

# Language Politics, Language Situations and Conflicts in Multilingual Societies

Case Studies from Contemporary Russia,  
Ukraine and Belarus

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Daniel Müller and Monika Wingender

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# Ukrainian-Russian Bilingualism and Diglossia in the Communicative Space of Kyiv<sup>1</sup>

Natalia Matveieva (Kyiv)

## 1. Introduction

The problems of bilingualism and diglossia are extremely important in modern linguistics. With regards to Ukraine, the language issue has been at the centre of attention for a long time because bilingualism and diglossia are such widespread phenomena in the Ukrainian society. Such a situation is the source of a permanent language conflict, the main essence of which is the following: the use of the Ukrainian state language is mostly restricted to the official spheres, while Russian often dominates in Ukrainians' everyday communication. Consequently, rather than consolidating society, it is a factor that divides it. Regardless, language is one of the most important factors of integration, since it has a great influence on the national consciousness and the sense of nationality.

The focus of our attention is Kyiv. Firstly, because it is the capital, whose language situation has an effect on the entire population of the country. Secondly, because it is the city where the group of bilinguals significantly exceeds the average indicator of the bilingual group in other large cities of Ukraine.

## 2. The terms 'bilingualism' and 'diglossia' in sociolinguistics

Bilingualism is a multifaceted phenomenon that is studied by linguistics, sociology and psychology. The classical definition of bilingualism comes from WEINREICH, who considered it as the alternate usage of two languages (VAJNRAJCH 1979, 22). It should be noted that there are many different definitions of this concept. Some scientists believed that bilingualism is rather a knowledge of both languages (DEŠERIEV, 1976, 22; AVRONIN 1972, 51; ACHMANOVA 1969, 125; BONDALETOV 1987, 82), while others thought that bilingualism is the practice of simultaneous usage of two languages (ŠVEJČER / NIKOL'SKIJ 1978, 111). We identify these differences as a wide concept of bilingualism and a narrow one. We concentrate on the

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narrow interpretation and argue that bilingualism is not the knowledge of two languages, but rather the usage of them.

There are many different classifications of bilingualism. According to various parameters this phenomenon can be divided into such categories as: individual and societal; coordinative, subordinative and mixed; simultaneous and sequential; children and adults; natural and artificial; full and partial; symmetrical and asymmetrical; balanced and unbalanced; maximum and minimum, etc.

In modern linguistics the term 'diglossia' is even more controversial and contradictory than bilingualism, since its definition is often based on different language situations. We also distinguish between a narrow and a wide understanding of this phenomenon in accordance with the language situation. For example, some researchers thought that diglossia is a situation in which different variants of *one* language exist in a society (literary language, territorial dialects, social dialects, etc.) (FERGUSON 1971; BAKER <sup>2</sup>2002, 75; ŠVEJČER / NIKOL'SKIJ 1978, 112; BONDALETOV 1987, 78). This is the narrow interpretation of diglossia. However, most linguists follow the wide understanding of diglossia, insisting that, in a diglossic situation, society uses different languages, but not their variants. This idea was followed by FISHMAN (2010, 30), KLOSS (1966), BELIKOV / KRYSIN (2001, 36). When it comes to our research, we argue that diglossia is the functioning of two languages, but not only their variants.

The main features of diglossia are the conscious choice of a particular language and a clear differentiation of the two languages according to specific communicative spheres. In brief, there is always a conscious attitude towards each of the two languages and their clear differentiation as prestigious or non-prestigious, formal or informal, high or low. Thus, in a diglossic situation the two languages are always differentiated in peoples' minds, in contrast to a bilingual situation, when the speakers equally use two languages in different communicative situations. In other words, bilingualism is the alternate use of two languages in a society, diglossia – the conscious choice of a particular language in order to achieve a communicative success.

If bilingualism is the alternate usage of two languages, and diglossia is the distribution of these languages according to the spheres of communication, it becomes obvious that the two phenomena are not interchangeable, but complement each other. Putting it another way, bilingualism and diglossia often meet together in different-language societies. To sum up, in most cases bilingualism does not exist on its own, but combines with diglossia, because speakers always have different views on each language, different attitudes to them and traditionally use them in different spheres of communication.

Hence, knowledge of more than one language undoubtedly has a great influence on a person, since it makes the individual more experienced and erudite, but when bilingualism becomes societal, it threatens the unity of the nation and leads to the destabilisation of social life.

### 3. The history of the Ukrainian bilingual language situation

Language is one of the most significant features of an ethnic group, and is linked to the history of the people. It should not be overlooked that, from the very beginning, the path of Ukrainians towards the independence of their nation and their language was extremely difficult and controversial. The first East Slavic state, *Kyivan Rus'*, existed until the middle of the 14<sup>th</sup> century. In this context, the importance of the capital should be emphasised, since Kyiv played a huge role in the society for a long time. It was considered to be the main city among all cities of that time, the political centre of the state and its spiritual capital (HYRYČ 2017, 29). However, after the collapse of *Kyivan Rus'* the status of the city was lost. As a consequence, from that time, Ukraine was always conquered by other countries, each of whom sought to propagate their own orders.

The *Lithuanian period* was the most beneficial period for the development of the Ukrainian language and culture. The period under the *Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth* was characterised by more powerful propagation and implanting of their ideology. However, the worst period for Ukraine was the Moscovite one. Ukrainian lands were under Russian rule for three centuries. Of course, the consequence of this was the total Russification of the Ukrainian population, because the Russian authorities highly denationalised the society and enforced their language. The purpose of the policy of the *Russian Empire*, embodied in the figures of Peter I and Catherine II, was to ruin all spheres of Ukrainian public life. They not only took the name *Rus'*, but also destroyed Ukrainian book printing and forbade the use of the Ukrainian language in the religious and educational spheres.

The *Valuyev Circular* (1863) and the *Ems Ukaz* (1876) aimed to deny the very existence of the Ukrainian language, prohibiting its use in all public communicative spheres. Obviously, such actions were largely politicised, since the Moscow government was afraid that the Ukrainians could demand their own state in addition to their own language. As a result of all the prohibitions, Moscow's policy ruined the spirit of the Ukrainian people and broke their eternal desire to use their own language. The Russians managed to impose the idea that the Ukrainian language was rural and peasant, and thus completely undermined its prestige. Hence, to a certain extent, the language situation of Ukraine reflected the social differentiation: Ukrainian was used by peasants, and those who moved to the city tried to use Russian, in all intellectual areas – church, education, science, government – Russian functioned.

Another factor determining the Russification of the cities was the active development of industry, which was accompanied by a significant influx of representatives of the Russian ethnic group to the capital. In the Russian-speaking environment, Ukrainians felt themselves low-grade, and therefore they began to switch to Russian in order to exist in the city comfortably.

By contrast, there were various displays of national consciousness in the capital of Ukraine. The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was marked by a new wave of national revival, which led to an increase in book production, the emergence of Ukrainian schools and the revival of theatrical life. But then the situation became worse again. In the history of the Ukrainian nation, the 1930s were the most terrible years, since they were accompanied by famine, repression, arrests, executions and exile. All this was done in order to undermine the

Ukrainian spirit. After the terrible terror, the Soviet government continued its course aimed at the Russification of the Ukrainian population.

Thus, assimilation, which has been ongoing for several centuries, as well as opinions about the Russian language as the native one, blurred the identity of Ukrainians. The conviction prevailed that Ukrainian and Russian were not different, but common and equally native. Because of this, even now many Ukrainian people are not nationally conscious and do not understand the language problems.

During the independence period, the Ukrainian language has been officially approved as the state language, but in reality its position does not correspond to this status. It seems that the Russian language has the same position as the state language. The consequence of this is the active functioning of bilingualism. Positive changes have been noticeable only after the *Revolution of Dignity*: the Ukrainian language is now beginning to strengthen its position.

#### 4. The modern language situation of Ukraine (on the basis of a 2017 questionnaire)

The conflict factor of the Ukrainian language situation has led to a large number of applied sociological and sociolinguistic investigations. In February 2017, within the framework of the aforementioned project of the Volkswagen Foundation (see footnote 1), a mass survey was conducted throughout the whole of Ukraine. The results of this survey clearly demonstrate that bilingualism is a widespread phenomenon in Ukraine, and therefore language conflicts still exist. As can be seen from the results of the survey, half of respondents (48.7%) refer to themselves as bilingual speakers and the same amount of respondents consider Ukrainians to be bilingual. Important in this context is not only the self-identification of citizens, but also their assessment of their knowledge of both languages. Less than 10% of respondents indicate that they do not speak one of the languages, the rest qualify their knowledge as “*very good*”, “*good*” or “*satisfactory*”, which numerically confirms the bilingual nature of Ukrainians.

Let us analyse the other questions of the questionnaire. With regard to changes in linguistic behaviour following the *Revolution of Dignity*, about half of respondents state that the language situation in Ukraine has not changed. 61.2% of respondents indicate that their attitude to the Ukrainian language remains unchanged, 73.8% of respondents state the same about Russian. 52.2% of respondents believe that the Ukrainian language has been used to a greater extent, but 42.8% did not notice such an increase. As can be seen from the results, the events of the *Revolution of Dignity* have had little effect on the language preferences of many Ukrainians, and therefore people almost do not associate language issues with political ones. However, when these data are compared with the results of a survey, conducted in 2006 by the participants of the INTAS project “Language policy in Ukraine: anthropological, linguistic and further perspectives”, we can observe noticeable differences: the number of people perceiving a change in the language situation in favour of the Ukrainian language has grown by 8 percentage points from 44.6% in 2006 (BESTERS-DIL’GER 2010, 344) to 52.6% in 2017.

The obvious problem now is that most people do not understand the essence and causes of the language conflicts. This is proved by the respondents’ answers to certain questions.

For example, the question about the existence of a language conflict in Ukraine has revealed the following: almost half of respondents (46.9%) respond that there is no conflict, and only 21.6% give the affirmative answer. 54.3% of respondents believe that the Ukrainian and Russian languages do not compete, but rather coexist peacefully in Ukraine. 52.4% are convinced that the functioning of two languages has no influence on the integrity of the state. As a result, a half of respondents do not consider that the annexation of the Crimea and the war in Donbas are related to the active functioning of the Russian language. At the same time, most respondents agree with the statement that language is not only a cultural issue, but also a factor of national unity and security, as well as one of the attributes of statehood. On the other hand, a significant percentage of Ukrainians do not understand the importance of language issues at all, because they are convinced that the state language status of Ukrainian implies its actual usage.

The data of the sociolinguistic analysis confirm that Ukrainians are mostly satisfied with the modern language situation. The respondents do not encounter cases of language discrimination, and therefore they do not attribute great importance to this issue. The population shows a high degree of linguistic tolerance, since most people indicate that their attitude towards a certain person is not connected to the language spoken by this person.

Not to be overlooked is the real communication of Ukrainians. Thus, in the presence of Ukrainian speakers, 63% of respondents speak mostly Ukrainian, 18.4% use Ukrainian and Russian, and only 17% choose Russian. On the other hand, in the presence of Russian-speaking people, the situation is very different. In this case, almost half of respondents communicate in Russian, 22.7% use both languages and 28.8% choose Ukrainian. As can be seen from the results, in conversations with Russian-speaking people the number of Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians is halved, and the number of Russian speakers is doubled. Only few communicants are language stable, the rest easily switch language codes according to the language of the interlocutor. This fact proves that the population is mostly bilingual, and they do not pay particular attention to the choice of the language of communication, but often choose it automatically depending on the language of the interlocutor.

The results of this investigation also prove the existence of diglossia. It turns out that distinguishing between formal and informal communication is a very significant factor for language choice. While about 60% of respondents state that, in formal communication – state institutions, schools, universities – mostly Ukrainian is used, in informal spheres we have contrasting views: only about 40% of respondents think that in shops, cafes, public transport, in communication with family and friends mostly Ukrainian is used. Such results confirm the tendency of the Ukrainian language to dominate in official communication, and Russian or both – in non-official one.

It is important to compare these data with the results of the 2006 survey conducted by the participants of the INTAS project. Then, about 40% of respondents indicated that Ukrainian was the language of formal communication, that is 20 percentage points less than today. At the same time, the situation with the Russian language contrasts with this: in the informal sphere, Russian has lost 10 percentage points during this period although it continues to prevail in the non-official communication of Ukrainians (in 2006 about 30% of respondents used Ukrainian in informal communication (BESTERS-DIL'GER 2010, 346), while now this figure has grown to 40%). Thus, over 11 years the Ukrainian language has won about 20 percentage points in formal communication and 10 percentage points in informal communication.

However, despite the obvious increase of the Ukrainian language, diglossia continues to exist, although it should be noted that its characteristics have been changed to a certain extent. If the indicator of prestige was previously one of the main factors in the distribution of languages, and Russian was considered to be more prestigious than Ukrainian, today the situation has changed. The subjective ratings of both languages differ considerably: the Ukrainian language is considered to be much more prestigious (73.6% of respondents believe that Ukrainian is prestigious, and only 28.9% think the same about Russian). Note that in 2006, 64.7% of respondents considered Russian as prestigious, that is 35 percentage points more than today (*ibid.*, 345). Now, as statistics shows, the main feature of diglossia is the distinction between formal and informal communication. Evidence of this is the 20 percentage points difference between the use of Ukrainian in official and non-official communication. As we see, in informal communication, the Ukrainian language is still behind the Russian one, although gradual changes are of course positive.

Let us also turn our attention to the views of the population on the future status of the Ukrainian and Russian languages. 36.4% of respondents think that it is necessary to accept Russian as a second state language or as an official one. It is important to notice that, in 2006, even more people had the same opinion – 55.9% (*ibid.*, 348). Therefore, we can state that 20 percentage points more now believe that the Ukrainian language should be the sole state language.

The willingness of Ukrainians to increase the functioning of their mother tongue in the future is notable. Thus, half of respondents want their children (or future children) to study and speak in the state language (51.4% and 48.6%). And only about 11% of them see their children learning and communicating in Russian (in 2006 only 35% of respondents wanted their children to use Ukrainian (*ibid.*, 356)). Almost all respondents believe that Ukrainian citizens must know the state language perfectly, and that it is necessary to establish an examination on Ukrainian language skills for all public servants (the number of people affirming the latter increased by 25 percentage points – 50.9% in 2006 (*ibid.*, 353) and 75.9% in 2017).

A majority of respondents also considers that Ukrainian must be the language of education, that teachers have to use it not only in lessons, but also during breaks (72.3% of the respondents give this answer, in comparison, in 2006, 56.1% thought the same (*ibid.*, 353)). Therefore, these statistical data prove that Ukrainians still want the state language to strengthen its position, even in formal communication.

It is noticeable that the population does not resist the legislative consolidation of various provisions on the Ukrainian language, which, of course, is very important. Thus, the majority of respondents would be glad if all civil servants, and heads of educational and medical institutions use the state language. They also support the opinion that the language of television and radio broadcasting, print media and advertising should be only Ukrainian. When asked about their expectations towards Ukraine's language policy, they believe that it should gradually transform the information and cultural space towards increasing the number of Ukrainian-language products.

Another positive trend is that most people think that, in the future, only the Ukrainian language should be used in Ukraine. It is interesting to compare these data with the results of the previous survey. If, in 2006, 38.7% of the respondents argued that the Ukrainian language had to be the main one in all spheres of communication (*ibid.*, 359), now 57.3% have the same views. This is obviously an indisputable indicator for the improvement of respondents'

language consciousness as well as for the awakening of their national consciousness. However, this growth can also be explained by the fact that the 2017 survey has not been conducted in the occupied territories, where people are more Russian-speaking.

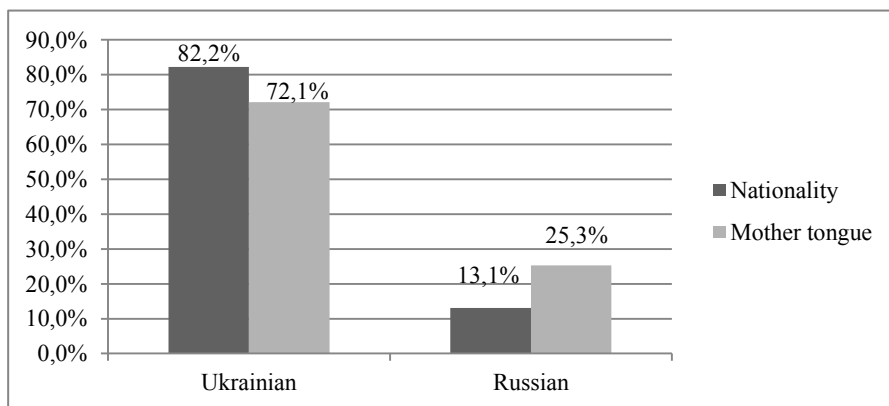
Therefore, the results of the study reveal Ukrainians' ambiguous and contradictory views on language issues. On the one hand, a significant part of the population does not consider language issues to be important, because they think there are many more important problems. On the other hand, Ukrainians want to increase the functioning of the native language in the future and consider Ukrainian to be the main language of our country.

From the aforementioned data we can make the conclusion that the Russian language may gradually lose its dominant position in Ukrainians' communication and that Ukrainian, as the state language, will occupy its place.

## 5. The functioning of bilingualism and diglossia in Kyiv

The language situation in Kyiv is a reflection of the language situation in the whole of Ukraine. Firstly, this is thanks to the capital status of the city, and because the capital is always a pattern and a model for imitation. Secondly, people from different cities and villages move to Kyiv, as migration processes to the capital are the most active. Thus, to a certain degree, Kyiv's population represents the population of the whole country. Therefore, the capital of Ukraine reflects all the contradictions of language and cultural development in the entire country. The real situation of the Ukrainian language in the capital does not correspond with the national and language identification of Kyiv's population. Thus, according to the data of the *All-Ukrainian Population Census 2001*, 82.2% of people living in Kyiv are Ukrainians, 13.1% are Russians, and the rest are representatives of other nationalities. It is interesting to compare these data on nationality with the language preferences of Kyiv's inhabitants. During the last census the Ukrainian language was named as the mother tongue by 72.1% of Kyiv's population. Russian was identified as native by 25.3% of Kyiv's population (*All-Ukrainian Population Census 2001*). Therefore, the discrepancy between nationality and mother tongue is evident, as is demonstrated by the following illustration (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1: Results of the *All-Ukrainian Census 2001* for Kyiv's population





The diagram clearly shows that, in Kyiv, about 10% of Ukrainians refer to Russian as their mother tongue. It should also not be overlooked that those speakers, whose native language is Ukrainian, are in fact bilinguals. This is proven by several studies, and their bilingualism is diglossic, because language choice is conscious, depending on the goal and sphere of communication.

Thus, a study conducted by the Centre *Public Opinion* in 2000 (ZALIZNJAK / MASENKO 2002), shows that the relationship between the Ukrainian and Russian languages in the capital was far from one of harmonious coexistence. According to this survey, 52.5% of Kyiv's inhabitants used Russian in their daily lives, and only 14.8% used Ukrainian. 32.0% of respondents spoke Ukrainian and Russian equally. Taken in that light, there is an obvious difference of 57 percentage points between those people considering Ukrainian to be their mother tongue (72.1%) (according to the data of the *All-Ukrainian Population Census* 2001) and those who used it exclusively in their everyday life (14.8%). The difference between those identifying Ukrainian as their mother tongue (72.1%) and those exclusively (14.8%) or partly (32%) using Ukrainian (46.8%) still consists of 25 percentage points. Such results prove the existence of Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism (asymmetrical, with Russian dominating) and diglossia, with Russian dominating in all spheres of communication, except in official communication.

Notable in this context is the transformation of factors, which are the basis of the diglossia phenomenon. In the 2000 study, the Ukrainian language was not associated as the prestigious one, since only a half of residents of the capital considered it to be prestigious. If we compare this number with the amount of citizens of all Ukraine, interviewed in 2017, then we notice significant differences: today, three out of four Ukrainians consider the Ukrainian language to be prestigious, whereas at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century only half of Kyiv's residents thought the same. Therefore, the prestige factor in the interpretation of the diglossia phenomenon has disappeared, and the factor of formality or informality of communication has occupied its place.

Let us turn our attention to a study of bilingualism and diglossia in the capital of Ukraine, conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (VYŠNJAK 2009). The analysis of language practices based on the results of the National Survey of April 2007 showed that 30.2% of Kyiv residents communicated in Ukrainian at home, while 56.3% used Russian. The situation with communication in informal spheres – in the street, stores, public places – was even worse for the Ukrainian language. 27.1% of respondents used Ukrainian, at the same time, 64.6% – Russian (*ibid.*, 39–44). It can be concluded that a number of Ukrainians switched to the Russian language in communicating outside their home. Obviously, Russian won an additional 8 percentage points of speakers, when compared to household use. According to the data of this survey, the Russian language even dominated in the official communication of Kyivans: 38.1% of respondents used Ukrainian at work and study, 53.5% chose Russian (*ibid.*, 39–44). Thus, as can be seen from these survey data, the position of the Ukrainian language in formal and informal communication in 2007 was highly unsatisfactory, since the most common language in *all* spheres was Russian.

In the light of this evidence, the following question was interesting: “*Which language do Kyiv's government officials use?*” 17.7% of respondents indicated the Ukrainian language, 1.2% – exclusively Russian, 24% – Ukrainian or Russian, and the largest number of respondents (35.4%) noted that the use of Ukrainian or Russian was a choice for officials (*ibid.*,

140). In fact, this choice should not be the choice of officials, because the law stipulates the usage of the Ukrainian language in official communication. After all, only 1.2% of the civil servants were Russian-speaking monolinguals, while the rest used two languages, which is a proof of the existence of bilingualism.

The diglossic character of bilingualism is also demonstrated by data of an all-Ukrainian poll in 2013, but these results are more positive for the state language. Thus, to the question of whether every civil servant should know and speak Ukrainian, 96.4% of Kyiv citizens gave an affirmative answer. 90.5% of respondents considered that it is necessary to study Ukrainian at school (BESTERS-DIL'GER 2014, 77–79). Hence, we see that, in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people have become more conscious about language issues. This is a noticeable positive moment, since it shows people's desire to improve the functioning of the Ukrainian language at least in official communication.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the real functioning of diglossia in the capital. How do the Ukrainian and Russian languages coexist in the formal and informal communication of Kyiv's citizens? The organisation *Prostir svobody* has been studying the annual language situation of Ukrainian cities from 2011 onwards. From these data we can conclude which language dominates in legal proceedings, education, book publishing, print media, cinema, television and radio broadcasting (*Prostir svobody*).

For our study it is important to trace the dynamics of the functioning of the two languages in official and non-official communication. In this investigation, informal communication is studied by monitoring café and shops on the basis of three criteria: the presence of a signboard, menu or price list in Ukrainian, and the language in which employees communicate with Ukrainian-speaking clients. For monitoring, 10 coffee shops or other catering establishments and 10 stores were selected in Kyiv. In order to be objective the volunteers chose shops and cafés, located in a row in the centre of the city (*Prostir svobody*). In Table 1 we can see how the language situation in Kyiv has changed from 2011 to 2018.

*Table 1: Monitoring of café and shops in Kyiv (2011–2018)*

Year (objects)	Language of signboard				Menu / prices in Ukrainian		Language of communication with clients		
	Ukr.	Rus.	Lat.	Other	Yes	No	Ukr.	Rus.	Switching to Ukr.
2011 (10)	4	2	3	1	8	2	5	4	1
2012 (20)	8	3	8	1	17	3	8	7	5
2014–2015 (20)	6	4	7	3	19	1	5	6	9
2016 (20)	8	2	8	2	18	2	9	7	4
2017 (20)	2	3	15	0	20	0	7	9	4
2018 (20)	9	2	9	0	20	0	11	9	0

Therefore, as can be seen from the table, it is evident that the prestige of Latin graphics on the signboards of coffee shops and stores is increasing. The results confirm the rapid decrease of Ukrainian-language signboards (compare 4 out of 10 in 2011 and 2 out of 20 in 2017) and the increase of Latin ones (3 out of 10 in 2011 and 15 out of 20 in 2017), whereas the Russian language on signboards of cafés and stores remained pretty the same. From this we can conclude that Latin graphics in the names of cafes and shops are now considered to be the most prestigious. However, according to the results of the latest study (2018), the Ukrainian language on signboards is becoming more widespread.

The situation looks better with regards to the menu and price tags, because today we can observe 100% (total) usage of the Ukrainian language in price lists and price tags in all investigated objects. This is the formal aspect of communication, but the informal one is worse. Many employees continue to serve their clients in Russian and do not switch language codes. However, this does not mean that Russian is their mother tongue. The reason for their behaviour might be the fact that corporative instructions often prescribe the use of Russian in communication with clients (*Prostir svobody*).

The volunteers of *Prostir svobody* also examined the use of Ukrainian in the official sphere by calling official institutions such as administrations and city councils. In the monitoring process, the language used by government officials was recorded. The results showed that both languages are also widely used at the official level.

## 6. The views of Kyiv's inhabitants on language issues (on the basis of focus-group discussions)

The materials of focus-group discussions, conducted by the Volkswagen Foundation project (see footnote 1), are of significant importance for analysing the language behaviour of bilinguals. These interviews were conducted in February 2017 in four cities of Ukraine: Kyiv, L'viv, Charkiv and Odesa. In each city, two discussions were organised, the participants of which were aged 18–35 (the younger group) and 36–65 years (the older group). The main requirements for participants of the discussions were the following:

- half of the participants in each group should communicate mainly in Ukrainian in their everyday life, the other half mainly in Russian;
- there should be the same amount of men and women;
- the participants should permanently live in the analysed city.

In the following, we focus on the analysis of the language behaviour of the capital's inhabitants. It should be emphasised that the language situation in the focus groups is similar to the language situation of Ukraine, because the participants know Ukrainian and Russian and used both of them during the discussion. Therefore, all communicants are at least passive bilinguals, because there were no misunderstandings during the conversation. However, the language behaviour of each participant is different: from demonstrating language stability to the constant switching of language codes.

In this context we can determine three patterns of the participants' language behaviour:

(1) The first one is the demonstration of language stability, i.e., the Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking participants use only their usual language and do not switch language codes. The previous sentence of another communicant has no influence on a communicant's language choice:

*Daryna (Rus.): [...] И каждая страна должна поддерживать свой национальный язык.*

*Janina (Ukr.): І захищати. Наприклад, як французьку.*

In this case we can see that each communicant uses his language, so that the conversation is held in two languages.

(2) The second language pattern is the use of Russian lexemes with the grammatical features of their Ukrainian equivalents, or vice versa. It should be noted that such cases are extremely widespread, which proves speakers' bilingual nature. Knowing two languages, participants spontaneously confuse the grammatical peculiarities of both languages and automatically mix two language codes. Obviously, the category of gender causes mixing processes most often, cf. the following examples:

*По региональной мове сложно что-то сказать.*

*Точно так же, если бы у меня дома разговаривали по-английски, то родная была бы как-никак английская.*

*Мы даже белорусскую понимаем.*

This phenomenon may also be caused by the fact, as SOKOLOVA (2017, 35) points out, that state-level documentation is conducted in Ukrainian, and certain terms are therefore fixed in Ukrainian in the minds of communicants.

(3) The third pattern of language behaviour is language switching. The main reason for this is the language of the interlocutor, e.g.:

*Moderator (Ukr.): В присутності російськомовних людей якою мовою ви розмовляєте?*

*Julija (a Russian-speaking participant): Російською.*

In this example we see that a Russian-speaking communicant switches to Ukrainian because of the language of the interlocutor.

Interestingly, Russian-speaking participants switch and mix language codes more often than Ukrainian-speaking ones. There are also obvious differences between Kyiv's citizens' language behaviour according to their age. Therefore, younger speakers demonstrate stronger language stability, while respondents aged 36–65 more often switch or mix language codes.

Consequently, it can be concluded that different types of language behaviour exist in a bilingual environment: language stability, switching of language codes and their mixing.

The materials of the focus-group discussions also demonstrate that Ukrainians have not yet understood the importance of the Ukrainian language for the country's security and prosperity, because they often give ambiguous and contradictory answers. On the one hand, they

argue that there should be one Ukrainian language in Ukraine. On the other hand, they do not know how to deal with Russian: to give it the status of a state, official, or regional language, or not to give it any privileges at all.

It should also be noted that the participants discussed the prestige of both languages and their attitudes towards them. This issue causes many discussions. Apparently most young respondents consider that they have not changed their attitude to any of the languages in recent years. Moreover, people do not relate a certain language and its speakers:

*Язык и люди – это же совершенно разные вещи. При чем здесь это?*

*Если человек приятный и всем интересно общаться, то это неважно, на каком языке он говорит. При чем здесь это?*

*Взагалі немає якихось симпатій чи антипатій. Симпатичне однаково спілкування, незалежно від мови.*

Therefore, we argue that people differentiate between the language and the people who use it. Therefore, the negative perception of a certain person is not transmitted to the language they use.

There are different answers regarding the prestige factor of each language. Half of the young participants think that it is now prestigious to speak Ukrainian, while others consider this to be an incorrect question, providing the following answers:

*Престижно быть воспитанным и культурным, здесь нет привязки к языку.*

*Престижно бути культурною людиною.*

For the representatives of the older generation the prestige of the Ukrainian language has grown to a certain extent, and therefore, in their opinion, the Ukrainian language is now very prestigious.

The issue of language stability is important in this context. Almost all participants indicate that, in the presence of Russian-speaking people, they use Russian. The situation with the presence of Ukrainian-speaking interlocutors is different. Only half of participants indicate: “fifty-fifty” or “it depends”. However, there are also those who never switch to the Ukrainian language:

*Потому что мы друг друга понимаем без этого. Мы с вами общаемся, понимаем в совершенстве.*

The active functioning of diglossia becomes apparent in the following widespread opinion of participants: in the official spheres Ukrainian should be used, and in everyday life everyone can choose the language of communication. It is notable that most people do not consider language problems important, conceiving their topicalisation to be a speculation and provocation. Some believe that Ukrainian society is facing more urgent problems at present than language issues. Many Ukrainians do not connect language and political problems, and do not believe that the functioning of two languages on its territory threatens the integrity of Ukraine. However, there are others who hope for an improvement of the real functioning of Ukrainian in the future. After all, the majority of the population is convinced that, in the future, Ukrainian will be the main language in Ukraine.

## 7. Conclusions

According to the analysis of the language situation of the capital, we can conclude the following:

1. The existence of bilingualism and diglossia in Ukraine and Kyiv is undeniable. The language practices of Ukrainians are characterised by switching language codes in accordance with the language of the interlocutor and the lack of language stability. The phenomenon of diglossia has changed. Earlier the most important indicator was the prestige factor of the languages. Now the differentiation between formal and informal communication is the main criterion of the diglossia phenomenon.
2. The language situation of the capital represents the language situation of the whole country. Changes in the language situation of the capital are especially effective, as it is always an example for imitation in the country's regions. According to the results of several surveys we have grounds to state that the situation of the Ukrainian language has recently gradually improved in the capital, despite the fact that bilingualism and diglossia continue to exist in Kyiv.
3. Focus group discussions held in Kyiv in early 2017 confirm that Ukrainians do not see the connection of language and national security / prosperity. They supposedly hold the position that there should be one Ukrainian national language in the Ukrainian state, but they do not know how to deal with Russian: to give it the status of a state, official or regional language, or not to give it any privileges at all.
4. We detected three possible patterns of language behaviour that occurred during the focus group discussions: language stability (both Ukrainian and Russian), switching language codes and their mixing.
5. Thus, the language situation in Ukraine is not ideal, however, there is a progress: the Russian language is losing its dominant positions in communication. For further transformation towards a strengthening of the position of the Ukrainian language, well-balanced actions are needed on the part of the ruling elite. Therefore, the task of language policy should be to ensure the expansion of Ukrainian into all spheres of broadcasting, creating a fully Ukrainian-language information and cultural space and increasing the prestige of Ukrainian entertainment and news products.

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