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Review on: P. Levchuk, *Wielojęzyczność migrantów wojennych z Ukrainy w Polsce*, Instytut Sławistyki Polskiej Akademii Nauk, Warszawa, 2024, p. 246

Abstract. The review attempts to place Paweł Levchuk's book in a broader context as an important voice in the discussion on refugees' language and social adaptation, but also as a study on Polish-Ukrainian cultural contact and the variability of attitudes towards languages. The author addresses the issues of language and cultural identity, as well as multilingualism and diglossia. The work is based on current field material, both qualitative and quantitative.

Keywords: multilingualism; Polish language; Ukrainian language; Russian language; refugees; Ukrainians; Poland; language and social adaptation.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, especially after joining the European Union in 2004, Poland has become an increasingly attractive migration destination for Ukrainian citizens. Visa law and the casual nature of the work undertaken by many Ukrainians have influenced the popularity of circular migration (Iglicka & Gmaj, 2010, pp. 10–15). Since 2014, due to the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the outbreak of the armed conflict in the eastern regions of Ukraine, the number of immigrants began to increase gradually. At the same time, more and more people have applied for temporary residence permits, which means a gradual change from circular migration

to longer periods of stay in Poland (UDsC, 2024, p. 4). If 2014 led to an evolutionary increase in Ukrainian immigration to Poland and the number of visas issued at around 700–900 thousand per year, the beginning of the Russian invasion led to revolutionary changes not only in numbers but also in the nature of the migration movement, which was dominated by war refugees (cf. Iglicka & Gmaj, 2010, pp. 10–16; UdsC, 2024, pp. 7–8).

Studies conducted in various periods have indicated the relative ease of adaptation of Ukrainian immigrants in Poland, resulting from cultural closeness and linguistic affinity (see, e.g., Brunarska et al., 2012, p. 30; Olak, 2021, pp. 77–80). It is also significant that the Polish language, which has been taught at various levels of education in Ukraine for about 20 years, is known to many people even before migration (Chłopek, 2009; Kowalewski, 2023). The multilingualism of Ukrainians, who, in addition to Ukrainian and Russian, also speak Polish, has been the focus of Pavel Levchuk's research since the beginning of his academic career. The subject of his doctoral dissertation, which was the basis for the published monograph (Levchuk, 2020), was the language attitudes and behaviors of Ukrainian citizens who, despite not having Polish origins, mastered Polish and used it to varying degrees, functioning both in Poland as migrants and in Ukraine. The start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, and the influx of Ukrainian refugees to Poland have become the cause of many social, economic, and sociolinguistic phenomena. Their novelty resulted both from the scale, caused by the number of the incoming Ukrainian population, and from the specificity resulting from the different nature of immigration: unlike labor immigrants, refugees did not plan to come to Poland and were often unprepared for it in terms of professional, linguistic, and social competences, and, in addition, they were mainly children and adolescents under the care of adult women, whose opportunities for professional activity were limited by caring responsibilities (Trębski & Młyński, 2023, pp. 52–56).

In this way, P. Levchuk's research on the language situation of Ukrainian war refugees in Poland touched on a topical issue not only as a subject of study, but also as a part of socio-political and media discourse, and was also pioneering in nature, because it concerned groups and social environments that only came into being in the spring of 2022. The author used a methodological approach proven in his previous studies, combining quantitative research on a large sample and qualitative research of an in-depth nature, focused on key research issues. The research had two stages, the first of which

consisted of survey research. They were carried out practically immediately after the beginning of the war from mid-April to the end of August 2022 (Levchuk, 2024, p. 51), and as it later turned out, this was the period when the largest number of refugees stayed in Poland. In the quantitative study, when constructing the survey, the author focused on the most important sociological parameters established on the basis of previous studies of bilingualism and the linguistic situation (age, gender, place of birth and residence in Poland, citizenship, education, nationality of parents, declared identity), directing the study to explain the following issues: relative language proficiency in each of the languages, forms of functioning of both languages, order of their acquisition, use and usefulness in the communication process, emotional involvement, and the importance of both languages in the process of social advancement (cf. Levchuk, 2024, p. 16; Weinreich, 1963, p. 75; Głuszkowski, 2013, p. 27).

In the first stage of the work, P. Levchuk prepared a database of informants for the second – qualitative – part of the study, the number of which also stands out from similar studies, as it includes as many as 133 people. After developing the survey results, the author began analyzing multilingual people's case studies. The composition of the study and the way of understanding the language biography as "the totality of developmental stages significant for a specific idiolect" was adopted after similar studies conducted so far in Polish sociolinguistics (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 145–146; cf. Głuszkowski, 2011; Zielińska, 2013; Miodunka, 2016).

Both stages of the study were embedded in the broader context of Russian-Ukrainian relations, which were the main driving force behind the dynamics of language stances. They were an important aspect of the research. The outbreak of the war caused changes in the functioning of the Russian language in various countries. Even on the part of Poles, a nation not directly involved in the conflict, interest in the Russian language decreased. For instance, due to the limitation or severance of many trade and tourist contacts in connection with the sanctions imposed on Russia, the number of students of Russian studies also decreased (Głuszkowski et al., 2024, pp. 309–312; Serebriansky, 2025). The changes in the language stances and identity of Ukrainians who used both languages in their daily lives until 2022, or Russian was their first and primary communication tool, are all the more understandable (see, e.g., Yaremko & Levchuk, 2024; Levchuk & Shevchuk-Kliuzheva, 2024). The author does not leave the readers with a de-

scription of the respondents' attitudes without explanation, but places the current situation in a broad historical context. It is presented taking into account the Tsarist and then Soviet language and nationality policy, starting with the formation of the Ukrainian language against the background of East Slavs, the situation of the Ukrainian language after 1654, i.e., after the agreement in Pereyaslav that meant the incorporation of the Cossack Hetmanate (Zaporozhian Host) into the Russian Empire, and then the linguistic situation in Eastern Galicia and the fate of the Ukrainian language after 1915 (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 29–42). P. Levchuk also pays attention to the formation of Russian-Ukrainian relations in the context of language and identity in the times that followed and immediately preceded the war. He refers to the centuries-old but still vivid concept of Russia as the "Third Rome" and the special place of Ukraine in this myth (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 43–48). In this way, it does not limit itself to the analysis of the language policies of both countries and how multilingual Ukrainians organize their languages, but presents a broad and multidimensional interdisciplinary study. This is particularly important in the context of using this important and up-to-date report, in a situation where relatively few studies have been written on the linguistic situation of Ukrainian refugees, and this is currently the only study on such a large scale.

Similarly to his first large study of multilingual Ukrainians (Levchuk, 2020), this time the author also divided the research population into groups according to key sociolinguistic criteria, which this time concerned the primary language: U – Ukrainian was the first language, R – Russian, UR – with two primary languages. The possible Polish origin of the ancestors was also considered (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 57–58). On this basis, many variables were given in the quantitative part of the analysis, divided into three categories. The first of them are variables that can be described as basic from the point of view of the study, including, among others, knowledge of Polish before arrival and its learning after arrival in Poland, together with the determination of motivation, frequency of use of individual languages and emotional attitude to them, and motivations for choosing the language in a communication situation (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 58–100). The second set of variables served for a detailed analysis of diglossia, and referred to various spheres of life of the refugees, not only the most often studied, such as home, work, public, and administration (cf., e.g., Árokay et al., 2014), but also swearing, dreaming, taking notes, and doing math. The last group of variables included pref-

erences for language selection in passive situations, e.g., films, TV series, and programs, radio broadcasts, the press, the Internet, mobile phone applications, and computer systems. Such a detailed analysis led P. Levchuk to prepare a matrix of multilingualism of war immigrants from Ukraine, which was a kind of summary of the quantitative part of the monograph (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 135–144).

The discussion of language biographies constituted the last analytical part of the book. Based on interviews, the author discussed in detail individual choices and the conditions leading to them in the everyday lives of subsequent interviewees. This is an extremely valuable illustration for the quantitative part and constitutes an original documentation of the linguistic behavior of Ukrainian refugees (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 145–214). The qualitative part was also provided with a systematic summary, the core of which consisted of clear tables containing a synthetic description of the types of multilingualism already distinguished in the quantitative part, depending on the primary language.

In conclusion, P. Levchuk verified the initial hypotheses and proposed patterns in which the multilingualism of war refugees from Ukraine in Poland was shaped. Such a diverse and multidimensional study allowed for drawing many important conclusions, important not only from the point of view of the studied community but also possibly extrapolating to other groups. They referred to the conditions of acquiring subsequent languages, the meaning and importance of individual motives, and in the most current issue, that is, referring to the ongoing war, P. Levchuk noted that the current linguistic choices and behaviors of Ukrainians are the result of compensating for the effects of warfare and include the rejection and negation of Russianness, including identity changes (Levchuk, 2024, pp. 215–220).

The interdisciplinary nature of the study combined with its scientific and socio-political relevance makes P. Levchuk's work particularly noteworthy. It is an important work in two dimensions: in relation to a strictly defined research topic, i.e., the analysis of the linguistic situation of a specific group, and also as a wide-ranging and multidimensional study conducted in logistically and emotionally difficult conditions. As such, it can be a starting point for further analyses of the community of war immigrants from Ukraine, also from a political, sociological, psychological, and economic perspective.

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