



The Coverage and Reception of  
the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict



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# Cultural Crossroads: Ukrainian Migrants' Discourse and Perception of Romanian Society during Social Integration

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# Introduction and research focus



- Starting from the premise that **language assimilation** is one of the key factors in social inclusion, this study aims to analyze the perception of (Ukrainian vs non-Ukrainian) refugees regarding the Romanian language and culture during their integration into Romanian society. To provide a comprehensive perspective on migration, the study examines the social, cultural, and political causes that drive migration and how these perceptions have evolved across the two key phases: pre-migration and in-migration.
- The analysis of **language ideologies** (Capstick 2020)
- How do beliefs about language challenge and transform migrants' practices (Capstick 2020)

# Theoretical framework



„**Migration linguistics** is the interdisciplinary and multidimensional study of the various aspects of language within the dynamic process of human mobility. It is a systematic study of migration, focusing on how language effects and likewise is affected by the whole migration process. It is concerned with how language is used, why language is necessary, what language represents, and which language is acquired and learned before, during, and even after migration.” (Borlongan 2023:42)

# Why the need for a new sub-discipline?

„applied linguistics in diverse parts of the world studying this nexus (**language & migration**) don't necessarily enjoy a shared scholarly identity or disciplinary space.” (Canagarajah 2017:1), being subsumed under the Migration Studies umbrella.

# *Migrationslinguistik/*

## *Migration linguistics*

Before the term „Migration linguistics” was coined in 2019, Krefeld used the concept of *Migrationslinguistik* (2004).

Unlike *Migrationslinguistik*, which is focused more on „language-internal aspects”, ML takes „into account both language-internal and language-external aspects of migration.” (Borlongan 2023:44), and „is more interested in immediate effects of recent migration on language use, acquisition, and learning such as accomodation, code-switching, interlanguage, and bilingualism.” (Borlongan 2023:45)

# A linguistics or sociolinguistics sub-discipline?

„Migration linguistics will be involved in the scientific study of language in the context of migration and, while it is a primarily linguistics sub-discipline, it borrows significantly from a number of other disciplines, sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, political science, education, and other related disciplines.”

„Of course, *migration linguistics* clearly embeds the research area under the broad discipline of linguistics, again, rather understandably, because the point of focus is language.” (Borlongan 2022:18)

# Aims and principles of ML



## **Aims:**

- (1) To theorize on language as it is used, acquired, and learned in the context of migration;
- (2) To describe the various factors and patterns relating to language within the migration process;
- (3) To investigate on language in the migration process using interdisciplinary perspectives and methodologies;
- (4) To provide practical solutions to the issues and problems related to language confronting migrants
- (5) To engage various stakeholders of language and migration, most especially migrants themselves, in understanding and acting upon language in the migration process. (Borlongan 2023:43)



# Aims and principles of ML



## **Principles:**

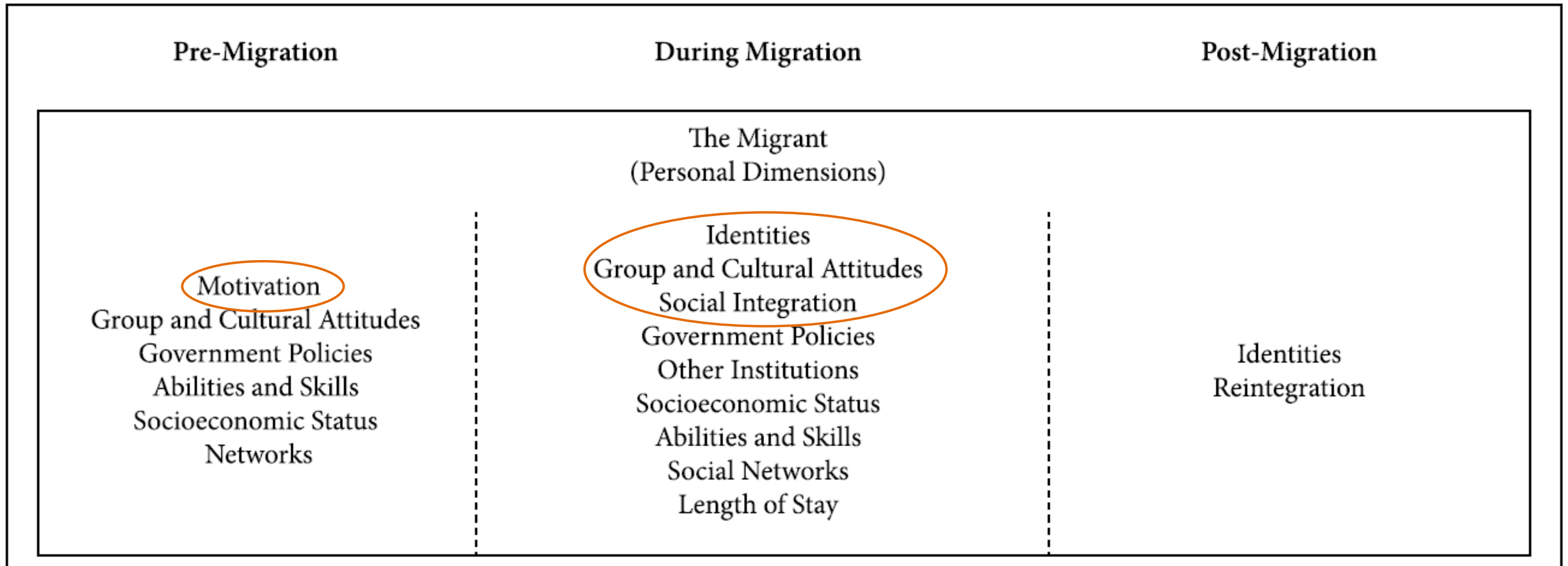
- (1) Language is an essential element in the migration process;*
- (2) An individual's acquisition, learning, and use of language significantly changes as a result of migration;*
- (3) Migrants must be understood in languages they can use, taught the destination language, and provided basic and essential services understandable to them. (Borlongan 2023:46-47)*

**MOTHER TONGUE vs MIGRANT TONGUE**

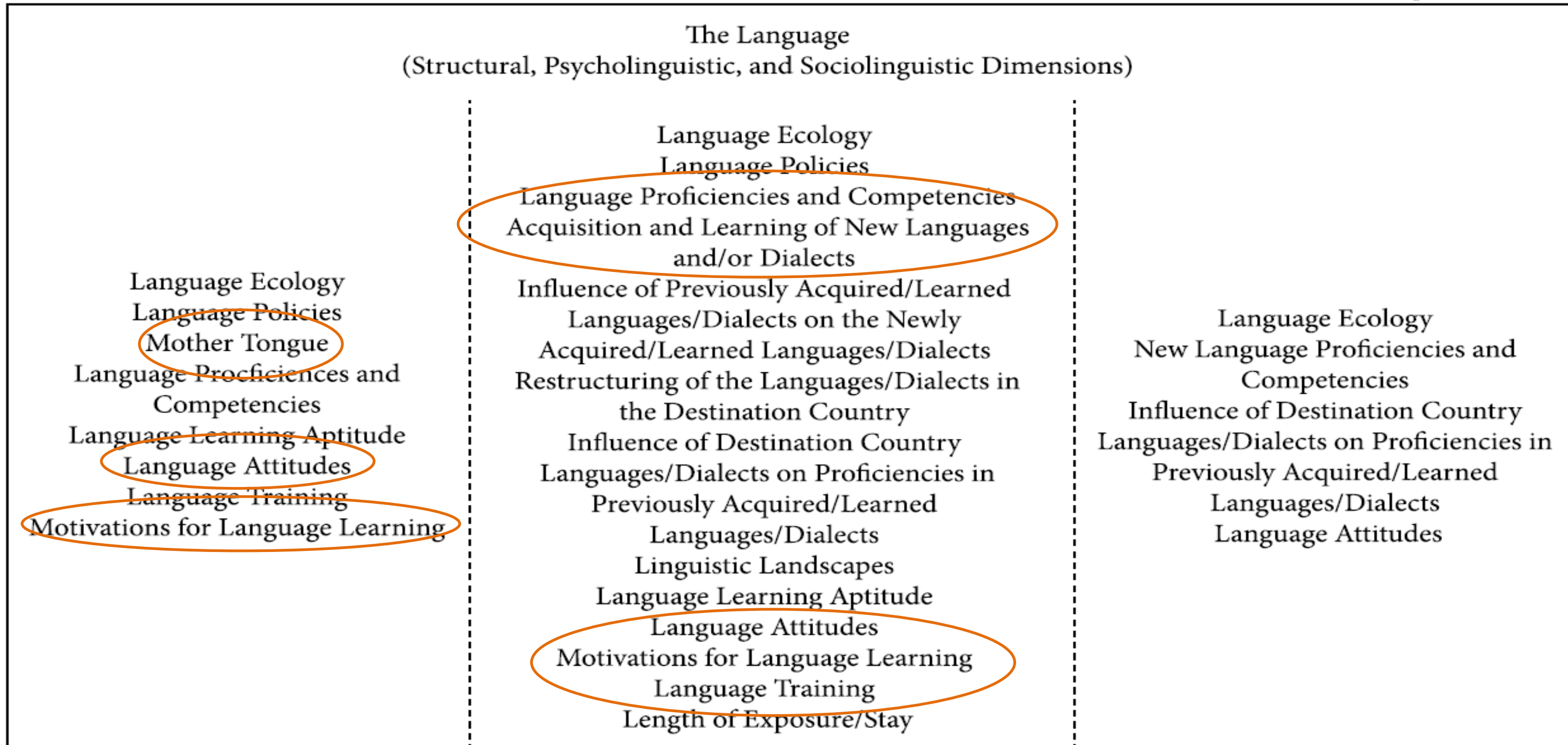




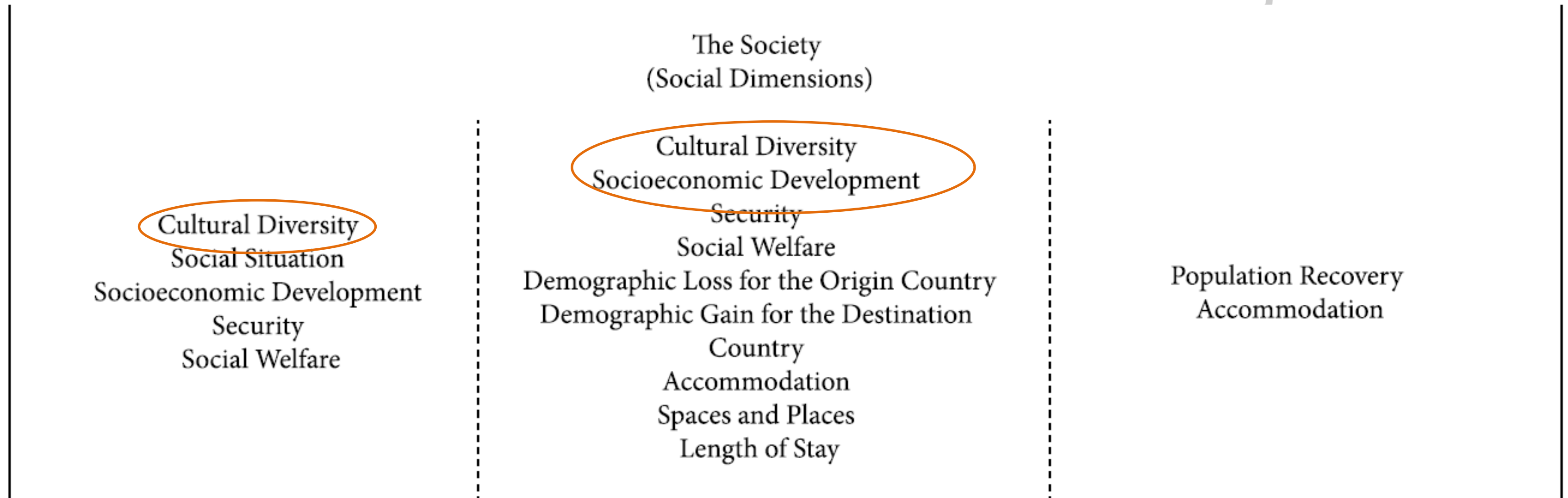
# ML Framework (1)



# ML Framework (2)



# ML Framework (3)



(Borlongan 2023:50)

# **Methodology**



A questionnaire comprising 113 questions based on:

## **PHASES OF MIGRATION:**

**1**

Pre-migration

**2**

In-migration

**3**

Post-migration

## **LINGUISTIC ASPECTS OF THE MIGRATION PROCESS:**

**1**

The migrant

**2**

The language

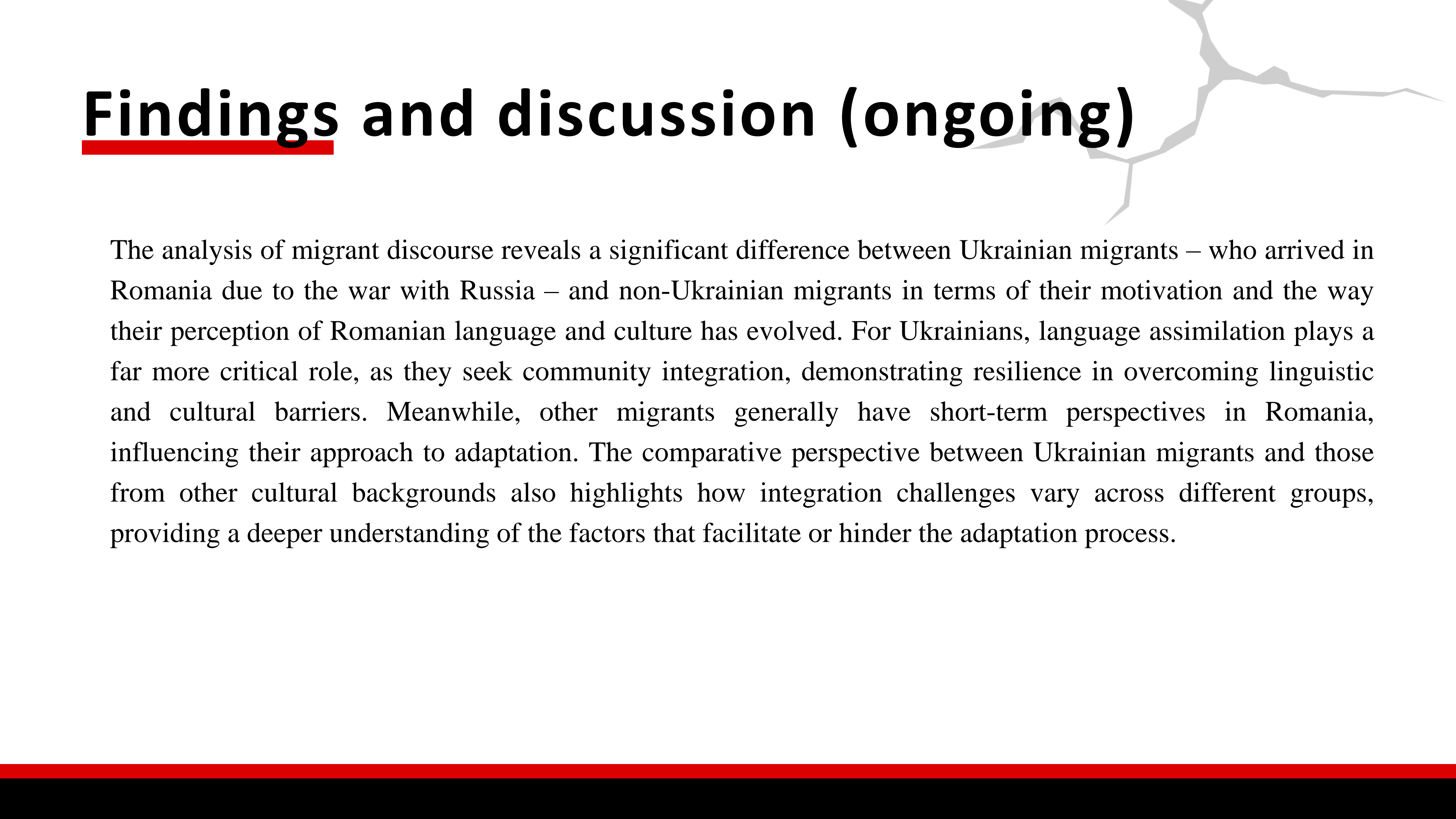
**3**

The society

**Target respondents: 100+ migrant students**




# **Findings and discussion (ongoing)**



The analysis of migrant discourse reveals a significant difference between Ukrainian migrants – who arrived in Romania due to the war with Russia – and non-Ukrainian migrants in terms of their motivation and the way their perception of Romanian language and culture has evolved. For Ukrainians, language assimilation plays a far more critical role, as they seek community integration, demonstrating resilience in overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers. Meanwhile, other migrants generally have short-term perspectives in Romania, influencing their approach to adaptation. The comparative perspective between Ukrainian migrants and those from other cultural backgrounds also highlights how integration challenges vary across different groups, providing a deeper understanding of the factors that facilitate or hinder the adaptation process.

# **Findings and discussion (ongoing)**



1. Different cultural perceptions shape language experience;
  2. Adaptation levels differ by proximity and cultural familiarity;
  3. Romanians' tolerance is generally rated high, but perceptions vary;
  4. Romanian as a professional vs occasional tool;
  5. Readaptation fears are linked to integration depth.
- 

# Motivation - Ukrainians




- „I want to understand people with whom I want to live”
- „Integration in the society and working here”
- „When you can talk to people in their native language, it changes their attitude to you. Many of Romanians can speak English fluently but not all, so it helps to make connections to local people easier, to have better job opportunities. And maybe I'll be an interpreter from Romanian to other languages one day.”
- „I want to understand Romanians and communicate with the local population in Romanian, not English. Learning Romanian will contribute to my employment in Romania.”
- „I want to live here”



# Motivation – non-Ukrainians



- „To continue my studies/ to work / make more friends and connections”
  - „College Entrance Exam”/ „University”
  - „I love this language and I need it for my patients in the hospital during the lab lessons”
  - „Communicating with patients, as I am a medical student in Romania”
  - „Nothing”/ „I had to”/ „We have a course for Romanian language”
  - „For it to be easier for me to communicate with other Romanians who can not speak”
- 

# **Integration - Ukrainians**



**In which areas do you need Romanian the most?**


Everyday life, education, work, communication with people, going to Romanian institutions, full integration

**Do you feel that you have integrated better after you started learning the Romanian language? Why? - +90% yes**

**What do you find the most difficult about the Romanian language?**

Grammar, tenses, vocabulary, gender, articles, the plural forms, start talking, everything

# **Integration - Ukrainians**



**Has your motivation to learn Romanian changed in any way now compared to before you came to Romania?**

75% yes (due to the desire to settle here; because of the prejudices that students had before coming; increase in motivation); 25% no/ not really

**Has your attitude towards the Romanian language changed in any way since you moved here, compared to before coming to Romania? How?**

„Well, now I care about it, and think that it has its own beauty”

„Yes. I stopped thinking that this language is ugly and impossible to learn”

„Yes, it sounded completely alien to me, now I can somehow understand it”

„It didn't change much because I like learning languages in general.”

„Yes. I started to like it”

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