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## LANGUAGE POLICY IN UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

*Since 1991 when Ukraine attained its independence, the Ukrainian language status has become a critical issue. The annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in 2014 threatened the very existence of the Ukrainian language on the peninsula. Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the language issue has become a matter of national security. The article outlines the key trends in the implementation of language policy in Ukraine. It discusses the key legal provisions of the functioning of the Ukrainian language as a state language and minority languages, among which are the Constitution of Ukraine, the laws of Ukraine "On National Security", "On Education", and "On National Minorities in Ukraine". Special focus is given to the new "Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language" ("Language Law") which establishes the state status of the Ukrainian language, making it mandatory for state authorities and local self-government bodies, throughout Ukraine. The implementation of the effective state language policy must be directed at the protection of national interests, it has to guarantee the safety of an individual, society, and state from external and internal threats in all spheres of life. The question of the formation of legal regulation of the state language policy is essential for every state. Given the fact that the linguistic diversity of Ukraine resonates with the multilingualism of the European Union, as well as the EU candidate status granted to Ukraine on June 23, 2022, the expertise of the European Union in dealing with language issues has gained even more importance. The article describes how different European countries apply different models of the legal regulation of the official (state) language status. It analyses the European experience in the advancement of official (state) and minority languages and showcases the steps regarding the implementation of the recommendations of the Venice Commission in the context of EU integration.*

**Key words:** language policy, European integration, language legislation, models of language regulation, education, communication, national minorities, national security.

### Problem statement

The European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages adopted on November 5, 1992, in Strasbourg, states that "The member States of the Council of Europe signatory hereto, considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members, particularly for the purpose of safeguarding and realizing the ideals and principles which are their common heritage; considering that the protection of the historical regional or minority languages of Europe, some of which are in danger of eventual extinction, contributes to the maintenance and development of Europe's cultural wealth and traditions; considering that the right to use a regional or minority language in private and public life is an inalienable right..." [1].

However, for Ukraine, there is a bigger and more permanent threat of losing its territories and population in the guise of protection of minority languages timed to the 300th anniversary of russification.

European countries apply several models of the legal regulation of the official (state) language status. The population of certain states is made up of several large ethnic groups. In addition, many European states are home to numerous migrant communities. Models of official (state) language regulation are Single state (official) language (Great Britain, Italy, Germany, Portugal, France; predominantly, countries of Central and Eastern Europe); Existence of other state (official) languages in certain parts of the state (Spain, Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia, Russia); Swiss model (several state (official) languages) (Switzerland rec-

ognizes four languages – German, French, Italian, and Romansh as national, and three languages – German, French, and Italian as official); Finnish model (two state languages) (Finland).

Typical of many countries is the international legal provision, according to which the definition of the status of languages and specifics of their use is a sovereign prerogative of the state. Every state independently settles their language issues, taking into account historical factors, national specifics, and cultural traditions. “The basic principles of the language policy are defined by the constitutions of the majority European states, particularly, by giving the state status to a language or languages. As of today, 42 European languages with the official (state) status throughout the whole territory are recognized in 50 European countries”. The constitutions of Unitarian monarchies, such as Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden do not contain any references to the language status, with Great Britain having no written constitution at all. The use of the language of the relevant nations – Danish, Dutch, Norwegian, Swedish, and English – as official (state) has a long history [2].

The negative example of the state language policy is naming Russian in addition to Belarusian as an official language of Belarus in 1996, which will lead the Belarusian language to disappear from the linguistic map of Europe.

Hence, the implementation of the effective state language policy must be directed at the protection of national interests, it has to guarantee the safety of an individual, society, and state from external and internal threats in all spheres of life.

The question of the formation of legal regulation of the state language policy is essential for every state. The issue of language identity in Ukraine arose immediately after Ukraine gained its independence. Since the state policy forms an adequate system and suggests mechanisms of how to exercise power, improvement of the process of language policymaking at both national and local self-government levels is essential.

#### **Aims of the article**

*The study aims to analyze the trends of the implementation of the language policy in Ukraine in the context of EU integration processes.*

#### **Literature review**

Linguistic diversity lies at the heart of EU policy. Given the fact that national languages are a fundamental feature of a country's cultural identity and an important element of its identity and the fact that citizens of hundreds of nationalities are now living in the European Union, not to mention ongoing in-migra-

tion processes, it is no wonder that the language policies remain on the agendas of European countries.

The literature review has demonstrated the topicality of the analysis of the functioning of state, regional, and minority languages in European countries, the role of family members in speaking a new language, relations between politics and language, linguistic imperialism, and the role of education and communication in language development.

Percio A. examines the strategies and forms of expertise offered to migrants to facilitate their socialization into a job market. Investing in migrants' education is a large state project in Italy. The practices of Italian job guidance centers must encourage hiring migrants; however, language and communication skills are key resources [3]. O'Rourke B. and Nandi A. focus attention on the potential benefits of new language speakers in a family, claiming that through their individual linguistic practices, parents influence their children's language learning by creating future generations of speakers. The role of parents as potential agents of sociolinguistic change in the process of language development may become a vital factor in the implementation of the state language policy in the country [4].

Edwards C. W. explores the connection between politics and language policy in the discourse of migration, using the Welsh language policy as an example. The author argues that neither politics nor language is ever neutral but interrelated which highlights the significance to adopt an approach to language policy given full consideration to “real social actors” [5]. Karlander D. researches language politics in Sweden, specifically the dispute that has developed over the language political regulation of Ovdalsk, a non-standard form of Scandinavian spoken in Ålvdalen in northern central Sweden following the ratification of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages [6].

The research into the history of the Dutch language has enabled the authors to claim that it was an object of political control. Significant aspects of the nationalization of language were the establishment of an officialized orthography (1804) and grammar (1805), which were to be used in the national school system [7]. Linguistic imperialism is still being debated in Ireland. For instance, Rose H. and Conama J.B. explore language policy concerning Irish Sign Language within a framework of linguistic imperialism. The authors conclude that the spread of English is a result of language planning, and is based on “conspiracy” and implicit language policy that aims toward a dominant language (English) [8]. Vuorsola L., while

addressing the issue of Finnish in the Swedish school system, concludes that a functional language policy protects a minority and allows it to develop its culture and language, while an ineffective policy might cause irreparable damage and lead to language attrition and even complete loss of language [9].

The minority languages debate in France is ongoing. Oakes L. highlights the benefits of a normative language policy approach in the case of immigrants and their descendants as it is better suited to the modern world and has the potential to generate a distinctive model of minority language rights [10]. Salo et al. investigate the advancement of the mother tongue in the educational sphere of Sweden and Denmark from a historical and comparative perspective, pinpointing the key differences in language policy. The authors state that the Swedish discussion on the issue is academically bound whereas the Danish discussion has become a politicized object of struggle when agents in power seek to control language policy resources and influence school curricula [11]. Sebba M. researches the findings of the Scots language status in the 2011 census in Scotland, concluding politics and ideology behind the census, with wordings and order of the questions influencing the respondents and, as a result, the absence of the conclusive answer about the number of people speaking Scots [12].

Shohamy E. in her book *Language policy* claims that there have always been those groups and individuals who want to manipulate the language issue to promote the party's political and ideological interests. Such mechanisms are overt and covert [13]. Bublyk L. from Ukrainian Free University in Munich discusses a country's state language policy concerning its effectiveness and considers that based on its implementation affects the language policy can be positive (strengthening the language) and negative (prompting the language to fall into disuse) [14].

In 2010, the publishing house of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy released a book based on the project "Language Policy and Language Situation in Ukraine". Scientists from Austria, England, and Ukraine, who participated in the project, studied different aspects of the language policy and language situation in Ukraine: international standards and obligations (B. Bowring, the United Kingdom), sociolinguistic analysis (L. Masenko, Ukraine), language policy in mass media (Yu. Besters-Dilger, Austria). The research drew on the results of an all-Ukrainian survey and focus group discussions held in the following five cities: Kyiv, Donetsk, Lutsk, Lviv, and Odesa. The research emphasized: "There is no other European country, where the language of an ethnic minority has

received as much dissemination as the state language, with the state language becoming the minority population language in certain areas. The reason for this lies in the history of Ukraine" [15, p. 332].

#### **Basic provisions**

Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine acknowledges that the state language of Ukraine is Ukrainian. The state ensures the all-around development and functioning of Ukrainian in all spheres of social life and throughout the entire territory of Ukraine [16].

The Law of Ukraine "On National Security of Ukraine" determines the fundamentals of the state policy, aimed at defending national interests and guaranteeing the safety of an individual, society, and the state from external and internal threats in all spheres of life, in particular, in cultural and spiritual spheres. Per Article 3, "The state policy in the sphere of national security and defense is aimed at protection of an individual and a citizen, his/her life and dignity, constitutional rights and freedoms, safe living conditions; the society – its democratic values, well-being, conditions for sustainable development; the state – its constitutional order, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and inviolability; the territory and natural environment – from emergency situations" [17].

The concept of the state language policy has been developed in compliance with the Constitution and laws of Ukraine, international treaties of Ukraine, which consent to be bound is provided by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, and other regulatory legal acts, which govern the relations in the language sphere. According to the Presidential Decree, "Ukrainian as the means of communication and intellectual identification of the personality displays the identity of the Ukrainian people and is the basis of their spirituality and historical memory. Full functioning of Ukrainian in all areas of public life over the entire territory of the state is a guarantee of preserving the identity of the Ukrainian nation, unity of Ukraine" [18].

Under the Constitution, Ukraine guarantees free development, use, and protection of other languages of ethnic minorities in Ukraine. The legislation stipulates that in official settings the language of ethnic minorities may be used along with the state language in the regions where the number of respective language speakers makes up the majority population [18].

The state status of the Ukrainian language does not violate the rights of its citizens to freely use any language in private settings.

According to the All-Ukrainian Census of December 2001, Ukrainians make up 77,8% of the country's population, with 67,5% of respondents naming

Ukrainian their mother tongue. Representatives of 134 nationalities and ethnic groups, including several hundred Crimean Tatars and several million Russians, account for approximately 20% of the population of Ukraine [19].

Historically, the situation in Ukraine has been characterized by Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism, actively promoted by anti-Ukrainian forces. It is these anti-Ukrainian forces that created conditions for language and cultural expansion used by Russia to seize Donbas and the territories of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by waging a full-scale war in 2022 to ensure the so-called “protection of the Russian and Russian-speaking minority”.

According to the Institute of Sociology of the NAS of Ukraine over the period 2002–2014, if in 2002 75,8% of respondents viewed giving Russian the status of the second state language positively, then in 2014 the percentage decreased to 50,8%. Instead, Ukrainians demonstrate their wish to learn the languages of international communication, with English receiving an overwhelming 89,3% [20].

Mass extermination of Ukrainian language speakers at times of man-made famines, forced deportations, and armed conflicts, the policy of Russification when Ukraine was a part of the imperial and later Soviet Russia led to the deterioration of the language policy in Ukraine.

The Minister of Culture of Ukraine in 2019 noted: “In the 21st century we are forced to talk about the importance of language support after hundreds of years of colonial policy, internal colonialism, marked by the virus of hatred for Ukrainian word. We have examples when Ukrainian citizens were subjected to hatred if they spoke Ukrainian. The policy of hating Ukrainian word has led to horrible sociopolitical catastrophes, the consequences of which Ukrainians continue to suffer” [21].

Among contemporary researchers, active reformers, and lawmakers working on the Ukrainian language advancement and the increasing importance of the state in the world are Volodymyr Vasylenko, the professor at the National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”, Lina Kostenko, the poetess of the 60’s, Oksana Zabuzhko, the poetess and writer, Yurii Andrukhovych, the poet, Ivan Malkovych, the Ukrainian poet and publisher, other Ukrainian poets, poetesses, authors, scientists. They are awarded prestigious prizes for their tangible contribution to the development of the Ukrainian language and literature. Among the prizes are Shevchenko National Prize (Ukraine), Omelian and Tetiana Antonovych Foundation Award (USA), Global Commitment Founda-

tion Literary Award (USA), etc. Among promoters of the Ukrainian language are also philanthropists. Petro Jacyk was a Canadian entrepreneur of Ukrainian descent, a philanthropist, known for his valuable contribution to funding Ukrainian studies in the world and Ukraine. The projects sponsored by Petro Jacyk are Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, the multivolume Ukrainian-language Encyclopedia of Ukraine, Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies. In 2000 Petro Jacyk initiated the International Ukrainian Language Competition held annually ever since. Every year this prestigious large-scale language competition unites experts in Ukrainian from Ukraine and many Ukrainian Diasporas around the world. The results of the 19th language marathon, in which some 1000 pupils and students took part, were announced in May 2019 [22].

By adopting the Law “On Education” on September 5, 2017, the Verkhovna Rada initiated education reform in Ukraine. This Law, inter alia, stipulates that the language of the learning process in educational institutions shall be Ukrainian, which is the only state language [23].

On April 25, 2019, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a new “Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language” (“Language Law”) [24]. It secures the state status of the Ukrainian language, which is mandatory for the state and local self-government authorities throughout the territory of Ukraine. There are exemptions for private communication and the language of religious worship. The Language Law increases Ukrainian language quotas in media. Now the share of the Ukrainian-speaking content on national TV channels and radio stations must make up at least 90% of the total. Regional television and radio companies broadcasting in other languages must make up at least 20% of the total content. In addition, the Language Law foresees a five-year transition period to implement this provision. The Language Law also aims to considerably encourage and promote the publication of Ukrainian-language books.

This Law is different from the language legislation of the majority of European countries for objective reasons. Only the legislation of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe has relevant provisions due to certain issues in their language sphere [25].

The adoption of two separate laws on the state language and the language of national minorities has been encouraged by OSCE. Some international organizations opine that the spread of language in the country must be accomplished only with the help of incentives.

On 16 July 2022, new provisions of the Language Law came into force, including requirements concerning the language of software user interfaces and websites. Moreover, the Commissioner for the protection of the state language will finally be able to enforce these and other provisions through the imposition of a range of fines on public authorities and local self-government bodies, management and workforce of enterprises, entities, individuals in the fields of education, science, culture, book publishing, public events, advertising, health, sport, telecommunications, transportation, etc. [24].

The Law “On Education” [23] stipulates four categories of languages with different rights: state (Ukrainian) – the language of instruction at all levels; languages of indigenous peoples; languages of national minorities that are official languages in the EU; languages of national minorities with no official status in the EU. Following the Law “On Education” indigenous peoples in Ukraine have the right to be instructed in their language as well as state language throughout their early years, primary and secondary education. The Law “On Education” also stipulates that certain subjects may be taught in English or other official EU languages (Bulgarian, Greek, German, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian, 24 in total).

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the use of the aggressor state's language has become a matter of national security. On June 19, 2022, the Verkhovna Rada adopted a law aimed to support Ukrainian music and limit the aggressor state's music on TV, radio, and in public places [26]. The law bans public performance of Russian songs, the use of tracks and music videos of the Russian performers who support Russia's aggression, and their touring alike. The Verkhovna Rada also voted to ban the import and distribution of books from Russia, Belarus, and the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.

On December 8, 2017, the Venice Commission presented the *Draft Opinion on the Provisions of the Law on Education of September 5, 2017, which concerned the use of the state language and other languages in education*. The document included recommendations pertaining adoption and implementation of the legislation on national minority school instruction in official EU languages [27].

Thus, the evolutionary changes incited by the now open military aggression of Russia in Ukraine, preceded by hybrid warfare, as well as growing civic awareness of Ukrainians are leading to the spread and increased use of the state language at home and on the job.

On March 19, 2022, Rating Group Ukraine held *The Sixth National Poll: the Language Issue in Ukraine*. According to sociologists, “Over the last decade, there has been a steady growth in the number of those who consider Ukrainian their mother tongue: from 57% in 2012 to 76% in 2022 ... “significant changes in language self-identification took place between 2012–2016. The key reasons were ... the events of the Revolution of Dignity; Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and the temporary occupation of the Crimea and some territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions. ... Unprecedented unity of Ukrainian society during the full-scale war has had a dramatic impact on the attitudes to the status of the languages: today, the absolute majority (83%) support Ukrainian being the only state language in Ukraine” [28].

### Conclusions and proposals

European countries apply several models of the legal regulation of the official (state) language status given their current national linguistic and political landscapes and historical background. The review of the literature on language policy in the European Union enables us to identify such topical issues as preservation and advancement of minority languages, linguistic nationalism, migrants and language, linguistic imperialism, politics and language, and the role of new speaker parents.

The framework for the language policy is the legislation of Ukraine (the Constitution of Ukraine, the laws of Ukraine “On National Security”, “On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as a State Language”, “On Education”, “On National Minorities in Ukraine” etc.).

There are four categories of languages with different rights in Ukraine: state (Ukrainian) – the language of instruction at all levels; languages of indigenous peoples; languages of national minorities that are official languages in the EU; languages of national minorities with no official status in the EU. The Law “On Education” also stipulates that certain subjects may be taught in English or other official EU languages (Bulgarian, Greek, German, Polish, Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian, 24 in total).

There has been a steady growth in the number of Ukrainians who consider Ukrainian a mother tongue. Over twenty years this number has increased by 20%. Against the background of the full-scale war of Russia in Ukraine, the absolute majority of Ukrainians support Ukrainian being the only state language in the country.

Given the specific situation in the country, the introduction of the Russian language as a second state

is not acceptable for the Ukrainian society, as it will inevitably lead to the decline of the Ukrainian language, and the loss of the country's statehood and independence.

An important principle of the language policy in Ukraine is adherence to the principles of linguistic diversity and any cultural rights of individuals and communities. The cultural diversity of the country must become its asset to establish itself as equal in the European and global space.

The state language policy of Ukraine should aim to make the Ukrainian-language content part of profitable entrepreneurship rather than limit it to a spiritual need. The state should also address the needs of Ukrainians abroad. State agencies should work on the effective implementation of the language policy; in particular, promote Ukrainian as a means of uniting the nation. A significant contribution to the promotion of the Ukrainian language in the country and the world should be made by civil society organizations in partnership with the state.

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### **Малиш Н. А., Шевченко В. Е., Ткачук-Мірошниченко О. Є. Мовна політика України в умовах своїнтеграційних процесів**

*Після здобуття Україною незалежності статус української мови набув критично важливого значення. Анексія Криму у 2014 році поставила під загрозу саме існування української мови на півострові. Після повномасштабного вторгнення росії в Україну 24 лютого 2022 року мовне питання стало питанням національної безпеки. У статті окреслено основні тенденції реалізації мовної політики в Україні. У ній розглядаються основні правові положення функціонування української мови як державної та мов національних меншин. Визначено, що мовна політика ґрунтується на законодавстві України (Конституція України, Закони України: «Про національну безпеку», «Про освіту», «Про національні меншини в Україні»). Особливу увагу приділено новому закону «Про забезпечення функціонування української мови як державної» («Закон про мову»), який закріплює державний статус української мови та робить її обов'язковою для органів як державної влади, так і місцевого самоврядування в Україні. Реалізація ефективної державної мовної політики має бути спрямована на захист національних інтересів, повинна гарантувати безпеку особи, суспільства, держави від зовнішніх і внутрішніх загроз у всіх сферах життя. Питання формування правового регулювання державної мовної політики є критичним для кожної держави. Ураховуючи той факт, що мовне розмаїття України перегукується з багатомовністю Європейського Союзу, а також статусом кандидата в ЄС, наданим Україні 23 червня 2022 року, досвід Європейського Союзу у вирішенні мовних питань набув ще більшого значення. Стаття розкриває, як різні країни Європи застосовують різні моделі правового регулювання статусу офіційної (державної) мови. У ній аналізується європейський досвід розвитку та просування офіційних (державних) мов і мов меншин, а також демонструються кроки щодо впровадження рекомендацій Венеціанської комісії в контексті інтеграції до ЄС.*

**Ключові слова:** мовна політика, європейська інтеграція, мовне законодавство, моделі мовного регулювання, освіта, комунікація, національні меншини, національна безпека.