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**LARYSA MASENKO, “SURZHYK: MIZH MOVOJU
I JAZYKOM”. VYDAVNYCHYĬ DIM “KIIEVO-
MOHYLIANSKA AKADEMIIA”, KYIV 2019, SS. 232¹**

Abstract

The reviewed monography is the first vast paper on the phenomenon of the Ukrainian–Russian linguistic contacts. The second edition is extended to include new scientific publications and completed with the respondents answers. The study as a whole depicts the etymology of the name of the phenomenon (Surzhyk), tries to place the phenomenon in the theory of linguistic contacts and gives examples of the use in the respondents answers, literature and the Internet.

Keywords: surzhyk; Ukrainian language; Russian language; fused lect

The study of the sociolinguistic phenomenon known as Surzhyk is gaining momentum not only in Ukraine, but also in other countries. An indication of this is that monographs and articles on the topic have appeared in various countries, not only in Ukraine. The issues of Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism, diglossia, and mixed codes are especially important in the context of the Russian–Ukrainian conflict in eastern Ukraine.

Among Ukrainian researchers of Surzhyk, Larysa Masenko is deserving of special mention and she remains one of the main researchers of this phenomenon. Her published monograph on the topic of Surzhyk, the second edition of her 2019 book (Masenko, 2019), is the subject of this review.

In comparison with the first edition, the second edition is more developed and presents an even larger array of studies and academic articles on Surzhyk. Additionally, the author compares the situation in Ukraine with that in Belarus and shows certain relationships between the two linguistic phenomena.

In the first chapter (pp. 5–16) of the monograph, the author presents the terminological problem of this linguistic phenomenon, proposing that it be compared with pidgins or creole languages. However, the author does not take a definitive position on the question and does not classify the phenomenon.

¹Larysa Masenko, “Surzhyk: between the Ukrainian and Russian languages”, second edition. Vydavnychyĭ dim “Kyievo-Mohylianska akademiia”, Kyiv 2019, pp. 232.

In the second chapter (pp. 17–48), the author pays special attention to the origin and spread of the phenomenon, using dictionaries and the descriptions of other linguists, and examines the transfer of the term *surzhyk* from agriculture to linguistics.

The third chapter (pp. 49–62) deals with the concepts of bilingualism and diglossia, their relationships, and the attempts to apply this classification to the described phenomenon.

The fourth chapter (pp. 63–84) deals with language contacts, namely the concepts of language interference and mixing. The author introduces the concepts of code-mixing and code-switching. Analysing these phenomena, the author leaves the reader to decide which could be best applied to the phenomenon of Surzhyk. The next theoretical question is that of interference. The author attempts to create certain grammatical rules for the use of Surzhyk on the basis of the publications of other linguists.

After presenting the theoretical background, the author focuses on the use of Surzhyk in mass public consciousness and in journalistic discourse. The author employs material from survey respondents and accurately describes the phenomenon of Surzhyk in the media, journalistic discourse, and public consciousness.

The sixth chapter focuses on linguistic publications concerning language interference and mixed forms of spoken speech. The author draws attention to the fact that one of the problems in the study of Surzhyk is the lack of a clear distinction between mixed speech and interferential speech. The lack of such a clear boundary is due to the small number of studies on this topic, as a result of the specificity of Ukrainian–Russian bilingualism.

The seventh chapter (pp. 123–140) deals with the position of Surzhyk in the Ukrainian socio-linguistic context, in which it is viewed in different ways, ranging from a semi-language to an example of deculturation. The author attempts to show that the linguistic aspect is also transmitted to culture and makes it clear why an individual who speaks Ukrainian transforms it into Surzhyk. The answer to this question is quite simple — to improve their image among Russian-speaking colleagues and friends. The phenomena described by the author are well illustrated by other publications.

In the eighth chapter (pp. 141–171), the author shows the functioning of the language hybrid in both Soviet and post-Soviet mass culture, showing that Surzhyk is also present on television and radio. Among the people who create it, the use of Surzhyk is viewed as a an element of cultural identity, opposed to the use of standardized Russian. In this system, the author attempts to show why standard Russian is becoming so popular among people who live in big cities and why those who migrate to cities for work or to study try to emulate them.

In the ninth chapter (pp. 172–189), the author makes an attempt to analyse the phenomenon of Surzhyk in modern fiction by showing examples of contemporary Ukrainian writers who stylize this linguistic hybrid in their publications. The monograph quite aptly shows that with the help of Surzhyk the authors convey a certain linguistic picture to their readers.

The tenth chapter, which has been added to the second edition, shows the functioning of Surzhyk on social media, especially Facebook, because this is where one can easily encounter people who write in Surzhyk. Although their everyday communication is conducted in Ukrainian, the language of online communication online has become a form of stylization, an opportunity to quickly and efficiently express thoughts. People try to convey their views with the help of Surzhyk, even though they are fluent in the state language.

There are some critical points and issues that have not been worked out in Masenko's book. It is very difficult to understand from the text how the author classifies Surzhyk in the system of language contacts. In the first chapter, the author tries to convince the reader that Surzhyk should be viewed as a pidgin or a creole language. Creolization is discussed in the fourth chapter, but later the concepts of code-mixing and code-switching appear. The author leaves this question open, although most linguists, in particular those who work outside Ukraine, believe that Surzhyk is a *fused lect*, i.e. a mixed sociolect between code-mixing and code-switching (Besters-Dilger, 2012, p. 14; Bilaniuk, 2005, pp. 122–123; Lewczuk, 2016, pp. 184–185; Taranenko, 2008, p. 21). Ewa Lipińska believes that the most common cause of code-switching is an insufficient level of

proficiency in each of the languages used by the individual (Lipińska, 2003, p. 88).

The author describes the problem of mixed speech and the problem of the interference threshold, but does not clearly establish this framework in the text, referring to a rather small number of linguistic studies of this phenomenon. On the other hand, it would be worthwhile to suggest to the author, who is the undisputed authority in this case, to create her own criteria and start a discussion on establishing an interference threshold. Moreover, such research may then prove useful in the study of Ukrainian-foreign bilingualism or the situation of the Ukrainian language in countries with a significant Ukrainian-speaking population (for example, Poland, Italy, the United States, Canada, Portugal).

The author transfers the problem of language hybrids to the sphere of culture and gives convincing examples, such as the situation in Belarus. Elżbieta Smułkowa calls the Belarusian language situation *diglossia*, and the cultural situation a *dietna* (Smułkowa, 2000, pp. 96–98). It may be worth paying attention to the even more accurate term of cultural creolization, which was first used by Robert Chaudenson (Chaudenson, 1992, as cited in Hlibowicka-Węglarz, 2013, p. 62). According to his examples, cultural creolization refers to the languages of medicine, music, cooking, literature and religion. The last of these fields can be seen as a victory of Ukrainian culture due to the creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, but the other areas remain under strong Russian influence.

When covering cultural coexistence in the media space, Masenko gives accurate examples from modern Ukrainian television, but she also expresses some overly politicized opinions, especially with regard to Volodymyr Zelensky. He is the co-founder and creative producer of Kvartal 95 Studio, who ran in the 2019 Ukrainian presidential election and was elected President of Ukraine. Masenko's view of Kvartal 95 Studio's output is rather one-sided and shows a dislike for the creative producer himself, rather than for the productions that can be seen onscreen. The attitude of Kvartal 95 to the annexation of Crimea, the war in the Donbass region, or Russian propaganda journalists would have been worth mentioning.

Among the TV programs analysed in the book, there is one show (which could be seen as anti-Russian) that is absent, namely *The last Moskal*. It depicts a Carpathian village where the Ukrainian language and the dominant Ukrainian culture are contrasted with the Russian language and Moscow culture. Velyki Vuyky, a small village located 75 km from the nearest village with a television, is contrasted with the Russian capital and all its positive aspects. Although the series sometimes ridicules both Hutsuls (an ethnic group from western Ukraine) and Muscovites, it is worth thinking about the hidden meaning of the production. An example of such an analysis is provided in an article by Nina Boichenko (Boichenko, 2020), although the author analyses the specific characters of the series, rather than comparing the image of Ukrainian and Russian.

Looking forwards, a step of great importance would be the translation of the monograph into English. English-speaking readers must objectively assess the language problems of Ukraine and draw their own conclusions. The monograph shows the real situation, coverage of which is important for Ukraine.

The critical attention presented above in no way affects the quality of the monograph, which shows the reader the origin of Surzhyk and its functioning in the modern environment. I believe that this monograph represents an important voice in the discussion on the language hybrid which Ukraine inherited from the Soviet Union.

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