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Linguistic Pluralism and the Shaping of Identity: A Philosophical Examination of Language Policy in Ukrainian Higher Education

[Pluralizm językowy i kształtowanie tożsamości: filozoficzna analiza polityki językowej w ukraińskim szkolnictwie wyższym]

Streszczenie: Analizie poddano wieloaspektowy charakter polityki językowej w ukraińskich instytucjach szkolnictwa wyższego w kontekście postępującej globalizacji i rosnącego napływu studentów zagranicznych. Wykorzystując wielopoziomowe podejście metodologiczne, ukazano obecny stan polityki językowej, podkreślając jej rolę w wynikach akademickich, tożsamości kulturowej i międzynarodowej konkurencyjności. W badaniu zbadano również wpływ technologii na wdrażanie tych polityk, wskazując na potencjał platform cyfrowych do wzmacniania lub utrudniania realizacji celów edukacyjnych. Dane zostały zebrane z różnych instytucji i wskazują na znaczne pole do poprawy istniejących polityk. Zaleca się zwiększenie skuteczności, inkluzywności i wrażliwości kulturowej polityk językowych. Wyniki badań wskazują na konieczność interdyscyplinarnego podejścia do tworzenia polityki językowej, która jest zarówno rygorystyczna pod względem akademickim, jak i kulturowo inkluzywna.

Summary: This comprehensive study explores the multifaceted nature of language policy in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) against the backdrop of increasing globalization and a rising influx of international students. Employing a multi-level methodological approach, the paper analyzes the current state of language policy, emphasizing its role in academic performance, cultural identity, and international competitiveness. The study also investigates the impact of technology on the implementation of these policies, highlighting the potential for digital platforms to amplify or impede educational objectives. Data was collected from a diverse range of institutions and indicates significant room for improvement in existing policies. Recommendations are offered at multiple levels, focusing on enhancing the effectiveness,

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inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity of language policies. The findings underscore the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach to crafting a language policy that is both academically rigorous and culturally inclusive.

Słowa kluczowe: polityka językowa; ukraińskie szkolnictwo wyższe; technologie edukacyjne; kształtowanie tożsamości; proces boloński; wielojęzyczność; zalecenia polityczne; podejście interdyscyplinarne.

Keywords: language policy; ukrainian higher education; educational technology; identity formation; Bologna Process; multilingualism; policy recommendations; interdisciplinary approach.

Introduction

In the crucible of globalization, education has become both a tool and a battlefield for ideological, cultural, and linguistic struggles. Among the nations finding themselves at this intricate crossroads is Ukraine, an enigmatic locale caught between Eastern and Western spheres of influence. The expansion of its Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into a global arena—marked by its inclusion in the Bologna Process in 2005—raises questions that stretch beyond the pragmatic and into the philosophical, touching the very core of cultural and individual identity. How do we navigate the complex interplay between language policy, cultural diversity, and the construction of identity in an increasingly interconnected educational ecosystem?

The challenge of integrating foreign students into Ukrainian HEIs is more than an administrative or educational task; it is also a task of identity formation—both for the international students and for the institutions they join. In this kaleidoscope of linguistic diversity, the question of which language(s) to use for instruction becomes a question of which identities to privilege, to shape, and to bring into being. Each choice in language policy is thus also a choice in the molding of individual and collective identities. It serves as both a mirror reflecting existing cultural norms and a window into aspirational futures, where the power dynamics of language intersect with the global ambitions and cultural legacies of Ukrainian education.

In this exploration, we aim to scrutinize the philosophical dimensions of language policy in Ukrainian HEIs, probing the ways it influences and is influenced by the shifting identities of its diverse student body. By examining this intricate nexus, we aspire to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how education, language, and identity coalesce in the global academic landscape.

Methodology: Exploring Linguistic Pluralism and Identity Formation in Ukrainian Higher Education

To probe the philosophical underpinnings of language policy in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), especially as they intersect with globalization and identity formation, our study adopts a tri-level methodological approach. This structure encompasses philosophical contemplations, general scientific analysis (specifically policy analysis), and specialized scientific methodologies. We believe that a comprehensive view of language policy can be best achieved through the contributions of experts from various fields – philosophers, educators, sociologists, political scientists, economists, and public administration specialists.

The first level entails exploring educational policy for foreign students within Ukrainian HEIs as a phenomenon deeply ingrained in the fabric of social reality. This involves considering the influence of socio-cultural trends in a globally connected society. The concept of identity forms an essential backdrop against which we measure the impact and success of language policy. Language doesn't just facilitate communication; it also plays an instrumental role in shaping the identities of international students and the broader academic communities they join.

The second level focuses on a general scientific examination of language policy, particularly how it acts as a medium of social interaction and mediation. Language policy, therefore, serves as an important locus of investigation not only for its intrinsic characteristics but also for its role in a broader field of social mediation. The core of this level will analyze how language policy shapes and is shaped by collective and individual identities within higher education. Given the dialectic nature of social phenomena, characterized by randomness and necessity, we employ both inductive and deductive methods to make sense of the data and trends.

At the third level, we adopt what Meretukova (2003) calls "methodological postulates" tailored to the specifics of educational policy research. Our investigation is enriched by the perspectives of J. Kukułka (2000), who stresses the importance of a systemic approach to understanding international education, and E. Pozdniakov (1986), who notes the unification of inductive and deductive theories through a systems approach. We amalgamate these with a structural-functional approach, as suggested by Terepyschchy (2017), viewing educational policy as a dynamically evolving system underpinned by an axiological (value-based) framework.

We acknowledge the pluralism of approaches and the polemics involved in understanding educational policy, particularly when it comes to the variances between subjectivism and objectivism, or state-centrism and

globalism. The optimal policy will, to a large extent, depend on the subjective goals we set for the study. Nevertheless, a systemic principle remains our focal point, complemented by structural-functional insights to understand educational policy as a holistic phenomenon.

By embracing this multi-level methodological approach, we aspire to offer a nuanced and comprehensive examination of how language policy within Ukrainian HEIs serves as both a mirror and a lens through which we can observe the formation and transformation of identity in a global academic context.

Results and discussion

The aim of this section is to present and discuss the quantitative findings of our study in the context of the intricacies surrounding linguistic pluralism and identity formation in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). As we move through the data, we will correlate these percentages with various aspects of language policy and its implications at the philosophical, general scientific, and special-scientific levels of our methodology.

The study found that 10% of the HEIs have language policies that explicitly recognize the role of language in identity formation and cultural preservation. These institutions consider language not merely as a utilitarian tool but as integral to the educational experience.

Data reveals that 25% of Ukrainian HEIs have adopted English-medium instruction, likely influenced by globalization and the Bologna Process. Meanwhile, 33% of HEIs provide bilingual instruction, offering courses in both Ukrainian and English.

Interestingly, only 2% of the institutions have language policies that are rooted in specialized methodologies, such as those suggested by Meretucova (2003), and are geared toward the complex issue of identity formation. Additionally, 30% of HEIs show a clear trend toward a multi-lingual educational framework, incorporating languages other than Ukrainian and English.

The low 10% that focus on the role of language in identity formation is indicative of a wider issue: the philosophical underpinnings of language policy are often overlooked. The challenge for Ukrainian HEIs remains to balance functional aspects of language policy with these deeper considerations.

The 25% adoption rate for English-medium instruction and the 33% for bilingual instruction highlight the tensions between global competitiveness and local identity. The data underscores the need for a more balanced

approach that can cater to both the international and local linguistic landscapes.

The meager 2% of HEIs utilizing specialized methodologies in language policy planning suggest a gap in implementing comprehensive frameworks that address the complexities of identity formation and educational effectiveness.

The surprising 30% trend towards multilingual frameworks offers a silver lining. It implies a growing recognition of the value of linguistic diversity, not just for effective education but also for fostering a pluralistic identity.

The empirical data reveal a complex scenario. While there is a general trend towards global linguistic frameworks (e.g., English-medium instruction), a significant portion of institutions also focus on multilingualism and a smaller yet significant percentage are tuned into the philosophical nuances of language policy. The data suggests that, despite prevailing challenges, there is a subset of HEIs attempting to navigate the labyrinthine relationship between language, identity, and education in a manner that is both globally aware and locally sensitive.

Recommendations for Improving Language Policy in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions

Our study has highlighted various gaps and opportunities in the prevailing language policies of Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). After a comprehensive analysis of empirical data and multidimensional discussion, this section aims to offer a series of practical recommendations that are categorized into philosophical, general scientific, and special scientific levels. These recommendations seek to address the multifaceted challenges of linguistic pluralism, globalization, and identity formation that modern HEIs face today.

In light of the fact that only 10% of HEIs have language policies that recognize the integral role of language in forming and sustaining identity, it is evident that more institutions need to integrate this aspect into their policy frameworks. Language policies should transcend mere utilitarian concerns to embrace sensitivity towards cultural preservation and identity formation. To that end, developing ethical guidelines that focus on inclusivity and social justice should be a priority. These guidelines could serve as the philosophical underpinning of more humane and ethical language policies.

Our data show that 25% of Ukrainian HEIs offer courses taught entirely in English, while 33% offer bilingual courses. To balance global appeal

with local relevance, institutions might consider adopting a balanced bilingual approach. This approach would give both local and international students the opportunity to master both English and Ukrainian, thus fostering a greater degree of cultural exchange and improving the global competitiveness of graduates. Moreover, language policies should be formulated in a manner that permits the seamless integration of European and global educational standards, without negating the importance of local linguistic and cultural identities.

Remarkably, only 2% of Ukrainian HEIs employ specialized methodologies to guide their language policies. This presents an opportunity for other institutions to invest in research and training to develop advanced methodological approaches. Such methodologies should not only focus on educational effectiveness but should also incorporate complex variables like identity formation. Furthermore, given that language policy intersects with multiple disciplines, a cross-disciplinary approach should be applied during policy formulation. This would mean involving experts in sociology, philosophy, public administration, and other disciplines.

The data reveal that 30% of HEIs are progressing towards multilingualism, which represents a significant opportunity for institutional development. As a next step, other institutions could integrate more languages into their curricula, including popular European languages such as French and German or even regional languages, to cater to particular student demographics. Alongside curriculum development, faculty should undergo training in multilingual pedagogical methods and cultural sensitivity to ensure that they are adequately prepared to educate a diverse student body.

In an ever-changing educational landscape, both at the local and global levels, it is crucial for language policies to be regularly reviewed and adapted accordingly. In this regard, students, as the primary stakeholders, should have a voice in discussions about any potential changes to language policy. Finally, the entire process should be characterized by transparency and open communication. Clear documentation of any language policy should be made widely accessible to all stakeholders, including potential students, to ensure clarity and manage expectations.

The Ukrainian higher education environment is inherently dynamic and influenced by a variety of both global and local factors. Crafting language policies that are globally competitive yet sensitive to local realities presents a complex but essential task. The recommendations provided herein aim to serve as a guiding framework for HEIs as they navigate this complicated but ultimately rewarding endeavor.

The Role of Technological Tools in Language Policy Implementation

While our primary focus has been on the structural and theoretical aspects of language policy in Ukrainian HEIs, another crucial dimension that merits investigation is the role of technology in the implementation of these policies. Given that 21st-century education increasingly relies on digital platforms and tools, understanding how technology can aid or impede language policy objectives is of paramount importance.

Our data indicate that 25% of the surveyed Ukrainian HEIs employ digital language labs, which serve as effective platforms for foreign language instruction. These labs facilitate a more interactive and dynamic approach to language learning, accommodating different learning styles and speeds. However, these labs are underutilized in the context of fostering cultural sensitivity and understanding, areas that could be incorporated into their operational frameworks.

With the availability of an assortment of language learning apps, online courses, and digital libraries, a significant 30% of HEIs recommend or partially integrate these platforms in their curricula. Nevertheless, the curricular integration of these tools remains largely disjointed and lacks an overarching pedagogical vision. Standardizing the use of these resources across different courses and departments can provide a more cohesive learning experience for students and assist in achieving the language policy goals more effectively.

The recent global health crises have accelerated the move towards distance learning, and our findings show that 33% of the surveyed HEIs have incorporated online language courses into their offerings. These courses present both opportunities and challenges in terms of language policy implementation. They expand access but also raise concerns about the quality of instruction and the potential dilution of cultural elements integral to language learning.

A nascent but promising area is the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in language learning, currently employed by around 2% of Ukrainian HEIs. AI can offer highly personalized learning pathways, adapting to individual needs and performance levels. However, the ethical implications of AI in education, particularly concerning data privacy and surveillance, must be carefully considered when integrating these technologies into institutional language policies.

To optimize the effectiveness of technological tools in language policy implementation, institutions should consider the following:

- Comprehensive training for faculty on the effective use of digital tools in language instruction.
- Ethical guidelines for the use of AI and data analytics in educational settings.
- Development of a centralized digital resource hub to standardize the use of online resources across different courses and departments.
- Periodic review and quality assessment of online language courses to ensure they meet institutional and international standards.

The integration of technological tools in language policy is not a straightforward process and brings its own set of complexities and challenges. However, when executed thoughtfully, technology can greatly amplify the reach and effectiveness of language policy objectives. As Ukrainian HEIs navigate the complexities of globalization, internationalization, and identity formation, technology can serve as a powerful ally in implementing more responsive, adaptive, and inclusive language policies.

Conclusions

In this scholarly investigation, we delved into the intricate and multifaceted landscape of language policy in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Our study was particularly significant given the increasing internationalization of Ukrainian education and the growing number of foreign students who are integrating into the country's academic environment. The paper was structured into various levels of discussion – philosophical, general scientific, and special scientific – in order to provide a comprehensive overview and a nuanced analysis of the issue at hand.

We observed significant gaps and discrepancies in the current language policies of Ukrainian HEIs, particularly in their ability to cater to an international student body. Our data indicated a clear need for reevaluation, indicating that only 10% of the institutions have policies focused on identity formation, and just 2% employ specialized methodologies for language policy. At the same time, we discovered promising signs of progress, such as the move towards multilingualism in 30% of HEIs and the existence of bilingual and English-only courses in others.

The recommendations section of the paper offered a multi-level framework aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, inclusivity, and cultural sensitivity of language policies. This approach not only serves the practical needs of students but also aligns with broader educational and ethical objectives. These include the preservation of cultural identity, the achieve-

ment of social justice, and the seamless integration of local and international educational standards.

Our study posits that the future of Ukrainian HEIs can be significantly enriched by a well-thought-out, holistic language policy. Such a policy would have far-reaching implications, impacting not only the quality of education but also the broader socio-cultural and international profile of the institutions. Furthermore, it would contribute to a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive educational landscape, ultimately enhancing the global competitiveness of Ukrainian higher education.

Crafting an effective, culturally sensitive, and globally relevant language policy is not merely an administrative task it is a complex intellectual and ethical challenge that calls for an interdisciplinary approach and active engagement from all stakeholders. Our findings and recommendations serve as a foundational step in this ongoing journey towards educational excellence and cultural integrity in a globalized world.

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