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Centre for Research on Minorities

# MINORITIES IN THE POST-SOVIET SPACE THIRTY YEARS AFTER THE DISSOLUTION OF THE USSR

EDITED BY
PAOLA BOCALE, DANIELE BRIGADOI COLOGNA, LINO PANZERI

When the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, the Russian Federation and the newly independent republics of the Baltics, the Caucasus and Central Asia engaged in redefining their national identity in a challenging regional and global context. The stances and policies towards the minorities living in these countries became part of the striving towards national independence and identity formation. Despite vastly different post-Soviet nation-building trajectories, the development and implementation of state policies towards minorities had similar relevance and importance across the region. Thirty years after the end of the USSR what is the situation of minorities and minority issues in the countries that emerged from that multi-ethnic state? How have the former republics – including Russia dealt with their minorities and minority affairs? To what protection and rights are minority communities entitled to?

Studies of the dissolution of the USSR and of nation-building in the independent post-Soviet states have flourished over the past decades. However, despite the relevance of the theme, there is a dearth of specialist publications which address the many issues related to minority communities in the post-Soviet space. This volume attempts to fill this gap by providing a collection of essays covering some of the most relevant aspects of the contemporary status and situation of minorities in the area.

The cover illustration by Daniele Brigadoi Cologna is a watercolor rendering of the Chinese character chū 出 "to exit, to grow out of" in small seal script.

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# Minorities in the Post-Soviet Space Thirty Years After the Dissolution of the USSR

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# Preface

This volume presents selected and edited papers and keynote lectures from the international research conference "Minorities in the post-Soviet space thirty years after the dissolution of USSR", held in Como on December 1-3, 2021. The conference was promoted and coordinated by the Centre for Research on Minorities (Cerm), a cross-institutional and interdisciplinary research network based at the University of Insubria.

When the Soviet Union broke apart in 1991, the Russian Federation and the newly independent republics of the Baltics, the Caucasus and Central Asia engaged in redefining their national identity in a challenging regional and global context. The stances and policies towards the minorities living in these countries became part of the striving towards national independence and identity formation. Despite vastly different post-Soviet nation-building trajectories, the development and implementation of state policies towards minorities had similar relevance and importance across the region. Thirty years after the end of the USSR what is the situation of minorities and minority issues in the countries that emerged from that multi-ethnic state? How have the former republics – including Russia dealt with their minorities and minority affairs? To what protection and rights are minority communities entitled to?

Studies of the dissolution of the USSR and of nation-building in the independent post-Soviet states have flourished over the past decades. However, despite the relevance of the theme, there is a dearth of specialist publications which address the many issues related to minority communities in the post-Soviet space. This volume attempts to fill this gap by providing a collection of essays covering some of the most relevant aspects of the contemporary status and situation of minorities in the area.

Several institutions and individuals deserve thanks for contributing to the realization of the conference and this volume. We are

The work of the conference has contributed significantly to our understanding of the impact of the dissolution of the USSR upon the minorities living in the former Soviet bloc. It is our sincere hope that this book will help other researchers and the broader public to gain awareness and knowledge of minority issues in the post-Soviet space.

*Paola Bocale*
*Daniele Brigadoi Cologna*
*Lino Panzeri*

*Como, Italy*

# Competing Language Ideologies and Language Policies in Ukraine and Their Impact on Minorities

*Paola Bocale*

Since the independence, language policies in Ukraine have been shaped by two contrasting and competing ideological stances. On the one hand, the recognition of Ukrainian as a fundamental marker of the national identity that would include everybody who lived in and supported Ukraine, regardless of their ethnic backgrounds. This ideology has been implemented into language and educational policies aimed at linguistically unifying the country, making sure that standard Ukrainian is systematically learnt at schools and used throughout the nation. On the other, a willingness to acknowledge and accept the reality of the multilingualism of the country, particularly in what concerns the diffuse Ukrainian and Russian bilingualism. This ideological stance has been a recurrent topic in the political agenda, and has also found implementation, over time, in some policies and regulations. The tension between the two ideologies has been mediated, from time to time, by a centrist position, which advocates a common sense, pragmatic approach as a solution to Ukraine's complex coexistence of languages.

This work will analyse the various language ideologies that have informed language policies in Ukraine, contributing to the country's nation-building after its independence in 1991. It will start with a description of Ukraine's complex ethnic and linguistic diversity. It will then review the different language and educational

policies that have been introduced and implemented since 1989, analysing the language ideologies that have informed and shaped them. The last section of the paper will be devoted to a discussion of the impact and implications of Russia's war on Ukraine for language policies and practices.

The paper builds on the notion of language ideologies as beliefs about languages constructed in the interest of a specific social group, and embedded within a broader historical, political, economic, and social context (Kroskrity, 2004). Linguistic ideologies are not about language alone, but tied to issues of identity and power (Woolard, 1998).

## Ukraine's complex and multi-layered diversity

Ukraine is a complex country from the point of view of its population's ethnic composition and historical development. The numerous minorities living in the nation testify to the multi-ethnic nature of this borderland country. According to the last census of the Ukrainian population (Vseukrajins'kij perepis) the largest ethnic group is Ukrainian, comprising 77.8% of the population, followed by Russians (17.3%). Smaller minority communities include: Belarusians, Moldovans, Crimean Tatars, Bulgarians, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, Jews (with populations between 100,000 and 300,000); Armenians, Greeks, Tartars, Roma, Azerbaijanis, Georgians, Germans, Gagauzes (between 30,000 and 100,000); Estonians, Kurds, Karaites, Krimchaki, Komi-Permians, Kyrgyz, Italians and others (less than 30,000; Vseukrajins'kij perepis).

Some minorities are scattered throughout the country, while others are concentrated in specific areas: Russians mainly in Crimea (where they make up the majority of its population: Crimea is the only region with a non-Ukrainian majority) and in other eastern and south-eastern regions; Crimean Tatars in the Crimea; Hungarians and Slovaks in Transcarpathia (Hungarians are the majority in the Berehove/Beregszász district); Romanians in Bucovina and in the Odessa oblast; Bulgarians in the Odessa Oblast (they are the majority in the Budžak district).

Directly related to the presence of minorities are issues of minority languages. Article 2 of the law ratifying the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages lists thirteen minority languages: Belarusian, Bulgarian, Gagauz, Greek, Jewish, Crimean Tatar, Moldovan, German, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Slovak and Hungarian. In practice, however, the only real linguistic question

concerns the role of the Russian language, which has been one of the most hotly debated topics in the academic-cultural discourse, as well as in the political arena since the country's independence in 1991. As effectively summarized by Besters-Dilger "there is no other European state, where the language of an ethnic minority is on a level with the state language, and where the state language (Ukrainian) is spoken only by a minority in some parts of the country" (Besters-Dilger, 2009: 359).

In the 2001 Census, the share of census respondents reporting Ukrainian as mother tongue was 67.5%, while 29.6% claimed Russian. It is clear that no precise relationship between declared nationality and spoken language exist: in Ukraine, as in other post-Soviet contexts, there is a wide discrepancy between ethnolinguistic identification and linguistic practice, with consequent common use of Russian as the primary, if not exclusive, language of communication of ethnic groups which nevertheless indicate another language as a mother tongue in censuses and polls. The concept of mother tongue itself has, therefore, a different meaning in Ukraine than that commonly accepted internationally, as it reflects not so much the degree of skills or communication practices as the loyalty to the homonymous ethnic group (Kulyk, 2014). The roots of this complex situation lie in the Soviet language policies which promoted Russian as the lingua franca of international communication in the Soviet Union, while, at the same time, encouraging different ethnic groups to maintain their ethnic identification, the distinctive feature of which was considered to be possession of an ethnic language.

Sociolinguistic surveys carried out in 2016 and 2019 indicate that the west is overwhelmingly ukrainophone, with values of over 90% of respondents reporting only/mainly Ukrainian as the language used for communication at home. In the south and the east, the usage frequency of Ukrainian declines very sharply, falling to values lower than 20%, whereas the centre of the country has a middle position between the west and the other two regions (Hentschel & Taranenko, 2021). To complicate the picture, suržyk, a mixed subvariety with a Ukrainian substrate and a Russian superstrate[1] which emerged from the long contact between two very closely related Slavic languages, is spoken more or less widely throughout the country. Some linguists consider suržyk as the de facto third linguistic code used in Ukraine (Hentschel & Taranen-

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[1]  A "neo-Suržyk" on Russian-basis has emerged after Ukraine became independent (Del Gaudio 2015).

ko, 2021; Del Gaudio, 2015).

The spatio-linguistic polarization and the existence of suržyk were born out as a result of Ukraine's troubled history and geographical location. The western and central parts of the country, which had long been part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, were the cradle of Ukrainian nationalism from a cultural-linguistic, religious and political point of view. When Poland was partitioned among Austria, Prussia and Russia towards the end of the XVIII century, modern-day western Ukraine, then known as eastern Galicia, fell under the Austrian rule, which guaranteed a much greater degree of local autonomy and cultural freedom than the harsher Russian Empire, which controlled central Ukraine, including Kyiv, and the southern and eastern regions. It was precisely the existence of Galicia that allowed the survival of the Ukrainian language in the long years in which its use was banned in the Russian Empire by the Valuev Circular of 1863 and the Ems Decrees of 1876 (Vassallo, 2022).

## Language and educational policies since 1989

In 1989, whilst still a member of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) passed the law "On languages in the Ukrainian RSR" (Zakon Pro movy), which gave Ukrainian the official status of the only state language. Russian was assigned the status of the language used for communication between the peoples of the Soviet Union, and its use was allowed alongside with the state language. Other minority languages were allowed in the public sphere in administrative units where national minorities constituted the majority of the local population (above 50%). The law has been interpreted by some researchers as a compromise between preserving the predominant position of Russian in public life, and granting the state language status to Ukrainian (Kulyk, 2006; Besters-Dilger, 2011). Other studies have described it as the first step towards de-Sovietisation and independence (Bilaniuk, 2003).

In 1996, Ukraine adopted its first Constitution since its independence in 1991. Article 10, paragraph 2, of the Constitution states that Ukrainian is the country's only official language. This is not just a passive recognition: the Constitution imposes an active duty on the state to ensure the "global development and functioning of Ukrainian in all spheres of public life throughout the territory of Ukraine". The approach followed in the 1989 law, i.e. finding a

balance between the willingness to establish Ukrainian as the sole state language while recognizing the role Russian played in the country, can be traced again in how the Constitution treats the issues of guaranteeing free cultural development of national minorities. Unlike all other languages of national minorities present on the territory, Russian is explicitly mentioned: "In Ukraine the free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of Ukrainian national minorities is guaranteed".

There appear then that both the 1989 language law and the 1996 Constitution aim to find a satisfactory compromise between recognizing the need to establish Ukrainian as an important attribute of the Ukrainian nation, and the ethical, political, and pragmatic necessity to accept the complex sociolinguistic situation of the country. This middle ground position reflects, according to Kulyk (2010), a centrist ideology based on a consensual view of society, which assumes that the majority of Ukrainians does not consider language use neither a social, nor a political problem. The centrist stance support, thus, both the symbolic status of Ukrainian as state language, and the acceptance of other languages, first and foremost Russian, in public practices.

The different and conflicting imperatives at work can also be viewed in terms of personal ideological stances, as proposed by Bilaniuk (2018), who identifies two principal language ideologies in circulation: *language does not matter*, i.e. does not matter which language you speak, and *language matters*, i.e., language choice is a symbolic statement of identity. If the language does not matter ideological perspective could counterbalance the politicization of language choice, there is a risk that could help to undermine the revival of Ukrainian, currently the weaker member in the sociolinguistic context of Ukraine. The danger of the language matters ideology, instead, could lie in a reinforcement of an "essentialization of ethnolinguistic identity - the idea that true or good Ukrainians should speak Ukrainian, and that Russian speakers are not true patriots" (Bilaniuk, 2018: 148).

At the end of the 90s, and up until the political turnover in spring 2014, the pendulum seemed to have swung in favour of the supporters of the idea of a multilingual Ukrainian nation. In 1996, Ukraine joined the Council of Europe, pledging to ratify the core conventions. Accordingly, in 1997 the country ratified the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), while in 1999 ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML). The ratification law listed 13 lan-

guages that Ukraine undertook to protect: Russian, Jewish, Byelo-russian, Moldavian, Romanian, Crimean Tatar, Bulgarian, Polish, Hungarian, Greek, German, Gagauz and Slovak. The ratification law gave ample rights to use minority languages in regions where the ratio of national minorities was above 20%, thus creating more favourable conditions for using minority languages than the 1989 law, which had a 50% threshold (Csernicskó, Ferenc, 2016). Russian community leaders welcomed the enactment of the law by the parliament, while President Leonid Kuchma and a group of deputies in the Verkhovna Rada strongly opposed it (Bowring, Antonovych, 2008). The Ukrainian Constitutional Court invalidated the ratification law on the grounds that it had been signed by the President of the Parliament, not by the President of the country (even if all previous ratification laws had been signed by President of the Parliament without incurring in invalidating procedures). After several new drafts were presented to the parliament, the ECRML was ratified again in 2003. The 2003 version of the ratification law listed the same 13 languages, but did not define threshold of language use for applying the measures of support required by the charter.

The ECRML finally came into force for Ukraine on 1 January 2006. The difficulties and the delay in ratifying the charter were linked to fears, amongst Ukrainian speakers, that it would principally promote Russian, a language deemed not to need protection (Masenko, 2006). Opponents also proclaimed that endangered languages such as Karaim, Krimchak and Roma were not in the list, and that Moldavian and Romanian were listed as two separate languages (Csernicskó, Ferenc, 2016). The main object of discussion, however, was how the purposes and principles of the ECRML had been (mis)interpreted in the Ukrainian context, even at the level of the translation of the charter's name into Ukrainian. The original expression "minority languages" had been translated into Ukrainian as "languages of national minorities", thus changing the focus of the charter from the protection of endangered, or near extinction languages to the protection of the linguistic rights of the country's minorities (Kulyk, 2006).

The importance of the issue emerged again in 2012, when the Ukrainian Parliament adopted, under the presidency of the pro-Russian Viktor Janukovič, a new language law, replacing the one from 1989. Named "On the principles of the state language policy" (Zakon Pro zasadi), the law is also informally known as Kivalov-Kolesničenko Law (or LL Law), after the names of its main

promoters. Without questioning the main role of Ukrainian as the only state language, the law, in reference to the ECRML, introduced the label of "regional or minority language", under which 18 languages were listed: Russian, Belarusian, Bulgarian, German, Modern Greek, Polish, Armenian, Gagauz, Yiddish, Crimean Tatar, Moldovian, Roma, Romanian, Slovak, Hungarian, Rusyn (officially not recognized as an independent language in Ukraine), Karaim and Krymchak. According to the law, certain rights were to be granted obligatorily and automatically by local authorities in those regions where the proportion of native speakers of one (or more) of the 18 languages was at least 10% (7th article, 3rd§). Among the rights guaranteed in the law there was the publication of official documents in minority languages; minority language use by public officials in their oral and written communications with minority language speakers; minority languages teaching in compulsory education; use of place names in minority languages.

The law considered 'regions' all administrative units of regional and local self-government: the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, the oblasts, districts, cities, towns and rural villages. As a consequence, Russian was recognised as a regional language in most of the southern and eastern regions and cities (13 out of the 27 administrative subdivisions), whereas Hungarian and Romanian were recognized as regional languages in the regions where there was a significant number of speakers of these languages, such as, for example, Transcarpathia for Hungarian, and Bucovina for Romanian. In addition to Russian, Hungarian and Romanian, in some districts native speakers of Bulgarian, Gagauz, Crimean Tatar, and Moldovan also reached the demographic thresholds set by law.

In contrast to the 1989 language law, and to the ECRML ratification law, that both address the issue of the use of minority languages in Ukraine, the 2012 language law focuses on the rights of the speakers of regulated languages (Csernicskó et al., 2020). The difference between the two approaches is fundamental because, as mentioned above, there is a significant variation in the composition of the population in terms of ethnicity as opposed to native language. In 2012, the linguistic situation in the country presented this picture: although the population was made up of about 79% ethnic Ukrainians, the share of those who declared they spoke Ukrainian at home was only 42.9%. Russian was reportedly used by 35.4% of the population, while those who used both languages made up about one fifth of the total (Vöcker, 2016). The extent of the 2012 law was, therefore, much wider than that of the 1989 law

and of the ECRML. It has been calculated that the number of native speakers of the 18 languages listed in the law was more than 15 million people, i.e. about 32% of Ukraine population (Csernicskó, Ferenc, 2016).

The law was debated and passed amidst fistfights between government and opposition members of Parliament, and its practical implementation was not systematically enforced. It did not change much in the linguistic situation of Ukraine, and was used mainly to politicise the debate on language issues for purposes of electoral mobilisation (Iglesias, 2014). In February 2014, immediately after the Euromaidan revolution, the Ukrainian Parliament made an abortive attempt to revoke the law. Acting president Oleksandr Turčynov, however, did not sign the document that would have repealed it, and the law remained in force until 28 February 2018, when it was annulled by the Constitutional Court on the basis that the procedure for its adoption in Parliament had been violated. It should be noted that the contents of the law were not criticised by the Constitutional Court.

A brisk turn in the language policies of Ukraine towards a more monoglossic ideology focused on Ukrainian as a national and state symbol of the country came with the post-EuroMaidan presidential election of Petro Porošenko on 27 May 2014 with a historic 54.7% percent of the votes. Porošenko presented himself as a nation-builder, and under his presidency the importance of creating a culturally unified and cohesive Ukrainian nation-state was emphasized and implemented through a series of legislative initiatives, that had an impact also on language education policies (Fedorenko, Umland, 2021)[2]. In September 2017, Porošenko signed a new law on education (Zakon Pro Osvitu). The law made Ukrainian the only language of instruction in schools starting from the fifth grade, notwithstanding the provisions of the Ukrainian 2012 language law, which allowed minority languages to be taught in schools in regions where minorities make up more than 10% of the population[3]. The law also provided for the cessation of the publication of school books in Russian; the possibility of creating separate classes with teaching in the languages of the indigenous peoples of Ukraine (Krymchaki, Crimean Tatars and Karaites); and

2    Language policies and language planning decisions are pivotal elements in nation-states' building, particularly in the post-Soviet space where education plays a fundamental role in society (Gugushvili 2017).
3    The contradiction between the two laws was eliminated when the Constitutional Court annulled the 2012 language law in 2018.

the authorization to teach one or more subjects in the languages of the European Union.

In 2017, 735 schools (about 400 thousand pupils in total) in Ukraine had provided education in languages other than Ukrainian. Of these, 581 schools had Russian as language of instruction, 75 schools – Romanian, 71 schools Hungarian, 3 schools Moldovan and 5 schools Polish (Oharkova, 2017). Not only Russia, but also Hungary, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria and Greece heavily criticised and opposed the education law, which abolished the possibility to obtain Ukrainian state school education in their state languages in Ukraine. The common thread in all of these protests was that the law infringed on the rights of non-Ukrainian ethnicities. The Russian State Duma even went so far as to decry the law as "an act of ethnocide against the Russian people in Ukraine" (Gosudarstvennaja Duma).

The education law was amended in 2019 to allow minority language students who started their education before September 2018 to continue to receive schooling in their languages until September 2023. The amendment, however, applies only to those minority languages that are also official languages in the EU, thus excluding russophones.

The strengthening of nationalistic forces and sentiments that characterized the political developments in Ukraine starting from 2014 onwards had a very strong impact on language and educational policies, exacerbating the polarization between the different language ideologies informing policies and sociolinguistic realities, and further politicizing the language issue. In April 2019, the Ukrainian parliament passed the new language law "On ensuring the functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language" which entered into force on July 16, 2019 (Zakon Pro Zabezpečennja). The new law was necessary to fill the legal void in language policy left by the annulation of the 2012 law in February 2018.

It is important to contextualise the political climate within which the signing of the law by the outgoing President Porošenko took place. Throughout his election campaign for the 2019 presidential elections, Porošenko had promoted three ideological pillars of Ukrainian identity: army (*armija*), language (*mova*), faith (*vira*). During the five years of his presidential term, however, he had never pressed for a law on support of the state language. Porošenko and his party *Jevropejs'ka solidarnist'* (European Solidarity) suffered a massive defeat in the elections, which were won in a landslide by Volodymir Zelenski and his party *Sluha narodu* (Serv-

ant of the people). The fact that, in a moment when voters had already clearly rejected his policy, the departing President rushed to sign a law that legally could have left to the new president to sign or return to parliament, has been interpreted as a deliberate attempt to weaken his successor's position by the burden of a highly divisive issue (Csernicskó et al., 2020).

Although the new language law in principle addresses only the functioning of the state language, in practice it applies to the use of all other languages in Ukraine. By defining Ukrainian as the only state and official language of the country, the law strips all minority languages of the status of regional languages, confining them to private life by drastically limiting their use in the public sphere. The text opens with a reference to the colonial past of linguistic assimilation of Ukraine, and with observations on the strong relationship between language and identity. Ukrainian is defined as the key trait of the identity of the Ukrainian nation, and its functioning is considered a guarantee for the preservation and strengthening of the Ukrainian nation. In this way the preamble establishes a primordial relationship between the Ukrainian language, the Ukrainian state, and the Ukrainian nation, thus creating a hierarchical relationship between members of the majority language and those of the minority languages (Csernicskó et al., 2020).

Sections II and III of the law establish the importance of knowledge of Ukrainian for acquiring Ukrainian citizenship, specifying that the state provides all the necessary resources. It is mandatorily prescribed that civil servants and public service employees shall be familiar with the State language. The law also strengthens the role of Ukrainian in education: article 21, which virtually repeats article 7 of the law 'On education', makes it clear that the language of instruction in educational institutions shall be the state language.

In what concerns culture and the media, Ukrainian must play a leading role. Print mass media shall be published in the state language. Print press products in other languages can only be published if, at the same time, the entire content, with the same title, size, number of copies etc., is also printed in Ukrainian (Article 25(1). With regard to television and radio broadcasting, the law increases the minimum proportion of content in the state language from 75% to 90% for broadcasters with national coverage, and to 60-80% for regional or local TV and radio companies, without making exceptions for private broadcasters.

The law excludes criminal liability for not knowing Ukrainian. However, it specifies that attempts to introduce bilingualism or multilingualism, or to provide official status to any other language throughout the country or in a particular region, shall be regarded as actions aimed at changing or overthrowing the constitutional order, namely as a serious crime punishable by imprisonment up to a maximum of 10 years pursuant to Article 109 of the Criminal Code.

The law provoked strong condemnation in Russia and Hungary, where it was seen as violating the rights of their kin-minorities in Ukraine. TASS (2019) published an article denouncing how the use of Russian language was limited in Ukraine. Valentina Matvienko, Chairman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, said that the foundations had been laid in Ukraine for the "genocide of the Russian language" (RIA Novosti 2019). The Venice Commission, at the request of the Chairperson of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe, examined the law and stated that it failed to find a compromise between the protection of the state language and the observance of minorities' rights (European Commission Opinion). The Venice Commission also denounced the differentiation for the teaching of, and in the languages of, indigenous peoples of Ukraine, the official languages of the EU, and the languages of national minorities which are not the official languages of the EU established by Article 21 (which reflects article 7 of the 2017 Education Law) as constituting a breach of the principle of non-discrimination.

The same differentiation, however, was confirmed in the law "On Complete General Secondary Education", which was voted by the Parliament in January 2020, and came into force on March 18, 2020 (Zakon Pro povnu). The law presents different language-in-education models, ultimately dividing students into four groups. Students, whose mother tongue is Ukrainian, the state language, receive education at all levels in their mother tongue. Students, who are representatives of indigenous peoples, that is Crimean Tatars, Crimean Karaites (Karaims) and Krymchacks[4], also have the right to pursue all education in their mother tongue, along with in-depth study of Ukrainian. Minority students, whose languages are official languages of the European Union (Hungari-

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4    According to the new Law "On Indigenous People of Ukraine", adopted in July 2021. https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1616-20#Text (last accessed 14.07.2022).

ans, Romanians, Poles, Bulgarians), may receive education in their mother tongue in primary school (grades 1–4), but at 5th grade not less than 20% of lessons should be taught in Ukrainian. The ratio has to increase gradually in order to reach at least 40% by 9th grade, and 60% by grades 10–12. Minorities speaking non-EU languages (Russians, Belarusians) may receive education in their mother tongue in primary school, but starting from 5th grade not less than 80% percent of the annual amount of study time should be in Ukrainian.

If one of the crucial reasons for the adoption of the law on secondary education was the need to increase the provision of minority language education, which was still inadequate according to the 2017 education law (Rabinovych, Berg-Nordlie, 2021), the new legislation raised another set of thorny issues: how to justify the different treatment of indigenous peoples, minorities speaking EU languages, and minorities speaking non-EU languages? How to ensure the practical implementation of the provisions of the law, particularly in small municipalities? How to avoid that the new education policies did not impact negatively on interethnic cohesion and peaceful cohabitation among all ethnic groups of Ukraine? Shortly after its adoption, the secondary education law was severely criticised for breaching the principle of non-discrimination and for increasing the politicization of the already politically fraught debate on language in education (Csernicskó et al., 2020).

## Conclusions

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a devastating invasion of Ukraine, marking a major escalation of the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian conflict. Not surprisingly, the Russian invasion is clearly having a considerable relevance also for the language debate central to the political and social life of the country. On June 19, 2022 the Ukrainian Parliament passed three new laws designed to restrict the circulation of Russian books and music, while increasing the development of Ukrainian book and music publications, performances and recordings.

Law 7273-d (Proekt Zakonu 7273-d) prohibits music created or performed on media and on public transport by those who are or were Russian citizens after the 1991 collapse of Soviet rule, unless they give up their Russian citizenship and take Ukrainian passports. The ban will not apply to Russian singers who condemn

Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The law also increases to 40% the share of Ukrainian music in radio broadcasting, and to 75% the quota of TV broadcasts, including news and entertainment.

Law 7459 (Proekt Zakonu 7459) forbids the printing of books by post-1991 Russian citizens, while also prohibiting the commercial import of books printed in Russia, Belarus and occupied Ukrainian territories. The import of books in Russian from any other country will require a special permission.

Finally, law 6287 (Proekt Zakonu 6287) aims at stimulating the development of Ukrainian book publishing and distribution, providing, in particular, measures of compensation for those who rent premises for operating Ukrainian bookstores.

The war is not only encouraging legislative measures aimed at strengthening Ukrainian as the definitive marker of the country's national identity, it is also deeply influencing Ukrainians' perceptions about themselves and the "other", urging many to redefine and reassess the markers of their belongingness. Prominent intellectual and political figures, artists and well-known celebrities have publicly announced their switch to Ukrainian as their only language (Walker, 2022; Koshiw, 2022). The same is happening on social platforms of Ukrainian migrants abroad (Bocale, unpublished work). Ukrainian language and Ukrainian culture are embraced as a source of strength and a means of connecting with one another and mobilizing resistance under the shared experience of war (Armitage, 2022). The process of reasserting Ukrainian identity is also having an impact on memory policy, with streets and subway stops whose names evoke the history of the Russian Empire or the Soviet Union being renamed with the names of Ukrainian historical leaders and people who contributed to safeguarding Ukrainian culture (Balačuk, 2022; Kovalov, 2022; Solomon, 2022).

In summer 2022, school curricula were amended. The works of most Russian and Belarusian authors were removed, while works of foreign writers, including Pierre Ronsard, Robert Burns, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Heinrich Heine, and Adam Mickiewicz were added. Nikolai Gogol or Mikhail Bulgakov, who wrote in Russian but were born in Ukraine, will continue to be studied. The history curriculum was also changed to include a separate block dedicated to the Russian-Ukrainian war (Osadča, 2022).

At the same time, some Russian-speaking Ukrainian authors and intellectuals report being made object of hatred and suspicion, accused of being responsible for the war because of their language, and supposed to prove their national loyalty and consciousness

publicly (Kurkov, 2022).

The war has thus unavoidably - and quite understandably so - resulted in the enforcement of a linguistic ideology that equates Ukraine with the Ukrainian language: only those who possess Ukrainian are considered to truly embody and belong to the nation. The extent to which this ideology will completely dominate language and educational policies in the long run will depend largely on the duration and outcome of the conflict.

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