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PECULIARITIES OF BILINGUAL LANGUAGE SITUATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF UKRAINE (ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS OF A MASS SURVEY)

ABSTRACT

The article summarizes the results of sociolinguistic study of the language environment of secondary schools in Ukraine, on the basis of which the conclusion about its bilingualism was made. It is proved that the quality of the language environment does not correspond to the declared school status. Changes in the assessment of the language environment of schools from 2006 to 2017 are identified and it is concluded that it is possible to develop recommendations for improving the legal support of the use of languages in the Ukrainian education.

KEYWORDS: sociolinguistics, language situation in school education, bilingualism, diglossia, language policy

STRESZCZENIE

W artykule przedstawiono wyniki badania socjolingwistycznego środowiska językowego w szkołach średnich na Ukrainie, na podstawie którego stwierdzono jego dwujęzyczność. W badaniu udowodniono, że specyfika sytuacji językowej na Ukrainie polega na tym, że jakość środowiska językowego nie odpowiada deklarowanemu poziomowi szkół. Prześledzono zmiany w ocenie środowiska językowego szkół średnich w ciągu dekady (od 2006 do 2017 roku), na podstawie których stwierdzono, że istnieje możliwość opracowania zaleceń w celu poprawy wsparcia prawnego używania języków w systemie edukacji na Ukrainie.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: socjolingwistyka, sytuacja językowa w zakresie edukacji szkolnej, dwujęzyczność, dyglosja, polityka językowa

INTRODUCTION

The article proves that usage of the mass surveys methodology is relevant during analysis of the language situation in Ukrainian schooling, due to mismatch of statistical data on the functioning of Ukrainian language as official and the real facts of the language use in the secondary schools. The use of languages in schools in Ukraine (in most of its parts) differs in the following areas: Ukrainian language is using mostly in class, and Russian – during the breaks and after school activities. The language situation

in a particular school, regardless of language of study, depends on the language situation in the region. However, data on language situation in the region is not included in official statistical reports. That is why in the survey conducted in the framework of the No. 62700395 of the Volkswagen Foundation “Bi- and Multilingualism: between intensification and conflict resolution. Ethnolinguistic conflicts, linguistic politics and contact situations in post-Soviet Ukraine and Russia”¹, questions concerning the real linguistic situation (perception of the linguistic environment, its assessment by the respondents) and its desirable development was proposed.

The article specifies the sociolinguistic criteria on the basis of which the conclusion about changes in the linguistic situation in the field of school education in the period from 2006 to 2017 is made, in particular the dynamics of the regional differences and quantitative deformation inherited from the Soviet era in the “city – village” aspect are traced. In particular, questions aimed to data collection on the assessment of the society’s linguistic situation in the field of education were thoroughly analyzed. These questions made it possible to trace changes in linguistic behavior of respondents depending on the sphere of communication. Comparison of responses in the regional dimension revealed the heterogeneity of the language situation in school education by region, and the analysis of the responses of different population centers residents allowed to trace trends in overcoming the unevenness of linguistic development in the state in the “city – village” aspect.

Providing respondents with questions that envisaged the assessment of possible language policy in the field of school education, we sought to determine whether this assessment depends on the peculiarities of the linguistic situation in the region, how common the stereotypical representations about the desired language education are, or whether the general political situation in the state affects perception and an assessment of the linguistic environment of educational institutions by the speakers. A separate question dealt with the prospects of bilingual education in Ukraine.

INCONSISTENCY OF THE QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS
OF THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION WITH THE REAL FUNCTIONING
OF LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS OF UKRAINE:
BILINGUALISM OF THE LINGUISTIC ENVIRONMENT

The quantitative characteristics of the language situation in Ukrainian school education at the beginning of 2017/2018 academic year were as follows: primary

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schools teach in eight languages, in general education institutions – six, and 30 languages were taught as a subject in schools in Ukraine. The response of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to the request of UKRINFORM lists the language of teaching, namely: “In general educational institutions of Ukraine teaching is carried out in ... Ukrainian, Moldavian, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian, in primary school... in Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Moldavian, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian” (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine 2017).

It is worth noting that the information on how many students study in which of the languages or how many students study each of the languages, in connection with the adoption of the new law “On Education” with its extensively discussed article 7 “Language of education” became the subject of close attention of public activists and journalists, which prompted Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to publish above-mentioned information.

According to the information, published by the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, at the beginning of academic year 2016/2017 3,845,517 students were attending 16,858 secondary schools in Ukraine. 89.7% of the students studied in Ukrainian, while 9.4% of students studied in Russian. The statistics regarding other languages is as following: Rumanian – 0.4%; Hungarian – 0.4%, Moldavian – 0.1%, Polish – 1785 persons, English – 379 persons, Slovak – 379 persons, Bulgarian – 61 (State Statistics Service of Ukraine 2017).

Considering these statistical indicators, the conclusion about the monolingual language situation in secondary schools in Ukraine is quite obvious. However, the real language situation in Ukrainian schools, contrary to declarations and quantitative indicators is far from being the case. As it is known, monolingual language situations are evaluated in terms of functional areas, the various forms of existence of the national language, literary standard, territorial or social dialects, Koine, and the like. However, considering current language situation in Ukraine, the analysis of the language situation in the field of education in mentioned aspect is possible only for the Western region, where Ukrainian language is fully functional, which is confirmed by authoritative sociological and sociolinguistic studies (except for schools with education in the languages of national minorities, where several languages function). In other regions of the state in schools at least at the level of interpersonal communication Ukrainian and Russian interact.

Sociolinguistic measurements of the quality of the language environment in schools in Ukraine, recorded in various studies since 2000, suggest that the language environment in schools in Ukraine in most of the state (except the Western region) – even for those institutions which status is declared as a monolingual (with the Ukrainian language of instruction), is bilingual.

The results of mass survey conducted in the framework of the Project No. 62700395 of the Volkswagen Foundation “Bi- and multilingualism between intensification of conflict and conflict resolution. Ethno-linguistic conflicts, language politics and contact situations in post-Soviet Ukraine and Russia” confirm the general

conclusion about bilingualism of the language environment of secondary schools in Ukraine. Here, in particular, what answers were received to the question “How many people, in your opinion, speak Ukrainian in the settlement where you reside, at schools?”: almost no one – 4.2%; less than half – 8.3%, about half – 14.0%; more than half – 22.0%; pretty much everybody – 41.5%; difficult to answer – 10.0%.

It should be noted that even the answer “Pretty much everybody” does not exclude the fact that someone can use another language in an educational institution (in the Ukrainian case – Russian); and in general, the number of those who hear not only the Ukrainian language or do not hear Ukrainian in schools is 48.5% (Figure 1).

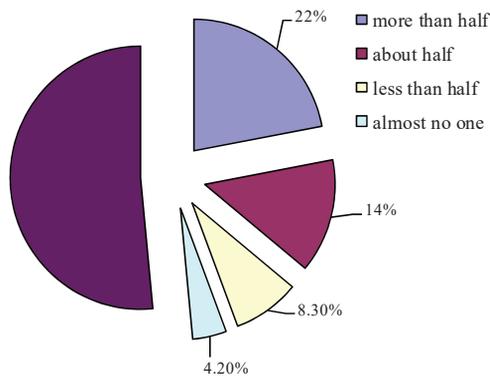


Figure 1. Number of respondents assessing the language environment in schools of Ukraine as bilingual

It is significant that this percentage coincides with the number of those respondents who, according to the survey, rated themselves bilingual or bilingual rather than monolingual – 48.7% of them (Figure 2).

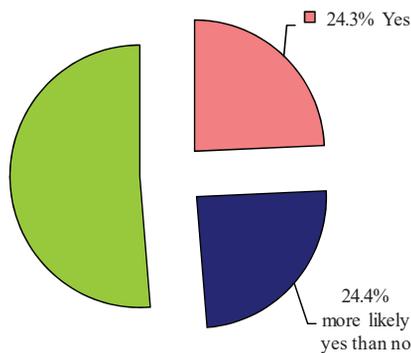


Figure 2. The number of respondents who consider themselves bilingual

It should be noted that the peculiarity of Ukrainian language situation is that the quality of the language environment of schools often does not correspond to the declared status of the school. In addition, it is not perceived as the optimal by experts, considering the bilingualism of Ukrainian schools is mainly excessive, because it increases the diffusivity of the language environment. It is also ambiguously evaluated by ordinary speakers, as evidenced by the results of a mass survey and discussions in focus groups.

Experts, as noted above, emphasize the deformed nature of the language situation in education, noting that the essence of the deformation is in the discrepancy of declarations on the dominance of Ukrainian language as the state in education and official statistics on the number of schools, classes with the language of instruction, the number of students in them like the real indicators of the use of languages in schools. For many schools in Ukraine the situation when teachers at classes speak Ukrainian, and at breaks and extracurricular activities speak Russian is typical. So do the students, noting in the survey that *“sometimes automatically turn on Russian in reply”* (according to the questionnaire of Kyiv school student) and *“already used to it: it is better to read and write in Ukrainian, and to speak Russian”* (according to the questionnaire of Poltava schoolgirl). The answers of Ukrainian high school students to the questionnaire on the quality of the language environment of their school are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of students' answers to the question about the quality of the language environment of the educational institution (in %)

	Zhytomyr	Kyiv	Bila Tserkva	Poltava
Almost 100% Ukrainian-speaking	24	19	8	11
Mostly Ukrainian-speaking, but occasionally there are situations when someone uses Russian language	30	38	73	25
Ukrainian and Russian are used approximately into half – each in its own situation: Ukrainian during the class, Russian during the breaks	35	36	12	46
Ukrainian and Russian languages are used at the same time even at classes depending on the language chosen for communication	9	6	6	18
Almost 100% use another (non-Ukrainian) language				
No answer	2	1	1	

Public moods in the assessment of the certified results of the survey situation are quite mixed, which, however, does not exclude the emergence of local conflicts, the wave of which passed, for example, in recent years, Kyiv schools.

Consequently, the language situation in Ukrainian school education is determined by the formal and actual interaction of Ukrainian language as the state language with Russian and other languages of national minorities, as well as languages

that are taught as a foreign language. However, the most significant value for the characteristics of the language situation in the outlined area is functioning in educational institutions of Ukrainian language as the state and Russian as the language of informal communication of a large number of participants in the educational process. This configuration of the language situation in education in independent Ukraine is determined by several factors.

FACTORS OF FORMATION OF THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN UKRAINIAN SCHOOL EDUCATION

The first factor is the national linguistic situation inherited from the Imperial and Soviet eras, which is determined by the inertial development of bilingualism (Masenko 2018). The formal change of status of schools after the proclamation of Ukrainian independence identified inherited from the Soviet Union deformations, as formalized bilingualism of linguistic environments in education, giving it the character of a mass phenomenon and the launch of the diglossia mechanism movement when used in speech clearly identifying their function. It should be noted that the spontaneous bilingualism in Ukrainian schools in Soviet times was rather an exception: in general education institutions adhered to the language regime provided for their status; the thesis of harmonious bilingualism was implemented, increasing the number of schools with Russian language of teaching in the national republics, in particular in Ukraine, and hours for learning of Russian. The education system in the USSR was an effective mechanism of official language policy as a component of national policy, which in the Ukrainian expanses was aimed at complete Russification and assimilation of Ukrainians.

At the same time, the formal change of the language of teaching in schools after the proclamation of independence of Ukraine did not significantly affect the configuration of the language situation in the state as a whole. Facts summarized in the order of the Minister of Education P. Talanchuk (No. 1/9-104 as of 22 July 1993) are eloquent “On the shortcomings in the implementation of the Ukrainian language of education in educational institutions”, namely: direct agitation of the heads of educational institutions against the introduction of Ukrainian language in the educational process, the practice of opening bilingual classes, which negatively affects the observance of a single both Ukrainian and Russian-speaking regimes, the requirements for parents to write applications for admission of their children to schools with Ukrainian language of education, cases when the language of teaching is determined by voting or questioning, the inability of heads of educational institutions to provide pupils of Ukrainian schools and classes with textbooks, the low level of language competence of heads of educational institutions, and sometimes teachers who due to lack of knowledge of Ukrainian language continue to teach in Russian,

even in Ukrainian schools and classes, unsatisfactory level of teaching history and geography of Ukraine, as well as other Ukrainian studies and social disciplines. Therefore, despite the official state status of Ukrainian language in education in independent Ukraine and convincing formal dominance (statistical indicators of the number of schools and classes with Ukrainian language of instruction and the number of students who on the basis of these indicators receive education in Ukrainian language) for the language situation in education and today characterized by uneven of regions and deformation through the “city – village”, which gives grounds for the conclusion about the discrepancy between the declarations and the real state of the use of state Ukrainian language in school education.

The second factor is the amorphous nature of the state language policy, the manifestation of which was the complete isolation of its activities for decades from the real language situation in education: these measures were reduced mainly to the declaration of general principles of language rights, but did not aim to affect the linguistic behaviour of residents of large cities, stereotypes of which were formed several generations ago (Taranenko 2009). L. Masenko, thinking on the reasons for the long-term indecision of the language conflict, writes that, unlike the Baltic countries, Ukraine has not created a state body endowed with the functions of control over the execution of language legislation, which, according to the researcher, had a decisive influence on the vector of development of the bilingual situation in the country (Masenko 2018). Therefore, despite the declarations and slogans initiated by the government measures to expand the functioning of Ukrainian language in education during the years of independence has not reduced the scale of Russification, and in some areas of public life, as noted by L. Masenko negative processes even increased (Masenko 2016). Because of this, sociolinguists conclude about the ineffectiveness of the state language policy in general and the system of language education in particular. The sign of Ukrainian language life is the fact that the expert environment, in particular, linguists, whose scientific interests include the problems of language functioning in society and the analysis of language policy, for almost the entire history of independent Ukraine were in a kind of opposition to the state bodies responsible for language regulation. There is the idea that the uncertainty of the language policy of independent Ukraine is due to the fact that the oligarchic power elite always hid the strategic goal of the state development of from society, which was clearly opened in 2013–2014 in connection with the Russian aggression. This gives grounds to talk about the reasons for ignoring the real language problems and the actual continuation of the policy of Russification of Ukraine by the methods of “voluntary refusal”, initiated in the USSR in the 70s of the last century (Marusyk 2017).

And finally, the third factor is the post-totalitarian nature of the education system in Ukraine, which determines, on the one hand, its formalism, isolation from the needs of students and parents, and on the other hand – the closeness, tradition, weak ability to update, which entails collective resistance of the educational bureaucracy

to formal measures of language policy, which contradict its bureaucratic habits and stereotypes.

The impact of these factors has not been the same throughout the history of independent Ukraine. In particular, in the first years it was about the wider use of Ukrainian language in education according to the status of the state, which was proclaimed in 1989 by the law on “Languages in the Ukrainian SSR”, which was manifested primarily in the increase in the number of schools and classes with the Ukrainian language of instruction according to the statistical number of Ukrainians in the state. After all, in 1991 in Ukraine only 49.3% of students studied in the Ukrainian language (until 2005, this number increased to 77%). But since the change of the language of the educational process in many situations was formal and did not lead to changes in the teaching staff in educational institutions, it did not extend to extracurricular activities, it often turned out to a purely formal use of the language in the classroom and in those textbooks that students used: if before the transfer of the school or class to Ukrainian language of teaching children used textbooks in Russian, then with the change of the language of instruction began to use textbooks in Ukrainian. As for teachers, the change of language in a particular school was entirely dependent on their ability to teach a subject in Ukrainian. Therefore, the real Ukrainization of educational institutions naturally occurred in Ukrainian-speaking regions and settlements, where Ukrainian was more common in everyday, in towns and villages. As for the East and the South, subject teachers in these regions often continued to teach in Russian or used Ukrainian at a very low level, resorting to language mixing or constant code switching. A typical example is the lesson of foreign literature in the 5th grade, which was observed in Kyiv school in early 2000: the teacher constantly appealed to children in Russian, switching to Ukrainian only to fix the stages of the lesson or certain forms of work. The teacher, for example, used Russian phrases “*So, let’s start the lesson*”, “*Be attentive*”, “*This is a very interesting topic*”, “*Do you like to read fairy tales?*”, “*Write down the date in your notebooks*”, “*Don’t shout out from your seat, when you want to tell something, raise your hand*”, and at the same time she spoke in Ukrainian “*The topic of today’s lesson is...*”, “*Let us read the textbook*”, “*Let us answer questions to the text*”.

DIFFERENCES IN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION
IN UKRAINIAN SCHOOLS BY REGION
AND BY THE INDICATOR “CITY – VILLAGE”

Analysis of the results of the mass survey revealed several trends in the perception of speakers of the language situation in education, which are directly due to the existing in previous times deformations.

First, answers to questions about the language environment in schools “*How many people, in your opinion, speak Ukrainian in the settlement where you reside, at schools?*” differ on regions. The nature and extent of these differences cannot be explained by regulatory mechanisms initiated by the state or by the fact that different models of language use in educational institutions are introduced in the regions, since the statistical characteristics of the language situation in them, as noted above, are not significantly different.

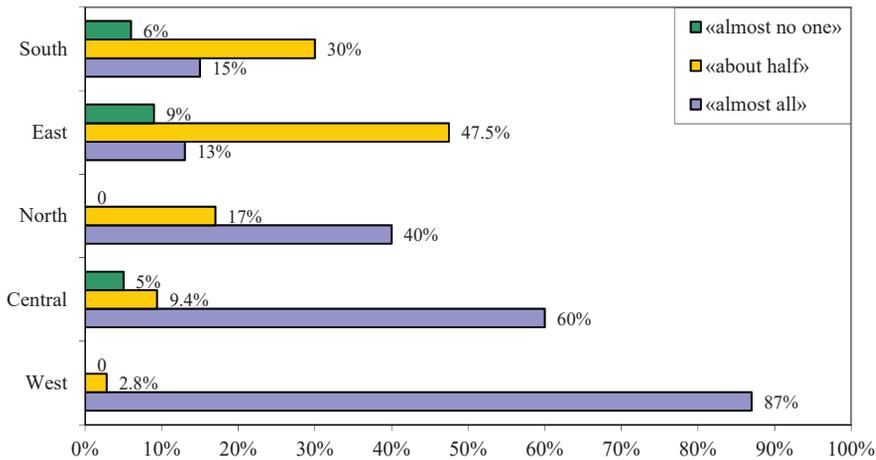


Figure 3. Distribution of answers to the question “How many people, in your opinion, speak Ukrainian in the settlement where you reside, at schools?” by regions

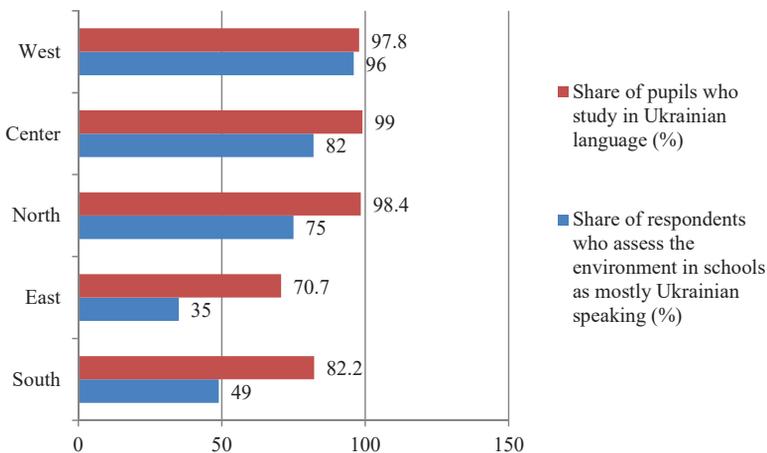


Figure 4. Distribution by regions of the proportion of respondents assessing the environment of secondary schools as mainly Ukrainian-speaking, and the proportion of students studying in Ukrainian according to official statistics

The results of the mass survey show a significant difference in the assessment of the language environment of secondary schools in the city and village, which generally meets the peculiarities of the language situation in Ukraine: in large cities and industrial centers Russian language prevails in the villages – Ukrainian, in small towns the ratio of two languages is about the same. This trend is a consequence of the deformation caused by the legacy of the Soviet era, which during the years of independence could not overcome the Ukrainian school. Analyzing the reasons for the uncontrolled linguistic and cultural development of the country, the manifestation of which is the analyzed deformation, L. Masenko writes that as a result of hunger-extermination (Holodomor), which undermined the social base of Ukrainian language, it was restored “achieved in the autocratic Russian Empire division of Ukraine into Russian-speaking cities and Ukrainian-speaking villages and towns” (Masenko 2017). This separation in the USSR consolidated and strengthened the famous since Imperial times myth of “rural” Ukrainian language, which significantly reduced its prestige in comparison with Russian. The participants of discussion groups, for example, recall what an ugly discriminatory mask this myth acquired at the end of the USSR’s existence: “*Yeah, what I meant to say... During all my childhood we lived in a residential district, and I remember when kids from different villages moved there and spoke Ukrainian, they were called devils, and their speech was called devilish*”. (Serhii, individual entrepreneur, participant of discussion group (35–60 years old) in Kharkiv).

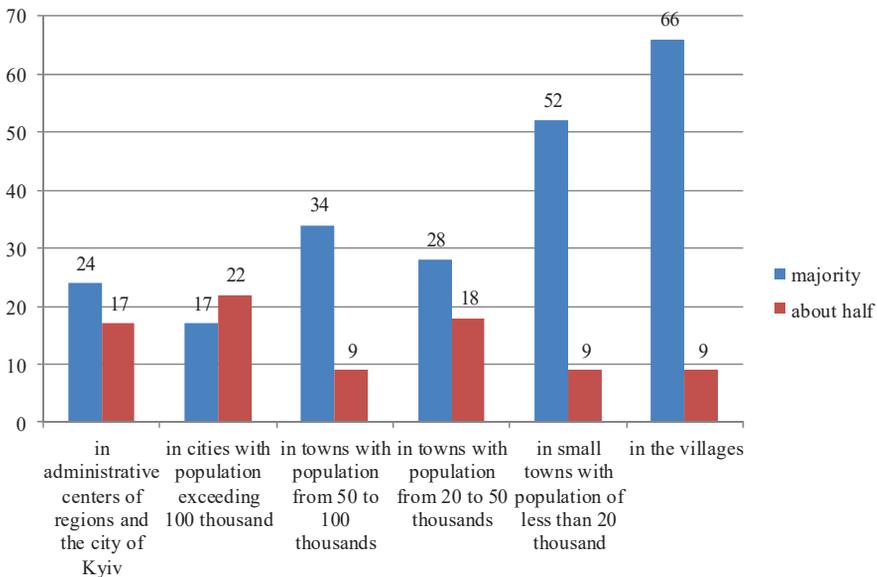


Figure 5. Distribution of answers to the question “How many people, in your opinion, speak Ukrainian in the settlement where you reside, at schools?” by the number of inhabitants in the settlement

FINAL REMARKS. THE URGENCY OF DEVELOPING CORRECTION MECHANISMS TO INFLUENCE THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN SCHOOLS OF UKRAINE

Thus, the analysis of the results of the mass survey confirms the conclusions of previous studies on bilingualism of the language environment in the system of secondary schools. Bilingualism in the field of education is spontaneous, formed through the unregulated spread in the educational environment of verbal practices (especially in the East and South). The attitude of society to real bilingualism in schools is ambiguous, which is confirmed by the results of our study on the prospects of bilingual education in Ukraine: 36% of the population want to see their children bilingual, and 32% want to teach in two languages. Many experts express hope that the language situation in education will improve with the introduction of the new law “On Education”.

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