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LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL INEQUALITIES IN UKRAINE: MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL PRACTICES[1]

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Abstract: *Drawing from Bourdieu's idea of language as a factor of social inequality and distinction, we examine the symbolic power of monolingual (Ukrainian and Russian) and bilingual (Ukrainian-Russian) linguistic practices as captured before the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. To account for the legitimacy of both Ukrainian and Russian, we follow the extended version of Bourdieu's concept of the legitimate language (Søvik 2010) and overview the language ideologies that legitimate each of them. The data for this study comes from the survey "Social inequalities: perception by Ukrainian society" conducted in 2017–2018 by the Sociological Association of Ukraine. The novelty of our analysis is the introduction of an additional variable for Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals, which allowed us to add practices where both Ukrainian and Russian are reportedly used by the respondents.*

The analysis shows the quantitative results for the three identified groups (Ukrainian speakers, Russian speakers, Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals) in terms of language-related social inequalities and distinctions. To track social distinctions, we analyzed responses to questions on identification and perceived support of the Ukrainian state. In terms of social inequalities, we compared the three groups in their self-assessments of English language proficiency; social status; material welfare; sectors of the economy where they are employed; and their levels of mobility. We find that there are no significant social inequalities and distinctions

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as related to the use of either Ukrainian or Russian in Ukraine, with indirect evidence for greater symbolic power linked to the Ukrainian-Russian bilingual practice. Comparing the potential of monolingual and bilingual practices to become a factor of social tension, we state the absence of reasons for linguistic discrimination as measured before the start of the full-blown Russian war on Ukraine.

Key words: *legitimate language, social inequality, monolingual practices, bilingual practices, language ideology, Ukraine.*

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1. Introduction

Relations of communication are always, inevitably, power relations where natural language constitutes a basis for social inequality and distinction. According to Pierre Bourdieu (1991), the relations of power are not inherent in symbolic systems as such but derive from the social positions of those who use them. Capable of producing real effects like physical or economic power, symbolic power can be exercised only if it is disguised as something else, that is exercised "only with the complicity of those who do not want to know that they are subject to it or even that they themselves exercise it" (Bourdieu 1991: 164). Disguised as culturedness, prestige or good taste, symbolic power is the power to make people see and believe a particular view of the world and agree to what is "correct" and "appropriate" in it. Via this worldview, the domination of certain groups in society is legitimized while their cultures and modes of expression are privileged over others. Symbolic power is a "misrecognizable and legitimated" form of the other forms of power, says Bourdieu (1991: 170), and language is among the ways to exercise it legitimately.

A language variety endowed with symbolic power is the "legitimate language" (Bourdieu 1991) and linguistic skill in this language constitutes a person's linguistic capital, which translates to social mobility and material welfare. Individuals lacking competence in this variety, the "legitimate competence," (Bourdieu's 1991: 55) are excluded from interaction in those domains which can be accessed via the legitimate language. According to Bourdieu, who conceived of the linguistic market as unified, the mode of expression imposed as legitimate is the standard language since it is the variety linked to elites, promoted in education and backed by the state institutions. Hence, language does not only relate to communicating but, as Bourdieu says (1991: 167), also contributes to social division: concealed beneath the function of communication is always the function of separation, since in legitimate situations, that is on the appropriate market, only those competent in the legitimate language are privileged to communicate (Bourdieu 1977: 650).

Despite being one of the most comprehensive accounts of the production of legitimate language, Bourdieu's theoretical framework fails to explain how some languages can still dominate in situations where other languages are promoted by school and supported by state institutions. Kathryn A. Woolard (1985) showed that the privileged position of the Catalan language in Spain, in the context where the government has been supporting Castilian, has its basis in "primary economic relations on arrangements for everyday living" (Woolard 1985: 742) rather than the support of the state. It is this economic basis that gives authority to the Catalan language and grants it "covert prestige," which inverts the hierarchy of dominant values. Christopher Stroud's (2002) study of the linguistic market in Mozambique illustrates the hegemony of standard European Portuguese in a context where cultural institutions, political and economic processes lending support to legitimate language are absent. "Standard European Portuguese provides the means whereby social identities and moral stances are represented" (Stroud 2002: 271) and therefore holds a strong hegemonic position against vernacular Portuguese and African languages in Mozambique.

In her study of French-medium education in Ontario, Canada, Monica Heller (1996) describes how French is constructed as the legitimate language in advanced French-language classes while English, the dominant language of the province Ontario, is strongly suppressed. The legitimacy of English could, however, be recognized in general-level French-language classes and other subjects where English, but not any of the students' other first languages, was seen as an appropriate counterpart to be used. Stroud (2002) argues that an "alternative legitimacy" of another language could be explained by the emergence of a new ideology on which the authority of this language would rest.

Margarethe Søvik (2010) extends the definition of Bourdieu's concept of the legitimate language to make it applicable in cases where the language situation is dynamic or changing and the linguistic market is not unified. She agrees that "several languages may coexist as legitimate languages, and there may be several ideologies which account for an alternative legitimacy" (Søvik 2010: 6). Søvik considers legitimate not only the language endorsed by state institutions, but also the language "which one is expected to use in certain settings" where this language constitutes the norm (Søvik 2010: 8-9). In her study of Kharkiv, Ukraine, where both Ukrainian and Russian can be seen as legitimate languages, Søvik (2002) links the legitimacy of Ukrainian to the support of the state while Russian is legitimated by its use as an accustomed means of communication.

In this paper, we will look at the Ukrainian situation in general. Rather than examining language use in a separate city or region, we will analyze the results of a nationwide survey conducted in 2017–2018 to measure the perception of social inequality as related to language choices. The data analyzed in this paper were collected prior to the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, so the results of the analysis should be perceived as reflecting the then state of affairs. The full-scale invasion may have substantially changed the situation since then, which requires conducting a new investigation. In this paper, we intend to explore if there were any significant inequalities and social distinctions related to the use of either Ukrainian or Russian in Ukraine before the full-scale invasion.

Besides the two monolingual groups of Ukrainian speakers and Russian speakers singled out in the nationwide survey, we also take into account existing bilingual practices and include a third group of Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals in the analysis of the survey results. Alongside the identified language practices, we consider respondents' self-reported proficiency in English which is treated here as an indicator accompanying material status and social prestige. Thus, we seek to examine the linguistic capital related to each monolingual practice (Ukrainian or Russian), and also aim to detect bilingual (Ukrainian and Russian) linguistic practices and the symbolic power that is accorded to them. We set out to answer the following questions: does linguistic competence define significant social distinctions? Which linguistic competence relates to greater social mobility and an increase in material welfare? Which linguistic practices demonstrate a potential to become a factor of social tension? And is there any linguistic capital related to Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism in Ukraine?

In the following section, we will take a closer look at the ideologies legitimating each language since it is within this theoretical framework that the survey data will be discussed. After that, we will provide the details of the design of the survey and the method of collecting the data, and we will present the analysis of the survey results. We will then discuss the results and argue that, despite the different ideologies legitimating each language, neither linguistic competence (neither Ukrainian nor Russian) is perceived to be linked to greater success. Instead, a certain relation between linguistic competence and the respondents' material welfare can be detected in the case of foreign languages such as English, which is viewed in this study as an attribute accompanying social status and material welfare. The level of English proficiency rises within the group of Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals, which suggests that there is more access to valuable economic resources for them. We will also compare the potential of monolingual and bilingual practices to become a factor of social tension and conclude by affirming the absence of language-related reasons for the increase of social collision in Ukraine.

2. Ideologies of the Legitimate Language

In this section, we will overview ideologies which can account for the legitimacy of a particular language. These are commonly held beliefs used to justify the authority of a language, or its particular variety, to be respected and widely used. Within a critical approach, a language ideology is defined as "the cultural (or subcultural) system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine 1989: 255; see also Woolard and Schieffelin 1994; Woolard, Schieffelin and Kroskrity 1998; Kroskrity 2004; Woolard 2021). The concept of language ideology, thus, captures what Bourdieu meant by saying that language is not only about communication, but is also about social separation and material concerns.

The view of language as a neutral means of communication arose in the process of the standardization of modern French and is associated with the eighteenth-century Enlightenment (Geeraerts 2003). This view is also known as "anonymity" within language ideology research (Woolard 2016). This is the ideology on which dominant languages often rest as they are presented as open to all and universally available. Woolard (2008) gives an example of Standard English in North America which is perceived to be a neutral medium of communication, participation and inclusion in wider social and political domains. However, she remarks that Standard English is, in fact, not everybody's language since it does belong to specific "someones" and always functions in the interests of specific groups (e.g. Standard English in America is coded as "white") (Woolard 2008).

A language can be legitimated by yet another view, or an ideology, of language. Opposing the vision of language as a neutral communication tool is the view of language as a marker of identity. This view contrasts with the participatory ideal of the communication ideology by emphasizing a unique identity of those who speak the language and a particular conception of the world contained within it. Instead of stressing uniformity, the language-as-identity-marker view values diversity as it prioritizes the expressive function of language over the communicative function.

This ideology originated in the nineteenth-century Romanticism and is also referred to as "authenticity" whereby the value of a language is derived from its relationship to a particular community and culture (Woolard 2016). The function of the standard language is to emphasize a distinct identity of its speakers and in this way to separate them from the other groups. A clear example of standardization based on this ideology is the initial period of the formation of Standard Ukrainian which was conceived of as a living vernacular used primarily in the village and opposed to Russian as the language of communication of urban elites (Yavorska 2010). However, the Standard was, in fact, modelled on the language used in literary works of some Ukrainian writers (e.g., Ivan Kotliarevskyi, Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko, Marko Vovchok) and not on the actual folk speech.

In multilingual contexts, several languages may be held legitimate because the situation is dynamic and the linguistic market is not unified. This can be evident in domains prioritizing formal rather than informal use, or in situations where the desire for uniformity in communication confronts identity issues in the multinational dimension. These are the sites of the formation of language hierarchies which are beliefs in the unequal value of different languages not necessarily conforming with their officially designated roles. An illustration of language hierarchies enacting social hierarchies on the basis of linguistic differentiation is the film industry in Bollywood (Ganti 2016), where English has become a lingua franca in the process of filmmaking, prioritizing those possessing the linguistic skill for respective jobs. Against the dominance of English as "the unmarked, naturalized language of production," it is possible for Hindi to be valued on camera only, that is when spoken by actors, as a specific feature of Indian films (Ganti 2016: 128). Similarly, in a Finnish-Swedish corporation, English was perceived as "the most natural and legitimate choice" for official communication since it was not seen as belonging to either Finns or Swedes (Vaara et al. 2005: 617). At the same time, however, this choice could be utilized only by those who possessed the necessary linguistic competence, leaving others with no opportunities for professional success.

In Ukraine, the linguistic market has been defined by the dynamic use of two major languages – Ukrainian and Russian. From the end of the eighteenth through to the beginning of the twentieth century, the majority of modern Ukraine was subsumed by the Russian Empire with only a minor territory in the west, comprising Bukovyna, Zakarpattia and eastern Halychyna, belonging to Austro-Hungary at the time. The use of Ukrainian was restricted both in the part of Ukraine under Austro-Hungary and in the part under the Russian Empire, where the public use of the language was forbidden by official decrees. This policy, referred to as "Russification," continued throughout the Soviet time with the aim of converging Ukrainian and Russian in structure and entirely marginalizing Ukrainian to a language of limited use. By the time of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the Ukrainian language had been considerably forced out of use by the former common imperial language – Russian – primarily in the south-eastern parts, as well as in large industrial centers all over Ukraine. However, Ukrainian was not completely superseded by Russian even in the southeast, where the rural areas still remained Ukrainian-speaking (Masenko 2010: 97). In the early years of independence, Russian enjoyed higher prestige, still dominating the southeast, despite the language planning prioritizing

the use of Ukrainian (Ivanova 2013: 264; Kulyk 2015: 287). Additionally, while surveys revealed that the prestige of speaking Russian had been surpassed by that of speaking Ukrainian and English already by 2008 (Masenko 2010: 110), younger generations continued relying on Russian, which was seen as more prestigious (Kulyk 2015: 287) and perceived as a normative practice by them (Friedman 2016: 173). The shift toward Russian ended around 2012; however, the language remained a major means of transnational communication and globalized job markets (Kulyk 2015: 297-298).

For these reasons, in the Ukrainian context, where Ukrainian and Russian are widely used, both languages may be considered legitimate. The legitimacy of the Ukrainian language derives from its status as the state language, whereby it is promoted in education and supported by the state, as well as from its symbolic significance as the language of the Ukrainian nation. Søvik (2010) suggests that the legitimacy of Ukrainian is, thus, primarily constructed within the "identification" dimension, while it can also be used as a communication tool. The legitimacy of Russian is secured by its being a habitual means of communication normally used in certain domains. The legitimacy of Russian is thus defined in terms of its "utility" related to economic capital as it facilitates access to certain sectors of the labor market (Sovik 2010). Recent research shows a relative stability in language attitudes towards Ukrainian and Russian over time: while Russian is still primarily valued as a means of communication, the importance of Ukrainian is both communicative and symbolic (Kulyk 2017). In view of the dynamism of the linguistic market and growing support for Ukrainian on the part of the state, the legitimacy of this language is increasingly being constructed within both the identification and the utility dimensions, the latter attitude now also evident in younger generations (Kudriavtseva 2021).

Though changes in the linguistic market may dictate a more widespread acceptance of the attitude that Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism is beneficial in terms of the linguistic and economic capital that it provides, the hegemonic ideologies legitimating the standard varieties of Ukrainian and Russian significantly overshadow the value of bilingual practice. The ideology of standard language is built upon the construct of an ideal discrete language which entails heightened concerns for linguistic purism and deprecation of language mixing of all kinds. Under this view, the Ukrainian-Russian mixed variety *surzhyk* is considered illegitimate (Bilaniuk 2005; Friedman 2021) while Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism is also delegitimized in public discourse shaped by Ukraine's postcolonial narrative.

The postcolonial narrative frames the Russian language as the "tragic colonial legacy" in Ukraine; the result of Russification policy which lasted for about three hundred years (Pavlenko 2011: 48). Consequently, Russian is perceived as alien to Ukrainians in Ukraine, "the language of the former empire" linked to a Eurasian identity and "authoritarian Eurasian values" (Pavlenko 2011: 49). Ukrainian arises as the only language that "belongs" to Ukraine and relates to a European identity, the ideology encoded in the expression *nasha ridna mova* prominent in hegemonic discourse (Friedman 2016: 168). Its basic tenets proclaim the necessity "to undo the Russification of the Ukrainian population" since Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism is a "distorted" and

"anomalous situation" and monolingualism is the only "normal" state of affairs (Pavlenko 2011: 48, 52) [cf. the "normalization" debates in Catalonia (Woolard 2020)]. This brings about the so-called "split-identity framework" (Kudriavtseva 2021: 155) which discursively frames societal bilingualism in Ukraine [cf. the "divided identity" view that frames bilingualism in Catalonia (Woolard 2020: 265-266)]. The split-identity stance nurtures the "subtractive bilingual" model of language acquisition (see Riley 2011: 500) whereby the acquisition of Ukrainian implies a total erasure of the use of Russian.

Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism is a widespread phenomenon in Ukraine (Shevchuk-Kliuzheva 2020), however, often speakers are not willing to recognize their being bilingual either because bilingualism is stigmatized (Csernicskó 2017) or because of the major perception that only active and/or balanced bilingualism, where competency is equally strong in both languages, is deemed valuable as part of one's cultural capital (Lakhtikova 2017: 147). Moreover, the term "bilingualism" is compromised in western Ukraine where it has been traditionally identified with aggressive Russification (Lakhtikova 2017: 153).

Concerns for the protection of Ukraine's Russian-speaking population have become for Russia "a justification" for aggression since the invasion of Donbas and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 (Stepanenko 2017). The fact that the Russian language has been used to justify Russia's military aggression against Ukraine highlights the symbolic value of Ukrainian and correspondently diminishes the practical significance of Russian as a neutral medium of communication. The 2013–2014 Euromaidan and the Russian annexation of Crimea and parts of Donbas gave rise to the idea that speaking Russian "can undermine Ukraine's peace and security" (Bilaniuk 2016: 147) while speaking Ukrainian is a sign of belonging to Ukraine (Seals 2019: 114).

Though the war has significantly politicized language choice, a counter ideology, which sees this choice as transparent and politically neutral, has not lost its power, since "many people's deeds show that being Russophone often goes along with being a Ukrainian patriot" (Bilaniuk 2016: 142). There are also indications of a more positive appreciation of bi-/multilingualism within the recent developments in the language pedagogy for Ukrainian as a second language, which has been part of language activism since the Euromaidan (Kudriavtseva 2023).

Against the backdrop of this complex set of conflicting and contesting ideologies, it is hard to predict which linguistic competence can be perceived as more valuable in the linguistic market of Ukraine. Among the factors defining the social inequality of different groups, there are not only long-term and gradual processes such as state support and promotion via education, but also the effects of influential discourses shaped by the war as well as the overall politicization of symbolic spaces.

Such a perspective foregrounds monolingual practices in the first place. For instance, the Ukrainian legislation as well as the hegemonic discourses of education and civil service legitimize the use of Ukrainian in these domains. The discourse of cultural heritage legitimizes the linguistic practices of ancestors, particularly parents, and this supports the monolingual practices of family communication. The discourse of ethnic identity and the "identification" ideology link language to a particular ethnicity and justify

the use of one respective language as legitimate for that group. The link of language to ethnic identity has also characterized Ukrainian legislation: for instance, from the 1990s until specific laws on education were passed,[1] local authorities would determine the number of schools operating in particular languages on the basis of the ethnic composition of the population (Kulyk 2009: 19).

The practice of bilingualism is a separate phenomenon relevant for the study of the relationship between linguistic practices and social inequalities. Of special interest is the bilingual competence in the case of Ukraine since here it has hardly been legitimated by influential discourses. Here, bilingual practices are called forth by practical reasons and grounded in urgent needs, rather than sanctioned by specific ideologies. In this respect, self-reported linguistic practices in various communicative situations should be considered too, since these may differ from those explicitly recognized in terms of deliberate language choices (i. e. as responses to general questions on language spoken in everyday life).

3. Data and Method

Empirical data presented and analyzed in this paper was obtained within the framework of the project "Social inequalities: perception by Ukrainian society" carried out in 2017–2018 by the Sociological Association of Ukraine with the financial support of the "Renaissance" International Foundation. The main objective of the project was to determine the types of social inequality that significantly increase the level of social tension within Ukrainian society. The aspects surveyed in the project included inequalities in access to education, professional self-realization, the labor market, opportunities to start one's own business, power and political participation, the consumer market, quality medical services, means of personal safety, information technology and the Internet, cultural resources, as well as opportunities related to linguistic competence.

The data of the "Social inequalities: perception by Ukrainian society" research, analyzed in this paper, were collected by the method of mass survey. The primary data collecting was carried out by Oleksandr Yaremenko Ukrainian Institute of Social Research between August 28 and September 8, 2017. The subject of the survey was the adult population of Ukraine over age 18 residing in all regions, except for the temporarily occupied territories of Crimea and Donbas. The sample is representative in terms of age, gender and place of residence (e.g., urban, suburban, rural). The sample population is 2046 respondents, comprising 1107 women and 939 men. The mass survey was conducted in 25 territorial and administrative units of Ukraine: the Ukraine's 24 oblasts (Vinnytsia, Volyn, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zhytomyr, Zakarpattia, Zaporizhzhia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Luhansk, Lviv, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmelnytskyi, Cherkasy, Chernivtsi, Chernihiv) and the city of Kyiv.

[1] The 2017 Law of Ukraine "On Education" and the 2020 Law of Ukraine "On Complete General Secondary Education" provide for Ukrainian as the only means of instruction in post-primary school education in all of Ukraine's state-funded schools.

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The respondents' distribution by age is as follows: 421 respondents aged between 18-29, 388 respondents between 30-39, 350 respondents between 40-49, 360 respondents between 50-59 and 527 respondents aged 60 and older. According to the survey results, the age of Ukrainians does not affect their language practices. A z-test reveals slightly more Ukrainian speakers among respondents aged over 40. Variation in the number of bilinguals and Russian speakers in different age groups is not statistically significant. In general, there is no relationship between the variables "age" and "language practices:" the chi-square test is insignificant (Chi-Square Tests: Pearson Chi-Square — 10.014, df — 8, Asymptotic Significance (2-sided) — 0.264; N of Valid Cases — 2047).

The data analyzed in this paper covers the issue of language practices as related to the kinds of inequalities mentioned above. The data were obtained using individual standardized face-to-face interviews conducted at the respondents' place of residence. All the respondents had to answer the same questions from the suggested list (available both in Ukrainian and Russian; the language of the interview was chosen by respondents). Answers to the questions on language practices, foreign-language proficiency and personal material welfare were recorded as reported by the respondents. This means that to obtain the data on the use of languages, language proficiency and income, we did not use any specific language tests, but accepted the respondents' self-assessments.

The analysis of the data presented in this paper is given in five subsections. First, we focus on the questions of the part of the survey devoted to language issues. These questions were aimed at collecting information on actual language use as well as the opinions of respondents on potential tensions between various linguistic groups. The questions were formulated taking into account previous studies on language practices in Ukraine (Vyshniak 2009; Skokova 2018). The list of questions is as follows:

> *In which language do you usually communicate… (at home, at work or educational institutions, in public places, with friends and acquaintances)?*
>
> *Which foreign languages do you speak and how fluently?*
>
> *In your opinion, is the following statement correct: the successes and achievements of Ukrainian citizens do not depend on the language they speak?*
>
> *Are relations between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking citizens tense in Ukraine?*

The analysis of the responses to the first question on language choice in various communicative situations allowed us to introduce an additional variable for the Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals. This means that we treat "bilingualism" as a variable in this study. The group of respondents seen as bilingual in practice comprises all the respondents who reported using more than one language in different communicative settings (e.g., those who chose the option "Ukrainian" for communication at work and the option "Russian" for communication with family at home) while not necessarily explicitly recognizing their own bilingualism (i.e. choosing the option "Ukrainian and Russian" for various communication situations).

We merged these respondents into one group of Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals since they reported on the use of more than one language in different contexts. Ukrainian-Russian bilingual practices, as we understand them here, do not refer to *surzhyk*, but include the ability to communicate in Ukrainian and Russian, regularly switching between them.

The following subsections present the results of statistical analysis (z-test — to confirm the statistical significance of the differences in percentages; the construction of an additional variable; xi-square test – to define the correlation of indicators; ANOVA — to estimate the difference between the mean values of self-assessed social status on the seven-point scale (the imaginary ladder) among the respondents with different levels of English proficiency) carried out in order to answer our research questions. At the core of our analysis is the data for the three linguistic groups (Ukrainian speakers, Russian speakers and Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals) and their comparison in terms of social inequalities and distinctions. In order to track social distinctions, we posed questions on identification (i.e. nationality — *національність*) and the perceived support of all ethnic groups by the state. The exact wording of these survey questions is as follows:

> *What nationality do you consider yourself to be?*
>
> *In your opinion, is the following statement correct: The Ukrainian state provides equal opportunities and creates equal living conditions for all ethnic groups*?

To elucidate social inequalities as related to linguistic choices, we compared the three identified groups (Ukrainian speakers, Russian speakers and Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals) in terms of their foreign-language proficiency; social status (using an imaginary ladder locating people at different points); material welfare (using a five-point scale where 1 is “very low”, 2 is “low”, 3 is “below average”, 4 is “average”, and 5 is “above average”); sectors of the economy where they are engaged in jobs (agrarian, industrial, industrial services, education and health, postindustrial services); and levels of mobility (visits to other countries for any purpose in the three years before the survey). The statistical use of these indicators allowed us to test the hypothesis about the impact of language practices on social inequalities in Ukraine.

4. Results

In this section, we present the results of the nationwide survey. To allow an examination of Ukrainian society’s perception of social inequality as related to language use, we first measure self-reported linguistic practices and competence and show the responses to the questions on the language of communication (Ukrainian, Russian, other) in different settings. Then we show the data on ethnic identification in relation to the linguistic practices that we detected, followed by the respondents’ evaluation of the state support for various ethnic groups in Ukraine. After that, we present the results on the perceived relation of Ukrainian citizens’ successes and achievements to their language of communication as well as on their perceptions of existing tensions among various ethnic and linguistic groups in Ukraine. Then, we give details of the respondents’ self-reported foreign-language proficiency and draw correlations between the levels of proficiency and the monolingual and bilingual language practices.

Finally, we compare the three linguistic groups in terms of social inequalities understood as varying social status, material welfare, external mobility (travels abroad) and job prestige.

4.1. Linguistic practices: monolingualism and bilingualism in everyday communication

The distribution of responses to the questions on the language of communication in various communicative situations (at home, at work, in public places and with friends and acquaintances) is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Language of communication in various communicative situations (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

	with family at home	at work / in educational institutions	in public places	with friends and acquaintances
Ukrainian	**43.5**	40.9	39.9	39.0
Russian	**34.8**	31.7	32.8	33.3
Both Ukrainian and Russian	21.4	27.3	27.2	**27.5**
Other	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2

Table 1 shows that the dominant languages of communication are Ukrainian and Russian. Other languages named by the respondents included Crimean Tatar, Moldavian, Azerbaijani, Polish and Slovak. The order of distribution of language use in the surveyed communicative situations is similar: in all types of communication, the Ukrainian language prevails, followed by Russian and then by bilingual practices. The use of the Russian language is lower than the use of Ukrainian: by 9.2% in communication at work and by 5.7% in communication with friends. The distribution of monolingual and bilingual practices in communication at work and in public places has no significant differences.

The analytical design, in particular the introduction of the additional variable, made it possible to reveal the number of respondents who are monolingual or bilingual in all the given communicative settings (Fig. 1). The use of the additional variable allows us to add to the bilingual competence claimed by the respondents those bilingual practices reported on in various communicative situations, that is, where both Ukrainian and Russian are used for different types of communication. The share of respondents who communicate in Ukrainian both privately and publicly is 36.6%, in Russian – 27.2%, while 17.6% of respondents use both languages in all the situations surveyed. Other variants of bilingualism make up 18.6% (Fig. 1), for example, respondents recognize that they are bilingual at home and speak Ukrainian in other situations. In general, the share of respondents who use both Ukrainian and Russian in various types of communication is 36.2 %.

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Figure 1. Language practices in Ukraine (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

Table 2 is based on language practices reported in Figure 1 and shows the results of the regional distribution of monolingual and bilingual practices. Ukrainian-speaking practices prevail in the west and the center, while Russian-speaking practices dominate in the east and the south.[1] The level of bilingual practices rises from the west to the north. The highest prevalence of bilingual practices is found in the north (44.0%), Donbas (the controlled territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions) (50.6%) and the capital Kyiv (62.8%) (Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of language practices by region (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

	Survey region						
	West	**Center**	**North**	**East**	**Donbas**	**South**	**city of Kyiv**
Ukrainian speakers	**86.5**	**63.2**	40.8	6.9	1.7	8.7	10.3
Russian speakers	0.6	8.3	15.2	**51.3**	47.7	**48.7**	26.9
Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals	12.9	28.5	**44.0**	41.8	**50.6**	42.6	**62.8**

[1] The grouping of oblasts into larger regions is as follows. West: Volyn, Zakarpattia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Ternopil, Chernivtsi (N = 428); Center: Vinnytsia, Kirovohrad, Poltava, Khmelnytsky, Cherkasy (N = 315); North: Zhytomyr, Kyiv, Sumy, Chernihiv (N = 274); East: Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Kharkiv (N = 462); Donbas: controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts; South: Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson (N = 221); the city of Kyiv (N = 158).

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4.2. Identification and state support

In Table 3, we compare the results on self-reported identification of monolingual and bilingual respondents. The data show that there is no significant difference in self-reported nationality between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking respondents and those respondents who use both Ukrainian and Russian. Ukrainian identification prevails in all three of the groups, with only 5.1% of bilinguals and 18% of Russian speakers naming their nationality as Russian (Table 3). In terms of the whole survey, 91% of all respondents identify their nationality as Ukrainian and 6.9% as Russian. Table 3 shows self-identification by Ukrainian speakers, bilinguals and Russian speakers.

Table 3. Self-reported identification in relation to linguistic practices (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

"What nationality do you consider yourself to be?"	Linguistic practices		
	Ukrainian speakers	Bilinguals	Russian speakers
Ukrainian	99,4	93,2	80,6
Russian	0,6	5,1	18
Other	0	1,7	1,4

The introduction of the additional variable for bilingual respondents diversifies the linguistic landscape of Ukraine and makes it possible to study the perceptions of monolingual and bilingual groups of respondents in terms of influences of their language use on their social positions. These perceptions include opinions on state support as well as ensuing tensions between different ethnolinguistic groups in Ukrainian society.

Table 4 shows a correlation between language practices and the perception of the activities of the state to ensure equal opportunities and living conditions for various ethnic groups in Ukraine (xi-square = 41.45, $p < 0.001$). The bilingual respondents' evaluations of state support are lower than those of the Ukrainian speakers, but do not differ from the evaluations reported by the Russian speakers both in terms of positive and negative responses to the respective question.

Table 4. Answers to the question "In your opinion, is the following statement correct: "The Ukrainian state provides equal opportunities and creates equal living conditions for all ethnic groups" in relation to language practices (in percentages; [a,b] different letters indicate significant differences by *z-test* at the level of 0.05, and identical letters mean that such differences are absent)

	Ukrainian speakers	Bilinguals	Russian speakers
Incorrect	28.9 [a]	39.3 [b]	45.4 [b]
Correct	63.7 [a]	54.0 [b]	47.4 [b]
Undecided	7.4	6.7	7.2

4.3. Linguistic practices, inequalities and social tension

Table 5 shows the responses to a general question on the perceived dependence of Ukrainian citizens' successes on their language of communication. Here there is no statistically significant difference between the positions of monolingual and bilingual respondents (xi-square = 3.24, p = 0.519). This result demonstrates that the language of communication is not generally perceived as a privilege conditioning success and advantage by the population in Ukraine.

Table 5. Responses to the question "In your opinion, is the following statement correct: "Successes and achievements of Ukrainian citizens do not depend on the language they speak" in relation to language practices (in percentages)

	Ukrainian speakers	**Bilinguals**	**Russian speakers**
Incorrect	18.5	19.9	20.9
Correct	75.1	74.2	74.7
Undecided	6.4	5.9	4.4

Table 6 summarizes the responses to questions on possible tensions among ethnic, regional and linguistic groups in Ukraine. The results show that all three linguistic groups perceive the tensions between Ukraine's various regions to be most salient (Table 6).

Table 6. Positive responses to the question on tensions in relation to language practices (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

Are there tensions in Ukraine between...	Ukrainian speakers	Bilinguals	Russian speakers	xi-square	p-level
...ethnic Ukrainians and the other national and ethnic groups	15.8	18.2	21.0	8.176	0.085
...residents of the country's different regions	22.2	34.8	32.9	33.658	< 0.001
...the inhabitants of the west and the southeast	28.4	37.9	38.0	24.267	< 0.001
...Ukrainian speakers and Russian speakers	21.8	17.2	18.4	7.327	0.120

4.4. Inequalities and foreign-language proficiency

The questions reported on in Table 7 asked the respondents to assess their own level of foreign-language proficiency. The results show that the most common foreign language mastered by the respondents is English. About half of the respondents (45.1%) reported some level of English-language proficiency; for German this figure is 13.5%, for Polish it is 9.2%, and for French it is 4.5% (Table 7).

Table 7. The level of foreign-language proficiency (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

	Not proficient	Initial level	Average level	Sufficient level	Very high level
in English	54.9	25.0	15.0	4.3	0.8
in German	86.5	10.6	2.5	0.4	0.0
in Polish	90.8	6.5	1.9	0.6	0.2
in French	95.5	3.4	0.8	0.3	0.0

The results of the survey show that there is a correlation between the self-assessed level of English-language proficiency and self-assessed social status (the xi-square test is significant: xi-square = 164.664, $p < 0.001$) (Fig. 2). Figure 2 depicts the steps of an imaginary ladder. The lowest step 1 locates those who assess their social status as the lowest, and the highest step 7 locates those who assess their status as high. The percentage of those who see themselves as not proficient in English decreases from the first to the fourth step (45%), while it remains almost the same at steps five, six and seven: about half (from 58% to 54%) of those respondents who assess their social status as average and above are to a certain extent proficient in English.

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However, this proficiency is not an exclusive sign of middle or high social status: advanced proficiency in English increases from 2% at the first step to 17% at the seventh, that is the highest step of the ladder. This means that there are people with high level proficiency in English not only at the higher steps of the social status ladder, but also on the lower steps.

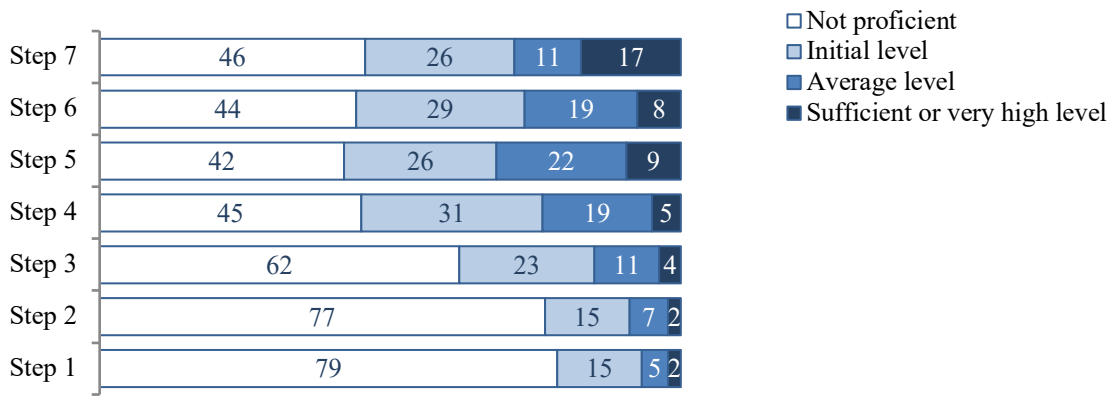

Figure 2. English-language proficiency on the steps of an imaginary ladder locating people of different social status (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

The relationship between the level of English-language proficiency and social status is more clearly shown in Figure 3. The average self-assessment of one's social status on the seven-point scale (the imaginary ladder) by the respondents with different levels of English proficiency has significant differences (ANOVA, $F = 42.264$, $p < 0.001$). In particular, the scores of those who do not speak English at all differ at the 0.05 level (3.37) from those who have an initial (3.85) or average level (4.04). The average score of those who assess their English-language proficiency as sufficient and very high is significantly higher (4.23).

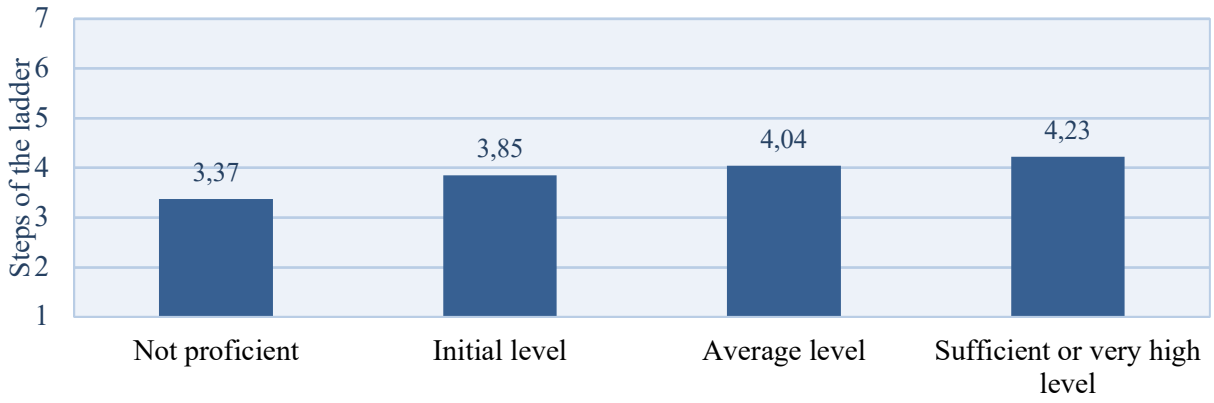

Figure 3. Average positions of people with different levels of English proficiency on the steps of an imaginary ladder which locates respondents with different social status: the lowest step 1 locates those who assess their social status as the lowest, and the highest step 7 locates those who assess their status as high (average values)

Figure 4 shows how an increase in the level of English proficiency is accompanied by an increase in the respondents' material welfare, which is depicted with the help of a scale diagram (Fig. 4). For groups with different levels of English proficiency, the average trend of assessing one's material welfare increases: from "below average" for the initial level of English proficiency to "above average" for the sufficient and high levels.

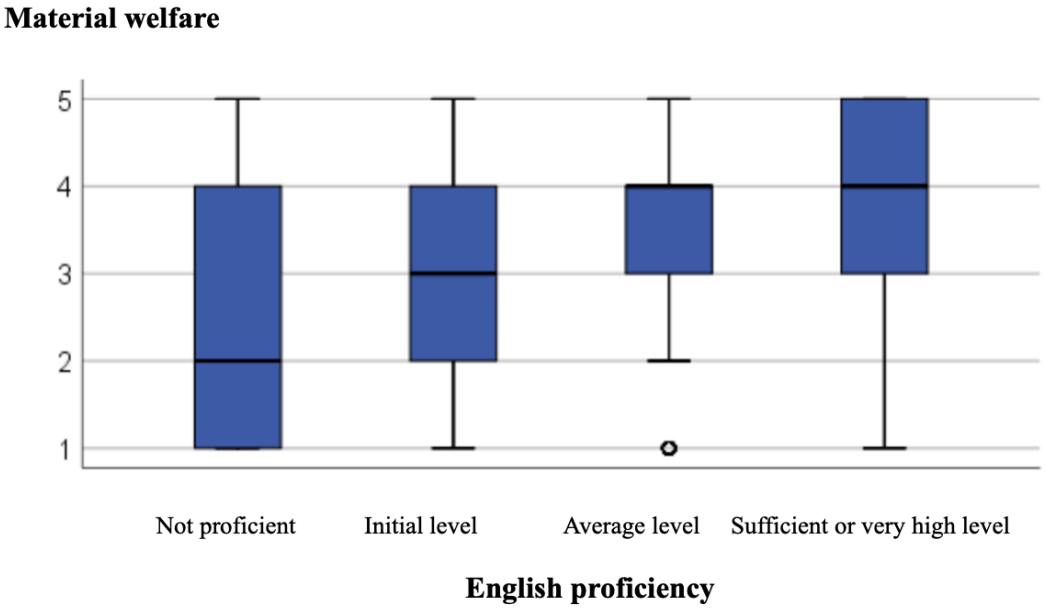

Figure 4. Comparison of the respondents' self-assessment of their material welfare* with their self-assessed levels of English proficiency (*material welfare: 1 — "very low", 2 — "low", 3 — "below average", 4 — "average", 5 — "above average")

Figure 5 depicts the relationship between the respondents' English-language proficiency and occupation (xi-square test is significant: xi-square = 55.979, $p < 0.001$). The lowest English proficiency is found in the agrarian sector: there, only a quarter of the respondents assess their English to be of initial and average levels. In the industrial sector, the figure increases to 55.1%, of which 3.8% of respondents consider themselves to have sufficient and high levels of English proficiency. For the sectors of industrial and post-industrial services, as well as education and health care, more than 50% of respondents declare either initial or sufficient and very high levels of proficiency in English.

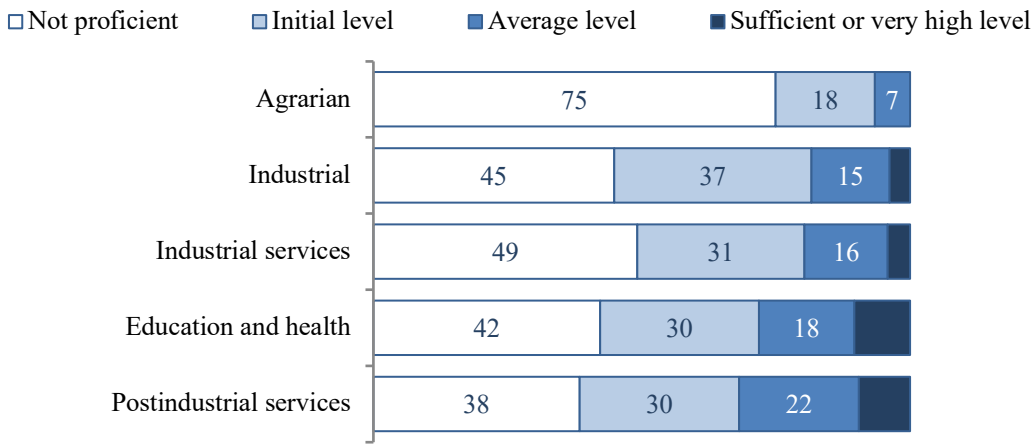

Figure 5. Level of English proficiency in different sectors of the economy (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

The level of English proficiency is significantly higher among those respondents who report to have travelled abroad (xi-square test = 168.177, $p < 0.001$) (Fig. 6). However, 30.3% of those who travelled for the purposes of temporary occupation, study, holidays and leisure, visiting relatives, medical treatment, or participation in conferences or business trips recognize no level of proficiency in English.

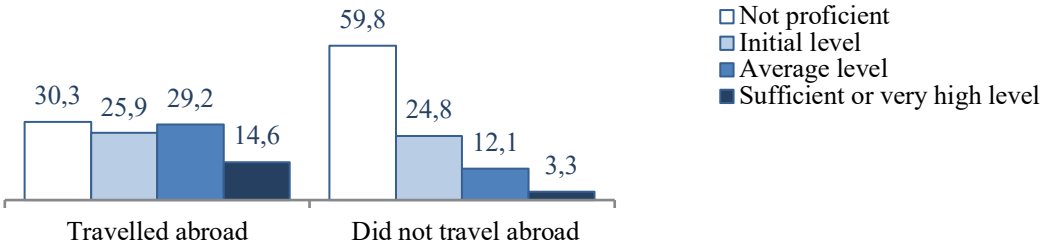

Figure 6. Levels of English-language proficiency for respondents with different levels of mobility (visits abroad for various purposes within the three years preceding the survey; in percentages)

Proficiency in foreign languages (especially English) can be seen as an accompanying indicator of material status and social prestige. The results of the survey depicted in Figures 2-6 suggest that the higher the respondents assess their material welfare and social position, the higher they evaluate their English language proficiency and the more probable it is for them to be engaged in jobs within more profitable sectors of the economy.

4.5. Inequality and linguistic practices

In our study, we also examined the relationship between the level of English-language proficiency and monolingual and bilingual practices. Table 8 shows the differences among the three studied groups of Ukrainian speakers, Russian speakers and Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals in relation to the level of English-language proficiency that they declare. While the Ukrainian speakers show the highest rate of no proficiency in English (64.8%) and the Russian speakers tend to have the highest rate at

the initial level (31.7%), the bilingual respondents most often rate their English language proficiency as average, sufficient and very high (25%) (Table 8).

Table 8. Levels of English-language proficiency in relation to language practices (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

	Ukrainian speakers	Bilinguals	Russian speakers	In general
Not proficient	**64.8**	50.1	47.5	54.9
Initial level	20.3	24.9	**31.7**	25.0
Average level	11.5	**18.2**	15.3	15.0
Sufficient or very high level	3.4	**6.8**	5.5	5.1

At the same time, however, the statistical analysis shows the absence of significant differences between the monolingual and bilingual groups in terms of social inequality. The comparison of the average positions of the groups on the steps of the imaginary social ladder depicts the absence of significant differences (ANOVA, F = 1.452, *p* = 0.234) (Fig. 7).

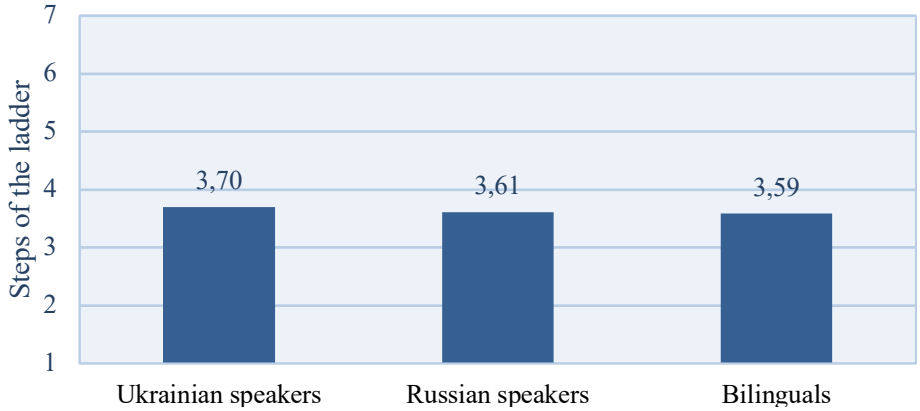

Figure 7. Average positions of respondents with different language practices on the steps of an imaginary ladder which locates respondents with different social status: the lowest step 1 locates those who assess their social status as the lowest, the highest step 7 locates those who assess their status as high (average values)

The comparison of the material welfare as reported by monolingual and bilingual respondents also shows no differences (Fig. 8).

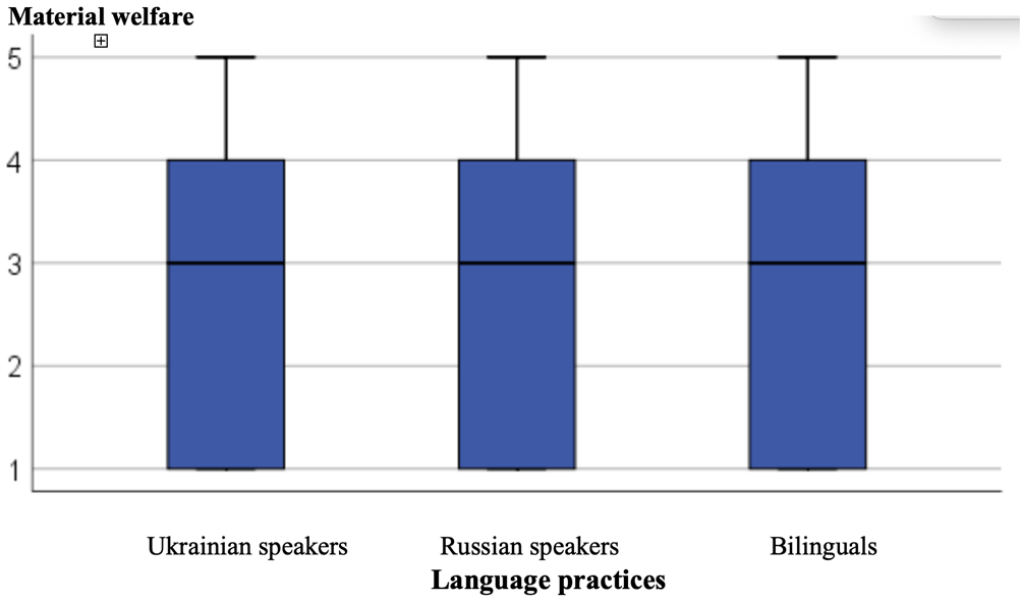

Figure 8. Comparison of material welfare* for respondents with different language practices (*Material welfare: 1 — "very low", 2 — "low", 3 — "below average", 4 — "average", 5 — "above average")

The scale diagram shows that Ukrainian-speaking, Russian-speaking and bilingual respondents report the same level of material welfare. Among them, there are those who assess their material welfare as "higher than average," this being the highest level of self-assessment for the three groups. The average tendency for self-assessment of material welfare for the three linguistic groups is located at the level of "below average."

The comparison of the presence of monolinguals and bilinguals in different sectors of the economy also shows no significant differences (xi-square = 7.664, p = 0.264), except for the agrarian sector (Fig. 9). Here, the share of Ukrainian speakers significantly prevails and constitutes 60.8%, while the share of Russian speakers is only 6.3%.

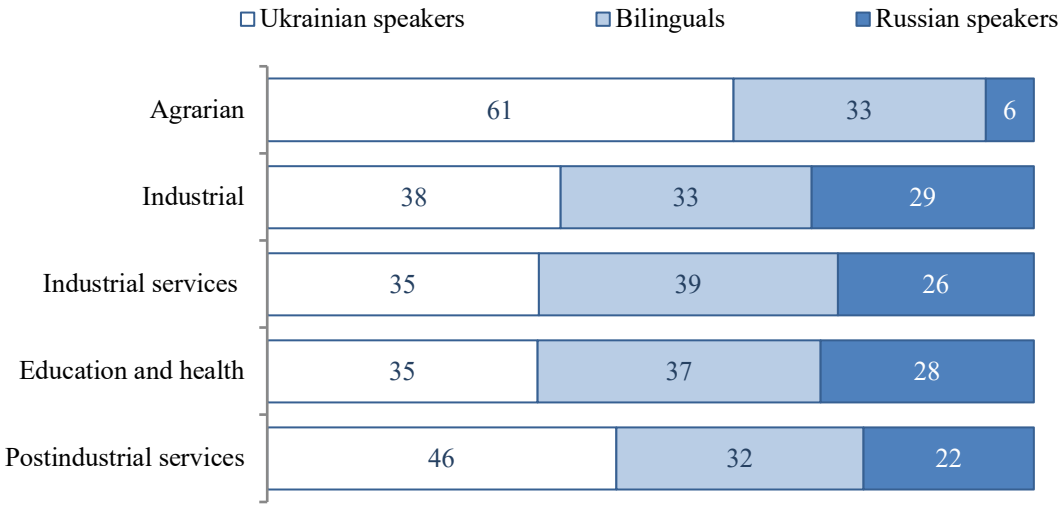

Figure 9. Language practices in different sectors of the economy (by percentage of those who answered the questions)

As for external mobility, that is travelling abroad, the share of Ukrainian speakers is higher among those who have never travelled abroad (Fig. 10). The share of bilingual respondents prevails among those who had visited other countries for various purposes within the three years preceding the survey. This is another characteristic which singles out bilinguals in terms of inequality, in addition to the already mentioned higher self-assessments of proficiency in English.

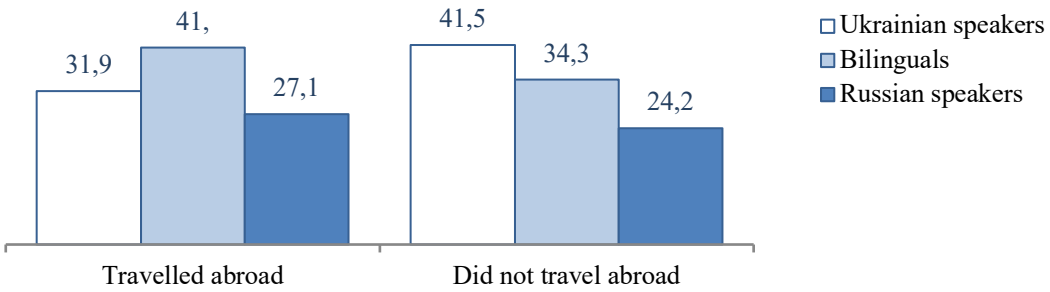

Figure 10. Language practices of respondents with different levels of mobility (travelling abroad for various purposes within the three years preceding the survey; in percentages)

5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this section, we will summarize the analysis of the results of the nationwide survey to trace the inequalities and social distinctions that can be seen as linked to particular languages in Ukraine. We will also compare the symbolic power of Ukrainian and Russian, as well as of Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, in terms of their relation to social mobility and material welfare. Though the survey also asked respondents to report on their foreign language proficiency, and the level of proficiency in such foreign language as English was related to the monolingual and bilingual practices, it is important to bear in mind that we did not consider English language proficiency in terms of its symbolic power. Neither did we examine ideologies underpinning the perception of English, nor its legitimating discourse. The focus of our study is primarily on Ukrainian and Russian, as well as on Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, and the symbolic power related to them. The English language proficiency is, therefore, considered here a stand in for measures of external mobility which can be available to different people in a varying degree.

The analysis of the survey results shows that Ukrainian is more often used in both private and public communication. Ukrainian is more often spoken at home (43.5% of all respondents), at work (40.9%), in public places (39.9%) and with acquaintances and friends (39.0%). Russian is less often used at home (34.8% of all respondents), at work (31.7%), in public places (32.8%) and with acquaintances and friends (33.3%). The data shows that, while communication with friends is the most common context for bilingual practices (27.5%), communication in the family shows the highest indicators of monolingual practice (43.5% for Ukrainian and 34.8% for Russian). These results mirror the idea of family communication as largely monocultural and, as a result, monolingual.

In terms of regional distribution, Ukrainian dominates western and central regions (86.5% and 63.2% respectively), while Russian is more often used in the east and south (51.3% and 48.7% respectively). The majority of Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals reside in the north (44.0%), the controlled territories of Donbas (50.6%) and the capital Kyiv (62.8%). It should be stressed that the share of bilinguals in the east and south is also rather high: 41.8% in the east and 42.6% in the southern regions. These results testify to the growing significance of the Ukrainian language all over Ukraine and especially in the northern and southeastern regions; that is, the share of bilinguals has increased there because of a wider spread of the Ukrainian language. In line with earlier surveys relating the importance of Ukrainian to both the communicative and symbolic dimensions (Kulyk 2017), the language is increasingly perceived as a valuable resource in the north and southeast of Ukraine which was traditionally seen as largely Russian-speaking.

This tendency continues the trend of the so-called "bilingualization"—a major disposition of the speakers to use both Ukrainian and Russian in communication—characteristic of the central and northern regions and the capital Kyiv around 2008 (Ivanova 2013). A new finding is that the bilingualization has since also spread to the eastern and southern regions, with a remarkable figure of more than half of bilingual respondents residing in the controlled territories of Donbas in 2018. This can be seen as a natural development of the sociolinguistic situation there, taking into account the suggestion that Russian speakers in Ukraine are, in fact, passive bilinguals; that is, they have a passive competency in Ukrainian in addition to their fluency in Russian (Lakhtikova 2017). Another new result of our survey is that the central region was found to have now become predominantly Ukrainian-speaking, the regional sociolinguistic dynamics suggesting a view that Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism may be a transitional stage in the process of public Ukrainianization.

It is our focus on the dynamics of the language situation in Ukraine that draws attention to bilingual practice. The introduction of an additional variable for bilingual respondents allows us to single out the share of bilinguals equaling 36.2% in the whole sample, with 36.6% of Ukrainian speakers and 27.2% of Russian speakers. The share of Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals turns out to be significant enough to be tested for relevant social distinctions. In terms of self-reported nationality, there is no difference between Ukrainian-speaking respondents and bilinguals, where the majority identify as Ukrainians (99.4% and 93.2% respectively). However, in the group of Russian speakers, the share of those who recognized their nationality as Russian (18%) is significantly higher. The question on nationality links to the next question on equal support of ethnic groups by the Ukrainian state as it is perceived by groups of monolingual and bilingual respondents. Since language is often linked to ethnic identity in hegemonic discourse, the responses to this question on state support can be interpreted as the respondents' perceptions of the support not only for ethnic groups, but also for their respective languages. The difference here is significant: a higher share of Ukrainian-speaking respondents (63.7%) agrees with the statement that the state equally supports all ethnic groups in Ukraine; among bilinguals and Russian speakers, the share of positive responses is significantly lower (54.0% and 47.4% respectively). Taking into account the fact that the overwhelming majority of each group identifies as

Ukrainians, and that the Ukrainian language is legitimated by the state, the smaller number of positive responses on the part of Russian-speaking and bilingual respondents can be interpreted as their perception of unequal support for languages. The ideology of "identification" legitimates support for the Ukrainian language and for Ukrainian ethnic identity since this ideological framework conflates the two. Hence, there are more Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians who agree with the statement while those who can draw from the experiences of using another language (bilinguals and Russian speakers) more often disagree.

At the same time, however, neither of the monolingual groups, nor the bilingual respondents, tend to see the successes of Ukrainian citizens as dependent on their language use: around 75% in each group agree on the absence of such a dependence, while only around 20% of the respondents disagree. Likewise, the majority within the three groups report the absence of any tensions between ethnic Ukrainians and the other ethnic groups in Ukraine: the number of those who perceive the interethnic relationships to be tense is lowest among the Ukrainian-speaking respondents (15.8%) and slightly increases within the two other groups (18.2% of bilinguals and 21.0% of Russian speakers). Any tensions between Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine are also largely imperceptible: here, Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals feel least tense, with 17.2% of positive responses, this figure slightly increasing for Russian speakers (18.4%) and Ukrainian speakers (21.8%). More pronounced in all three groups is the perception of tensions between the residents of Ukraine's various regions and particularly between those living in the west and the southeast. The statistically significant difference here is found in the case of bilinguals and Russian-speaking respondents who are most sensitive to the "east-west divide" (37.9% and 38%, respectively). Taking into account the barely visible recognition of language-related success, as well as interethnic and interlinguistic collisions (around 20% in each case) in all three groups, we argue that language can hardly be viewed as a ground for serious social tension, nor should language be held accountable for any interregional clash in Ukraine. The absence of confrontation between the Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking parts of Ukraine's population also found in previous studies (Masenko 2010: 112) testifies to the public acceptance of the sociolinguistic dynamics developing toward a greater embrace of the Ukrainian language, as well as to the public acceptance of bilingualism in general, i. e. the embrace of Ukrainian by Russian speakers, since Ukraine's independence in 1991.

A correlation between social inequalities and linguistic competence is detected in the case of foreign-language proficiency. English-language proficiency, which prevails in the analyzed sample (45.1% of all respondents), correlates with the respondents' self-assessed social status and material welfare along with the sector of the economy where they are employed. The level of English proficiency is also significantly higher among those who have had an opportunity to travel abroad. Taking together the data on self-assessed social position (the seven-point imaginary ladder), material welfare (the five-point scale diagram) and external mobility (visits abroad within the past three years), we can suggest that the highest levels of English-language proficiency are found among respondents with self-assessed highest material and social positions.

When the level of English-language proficiency is queried among the three studied groups (Ukrainian speakers, Russian speakers, Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals), it is the Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals who report on the highest proficiency. The bilingual respondents also tend to travel abroad more often. As a result of the study, a connection between the English language proficiency and the level of material status was recorded. But more research is needed to clarify whether English proficiency is a status-enhancing resource or an unattainable skill for low-status individuals.

The self-assessments that the monolingual and bilingual respondents provide for their social position and material welfare are similar: the average values on the seven-point ladder for social status and the five-point scale diagram for material welfare do not show statistically significant differences. Likewise, the figures on the employment of all the three groups in the various economic sectors do not differ. The only exception is the agrarian sector where the majority of Ukrainian-speaking respondents are employed (60.8%), followed by the bilinguals (32.9%) and Russian speakers (6.3%). This data suggests the absence of significant social inequalities among the three groups of Ukrainian-speaking and Russian-speaking monolingual respondents and Ukrainian-Russian bilinguals. This is in line with our previous finding on the absence of language-related social distinctions, whereby the majority of respondents in all of the identified groups do not report any tensions in interethnic and interlinguistic relations.

The results of the survey let us draw another set of conclusions. The data on regional distribution of monolingual and bilingual practices in Ukraine suggests that the traditional view of Ukraine's southeast as largely Russian-speaking is no longer valid. The figures on bilingual practices there highlight the importance of the Ukrainian language for the respective respondents and the growing shift from Russian monolingualism toward Ukrainian-Russian bilingual communication. Though these respondents still retain Russian in use, they also wish to rely on the utility of Ukrainian. Together with the abovementioned finding on the absence of significant material inequalities and social distinctions, this inference further suggests that language should not be viewed as a factor of social inequality in any part of Ukraine. The different ideologies underpinning the value of Ukrainian and Russian can coexist and be equally utilized by their speakers. In this respect, our data suggests that there may be, in fact, more linguistic capital related to Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism than to each of the monolingual practices, even in the absence of a legitimizing discourse.

This finding is of interest beyond the Ukrainian context as it implies a reconsideration of the view that a mode of speaking imbued with symbolic power is either established through the formal institutions (Bourdieu 1991) or legitimized as an accepted means of communication in the local economic domain (Woolard 1985). The finding that a bilingual practice, such as Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, may relate to greatest material welfare invites a revision of the concept of the legitimate language as applied to only one language at once. This finding suggests that what is gaining "utility" (Sovik 2010) in Ukraine is no longer Russian on its own, but a Ukrainian-Russian bilingual practice, i. e. it is bilingualism that constitutes the "legitimate language" in this case. This finding is in line with findings from other similar contexts, such as

the sociolinguistic situation in Catalonia, where the traditionally negative attitude to societal bilingualism has been reframed as plurilingualism, implying that "a bilingual repertoire is now more often a measure of acquisition of Catalan rather than displacement of it" (Woolard 2020: 276). Such a revision would entail a consistent departure from the view of the legitimate mode of expression as an ideal discrete language with clearly defined boundaries, which is the classic view of the legitimate language as understood by Bourdieu. These prospects would be fruitful avenues for future research in the current field of bi/multilingual studies.

The phenomenon of bilingualism and its symbolic power in Ukraine also requires further investigation, especially in view of the changes initiated by the 2019 Language Law as well as the dynamics of the language situation as influenced by the February 2022 full-scale Russian invasion. The inferences drawn from our data reveal the absence of discrimination on the basis of language as measured before the full-blown Russian war on Ukraine. This means that the allegations of tensions related to languages in Ukraine should be seen as unfounded.

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