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R E V I E W   A R T I C L E S
О Г Л Я Д И

Two views on a single research object: mixed language code

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article was to present the approaches and methods of Ukrainian and European scientists to the research of the interaction of two languages – Ukrainian and Russian in the communication processes between different segments of the society. As a result of close contacts, a mixed code with an uncertain status emerged, which received the figurative name "surzhyk" and was assessed by Ukrainian sociolinguistics as a threat to the development and functioning of the Ukrainian, primarily literary, language. The goal of the study was to analyze how the research object is presented in European science, namely in a scientific project in which Austrian, German and Ukrainian researchers participated (2019 – 2024). This article belongs to the comparative and general research, therefore, the methods with which the author worked include the comparative method and the method of induction, which enabled to identify certain trends in the development of scientific thought in specific cases. The methods of analysis and synthesis allowed to analyze the approaches and methods of studying the results of the language mixing, which is Ukrainian-Russian Surzhyk. The analysis of the approaches and methods of analysis, recorded in the works of Ukrainian and Western European scholars - project participants, allowed us to draw conclusions that, when studying surzhyk, researchers have different goals in front of themselves.

АНОТАЦІЯ

Метою цієї статті є представлення підходів і методів українських та європейських учених до вивчення взаємодії двох мов - української та російської у процесах комунікації різних верств населення. У результаті тісних контактів виник змішаний код із невизначеним статусом, що отримав образну назву «суржик» і оцінювався українською соціолінгвістикою як загроза розвитку і функціонуванню української, насамперед літературної, мови. Завданням роботи є аналіз того, як презентовано об'єкт дослідження в європейській науці, а саме в науковому проєкті, в якому брали участь австрійські, німецькі та українські дослідники (2019-2024). Матеріалом дослідження стали статті про змішаний код, опубліковані в Україні та за кордоном, а також доповіді, виголошені на семінарі «Гібридизація з двох боків: українсько-російське та російсько-українське кодове змішування в контексті (соціо)лінгвальної ситуації на півдні України вздовж узбережжя Чорного моря» («Hybridization from two sides: Ukrainian-Russian and Russian-Ukrainian Code Mixing in the context of the (socio)linguistic situation in southern Ukraine along the Black Sea coast», який відбувся в лютому 2024 р. в Альпійсько-австрійському .університеті (м. Клагенфурт, Австрія) і на якому виступили учасники однойменного проєкту - дослідники з названого вище університету, Університету ім. Карла фон Оссецького (Інститут славістики), м. Ольденбурга, (Німеччина), а також експерти з України і Польщі. *Методи дослідження*. Ця стаття належить до праць порівняльного і узагальнювального плану, тому до методів, з якими працював автор, належать зіставно-порівняльний метод і метод індукції, який дозволив за конкретними випадками побачити певні тенденції в розвитку наукової думки. Методи аналізу і синтезу дозволили проаналізувати підходи й методику вивчення результатів змішування мов, яким є українсько-російський суржик. Аналіз підходів, методів аналізу, зафіксованих у працях українських і західноєвропейських учених – учасників проєкту, дозволяє зробити *висновки*, що, вивчаючи суржик, дослідники ставлять перед собою різну мету. Українські соціолінгвісти презентують його як негативний наслідок існування двомовності на території України, як загрозу функціонуванню й розвитку української мови, як простір інтерферентних явищ у структурі висловлень. Німецькі й австрійські учасники проєкту, зважаючи на історичний і культурний розвиток України, розглядають суржик як код, що виник у результаті складної комунікаційної взаємодії мов і діалектів, що побутують на території держави, шукають в ньому вузли стабілізації, виокремлюють регіональні лексифікатори, які формують цей код, аналізують ознаки системності коду через зменшення варіативності його одиниць. Обидві групи підкреслюють необхідність врахування діалектних впливів, які дозволяють говорити про різні види суржику, вважають суржик мовою обмеженого вживання і не прогнозують його усталення у вигляді третьої мови, що забезпечує комунікацію соціуму.

КЛЮЧОВІ СЛОВА: комунікація; змішаний код; суржик; варіативність; стабілізація.

Introduction

Linguistic communication is the popular research object in many blocks of the linguistics - communicative linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and media linguistics. It is important for all domains of life in society – strengthening and defending the state, developing education, culture, media. Language is the optimal means of communication, which, together with non-verbal means, allows you to transfer information in the most convenient way. It is communication that organizes the life of society, allows it to function and develop properly. Even when individuals communicate with one another, they act as subjects in the system of ethnolinguistic, demographic, and sociocultural parameters – self-identification, social status, age, gender, role in a specific situation. The social factor permeates all aspects of communication, even domestic, stimulates its implementation, limits deformations and ensures results.

In Ukraine, as in other multilingual societies, communication takes place in several languages. On the other hand, the Ukrainian state implements a certain language policy, adjusts language

communication in society, encouraging the development of the language, which is most often the language of the indigenous population. After gaining independence in Ukraine, the Ukrainian language received support, its declaration as the state led to the implementation of a significant number of cultural and educational tasks, the introduction of changes in the work of educational institutions, the media, state organizations, and the system of the country's communication space.

Immediately after the beginning of the great work on language development in the country, the question arose of the study of mixed speech, which was formed on the territory of Ukraine during the centuries of its existence within the Russian Empire, where the main language of communication in all spheres was the Russian language. This mixed speech attracted the attention of Ukrainian linguists for a long time, but it became the object of study only in the period of independence as a phenomenon of "linguistic and communication threat" to the processes of functioning, stabilization, and normalization of the Ukrainian language.

The *purpose* of this article was to present the approaches and methods of Ukrainian and European scientists to the study of a mixed code as a result of the centuries-old interaction between two languages – Ukrainian and Russian – on the territory of Ukraine.

This mixed code is defined in the linguistic tradition of Ukraine, and to some extent in Europe, as "surzhyk", which is a figurative name based on the primary meaning of the word, i.e., "mixture of grain from several cereals". Over time, the lexeme developed a secondary meaning – "non-normative individual speech of a certain person or social group, which is the result of mixing two or more languages" (Dictionary of the Ukrainian language, 2012, p. 1124).

The task of the work was to analyze how this research object is presented in Ukrainian science and in the works of European scholars – participants of the scientific project on the study of mixed speech of the South of Ukraine ("Hybridization from two sides: Ukrainian-Russian and Russian-Ukrainian Code Mixing in the context of the (socio)linguistic situation in southern Ukraine along the Black Sea coast"), in which Austrian, German and Ukrainian researchers participated (2019 – 2024)[1].

The research material were the articles about surzhyk published by Ukrainian linguists, as well as the works of German and Austrian researchers and their reports delivered at the seminar of the same name on language hybridization problems, which took place in February 2024 at the Alpine-Austrian University (Klagenfurt, Austria). At this seminar, which concluded the work on the above-mentioned project, its participants – researchers from the above-mentioned university, the Carl von Ossietzky University (Institute of Slavic Studies, Oldenburg, Germany), as well as experts from Ukraine and Poland.

This seminar was a kind of summary of the research carried out within the project and a scientific platform for further analysis of language mixing processes. The work, as already mentioned above, was carried out during 2019 – 2024. Its purpose was to carry out a corpus description of Ukrainian-Russian mixed speech correlated with territorial and sociodemographic factors. See details of the project. (Hentschel & Reuther, 2020).

Method

This article belongs to the research of a comparative and generalizing context, therefore, the methods with which the author worked involved the method of generalizing the results obtained by different authors who considered the same object of research, the comparative and comparative method, as well as the induction method, which allowed for in specific cases to see certain trends in the development of scientific thought. The methods of analysis and synthesis made it possible to analyze the approaches and methods of studying the result of the language mix, which is Ukrainian-Russian Surzhyk.

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[1] This article is based on the report "About one type of language communication in Ukraine", announced on April 18, 2024, at the International scientific and practical conference "Actual problems of the media space" (Kyiv, April 18, 2024) and the materials of this conference. At the time of writing, they had not yet been made public.

Results

Active study of surzhyk after Ukraine gained independence began with the presentation of this code in normative and cultural-historical aspects. Starting from the 1990s, researchers tried to determine the essence of surzhyk, demonstrated deviations in expressions in the Ukrainian language, which, in the opinion of the authors, posed a potential threat to the colloquial and literary segment of the national language due to the loosening of norms, and described the conditions and consequences of the emergence of mixed speech due to the centuries-old pressure from the Russian language as the main language of the Russian Empire, and later of the soviet union, which included Ukraine as a republic.

Ukrainian sociolinguists, along with outlining the social and linguistic essence of surzhyk, emphasizing its unpredictability, spontaneity, lack of system, chaoticity, tried to find its place both in the language and communication sphere of the social life, and in the system of the language itself, in its functional and stylistic paradigm. They wrote about colloquial speech, "colloquial language" (Stavytska & Trub, 2007, p. 77), pidgin (Dzyubyshyna-Melnyk, 2010, p. 16), subcode (Kuznetsova, 1999, p. 80), regional koiné (Demchenko, 2003, p.29), sociolect of mixed type (Taranenko, 2008, p.15), etc. It was noted that the mechanism of this code's formation is similar to the mechanism of formation of a pidgin (Masenko, 1999, p. 28), and despite all discussions and objections, this opinion continues to exist (Masenko, 2019, p. 10). Its key characteristic is fluidity, which makes it impossible to form a stable system (Masenko, 2004, p. 32). The last characteristic emphasizes the blurring of the concept, and therefore the phenomenon it reflects, and determines its stylistic and value orientation in the hierarchy of social communication. Surzhyk was and remains an unacceptable socio-communication phenomenon among Ukrainian linguists.

In all those definitions, the blurring of the idiom and the stylistic and value positioning in the hierarchy of public communication were emphasized. For the most part, surzhyk is negatively evaluated even by teenage schoolchildren (Danilevska, 2018, p.90). Given the functional and stylistic load of surzhyk, it is recognized as a fact of speech practices and is not allowed for "normative approval" in the system of the national language with its subsystems in the form of colloquial speech, colloquial speech, dialects, etc.

Evaluation permeates Ukrainian works on surzhyk, which is understandable, because the process itself was the result of the pressure and dominance of the Russian language for several centuries in the Ukrainian communication space. As I. Braga rightly points out, "the discussion of the mentioned problem is very emotional, the evaluative connotation of the surzhyk seems to spread across the entire scientific discourse about it" (Braga, 2013, p. 96). At the same time, even though surzhyk as a phenomenon is generally negatively positioned by most Ukrainian sociolinguists, the lexeme itself is calmly used in a terminological sense and is written without quotation marks.

European researchers show a certain accuracy and prudence, understanding the requirements of the conceptual framework: the terms in the meaning structure should not be burdened with a figurative component. They call the specified concept a mixed language, code, idiolect, correlating it with an idiom, sometimes hiding the word in the structure of the abbreviation URS (Ukrainian-Russian Surzhyk), which neutralizes evaluability, or URMS (Ukrainian-Russian mixed speech). It is natural for them to use terminology related to language contacts, therefore, surzhyk is represented as a mesolect – the middle component in the vertical hierarchy of language codes. Some of the above-mentioned nominations are widely used in "both sociolinguistics", however the core term in European works undergoes graphic changes (it is written in quotation marks, which demonstrates the critical attitude of researchers to the figurative component in the meaning structure of the concept. This is the principal position of researchers (Gentschel & Taranenko, 2022, p. 31).

Research emphases in the study of the language situation as a whole and surzhyk as its component in the works of Ukrainian and European researchers differ somewhat. For the former, it is extremely important to analyze the language space dynamics of Ukraine's different regions and emphasize the position of a negative attitude towards surzhyk, i.e., the linguistic situation is in the

first place in the circle of interests, on the second is surzhyk with examples of its asystemicity. There are many articles about surzhyk in Ukrainian linguistics, but there has been no comprehensive work of a generalizing nature until now. As far as the author of this article knows, the only consistent long-term collector and researcher of surzhyk oral and written texts on the phonetic/phonological, lexical-semantic and grammatical levels is I. Braha (see, e.g.: Braha, 2011; 2013; 2014; 2015; 2021).

Ukrainian sociolinguists investigate the language situation in various aspects: as language behavior and language preferences in the communication of different strata of the population, as a language that functions in various areas of social life – education, state development, culture, as a dynamic of changes in connection with the establishment of Ukrainian language as state. Thus, with the help of questionnaires, in particular, including in questionnaires questions about the choice of the communication language in different situations, the variability of this choice depending on sociodemographic and territorial factors is examined, i.e., the correlations between sociolinguistic variables are studied (Shumarova, 2000; Sokolova & Zaliznyak, 2018; Danylevska, 2019; Sokolova, 2021).

In contrast to the study of the language situation, the study of surzhyk is mostly not accompanied by a questionnaire with a representative sample due to the time-consuming nature of such work for a specific researcher and the lack of technical and financial opportunities to order relevant materials from professional sociological institutions. Due to this, the collected data cannot be presented as statistically substantiated and verified. Researchers simply write about the hybridization in oral speech of many Ukrainians (see, e.g.: Masenko, 2019, p. 7; Danylevska, 2018, p. 90; Braha, 2024, p. 30). They explored the language behavior of certain strata or social groups of the society – civil servants, young people (Sheludko, 2017; Danylevska, 2018; Tsar, 2018; Braha, 2024).

European researchers (representatives of Austrian and German sociolinguistics – project participants) are trying to combine quantitative and qualitative indicators in sociolinguistic research, building a theory of mixed Ukrainian-Russian speech based on a corpus linguistic description combined with analytical methods of quantitative variational sociolinguistics correlated with sociodemographic data (Hentschel & Reuther, 2020). They focus on the results of the language codes mixing and try to determine the variability degree of repeated language units.

Significant amount of content used in this project is its strong point. Thus, in this project led by Austrian and German researchers, 1,290 questionnaires, 103 texts of in-depth interviews, and recordings of family speech were analyzed, which, after decoding, yielded 388,000 word usages. Then the corpus of lexemes was supplemented with data obtained in the previous project on the functioning of surzhyk in Central Ukraine. This together amounted to almost 750,000 word usages, which became the subject of sociological, statistical, and linguistic analysis (Hentschel, 2024). The speech of the respondents who admitted in the questionnaires that they communicate in surzhyk was analyzed.

The theory of variability became the theoretical justification for the word selection. The researchers expressed the idea of the variability of the mixed code much earlier than the group started working in the southern areas – first in the studies of the "trasianka" in Belarus, then the mixed code in the Center of Ukraine (Hentshel, 2013; Taranenko, 2013), and after that in the South of the country.

Variability is the presence of options, the possibility of using them to convey some content. In the case of surzhyk, at the lexical level, it is the use of lexemes of another language, i.e., Russian, in the expression. From the point of view of the formation of internal speech, when the lexeme is selected for the realization of the idea (Shumarova, 2000, pp. 28–44), the speaker picks up the one that belongs to another language, in other words, chooses one of the two options. Since the surzhyk is based on the Ukrainian language, which is regularly used by this or that speaker, variability arises when, for some reason, he "didn't have enough" of the Ukrainian analogue, he cannot remember it, or he is simply used to using the Russian equivalent in certain contexts or situations. These are a kind of language stamps, clichés, which speakers are used to using in everyday and

non-domestic spheres of activity. The fact of the implementation of certain templates, the existence of "interference stamps", lexical and grammatical interference was recorded even before the project started (Taranenko, 2013, p.38).

In this project, during the analysis of the lexical level, the researchers faced the task of determining whether surzhyk demonstrates a tendency towards a certain stabilization, which consists in choosing (quite often) in similar situations the expression of a Ukrainian or a Russian lexeme, i.e., one of them. 107 lexemes were selected, which "sounded" in the text of the interview more than 100 times. The choice of the lower limit of the sample is quite conditional, but it is accepted in modern experimental studies. The upper limit was not fixed, so lexemes with repetitions of more than 10,000 word usages were included in the list.

The words highlighted in this way could potentially be interpreted as elements of the structural framework of mixed speech. The results of this important comprehensive study are outlined in (Hentshel, 2024).

The main table of the study was built based on the frequency of selection of the Ukrainian lexeme according to the principle of its reduction, i.e., first hyper lexem[2] were recorded, the average frequency of selection of which reaches 99.8% (this is the frequency of use of the conjunction Ukrainian *щоб, щоби*, and its equivalent Russian *чтоб, чтобы*, respectively 0.2%). Further, the table records those with a slightly lower average frequency (e.g., *співати* – 98.5%, *колись* – 97.5%, *немає* – 97.1%), up to those cases when the choice of Russian reaches almost 100% words (e.g., from the two lexemes Ukrainian *дівчинка* - Russian *девочка*, the frequency of the Ukrainian variant is limited to only 4.8%, i.e. 95.2% is the frequency of the Russian variant, which is chosen by speakers). The five most frequently used Russian words with a choice rate of 95% – 99% include *девочка, тоже, садик, да, типа* (parasite word). Such translation equivalents as Ukrainian. *куди* – Russian *куда*, Ukrainian *влада* – Russian *власть*, Ukrainian *використовувати* – Russian *использовать*, Ukrainian *дід* – Russian *дед* do not show a clear choice of one or another option, i.e., both lexemes can be used equally. It is they who demonstrate significant variability in the range of 56.7% - 48.4%. In total, according to the data of this study, 30 hyper lexemes tend to the Russian version, and 37 hyper lexemes – to the Ukrainian. Together (67 hyper lexemes), they make up most of the analyzed word pairs (107) and allow us to speak about a certain stability of the choice (Hentshel, 2024).

Further analysis of these equivalents' variations based on the frequency of use made it possible to distinguish 3 groups of hyper lexemes with different degrees of regional dependence. The first group includes equivalents that do not have regional differences, the second – those where the differences are quite clearly traced, and the third – those where they are weak enough. Regional differences with elements of stabilization are also manifested at the morphonological and morphosyntactic level (Palynska & Henchel, 2022; Gentschel & Palinska, 2023), which contradicts the idea of the chaotic, spontaneity of this mixed code. The antecedents of normalization (dialectal type) are obviously present in it.

Thus, if the choice between the Ukrainian and Russian equivalents is presented as a competition of linguistic patterns, then based on frequency analysis, it is possible to identify "nodes of stabilization" with the rooting of one or another form (Hentshel, 2024). However, due to the influence of dialects, this stabilization may turn out to be local, but nevertheless it exists, reducing variability. The uniformity of choice (stabilization in the choice of a language option) as a language practice is supported by family traditions and centuries-old contacts of the two languages and, obviously, reaches the level of automatism.

What does such an analysis provide for the study of a mixed code, which is a surzhyk? First, it will allow us to see the outlines of this speech, to determine which words of another language, in our case Russian, are more often actualized in Ukrainian speech, to find weak points in the semantic

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[2] Hyperlexems are lexemes of the Ukrainian and Russian languages, which are based on a common concept, e.g., Ukrainian *місто* – Russian *город* or Ukrainian *завжди*, Russian *всегда*, in other words, these are translation equivalents.

and formal structure of speech, to understand the role of full-meaning and incomplete (service) words in the system of bilingual communication, to determine the role of the lexifier's language in the formation of the communication space.

For some time, Ukrainian linguists were worried about the further functional status of surzhyk, its communicative status in the social hierarchy, but observations of its use proved its functional and socio-cultural limitations. Today, its dangerous influence is rather attributed to the sphere of speech culture.

Surzhyk will not become a full-fledged language for many reasons, primarily of an educational, production-technical, and cultural nature. It is not studied in secondary and higher educational institutions (there they teach a standard, i.e., literary language), it is not used to write documentation of a production and technical nature, it is used to a limited extent in the digital environment (for more details on the role of the digital environment in maintaining the vitality of the language (see: Seligey, 2022, p.8–12), a component of free, spontaneous and casual communication. The attitude towards it among sociolinguists and native speakers differs according to the evaluation scale: specialists evaluate mixed speech negatively, while average speakers demonstrate the entire range of value orientations – from negative to positive.

The analysis of the analytic approaches and methods used in the works of Ukrainian and Western European scientists – participants in the project dedicated to the study of surzhyk allows us to draw the following conclusions:

1. When studying surzhyk, researchers set themselves a different goal: Ukrainian sociolinguists present it as a negative side of the existence of bilingualism on the territory of Ukraine, as a threat to the functioning of the standard (literary) language, to the improvement of language culture and the culture of communication among the Ukrainian people; project participants, primarily German and Austrian researchers, consider surzhyk as a code that arose as a result of the complex communication interaction between languages and dialects living on the territory of Ukraine. Due to repeated lexemes and word forms, they look for nodes of stabilization in it, spread over the entire territory of the study, or regional lexifiers that form this code. They do not consider the issue of the language culture, do not analyze the threat posed by surzhyk to the existence of the literary standard language from the point of view of the norms loosening, they look for signs in the system of the code due to the reduction in the variability of its units.

2. Both groups emphasize the need to take into account dialectal influences that diversify the forms of surzhyk speech and allow us to talk about different types of surzhyk.

3. Both sides consider surzhyk to be a language of limited use and do not predict its establishment as a third language that ensures communication function in society.

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