

COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE SOCIAL RECEPTION OF SURZHYK OVER THE LAST DECADE

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The paper discusses the issue of using the Ukrainian and Russian language and consequences of bilingualism in Ukraine which caused the development of surzhyk. Also the matter of social reception of surzhyk is discussed. Data from scientific reports are the base of conducted scrutinisation: INTAS project – «Language Policy in Ukraine: Anthropological, Linguistic and Further Perspectives» (2006-2008) and the report of the Razumkov Institute of 2017. The geographical context is taken into consideration when analysing usage of linguistic code in Ukraine. The data analysed in the paper shows the linguistic trend in the use of individual language codes in Ukraine and how it has changed in recent years in each area of the country (Central, Western, Eastern, Southern). The conclusions draw a potential path of further development of the analysed issue. **Keywords:** surzyk, the Ukrainian language, the Russian language, bilingualism.

Statement of the problem and its applicability. The aim of the paper is to analyze data connected with language usage on the territory of Ukraine. The primary focus in this article will be on social reception and usage of surzhyk based on the results of researches conducted in 2006 and in 2017. The geographical context will be the leading indicator in the interpretation of data. The problem is up-to-date according to people migration within the territory of Ukraine according to the current political situation.

Analysis of latest researches and publications, which the author relies on. In the work, we will refer to the results developed by Artur Bracki [1, p. 129], carried out as a part of the INTAS project – «Language Policy in Ukraine: Anthropological, Linguistic and Further Perspectives» (2006-2008) [2, p. 234-277] and formulated in the report of the Razumkov Institute of 2017 [3]. The survey conducted within the INTAS project was attended by 2 015 respondents from various regions of Ukraine, answering questions in December 2006 [2, p. 340-343]. The 2017 report was compiled on the basis of the results of a social survey conducted on the 3-9th of March 2017 in all regions except occupied territories (Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) [3, 4]; 2,016 respondents aged over 18 participated in the study [3, 4]. The main

goal of the report was to analyze the basic identity component of Ukrainians – a system of values important for citizens, its specificity and regional differences [3, 3]. The linguistic aspect was also taken into account in the analyses carried out. Researchers, by selecting the criteria for scheduling the acquired data, also classified them due to the language used by the respondents.

Formulation of the purposes of the article and tasks of the article. The paper discusses the issue of social reception of surzhyk based on analyzing data gathered in 2006 and 2017. Both surveys took into consideration using the Ukrainian and Russian languages, as well as surzhyk. The main task is to scrutinise the usage of surzhyk in context of geographical territory. The analysis will be based on the most representative results of the empirical research.

Main research material. In our opinion, when considering the topic of surzhyk, at first, it is necessary to verify how popular it is among the people living on the territory of the Ukrainian state. The research group, answering the question about their every day language [2, p. 105], showed the following results (Fig. 1).

As it results from the statistics presented above, over 40% of respondents were in favour of using Russian in everyday situations, while just

over 35% described themselves as the users of the Ukrainian language. The difference of about 5% between Russian and Ukrainian native speakers is less than the group describing themselves as communicating in surzhyk (3%). At the same time, over 40% of respondents in the survey conducted in 2006 stated that they fully agreed with the statement «Ukrainian is one of the symbols of the Ukrainian state» [2, p. 346]. For similar questions about the use of Ukrainian in everyday life in 2017 («What language do you speak at home?» and «What language do you use to communicate outside of home (at work,

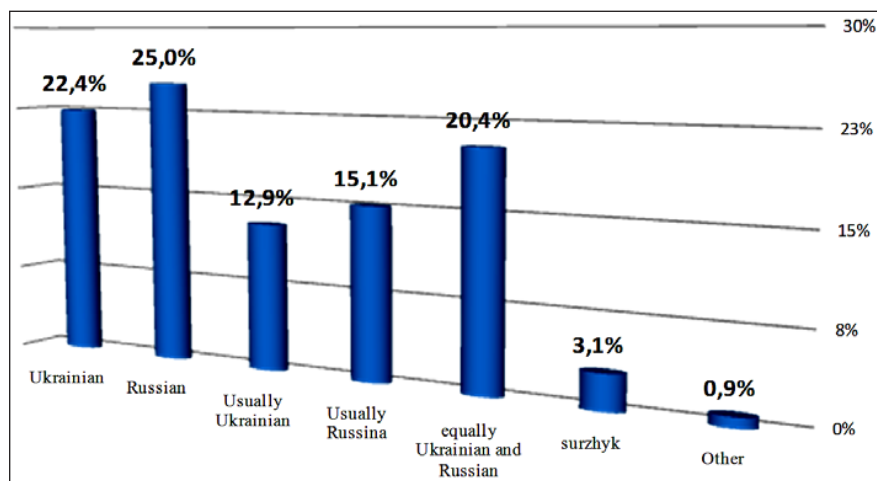


Fig. 1. Chart: own study based on research results: Л. Масенко, Мовна ситуація України: соціолінгвістичний аналіз (in:) Ю. Бестерс-Дільгер, Мовна політика та мовна ситуація в Україні, Київ 2010, p. 105

at school, etc.)?») for the first question 52% of respondents indicated Ukrainian, while answering the second question, the percentage of those who chose the answer «Ukrainian» indicated nearly 49% [3, p. 27]. The reported increase of about 10% of the popularity of the Ukrainian language is connected with the socio-political events taking place in recent years. It is noteworthy that in surveys from 2017, nearly 68% of respondents named Ukrainian as their mother tongue [3, 6], which is a significant increase compared to the data obtained as a response to this question in 2006 – 55.5% [4, p. 358]. The presented research results clearly indicate an upward trend in the popularity of identification the Ukrainian language, thus reducing the percentage of the population pointing to Russian or surzhyk as its language code.

Statistics differs in relation to how respondents perceive the way people communicate with their surroundings [4, p. 321]. Respondents had a choice of 5 answers: Ukrainian, Russian, both Ukrainian and Russian, surzhyk and others. They provided the following answers (Fig. 2).

The presented research results allow us to observe that the communication using surzhyk was made to other people 3 times more often than by respondents themselves. The presented results show low surzhyk's prestige as a language code and reluctant admission to speak it. Such a distribution of data may also indicate that respondents do not admit to speaking surzhyk [4, p. 321].

In the conducted surveys, the percentage of the population using surzhyk in a given area of Ukraine was checked. The division according to regions was used: Western Ukraine, Central Ukraine, Northern Ukraine, Eastern Ukraine and the South of Ukraine. The result of the research was as follows (Fig. 3).

The data showing the percentage of users of surzhyk in different regions of Ukraine [4, p. 321] confirm the thesis that areas lacking a dominant language, at the same time constitute a border sphere (running more or less in the course of the Dnipro) between the leading influence of either Ukrainian or Russian, and are in the widest

dimension affected by the problem of mixing languages. In connection with the above mentioned facts, surzhyk is the most widespread language in central Ukraine. Reflecting on the reason for this state of affairs, it is possible to put forward

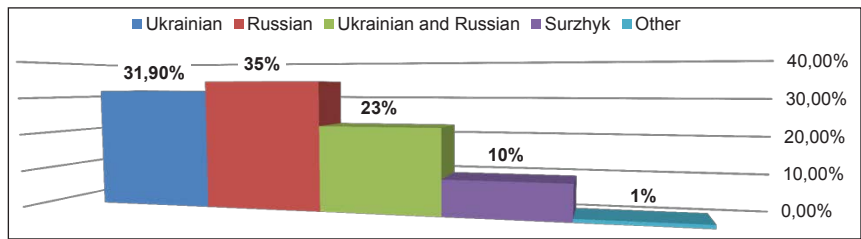


Fig. 2. Chart: own study based on the results of the research published in: Додаток 2 (in:) Ю. Бестерс-Дільгер, Мовна політика та мовна ситуація в Україні, Київ 2010, р. 357

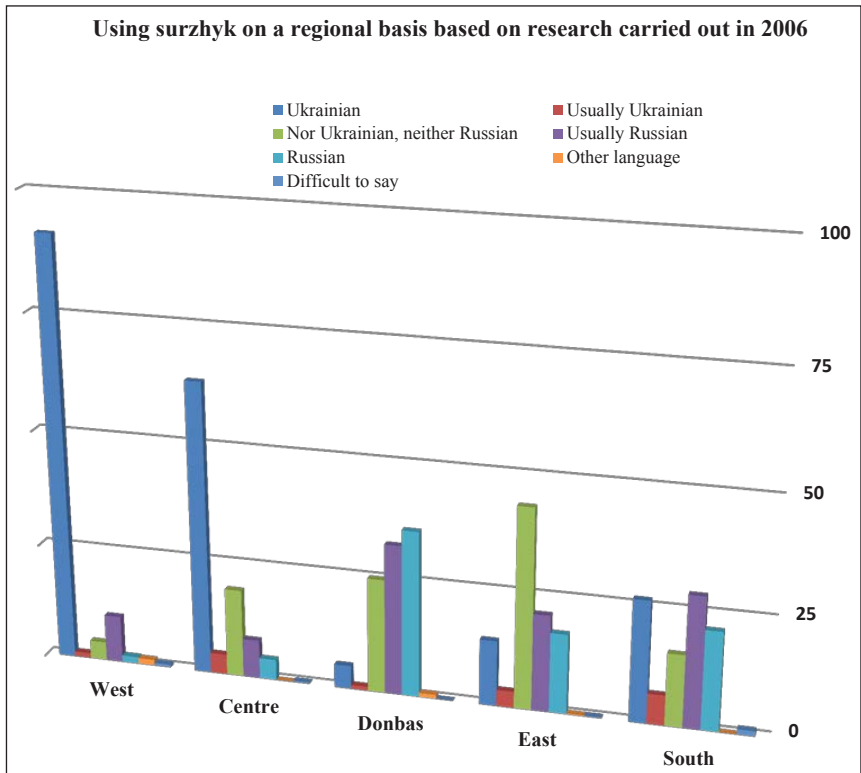


Fig. 3. Map: own study based on research results: С. Дель Гаудіо, Б. Тарасенко, Суржик: актуальні питання та аналіз конкретного прикладу (in:) Ю. Бестерс-Дільгер, Мовна політика та мовна ситуація в Україні, Київ 2010, р. 319

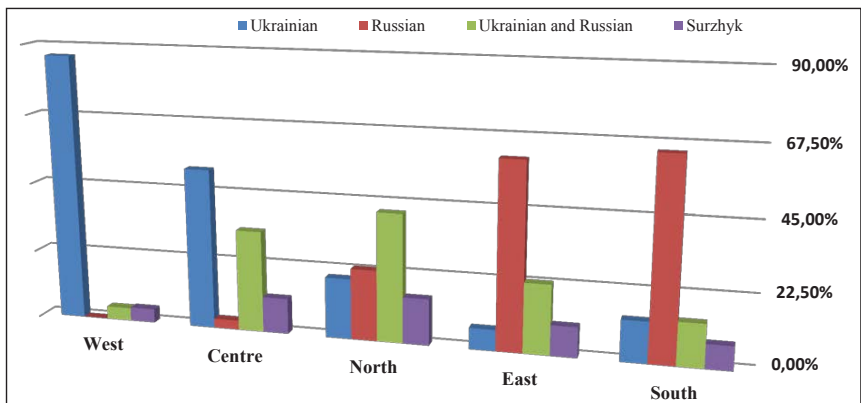


Fig. 4. Chart: own study based on the results of the research published in: С. Дель Гаудіо, Б. Тарасенко, Суржик: актуальні питання та аналіз конкретного прикладу (in:) Ю. Бестерс-Дільгер, Мовна політика та мовна ситуація в Україні, Київ 2010, р. 320

a hypothesis about the largest labor migration to the central areas of the country, both by residents of the eastern (definitely Russian-speaking) areas, as well as those from western areas (much more Ukrainian-speaking) (Fig. 4).

From the presented research it is clear that in the areas covered by bilingualism (parallel use of Ukrainian and Russian language), the use of surzhyk is increasing, in particular, it is possible to observe this in the northern part of Ukraine. Thus, it can be observed that the significant number of bilinguals favour the use of the analyzed linguistic phenomena.

In a survey carried out in 2017, respondents answered the question which language they speak at home (there was no question about using the language at all). The answers that they could point to were «Ukrainian language»; «usually Ukrainian»; «neither Ukrainian nor Russian»; «usually Russian»; «Russian»; «other language» and «difficult to say». The answer «neither Ukrainian nor Russian» should be treated as a mixture of these two, because completely different languages were a separate answer.

The results of the survey are as follows (Fig. 5).

The presented results allow us to confirm the hypothesis about the growing popularity of the Ukrainian language in all regions of Ukraine. Characteristically, the drop of surzhyk users (in the surveys of 2017, «neither Ukrainian nor Russian») and the increase in respondents pointing to Ukrainian allow us to accept the conclusion that fluctuation occurs within these two groups of users. It is noteworthy that in the eastern regions of the country, the proportion using Russian is over half.

Respondents also assessed the level of prestige of particular communication methods – the highest rated Ukrainian (45.9%), followed by English

(38.1%) and Russian (27.1%) [4, p. 321]. Surzhyk was not indicated. It is worth noting that only one-third use Ukrainian in professional, business contacts and the sphere of education. The vast majority of respondents recognized the national language as a symbol of Ukrainian statehood (over 70%) [5, p. 186]. Despite this, among the residents of large cities, Russian was considered more prestigious [2] and [5, p. 186].

When analyzing the phenomenon of surzhyk it is worth asking a question about who uses it and what association makes people use it. The research [6, p. 118-122] shows that these are mainly people remembering the communist period, while at the same time poorly educated. Respondents described Surzhyk as «the language of communication between grandparents and grandmothers» [5, p. 186]. Negative connotations associated with this linguistic phenomenon are indicated by the fact that the respondents admitted cursing in surzhyk (5.7%) [2, p. 355-356] and [4, p. 323].

The pejorative reception of using surzhyk was also visible in the statements given by members of the focus group. It is interesting that the respondent's territorial origin did not matter. As examples, the following statements [4, p. 322-323] can be cited:

«Rather, I am against. It comes out in total that it [surzhyk – author's note] is neither the correct Russian nor Ukrainian.»

/Dina, 30 years old, nurse, Odessa/

«It sounds bland... Better to be correct language.»

/Taras, 19 years old, student, Lviv/

«Mostly negative [I refer to surzhyk – author's note], because it is a distortion of the language, it is something that I think is incorrect.»

/Tetiana, 18 years old, schoolgirl, Donieck/

«It's a mixture of a bulldog with a rhino, it's a distortion, really, it's a mockery.»

/Grigoriy, 44 years old,

engineer – mechanic, Kyiv/

Respondents, asked about the genesis of surzhyk, indicated Russification, influx of people of Russian-speaking origin (including respondents from the East of Ukraine) and connotations with the prison language [4, p. 323]. It is legitimate to conclude that the analyzed phenomenon was unambiguously criticized. The negative attitude to surzhyk was shown by both respondents using the correct Ukrainian or Russian languages, but what is interesting also by surzhyk users [4, p. 324]. Researchers indicate [4, p. 324] that this is related to the currently critical reception of the people using surzhyk (often in small towns or in the villages of Central and Eastern Ukraine). Today, it is perceived as a separate linguistic code characterized by a lack

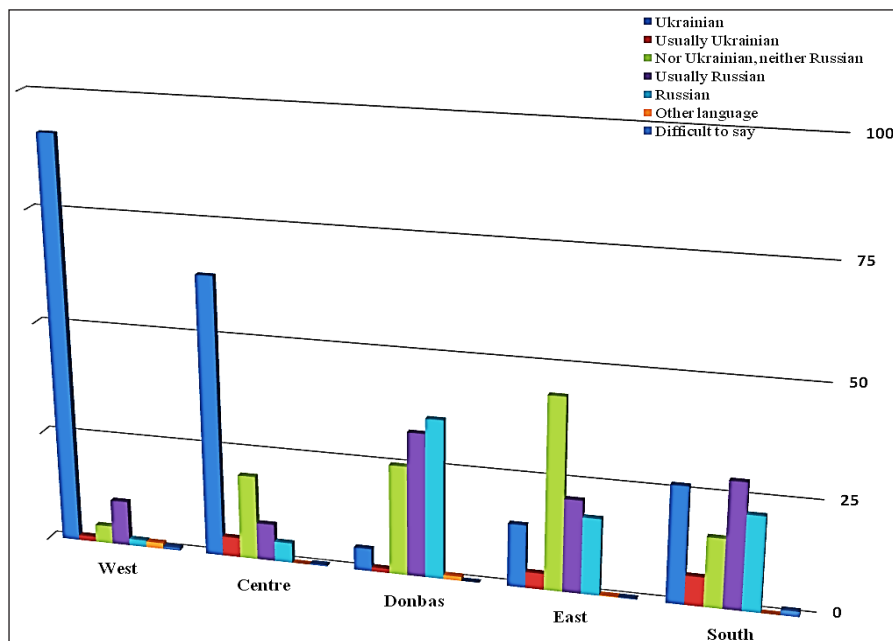


Fig. 5. Chart: own study based on the results of the research published in: ОСНОВНІ ЗАСАДИ ТА ШЛЯХИ ФОРМУВАННЯ СПІЛЬНОЇ ІДЕНТИЧНОСТІ ГРОМАДЯН УКРАЇНИ. Інформаційно-аналітичні матеріали до Круглого столу 12 квітня 2017р., Центру Разумкова, Київ 2017, р. 27

of grammatical and lexical correctness, which was not recorded by older generations. This position is also reflected in the survey results cited above.

Conclusions. To sum up, it should be said that at present surzhyk is not a mass phenomenon but noticeable and significant. The most up-to-date information indicates that along with the increase in

the prestige and interest in literary («pure») Ukrainian language, the trend of the return and promotion of the national language can be observed. Surzhyk, in Ukrainian society, is perceived and associated pejoratively. The conclusion is also that its creation and development is caused by the phenomenon of bilingualism functioning in Ukraine.

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Бáран Беата

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ПОРІВНЯЛЬНЕ ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ СОЦІАЛЬНОГО СПРИЙНЯТТЯ СУРЖИКА ЗА ОСТАННЄ ДЕСЯТИЛІТТЯ

Анотація

У статті розглядаються проблеми сучасної ситуації мов в Україні з особливим акцентом на розвиток і роль суржика в контексті феномена двомовності. У публікації також обговорюється проблема суспільного сприйняття суржика. Основні дані для проведеного аналізу були взяті з наукових доповідей: проект ІНТАС – «Мовна політика в Україні: антропологічні, лінгвістичні та інші перспективи» (2006-2008 рр.) і звіт Інституту Разумкова (2017 р.). Представлені результати дослідження також враховують географічний контекст використання суржика. Проаналізовано використання мовних кодів у всіх регіонах України: Центральному, Західному, Східному та Південному. Висновки базуються на потенційному розвитку аналізованої проблеми.

Ключові слова: суржик, українська мова, російська мова, двомовність.

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СРАВНИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ СОЦИАЛЬНОГО ВОСПРИЯТИЯ СУРЖИКА ЗА ПОСЛЕДНЕЕ ДЕСЯТИЛЕТИЕ

Аннотация

В статье рассматриваются проблемы современной ситуации языка в Украине с особым акцентом на развитие и роли суржика в контексте феномена двуязычия. В публикации также обсуждается проблема общественного восприятия суржика. Основные данные для проведенного анализа были взяты из научных докладов: проект ИНТАС – «Языковая политика в Украине: антропологические, лингвистические и другие перспективы» (2006-2008 гг.) и отчет Института Разумкова (2017 г.). Представленные результаты исследования также учитывают географический контекст использования суржика. Проанализировано использование языковых кодов во всех регионах Украины: Центральном, Западном, Восточном и Южном. Выводы основаны на потенциальном развитии анализируемой проблемы.

Ключевые слова: суржик, украинский язык, русский язык, билингвизм.