

Splitting Linguistic Consciousness of Ukrainians: Neuropsychological and Legal Aspects

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Abstract: The article deals with the problem of splitting linguistic consciousness of Ukrainians as a result of Russia's destructive historical influence on their self-identity. In this regard, it offers some ways of solving this particular problem at the legislative level, as well as in the context of neuropedagogical and neuropsychological approaches. The article aims to prove that the Ukrainian language is the key factor in national self-identity, and appropriate neuropedagogical influence on linguistic personality can correct negative attitudes, stereotypes and weak self-identification. Research methods include historical and systemic analysis of relevant legal provisions; extrapolation of historical facts to the ethnopsychological and neuroscientific levels; generalization and modelling (formulating effective recommendations based on a preliminary analysis). Besides, the article discusses and characterizes the causes of differences in linguistic space, mainly in the south-eastern and western regions of Ukraine. They led to bilingualism, which is one of the factors threatening national security and territorial integrity. Furthermore, there are differences and linguistic conflicts in the current language policy in terms of relations between Ukraine and neighbouring countries. In this regard, the article attempts to outline the role of neuropedagogical tools in correcting splitting linguistic consciousness as the most destructive personal phenomenon of artificial bilingualism. Finally, the article proves that legal support can only provide a framework for solving the problem of artificial bilingualism. At the same time, the way out of destructive language policy lies in applying the latest neuropedagogical and neuropsychological methods, described in the conclusions below.

Keywords: *language policy, linguistic space, linguistic security, bilingualism, linguistic-cultural environment, identity, neuropedagogy, neuropsychology.*

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1. Introduction

For Ukrainians, as for any other nation, the geographical space that they have always been protecting is indeed important. Their land is located on the border between West and East, so it has always been “a tasty morsel” for aggressive politicians on both sides. Throughout the challenging history, Ukrainians have become accustomed to defending their land, even the name of their country. They protect the land, cherish every part of it as a family treasure, plant it, decorate it, look after it, because it is their space. The philosophical concept of space is an integral form of being, which expresses its essence, as well as the interaction between its elements. Space is infinite in length, linear, three-dimensional, continuous. Therefore, there are many types of space (information, market, cultural, political, linguistic). One of the keys to the mental and genetic health of a nation is the creation of holistic informational (also linguistic) space and, thus, a holistic linguistic personality (Gerasymova et al., 2019; Melnyk et al., 2019; Nerubasska & Maksymchuk, 2020; Sheremet et al., 2019). At the same time, legal and neuropedagogical tools can minimize the manipulative influence of corrupt and heterogeneous linguistic and media space.

The language of the people is one of the determining factors of a nation and its culture, a kind of synthesis of everything national, the only factor of Ukrainian national identity. In the early 21st century, according to Shevelov (1998), “the language issue inevitably ceases to be only a linguistic question, or, to put it better, a direct linguistic question; social and cultural” (p. 6). In current political discussions, the language issue is considered to be the reason behind the split in society. However, state language policy reflects the real state of affairs in that society. Language is a guarantee of national security, territorial integrity, national consciousness and historical memory. Having a good command of the native language, traditions and social innovations contributes to Ukrainians’ socialization and integrity. It also helps overcome frustrations of social origin and eliminate cognitive language dissonance.

The relevance of the research lies in the need to discover a) how much national security depends on the state, status and level of language functioning in the country; b) the factors behind the emergence and active dissemination of bilingualism, which is the result of certain linguistic and cultural differences at different stages of state formation. It is also crucial to prove that a neuroscientific interdisciplinary approach to the problem in question is the key to the nation's mental health and the effective tool for overcoming “linguistic split”.

According to **the research hypothesis**, neuroscientific analysis of the problem in question (splitting linguistic consciousness of Ukrainians) and consequent formulation of conclusions and practical recommendations can help solve the main problem of pathological bilingualism in Ukraine.

In this regard, those theories that analyze splitting mass (social) consciousness are relevant to this research. Winkielman & Schooler (2011) single out “mental states that are = genuinely unaware, = aware, but lack meta-awareness, and meta-aware-internally articulated as states of the perceive”. It follows that the self-identity of society members directly depends on their awareness. Thus, the awareness of linguistic identity or the lack of it directly affects the psychosocial health of the nation. As noted by Winkielman & Schooler (2011), destructive factors of splitting social consciousness include “unconscious affect, mind-wandering, verbal overshadowing, theory-based biases in reporting of experiences”. The reflection of these phenomena on information and social-communication space shows that such factors are provoked by manipulative measures, the biased media, the propaganda of autocratic ideas or “return” to the Soviet Union.

Concerning the psychosocial level, one can talk about national or ethnic (or group) self-identification. When it comes to the higher nervous system, one means the self-presentation of consciousness. Therefore, it is important to provide some neurophysiological evidence of the material existence of self-identity. Newen & Vogeley (2003) refer to the experiments that “operationalize a first-person-perspective on the level of conceptual and meta-representational self-consciousness”. The obtained findings prove the existence of neural connections responsible for self-awareness at different complexity levels of self-representation. This very fact provides a strong argument against considering language, mental code or self-identification to be unimportant and mere ephemeral attributes of the nation. Different aspects of the problem under study are covered in the works of many scholars as Karasievych et al. (2021), Berbets (2021), Sarancha et al. (2021), Demchenko et al. (2021), Kosholap et al. (2021).

Besides, it is essential to distinguish between language transfer, politically imposed bilingualism and natural bilingualism. Only natural bilingualism is constructive. Costa & Sebastián-Gallés (2014) claim that learning two languages from an early age (in a natural bilingual environment) reports no difficulties. In turn, it contributes to the equally effective processing of world views in both languages and leads to brain plasticity. Unfortunately, in Ukraine, one can mostly observe how Ukrainian and Russian languages are mixed, and the Russian language is “placed” on the mental basis of an essentially Ukrainian personality.

According to Joseph (1982), neuroscientists have long proven that “the left hemisphere gains a competitive advantage in the acquisition of motor representation, whereas the later maturing right has an advantage in the establishment of sensory-affective synaptic representation, including that of limbic mediation”. The child matures physiologically earlier than cognitively, so linguistic “defamation” negatively affects the “limbic” language acquisition, and hence the early emotional experience and subsequent behaviour (Joseph, 1982, p. 4). The dependence of the later conscious behaviour on early emotional and linguistic experience determines social and civic identity and behaviour. Thus, the linguistic split directly harms Ukrainians as the actors in state formation.

Given the emergence of manipulative technologies and digital influences, researchers have raised the issue of the so-called “political language”. Edelman (1985) believes that language is a key creator of social worlds that should not be understood as a tool for describing objective reality (p. 10). However, political language can reflect ideology, mystify and distort historical facts. When perceived as an ideological manipulative tool, it is opposed to natural undistorted language.

The original contribution of the authors lies in neuroscientific interdisciplinary views on the historical, social and legal realities of language policy and behaviour in Ukraine.

Thus, **the article aims** to 1) prove the legal and neuropsychological expediency of the Ukrainian language as the only possible one in Ukraine and 2) provide effective recommendations for solving the problem of the linguistic split.

Research methods include systemic analysis of relevant legal provisions; historical analysis, neuroscientific and legal interpretation of destructive facts of linguistic splitting by the method of interdisciplinary extrapolation; generalization and modelling of effective recommendations.

The article is **theoretical in nature**. The main thesis supported by the authors of the article is as follows: in addition to the already implemented legal measures to support the Ukrainian language, one can prevent the linguistic split of Ukrainians by specific social, pedagogical and neuropsychological tools.

2. Ukrainian linguistic space and its connection with the mental well-being of the population

Many scholars (Masenko, 2010; Radevych-Vynnytskyi, 1997) have analyzed the problem of the Ukrainian language’s development and functioning, as well as the formation of linguistic perspective and national-

patriotic attitude towards the mother tongue. Today, the Ukrainian language as the first sign of Ukrainianness and the national idea should act as an important factor in the national security of Ukraine. It should be able to consolidate Ukrainian society and play an extremely important role in uniting ethnic Ukrainians into a single Ukrainian-speaking nation. The national-wide issues of language security are covered in many scientific works, whereas neuropsychological and linguistic aspects of the impact of artificial bilingualism still need to be studied more in detail.

Existing for approximately 3-7 thousand years, Ukrainian linguistic space is extremely ancient and unchanged. Krasuskiy (1880), who was fluent in many languages, claimed that the Ukrainian language was older than not only all Slavic languages but also Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and other Aryan languages.

Klyuchevskiy (1956) once was asked, "How did people speak in Kievan Rus?". The answer followed, "The same way as Little Russians still do". Thus, Ukrainians have been living on these lands for a long time, and have long spoken in Ukrainian.

These important facts, on the one hand, and social realities, on the other hand, have a negative psychological impact on authentic Ukrainian speakers. There is quite a dissonance: the presence and accessibility of rich history and culture and the lack of full realization of their right to linguistic expression of will. In turn, it leads to weak linguistic and national identity and violation of personal information security.

Linguists from different countries have found that language is mostly unchanged in its basis. Even under the colonial conditions of the nation, its language remains. Despite the frequent betrayals, adaptation, transition to invaders' language, the people cherished the song, historical memory and language. Therefore, it was a kind of guardian of the native space (Ohienko, 1995).

Language has often been and is a means of political manipulation, defining the political space of the state. The equality of languages in Ukraine has been more than once discussed at a primitive level. Firstly, equality is understood as not the same functions of the strong and the weak, the healthy and the sick. Equality is a benefit to the weaker. Secondly, there are many others countries, so it is necessary to speak about equality in a world context. If Russian is a state language in Russia, Polish is in Poland, then Ukrainian is a state language in Ukraine. In the Ukrainian sociolinguistic space, however, one can observe the inequality and divergence in the definition of language equality.

In the context of psycholinguistics and neurosciences, these facts create a permanent traumatic background, which results in the inferiority complex of Ukrainians. Thus, foreign sources widely cover socio-psychological processes occurring in the country where the function of the mother tongue is gradually assumed by another language. Most often, it is the language imposed by the colonizer in the case of colonial dependence. As for Ukraine, this colonial Soviet-totalitarian dependence is the cause of identity differences within the people, which creates bilingualism.

In this context, the situation of bilingualism in Belarus, a country with the same post-Soviet past as Ukraine, is quite relevant. Belarusians, themselves, choose the Russian language for education. Only a small proportion of the population believes that Belarusian should be the language of education and science. Accordingly, there are three possible ways of dividing society into three groups due to the peculiarities of language use and linguistic behaviour in a society: the first group completely supports the Russian language; the second group advocates the Belarusian language; the third group supports the status quo (the equality of both languages).

According to Masenko (2010), a similar situation has arisen in Ukraine, however, with a significant difference. Ukrainians have a distinct territorial dimension. The country is divided into Ukrainian-speaking West and Russian-speaking East and South with the transition zone of Central Ukraine.

3. The division of Ukraine on linguistic grounds

This article considers the linguistic split in Ukraine both as the opposition of two languages and the confrontation of identities and civilizational orientations of the population. A linguistic component of the self-concept is one of the most important psycholinguistic factors in the moral well-being of the population, which does not yet have sufficient legal, psycholinguistic and neuropedagogical conditions for its development.

It is also essential to analyze significant territorial linguistic and cultural differences in Ukraine, which weaken the national security and personal comfort of the population.

First, the annexation of Western Ukrainian lands to the USSR fulfilled the main task of Russia, which is to widen the borders of the Russian-Soviet influence, in particular, the Russian language.

Second, throughout the 19th century and the early 20th century, conditions for socio-political and socio-cultural life in Western lands were more favourable. In Galicia and Bukovyna, new newspapers and magazines were published; scientific centres were established. Most importantly, there appeared the national-conscious elite which strived to meet “the cultural and

political needs of the nation and promoted the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life” (Tkach, 2007, p. 215).

The third reason is the Holodomor, organized by the totalitarian regime. It undermined the social foundation of the Ukrainian language and resumed the division of Ukraine into Russian-speaking cities and industrial centres and Ukrainian-speaking villages and small towns, common in the autocratic Russian Empire. At the same time, Crimea and Donbas suffered Russification.

Concerning Donbas, the specificity of its economic and industrial development resulted in high levels of Russification. There was a constant need for a new workforce (workers), which caused the mass settlement of Donbas with nationalities from different parts of the Soviet Union. This led to the multi-ethnic composition of its (Donbas) population, even though even under these conditions the Ukrainians were still numerically overwhelming.

Finally, the most serious problem was the extremely ideologically competent people who appeared on the territory of the Ukrainian lands of the USSR. They sought to embody the policy of the Soviet leadership to completely denationalize Ukrainians and eliminate them from the national, linguistic and geopolitical map of the world.

Thus, history shows why in Ukraine different linguistic environments threaten the Ukrainian-speaking space and serve as the basis for the emergence and existence of bilingualism.

The term “bilingualism” is synonymous with the very same Ukrainian term “dvomovnist”, which is closely related to the problem of linguistic and, therefore, national security. Even though there are numerous sociolinguistic studies on bilingualism (Burda, 2002; Masenko, 2010; Radevych-Vynnytskyi, 1997; Schweitzer, 1977; Weinreich, 1979), the doctrine of the phenomenon is still in its infancy.

Radevych-Vynnytskyi (1997) considers Ukrainian bilingualism to be diglossia. This term refers to the simultaneous existence in society of two languages or two forms of the same language used in different functional spheres. Unlike bilingualism, diglossia implies compulsory conscious assessment by the speakers of their languages by the “high-low” (literary-colloquial) criterion. Describing such a feature of bilingualism in Ukraine, sociolinguists refer to the profligate Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism in its state of affairs, which was formed during the Soviet era. In the USSR, the Russian language acquired the trait of a higher language, being an important and obligatory one. It was associated with power and prestige, whereas the Ukrainian language was mainly seen as a lower, optional, marginal one. Such

ambivalence is a direct threat to self-identity from the first years of one's life and requires deep neuropsychological correction.

This condition was caused not so much by the qualities of the languages themselves as by the position of Russian as the dominant language in the USSR. In this context, one might wonder to what extent is bilingualism a sustainable phenomenon: whether it will not lead to the absorption of one language into another; whether there is a danger for the Ukrainian language as a state language.

The peculiarity and paradox of the Ukrainian situation were that the language of a much larger indigenous ethnic group (Ukrainians) was reduced to the state of minority. However, in the Soviet empire, Ukrainians in their own territory were reduced to a state of mass ethnicity and became a majority subordinated to a dominant minority. At the neuropsychological level, Ukrainians demonstrate certain destructive symptom-complex that inhibits personal and national development.

Masenko (2010) believes that the bilingualism of Ukrainians as a mass ethnic group is a consequence of long-term linguistic-cultural assimilation. They remain a temporarily necessary bridge on which the population moved from Ukrainian to Russian monolingualism. The proclamation of independence significantly improved the situation. However, it is indeed crucial to continue preserving and strengthening state independence due to decisive changes in the vector of bilingual development. There is no doubt that a further inertial movement towards Russian monolingualism will lead the country to reintegration with Russia, as has happened with Belarus, and has already been discussed above (Masenko, 2010, p. 103).

It is indisputable that the state status of the Ukrainian language, approved by Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 1996), contributed to the enhancement of its prestige. The socio-linguistic polls of 2013-2015 show an increase in the prestige of the Ukrainian language, as 73% of respondents indicated that the Ukrainian language is one of the symbols of Ukrainian statehood. Still, one can see that about 25% are also those who disagreed with this statement (9.5%) or chose the answer "yes and no" (16%). Similar studies were conducted on Ukrainian-Polish bilingualism (Levchenko, 2015). Thus, the percentage of those who support bilingualism and are not ready to use one unified language is still quite high, and the problem of the Ukrainian state language is still relevant. One of the most important reasons is the lack of real governmental measures aimed at implementing mechanisms to monitor the enforcement of language legislation.

Bilingualism, as a sociolinguistic phenomenon, provides wider opportunities to learn about the world and prove oneself. In turn, mass group or bilingualism can lead to the disappearance of the native language and the transformation of bilinguals into monolinguals who lose their national consciousness. Eventually, this will cause the absorption of one language by another and, therefore, the loss of its status as a state language, which is an imminent threat to Ukraine's national interests.

Emphasis should be placed on the guarantee of linguistic security at the state level. Given the factors of state security (informational, educational, scientific, cultural, religious), there is a linguistic aspect that includes the smooth functioning of Ukrainian as a state language in all spheres of social life.

If the Ukrainian language was not a factor in nation-building and state aspirations (as the history of the language and the people testifies), there would not have been so many attempts to ban it (from 1622 to the early 21st century). The Ukrainian language was banned for only one reason: cultural and educational activities in Ukraine could cause consequences that would threaten the peace and security of Russia. Thus, the language was considered a manifestation of separatism.

In the 21st century, the key factor in national security policy which is a linguistic one also remains undefined.

Therefore, Ukrainian authorities are striving to resolve the language issue at the legislative level, recognizing that the hybrid war that is ongoing between Russia and Ukraine is a war not only on the battlefield but also on the linguistic front. One of the reasons for the annexation of Crimea and the support of separatists in the east of the country was also the language issue. The negligence and false political correctness of the Ukrainians, and above all the Ukrainian authorities, which for twenty-five years failed to protect their information and cultural space from Russian propaganda with aggressive anti-Ukrainian orientation, especially in the south-eastern region, is the reason for the fact that Ukrainians still did not have a state language law. Until 2012, the above-mentioned language legislation of Ukraine still had a Soviet law on languages, not on the Ukrainian language. It was replaced by the notorious Law on the Principles of Language Policy (the so-called Kivalov-Kolesnichenko Law) (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2013), which only became effective on July 16, 2019, with the passage of a new Law on Language. Thus, two documents are determining the status of the Ukrainian language as a state language. All other language laws, conventions and declarations ratified by Ukraine protect the languages of national minorities, to whom the Constitution of Ukraine belongs, and thus guarantees the right to development and functioning.

However, Ukraine's attempts to resolve the problems of linguistic and therefore national security have led to a conflict between Ukraine and Hungary, which fears that the new law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State One" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2019) will violate the rights of national minorities by narrowing the use of Hungarian. This has resulted in strained relations between two countries in the diplomatic area. Hungarian diplomats continue to block NATO-Ukraine summits. Ukraine, however, cannot yield to its principle because it is about the survival of the Ukrainian state. Language policy, namely, the relations between the titular nation and national minorities, is the most important factor in maintaining the security and vitality of the state. The Government of Ukraine believes that minority language and educational rights should not be restricted; yet, they should be given a real chance to learn Ukrainian. There is hope the language problem between Ukraine and Hungary will be successfully resolved.

Besides, Russia is attempting to influence the linguistic situation in Ukraine, alleging violations of Russian-speaking rights in the independent states that emerged from the former Soviet republics and began to shape their linguistic policies. All languages, except Russian, were qualified as unpromising; they were subject to all kinds of prohibitions. In this way, Russia has outlined the territories it considers to be its sphere of interest and influence. Therefore, it seems appropriate to consider what language policy is being pursued by post-Soviet Russia against Ukraine today.

Federal multinational Russia is aggressively opposed: expanding the spheres of Ukrainian language use in unitary mono-ethnic Ukraine and assimilating ethnic Russians in Ukraine.

Today, the Ukrainian government is seeking to reduce Russian influence, first of all by adopting a new Law on Language. The Russian language in Ukraine is permanently losing its status as a language of international communication. The current language law, "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State One" (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2019), assigns these functions exclusively to the Ukrainian language. Mandatory usage of Ukrainian for civil servants was introduced earlier by the Law on Civil Service (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 2016). Today, however, it is the responsibility of every Ukrainian citizen and even individuals seeking to acquire Ukrainian citizenship to have a good command of the state language.

Such a decision has caused great discontent on the part of the northern neighbour. Russia has attempted twice to initiate a UN Security Council meeting on Ukraine's "language law". The first proposal, on May

20, 2019, was blocked by delegations from the USA and European countries that referred to its manipulative purpose. However, on July 16, 2019, the Russian delegation convened a meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss the law, condemning it, stating that the fight for national identity violates the rights of the Russian-speaking minority. The Ukrainian delegation to the UN has repeatedly stated that language law is an internal issue of the country. The Security Council is not related to it.

In the Russian Federation, natives of Ukraine are planned to be recognized as native speakers of the Russian language without interviewing upon obtaining Russian citizenship. This will allow Ukrainians not to undergo an appropriate interview when receiving Russian citizenship.

Russia pursues the same policy in occupied Crimea and is responsible for discriminating against Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in access to education in their native language. The Autonomous Republic of Crimea had its language legislation, according to which Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages are state languages, and Russian, in addition, is also official. Only the Russian language functioned in the social life of autonomy. After the annexation, the number of students studying Ukrainian has fallen sharply. In addition, according to parents and teachers, when choosing a language of education, parents are subjected to moral or administrative pressure from school or employer management and are not required to indicate Ukrainian as the language of education. For instance, in the schools occupied by the Russian Federation of Sevastopol in 2019 out of 41 thousand children, only 180 began to study Ukrainian again, including ethnic or linguistic characteristics.

Thus, one can see that Russia's language policy towards Ukraine is imperial and totalitarian. Besides, Russia is making attempts to put pressure on the linguistic situation in Ukraine itself, protesting against the expansion of Ukrainian language usage and the assimilation of ethnic Russians in Ukraine.

4. Conclusions

Therefore, the state dimension of Ukraine's linguistic space should be Ukrainian, as the Constitution proclaimed (Verkhovna Rada Ukrainy, 1996). Consequently, no anti-constitutional actions that would threaten the national security of the state in the linguistic aspect can be allowed. The provisions of the Constitution on the state status of the Ukrainian language guarantee the natural right of the language to have a home (since no other

language is a state language in any other country) and obliges every citizen to speak Ukrainian to the extent necessary for the performance of their duties.

To avoid the consequences of Ukrainian bilingualism of totalitarian origin, one should analyze and correct Ukrainians' ideological and mental attitudes that underlie their authentic culture. It is also vital to introduce a wide range of neuropedagogical tools to improve innate neuropsychological properties and symptom-complex of character. The latter, unfortunately, includes such features as insecurity, conformism and violation of national identity.

Cultural-linguistic education of young people can be effective under a trilateral educational approach, namely, national pedagogy, ethnopedagogy and neuropedagogy. The greatest dissonance lies in the fact that ethnopedagogy and cultural traditions have a dominant influence in Ukraine, whereas neuropsychological and neuropedagogical factors are almost neglected when forming linguistic personality.

At the personal level, one can avoid the linguistic split only by applying systemic and long-lasting neuropedagogical and psycholinguistic tools. The first one lies in levelling the influence of linguistic manipulation and language transfer through self-observation, self-regulation and self-improvement.

Besides, the neuropedagogical and neuropsychological impact on linguistic personality should be multimodal: from clarifying the lateral profile to spiritual practices with obligatory identification and personal record of mental and physical achievements (Barr, 2003). It necessitates profound reforms in language education at the level of all institutions, whereas the equalization of linguistic deformation (contamination, linguistic "surzhyk") requires that a wide range of neuropedagogical and neuropsychological tools should be implemented.

Research limitations. This article presents a theoretical analysis of the linguistic split in Ukraine and offers some ways of solving this particular problem. However, such generalizations require one to elaborate methodical (sociological, pedagogical, neuropsychological) tools and effective methods of using them.

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