

Grammatical gender in Ukrainian-English Code-Switching

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1. Introduction

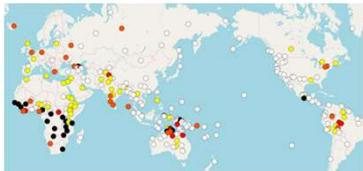
BACKGROUND

- Languages differ in whether and how their nouns are marked for grammatical gender
- Grammatical gender that involves differences in the form of nouns → impact various elements in a sentence
 - fem- vesela divtjina
 - masc - veseljtj ihlopetf
 - neuter - vesele ditja
- Ukrainian and English differ in this respect:
 - Ukrainian is overtly marked for gender (Masculine, Feminine and Neuter)
 - English is not overtly marked for gender¹

English and Ukrainian come into contact with each other in NY, including when speakers code-switch – that is combine the use of the two languages including in same sentence.

SIGNIFICANCE

<https://wals.info/feature/30A#2/26.7/148.9>³



None	145
Two	50
Three	26
Four	12
Five or more	24

- Much variation across the world languages with to the expression of this feature
- With globalization: increase in language context contexts
- Need insights into more different contexts of language contact
- Language use of multilingual Ukrainian speakers in NY: understudied.

2. Research Question & Hypotheses

GRAMMATICAL GENDER IN ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN³

- English: only semantic gender assignment that mainly applies to words that refer to animates (e.g. boy/he; girl/she)
 - Only a few inanimate nouns are assigned gender: exception, e.g. ship/she
 - In English the gender of nouns: no consequence for the syntax, e.g. form of adjective
 - She/he is kind
- Ukrainian: gender assignment system based on complex set of semantic, phonological and morphological rules
 - Masculine (Typically ending in consonants)**
 - E.g. дощ 'doshch' = rain
 - Neuter (typically ending in -o or -e)**
 - E.g. сонце 'sontse' = sun
 - Feminine (typically ending in -a or -ya)**
 - E.g. зима 'zyma' = winter

- Grammatical Number: both English and Ukrainian have a two-number (singular vs plural) noun system

Singularia Tantum (mass nouns)	E.g. medicine, milk, racism Ukrainian e.g. 'polityka' = politics
Pluralia Tantum	English e.g. pants, glasses Ukrainian e.g. 'dveri' = door

RESEARCH QUESTION

In the context of code-switching, when using an English noun (Embedded/donor language) in a Ukrainian sentence (matrix/recipient language), will speakers rely on semantic or phonological criteria to assign gender and numbers to English noun?

HYPOTHESES

- H1:** Ukrainian-English speakers will rely on semantics (the gender of the word that has same meaning in Ukrainian) when assigning gender to an English Noun in a Ukrainian sentence.
- H2:** Ukrainian-English speakers will rely on phonological cues (last syllable of English word) when assigning number to an English Mass/Tantum in a Ukrainian sentence.

3. Methodology

PARTICIPANTS: Nine 20—30 year old Ukrainian-Russian-English Trilinguals in NY

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY:

LEAP-Q³ adapted to trilingual speakers
 Profile of Study participants:
 Time in the US (English-speaking Environment): 7-19 years
 Dominant Language: 56% Eng, 33% Ukrainian, 11% Russian
 Language Exposure: 46% Eng, 30% Ukrainian, 24% Russian

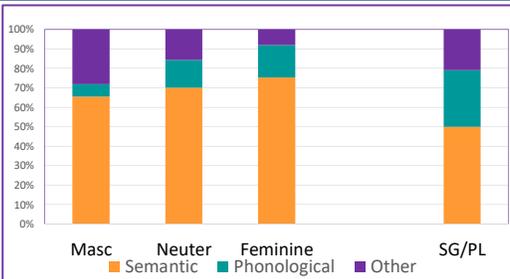
OBJECTIVE OF ONLINE QUALTRICS GENDER & NUMBER

QUESTIONNAIRE: Determine criteria (semantic, phonological or other) Ukrainian-English speakers use when assigning Gender or Number to a code-switched English Noun in Ukrainian sentence.

PROCEDURE: Participants read examples of Ukrainian sentences that contained English nouns (in Roman letter) and had to select gender or number inflections that 'agreed' with the nouns out of choice that reflected semantic, phonological or other strategies; 10 seconds

STIMULI: Developed for the purpose of this study; involved nouns that do not have inherent gender in English but the equivalent of which are gendered in Ukrainian (28 Masc, 28 Fem, 28 Neut.) and Singular or Plural Mass Nouns (18) that ended with different consonants and vowels; order of presentation randomized.

4. Results and Conclusions



+ H1 confirmed: Across the three genders (Masc., Neuter and Fem.): Ukrainian-Russian-English speakers in NY rely on **semantics** of the equivalent Noun in Ukrainian and much less frequently on **phonological** or other cues

-- H2 not confirmed: For the SG/PL Mass noun, they rely on **the semantics** of the equivalent Noun in Ukrainian **50%** of the time > on **phonological cues (29%)** > and other cues (21%).

CONTRIBUTION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE RESULTS

- Different from results obtained on previous studies on Russian/English and Ukrainian-English Code-Switching: prevalence of **phonological cues**^{4&5}
- Possible accounts and next step in the present study

¹Crystal, D. (2008). *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (6th ed.). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444302776>; ²Greville, G. Corbett. (2013). Number of Genders. In: Dryer, Matthew S & Haspelmath, Martin (eds.). *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. <http://wals.info/feature/30>; ³Karamysheva, I. (2012). *Contrastive Grammar of English and Ukrainian Languages* (2nd ed.). Nova Knyha Publishers. <https://www.scribd.com/doc/182083997/Karamysheva-I-D-Contrastive-Grammar-of-English-and-Ukrainian-Languages>; ⁴Maryam, Blumenfeld & Kaushanskaya (2017) The Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q): Assessing language profiles in bilinguals and multilinguals. *Journal of Speech Language and Hearing Research*, 50 (4): 940-967. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9481.00013>; ⁵Chirsheva, G. (2009). Gender in Russian—English code-switching. *International Journal of Bilingualism*, 13(1), 63–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367006909103529>; ⁶Budzhak-Jones, S & Poplack, S. (2002). Two Generations, Two Strategies: The Fate of Bare English-origin Nouns in Ukrainian. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 1(2), 225-258

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