

Dzūkian vs. Lithuanian and Polish. The prestige of the Dzūkian language among the Lithuanian community living in Poland

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The purpose of this presentation is to show the opinions of Lithuanian-speaking residents in north-eastern Poland, especially those who use the Dzūkian variant of Lithuanian in their daily communication. The study was conducted using an online survey distributed through a social media platform. The survey was designed to gather respondents' views and expectations about their language, as well as to determine when and where they use different languages (standard Lithuanian, Polish and Dzūkian). The survey was available in three language versions: Standard Lithuanian, Standard Polish and Dzūkian, which is commonly used by the majority of Lithuanian-speaking residents of the region. The survey was carried out from an emic perspective by a community member familiar with the issues of vitality and prestige of the Dzūkian language in the region.

The community knows Standard Lithuanian, which is taught in schools, but it is primarily Dzūkian that they acquire in their childhood. Standard Lithuanian may be their second or even third language, but it has a relatively high level of prestige among some members of the community. They also use Polish in various aspects of their lives, as it is taught in schools and has considerable prestige as a state language. Dzūkian, which is widely spoken in the region, is sandwiched between two languages of greater prestige and is not used in many other areas.

The survey consisted of 27 questions, most of which were closed or semi-open, with a few alternative questions where respondents could choose between two options. A total of 280 people completed the survey (168 adults and 112 students). It is important to note that the survey was a pilot study and this was the first time respondents had completed the questionnaire in Dzūkian.

The survey results indicate that community members would like to see an increase in the use of Dzūkian in other areas, such as regional events, local media, and even primary and secondary education.