

The Ecology of Language in Ukraine

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Since becoming an independent nation in 1991, Ukraine, like other post-Soviet countries, has heavily promoted the use and development of the titular language to reverse the effects of historical discrimination and Russification. This paper uses an ecological framework to illustrate the deeper complexities of the relationship among Ukrainian, Russian and additional languages in Ukraine in: 1) historical and geographical aspects of national language policy and practice, 2) language-in-education policies, 3) language use and language attitudes, and 4) the current role of English in Ukraine. I conclude that state support for Ukrainian continues to be justified. The necessary level of language rights protections for Russian speakers, including Russian-speaking Ukrainians, is still subject to debate. The unique interplay of policy, practice and cultural norms in Ukraine are likely to impact future Russian or Ukrainian language planning outcomes. English study and use, however, may be more influenced by bottom-up, regional policy decisions.

Introduction

Nancy Hornberger, drawing on the work of Einar Haugen and Peter Mühlhäusler, says, “languages, like living species, evolve, grow, change, live, and die in relation to other languages and also in relation to their environment” (2003, p. 320). The language environment in the republics of the former Soviet Union could be fairly described as predatory. Titular languages (the main territorial language of each republic) have over the course of time evolved, grown, changed, and been threatened with extinction by Russian-speaking political powers. Since the breakup of the Soviet Union, titular languages have risen back to power, sometimes threatening the former imperial power. Nevertheless, Russian continues to be used in the region to varying degrees (Pavlenko, 2008). English has also been growing in status, posing a potentially new threat to titular languages, Russian, and minority languages in the post-Soviet region (Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996).

The purpose of this paper is to elaborate on the historical and current ecology of language in one post-Soviet republic, Ukraine. The ecology will be described thematically in four main sections: 1) national language planning, 2) language-in-education policy, 3) language use and language attitudes, and 4) the status of English. A tripartite theoretical framework will be used to explain the ecology of language in Ukraine. The first part is explicit and implicit policy supporting or prohibiting language, explored in the domains of status planning (planning the recognition of a language by society), corpus planning (developing the lexicon and orthography of a language for those functions), and acquisition planning (plan-

ning the learning of the language) (Cooper, 1989; Wiley, 1996)¹. The second part is actual practice in Ukraine in relation to language planning and policy. To this end, special attention will be paid to covert and overt policy. As Schiffman observes, “Soviet language policy...exhibited characteristics that exemplified the ‘covert’ in conflict with the more overt policy” (Schiffman, 2006, p. 115). It will be shown that the covert/overt distinction is also relevant to a discussion of post-Soviet Ukraine, at least in the first decade of independence. The third part is what Schiffman calls the *linguistic culture*: “the sum totality of ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious strictures, and all the other cultural ‘baggage’ that speakers bring to their dealings with language from their culture” (Schiffman, 2006, p. 112). Ukrainians themselves might refer to this as their “mentality”².

The paper has been organized to progress from themes that are predominantly policy-oriented through practice-dominant themes to those themes most connected with culture. However, policy, practice, and culture do not exist in isolation; thus, each section of the paper draws on all three points of the theoretical framework to the extent they are relevant.

National Language Planning

Waves of Russification and Ukrainianization

At the level of national language planning, Ukrainian history can be characterized by waves of “Russification” or “Ukrainianization” (also called “Ukrainization”). Russification refers to the promulgation of the Russian language as the sole language of public life. In periods when Ukrainian is the sole language being promulgated, the movement is referred to as Ukrainization or Ukrainianization³. With the exception of three years at the inception of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic when Ukrainian and Russian were recognized as two generally used languages (Shevelov, 1989), official language policy in Ukraine has generally focused on promoting the public use of either Russian or Ukrainian to the exclusion or denigration of the other. Moreover, the official role of these two languages has changed several times over the course of history.

The first era of Russification can be traced back to the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Russian empire sought to tighten its control over the Cossack lands in the central and eastern portion of present-day Ukraine which had been annexed (from the Russian point of view) with the signing of the Agreement of Pereiaslav (Magocsi, 2007). This region, which had just emerged from Polish government rule after a rebellion led by the Cossack warrior Bohdan Khmel’nytskyi, found itself overpowered by the Russians. The empire brought serfdom, a new administration and institutions, and the use of the Russian language instead of Ukrainian in official settings. As a result, the Ukrainian language experienced a sharp decline in use in the region. Ukrainian in the Russian empire nevertheless experienced a renaissance in the first half of the nineteenth century, led by the works of the poet Taras Shevchenko (Friedman, 2006). This renaissance was thwarted by the Ems Ukaz (decree) of 1876, which banned the Ukrainian language in virtually all spheres of public life including printing or translation

(except *belles-lettres* and historical records), public performances, importation of Ukrainian books from Ukrainian-speaking areas of Poland (where the language was not restricted), and Ukrainian language instruction in schools. Teachers identified as “Ukrainophiles” were dismissed and students were expelled (Hrycak, 2006; Shevelov, 1989; Solchanyk, 1985).

The tide of official policy turned in favor of the Ukrainian language in 1920, when the first of several decrees intended to make Ukrainian the language of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was passed by the All-Ukrainian Central Executive Committee. The last decree in 1925 made Ukrainianization mandatory in all spheres (Solchanyk, 1985). Communist party members and government workers in Ukraine were commanded to learn Ukrainian; workers who did not speak Ukrainian could be fired (Hrycak, 2006; Shevelov, 1989)⁴. Overtly, these efforts were part of Stalin’s union-wide movement for *korenizatsiia* [indigenization], the bringing of the native population of the republics into the Communist party ranks (Magocsi, 2007). The covert reason, however, was the appeasement of the peasants who were being treated poorly in the big cities for speaking Ukrainian instead of Russian (Bilaniuk, 2005; Shevelov, 1989). Regardless of the reason for the shift, Ukrainianization had a significant impact on Ukrainian-language education from 1925 to 1930. From 1922 to 1930, the number of Ukrainian-language schools jumped from 6,105 to 14,430, while the number of Russian-language schools decreased from 1,966 to 1,504 (Shevelov, 1989). Moreover, 81% of all adult literacy schools in 1925 used Ukrainian as the language of instruction, and in 1928 Ukrainian was the language of 42% of university classes (Magocsi, 2007). Such policies, however, could not change the stereotype among Russians and urban Ukrainians that Ukrainianization was a farce or that Ukrainian was the backwards dialect of the villages. One joke from that time went, “Do you speak seriously or Ukrainian?” (Shevelov, 1989).

On a more positive note, the years of Ukrainianization in the 1920s were also a period of scholarly cultivation of a standardized Ukrainian corpus and orthography. In 1927, the Kharkiv Conference on Orthography developed 103 rules for the spelling of native Ukrainian words and foreign borrowings, drawing on both the prestigious Kyiv-Poltavan dialect in Soviet Ukraine and the Galician dialect of what was then eastern Poland⁵. The conference members also developed neologisms to reduce the number of Russian or Polish cognates and to make Ukrainian more literary than colloquial (Friedman, 2006; Shevelov, 1989; Wexler, 1974). Fishman refers to this type of corpus planning as *Ausbau*, “building the language away from an overpowering and structurally very similar neighbor, relative to which it is often perceived as a dialect rather than as a really autonomous language” (Fishman, 2006, p. 317). In Ukraine, *Ausbau* became a pretext for the end of Ukrainianization and the party purges of the 1930s⁶. One by one, linguists who had worked on the standardization of the Ukrainian corpus and orthography were put on trial for trumped-up charges of “language sabotage” (accentuating differences between Ukrainian and Russian) or “treasonous irredentism” (pushing the language away from Russia and towards the foreign enemy, Poland) (Friedman, 2006). They were sent to *gulags*, shot, driven to suicide, or simply disappeared (Fishman, 2006; Shevelov, 1989; Solchanyk, 1985).

By 1938, Russification was the norm again, albeit in a subtler form. A new decree that year required the study of Russian in all non-Russian schools in the So-

viet Union (Solchanyk, 1985), but not to the exclusion of the indigenous language. The corpus and orthography of Ukrainian were also changed to bring the language closer to Russian again (Fishman, 1979; Friedman, 2006). Although overtly it seemed that Ukrainian and Russian co-existed in the country, the terror of the purges as well as the need to know Russian to progress in party leadership or pursue higher education made the reality of Russification quite clear. While practiced in less severe forms after Stalin, Russification continued in status, corpus, and acquisition planning for the remainder of the Soviet era.

The Current Era of Ukrainianization (1989-Present)

The year 1989 (two years before independence in 1991) was one of significant policy changes in the Soviet Union. Following the lead of other Soviet republics and the activism of the Ukrainian Rukh political group, the Ukrainian Soviet government passed a Law of Languages in October 1989. According to Arel (1995), the law established four principles: 1) that the official language, i.e., Ukrainian, was to be the sole language of administration, replacing Russian; 2) that Ukrainian language study was now mandatory in all Russian schools; 3) that higher educational institutions would eventually have to use Ukrainian as the medium of instruction; and 4) that external signs should be in either Ukrainian only or Ukrainian and Russian. Article 10 of the Constitution, adopted in 1996 and amended in 1999, is less specific than the 1989 law but no less clear on the position of Ukrainian:

Article 10

The state language of Ukraine is the Ukrainian language.

The State ensures the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life throughout the entire territory of Ukraine.

In Ukraine, the free development, use and protection of Russian, and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine, is guaranteed.

The State promotes the learning of languages of international communication.

The use of languages in Ukraine is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine and is determined by law. (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2008)⁷

With the passages of the Law of Languages and the Constitution have come additional laws designed to strengthen Ukrainianization in policy and practice (Friedman, 2006; Pavlenko, 2008). Ukrainian is now the language of the government, law, and official documentation (Pavlenko, 2008). In the 1990s, laws were passed stipulating that all Ukraine-based television stations and billboards be in Ukrainian, and making Ukrainian language and literature an obligatory subject (Friedman, 2006). A 1998 law requires that foreign movies either have Ukrainian subtitles or (more commonly) be dubbed into Ukrainian. This law was upheld by the Constitutional Court (Borisow, 2008; Sewall, 2008). The government has also proposed requiring international channels be dubbed in Ukrainian (Poludenko, 2008).

Such Ukrainianization policies might seem punitive towards Russian speakers, but as Fimyar points out, "implementation and monitoring of the existing policies has been highly selective and unsystematic" (2008, p. 574). In addition, sanctions against individuals or groups who fail to comply with Ukrainianiza-

tion laws are generally not imposed (Cherednychenko, 1997; Hrycak, 2006; Søvik 2007). For example, Ukrainian public television stations regularly broadcast Russian-language shows (original programming from Russia or foreign movies which have been dubbed into Russian)—usually with Ukrainian subtitles but sometimes without Ukrainian subtitles⁸. Cable or satellite channels as of June 2009 still broadcast in their original language.

In short, current Ukrainianization policies are justified as necessary to protect the Ukrainian language from the historical threat of the Russian language (Arel, 1995) and from Russia itself (Søvik, 2007). Ukrainianization policies are implemented in a less heavy-handed fashion than the Russification policies of the past, allowing Russian to continue to be used by Russophone Ukrainians. It will be shown in the next section that the educational system has also undergone a shift in favor of Ukrainian, with smaller spaces left for the continued development of Russian and other languages.

Language-in-Education Policy

Ukrainian has increasingly become the main language of education; from 2005-2006, 78% of elementary and secondary students were in Ukrainian-language schools, a 30% increase since 1991 (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Hrycak, 2006). Teachers and professors at higher educational establishments are required to use only Ukrainian (Fimyar, 2008; NL, personal communication, April, 21, 2008), though there is evidence that they continue to use Russian (Goodman & Lyulkun, 2008; Søvik, 2007). Moreover, the labels “Ukrainian-language school” and “Russian-language school” do not reflect the fact that students in Russian-language schools also learn Ukrainian as a separate subject (VE, personal communication, June 10, 2009). In Ukrainian-language schools, Russian may be taught alongside other foreign languages such as English or German, and selected works of Russian literature are incorporated - in Ukrainian translation - into the course on world literature (Pavlenko, 2008; Søvik, 2007). Literature is one sphere where Ukrainian is likely being promoted for status reasons to the detriment of Russian. Stepanenko observes, “The particular emphasis on languages with a priority of the Ukrainian language and literature over the Russian language represents the most vivid manifestation of the state policy of Ukrainisation in schools” (1999, p. 106). In addition, some Ukrainians have said “what a pity it is” that students are not reading Pushkin and other great Russian writers in the original language (Søvik, 2007; MD, personal communication, May 14, 2009).

Geographic, Cultural and Political Dimensions

National data on the medium of instruction also do not reflect the unique geolinguistic patterns of language use in Ukraine. As Bilaniuk and Melnyk note, “the two main ethnic groups in Ukraine are unevenly distributed, with the greatest concentration of Russians in eastern and southern Ukraine, and generally in urban areas” (2008, p. 3). The western *oblast* [administrative region] of Ternopil is 98% Ukrainian and 1% Russian, while the eastern *oblast* of Donetsk is 38% Ukrainian and 57% Russian. This ethnic distribution has resulted in a corresponding - though

not identical - distribution of Ukrainian and Russian language schools in the nation. Although the goal of the Ukrainian national government has been to bring Ukrainian-language education in line with the ethnic composition of the population (Hrycak, 2006; Janmaat 1999), a comparison of 2005-2006 school data (from Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008) with the most recent Ukrainian census data (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2003-2004) indicates that this goal has been achieved in only three oblasts, all in the east or south: Dnipropetrovs'k, Kharkiv, and Kherston. In all other southern and eastern oblasts except Mykolaiv the percentages of Ukrainian-language classes are lower, especially in areas with a native Ukrainian population of less than 60% (Hrycak, 2006). Conversely, in Kyiv and the western Ukrainian oblasts, percentages of Ukrainian-language school attendance have increased to levels higher than the native Ukrainian population, indicating that Russians and other ethnic minorities are attending Ukrainian-language schools in these areas (Arel, 1996; Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Janmaat, 1999; State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2003-2004).

Such trends can be explained in part by the geopolitical and geolinguistic history of Ukraine. The southern and easternmost parts of Ukraine had high rates of immigration from Russia after World War II (Magocsi, 2007). The westernmost oblasts of Ukraine were not annexed until 1944; prior to that, Ukrainian speakers in the west were living under the rule of Poland, then the Austro-Hungarian Empire, then Poland again. Under both the Polish and Austro-Hungarian systems, Ukrainian speakers had relatively more freedom to use and study Ukrainian, and developed a stronger sense of nationalism in connection with the Ukrainian language (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Shevelov, 1989). The Crimean peninsula, which Bilaniuk and Melnyk (2008) state has the lowest numbers of Ukrainian-language schools (5%), was a gift to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in 1954 from Khrushchev. Before that it was an Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. In addition, Crimea is home to an ethnic Russian majority and a large Tatar-speaking population which was banished by the Soviets but allowed to return after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Kreindler, 1997). Because of these factors (as well as years of negotiating with the Ukrainian government), Crimea once again has the status of an autonomous republic and has the constitutional right to "ensure the functioning and development of the state language and national languages and cultures in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea" (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2008).

Other phenomena of ethnicity and language in education can be explained culturally as language retention (use of the ethnic language at home and in school), language integration (compliance with national policy by studying the titular language at school while maintaining the ethnic language at home), or language assimilation (both studying the titular language in school and using it at home). Arel says, "The quiet Ukrainianization of the Kiev schools suggests that both the Russian-speaking Ukrainians and the Russians of Kiev find it in their interest to integrate into the nation-building project" (1996, p. 77). Janmaat (1999), in his survey of Russian and mixed Russian-Ukrainian families in four Ukrainian cities, also found evidence of language integration in Kyiv⁹. In L'viv, however, mixed Ukrainian-Russian couples assimilated to Ukrainian while Russian couples opted for language retention. Janmaat suggests that because of the predominance of Ukrainian culture in L'viv, the Russian couples resist assimilation or integration out of fear of cultural loss.

In addition to an “east-west” divide, language in Ukraine is often said to have an “urban-rural” divide—Russian in the cities and Ukrainian in the villages (Shevelov, 1989). Occasionally, this view has a positive connotation, as when one talks about the beauty of the Ukrainian language for describing nature and other things pastoral (Friedman, 2006). Generally, though, the stereotype is negative: “even though Ukrainian is now the sole state language of the country, stereotypes persist of Ukrainian as a backward peasant language, in contrast to Russian as the ‘civilized’ and ‘highly cultured’ language” (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008, p. 2). In Soviet times, the urban-rural divide was a component of language-in-education policy; students in rural areas attended Ukrainian-language schools, while urban areas were Russified (Arel, 1995; Hrycak, 2006). Given the current high levels of Ukrainian-language study in formerly Russified oblasts, it seems unlikely that this urban/rural divide persists to the same degree in Ukrainian education today. However, more research is needed to attest this fact.

The Politics of Language in Education: The Fallacy of Parental Choice

While geographic and ethnic factors are important in understanding patterns of language in education in Ukraine, it would be incorrect to assume that these patterns are usually based on parental choice. In fact, much of Ukrainian education history—both Soviet and post-Soviet—can be characterized by an official orientation to parental choice but an unofficial tendency away from it. In 1958, the Soviet Union under Khrushchev revoked the 1938 Russian-language mandate; study at a Russian-language school was now “voluntarily chosen” (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Hrycak, 2006; Kreindler, 1997; Lewytkyj 1984; quotes original to Kreindler). Hrycak (2006) notes,

Only in the countryside and the newly annexed Western Ukraine did most ethnic Ukrainians continue to attend Ukrainian-language schools. In cities elsewhere in Ukraine, the policy of “parental choice” compelled most children to attend either Russian schools or a new type of bilingual school in which Russian was in fact the primary language of instruction and Ukrainian was studied as a separate subject. (p. 73)

Since 1989, parental choice policy and practice have continued to diverge. Article 25 of the 1989 Law of Languages gave parents the right to choose the language of instruction for their children (Janmaat, 1999). Although this right was said to be “inalienable,” this part of the law “has been disregarded by the Ministry of Education since the 1990s” (Arel, 2006). Yet this time it is primarily Russian speakers who have no choice but to send their children to Ukrainian-language schools. Janmaat (1999), in interviews with school officials in the mid-1990s in L’viv (west), Kyiv (central), Odesa (south), and Donetsk (east), found that only Donetsk has honored legislation stipulating that a Russian-language class be opened if eight to ten parents request it. In the other three cities, officials maintained that their decision to increase the number of Ukrainian-language classes was based on surveys or consultations with parents. The parents Janmaat interviewed, however, maintained it was administrative pressure, forced personnel shift, or a decision made without any parental survey that led to the decision about the medium of instruction.

National Minorities and Language in Education

The minority language with the highest status in Ukraine nowadays is Russian. Not only do ethnic Russians comprise the largest minority ethnic group, Russian is the only language named in the Constitution as a minority language. At the same time, having the status of a minority language is a significant downward shift for Russian speakers (Fournier, 2002; Janmaat, 1999; Pavlenko, 2008). While there have been pushes over the years to make Russian an official language alongside Ukrainian, so far such efforts have failed. Part of Cherednychenko's rationale for resisting making Russian an official language is as follows,

without trying to diminish the Russian language with its rich literary tradition and its international standing, it is necessary to point out that it is neither inferior nor superior to other international languages and therefore should not be given special status in any part of the world...undoubtedly, the Russian language will preserve this status and it will strengthen the position of the Russian language, in Ukraine as well. That is why this language does not require legislative protection usually given by a state to its state language. (1997, p. 58)

Although Ukrainian and Russian are the most prevalent ethnic groups, comprising over 95% of the total population, Ukraine boasts over 130 nationalities and ethnic groups (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2003-2004). The percentage claiming their ancestral language as their mother tongue varies widely.¹⁰

Table 1

National Minorities in Ukraine (State Statistics Committee of Ukraine, 2003-2004)

Nationality	Number (in thousands)	Percent of Population	Percent claiming nationality language as mother tongue
Russian	8334.1	29.6	95.9
Belarussians	275.8	0.6	19.8
Moldavians ⁴¹	258.6	0.5	70
Crimean Tatars	248.2	0.5	92
Bulgarians	204.6	0.4	64.2
Hungarians	156.6	0.3	95.4
Romanians	151	0.3	91.7
Poles	144.1	0.3	12.9
Jews	103.6	0.2	3.1
Armenians	99.9	0.2	50.4
Greeks	91.5	0.2	6.4
Tatars	73.3	0.2	35.2
Gypsies	47.6	0.1	44.7
Azerbaijanians	45.2	0.1	53
Georgians	34.2	0.1	36.7
Germans	33.3	0.1	12.2
Gagausians	31.9	0.1	71.5
Other	177.1	0.4	32.6

All minority language groups are guaranteed the right to free development, use and protection of their national language according to the Constitution of Ukraine. An additional layer of protection comes from Ukraine's 1996 signing and 2006 ratification of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (ECRML) (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 1998; Nic Craith, 2006; Søvik, 2007)¹². As a result, there has been limited but noteworthy progress for minority languages as a medium of instruction in some schools in Ukraine. In the 2005-2006 school year, Ukraine had school classes which were conducted in Romanian, Hungarian, Crimean Tatar, Moldavian/Moldovan, Polish, Bulgarian, and Slovak. Many of these schools were bilingual (Ukrainian and the minority language) or trilingual (Ukrainian, Russian, and the minority language) (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008). This means, however, that speakers of other languages are receiving education in Russian or Ukrainian depending on where in Ukraine they live.

Like Russian- and Ukrainian-language education, there is a noticeable geographic component to minority language education. Yakobets (2004) found that Romanian-language schools are offered in only three oblasts: Chernautsi (Chernivtsi), Odesa, and Transcarpathia (Zakarpattia). All three oblasts border Moldova or Romania. Gordon said of the Polish minority: "they make up only 0.43% of the population and are not geographically concentrated in one area. This has no doubt contributed to the assimilation and loss of national identity of the Polish population in Ukraine" (Gordon, 1996, p. 226).

Even speakers of minority languages who have access to mother-tongue education face educational challenges in Ukraine. Yakobets (2004) and Gordon (1996) both found a lack of adequate mother-tongue reading and teaching materials for Romanian and Polish classes respectively. National exams pose another problem. When the Ukrainian government decided for the first time to implement a standardized college entrance exam system in the spring of 2008, Crimean government officials asked the Ministry of Education to translate the exams into Russian. The Ministry relented, agreeing to translate the exams into the languages of national minorities—but only for two years as a transitional period (Orlova, 2008).

In summary, Ukrainian schools are adhering more strongly to policies that support the use of Ukrainian in schools regardless of parental wishes. This pattern has a historical basis in Soviet language-in-education policy, but it now favors the Ukrainian language instead of the Russian language. In regions of the country with high numbers of ethnic language minorities (including ethnic Russians), students have a greater chance of attending a school taught in their mother tongue; in those schools they are also likely to be encouraged to learn Ukrainian. If Ukrainian truly becomes the dominant language in higher education, the demand for Ukrainian in elementary and secondary schools regardless of the language spoken at home may rise. In the next section it will be shown, however, that that language use and attitudes outside of school have been and are likely to be more fluid.

LANGUAGE USE AND LANGUAGE ATTITUDES

Native Language and National Identity

That the Ukrainian language is a symbol of national identity should not be surprising given the well-documented relationship between language and nationalism or national identity (c.f. Fishman, 1997; Nic Craith, 2006). Hrycak (2006) traces the identification of the Ukrainian language with nationalism as far back to the 1860s, when Ukrainophile educators recognized Ukrainian as a distinct native language which was most suitable as the medium of instruction. The Russian Empire responded with the Valuev Circular of 1863, which signified concern that a separate Ukrainian language was an expression against Russia and a precursor to “Little Russia” (as Ukraine was called then) becoming a separate Ukrainian nation:

A Little Russian language has not, does not, and cannot exist, and its dialects as spoken by the masses are the same as the Russian language, with the exception of some corruptions from Poland...those people who are attempting to prove the opposite are reproached by the majority of Little Russians themselves for separatist intentions that are dangerous for Russia and detrimental to Little Russia. (Magocsi, 1996, as cited in Friedman, 2006, p. 67)

In Soviet times, Ukrainians were encouraged to see nationality and native language as connected with their ancestral homeland, despite official public discourses discouraging nationalism (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Hrycak, 2006). In 1989 the Ukrainian Rukh party addressed the previous repression of the Ukrainian language and asserted the right to develop both the Ukrainian language and the Ukrainian nation-state:

As a result of the colonialist policy of the Czarist regime, and later of the gross violation of generally recognized principles of national existence during the times of Stalin and Brezhnev, the destruction of the creative and scholarly intelligentsia, the artificial narrowing of the domain of the Ukrainian language...now the Ukrainian people faces the need to revive its national culture via the over-all development of the Ukrainian language, which is the determining factor of the existence of a nation. (as cited in Fishman, 1997, p. 286)

Perhaps as a result of this emphasis on language and nationhood, nowadays “native language” (*ridna mova* in Ukrainian, *rodnoi jazik* in Russian) denotes the native homeland, not the native home (Arel, 2002; Friedman, 2006). As Friedman says: “the *ridna mova* of ethnic Ukrainians is presumed to be Ukrainian, regardless of what they actually speak” (Friedman, 2006, p. 86). Most Ukrainians who grew up speaking Russian at home claim Ukrainian as their native language on the census, and the percentage of people in Ukraine claiming Ukrainian nationality and Ukrainian as a native language increased by 5% and 3% respectively from 1989 to 2001 (Arel, 2002, 2006; Bilaniuk & Melnyk 2008; Hrycak, 2006; Friedman, 2006). Thus, while it has been said that the mother tongue is “the central symbol of individual and collective identity” (de Cillia, 2002 as cited in Wodak, 2006), in Ukraine either identification with the linguistic collective tends to be emphasized over in-

dividual linguistic identity (Arel, 1995), or at best differentiated so that Ukrainian is a symbol of collective identity and Russian is a symbol of personal and local identity (Søvik, 2007).

In education, the result is that “the basic nationalist premise that the language of instruction is not a matter of choice but of heritage has quietly prevailed since independence” (Arel, 2006, p. 8). A recent survey of Ukrainian university students in central-western Ukraine supports these national findings. Over 90% of students agreed with the statement “Ukrainian is a symbol of our national identity”, and nearly equal numbers agreed that Ukrainian should be the language of classes and exams, although actual usage of Ukrainian in and out of class was reportedly lower (Goodman & Lyulkun, 2008). The symbolic value of Ukrainian as the native language of the Ukrainian homeland is also reflected in the discourse of Russophone Ukrainians about Ukrainianization. Fournier (2002) found that Russophone Ukrainians who complain about Ukrainianization are not denying the role of Ukrainian in their identity; rather, they resent a denial of their hybrid cultural and linguistic connections to both Ukraine and “brother Russia”¹³.

Bilingualism

Kreindler characterizes Ukraine as “basically a bi-ethnic, bi-linguistic state” (Kreindler, 1997, p. 96). It is important to recognize that Kreindler’s use of the term “bi-linguistic” should not be glossed as “bilingual”, though many people in Ukraine are proficient in both Ukrainian and Russian and alternate their use of Ukrainian and Russian at home, in meetings or informal events, and in Ukrainian-language schools when class is dismissed (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Friedman, 2006; Pavlenko, 2008). The term “bilingualism” is stigmatized in Ukraine because the Soviet-era promotion of “bilingualism” was a euphemism for transition of non-Russians to Russian (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Cherednychenko 1997). Moreover, Ukrainian nationalists saw this “bilingualism” as harmful to the development of the mother tongue (Arel, 1995). Even if Ukrainians did manage to become bilingual in the Soviet educational system, ethnic Russians generally remained unilingual (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Cherednychenko 1997). A 2007 survey of language use suggests this imbalanced pattern persists in Ukrainian society: ethnic Ukrainians are 2.7 times more likely than ethnic Russians to be bilingual at home (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008).

The second problem with the term “bilingualism” is that it does not adequately capture a phenomenon in Ukraine referred to by Ukrainian scholars as *cooperative nonaccommodation* (Pavlenko, 2008) or *nonreciprocal bilingualism* (Bilaniuk, 2005). Pavlenko defines cooperative nonaccommodation as a situation in which “each party conducts the conversation in their preferred language, with the expectation of being understood and respected by the other party” (2008, p. 62). While the terms “nonaccommodation” and “nonreciprocal” suggest either a negative stance towards the language of the interlocutor or the continued hegemony of Russian as the language of power, status, culture, and urban style, the prevalence of this type of communication at home, on the street, and in television shows is taken as a positive indicator of the equality and acceptance of both languages (Bilaniuk, 2005; Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Pavlenko, 2008).

Both the choice of ethnic Russians not to learn Ukrainian and the choice of ethnic Ukrainians to use their language of preference regardless of the language of their interlocutor might be facilitated by the ease with which speakers of Ukrainian and Russian can develop passive proficiency in each other's language. Ukrainian and Russian are both in the Eastern Slavonic language group and they are both written in the Cyrillic alphabet. Many words and grammatical forms in Ukrainian and Russian derive from a common source (Old Church Slavonic), Soviet corpus and orthography policies led to the development of many Ukrainian words which are Russian cognates, and both languages are used widely in Ukraine today. As Janmaat observes, compared to other Soviet republics "Ukraine appears to be a special case in that...with a little effort, Ukrainians and Russians can understand each other's language even if they have never heard the other language before" (1999, p. 477).

Surzhyk: The Problem of Codemixing

Baker (2001) says very few people who speak two languages keep those languages completely separate. Nevertheless, codemixing is often viewed negatively by the monolingual speakers of one of the varieties being mixed as well as those who do the codemixing. Derogatory terms for common practices of codemixing include Hinglish (Hindu-English), Spanglish (Spanish-English), and Wenglish (Welsh-English). In Ukraine the mixing of Ukrainian and Russian has the derogatory term *surzhyk* (literally, a mix of low-quality flour grains). What is perhaps unique to the Ukrainian context¹⁴ or at least important to know about *surzhyk* is that such mixed language is not just codemixing at the topic or sentence level; it is also the fusion of Ukrainian and Russian forms into a third form. For example, in Russian the word for city is *город* [gorod] while the Ukrainian word is *місто* [misto]¹⁵. Bilaniuk interviewed one woman who substituted the Russian [g] with a Ukrainian [h] and the Russian *akanie* (schwa in the unstressed vowel) with the Ukrainian clear vowel, creating the form /horod/ (Bilaniuk, 2005). The closeness of the two languages may make it more difficult for speakers *not* to mix them. As Friedman says, "while Ukrainian and Russian contain many distinctive features, the boundaries between them are by no means as clear or as impermeable as the labels 'Ukrainian language' and 'Russian language' might suggest" (Friedman, 2006, p. 53).

Surzhyk has many denotations in Ukrainian society, covering such diverse referents as entire village dialects, the insertion of Russian words into Ukrainian speech, or simply a Russian "accent" in one's Ukrainian (Bilaniuk 2005; Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008). This last definition in particular indexes the shift in status of Ukrainian. Historically *surzhyk* was generally defined as codemixing by Ukrainian peasants who were trying to sound more cultured or educated by adding Russian words to their speech, often incorrectly (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008); now it can refer to urban Russian speakers who are trying to use Ukrainian.

Whether *surzhyk* results from Russian in Ukrainian or Ukrainian in Russian, the attitude towards *surzhyk* is overwhelmingly negative. It has been called a "disease," a product of "Ukrainian self-hate and self-denigration," a "national tragedy," and "*malointelihentna* [less educated]," among other things (Bernsand, 2006; Bilaniuk, 2005). Ukrainian pop artists who have used Russianisms in their songs

have been harshly criticized by journalists, and the artists themselves have expressed their shame at having such poor knowledge of Ukrainian (Bilaniuk, 2005). There are anti-*surzhyk* books sold in stores. Friedman (2006) found that students who used Russian or fused Ukrainian and Russian forms in classroom discourse were interrupted and corrected by the teacher.

Ukrainians who denigrate the use of mixed language are generally concerned either with language purity in general, with cultivating a language separate from Russian, or elevating the status of Ukrainian (Bilaniuk, 2005; Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008; Friedman, 2006). On the other hand, there are speakers who defend the use of *surzhyk*. Bilaniuk (2005) spoke with a Ukrainian who preferred to use the term 'mixed language', and said people who are concerned with linguistic purity are actually perpetuating Soviet models of cultural correctness. Flier adds that *surzhyk* has a positive status in certain elements of Ukrainian society, though the majority of these elements might be considered counterculture:

Surzhyk has gained a certain cachet as the language of the alienated and the rebellious, of those who press against the norms of social convention, whether members of the youth culture, the underworld, the military, or the socially conscious hip crowd. (Flier, 1998, p. 114)

Bernsand remarks, "It is more seldom pointed out that the original connotations of the term specifically relate it to the struggle for survival under harsh rural conditions...it would not seem unreasonable to argue that *surzhyk* in some circumstances kept hunger away" (Bernsand, 2006, p. 87). He further cites Ukrainian linguists who point out the linguistic essence of Ukrainian that remains in *surzhyk*, as well as explicit discourse supporting a "better *surzhyk* than Russian!" ideology.

The Reality of Two Languages in Individual Lives

Pennycook states that "language policy can only be understood in the complex contexts of language use" (2000, p. 64). In the biographic interviews she conducted with Ukrainians, Bilaniuk found not only stories that reflected the geographical patterns and historical status of Ukrainian and Russian described in previous sections, but also "relationships that defy the stereotype, revealing heterogeneity in practices and ideologies" (2005, p. 38). I too have observed anecdotally the individual language realities in Ukraine that conform to or defy stereotypes. In April 2008, I had dinner with a group of English teachers from Ukraine who were in New York for a conference. One teacher told me that her father was Russian and her mother was Ukrainian. When she said her father spoke both Russian and Ukrainian, a colleague replied, "really?" The teacher then explained that her father had taught at a school in a village, so he had to learn Ukrainian. The implication was that she had to rationalize her Russian father's study of Ukrainian, and notably she defined his use in terms of the urban-rural educational divide between Russian and Ukrainian. In another example, I attended a conference in eastern Ukraine in May 2009 where the *rector* (president) of the university and city councilman gave their opening remarks in Ukrainian, but the British Council representative gave her opening remarks in Russian. I was surprised to hear Russian in such a formal context, until I talked to her and found out she was originally

from Russia but moved to Donetsk 20 years ago because she married a Ukrainian. I didn't question her directly about her knowledge of Ukrainian or her use of Russian in her speech, but her background, current location, and language use suggest she is an ethnic Russian who has remained a monolingual Russian¹⁶. In contrast, an ethnic Russian who moved to central-western Ukraine in 1999 and admits she "loves languages" and is "enchanted with Ukrainian" has over time shifted from using Russian to Ukrainian to tutor students in English—in part because of the language-in-education practices:

Now I mostly work with kids who all attend Ukrainian schools. And first, it came to terms like grammar terms, and they didn't know the Russian equivalents, they only knew them in Ukrainian, so at first I had to learn the grammar terms, and then it was, like we did the translation exercises, they were supposed to do for their homework in Ukrainian, and I was teaching in Russian, and then I, well, first my Ukrainian was getting better and better with the years, and then I felt like, three languages were too much, and now I teach only in Ukrainian. And I have some Russian speaking kids, they come to me, they still mostly speak Russian, but I conduct lessons in Ukrainian because they hear it at their English lessons at school. I think it's more natural to them. (LB, personal communication, June 11, 2009)¹⁷

Finally, there is evidence at an individual level that education and geography are affecting the type of Ukrainian language young people speak. One university student in central-western Ukraine who grew up in Crimea said the Ukrainian she studied in school is pure because it's learned in a textbook, but the Ukrainian spoken in central-west Ukraine is "weird" because it's a mix of Polish, Russian, and Ukrainian. People from the region are surprised to the point of stopping and staring at someone who speaks such pure Ukrainian (VE, personal communication, June 10, 2009).

In short, there is ample evidence in the Ukrainian context that the definition of basic linguistic terms such as "native language", "bilingualism" and "codemixing" is not at all basic. While the use of Ukrainian has had high symbolic support since independence, both Ukrainian and Russian have been actively used languages in Soviet and post-Soviet times, and they continue to be used and mixed to varying degrees in ways that are only occasionally considered problematic. The degree to which English may add to or supplant these languages will be discussed in the next section.

Situating English in the Language Ecology of Ukraine

With one official language, one language of wider communication, a fused variety, and several languages of national minorities already vying for attention in the Ukrainian landscape, it is hard to imagine how English could fit into the language ecology of Ukraine. Robert Phillipson, however, contends that it is exactly this kind of environment in which English can be most threatening:

World-wide, language policy is torn between top-down pressures to maintain the position of national languages, and bottom up pressures to

secure linguistic diversity and the implementation of language rights. *Impacting on both of these trends is the ever-increasing use of English world-wide.* (2006, p. 346, emphasis mine)

Phillipson's statement implies that in Ukraine the government is promoting Ukrainian, and the community is working to preserve its rights to speak either only Ukrainian (or Ukrainian and Russian or another language), but the drive for English may hinder or otherwise impact these goals.

It has already been said that the Ukrainian government has sought to pass legislation to limit the use of English and other foreign languages in movies in order to protect the use of Ukrainian. The only other evidence of national planning of English use in Ukraine is found at the Ukrainian Ministry of Education. For English - and other general education subjects - the Ministry of Education disseminates national curriculum guidelines, textbook recommendations, and training manuals for each year of study (*Ministerstvo Osvity i Nauky Ukrainy*, 2002). The Ministry also regulates specialized elementary and secondary schools, including those which specialize in the teaching of foreign languages (c.f. *Ministerstvo Osvity i Nauky Ukrainy*, 2009). These efforts, however, may be falling short of the teachers' and students' desired levels of English knowledge. For example, in a 90-minute English club discussion about teaching and learning English, participants spent nearly 20 minutes discussing which textbooks to use in the classroom. During that time they described the low quality of English textbooks provided by the government, and debated whether teachers should supplement the national textbooks (provided for free to teachers) with photocopies from "authentic textbooks" (textbooks from British or American publishers), or risk a scandal by persuading all parents in a class to go against school regulations and agree to buy authentic textbooks.

There is further evidence for the bottom-up development of English in Ukraine in education and employment. Since 1991, demand for private English language studies has grown (Bilaniuk, 2003; Fennell, 2001). This is likely related to economics; one English professor estimates that 60% of job offers in his city require knowledge of English or German (YS, personal communication, June 9, 2009). Universities appear to be setting their own policies regarding faculty, teaching, and the English language. The rector of the Dnipropetrovs'k University of Economics and Law (a private institution) announced at a conference in May 2009 that they intend to teach all subjects in English to students of the third year on, and to hire teachers only if they have a good command of a foreign language. A few years ago, Khmel'nyt'skyi National University in central western Ukraine began offering English classes to professors through the Office for Continuing Education and Professional Development; professors who take this class have added points to their annual rating/evaluation (LA, personal communication, June 9, 2009).

There is even evidence that English may be competing more directly with Ukrainian—and winning—due to regional acquisition planning or a lack thereof. Friedman (2006) quotes a school official in Vinnitsya who told her that the number of Ukrainian class hours had to be cut to accommodate English lessons. Søvik (2007) describes focus group interviews with students in Eastern Ukraine who lament that the Ukrainian government hasn't provided sufficient incentives to attend Ukrainian classes, whereas there is greater economic incentive to learn English or German. As two students reflected,

If you want to go to Israel, learn [the language], it is even free. Here courses in Ukrainian cost the same amount as courses in English, other foreign languages. (Søvik, 2007, p. 194)

99% [of political science students] stop learning Ukrainian and begin learning English. Then one comes to a certain level of knowledge of the English language. Then what does one do? The person is not even going to bring the level of Ukrainian up to the level of English or to the level of Russian, but start to learn German from scratch and try to bring German to the level of knowledge of English. (Søvik, 2007, p. 188)

English also seems to have a higher social status in Ukraine than Ukrainian. Despite the Ukrainianization laws and the stigma of mixing Russian and Ukrainian, mixing English with Ukrainian in speech is fashionable. In advertising, it achieves a particular stylistic effect (Bilaniuk 2003, 2005; Bilaniuk & Melnyk 2008). Bilaniuk (2003) further demonstrates through a matched-guise study that the English-Ukrainian speaker in her study is rated more positively in English by Ukrainophone and Russophone speakers for all personality traits, suggesting English may have a higher implicit status than both Ukrainian and Russian. Bilaniuk adds, however, that this may be connected with the economic opportunities and projected image of wealth of English speakers.

On the other hand, it seems highly unlikely that English will ever replace Ukrainian or Russian as a national language or language of wider communication in the country. As one Ukrainian teacher of English put it, "English will never be the first language in Ukraine, but only as a foreign language, as well as, perhaps, Russian" (NL, personal communication, April, 21, 2008). An American teacher said metaphorically, "English in Ukraine is like mustard on a hot dog. The mustard can't replace the hot dog" (TC, personal communication, June 15, 2009). A pilot survey of 27 students at a Ukrainian university supports these sentiments; 89% of survey respondents strongly disagreed that English should be the state language of Ukraine, and the remainder neither agreed nor disagreed (Goodman & Lyulkin, 2008).

Conclusion and Implications

A question in language policy research has been posed, "Is multilingualism an *outcome* of the policy, or does it develop and persist contrary to or independently of the policy?" (Schiffman, 1996, as cited in Wiley, 2002). It has been shown through the Ukrainian context that the answer is not always so dichotomous, and that other factors unique to a language context must be taken into account. Historically in Ukraine, language policy has strived to assert the power of a single language (either Russian or Ukrainian). The means of policy implementation in Soviet times alternatively crushed individuals attempting to cultivate a language under the law, or left room for the development and use of two languages under newer laws, albeit with significant power differentials. In the post-Soviet era, there is still evidence of top-down control of language planning and policy and a certain level of hegemony for state control of language policy which affects Ukrainians' symbolic views of the Ukrainian language. On the other hand, increasingly in Ukraine

people have had the freedom to vocalize their concerns when it appears their language rights are being denied, and to define their use of language in terms that are most compatible with their sense of national identity and linguistic culture. At the individual level, historical and current monolingualism or multilingualism may be influenced by a combination of factors including language policy, geography, ethnicity, symbolic value of a language, education, and personal feelings about the language. English has its own symbolic value in the country, and appears to have a limited but potentially growing impact; for that reason Phillipson is right to contend that it should be monitored in Ukraine and elsewhere. Yet the case of English in Ukraine may also serve as an example of how bottom-up practices and micro-level policies can contribute to the development of a language in a country in the absence of a strong national planning agenda.

In closing, it should be said that the Ukrainian nation is still a young one, and the wave of Ukrainianization could theoretically shift again if someone is elected on a pro-Russian platform (US, personal communication, April 26, 2008). Continued monitoring of the political situation as well as explicit and implicit language policy practices in Ukraine is necessary to ensure language rights for speakers of all languages in the country. More research is also needed on the attitudes, status and educational access or conditions of national minorities other than Russian in Ukraine. Finally, more systematic, nationwide data on the historical, current, and predicted position of English within the language ecology of Ukraine is needed.

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Notes

¹This framework and the questions that underlie the theoretical approach have been criticized in recent years (c.f. Moore, 2000; Ricento, 2000; Wiley, 2002) for being arbitrary and for not reflecting the individual reality of language use. I found that corpus, status and acquisition planning as categories were a useful starting point for a literature review on macro-level aspects of language planning and policy in Ukraine that I might have overlooked otherwise, and for that reason I reference them in this paper.

²I lived in Ukraine from 2001-2003 and have made multiple visits since then. Each time I have been in Ukraine I have discovered aspects of Ukrainian society that surprise me and which have often been explained to me with the expression "It's our mentality."

³This terminology is not unique to Ukraine. In an 2008 issue of *The International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* there are articles on “Kazakhization” (Kazakhstan) and “Estonianization” (Estonia).

⁴According to Shevelov (1989), the official policy said workers who do not speak Ukrainian on the job must be fired. However, higher ranking officials who did not speak Ukrainian managed to avoid dismissal.

⁵According to Magosci (2007), Galicia was a principality of Kievan Rus’ which joined with Volhynia and later became a region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This territory is distinct from the region of Spain also known as Galicia.

⁶Some scholars suggest the covert reason for the end of Ukrainianization is simply that Stalin’s approach to the peasants shifted from appeasement to decimation (Bilaniuk, 2005; Shevelov, 1989).

⁷At the end of the English language translation it is written, “Official English translation. The only authentic text is the text in the state language of Ukraine.”

⁸While I was in Ukraine in the spring of 2009, I regularly saw Russian-language programming with Ukrainian subtitles. A Russian live comedy show, however, was broadcast without subtitles.

⁹“Kyiv” [kiiv] is the transliteration of the Ukrainian name for the capital of Ukraine (К и ї в). “Kiev” [ki Ev], as it is more commonly known in English, is the transliteration of the Russian (К и е в). Since Ukrainian is now the official language of Ukraine, I use the Ukrainian transliteration unless the original text uses the Russian variant. However, a preference for the spelling “Kyiv” or an insistence that “Kyiv” is the only correct spelling may index a preference for Ukrainian or uptake of Ukrainianization policies.

¹⁰According to the census data, other choices for mother tongue are Ukrainian, Russian, or another language.

¹¹The terms on this page come from the English language version of the Census website. The English words ‘Moldavian’ and ‘Moldovan’ are used interchangeably in Ukraine. Both refer to the people and the variety of Romanian from the neighboring post-Soviet republic of Moldova, not the Moldavian people and dialect of northern Romania. Likewise, Belarussian is used to refer to the language of Belarus in Ukraine, while the more culturally sensitive term in Belarus is now ‘Belarusian’ to distinguish it from Russian.

¹²Søvik (2007) adds that the ECRML was challenged in the Ukrainian courts and annulled in 2000 because it failed to protect the state language. That decision was later reversed.

¹³According to *Kyiv Post*, in January 2009, the Ukrainian foreign minister responded to this notion of brotherhood by saying, “The time has come to get rid of stereotypes and stamps of brotherhood, historic unity and other things. We are the two sovereign states and we should build our relations on the basis of the international law” (“Ukraine’s Foreign Minister,” 2009).

¹⁴Belarus also has a mixed Belarusian-Russian form referred to derogatively as trasianka, but the current social meaning of trasianka is slightly different from surzhyk. See Giger and Sloboda (2008) for more about mixed Belarusian-Russian.

¹⁵See Flier (1998) for a more detailed description of the linguistic environments in which such third forms occur in Ukrainian-Russian codemixing.

¹⁶An alternative account of this woman’s language use is that she knows Ukrainian, but feels more comfortable using Russian because she is proficient in

it and less likely to be critiqued. See Bilaniuk (2003) for more about Ukrainians' opinions of others' Ukrainian and Russian proficiency.

¹⁷I attended a meeting of a weekly English Club organized by a friend in central-western Ukraine and asked English teachers and students questions about how they learned English and in what language(s) they teach English. This quote is from my transcript of that meeting.

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