MODERN TRENDS
IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING
AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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The present volume publishes the proceedings of the international academic conference held on 11 April, 2014 at the Ferenc Rákóczi II Transcarpathian Hungarian Institute. During the event, the participants worked in two sections. In the first one, presentations on language pedagogy could be heard, while in the second one participants discussed applied linguistic issues. The internationally known and acknowledged plenary speakers and presenters spoke about the most modern trends of their research areas. The written-up version of the presentations has been collected and published in one volume so that they could reach a wider audience.

Jelen kötet a 2014. április 11-én a II. Rákóczi Ferenc Kárpátaljai Magyar Főiskolán megtartott nemzetközi tudományos konferencia írott anyagait tartalmazza. Az eseményen két szekcióban folyt a munka. Az egyikben nyelvpedagógiai, a másikban alkalmazott nyelvészeti kutatásokról hangzottak el előadások. A nemzetközileg ismert és elismert előadók kutatási területeik legmodernebb irányzatairól értekeztek. Az előadások szerkesztett változatát egy kötetbe gyűjtöttük össze, hogy minél szélesebb szakmai közönséghez jusson el.

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Contents

LANGUAGE SITUATION IN UKRAINE AND POSSIBILITIES OF TEACHING THE TRANSCARPATHIAN GEOGRAPHICAL HERITAGE THROUGH ENGLISH

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Abstract:
The abundance and richness of the local Transcarpathian geographical heritage is unquestionable, in terms of natural and social science as well. Natural conditions and resources of the region play a crucial part in the quality of life of the local society and are very important from the point of view of the growing tourist industry, one of the potential leading branches of the county's economy. That makes substantial to properly teach about this heritage in English (as presently the most popular foreign language in the region) to the local, mainly Hungarian-speaking teenagers. Though, to fulfill this task is not easy, among others owing to the sometimes inappropriate traditional Soviet and partly post-Soviet approach to foreign language teaching, which is not always based on functionality and usability. We believe that teaching correct geographical technical language will serve as a step on the way of reforming this outdated approach in general.
Keywords: Transcarpathia, geographical heritage, lingua-ethnic groups, non-native language, cultural focus

1 What Is Geographical Heritage?

According to the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, the geographical heritage of a nation or a certain region is made up of the specific cultural background and the totality of the local geographical objects, processes and names which are all serious means of cohesion within the definite ethnic group or territory. This heritage is always the legacy of the past and the entirety of what is transferred to the following generations, thus being a tool of upbringing them in nation-conscious and patriotic way. It means that culture and heritage are both very important aspects of one's ethno-cultural identity. In turn, the geographical names are a source of inspiration for local, regional and national conscience of different ethnic groups.
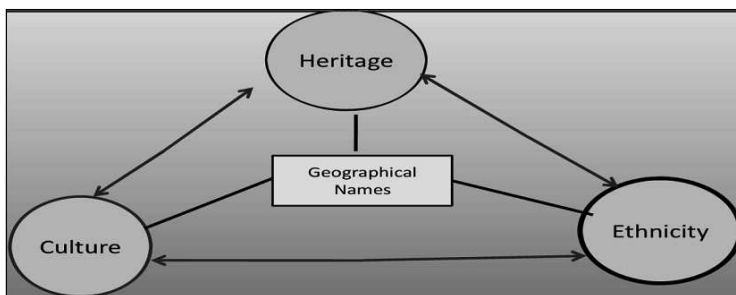

Figure 1.
Relation between the heritage, culture, ethnicity and geographical names
Source: United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, Working Paper No. 29, 2011

2 Ethnic and Linguistic Diversity in Ukraine

Some experts consider that Ukraine's population is made up of 3 lingua-ethnic groups (Arel & Khmelko, 1996; Khmelko, 2004):
– Ukrainian speaking Ukrainians (about 40–45% of the country's population);
– Russian speaking Ukrainians (about 30–34% of the country's population);
– Russian speaking Russians (about 20%).

However, according to the 2001 national census (which focused not only on Ukrainian and Russian speakers, but also on other smaller linguistic groups) the population of Ukraine can be divided into the following groups on the basis of people's native language (see Figure 2):

a) people who speak Ukrainian as their native language, including:
– Ukrainians (by nationality) whose native language is Ukrainian (85% of those who claimed to be Ukrainians);
– Russians whose native language is Ukrainian (4% of those who claimed to be Russians);
– national minorities whose native language is Ukrainian (e.g. 71% of the Poles and 42% of the Slovaks who live in Ukraine);

b) people who speak Russian as their native language, including:
– Russians whose native language is Russian (96% of those who claimed to be Russians);
– Ukrainians whose native language is Russian (15% of those who claimed to be Ukrainians);
– national minorities whose native language is Russian (e.g. 62% of the Byelorussians);

c) national minorities whose ethnicity and native language coincide (e.g. 95% of the Hungarians, 92% of the Romanians);

d) national minorities who speak the native language of another minority group; e.g. 62% of the Romas in Transcarpathia consider Hungarian to be their native language, this group constituting 18% of all Romas in Ukraine (Braun, Csernicskó & Molnár, 2010).
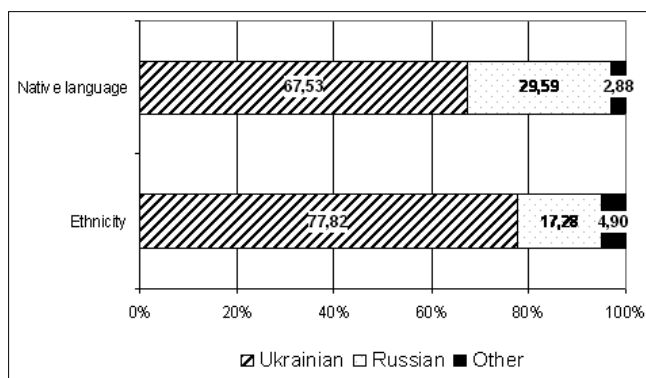

Figure 2.
The coincidence of the native language and ethnicity in Ukraine (%)
Source: Braun, Csernicskó, & Molnár, 2010

On the base of the above division and the examination of the census data shown in Figure 2, we can state the following:

– the ratio of people whose ethnicity is Ukrainian is higher than the ratio of people who speak Ukrainian language;

– the ratio of people who speak Russian is higher than the ratio of people who has Russian ethnicity;

– the Linguistic variety is not so vivid than the ethnic variety, because a lot of minority groups have begun to speak Russian or (less frequently) Ukrainian.

Near half of the country's population use the Russian language in everyday practice (Besters-Dilger, 2009), 30% of them having Ukrainian as their mother tongue (Mayboroda, Shulha, Gorbatenko, Azhniuk, Nagorna *et al.*, 2008).

Based on sociolinguistic research (Zalizniak & Masenko, 2001) it is also evident, that both Ukrainian and Russian languages are widely used in Ukraine. A significant part of the society uses both languages every day (Alekseev, 2008).

On the other hand, it is commonly thought that the census results over-simplify the real linguistic landscape of the country. If we take into account not only the census data, but also the data of a sociolinguistic survey based on a national representative sample, the language make-up of the population will show a very different picture. The sociolinguistic research took place between 1991 and 2003 and examined continuously the usage of languages among the adult population of Ukraine, based on a representative sample from approximately 173 thousand interviews, which were conducted to yield comparable data (Khmelko, 2004). This study revealed, that from the point of view of ethnicity and native language, we can find different language situations in the different regions of Ukraine. In the five large regions, identified by the author the percentage of those who speak Ukrainian or Russian as their native language, or use a contact variety of the two languages (the so called "surzhyk") is very high (see Figure 3).
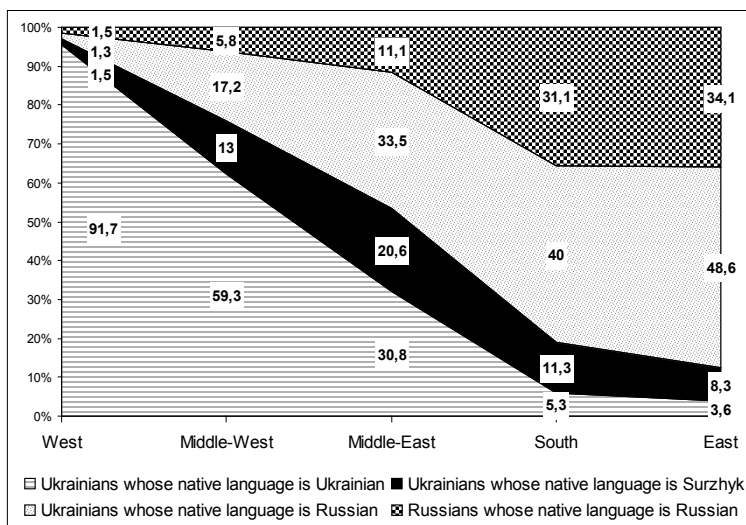

Figure 3. The distribution of the adult population of Ukraine according to their ethnicity and native language in different regions in 2003 (%)

Source: Khmelko, 2004

"Surzhyk" (Ukr.: «*суржик*», originally meaning 'flour or bread made from mixed grains', e.g., wheat with rye) is currently the mixed language or sociolect. It is a mixture of Ukrainian substratum with Russian superstratum.

Basically there are two visions of language policy in the country:

a) Ukraine could have only one official and state language, the Ukrainian; the positions of the Ukrainian language are threatened by the Russian;

b) Russian language should get the status of state language (or at least the status of official language).

Behind the two language policy conceptions we can find almost the same extent of political and social power. So, from linguistic and political points of view the country has been torn into two parts.

On the basis of this it is evident, that Ukrainian language policy almost exclusively focuses on the Ukrainian–Russian dimension of jockeying for ethnic, linguistic, social and economic positions. The problems of other minorities appear in public discussion only shallowly. The linguistic question has become so strongly politicized, that it makes impossible to adopt the new version of the out-of-date minority and language law, and to carry out the expert and conformable settling of the situation of ethnic and linguistic minorities.

The Ukrainian political elite is interested in maintaining the social order by preserving the linguistic status quo (Fodor & Csernicskó, 2013).

3 Ethnic and linguistic otherness in Transcarpathia

The population of the Transcarpathian region is made up of the representatives of more than 100 nationalities, though only the ratio of 8 of them reaches as high as 0.1 per cent of the total population. Nevertheless, the region is characterised by a great ethnic and linguistic variety (see Figure 4). In the conflict between Russian and Ukrainian the Hungarians and other minor nationalities do not wish to take any side, instead English is becoming much more popular for them. In these circumstances teaching proper English (also technical) is a crucial task of (public) education.
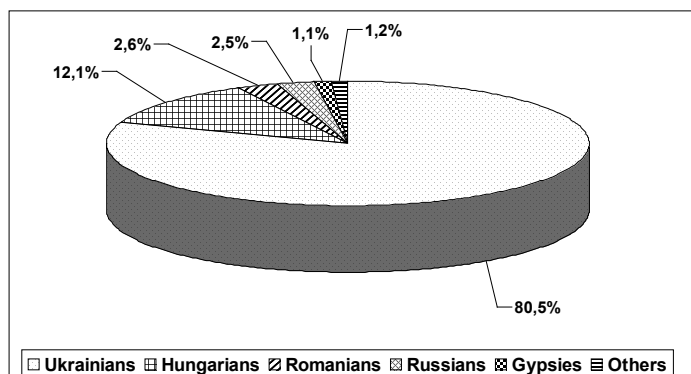

Figure 4.
Ethnic structure of the population of Transcarpathia
Source: Census data, 2001

4 Teaching About the Local Geographical Heritage in English

The old-school Soviet and early post-Soviet approaches to foreign language teaching and teaching the geographical names and heritage in particular were not always based on usability and functionality. Instead, they have contained a huge share of political and (Soviet) patriotic training which was not too attractive and motivating for the pupils, especially for the representatives of national minorities. As a result, the level and efficiency of English teaching both in Ukrainian language and national minority schools of the country were not high enough in comparison with the standards of other post-Socialist states.

Being aware of that we suggest to start using new methods of English teaching instead of those old-fashioned approaches. As one of the appropriate methods, the so called CLIL approach can serve to reach our goal. The abbreviation stands for Content and Language Integrated Learning. That means, it is an approach of teaching the contents of curricular subjects by means of a non-native language. By this learners will acquire knowledge and understanding of the subject while simultaneously learning and using the target language.

The most important word in CLIL is 'content', as the language learning is determined by the curricular content. Learning about geography involves developing knowledge and understanding of where the learners live, of other people and places, of how people and places are interrelated, of physical and human environments, of causes and consequences of geographical processes, etc. (Teaching Geography Through English, 2011)

By this approach learners are expected to build up the ability of proper asking and answering geographical questions. Therefore, teachers have to know the specific academic language that learners need in order to question and explain, to analyse and make conclusions. Teachers have to present the language of geography, the key grammatical patterns and the key content vocabulary. By this learners will be able to effectively communicate their knowledge of geographical issues.

According to Coyle, the CLIL approach contains four questions (the 4 C's):
1) content: what is the geography topic? (e. g. rivers, natural resources, population, economy);
2) communication: what geography language will learners communicate during the lesson? (e. g. the language of cause and effect to talk about the connection between overgrazing and desertification);
3) cognition: which thinking skills are demanded of the learners in geography lessons? (e. g. identifying locations, comparing maps, giving reasons for changes in the environment);
4) culture: is there a cultural focus in the lesson? (e. g. similarities and differences between people and places) (Coyle, 1999).

CLIL learners need to develop an academic geography register. They also need to know both content-obligatory and content-compatible languages (Snow, Met & Genesee, 1992). The first one means the subject-specific vocabulary, grammatical structures and functional expressions learners need to learn about a curricular subject, to communicate the appropriate knowledge and to take part in interactive classroom tasks. The second is the non-subject specific language which learners may have learned in their English classes. They can use it to communicate more fully about the curricular subject (Teaching Geography Through English, 2011).

For example, when learning about the rivers of Transcarpathia (the Tisa, the Uzh, the Latorytsia, the Borzhava etc.) teachers could identify the following language and vocabulary contents (see Table 1), though they do not need to technically define the two language types. In general, content-obligatory language is described as subject-specific or specialist language.

Content-obligatory language	Content-compatible language
source ↔ mouth	small ↔ large, short ↔ long
delta	the start of a river
estuary	the sides of a river
meander	rain
tributary	water
(explaining geographical processes): It is the process of dropping sediment.	*(defining):* It is the place, where river Tisa starts.

Table 1
Types of geographical vocabulary connected with the rivers
(Source: Teaching Geography Through English, 2011)

There are several peculiarities teachers have to take into consideration when planning a geography lesson by the CLIL approach:

a) activating prior knowledge: at the beginning of the lesson it is helpful to find out what learners already know about the given geographical topic. They may know much about it in their native tongue, but may have difficulties to express all that in English. That's why it can be useful to let the learners use their native language during the introduction of the new topic (brainstorming phase) and then translate the issues into English;

b) the input and the output: the input is the totality of the information that is being presented during the lesson. Teachers need to decide whether it will be delivered in oral, written or electronic form, drawing in the whole class or by the method of group (pair) work etc. The output means, how are learners

going to produce and communicate the content and vocabulary of the lesson (orally, in written form or by using practical skills etc.) Teachers are also to determine, at what output level can the lesson be considered as successful;

c) waiting time: it means the time teachers should wait between asking questions and learners answering them. When geography is taught on a non-native language this time needs to be longer than usual so that all students are encouraged to take part in classroom interaction;

d) collaborative tasks: these kinds of tasks involve learners in producing key subject-specific vocabulary and structures in pair or group work activities (tasks at word level, information gaps, making conversations about local rivers, presenting and describing the main geographical features of them etc.);

e) cognitive challenge: this means supporting learners to develop their thinking skills in English, i. e. to communicate not only the functional everyday language but the cognitive, academic language of geography too. Thus it is very important to provide the students with content and language supporting strategies. E.g., writing a substitution table on the board to support skills of explaining cause and effect (see Table 2). Teachers have to arrange these types of activities targeting the maximum level of effectiveness, as learners usually vary in the amount of support they need and also in the length of time the support is needed. All the more, learners might need more support and for longer period of time in one subject than in another;

f) developing thinking skills: thinking skills are divided into two groups – lower order thinking skills and higher order thinking skills. The former ones give a hand in answering the *what, when, where* and *which* questions, while by the help of the latter ones learners can answer the *why* and *how* questions. In CLIL issues students often need to use higher order thinking skills at early stages of learning curricular content.

The cause of	the erosion	is that river water wears away	the rocks.
Erosion is	caused by the water wearing away		the rocks. the sides of the valley.

Table 2
Example of tasks for explaining cause and effect
(Source: Teaching Geography Through English, 2011)

It is believed that introducing new approaches to foreign language teaching (like CLIL and others) and proper usage of them will result in higher level of efficiency, functionality and learners' knowledge of technical English and English language in general. The training of future English teachers in Ukraine and Transcarpathia should (also) focus on including these methods and strategies in the relevant curricula.

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Видання адресоване науковій спільноті.