

# The teaching of the Ukrainian language in Poland.

## Experience , theory and practice.

### General considerations

Polish citizens of Ukrainian origin ( called here and after the Ukrainian minority) had found themselves in a very specific and unfavorable situation in Poland since 1947. After the forced resettlement of more than 140,000 people in so-called “ Wisła operation “, Ukrainians ( Polish citizens ) were settled throughout almost all territories of the north- western Polish border zone . Actually , the provinces in which this minority lives in the larger clusters are: Warmia and Masuria ( warmińsko-mazurskie) , Pomerania ( pomorskie), West Pomerania ( zachodniopomorskie) , Lubusz (lubuskie) , Lower Silesia (dolnośląskie), Lesser Poland (małopolskie) , Subcarpathian (podkarpackie) and Podlaskie (podlaskie) .

The official propaganda, in totalitarian communist state did not recognize or even accept the existence of any national minority in Poland , especially the Ukrainian minority. Despite of this fact, it had been possible to create in Poland (beginning in 1952 ) residual foundations of education, in the form of several primary and secondary schools and to create a network of so-called teaching points of the Ukrainian language. However, they gave a very limited opportunity to learn their mother tongue . The determining factor for the Ukrainian minority after 1947 up to the present time has been the fact of its dispersing all over the country . Originally, such a dispersion was aimed onto the rapid assimilation of this community. This, as well as lasting throughout the whole postwar period, constant emigration of members of the Ukrainian community in Poland (both gainful and political ) and rather reluctant attitude of government and other ethnic groups to it, influenced the fact that in the national census conducted in Poland in 2002, only about 36,000 people in Poland claimed their belonging to Ukrainian nationality. However, the results of the national census in 2011 showed that the Ukrainian minority in Poland is much larger in its number. It is about 48,000 people<sup>1</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> Results of the National census of people and their Housing in 2011. The basic information upon the social-demographic situation of Poles and their Housing, GUS Warsaw , March 2012 p. 18. (*Wyniki Narodowego Spisu*

A large proportion of people belonging to the Ukrainian minority in Poland speaks Ukrainian and for some young people this language is still the first language treated as a native . However the long-term isolation of their own language from everyday language, that is used contemporary in Ukraine , meant that it retains to this day some archaic forms and phrases , and also has a lot of borrowings taken from Polish language.

### **Legal basis of the of the mother tongue teaching in Poland**

The rights of person belonging to national or ethnic minorities to maintaining and developing their own language, customs and traditions is guaranteed by items of Article 35-th of Polish Constitution <sup>2</sup>.

Beside of that:

- • Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities ( Journal of Laws of 2002 No. 22, item . 209 ),
- Article 11<sup>th</sup> of the Treaty between the Republic of Poland and Ukraine on good neighborliness , friendly relations and co-operation , done in Warsaw on 18<sup>th</sup> of May 1992 ( Journal of Laws of 1993 No. 125, item . 573)
- Articles 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of the Agreement between the Government of the Polish Republic and the Government of Ukraine on cooperation in the field of culture, science and education, done in Kiev on 20<sup>th</sup> of May 1997 ( Journal of Laws of 2000, No. 3 , item 29)
- Articles 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> of the Agreement on Cooperation between the Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Poland and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine , prepared in Górowo Iławeckie dated on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2001 ( Monitor Polski dated 5<sup>th</sup> of February, 2002 )

---

*Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2011.Podstawowe informacje o sytuacji demograficzno-społecznej ludności Polski oraz zasobach mieszkaniowych, GUS, Warszawa, marzec 2012 rok, s. 18)*

<sup>2</sup>Article 35-th of Polish Republic Constitution done on 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 1997 published in Journal of Laws of 1997 No. 78, item 483 ( Art. 35 Konstytucji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 2 kwietnia 1997 r., Dz. U. z 1997 r., Nr 78, poz. 483, )

- Article 13<sup>th</sup> of the Act of 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1991 on the education system (uniformed text: Journal of Laws of 2004 No. 256, item . 2572 , as amended. )
- Act of 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2005 on National and Ethnic Minorities and Regional Language (Journal of Laws of 2005 No. 17, item . 141 )
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2007, on the conditions and manners of realization by kindergartens, schools and public institutions the tasks that allow the maintenance of a sense of national identity , ethnic and linguistic diversity of students belonging to national minorities and ethnic communities using a regional language ( Journal of Laws No. 214 , item . 1579 , as amended. )
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 30<sup>th</sup> of April 2007, on the conditions and methods of assessment, grading and promotion of pupils and students as well as conducting tests and examinations in public schools (Journal of Laws No. 83, item . 562, as amended.)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2008, on the core curriculum and general education in particular types of schools ( Journal of Laws of 2009, No. 4 item 17 )
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2002, on the framework curricula in public schools (Journal of Laws of 2009 No. 54, item . 422, as amended.)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 8<sup>th</sup> of June 2009 on the acceptance for using in school, pre-school programs and curricula , and admission for using school textbooks (Journal of Laws of 2009 No. 89, item . 730 )
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 21<sup>st</sup> of May 2001 on the framework statutes of public kindergartens and public schools (Journal of Laws of 2001 No. 61, item . 624, as amended. )
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 19<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 concerning teacher training centers (Journal of Laws No. 200, item . 1537 , as amended.)
- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2009 on the specific qualifications required from teachers and schools and determination the cases in which employ teachers with no higher

education or completed teacher training can be employed (Journal of Laws of 2009 , No. 50 item . 400)

- Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 20th of December 2012 on the allocation of the general subsidies for local government units in 2013 (Journal of Laws from the 31<sup>st</sup> of December , 2012 , item. 1541 )

## **Organization of education**

The organization beginnings of the Ukrainian language teaching in Poland after 1947 had its initial stages at the fifties . In 1952, the Political Bureau of the Communist Party , adopted a resolution on the stabilization of the Ukrainian population staying in new places of residence. Political Bureau of the Communist Party guidelines referred also to the issue of education. The first directive on the organization of teaching Ukrainian language in Poland ( as a native language ), the Ministry of Education , issued two circulars publishing , from the 4<sup>th</sup> of July 1952 – No. II, I-5232/52 and dated on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 1952 - No. SO 5-7630 / 52

The indication of these documents is important in this matter because inside of them the basic organization forms of the language teaching - in practice , continued up today - including , among others, creating the opportunity to establish interscholastic teams or interclass teaching the Ukrainian language .<sup>3</sup>

At the moment the organization conditions of teaching Ukrainian (as a mother tongue ) is governed by the Education Act , especially the Article 13<sup>th</sup> of that act : “ *Public schools enable pupils to retain their national, ethnic, linguistic and religious identity, in particular, learning their own language, their history and culture*” .<sup>4</sup>

Teaching process is organized at the request of the parents ( a legal foster protector ) or an adult student. It can be carried in the following forms :

- in the separate groups , departments or schools,

---

<sup>3</sup> Zabrowarny S., Widrodzennia ukrainskoho szkilnytwa, w: Ukrainskyj Almanach 1997, Warsaw 1997, p. 256

<sup>4</sup>Act of 7<sup>th</sup> of September 1991 on the system of education (as amended), Article 13<sup>th</sup> , paragraph 1, Journal of Laws 1991 No. 95, item 425.( Dz.U. 1991 Nr 95 poz. 425)

- in groups, departments or schools - with additional language learning classes and teaching own history and culture,
- in inter- school teaching teams .<sup>5</sup>

The method and conditions for the organization of the teaching of the mother tongue for children and young people belonging to ethnic and national minorities in Poland is defined in the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 November 2007 on the conditions and manner of exercise of the kindergartens, schools and public institutions to allow maintenance of a sense of national identity ethnic and linguistic diversity of students belonging to national and ethnic minorities and the community using the regional language ( Journal of Laws No. 214 , item . 1579 , as amended ) . In 2012 ( April 4<sup>th</sup> ) , some certain provisions of above mentioned regulation has been changed. In practice, this was the adaptation of regulation to changes that happened in the Act on the education system. Including - especially - the introduction specifying the number of hours of language teaching at different levels of education and the number of hours of studying the history and geography of the country , of which the defined minority identified itself <sup>6</sup>.

### **Organizational form and the number of teaching hours**

The number of teaching hours devoted to the teaching of the mother tongue , depends on the agreed at school or teaching center forms of teaching . The teaching of the mother tongue in the nursery schools can be organized in the following ways:

- in a nursery or nursery school , where classes are taught in their native language minority or regional language
- in a nursery or nursery school , where classes are taught in Polish and in the minority language (or regional )
- in a nursery or nursery school , where classes are taught in Polish , and in addition the teaching of the mother tongue In number of 4 hours a week is carried out,

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, item 2

<sup>6</sup> Minister of National Education Regulation of 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2012 amending the Regulation on the conditions and manner of exercise of kindergartens, schools and public institutions to allow maintenance of a sense of national identity, ethnic and linguistic diversity of students belonging to national minorities and ethnic communities using a regional language (Acts. Laws of 11 April 2012) (Dz. U. z dnia 11 kwietnia 2012 r.)

- in multi-kindergarten groups of mother tongue teaching .

The teaching of the mother tongue in schools can be organized :

- in schools or departments of the native language teaching
- in schools or bilingual sections where teaching process takes place in Polish language and the mother tongue of minorities
- In schools or offices with additional teaching of the mother tongue in which teaching takes place in Polish language , and additionally as a subject taught is a minority native language
- in interscholastic mother tongue learning groups <sup>7</sup>.

Number of teaching hours of the mother tongue in the various levels of education in schools and centers :

Tab.1 in the native language (hours per week)

Type of school	Class					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Primary	4	5	5	4	4	5
Gymnasium (Lower secondary)	4	5	4			

---

<sup>7</sup>Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14<sup>th</sup> of November 2007 on the conditions and manner of exercise of kindergartens, schools and public institutions to allow maintenance of a sense of national identity, ethnic and linguistic diversity of students belonging to national minorities and ethnic communities using a regional language (Journal of Laws No. 214, item. 1579, as amended. ), § 3-4 (Dz.U. Nr 214, poz. 1579, z późn. zm.),§ 3-4

Vocational	2	2	2			
Secondary	5	4	4			
Technical	3	4	3	3		

Tab.2 Bilingual schools where the teaching is held in Polish and the language of minority (number of hours weekly)

Type of school	Class					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Primary	4	5	5	6	6	5
Gymnasium	5	6	4			
Vocational	2	2	2			
Secondary	5	4	4			
Technical	3	4	3	3		

Tab.3 Schools Or sections with additional teaching of the minority language where it is treated as another subject – numbers of hours weekly.<sup>8</sup>

Type of school	Class					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Primary	3	3	3	3	4	3
Gymnasium	3	4	3			
Vocational	2	2	2			
Secondary	3	4	3			

---

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem,

Technical	3	3	2	2		
-----------	---	---	---	---	--	--

In the interschool group of mother-tongue teaching, for teaching of this subject to three hours per week is allocated - at all levels of education <sup>9</sup>.

### **The notification and obligation**

To allow the teaching of the mother tongue of minorities and make it possible a submission of a written declaration of parents or an adult student is required. Declarations can be submitted at the time of recording of the child ( a student ) to school or nursery and by the 30<sup>th</sup> of April each year - when the child ( student ) already resides. In practice, this latest method is used when the new teaching groups of the mother tongue are organized. There is no need to redo the declaration - once submitted declaration gives spaces to complete the educational level<sup>10</sup>.

The study declaration of the mother tongue ( submission ) is voluntary. However, when the declaration is submitted , teaching ( to complete the educational level ) becomes mandatory , with all the consequences of this fact (promotion , classification , etc. ) <sup>11</sup>.

### **When and what form of teaching can be used**

The adoption of an appropriate form of teaching organization of the mother tongue is mainly dependent on the number of people willing to learn the language. Teaching at the school of native language (or separate branches ) in a bilingual school and in the school with additional teaching of the mother tongue , can be organized at the time when the following number of students is declared<sup>12</sup>:

- a minimum of 7 children in kindergarten ( in the branch )

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, § 8.3

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, § 3.3

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, § 3.3

<sup>12</sup>Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 14 November 2007 on the conditions and manner of exercise of kindergartens, schools and public institutions to allow maintenance of a sense of national identity, ethnic and linguistic diversity of students belonging to national minorities and ethnic communities using a regional language (Journal U. No. 214, item. 1579, as amended. amended.), § 5 (Dz.U. Nr 214, poz. 1579, z późn. zm.),§ 5

- 7 pupils in elementary school ( at one class)
- 7 students in gymnasium ( at one class)
- 14 students in secondary school ( one branch )

If the smaller number of students is declared , the teaching of the mother tongue can be arranged in the form of interclass groups that are created among the students of several classes of one level (minimum 7 students in primary schools or gymnasiums and 14students at the secondary school level ) . It is also possible to organize an interclass group - formed from students of various classes and levels - the minimum number of students in this case is 3 and maximum - 14 students . The authorities running schools may , in specific, justified cases, decide to reduce the minimum number of participants in the teaching of the mother tongue in class, groups or groups of interclass .

The above-mentioned provisions apply only to students of one school ( or center ) . In other situations , the teaching of the native language is organized in the form of interschool or inter-nursery school teaching teams . Number of students who create such an interschool learning team of the mother tongue is in an interval of between 3 to 20 people<sup>13</sup>.

### **Status of the Ukrainian language teaching in Poland (as a language of minority )**

The Ukrainian language ( first language ) is taught currently in 11 provinces of Poland : West Pomeranian , Pomeranian , Warmia and Masuria , Podlasie , Lublin , Subcarpathian , Lesser Poland , Lower Silesian , Lubusz , Masovian and Greater Poland .

Tab. 4 The teaching of the Ukrainian language in Poland in all organizational forms in years:

---

<sup>13</sup> The most widespread organization form of teaching Ukrainian language In Poland.

Province	School year		
	2010/2011 <sup>14</sup>	2011/2012 <sup>15</sup>	2012/2013 <sup>16</sup>
West Pomeranian	217	207	242
Pomeranian	185	209	209
Podlaskie	306	304	303
Subcarpathian	357	371	386
Warmia and Masuria	1080	1170	1183
Lubusz	37	66	56
Lower Silesian	206	210	213
Masovian	91	32	89
Greater Poland	11	16	12
Lesser Poland	67	57	64
Lublin <sup>17</sup>			
Altogether	2574	2642	2757

The Ukrainian language is taught in 169 centers in Poland ( 2012/2013 ) . However, due to the large dispersion of the Ukrainian population ( as the aftermath of historical processes ) , up to 155 institutions organize the teaching of the language in the form of interscholastic groups of learning what is the least effective <sup>18</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Data taken from Educational Information System ( SIO) on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2010,Ukrainian language.

<sup>15</sup> Data taken from SIO on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2011 v.5.

<sup>16</sup> Data taken from SIO on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2012.

<sup>17</sup>There is no information concerning Lublin Province In SIO .

<sup>18</sup> Data taken from SIO on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2012.

The others are :

- School complex in Biały Bór - elementary school , gymnasium , secondary school
  - School complex in Górowo Iławeckie - gymnasium , secondary school
  - • School complex In Bartoszyce - elementary school , gymnasium
  - School complex in Przemyśl - elementary school , gymnasium , secondary school
  - School complex in Legnica - gymnasium , secondary school
  - Branches of supplementary teaching of the Ukrainian language in school complex in Bielsk Podlaski - primary school
  - Branches of supplementary teaching of the Ukrainian language in school Complex in Bielsk Podlaski - gymnasium
- When analyzing the above , it is clear that:
- The Ukrainian language interschool teaching groups in Poland stands up to 91.72 % of all schools in which the teaching of this language is organized
  - Schools with the Ukrainian language of instruction or bilingual stand 7.10 %
  - Branches with additional teaching the Ukrainian language stand 1.18%

It is worth noticing the aspect of the number of children and students learning the Ukrainian language in Poland , at the various levels of education .

Tab. 5 The teaching of the Ukrainian language in Poland - the number of students divided into educational levels<sup>19</sup>

Educational level	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013
<b>West Pomerania Province</b>			
Kindergarten	9	4	18
Primary school	99	117	126
Gymnasium	62	46	56
Secondary schools all types	47	40	42
<b>Pomerania Province</b>			
Kindergarten	12	12	9
Primary school	115	165	176
Gymnasium	45	29	20
Secondary, all types	13	3	4
<b>Podlaskie Province</b>			
Kindergarten	111	99	98
Primary school	159	164	152
Gymnasium	36	41	53
Secondary all types	-	-	-
<b>Warmia-Masuria Province</b>			
Kindergarten	53	131	78
Primary school	648	633	726
Gymnasium	266	295	270

<sup>19</sup> Data taken from SIO on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2012.

Secondary all types	113	111	109
Subcarpathia Province			
Kindergarden	36	32	52
Primary school	182	202	201
Gymnasium	93	97	85
Secondary all types	46	40	48
Lubusz Province			
Kindergarten	-	1	13
Primary school	6	24	19
Gymnasium	31	39	23
Secondary all types	-	2	2
Lower Silesia Province			
Kindergarten	4	8	3
Primary school	61	64	62
Gymnasium	95	87	94
Secondary all types	-	51	54
Masovia Province			
Kindergarden	19	5	23
Primary school	72	27	51
Gymnasium	-	-	15
Secondary all types	-	-	-
Greater Poland Province			
Kindergarten	-	-	-

Primary school	11	16	12
Gymnasium	-	-	-
Secondary all types	-	-	-
Lesser Poland Province			
Kindergarten	2	1	-
Primary school	45	37	41
Gymnasium	11	10	19
Secondary all types	4	9	4

### **Curricula , textbooks**

Following the announcement of the new Regulation on the Ministry of Education from 2008 concerning the core curriculum and general education in particular types of schools , most of the already developed curricula and textbooks for teaching and learning the Ukrainian language in Poland lost its actuality - almost all in fact , were published until 2008. <sup>20</sup> However , they can still be used in teaching , but only as auxiliary materials . Unfavorable thing is that the manuals and programs are written only by teachers - that there is no qualified professional team preparing these publications . The new thing in educational law is the fact that the possibility of simplifying the procedure for the introduction and use of copyright publications - in relation to the curriculum . This enables the teachers (especially) working in intergroup teaching of the Ukrainian language to adapt them both to their needs and opportunities of the teaching –learning environment.

### **Improvement and qualifications of teachers**

The most desirable thing is when the teacher of Ukrainian language has completed the Ukrainian philology . However, this is not a requirement in the

---

<sup>20</sup> Minister of National Education of 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 2008 on the core curriculum and general education in particular types of schools (Journal of Laws of 2009, No. 4, item 17), (Dz.U. z 2009 r., Nr 4, poz. 17)

final case if someone teaches a language as a native speaker. Teacher is sufficient in this case to confirm his or her language proficiency issued by the adequate national minority society . However, if the language is taught as a foreign language , this provision cannot be applied.<sup>21</sup>

Improvement of language teachers is in the prerogatives of local provincial level . Unfortunately - for teachers of Ukrainian the organization of their improvement is very difficult because of the following factors: Objective - not enough teachers in different regions , large scattering of the teaching centers , the imperfection of the entire system of training teachers and subjective - the lack of understanding of the needs of this group of educators . Working time equivalents ( part times ) for teacher – consultants of Ukrainian language were created only in Western Pomerania (one- fourth working time) , Pomeranian ( one-fourth working time) , Warmia-Masuria ( one-third working time) and the Subcarpathian ( a half of working time) . The rest of the Ukrainian language teachers in Poland are deprived of methodological consultancy .

The function of the methodology guide meets while publishing " Ridna Mowa" appearing under the auspices of the Association of Ukrainians in Poland and the Ukrainian Association of Teachers in Poland. Since 2001, there has been 20 issues of this journal. It has been published thanks to the grant of the Ministry of National Education for last few years. Editors also conducts their extensive website<sup>22</sup>.

In 2011, after a long period of preparation, "Strategy for the Development of Education of the Ukrainian minority in Poland" has been developed and approved. This document has been prepared with the participation of the Ukrainian minority school headmasters , school superintendents and the organization of the Ukrainian minority in Poland <sup>23</sup>. It is the culmination of a

---

<sup>21</sup>Minister of National Education Regulation of 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2009 on the specific qualifications required of teachers and schools and determine cases in which it is possible to employ teachers with no higher education or completed teacher training (Journal of Laws No. 50, item. 400 as amended.) , (Dz.U. Nr 50, poz. 400 z póź.zmian.)

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.interklasa.pl/porta1/dokumenty/r\\_mowa/](http://www.interklasa.pl/porta1/dokumenty/r_mowa/)

<sup>23</sup> <http://mniejszosci.narodowe.mac.gov.pl/mne/oswiata/strategie-rozwoju-oswi/ukrainska/6665,Strategia-rozwoju-oswiaty-mniejszosci-ukrainskiej-w-Polsce.html>

years work of several groups of experts representing these above mentioned institutions . Work upon the "Strategy .. " have been taken by the Ukrainian environment demands in Poland , after the presentation of the draft document , which became the basis for discussion. Ukrainian minority side is, moreover, an often initiator of a series of actions that remain in the prerogatives of the educational authorities what makes such a situation unfavorable.

Marek Syrnyk

---