

Dr. Mariona Sabaté Carrové,
Associate Professor, Department of
Foreign Languages and Literatures,
University of Lleida

Dr. Yuliia Kostiuk,
Head of Centre for Projects and
Research, Lecturer,
Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk
National Pedagogical University

Dr. Mercè Vázquez Garcia,
Associate Professor, Arts and
Humanities Department,
Open University of Catalonia

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND IDENTITIES: STRATEGIES AND TOOLS FOR REVITALIZING MINORITY LANGUAGES

In contemporary academic discourse, the preservation of linguistic diversity is a key challenge amid globalization, as trends toward standardization and the strengthening of major languages increasingly marginalize smaller linguistic communities. Under these conditions, non-dominant and minority languages face increasing risks of marginalization, making it essential to develop a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms that support their maintenance and revitalization. The preservation and promotion of minority languages have become key factors in safeguarding linguistic identity, cultural heritage, and sustaining democratic pluralism [2; 12].

Within this framework, the concept of linguistic identity is particularly relevant. It can be understood as a dynamic sociocultural construct shaped by the interplay of linguistic practices, historical memory, and institutional factors.. Linguistic identity serves as an important resource for community consolidation, and a factor influencing the effectiveness of strategies to support and revitalize minority languages.

In this regard, a comparative analysis of Catalonia and Ukraine's experiences is relevant, as both contexts illustrate attempts (i.e. policies and practices) for preserving linguistic diversity under different historical, political, and sociocultural

conditions. This paper aims to identify common challenges and relevant strategies and tools for revitalizing minority languages, taking into account language policy and the processes of language identity formation in both cases.

Both the Catalan and Ukrainian languages endured substantial repression and lost many speakers to dominant languages throughout the 20th century. During Franco's dictatorship (1939–1975), the Catalan language was completely banned from education, public administration, governmental institutions, the media, and publishing [3]. Its public use was often penalized, as speaking Catalan could lead to persecution. Franco's policies were accompanied by an attempt to create a “united Spanish nation” through a broader project of linguistic assimilation.

As for the Ukrainian language, although it was not formally banned in the USSR and had a regional status, the state policy aimed for linguistic assimilation. Russian dominated “high-prestigious” spheres—politics, diplomacy, science, industry, and the media [15] while Ukrainian intellectuals, writers, scholars, and artists faced censorship, persecution, or repression, as many of them were eliminated by the regime or banned from publishing. Starting in the 1930s, language policies in the USSR marginalized regional and minority languages and local dialects, stigmatizing their speakers, the effects of which continue to be visible in numerous independent states that emerged in the 1990s.

Experiencing marginalization within multinational states has reinforced the connections between language, culture, and identity in both Catalan and Ukrainian contexts. For instance, in a recent study, Catalan university students associate language loss with cultural loss, as “forbidding one to speak their language would suppress not only their language but also their cultural and collective identity” [3, p. 20]. Similarly, the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war has become a catalyst for changes in linguistic identity among bilingual Ukrainians, many of whom increasingly reconsider the concept of a native language (*рідна мова*) and begin to assert that Ukrainian is their native language [16].

After Spain transitioned to democracy, Catalonia gained autonomous status and the ability to shape its own language policy. Catalan was restored as the co-

official language of the autonomous region. In Ukraine, the Ukrainian language was proclaimed the state language in 1989, before gaining independence. However, in both cases, legal recognition did not guarantee the automatic restoration of the language's actual use by native speakers: the prestige of the dominant language (Spanish or Russian) continued to shape linguistic behavior and practices, particularly in urban and professional settings [5; 15].

In Catalonia, language revitalization has been strongly revived and promoted by comprehensive institutional measures. Key milestones include Linguistic Normalization Law and the Language Immersion Program (1983–1998), and the Language Policy Law (1998). The success of the Linguistic Normalisation Programme in Catalonia demonstrates the effectiveness of a comprehensive, education-centered approach to preserving linguistic diversity and supporting minority languages. Key factors include systematic teacher training, institutional requirements for bilingual proficiency, the promotion of Catalan-medium instruction, and the active role of teacher associations in advocacy and materials development. Despite an initial shortage of qualified staff, these measures enabled the consolidation of Catalan as the primary language of instruction in most primary schools by the mid-1990s, reflecting the successful institutionalization of language policy and its impact on strengthening linguistic identity. The 1998 law called for further promotion of the Catalan language in public administration, culture and entertainment, and business and commerce, including Catalan-language quotas in the mass media, dubbing films in Catalan, and mandatory Catalan-language financial documents [4]. This integrated approach has been widely recognized as a successful model of language policy implementation.

By contrast, language policy in Ukraine since 1991 has been much less straightforward. While Ukrainian remained the only state language, the 2012 Law “On the Fundamentals of State Language Policy” instrumentalized the concept of “regional languages” to provide Russian with an official status and *de facto* replace Ukrainian in several regions. The law stayed in force until 2018, when the Constitutional Court of Ukraine deemed it unconstitutional and invalid. The current

language legislation is based on numerous acts, including the Laws “On Ensuring Functioning of Ukrainian Language as a State Language,” “On Indigenous Peoples in Ukraine,” and “On National Minorities (Communities) in Ukraine,” which benefit the Ukrainian language as well as minority and indigenous languages. This framework requires using Ukrainian in all spheres of public life, including governing, media, website interfaces, customer service, public events, healthcare, advertising, and many more [14].

Digital technologies have emerged as powerful tools for revitalizing and supporting minority languages and safeguarding linguistic diversity. As noted by G. Holton, information technologies can foster new forms of community engagement and support the development and appreciation of endangered languages, especially when speakers actively participate not only as users but also as creators of digital content [8]. At the same time, the development of digital tools such as multilingual terminological resources can enhance knowledge production and dissemination in less-resourced languages, helping to address gaps in specialized domains [11]. However, these opportunities remain unevenly distributed: the development of translation and language technologies is shaped by market-driven dynamics that privilege dominant languages, resulting in digital divides and asymmetrical access to technological infrastructures [6]. Consequently, while digital tools constitute a powerful instrument for sustaining linguistic diversity, their effectiveness depends on addressing structural inequalities and ensuring the active involvement of language communities in the creation and use of such technologies.

In the Catalan context, digital language preservation and revitalization reflects an integrated and interdisciplinary approach that combines audiovisual translation, language education, and technological development. Research groups such as Tradit and ARENA have focused on Audiovisual Translation, Didactic Audiovisual Translation, and accessibility, implementing initiatives such as TRADILEX, TRADILAB, ECODAT, and LEARNDAT [10]. These projects and initiatives explore the pedagogical potential of audiovisual translation for language learning

and inclusive practices. The University of Lleida's involvement in international collaborations, including the Erasmus+ AVTIA project, further demonstrates institutional commitment to advancing training related to accessibility, particularly in areas such as audiodescription and subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing [1].

In parallel, research at the Open University of Catalonia, especially within the GRIAL research group, highlights the role of linguistic technologies in addressing challenges faced by less-resourced languages. Efforts in computational terminology, drawing on open-access linguistic resources and natural language processing tools, have supported the expansion of Catalan in specialized domains and contributed to improving the accessibility of public services. Partnerships with TERMCAT (the Catalan Center for Terminology) have strengthened multilingual communication in institutional contexts, ensuring both inclusivity and cultural relevance [7].

In Ukraine, digital technologies and initiatives are increasingly being used to safeguard minority and endangered languages within its territory. In 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted and officially recognized “The List of the Endangered Languages of National Minorities (Communities) and Indigenous Peoples in Ukraine”, including Belarusian, Gagauz, Yiddish, Karaim, Crimean Tatar, Krymchak, Romani, Mariupol Greek, and Urum languages [17]. Living in the south-east regions of Ukraine, most of these peoples and communities face alarming endangerment because of Russian military aggression, leading to the destruction of settlements, cultural and linguistic heritage, human loss, and migration.

Currently, Ukraine is making significant efforts to digitalize the Crimean Tatar language to promote it and increase its online representation. The ambitious project to create the National Corpus of the Crimean Tatar Language was initiated by the government as part of the implementation of the Crimean Tatar Language Development Strategy for 2022–2032 and is now available in the Sketch Engine software [9]. In 2020, the Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine proposed adding Crimean Tatar to Google Translate [13], and it was finally implemented in 2024 after rigorous development of digital translation resources. Although the Crimean Tatar language is still less-resourced than other

Turkic languages, the mentioned platforms provide a basis for its preservation and revitalization.

To conclude, the comparison of Catalan and Ukrainian experiences highlights that the preservation of linguistic diversity depends on the interplay between language policy, community engagement, and digital and technological innovation. While Catalonia illustrates the effectiveness of sustained institutional support, Ukraine reflects the challenges of maintaining linguistic diversity in dynamic socio-political contexts. Both cases underscore the need for further research to identify transferable best practices and strategies for enhancing the digital presence of underrepresented languages and to evaluate the broader social benefits of multilingualism, including its role in reinforcing and shaping identity, well-being, cultural continuity and social cohesion.

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Лідія Ачкан,
кандидат філологічних наук, викладач
Тернопільський національний педагогічний університет
імені Володимира Гнатюка

МОВОЗНАВЧА СПАДЩИНА В. СІМОВИЧА ТА ЇЇ ЗНАЧЕННЯ ДЛЯ ПІДГОТОВКИ СУЧАСНОГО ВЧИТЕЛЯ-СЛОВЕСНИКА

Сучасна система підготовки майбутніх учителів української передбачає формування високого рівня мовної культури, професійної компетентності та здатності ефективно організовувати освітній процес. У цьому контексті важливим є звернення до наукової спадщини видатних українських мовознавців, які зробили значний внесок у розвиток української лінгвістики та педагогіки.

Однією з визначних постатей українського мовознавства є В. Сімович – учений, педагог, громадський діяч, дослідник української фонетики, граматики та культури мовлення. Його праці стали важливим етапом у розвитку української