

Article

Linguistic *tug-of-war*: regional perceptions of Ukrainian

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Abstract

The present study offers an examination of attitudes and perceptions of the Ukrainian language by respondents who have lived at least half of their life in Ukraine; they were asked to draw on a map of Ukraine *where the most correct Ukrainian is spoken* and where the Ukrainian that grates on one's ears is spoken. Recruitment for the online survey was conducted by placing ads on several Ukrainian-language Facebook pages, along with a link to the survey. The findings presented are from a total of 90 analyzed surveys. Respondents' maps were analyzed and compared using QGIS software. The research demonstrates that there is a tug-of-war of correctness between Kyiv and Lviv. It also shows that there is an overall tendency of native speakers to evaluate the Transcarpathian region as the area that *grates one's ears*.

Keywords: perceptual dialectology; regional variation; Ukrainian; Transcarpathia

1. Introduction

Sociolinguists seek to describe language use as a social phenomenon. As such, studies in sociolinguistics examine correlations between language use and social structure as well as the social meaning that is imbued in this interaction of structure and meaning. Much research within sociolinguistics has focused on investigating variation in both urban and rural locations (e.g. Labov, 1970; Eckert, 1989). Given that previous research on perceptions of language variation reveals that speakers are in fact aware of sociolinguistic patterns, speakers easily assign prestige or stigma to linguistic differences, especially with regard to these differences within their own language (Preston, 1989; Niedzielski & Preston, 2003), and that perceptual dialectology (hereafter PD) functions as a corollary to the description of linguistic patterns in a variety, one way of answering questions about such patterns in Ukrainian is to obtain the perceptions of Ukrainian speakers. Therefore, the following research questions were posed:

1. Where do Ukrainian speakers perceive where the most correct variety of Ukrainian is spoken?
2. Where do Ukrainian speakers perceive where the least correct variety of Ukrainian is spoken?

This article is devoted to the analysis of some aspects of Ukrainian PD, as they refer to the modern linguistic situation of Ukraine. Unfortunately, PD studies related to Ukrainian have not been an item of priority in linguistic research. This is striking given the sizeable body of research on attitudes to language (e.g., Lambert et al. 1960; Niedzielski & Preston 2003) that have demonstrated the ubiquity and intensity of speaker attitudes towards linguistic varieties. There has been some focus on the linguistic situation in Ukraine as it compares to mixed varieties. Despite this and other

work being done in the area of PD among some western European languages (see Moreno-Fernández, 2015; Schwarz & Stöckle, 2017), to date there is still a paucity of PD information regarding perceptions and attitudes of Ukrainian in Ukraine. A notable exception is Redkva and Stachowski's (2019) research conducted in Chernivtsi, Ukraine, inquiring about "where people speak differently."

The present study addresses questions of how Ukrainian speakers perceive spatial differentiation of Ukrainian and whether residents of different parts of Ukraine perceive the same patterns of differences. The results highlight key dimensions of the linguistic landscape and point the way toward a more detailed understanding about perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs of Ukrainian speakers and about the modern linguistic situation as a whole.

2. Perceptual dialectology

The study of non-linguists' beliefs and perceptions about language variation and its spatial distribution exposes respondents' socio-cultural associations about the spatial distribution of variants that are salient to them. This offers linguists insight into the way speakers construct their social worlds. Wassink and Dyer (2004:13) suggest: "if it is important for us to understand the meaning of variation in phonological forms for the speakers, then clearly we must understand how they construct their social worlds." In this way, the present study was carried out to determine what perceptions long-time residents of Ukraine have about the Ukrainian spoken across the territory of Ukraine.

PD focuses on the examination of speakers' perceptions of their own and other linguistic varieties. Detailed knowledge of how linguistic varieties are perceived – languages, varieties, ways of speaking – can be very valuable information, both for the study of internal aspects of language (e.g., linguistic variation and change) as well as for the analysis of some external dimensions (choice, loss, and maintenance of varieties, factors often related to language planning and politics).

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Linguists have long suspected that non-linguists believe some areas support better, more correct language use than others. In spite of a general awareness among linguists of this folk belief, no systematic attempt has been made to determine exactly where any group would locate more and less standard varieties in Ukraine.

Perceptions and attitudes towards different varieties of Ukrainian can be a crucial component of the linguistic description and analysis of a language that provide “overt folk notions of geographical variation, based on neither production nor responses to forms, and provide a helpful corollary to both production and attitude studies” (Niedzielski & Preston, 2003:41). Speakers’ and listeners’ responses to variants result from a complex negotiation among attitudinal, perceptual, and productive factors. Sociolinguists increasingly recognize the value of looking at all three types of factors when attempting to characterize the socially governed use and transmission of linguistic variants (Fridland & Bartlett, 2006). As Coupland and Jaworski (2004:11) note, “the distribution of linguistic forms is underpinned by patterns of social evaluation.” So, while linguists can study features of speech production in order to fully describe a particular language variety, the affective dimension of those features should be part of that description.

In PD, this affective dimension is directly related to the spatial dimension. Although space and spatial distribution have always been a concern of sociolinguists, dialectologists, and dialect geographers before them, the importance of geographical space is now being explicitly considered as a relevant analytic category and an important means for construction and handling our socially constructed worlds (e.g. Eckert, 2004; Auer, Schmidt, & Lameli, 2010; Lameli, Kehrein, & Rabanus, 2010). Britain (2004:45) suggests that understanding space as an extralinguistic variable is an important direction for the future of sociolinguistics, adding that “critical sensitivity to the socialized nature of human space(s) is required if we are to advance the discipline further.” Given this, the present study attempts to further the understanding of space as an extralinguistic variable by presenting the perceptions of Ukrainian across the geographic territory of Ukraine.

3. The linguistic situation of Ukraine

To provide a background against which the most recent data can be considered, this section briefly reviews what is relevant regarding the linguistic situation in Ukraine. The current linguistic situation can be described as a combination of competing and unclear standards (Bilaniuk, 2005; Masenko, 2010) and wide regional variation (Del Gaudio, 2010). It can also be characterized by a heavy influence of regional varieties upon the norms of standard Ukrainian accompanied by a laxing of puristic tendencies to ban non-standard regional elements (Danylenko, 2015), which Gricenko (2012:41) calls “the dialect Reconquista.”

The historical development of what is now the standard variety will shed some light on the current situation. According to Gricenko (1993), the sociolinguistic situation in the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century brought about the formation of the following standard varieties:

- The Central Dnieper standard variety (hereafter CDSV)
- The Galician standard variety
- The Bukovynian standard variety
- The Transcarpathian standard variety
- The Vojvodinian or Bačka-Srem standard variety

The CDSV was primarily used in fiction, with Russian in all other secular spheres.

In the mid-twentieth century, the CDSV, which has its location anchored around the Poltava region, became widespread and predominately used over all other local standards, thus representing “the Ukrainian nation as a unity” (Gricenko, 1993:287). This can be reinforced by the fact that even Ivan Franko, who did a great deal to develop the modern Ukrainian variety and also wrote in the Galician standard variety, supported the unity of a language under the CDSV. He (1907:356) noted, “[e]veryone who attempts to write in this language has to begin with Kotliarevsky, Kvitka, Shevchenko, Marko Vovchok, Nechui-Levytsky – has to see that here, in the language of these authors, lies the basis of that variety of the literary language which must become the literary standard for all Ukrainians.”

Despite the CDSV being the base for standard Ukrainian, modern standard Ukrainian seems to consist of a more complex system of standard varieties. According to Matvijias (1998), the standard variety consists of three sub-varieties: East Ukrainian, West Ukrainian, and Transcarpathian. Danylenko (2015:237–238) states that the continuum of sociolects of standard Ukrainian as spoken within Ukraine forms two major areas: 1) “the East Ukrainian” and 2) “West Ukrainian regional varieties which constitute a national variety of standard Ukrainian.”

It also is very important to highlight that the Russian language plays a very important role in the linguistic situation of Ukraine. The first era of Russification can be traced back to the second half of the eighteenth century, when the Russian Empire sought to tighten its control over the Cossack lands in the central and eastern portion of present-day Ukraine (Magocsi, 2007). The influence of Russian continues to the present day, where Kreindler (1997:96) characterizes Ukraine as “basically a bi-ethnic, bi-linguistic state.” To highlight the bi-ethnic and bi-linguistic situation, in 2006 nearly 80 percent of the population identified as Ukrainian, and 17 percent as Russian, though 57 percent of the population claimed Ukrainian as a native language and 30 percent Russian. Also, 37 percent of the population considered Ukrainian and 37 percent Russian to be their language of daily use, with 25 percent claiming both languages in daily use (Kulyk, 2017). According to Kulyk (2017:318), “[b]y 2014, fewer Ukrainians claimed Russian ethnicity (10%) and native language (25%), however, the use of both Ukrainian (42%) and Russian (40%) had increased.” This bi-linguistic-ness gives the linguistic situation a uniqueness of a very salient mixed code, known also as *surzhyk*.

Surzhyk has many denotations in Ukrainian society, covering such diverse referents as entire village dialects, the insertion of Russian words into Ukrainian speech, or simply a Russian accent in one’s Ukrainian (Bilaniuk, 2005; Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008). Historically, *suzhyk* was generally defined as codemixing by Ukrainian peasants who were trying to sound more cultured or educated by adding Russian words to their speech, often incorrectly (Bilaniuk & Melnyk, 2008); now it can refer to urban Russian speakers who are trying to use Ukrainian.

The division of East to West as prompted by Danylenko coupled with the numerous standard regional varieties listed by Gricenko, plus the use of Russian and the salience of code-mixing, paint a picture which shows that the modern language situation is not a one-size-fits-all scenario. The reality is much more complex. Within the present linguistic situation in Ukraine, there is a tug-of-war, ultimately, between Lviv to the west and Kyiv to the east, with the local regional varieties adding some weight behind one region or another. As demonstrated below, this tug-of-war manifests itself likewise within the perceptions of Ukrainian by native speakers.

Table 1. Respondent Demographic Information (n = 90).

Gender:		Region:	
Female	60 (67%)	Central	32 (36%)
Male	30 (33%)	West	33 (37%)
		Southeast	25 (27%)
Age:			
Mean – 33	Min. – 18; Max. – 73		
Education:			
High School	7 (8%)		
Vocational	2 (2%)		
Specialized Secondary	5 (5%)		
BA	16 (18%)		
MA	43 (48%)		
PhD or Higher	17 (19%)		

4. Methodology

4.1. Sampling

Respondents who had lived at least half of their lifetime in Ukraine were solicited online and were asked to complete a map survey instrument. Recruitment for the online surveys was conducted by placing ads on several Facebook pages using the “snowball technique” (Milroy & Gordon, 2003:32). A minimal amount of demographic information was collected from the respondents in order to assure anonymity and keep the map survey instrument brief. Region was prioritized over age and gender categories to obtain as much regional representation as possible. To date, a total of 106 respondents have taken the survey. Of the 106 only 90 were analyzed for this study. Sixteen of the respondents were dropped: 6 due to not meeting the minimum age requirement of 18 and the other 10 not being born and raised in Ukraine. The average age was 33 (respondents were over 18 years old). In all, 60 respondents were females, and 30 were males. All the respondents indicated Ukrainian as their native language. Long-term residents were sought, and data from other residents were not used. *Long-term residence* was defined as someone who had resided in Ukraine and had been raised in Ukraine. This was in order to not exclude respondents who had not been born in Ukraine but had lived there for a very long time. In Table 1, a breakdown of all the demographic information can be seen.

The sample was also coded by region to distinguish central, western, and southeastern areas, based on the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology’s (KIIS) geographic division of Ukraine. The Central region of Ukraine, which 36% (n = 32) of the respondents were from, encompasses the following oblasts: Zhitomyr, Vynnytsya, Cherkasy, Kyiv, Poltava, Chernihiv, and Kirovohrad. The Southeastern region of Ukraine, which 27% (n = 25) of the respondents were from, encompasses the following oblasts: Odesa, Mykolaiv, Kherson, Krym, Zaporizhzhya, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Kharkiv. The Western region of Ukraine, which 37% (n = 33) of the respondents were from, encompasses the following oblasts: Khmelnytskyi, Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne, Trenopil, Volyn, and Zakarpattia.

The descriptive characteristics of education level, gender, and age were not considered when creating the composite maps due to the quite uneven distribution. Further studies will need to be

conducted to see if there are different perceptions when education, gender, and age are taken into consideration.

4.2. The map survey instrument

The map survey instrument drew on methodology from Preston, Howe, and George (1987) and Preston (1981, 1989) and instructed respondents to draw on a map of Ukraine as follows: *Draw a circle around places where you think people’s Ukrainian grates one’s ears; and Draw a circle around places where you think people speak the most correct Ukrainian.* The use of the phrase *grates one’s ears* (‘rizhaty vukho’) was selected based on how Ukrainian speakers discuss attitudes toward language. The phrasing *least correct* is not often encountered but *grates one’s ears* is often encountered to imply something that is not correct, sounds bad, and has a lower quality. For the Ukrainian cultural context, the phraseology *grates one’s ears* can imply a mixing of correctness and politeness aspects. Since this expression can contain both the pleasantness–unpleasantness and correct–incorrect axes, I cannot tease out which a respondent specifically means and specifically talk about where Ukrainians talk about the least correct language. However, what can be taken from this phrase is an overall negative evaluation by the respondent of language use of an indicated area. Figures 1 and 2 offer examples of the map survey instrument.

The survey was accessed via the website Jotform.¹ This site was used due to the fact that it allowed for the image of the map to be uploaded and then the respondents could easily draw on the map from the comfort and safety of their computer. The decision to go for this online way of data collection was due to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic was still ongoing during the time of data collection.

The map survey instrument used here had a more general geographical focus due to the nature of the research questions. Similarly to Bounds (2010), I decided that it might be useful for the proposed research to indicate cities on the map instead of other administrative divisions. Moreover, as indicated in the previous studies in cultural geography by Gould and White (1986) and Zelinsky (1973), cities may be considered as carrying the value of cultural centers and therefore play a major role in spatial perceptions. I put 12 major cities on the map of Ukraine. The maps were given minimal color and detail for technical reasons; excessive detail would potentially disrupt the comprehension of the task. I wanted to keep a balance by providing enough detail for easy geographical orientation and not obscure it with too much information.

The instructions used were again adopted from Preston (1989). I arrived at a version appropriate to the type of data that I was aiming to collect. As suggested by Preston (p.c.), I avoided using words like dialect, accent, or slang that could trigger negative connotations. As I was not able to project and foresee all possible outcomes of people’s perceptions of the given wording, I was aiming at the most neutral way to phrase the instructions. The task also asked for demographic information. The respondents gave their age, gender, occupation, education, and place of birth. Also, the subjects indicated where they had lived until adolescence.

To create the composite maps, I employed a method that is functionally closest to the methods presented by Montgomery and Stoeckle (2013) and Calaza Diaz et al. (2015). Each map was scanned and saved as a digital image file so that it could be read by QGIS.² The hand-drawn shapes on each map were traced, resulting in a single GIS polygon feature for each shape that a respondent drew on their map. All of the polygon features were combined into

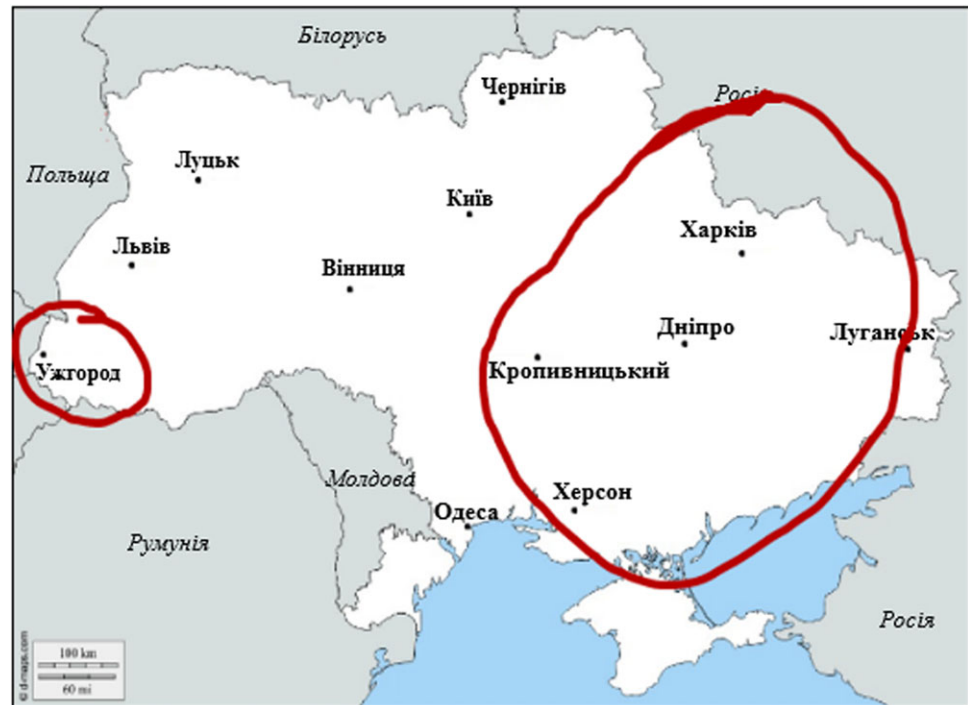


Figure 1. Example map: 22-year-old male.



Figure 2. Example map: 46-year-old female.

a single spatial data set, which was then used to generate composite maps consisting of features from all the respondents. This procedure translated individual maps into a composite representation showing the intersections among respondents' ideas of differentiation in the state. The resulting composite maps show the overlap of the polygons from the hand-drawn originals as a percentage based on the number of respondents who indicated an area.

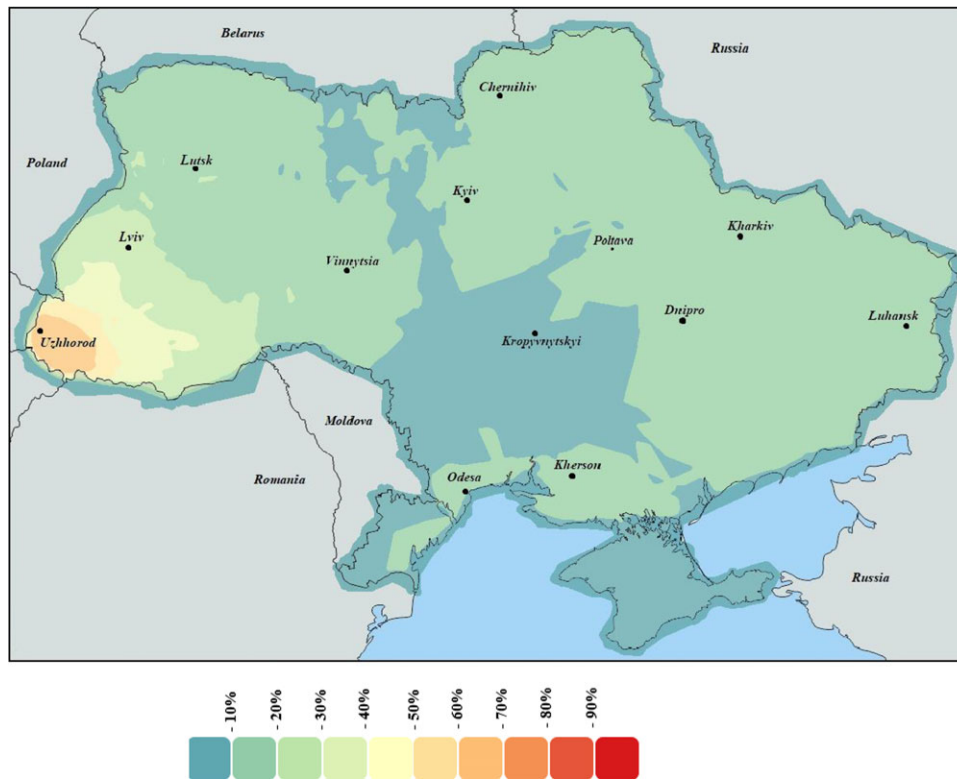
5. Results and discussion

In this section, the composite maps are considered in order to arrive at a general picture of Ukrainian speakers' perceptions. This

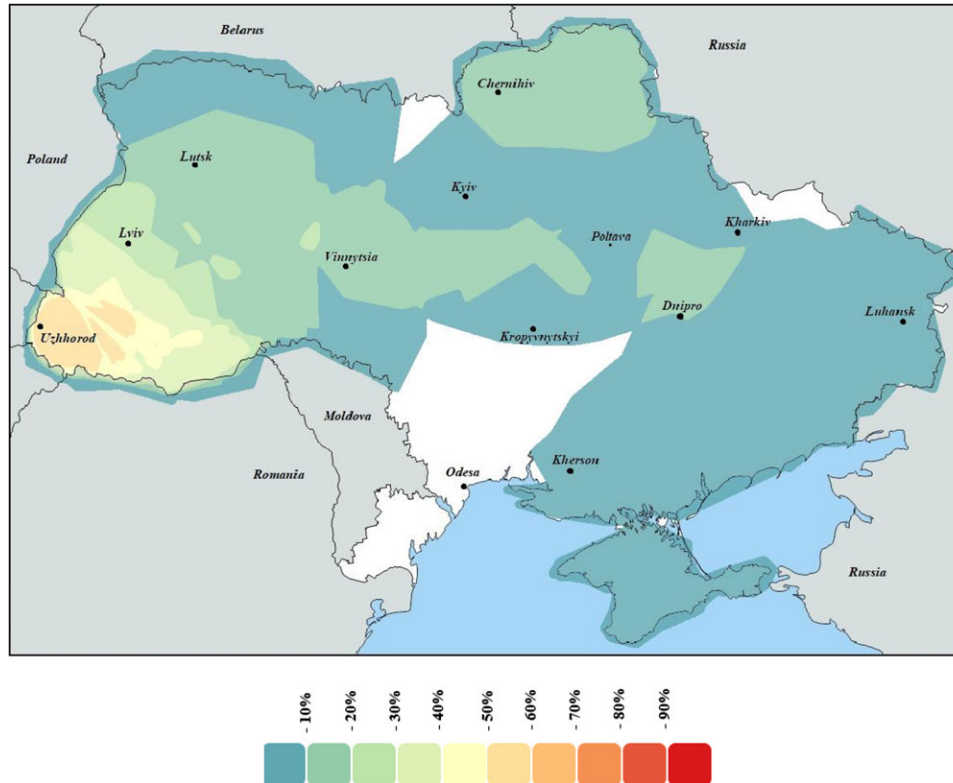
general picture is complemented by a discussion of the results broken down by region to compare responses from Central, Southeastern, and Western Ukrainians. In this section, I also attempt to give some explanations to the trends and tendencies that have arisen out of the composite maps.

5.1. The *rizhe-vukho* phenomenon: Transcarpathia

Places identified by respondents where they *think* people's Ukrainian grates one's ears are indicated in composite Maps 1–4. Again, though *rizhe-vukho* (*grates one's ears*) can mean both unpleasant and incorrect language use from the perspective of the



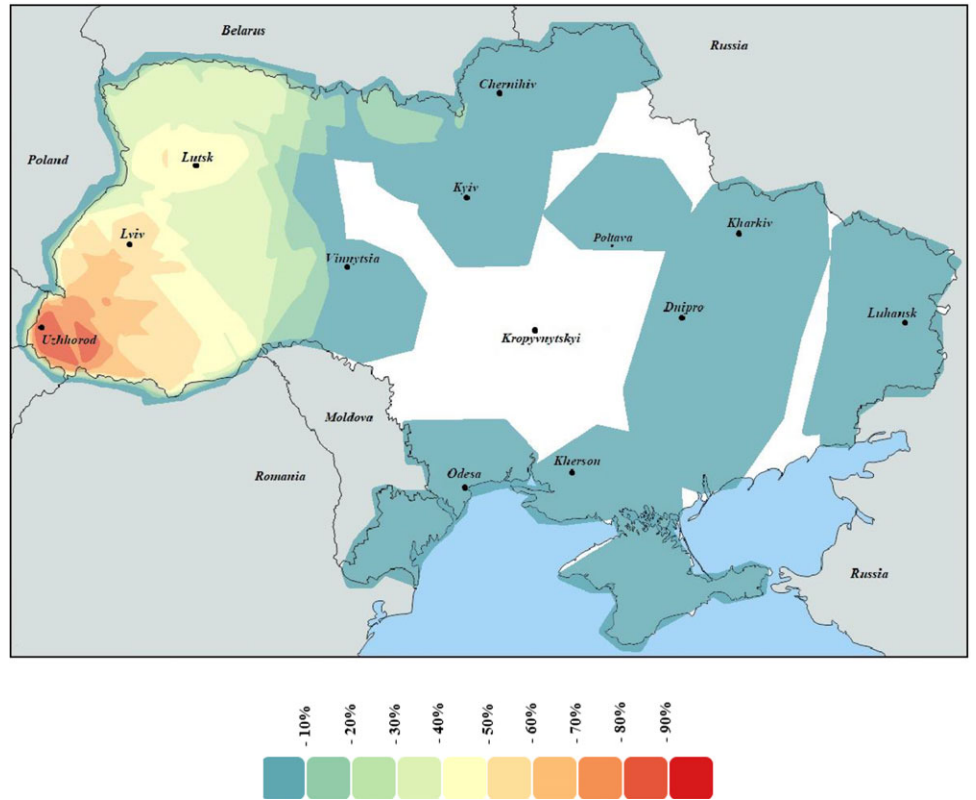
Map 1. Ukrainian respondents' (n = 78) perceptions of "where people's speech grates one's ears."



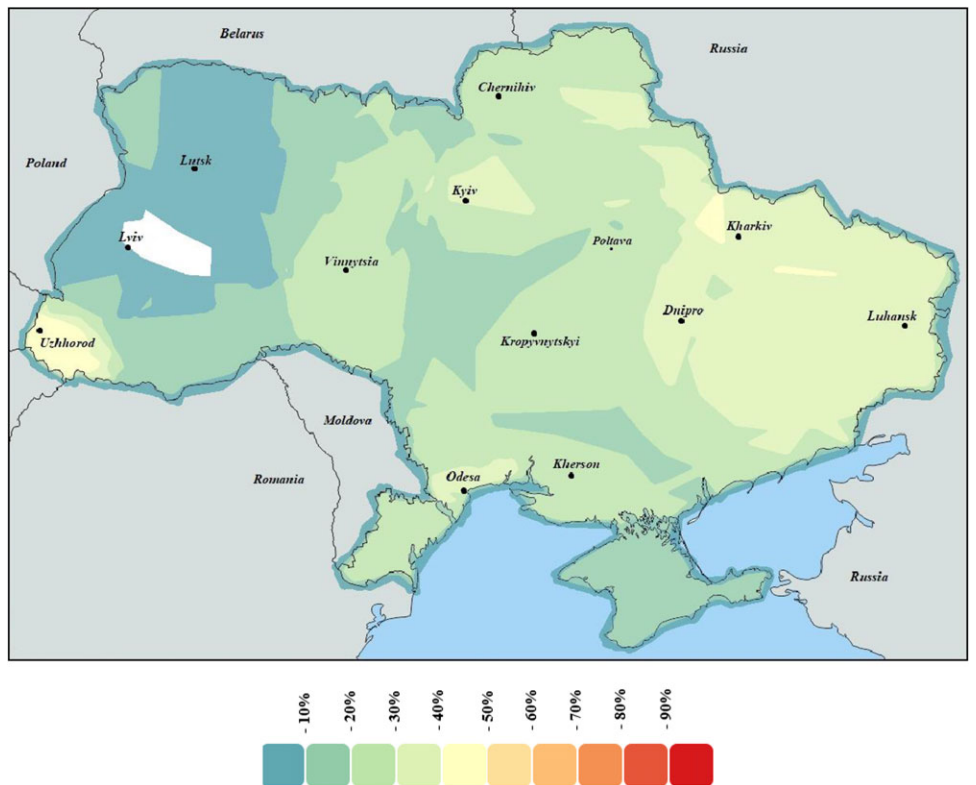
Map 2. Central Ukrainian respondents' (n = 28) perceptions of "where people's speech grates one's ears."

respondent, here *grates one's ears* can only be interpreted as an overall negative evaluation of language use. Under each composite map is a legend showing the overlap as a percentage of the

respondents who identified an area. The dark red areas indicate where the most overlap occurs, while the darker green areas indicate where the least overlap occurs. For example, in Map 1 the darkest



Map 3. Southeastern Ukrainian respondents' (n = 24) perceptions of "where people's speech grates one's ears."



Map 4. Western Ukrainian respondents' (n = 26) perceptions of "where people's speech grates one's ears."

locations on the map represent the overlap of areas identified by at least 60% (n = 47) of the 78 respondents. In Map 1, the most prominent feature is the apparent salience of the Transcarpathian region, especially the area surrounding the city of Uzhhorod. That is,

Transcarpathia is the place that was most frequently identified by respondents on their hand-drawn maps.

The prominence of Transcarpathia on the hand-drawn maps could be due to the language practices of Transcarpathia's

inhabitants, where they often use Ukrainian (and at times Russian) in the so-called elevated contexts and the local variety in so-called everyday interaction (Csernicskó & Laihonon, 2016). This local variety differs to a great extent from standard Ukrainian, though standard Ukrainian is used in administration and taught in schools (Pietikainen & Kelly-Holmes, 2013; Csernicskó, 2015).

The linguistic features of the Transcarpathian variety vary significantly from the modern standard Ukrainian variety. Some of the features that are distinct from the standard variety are as follows (Pop, 2001; Kushko, 2007):

- Presence of the phoneme [u ~ ʏ]
- [u] or [y] in place of [i] in closed syllables: [kunʲ], [kynʲ] — [kinʲ] (“horse”)
- Dejotation: [znawu] — [znaju] (“know” 1st sg present)
- Lexical items: archaisms no longer used in the modern standard variety; borrowings from Hungarian, Slovak, Polish, and Romanian
- Use of enclitics: [ʲubuv bu- m fio vidʲiti] — [ja xotʲiv bi jofio batʲiti] (“I would like to see him/it”)
- Use of [naj] in place of [nexaj] in the third person imperative

The use of the variety spoken across the Transcarpathian region carries stigmatization. In an article published on the Rusyn Society’s website titled “Speak normally!” (*Говори нормально!*), the author, Myhal Lyzhechko (2021), gives examples of some attitudes that they have experienced when speaking the Transcarpathian variety: “I have heard phrases like ‘Come on, just speak without those rural words of yours.’ . . . ‘And could you not speak Transcarpathian? It is unpleasant to me.’”

In Map 2, the perceptions of only those from Central Ukraine are shown (n = 28). As is shown, the areas that contain the most overlap were again the Transcarpathian region. The area with the most overlap encompassed the city of Uzhhorod with a least 50% (n = 14) of the respondents identifying this area. The central regions were not left out, but only 3 of the 28 respondents from Central Ukraine circled an area that would be defined as part of Central Ukraine.

Map 3 shows the composite map of respondents from Southeastern Ukraine (n = 24). Similarly to the respondents from the central region, the area around Uzhhorod was indicated by at least 80% (n = 19) of the 24 respondents. Much of the oblasts of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Zakarpattia were indicated by at least 50% (n = 12) of the 24 respondents. Of the three regional composite maps, the Southeastern respondents noted much more of the western area to be the places *where people’s Ukrainian grates one’s ears*. Though, when more of the west was added, the highest concentration of agreement was still within the Transcarpathian region.

In Map 4, the perceptions of Western Ukrainian respondents paint a different picture when compared to the other regions’ respondents. Though the Transcarpathian region, particularly around Uzhhorod, was still frequently indicated with between 40% (n = 10) and 50% (n = 13) of the 26 respondents circling this area, also smaller areas in the east around Kharkiv fell into this grouping, which were not as often marked by respondents from the other regions. Although the question asked talks specifically about Ukrainian, the regions indicated by western respondents do have a higher rate of Russian language use, as compared to the west, which could be in the minds of the respondents and be influential. The western speakers could also be highlighting the use of Surzhyk (Ukrainian–Russian code-mixing) in these areas, the attitudes towards Ukrainian–Russian

codemixing being overwhelmingly negative (Bernsand, 2006; Bilaniuk, 2005).

The composite maps suggest that the area surrounding the city Uzhhorod, located in the Zakarpattia oblast, and to a large extent the Transcarpathian region generally, are most agreed upon by the respondents as to be the area where they *think people’s Ukrainian grates one’s ears*. Despite this agreement, the composite maps also suggest divergent views between Western respondents and those Central and Southeastern respondents as to where they *think people’s Ukrainian grates one’s ears*, given that Western respondents indicated regions in the East more often than their Southeastern and Central counterparts.

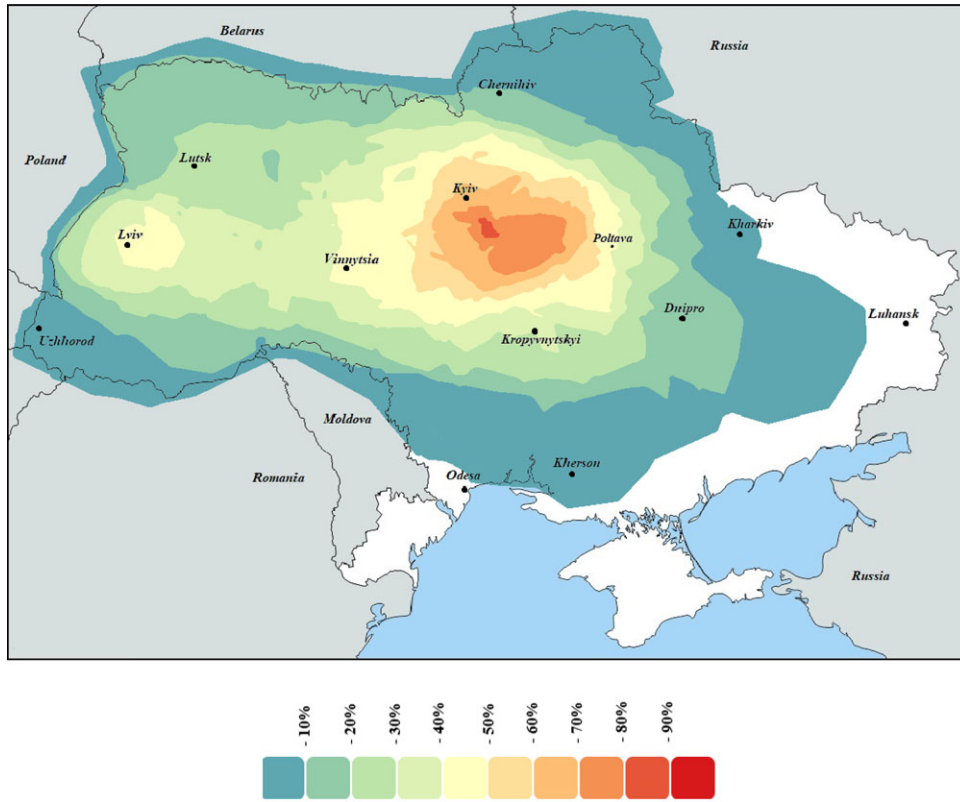
5.2. Most correct Ukrainian: linguistic tug-of-war

Maps 5–8 are composite maps that indicate the overlap of the areas identified by respondents as places where they *think people’s Ukrainian is the most correct*. The white areas were not indicated by any speakers to match this description. In Map 5, a band stretching from Odesa across the Crimean Peninsula and up to Luhansk was not indicated by any speaker as being an area where people speak the most correct variant of Ukrainian. As pointed out above, these areas have a high percentage of Russian usage as well as code-mixing.

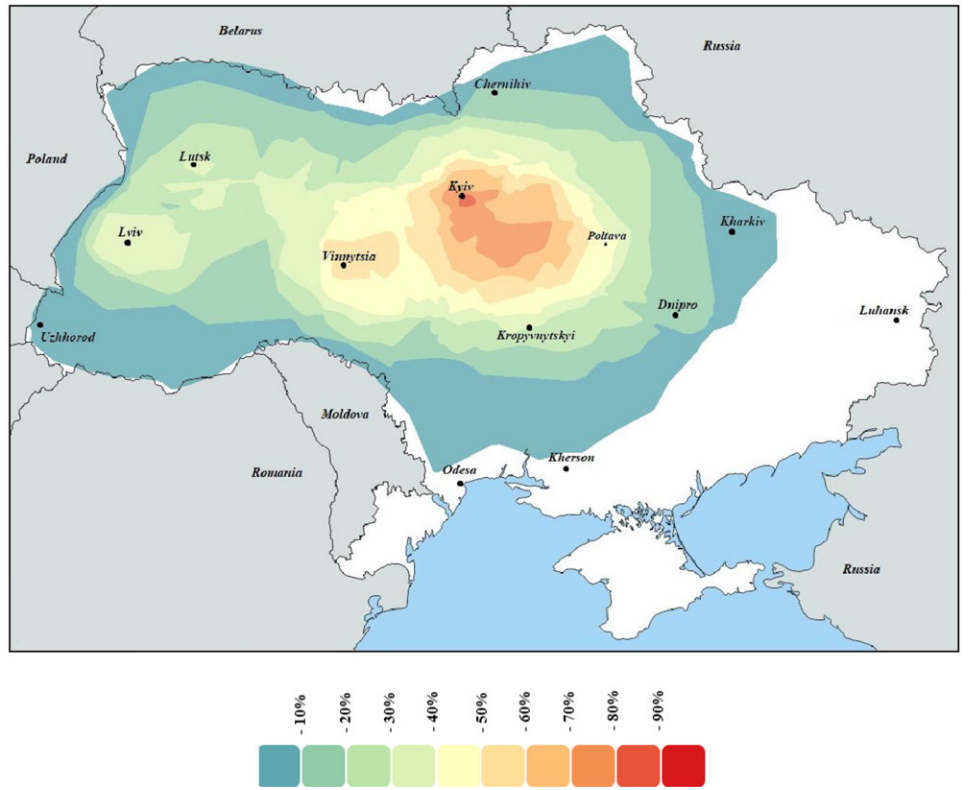
The area between Kyiv and Poltava were frequently indicated as the areas where the most correct Ukrainian is spoken. In Map 5, at least 60% (n = 51) of the 86 respondents indicated Kyiv (and surrounding areas). There was more overlap, at least 70% (n = 60) of the 86 respondents indicating an area, in the area between Kyiv and Poltava, which is not surprising given that the historic standard is based on the CDSV, which is located between Kyiv (but not including it) and Poltava. What is interesting to see is that Kyiv, which historically is on the edge of both the CDSV and northern Ukrainian varieties, is seemingly salient for correctness among the respondents. In standard-language cultures, of which Ukrainian is one, virtually everyone subscribes to the ideology of the standard language, and one aspect of this is a firm belief in correctness (Milroy, 2001). If the variety of Ukrainian historically associated with “the Ukrainian nation as a unity” (Gricenko, 1993:287) was CDSV, which has its anchor in the Poltava region, and Kyiv is on the edge of both CDSV and the northern variety, there is a disconnect in the identified area between using the so-called “most correct” variety and the historical standard variety that must be explained.

One possible explanation of the disconnect between the historically recognized standard and where speakers identified the most correct Ukrainian as being spoken could be the result of Kyiv being the capital of Ukraine. It is not uncommon for the base dialect for a country’s standard language to be the original dialect of the capital—in France, Paris; in England, London; in Russia, Moscow. There is also precedent for the recognized base variety of a language to be associated with a strong economic and cultural center—in Italy, Florence. Additionally, the language may be a combination of several regional dialects, as are German and Polish. Given that Kyiv is the largest city in Ukraine and from 2001 has increased in population by 13% according to the 2021 estimate (Ukrstat),³ Kyiv holds a key place for Ukraine that makes it likely to be identified with the most correct variety of the language.

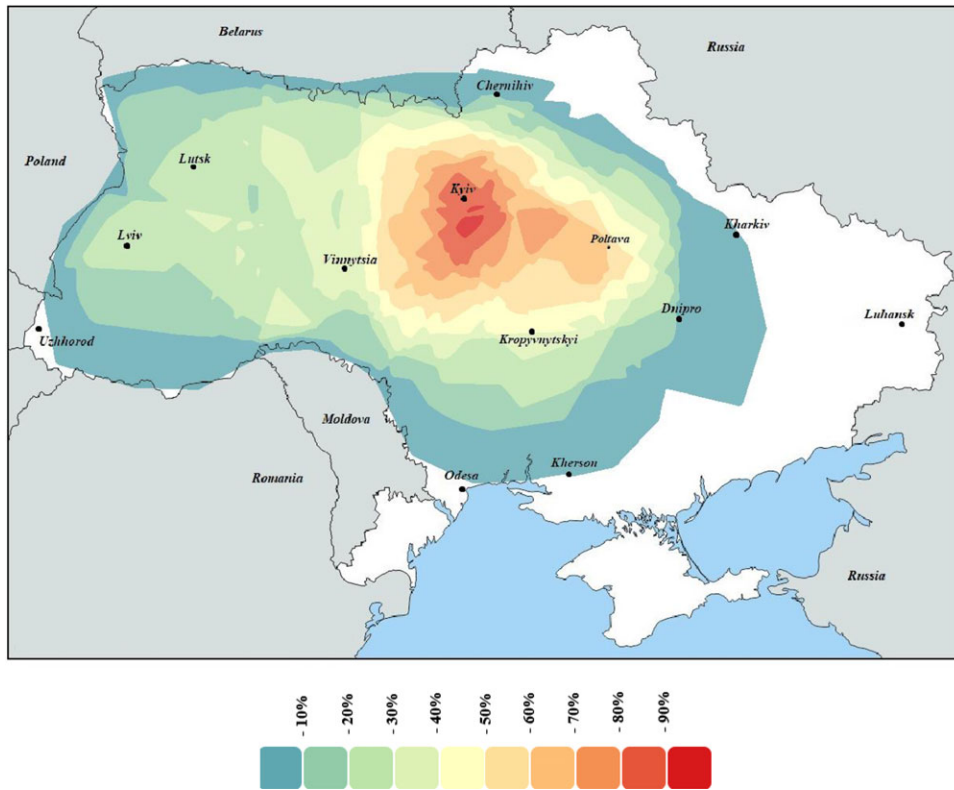
The fact that Kyiv is the capital may not be the only factor in a shift from the CDSV to a more Kyiv-centric idea of where the most correct Ukrainian is located within a speaker’s mind. Another possible explanation is that Kyiv has become an important political and cultural symbol for unifying Ukrainians. This is due to



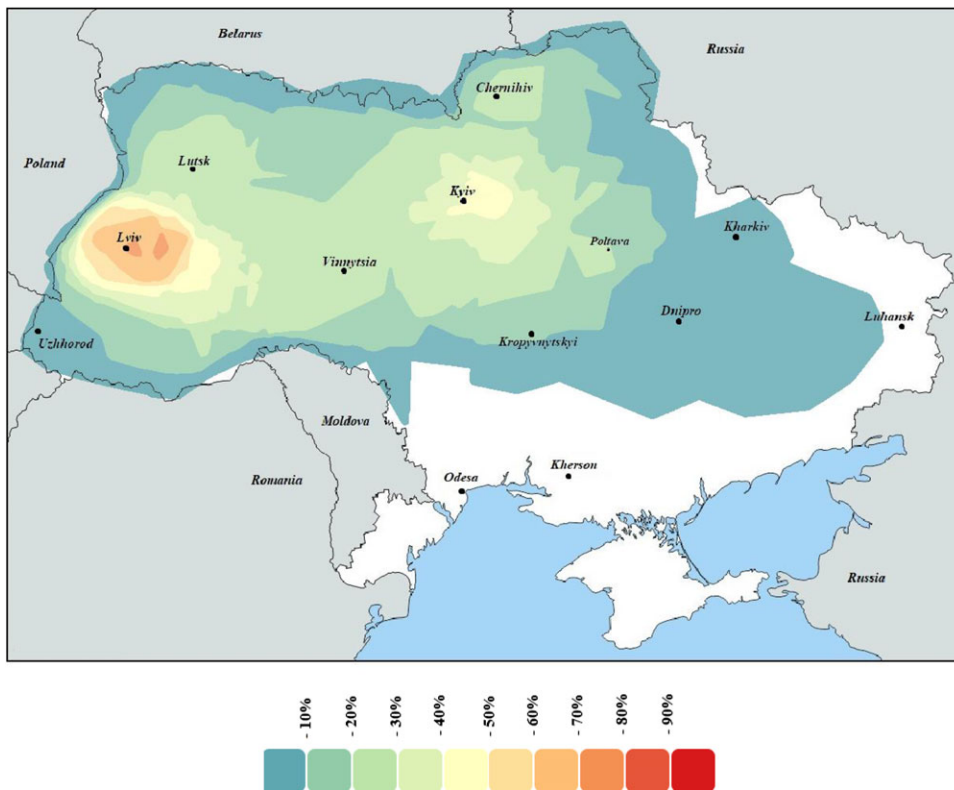
Map 5. Ukrainian respondents' (n = 86) perceptions of "where people speak the most correct."



Map 6. Central Ukrainian respondents' (n = 30) perceptions of "where people speak the most correct."



Map 7. Southeastern Ukrainian respondents' (n = 24) perceptions of "where people speak the most correct."



Map 8. Western Ukrainian respondents' (n = 32) perceptions of "where people speak the most correct."

important events such as the Orange Revolution of 2004, the Euromaidan of 2013, the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, and even language policy such as the implementation and adoption of new orthographic rules in 2019. This poses an interesting shift

in the continual process of standardization within Ukrainian. Historically, the unifying function of standardization was to elevate CDSV. Based on the composite maps, it seems as though the standard variety has shifted from being anchored in the Poltava

region to Kyiv and an outward radiating region surrounding the city.

In Map 6, Central Ukrainian perceptions are shown. Among Central respondents there was a small area around Kyiv that had the highest overlap, at least 80% ($n = 24$) of the 30 respondents. It is also important to know there is a larger central area that includes the area around Vinnytsia, and outside of Poltava was still indicated (at least 50%, $n = 15$, of the 30 respondents).

In Map 7, the perceptions of Southeastern Ukrainian respondents are shown. It is important to note that most of the eastern and southern regions were not indicated as being areas where people speak the most correct by Southeastern respondents. It seems that Southeastern respondents, like the Central respondents, marked areas round Kyiv, with at least 80% ($n = 19$) of the 24 respondents indicating areas that include Kyiv. Also, the CDSV still seems holds much of the prestige and correctness, given that at least 60% ($n = 14$) of the 24 respondents indicated an area that is placed in the region of the CDSV. Southeasterners were also in agreement that eastern and southern regions were not included in areas where the most correct Ukrainian is found. The concept of linguistic insecurity may best explain this fact. Southeasterners are convinced that their dialects do not fall into the areas where the most correct Ukrainian is spoken; the general view about their dialects has somehow shaped the way they perceived themselves. Though another possible explanation is that the Southeastern respondents are highly self-aware of the fact that the language use that occurs most often in their region is, in fact, not Ukrainian, but rather Russian or the mixed-code.

In Map 8, Western Ukrainian respondents' perceptions are indicated. Unlike the other composite maps, where Kyiv and more central regions tended to have the most overlap, here in the mental maps of the western respondents, Lviv was the area that observes the most overlap. At least 70% ($n = 22$) of the 32 respondents indicated Lviv as the area with the most correct Ukrainian. The Kyiv area was marked by at least 40% ($n = 13$) of the 32 respondents. Similarly to the composite maps regarding the *rizhe-vukho* phenomenon, the composite maps here suggest that Western respondents diverge in their agreement to where the most correct Ukrainian is spoken. This divergence from the Central and Southeastern respondents further highlights the linguistic tug-of-war between Kyiv and Lviv.

Lviv, according to UNESCO in 2009, is the largest city in western Ukraine and home to 750,000 inhabitants and was recognized as the country's Cultural Capital. Kyiv being the country's political capital and Lviv being designated as the capital of art and culture may help explain the polarity of two regional perceptually correct variants being highlighted. The salience in agreement of Western respondents that the area around Lviv is seen as most correct could also be connected to comments Andrey Kurkov gave in an opinion piece about Euromaidan on BBC News Online (January 28, 2014) that states, “[p]erhaps, if Ukraine did not have its western regions, with Lviv at the centre, it would be easy to turn the country into another Belarus. But Halychyna and Bukovina, which became part of Soviet Ukraine under the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, brought to the country a rebellious and free spirit.”

This dichotomy of Lviv versus Kyiv, west versus east, that the composite maps suggest, can possibly be explained by examining historic linguistic trends and traditions. We can see a linguistic tug-of-war between Eastern and Western Ukrainian varieties going on throughout the history of the codification and standardization of Ukrainian. At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the

twentieth centuries, there was an opposition of “rural language” versus “urban language” (Yavorska, 2010:185). The Western Ukrainian variety was identified with the latter, and this variety began to be seen as more prestigious, even in certain circles of Eastern Ukrainian intelligentsia. It can also be seen as Shevelov (1987:122–126) notes, “the language of Lviv was anti-national and spoiled, most of all because of its excessive use of foreign words, which made this language variety incomprehensible to ordinary peasants. Linguistic elements from the Western Ukrainian variety also evoked resentment among pro-Russian journalists.”

Codification of standard Ukrainian had its goal in achieving unification of Ukrainians from all Ukrainian territories, and this was attempted through a compromise between the Eastern and Western Ukrainian linguistic traditions, which bore out the 1928 orthographic norms, also called the orthography of Kharkiv due to the fact that the All-Ukrainian spelling conference took place in the then capital of the Ukrainian SSR, the city of Kharkiv (Hornjatkevych, 2011). The Ukrainian orthography of 1928 was an attempt at this, and in general it oriented itself toward the Eastern Ukrainian tradition, while the choice of orthographic norms within borrowings was based on the Western Ukrainian tradition. This tug-of-war between Eastern and Western varieties continued beyond the 1928 orthography. In Eastern Ukraine, the orthography of 1928 did not last long. According to Yavorska (2010:189), as early as 1933, during the campaign against “nationalist subversion in linguistics,” the orthography had been altered in Eastern Ukraine; however, this 1933 orthography was not acknowledged in Western Ukraine, and it was introduced there only in 1939, after Western Ukrainian lands were taken into the Ukrainian SSR due to the Nonaggression Pact between Germany and the Soviet Union.

This Eastern and Western dichotomy, seen through the historical development and standardization of Ukrainian, continues to manifest itself as the composite maps of the respondents demonstrate. The composite maps suggest that this is now not inherently a geographical East versus West, given Kharkiv is no longer the capital, but is now a tug-of-war between Lviv as the Cultural Capital and Kyiv, the nation's capital.

6. Conclusion

Attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions can be strongly associated with one another. The mainstream attitudes of popular culture exert some influence on beliefs of individuals within that culture. The results of the composite maps described above demonstrate that Ukrainian speakers perceive spatial differentiation in the Ukrainian spoken across Ukraine. There is a consensus among respondents that the Transcarpathian region, with a focal point around the city of Uzhhorod, has the Ukrainian that *grates on one's ears*, with linguistic features that vary significantly from the modern standard Ukrainian variety as well as Southeastern varieties. There is also a consciousness among respondents that much of the Eastern and Southern regions are not part of what is considered to speak the most correct Ukrainian; this is to say, those areas were not marked by any respondent. The Western respondents, while still indicating Transcarpathia, diverge slightly from Central and Southeastern respondents by including Eastern regions into areas where Ukrainian *grates on one's ears*.

For the 90 respondents, there seems to be a shift from the historic base of the Central Dnieper Standard, which is located around the Poltava area, to move the most correct variety of Ukrainian closer to Kyiv. This may have its explanation in the

primary function Kyiv has had in the last decades as well as being the nation's capital. Western respondents again diverge from the Central and Southeastern respondents by indicating the Lviv area in Western Ukraine as the place where the most correct Ukrainian is spoken. Though there has been a shift from geographical east versus west, the composite maps of Western versus Central and Southeastern regions continue to manifest this ongoing tug-of-war in linguistic traditions and where the standard and correct version of Ukrainian is located.

The results of the study are interesting and require further analysis by both linguists and sociologists, as the perception and interpretation of language are due to many non-linguistic factors. The findings indicate a clear need for further research on the production and perception of Ukrainian within Ukraine using a narrower spatial reference point (e.g., oblast, city). Also, by allowing the spatial and descriptive distinctions to emerge from the data and by exploring the implicit associations connected to those dissociations, we can arrive at a richer understanding of respondents' conceptions of their social worlds.

Competing interests. The author declares none.

Notes

- 1 Jotform is a San Francisco based company for building online forms; www.jotform.com.
- 2 QGIS is a free and open-source cross-platform desktop geographic information system (GIS) application that supports analysis of geospatial data; www.qgis.org.
- 3 Ukrstat is the State statistic service of Ukraine; ukrstat.gov.ua.

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