



# Vnmes

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A II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola tudományos évkönyve  
Науковий вісник Закарпатського угорського інституту ім. Ференца Ракоці II  
Scholarly Annual of Ferenc Rákóczi II. Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute

Vnmes

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*Limes – 2014*

*A II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola  
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*Scholarly Annual  
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ЗАКАРПАТСЬКИЙ УГОРСЬКИЙ ІНСТИТУТ ім. ФЕРЕНЦА РАКОЦІ ІІ

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RÁKÓCZI FERENC KÁRPÁTALJAI MAGYAR FŐISKOLA

# *LIMES*

**A II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola  
tudományos évkönyve**

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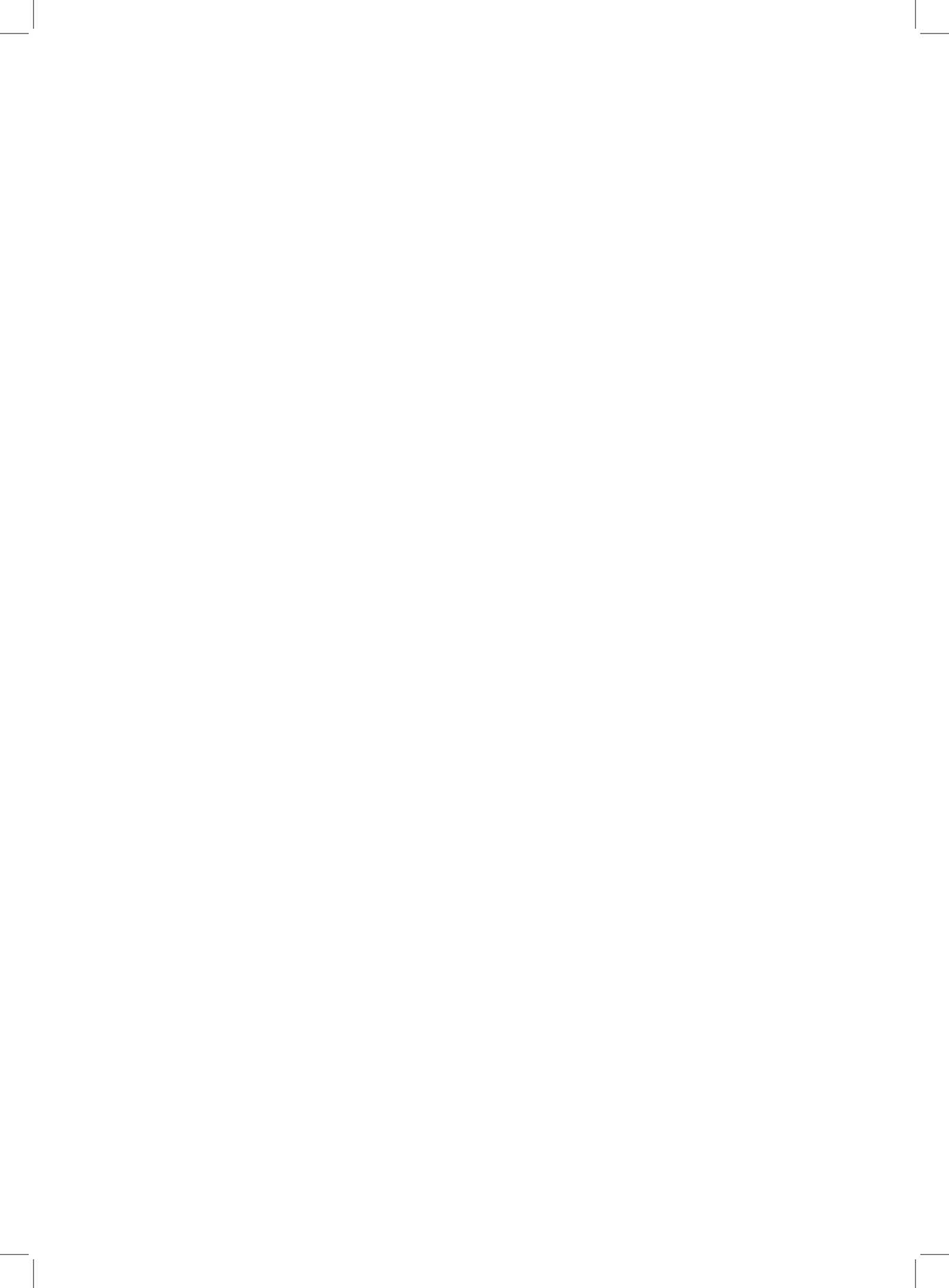
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# THE LANGUAGE REPERTOIRE OF TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN TEENAGERS\*

RÉKA SÜTŐ

II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskola, IV. évf. angol szakos hallgató

*Jelen tanulmányban a nyelvi repertoár, a két- és többnyelvűség fogalma kerül kifejtésre. A tanulmány szociolingvisztikai szempontból vizsgálja Ukrajna, s ezen belül Kárpátalja nyelvi helyzetét. Különböző megfigyelésekre és kutatásokra került sor a témával kapcsolatban Kárpátalja magyar tannyelvű nemzeti kisebbségi iskoláiban, bepillantást nyerve a nyelvi és más jellegű problémákba.*

*Fény derült a tanulók által tanult és használt nyelvekre. 30 tizenéves vett részt kérdőíves kutatásunkban. Az eredmények alátámasztják, hogy a tanulóknak nincsenek problémáik anyanyelvük használatával, az államnyelvet viszont gyengén beszélnek. Fontosnak tartják az államnyelv elsajátítását későbbi életükre vonatkozóan. A megkérdezett tanulók az általuk tanult idegen nyelvet (angol) leggyakrabban az internet használatánál és filmek megtekintésénél alkalmazzák, ezzel is elősegítve annak elsajátítását. Az ukrán nyelvet főleg üzletekben, orvosi vizsgálatokon és ukránnyelv-órán használják.*

## ABSTRACT

*У статті зроблено спробу дати визначення таким термінам, як мовний «репертуар», двомовність та багатомовність. Особлива увага приділяється мовній ситуації з точки зору соціолінгвістики в Україні, зокрема на Закарпатті, на основі власних досліджень та спостережень, результати яких описуються у даній статті. Дослідження проводились нами в школах національних меншин Закарпаття, а саме в школах з угорською мовою навчання, шляхом анкетного опитування. У ньому взяло участь 30 учнів. Результати дослідження показують, що в учнів не виникають проблеми при вивченні рідної мови, однак є труднощі при вивченні української мови. Вони вважають важливим вивчення державної мови, знання якої необхідне для майбутнього професійного становлення. Учні часто використовують Інтернет, дивляться фільми англійською мовою, що сприяє кращому засвоєнню цієї мови. Українською мовою користуються переважно в магазинах, лікарнях та на уроках української мови та літератури.*

## INTRODUCTION

The proverb says: as many languages you speak, as many people you are worth. Such countries, where exclusively one language is spoken can be found neither in Europe, nor all over the world. A considerable amount of studies and research prove that Ukraine is a multilingual country, and it seems to be very easy to ascertain. Transcarpathia is one of the smallest but ethnically most colourful regions of the country. Over the past decades there has been a dramatic change in state boundaries and this is one of the reasons why the region is a perfect example of many

nationalities living together: a foreign traveller could meet Ukrainian, Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, or Rusyn people just to mention some of them. Being born into a mixed family is not an extraordinary phenomenon in this region. Many children acquire both of the parents' languages or use a lingua franca while communicating with each other. Nevertheless, many people stay monolingual because of different reasons (for instance social surrounding or the lack of education). It is now generally recognised that the investigation of students' language usage could

\* A tanulmányt dr. Huszti Ilona lektorálta.

lead to important consequences in the field of education, because knowing students' strengths and weaknesses can help teachers to educate them in a more effective way.

Recent developments in the field of sociolinguistics have led to a renewed interest in examining the language usage of different ethnic groups, and minorities. Many recent studies have focused on the language repertoire of people to find out what languages they know and which of them they use frequently or to investigate the languages used in different fields of social life. Language repertoire refers to a group of language varieties, mastered by the same speaker, to different degrees of proficiency and for different uses. This individual repertoire changes over the course of an individual's lifespan. The first serious discussions and analyses of verbal repertoire emerged during the early 1960s. As a sociolinguistic concept, this notion is associated with the work of John Gumperz. Nowadays, many linguists deal with verbal repertoire on the international scene of sociolinguistics.

This study seeks to answer the following questions: what is language repertoire? Why is it important to examine the language usage of Transcarpathian Hungarian teenagers? How do the students of different Transcarpathian Hungarian schools see their language knowledge? The main issues addressed in this study are: what is verbal repertoire, what is meant by monolingualism, bilingualism and multilingualism.

The article gives an insight into the language situation of Ukraine and Transcarpathia: what the main languages spoken in these territories are and what kind of conflicts and problems occur because of the different language situations.

This article also describes an empirical piece of research on the topic carried out in two

Transcarpathian Hungarian schools, amongst students aged 15-17.

## 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND TO VERBAL REPERTOIRE

### 1.1 *Linguistic and verbal repertoire*

As a sociolinguistic concept, this notion is associated with the work of John Gumperz in the early 1960s, what he initially called 'verbal repertoire', while he was doing empirical research in India, North Delhi. This notion is linked to a particular speech community and contains all the ways of formulating messages. It provides the means of everyday communication [1].

As sociolinguistics examines language not as an idealized system, it is based on the diversity of the spoken language. Language in the reality is not an unchangeable phenomenon; it consists of different varieties, dialects and styles. Language repertoire is a group of language varieties (first language (L1) or mother tongue, second language (L2), regional language, languages learned at school or in visits abroad), mastered by the same speaker, to different degrees of proficiency and for different uses. This individual repertoire changes over the course of an individual's lifespan (acquisition of new languages, 'forgetting' languages learned). There are no speakers who own just one variety or style of a language, and opposed to that, seldom can we meet people who use the entire set of it. The total range of linguistic resources a person has at his disposal is called a verbal repertoire. This could be another language, or it could be a regional or social dialect.

A lot of examples can be seen of misunderstanding between speakers who own a language but in different varieties. Languages are considered to be the same, but the varieties

are so different from each other, that it makes understanding harder than between people, who speak dissimilar languages. This phenomenon can be easily understood through a set of precedents. Chinese people in Hungary often need the help of an interpreter while managing their official businesses. However, the problem cannot be easily solved by the offices or the authorities, because the Chinese interpreter offered by them can rarely handle the situation. Authorities do not understand that they are mistaking between 'apple and pear'. The populations living near the Dutch-German border sometimes understand each other's language varieties better than the standardized variety of their native language. The situation is almost the same in the French-Italian border area [2].

### **1.2 Bilingualism and Translanguaging**

Bilingualism refers to the use of two languages by an individual or a speech community [3]. Throughout the world, bilingual children are the norm. On the one hand, many children grow up in homes where families have various ways of speaking. On the other hand, children acquire different language practices as they move to the community. Sometimes they move with their parents to other geographical regions where they learn additional languages, or they learn them in school [4]. There are various types of bilingualism:

- Additive bilingualism – when a speaker adds a second language without any loss of competence to the first language.
- Balanced bilingualism – the consequence of additive bilingualism.
- Subtractive bilingualism – the addition of a second language leads to a gradual erosion of competence in the mother tongue.

In other words, bilingualism means being able to communicate effectively in two or more languages with more or less the same degree of proficiency [3]. Children throughout the world most commonly engage in bilingual languaging or translanguaging [4].

Translanguaging according to Li Wei [5:24] creates a social space for the multilingual language user 'by bringing together different dimensions of their personal history, experience and environment, their attitude, belief and ideology, their cognitive and physical capacity'. Translanguaging is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or different models from autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential [4], or as Gutiérrez [6:128] calls it, a 'systematic, strategic, affiliative, and sense-making process'. It is very important for all bilinguals or multilinguals.

Unfortunately the ability to 'language' bilingually is rarely recognized by educators and educational systems. Pupils who speak in different ways from the habitual language practices of school are often stigmatized and forced to remedial courses. Taking Western scholarly attitudes, monolingualism is accepted as a norm, and bilingualism is accepted only as double monolingualism. However, the use of two languages in education is not new. In Greek-Latin education boys from Roman aristocratic homes were expected to learn the language of admired Hellenic civilization. Later on, two languages were used to educate for social and religious purposes. Bilingual education came into the centre of attention in the second half of the 20th century, when bilingual education programs started in Québec, as a way to make Anglophone children bilingual. In the middle of the 20th century the USA started to develop bilingual education programs in particular for US Latinos. These programs were mostly transitional, which means that

mostly the first language was used for subject instruction. But these programs were, and continue to be, rare [4].

### ***1.3 Acquiring a Third Language: a Way to Multilingualism***

In 1890, a famous professor from the University of Cambridge affirmed: “If it were possible for a child to live two languages at once equally well, so much the worse. His intellectual and spiritual growth would not thereby be doubled, but helved. Unity of mind and character would have great difficulty in asserting itself in such circumstances.” [7:15]. Nowadays, a statement like this would seem ridiculous. Since the early eighties, specialists believe in the ‘holistic’ view of bilingual and multilingual competence and, of course, bi- and multilingual people. Multilingualism does not concern just linguistic competence, but entails life in two or even more cultures. However, it does not mean an ideal and coordinated membership of several communities. Becoming multilingual means the development of an intercultural communicative competence.

In the past, for many years, the common belief was that multilingual people should learn all of their languages at the same time, simultaneously in early childhood, and should own a native-like oral and written competence in all of them [8]. Today it is not the same. A person may be called multilingual if he or she uses his or her languages on a regular basis, has the ability of switching from one to the other if necessary, even independently from the distance between the varieties [9]. According to Lüdi [10], monolingualism is a boundary case of multilingualism, originated by very specific cultural conditions – and bilingualism is a particular form of multilingualism.

The ruling groups of a society often reject multilingualism because of their scepticism

towards it, which is based on two veins of tradition: the first one is the belief expressed by the Bible that mankind was originally monolingual and multilingualism resulted from the confusion of tongues by God. The second idea dates back to the establishment of the European nation states, when ‘national languages’ were an important cohesive factor of ‘nations’. Both traditions originate from the Greek philosophers, that monolingualism is the natural and legitimate state of mankind. Between the French Revolution and World War I and under the influence of Romanticism this idea got ideological and religious dimensions.

In recent years, the ideological background of these ideas has been deconstructed. Third language acquisition is a very common phenomenon today, and it takes place in diverse sociolinguistic situations. For instance, one might think of children living in African countries. They acquire different tribal languages plus a lingua franca and/or a national language as well. Another example is a child of a bilingual family who is exposed to a third language outside home. In European countries there are linguistic minorities that have achieved status and support for their languages, for instance the Netherlands, Spain and Finland. In these countries language policies include bilingual programs and foreign language programs as well. In the countries of the European Union, new minorities are becoming established, forming bilingual communities, mainly in urban areas. [11]

## **2. THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN UKRAINE AND TRANSCARPATIA**

### ***2.1 The Language Situation in Ukraine: the State of the Ukrainian language***

Ukrainian was officially designated the state language of Ukraine in 1989. Making Ukrainian official was one of the first legal steps towards de-Sovietization and independence

of the country in 1991. This step went against a long-established diglossic relationship between Ukrainian as a 'low, peasant' language, and Russian as the 'high, cultured' language. This change in language policy led to many social and political changes in the country [12].

Correctness of words and pronunciations has become hotly contested in interactions as people negotiated authority. Language choice and language quality played an important role of the discussions in newspapers, on television, radio, and even in the street. Books, brochures and television and radio programs attacked what they defined as incorrect usages and promoted 'correct' forms. Interviews in newspapers sometimes commented on the incorrectness of the language of those interviewed.

In the past, Ukraine as defined by its current borders, had been fragmented and dominated by neighbouring regimes. Ukraine has an identity crisis 'lasting centuries' [13]. In the current territory of Ukraine there has been a long history of official, but non-Ukrainian languages, such as Polish, Russian, German, Romanian, which were the languages of the governing regimes. Under the Soviet regime, Russian was imposed forcefully and also attracted people by the privileges associated with it. This language was required for access to good education and decent job, and it was politically reprehensible not to know and use Russian. In the Soviet era Ukrainian was favoured as a language for singing, and it was seen as appropriate for use in folkloric purposes, like other non-Russian republic languages. People used Ukrainian at home and in rural areas, but there was a widely spread view that it would die out as Russian ascended to its destiny as the world language. Now that the Soviet Union has disintegrated, the dominant role of Russian is no longer secure. Although, Russian is still a

politically powerful presence, a lingua franca of the post-Soviet regions, and its cultural prestige remains strong [14].

The Ukrainian and Russian language encompasses much complexity, reflecting regional, generational, demographic and other factors, as well as specific influences in people's personal backgrounds. Both of them refer to standardized languages, and there is speech that falls close to a standard and is unequivocally labeled [15]. Languages that are mixed or impure are called a *surzhyk*, generally a derogatory term. Nowadays this term is not limited to regularized mixed forms (for instance the language varieties developed as Ukrainian-speaking peasants moved to urban areas and tried to speak Russian). The term is also used to criticize someone who might borrow a term from Ukrainian into Russian, or who speaks with an 'accent'. People often use this negative label as a weapon in the symbolic struggle for validity and correctness.

The attention to correctness reflects a growing concern with purity in language. The resurrection of purism is a likely response to the mixed feelings of having a language which was previously peasant and suddenly become the state language. With a focus on purity and correctness, people can separate a valuable variety of Ukrainian from 'debased' forms. If the prestige of Ukrainian was to become high, it would have to be pure Ukrainian. As a professor of journalism in Lviv stated, Ukrainians need a 'king's Ukrainian': just as there is a king's English. Impure forms of Ukrainian and mixtures with Russian have a low status. But what exactly gets considered pure and impure leaves room for debate, still making language ideology a field of contestation [16].

## 2.2 The Language Situation in Transcarpathia

According to the data of the Ukrainian census in 2001, the number of Hungarians in



Transcarpathia is 151516 people, which makes 12.1 % of the total population. 74 % of the Hungarians live in blocks, where the proportion of Hungarian people is 75-100 % [17]. In 2005-2006 the number of secondary schools, where the language of education is Hungarian, is 107 in the region. In the Soviet era, Russian was taught instead of Ukrainian in Hungarian schools, and because of this, the native Hungarians of the region, living in blocks, did not acquire the Ukrainian language, only Russian. After the declaration of independence in the country, the state language is taught in every school of Transcarpathia, including Hungarian schools, although the proper conditions of language learning are still missing.

The primary problem is the inadequacy of the curriculum and the textbooks. Ukrainian, as a subject requires a totally different approach in teaching native Ukrainians and native Hungarians. In those schools, where the language of teaching is Ukrainian, it is taught as a native language, because students are native speakers. In Hungarian schools, children first come across the language at the age of 6, but the curriculum requires from them to learn difficult grammatical structures even at the beginner level, not knowing the language itself. Moreover, Hungarian schools are in lack of qualified educators. Only 50 % of teachers of Ukrainian language and literature have the right qualification. The remaining half is made up of teachers of Russian who were reeducated. At this field, those teachers, who are native Ukrainians cannot solve minority schools' problems. Those schoolteachers, who hold a degree in Ukrainian philology, are qualified to teach Ukrainian as a native language, and they do not know how to treat it as a second language. It is the same as if teachers coming from London would teach the English language, following a curriculum for children studying in schools of London. The conditions of teaching the state language are also a governmental-political problem. A

minority which does not speak Ukrainian at a proper level cannot take part equally in the political or economic life of the country. The problems which arise while speaking about teaching of Ukrainian in Hungarian schools could be examined only through a sociolinguistic perspective, which presupposes taking into account the language situation of Transcarpathian Hungarians. When elaborating the curriculum and constructing textbooks the specific language, demographic and governmental situation of this minority should be kept in mind [18].

The current territory of the area has been multicultural and multilingual as well. According to the data of the census in 1880, the number of Rusyn (and Ukrainian) people was the 59.8 % of the population, and the number of Hungarians was 25.5 % [19].

In 1944 the current territory of Transcarpathia was annexed to the Soviet Union. The transition of governing power and the emerging political situation had an impact on the nature of language contacts. For instance, in the Soviet era, Russian was taught instead of Ukrainian in Hungarian schools, and because of this, native Hungarians did not learn the Ukrainian language, only Russian. This led to the lack of knowledge of this language amongst Hungarian people. After 1991, Ukraine became independent, and since then Ukrainian is taught in every school of Transcarpathia, including Hungarian schools. Although, the right conditions of free acquiring and speaking are still missing [20].

In average Transcarpathian Hungarian families the language of communication is Hungarian. In their homes children speak mainly Hungarian.

Ukrainian and Hungarian do not belong to the same family of languages. It should also be kept in mind: for Russian, Byelorussian,

and Polish people it is much easier to learn Ukrainian compared to Hungarians or Romanians. It is important to remember that Ukrainian and Hungarian do not have the same roots, and are lexically and phonetically diverse. Acquiring different Ukrainian grammatical structures is very hard for Hungarian speakers [21].

Teaching the state language to minorities as if it was a native language is an enormous pedagogical and methodological mistake, which can lead to dissatisfaction in teaching the language. These mistakes could lead to serious social conflicts. [22]

The question is: how to solve the problems of teaching Ukrainian to Hungarian children? Some might think the only solution is to close all Hungarian schools. However, international experience prompts: the language of the education is not strictly related to the acquisition of the state language. As several experiments testify, the language of education should be the mother tongue in nursery school, school, and the state language should be taught as a separate subject, involving bilingual teachers who know the children's level of language knowledge. [18]

### **3. RESEARCH ON 'THE VERBAL REPERTOIRE OF TRANSCARPATHIAN HUNGARIAN TEENAGERS'**

#### **3.1 Methodology**

The following research deals with the verbal repertoire of the Hungarian teenagers in Transcarpathian Hungarian communities. The target of the research is to find out, which languages are used most frequently by the participants and in which cases they are spoken. It is very important to get acquainted with the language usage of students of this age, for different reasons.

Firstly, useful pedagogical insights could be gained, which later can facilitate a more successful teaching and learning process. Information, acquired that way can be used in language teaching, and helps teachers to discover, what to emphasize and what to neglect while dealing with students.

Secondly, the research gives us a reflection, how students see themselves, how they value their language knowledge, and last but not least, their hopes and goals in the field of language learning could be unfolded.

#### **3.2 Participants**

Thirty secondary school students were recruited for this study. The students were chosen randomly, no particular requirements were followed, except for their age. The teenagers were students of two Transcarpathian Hungarian schools. All of the participants were aged between fifteen and seventeen. 37% of the students was 17 years old, 50% of them were 16 and 13% were aged 15. 80% of the participants were female and 20% were male.

#### **3.3 Research Instruments**

The main target of the research was to gain information about the language usage of Transcarpathian Hungarian teenagers. The first step of designing the research was deciding the number of students being asked, which – according to the final decision – was 30. Taking into consideration the number of participants, a questionnaire (an empirical research method) was used. Questionnaires are the most frequently used methods of empirical analysis. There were two main objectives in designing the questionnaire:

1. To maximise the response rate.
2. To obtain accurate relevant information for the survey.

The questionnaires contained 18 questions, both open format and close format. These

open format questions were used to ask for unprompted opinions. In closed format questions multiple choice questions were used with various numbers of options ranging between three and five.

### ***3.4 Procedures of the Research***

The research was carried out from the end of February until the beginning of March, 2014. In order to bring to light the different areas of the students' language use, a series of questionnaires was performed. 30 students were asked to fill in the questionnaires, which were in Hungarian in order to make them understand the questions better and to avoid misunderstandings while answering. The students were asked to answer appropriately, not to omit questions, and to read through the questionnaire carefully before answering. The response rate was very high, 93 % of the students answered every question and only 7 % of them skipped two open format questions.

### ***3.5 Findings***

The mother tongue of every student was Hungarian, and only one of them thinks he makes small mistakes while speaking. 60 % of the students think they speak Ukrainian at a very low level, a minority of participants (34 %) understands the language but cannot respond and only 6 % speaks the language well, with small grammatical or pronunciation mistakes. Half of the participants do not speak Russian at all, some of them speak it at a very low level (43 %), and only one student speaks it well (later the questionnaire showed, that the father of the student is Russian). 100 % of the students studies English as a foreign language, one student studies a second foreign language, which is French, and another one studies Spanish. 24 of the participants define their level of knowledge of English at a very low level, 5

students struggle with communication, but can cope well with understanding, and one speaks the language well. The father of 29 students is Hungarian by nationality, and one is Russian. 100 % of the students has a native Hungarian mother. 100 % of the participants communicate in Hungarian at their homes, and 6 of them chose a second option (5 of them use Ukrainian, and one uses Russian as well). 100 % of the students communicate with their schoolmates and friends in Hungarian, 2 of them use Ukrainian as well. 5 students use Ukrainian language in average social interactions, 6 use it in offices, post offices, banks etc., 14 participants use it in shops, markets, 9 at medical examinations and hospitals, and 5 of them use it only at the Ukrainian lessons. Over half of those surveyed reported that they use English for the use of the Internet or to understand films and television programmes (48 %). Only one student uses it for travelling abroad. 9 students use English at the lessons alone.

### ***3.6 Discussion and Interpretation of Results of the Research***

According to the answers, all of the students' mother tongue is Hungarian. The majority of students grew up in a Hungarian family, only one of them has Russian father. They seem to be motivated in learning Ukrainian, but for some reason, they think their knowledge is insufficient. The results above have clearly shown that the majority of the participants do not see themselves as a fluent speaker of any language except for Hungarian. One of the questions was about their opinion about the importance of learning Ukrainian. A sixteen-year-old girl gave such an answer to the question: "I reckon that Ukrainian is crucial, because this is the state language and it is important if I would like to continue my studies." A seventeen-year-old boy wrote: "You cannot make ends meet without knowing this language." On the concept of the usefulness of

Ukrainian in their lives, this study found, that their opinion about the state language is very similar. They recognize its usefulness but as we see the results, their knowledge seems to be very low.

The results of the study indicate that foreign languages studied by the participants are English, French and Spanish. Question 16 is about the importance of learning foreign languages. The overall response to this question was very positive. The students shared different opinions. They refer to these languages in the following ways: "This is the most widely spoken language in the world. It is indispensable to know it." Or: "I like the language, therefore I study it. And of course, English gives me a chance to score points at the entrance exams". The majority of the participants wrote enthusiastically about foreign languages. A girl, aged 16 wrote: "I like Spanish because it sounds beautiful. And the Barcelona [football team] is from Spain." It is surprising that contrary to these positive opinions, 80% of the students speak foreign languages at a low level, 17% experience difficulties in using them and only one student speaks them at an advanced level. There are several possible explanations for this result. The first is that 'weak students' learn foreign languages with the language teachers applying inappropriate methods [18]. It is possible, that language teachers should be suggested to try using new ways of teaching. On the other hand, an other explanation can be 'laziness'. Students see foreign languages as something useful which can help them in their future career, but contradictorily they seem unmotivated in learning. A further study with more focus on weaknesses, strengths and the causes of this demotivation is therefore suggested.

Questions 11-14 refer to the different fields of language use. 100% of the students use Hungarian as the language of communication in

their families and amongst their schoolmates, friends. One of them uses Russian and 5 of them apply Ukrainian. It means that the use of other languages apart from their mother tongue is not frequent for the majority of the participants. According to this, 5 people use the state language in everyday life. Over half of the surveyed uses this language in shops, markets, 9 of them at medical examinations and 6 of them in offices. 13 of the students use Ukrainian at the lessons, but 5 of them chose this as the only option. This means that these students do not use Ukrainian outside the classroom. These findings prove that the majority of students utilize their knowledge of the state language in many different situations.

As regards foreign languages, the participants mainly make use of their knowledge in the field of media: 39 % while watching films and different programs and 60 % while using the Internet. Only one of the participants uses it for travelling. 17 of the surveyed use foreign languages at the lessons and 9 of them do not use it for other purposes. Comparing to the use of Ukrainian, more students can use their knowledge of this language than for example English.

Questions 17-18 advert to hopes for future language learning: the participants were asked to enumerate the languages which they would like to learn in the future. They were also asked to comment on their choice. French, Spanish and German were found to be the most popular amongst students, almost equally. They have different reasons for their choice, ranging from rather funny to more serious and deliberate ones. Most of them refer to the beauty or the melody of the language, while others would choose them because of the usefulness of knowing as many languages as possible. Some of the students have personal relations to a language: the love of the culture or country where the

language is spoken, the interesting facts about a language or purposes like travelling, meeting different people, having Internet-friends, or being successful in business. The overall response to these questions was very positive. It can therefore be assumed that students are willing to learn languages they like; they have opinions and hopes about foreign language learning.

### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Ukraine and Transcarpathia are the excellent examples of linguistic diversification. Many nations live together in these territories, and because of this a considerable amount of the population acquires one, two or more languages throughout their lifespan. It is especially important to examine the language repertoire of the Transcarpathian Hungarian teenagers, because we can get information about the language knowledge of those students who are going to graduate soon from high schools and secondary schools.

In this investigation the aim was to access the language knowledge of the students, to gain information about their language usage, their level of knowledge and about those languages which they hope to learn in their life. The survey was carried out in Transcarpathian Hungarian secondary schools. While compiling the research, questionnaires were used, 30 students were asked, aged 15-17. This

study has shown that generally the majority of students do not know the state language at a proper level, but surprisingly they found important to acquire the language for the sake of their career and future life. Almost 100 % of the participants come from Hungarian families, and they communicate mostly in Hungarian, and sometimes use Ukrainian and seldom use Russian. Teenagers use Ukrainian mostly in shops, medical examinations and at the lessons. Most of them use foreign languages at the lessons, but some of the students use them while watching films and television programmes in foreign languages or while using the Internet.

The results of this study implicate that most of the participants cannot speak any other languages at a high level except for their mother tongue, but according to their answers, they have hopes and dreams about further studying languages and they recognise the importance of learning as many languages as possible. Considerably more work will need to be done to determine the real level of the language knowledge of Transcarpathian Hungarian teenagers and to find the causes of the defections of the language use. Further research in this area may include surveys both of the qualitative and quantitative types involving larger quantities of students, living in different parts of the region. The fields of the research – besides the Hungarian schools of Transcarpathia – may be expanded to Ukrainian schools as well.

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