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Variability of textbooks for studying the Ukrainian language in the diaspora

Studia Gdańskie. Wizje i rzeczywistość 14, 279-291

2017

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

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Introduction

Ethno-cultural and demographic processes in the environment of the western diaspora during the last century caused the most important problem for the Ukrainians abroad – preservation and development of the native language, expansion of the sphere of its existence, since the majority of them considered that mastering the Ukrainian language is the main guarantee of the establishment of their own ethno-cultural identity, the basis of national self-development. However, assimilation processes have been untiringly influencing the younger generation and gradually more and more young people stepped away from the community engagement, losing language skills. In order to slow down these processes, nationally conscious Ukrainian educators used all the means available to them, and first and foremost, textbooks as the main factor in mastering the Ukrainian language in the diaspora. At the same time, they realized that gradually more and more Ukrainian children would naturally enter the language environment of the country of residence, since it becomes a means of communication for them in all spheres of society, and often also in personal life, therefore, they tried to create educational books that would attract children and youth by their content, design, didactic maintenance, and form the desire to learn the language of their ancestral home, learn the world of Ukrainians.

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Statement of the main theses

Professor Yar Slavutych participated most actively in the process of creating textbooks for Ukrainian native-language and state bilingual schooling in Canada. As a passionate supporter of the visual-auditory method of teaching a language in a foreign environment, he argued: *I emphasize the spoken learning method – in all its varieties – albeit at the beginning, albeit for several years at school, for one or two years of study at the university. Grammar cannot be neglected, it must also be taught, but it should be an appendix to the study of the language, to the inherent speech.*

*Let's start teaching to talk in the first place. Let's use pure Ukrainian vocabulary, and foreign words – only when one cannot do without them. Let's speak the standard language!*¹ Actually, all the textbooks of the famous specialist in linguodidactics are compiled on the visual-auditory method, starting with the first *Conversational Ukrainian* (p. 1)², which was released in Edmonton in 1959.

By placing the Ukrainian alphabet in his introductory part, Yar Slavutych includes fifty lectures, their contents must be mastered by a student. Each of them contains: a dialogue, reading (a text), proverbs and sayings, phrases, grammar (basic statements), homework (various exercises), vocabulary.

The author follows the didactic principle – he proposes the material from simpler to more complex, firstly, he introduces lexical material from everyday life, from the well-known environment, and later expands the volume of vocabulary, offering the words and abstract concepts accordingly.

Basic texts (*Dialogues* and *Reading*) are gradually supplemented by poetry and specially selected proverbs, sayings, idioms; it is quite appropriate, as it immediately helps a student be involved into a living conversational language, encourages him to master the language. The textbook follows the principle of consistency in the complexity of texts. Systematic and consistent presentation of the educational material is one of the greatest positive points, the most fundamental hallmark of the textbook. And, samples of declension and conjugation, grammatical index and vocabulary-index given at the end of the book play an important role in learning the selected material.

The themes of the didactic material are elaborated in the textbook by Slavutych. The texts cover a wide range of information about Ukraine, its history and geography, Ukrainian literature, culture and even industry. The author also touches the sphere of religion and folk art. It should be emphasized that he

¹ Y. Slavutych, *Conversational Ukrainian II*, Winnipeg 1960, p. 437.

² *Idem*, *Conversational Ukrainian II*, Winnipeg 1959, p. 368.

almost comprehensively embraced all branches of life of the Ukrainian people, which is extremely necessary for an English-speaking student who not only learns the Ukrainian language but also acquaints himself with the richness of the culture of the Ukrainian people.

The second part of this textbook, which has gained popularity and is widely used in the system of Ukrainian schooling in Canada, was published in 1960³. It includes 25 lectures, compiled according to the structure of the first part, the Ukrainian-English dictionary of grammar terms, the index of terms and the subject index. As the author points out in the statement *To teachers: the training material is presented in accordance with the original plan. [...] the number of words in both volumes hardly exceeds four thousand*⁴. Slavutych included dialogues and texts about the territory and population of Ukraine, its nature, economy, culture, life of Ukrainians in the US and Canada, provided samples of business papers and documents, excerpts from the works of Ukrainian literature in this part. The profound comprehension of the content of the texts is facilitated by successfully formulated tasks and questions, which undoubtedly encourage students to creative thinking, search for additional sources of knowledge about Ukraine and Ukrainians, the conditions of their existence in the modern world. Here is an example of a home task to the sixty-fifth lecture, which deals with education in Ukraine: *Write complete answers to the questions: How many languages did Prince Vsevolod speak? Who wrote "Precepts to children"? How did Hetman Ivan Mazepa spoke Latin? Who used the Latin language at that time? When were the Kiev, Lviv and Ostroh schools founded? What was taught there? When did Petro Mohyla become the Grave Metropolitan? Who came to study in Kiev in the seventeenth century? When was the Kharkiv University opened? Who banned the Ukrainian language? When were the Lviv and Kiev universities open? When did the Ukrainian language become a state language? How many institutions and universities are there in Ukraine?*⁵

Later Slavutych elaborated both parts of this textbook and published them in one volume in 1987. The textbook, already consisting of 608 pages, was added with a map of Ukraine, portraits of Taras Ševčenko and Ivan Franko, and he posted a photo of "the heart of Ukraine" – the Cathedral of St. Sofia in Kiev before the beginning of the main content to enhance the emotional perception of his work.

³ *Idem, Conversational Ukrainian II*, Winnipeg 1960, p. 437.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 610.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 504.

The advanced version of the textbook *Conversational Ukrainian*⁶, which consists of two parts (a total of 75 lectures), aims to teach non-Ukrainians to speak Ukrainian, to read a variety of Ukrainian-language periodicals and fiction fluently. As the specialist in linguodidactics notes, it is intended for secondary school students and, possibly, colleges in Canada and the United States. *Conversational Ukrainian* can also be used as a self-examiner. This textbook is based on three fundamental ideas:

- present modern Ukrainian language in daily conversation;
- give a student a brief knowledge of Ukraine, its geography, history and culture, as well as its language;
- provide some information about the Ukrainians living in Canada and the United States⁷.

Before basic lectures Slavutych presents 24 introductory paragraphs, from which one can learn about the history of the Ukrainian language and the peculiarities of its existence in the 19th – 20th centuries.

By content and structure, the textbook *Conversational Ukrainian* can be divided into three conventional sections.

The first is a phonetic part in which description and graphic representation of Ukrainian sounds are given. Slavutych correctly outlines that, having mastered the basic pronunciation skills well, then foreign (here – English) influence of articulation can be avoided. In addition, when explaining the pronunciation of each sound, examples of English words are presented, in which the pronunciation of this sound is as close as possible to Ukrainian, which greatly simplifies the study of Ukrainian phonetics: for example, the vowel “a” in Ukrainian is pronounced approximately as “a” in the English words “father”; “art” etc.

The second part of the textbook is made up of samples of texts for reading: here are fragments from *Īstoriâ Ukraïni-Rusi* by Mihajlo Gruševs'kij, *Hetman Ivan Mazepa*, literature classics (*Marusia Bohuslavka*), and examples of dialogues that in the context of historical themes are represented by Ukrainian dumas, legends and folk tales, as well as a variety of information about contemporary Ukraine – its culture, art, education, industry development and sports. In addition, each theme is supplemented by set expressions, proverbs and sayings. Simplified grammar explains the most important grammar phenomena in the Ukrainian language and is connected with the material of a particular lesson. All grammar rules are reinforced by written and oral exercises, which

⁶ *Idem, Conversational Ukrainian II*, Winnipeg 1987, p. 608.

⁷ *Ibidem*, ch. VII.

are proposed after the explanation of the material. Such a wide range of the training material gives students the opportunity to learn, apart from the spoken language, as well as modern journalese, official and scientific Ukrainian.

The third part of the textbook contains glossaries, which list more than 4000 most commonly used Ukrainian words, which appear in the texts.

Slavutych and other supporters of the visual and auditory method of teaching the second language (Vira Labah, Roma Franko, Sofiâ Cìpivnik) were convinced that a student can successfully master the material given in textbooks and will be competent to use a new language in different spheres of life. But such an experienced scientist as Slavutych did not reject traditional methods of learning the language.

As the majority of diaspora Ukrainian young people did not express desire to learn Ukrainian as a second language, Ukrainian teachers began to create textbooks that could stimulate young Ukrainians to master the language of their ancestral homeland, learn and multiply its treasures and (what is more important) to use it more often in their life. As a good language expert, an experienced methodologist and a true patriot of Ukraine, Slavutych, has shown an initiative: on the basis of the fundamental textbook *Conversational Ukrainian*, he prepared a series of textbooks-brochures for the initial acquisition of the language by the visual-auditory method. Using the principles from simple to complex, from the closest to the distant, the teacher developed the original textbooks that successfully complement each other. The first textbook *An Introduction to Ukrainian*⁸ consisting of 24 paragraphs, proposed a printed and written Ukrainian alphabet, a brief overview of the history of the Ukrainian language, the features of the formation of vowel and consonant sounds with a corresponding representation of their pronunciation and examples of use in words (all of them have an accent) are outlined, which is very important for beginner speakers. The author successfully picked up the words from the immediate environment of children, contributing to the enrichment of their vocabulary. The given rules and examples of the formation of words and sentences, as well as the table of declension of nouns with precise examples of their use, expand the communicative capabilities of students and activates their cognitive activity. This also contributes to the completion of written exercises – rewriting proposed manuscripts.

The following textbook, the brochure *Ukrainian for Children*⁹, consists of three parts. The first part contains the alphabet and basic information on pho-

⁸ *Idem*, *An Introduction to Ukrainian*, Edmonton 1962.

⁹ *Idem*, *Ukrainian for Children*, Alberta 1963, p. 68.

netics for the repetition of the material studied before. The second part contains ten lectures (lessons), which include conversations (dialogues from the closest environment of children), texts for reading (in content they repeat dialogues, that is, reinforce their learning), grammatical rules and examples related to dialogues and texts that again deepen the knowledge of the learned material. Learning the words by heart which are given in the Ukrainian – English dictionary completes this process. In the third part of the textbook Slavutych introduces the texts for reading (poetic and prose), which (unfortunately, they are presented in passages) reflect the past and the present-day Ukraine, its nature.

The textbook *Ukrainian in Pictures*¹⁰ became a continuation of the scientific searches of the scientist in improving the means of the visual-auditory method of initial learning of the Ukrainian language in a foreign language environment. The author, following the traditional principles of the method tested by Chilton, suggested to draw pictures that reflect the content of the dialogues. Answering the question “Who is this?” or “What is this?”, students, looking at the picture, should give the correct answer. After a series of questions – answers (drawings), an interpretation of grammatical notions is given – genders of adjectives and prepositions that determine their affiliation. Text-dialogues, built on the material of life from the immediate environment of students, reflect their everyday life mode, due to which they (and even with corresponding drawings) are easily memorized. At the end of the textbook Slavutych placed a small dictionary in which he provided translations of Ukrainian words and word combinations from the texts and dialogues.

An important step in the adoption of a new approach to teaching the Ukrainian language was the publication of the textbook – the brochure by Slavutych *Ukrainian language by the visual-auditory method. Part One*¹¹.

The textbook consists of two parts: the first part contains twenty five thematic lectures, the content of which is closely related to the daily life of speakers (for example: *Phone calls, Early in the morning, Apartment, Family and relatives, Home conversations, Giving directions, In the store, etc.*), and the Ukrainian spelling dictionary, in which Slavutych, unlike other authors of educational books, did not submit Ukrainian words in English, but samples of their correct use with the corresponding explanations. In particular, the dictionary contains nouns in nominative, genitive, and dative cases singular, and after the semicolon – in nominative case plural. In some complex cases, the endings of genitive and dative cases plural are given. Nouns in vocative case have an ex-

¹⁰ *Idem, Ukrainian in Pictures*, Edmonton 1965, p. 90.

¹¹ *Idem, Ukrainian by the Audio-Visual Method*, p. 1, Montreal, Paris, Brussels 1965, p. 65.

clamation mark. Sometimes a form of a locative singular case is proposed. There are also English-language marks: coll. = collective, indecl. = does not decline, pl. = is used only in plural, m. = masculine gender, f. = feminine gender. Adjectives are given in the nominal case in masculine, feminine, and neuter genders, as well as in plural. The verbs have such marks as pf. (perfect aspect) and impf (imperfect aspect). In the most difficult cases, verbs are conjugated. Of course, only the forms of the first and the second person singular, the third person plural and the form of imperative mood are given. Figures near them denote the lecture where the word is used. Modern regulatory accents are preserved. In addition, the specialist in linguodidactics recommends additional use of *Slovník nagolosiv* by Mihajlo Pogribnij, *Slovník vimovi* by Grigorij Goloskevič and *Ukraïns'kij pravopisnij slovník* by Dmitro Nitčenko.

According to the visual-auditory method, a series of textbooks by Sofia Vasilišin *Divis', slukhaj, govori. Pidručnik dlâ počatkovo-rozmovnoï klasi*¹² and the textbook by Genrika Mîz' *Divis' ì kaži*¹³ were composed, which are designed for initial language learning.

Educational books by S.Vasilišin are intended for the use in a “preparatory class”. They are well illustrated, contain auditory and visual material, the study of which requires high activity not only from the teacher, but also from students who have only reached school age and begin to study, as a rule, a new language for them. The textbooks have been structured according to the seasonal-thematic principle: one part reflects the state of nature and life of people at certain times of the year (*Autumn, Winter, Spring, Summer*), the other tells about events and processes, the direct participants of which are the children themselves. We consider it to be appropriate, since such an approach naturally introduces a child into a new period of his life – schooling. The external design of textbooks also attracts: story drawings reflect the communication of children dressed in embroidered shirts.

The textbook by Vasilišin *Divis', slukhaj, govori – častina perša* begins with a short story about the preparatory class where the book will be used. The author emphasizes that this textbook is created primarily for children who should be prepared for alphabet period, that is, for children who neither write nor read in Ukrainian, as well as for pupils of 1–2 form who already read and write, but need to be taught in oral speech.

¹² S. Vasilišin, *Divis', slukhaj, govori. Pidručnik dlâ počatkovo-rozmovnoï klasi*, č. 1, Winnipeg 1973, p. 52, č. 2, Winnipeg 1973, p. 51, č. 3, Winnipeg 1975, p. 79.

¹³ G. Mîz', *Divis' ì kaži*, Chicago 1982, p. 87.

The first lesson in the textbook by Vasilišín begins with the acquaintance of a teacher with children and is conducted in the form of the following conversation:

Dobriden', diti! / Good afternoon, children!

Â vaša včitel'ka. / I am your teacher.

Â nazivaûs' _____. / My name is _____.

Dobriden', pani _____. Good afternoon, Ms _____.

Os' khlopec'. / This is a boy.

Âk ti nazivaêšsâ? / What is your name?

Â nazivaûcâ Petro. / I am Peter.

(Malûnok khlopčika, pìd âkim pìdpis – Petro).

Personal pronouns are also used in the dialogue, which are presented in the form of a table:

I	he
you	she
here	your
this	our
what	who

It is also worth noting that the textbook is rich in illustrative material. Each picture is signed. For example: I am Ukrainian (the picture of a boy), We are Ukrainians (the picture of a group of children in national clothes)¹⁴.

All the pictures, according to the method of language learning, are assisted by conversational exercises. The textbook by Vasilišín boasts a wealth of didactic arsenal. The children's activity is diversified by games which are used during the process of learning linguistic material. The proposed texts and dialogues (conversations) – *We are Ukrainians, Our Ukrainian school, Flags, The Ukrainian language, Homeland, Our home, Our church*, etc. – correspond to psycho-physiological peculiarities of children of junior school age. The new words with which are learned by pupils, are given sequentially and they are circled with a frame.

Various kinds of exercises, tasks, games, as well as texts of songs with notes and rhythmic exercises for them are offered for the development of pupils' creative abilities, their agility and cleverness.

We believe that such method attracts children, because the goal is not only to teach language, sing songs, but also to temper them physically, improve health, that is, to develop. In the end, it corresponds to the main type of activity

¹⁴ S. Vasilišín, *Divis', slukhaj, govori. Pìdručnik dlâ počatkovo-rozmovnoï klasi, č. 1, op. cit.*, p. 3.

of pupils in this age – the game. Of great interest are the exercises with the elements of drawing (leaves, their colors or pictures, signed by words, the sun, sheaves, pumpkins, and above these words the word “autumn” is given. The task for children is to sign drawings with appropriate words).

The textbook contains materials not only for reading, writing, drawing, but also the tasks in mathematics. Using them, the children will learn to count up to ten, to solve simple sums:

2 eat,
8 run¹⁵.

Consequently, this textbook is an interesting initial tool for children of all ages, since its purpose is to familiarize pupils with their everyday life, the environment, the animal and plant world, which contributes to their comprehensive development, and not just the language proficiency.

The second part of the textbook by Vasilišın *Divis', sluhaj, govori* begins with similar appeals and specific tips (how and what to learn). The picture of winter nature, a house and a snowman near it under the title *Winter* is given later. Simple sentences about winter, riddles (with drawings) are proposed.

The task *How many words do you remember?* is illustrated by the ladder and the pupil who goes upstairs, and at each step there is a drawing, the title of which should be recollected by a pupil. In this way, the previously studied material is repeated.

Learning linguistic material is combined with the creative work of children. Pupils should draw and cut out snowflakes presented as a sample, make a snowman, make toys for Christmas tree, etc. For example, there are four drawings in the square, in the middle there are two words, children must combine the words with the corresponding drawings. An important achievement of the author is the presence of various kinds of exercises for the development of oral speech. This is also supported by the games *Where does it snow, Warm, cold, hot, Look and guess, What is this?*

It is comforting that the learning material in the textbook gradually becomes more complex, based on the principles of abilities, continuity, and advanced learning. It contains information about the ordinal numerals. When learning it, the pupils learn to use the clock. More complex in structure poetry, songs, exercises for games are offered. A larger number of new words is selected, which greatly expands the vocabulary of pupils. The textbook is full of pictures, de-

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 37.

scription of which develops the spoken language of schoolchildren and, accordingly, enriches their spiritual world, forms their ethnic consciousness.

On the basis of the same principles, the textbook *Divis' i kaži* (Look and speak) by Genrika Miz' has been built, designed for pre-school children and pupils of the first class (pre-primer period). It is composed on the principle of developmental training. Since the children of this age dominate figurative (subject) thinking, the entire textbook is generously illustrated with pictures, that is, it consists of a series of different parts by genres and types of illustrations. The author divides it into parts for the seasons of the year, according to this picks up drawings. So, to get acquainted the children with household items in the chapter *Autumn*, their graphic image and title are given. So schoolchildren have the opportunity to see this subject, call it, and the teacher helps them to read the written word. Using this textbook, the teacher develops pupils' speech, enriches their vocabulary. In the process of work on thematic pictures, the schoolchildren make small sentences, stories that activate their thinking, form the ability to express their own opinions, instills love for the Ukrainian word.

Among the textbooks for Ukrainian schooling in the diaspora, the textbook by Jacob Kozlovskyi is distinguished – the first primer with clearly distinguished periods of teaching the grammar – pre-primer and post-primer ones. It contains samples of written and printed letters, each page is well illustrated by the pictures of familiar to children objects, people and animals. The plot drawings are accompanied with the relevant texts, as well as tasks that promote the development of thinking and speech of pupils – both oral and written. Large part of the printed texts is duplicated in handwriting, which helps pupils to better learn the Ukrainian calligraphic letter. The texts of the post-primer period have a specific national-patriotic content, reflecting the phenomena and concepts familiar to children (*The Clock, In the Living Room, Mother's Birthday, School Fun, On Saturday, On Sunday, Bow to Taras, At the Farm, Little Ukrainian Girl, Ukraine, To Ukrainian Child, Conversation about Canada, Oh, Canada!* etc.). Its perceptions and awareness reinforce the corresponding colored drawings, the images of the national symbols of Canada and Ukraine, as well as maps of both states. The texts and drawings correspond to the age peculiarities of the pupils.

The textbook begins with the pictures of the everyday life of the child, which contributes to the development of the speech, memory, enrichment of the vocabulary. The themes of the drawings are diverse: it is the environment of children, personal hygiene, work and study, home town, transport, the world of animals and birds. With such drawings, the teacher carries both moral, social and religious upbringing, instilling love for the book, nature. After all, as you

know, the pre-school period in further education plays extremely important role. The teacher in the process of learning with the help of the close to the children drawings develops their language, thinking, teaches to express correctly their own opinion. Due to this, the child, without the knowledge of letters, reading or writing, using the pictures, learns to make small sentences, to answer the questions asked by the teacher, and then makes small stories. The number of pages allocated for the pre-primer period is twelve.

Then Kozlovskiy acquaints children with the letters O, T, and, shows the syllables, which they make. Appropriate and successful, in our opinion, is that the author combines reading with writing. The children have the opportunity to see what the printed letter looks like and how it is written.

In order to consolidate the acquired knowledge and skills, the teacher submits subject pictures (three), in which the learned sound is at the beginning of the word. The task of the children is to name these words, that is, to supplement the proposed word. He takes into account the importance of mastering the knowledge of the principle of visualization (in this case, the relationship between the word and the picture), and therefore selects the appropriate drawings to study the new letters. In order to repeat the studied Kozlovskiy offers a variety of stories, riddles, poems, expanding the world view of junior schoolchildren, shaping their national feelings. The textbook ends with the interesting methodological discovery: Ukrainian alphabet of printed and written letters, next to which the corresponding drawing and the word that calls it.

The primer by Orisâ Mel'nik and Nadiâ Pip (Winnipeg) is also a peculiar teaching book¹⁶. It is intended for children who are very weak or do not understand the Ukrainian language at all, because their parents do not use it at home. To facilitate the learning process, especially the learning of the lexical composition of the native language, the authors selected small texts in which individual words for better learning are often repeated. They are presented with contours of drawings that children need to color, as well as written and printed variants of the letter being studied, and images of the object or creature which name begins with this letter. In order to develop the pupils' speech, below each letter and the corresponding picture there are the words that begin with it, and simple two-three-component sentences (Owl: *There is an owl, The owl is alone, Mom, there's an owl over there!*).

The analyzed textbook is of the integrative nature: it simultaneously acquaints pupils with color studies and elementary mathematical ideas. After

¹⁶ O. Mel'nik, N. Pip, *Bukvar*, Winnipeg, Manitoba [no date], p. 69

studying all the letters, the authors of the primer offered the schoolchildren to paint six circles with the colors, under which the names of the main colors are given (red, black, yellow, blue, green, white).

The next section of the textbook is devoted to the study of numbers. It uses the same traditional figurative-verbal method for the acquisition of knowledge: view of the number, to the left are the objects or creatures that correspond to its content, to the right there is the name of a number and the verse sentence that has verbal-digital content, for example: the number and the word “one”, one bird (image) sat on the roof (picture).

Then in the primer there is a section that contains small verses with drawings that help the pupils to learn more deeply the educational material – both linguistic and mathematical. The small vocabulary of all the words from its texts, presented at the end of the primer, serves the same purpose.

Conclusions

We should mention that the textbook by O. Mel'nik and N. Pìp enjoyed popularity in the English-language classes, which also gave positive results: the schoolchildren learned the material presented in it for half a year, despite the fact that they studied the unknown language.

We believe that the availability of multi-dimensional educational books testifies to the desire of the diaspora specialists in linguodidactics to ensure the effective assimilation by the younger generation of foreign Ukrainians of the Ukrainian language, culture, customs and traditions of the Ukrainian people, to raise their love for their motherland, Ukraine.

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Summary

The article deals with the actual problem of preserving the native language under the conditions of foreign language environment. It is substantiated that the qualitatively written teaching books play an important role in this process. Among the range of various textbooks for Ukrainian schoolchildren in the diaspora, the methodical apparatus of the textbooks of Yar Slavutych, Sofia Vasilišin, Genrika Miz', which receive positive reviews in the USA and Canada and are actively used in the teaching of the native language of foreign Ukrainians, has been analysed. They contain interesting Ukrainian studies materials, exercises for listening, tasks, games, as well as texts of songs with notes and rhythmic exercises for them, which promote not only the learning of the language, but also the development of creative abilities of schoolchildren, their agility and savvy.

It has been established that the textbooks with a clear visual methods, adherence to the principles of the individual approach, connection with life, originality in content diversity provide motivation of children to learn the language, develop their communicative competences.

keywords: schooling, variability of textbooks, visual-auditory method, diaspora Ukrainians, communicative competences, native language, foreign language environment

słowa kluczowe: szkolnictwo, zmienność podręczników, metoda audiowizualna, diaspora ukraińska, kompetencje komunikacyjne, język ojczysty, środowisko obcojęzyczne