-Soviet centrism similar to the so-called consensual view of society, which became hegemonic in Western political and media discourse in the post-World War II decades and presented the views of the groups opposing the status quo as “deviations” from the alleged consensus (Hall 1982).

As far as the language issues are concerned, the centrist ideology assumes that the entire (or at least the overwhelming majority of) Ukrainian population knows and accepts both languages and, therefore, considers language use neither a social problem nor, accordingly, a political one. On the one hand, centrum allies with the Ukrainophones in that Ukrainian should be the only official language; on the other, it shares the Russophone view that Russian should be accepted as, along with Ukrainian, a language of most public practices. It supports the status of Ukrainian as the language of the state and, symbolically, the language of the nation/country and, at the same time, accepts Russian as one of the two legitimate languages of society if not the primary one. That is, centrist ideology accepts and normalizes the ambivalence of many Ukrainians’ attitudes toward language issues (Kulyk 2004a, 2006b). While embracing both ideologies of identification and understanding and evenly applying them to members of the two ethnic/linguistic groups, centrism nevertheless distorts the popular beliefs. This is because it assumes, in effect, a homogeneous combination of the two elements in the consciousness of every member of Ukrainian society rather than admitting ethnocultural and (given uneven regional distribution of ethnocultural groups) regional heterogeneity with the prevalence of one of the elements in some segments of the population.10

Although the Ukrainophone and, to a lesser extent, Russophone ideologies have been embodied in discourses of politics, education, churches, and some other domains, it is centrism that within the last decade has become hegemonic in those institutional practices which exert the biggest influence on popular beliefs about language. Among these practices, the media is perhaps the most important.
4. The ambivalent normality of the media discourse on language use

Prior to analyzing the discourse on language and the practice of language use in the Ukrainian media, I would like to mention some features of this media which made it particularly suitable for the normalization of events and processes reported on and the naturalization of underlying ideologies. To a large degree, these features were caused by the repressive media policies of the Kuchma regime and the resulting reluctance of journalists and especially their employers to criticize those in power (Riabchuk 2001; Dyczok 2003, 2005). The very structure of media genres, styles, and topics virtually excluded the problematization of reported “facts,” which thus stood a good chance of being perceived as merely normal. News bulletins on television and news reports in newspapers provided very little background information and few, if any, expert opinions. The positions of both/all parties involved were only presented in the most important or obviously controversial cases. Usually it was not a conflict or a problem that was presented but just a “fact” about who did or said what (with the authorities as primary newsmakers), which usually was not followed by another report on the same event in a later issue/bulletin. Moreover, the views of journalists were rarely explicitly articulated and those of the politicians and officials rarely commented on, as there were no editorials and few opinion articles or letters to the editors in the newspapers, while TV channels and radio stations produced very few talk shows on political or cultural issues. In general, “serious” issues such as politics, economy, or “high” culture occupied rather little space in the media discourse, which was primarily oriented toward entertainment. Even the news bulletins on TV and news pages in the newspapers sometimes paid more attention to unusual crimes and bizarre contests in distant countries than to domestic law-making or privatization of major enterprises. After the Orange Revolution of late 2004 and an ensuing change of regime, freedom of the press has markedly expanded and the media has become more critical of the authorities. However, this change has not so far been matched by an adequate increase in the plurality of represented positions and a critical interest in social problems (Dyczok 2007). In any case, the structure of the media discourse has not significantly changed; most outlets still avoid discussions and fill the prime time slots first and foremost with entertainment.

The marginalization of discursive practices facilitating the articulation of, and competition between, different ideological positions created preconditions for the centrist hegemony in the media discourse. It is true that adherents of clearly marked ideologies were sometimes allowed to express their particular “views” of an issue under discussion, but these
occasional appearances placed them, at best, on the fringes of media-constructed normality, if only because other, supposedly normal people were not divided according to their views and, thus, assumed to think and behave like everybody else. In contrast, the Kuchma regime’s allegedly non-ideological position was made to look perfectly normal by the constant seemingly neutral presentation of “facts” reflecting its underlying assumptions which, however, were rarely explicitly articulated. Moreover, the supposedly neutral non-problematizing reports made it possible to assume and reinforce the normality of the peaceful coexistence of very different assumptions, not just in society as a whole but even in particular group or individual consciousness. For example, centrist media reported on Kuchma’s decrees on the official celebration of anniversaries of both Soviet and moderately anti-Soviet Ukrainian figures and occasionally published feature articles about them, without raising the question of whether it was expedient to publicly commemorate them (radical anti-Soviet figures were more often ignored than blamed). Such incorporation of virtually incompatible positions helped centrism to de-normalize and marginalize the very adherence to clear ideological principles and thus, in effect, any opposition to the status quo (Kulyk 2002, 2006b; Riabchuk 2003).

As far as matters of language use were concerned, media discourse has contributed to the naturalization of centrist ideology by assuming and, at the same time, producing the normality of both the role of Ukrainian as the only/primary language of the state and nation/society and the (equal) acceptability of the two main languages. On the one hand, Ukrainian is presented not only as the language of the state’s functioning and concern, but also as the language of society, similar to the titular languages of established nation-states where the media has been shown to significantly contribute to the (re)production of the population’s “banal nationalism” (Billig 1995). Not only have the newspapers and TV stations reported, usually without any comments, on official statements and actions regarding the promotion of the use of the state language, but also they have routinely informed their audiences about social and cultural events related to Ukrainian rather than Russian or any other language. For example, the publication of a Ukrainian translation of a new book of the Harry Potter series was celebrated as a major cultural event. This was particularly the case when Ukrainian was the first foreign language into which the book was translated as was the case with the last book published in September 2007. In contrast, Russian translations of these books were almost never considered newsworthy in themselves, but rather were mentioned to demonstrate the Ukrainian publisher’s success, which the media readily projected onto the whole nation.'
In a similar vein, a plan to change the language of instruction in schools from Russian to Ukrainian could be briefly mentioned as normal news, not warranting any questions or comments, even if it was obviously at odds with the democratic norms and political expedience. Thus, the Ministry of Education’s initiative to gradually switch to Ukrainian all educational institutions in the predominantly Russian-speaking region of Donbas was briefly mentioned by the TV station $I+I$ in its news bulletin on 29 September 2003 and then never dealt with again (Kulyk 2004b). However, perceived examples of the inadequate use of Ukrainian in some practices, such as the scarcity of newly published books in that language, has often been presented as a serious problem and a violation of normality. That is, the dominance of Ukrainian is assumed to be normal, while its marginalization in any domain is not. The reasons for such special treatment of the titular language are never mentioned, which means that the journalists/editors expect the readers/viewers to take it for granted. Accordingly, the roles of Ukrainian as the language of the state and that of an (ethno)linguistic group are not separated, nor are the respective scopes of social use and media interest distinguished from each other.

On the other hand, no less routine media practices have supported the view that the presence of the Russian language and culture in Ukrainian society is also normal. It is this aspect that makes the (re)production of nationhood in the Ukrainian media different from the practices of established nation-states where only one language is represented as the language of the nation/society or, in multilingual countries like Switzerland or Belgium, of each part thereof. It is true that the presentation of Russian differs significantly from that of Ukrainian. In particular, no “banal nationalism” is reproduced in this case; Russian is not implicitly presented as the only/primary language of the country or a symbolic marker of the nation. There are no news reports on the publication of the Harry Potter books in Russian or the closure of schools with the instruction in that language (which happens regularly as education moves toward greater use of Ukrainian and is deemed by Russophone activists the biggest problem of their ethnolinguistic group). Partly this difference in media presentations reflects a difference in state policies and popular ideologies regarding the two languages. But the media also distorts social practices and attitudes as they do not always prioritize Ukrainian over Russian. For example, the Harry Potter series has had in Ukraine perhaps more readers in Russian than in Ukrainian and besides, the choice is for many people determined by the time of the publication and the price of a copy rather than the language of translation.
However, this distortion in favor of Ukrainian does not amount to the exclusion of Russian from the media discourse on language use. While not equal to Ukrainian in *symbolic status*, Russian is presented in a number of media practices as equally acceptable or even preferable in *social interaction*. The primary means of the normalization of its social role running counter to its symbolic and legal status is the omitting or back-grounding of the information about the choice of language in a reported event, which makes this aspect seem irrelevant and the prevailing patterns of language use acceptable. For example, the news of the opening of a computer class in a school or the problem of scarcity of such classes in the country as a whole have usually been presented without mentioning the language of the computer interface or referring to the problematic lack of Ukrainian-interface computers in most of the social domains functioning in that language.\(^{19}\) That is, a lack of computers is considered a problem while their language is not, which means that Russian (the language of most computer interfaces, at least until 2003 when a Ukrainian version of the Microsoft software was released) is believed to be understandable for all school students and ideologically acceptable in the education process otherwise predominantly conducted in Ukrainian. Similar omissions have been characteristic of the reports on the release of Western movies, almost all of which were, until 2007, shown in Ukrainian cinemas dubbed into Russian rather than Ukrainian. Ironically, this was also the case with the first four movies in the Harry Potter series, whose Russian language was never problematized, even in those outlets celebrating Ukrainian-language books.\(^{20}\) Moreover, when the media reports on perceived *violations* of normality, the implied normality often appears to provide for equal currency of the two languages rather than the dominance of Ukrainian. In particular, the repeated discussions of the deplorable situation of book publishing or cinema in Ukrainian have referred to their *inferior* position with regard to their Russian-language counterparts, whose more-than-minority currency in Ukraine is thus assumed to be perfectly legitimate.\(^{21}\) Since this assumption is almost never explicitly articulated in media reports, journalists need not even reflect on how compatible it is with the perceived role of Ukrainian as the only legitimate language of the state and the nation.

5. **Language practices of the media**

The normalization of the widespread use of Russian and the interchangeability of the two languages in Ukrainian society has been even more effective in the language uses of the media itself, where this normality
clearly prevails over that of the dominance of Ukrainian. Contrary to widespread expectations of the early 1990s, Russian has retained its prominence in the media domain in general and established a dominant position in some media products that have become popular in the post-Soviet era, such as tabloid newspapers, entertainment magazines, TV series, and talk shows. In the print media, most outlets are published in either Ukrainian or Russian (that is, not combining texts in both languages), with the share of publications in the latter increasing during the independence years and becoming much higher than the share of (however defined) Russian speakers in society (Medvedev 2007). Therefore, many people identifying with Ukrainian as their native language or even preferring it in everyday use are ready — or, given the lack of many kinds of products in that language, virtually forced — to read in Russian.22 Each newspaper translates the quoted speech of actors and answers of interviewees into the language of publication, hence the readers cannot know (unless they have information from other sources) what language a certain person used in a particular communicative act represented in a newspaper text. It is very rarely that journalists draw attention to actors/interviewees’ choice of language in interaction they present, at least as long as their choice is perceived normal, which for Ukrainian citizens means speaking one of the two main languages of the country.23

While centrist newspapers usually recognize that the state officials occupy a somewhat exceptional position in that they are legally obliged to speak Ukrainian in their official role, it is only the complete unwillingness or inability to use the state language (which can be found even at a ministerial level) that may be presented as abnormal. By making all people linguistically alike, this practice conceals or at least downplays heterogeneity of language practices and identities in society.

On television and radio, in contrast, the prevailing pattern is the use of both Ukrainian and Russian, not only on every station where programs in one language alternate with those in the other,24 but also within many programs such as talk shows, news bulletins, or commercials. In particular, audio or video quotes of actors’ speech in Russian are not translated in Ukrainian-language news bulletins and vice versa (while quotes in languages other than these two are always voiced-over).25 In talk shows some or, in many cases, even most of the guests speak a language other than that of the host(s), and sometimes even the two hosts speak different languages (Bilaniuk 2005, this issue). While not concealing the linguistic heterogeneity of elites and society as a whole, these practices normalize it by taking it for granted. They presuppose and impose both Ukrainian and Russian as understandable for all members of society and not only those considering the respective language their native or preferable lan-
guage. Moreover, they contribute to the naturalization of the view of both languages as equally acceptable and, therefore, of society as inherently bilingual, not in the sense of consisting of two relatively homogeneous parts, but rather of the two elements being present in every member’s identity (Kulyk 2006b). In this respect, Russian thus appears to be not only a language Ukrainian citizens (best) understand but also one they somehow identify with, even if less strongly — or simply in a different way — than with Ukrainian.

Given the twin roles of Russian in Ukraine as the language of a part of its own population and that of a neighboring country, the normalization of its media presence in the former role has facilitated the normalization of its presence in the latter. Not only have Russian-made series, movies, and talk shows since the late 1990s occupied a large share of Ukrainian TV stations’ air time, in particular most of the prime time, but also they have substituted for lacking Ukrainian analogues in the role of domestic products. They have thus contributed to the naturalization not only of the Russian language but also of an ideology overtly or covertly establishing the cultural and political unity of post-Soviet countries and, therefore, running counter even to a moderate and inclusive version of nationalism supported by the Ukrainian state. Moreover, the Russian-language movies produced in Ukraine in the early 2000s in cooperation with Russian companies were often presented as a national alternative to foreign production, “our movies,” and the media celebrating their appearance as an important media/cultural achievement did not even mention what language those movies used, to say nothing of asking why it was (only) Russian (e.g., Trymbach 2000; Sobolevs’ka 2001). The notion of “ours” appeared to be vague and inclusive enough to enable references to the common post-Soviet or East Slavic cultural space, so Russian-made products could be marketed as domestic too.

The normalization of Russian as the primary language of “our” media products paved the way for exclusively Ukrainian-made products in that language, which lately began to compete with Russian-made analogues for the markets of the two (and other post-Soviet) countries. Craving for success in the more lucrative Russian market, the producers pay primary attention to the ideological preferences of the Russian audience, while expecting Ukrainians to similarly welcome or at least tolerate the Russian-centric or nationally inconspicuous post-Soviet outlooks. These market priorities urge Ukrainian TV companies to resist the pressure on the part of the authorities to increase the share of Ukrainian in their air time in accordance with their license provisions. This pressure has significantly increased since 2005 with the election of the pro-Ukrainophone Viktor Yushchenko as president and a corresponding change in the membership
of the National Television and Radio Council, a body in charge of issuing broadcasting licenses and monitoring their observance. While not overtly ignoring the council’s demands, which could have cost them licenses, the television stations have nevertheless sought to retain Russian as the language of the most expensive and profitable products, in particular those broadcast in the prime time. So far, most Ukrainian and Russian movies and series are shown with Ukrainian subtitles rather than voices. This makes it possible to include them as part of a Ukrainian-language share without significantly increasing the cost of production or changing the language in which these products are actually perceived by most Ukrainian viewers (whose understanding of Russian, in turn, partly results from media consumption, especially in the predominantly Ukrainian-speaking regions). As this practice hardly gives the Ukrainian-speaking population any prime-time products in their preferred language, the council has stopped counting subtitled products as Ukrainian-language ones, thus urging the companies to produce them in Ukrainian or voice-over into that language (Telekrytyka 2006). Whether this pressure results in a radical change of the language profile of Ukrainian television and radio content and, indeed, whether it persists in the event of governmental changes, remain to be seen.

6. Conclusion

Taken together, the above-described media practices embody the centrist ideology of language use normalizing both the symbolic primacy of Ukrainian and the practical equality and interchangeability of the two main languages. On the one hand, Ukrainian appears in media discourse on language matters as the language of the state and society, the one which citizens (should) identify with and which, accordingly, the state rightly supports. On the other, Russian is presented as an acceptable language of virtually all social practices both by the non-problematizing portrayal of its use by various actors and by the language use of the media itself. This combination is rather ambivalent, as the assumed scope of normality of each language is not quite compatible with that of the other, all the more so because Russian sometimes appears to be not only understandable to all citizens of the country (rather than just members of the respective groups) but also “not alien” to them, that is, somehow identified with. Although the priority of Ukrainian is (deemed to be) primarily localized in political and symbolic practices associated with the state and the preference for Russian is placed within everyday life of society (where the media thus positions itself), these different localizations are never
clearly defined. Media outlets do not discuss the compatibility of the two aspects of their perceived/produced normality, nor do they present the variety of experiences and perceptions of individuals and groups who might have questioned it. While this reproduces the Ukrainians’ belief in the identification and state-building value of the titular language, the media also downplays the importance of language matters in general.

The prominence of the above practices in the media discourse on language, which reflects the centrist ideology’s dominant position in the media domain in general (Kulyk 2006b), makes them an important factor influencing popular beliefs about language and language use. Although I did not study the audience reception of media practices, I will venture some tentative conclusions regarding their social impact. I believe that, on the one hand, these practices have contributed to the acceptability of Ukrainian which had not been a normal language of many social domains in late Soviet decades and, at the same time, to the failure of the radical nationalist strategy of the complete de-legitimization of more-than-minority use of Russian and its expulsion from the Ukrainian public sphere. An effect of this contribution can be seen, inter alia, in media discourse itself, where interviewees or talk-show guests (at least in nationwide outlets which aim at a broad audience that includes members of both language groups) no longer deem it acceptable to question the interviewers’/hosts’ institutional preference for Ukrainian, nor do guests or journalists raise objections against some of their interlocutors’ choice of Russian. On the other hand, the media’s non-problematized acceptance of any choice between the two languages implies the freedom of this choice, which seems to be determined only by a person’s own preferences, and thus excludes from public discourse and consciousness various social constraints on the individual choice that create unequal opportunities for members of different groups to speak their preferred language(s). At the same time, the media presentation of language-related processes suppresses particular individual/group experiences and views and, therefore, discourages the perception of language matters in terms of rights and the law. Moreover, the effective silencing of these matters in the media has been one of those factors causing the lack of public awareness of the language problem and the will and means to solve it. In brief, by helping make language a non-issue, the media discourse has contributed to social integration and stability but not to democracy.

This article has demonstrated the extreme complexity of the media embodiment of language ideologies, which makes it a fascinating object of investigation for scholars studying these ideologies. By representing linguistic beliefs and practices of various (groups of) social actors, including journalists/editors themselves, and by using some language varieties and
forms rather than others in this representation, the media does multi-
layered, largely contradictory, and mostly hidden ideological work. As I
have argued, an important part of this work is the differentiated normal-
ization of the ways in which people use language and, by extension, of
their motives for doing so. In particular, media presentations and lan-
guage practices accept both identification and understanding as legitimate
reasons for language choice. Moreover, they assume that these values
may be attached to more than one variety, whose use may, accordingly,
be contextually diversified. In other words, it is fine to speak one language
in some domains and another one (maybe not even a “language,” but a
“mixture”) in some others; to adapt to an interlocutor’s choice in some
situations and to expect him/her to accommodate in others; to accept
some people’s language behavior as normal and reject or question the
same behavior by other people. However, this diversity of supposedly
normal ways of speaking and reacting to others’ speech does not mean
that all of them are embraced to the same extent. By examining specific
practices of media normalization, we can reveal different scopes of nor-
mality attached to different choices in certain social contexts and, as a
result, in society as a whole. Therefore, we can expose — and thus help
people recognize, evaluate, and possibly oppose — the social hierarchiza-
tion and functional differentiation of language varieties and, accordingly,
the unequal legitimacies and opportunities of their speakers that the me-
da (re)produces.

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Notes

* I am grateful to Laada Bilaniuk and Jennifer Dickinson for their valuable suggestions
on the substance and language of an earlier version of this article.
1. This concept does not necessarily coincide with the popular notion of “normal,” which
is in some cases used in a normative sense, that is, not in the meaning of what is a usual
pattern in a given situation but rather in the meaning of what should be (Rausing 2004:
36).
2. In non-interactive communication such as writing or broadcast talk (with no feedback),
people cannot immediately react to their partners’ behavior, if only because they cannot
perceive it. Even in this case, however, writers/speakers try to anticipate reactions
and behave accordingly.
3. The beliefs regarding language use primarily pertain to the public sphere, which is con-
sidered to be of public concern and thus duly subject to state regulations. However,
given the relation between perceived value of specific varieties and their appropriate
scope of use, there is a “spillover” into the private domain, that is, valuable varieties
are considered worthier of using there too.
4. This differentiation is similar to the dichotomy of ideologies of authenticity and anonymity discussed by Woolard (2005; see also Gal and Woolard 2001). Dickinson (this issue) calls the latter a lingua franca ideology (or a market language ideology, as she considers a marketplace its primary context of application), while in the former case she distinguishes between identity/authenticity on the national and regional/local levels.

5. The appropriateness of translation results from the same perception of languages as conduits of something rather than values in themselves, as “forms” rather than “substances.” The substance cannot therefore be lost when put into a different form.

6. Beliefs regarding surzhyk have been studied extensively by Bilaniuk (e.g., 1997, 2005) and Bernsand (2006a, 2006b).

7. The deliberate use of nonstandard varieties (which should be differentiated from the verbatim reproduction of actors’ nonstandard speech by the broadcast media) is most common in those programs or particular utterances intended to create a humorous effect. Such varieties may also be used in the representation of discourse of those people seen as the paradigmatic speakers of these varieties, such as dialects of elderly villagers. By the same token, it is implied that all other members of the audience/community should speak the standard language, at least in the public domain (Pavlou 2004).

8. This is the language a respondent chooses in communication with a supposedly bilingual and unbiased interviewer (e.g., Arel 1995). For criticisms of this practice as a way of analyzing language preferences of the population, see Riabchuk (1998), Kulyk (1999).

9. For example, as many as 70% of respondents in a 2006 survey by the Kyiv center “Hromadska dumka” agreed with the statement that “the Ukrainian language is one of the symbols of Ukraine’s statehood,” but only 11% supported its becoming “the only state language with the Russian language forced out of all social spheres” (Besters-Dilger 2009: 374).

10. Thus, in the survey mentioned in the previous endnote, about 70% of respondents in the predominantly Ukrainian-speaking West of Ukraine opted either for the full exclusion of Russian from public use or the preservation of its current minority status, while in the predominantly Russian-speaking East and South, more than 60% supported an official status of that language either on the national or on the regional level (Kulyk 2009: 46).

11. My analysis focuses on the media practices of the Kuchma period, in particular his second term in office (1999–2004). In addition to my long-term experience of reading mainstream newspapers and watching TV channels broadcast nationwide, I rely on a large corpus of texts resulting from keyword searches on the Web sites of these outlets. It is only occasionally that I mention changes since 2005. I use the present tense with regard to those practices which, in my view, have not changed significantly.

12. Unless, that is, a media outlet or a particular journalist was paid by a politician or a businessman or even bluntly ordered by the authorities to portray a conflict or a scandal that would discredit an opposition politician or the businessman’s rival. While big businessmen could fight with one another by means of such publications, in the last several years of Kuchma’s presidency the authorities virtually excluded the opposition from the media outlets with the greatest reach, particularly nationwide TV channels (Dyczok 2005; Lyhachova et al. 2005). Although the regime’s information war against the opposition was a crucial aspect of the Ukrainian political and media landscape of the early 2000s, here I focus on those media practices which did not have a direct discrediting function but rather legitimized the regime more subtly, by implicitly normalizing its actions.
13. It is hardly possible to clearly delimit these matters since virtually all social events involve the use of language, which can thus be one of the aspects dealt with in media (or any other) presentations. In most cases, this aspect is only mentioned when presenters believe it to be not quite normal for a given type of events, although sometimes they wish to draw attention to a perfectly normal pattern because of its perceived importance for their discursive/ideological purposes. However, the omitting of the language aspect may be ideologically significant, too, as it reflects and reproduces the perception of a presented pattern of the language use as normal.

14. The appearance of a Ukrainian translation of the seventh book was reported on by most nationwide TV channels and major newspapers. Some reports used national, rather than linguistic, terms, arguing that “The Ukrainians were the first in the world to translate the last part of ‘Harry Potter’” (Fifth Channel news, 25 September 2007, 19:00) or “The Ukrainians will be the first in the world to read a translated Potter” (ICTV channel news, 26 September 2007, 12:45).

15. “Often” means in comparison with other reports focusing on a problem rather than just an event, which in general are rare. But the situation in book publishing, if problematized, is usually presented as abnormal, since the perceived status of Ukrainian as the/a language of the country leads journalists to believe that it should be used at least on a par with Russian (see below).

16. Accordingly, the resulting marginalization of other languages (including Russian, which is being gradually excluded from domains such as education) is not seen as a problem for society in general or even for their speakers, who are thus assumed to be ready to use Ukrainian instead. As I argue below, this assumption runs counter to those embodied in other media practices, which reproduce the acceptability of widespread use of Russian (but not other minority languages).

17. In some cases, two languages can be deemed normal on the same territory (e.g., Spanish/Castilian and Catalan in Catalonia) but then one of them is usually statewide and the other regional. Ukraine’s complex coexistence of languages with no clear delimitation of their areas of use is more like those in former colonial countries of Africa and Asia. At the same time, their former metropolitan languages are more distant to local varieties and less intelligible to their native speakers, hence the overlap between language communities is more limited in those countries than in Ukraine.

18. In the 2006 survey referred to in endnote 9, the respondents who declared their preference for a Russian translation of a foreign book (provided they could choose which to buy) were twice as many as those who said they would prefer a Ukrainian version. The former group included a considerable share of those people who considered Ukrainian their native language and even used it as their primary language of communication. This pattern also pertained to other media consumption preferences of the respondents, such as the choice of newspapers, TV series, etc. (Besters-Dilger 2009: 378–380).

19. For example, the newspaper Segodnia (‘Today’) published as many as ten texts on this topic in the second half of 2000 alone, but language was not mentioned in any of them. This newspaper is published in Russian but many Ukrainian-language media are indifferent to the language aspect, too.

20. The fifth movie, released in July 2007, was dubbed into Ukrainian, which many reports mentioned favorably.

21. A good illustration of this assumption is a series of problem-oriented stories shown in news bulletins of the I+I channel from 22 to 26 April 2006, which focused on the marginalization of Ukrainian-language book publishing and possible means to overcome it.
22. Actually, some Ukrainian speakers prefer newspapers in Russian as revealed, for example, by the 2006 survey cited above (Besters-Dilger 2009: 274). However, this preference may have something to do with the habitual practice of reading in that language which, in turn, is partly caused by the prevailing supply of products. This prevalence induced even those who prefer Ukrainian to read in Russian.

23. Other categories of people may be judged by different criteria of normality. Thus, the use of Ukrainian by a foreign diplomat is often emphasized as a nice surprise, while speaking English or Russian goes unnoticed. A conspicuous exception to this rule is the practice of the recently established Ukrainian-speaking daily Hazeta po-ukrains’ky (‘Ukrainian newspaper’) which often points to Ukrainian actors or interviewees’ speaking Russian or incorrect Ukrainian by simply mentioning this fact or quoting a piece of such speech, which is thus presented as not quite appropriate (all the more so because supposedly correct Ukrainian is never made an issue).

24. This combination is structurally facilitated by the license provisions of all TV and radio stations stipulating not a particular language to be used but rather a minimal share of air time in Ukrainian and thus allowing them to fill the remaining time with programs in Russian.

25. In 2005, the producers of the Ukrainian-language news bulletins on the state-owned Pershyi natsionalnyi (‘First national’) TV channel started using voice-over for quoted speech in Russian. While some journalists welcomed this attempt to make a “truly Ukrainian-language news [bulletin]” and an incentive for the elites and the rest of society to use Ukrainian more often, others were aware of its potentially alienating effect on Russian-speaking viewers (Chekmysheva and Pluzhnykova 2005). In any case, this practice has not been adopted by any other channel.

26. This practice may be economically reasonable as Russian-speaking viewers are much more sensitive to the language of TV products than Ukrainian-speaking ones, many of whom are quite ready to watch in Russian. Moreover, as demonstrated by the results of the 2006 survey discussed above, even if they prefer Western movies and series translated into Ukrainian rather than Russian, most Ukrainian speakers see no need to translate Russian-made products.

27. This media-created normality is strong enough to survive significant changes in the state policies, such as the assumption of the presidential post by the Ukrainophone Yushchenko. It should be taken into account, however, that Yushchenko’s influence was significantly diminished in 2006 when a constitutional reform took effect which transferred a large part of presidential powers to the parliament and the prime minister. This facilitated the retention of centrist’s leading position in Ukrainian public discourse in general and that of the media in particular.

References


Abstract

The practice of speaking one’s preferred language, Ukrainian or Russian, regardless of the language spoken by one’s interlocutor has become widespread in media and public life in Ukraine since independence. I refer to this practice as “non-accommodating bilingualism,” since for communication to occur the participating individuals are necessarily bilingual to some degree, but neither accommodates by switching to the language spoken by the other. In this article I investigate the prevalence, variety, and significance of non-accommodating bilingualism in Ukraine, with particular focus on television talk and game shows. I argue that while in some ways bilingual non-accommodation functions to defuse the contested issue of language choice, it can also perpetuate existing linguistic inequalities and tensions. Even in conversations where speakers are free to speak whichever language they prefer, the politics of Ukrainian and Russian language and ethnicity continue to be engaged.

Keywords: bilingualism; non-accommodation; television; language politics; Ukraine.

1. Introduction

Language choice is a poignant issue in Ukraine, as the legal statuses and actual uses of Ukrainian and Russian continue to be contested. In this context of heightened language politics, I was struck by the prevalence of a practice I call “non-accommodating bilingualism”: speaking one’s preferred language, Ukrainian or Russian, when this is not the language spoken by one’s interlocutor, thereby maintaining a conversation in two languages. At first I found it hard to participate in this practice — it went against my instincts, which told me I should speak the same language as
the person I am interacting with. However, when I accommodated by switching languages, this sometimes seemed to make people more uncomfortable than my not accommodating. The institutionalization of non-accommodating bilingualism in television programs further piqued my interest in this unusual linguistic practice. People still do accommodate in many situations in Ukraine, more often to Russian than to Ukrainian, and the acceptability of non-accommodation varies by region and context (Søvik 2006; Zazulya 2003). However, non-accommodating bilingual interactions have become increasingly frequent since the mid-1990s on the street, in stores, on the radio, on television, and within families. Most of my observations are from Kyiv, but I also witnessed and heard of this practice in other areas of Ukraine and on national television. Here I focus in particular on the language dynamics in bilingual television programs that were broadcast nationwide.

I use non-accommodating bilingualism to refer to conversations in which people speak two different languages with everyone mostly understanding (and to some degree being able to speak) both. At play here are not only regional or social linguistic differences, but specifically ways of speaking that the interlocutors recognize as languages, that is, having the social and ideological status of different linguistic units. The form of non-accommodation I examine contrasts with the more common occurrence of people speaking with each other in different social or regional varieties of “the same language” (ones which would be labeled with the same ethno-national linguonym). The significant factor is not the degree of externally observable linguistic differences, but that the differences are ideologized as constituting “different languages.” In Ukraine, people who are bilingual and could accommodate to their interlocutors by choosing a common language for conversations are often not doing so.

Another important factor is the degree of bilingual skill. While we can say that most people in Ukraine are bilingual, language skills vary among individuals. Perceived fluency can play an important role in language choice, as people who can speak a particular language reasonably well may avoid speaking it if they feel it is not “perfect.” In examining the practices in Ukraine, we face the difficult task of distinguishing inability to speak a language from the unwillingness to speak it imperfectly, as purist linguistic perfectionism is an important factor underlying non-accommodating bilingualism. Language skill is only a part of the picture, however, and it is often not the determining factor. In some of the bilingual television programs I examine, the speakers in non-accommodating interactions appear to be equally skilled in both languages, or in some cases even more skilled in the language they are not speaking in their official role. It is important to distinguish this particular Ukrainian case from
“mutual passive bilingualism,” where conversation is carried on in two languages predominantly because of the interlocutors’ lack of skill. The latter exists between many immigrant parents and children worldwide, where the children cannot speak, but do understand, their parents’ native language. Mutual passive bilingualism has also existed in Ukraine, most commonly between urbanites speaking only Russian and their Ukrainian-speaking relatives in villages. The focus of this article is a practice that has become widespread more recently, where the speakers are often not just passive bilinguals, but are reasonably fluent in the other language, just at times they choose not to speak it.

Non-accommodating bilingualism appears to be a rare phenomenon outside of Ukraine, or at least little documented. One similar society-wide case that I am aware of is between speakers of Slovak and Czech in Slovakia and Czechia (Nábělková 2007). A more circumscribed, but well-established, case of non-accommodation exists between language-conscious speakers of Ukrainian and Belarusian (such as intellectuals at conferences) who seek thus to avoid converging by means of Russian, the former lingua franca. Another case I have been made aware of is of Mandarin and Taiwanese non-accommodating bilingualism in Taiwan.

Research in social psychology suggests that non-accommodation (speakers choosing not to speak more similarly to one another) expresses social distance or antagonism (Shepard et al. 2001). This finding is consistent with my initial experiences with non-accommodation, as in the field I often felt compelled to try to speak like my interlocutor, and felt that not accommodating was antagonistic. In my more recent experiences, however, I have found that in many contexts speaking a different language can have no negative or distancing connotations. This finding also testifies to the significance of language ideologies and sociohistorical context in shaping the dynamics of accommodation. This article is an endeavor to examine the reasons for, and implications of, the wide-spread and socially acceptable bilingual non-accommodating interactions that I found in Ukraine.

To examine non-accommodating bilingualism, I must first introduce briefly the broader context of language politics in the country. In the USSR, Russian had been the de facto state language and generally the language of prestige and power. During Soviet times, bilingualism in Ukraine was basically unilateral: ethnic Ukrainians were actively bilingual, while ethnic Russians generally only had passive knowledge of Ukrainian and seldom tried to speak it (Taranenko 2007: 123–124). Since independence, this situation has changed somewhat as there are more contexts favoring use of Ukrainian, and everyone is exposed to this language more in public. Young people in particular are likely to know Ukrainian as more and more schools have converted to Ukrainian language
instruction. Even so, Russian has remained the language of interaction outside of school among most young urbanites, except for Western Ukraine. While there are many popular Ukrainian music groups, popular music and other media are generally dominated by Russian language.

In Ukraine, Ukrainian was declared the state language in 1989 and this status was reaffirmed in the newly independent country’s constitution of 1996, but with some contradictory and vague wording. Article 10 of the 1996 Constitution states both that “the State ensures the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life throughout the entire territory of Ukraine,” and that the “free development, use and protection of Russian, and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine, is guaranteed” (Verkhovna Rada 1996). This wording was a compromise between the opposing camps of Ukrainophones and Russophones, but its ambiguity was used strategically by “centrist” political groups to de-emphasize the language issue, avoid a commitment to a clear course of action, and generally uphold the status quo (Kulyk 2006).

The increased use of Ukrainian would inevitably encroach on spheres that had been exclusively Russian. While the languages can coexist in many areas and people can often have the freedom to choose which language they speak, the situation is more complicated in institutions where language use must be more regulated. For example, in order to promote the development of Ukrainian, many schools converted to Ukrainian as the language of instruction, away from the Russian instruction that had become widespread in the USSR. While this step was clearly necessary for the development of Ukrainian language that is supported by the constitution, it could also be seen as infringing on the free development and protection of Russian that is guaranteed by that same legislation, since it reduced the number of Russian-language schools.

Ukrainian language still suffers from limited use and low status, the legacy of the Russian imperial and Soviet periods. In contrast, Russian had been the language of power and high culture prior to Ukraine’s independence, and it has retained many of its positive connotations and remains widely used in many spheres in Ukraine. When non-accommodating bilingual conversations take place, they most often entail Ukrainian spoken in spheres where Russian was previously dominant, as the use of Ukrainian has been expanding beyond its Soviet-era confines of mostly rural, domestic, folkloric, and narrow elite use. Currently legislators and people in the position to implement laws are torn between supporting measures to elevate and foster the use of Ukrainian on the one hand, and allowing the continued wide use of Russian on the other. They face the often incommensurable tasks of upholding the rights and
preferences of both Ukrainophones and Russophones. Almost everyone in Ukraine is bilingual, to varying degrees, but many people do express a preference for one language, and they express their opinions about legislation accordingly.

The current legal status of Ukrainian is technically stronger, which some Russophones find threatening since there has been a recent clear trend in increased public use of Ukrainian. At the same time, Russian still prevails in many regions and spheres of life, which some people feel indicates that Ukrainian is still endangered. The social conventions that ascribe the meanings for speech behaviors have been shifting and becoming fragmented since independence. The relative prestige and status of the two languages vary by region and context. Currently many conflicting tendencies coexist, and while the status and usage of Ukrainian is more tenuous, it is impossible to say whether Ukrainian or Russian language is more prestigious in Ukraine as a whole.

2. Language ideology and communication accommodation theory

The language people speak communicates something other than just the content of their words. It says something about who they are, who they want to be seen as, and how they relate to the people they are interacting with. “In multilingual contexts, language provides an important cue for social categorization and is often considered to be the most important and valued dimension of group identity” (Satchdev and Bourhis 2001: 418). At issue is not just which particular named language is spoken, but also more subtle differences in pronunciation that carry social information. What it is that a way of speaking communicates about someone depends on a hearer’s *language ideology* — their attitudes and understandings of a given sociolinguistic system, which shape their perceptions and evaluations (Woolard and Schieffelin 1994; Irvine 2001). Language ideology is the web of meanings constructed through social practices in a particular cultural context that connects psychological impulses to social meanings. The focus on language ideology complements the psychological approach of communication accommodation theory (CAT), as well as the empirical study of variation in linguistic production that has been the main concern of sociolinguists.

Communication accommodation theory aims to explain the social and psychological forces that shape linguistic choices. It builds on ideas that have been developed for the last thirty years in social psychology, beginning with the work of Howard Giles and his associates in the late 1970s,
initially labeled more narrowly as “speech accommodation theory” (SAT) (Giles et al. 1977). In looking at linguistic choices, CAT examines some of the ways in which individuals create, maintain, or decrease social distance.

One of the basic tenets of CAT is that accommodation indicates positive feelings toward an interlocutor, while divergence indicates negative feelings. While degrees of accommodation are socially and contextually determined, the basic idea underlying overall tendencies is the similarity–attraction hypothesis: we are more likely to be attracted to people whose attitudes and behaviors are more similar to ours, and we will modify our behavior (including speech) to be more like the people we are attracted to (Shepard et al. 2001: 36–39; Thanasoulas 1999: 3). Our ability to modify our speech to resemble that of others to whom we are positively disposed may be limited; it may take the form of language choice or subtler linguistic shifts. The similarity–attraction hypothesis is supported by research which has shown that similarity in speech styles is associated with greater predictability, intelligibility, and clarity in the interaction, allowing for smoother and more comfortable communication (Shepard et al. 2001: 36).

The idea of attraction as it relates to language is mediated by language ideology. For example, the language of an otherwise physically attractive person can make him or her seem unattractive if this language is considered undesirable. The language we speak is not completely under our conscious control, so it is not just an issue of choice, and much is due to ingrained habits. An excellent example of these issues comes from a 1929 play by Ukrainian playwright Mykola Kulish titled Myna Mazailo (Bilaniuk 2005: 124–125). The title character Myna Mazailo is a man who is trying to learn “good Russian,” to replace his Ukrainian and Ukrainian-accented Russian in the desire to move up in society. During speech lessons, as he confronts his difficulty with pronouncing the plosive /ɡ/ instead of the typical Ukrainian fricative /ɦ/ for a given phoneme, he laments that his good looks have been negated by his speech (Kulish 1955: 141–142). Myna Mazailo tries desperately to change his speech to be more like that of the wealthy and privileged people he admires, but his inability to do so results in his exclusion from that group. Such specifics of pronunciation, not just language choice, continue to be significant in today’s Ukraine, leading many people to refrain from speaking the language which is not their native tongue, to avoid “speaking with an accent.” The stigma associated with certain pronunciations leads many people to avoid trying to speak the same language as their interlocutor, thereby counteracting the forces of similarity–attraction. We could also view these tendencies as not just unmediated psychological reactions, but
as relating to competing language ideologies: the “ideology of convergence,” versus the “ideology of pure speech.”

The stigma of “impure language” is not the only factor supporting non-accommodating behavior, however. People who are fully fluent in both languages also at times do not accommodate, often without the negative implications of disapproval and dislike of the other. A positive desire to differentiate oneself may be at play here, as outlined in Tajfel’s theory of intergroup relations (Giles et al. 1977: 318–321; Thanosoulas 1999: 4). Tajfel argues that individuals actively define themselves in the world through categorization of themselves and others, and much of this takes place through language. Social identity, defined as “people’s knowledge of their membership in various social categories or groups of people, and the value attached to that membership by them in positive or negative terms,” only acquires meaning by comparison with other groups (Giles et al. 1977: 319). Positive distinctiveness makes people feel good about themselves, and people display this distinctiveness when they increase differences in one’s speech away from one’s interlocutor. The readiness to display a difference depends on its perceived value for the speaker and his/her interlocutors/audience, a value that is determined according to the individuals’ language ideology.

The performance of distinctiveness may result in complementarity, in which valued sociolinguistic differences between interlocutors occupying different roles are accentuated. For example, research has shown that men often take on more masculine tones of voice and women more feminine tones when in mixed-sex dyads, as compared to same-sex dyads (Shepard et al. 2001: 35). The Ukrainian case of interactions carried on in two languages may be seen as a case of complementarity, where divergent language choices are ways of performing cultural identity, signaling an expected performance of social differences.

Specific contextual social meanings also affect the meanings of language and hence of people’s choices: who converges or diverges, whether they converge “upward” (toward the higher-prestige language in a particular context) or “downward” (toward a lower-prestige language), and in what situations. The perceived motives for choosing one language or another are also significant, as there are different implications in speaking a particular language because of contextual institutional pressures, because of desire for social solidarity, or because of personal convictions (Thanosoulas 1999: 3–4). How one’s language use will be judged and how one’s motives will be interpreted is an issue of perspective. For example, some people might see a Ukrainian politician who speaks Russian as motivated by anti-Ukrainian politics, while others might consider that politician’s choice of language more neutrally, as motivated by habit.
Sociohistorically shaped contextual meanings can trump other factors in determining the meanings of language choice. For example, while convergence has most often been analyzed as indicative of positive feelings toward an interlocutor, it may sometimes be understood quite negatively, as embarrassment or lack of confidence in one’s own way of speaking. Given the history of Ukrainian as a denigrated language, the switch from Ukrainian to accommodate to Russian by a Ukrainophone may be seen as the perpetuation of an inferiority complex, as if Ukrainian were “not good enough” and Russian were more desirable. In my experience, educated and nationally conscious Ukrainophones are the likeliest to voice this interpretation regarding the Russian speech of a Ukrainian from a provincial background. Switching from Russian to accommodate to Ukrainian can also be taken negatively, implying that one’s interlocutor is not educated enough to know Russian. Both of these examples reflect conflicts in interlocutors’ interpretations of the situation: Does convergence to Russian connote politeness or shame? Does convergence to Ukrainian connote solidarity or patronization? Speakers, hearers, and overhearers may have diverging perceptions of how language is being used.

The psychological forces elucidated through CAT are certainly applicable in analyzing interactional dynamics in Ukraine, but the sociohistorical context complicates the situation in ways that make it impossible to present convergence or divergence as having clear psychological motivations or meanings. We could even disrupt the concept of “accommodation” by saying that people are accommodating to the norm of “speaking one’s own language” by carrying on conversations in two different languages. From this viewpoint, maintenance or even divergence could constitute accommodation, in opposition to the cases presented within the CAT paradigm so far. While it is important to recognize the possible complex layerings of what constitutes accommodation at different levels, for the sake of analysis I will adhere to the term “non-accommodation” to refer to non-convergence in language choice. Non-convergence may also take the form of an incremental process, but here I examine cases where accommodation is categorical, based on the categorical social-ideological constructs of language. That said, incremental convergence (or divergence) certainly does occur in Ukraine through code switches and modification of other linguistic features, alongside the accommodation or non-accommodation in language choice.

My focus here is on the conventions that allow for non-accommodation between bilinguals, leading to non-antagonistic dual-language conversations. As I show in my analysis of interactions from a television show below, the forces of similarity–attraction, as well as contextual, social, and
identity factors continue to play a role, and instances of accommodation do occur, but they are framed within broader conventions that promote non-accommodation. Prior to examining specific cases, I first consider the general social and political implications of non-accommodating bilingualism as it is practiced in Ukraine.

3. The potential implications of non-accommodating bilingualism

Non-accommodating bilingualism can be seen as a way to uphold the preferences of both Ukrainophones and Russophones simultaneously, and thus to defuse the tensions around the language issue. For this to happen, speaking Ukrainian or Russian should be equally understandable and acceptable. Ease of understanding grows with exposure to a language, so the more dual-language conversations occur, the more comfortable people should be in engaging in them. Bilingualism is thus not only a precondition of non-accommodating bilingualism, but also its result. When non-accommodating bilingualism is first used, it may be only partially appropriate if the two languages are only partially understood. Then, by virtue of being used, this practice becomes more appropriate and accepted. As the practice becomes habitual, language choice may even cease to be noticed, thus neutralizing linguistic tensions. In the sphere of politics, neutralization is probably the most difficult to achieve, as language choice remains overtly politicized, symbolic of opposing camps. In everyday life and popular culture, non-accommodation is more likely to have a tension-neutralizing effect.

To the extent that non-accommodating bilingualism consists in functioning bilingual exchanges, it entails overlooking the saliency of differences between the Ukrainian and Russian languages as means of communication. This ideology diminishes the perception of structural linguistic differences, and to some extent, social differences between the languages, through ideological processes of erasure (Irvine and Gal 2000; Irvine 2001). The perception of communicational equivalence is facilitated by the historical and structural closeness of the two languages, although in theory this situation could exist with any two languages, however unrelated, that are widely known in a society. In Ukraine, the denial of linguistic difference evokes the political rhetoric of the Soviet and tsarist eras, when the idea that Ukrainian and Russian are not really distinct languages, or rather that Ukrainian is not really a language while Russian is, was intrinsic to efforts to deny Ukraine political and cultural legitimacy. This line of argument has persisted in the post-Soviet period, and the interchangeability of Ukrainian and Russian is constructed in the
media as “common sense” (Fournier 2002; Kulyk 2006). It should be noted that this is not a continuation of the tsarist denial of the status of “language” to Ukrainian (although there are surely some people who subscribe to this ideology). Now Ukrainian is mostly seen as a language equal to Russian, and the constructed ideological interchangeability seems to be based on both the similarity and equality of the languages. While the status of Ukrainian has been elevated, some people fear that the current denial of communicational difference entails political and cultural delegitimization for Ukrainian, as it is still in a weaker position relative to Russian in both Ukraine and globally.

The acceptability of the practice of non-accommodating bilingualism facilitates the growing presence of Ukrainian in domains where it was previously unacceptable and marginalized, without the drastic shift that would require everyone to change established language habits. Those people who feel so inclined can choose to speak Ukrainian in spheres previously dominated by Russian, such as science, politics, and popular culture, even if others around them speak Russian. While Russian still tends to prevail on the streets of Kyiv and in the bilingual television programs I watched, the arrangement allows for choice and change. At the same time, non-accommodating bilingualism allows those so inclined to use Russian where Ukrainian is required or expected, thus hindering efforts to institute Ukrainian language in some spheres.

On television and radio, non-accommodating arrangements are formally instituted in various talk shows and game shows that have two hosts, one always speaking Ukrainian, the other Russian. The fact that both languages are institutionalized in a program ideally should make guests comfortable speaking either one. I first noticed this practice in 2002. Prior to that time, if both languages were used in a program it was most likely a journalist or host speaking Ukrainian, as officially prescribed in a given program, and interviewees or guests answering in Russian. That arrangement was still visible in 2002, along with the reverse case, with a Russian-speaking host and Ukrainian-speaking guest, a state official who in this way adhered to his choice of Ukrainian as the language of state. This showed that Ukrainian had gained legitimacy and prestige value, so that it was sometimes chosen even when it was not the established language of a program.

A 2006 amendment to the law regulating television and radio broadcasting stipulates that national channels should broadcast at least 75% in Ukrainian language (Verkhovna Rada 2006). The National TV and Radio Council may strip a channel of its broadcasting license for not adhering to the law, but it has tended to use a more gradual strategy, getting stations to develop a timeline during which they will improve compliance.
and increase Ukrainian language airtime (Kulyk forthcoming). In a
November 2006 study, the actual proportion of Ukrainian broadcast
programs was found to be much lower than required by law, with 48%
Ukrainian and 52% Russian on the Ukrainian national channels (Medve-
dev 2007). When including the three major Russian channels that are re-
broadcast by cable networks to Ukrainian territories, prime-time televi-
sion was 61% Russian and 39% Ukrainian. In this study, Medvedev
prioritized voicing, and thus he counted Russian programs with Ukrai-
nian subtitles as being in Russian, but he did not discuss programs where
both languages are spoken.

It is possible that even minimal presence of Ukrainian can satisfy legal
requirements for broadcasting in Ukrainian. Non-accommodating bilin-
gual arrangements on television shows do not simply facilitate the spread
of Ukrainian — they can also help the established wider use of Russian to
persist in given spheres. In some cases most of a “bilingual” show was
conducted in Russian, with one co-host and all guests speaking Russian,
and only the other co-host speaking Ukrainian. In this case the presence
of Ukrainian was primarily symbolic, with Russian persisting in its role
of the more common, popular, urban media language.8 This role is rein-
forced with the prevalence of Russian in the media, particularly feature
films, which has helped Russian continue to carry the connotations of
a more prestigious language. The translation of foreign movies was the
focus of controversy in 2006, as lawmakers required Ukrainian transla-
tions and media companies protested that this was financially unfeasible
(Shevchuk 2006). The virtuoso translation of the animated Disney/Pixar
movie Cars was celebrated as a boon for the cause of Ukrainian lan-
guage. In contrast, some feel that other poor quality Ukrainian transla-
tions may do more harm than good by presenting the Ukrainian language
as a pale and awkward imitation of Russian (Riabchuk 2007).

Another factor working against the use of Ukrainian is that for many
bilinguals it is their weaker language, given its relatively recent spread
into new spheres after independence, especially in the eastern and south-
ern urban areas. There are negative connotations to speaking Ukrainian
with a strong Russian accent, which is often typical of people who have
been primarily Russophones (Bilaniuk 2004). The negative connota-
tions of “impure speech” tend to outweigh the benefit or desire to speak
Ukrainian on air. With no impetus to speak Ukrainian, a regime of non-
accommodating bilingualism can end up supporting a Russian-dominant
status quo. It also serves to perpetuate attitudes of purism, as within
this practice no one should be put in a situation in which they must
speak a language that is not their best. This contrasts with situations in
which Ukrainian is required, such as official state appearances where
Russophone officials do use “impure Ukrainian,” for which they are often critiqued by purists (e.g., Hnatkevych 2000).

The potential implications of the growing trend of non-accommodating bilingualism in Ukraine are multifaceted, with some opposing potentialities, not limited to a particular political or cultural tendency. Non-accommodating bilingualism can be seen as a way to uphold the preferences of both Ukrainophones and Russophones simultaneously, and thus to defuse the tensions around the language issue. But it may only be a mask for continuing inequalities. The practice provides the potential for change, allowing Ukrainian to be increasingly present in domains where it was previously unacceptable and marginalized. At the same time, it allows the status quo use of Russian in given spheres to persist, since it removes the imperative for speaking Ukrainian. For example, the dual-host/dual-language arrangement in many television and radio shows allows a broadcast program to claim Ukrainian content, while still retaining predominately Russian content.

Non-accommodating bilingualism thus provides the basis for competing ideological tendencies in viewing language: as a performative choice, as an essential linguistic identity (based on life circumstance), or as an essential ethnolinguistic identity (based on heritage). Conceptualizing language choice as a performative move separates it from any defined group identity, and views it as a stylistic, contextual statement. This view accords maximum freedom of choice to individuals, and ignores how agency is constrained by social and contextual pressures. People of any ethnicity supposedly can switch between languages to capitalize on different contextual connotations of a given language.9

In contrast to a performative view, essentialist views of language naturalize the ties between language and identity, and people are expected to speak their “own, true, pure” language, and not to try to speak the “other” language. We can distinguish two different essentializing language ideologies. In one, linguistic identity does not have to be the same as one’s ethnic identity; it is simply the result of upbringing and life circumstances, which establish a “natural” language for each person that cannot be changed. According to this view, the extensive use of Russian in Ukraine is seen as “natural” and not problematic, and Ukrainian and Russian are both treated as local languages, in a category different from “foreign” languages.

In another understanding of essentialism, linguistic identity is believed to coincide with ethnic identity, and misalignment is seen as a social ill. Thus ethnic Ukrainians should speak Ukrainian, while ethnic Russians should speak Russian, as if there were a natural, biological connection between language and ethnicity.10 The essentialization of a connection
between language and ethnicity also ties in to an attitude of purism — the
idea that people should only speak a “pure,” correct language, according
to the logic that if they attempt to speak a language not “their own” they
are likely to mix languages and to speak incorrectly. Also according to
this view, Russophone-ethnic Ukrainians are evidence of Russian imperi-
ality, something that should be remedied to prevent the demise of
Ukraine and Ukrainian language.

Only time will tell how these coexisting ideologies will shape language
statuses if non-accommodating bilingualism persists and spreads in
Ukraine. Genetic-heritage essentialism favors Ukrainianization in the
most heavy-handed way, leaving out ethnic Russian citizens. Life-
circumstance essentialism favors the status quo, in which Russian lan-
guage dominates. The performative (non-essentialized) view of language
can favor either language, as it conceptualizes individuals as free to define
their situational and general sociolinguistic identity. My own sense is
that the combination of Ukrainian prevailing in educational and state-
administrative spheres with continuing dominance of Russian in urban
public spheres and the media will continue to build a more evenly bilin-
gual population, and that non-accommodating bilingualism will persist,
unless events or activist efforts strengthen the politicization of language
choice.11 In this article I consider a limited data set and take a closer
look at the different forms of dual-language interactions on television to
provide a sense of how the various tendencies are playing out in one
sphere of communication.

4. Manifestations of non-accommodating bilingualism in Ukraine

Non-accommodation is widespread in public life in Kyiv, in marriages,
on the Internet, and in television shows. This is not to say that accommo-
dation is not happening, as people do often converge and speak in the
same language as the people around them, and they do so for social, po-
itical, and personal reasons. Indeed, in some situations, people experi-
ence very strong pressures to accommodate to one language or the other — in unofficial situations, it is still more often to Russian, as in the past.
However, the practice of non-accommodation is unusually common and
regular in many spheres in Ukraine. Here I focus on language dynamics
in bilingual television shows that aired in 2002, to examine how non-
accommodation and accommodation operate in specific contexts.12 The
significance of television was underscored by survey data that identi-
fied “watching TV” as the most frequent leisure activity in Ukraine
(engaged in at least once a week by 87% of respondents), followed by
Many of the television programs involving regular hosts with different visitors are bilingual to some degree, in varying combinations. Most often the hosts speak one language and do not code-switch, while code-switching is somewhat more common for guests/contestants (although there are exceptions). Some hosts speak Ukrainian, some speak Russian. Several shows have two hosts, one assigned to speak Ukrainian, the other Russian. The dynamics of the shows vary greatly, in particular depending on the degree of scriptedness (the higher degree of scriptedness, the less code switching) versus improvisation (more improvisation usually entailed more code switching).

Two examples of game shows with Ukrainian-speaking hosts are LG Evryka (‘LG [brand name] Eureka’, a university-age youth game show testing knowledge and performative skills, on channel 1+1) and Pershyi Mil’ion (‘First Million’, an adult quiz show also on channel 1+1). In the case of LG Evryka, the two hosts (in their early twenties), one male and one female, both spoke only Ukrainian, while contestants varied in their language use. The language issue was usually not commented upon, but in one episode the hosts went against this trend by presenting the language issue as a debate topic. In the several episodes of this show that I viewed in 2002, contestants who were primarily Ukrainophone spoke only Ukrainian. Those who were primarily Russophone usually would converse during introductory remarks in Ukrainian, but switch to Russian during the high-pressure timed competitions (for example, a one-minute presentation of an argument, or description of objects unseen by another person so that the person would identify as many of them in a limited time period as possible). Russophones sometimes would switch back to Ukrainian during noncompetitive conversation with the hosts (and thus accommodate to the hosts’ Ukrainian). Both Ukrainophones and Russophones would sometimes throw in a “good luck” or some other phrase in English as part of their introductory remarks, thus introducing yet another linguistic element. This program presented a combination of accommodation and non-accommodation characteristic of the younger generation (late teens to early twenties): while either language was acceptable, there was a sense that accommodating to Ukrainian was most appropriate when this did not disadvantage a primary Russian speaker in competition. Not using Ukrainian at all, even during introductory comments, was rare. At least some symbolic demonstration of the ability and willingness to speak Ukrainian was the norm (and English was occasionally thrown in, demonstrating that it constitutes valued symbolic capital among this group).
The conversational regime of LG Evryka contrasted sharply with Pershyi Mil’ion, a quiz show with a middle-aged host and contestants. In the episodes that I viewed, there was no linguistic accommodation on the latter show. The host only spoke Ukrainian, and contestants who preferred Russian only spoke Russian. There was no code switching even though the show was unscripted, outside of the specific quiz questions asked.

Examples of shows that had only Russian-speaking hosts were the talk shows V gostiakh u Gordona (‘Guest at Gordon’s’, which aired on the Gravis and TV Tabachuk channels and later on Pershyi Natsional’nyi channel) and Shalash (‘Lean-to’, on the Zahrava channel). A variety of discursive practices was also evident on these shows. On Dimitrii Gordon’s talk show, some interviewees spoke in Russian (e.g., Andrii Danylko, the actor best known for performing Verka Serduchka), while others spoke only Ukrainian (e.g., Leonid Kravchuk, first president of independent Ukraine). On Shalash, where the interviewer/host impersonated Lenin, he spoke only Russian (as one would expect of Lenin). His guest, Yurii Karmazin, a deputy of the Nasha Ukraina political party, alternated between Russian and Ukrainian. At times Karmazin seemed to be accommodating to his questioner, “Lenin”, and at other times he appeared to be influenced by the fact that Ukrainian was his more customary professional language. Karmazin switched to Ukrainian on a few occasions when discussing specific laws or political issues, and then he would often go back to Russian, accommodating to “Lenin’s” Russian question.

Non-accommodating bilingualism occurs unplanned on shows with monolingual hosts as already discussed, but there are also programs that have institutionalized non-accommodating bilingualism. Here I discuss features from four such shows: Loto-Zabava (‘Lotto-Play’, a lottery show on channel 1+1), Kokhannia z Pershoho Pohliadu (‘Love at First Sight’, a dating game show on channel Inter), Medovyj Misiats’ (‘Honeymoon’, a game show for newlyweds on channel 1+1), and Khoroshou (‘Good-show’ [a play on the Russian word for ‘good’ khorosho], a show in which popular music is discussed and videos are presented, on M1, Ukraine’s music channel).

Lotto-Play is a program in which the results of a nationwide lottery are presented, and contestants from all over Ukraine come to the studio to play games of chance on air (such as spinning a wheel to win prizes ranging from microwave ovens to cars). The hosts’ words on this show seemed completely scripted, and the hosts did not code-switch at all. On average, the Russian-speaking male host spoke more than the Ukrainian-speaking female host, resulting in more airtime for Russian. Contestants
on the show generally spoke little, but when they did, it could be in either language. Contestants tended to interact the most closely with two male clown figures that acted as assistants on the show. These clown figures spoke in an “impure Ukrainian” — Ukrainian with some Russian borrowings and non-standard forms — which contrasted with the more formal, standard Ukrainian of the female host.14

Two other shows also had Russian-speaking male hosts and Ukrainian-speaking female hosts: the dating game Love at First Sight and the game show for newlyweds titled Honeymoon. Both shows had a combination of scripted or mostly scripted remarks and questions, along with improvised discussion with the contestants. In various episodes I saw a wide variety of language use, from mostly monolingual Ukrainian or Russian, to various degrees of code switching, but overall Russian language use predominated among contestants. Below I examine the conversational dynamics in one episode of Love at First Sight in detail, and here I point out just some of the general trends in these two shows. On Love at First Sight, while both hosts were equally involved in the first half of the show, the second half was led only by the Russian-speaking male host, which resulted in more airtime for Russian. On Honeymoon, the distribution of host roles appeared more equal throughout the show. One source of inequality was the fact that all official questions to the contestants were posed in Ukrainian, so the Russian-speaking male host switched to Ukrainian when it was his turn to pose a question. This resulted in a scripted switch, as the prepared questions were always read from a card. The official game questions were likely posed in Ukrainian to support the official presentation of the show as a Ukrainian-language product, probably spurred by the legislated requirements for Ukrainian-language programming. The male host did not use Ukrainian outside of posing the question, and the female host did not code-switch at all.

The most unscripted of bilingual dual-host shows I viewed was Khoroshou, hosted by a young man and woman (who appeared to be in their early twenties). Most of the discussion topics were specifically directed toward youth. Here the female host was Russian speaking, while the male host was Ukrainian speaking. The hosts were sometimes the only ones on air, discussing videos or other popular music events, and sometimes they had studio guests and live phone calls where the caller’s voice was broadcast to be heard by all. In watching episodes of this show, I consistently had the impression that the hosts were struggling for the floor, creating a de facto struggle for the presence of Ukrainian versus Russian. There was often overlapping speech, with at times the same things (such as greetings or questions to callers) repeated by both hosts (resulting in simultaneous voicing in both languages). The male host’s Ukrainian was less fluent
than the female host’s Russian, and this resulted in unequal conversational dynamics. The general rule was non-accommodation, with each host fulfilling their assigned role as a speaker of Ukrainian or Russian, with the following significant exceptions: the male host would accommodate by switching to Russian with Russian speakers from outside of Ukraine, but he would not accommodate with Russian speakers who were from Ukraine. Since simple accommodation was not the rule, the male host sometimes seemed flustered or made “mistakes” regarding which language he used. Occasionally he would make an issue of needing to take aside a moment to overtly re-orient himself when switching languages, thus highlighting the significance of the language difference. This behavior contrasted with all of the other shows in which language choice and any code switches were not noted or problematized. The Russian-speaking female host did not switch to Ukrainian on any occasion during the program.

5. Language and Love at First Sight

As discussed above, there are as many patterns of accommodation and non-accommodation on television as there are in daily life. Television presents us with a combination of institutionalized linguistic roles (related to the established language of a channel, which is affected both by legislation and by the inclinations of the channel’s leadership, as well as by the orientation to a particular audience) and non-institutionalized roles (the freedom of language choice of guests and contestants). When both the norms of accommodation and non-accommodation are present, how do people choose whether and when to accommodate or not? A closer look at the interactional dynamics in one program reveals the complex interplay of the forces of similarity–attraction, social meanings of languages, identity construction, and context.

The show was led by two hosts, Katia Vynohradova who spoke in Ukrainian, and Pavlo Kostitsyn who spoke in Russian. Both their names were written in Ukrainian on the screen at the beginning of the show, but during verbal introductions both were pronounced with markedly Russian pronunciations or modifications. This meant that Katia slipped out of her Ukrainian guise, using Russian akanie (pronouncing unvoiced “о” as “а”) when saying her co-host’s surname [kastitsyn]. The Russianness of her guise was limited to the level of phonology, as she used the Ukrainian form of his first name, Pavlo (instead of the Russian form Pavel). Aside from this instance, Katia did not switch out of Ukrainian at all during the show, with one exception shown during scrolling credits after the
show’s end, where after flubbing a line and realizing that it would have to be cut, Katia commented to the studio personnel in Russian. During introductions, Pavlo stayed within his Russian guise, taking things even further: he provided a morphologically Russianized formal form of Katia’s first name [iekat’erina] and a phonologically Russian version of her last name [vinogradova] (instead of the Ukrainian pronunciation [vynohradova]). However, on a few occasions during the show Pavlo did say a few phrases in Ukrainian, mimicking prior words and officialese, as I discuss below. The code switches constituted rare exceptions to a prevailing regime in which each host adhered to their assigned language. The introduction to the show demonstrates this bilingual paradigm:

(1) Pavlo (P), Katia (K). Russian is in plain text, Ukrainian is underlined.15

P: И людей ещё в помине не было, когда на земле родился первый поцелуй.
‘There was yet no trace of people when the first kiss was born on Earth.’

K: Дослідники історії кохання радять скептикам завітати до зоопарку
‘Researchers of the history of [romantic] love recommend that skeptics go visit the zoo’

P: И понаблюдать за шимпанзе, как великолепно они целуются
‘And observe the chimpanzees, how superbly they kiss’

K: Але ми стверджуємо, що раніше за поцілунок народилося кохання
‘But we argue that before the kiss [romantic] love was born’

P: Не стоїть проверятъ это на шимпанзе
‘It is not worth testing that on chimpanzees’

K: З однією метою поєднати зовсім дві різні істоти, чоловіка та жінку
‘With the single goal of uniting two completely different beings, a man and a woman’

P: Одним словом, на телеканале Интер сказки о вечной как мир любви
‘In a word, on the television channel Inter, tales of love as eternal as the world’

K: Які вам розповідатиме маг-чародій Павло Кастіцин
‘Which will be told to you by the magician-sorcerer Pavlo Kostitsyn’

P: И известная в народе сказочница Екатерина Виноградова. Итак, встречайте тех, кто верит в сказочную любовь. Наши участники!’
‘And the famous among the people storyteller Iekaterina Vino-gradova. And so meet those who believe in fairytale love. Our participants!’

K: Для котрих наш генеральний спонсор торгова марка Шанді приготувала безліч сюрпризів. Шанді власно побачення і вам. ‘For whom our general sponsor the Shandy brand has prepared countless surprises. Shandy will set up a date for you too.’

In this introductory segment, as the hosts alternate lines they sometimes finish one another’s sentences and sometimes interject comments, resulting in a rather even and tight mix of Ukrainian and Russian. After the introductory remarks, the hosts introduce the contestants, saying a few words about each one, with information they have apparently gleaned from prior interviews. There are six guests on the show, three men (Mykhailo, Mykola, and Roman) and three women (Vika, Natasha, and Alia). The hosts then take turns engaging with each contestant in a question-and-answer discussion. In this episode, Katia initiates all of the discussion with the men, while Pavlo initiates all of the discussion with the women. In most of the discussions, the other co-host also enters the conversation, resulting in questions and comments from hosts in both languages. All of the contestants in this episode respond in Russian, both to Katia’s Ukrainian questions and to Pavlo’s Russian questions, with a few notable exceptions by Natasha, Roman, and Alia. I examine these exceptions in more detail, to understand what motivates code switching in a context where adhering to one’s chosen language and not accommodating otherwise prevails.

After conversations with Mykhailo, Vika, and Mykola, it is Natasha’s turn to be questioned. Below is the relevant excerpt:

(2) Pavlo (P), Katia (K), Natasha (N). Russian is in plain text; Ukrainian is underlined; nonstandard terms are bold.

P: Наташа, на собеседовании ты сказала что к мечте нужно относиться серьёзно. Что это значит?
‘Natasha, in the interview you said that one should be serious about one’s dream. What does that mean?’

N: Ну, а на самом деле я когда-то с детства очень сильно мечтала работать на телевидении, и значит, моя мечта сбылась, я сделала максимально всё, что для этого нужно, и вот во Львове, в своём родном городе я веду региональные выпуски новостей.
‘Well, in fact since some time in my childhood I had dreamed very strongly of working on television, and so my dream came true, I did the maximum, everything that was necessary for that, and so
now in Lviv in my native city I am the anchor for the regional newscasts.'

P: 'Vay!' 'Wow!'

K: Наташа, мені сподобалося, як ти зробила так, я зробила максимально, максимально я зробила, щоб працювати на телебаченні)

'Natasha, I liked how you did [said] this, [I did the maximum, the maximum I did so that I could work on television]' [the phrase set apart by angle brackets is marked by mannerisms as a quotation, with suggestively rolled shoulder and batting eyes]

P: Но но она же не спросила шо шо ти зробила Катя, щоб працювати на телебаченні!

'Well but she hasn’t asked you what what you did Katia, to work on television!'

K: Наташа, дуже красномовний був жест.

'Natasha, it was a very expressive gesture.'

P: Ишо?

'what?'

K: Мені цікаво, а кому легше влаштуватися взагалі де-небудь, чоловіку або жінці?

'I wonder, for whom is it easier to get a job in general, anywhere, for a man or a woman?'

N: А Катя, яку я скажу, що чоловікові, я думаю, що ви зі мною погодитеся, тому що гарній жінці завжди тяжко.

'Katia, if I say that for a man, I think that you will agree with me, because for a beautiful woman it is always difficult.'

K: Погоджуємось!

'I agree!'

P: Катя тольки вчера вот это мне говорила. Сто процентов, ну мне понравилось так выпуски новостей, таким голосом она говорит. А как здоровается вообще вот?

'Katia said just that to me only yesterday. One hundred percent, well I really liked that news announcement, with such a voice she speaks. And so how do you generally do your greeting?'

N: Добрий вечір, Вас вітає інформаційна програма Вісник. З вами я, ну і так далі.

'Good evening, greetings from the news program Visnyk. With you am I, well and so on.'

P: І вся Львова область

'And the whole of Lviv oblast'
K: Я уявляю, що з чоловіками!
'I can imagine what is [happening] with the men!'
P: Так? Львовська область!
'Thus? Lviv oblast!'

Pavlo prompts Natasha to talk about her seriousness in realizing her dreams, which leads her to explain how she “did the maximum” to become the news anchor for Lviv evening news. While Pavlo responds with an impressed exclamation, Katia takes the opportunity to use Natasha’s words to make a potentially demeaning suggestive joke, reiterating Natasha’s phrase that she “did the maximum” with suggestive body movements. While Katia says she “liked” Natasha’s phrasing, there is the potentially insulting suggestion that Natasha gave sexual favors in order to succeed, a well-known pressure in show business in Ukraine as elsewhere. Pavlo immediately challenges Katia in defense of Natasha, and in doing so, he switches to Ukrainian, using Katia’s exact phrasing. Pavlo’s use of the Ukrainian phrase may be a direct reliance on what was just said, but given that this phrase is easily translated into Russian, it is worth considering what other potential meanings are packed into this switch. Most significantly, I find that in repeating the Ukrainian phrase, Pavlo is equating Katia’s work situation with Natasha’s, and thus Katia’s suggestive comment is turned back on her. Also, Katia’s work on television is specifically conducted in Ukrainian, and stating this in Ukrainian emphasizes this stipulation of Katia’s work.

Katia ignores Pavlo’s comment, and then directs a more serious question to Natasha about gender and job opportunities, thus neutralizing the possible insult from her previous comment. Here Natasha accommodates and answers in Ukrainian. We do not know whether Ukrainian or Russian is Natasha’s habitual language, but within this conversation, Natasha demonstrates solidarity of identity and circumstance with Katia in using Ukrainian. Additionally, Natasha employs explicit and implicit discursive strategies to construct goodwill with Katia, such as by addressing her directly by name (excluding Pavlo for the moment), and implying that Katia is a beautiful woman, and inviting shared understanding of difficulties. Katia accepts this gesture of solidarity by responding simply, “I agree”. Pavlo remedies his temporary exclusion and the preceding tiff between him and his co-host by supporting Katia, asserting that she had just told him the same thing the previous day. Then he quickly changes the subject back to Natasha, expressing admiration for her voice, and asking about her news greeting. Natasha responds in Ukrainian, thus remaining in a Ukrainian guise and not accommodating to Pavlo, but in this case she is demonstrating a performance of her official role as
newscaster. The discussion with Natasha concludes with lighthearted comments implying that she surely charms all the men in her region.

Next Katia initiates discussion by posing a question to Roman. Unlike all of the other contestants, he responds in Ukrainian, thus accommodating to Katia. He sticks with Ukrainian for the six turns that comprise this block of conversation, even after a questioning comment from Pavlo in Russian. In a later conversation in which Roman is questioned only by Pavlo, Roman speaks exclusively in Russian. Roman thus shows initial accommodation to his questioner in language choice, but he does not switch between languages to accommodate once a conversation has started. Roman’s initial accommodation results in a demonstration of skill in both languages. Also, his use of Ukrainian needs to be seen in its conversational context. He is questioned by Katia right after the discussion where Natasha speaks a few turns of Ukrainian. By using Ukrainian Roman demonstrates solidarity of language and identity with both Katia and, more significantly, Natasha. This is significant since the goal of the show is to be chosen by the opposite sex partner that you prefer as well. Later, Roman’s use of Russian in conversation with Pavlo also demonstrates his knowledge of Russian.

After the questioning of Roman, Pavlo begins the questions with Alia, and Katia joins in. Alia speaks Russian even when answering questions posed by Katia in Ukrainian. However, like Natasha, she has a job in which she must sometimes speak Ukrainian. Alia echoes Natasha’s behavior when she switches to Ukrainian to demonstrate her professional speech when she is in court. Unlike Natasha, Alia switches back to Russian and does not speak Ukrainian outside of these demonstrated official phrases.

(3) Pavlo (P), Katia (K), Alia (A). Russian is in plain text, Ukrainian is underlined.

P: Аля, Аля у нас человек серьёзный, работает знаете кем? Помощником прокурора. Скажи, моя дорогая, часто случается так, что мужчины, ну, те с которыми ты, грубо говоря, работаешь, с кем приходится встречаться вот, где небо в клеточку, пускает в ход свои чары, чтоб тебя охлаждать и как-то смечь свою участь?

‘Alia, Alia is a serious person, do you know what her profession is? She is a prosecutor’s assistant. Tell us my dear does it often happen that a man, one of those who, in rough terms, with whom you work, with whom you must meet where the sky is checkered [behind bars], puts into play his charms to enchant you and so somehow to lighten his sentence?’
A: На самом деле, когда я прихожу в процесс, многие подсудимые радуются, но пришла милая девушка, то есть много не попросит.
‘In actuality when I come into the proceedings, many of the accused rejoice, well here has come a sweet girl, that is, she won’t ask for much [of a punishment].’

K: Зараз посадить так років на п’ятнадцять, яка мила дівчина!
‘In a moment she’ll send you to jail for fifteen years, such a sweet girl!’

A: Да, да, да. А когда в процессе я задаю очень жесткие вопросы и когда мм и когда я обвиняю, когда я говорю свою обвинительную речь, шановный суд, прошу засудить и признать миру покарания позавления волі строком на п’ятнадцять років, я думаю что они сразу падают духом и я их разочаровываю в этом.
‘Yes, yes, yes. And when during the trial I ask very harsh questions and when hmm and when I accuse, when I say my prosecuting statement, respected court, I ask you to sentence and to designate as punishment fifteen years of deprivation of liberty, I think that they quickly lose their hope and I disenchant them.’

P: Как ты можешь себе позволить роскошь вот быть такой слабой женщиной, не кричать вот так вот п’ятнадцать років, а вот
‘How can you allow yourself the luxury to be just such a weak woman, not to yell just like that fifteen years but’

A: Надо, женщиной могу себе позволить быть вот только после восемнадцати ноль ноль.
‘I must, I can only allow myself to be a woman so only after 6pm.’

Alia’s self-motivated use of Ukrainian may also be considered in the context of Roman’s preceding Ukrainian conversation, as a possible demonstration of skill in Ukrainian, however limited. Alia does choose Roman as her preferred partner at the end, but he chooses Natasha, and Natasha also chooses Roman (contestants must all make a choice before any of the choices are revealed). It is impossible for an outside observer to determine what ultimately guided the choices, as physical appearance, clothing, mannerisms, and beliefs and ideas expressed all play a role. But, it is clear that language dynamics play into the presentation of personas and their efforts to relate to one another.

In the excerpt with Alia above, Pavlo also demonstrates a momentary code switch in the phrase “fifteen years”, which is a repetition of Alia’s words. This is similar to Pavlo’s earlier switch, in which he repeated Katia’s Ukrainian phrase. In the case of “fifteen years”, it also constitutes
a segment of official talk. Pavlo later produces his own original example of bureaucratese-Ukrainian in an imitation of a recorded phone announcement that a caller would hear on an overloaded phone system in the event of a hypothetical world disaster: “Дзвінки вхідні цьому абоненту заблоковані в зв’язку з кінцем світу” (‘Incoming calls to this subscriber are blocked due to the ending of the world’).

In the code switches of Natasha, Alia, and Pavlo, the function of Ukrainian as an official institutional language is highlighted. Also, since speaking Ukrainian is an implicit performance of some degree of Ukrainian identity (however partial or momentary), the contestants’ use of Ukrainian demonstrates their ability and willingness to perform Ukrainiananness. Use of the language in a public media context implicitly serves to legitimize its presence in that context. Natasha and Roman also use Ukrainian more directly to construct solidarity with each other and with Katia, the Ukrainian-speaking host. Solidarity construction might also be one of the motivations for Alia’s switches to Ukrainian, although she does not use Ukrainian in a directly accommodating manner.

Overall, I find that the interactions on Love at First Sight reinforced an institutionalized role for Ukrainian and the role of “means of normal interaction” for Russian. This was supported in the outtake aired at the end of one program, which showed that the Ukrainian-speaking host Katia used Russian as the habitual language of studio interaction. On the other hand, while Katia never used Russian as a host, it is notable that Pavlo did occasionally voice things in Ukrainian, however briefly. While Russian language predominated in the show overall, structurally the option for more use of Ukrainian was there, and it depended on the preferences of contestants whether or not more Ukrainian or Russian was spoken on the program.

6. Conclusions

Linguistic non-accommodation, resulting in conversations conducted in two languages, is common in many spheres in Ukraine. This is an unusual situation, as the prevalent trend worldwide appears to be toward accommodation in choice of language, leading to the use of a single language for prolonged non-antagonistic interactions between bilingual participants. Research in social psychology has shown that non-accommodation tends to correlate with a desire to emphasize difference, if not disdain (Shepard et al. 2001). This study complicates that generalization, and shows how social and cultural conventions shape who accommodates or not, and to what degree. In Ukraine we have seen the development of a convention
that makes non-accommodation in language choice an acceptable, even expected behavior, in various contexts: public, private, mediated, and unmediated.

That is not to say that there is no pressure to accommodate in Ukraine — there certainly is. While some linguistic tendencies in the country have been changing, Russian continues to prevail in public urban spheres in the East and South, and in the media and popular culture. Ukrainian is becoming increasingly prevalent in various state institutions and education, and it continues to be the language of the rural sphere throughout Ukraine. More research is necessary to understand how people negotiate language choice given the two coexisting paradigms of accommodation (convergence by one or more participants to speak the same language in an interaction) and non-accommodation (participants speaking different languages). The possible social and political implications of non-accommodation are conflicting: it can be a way to uphold the preferences of both Ukrainophones and Russophones at the same time, thus defusing the tensions around the language issue, but it may only be a mask for continuing inequalities. Non-accommodation provides the potential for change, allowing Ukrainian to be present in domains where it was previously unacceptable and marginalized. However, it also allows the use of Russian in spheres where it is dominant to persist, by removing the imperative for speaking Ukrainian.

In this article my focus was on bilingual television programs, where non-accommodation is prevalent. I presented various linguistic arrangements that existed on several Ukrainian television programs in 2002, with a closer analysis of the dynamics from one dating-game show. This conversation analysis revealed that language choice was motivated by desire for solidarity (underpinned by forces of similarity–attraction), identity construction (also for solidarity, as demonstration of social competence, and as an assertion of the legitimacy of a given language), and to capitalize on the contextual and social connotations of language. On the show I analyzed, the regime of non-accommodation did indeed seem to neutralize the issue of language choice. While Russian dominated overall, Ukrainian was present and welcome, and the possibility for more Ukrainian was structurally established.

This show, along with the other bilingual shows discussed, presents a model of voluntary non-contentious bilingualism. A basic requirement of this model is two hosts whose linguistic roles are prescribed, but otherwise these programs establish contexts where there is freedom of choice of language. I have experienced similar situations where language choice is neutralized and non-accommodation is the norm in public spaces of Kyiv and in Internet forums. I have also been told about similar
arrangements within families. Whether this paradigm will spread and de-fuse the explosive issue of language choice, or not, remains to be seen.

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Notes

1. Elsewhere I have followed others in referring to this phenomenon as “non-reciprocal bilingualism” (Bilaniuk 2005). The latter term may be misleading, since in fact both speakers are bilingual and in understanding each other they are demonstrating reciprocal (passive) bilingualism. While using the term “non-accommodating bilingualism” does not eliminate similar ambiguous understandings of accommodation, it feels more precise to me as it puts the focus on dynamics of (non-)accommodation in conversation.

2. “Mutual passive bilingualism” is the term used by Harold Schiffman to label the non-accommodating interaction between Han Solo and Greedo in Star Wars Episode IV (e-mail to “linganth” list, 15 August 2006).

3. I have personally witnessed and participated in such Belarusian–Ukrainian non-accommodating bilingual interactions at conferences in Ukraine in 2000 and in Germany in 2007.


5. According to the 1989 census, Ukraine’s population was 73% ethnic Ukrainian and 22% ethnic Russian. In the 2001 census, it is 78% Ukrainian and 17% Russian. The remaining 5% is comprised of other groups that account for less than 1% each.

6. Such was the case in an encounter related by a colleague in Ukraine in the early 1990s. He went to a store where the usual language between shopkeepers and customers was Russian at the time, but since he had overheard two shopkeepers speaking Ukrainian with each other, he addressed them in that language. They rejected his accommodation and responded in Russian, in an unfriendly manner. His reading of the situation was that his use of Ukrainian implied that they were villagers who would not know Russian well.

7. Communication accommodation theory predicts that in a context where adhering to one’s own language is the norm, interlocutors speaking different languages (Ukrainian and Russian) who are positively disposed to one another would accommodate in other ways, such as in tempo or formality of speech. That level of analysis is beyond the scope of this article. Further research is required to study this prediction.

8. My findings are based primarily on research of the media in Kyiv. In western regions, such as Lviv, Russian is no longer the more common urban language, although it is still present in urban public discourse and local media. I have not studied how language figures in the local Western Ukrainian television programming.

9. For example, see Søvik (2006: 11).

10. My favorite example of these beliefs is the case of a doctor who cures maladies by getting people to speak what he believes is their true native language, through reading aloud classic literary pieces. The specific vibrations of the (exemplary literary) lan-
guage, transmitted throughout the body by the hyoid bone involved in speech, are supposed to align with the vibrations of the Earth in the specific area of their homeland, thereby alleviating physical ailments caused by previously misaligned vibrations (Konkevych 2006).

11. An example of activist efforts to support people speaking Ukrainian is the “Don’t Be Indifferent” social movement (Hromads’kyi Rukh “Ne bud’ baiduzhym!” http://www.nbb.com.ua/), which encourages people to “give a present to Ukraine” by switching to Ukrainian.

12. See also Bilaniuk (2005: 185–191) and (2010) for additional discussion of bilingualism on Ukrainian television.

13. This finding is based on data from a yearly nationwide survey representative of the adult population of Ukraine, conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences in the year 2000. Comparison of survey results from 1994 to the year 2000 shows that the percentage of people who had watched television at least once in the week prior to the survey had increased, from 79% in 1994 to 87% in 2000. I am grateful to Oxana Shevel for sharing this database with me.

14. As discussed in Bilaniuk (2005: 189), the fact that clowns speak an impure language only serves to reinforce the stigmatization of this language, upholding an ideology of purism.

15. Punctuation in the transcriptions does not depict specific timing or intonation. Rather, it is provided to clarify the meaning that was conveyed through combinations of timing, intonation, and gesture. Question marks indicate questions, exclamation points indicate emphatic statements, and periods indicate clearly completed statements. Conversational turns do not have sentence-final punctuation when the speaker did not complete a phrase, or when their sentence is continued by their interlocutor (as is especially the case in Excerpt [1]).

16. The hosts tend to Ukrainianize or to Russify the names of the contestants depending on which language the host is speaking. Hence the Ukrainian forms of the men’s names as introduced by Katia, and the Russian forms of the women’s names by Pavlo. Some names lend themselves to this sort of transformation, while others do not (the names Roman, Vika, and Alia do not change). Hosts will use different forms of the contestants’ names during the show, often using ethnolinguistically marked diminutives. For example, when Pavlo speaks to Mykhailo he addresses him by the Russian diminutive “Mish.” Pavlo often refers to his co-host with the Russian-marked diminutive “Katiush.”

17. In my experience, Russian predominated in such game shows among this age group (mid-twenties to mid-thirties), although there were occasional Ukrainian speakers or code switches into Ukrainian. Shows with contestants who were younger, from smaller towns, and from central and western regions were likely to have more Ukrainian language.

18. Roman’s Russian pronunciation is marked by the Ukrainian pronunciation of [g] as /h/, the bane of Myna Mazailo’s existence in Kulish’s play, discussed above. This feature did not seem to carry such stigma for Natasha, who picks Roman as her favorite in the end.

19. Pavlo Kostitsyn later served as the exclusively Ukrainian-speaking announcer for the Ukrainian team in the popular program Lepi Hlampionia ‘Patriot Games’, where teams of celebrities from different countries were pitted against one another in various tasks. One of the other contestant teams was from Russia.

20. The programs I analyzed had guests and call-in participants from all over the country, and so I assume that they were indeed broadcast nationwide (I recorded these
programs as they were broadcast in Kyiv). I did not analyze regional patterns of television programming, and we should keep in mind that these might be different than the programming in Kyiv.

References


Conflicting abstractions: language groups in language politics in Ukraine*

STANISLAV SHUMLIANSKYI

Abstract

This article is an analysis of the ongoing language debate in Ukraine. I assert that in Ukraine, unlike in Belgium or Canada to which Ukraine is often compared, the substance of language politics does not lie in opposition between language groups or between their representatives. In fact, due to the absence of clearly defined language groups, political discussions concerning language in Ukraine are not a symptom of the language structuring, but its main agent. The heated political debates regarding languages are not driven by divergent interests or group attitudes, but by conflicting agendas for the protection of languages. Therefore, in the article I emphasize the core positions of the discourses — the presentations of the language groups and their agendas. This includes both the Russophile and the Ukrainophile camps, in which one may discern various visions and action plans of the language groups that these camps claim to represent. As the analysis of their arguments shows, tensions in the language sphere lie not only in their conflicting agendas of language grouping from the standpoint of one language, Russian or Ukrainian, but in the competition concerning the very identity and even existence of the represented groups.

Keywords: language group presentation; language grouping; language politics; Ukrainophones; Russophones; Ukraine.

1. Introduction

A fundamental characteristic of the language situation in Ukraine is bilingualism of society. The concept of bilingualism is widely debated in language studies; however, since its definition is not the subject of this article, let us only briefly underline those parameters that establish Ukrainian society as bilingual. First, over 90% of the country’s population associates...
itself with Ukrainian, Russian, or both languages. According to a June 2006 nationwide survey, 98% of the population of the country identified their “native language” as Ukrainian (60%) or Russian (38%) (Ridna mova 2006). Second, only those two languages are used in all aspects of social life (official and private communication, mass media and publishing, education, culture, and so on) in all areas of the country, albeit in some particular spheres or regions one of the two may dominate, while in others both are present to varying degrees. Furthermore, there is no social domain or region in which a language other than Ukrainian or Russian is dominant, nor is there one in which they are both absent.

Discussions on language issues in Ukraine have traditionally been very heated. Many researchers look to the formation of language grouping to explain this fact, because actors in language politics are divided into two fairly well-defined camps. The same applies to political actors in general, to the extent that they declare their positions on language issues or imply them to the electorate. Regardless of what provoked a particular discussion, it likely encompasses the status of languages, their legitimacy, and limits of their usage in various spheres. It is assumed that behind these distinctions there are differences in the interests of the represented groups.

Like other countries known to be bilingual, for example, Belgium and Canada, Ukraine is often portrayed as divided along linguistic lines. Thus, language politics in Ukraine is considered to be “politics of symbolic and cultural representation between (and within) three key groups of roughly equal size: Ukrainophone Ukrainians, Russophone Ukrainians and ethnic Russians” (Wilson 1998: 119). According to this view, each group has spokespeople for their interests, and the battles between them (and by extension between the discourses originated and spread by them) form the basis of language politics in Ukraine. This scheme has some variations. For instance, Dominique Arel (1995) asserts the existence of only two language groups — “Ukrainophones” and “Russophones.” Mykola Riabchuk also distinguishes two groups, but refers to them as “Ukrainophiles” and “Russophiles” (Riabchuk 2003: 58).

There is also a tendency to estimate the numerical strength of the groups: “using the survey evidence … there are approximately 21 million Ukrainophone Ukrainians, 17 million Russophone Ukrainians, and 11 million Russians” (Wilson 1998: 138). Furthermore, the groups get characterized as communities: “Russophones tend to disagree” (Arel 1995: 171), “Ukrainophone Ukrainians have always suspected” (1995: 167), etc. Although the authors recognize that these models are simplified (Wilson 1998: 119–120), they attribute the simplification primarily to the
absence of clear boundaries that distinguish one group from another and to the indefiniteness of group inclusion, but the groups themselves are presented as existing.

The thesis that Ukrainian society is divided along linguistic lines is so deeply entrenched that it is implicitly present even in the works of critics of this model. For example, Volodymyr Kulyk, while denying the existence of “Russophones” and “Ukrainophones” on the basis that “a group defined in terms of any single factor will consist of very different subsets” (Kulyk 2001: 206), in the same article writes about the “non-conflictual relationship between the state and the two dominant ethnic and linguistic groups” (2001: 216). In another work, Kulyk also claims, in the context of state language policy, that “none of the main ethno-linguistic groups felt excluded or clearly discriminated against” (Kulyk 2006: 310).

Let us consider what criteria are applied when a division into language groups is postulated. A division into “Russophones” and “Ukrainophones” relies mostly on the criterion of “language of preference” as indicated in surveys, which is more appropriate for the realities of Ukraine than the criterion of “mother tongue” applied in other countries (Arel 1995: 169; Wilson 1998: 119–120). At the same time, the introduction into the questionnaire of a third option, “Ukrainian and Russian” reveals the existence of a third group, bilinguals (Khmelko 2004: 3). And consideration of mixed Ukrainian–Russian speech, or surzhyk, as a factor gives rise to a fourth group, surzhyk speakers (2004: 15). A combination of the ethnic and linguo-ethnic lines of division shows a two-dimensional structure with four linguo-ethnic groups (Ukrainophone Ukrainians, Russophone Ukrainians, Ukrainophone Russians, and Russophone Russians) and three ethnic groups (monoethnic Ukrainians, Ukrainian-Russian bi-ethnics,1 and monoethnic Russians [2004: 18–19]).

However, the inclusion of dual and intermediate affiliations does not add precision. Instead it undermines the sense in distinguishing two (or any) language groups. And this applies to the model of grouping based on just one aspect of language function, namely language practice. Yet even as far as examining that practice is concerned, one may apply different criteria, for example, “family language” (Kyrychenko 2005) or the closely related “primary domestic language” (Constant et al. 2006: 21),2 or a combination of the “first” and “basic” languages (Trub 2000: 50).3 However, language grouping can also rely on aspects other than practice, for example, attitudes toward languages. Thus, taking as a criterion the “affinity” to a language, some authors put forth an image of Ukrainian society that is comprised of two (Riabchuk 2003: 58; Shumlianskyi 2007: 6–7) or four (Vasiutynskyi 2002: 74–75) language groups.
Therefore, language groups are neither fully formed, nor clearly separated from one another and appear as such only in a simplified view. A deeper examination shows that “in the sociocultural perspective, ‘Ukrainophone’ and ‘Russophone’ groups of the population are, to a certain degree, abstractions which are built and constituted on a factual preference for the use of one language or the other” (Lanovenko et al. 1998: 48). That is to say, we face the issue of differences and commonalities in linguistic practices and attitudes, none of which is clearly more important than the others to the majority of their carriers, and which (so far) are not enough to draw any conclusion about the existence of a conscious membership, or even a common interest, that unites people into communities (i.e., language groups) and distinguishes one community from another.

Therefore, in this article I examine language debates as being a competition between political actors, rather than manifestations of an ongoing conflict between language groups. Instead of trying to uncover a language group behind each political platform, which is often assumed to be a matter of conflict, I will limit my analysis to the arguments of political actors in order to reveal the group presentations that they use. The aim of this article is, therefore, to illuminate such presentations and to compare their core concepts, which I believe will expose the reasons for conflict on the political as well as societal levels.

In view of the established objective, I will first briefly introduce the most common approaches to classifying the key discourses in Ukrainian language politics. Then I will outline the criteria according to which I shall search for models of language groups’ presentations, and on that basis I will elaborate a broader classification of the discourses. The key portion of the article is devoted to an analysis of the presentations, from which I will draw conclusions concerning the conflict that is inherent to each presentation, as well as the interactions of the “language camps” using different presentations, and finally the tension on the “language question” in society.

2. Ukrainophile and Russophile discourses: language groups’ representations

Most students of language politics in Ukraine underline the division of the actors into two camps, which are most often called “Ukrainophone” and “Russophone” (Arel 1995; Kulyk 2004),4 or “ethnic Ukrainian” and “eastern Slavic” (Shulman 2004: 38), or “ethnically conscious Ukrainians” and “Russophiles, or rather Sovietophiles” (Riabchuk 2003: 32–33). Beyond a few nuances, for each of these authors the core of the division relies on the defense of either the Ukrainian or Russian languages.
and on the representation of the interests of the respective language group, although the second aspect is mostly implicit in the classification schemes. Somewhat different is the classification by Andrew Wilson (1998), who distinguishes a separate discourse of “Russophone Ukrainians.” Thus, each of the three language groups in his scheme (Ukrainophones, Russophone Ukrainians, and ethnic Russians) is represented on the political level by a respective discourse. In Arel’s scheme (1995), the last two groups are represented by one Russophone discourse. Given that they are said to constitute 33–34% of the population, the Russophone Ukrainians of Wilson’s scheme (Wilson 1998: 120) include ethnic Ukrainians who show a preference for the Russian language. At the same time, unlike Russophone Ukrainians as a group, Wilson does not offer a concise characterization of their “ethnic [sic] entrepreneurs.” One may assume that the author means adherents of the idea of unity of the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, languages, and cultures, such as politician Volodymyr Hryniov, the Socialist Party, and the Party of Slavic Unity, which have differing views on the language issue (1998: 133–135).

Volodymyr Kulyk indicates the existence of a third camp (in addition to Russophones and Ukrainophones) to whom he refers as “centrists.” In this discourse, as Kulyk points out, increasing the role of Ukrainian and preserving the current position of Russian are not seen as contradictory alternatives. The core assumption of their discourse is bilingualism, meaning that “the society itself is assumed to be bilingual and bicultural not in the sense that it consists in two relatively homogenous parts, but rather that every member combines the two elements in his/her identity and behavior” (Kulyk 2006: 309–310). This “normality” in particular results in the rejection of language grouping as such — a grouping would be based on the selection of one of the two languages. Doing so, the discourse of “centrism” rests on a distinct (and exclusive) stance with respect to the Russophone and Ukrainophone discourses, discrediting them both simultaneously as “abnormal” extremes (Kulyk 2004).

If the presentation of one’s language group is taken as a criterion, the above-mentioned approaches become more precise. First of all, as a preliminary analysis of available texts on the languages’ status and function shows, such presentations are not concisely formulated and are, even if implicitly present, explicitly omitted. None of the prominent actors of Ukrainian politics presented themselves as a defender of the rights of the respective language group. According to Volodymyr Kulyk, all of them have embraced the “centrist” view, considering Ukrainian society as inherently bilingual (Kulyk 2006: 307). At the same time, all prominent political parties (as well as other influential actors in language politics) are more or less identified (by themselves and/or by their electorate)
with either Russian or Ukrainian languages, while there is no political party or even single politician who would defend, for example, the rights of surzhik speakers or Russian–Ukrainian bilinguals.

An analysis of texts from representatives of the Ukrainophile and Russophile camps shows that they are not as homogeneous as they are sometimes described. The differences are not only in their strategies for protecting the interests of the represented group, as some authors write, but also in the presentations of the language groups they claim to represent. In my view, it is this latter difference that is paramount in distinguishing different discourses within each camp.

The basic hypothesis in this article is that models of language grouping can actually be generated by less powerful or even marginal actors and come to influence the positions of primary actors and potential members of the perceived groups. These presentations, which are for the most part imprecisely expressed and articulated, simultaneously form a deeper level of conflict in language debates.

In the Ukrainophile camp, I distinguish two models of group presentation: “maximalism” and “pragmatism.” The maximalist view is described on the basis of a collection of articles on language issues by Yurii Hnatkevych, written in 1995–1998 (Hnatkevych 1999). The collection also includes official documents of the Prosvita society (recommendations from roundtables and conferences), of which Hnatkevych was either the author or a co-author. Considering this and the fact that Hnatkevych belonged to the inner circle of Prosvita leaders and ideologists, the opinions spelled out in this collection reflect the views of the entire maximalist Ukrainophile movement — not just members of Prosvita, but also organizations allied with it. Given that all the texts belong to one author, the collection presents a rather cohesive set of arguments. In this model, the Ukrainian language is presented as dominant (i.e., over Russian) because of its status as the state language, and the Ukrainian group as the “titular” group in contrast to the Russian group, which is considered to be “one of the minorities.”

The pragmatic view is described on the basis of the booklet “Zroby podarunok Ukraini — perekhod’ na ukrains’ku!” (‘Give Ukraine a gift — switch to Ukrainian!’) of the civic movement Ne Bud’ Baiduzhym! (‘Don’t Be Indifferent!’). The leaders of this movement are well known (mostly rock) musicians from groups popular especially among the youth, such as Tartak, Mandry, Ot Vinta, and others, whose songs are in Ukrainian. The booklet was printed with a press run of 20,000 copies and distributed during concerts and other activities of the movement. The goal of the organization is to change language practices and attitudes in favor of the Ukrainian language. It is focused mainly on the program (that is, on
the direction and methods of changing the existing situation in the desired direction), but there are also statements that provide a sufficient basis for drawing conclusions about the authors’ presentation of their language group and grouping in general.

In the Russophile camp I distinguish the supremacy and equality platforms. The first is described on the basis of the publications of the Russkoe Dvizhenie Ukrainy (‘Russian Movement of Ukraine’), and the Russkii Blok (‘Russian Block’) formed on its basis, namely the newspapers Russkii Mir (‘Russian World’) for 2001–2002 and Russkaia Pravda (‘Russian Truth’) for 2004. In this model, the defense of the Russian language is justified by its alleged superiority to Ukrainian and, accordingly, the priority of the Russian (russkaia) identity over the Ukrainian.7

The Russophile equality model in its most evident form is formulated by Vladimir Malinkovich, a political commentator and rights campaigner, one of the leaders of the Social-Liberal Union during the 1998 elections in Ukraine, and one of the best-known advocates of elevating the status of the Russian language. In the framework of this discourse, the defense of the status of the Russian language is perceived to be a defense of group and individual rights, and a legal elevation of the status of that language is presented as the recognition of the equality of both languages and language groups in Ukraine. For the analysis of this point of view, three interviews with Malinkovich from 2000 to 2001 and his presentation at an expert seminar in 2003 were selected.

Below, I analyze these four models, concentrating mainly on two main characteristics of each. The first one is the presentation of language grouping — a depiction of the group which the authors are claiming to defend. Insofar as the definition of a represented group also implies a description of one or more other groups (Eriksen 2002: 40–41; cf. Søvik 2007: 61), in each case it also presents (although somehow implicit) a certain model of language grouping for society as a whole. The second of each model is its program or agenda, that is, a desired outcome with respect to the language situation, an action plan to change the current situation in the desired direction, and identification of those responsible for carrying out the program.

3. Maximalist Ukrainophiles

3.1. Presentation of language grouping

It is characteristic of Ukrainophile discourse that language grouping is treated as identical to ethnic grouping, and language is seen as a marker
of ethnic belonging. Accordingly, society is conceived of as divided into the titular nation — Ukrainians — and national minorities, including Russians. A discrepancy between this model and the actual language situation is explained by the concept of Russification. According to this concept, the Russian language is foreign to Ukrainian society (except for the ethnic Russian minority), and its dominance in society and ethnic Ukrainians’ identification with it are seen as a deviation: “Ukraine has left the Russian state, but the Russian state has not left Ukraine and Ukrainians, the Russification of which plays the role of metastases of the old empire in our young state” (Hnatkevych 1999: 10). In a Prosvita’s appeal to the prime minister, Valerii Pustovoitenko, Russian-language periodicals were called “satanic” (1999: 101). In other words, Ukrainian and Russian are treated as “good” and “evil,” respectively.

Perhaps the main objective of Ukrainophiles from the Prosvita society is to counter any demands to elevate the status of Russian. Thus Yuri Hnatkevych does not simply understate the numbers, but even denies the very existence of Russian speakers as a separate group, which is the key argument in demands for giving Russian an official status: “If a Ukrainian, because of life experience and language practice, has a better command of Russian than Ukrainian, then this fact by itself does not give grounds to include such a Ukrainian in the ranks of ‘Russian-speakers.’ He is bilingual. […] In Ukraine there are no people who do not understand Ukrainian at all and do not use it at least passively, therefore, there are no exclusively Russian-speaking people in Ukraine.” (Hnatkevych 1999: 70).

From this perspective, those who speak Russian are portrayed as “damaged” as a consequence of Russification, and do not belong to one or the other group defined along ethnic lines: “Ukráintsy are a new national category. They are not Russians, although they use Russian lexis. At the same time, they cannot be considered Ukrainians, because they do not use the language of their nation and its fate and future do not concern them. […] Each Ukráiniets has abandoned his language and is clearly aware of this fact. Ukráintsy are Ukrainians of a different type. They do not teach their children Ukrainian as their native language, instead orienting themselves in the long run towards a completely different culture” (Hnatkevych 1999: 74–75). So, switching to Russian is presented as not only a result of feeling inferior but is also treated as a moral crime, a betrayal of their native language and community. Ukrainians who speak Russian with their children at home are accused of Russification which “is consciously and unconsciously designed for the degeneration of the Ukrainian nation” (1999: 11).

While heaping blame on those who speak Russian, maximalist Ukrainophiles decline to appeal to them, postulating the impossibility of chang-
ing their language behavior, nor of convincing them to “return” to their own community or at least to stop the “wrongdoing” against it: “We do not appeal for understanding to the proprietors and publishers of new or old Russian-language publications […] [These are] people who have become mankurts or janissari, who have torn out their own Ukrainian roots and seek to do the same to others. The fate of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainianness does not concern them, and never will” (Hnatkevych 1999: 27; emphasis added). Thus, Ukrainians who use Russian are portrayed as “infected” (which is a continuation of the metaphor that Russification is a disease) and who do not seek “treatment.”

In addition to deliberate Russifiers, Hnatkevych also distinguishes the “semi-Russified,” people who continue speaking Ukrainian but also use Russian. “A significant portion of these people speak Russian with their children, or more exactly use Russian words, because it’s often difficult to name what they speak the Russian language. The cause of this behavior is a low level of general and linguistic culture. Sometimes such Ukrainians are ashamed of their surzhyk language. […] Their behavior with respect to language reminds one of splinters flowing in a torrent” (Hnatkevych 1999: 19). Hnatkevych identifies this group as being the most numerous in Kyiv, the second largest group being those who speak mostly (or only) Russian. According to this model, these two groups along with ethnic Russians and representatives of national minorities in general, account for the language structure of the Kyiv population. Consequently, the Ukrainian-speaking group, which he terms “Ukrainians” or “true Ukrainians (shchyri ukraiintsyi)” (1999: 33), with which Hnatkevych identifies personally, is in essence not a broad social group, but an elite. His depiction of the plausible elevation of the Russian language to the status of a state language supports this contention: “Not a soul in Ukraine, with the exception of a handful of idealistic but not moneyed national-democrats is going to defend the Ukrainian language. It will be betrayed” (Hnatkevych 1999: 76).

In the above-cited appeal to the prime minister, maximalist Ukrainophiles demand support for the Ukrainian language based on its weakness: “A bird with wings trimmed, no matter how beautiful it may be, cannot compete with a predatory bird. […] The Ukrainian language had its wings cut and legs broken. It doesn’t have the strength to compete under market conditions with a language that forced it to wander like a deflowered girl (pokrytka) in the shadows of her own house” (Hnatkevych 1999: 101). The weakness that is ascribed to the Ukrainian language is portrayed not just as an external or status characteristic (pokrytka) but also as an internal feature, a view supported by the metaphor of illness and disability.
3.2. **Program of action**

According to such presentation of the language grouping, the only group that is concerned about the fate of the Ukrainian language and the putative Ukrainian community is the maximalist Ukrainophile group itself. However, by their own presentation they are neither numerous nor influential. Therefore, Hnatkevych and other ideologists of Prosvita count on the state to carry out their program for them: “our language is dying. And it will die, […] unless the authorities in Ukraine become truly Ukrainian” (Hnatkevych 1999: 99). The maximalist plan directed at carrying out change in the actual language situation could be divided into two phases. The first one prescribes the engagement of the state apparatus in an Ukrainianization program: “Ukraine was Russified by its leaders. They must also de-Russify it” (1999: 49). Thereafter, during the second phase the defense of the state language becomes an exclusive task of the state: “[The state] must teach the state language to its citizens, first of all to civil servants and convince them of the necessity of using the language while on duty” (1999: 78; emphasis mine). Along with this, the state, as Ukrainophile ideologists put it, must become an advocate for the Ukrainian-language community, gaining responsibility for its destiny: “For the state, it is not appropriate to acquiesce to the situation, when in the eastern and southern oblasts of Ukraine millions of children of Ukrainians are denied the opportunity to receive an education in Ukrainian in schools and colleges” (1999: 71; emphasis added).

Considering that, maximalist Ukrainophiles see their own role not in influencing the current situation, but in impacting those with influence, who in turn are supposed to change the situation in the desired direction: “The targets of our influence and agitation must be not an average inhabitant and not even an average functionary, but leaders of a higher order, and the higher a leader, the more pronounced our agitation and influence on him must be” (1999: 52). It is worth mentioning that maximalists themselves admit that for the state, defense of the Ukrainian language is not a goal: “The Ukrainian authorities see everything, hear everything, and understand everything. Yet so far they have done nothing to support the Ukrainian press and Ukrainian book publishing in Ukraine” (1999: 99).

4. **Pragmatic Ukrainophiles**

4.1. **Presentation of language grouping**

In contrast to maximalists, Ukrainophile pragmatists do not postulate a clear division of the population according to language markers. However,
some signs of its implicit presence can be found. In the booklet ‘Make a gift . . .’ (Zroby podarunok . . .), Ukraine is viewed as naturally unilingual: “From times immemorial, in almost all of Ukraine, Ukrainian was spoken” (Zroby podarunok 2007: 5). Accordingly, bilingualism is treated not as a self-evident, but as a possible (and undesirable) characteristic: “Maybe Ukraine needs to become a country of several parts, with several languages, like Switzerland or Belgium, but is that something to rejoice about? In our opinion, it [would be] wrong” (2007: 6; emphasis added).

Just like maximalists, pragmatists postulate the existence of a Ukrainian-speaking community deserted by those Ukrainians who currently speak Russian: “We are not against the Russian language. We are against apathy and weakness, which prompts people to give up the language of their forefathers, of their land” (2007: 2; emphasis mine). The two discourses share a negative evaluation of speaking Russian, but pragmatic Ukrainophiles treat it not as a deliberate wrongdoing, but as a consequence of circumstances that are external to the individual.

At the same time, the switch to Ukrainian advocated in the booklet is presented not as an external obligation that must be obeyed, but as a conscious choice of the individual: “[S]witch to Russian, when you feel the need. After all, you are the master of the situation. Switch to Russian with particular people or in particular circumstances. [...] If at some moment you simply get tired of speaking Ukrainian, take a break for a few hours or days” (Zroby podarunok 2007: 9). In other words, the change of language behavior is not treated as abrupt or absolute: mastery of Ukrainian is postulated as being additional to that of Russian. Moreover, a return to the native language does not include a component of irreversibility, i.e., potential “new returnees” are not expected to give up Russian, nor be torn away from their Russian-speaking environment, and language choice remains an internal decision for the individual.

One of the points on the agenda of pragmatic Ukrainophiles is the acknowledgement of the current role of the Russian language and the need to avoid a conflict between speakers of the two languages: “[I]n Ukraine, there should be an atmosphere of mutual understanding” (Zroby podarunok 2007: 8). Such an attitude may be (at least, in part) caused by the fact that Russian is the native language of many leaders of the “Don’t Be Indifferent” movement, and switching to Ukrainian was a conscious decision for them. In the words of rock singer Serhii Prysiazhnyi, “I am Ukrainian, but my first native language was Russian” (2007: 16). Likewise, the Mandry music group’s frontman Foma says that, “I’m a Kyivite
and since childhood I was in a Russian-speaking environment. Like the majority, I spoke Russian” (2007: 4).

Since pragmatists do not treat people who speak Ukrainian and Russian as members of separate language groups, the booklet does not portray the Other in a negative light. At the same time, we can observe some sort of negative portrayal in the description of Ukrainophile maximalists and their methods. As rockabilly musician from Western Ukraine, Yurii Zhuravel’, recalls from the 1990s, “[t]hey came to us from the municipal executive committee and wrecked stands holding posters from our theater because they were in Russian. Then I came to hate inadequate methods of Ukrainianization, and decided out of principle to speak Russian. Today, I see this as an example of how not to introduce patriotic ideas” (Zroby podarunok 2007: 16).

Having the same aspiration to promote Ukrainian as maximalists, pragmatists emphasize not its holiness, but its use. So, the purity of the language, which for maximalists is an absolute, for pragmatists is not important and even not needed, at least to the extent it keeps one from speaking the language: “Do not underestimate your knowledge of Ukrainian. Imagine that your mastery of any other foreign language, for example English, is the same as your mastery of Ukrainian. In that case you would consider that you do know English just perfectly, and would use it with great relish whenever possible” (Zroby podarunok 2007: 17). Therefore, it is put forth that plugging into the Ukrainian-speaking community is easy, since mastery of the Ukrainian language is accessible to almost all Russian speakers, albeit to different degrees.

Another aspect of this difference is the perception of surzhyk and its speakers. First of all, surzhyk (which is mentioned several times in the twenty-page booklet) is not seen as “spoiled” or “ignorant” language, but viewed rather positively — as a form of Ukrainian that may be used. Following the goal of protecting surzhyk, pragmatists address its speakers in order to improve their self-esteem and their connection with the Ukrainian-speaking community: “It’s nonsense to be embarrassed by the Ukrainian language (even surzhyk) in Ukraine” (2007: 21). Moreover, surzhyk speakers are offered a positive program which is attainable, and at the same time does not demand any special effort from them: “Today a person speaks surzhyk, and tomorrow his or her children will fully master Ukrainian and will become a part of a strong Ukrainian-speaking community” (2007: 23). Along with this, pragmatists send a separate message to other members of the perceived group, in particular those speaking proper Ukrainian: “Be understanding towards those who speak surzhyk” (2007: 23).
4.2. Program of action

The booklet declares two goals. The first one is to increase the use of the Ukrainian language. The reader (that is, the target of the proposed program) is offered a choice of several variations of linguistic behavior — from a full switch to Ukrainian to just toleration of those who do speak it. The second goal is to improve the attitude toward the Ukrainian language among Russian speakers. It is remarkable that these two goals are not separated, that is, those Russian speakers whom pragmatists are trying to convince to change their own language behavior (start using Ukrainian or even switch to it) are not separated from those who might remain Russian speaking, but should change their attitude and not treat other people’s speaking Ukrainian and switching to it with hostility or view it as inferior.

The most important practical task that “Don’t Be Indifferent” sets for itself is the creation of competitive products in the Ukrainian language (Zroby podarunok 2007: 8). Supporting Ukrainian as the state language (which is the main goal of maximalists) is second in the list of priorities, and harmonious coexistence of languages (which is often advocated by Russophiles as their priority) is the third.

The self-presentation of the leaders of the group in the pragmatists’ discourse also differs from the maximalists’, not only in (implicit) professional affiliations, but also in their relationship with the represented community: “This shows the importance of the position of creative intellectuals and social leaders — musicians, journalists, TV workers, businesspeople, and so on. They are opinion leaders, and others listen to them. Recall for example how the Mel Gibson film Brave Heart of 1995 raised the level of patriotism in Scotland” (Zroby podarunok 2007: 16). Moreover, the leadership in the movement to strengthen the Ukrainian language is portrayed as a result of a conscious choice. In this way, pragmatists illustrate the possibility that anyone can join the group of “leaders” regardless of their ethnic or linguistic origins.

Thus the strengthening of the position of the Ukrainian language is framed as a collective action of the whole language group, in particular by means of mutual help and small steps. “We all, Ukrainians, are one organism. The success of one of us is shared with others. For example, you bought our disk. With this money tomorrow I will be able to record a clip and thus the producer and the whole group can also earn something. They, in their turn, will buy the products of the company where you work. It’s important to consciously help one another” (Zroby podarunok 2007: 18).
5. Supremacist Russophiles

5.1. Presentation of language grouping

In the framework of this discourse, the protection of the Russian language emerges as a defense of the Russian people (*russkii narod*), which is continuously emphasized in the names of organizations: Russkii Blok (‘The Russian Block’), Russkoie Dvizhenie Ukrainy (RDU, ‘The Russian Movement of Ukraine’) and their newspapers — *Russkaia Pravda, Russkii Mir*. This notion of *russkie* contains two different meanings. First, they are treated as an ethnic group that is not an ethnic minority but one of two equally large groups in Ukraine: “We, the *russkie*, do not consider ourselves a minority — that would be a big mistake [to think we are a minority]. Half of Ukraine’s population is a *russkoe* population, *russkoe* rather than *rossiiskoe*” (Svistunov 2001a).11 This community is presented as considerably larger than the number of people with ethnic Russian self-identification. According to Alexander Svistunov, it includes “*all residents* of Ukraine, who acknowledge their belonging to the thousand-year-old population of Rus, and maintain a spiritual unity with the historical brotherhood of nations that arose out of ancient Rus” (Svistunov 2001a; emphasis added). Second, the community that supremacists claim to defend is, at the same time, just a part of a larger entity, which is called the “Eastern Slavic civilization” (Provatorov 2004; emphasis added), “thrice-united Russian people” or “the Russian world” (Vernut’ 2004; emphasis added), and whose membership is by no means limited to Russia.

By speaking about “half of Ukraine’s population,” the RDU implicitly acknowledges the existence of a separate Ukrainian language, and therefore, of a certain group that exists apart from the Russian. On the other hand, the boundaries of the Ukrainian (and therefore, also of Russian) community are not clearly defined. The supremacists emphasize that “[t]he Russians in Ukraine are not a foreign factor. Along with other nationalities in the general population, this is the *people* [narod] of Ukraine . . . In the Russkii Blok . . . we believe in the idea that *Ukrainians and Russians in Ukraine are one people*. For the larger part of the population, this is a fact which doesn’t require proof” (Lukianenko 2002; emphasis in the original). At issue here of course is an ethnic, rather than a political interpretation of the word ‘people’ (narod), since it does not prescribe the unity of Ukrainians with ethnic groups other than Russians and, probably, Belarusians. In this way, the Ukrainian (and in particular, the Ukrainian-speaking) identity is seen not as an alternative to the Russian one, but as a variant of the Common Russian (*obscherusskaia*) identity.
According to the views of the RDU, Ukrainian culture can only be portrayed as ancillary to the greater Russian culture: “It is unbelievable to reject the belonging to the East Slavic civilization . . . the peculiarities of the Russian-Ukrainian culture and mentality . . . and suddenly become a self-sufficient state of the European type . . . On this idea, mediocrity and provincialism have raised their heads highly, the veil has been pulled over beggarly people’s eyes, and the young generation has been deprived of true values and guiding lines” (Svistunov 2001a). In their view, the Russian community, united by the Russian language, encompasses not only ethnic Russians, but also (implicitly) those who speak Ukrainian or some variant of mixed language, but do not manifest their separateness.

Therefore, the criterion for distinguishing the other group, the non-Russians, is not the use of a language or linguistic identity, but the affirmation of separateness from the Russian identity. Criteria for inclusion in this group can be found specifically in an editorial article of Russkaia Pravda: “Why is our language treated with such hate? Let’s see who they [haters] are and what their intentions are. And we will see that they are opponents of the unity of the three branches of the Russian people . . . depravers of morality and Herostratuses of culture . . . The Russian language is truly seen by them as one of three whales that the power of the Russian World rests on. The other two are the thrice-united Russian people and its Orthodox faith. Local Chikatilos,12 apprentices of NATO’s Jacks the Ripper which threaten the life of the Russian World, understand how the Russian language strengthens this world. They are aware of this language’s culture-cultivating role. They realize that without the Russian language . . . our people [narod] will degrade and the common Russian culture will die. And then ethnic annihilation of eastern Slavs will take place according to a plan contrived of by Euro-American strategists” (Vernut’ 2004).

In the framework of this discourse, those who believe in a distinct Ukrainian identity are portrayed as a numerically small group. They are sometimes localized to Western Ukraine and are labeled as “Galicians.” These “separatists” are portrayed as a group backed from the outside and lacking significant support among the population. At the same time, this group is presented as an extremely aggressive minority, which physically threatens the RDU and thereby the majority of the population of Ukraine that the movement claims to represent: “The Russian Movement of Ukraine not once informed the police and society about frequent attacks on the organization’s activists . . . by fascist-like bandits from Ukrainian extremist structures . . . They also burnt offices of the RDU in Kyiv and attacked its headquarters in Luhansk . . .” (Svoikh 2002).
5.2. Program of action

The main declared objective in the framework of this discourse is the recognition of Russian as a state language. Formally, the struggle aims to achieve equality with Ukrainian. However, in the view of the supremacists’ refusal to acknowledge worthiness and self-sufficiency of the Ukrainian language (which is evident from the above quotes), they are actually seeking to restore the superior social status that Russian enjoyed in pre-independent Ukraine: “We demand that the Russian language be granted the status as a state language along with Ukrainian. Otherwise, we will be doomed to an eternal internal conflict and spiritual provincialism . . . [W]e have become a state with provincial mentality (khutorskoe myshlenie), but with huge and foolish ambitions. And even if the whole population of Ukraine tomorrow speaks the state language, the situation won’t change” (Svistunov 2001a; emphasis added).

Spokespeople of this group mostly demand the “restoration of justice” from the government, but they also declare their interest in a dialogue with the other language group: “The two main peoples in Ukraine must come to an agreement. Come to an agreement without external factors. Some common theories, such as the theory of bilingualism, in the meaning of mastering both the Ukrainian and Russian languages, should be worked out” (Svistunov 2001b). However, considering the supremacists’ discredit of the defenders of the Ukrainian language and their refusal to recognize the legitimacy of that defense, such a dialogue could only take place on the supremacists’ own terms.

6. Equalistic Russophiles

6.1. Presentation of language grouping

A fundamental argument by Vladimir Malinkovich is the denial of the notion that linguistic belonging originates from ethnic belonging. He prefers the use of a language as a criterion of language grouping and postulates the division of the population approximately in half: “Those who speak Russian are more than half, not less than 50%. Therefore, the first thing that I consider important is to separate the problem of language from the problem of ethnicity” (Chalenko 2000b). Furthermore, according to Malinkovich, the processes of the formation of the two language groups are not yet complete, and the two groups are being formed at different tempos. Actually, he sees the Ukrainian-speaking group as already formed, although it may not include all those who could potentially be-
long to it: “... nationalistic-minded part of our society (12–15 percent of the population) has its values, actively demonstrates and defends them, is able to consolidate for them, particularly during electoral campaigns. So, these people have become real citizens of the state. One cannot deny that” (Lopatin 2001).

At the same time, the Russian-speaking community is presented as not fully formed yet and only potentially existing: “It is bad that there is no civil society in the east of Ukraine, while it already exists in the western oblasts” (Bahatokul’turnist’ 2003: 14). As we can see, language communities in his scheme are localized geographically: Ukrainian speakers mainly in the west of the country, and Russian speakers in the east.

This division is reflected on the political level in a struggle between representatives of the interests of these communities, whom Malinkovich calls the Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking intelligentsias: “It is a very serious problem that it is mostly nationally-oriented Ukrainian-speaking intelligentsia that participates in the construction of our ... society. At the same time, the Russian-speaking intelligentsia, which is much more numerous and voluminous, has not been in demand after the proclamation of independence and is even in the state of implicit rejection. Why did that happen? ... [Because] the people who have really been ruling the country for ten years (the nomenklatura and businesspeople), have essentially given the nationalists complete control over the whole humanitarian block (culture, education and the state-owned media)” (Lopatin 2001).

As we can see from the text above, the establishment of Ukrainian as the only state language is described as a victory of Ukrainophiles over Russophiles. However, in view of the Ukrainophiles' alleged weakness, this victory is represented not as their own achievement, but as an act of those who wield real power — the “nomenklatura and businesspeople.”

6.2. Program of action

The main aim of the equalizers is to stop perceived discrimination against Russian speakers and to achieve equality of the two languages. At the same time the “rights” discourse is not directed against the state, even if it seems odd, and the above excerpt shows why. Instead, it is assumed that the state is indifferent to the language problem, as its interests lie elsewhere. This discourse explains the state’s refusal to elevate the status of the Russian language not as a deliberate policy, but as due to the low priority of the language sphere. As Malinkovich claims, by focusing on its own interests in other spheres (most of all, the economic one), the
leadership of the state allows the Ukrainophile program to be implemented in the language sphere. However, the equalizers assume that the state leadership itself does not subscribe to this program. Thus, to change the situation, they deem it necessary to attract the leadership’s attention to the language issue, most of all by unifying the Russian speakers (especially their representatives among the intelligentsia) and applying pressure from this group on the state: “...[T]oday there is an opportunity for creating a liberal-democratic wing in politics, and even for showing the West that it is not nationalists who are supporters of Ukraine’s European development. [But] first of all the Russian-speaking intelligentsia must realize its political priorities and the need to consolidate for their protection” (Lopatin 2001).

At the same time, this discourse advocates the importance of taking into account the interests of the other group: “We must aspire to a consensus if we want to have a united Ukrainian civic nation” (Bahato-kul’turnist’ 2003: 14). Moreover, Ukrainophiles are acknowledged to be the counterparty in a dialogue: “I am a member of the group of Russian-speaking Ukrainian intelligentsia that is trying to begin such a dialogue ... [U]nfortunately, the Ukrainian-speaking intelligentsia ignores all that, although such a dialogue is not only desirable but necessary” (2003: 14). While the Ukrainophiles’ program is criticized in the equalistic discourse, it is not de-legitimized as such: “[I]n my opinion, the Ukrainian language was really oppressed for many years in the past, so I support the development of the Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian language and the state status of the latter” (Chalenko 2000a).

7. Conclusions

We may discern two levels of conflict associated with the above-examined presentations.

The first level arises from the internal content of each presentation — of both the represented group and language grouping of society in general — and the possibility for the coexistence of different presentations, including those of the same group.

Thus, the discourse of maximalist Ukrainophilism, which represents language grouping as proceeding from ethnic grouping, and which sees the Ukrainian language as the language of “three quarters of the population,” is in conflict with the linguistic practices of those people whose ethnic identity does not coincide with their language practice and/or identification. Most visibly, this pertains to people who have a Ukrainian ethnic identity, but are associated with the Russian language in their
practices or attitudes. This presentation also makes inclusion impossible for people with a different ethnic identity, even if their language practice is strictly Ukrainian, and whose attitude toward supporting this language may be unequivocal, perhaps even to the point of opposition to the Russian language.

Despite actual (or at least potential) inclusion into the Ukrainian group of those whose language practices are associated with Russian, their portrayal in the maximalist Ukrainophile discourse is clearly negative and contains elements of othering. Moreover, the program of Ukrainianization does not offer them a path of “return” to the group, which likely makes uncomfortable those whose language practices and attitudes are portrayed as deviations from the norm.

Another dimension of the conflict emerges from transferring the responsibility of carrying out the maximalists’ program to the state. So, if the state does not carry out the program, then it is accused of betrayal (theses of the “non-Ukrainian Ukraine,” the “president who is not ours,” and so on). In case the state does carry out the program, the conflict is transferred to the social level, causing a negative reaction from those who affiliate with the Russian language and unease among those people who are supposed to be “returned” without considering their preferences.

By contrast, pragmatic Ukrainophiles emphasize not a presentation of the Ukrainian group, but a program of changes in a desired direction. This program is declared in the name of the Ukrainian community, whose description does include the ethnic criterion in part, but is not well defined, and the possibility of belonging is extended even to those who only have sympathy for the Ukrainian language without any practice of speaking it. The program appeals both to active members of the group (it defends their rights, calls upon them to actively take a stand, and gathers them for mutual assistance) and to potential members of the group (it underscores the acceptability of surzhyk and presents the Ukrainian language as attractive). According to this program, the acquisition of membership in the Ukrainian community is a free decision, which does not require a “departure” from another community. It is also not irreversible: it does not demand exclusive use of Ukrainian. At the same time, an obvious consequence that follows from this program is that new converts would not seek to elevate the status of the Russian language. That is, they would leave the ranks of adherents to this idea. In this respect, there is a competition for potential members between pragmatic Ukrainophiles and Russophiles.

Spokespeople for the supremacy of the Russian language postulate a connection between linguistic and ethnic belonging, but their view of this
relation is opposite to that of maximalist Ukrainophiles, namely, speaking Russian is seen as a manifestation of belonging to the Russian people, a community which is partly ethnic and partly rooted in culture and mentality. Since the program for the defense of the Russian language actually aims at the maintenance of its dominant position, the implementation of this program contains several sources of tensions: (i) with those who would attempt to elevate the position of Ukrainian; (ii) with the state, insofar as it acts to support the Ukrainian language or just declines to elevate the status of Russian; and (iii) an internal conflict for those who speak Russian, but are indifferent or opposed to attempts to elevate its status or even to preserve its current role in Ukrainian society. Moreover, this program advocates that the Russian language community in Ukraine (along with the rest of the “less conscious” population) is not only connected with Russia, but has the same needs and interests, which runs counter to the very idea of the Ukrainian nation and state.

The program of equalistic Russophiles also calls for the elevation of the status of Russian to that of an official language (symbolically lower than Ukrainian), or of a state language (fully equal to Ukrainian), but this demand is based on a different model of language grouping. In particular, these authors claim that language grouping is not the same as ethnic grouping. In this way, bilingualism on the state level is presented as an acknowledgement of the equality of both language groups and their members. The unnaturalness of unilingualism at the state level is underscored by comparing it to the language practice of the vast majority of citizens in which, it is claimed, the Russian language naturally coexists with Ukrainian. The demand for equality has a very important regional aspect, namely Ukrainian is presented as the language of the country’s west and center (and lately, also of the capital), and Russian as the language of the east and south. Accordingly, by giving the state status only to Ukrainian, the central government, equalists believe, ignores the interests of the regions, or even worse, lets one part of Ukraine dominate over the other.

As a result, maximalist Ukrainophiles and supremacist Russophiles, who both postulate the superiority of their respective languages, also consider a high status or comfortable position of the other language as not only undesirable, but also as abnormal and temporary. In the discourses of pragmatic Ukrainophiles and equalistic Russophiles, mutual antagonism is also present, but at the same time they acknowledge coexistence with the other language as a given, declare a desire for peaceful coexistence of languages and their speakers, and approve, or at least do not condemn, bilingualism on an individual level. The equalizers see the way to manage language disputes in a dialogue between representatives of
both language groups, but they consider maximalist, rather than the pragmatic Ukrainophiles, to be their counterpart on the Ukrainian-speaking side.

If we analyze images of the groups and their languages in the categories “minority–majority” as proposed by Wolfgang Wölck, the Ukrainian language group has clear features of a minority in the discourse of maximalists (“Ukrainian language had its wings cut and legs broken”), and of a majority in the discourse of pragmatists (creation of competitive products, mutual help of Ukrainian speakers). It is also very remarkable that in the discourse of supremacy, not only is Russian portrayed as having positive instrumental features, but also Ukrainian speakers (those who manifest their separate language identity) are labeled with negative personal characteristics (“Chikatilos,” “Herostratuses,” “depravers of morality”), which shows, according to Wölck, that they are perceived as a majority as well.

There are also differences in the sharpness with which language grouping and group boundaries are portrayed. This division is practically absent from the discourse of pragmatists, who maintain that belonging to a group is a result of individual choice, and that change in language practice is desirable, but not mandatory. This discourse acknowledges individual bilingualism, and it does not represent surzhik as something negative. The clearest divisions are postulated in the discourse of the maximalist Ukrainophiles, who deny bilingual and surzhik-based identity and practices.

A comparison of rhetoric of the defenders of the Ukrainian and Russian languages shows that conflicts between them are caused not only by the fact that they defend different languages, but also by the incompatibility of their presentations of language grouping. For the maximalists and supremacists, these presentations are based on similar criteria, but they exclude or marginalize the other language group (Russian and Ukrainian, respectively). At the same time, there is no equivalent antagonism in the other pairing, pragmatists and equalizers. Each of these two discourses postulates linguistic criteria of group belonging (language use and attitude toward language), and accepts that, besides its represented group, there is a group defined by the use of and identification with the other language. Considering that equalizers and pragmatists present peaceful coexistence as their goal and indicate their readiness to hold a dialogue, these discourses can coexist, albeit with some tensions caused by different interests of the represented groups and competition for potential members (those whose language identity would not be already shaped). This competition is much more evident between those who claim to represent the speakers of the same language (i.e., maximalists and
pragmatists on the one hand and supremacists and equalizers on the other) — especially if/when those discourses become programs of political parties or movements, which would compete for a monopoly representation of the respective language.

The second level of conflict among the presentations of linguistic groups has to do with their mediated or implicit presence in society, most of all in the rhetoric and activities of leading political forces in the Ukrainophile and Russophile camps. Each of these forces speaks mostly about the problems of their respective language, be it Russian or Ukrainian, and it is on this basis that they are identified by the electorate as “pro-Russian” or “pro-Ukrainian” in the linguistic sense. Their rhetoric is based on the defense of their language without clearly defining who is supposed to win or lose from this defense, i.e., who is included in the language group in question. At the same time, as the analysis of political texts has shown, certain presentations of language grouping are nonetheless present in the debates on language issues. In particular, President Yushchenko and leaders of the Our Ukraine block, speaking about the uniting role of Ukrainian, see it as the language of “three quarters of the population” — an idea from the maximalistic Ukrainophile discourse. Conversely, the Party of Regions from the Russophilic side bases its “language rhetoric” on the program of equalizers and partly of supremacists. The group presentations that form the basis of this discourse determine the character and content of current language debates of political actors and, through the intermediation of the media, to a significant extent also in the whole society, although this is often not understood by the political players themselves.

The political debates and the presentations of language groups embedded in them, as described in this article, only outline the possibilities for shaping such groups in Ukrainian society. Whether any of these presentations will become dominant in society, and whether there will be a clear structuring on the basis of particular criteria, will depend on their degree of adequacy for the current language practices and preferences of members of the putative groups, as well as on changes in language practices and attitudes in Ukrainian society.

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Notes

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who translated this text into English, and to Maryanna Kornienko, who helped me in editing it.

1. In his later article, this group is called rus’ko–ukraı¨ntsi (Russians–Ukrainians) (Khmelko 2006).

2. Those respondents who chose the “both languages” option on the questionnaire were allocated to the “surzhyk speakers” group. In this way, one category includes both those who speak one mixed language with elements of Ukrainian and Russian and those whose families alternate between Russian and Ukrainian.

3. The author designates the “first language” as “the natural language which a person learned as the first language in life, without reliance on any other natural language,” and “basic language” as “the language in which a speaker has mastery of most lingual subsystems, and in which he can most easily and quickly express a given thought, and which he uses in unbounded, unforced circumstances” (Trub 2000: 49). Using these two criteria, the author describes four types of language proficiency, which could become a basis for distinguishing language groups. Two of them, “Ukrainian basic and first, Russian non-basic and non-first” and “Russian basic and first, Ukrainian non-basic and non-first” describe “purely” Ukrainian and Russian language practices, respectively. The third type, “Ukrainian non-basic and first, Russian basic and non-first,” captures the process of transition from Ukrainian to Russian, or “Russification.” The fourth, “Russian non-basic first, Ukrainian basic non-first,” is a symptom of the opposite process of “Ukrainianization,” the transition from Russian to Ukrainian (2000: 50).


5. I consider these terms less confusing than “Ukrainophones” and “Russophones,” which are more frequently used (Wilson 1998; Arel 1995; Kulyk 2001) because of the implicit connection of the latter pair with language practice. Although “-phone” definitions sometimes are clearly stated as ideological positions (Kulyk 2004: 19–20; Bernsand 2006: 78), they are often used without special explanation. Whenever this happens, “Russophones” may mean “Russian speakers,” “Russian-cultured people,” and “Russophiles” at the same time. So the ideological position becomes implicitly prescribed to all those who have the same language practice (see, for example, Zhurzhchenko 2002).

6. Andrew Wilson (1998), for example, distinguishes “Ukrainophone nationalists” (1998: 124) and “liberal Ukrainophones” (1998: 136) among the defenders of Ukrainian language, although the difference between the two is not clearly stated.

7. In the Russian language, the word russkii has two meanings: (i) ethnic Russian and; (ii) belonging to the ancient Rus’, Kyiv Rus’. In Ukrainian, there are two different words: rosii’s’kyi for the first and rus’kyi for the second. The leaders of the Russian Block usually emphasize that, in Ukrainian, its name is Rus’kyi Blok and not Rosii’s’kyi. That is a conscious rhetorical figure for outsiders, because for the leaders of pro-Russian organizations, as well as for their supporters, Rus’ naturally (and almost exclusively) means ‘old Russia’.

8. The author uses the form that is widespread in colloquial Russian, with the stress on the second syllable, whereas the normative form (in Ukrainian, and also in literary Russian) is considered a stress on the third syllable.

9. Russian-language publications hold the lead in the Ukrainian media market, outselling Ukrainian-language publications in every market segment. However, with the appearance in the last years of several Ukrainian-language dailies and magazines, the situation has somewhat changed, in comparison to earlier years. Concerning the characteristics of the Ukrainian media, refer to the article by Volodymyr Kulyk in this issue.
10. In most of the articles by Yurii Hnatkevych, the language situation is examined using Kyiv as an example. However, he implicitly applies this model to the whole country, albeit different proportions (allegedly) of the language groups in different regions.

11. Both русский (referring to the Russians as an ethnocultural group) and российский (referring to Russia as a country/state) are translated as “Russian” into the English language. However, in the reminder of this article (including quotations from analyzed discourses) the word “Russian” will be only used in the first meaning.

12. Chikatilo is the surname of the most notorious serial murderer in Russia.

13. “The state” here means government apparatus under President Leonid Kuchma (1994–2004), who was the most powerful actor in Ukrainian politics in general and language politics in particular.

14. That is true for Kuchma’s presidency, the time when the analyzed articles of Malinkovych were published. President Kuchma was from a Russian-speaking background, and came to power with (and due to) his promise to make Russian a second state language. When in power, he assumed influence over the parliament and the government. Russophiles did not criticize him sharply, even when he spoke against elevating the status of the Russian language. In comparison, President Yushchenko, who came from a Ukrainian-speaking background and was associated with Ukrainophiles, was harshly criticized for his statements to the same effect. However, the “real” policies of both presidents were very similar: they avoided intruding into the language sphere (Shumlianskyi 2006a: 99–100; Kulyk 2007: 272–274).

15. Some Ukrainophiles reject this term; instead they speak about “de-Russification,” in other words, not imposition of a new state but a reversion to the “natural” state, one with a dominance of the Ukrainian language.

16. That using Russian (or even acknowledging belonging to the Russian-speaking language group) is not a determiner of attitudes toward its defense is confirmed by sociological studies and by numerous opinions expressed by representatives of the perceived Russophone group in the media. One example of this are the comments on the “Appeal of Representatives of the Creative Intelligentsia to the Parties of the Ruling Coalition” by visitors of the Communist Party of Ukraine Web site where it appeared (Obraschenie predstavitelei 2007). The appearance of several pro-Ukrainian informal groups, such as the Organization of Russian-speaking Ukrainian Nationalists (Nashi vzgliady n.d.) in the late 1990s or Web initiatives like Твоїй мови (“Your language”), advocating protection of the Ukrainian language and/or opposing a higher status to Russian, in which they publish their materials, is also remarkable.

17. As results of longitudinal surveys in Peru and some other bilingual societies show, in language contact, the majority language and its speakers are portrayed with positive instrumental-institutional (“rich,” “educated,” “successful”) and negative personal (“dumb,” “unreliable,” “deceitful”) characteristics, while the minority tends to evoke positive personal-affective (“smart,” “honest,” “responsible”) and negative instrumental (“poor,” “uneducated”) characteristics (Wölck 2004).

18. In the language sphere, this opposition was made most obvious during the declaration of Russian as a regional language in the eastern oblasts (Shumlianskyi 2006b). With respect to the language question at that time, President Yushchenko and Our Ukraine emerged as the leaders of the Ukrainophile camp, while the Party of Regions and Viktor Yanukovych emerged as the leaders of the Russophile camp.

19. The connection between the president’s views and concepts of the maximalist discourse is evident, for example, in some appointments to the government. For example, David Zhvaniia, an exclusively Russian speaker, was appointed to a ministerial post. Notwithstanding the strong “Ukrainianizing” rhetoric of the president, in this case
not speaking Ukrainian was a non-issue because Zhvaniia was clearly seen as non-Ukrainian, being a member of a minority.

20. Claims for official status for Russian are usually presented by the party leaders as a demand of their linguistic part or geographic region (usually the South and East) of Ukraine. The party’s main speaker on language issues, Vadim Kolesnichenko, mostly uses two theses — the defense of the rights of Russian speakers and the equality of the speakers of both major languages (e.g., Kolesnichenko 2007) — which are leading ideas in the equalizing version of the Russophile discourse. However, claims for elevating the status of Russian are frequently supported by other arguments when only the residents of their core region (Donetsk, Luhansk, Crimea, etc.) are being addressed. More radical than the party leadership are regional bosses of the party, particularly those from Donetsk and the Crimea, whose rhetoric also includes the arguments of supremacy. Most illustrative are statements by secretary of the Donetsk city council Nikolai Levchenko, who came out with a demand to declare Russian the sole state language, based on the claim that Ukrainian cannot be a state language because it is “underdeveloped” and only appropriate for “folklore and anecdotes” (Zikora 2007).

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The impact of ideologies on the standardization of modern Ukrainian*

GALINA YAVORSKA

Abstract

The contemporary trends in the processes of codification of Ukrainian are influenced by numerous different factors. Today’s rise of activity in the sphere of language reform is an attempt to resolve rather old cultural and ideological conflicts. Ukrainian linguistic purism mostly manifests itself not in the elimination of lexical borrowings, but in a negative attitude toward bookish elements on a stylistic level. At the same time, in orthography, the struggle for language purity is concentrated on the transliteration of borrowings from Greek, Latin, and other European languages. Whether they focus on the redistribution of stylistic variants or variants of loanword spelling, the language ideologies discussed in this article symbolically underscore cultural distances. An analysis of cultural models and language ideologies associated with them bears witness to the particular role of the romantic and European models in the history of Standard Ukrainian. These models are aimed at reaffirming and consolidating the separatist, divergent function of Standard Ukrainian as one of the fundamental means of supporting the Ukrainian national identity.

Keywords: language ideologies; corpus planning; modern Ukrainian standardization; purism.

1. Introduction

The current stage of codification of the Ukrainian language has witnessed a sharp increase of awareness of language standardization issues. New handbooks and dictionaries (first of all orthographic and terminological ones) published in recent years occasionally contradict one another, and sometimes appear to be ideological programs rather than codified sets of rules. All this is taking place against the background of important
changes in the language situation accompanied by changes in the language itself and in communication stereotypes.

Under these circumstances, current Standard Ukrainian appears to have come to a crossroads: on the one hand, actual tumultuous linguistic practice clearly does not fit into a Procrustean bed of codified norms, and on the other hand, the very process of codification is under pressure due to various ideological tendencies sometimes leading in opposite directions. It is not only a revision of linguistic standards that now takes place, but also — and no less importantly, a revision of criteria, principles, and underlying notions of “language correctness,” the latter revision determined by change of attitude toward the language.

This last aspect still remains insufficiently realized, and this regards not only common speakers, but also professional linguists dealing with questions of standardization and codification. The reason for this is a fact, well-known among sociolinguists, that attitudes toward language in general and standard language in particular are mostly implicit in their character, and in order to make them explicit, it is necessary to apply special analytical procedures.

In such a situation, the first question that needs to be tackled is the selection of an appropriate research methodology. Given this aim, in addition to adopting a general sociolinguistic scheme of language planning, I introduce the notion of a cultural model and establish fundamental cultural models (romantic, European, elitist, and rationalist), which, to various degrees, determine directions of actual corpus planning in Ukraine. Each of these models reflects a particular language ideology, in other words, it is based on a structured set of attitudes and concepts concerning language. It should also be noted that the roots of current language issues in Ukraine have considerable historical depth; therefore any explanation of current events requires consideration of what took place in the 1920s and early 1930s, and even in the first half of the nineteenth century.

2. Stages of language planning and revision of codified norms

I find it expedient to apply a popular sociolinguistic scheme concerning directions and stages of the regulation of society’s linguistic practice, i.e., language planning. According to this scheme, in language-planning processes, one should distinguish between deliberate efforts to allocate the functions of a certain language within the speech community (status planning) and measures intended to standardize that language, in particular, its orthography and terminology, compile normative grammars, etc. (corpus planning) (Kloss 1969). In contemporary research, this scheme is
further developed by the use of Haugen’s model, which describes the following succession of steps in corpus planning: (i) norm selection, (ii) codification, (iii) implementation of codified standards, and (iv) their elaboration (Haugen 1966). The last step is sometimes supplemented by the notion of cultivation of the language standard (Neustupny 1974), which, according to the European tradition, corresponds to measures taken in the sphere of so-called language culture.

The application of this scheme to the history of Modern Ukrainian standardization results in the following. The first phase, that of norm selection, took place from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1840s, when the foundations of new Standard Ukrainian were laid and its dialect base was selected, namely the subdialects of the Middle Dnipro region. The processes of codification of Standard Ukrainian took place over a considerable period, due to unfavorable circumstances under which the Ukrainian language existed in the Russian Empire (where it was denied recognition and outright banned by the tsarist government, e.g., by the Ems decree of 1876), as well as limitations that were imposed on its usage in Austria– Hungary. Despite this, during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a lot of progress was made in norm formation and codification. During this time, grammatical descriptions of the Ukrainian language were created, principles of orthography were actively developed, and with the publication of the four-volume Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language compiled by Borys Hrinchenko (1907–1909), outstanding progress was made in vocabulary codification. However, during this time, a system for implementing codified norms into language practice was virtually nonexistent, as such system presumes, first of all, support from government institutions.

This next phase of development began in full only in the 1920s and only in the part of Ukraine that was incorporated into the USSR. The government policy of “Ukrainianization” carried out at that time was aimed at the widest possible use of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life: school, higher education, government and administration, and mass media. During that time, codification processes became especially dynamic: a set of orthographic rules was developed and adopted in 1928, terminological dictionaries were being actively compiled (Pan’ko et al. 1994), and grammatical and lexical norms were being standardized. However, at the beginning of the 1930s and with the consolidation of Stalin’s totalitarian regime, the situation in the country changed drastically, which had an immediate effect on the processes of language planning in Ukraine. The system for introducing the Ukrainian language into social practice became more and more restrained. The process of codification continued, but its principles were changed.
In the years following the Second World War, the Ukrainian language achieved a high level of normalization and codification. By that time, standards for orthography and orthoepy had long been established (the contemporary Ukrainian orthographic norm was codified in 1946, and until 1990, new editions repeated it with only minor changes). There were also grammars of the Ukrainian language, both for school and scholarly use, the 11-volume Ukrainian dictionary appeared in 1970–1980, and principles were established for the coining of specialized terminology, which were then put to use in compiling a significant number of terminological dictionaries for various branches of knowledge and general encyclopedic references.

Basically, at that time, the main tasks concerning corpus planning were considered to be the development and cultivation of norms as well as the expansion of stylistic differentiation. Corresponding activities in the field of language culture aimed at solving these tasks were realized in the framework of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences' publications, and also in the Kultura Slova ('Culture of Word') periodical intended for the general public. Yet the abnormality of the then-situation lay in the fact that, although Ukrainian had such a highly developed variety as its literary standard, the use of this language was limited in many of those socially important spheres where this variety should be used (i.e., in administration, judiciary, academia, partially school, etc.) (Brytsyn 1997). At that period, Ukrainian functioned without limitations only in literature and to some degree competed with Russian in the mass media, those schools where Ukrainian was the language of instruction (the numbers of which was steadily dwindling, especially in the cities), and in social sciences. It was within the family sphere that the use of Ukrainian was actually being established (Shumarova 2000). However, what mostly prevailed in family usage was not the literary standard, but substandard vernacular varieties. In this way, there developed an increasingly deep chasm between the standard and the vernacular (Yavorska and Nazarenko 2007), with established and codified norms more and more divergent from actual language practice, and that became particularly evident after a change in the direction of status planning took place on the eve of Ukraine’s independence.

The Law on Languages adopted in 1989 declared Ukrainian to be the only state language in Ukraine. The law’s main objective was to broaden the scope of use of Ukrainian. It appeared that in language planning a retreat would be necessary, i.e., coming back from the cultivation of language standard to the implementation of Ukrainian in those socially significant functional spheres, in which the law required its use. To some extent, this was what really happened. However, alongside this,
there emerged yet another tendency, namely to revise, and accordingly change already codified norms. The reason for this revision was acceleration of the pace of linguistic change usually accompanying major social transformations, as well as a change of general cultural attitudes in society and language ideologies associated with them and influencing the direction of language planning.

3. Cultural attitudes toward language (language as means of communication versus language as national treasure)

In the process of language standardization, language units are interpreted in evaluative terms and are perceived by common native speakers and language codifiers as either correct, accepted, aesthetically satisfactory, "ours," or as incorrect, inappropriate to the given language, ugly, and "foreign." The basis for such evaluations is the covert system of cultural values, whose existence is not always realized, but which nonetheless determines the direction of standardization processes.

According to Garvin (1993), in order to construct a typology of standardization processes, it is essential to take into consideration the prevailing attitude toward standard language in a given society, whether language is regarded primarily as a means of communication or primarily as a national treasure, a valuable part of national heritage. Viewing language as a treasure correlates with the so-called separatist function of standard language, which emphasizes the independent identity of a language community with respect to other language communities, and produces a particular variety of language loyalty (Garvin 1993; Thomas 1996: 175).

Regarding language as treasure is also related to a collective sense of pride in it as an important part of cultural heritage. By contrast, in societies lacking such a manifest feeling of collective prestige associated with standard language, mastery of the standard variety is viewed as something natural. It is interesting to note that in assessments of individual language competence, these types of language communities demonstrate a negative correlation. That is, where the pragmatic attitude prevails that regards language principally as a means of communication, individual fluency in standard language is highly prized. On the contrary, if the prevailing attitude toward language views it as a cultural treasure, expectations for individual fluency in standard language may be lower (Garvin 1993: 51). Garvin cites English-speaking countries as examples of the first type of attitude, and Slavic countries, particularly the Czech Republic, as examples of the second type.
The Ukrainian language undoubtedly falls into the latter group because for the Ukrainian identity, the notion of the Ukrainian language as a national treasure is a central one. This particularly explains the intensity of the debate about the language question in contemporary Ukraine, since in Ukrainian tradition, relinquishing the native language is tantamount to resigning from national identity. Also, Ukrainian data largely substantiate the second part of Garvin’s thesis: in the generally bilingual contemporary Ukraine, a speaker’s very act of choosing to communicate in Ukrainian is much more meaningful than the level of his/her fluency in standard language. Although the criteria of “correctness” under some circumstances may acquire an autonomous meaning and can even be used by the authorities as a means of control (see Section 10), language loyalty is primarily expressed in the choice of language rather than ability to speak it correctly.

4. Cultural models and language ideologies

The functioning of language ideologies is determined by the set of cultural attitudes toward language as well as by their configuration. Lately, the concept of ideology is increasingly used in studies in linguistics and sociolinguistics (cf. Dirven, Hawkins, and Sandikcioğlu 2001; Dirven, Frank, and Ilie 2001). Research on the interrelationship between language and ideology generally assumes that ideology is an aggregation of views, opinions, and beliefs held by the members of a certain community, ranging in scope from a nation or ethnos to micro-social groupings of various types (Iavors’ka 2000; Iavorskaia 2006). Within the framework of this approach, ideology is seen as an individual form of social knowledge shared by members of a certain social group (Van Dijk n.d.).

Within the field of sociolinguistics, the excessively broad and amorphous notion of ideology (Woolard 1998) acquires a more narrow and definite sense. First, unlike sociologists and ethnographers, sociolinguists are only interested in ideologies of language and not ideologies in general. In other words, they are interested in views of a language (or, in the case of a multilingual situation, of several languages) which predominate in a certain social group. Second, sociolinguistic research only takes into account common speakers’ opinions on language, in other words, those held by people who are not professional linguists. This last constraint is in accord with the general understanding of ideology as the sphere of everyday knowledge traditionally contrasted with the sphere of scientific knowledge. However, this distinction between everyday and scientific knowledge is fairly transient. As some researchers reasonably contend,
“everyday” or “pre-scientific” knowledge of language to a large extent underlies scientific, the linguistic-theoretical approach (Moschonas 2004).

It should be noted that since the emergence of sociolinguistics as a scientific discipline, researchers in this field have observed that the opinions and thoughts about language that prevail in a given society are themselves an important diagnostic indicator of the kind of language situation existing in that society. One of the first to draw attention to this was Ferguson (1964), who pointed out that in multi-component language situations it is necessary to take into account what speakers themselves think of one or another language variety. Later Hoenigswald (1966) drew attention to common speakers’ attitude toward language, emphasizing the need to study these “unscientific” views (which he named “folk linguistics”), as well as the importance of clearly distinguishing between what people think about language and their actual linguistic behavior. Then, it became an established fact that language ideologies do influence the processes of corpus planning, in particular the formation of the language standard. However, this influence operates in an indirect way. Today, it is widely accepted by sociolinguists that “standard languages do not arise via a ‘natural’ course of linguistic evolution or suddenly spring into existence. They are created by conscious and deliberate planning” (Romaine 1994: 84). Also generally accepted is the fact that the processes of standardization on the level of linguistics are connected with the mechanism of language variability. Actually, what language planning in general and standardization in particular come down to is a selection among linguistic varieties, beginning with the choice of a certain ethnic language as the official language in multilingual situations and ending with the selection among phonetic and orthoepic variants. However, in spite of attempts completely to rationalize language-planning activity and present it as aggregate of deliberate actions, one has to admit that the activities of language planners partly depend on factors of which they themselves are not aware (cf. Hamans 2006). Accordingly, it becomes necessary to discover these factors and present them as deep cognitive models, explanatory in their character.

For this purpose, we find it most expedient to apply the concept of “cultural models” developed in our previous works (Iavors’ka 1997, 2000) and also in the works of other authors (Geeraerts 2003). Language is a part of social reality and, as Geeraerts (2003: 26) reasonably notes, “we think about social reality in terms of models.” Therefore, language operation is subordinated to corresponding cognitive factors, which must be accounted for in sociolinguistic research alongside all other well-known intra- and extralinguistic factors. In addition, this means that the way the brain processes and presents social realities, their significant part
being natural languages and their operation, is organized and structured in a certain way. The concept of cultural models that we propose allows us to explain implicit ways in which the knowledge of society's language is organized at various stages of the historical development of this society.

It should further be emphasized that the type of knowledge we deal with here was earlier investigated in the field of sociology in the framework of “common sense” theories (Schutz 1962). Today, knowledge of this type continues to evoke interest among cognitive scientists who analyze the notion of shared background knowledge, such as “common grounds” (Van Dijk 2001) and cultural presuppositions (Frank 2003). Some researchers believe that the leading feature of this type of knowledge is its acceptance by culture members as something that is self-evident and is exempt of explanation or criticism. At the same time, a more detailed analysis shows that such “natural” knowledge about social reality belongs to cultural constructs (Iavorskaia 2006).

So, it is presumed that there exist relevant mental structures that participate in constructing social reality (Bourdieu 1994), although their detailed content, and particularly the mechanisms of their functioning, have not yet been adequately explored. Still unanswered is the question concerning the nature of the relationship between collective background knowledge and stereotypes, on the one hand, and archetypes, on the other. The relationship between general cultural presuppositions and ideologies (Van Dijk 2001) and particular language ideologies is a separate problem, in whose context the above-mentioned fact, i.e., that society members view cultural constructs as something real and natural, takes on special importance. Speaking of the indexing of social differences by means of language, Woolard and Schieffelin (1994: 58) emphasize that the identification of these processes as ideological exposes the constructed nature of what becomes represented as natural or inherent properties of language use: it “reminds us that the cultural conceptions we study are partial, contestable and contested, and interest-laden …, that cultural frames have social histories.”

Therefore, in investigating the role of language ideologies, it is essential to first generalize individual and often contradictory folk conceptions in the form of analytical cultural models, and second, to take into account the historical-social context, or social history, that conditions their functioning. One of the methods for generalized modeling of cultural concepts consists in employing fundamental cultural oppositions. As evidenced by the social history of Standard Ukrainian, the basic cultural oppositions (“ours” versus “foreign,” “traditional” versus “modern,” “natural” versus “artificial”), being highly stable, coincidentally have variable linguistic manifestations, depending on historical circumstances, peculiarities of
national culture, the degree to which language is standardized, etc. It is these oppositions and their actual linguistic manifestations that model a set of linguistic ideologies characteristic of a given language community. It is important to note that every such opposition reflects a situation of active selection, in which preference is given to one of the opposites, this selection being accompanied by rationalizing explanations of those who argue in its favor. In this process, the models themselves tend to remain below the level of speaker’s awareness. This causes the emergence of what is known to ethnologists as “secondary explanations” concerning attitudes toward language and criteria for the choice of a norm; furthermore, it leads to discrepancy between actual linguistic substance of such views and their explicit claims, so that it becomes necessary to unveil that substance by means of analysis.

5. Role of cultural models in the formation of standard Ukrainian (romantic, European, and rationalist models)

The main cultural models that have influenced the formation of Standard Ukrainian and continue to underlie contemporary language ideologies and directions of codification are the romantic and European models. In both of them, we deal with operation of a mechanism for stylistic variation; however, in the former the selection concerns the feature of “bookish language vs. spoken language,” whereas in the latter the main issue is regional marking, which with some reservations can be qualified in terms of the “Eastern Ukrainian vs. Western Ukrainian” dichotomy.³

It must be emphasized that while these models express different cultural orientations, they are not entirely antithetic. On the contrary, both these models and their underlying linguistic ideologies, by the use of their own means and at different linguistic levels, endorsed the same function of Standard Ukrainian, namely the separatist, distinguishing function. Another cultural model, which in some contemporary research on the history of other European standard languages has been termed “rationalist” (Geeraerts 2003), while also having played a certain role in the history of Standard Ukrainian, was and remains less influential. This is mostly because ideology associated with it does not quite correspond to the goal of establishing Ukrainian identity, but also because of the relative weakness of the Enlightenment tradition in Ukrainian culture. The rationalist model was most active in the formation of Standard Ukrainian primarily during the Soviet period, from the 1930s until the early 1990s, and to some extent preserves its influence nowadays.
6. The romantic model: historical context and linguistic content

It is not incidental that the formation and active operation of cultural models and ideologies associated with them accompany the major phases of language planning, i.e., the selection of a norm, its codification, implementation, and in our case, its revision.

The contemporary operation of the romantic model has its roots in the earliest stage of the formation of the language standard, i.e., the period of selection of a norm. As is known, that was a period of national liberation movements throughout Europe, which had the ideology of romanticism as their foundation. It is also well known that for romantic ideology, the central opposition was that of Nature versus Culture. In this context, the common folk were seen as the bearers of natural values, contrasted to artificial, unnatural values of the higher social strata. During the selection of a norm and at the beginning of its codification, the romantic opposition between Nature and Culture was realized in a series of specific oppositions and in the selection of one of the opposites within them, namely of spoken language (living vernacular) rather than bookish language; of autochthonous (indigenous) language rather than language corrupted with foreign borrowings; of rural language rather than urban, etc. An important feature of that process in the part of Ukraine under Russian rule was that the rejected opposites (bookish language, language contaminated with foreign words, urban language) were identified with the Russian language.

Although certain preconditions for such identification were determined by different guidelines of the formation of Standard Russian from those of Standard Ukrainian and by a specific character of the linguistic situation, the main reason had to do with the political situation and the struggle for ethnic identity. Linguistic awareness was an inherent component of ethnic awareness, whose formation is also believed to have begun at the end of the eighteenth century. “The national identity of modern Ukrainians was formulated by those who, in defining Ukraine, rejected both the Russian identity and the Polish identity” (Szporluk 2000: 362). Therefore, with regard to language norm issues, an essential role was played by often complicated and contradictory attitudes toward the Russian and Polish languages.

At the initial period of the formation of Standard Ukrainian, the attitude toward the Russian language was particularly important, due to specific historical circumstances. In particular, at that stage, the Standard Russian language played the role of the “other,” through the rejection of which, “our,” i.e., the Standard Ukrainian, language was formed. This opposition subsumed the above-mentioned oppositions, so that “our” Ukrainian language, as seen in this ideal, was a living spoken ver-
nacular, free of borrowings and used by rural population, whereas the “foreign” Russian language was a bookish and urban one, with countless borrowings that were incomprehensible to common people. This had nontrivial consequences for the formation of linguistic correctness criteria, since during the selection and codification of the standard language, the central issue was the choice between the spoken vernacular and written traditions. As is well known, the selection was made in favor of the former as the basis for the standard norm. In the linguistic consciousness, this opposition was specified and given an actual substance. In other words, the folk vernacular was perceived as “ours,” national, and natural, and the bookish language as non-national, artificial, incomprehensible, and finally, Russian. In this way, the normative processes were not only oriented toward peasants’ vernacular, but also involved the denial and rejection of bookish elements.

An illustrative example here is the name of a collection of epigrams by one of the founders of modern Ukrainian literature, Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnov’ianenko (1778–1843): Шпигачки, або помосковському епіграмми (‘Biting verses’, or, in Muscovite, epigrams’) (Grabowicz 1981: 57). Thus, the Greek word epigram is unequivocally qualified here as “Muscovite.”

In the nineteenth century, the romantic model remained predominant, although toward the end of the century there already was some tendency to revise it (Shevelov 1986–1987; Grabowicz 1981; Hrabovych 1995). The ideal of Standard Ukrainian as exclusively modeled on rural vernacular began to get superseded by the image of Ukrainian as a full-fledged European language, yet it did not disappear completely. Romantic orientations still existed, as was confirmed by the linguistic purism of the 1920s.

7. **The opposition “conversational language” versus “bookish language” in the romantic model**

At that time, a variant of linguistic purism emerged in Kyiv, whose goal was the preservation of a pure and autochthonous Ukrainian language. The Russian language was understandably identified as the main source of undesirable external influences. At the same time, however, the rejection of foreign influences paradoxically led the purists to a hypercritical attitude toward Ukrainian-written texts of the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, including literary ones.

Among literary works, only those were regarded as relevant for modern standard language that, as the linguist Olena Kurylo (1925: 6) put it, best “modeled the style of Ukrainian folk speech,” in other words,
recreated the features of the Dnipro region’s peasant vernacular. In works on standardization by the 1920s authors who adhered to the purist position, the norm was generally illustrated by examples drawn from writers’ texts created between the end of the eighteenth century and the middle of the nineteenth century, whereas few illustrations were taken from works written at the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth centuries, to say nothing about those created after the Revolution of 1917. The purists took an even more critical stand toward scientific and popular science texts, which had very little in common with folk vernacular, exhibiting the influence of Russian instead. The role of the standardizers was seen as helping the contemporary Standard Ukrainian language “depart from the Russian basis and come to the living path of the folk, the path that was followed by earlier Ukrainian writers and which the contemporary language has abandoned. For Standard Ukrainian, only one base is possible, and that is folk language. Now the only source of forming Ukrainian intelligentsia is Ukrainian peasantry, and it is only the latter that can give a shape to the Standard Ukrainian language” (Kurylo 1925: 190). This stand is clearly a manifestation of the romantic linguistic-cultural orientation, including negative attitudes toward bookish criteria of correctness and toward “Russian-language basis” seen in written texts.

Purist tendencies also manifested themselves through the coining of new terms. In the activities of the Ukrainian Scientific Language Institute at the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences, there was the same orientation toward the living vernacular of the peasants and the formation of new terminology “on the basis of existing folk models” (Do ukraiıns’koho hromadianstva 1928: 49). In this, yet another cleavage made itself evident, “natural” versus “artificial.” It was, of course, the “natural” that was assessed as positive and assigned to new coinages formed in folk spirit, whereas the “artificial” (i.e., direct borrowings) was viewed negatively.

In the attitude toward terminological borrowings that was prevalent in the 1920s, there were several other peculiar traits, which were expressed most clearly in an article by the engineer Tadei Sekunda (1930), published under the subtitle “dyskysiina” (a proposal for discussion) in the Institute’s periodical Visnyk IUNM. The author does not completely reject international borrowings; however, drawing on the experience of Polish and Czech purists, he argues that it is also worthwhile to form Ukrainian counterparts to such terms. He is quite positive about the use of long-accepted loanwords (Lehnwörter), yet emphasizes that such words entered the Ukrainian language “from below,” i.e., through the living vernacular, and contrasts them with undesirable new borrowings (Fremdwörter) entering Ukrainian language “through newspapers, which very often spread
foreign words, and also through translators who translate foreign textbooks” (1930: 19), in other words, through written, “bookish” sources. The author regards, as the least acceptable, terms borrowed through Russian as an intermediary, and not international in their character, such as *shlak* ‘slag’, *buksa* ‘axle-box’, *shturval* ‘steering wheel’, *kronshtein* ‘bracket’, etc. Sekunda is particularly against the use of those words in Ukrainian, because they “entered Russian terminology not from below, from vernacular, but from above, through bookish language . . . and, due to this, often sound very unpleasant” (1930: 15). One should note here the author’s use of the criterion of euphony, since for the purists, the characteristics of “beautiful” and “aesthetically pleasing” were significant ones. Besides, here, once again, bookish language is rejected as an ideal for standardization, and the feature “bookish” is identified with “foreign.”

Nonetheless, in the 1920s, purism was not the only active tendency in standardization. There were works whose authors did not share the view that the Ukrainian language had to maintain its autochthonous character at all costs. Oleksa Syniavs’kyi (1931: 5) formulated his opponents’ attitude in the following, polemically exaggerated way: “anything as long as it does not resemble Russian or Polish, as long as it is ‘autochthonous’, ‘ours’, ‘distinctive’.” Naturally, he did not mean that foreign influences were to be encouraged; his point was to avoid extremity in the struggle against them. In addition, some participants in the debate considered unacceptable the purists’ orientation toward the past, their tendency to bring back obsolete elements. The opponents of the purists, being more pragmatic, called for more attention to be paid to contemporary language practice, and in their proposals concerning the standard norm they made greater use of classic and contemporary literature. Yet it is remarkable that although they used more extensively the language of artistic literature, they attached less significance to aesthetic criteria of language standardization, such as the criterion of taste, emphasizing instead the necessity of effectively using all linguistic means (1931: 6).

On the whole, the purists were more influential at that time, since they were supported by the highly reputed Ukrainian Scientific Language Institute. The pragmatists’ views had the advantage of being more practical and more oriented to the contemporary situation. It is difficult to say who might have won in the end or if some sort of compromise might have been worked out, but at the beginning of the 1930s the Great Terror put an end to all discussion, the purists became one of its first victims, and their approach to standardization of Ukrainian was branded hostile and subversive.

The campaign that got underway in 1933/34 under the title of a “struggle against nationalist sabotage in linguistics” used, as the basis for
incrimination, the purists’ linguistic-cultural orientation which was reinter-
preted in a particular way. One of the key accusations against the pu-
rists was their orientation toward distancing Ukrainian from Russian. In
the 1920s, this distancing had not carried any negative political connota-
tions — on the contrary, given the officially declared struggle against
“Russian imperial chauvinism,” such a stance could then be seen as fully
“ideologically correct” (Iavors’ka 1996). However, since the beginning of
the 1930s, this became a hallmark of “Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism.”
The tendency toward “artificial distancing of the Ukrainian language
from the Russian,” as it then came to be labeled, along with “backward-
ness,” i.e., orientation to the past, was declared “a tendency that sharply
contradicts the interests of the proletarian revolution and the building of
socialism in the Soviet land, and transforms into sabotage” (Rezoliutsiia
1934: 19). Thus, under the new political circumstances, the purists’ orien-
tation to the past became unacceptable, since it was logically interpreted
within the framework of the futuristic Bolshevik ideology as a “reaction-
ary” one. Finally, the purists’ orientation toward the vernacular of peas-
antry was not incidentally branded as “class-hostile” and therefore, also
“subversive and nationalist,” since the peasants, in this context, were
identified with “kulaks,” who in 1929–1930 had been subject to “destruc-
tion as a class.” Instead, a new direction for the codified norm was sug-
gested, namely that toward the language of “the vanguard class,” the
proletariat; however, actual linguistic substance of such suggestions was
not and could not be specified.

The formation of terminological neologisms, as realized in the Ukrai-
nian Scientific Language Institute, was also branded as “hostile to the
proletariat class” (Finkel’ 1934: 77). The opposition “natural” versus
“artificial” obtained an interpretation diametrically different from that
of the purists. Neologisms were declared “far-fetched” and “artificial,”
while the correct, “natural” terms were borrowings, but only those shared
with Russian. The aesthetic criterion for the standard norm forwarded by
the purists was, under the new circumstances, considered ideologically
unacceptable, with the emphasis on subjectivity of its application, and
this, too, provided material for political incriminations (Finkel’ 1934).

In general, the linguistic part of the criticism directed against “nation-
alism” simply reiterated some of the arguments articulated by the oppo-
nents of the purists in the 1920s. This, however, did not prevent the re-
gime from persecuting not only the purists, but also the “pragmatists,”
and after a while the critics of “nationalist sabotage” were exterminated
themselves.

But the most striking feature of the campaign of 1933–1934 was that
“nationalism” was assigned not only to opinions, but also directly to lin-
guistic units. The methodology of assigning nationalist content to words was extraordinarily simple: the nationalist items were those which had been proposed as normative by the purist linguists. Thus, the National Commissariat for Education’s resolution on the issues of terminology presented a list of terms that were announced subversive (Rezoliutsiia 1934: 18). These included vyrobnia ‘factory’, storch ‘perpendicular’, spyzh ‘bronze’, and driben ‘brevier’ (as their ideologically correct counterparts, the resolution declared, respectively, fabryka, perpendyku liar, bronza, and petyt, which formally coincided with the corresponding Russian terms). Certain syntactic constructions and word-formation patterns were also banned (Zhovtobriukh 1991: 97; Iavors’ka 1996: 31–32). Prohibited linguistic items became the subject of political censorship and, coincidentally, symbols of “nationalism.” These measures were intended to consolidate the orientation to the Russian language and thus strengthen control within the framework of the totalitarian state. However, this pressure provoked opposition, facilitating the diametrically opposite tendency that persisted particularly in the practice of artistic translation of the 1960s and 1970s, but fully resurfaced only in the post-totalitarian period.

At the same time, in the officially recognized doctrine of codification of Standard Ukrainian of the Soviet period, it is possible to discern some traces of the application of the rationalist model to the codification of Ukrainian copying that of Russian. The Russian language standardization was influenced by the French tradition (Zhivov 1990), which, in its turn, was particularly aimed at centralized unification of the standard and relatively intolerant of territorial variability. These orientations were subordinated to the ideal of intelligibility and transparency, highly valued during the age of Enlightenment. Geeraert s (2003: 35) also relates this to understanding language primarily as a means of communication, and to an emancipatory and participatory effect of the educational system.

8. The romantic model today: the question of terminology

Notwithstanding the elimination of the purist approach in the 1930s, its attitudes toward correctness and purity of Ukrainian have, to a certain degree, remained relevant. This is evident in the ongoing debate about language issues and in attempts to revise the codified standard. The romantic model has not lost its influence. For example, some attempts to transform terminology and bring it closer to the vernacular base were made as late as in the early 1990s. These attempts received a cool response from terminology specialists, who believed that it was no longer possible to fully return to the practice of coinage of the 1920s, when
Ukrainian scientific terminology was practically nonexistent. However, it was precisely the terminological tradition developed during the Soviet period that the purism of the 1990s was directed against. For example, in a medical dictionary published in 1992, generally accepted terms of foreign origin were intentionally mentioned last. For example, the Russian angina ‘quinsy’ was translated as myhdalytsia, zivnytsia, zhaba, anhina; libido ‘libido’ as khit’, khtyvist’, pokhit’, pokhitlyvist’, statevopotiah, libido, etc.

In general, contemporary Ukrainian language codifiers, both those using purist criteria as well as adherents of a more conservative approach close to the rationalist model, agree that the terminology codified during the postwar years requires revision. Many steps have already been taken in this direction. For example, in chemical terminology, equivalent codified names have been added, such as arsen ‘arsenic’ instead of myshiak (a borrowing from Russian that was adopted in an improper form), and stibii ‘stibium’ instead of surma (from the Russian sur’ma). In this process, it is not only some individual words that return, but certain codifying principles as well. For instance, both purists and moderate codifiers find relevant the suggestion of the 1920s terminologists, according to which those borrowings are undesirable that do not have an international character and have entered the lexicon through Russian as an intermediary.

At the beginning of the 1990s, there developed a general tendency to extend a range of synonym variability in bilingual dictionaries, by giving more Ukrainian counterparts to Russian terms. The same tendency is evident in general-use Russian–Ukrainian dictionaries. Coincidentally, Ukrainian equivalents are stylistically rearranged, so that those words that were earlier considered stylistically marked and consequently limited in their use are gradually gaining the status of neutral ones. For example, the word poïzd ‘train’ is now used alongside potiah, while in earlier dictionaries, the latter was labeled obsolete. In a new dictionary, this label was removed and both variants are offered as fully equivalent (e.g., Lozova et al. 2003: 717). Moreover, in current practice potiah is often viewed as a word that is more correct and appropriate in official contexts.

9. Editorial corrections: a tendency to change in the codified norm

Evidence of the survival and further operation of the romantic model is furnished not only by the revision of terminology, but also by the language practice of certain publications. From this perspective, editors’ corrections are especially interesting. They demonstrate the process of active
choice among variants and thus indicate direction taken by linguistic reflection. Editors’ very profession makes them an authority on language standards, therefore study of their activities is especially important (Haugen 1983: 281).

I have examined a significant number of manuscripts, containing editors’ corrections, which were to be published in 1992–1994 in a Ukrainian Academy of Sciences historical-philological periodical. I took into consideration only those corrections where the editors replaced forms or phrases correct from the viewpoint of the standard, and did so irrespective of the immediate context, i.e., not to avoid repetition. There were approximately two hundred such corrections in the examined manuscripts; therefore it was impossible for them to be accounted for as minor peculiarities of the editors’ individual stylistic preferences. The rather unexpected linguistic substance of the corrections also spoke against such interpretation. I found that most of them and, moreover, those most consistently made concerned lexical items providing for text cohesion and determining its major pragmatic characteristics. These were modal particles, conjunctions, inserted words, as well as adverbs and participles. Editors corrected lexical items expressing concession (odnak ‘however’, nezvazhaiuchy na ‘in spite of’), addition (takozh ‘also’), particularization (napryklad ‘for instance’), causality (tomu shcho, oskil’ky ‘because’), purpose (shchob; z tiieiu metoiu, shchob ‘in order to’), temporality (spochatku ‘at first’, piznishe ‘later’, ranishe ‘earlier’, teper ‘now’), and references to someone’s opinion (na moiu dumku ‘in my opinion’, na dumku takoho-to ‘according to . . . ’). Also corrected were lexical entities with an evaluative modal meaning, such as certainty (diisno ‘indeed’, zrozumilo ‘clearly’, ochevydno ‘obviously’), impossibility (nemozhlyvo ‘impossible’), a high degree of quality (nadzvychaino ‘extraordinarily’), etc.

These lexical items occurring in the texts of submitted papers and used by the authors were completely common in their character. Moreover, many of them were specifically indicative of the Ukrainian scholarly style of the last Soviet decades. Yet for certain reason, some editors at the beginning of the 1990s were no longer happy with this normal usage; they crossed off these words and phrases and replaced them with others. As a result of these corrections, in the texts prepared for printing, the conjunction bo ‘because’ appears instead of oskil’ky or tomu shcho; napryklad ‘for instance’ is consistently changed for skazhimo, the word shchob ‘in order to’, with infinitive of purpose, practically disappears and is replaced by aby; potim, piznishe ‘later’ are replaced with a todi; vnaslidok tsiho ‘as a result of this’ is changed for cherez tse; and nezvazhaiuchy na ‘in spite of’ is in all cases replaced with popry. The particle khoch ‘at least’ is exchanged for bodai (for example, khoch trokhy ‘at least some’ written by
an author is replaced by bodai trokhy; instead of nemozhlyvo ‘impossible’, in almost all cases hodi was used; and naprochno was used instead of nadzvyczaino ‘extraordinarily’. The phrases na moiu dumku ‘in my opinion’, na dumku takoho-to ‘according to . . .’ were replaced by iak na mene, iak na nioho, and what was tezh or takozh ‘also’ became i sobi.

Here are some examples (an author’s choice, which was crossed out, is shown in square brackets, while the editor’s correction is underlined in Ukrainian; the original is followed by the English translation where the changed word is underlined too):

(1) Tomson вважав, що з курсу порівняльної грамамики індосфер-пейських мов [неможливо] годі набути належних знань без вивчення санскриту

‘Thomson believed that in a course of comparative grammar of the Indo-European languages, it is impossible to acquire the appropriate knowledge without studying Sanskrit.’

(2) Він здійснив карколомну політичну еволюцію від члена ка-детьської партії . . . до лівого есера, [а нарешті] а тоді й більшо-вицького комісара.

‘He carved out a meteoric political career from being a member of the Cadet Party . . . to a Left Socialist Revolutionary, and finally, a Bolshevik commissar.’

(3) Самураї швидко позаганяли витончених естетів-чиновників у межі, за які [неможливо було вийти.] вийти було зась!

‘Samurais quickly drove the refined aesthetes-bureaucrats to the limits, which they could not transcend.’

(4) Корея [також] і собі опинилась у полум її внутрішніх вое.

‘Korea, too, found herself engulfed in the flames of internal war.’

In all these examples, the editors’ corrections show the same tendency: bookish elements, i.e., ones that are stylistically neutral in a scholarly text, are replaced with non-bookish ones. The scope of this “non-bookishness” oscillates from words that are stylistically neutral and have an almost imperceptible informal coloring, to words with a clearly conversational one, the latter’s stylistic marking becoming especially expressive in scholarly style.

In cases where the author’s word has been replaced by another, completely unnatural in scholarly style, the effect of the stylistic shift is naturally accompanied by most blatant semantic deformations. In the examined material, the editors in many instances replace the completely standard adverbs tezh, takozh ‘also’ with the collocation i sobi (the con-
junction *i* ‘and’ + the particle *sobi* ‘for oneself’, originally the dative case of the reflexive pronoun), for example:

(5) Деякі етимологи [також] *i sobi* вважають цю версію неприйнятною.

‘Some etymologists also consider this version unacceptable.’

It should be emphasized that the particle *sobi* has a clearly conversational, even folkloric connotation. Moreover, the phrase *i sobi* is generally used to denote physical actions or states and unarticulated sounds (whistling, muttering, and so on). It underscores the imitative character of an action or the induced character of a state. As a result, the use of *i sobi* with verbs denoting mental processes (which is the result of editors’ corrections) presents these processes as not independent and as insufficiently articulated, which, presumably, was not what authors of the papers had meant.

As evidenced by my interviews with numerous editors, they prefer those forms that they deem “more Ukrainian,” without taking into consideration the actual linguistic essence of these corrections, which is the removal of bookish elements. At the same time, orientation to actual conversational usage is not achieved there either, insofar as editorial corrections, while removing specifically bookish means of expression, do not reproduce the vernacular as such. In other words, this orientation is realized in a negative, rather than a positive, form. Elements of the type *hodi*, *zas’, aby*, and *i sobi*, which belong to the class of discourse words, become something like markers of the genuinely Ukrainian character of a text. In general, discourse words (*mots du discours*) — particles, conjunctions, adverbs, modal words, etc. — serve as cohesive devices in the text and determine its pragmatic characteristics. They have a distinctive structure of meaning (Paillard 2002; Baranov et al. 1993) and are mostly ethnospecific, which hinders their translation into other languages.

During the last decade, the tendency that I found in editorial corrections continues in language practice. Some of the above-mentioned lexical units have become widely used and have acquired an almost neutral stylistic character (*aby*, *popry*). At the same time, new “fashionable” words, such as *narazi* meaning both ‘so far’ and ‘now’, *zasvychai* meaning ‘usually’, etc., are becoming widely used. They, too, are discourse words and are intended to demonstrate that those using them speak the genuine Ukrainian language. In this way, discourse words are used as the most effective indicators of “Ukrainianness,” as well as those of linguistic and political loyalty.

On the other hand, in the vernacular, one may observe a completely opposite tendency to use discourse words, which in this case are borrowed from the Russian language.
potom — standard potim, Russ. potom ‘after’
vsio ravno — standard baiduzhe, Russ. vsio ravno ‘all the same’
kharasho — standard dobre, harazd, Russ. khorosho ‘OK, good’
kan’eshna — standard zvychaino, Russ. konechno ‘sure’
pozhalusta — standard bud’ laska, Russ. pozhaluista ‘please’

In this case, however, the aim of such use is not to demonstrate loyalty to the Russian language. Instead, these words serve a different function, namely to mark the informal register of conversation. At the same time, these examples testify to a tendency of divergence between standard and vernacular Ukrainian as well as the ability of discourse words to operate as social and cultural markers with various meaning. Irvine and Gal (2000: 37) describe similar processes as “iconization,” whereby “linguistic features that index social groups or activities appear to be iconic representations of them,” and which they see as one of the key processes by which “people construct ideological representations of linguistic differences.”

10. The elitist model

In the current revision of the standard, especially in the domain of terminology, still other tendencies are active, such as orientation to a standard developed “in accordance with the spirit of the Ukrainian language.” It is only at first glance that this trend is reminiscent of the principles of terminology formation of the 1920s, since today the criteria for the purity of Ukrainian are practically never associated with the living vernacular of the peasantry. Instead, they are formed in accordance with what some speakers, generally the Ukrainian-speaking scientific, technical, and artistic elites, think about them. This model for conceiving linguistic processes, which somewhat arbitrarily can be termed “elitist,” requires further investigation. However, it can safely be stated at the moment that the emergence of this tendency is a consequence of certain linguistic processes, especially the ever-greater divergence between the standard norm and the vernacular. There are some reasons to say that in today’s Ukrainian linguistic situation, signs are beginning to appear that are indicative of the same tendencies that led to the development of very different standard and vernacular languages in the Czech Republic and Croatia. There, divergence between the standard and the vernacular language varieties was intensified, according to Thomas (1996), chiefly by purist tendencies. In Ukraine, the development of this kind of linguistic situation leads to an aberration: the actual spoken vernacular is generally taken to be a “spoiled”, i.e., Russified one, and it can consequently be ignored. Char-
acteristically, contemporary Ukrainian linguists cannot even agree on a
definition of the vernacular. Some of them define it as an oral variety of
the standard language (Iermolenko 2004), while others consider it as be-
yond the limits of the standard norm (Taranenko 2004).

In contrast to the 1920s, today’s codifiers do not rely on “the living ver-
nacular,” which can no longer serve as the model for linguistic correct-
ness. Instead, there are people who seek out this ideal within themselves.
These people regard themselves as guardians of the spirit of the language,
as some gurus; it is them, the authentic language speakers and servants,
who are called upon to preserve the ideal Ukrainian language, which,
as some of them believe, exists in the universe independently of its
speakers. This kind of language mythology does, to some degree, affect
the practice of language standardization directed primarily toward the re-
vision of previous language norms. It is not only the arbitrariness of such
a language ideal that comes into play here, but also allegedly effortless
and unhampered implementation of innovations suggested by these lan-
guage arbiters. That is so because innovations and revised norms are not
to be truly implemented in practice — it does not comply with the ideal
anyway. Instead, the innovations are aimed at purifying and renewing
this ideal image of Ukrainian in order to preserve and return it to the
purified and renewed Ukrainian people. This peculiar model and the ide-
ology associated with it can be considered a variant of the romantic
model, insofar as it clearly echoes some of Humboldt’s ideas about ties
between a nation and its language. At the same time, under contempo-
rary circumstances, there are some attempts (limited to rather narrow
circles of Ukrainian intellectuals) to exploit this approach as an instru-
ment of power, by means of which the true gurus distinguish between
“their own” (genuine Ukrainians, patriots) and “aliens.” Given the in-
creases in the number of people speaking and writing Ukrainian over the
last decade and a half as a consequence of the widening scope of Ukrai-
nian functioning as the state language, this position can be viewed as an
instrument, by the use of which a group of Ukrainian intellectuals intends
to preserve its own identity as such. However, in reality this attitude on
the part of some language standardizers leads to a further rift between
the vernacular and standard varieties of the Ukrainian language.

11. Characteristic features of Ukrainian purism

In present-day sociolinguistic studies, much more attention is paid to the
phenomenon of purism than before. There are attempts to link purism
with nationalism (Thomas 2001), and also to account for current revival
of purist tendencies, which researchers interpret as a reaction against European integration and globalization processes.

Although the role of purism in the development of Slavic standard languages was already noted in the 1930s (Weingart 1937), this issue nonetheless remained insufficiently studied. While in the past purism was considered a peripheral phenomenon, limited to the lexical level of the language system, namely an attitude toward lexical borrowings, today it is much more broadly understood. In dealing with purism, researchers are not interested in its attitude toward borrowed elements in itself, but rather as one of fundamental diagnostic indicators of certain cultural intentions. Manifestations of language purism are never directed against foreign linguistic elements in general, but always against a certain kind of them. Purism is a stance toward language that accepts some of its elements and rejects others (Thomas 1996: 170). In addition, purists consistently appeal to arguments of moral order, since preserving the purity of a language is considered, first of all, a moral duty.

I have already mentioned that at the early stage of Ukrainian codification, certain cultural intentions concerning the Russian, and in part, the Polish, languages played a significant role, mostly in attempts to distance Ukrainian from these languages. It would only be logical to expect that Ukrainian purism, as an instrument of the next steps of corpus planning, i.e., implementation and elaboration, would manifest itself in the rejection of Russian and Polish through attempts to purify Standard Ukrainian by ridding it of borrowings from those languages. However, in this case the matter is complicated by the fact that Ukrainian and Russian are closely related languages. In such a situation it is not easy to identify loanwords, since borrowed elements are generally calqued, i.e., semantically loaned, and thus they come formally to resemble indigenous Ukrainian elements. Russian borrowings in Ukrainian can often be identified only as a result of special research, as they often have the form of translation borrowings, i.e., derivational, syntactic, or semantic calques (Unbegau 1932). In some cases, a Ukrainian construction may simultaneously be influenced by two different foreign language sources, Polish and Russian (Iavors'ka 2000). Besides, in the case of closely related languages, such a degree of phonetic adaptation is possible even in strictly lexical borrowings, such that the loanword “dissolves,” so to say, in the lexicon of the receiver language, losing all formal markers of its foreign origin.

It is generally recognized that for Ukrainian purism, cleansing Ukrainian of Russian borrowings consists first of all in the removal of “parallel means of expression,” i.e., those linguistic units that coincide with Russian ones in sound, form, or structure. As a result, some of these borrowings can pass unnoticed, while on the other hand, there are some Ukrai-
nian units that can be erroneously considered Russian loanwords, in that they and their Russian cognates derive form the same historical underlying unit and thus look much alike. Examples include *khoroshyi* ‘good, beautiful’ and *krasyvyi* ‘beautiful’, which are thought to be of Russian extraction (cf. Russ. *khoroshyi*, *krasivyi*), in contrast to *harnyi*, which is considered Ukrainian as it does not coincide with Russian, not to mention more complex instances of parallel development of cognates.

However, such instances are isolated. Cleansing the Ukrainian language of elements of Russian or Polish origin at the lexical level is too complicated a task. Therefore, unlike most historically known purist movements, primarily distinguished by their rejection of borrowed words, Ukrainian purism has expressed itself in other, sometimes rather peculiar forms. I have already mentioned some characteristic traits of Ukrainian purism: fighting undesirable influences on a stylistic level, and orientation to the use of folk vernacular means of expression. Another characteristic concerns principles of spelling words borrowed from European languages.

12. The role of the European model in the revision of the standard

At the end of the nineteenth century, the romantic model came to be superseded by a model that we call European. This found its expression, among other things, in attitude toward borrowed words.

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, the word stock of the Ukrainian language acquired a large number of borrowings (Muromtseva 1985). In the cultural context characteristic of the first half of the nineteenth century, foreign-language borrowings could be perceived as Russian, “Muscovite” words (see above). Toward the end of the century, the situation was already different. Foreign words were entering Standard Ukrainian mostly through essayistic and artistic literature created in Galicia, then part of Austria–Hungary (as I have mentioned above, in the part of Ukraine under Russian rule, the Ukrainian language was at that time practically prohibited). Therefore, borrowings were associated by linguistic awareness with Galician, or Western Ukrainian, lexical elements. This was accompanied by the reinterpretation of the semiotic opposition “rural language” versus “urban language”: the Western Ukrainian variety of Ukrainian was identified with the latter, and this variety began to be seen as more prestigious, even in certain circles of Eastern Ukrainian intelligentsia. However, the adherents of romantic ideology tended to assess this development rather negatively. For example, as Shevelov notes, in the view of Ivan Nechui-Levyts’kyi (1838–1918),
the language of Lviv was anti-national and spoiled, most of all because of its excessive use of foreign words, which made this language variety incomprehensible to ordinary peasants. On the other hand, linguistic elements from Galicia also evoked resentment among pro-Russian journalists (Shevelov 1986–1987: 122–126). In this way, there arose a new situation, in which linguistic elements of Galician provenance came to potentially be a feature of the European cultural model. Such an attitude toward these elements still exists among a certain portion of residents of Eastern and Southern Ukraine. Whenever the language situation exacerbates, these elements emerge as signs of “foreignness.”

13. Orthography of borrowings as marker of cultural distance

The process of borrowing is influenced by the intention (realized by linguistic awareness, to varying degree) to either draw toward, or dissociate from, a language and the culture it symbolizes. However, if lexical borrowings, particularly those incompletely adapted formally, more or less directly reflect an attitude toward the source language, the way the borrowings are presented in writing can acquire a more complex character. Then, for example, the Ukrainian spelling of a word of Greek origin can become some kind of marker of attitude toward the Russian language. In this way, orthography concerning borrowings constitutes an individual aspect of expression of language ideologies.

Among literate people there exists a tendency to directly associate graphical representations with culturally significant concepts. This tendency manifests itself during periods when linguistic awareness is especially acute — turning points in the history of the standard norm when written forms of linguistic elements have not yet begun or for some reason have ceased to be used automatically, for example, during reforms concerning alphabet or orthography. The stable link of a nation’s alphabet and orthography to its culture becomes the basis for their symbolic exploitation, as a means of demonstrating national, cultural, religious, or social relationships, in other words, certain ideologies (Iavors’ka 1993).

Borrowings, as is known, must be adapted to a recipient language in accordance with the structural constraints operating in it. In most cases, there are several possible variants of adaptation, determined by factors such as oral or written borrowing, and, in the case of indirect borrowing, the role of an intermediary language(s). The variability increases if the borrowing process involves a transition from one graphical system to another, for example from the Latin to the Cyrillic script (obviously,
this applies only to written borrowings of bookish character). Standard languages select one (rarely two or three) variant(s) to become the orthographically and orthoepically codified norm. Under certain circumstances, it is the selection of the written form that can become a symbol and marker of cultural distance. This is especially characteristic of written borrowings, which play an important role in shaping intellectual discourse.

In order to further develop this subject, it is necessary to evoke some facts from the history of Standard Ukrainian, in particular, its orthography (Kryms’kyi 1927; Zhovtobriukh 1991, 1997). In the nineteenth century, there were attempts to create a Ukrainian orthography both in Ukraine within the Russian Empire, and in its southwestern part that belonged to Austria–Hungary. These attempts were part of the processes of forming two variants of the standard language, structurally different on phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and lexical levels. Such differences were correspondingly reflected in the proposed orthographic systems. In both cases, phonetic (or more precisely, phonematic) and morphologic principles predominated. There were some attempts to develop a historical-etymological orthography (i.e., the orthography of Mykhailo Maksymovych [1804–1873]), but they were not widespread.

Significantly, the development of a Ukrainian orthography proper, based on a graphical system that differed from the Russian one, was something that the regime of the Russian Empire considered a threat. Thus, from the moment of Alexander III’s ascent to the throne in 1887 and until 1905, the Ukrainian orthography developed by Panteleimon Kulish (1819–1897) was banned, and the words of the Ukrainian language were to be written only using Russian letters. This is one of many examples of political manipulation of graphics of various peoples who lived on the territory of the Russian Empire. The regime considered undesirable even the slightest departure from the Russian alphabet: control over language graphics and orthography was a particular form of political control (Iavors’ka 1995).

As for the disagreement that arose as a result of the formation of two orthographic traditions (in the Russian and Austria–Hungarian parts of Ukraine), it should be noted that it became the cause of bitter and prolonged debate. Everyone agreed that Standard Ukrainian should have only one orthographic norm, but what came into question was which norm it would be.

European borrowings came to the Russian-ruled part of Ukraine and to Galicia by different routes. In the first instance, it was mostly Russian that was an intermediary language, and in the second, it was Polish (with the exception of direct borrowings, i.e., from German). Accordingly,
different variants of pronunciation and spelling were adopted for the
same words, but the greatest discrepancy was between principles of ortho-
graphical and orthoepical rendering of Greek and Latin elements. In this
way, there arose linguistic conditions for expressing certain cultural oppo-
sitions through written means. As was noted above, Western Ukrainian
variants of borrowings comfortably corresponded to the image of Stan-
dard Ukrainian as a full-fledged European language. Meanwhile Eastern
Ukrainian variants reflected a language that was autochthonous, ethnic,
and not similar to any other language. Naturally, as far as the adopt-
ing and adaptation of borrowings was concerned, the position of the
Eastern Ukrainian variants, with respect to this model, was less logically
coherent.

In the short-lived independent Ukrainian state of 1918–1920, and
thereafter in the Ukrainian Republic within the USSR, a regular work
on the codification of Ukrainian orthography was initiated by the newly
formed Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. In 1921, The Major Rules of
Ukrainian Orthography appeared, the first scholarly codification of
Ukrainian orthography sanctioned as compulsory. However, during the
1920s, when the use of the Ukrainian language became widespread, it be-
came obvious that The Major Rules . . . did not meet all requirements and
that the issues of orthography needed further elaboration. This work be-
came especially active in the middle of the 1920s. The State Commission
on Solving Orthography Problems was formed in 1925. After lengthy dis-
cussions, in which linguists from Western Ukraine (at that time part of
Poland) participated, a conference on orthography was held in 1927 in
Kharkiv, then capital of the Ukrainian SSR. Zhovtobriukh notes that
“[t]he leaders of the State Commission set as a goal the formation of a
unified orthography for all Ukrainian territories, so that it would serve
culturally to unite the entire Ukrainian nation, as the Peoples’ Commissar
for Education, M. O. Skrypnyk put it in his opening speech” (Zhovto-
bruiukh 1991: 57). The new orthography was officially sanctioned in
September 1928. A symbolic goal, the unification of Ukrainians of all
Ukrainian territories, was achieved through a compromise between the
Eastern and Western Ukrainian orthographic traditions. The new Ukrai-
nian orthography of 1928 was generally oriented toward the Eastern
Ukrainian tradition, while the orthography of borrowings was based on
the Western Ukrainian tradition.

Different patterns of the adaptation of borrowed words in the Eastern
and Western Ukrainian varieties of standard language resulted from dif-
ferent routes by which the same words had entered Ukrainian, as well as
from the influence of an intermediary language, Russian in the first case,
Polish in the second. There were, for instance, significant discrepancies
in words of Greek origin. The Eastern Ukrainian adaptation of Greek borrowings typically retained characteristics of the so-called Reuchlinian transliteration, according to which the Greek θ is rendered in Cyrillic as ф, η as и (i), and β as в. For instance, Αθήνα ‘Athens’, миф ‘myth’, Фибу ‘Thebe’, химія ‘chemistry’, орфографія ‘orthography’, варвар ‘barbarian’, etc. In the case of new borrowings and international terminology with Greek components, there is a distinct influence of the Russian language. It should be taken in account, however, that the same approach to transliterating Hellenisms is also found in Old Ukrainian texts; in other words, it is characteristic of ancient borrowings from Greek. Contrary to that, in the Western variety of Ukrainian, Greek borrowings, due to Polish influence, were rendered according to Erasmus’s transliteration. That is, the Greek θ was rendered as т, β as б, and η as е: Атені, міт, Тебі, хемія, орфографія, барбар, etc. In terms of linguistic criteria, some cases in the 1928 orthography appear questionable and open to criticism, but taking into consideration the cultural-symbolic aspect, the form of this compromise does not seem accidental. Aimed at differentiating the Ukrainian and Russian languages, the principles of the orthography of foreign borrowings were indicative of a general orientation away from the Russian language and thus toward Europe.

However, in Eastern Ukraine, the orthography of 1928 did not last long. As early as in 1933, during the campaign against “nationalist subversion in linguistics,” the orthography was altered, and this time, without any discussions. Actually, it was primarily a change in the principles of transliterating foreign words, the orthography of which, from this time onwards, was oriented toward the Russian language. The grapheme Γ (g) was deleted from the Ukrainian graphical system altogether. As a result of these events, seeds of a new cultural-semiotic conflict were sown. The orthography of 1933 was not recognized in Western Ukraine, and it was introduced there only in 1939, after Western Ukrainian lands were absorbed into the Ukrainian SSR. And it is the orthography of 1928 that continues to be used, albeit inconsistently, by the Ukrainian diaspora. This created conditions for identification of the 1933 orthography and the entire subsequent direction of codification of Ukrainian orthography with the ideologies of totalitarianism and national suppression, with the 1928 orthography accordingly becoming a symbol of Ukraine’s unity, national independence, and resistance to totalitarianism (Azhniuk 1997). Since differences between them mainly concerned the transliteration of borrowings, there arose situations when the spelling of a single word became symbolic of an ideological position. Thus, a leading dissident human rights organization of the 1970s was called Українська Гельсінська група ‘the Ukrainian Helsinki Group’, but not Хельсінська, as it should
have been spelled according to the “Soviet” orthography. Spelling it that way was an act of deliberate choice and symbolically significant.

As already noted, at the end of the 1980s the significant social transformations increased tendencies to revise the codified norms. It is notable that public discussion of these questions started precisely with orthography issues. Bringing back some language elements banned by the Soviet regime, particularly the letter І (g), soon took on a symbolic meaning as part of the struggle for national and state independence. The first International Congress of Ukrainian Studies, held in Kyiv in 1991, adopted a resolution calling for the development of a unified orthography for all Ukrainians, living in Ukraine or abroad. In recent years, new versions of the Ukrainian orthography (1990 and 1993) were adopted, with changes concerning, among other things, rules of transliterating foreign words. The Ukrainian National Commission on Questions of Orthography was formed by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, which from 1994 to 1996 prepared a new version of the Ukrainian orthography. In 1999, *Ukrainian Orthography: A Novel Edition Project* was published, with many amendments and additions (*Ukraїns’kyi pravopys* 1999), as an attempt to unify two orthographic traditions, those of the diaspora and homeland, by proposing a significant number of compromises. However, this publication appeared in a very limited edition of only 100 copies and has remained almost unknown to the general public, although it has often been cited in the orthographic debate.

In 2000–2001, discussions of orthographic problems became much more heated. When government officials responsible for humanitarian issues announced the plan to reform orthography by putting into practice the 1999 project, journalists and the general public joined the debate. Adherents of rapid and drastic reform in orthography argued for cleansing Ukrainian orthography of foreign influences, most of all the influence of the Russian language, which is identified, in ideological terms, with the Soviet totalitarian past and, in a wider historical perspective, with the colonial dependency on Russia. The adopting of a new, reformed Ukrainian orthography was considered a precondition for implementing the state’s language policy and a sign of genuine Ukrainian patriotism. In contrast, adherents of the opposite attitude to orthography, while not rejecting the idea of its gradual improvement, defended continuity in orthographical tradition, called for caution, and spoke out against hasty decisions. Their opposition precluded the reformers’ plans from being carried out. Exacerbation of the orthography debate coincided with certain political events in the country. The last such episode took place after the Orange Revolution of 2004. However, the expectations of a quick solution to the orthography question never materialized. The conflict again moved into a latent,
“frozen” phase. But since the problem remains unsolved both practically and semiotically, another phase of intensification is only a matter of time.

With the current lack of orthographic uniformity, the editorial practice actually allows for the simultaneous use of different orthographic variants, sometimes even on different pages of the same publication. In some cases, only individual words, typically borrowings, are spelled according to the orthography of 1928, while the contemporary orthography is otherwise maintained. For example, to use the spellings Европа ‘Europe’ or миф ‘myth’ instead of normative Європа and миф is a signal of the publication’s commitment to the idea of Ukraine’s belonging to Western civilization. Even normative orthographic references contradict one another, mostly with respect to the transliteration of borrowings. In general, the present situation of choice among, and coexistence of, competing orthographic principles transforms the spelling (and pronunciation) of loanwords into some sort of emblem, distinguishing members of different ideological and cultural circles.

14. Conclusions

It is difficult to generalize about contemporary trends in the processes of codification of Ukrainian because they are extraordinarily variegated and influenced by numerous heterogeneous factors. Ambiguity and instability are also growing, due to changes in what Garvin named the “style” of corpus planning. At present, the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine is no longer the sole authority on these issues, and one witnesses a move from a rigidly centralized Academy style of controlling codification process to a free enterprise style, somewhat characteristic of democratic countries (Garvin 1993). However, Ukraine differs from these countries in that adequate alternative structures have not yet been developed — for example, linguistic authorities other than those in the National Academy of Sciences — which could provide for effective realization of necessary measures. The ongoing process of revision and amendment of the codified standard generally complicates the task of broadening the scope of use of the Ukrainian language. At the same time, today’s rise of activity in the sphere of language reform is a consequence of a whole set of cultural and historical factors and an attempt to resolve rather old cultural and ideological conflicts.

An analysis of cultural models and ideologies associated with them bears witness to the particular role of the romantic model in the history of Standard Ukrainian. The model that I call European does not contradict the romantic approach, insofar as both are aimed at reaffirming and
consolidating the separatist, divergent function of Standard Ukrainian. On the ideological level, this function manifests itself as one of the fundamental means of supporting Ukrainian national identity. This role of the language remains significant even today, since the postmodern ideology largely agrees with the romantic ideal aimed at supporting linguistic and cultural diversity (Geeraerts 2003) and with a particularly postmodern cult of authenticity, which can be regarded as a safeguard against globalization processes.

The role of the rationalist model in the history of Standard Ukrainian is relatively less significant, due to a specific quality of Ukrainian history, namely the lack of continuity in the adoption and transmission of ideals of the Enlightenment. In the history of Standard Ukrainian, the rationalist model has operated mostly in the form of principles and criteria of correctness borrowed from, and to a large extent superimposed by, Standard Russian and Russian linguistics. These principles and criteria applied primarily to literature and aimed at the high prestige of its language. The rationalist model is in conflict with the romantic model, originally oriented to living vernacular. Contemporary Ukrainian adherents of the former oppose a total revision of language standards, argue for stylistic differentiation, and try to preserve continuity in the development of the standard. However, due to the association of the rationalist model with the Soviet past and the Russian language, they are criticized by the adherents of the romantic model, who accuse them of lack of patriotism.

It should also be noted that codifiers’ deliberate steps often lead to paradoxical consequences. Thus, orientation toward “living vernacular” as the ideal of language correctness actually results in attempts to eliminate bookish elements, rather than recreating the vernacular. In particular, Ukrainian linguistic purism mostly manifests itself not in the elimination of lexical borrowings, but in a negative attitude toward certain bookish elements on a stylistic level. At the same time, in orthography, the struggle to establish cultural distance between Ukrainian and Russian is concentrated on the way borrowings from Greek, Latin, and other European languages are transliterated.

Linguistically, the facts described above testify to the existence of certain tendencies in language change, whose further evolution is rather difficult to evaluate at the moment. For example, the tendency to increase the prominence of vernacular elements at the expense of bookish or neutral ones in non-artistic (non-literature) written texts destabilizes boundaries between functional styles, whereas a clear differentiation of such styles is considered an indicator of maturity of a literary language. On the other hand, certain processes may enhance this direction of change. Standard languages in post-totalitarian countries share a tendency for
the boundaries of literary standards to be eroded by a turbulent influx of variants coming from vernacular and/or territorial dialects. Consequently, the rigid official character of formal styles of communication is lost in some of their genres.

Whether they focus on the redistribution of stylistic variants or variants of loanword spelling, the varieties of linguistic ideologies I have described symbolically underscore cultural distances. They foster the implementation of the separatist function of Standard Ukrainian and maintain the tendency of Slavic languages toward divergence.

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Notes

* I would like to express my gratitude to all my colleagues who have helped me during my work. I am especially grateful to Professor Serhii Iermolenko, as without his help the preparation of the English version of my article would have been impossible. I also give my thanks to my parents and my husband for their love.

1. This distinction between the standard and the vernacular is essential for characterizing the Ukrainian language situation. However, it is virtually overlooked in studies dealing with this topic.

2. It should be noted that some functional styles were practically nonexistent until then and, accordingly, remained non-codified. For example, during the Soviet period, Ukrainian was not used in the army; hence this domain was in need of a retreat to an even “earlier” stage of language planning.

3. In the history of Standard Ukrainian, the terms “Eastern Ukrainian” and “Western Ukrainian” have more cultural than geographic meaning. It is with this reservation that they are used in this text.

4. Here, means of expression of different languages are considered, to some extent, equivalent, due to their “bookishness.” However, in speakers’ awareness, this feature is perceived as “the obscure,” which makes possible macaronic use of such means. The requirement of “understandability” for ordinary peasants as a criterion for literary norm is discussed by Shevelov (1986–1987: 124).

5. This fact was later used for political accusations.

6. It is only in the twentieth century that orientation to folk vernacular became associated with the obsolete. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the situation was the opposite. That is, folk vernacular was associated with “the new” and bookish tradition with “the old.”

7. Pylyns’kyi (1976: 129) distinguishes a special “editorial” norm and underlines that language in texts issued by much-reputed publishing houses becomes a basis for subsequent codification.

8. I was then working for that journal and, therefore, was allowed to access the editorial archive.

9. That the issue of spoken variants of the Ukrainian language is extremely ideologically charged is demonstrated by the case of surzhyk, which is highly stigmatized and usually
perceived as a mixture of the Ukrainian and Russian languages. This case is treated in terms of language ideologies in the works of Bilaniuk (1997, 2005).

10. These statements are taken from the notes taken during my conversation with a Ukrainian terminologist from Lviv Polytechnic University.

11. Readiness to adopt borrowings varies across languages. On the one hand, German is believed to possess an extremely low “level of readiness” to accept borrowings. On the other hand, English and French are arguably more willing to accept borrowings (Dostál 1982: 113). Clearly, the level of this readiness can change, as demonstrated by the case of contemporary French.

12. The history of Ukrainian orthography witnessed an attempt at creating a consistently phonetic orthography. It was made by Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–1895), who was guided by Serbian orthographic experiences.

13. This situation is not unique. For example, there are now various orthographies of the Serbian language (Pešikan 1996: 175), and in Croatia, several orthographies were created during the last decade (Pranjković 2006).

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Laada Bilaniuk: *Contested tongues: Language politics and cultural correc-

This book by a Ukrainian-American philologist is the end product of fifteen years of observation of the linguistic situation in Ukraine, of the dynamics of Ukrainian language politics and its wider sociocultural basis, and most importantly, of the linguistic existence of the Ukrainian ethnus. This ethnus happened to exist in the context of a dramatic conflict between the Ukrainian and the Russian language, which has influenced the structure of the Ukrainian language, its sociolinguistic visage, and has developed deep roots in the linguistic consciousness of Ukrainians. The author has succeeded in capturing the most delicate nuances of these changes, which have had an impact on the dynamics of the linguistic and social existence of the Ukrainian ethnus.

In the first chapter, the author touches on the question of the fate of languages in the former USSR during the era of perestroika and the linguistic aspects of various views of Ukrainian nationality at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The author emphasizes a phenomenon that became typical of the cultural space in the post-Soviet countries, namely invasion by the English language, which was associated with Western values and arose as an antipode to the Soviet ideology, politics, and way of life. As a consequence of this invasion, Slavic and English elements were mixed in certain genres, and with a particular communicational and pragmatic objective: “... efforts to avoid mixing Ukrainian and Russian contrasted with the increasingly frequent mixing of Slavic and English elements which I observed in advertising and popular culture. English was sometimes even chosen as neutral ground between Ukrainophone and Russophone speakers, who thereby avoided ceding the ‘upper hand’ to either native language” (p. 23). The author derives theoretical and practical aspects of this problem from the paradox of language as such, with its individual and social character, stability, and fluency:
“‘Pure’ languages are always already mixtures, suffused into both the conflicting intentions of their users” (p. 32). On a daily basis, people make decisions of how to speak and how to approach language selection when dealing with someone in conversation, taking into account the speaker’s past and present. This is especially appropriate in contemporary Ukraine, given the dynamics of its social development.

The second chapter is devoted to the problem of language selection by an individual. The author presents four biographical narratives, which show the linguistic history of Ukraine through the prism of individual choice. Especially important are those aspects that deal with the urban/rural divide, regional variations, institutional control over language, the Soviet system of subordinating languages, and linguistic changes after Ukraine’s independence.

The following chapter touches on the history of ideological categories and changes of linguistic direction throughout the history of Ukraine. The author reviews Ukraine’s history from the times of the Kyivan Rus, discussing in particular the functioning of the Ukrainian language in the nineteenth century, the politics of Ukrainianization at the beginning of Soviet rule, Russification in subsequent decades, and the status of the Ukrainian language during the period of independence.

The opus pays a lot of attention to the problem of language mixing. The author not only devotes the fourth chapter to it, but also examines it throughout the whole work, particularly in the material that analyzes surzhyk in Ukraine. As is well known, mixed languages are a widespread phenomenon in the world. In Bilaniuk’s opinion, “Multilingualism is more the rule than the exception, and where there is more than one language, there will very likely be some form of mixing, or, if not, then a lot of energy (which may be more or less overt) has been put into preventing or stigmatizing that mixing” (p. 122). While agreeing with this sentiment, we should note that it would be worth distinguishing, in principle, between the type of mixing that results in pidgins and creole languages, and surzhyk, which does not fit into these terminological categories.

Searching for the reasons why surzhyk arose as a specifically Ukrainian phenomenon, the author reasonably emphasizes the “urban peasant subculture” which became something of a trademark of sociocultural existence in Ukraine from the 1920s onward. Surzhyk, with all its aggregate linguistic, linguo-social-psychological, and historical-cultural ingredients, had not yet been examined in a serious monograph. However, Ukrainian and foreign scholars have accumulated considerable experience with different aspects and approaches to this phenomenon. Relying on the work of Yevhen Chykalenko, Michael Flyer, Larysa Masenko, Oleksandra Serbenska, the author of this review, and other writers, Bilaniuk offers...
an interesting and synthetic paradigm, portraying surzhyk as a phenomenon incorporating the above-mentioned ingredients, and as a central trope in Ukrainian discourse.

One of the solid achievements of the book is the author’s functional characterization of the different types of surzhyk:

1. Urban peasant surzhyk, the archetypal surzhyk, which arose as a result of the Russification of Ukrainian peasants, in their transition to the more prestigious and influential Russian language.
2. Village-dialect surzhyk, which developed in the villages as a consequence of the Russophony of village administrations or because of the short-term visits of villagers to the city.
3. Sovietized-Ukrainian surzhyk, a result of the decades of direct Soviet manipulation and spread of the use of Russian.
4. Urban bilinguals’ surzhyk, the habitual mixed language among bilinguals.
5. Post-Independence surzhyk, the mixed speech of adult Russophones, who did not speak Ukrainian earlier, but now are making an effort to do so, and which they are forced to do by the status of Ukrainian as the state language.

Although I do not wish to contest the author’s conceptual categorization, I nonetheless wish to bring attention to its logical inconsistency. Surzhyk types 1, 2, and 4 as linguistic phenomena are based on urban/rural dichotomy, but types 3 and 5 are based on the principle of socio-political chronotopy in the context of which different types of surzhyk can spread.

Chapter five deals with language criticism, the subjects of which became above all certain representative personalities: Leonid Kuchma as the president of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovych as the leader of the Donetsk region, and Viktor Yushchenko as prime minister. The author also takes note of the debates surrounding Ukrainian orthography, of various interpretations of surzhyk in Ukrainian social consciousness, and of the socio-symbolic and cultural functions of surzhyk, including in literature and popular culture. She devotes particular attention to the carnival surzhyk of Verka Serdiuchka, one of the cult personalities of Ukrainian popular culture. The dual ambiguity of gender (the woman’s role is played by the male Ukrainian actor Andrii Danylko) and language (the speech is a mixture of Ukrainian and Russian languages) transforms this popular personality into a symbol of post-Soviet chaos and absurdity.

The final chapter discusses a host of important questions, for example language politics in the media space (language selection as a means of sending signals, communication strategies of a Ukrainian talk show),
and mixing of Ukrainian and English in pop culture and the language of advertising.

As an epilogue to the book, there is a section about “The language of the Ukrainian Orange Revolution.” The author directs her attention to the language issue as a ideological focal point in the election, uncovers key linguistic characteristics of Viktor Yanukovych and how they exhibited themselves during the election campaign. She also outlines linguistic profiles of the supporters of Yushchenko and Yanukovych, who were the main contenders in the battle for the presidency and became symbols for opposing orientations of various parts of Ukrainian society.

Field studies and notes collected by Bilaniuk, numerous interviews and insightful observations on the meta-linguistic experience of residents of Ukraine, create a picture of the life of the Ukrainian language, its communicational and symbolic representation, and the dynamics of maintaining contact in their sociocultural and economic contexts.

Unquestionably, a strong aspect of the book is that Bilaniuk includes and accurately analyzes the wide discourse of material on the coexistence and competition of languages in Ukraine. At the center of the author’s attention rest various forms of lingual representations of bilingualism as modes of lingual existence for individuals:

- the public sphere, everyday dialogues, and private and family languages. For example, when describing the individuals in the chapter of biographical narratives, she notes, “In the two relationships that began before independence, the initial interactions were in Russian, whereas the couple who met after independence began their relationship in Ukrainian” (pp. 175–176);
- urban markets, especially the linguistic solidarity between the seller and buyer;
- discourse on popular music, television shows and series, and aspects of their Ukrainian–Russian–English mutual linguistic interaction (language-cultural diffusion in the translations of American TV shows into Ukrainian, audiovisual effects during the broadcasting of TV shows, which underlined linguistic preferences and were expected to exercise a suggestive influence on the viewer, and so on);
- semiotics of the urban space, particularly the language of advertising billboards, graffiti, monuments, and street signs.

The research monograph by Laada Bilaniuk belongs, on the one hand, in the context of the analysis of linguistic processes in Ukraine among the works of linguists from both Ukraine and the diaspora (George Shevelov, Vasyl Chaplenko, Paul Robert Magocsi), and on the other hand, in the field of global sociolinguistics, especially the investigation of bilingualism
and multilingualism, and language processes under conditions of globalization, and so forth.

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The volume under review emerged from one of the last projects implemented within the financial assistance of INTAS, the international association for the promotion of cooperation with scientists from the new independent states of the former Soviet Union. It reflects the interdisciplinary and international composition of the project team, comprised of scholars from Ukraine, Austria, and Great Britain. It analyzes the complex language situation in Ukraine with an interdisciplinary approach. Besides the focus on sociolinguistics, the contributors deal with legal aspects, questions of political manipulation of language policy, and culturological topics. Along with a large amount of statistical data in the articles, the volume includes an appendix (pp. 371–396) with the results of a nationwide survey conducted in December 2006 as part of the INTAS project. The recommendations which the contributors present in the conclusions of their chapters are summarized at the end of the volume (pp. 359–366).

The editor Juliane Besters-Dilger underscores the great relevance of research “on one of the most interesting problems of current sociolinguistics: Language policy in Ukraine” (p. 7). Indeed, the language situation in Ukraine has been on the agenda of Slavonic and post-communist studies for several years now. The editor and most of the contributors are renowned in the field. Research on sociolinguistics in Ukraine is not only fascinating because of the complex interaction of demographic, political, legal, anthropological, and linguistic aspects, but it also demonstrates the problems of nation building and social consolidation in Ukraine and other former Soviet republics.

The chapter “Language policies and language attitudes in post-Orange Ukraine” by Volodymyr Kulyk (political scientist, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine) opens the main part of the book. The author examines language politics from the point of view of the political process, focusing on how language politics are modified “in view of specific polit-
ical tasks largely determined by a power configuration in a particular period” (p. 15). He demonstrates how general characteristics of post-Soviet Ukrainian politics influence the attitudes toward the Ukrainian and Russian languages in public practices and how politicians try to “change the regulations in the language domain so that they correspond to their respective preferences and benefit their target constituencies” (p. 15).

Kulyk presents an intriguing view of the discourse of language policy since Ukrainian independence. It becomes obvious that despite certain changes in the political landscape, certain aspects of Ukrainian politics are left nearly untouched. One of these is language policy. The study indicates that all presidents and governments were not eager to push the legislative status of Russian vis-à-vis Ukrainian, i.e., the option that Russian could become the second state language. Establishing Ukrainian as the only state language in 1996 was a visible signal of “upgrading” the titular language, but there have been few legislative or administrative measures to enforce it in practical terms.

During the Kuchma administration, this problem was clearly at the margins. Language policy was purposefully “de-politicized,” except during elections. However, on the eve of the Orange Revolution of 2004, the electoral manipulation of the language question by Viktor Yanukovych targeted at eastern regions unexpectedly mobilized voters in central and western Ukraine against him. His policy was perceived as dangerous not only for the Ukrainian language and culture, but also for Ukrainian statehood and democracy.

In addition to an in-depth analysis of the language politics by presidents and administrations of different “colors,” Kulyk also studies language preferences of the Ukrainian population as revealed by the survey. Besides the clearly marked differences between Ukrainophone and Russophone parts, there is a discrepancy between the declared ethnolinguistic identities and actual use of Russian and Ukrainian languages. The study thus emphasizes that the potential for serious conflicts between different parts of the population over language issues is low since “for many people, the adherence to one [policy] option is not as strong as to preclude the acceptance of another, even if it is not quite compatible” (p. 45).

The legal dimension of language policy is the topic of Bill Bowring (lawyer, London University). He analyzes the national legal framework, the interaction of national and international laws, and makes the following recommendation: “There is no need at present to give a special constitutional status to Russian; on the other hand, several states have more than one official language and this may in future be a good solution, though not at the present time in Ukraine” (p. 96). He also refers to other “target groups” of language laws, of which “[p]articular attention should
be given to the Crimean Tatar language, as the language of an indigenous people of a part of Ukraine, which suffered actual genocide in 1944 and even now suffers significant discrimination and deprivation” (p. 96).

Larysa Masenko (sociolinguist, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) provides an in-depth sociolinguistic study on the language situation in Ukraine. Sociolinguistic studies, according to the author, “make a necessary precondition for language policy elaboration and implementation. In Ukraine these studies have been gaining more importance because during the long historic period of statelessness the language situation in Ukraine underwent considerable deformations” (p. 101). However, since Ukraine gained independence in 1991, there has not been intensive development of sociolinguistics “in response to a pressing social demand of expanding the functions and areas of usage of the Ukrainian language which gained the status of the state language” (p. 104). Ukrainian sociolinguistics has been developing only thanks to a few particular achievements, such as this INTAS project.

Masenko’s own analysis focuses on the results of Russification in Soviet times and the potential for development of the Ukrainian language. In this respect, Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism plays an important role. Since in the INTAS survey, the number of native language “speakers” of Ukrainian turned out to be significantly lower than in the Ukrainian census of 2001, the author argues that, “in independent Ukraine Russification of ethnic Ukrainians still continues” (p. 108). This is a somewhat curious conclusion given the difference in categories used in the two cases (unlike the census, the survey allowed the respondents to declare two native languages). As is often the case in Ukrainian sociolinguistics, the nationwide data should be supplemented with the “regional factor,” which would show that the most intense changes in favor of Russian happened in the east of the country.

Furthermore, Masenko points out that the share of respondents who would like their children to use both languages is much higher than the percentage of those who do so themselves. That is, many of the people who only speak Russian believe that the younger generation should be able to speak Ukrainian as well (p. 113). She also concludes that “in all the regions of Ukraine, both Ukrainian and Russian languages have quite a high prestige” and that “the level or probability of language-related conflicts remains insignificant” (p. 136).

The contribution by Hanna Zalizniak (sociologist, Hromadska Dumka Center, Kyiv) emphasizes the correlation between people’s language behavior and their political and cultural orientations. As a theoretical reference, she employs Samuel Huntington’s controversial book “The clash of civilizations,” in which he portrays a line dividing Europe into the Asiatic
type and European types on the basis of some sociocultural and political indicators. This line supposedly runs through the territory of Ukraine. Zalizniak states that numerous Ukrainian historians and philosophers follow the idea of two Ukraines: the European, Western Ukraine and the Eastern, Eurasian Ukraine orientated toward Moscow. Indeed, this division of Ukraine seems to have influenced elections and other political campaigns. However, one should keep in mind that there are other factors which can play an important role (e.g., economy, social welfare, etc.) and that borders not only divide but are contact zones as well.

Fortunately, Zalizniak did not follow Huntington’s schematic pattern in her interesting analysis and interpretation of the survey data. She analyzes multilayered indicators such as national self-identification, the level of sympathies for the European-type market as opposed to the centralized method of production, the alternatives of joining the European Union versus Eurasian integration, independent Ukraine versus a country having close ties with Russia, etc. The study convincingly shows the links between indicators of western or eastern orientation of the Ukrainian citizens and their language preferences. It is not surprising that people who speak Ukrainian and believe that its promotion is a language policy priority incline to look toward Europe, while those who speak Russian and care about giving it the status as a second state language usually perceive Ukraine’s past through the lens of Russian imperial history.

Despite ambiguity of the Ukrainian sociocultural and linguistic situation, since the beginning of the 1990s one can observe an increasing support for a European (in cultural terms) orientation, which Zalizniak illustrates by comparing the geographical distribution of votes for candidates perceived as representatives of the two orientations in consecutive elections (p. 172). One can add that this tendency goes beyond the schematic division of Ukraine by Huntington.

Oksana Kalynovs’ka (sociolinguist, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) analyzes the growth of positive attitude to Ukrainian as the state language in another field. Her investigation into the language situation in education reveals that the use of the Ukrainian language was promoted very successfully in this domain, in contrast to other public fields like business, mass media, Internet, mass culture, cinematography, and publishing. She points out that all levels of the educational system display a significant increase of Ukrainian-language institutions, with the most significant growth to be found in preschool education (p. 206). In terms of regional distribution, language use in education confirms the well-known east–west differences. However, Kalynovs’ka’s data shows a remarkable increase in the use of Ukrainian as the language of instruction even in
eastern and southern parts of Ukraine (p. 207). Thus education seems to be a domain where Ukrainian is perceived as a prestigious language.

Although the official statistics show an increase in the number of Ukrainian-language schools and of students taught in Ukrainian, the study demonstrates that the actual situation is much more complicated. The educational environment remains bilingual, since Russian is still used as the language of communication in the majority of supposedly Ukrainian-language schools. That is, "Ukrainian is used as the medium of instruction only, whereas the language of communication between parents and teachers, teachers and students, lecturers and students (especially in eastern and southern Ukraine) remains Russian" (p. 210). This is an asymmetrical bilingualism. Similarly to other fields, there is a discrepancy between the declared status of Ukrainian and its actual use, and there are no effective measures to implement the declared policies.

The mass media play a crucial role for the future development, state, and status of the Ukrainian language. The contribution by Juliane Besters-Dilger (slavicist, Vienna University, Austria, now Freiburg University, Germany) presents an in-depth analysis of language policy in mass media with a focus on the time after the Orange Revolution. Her study demonstrates achievements and failures of the language policy in various media such as television and radio, newspapers, books, and cinema.

The Ukrainian Constitution contains no references to the use of language in the media, and its language-related articles are very vague. Besters-Dilger draws attention to a big flood of draft laws submitted over the past few years and of laws finally passed by the parliament, but the general awareness of the legal situation regarding language policy in mass media is minimal. The author refers to the current state as the Soviet legacy, a set of political characteristics deeply rooted in Soviet traditions (p. 280). A good example of the difficulties caused by the Soviet legacy is the law "on television and broadcasting." Since its adoption, it took more than ten years before an attempt was made by a government agency in 2004 to implement its language regulations and ensure a required share of broadcasting in Ukrainian. However, only a week later, then-president Kuchma stated that the law is just a "recommendation" and should not be taken too literally (p. 281).

Since the mass media are a very important agent for an active language policy intended to spread Ukrainian as a state language into all public spheres, there is strong resistance in the broadcasters’ programming policy and in an "oppositional discourse" on language matters which, according to Besters-Dilger, is "consciously ahistorical and solely based on the contemporary situation in Ukraine" (p. 283). Another, official "discourse" the author calls "‘ethnonationally’ oriented" (p. 283), i.e.,
calling for the reverse of Russification by restoring the Ukrainian language in the public sphere, particularly in the media.

After a detailed analysis of a large amount of data, the author identifies three approaches taken by the state to deal with the different types of mass media: “a laissez-faire policy for the press, financial support for Ukrainian book production (without hindering the import of Russian books) and legal restrictions on Russian influence on the broadcasting and cinema sector” (p. 283). This combination resembles policies in other spheres which try to strike a balance between the “Orange” and “anti-Orange forces” (see Kulyk’s chapter) by increasing the use of Ukrainian without provoking Russophones. However, while the Russophones do have a certain understanding for the “‘ethnonationally’ oriented” discourse, in the sphere of mass media they (especially the older generation) are unwilling to accept the policy promoting Ukrainian at the expense of Russian.

There are other insightful studies in this volume. For example, a chapter by Nadiya Trach (sociolinguist, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) on the language situation “in the sphere of legal proceedings and office administration”; the case study of language as a “political weapon” in post-Soviet Odessa by Vera Skvirskaya (anthropologist, University of Cambridge, UK); and the linguistic examination by Salvatore del Gaudio (slavicist, Vienna University) and Bohdana Tarasenko (sociolinguist, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy) of the phenomenon of surzhyk, a result of language contact forced by Russification especially since the 1930s.

The studies in the volume show a high degree of public tolerance regarding language issues. It manifests itself most visibly in bilingualism, and it seems that the direction of language shift is now inverted: not from Ukrainian to Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism and finally Russian, but now from Russian monolingualism to Russian–Ukrainian bilingualism (with surzhyk as a stopover). In all studies we can find a tendency to conclude that there is a kind of post-colonial hybrid discourse (the situation “in-between” according to Homi Bhabha) on Ukrainian language policy, combining a shift of cultural orientations and political priorities after the Orange Revolution and continued emphasis on not restricting the use of Russian. The wide spread of the Ukrainian–Russian and Russian–Ukrainian mixed languages (referred to under the general label of surzhyk) should also be seen as a hybrid phenomenon.

All studies in the volume have a high level of analysis and interpretation of a variety of research data. The editor and contributors ensure cohesiveness of the volume through the similar arrangement of the presentations and their recourse to the same data resulting from a representative survey, focus group discussions (which seem to be an innovative
kind of research), structured interviews, legislative documents, and the census. What also makes the articles very interesting are the authors’ stimulating remarks about future perspectives of language policy in the respective fields (education, mass media, etc.).

This volume is the most insightful and extensive study of the language policy and language situation in Ukraine for a long time. These data and analyses provide all further research with a solid background and inspiring ideas.

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