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Thomas Daiber, Andrea Gawrich,
Peter Haslinger, Reinhard Ibler, Stefan Rohdewald
und Monika Wingender

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Language Politics, Language Situations and Conflicts in Multilingual Societies

Case Studies from Contemporary Russia,
Ukraine and Belarus

Edited by
Daniel Müller and Monika Wingender

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List of Contributors

MARIIA BOVSUNOVSKA is a PhD student at the Institute of Ukrainian Language, Kyiv (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). Her main research interest is the functioning of the Ukrainian language in Zhytomyr region.

ISTVÁN CSERNICKSKÓ is Professor of Hungarian Linguistics at the University of Pannonia (Veszprém, Hungary) and Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian College of Higher Education (Berehove, Ukraine). His main research areas are: language politics and contacts, linguistic conflict research, bilingualism, language learning and teaching.

GULSHAT GALIULLINA is a Doctor of Philology, Professor, and Head of the Department of Tatar Linguistics at Kazan' Federal University. Her main areas of research are: Tatar language, linguoculturology, sociolinguistics, colloquial speech, onomastics, inter-ethnic and inter-language contacts, ethnic culture.

ALSU GARAEVA is Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of History named after Shigabutdin Mardzhani at the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tatarstan (Russian Federation, Kazan'). Her main research areas are: language politics, socio-economic politics, economic sociology, Islamic economy, Islamophobia.

YURI DOROFEEV is Prorector for Research at the Crimean Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education and Head of the Department of Philology. His main research areas are: sociolinguistics, language politics, analysis of language situations, typology of language variety, language change and development, theory of standard languages and forms of existence of language, theory of linguistics.

NADIYA KISS is a PhD in Ukrainian Language, and a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Justus Liebig University Giessen. Her main research interests are: sociolinguistics, language policies in post-Soviet states and political rhetoric.

MAXIM KRONGAUZ is Professor at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE University), Moscow, and at the Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow. His main research areas are: sociolinguistics, semantics, pragmatics, linguistic conflict research and Russian studies.

HOLGER KUSSE is Professor of Linguistics and History of Slavic Languages at the TU Dresden. His main research areas are: cultural linguistics, pragmalinguistics, discourse linguistics, historical pragmatics, philosophy of language, Russian philosophy.

LARYSA MASENKO is Professor of Ukrainian Language at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, and Leading Researcher at the Institute of Ukrainian Language, Kyiv (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). Her main research interests are: sociolinguistics, language situation and language policies in Ukraine, issues of bilingualism, language conflicts in post-Soviet countries, peculiarities of language functioning in totalitarian state.

NATALIA MATVEIEVA is Junior Researcher at the Department of Stylistics, Language Culture and Sociolinguistics of the Institute of Ukrainian Language, Kyiv (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). Her main research area is sociolinguistics, especially the language situation in Ukraine.

LILIYA NIZAMOVA is Associate Professor (Docent) at the Department of Sociology at Kazan' Federal University. Her main research areas are: ethnicity, nationalism and multiculturalism in contemporary societies; media presentations of ethnic and national identities; qualitative methods of research of the media discourse.

AIDA NURUTDINOVA is Associate Professor at the Department of General and Ethnic Sociology at Kazan' Federal University. Her main research areas are: sociology of mass communication, mass media discourse of socio-political processes, methodology, especially concerning mass media discourse analysis.

OLENA RUDA is Head Researcher at the Department of Stylistics, Language Culture and Sociolinguistics of the Institute of Ukrainian Language, Kyiv (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). Her main research areas are: sociolinguistics, language politics, Russian-Ukrainian bilingual communities, linguistic conflict research.

SVITLANA SOKOLOVA is Professor of Ukrainian Language, and Leading Researcher at the Institute of Ukrainian Language, Kyiv (National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine). Her main research areas are: sociolinguistics, Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, Slavic aspectology and word formation.

ANTON SOMIN is Research Fellow at the Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow, and at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE University), Moscow. His main research areas are: sociolinguistics, linguistic conflict research, folk linguistics, speech etiquette and Belarusian language.

MONIKA WINGENDER is Professor of Slavic Linguistics at the Justus Liebig University Gießen. Her main research areas are: sociolinguistics, language politics and contacts in Eastern Europe, linguistic conflict research, language situations in Slavic countries and typologies of Slavic standard languages.

JAN PATRICK ZELLER is Professor of Slavic Linguistics at the University of Greifswald. His main research areas are: language variation, sociolinguistics, language contacts and psycholinguistics with a focus on Polish, Ukrainian, Belarusian and Russian.

Preface

From the middle of the last century, there has been a continuous growth in sociolinguistic research on bi- and multilingualism and language conflicts. PETER NELDE's statement that there can be no language contact without language conflict¹ stands for the longstanding incorporation of language conflict research into the discipline of contact linguistics. Clearly, the research field regarding language conflicts is much broader than the scope of language contact research. In order to shed light on the complex relationships of language(s) and conflict(s) and, accordingly, to contribute to the necessary expansion of the research field into language conflicts, the present volume addresses a broad spectrum of questions and issues regarding language politics and language situations in connection with language conflicts in multilingual societies in Eastern Europe. Most notably, this volume is a combination of theoretical and methodical considerations with elaborate empirical research in the form of mass surveys or focus group discussions.

This book is the second volume presenting the results of an international sociolinguistic project that compared bi- and multilingual situations in present-day Ukraine and Russia. The project's first volume was published in 2020: cf. Daniel Müller and Monika Wingender (eds.), *Discourse and Practice of Bilingualism. Contemporary Ukraine and Russia / Tatarstan*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. Our project ("Bi- and multilingualism between conflict intensification and conflict resolution. Ethno-linguistic conflicts, language politics and contact situations in post-Soviet Ukraine and Russia") was funded by the Volkswagen Foundation (2016–2019) within the framework of its funding programme *Trilateral Partnerships – Cooperation Projects between Scholars and Scientists from Ukraine, Russia, and Germany*. Against the background of the current conflict between Ukraine, Russia, and the EU, the Volkswagen Foundation aimed to strengthen the cross-border cooperation between scholars from the countries involved. The academic partner institutions in our trilateral project were: the Justus Liebig University of Giessen (Institute of Slavic Studies), the Kazan' Federal University (Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication, Institute of Sociology, Philosophy and Mass Communication), the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Institute of the Ukrainian Language) and, in the second half of the project, also the Crimean Institute of Postgraduate Pedagogical Education (Simferopol').

This volume includes the papers held at the project's concluding conference in Giessen, 2019. Alongside the aforementioned project partners, other cooperation partners contributed to the conference, and these are also included in this volume.

The present volume consists of an introduction to the project's theoretical and methodical development followed by three thematic sections. In the introduction, in a methodical-theoretical article, MONIKA WINGENDER picks up from where her article in the aforementioned first project volume left off, further developing the field of linguistic conflict research.

1 Nelde, P. (2005), Research on language conflict. In: Ammon, U. / Dittmar, N. / Mattheier, K.J. / Trudgill, P. (eds.), *Sociolinguistics. An International Handbook of the Science of Language and Society*. Vol. 2. Berlin / Boston, p. 1350.

Incorporating sociolinguistic research approaches from East and West and evaluating research on features or dimensions of conflicts as well as typologies of language conflicts, the author develops a multifactorial language conflict model that comprises four types of language conflicts with their overlaps and relationships. In so doing, she draws on concrete examples from language situations in Eastern Europe.

With their article on language as a source of conflict, MAXIM KRONGAUZ and ANTON SOMIN open the first thematic section (“Language Interactions”). They also begin with considerations on the concept of language conflict and point out that language contact is not a prerequisite for conflict distinguishing multilingual as well as monolingual situations. The authors focus on language units, which they consider in various types of language conflicts. Examples are taken from the sociolinguistic situation in Belarus and Russia.

HOLGER KUSSE describes conflictual communication in the form of perlocutions in conflicts, taking examples from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. He analyses perlocutionary conflicts in Russian talk shows, which he considers in a broader framework of perlocutionary act as well as perlocutionary effect followed by the reconstruction of perlocutionary intentions. The corresponding perlocutionary interaction is then analysed in its aggressive form using the example of Dostoevskij’s novel *Besy*.

The language situation in Tatarstan voiced ‘from below’ by non-professionals provides the focus of LILIYA NIZAMOVA’s research interest. Taking into account the changing federal language policy and the evident asymmetry of power, her article seeks to analyse the unofficial everyday language discourse in Tatarstan using materials from 8 focus group discussions and the results of a mass survey of Tatarstani residents. On this basis, the author highlights and analyses problematic aspects of language interaction.

OLENA RUDA describes the metalingual (political) discourse in Ukraine as being shaped by two contrasting views and demonstrating heated debates and a spirit of conflict. Focusing on the metalinguistic discourse on language issues in the internet (in posts in social networks, online forums and the comments of so-called ‘ordinary people’), the author seeks to identify the pragmatic strategies of language policy subjects.

The thematic section II on “Language Politics” opens with LARYSA MASENKO’s article on the current language policy of Ukraine (2017–2019). The author explores the implementation process of the state language law (2019) and language issues during the presidential as well as parliamentary elections.

NADIYA KISS focuses her language policy investigation on the rhetoric of politicians during the presidential elections in Ukraine in 2019. She analyses pre-election programmes, public messages by politicians, media reactions, and public debates between Porošenko and Zelens’kyj on the basis of rhetorical political analysis and political discourse analysis.

The following two articles deal with education issues from a regional perspective. ISTVÁN CSERNICKSKÓ analyses the conflict surrounding the Law of Ukraine “On Education” (2017) examining in particular the perspective of the Hungarian minority in Transcarpathia. The latter emphasises violations of the language rights of Hungarians in Transcarpathia and Ukraine’s international commitments, in a situation in which the Ukrainian government does not see any violations.

The perceptions of residents of Tatarstan with regard to native language teaching are analysed by ALSU GARAEVA. Following the Tatar language’s 2018 loss of its mandatory status,

as a state language, in the education system in Tatarstan due to changes in the federal language policy, the author analyses data from a sociological survey in Tatarstan with regards to opinions on the language issue which show contradictory results and ambivalent attitudes.

The third thematic section encompasses articles regarding “Language Situations”. In his article, YURI DOROFEEV addresses the language situation in Crimea from the perspective of geolinguistics. He deals with geolinguistics in the framework of linguistics and, above all, sociolinguistics as well as with the main concepts and categories of ‘language situation’. Furthermore, the author discusses terms such as ‘state language’ and ‘native language’. As an empirical basis, he draws upon a mass survey.

On the basis of a further sociological mass survey, AIDA NURUTDINOVA analyses the situation of bilingualism in Tatarstan, focusing on the two state languages in the Republic. She examines the asymmetry in the bilingual situation with regard to language use and language proficiency, the language policy and language use with regard to Tatar as state language, and the assessment of the language situation regarding the language environment in the respective locality, as well as changes in the use of the state languages following the collapse of the USSR.

SVITLANA SOKOLOVA investigates the peculiarities of the language situation in contemporary Ukraine and draws on a mass survey from 2017. Regarding the interpretation of data, the author is in the comfortable situation of possessing a similar survey from 2006 which allows her to draw comparisons about the development of the language situation. The focus in this article is on the linguistic behaviour and the language environment of bilinguals in Ukraine.

The functioning of the Tatar language in everyday communication is the topic of GULSHAT GALIULLINA’s article. The author focuses on the language of Tatar-Russian bilinguals of various generations using materials taken from a questionnaire, recordings of oral speech fragments and in-depth interviews with two groups.

The next three articles in this section cover local language situations. NATALIA MATVEIEVA analyses Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism and diglossia in Kyiv. The author outlines the history of the bilingual situation and then concentrates on the current language situation on the basis of a questionnaire from 2017. Furthermore, drawing on the results of focus-group discussions, the language behaviour of Kyiv’s inhabitants is also observed.

MARIIA BOVSUNOVSKA focuses on the Northern region in Ukraine, and on the Žytomyr region in particular, analysing the functions of languages in the cultural and information spheres. As well as a mass survey from 2017, the material she analyses also includes further surveys.

JAN PATRICK ZELLER concentrates on Central Ukraine and inquires into language attitudes and their relationship with other political, cultural, and identity-related attitudes. The data of this study come from a mass survey that was conducted in the middle of 2014. The author deals with three aspects: Ukrainians’ views on political, cultural, and linguistic items, the question of how these items are related to each other, and the question of whether these attitudes are related to the self-claimed linguistic preferences of Ukrainians.

Against the background of the current conflict between Ukraine, Russia, and the EU, the topics dealt with in this volume are not only very timely, but also controversial with regard to the question of language conflicts. Accordingly, the individual authors are responsible for the content of their articles.

We express our warm thanks to all project partners and contributors for their research and articles, which provide a multifaceted picture of language politics and language situations in Ukraine and Russia.

We are also very grateful to Francis Ipgrave for his efforts and dedication in the language editing of our volume.

Finally, we express our gratitude to the Volkswagen Foundation for the funding which allowed us to conduct these fruitful and extensive empirical studies in Ukraine and Russia.

We dedicate this volume to our project partner Prof. Kamil Galiullin (Kazan' Federal University, Institute of Philology and Intercultural Communication), who passed away on October 24th, 2021. We have lost an irreplaceable partner and keep his memory alive.

Giessen, December 2021

Daniel Müller & Monika Wingender
(Justus Liebig University Giessen)

Note: Scientific transliteration is done on the basis of DIN 1460.