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SPEECH DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES FOR UKRAINIAN CHILDREN IN FORCED MIGRATION: THE ROLE OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOCIAL CONTEXTS

This article explores the speech development challenges encountered by Ukrainian children in forced migration, with a focus on the influential roles of primary and secondary social contexts. The study delves into how these contexts shape early multilingualism, emphasizing the complex dynamics within the family and educational settings. In the primary society, we investigate family language policies, examining how language education strategies are implemented within families. In many cases, bilingualism arises by default due to the presence of both Ukrainian and Russian in the linguistic repertoire of parents and close relatives. This often leads to natural code-switching and a bilingual development pattern among children. Through survey data, we analyze the first language and home language usage of Ukrainian children, providing a detailed understanding of their initial linguistic environment. The study highlights how family-driven language policies contribute to the maintenance and development of both Ukrainian and Russian languages, despite the challenges posed by displacement. In addition to the primary societal influences, the article scrutinizes the impact of the Polish-speaking educational environment, representing the secondary society. The integration of Ukrainian children into Polish pre-schools introduces a new linguistic dimension, fostering the development of active trilingualism. We examine how exposure to Polish, alongside Ukrainian and Russian, influences the children's speech development and cultural adaptation.

The findings underscore the intricate relationship between home and educational environments in shaping the linguistic trajectories of Ukrainian children in forced migration. By navigating through familial bilingualism and the demands of the Polish educational system, these children develop unique multilingual capabilities.

Key words: bilingualism, trilingualism, family language policy, home language, language adaptation

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ПРОБЛЕМИ РОЗВИТКУ МОВЛЕННЯ УКРАЇНСЬКИХ ДІТЕЙ У ВИМУШЕНІЙ МІГРАЦІЇ: РОЛЬ ПЕРВИННОГО ТА ВТОРИННОГО СОЦІАЛЬНОГО КОНТЕКСТІВ

У статті досліджуються проблеми розвитку мовлення, з якими стикаються українські діти у вимушеній міграції, з акцентом на впливовій ролі первинних і вторинних соціальних контекстів. Дослідження заглиблюється в те, як ці контексти формують ранню багатомовність, наголошуючи на складній динаміці в сімейних мовленнєвих практиках та освітніх умовах. У первинному суспільстві ми аналізуємо сімейну мовну політику родин у вимушеній міграції, досліджуючи, як стратегії мовного виховання реалізуються на рівні родини. У багатьох випадках двомовність виникає за замовчуванням через наявність у мовному репертуарі батьків і близьких родичів як української, так і російської мов, які дорослі представники родин використовують, перемикаючи мовні коди залежно від комунікативних ситуацій. Це часто призводить до двомовного розвитку дітей, адже навперемінне чи одночасне використання двох мов — української та російської — провокує постійне перемикавання мовних кодів. Дані опитування демонструють сімейні обставини мовного виховання, тобто родинне мовне середовище, що є первинним контекстом раннього мовленнєвого розвитку дитини, де звернена увага на першу мову для дитини і сімейну мову. Дослідження підкреслює, як сімейна мовна політика, впливає на збереження та розвиток української мови у ситуації вимушеної міграції, але при цьому також звертає увагу на той факт, що на рівні сімейних мовних практик простежується досить активне і вживання російської мови, попри виклики переміщення. Крім первинних суспільних впливів, у статті досліджується вплив освітнього середовища (на матеріалі перебування українських дітей у польськокомовних дошкільних закладах освіти), що репрезентує вторинне суспільство, тобто таке суспільство, де розпочинається активний процес соціалізації дітей. Інтеграція українських дітей до польських дошкільних закладів освіти вводить новий мовний вимір, спричиняючи формування тримовності. Ми досліджуємо, як знайомство з польською, поряд з українською та російською (для певної частини українських дітей у вимушеній міграції), впливає на мовленнєвий розвиток та культурну адаптацію.

Отримані результати підкреслюють складний зв'язок між домашнім та освітнім середовищем у формуванні мовних траєкторій українських дітей у вимушеній міграції. Долаючи сімейну двомовність і вимоги польської освітньої системи, ці діти розвивають унікальні багатомовні здібності.

Ключові слова: білінгвізм, трілінгвізм, сімейна мовна політика, сімейна мова, мовна адаптація.

Defining the problem and argumentation of the topicality of the consideration.

The phenomenon of forced migration has posed significant challenges for Ukrainian children, especially in terms of speech development. These children often find themselves in new linguistic environments that demand quick adaptation and integration. Understanding the influence of primary and secondary social contexts on their language development is crucial for both linguistic theory and practical applications in education and social policy. This study focuses on how Ukrainian children in forced migration develop their speech within the intersecting influences of their home (primary society) and the new educational conditions (secondary society) they encounter. The primary social context involves the family's language policy, often adopting a bilingual model of language education due to the longstanding Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism in Ukraine. This bilingualism organically arises from parents using both languages in various communicative situations, significantly impacting children's language acquisition. This natural bilingualism, marked by frequent code-switching, contributes to a unique bilingual development pattern.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has resulted in the mass displacement of people, including children, who have sought refuge in neighboring countries like Poland. Ukrainian children in the Polish education system face unique challenges, including language barriers, curriculum differences, trauma and emotional support needs, and a lack of resources. Forced migration is a reality for many Ukrainian families. According to UNICEF statistics, in 2023, over 600,000 Ukrainian children between the ages of 3 and 19 were living in Poland, with approximately 22% attending children's clubs and preschools, totaling more than 130,000 children [9]. The circumstances of forced migration create specific conditions for accelerated language adaptation and cultural integration into new societies while preserving their national identity. As Ukrainian children integrate into the Polish educational environment, they encounter a third language (Polish as the target language), contributing to active trilingualism. This study aims to explore how these children navigate and reconcile the linguistic demands of their home environment with those of their new educational environment and how these dynamics affect their overall language development and cultural adaptation.

Solving this problem is relevant not only for understanding the language development of displaced children but also for forming educational strategies and policies that can support their integration and academic success. The results of this study will enable us to understand the adaptation strategies used by families and educational institutions, emphasizing the resilience and linguistic diversity of Ukrainian children in forced migration. This study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on multilingualism, migration, and educational practices in linguistically diverse settings.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In light of the growing research on language adaptation amidst active migration processes, particular attention is given to

the accelerated language adaptation in changing environmental contexts. A significant challenge in such circumstances is the preservation of the first language when new languages are introduced into a child's linguistic repertoire [14; 5]. The present article focuses on the language development of Ukrainian preschool children who were forced to migrate due to military aggression against Ukraine. This study underscores the importance of understanding the complex linguistic and cultural backgrounds of migrant children and the necessity of supporting their language development within a multilingual environment. The study draws on previous research on bilingual and multilingual language development in preschool children, as well as effective language learning practices for children with refugee experiences [5; 14; 8; 9]. Specifically, the article highlights the trilingual language development of Ukrainian preschoolers with refugee experiences in Poland, based on P. Levchuk's research on bilingualism and multilingualism [6]. According to Baker [1], bilingual education can be categorized into several types based on environmental contexts, such as early childhood bilingualism, one person-one language approach, differing home and external languages, mixed language types, and delayed second language acquisition. These types of bilingualism can provide communicative and cultural advantages, particularly in a multilingual context. The family language policy plays a critical role in shaping the type of bilingualism a child experiences. This policy, which encompasses language ideologies, practices, and management, dictates which languages are spoken and in what contexts [13]. Language ideology, defined as beliefs about the use of a particular language, significantly influences family language policy. Consequently, parental language ideologies at home affect the formation of family language policies, ultimately determining whether children become monolingual or bilingual. The implementation of family language policy is crucial for regulating language use within the family context [5].

The purpose and objectives of the article. The purpose of this article is to investigate the speech development challenges faced by Ukrainian children who are experiencing forced migration, with a specific focus on understanding how primary and secondary social contexts influence their multilingual capabilities. Based on the purpose, **the objectives** of the article are: 1) to examine family language policies and the use of the home language in the families of Ukrainian migrants, paying special attention to the interaction between Ukrainian and Russian; 2) to assess the impact of the Polish educational environment on the language development of Ukrainian children, particularly in the formation of active trilingualism at an early age; and 3) to project the difficulties early multilinguals will face, given the primary and secondary contexts of their upbringing.

The study is based on both qualitative and quantitative data from the project "Early Stages of Bilingualism Development in Ukrainian Children in Polish Kindergartens," funded by the National Agency for Academic Exchange of Poland (contract No. BPN/GIN/2022/1). Additionally, it draws on insights into the language situation within Ukrainian migrant families in Krakow, derived from a survey [10]. Utilizing data analysis methods outlined in the author's previous publication, as well as participant observation and

linguistic modeling, this study aims to predict the specific challenges that Ukrainian-Russian bilingual children may encounter when learning Polish as a third language.

The scientific novelty of this article lies in its comprehensive examination of the unique speech development challenges faced by Ukrainian children in forced migration. This study is one of the first to focus on the intricate interplay between primary and secondary social contexts. Specifically: 1) by investigating both family (primary context) and educational (secondary context) influences, the study provides a nuanced understanding of how these environments collectively shape early multilingualism in migrant children; 3) the research highlights the specific linguistic dynamics within Ukrainian migrant families, where bilingualism with Ukrainian and Russian is prevalent, a topic that has not been extensively explored in current literature. The theoretical value of the obtained results is significant for several reasons. The findings contribute to the broader field of multilingualism by illustrating the developmental trajectories of children exposed to three languages in a forced migration context. The practical value of this research is evident in its potential applications for educators, policymakers, and families. The insights gained can inform the development of educational strategies that support multilingualism in migrant children, particularly in settings where multiple languages coexist. This article significantly advances our understanding of the speech development challenges faced by Ukrainian children in forced migration by highlighting the critical roles of primary and secondary social contexts. The findings offer both theoretical advancements in the study of multilingualism and practical applications for supporting the linguistic and cultural adaptation of migrant children.

The outline of the main research material. To investigate the speech development challenges faced by Ukrainian children in forced migration, it is essential to analyze their previous language background. This involves understanding the primary social context of the child and the characteristics of the family's language policy. Such an analysis will help predict the direction of the children's speech development as they learn a new language, Polish, which is the target language in their educational environment. In this context, it's important to clarify what is meant by the target language. In linguistics and language learning, a target language is the language that a person is actively trying to learn. This concept is central to research on second language acquisition (SLA), bilingualism, and multilingualism. The target language is the focal point of educational efforts where students engage in activities designed to enhance their proficiency in that particular language. In early bilingualism and multilingualism, the target language holds significant importance. Children growing up in bilingual or multilingual environments often have more than one target language. Distinguishing between the mother tongue (L1) and additional languages (L2, L3, etc.) is crucial for understanding their language development process. For example, in early bilingualism, the target language can vary depending on the context; a child might speak one language at home (L1) and another at school (L2). Research shows that early exposure to multiple languages can lead to different cognitive and linguistic outcomes compared to monolingual development. De Houwer [3] emphasizes

that children who are bilingual from birth tend to be proficient in both languages, although the degree of proficiency may vary depending on factors such as the quality and quantity of language input, as well as social and family support. Genesee [4] discusses the simultaneous acquisition of two languages by young children, noting that both can be considered target languages as children strive to achieve communicative competence in both. In a multilingual context, the concept of a target language becomes even more complex. Children may learn several languages simultaneously, each serving different communicative functions. Researchers Cenoz and Genesee [2] highlight that multilingual individuals often manage several target languages, using them according to situational conditions, such as at home, school, or within their living environment.

Despite the complexities in defining and understanding the concept of a target language, in our study, it is helpful to perceive the target language (Polish, in this case) somewhat simplistically, focusing on its function as the language of the educational environment.

When studying the speech development problems of Ukrainian children in forced migration, it is crucial to analyze in detail the components of family language policy. This detailed analysis is important because family language policy significantly affects the peculiarities of a child's speech development in several ways. The first and most important aspect is language influence and input: the family's language policy determines the primary language(s) the child uses at home. This exposure affects the child's linguistic input, which is critical for developing both their first language (L1) and any additional languages (L2, L3, etc.). The quality and quantity of language input a child receives directly impact their language acquisition and proficiency.

Over the past few years, research on family language policy has shifted from a traditional parent-centered approach to a more inclusive family-centered approach. Researchers now involve children in their studies, allowing them to share their perspectives on what constitutes a successful family language policy [15]. In this article, we focus on the concept of family language policy as explained in linguistics [11; 12; 13; 14]. Following Bernard Spolsky [13], this study examines components of language policy such as language ideologies, language practices, and language management. These components and their interactions help us understand the specifics of the primary society and the context in which a child's speech practices are formed. A key point in this context is the concept of primary (direct) and secondary (mediated) societies and their changing priorities. For example, if a child's parents and closest relatives, who are the main circle of communication for a period, adopt a language education strategy that includes primary use of Ukrainian with non-native English learned in parallel, adjustments will still be necessary when the child starts to spontaneously acquire Russian. This can happen through interactions with other children, exposure to Russian-language content (cartoons, videos) on the Internet, and participation in non-monolingual children's groups such as kindergarten or school. Consequently, Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism will form regardless of the parents' or child's initial intentions due to the prevailing language

situation in the country. Therefore, the majority of children can be defined as bilingual with varying degrees of proficiency in the contact languages.

European researchers identify several types of children's bilingualism: competitive, which depends on the communication situation; selective, formed based on the topic of communication; complex bilingualism, characterized by cross-linguistic interference in the speech of bilingual children; and coordinative bilingualism, marked by the full development of speech practices in both contact languages. Considering global experiences, most children typically exhibit competitive and complex bilingualism. Ukrainian children also follow this trend, with many bilinguals experiencing varying degrees of language mixing, from interference at the phonetic, lexical, and grammatical levels to the complete blending of language systems. Among the factors influencing the prevalence of mixed Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism in children are the monolingualism or bilingualism of the family, which shapes specific speech behaviors or fails to do so, and the level of proficiency and communicative power of the contact languages. In defining types of bilingualism, it is important to consider dualingulism [7], a unique form of bilateral bilingualism in related languages where each participant in a communicative act uses their own language, yet the communication succeeds because the interlocutors understand each other.

Based on the data from our research [9], we have found that the majority of Ukrainian children currently in forced migration in Poland are Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals with various forms of bilingualism. For some Ukrainian children, this bilingualism is relatively coordinative, though, considering their early age, there is significant interference at the lexical and grammatical levels of Ukrainian due to the influence of Russian. For other Ukrainian children in forced migration, a mixed form of Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism is common, where the problem of differentiating related language codes is quite noticeable. This situation is facilitated by active bilingualism in the family, where the language situation is unstable, as language codes are used alternately or simultaneously depending on the communication situation and participants. Many families in forced migration exhibit similar language policies, with approximately half displaying such speech behavior as the norm [9]. This speech behavior and family language practices result in children becoming early bilinguals in related languages.

Children can be grouped according to their language experiences in families as follows:

- children with Ukrainian as their first language and passive knowledge of Russian: If Russian is not used in families, then partial acquisition of Russian occurs through communication with native speakers and consuming Russian-language children's content.
- children with Ukrainian as their first language and Russian as their second: These children exhibit early active bilingualism.
- children with Russian as their first language and Ukrainian as their second: In these families, Russian dominates, but the children still show a fairly high proficiency in Ukrainian, including sufficient vocabulary for their age and mastery of grammatical categories, with minor interference errors from Russian.

- children with Russian as their first language and passive knowledge of Ukrainian: These children understand Ukrainian but do not actively use it.
- children with a mixed form of bilingualism: These children have significant difficulty distinguishing between the two contact languages, even when communicating in one of the languages they know.

By analyzing these components of family language policy, we can better understand the specific challenges and developmental trajectories of speech in Ukrainian children in forced migration.

The quantity and quality of language input in the family directly affect the maintenance of a child's language(s). In forced migration, most Ukrainian children lose the opportunity to systematically learn and practice Ukrainian in an educational environment, a role that was supported in Ukraine by its status as the state language and legislative backing. Instead, during forced migration, the responsibility for maintaining Ukrainian language skills falls primarily on the family. Parents' attitudes and efforts to support their child's active use of Ukrainian are crucial. Encouraging children to speak Ukrainian can significantly increase their desire to communicate in the language, contributing to more effective language acquisition. Without constant access to the language and with the active learning of a third language — the target language in Poland — there is a risk of gradual language attrition. This attrition can affect both the first language (Ukrainian or Russian) and the second language (Ukrainian or Russian), depending on the child's individual situation and the quantity and quality of language input they receive.

Conclusions and directions for further research. The role of language in the well-being and integration of immigrants is both complex and controversial, intersecting with sensitive issues of indigeneity and cultural identity. Language proficiency is not merely a tool for communication; it is a crucial factor in the socialization process and significantly impacts how immigrants adapt to and integrate into their new communities. This complexity is heightened in the context of Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism within Ukrainian migrant families, complicating the acquisition of a third language at an early age — namely, Polish, the target language of instruction. In monoethnic communities, where a single language and culture dominate, language proficiency is essential for immigrants to understand and engage with the local linguistic and cultural norms. Mastery of the local language enables immigrants to participate fully in social, educational, and economic activities, fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance. It allows them to navigate daily interactions, build relationships, and access services and opportunities that might otherwise be inaccessible. In more diverse communities, proficiency in the dominant language remains crucial for integration. It facilitates communication across different cultural groups and helps bridge cultural gaps, promoting mutual understanding and respect. Language serves as a tool for cohesion, helping to weave together a mosaic of different cultural identities into a cohesive social context.

However, for Ukrainian migrant families, the situation is even more intricate. Children are often exposed to both Ukrainian and Russian at home, creating a bilingual environment.

This existing bilingualism makes the acquisition of a third language — Polish — more challenging. In essence, these children are navigating active trilingualism, with Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish all playing roles in their linguistic development. The extent to which these languages mix depends on individual factors in each child's speech development. The socialization process and the influence of the primary society, comprising the child's immediate family and social circle, are also crucial. The primary society's language practices and attitudes towards language learning significantly affect the child's ability to acquire additional languages. A supportive and resource-rich environment can enhance language acquisition, while a lack of consistent language exposure and encouragement can hinder it.

The process of acquiring language proficiency touches on deeper issues of identity and belonging. For many immigrants, learning the language of their new country can be a source of pride and a step toward embracing a new identity. However, it can also create tension, particularly when there is pressure to assimilate at the expense of preserving one's native language and cultural heritage. This duality makes the role of language in immigrant integration a topic of ongoing debate and sensitivity. Furthermore, the support systems and resources available for language learning significantly impact how easily and successfully immigrants, especially children, can acquire proficiency. Effective language education programs that are inclusive and accessible can greatly enhance immigrants' ability to integrate and thrive in their new environments.

In conclusion, while the role of language in the well-being and integration of immigrants is multifaceted and often contentious, it remains a fundamental aspect of their socialization and adaptation. Language proficiency is vital for immigrants to engage with and contribute to their new communities, whether in monoethnic or diverse settings. For Ukrainian migrant families, managing bilingualism and trilingualism adds an extra layer of complexity, underscoring the importance of the primary society and the socialization process. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of the interplay between language, culture, and identity, along with a commitment to providing the necessary support and resources to facilitate this crucial aspect of the immigrant experience.

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