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An Evaluation of the Power of Polish Language by Ukrainian Modern Language Students

Abstract

The article analyses the attitude of Ukrainian modern language students towards the Polish language. The research was conducted among students of Rivne State University of the Humanities (Rivne, Ukraine). The vast majority of the respondents had never studied Polish. The languages studied at the university are English, German, French, and Russian. At the time of the study, the university did not offer the opportunity to study Polish. The urgent issue of the growing interest in studying Polish among students is an indication of the increasing power of the language, which is proved by the research.

Keywords: power of language; the Polish language in Ukraine; emotional attitude to language

1 Language Power

The study of language power is becoming an integral part of language policy (Krasowska, 2020, pp. 55–57). The power of a language does not depend on its grammar structure, vocabulary, its idiomaticity or its phonetic complexity (Miodunka, 1990, p. 42). A language competes fiercely with other languages, becomes a commodity, and creates a market for language goods and services (Dems'ka & Mal'tsev, 2016, p. 17). The strengthening or weakening of the power of language depends on extra-linguistic factors, namely the importance of the information reported by a specific language. This subjective assessment is colligated with the *innate power of language* associated with the nation that communicates in this language: its population, GDP, mobility, and cultural and economic production (Miodunka, 1990, p. 42).

Adam Pawłowski proposes three major definitions of language power. Firstly, in general linguistics it means the quality of language which allows it to name objects and describe feelings on the basis of touch and experience, and to create a fictional world as in a literary work. Secondly, in the theory of communication it means the possibility to affect the environment, i.e., in advertising, education, politics, or psychotherapy. Thirdly, in sociolinguistics and language contacts theory it means the cultural and economic prestige of a certain communicative society. This quality of language gives native speakers career, social, and material advantages over those who use a “weaker” language. The result of this situation is the desire of members of some communicative communities to devote their time, energy and resources to learn a more prestigious language (Pawłowski, 2008, p. 122).

The authors of the article share Adam Pawłowski's point of view and consider his term “language power” the most suitable in the context of the studied problem (Pawłowski, 2015, pp. 144–148). The sociolinguistic interpretation of the term has become widespread due to economic

and cultural globalization. As a result of global processes, languages have lost their symbolic meaning, while the economic value of language has risen. Language proficiency is becoming a kind of deposit, which brings certain dividends (Pawłowski, 2008, p. 123). Such an understanding of the term “language power” was offered by a group of experts led by Władysław Miodunka (Miodunka et al., 2018, p. 333). Polish and French linguists offer the following seven determinants that affect the power of a language in the sociolinguistic aspect:

1. The number of native speakers for whom the language is their first. This criterion is not the main determinant, but only one of many.
2. The size and number of groups that speak the language around the world.
3. The social stability of the language. This variable separates those who permanently reside outside the country from those who reside in another country only for a certain period of time.¹
4. Ideological determinant. The language gains a strong advantage if it is attached to an ideology (religious or political).
5. Cultural value. The language creates cultural products that are often dependant on the political stability and independence of its country.
6. Economic development.
7. The political situation in the country (Mackey, 1976, pp. 203–214; Miodunka, 1990, pp. 43–44).

However, it should be noted that that the term “language power” has several synonyms in modern linguistic studies. One of the most widespread is “language / (socio)linguistic vitality” (Giles et al., 1977; Harwood et al., 1994; Ng & Deng, 2017). This is the term that UNESCO applies in its analysis and evaluation of endangered languages. Consequently, we decided to review ideas of modern linguists for a comprehensive description and understanding of the studied problem. Hence, language / linguistic vitality is interpreted as “that which makes a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in inter-group situations” (Giles et al., 1977, p. 153). L. Schreiber & I. Sitaridou (Schreiber & Sitaridou, 2017) state that, “Rather than being a matter of maintenance or death, language vitality can be understood as the continuum between stable vitality > contact-induced change in progress > radical shift in progress > death”.

The main factors that determine language / (socio)linguistic vitality are the following: absolute size and relative numerical concentration; institutional representations of the language community in government, legislatures, education, religion, and the media (Ng & Deng, 2017, p. 6). An international group of linguists (UNESCO, 2003) established the following six criteria of language vitality:

1. Intergenerational language transmission.
2. Absolute number of speakers.
3. Proportion of speakers within the total population.
4. Trends in existing language domains.
5. Response to new domains and media.
6. Materials for language education and literacy.

Language is a means of communication and thus its vitality depends on the extent to which it is used in various social situations and for different purposes. In conclusion, we can say that the discussed term may be widely understood depending on the research area and is mostly understood as “an umbrella term for the maintenance, endangerment and loss of languages” (Mufwene & Vigouroux, 2009, p. 28).

Regarding the Polish language, Walery Pisarek highlights the following factors that determine its power: socio-demographic (the number, status, education, and financial position of Polish

¹ A striking example of this variable is the situation of the Ukrainian language in Poland (cf. Levchuk, 2021).

speakers), political (Poland's membership and participation in international institutions and the positions held by Poles in these institutions), economic (GDP in general and per capita, the natural resources of Poland, Polish firms and goods, the solvency of Poles), cultural and communicative (world-famous Polish scholars, writers, artists, athletes and their achievements, translations of Polish literature into other languages and translation of foreign literature into Polish, teaching Polish as a foreign language, use of Polish on the Internet), tourism (the attractiveness of architectural and historical monuments, the amount of tourists visiting Poland, the amount and quality of organized festivals and other events). These are the factors that affect the "brand" of Polish (Pisarek, n.d.).

Poland as a state has passed a rather difficult period of reforms beginning in the early 1990s. Its present-day economic capacity and membership in the European Union has caused an increase in interest in the country among foreigners, among whom the Ukrainians are estimated to be the largest group, with more than 2 million Ukrainians living in Poland (Levchuk, 2020b; Pawłowski, 2019, p. 26).

2 Polish Language in Ukraine. Migration to Poland

Władysław Miodunka states that since 2014, political and social changes in Ukraine have significantly influenced the development of the Polish language in the country and assumes that these processes are still current. Pavlo Levchuk, in his analysis of Ukrainian migration waves to Poland, highlights the fifth wave that began after 2014 and is still continuing. In terms of numbers, it exceeds the previous four waves together (Levchuk, 2020b, pp. 52–55). Halina Karaś, analysing the situation of the Polish language in Ukraine, draws attention to the shift of its status from the language of a national minority to a foreign language chosen by students to study (Karaś, 2015, pp. 31–33).

At the end of May 2021, sociological research on the influence of foreign languages was conducted in Ukraine. 1,200 participants from all over the country took part in the survey. 11.1% of the respondents consider knowledge of Polish to be very important. Polish is inferior to English, German, French, and Spanish. 20.1% of the respondents (every fifth respondent) think that Polish is necessary for their career growth. In this case, Polish ranks in fourth place and is ahead of Spanish, French, Russian, Portuguese, and Arabic (Mindzhosa, 2021).

Przemysław Gębał and Władysław Miodunka characterize the motivation to learn Polish among representatives of different countries and state that Ukrainians display other motives in comparison with students from France, Canada or the United States (Gębał & Miodunka, 2020, pp. 92–95). The main differences are the status of the first language in relation to Polish and Polish origin. The Ukrainian language is inferior to Polish in economic terms, and most Ukrainians who study Polish do not have Polish ancestry. Helena Krasowska indicates the following motives for learning Polish among Ukrainians:

1. studying in Poland;
2. (temporary) departure to Poland;
3. permanent work in Poland;
4. moving to Poland on a permanent basis;
5. obtaining Polish citizenship;
6. Polish is one of the official languages of the EU, studying in Poland is studying in Europe, a prestigious language;
7. Polish is the language of ancestors;
8. Polish is a beautiful, rich language (Krasowska, 2018, pp. 600–614).

Pavlo Levchuk offers a similar classification, adding such factors as "desire to learn another Slavic language", "my job is connected with Polish", and "Polish is the language of a life partner" (Levchuk, 2020b, pp. 107–111).

3 Subject of the Study

The subject of the research is a group of Modern Languages students who do not study Polish at university and do not have it as a specialty. The majority of respondents have chosen foreign languages of greater power on the world stage. At the same time, the research proved that their attitude to Polish is positive, even though they do not study it.

3.1 Group profile

Questionnaires were conducted in May 2021 among Modern Languages students of Rivne State University of the Humanities. 150 people took part in the survey, of which 90% are women and 10% are men. All respondents were born in the Rivne region.

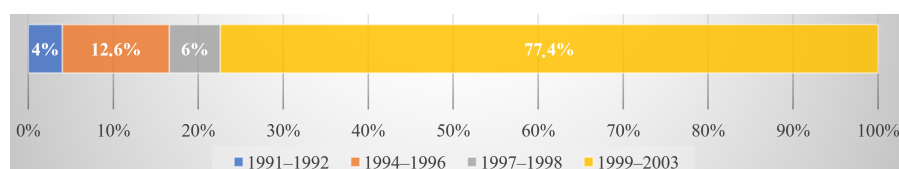


Figure 1. Age of respondents (processing by the authors of the text).

The majority of the respondents were 18–22 years old at the moment of the survey. Other respondents were older. Their age, at the time of the survey, did not exceed 30 years. Women traditionally dominate among philology students. In the study, 90% of respondents were women and 10% were men. Informants consider their first language (L1) to be:

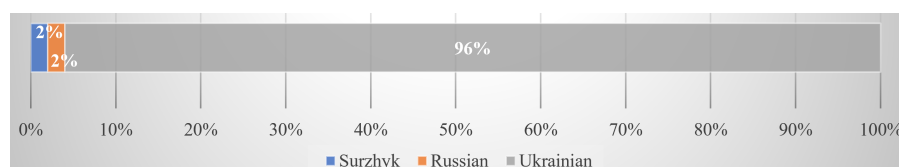


Figure 2. The first language of the respondents (processing by the authors of the text).

Almost all the participants consider Ukrainian to be their first language (96%). The same number of respondents (2%) consider Russian or Surzhyk to be their first language. Surzhyk (in linguistics) is a mixed Ukrainian–Russian sociolect.²

Commonly, students of the Faculty of Philology study two foreign languages or Ukrainian and one foreign language. See the list of studied pairs of languages below.

In all cases, the dominant language is English, which is either the first or the second studied language. Slavic languages are represented by Ukrainian and Russian. As was mentioned above, Russian is no longer the language of career advancement, so interest in learning the language is declining.

3.2 Learning Polish

The university where the respondents study does not offer Polish language learning. The participants were asked whether they had studied Polish.

² The problem of Surzhyk in the theory of language contacts is discussed in *Cognitive Studies / Études cognitives* initiated by a review of the monograph by L. Masenko (cf. Levchuk, 2020a).

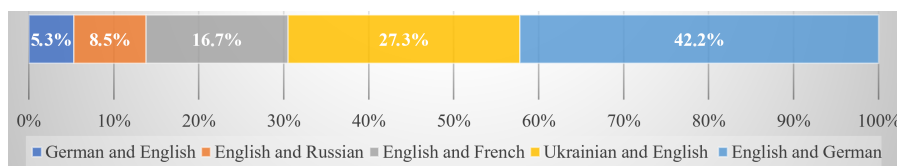


Figure 3. Languages studied by the respondents (processing by the authors of the text).

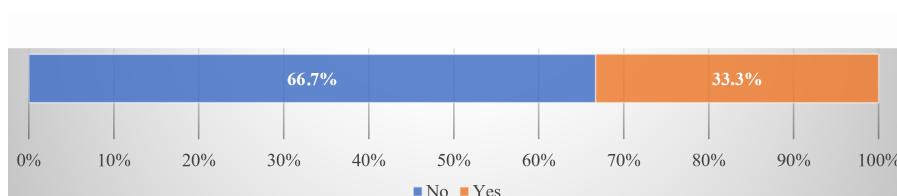


Figure 4. Learning Polish (processing by the authors of the text).

Despite the fact that the university does not offer Polish language classes and a large number of respondents were studying two foreign languages already, a third of all respondents declared that they had studied Polish. Thus, the question about their level of Polish proficiency seems reasonable. As the group of respondents was well acquainted with the European criteria for describing language proficiency, it was suggested that they determine their level in accordance with generally accepted standards (Council of Europe, 2001, 2018, p. 46).

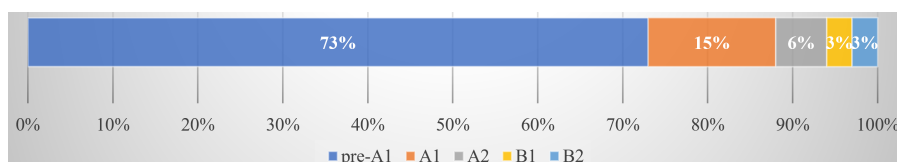


Figure 5. The declared level of Polish language proficiency (processing by the authors of the text).

88% of respondents chose levels pre-A1 and A1. This means that only 12% of respondents know Polish and are able to use it in different situations. Despite the fact that 33.3% of respondents stated that they had previously studied Polish (cf. Figure 4), the majority of those surveyed (73%) pointed out that they do not know Polish at all (cf. Figure 5). Thus, 6% of the respondents are not absolutely sure of their knowledge of the language (despite declaring it earlier, cf. Figure 4) and because of this stated their level as pre-A1 (cf. Figure 5).

3.3 The Desire to Study Polish

As the majority of those surveyed had never studied Polish, one of the questions asked was whether the respondents would like to attend Polish language courses at their university:

The majority of those surveyed (about 65%) expressed a wish to study Polish. Hence, one of the questions in the survey was whether the students would like to choose Polish as a second foreign language if there were such an opportunity. To paraphrase this question, it means whether Polish offers more prospects for future employment in comparison with the languages the students are currently studying.

As can be seen in Figure 7, more than 60% of those surveyed made a choice in favour of Polish regardless of the fact that they had not studied it previously. The answers of the respondents show

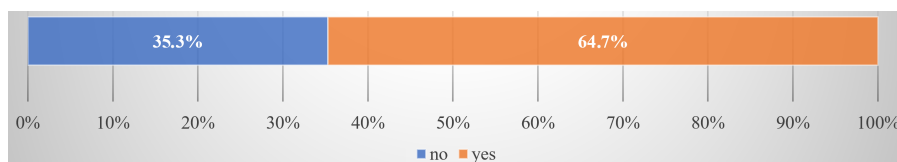


Figure 6. Opportunity to attend Polish language courses at the university (processing by the authors of the text).

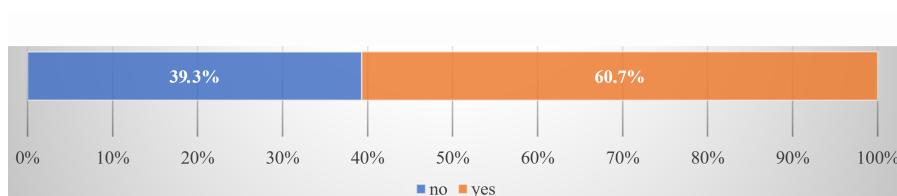


Figure 7. Choice of Polish as a second foreign language (processing by the authors of the text).

the great power of Polish in the region, as some respondents would choose Polish not only instead of Russian, but also over other popular foreign languages. At the same time, more than 39.3% of respondents do not feel the need to learn Polish. This language remains outside their sphere of interest.

3.4 Experiences of Poland

Learning a language is often associated with a desire to travel to the country where the language is used. Therefore, a block of questions was created to find out the plans of the respondents related to Poland. The respondents had chosen other foreign languages to study, so either they had not planned to have any contact with Poland, or they believed that knowledge of the language is unnecessary. The first question in this part referred to experiences already gained in Poland, namely whether the respondents had ever been to Poland:

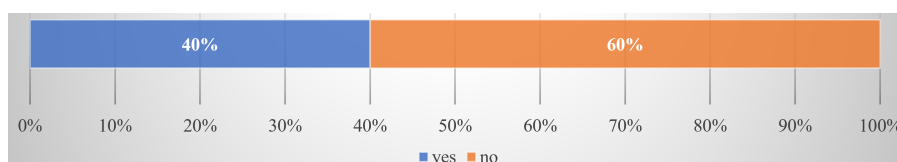


Figure 8. Visits to Poland (processing by the authors of the text).

Only 40% of respondents had been to Poland at least once in their lives, even though Ukrainian citizens have a visa-free regime with EU countries. One of the reasons may be the global Covid-19 pandemic. The next question concerned experiences of working in Poland (the conditions of work and jobs are not the subject of interest of the questionnaire authors).

Only 11% of respondents had worked in Poland, so interest in Polish among respondents is caused by factors other than their own working experience in Poland.

3.5 Plans Connected with Poland

One of the motives for being interested in Polish may be plans to go to Poland for work or study in the future. Respondents were asked about their plans:

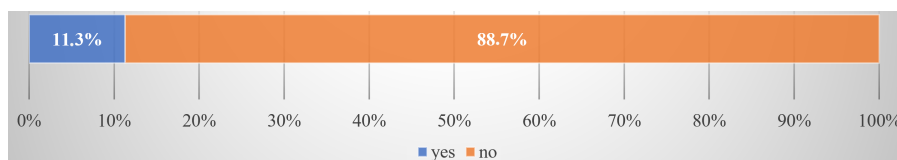


Figure 9. Work in Poland (processing by the authors of the text).

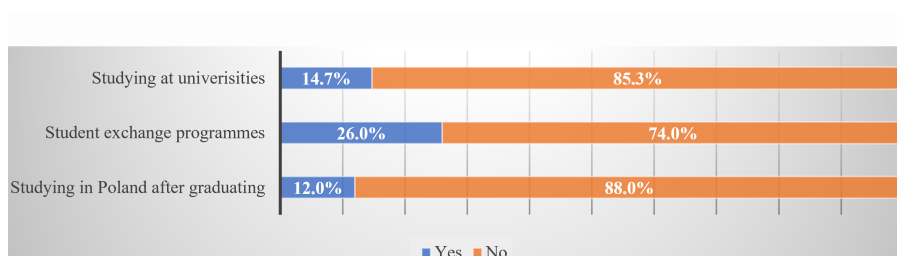


Figure 10. Interest in studying in Poland (processing by the authors of the text).

A quarter of respondents are interested in going to Poland for a student mobility programme, which may be an impetus for learning the language. On the other hand, only about 14% of all the respondents are considering studying at Polish universities. It may be assumed that the students have already made their choice and do not want to get another education at a foreign university.

In spite of the fact that interest in studying in Poland is not very high, a much larger number of the study participants plan to work in Poland:

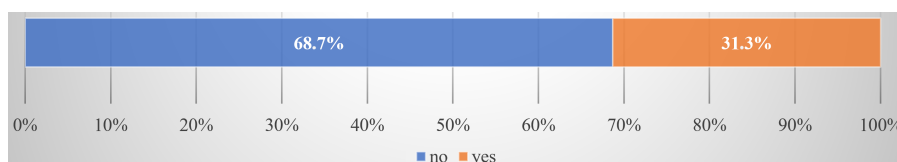


Figure 11. Interest in working in Poland (processing by the authors of the text).

Almost a third of all respondents want to work in Poland, which may be an impetus for learning Polish in the future. It is worth remembering once again that the study participants have chosen other foreign languages and plan to connect their work with them. However, the experience of a large number of the Ukrainians working in Poland gives pause to reflection about choosing such an offer.

3.6 Emotional Attitude to Polish

The researchers of Polish-foreign bilingualism and multilingualism often ask their respondents about their emotional attitude to the Polish language (Levchuk, 2020b, pp. 149–150; Miodunka, 2003, pp. 142–146). The respondents of the presented study had an opportunity to choose several options to answer this question. 40% of the respondents do not see any necessity to learn Polish, which may be due to their knowledge of other foreign languages or the absence of plans to live or stay in Poland. However, the general positive emotional attitude towards Polish is worth noting. Almost the same number of respondents (38.7%) have a positive emotional attitude towards the language and also want to learn it. More than 15% of respondents see Polish as an important

language in the European Union. This view might be due to the fact that Polish is the largest Slavic language in the EU and the possibility of getting a diploma or a certificate in the Polish language, especially in Ukraine, gives grounds to view this language as important in the international arena. 13% of respondents have a neutral emotional attitude towards Polish and about the same number of respondents consider Polish to be the language of a rich literary and cultural heritage. In contrast to the sociological surveys mentioned above, only 10% consider Polish to be a language offering career progress. Only 4% of respondents have a negative attitude towards Polish, which confirms the results of previous surveys.

Table 1. Emotional attitude to Polish (processing by the authors of the text).

It is a nice language, but I do not have a necessity to learn it	40%
I like it and want to learn it	38.7%
It is an important language in the European Union	15.3%
It is an ordinary foreign language	13.3%
It is the language of a rich literary and cultural heritage	12.7%
It is the language of career progress	10.0%
I do not like it	4.0%
Your variant	3.3%

3.3% of respondents wrote their own answer (As the questionnaire was developed in Ukrainian, the authors tried to preserve the original style of the comments in translation), e.g.:

- (1) *This is a common language, but now there are languages which are more promising for learning.*
- (2) *It's an interesting language, but there is no time to learn one more language when there is no need. But a little knowledge of this language could be useful. Perhaps I might need it.*
- (3) *I'd like to know it as my Mum has been living in Poland for rather a long time and we're going to visit her.*
- (4) *I'd start learning just for the sake of self-development but, in my opinion, this language is no different from all others.*
- (5) *It would be interesting to learn it for future travels and for general development and for broadening my horizons.*

As interest in Polish is growing in Ukraine, the respondents answered a question about the utility of learning Polish. Here are some important comments:

- (6) *Useful, knowledge of any language is a benefit, development and self-improvement*
- (7) *It's useful, it is also a foreign language that trains the brain.*
- (8) *Learning any foreign language is useful. Especially Polish for the Ukrainians because we border Poland and even during days off you can easily go there for the weekend.*
- (9) *Of course, it's useful. There is a possibility to go to Poland not only to earn money or to study, but for permanent residence.*
- (10) *Learning one more language is totally cool! Perhaps it's less relevant for people who focus on other countries or deal with other languages.*
- (11) *Learning the Polish language in present-day realities is an important element for professional and personal development.*
- (12) *Everything depends on a person's goals. So, if you need it, why not?*
- (13) *It is rather useful because studying the language you also study the culture of the country.*

- (14) *Definitely useful. This may be required when entering the university or in hiring. Even if it isn't necessary, studying the language develops memory and knowing the Polish language it is possible to work with various literary and scientific works.*
- (15) *It's useful both for our self-development and for our own needs.*
- (16) *Of course, it is useful, the more languages you know, the more promising life can be.*
- (17) *It's very cool. Because I adore Polish.*
- (18) *I believe learning Polish can be useful. Knowing Ukrainian, Russian, English or any other foreign language and studying Polish is the proof that the person is a polyglot and is engaged in self-development and self-education.*
- (19) *I think that learning a foreign language isn't a waste of time. There is a saying: "As many languages you know, as many times you are a human being".*
- (20) *If you're going to Poland, then yes.*
- (21) *If you need it for your future life, then it's useful, you can be realized.*
- (22) *It's useful, at least because the more languages you know, the easier is to add one more, besides, it's also the cultural enrichment. Well, as it is a neighbour of Ukraine, it opens up some possibilities and plans for future.*

Thus, the motives for learning Polish described by H. Krasowska are fully confirmed by the comments of the study participants (cf. Krasowska, 2018, pp. 600–614). In addition to the positive comments, the respondents also wrote neutral and negative comments about learning Polish:

- (23) *It's a waste of time.*
- (24) *Will learn it in the strawberry fields (i.e. the author means seasonal work in Poland).*
- (25) *For everyone differently.*
- (26) *For me it's useless.*
- (27) *It depends (fifty-fifty).*
- (28) *As for me it is not necessary, because I don't see any prospect in Poland.*

Analysing these comments, it is worth remembering that the respondents have already made their choice of language, which was not in favour of Polish. Thus, the lack of interest may be interpreted as a conscious choice in favour of another language. The respondents also made comments regarding the practical perspectives of learning Polish. The comments of the study participants contain both their attitude towards the necessity and topicality of its learning and the motives for their choice. Note the fact that the respondents identified job prospects and their own demand in the labour market as the main motive for learning the language:

- (29) *In my point of view the Polish language is very urgent nowadays because quite a lot of students and not only them go to Poland to study or to work.*
- (30) *Yes, because Polish can be learnt easily and quickly, also to feel at ease in Poland, besides, to find a better job is possible while knowing the language (in Poland).*
- (31) *Yes, because knowledge of the Polish language opens new opportunities in the labour market of the country that is richer than ours.*
- (32) *Because knowing the language, the person is developing and has the bigger chance to get a job.*
- (33) *Yes, because knowledge of the Polish language gives a chance in further employment or studying; knowing this language there is a possibility to find out something that hasn't been known before.*
- (34) *Yes, because a lot of people go to work or study to Poland.*
- (35) *Because of employment in Poland. For the sake of various opportunities and career growth.*
- (36) *It's profitable for further employment in Ukraine.*
- (37) *There are a lot of possibilities for implementation in Poland and, if you want to feel at ease there, it's necessary to know the language.*
- (38) *For career growth.*

- (39) *Because most of my acquaintances work in Poland and it's rather difficult there without knowing the language.*

In addition to the above-mentioned employment motives, the respondents stated that Polish is an important language in the world and has prospects for active development and usage:

- (40) *It is an important language nowadays.*
 (41) *Yes, because it is the language that now is in great demand among the Ukrainians.*
 (42) *Polish is a very popular and necessary language now. In my opinion, everyone should know the Polish language.*
 (43) *Yes, because this language is necessary in future.*
 (44) *This is an experience and an opportunity for a person to develop. Foreign languages in the 21st century play an important role for young people and for the whole society.*
 (45) *Because it's a good contribution to the future.*

Some respondents tried to explain the reasons that motivate other people to learn the Polish language:

- (46) *A lot of people need the Polish language for their work. Some study it at school as a second foreign language. Some need it for their studying in Poland. And some study it for their self-development.*
 (47) *Because it is similar to the Ukrainian language.*
 (48) *Because Poland is a promising country where you can realize yourself and get a lot of possibilities for study and career.*
 (49) *Maybe they like it, maybe they're planning to study or work in Poland.*
 (50) *Because this language is relevant for the Ukrainians as most of our citizens work there.*
 (51) *More and more Ukrainians have been working or studying in Poland lately.*
 (52) *To achieve their goals.*
 (53) *Because there are a lot of opportunities there.*
 (54) *A lot of people study this language because they are working or are going to work in Poland, or they are studying or are going to study in this country.*

As mentioned previously, the main reasons for learning Polish are the possibility of employment in Poland, a demand for Polish in the labour market, and consequently a better life. However, it should be mentioned that a certain number of respondents consider that the main reason for learning Polish is connected with the prospects of their future study in Poland, with employment opportunities coming second. Therefore, we see it as necessary to divide the processed comments into the following corresponding blocks: "Education and work", "Searching for a better life" and "Positive attitude to the target-language country" (the emotional component of motivation to learn Polish has already been analysed above). It should be noted, however, that the prospects of studying or working in Poland are often indicated by respondents as a single reason for learning the language, rather than two separate motives. The block "Searching for a better life" presents both purely financial motives for learning Polish and a more general and abstract motive, the desire for a better life. The third block, "Positive attitude to the target-language country", contains comments related both to the direct family ties of Ukrainians with Poland and the good neighbourly relations between the two countries.

"Education and work":

- (55) *Many people plan to go to Poland to study or work.*
 (56) *It is extremely convenient to speak Polish to study in Poland, to improve one's skills, to teach English in Poland.*
 (57) *Probably, because it's easier to find a good job there.*
 (58) *To realize the opportunity to enter a higher education institution and work in Poland.*
 (59) *To get a job in Poland, further study abroad.*

- (60) *Because many Ukrainians go to work in Poland. Many school leavers want to study abroad, namely in Poland.*
- (61) *To be able to find a better job in Poland.*
- (62) *To go to work or move there permanently.*
- (63) *Because they go there to live, study or work.*
- (64) *A lot of people go to work in Poland + study.*
- (65) *To get a job in Poland.*
- (66) *In my opinion it is connected with employment in Poland.*
- (67) *Because many people go to Poland to work or study.*
- (68) *Many people go to work to Poland, and without knowledge of the Polish language it will be difficult there, so it's important to have a base (here – basic knowledge of the language).*
- (69) *Very many people go to work to Poland.*
- (70) *Because they are thinking about going to work to this country.*
- (71) *A lot of people work in Poland where they need the language to communicate with other people and their employers.*
- (72) *Because they want to earn more money in Poland.*
- (73) *Because of the opportunity to study and work in Poland.*
- (74) *Because many people go to Poland to earn money.*
- (75) *Because they get employed in Poland.*
- (76) *Because they want to study or work in Poland.*
- (77) *Because a lot of pupils or even students decide to enter Polish universities. Also, a lot of people from Ukraine go to work there.*
- (78) *As a rule, this do (here – learn Polish) people who plan go to work or to study to Poland.*
- (79) *For future study or employment in Poland.*
- (80) *Because later they go to work to Poland.*
- (81) *To go to work and then to live there.*
- (82) *Go to work to Poland.*
- (83) *To go to study or to work to Poland.*
- (84) *A lot of students see the prospect of work and study in the future in Poland, this requires the knowledge of the language; also, this language is easy to pick up and very comprehensible.*
- (85) *To go to work or to study to Poland.*
- (86) *This is an opportunity to study as an exchange student and to work in future.*
- (87) *It's a country of the European Union which is nearby. It's a possibility to go to work and to get a higher salary than in Ukraine. The language isn't difficult to learn.*
- (88) *Most people who go to work abroad work there.*
- (89) *Labour emigration. Poland is geographically close to Ukraine, which provide opportunities for relations at various levels.*

“Searching for a better life”:

- (90) *The need for work in Poland forces them to do this, the search for a better life abroad.*
- (91) *There is a different standard of living there.*
- (92) *It is believed that Poland has more prospects than Ukraine.*
- (93) *Because there is a desire to go to Poland to study or to work as they believe that there are better conditions there.*
- (94) *Poland to the Ukrainians is a door to other European countries.*
- (95) *Because Poland provides plenty of jobs for the citizens of Ukraine and there are excellent living conditions there.*
- (96) *To leave Ukraine.*
- (97) *Because lots of Ukrainians plan to go to Poland and live there.*
- (98) *Because they want to work in the EU.*
- (99) *There could be plans to move to Poland or to go there to work.*

- (100) *Because during low wages and lack of jobs most people are looking for more opportunities to get a comfortable life.*
- (101) *To move abroad, looking for a better and more stable life.*
- (102) *Because they want to move.*

“Positive attitude to the target-language country”:

- (103) *Lots of people, especially in the western part of Ukraine, have Polish roots, so there is a wish to learn the language of their ancestors.*
- (104) *The Poles are our neighbours and business partners, there's cooperation in various projects.*
- (105) *Ukraine has got good relations with Poland.*
- (106) *They communicate with relatives in Polish, travel around Poland, plan to study and work there.*
- (107) *To communicate with relatives, to work in Poland, to study there.*
- (108) *Poland is a neighbouring country which is much more developed in certain areas, so, knowing its language it would be easier for us to learn from their experience.*

In addition to all of the above questions, the questionnaire contained a section where the respondents could leave their own comments concerning the possibility of learning Polish at the university. A significant number of respondents expressed a desire to learn the language, accompanied with the following comments:

- (109) *I'd like to study Polish, even for general development as a third language. This language is quite popular.*
- (110) *I want to note that my friend knows Polish and now works as a teacher in private courses there. It's high-paying job (at least 50 zlotys per hour).*
- (111) *It would be very good if there were an opportunity to learn Polish for free for everyone.*
- (112) *As the demand for learning Polish is growing significantly and most pupils at schools choose Polish to study, I think that the Faculty of Foreign Philology needs to train qualified specialists not only in English, German, French and Russian but in Polish as well! P.S. + Spanish or Italian.*
- (113) *It would be great if the university graduates also had the opportunity to attend Polish language courses.*
- (114) *Poland is our neighbour country and in order to go there for any purpose (studying, tourism, work) it's important for people to communicate in the language of this country to achieve better interaction. To my mind, knowledge of the Polish language will make our lives better.*
- (115) *I think that the Polish language should be studied at school optionally or as a main subject. And Polish language courses should also take place in our lives. It's a good language and quite easy to learn.*
- (116) *I'm very glad that the university has decided to include the Polish language in education. This is an extremely good language! I wish those students who will learn Polish to achieve great success. And wish them easy studying!*
- (117) *Polish is a good option for the Ukrainians.*
- (118) *Our university needs a faculty of Polish language at the Bachelor's degree programme and Master's degree programme.*
- (119) *I definitely want to study polish at the university.*
- (120) *The Polish language is interesting, if I could choose what to study – Russian or Polish, I'd definitely choose Polish.*
- (121) *It would be great to study Polish at our university, it would add new students.*
- (122) *The opportunity to choose Polish as a second language will have a positive impact on the development of the faculty and expand the students' opportunities.*
- (123) *It would be nice to take Polish language courses at the university.*
- (124) *The Polish language is good and interesting, but I don't need to study it now and, besides, I don't have much time to learn another language.*

However, it should be noted that some respondents do not see the need to add Polish to the curriculum and justify their opinion as follows:

- (125) *I think it's better to learn at least German. Nowadays the Poles themselves are going to Germany to earn money, leaving the Ukrainians as hired workers to work in Poland, to develop their country. Therefore, it's more economical in time to bypass the stage of Poland and immediately go to Germany, for those who suffer here. As for me, now Russian is much more necessary for me, I need Russian as an international language to communicate with business people around the world (neither Ukrainian, nor Polish is accepted here). It's a pity that government's obsessive attitude to it destroys the remnants of common sense and the possibilities of Ukraine's entry into the civilized world. I speak English, of course. Chinese is also needed, as it turned out. Polish is only for those who is satisfied with the position of a hired worker in Poland, where the mentality of the people does not allow perceiving hired workers as equal.*
- (126) *It's much more appropriate to focus on learning English and, for example, German, which is quite popular in Poland. Also, my attitude to Polish has got a political character, so I don't think it's right to announce it here.*
- (127) *It's not necessary to learn Polish, it's not popular now.*
- (128) *Polish is not very popular, I don't need to learn it.*
- (129) *I don't plan to learn Polish. If I had an opportunity, I'd learn German, French and Chinese.*

These comments reflect the attitudes and desires of young people aged 17–21 concerning the need to learn Polish, and the motives, prospects and results of doing so. Since the main foreign languages studied by the respondents are other (non-Polish) languages, attitudes towards learning Polish are ambiguous and highly subjective.

4 Conclusion

Language power is a matter which requires deeper study. However, it has more been widely considered in the context of endangered languages. The term can be applied to the analysis of languages that have significant number of speakers and language learners. Measuring the power of a language among those who do not speak it is a new topic which remains little-studied. Nevertheless, it would appear that a language should be defined in the international arena not from the linguistic point of view, but exclusively as an economic and marketing issue. This variable can be influenced by the language policy of each state. A. Pawłowski views Polish in a similar way (Pawłowski, 2015, pp. 143–155).

Analysing the results of the questionnaires, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The position of Polish as a foreign language among philologists who have chosen other languages is quite high. Polish has the potential to become one of the foreign languages that most respondents would like to or will learn. The percentage of respondents expressing a desire to learn Polish is high, regardless of the level of Polish knowledge that the respondents claimed to have.
2. The respondents identified a number of reasons why they want to study, are studying or will study Polish. The main motives for learning Polish are the relative economic prosperity of Poland and the opportunities for Ukrainians to study or work there.
3. A significant number of the respondents highlighted the fact that Polish is becoming much more popular than other foreign languages, with the exception of English.
4. The majority of the respondents stated a strong wish to study Polish. However, the university they study at does not offer Polish as a foreign language. It is obvious that introducing a Polish Studies course could be beneficial for the faculty in particular and the university in general.

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