Reinventing Language: Agency and Linguistic Switching in the Wartime Ukraine

By

Anastasiia Teslenko

Submitted to

Central European University

Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisors:

Alexandra Kowalski

Jean-Louis Fabiani

CEU eTD Collection

Vienna, Austria

2023

Abstract

This research is centered around the experience of Ukrainian citizens who were brought up in Russian-speaking households but later decided to switch to the Ukrainian language. After the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion, many Ukrainians felt the need to abandon the Russian language in their everyday life and turn to Ukrainian instead of it. However, as this thesis shows, changing the primary language of communication is a complicated and time-consuming process. The first aim of this research is to understand how massive events such as war reflect on mundane practices such as the use of language. Secondly, it explores the individual trajectories of people switching to the Ukrainian language and the challenges they encounter in the process. To achieve what has been stated above, I conducted 16 in-depth interviews with Ukrainians of various ages and professions as a part of my fieldwork in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. I argue that linguistic switching acts as a tool of performing agency and national belonging; it allows people to create safe spaces and encourages comradeship in the times of extreme danger.

CEU eTD Collection

Table of Contents

CEU eTD Collection

Introduction

The three other passengers were already inside when I entered the train compartment. They were all female, as men were not allowed to leave the country during martial law. Time was getting close to midnight, so everyone looked somewhat tired, anticipating their sleep in a cramped compartment, which for some reason had a pair of the bottom, top and additional middle berths squeezed between the two. It was almost impossible to climb on the last one, so high it was attached.

"Good evening!"– I greeted my train mates in Ukrainian. The topic of language emerged instantly, even without my interfering. One of the women commented on how nice it was that everybody in our compartment was Ukrainophone. Later I discovered that her name was Kateryna, just like that of my favorite Ukrainian language and literature schoolteacher. Kateryna was in her early 40s. She was born and raised in Kyiv, so naturally, the woman explained, she spoke Russian for most of her life. Soon after the first bombs fell in her city, thus marking the start of a full-scale Russian invasion, Kateryna continued her story, she switched to speaking exclusively Ukrainian. The woman became alienated from her mother language as it carried a strong negative connotation invoking associations with danger and violence. After the initial shock caused by the hostilities unfolding near her hometown passed, she decided to abandon the Russian language completely.

Two other fellow travellers, who coincided to share the name Valeria, quickly joined the conversation. One of them was Kateryna's colleague. She did not share her story of a linguistic switch as she had none – she always spoke Ukrainian. "Her Ukrainian is so good, that's because she comes from a village in the Zhytomyr region. Everybody speaks Ukrainian there", said Kateryna about her colleague. Another Valeria was the last one to comment on the topic of personal switching. Her high proficiency in Ukrainian surprised everybody when she revealed that she comes from the Northern East of the country, a region totally dominated by

CEU eTD Collection

the Russian language. "How come you speak Ukrainian so well?" Kateryna asked her. Valeria replied, "Oh, my husband is Ukrainophone. I learned from him. You know, it is funny; he comes from the village in Zhytomyr region close to other Valeria".

In my opinion, this ethnographic vignette is a nice illustration of how conspicuous language is in Ukrainian society right now. It seems like this topic is in the air now.

I have been living in Kyiv up until I left it after the start of the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022. As I remember it, Ukrainian was the language of a minority in Kyiv. Like my interviewees, I mostly spoke Russian and occasionally used Ukrainian before I decided to switch to Ukrainian completely. Sometimes people would even express their surprise at my fluency in Ukrainian, knowing that I come from the capital city. When I came back after the year of absence in April 2023, I noticed that the practice of Ukrainian on the streets had grown significantly. By my amateur estimate, at least half of the people speak Ukrainian in public places now. The switch from speaking Russian to Ukrainian represents the current trend in Ukrainian society, which, I believe, is there to stay.

I do not intend to measure the exact scale of the current linguistic switch or provide a completely objective account of it. None of these are my intentions. I can only hope that my respondents were truthful with me while telling their stories. I do acknowledge that memory is always open to distortion (Schudson 1997), and their own recollections could have been consciously or unconsciously reshaped to serve the present interests. What I am interested in, is the role of language in the process of societal transformation and the individual strategies that people adopt to cope with extreme events.

Ukrainian Language and Identity in Modern History

CEU eTD Collection

Ever since Ukraine embarked on the path of separation from the Soviet Union, language has always been a hot topic in society and politics. The Ukrainian language was declared the sole state language back in 1989, two years before the country gained independence. The official status of language fixed by the Constitution legitimized the existence of a separate Ukrainian language and nation, therefore contrasting the newly independent Ukrainian state to Russian Federation, which was actively seeking ways to impose its political influence on it (Bilaniuk 2017). "Law of the Languages" called for creating a favorable climate for developing the Ukrainian language in various spheres of social life.

As the majority of Ukrainians were actively or passively bilingual (Bureiko and Moga 2019), they could speak or at least understand both Ukrainian and Russian languages. However, the actual use of Ukrainian differed from the state imagination because the Ukrainian language was largely marginalized in society. De facto, many individuals and even state institutions continued to speak Russian. Peculiarly, the portion of the population who call Ukrainian their "mother tongue" or "native language" is significantly bigger than the number of citizens who actually use it daily (Masenko 2020; Friedman 2016). In the broad sense, "mother tongue" refers to the language a person learns during primary socialization. Typically, individuals acquire this language from their parents or immediate family members in their early years. However, if we adopt such a definition, calling Ukrainian "mother tongue" seems a common fallacy as it was often not the language used inside the family unit. However, in the Ukrainian context mother tongue has a slightly different meaning alluding to ancestry and tradition instead of the actual use. As the generations change, actually performed functional mother tongue may move into a cultural realm of "ethnic mother tongue" (Fishman and Nahirny 1964, 311). Thus, the native language does not equal the "language of convenience" or the "language of choice" that can differ (Arel 2018). What is more, people often refer to the Ukrainian language just by

CEU eTD Collection

its status as *"derzhavna mova"* (the state language) therefore accentuating the legal status over the ethnic or cultural one (Bilaniuk 2017).

Previous research has shown that even though Ukraine is mainly bilingual, drawing a direct link between the preferred language of communication and identity would be an oversimplification. The interplay of language and identity in Ukraine is complex and dynamic. Many scholars have challenged the image of the Ukrainian state being torn between the Europe-oriented Ukrainophone West and Russia-oriented Russophone East. The existence of two separate Ukraines is more a myth than a sociopolitical reality. A majority of citizens, irrespective of their language preference and region of origin, in fact, consider themselves to be Ukraine patriots and endorse the democratic values associated with the West (Fomina 2014). Nadiia Bureiko and Teodor Moga claim that Ukrainian identity, especially after the 2014 Euromaidan revolution [1], is moving from the ethnocultural to the civic realm. According to this perspective, a sense of national identity is determined by individual willingness to uphold a shared set of values and vision of the state's future rather than by sharing and maintaining a common cultural heritage. This allows people to speak Russian but easily identify as Ukrainians (Bureiko and Moga 2019). Researchers found out that the most prominent factors that people associate with being Ukrainian were 'to feel Ukrainian', 'to respect and follow Ukrainian traditions', 'to help compatriots', 'to respect Ukrainian political institutions and law', and 'to protect Ukraine' (Ibid, 152). Nevertheless, Euromaidan has altered the way Ukrainians present and perceive themselves inside their country. Volodymyr Kulyk describes the changes in self-identification and linguistic preferences of Ukrainians as "bottom-up de-Russification", meaning that citizens distance themselves from Russian culture. However, he claims, this process is characterized chiefly by distancing from the Russian state and nation than

[1] Euromaidan (also known as Revolution of Dignity) was a series of protests that took place in Ukraine from November 2013 to February 2014. This movement was sparked by the government's refusal to accept an EU association agreement and culminated in the downfall of the ruling elites.

CEU eTD Collection

abandoning the Russian language. It had a certain impact on the language of Ukrainians. Even if people did not completely switch from Russian to Ukrainian, they certainly "came to speak it, or at least read and listen to it more than ever before" (Kulyk 2018, 134).

Based on existing literature, it is clear that the political events around Ukrainian citizens continuously impact their perception of language, shaping and reshaping it over time. Euromaidan, the Annexation of Crimea, and the Russian invasion launched irreversible political transformations in the history of Ukraine. Common in the past Russophone-friendly discourse 'language choice does not matter' competes with another one claiming 'language matters' and encouraging the Ukrainian population to switch to the Ukrainian language (Bilaniuk 2016). The growing threat to Ukrainian statehood and sovereignty from neighboring Russia forced Ukrainians to realize themselves as separate nation. Here I employ an understanding of the nation as an imagined community (Anderson 1991), members of which perceive themselves as a part of one community even though they "will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them"; this shared sense of belonging to one nation allows people to experience feelings of comradeship and brotherhood. A sense of belonging to a particular nation rises dramatically in extreme circumstances such as the Russo-Ukrainian war. People become united not by the media, census, or museum (Ibid) but by compassion towards compatriots and losses that they have experienced.

CEU eTD Collection

Language and Nation

One should not overlook the importance of language, which serves as one of the crucial mediums that bind people together and enable them to imagine themselves as a nation (Anderson 1991; Gellner 1988; Hobsbawm 1993). Speaking a native language, regardless of the speakers' fluency level, can hold the purpose of performing their identity and marking a membership in the community (Ahlers 2006). The very existence of the Ukrainian language,

distinct from other languages in the Slavic group, allowed for the formation of a Ukrainian national consciousness (Anderson 1991, 74). However, identification with the Ukrainian nation through the use of the official language was largely absent in practice in the past, as the previous section shows. According to Eric Hobsbawm, nation-building is a continuous process where the development of national consciousness often varies among social classes and regions within a country (1993, 12). Nevertheless, the external threat to Ukrainian freedom and sovereignty has led to a significant surge in the sense of belonging to the Ukrainian nation. Speaking the Ukrainian language is seen as revitalizing the collective memory of the land; speaking Ukrainian means ensuring the continuity of the nation and state (Ibid). In the midst of the full-scale war, the Ukrainian language increasingly serves as a distinguishing factor of national belonging, highlighting the state's distinction from Russia. One can argue that the process of Ukrainian nation-building truly started to unfold only after the Russian invasion. I deem it necessary to emphasize that Ukrainian linguistic nationalism as a broad phenomenon is defensive in its nature. It is the opposite of everyday 'banal nationalism', typical for established states having "confidence in their own continuity" (Billig 1995). While waved flag in Western nation-states acts as a subtle reminder of ideology that allows a nation to reproduce itself (Ibid), waived flag in wartime Ukraine signifies that nation is still fighting for its freedom and existence. Thus, the Ukrainian language becomes a symbolic weapon on the cultural front of the Russo-Ukrainian war.

There is a big difference whether the city is called Kharkov or Kharkiv, Odessa or Odesa, Nikolaev or Mykolaiv, and Kyiv or Kiev, as the first option corresponds to the Russian spelling and the second one correspond to the Ukrainian one. The renaming of cities on road signs in occupied territories performed by the Russian Federation (Kizilova 2022) serves as another reminder that language and nation are inextricably linked. Quoting Paul Connerton, "When a large power wants to deprive a small country of its national consciousness, it uses the

CEU eTD Collection

method of organized forgetting" (1989, 19). Therefore, speaking Ukrainian is an act of remembering; it is declaring one's distinct national identity.

Language, self, and language switching in everyday life

On the micro level of analysis, language switching raises the question of how people handle the change of linguistic structure in their everyday life. It is essential to recognize that people did not give up their habit of speaking Russian all at once. Ukraine is and most likely will be a bilingual country, but the number of people switching from Russian to Ukrainian is rising. For many people, speaking Russian was the status quo up until the full-scale Russian invasion, an event that profoundly changed everything. Here I mean an event in a sense of a rupture in everyday life that challenges the existing order of things and paves the way for endless possibilities (Badiou 2009; Sewell 1996). The date of February 24, 2022, holds great significance for Ukrainians and will always be remembered. Many people started behaving in a way they could not imagine before the war. The full-scale Russian invasion had the potential to overthrow the structure of society where the Russian language used to be dominant. Switching from speaking Russian to speaking Ukrainian is a salient example of a transformation of established order caused by the event.

In this thesis, I want to place the case of politically motivated language switching of Ukrainian citizens into the broader context of the debate between agency and structure. My goal is to provide a "thick description" (Geertz 2008) by presenting a detailed account of the personal strategies that individuals adopt to cope with the challenges of using Ukrainian as their "mother tongue" on a daily basis while considering the emotional and symbolic load of Ukrainian and Russian languages in the current war climate. Language is a fundamental part of habitus – a set of mental structures that allows individuals to apprehend the social world around them (Bourdieu 1989, 19). Habitus generates practices that predispose individuals to behave and

CEU eTD Collection

respond in a particular manner giving them a "feel for the game" (Bourdieu 2009). Therefore, transitioning from speaking Russian to speaking Ukrainian means altering one's dispositions embodied through socialization, which is certainly not an easy task to fulfill. It calls for the invention of new patterns for small talk, new ways of expressing and interpreting emotions, different articulation of sounds, and many other things that the people I interviewed faced. In accordance with Mikhail Bakhtin's ideas, language is not a neutral medium but a collection of practices that are deeply ingrained in society. To make Ukrainian "one's own" language, individuals have to take the words and appropriate them by "populating them with their own intentions, their own accent (…) adapting it to their own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin 2004, 696).

I will zoom in on the individual trajectories of people performing switch to the Ukrainian language to see what is happening on the flip side of the phenomena that can be called Ukrainian language revival. Unlike Laada Bilaniuk, whose publications on the Ukrainian language provided me with many insights on the topic, I use the notion of "linguistic switch" instead of "linguistic conversion". While she deliberately wanted to invoke associations with religious conversion when defining the latter as "the decision to radically change one's daily linguistic practices" and "a personal act of patriotism and contribution to nation building" (Bilaniuk 2020, 3), I nevertheless want to highlight the idea that switch is a continuous process but not an act. For many people switching to Ukrainian was not an intended action but a consequence of alienation from the Russian language. As William Sewell argues, when we talk about the transformations caused by historical events, they tend to be sudden and unpredictable happenings leading to the "dramatic crisis of existing practices" (Sewell 1996, 843). People often felt estranged from the Russian language faster than they became accustomed to expressing their thoughts in Ukrainian, making the switch challenging and imperfect, as this research will show. Therefore, as the 2022 full-scale Russian invasion launched a process of

CEU eTD Collection

profound transformation inside Ukrainian society, it is time to revisit the field to answer the question: ***How does an extreme and unpredictable event such as war can challenge one's habitus and make people switch from Russian to the Ukrainian language in their daily communication?***

The subsequent questions include the following:

- How do people narrate their experience of switching to the Ukrainian language? What pushes and motivates them?
- What kind of challenges and paradoxes do people encounter in the process of switching, and how do they deal with them?
- How do people perceive the Ukrainian language, and which meaning(s) do they attribute to it in times of turbulence and the struggle for freedom?
- How did the power relations in the linguistic field change during the period of Ukrainian independence?
- How does the Ukrainian language act as a tool of nation-building?

This thesis consists of one background chapter and two chapters that present and analyze the empirical data I collected during my fieldwork. The first chapter of this thesis provides a historical overview focusing on the changing status and prestige of the Ukrainian language from the Russian Empire to modern-day wartime Ukraine. Next, the second chapter uncovers the interplay between language, safety, a sense of national belonging, and identity. Finally, the third chapter provides a deeper look at how people perform their linguistic switch in everyday life and the impact of war on it.

CEU eTD Collection

Methodology

In this thesis, I rely on the data I collected in April 2023 during my fieldwork in Kyiv, Ukraine, where I stayed for three weeks. I conducted 16 in-depth interviews, 13 face-to-face interviews with people based in Kyiv and 3 online interviews with Ukrainian citizens living abroad. All of my interviewees grew up in Russian-speaking households but later decided to switch to the Ukrainian language. Most of my respondents were bilingual in Ukrainian and Russian languages from their early years; however, two women had to learn Ukrainian from scratch. All the men and women who participated in my research were from the lower middle or middle class and had obtained higher education. The average age of respondents was 34 years. The range varied from 21 years (the youngest) to 72 years (the oldest). While I was looking for the respondents, I neither specified the exact time frame of their linguistic switch nor defined it. This was a conscious choice because, as the interview data has shown, the switch is often a process – gradual, partial, and imperfect. Some people I talked to speak Ukrainian in all aspects of their life, while others use both Ukrainian and Russian languages. To find the respondents, I used the snowballing method moving from acquaintances to strangers. The semi-structured interview guide that I used engaged with the topics of language use in the family, schooling, habits, linguistic switch, and general attitudes toward the linguistic situation in Ukraine. In order to analyze the data, I recorded and transcribed all of my conversations; then, I thematically coded them using an interpretation-focused approach with ALTAS.ti software. I used the method of relational content analysis to see some common tendencies and moods, to compare and contrast individual answers to the same questions and make conclusions.

Defining the limits of my case was somewhat of a challenging task due to the intangible nature of language and the variety of historically determined contexts that coexist in Ukraine.

CEU eTD Collection

Being aware of the fact that I cannot grasp the whole breadth of the linguistic landscape in modern Ukraine, I decided to focus on ex-Russophone people like myself.

Even though there are no obvious risks to my interviewees, all the names and personal details, except for their profession and age, were altered.

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter 1: Historical Background

1.1. Marginalized Language

Before I go into detail describing how individuals perform linguistic switch as a part of the bigger language revival phenomena, I find it vital to set the scene and understand how Ukrainian happened to be stigmatized in society in the first place. Language, being deeply intertwined with the social and political sphere, can serve as an instrument of power. However, language is not a source of power itself, as its status fluctuates depending on the context surrounding it. According to Pierre Bourdieu, "Language at most represents authority, manifests and symbolizes it" (2009, 109). Due to the long period of Ukraine's subjection to the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union after the downfall of the former, the Russian language, which was hegemonic in both state entities, dominated over Ukrainian. In such a bilingual environment, languages are juxtaposed against each other, and only one of them is considered legitimate (Ibid, 45). While the Ukrainian language existed, it usually promised no prestige or social mobility for its speakers, pushing citizens to adopt the Russian language. As a side note, it is important to mention that throughout history, parts of modern Ukraine were also governed by other regimes, namely Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Austrian Empire, and Austria-Hungary from the mid-seventeen until the early twentieth century, and Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania after the First World War (Flier and Graziosi 2017). However, since Ukrainian could develop relatively freely in those territories (Bilaniuk and Melnyk 2008), my main focus is the Russian-Ukrainian linguistic dyad.

The Ukrainian language was banned dozens of times throughout the centuries of Russian rule (Shulzhenko 2023). Ukrainian was considered a patois or Little-Russian dialect in the Russian Empire, and its separate existence was vigorously denied. Two notorious secret decrees prohibiting the Ukrainian language are salient examples of imperial politics. Namely,

CEU eTD Collection

Valuev Circular, issued in 1863, banned Ukrainian-language publications except for works of fiction, and Ems Ukaz, issued in 1876, reinforced this measure by prohibiting all Ukrainian books, including the ones that could be imported from abroad (Plokhi 2021, 167). Quoting Valuev Circular, "a separate Little Russian language never existed, does not exist, and shall not exist, and the tongue used by commoners is nothing but Russian corrupted by the influence of Poland" (Boriak 2013, 52). Erasure of the Ukrainian language was a part of cultural imperialism program meant to root Russian influence and dissolve any aspirations for Ukrainian nationhood. Here I understand cultural imperialism broadly as the practice of imposing the dominant cultural habits, practices, values, and meanings (Tomlinson 2002) performed by the occupying force. More specifically, the rule of the Russian language can be described as linguistic imperialism. Robert Phillipson suggests that linguistic imperialism is rooted in societal structures where most resources are allocated to the dominant language. This belief system is also driven by ideology, as the dominant language is often perceived as superior to others, leading to its greater prestige (Phillipson 2012). Bourdieu describes a conflict between the two languages as a "struggle for symbolic power in which the formation and reformation of mental structures were at stake" (2009, 48). The Ukrainian language was losing its battle against Russian. It was stigmatized and framed as a speech of dark peasant masses.

The way a person expresses himself, or herself comes with a set of social cues, which allow interpreting the class and status of the interlocutor. In predominantly rural Ukraine, similarly to France at the end of the 19th – the start of the 20th century (Weber 1976), being modern was synonymous with being urbanized. Therefore, speaking like a city dweller was considered prestigious and desirable for social and work advancement. While the urban Ukrainian elites spoke and comprehended Russian in the middle of the 19th century, the vast majority of countryside Ukrainians did not (Flier and Graziosi 2017).Their inability to understand Russian gave them a brand of uneducated people. For villagers, speaking Russian

CEU eTD Collection

instead of Ukrainian, just like speaking standard French instead of patois, was an act of "civilizing them in their integration into a superior modern world" (Weber 1976, 73). The rising prestige of the Russian language and the simultaneous marginalization of Ukrainian encouraged urbanizing peasants to convert to the hegemonic language (Bilaniuk and Melnyk 2008). Switching to the dominant language promised some perks to the speaker. However, there is a catch. The language has to be pure; otherwise, one fails to deliver an impression of an educated person and risks being ridiculed instead. Considering that peasants still think in their native language, there is a high chance that what comes from their mouths is not standard Russian or French but a mangled and distorted version of it (Bilaniuk 2004;Weber 1976). In Ukraine, such impure language combining Russian and Ukrainian elements is called 'surzhyk'. It is a derogatory term that originated from the word meaning a mixture of wheat and rye, which is considered a cheaper flour. To this day, it is still widespread in Ukraine.

When the Russian Empire ceased to exist and the Soviet Union took its place, Russian still remained a dominant language in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. However, there was a brief period in the 1920s-30s when the Soviet state itself reversed the power relations – the Ukrainian language was heavily promoted and meant to get the same prestige as Russian. To achieve that, Ukrainization as an official government policy was adopted in 1923. It was a part of the All-Union program of indigenization meant to promote the local languages and culture. In Ukraine, it aimed at creating loyal communist elites (Plokhi 2021, 231) and bridging the modern Russified city with a backward Ukrainian village. As Matthew Pauly writes, "Ukrainian culture would become identifiable with urban and modern, and Ukrainian-speaking peasants would seek to mimic its new form and use it for their own social mobility" (2014, 5). While Ukrainization gave birth to the pleiad of artists, writers, and poets who contributed to the renaissance of Ukrainian culture, it was mostly a failure. Support for Ukrainization among the masses varied. Some were happy they finally got to promote the local culture; some were hostile

CEU eTD Collection

towards the Ukrainian language they once abandoned (Ibid). Moreover, it was still stigmatized in the city. At the end of the 1920s, the communist regime saw Ukrainization as a threat to the Soviet Union's security and started persecuting and executing Ukrainian-speaking intelligentsia. The problem with Ukrainian intelligentsia, at least from the Party's point of view, was its dual nature - communist and nationalist (Plokhi 2021, 233–34). Local intellectuals were sure that Ukrainian culture should evolve independently from Russian Overall, the politics of indigenization failed to achieve its aims, and in the 1930s, power relations in the linguistic field reversed once again. Since then, Russian has been needed to access new information and scientific knowledge. Some of the pupils schooled in Ukrainian quickly converted to Russian (Pauly 2014), which reclaimed its status as a language of prestige and advancement. At the start of the 1930s, three events stroke the Ukrainian language with a multiplying force. This decade brought the beginning of the mass execution of the Ukrainian intelligentsia; the new Ukrainian orthography of 1933 erased the uniqueness of many Ukrainian words and brought them closer to Russian (Masenko 2005); and Holodomor, artificial mass famine designed by Joseph Stalin, brought death to millions of peasants (Plokhi 2021), who were a mainly Ukrainian-speaking class. Under Soviet rule, the Ukrainian SSR returned to the policy of Russification, which continued until the collapse of the Soviet Union (Bilaniuk and Melnyk 2008).

Considering centuries of planned language oppression legitimized by those in power, it is unsurprising that the Ukrainian language was marginalized in regions of Ukraine that were under Russian rule for a longer time. Stereotypes about the Ukrainian language being the backward speech of rednecks appeared to be enduring in big cities (Richardson 2008), even in independent Ukraine. The majority of people that I interviewed in Kyiv confessed that they either used to hold such opinions themselves or encountered them in society. Often the Russian language was an indicator of a 'capital city boy/girl'. Many Ukrainophone people felt like they should switch to Russian once they had moved to Kyiv because of the cultural capital that this

CEU eTD Collection

language carried. Speaking Russian meant representing the legitimate culture within society (Bourdieu 1984), whereas speaking Ukrainian meant going against the flow and often sacrificing one's social status. Yaroslava Kravchenko, Ukrainian activist and cultural producer, shared her experience on her Facebook page (Zahorodnii 2022): "I had to learn Russian in 2000s. To survive. I was 13; I came to Kyiv for a sports boarding school. It was possible to speak the 'village language', but it required strength. Kyiv in the 2000s was harsh. I had no strength. Therefore, as a child, I adapted to the environment". Speaking Russian was a crucial part of impression management (Goffman 1990), which allowed individuals to present themselves in a manner that aligns with societal norms and expectations.

The pursuit of prestige made some Ukrainians see their indigenous language as inferior to the high-class Russian language. As a result, they internalized negative stereotypes about themselves, developing an inferiority complex. Following Frantz Fanon, I understand the inferiority complex as a distorted self-perception that roots in the denial of one's own culture and adopting one of the colonizers (Fanon 1986, 18). Mykola Riabchuk, a Ukrainian literary critic and scholar of postcolonialism, framed it as the Little Russian complex (2000), referring to the name of Ukraine used during the Russian Empire. He argues that Ukrainian ethnos was forced to accept the humiliating self-image proposed by the metropolis as a true description of its nature. Those who adopted the Little Russian complex wanted to distance themselves from the uneducated "dancing and singing provincial Little Russia" and get closer to the legitimate culture of "The Great Russian people" (Riabchuk 2000, 198–99). In his autoethnography "Black Skin, White Masks", Fanon pointed out that black people, no matter how much they wanted to blend in, could not change the color of their skin; it would always expose them as inferior. Ukrainian case is much simpler than that. For Ukrainians, their farm-like language was their skin (Riabchuk 2000), which could be relatively easily changed, especially from the second generation.

CEU eTD Collection

1.2. Ukrainian as a Tool of Resistance

Throughout the three decades of Ukrainian independence, the 'language question' largely remained on the outskirts of public discourse. Indeed, there were some 'nationally conscious people', as society often referred to them. They spoke the Ukrainian language and promoted Ukrainian culture. Some spoke Ukrainian from birth, while others were 'converts' (Bilaniuk 2020) from Russian. The latter group usually switched because of internal contradictions between their national belonging and existing linguistic practices.

Nevertheless, bilingualism was rarely challenged as a status quo because the choice of language lacked that political dimension that became salient when the threat of war loomed over Ukrainian society. Amidst paranoia fueled by the possibility of a Russian invasion, the significance of the language question rose dramatically. On February 22, locally known Ukrainian architect Slava Balbek made an Instagram post with the following caption: "Hello, I am Slava, and I am switching to the Ukrainian language. Considering the fact that for the past 38 years, I have communicated exclusively in Russian, the transition will be gradual [...] And all of you, please support me in this". This post instantly started a flashmob among Ukrainian public figures, business owners, cultural producers, and ordinary citizens. People who used to speak Russian declared that they would switch to Ukrainian from now on.

They rarely went into details explaining the motivation behind the linguistic switch, as it was clear for the majority of Ukrainians. The speech of Russia's President Vladimir Putin broadcasted the day before, on February 21, served as the turning point that led people to make this decision. He claimed that "modern Ukraine was entirely created by Russia" and "it is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space". It was a clear sign of an inevitable aggravation of already existing military conflict. Moreover, the necessity to defend the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine was one of the narratives in Russian propaganda

CEU eTD Collection

frequently used to rationalize the invasion of Ukraine. The mass transition to the Ukrainian language that followed Putin's speech became a symbolic way to separate oneself from Russia and show that Putin is not welcome in Ukraine; it was also a way to create a sense of unity while facing the imminent threat. The sentiment of fear and anxiety reached the climax in the early morning of February 24 when the whole of Ukraine woke up to the new reality of war. Since then, the Ukrainian language has become a tool of resistance. The number of Ukrainian speakers is rising as the war with Russia continues. Switching became a widespread thing (Ratsybarska 2022; Harding 2023) that changed the narrative around the 'language question'. Perhaps the most famous 'switcher' is the current president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, who used to claim that the promotion of the Ukrainian language is misplaced in time as such issues can only divide Ukrainian society ("Zelenskyi: pytannia movy narazi ne na chasi, ukrainska - povnistiu zakhyshchena" 2021). However, in November 2022, by the time the full-scale war had been ongoing for ten months, he demonstrated an utterly different position claiming that the Ukrainian language is "a powerful weapon of the Ukrainian people in the struggle for our independence and victory" ("Armiia. Mova. Vira. Yak Hasla Poroshenka Staly Haslamy Zelenskoho" 2023).

The ongoing struggle for freedom sparked interest in the Ukrainian language and culture in general. For instance, the language-learning app Duolingo reported that after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, more than 1.3 million individuals opted to learn the Ukrainian language as an act of solidarity ("Language Learners Take up Ukrainian on Duolingo in Show of Solidarity" 2022). What is more, an increasing number of Ukrainian-language songs by both emerging and established artists are now making their way to the top charts of various streaming platforms (Tkachuk 2023). Nevertheless, it is essential to bear in mind that the state adopted some policies aimed at promoting the Ukrainian language and culture even before the full-scale invasion. To be more specific, in 2016, it passed a law that introduces quotas for Ukrainian-

CEU eTD Collection

language songs and Ukrainian-language programs on the radio; in 2021, the law that obliges all service providers in Ukraine to serve and provide information in the Ukrainian language came into force. However, the official measures had minimal impact on how individuals used the Ukrainian language in their private lives compared to the influence of total war. The Russian invasion forced people to embrace their native language. As articulated by Volodymyr Dibrova, a Ukrainian writer currently teaching the Ukrainian language at Harvard University, "Before the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Ukrainian language was more like a museum item. It is on the wall: 'Look, it is a sword, what a beautiful sword […] But now it is a tool; it is an active tool, it is taken off from the wall, it is used actively, sometimes appropriately, sometimes not, there is dirt on it. But we are in business now" (Pearce 2022). Ukrainian language transformed from the cherished lieux de memoire (Nora 1989), a site of memory protected from the possible dissolving under the pressure of history, and turned into a tool of resistance that allows individuals to construct 'strategies of action' in changing situations (Swidler 1986). In her analysis of culture as a 'tool kit' of symbols, worldviews, and practices such as language, Ann Swidler argued that "people may have in readiness cultural capacities they rarely employ; all people know more culture than they use" (Ibid, 277). In this 'unsettled' war situation characterized by uncertainty, perplexity, and threat, individuals suddenly remembered that they could speak the Ukrainian language. Switching to Ukrainian serves as a strategy that enables individuals to make sense of what is happening and navigate through the extreme situation (Ibid).

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter 2: Speaking the Nation

2.1. Performing 'Ukrainianess' in Public

When I asked my interviewees how they got the idea of switching to Ukrainian, the majority simply stated that it felt wrong to continue speaking Russian in the current political climate. Some people recalled how a friend, partner or relative pushed them for a change; others took a decision on their own, motivated by various internal and external reasons. However, almost every individual's reconstruction of his or her linguistic journey had a pattern, which is quite evident within Ukrainian society. No one in their close social circle really questioned why they stopped speaking Russian, as everyone experienced the same shock on February 24, 2022. "If it were not for the full-scale invasion, I would hardly have switched", confessed Khrystyna, 21 years old student. Her linguistic transition started because of Khrystyna's best friend, who suggested that the two of them could start talking to each other in Ukrainian and later spread to other social interactions. Sometimes Khrystyna still code-switches, meaning that she uses "two or more language varieties in the same speech event or exchange" (Duranti 2009, 73) to adapt to some emotionally close Russophone people in her life. However, she always speaks Ukrainian in public places such as cinemas, cafes and official institutions. Such behaviour was typical among my interviewees and random people I observed on Kyiv's streets. Many try to display their affiliation with Ukraine by speaking the Ukrainian language with baristas, cashiers, pharmacists and total strangers, no matter which language they usually use for private matters.

Some of my interlocutors claimed that rhetoric employed by the Russian state to justify the invasion of Ukraine played an important part in their decision to start speaking Ukrainian. Lisa, a 29 years old stylist and photographer, explained that she switched to Ukrainian to show that she stands against Russia. "As a Ukrainian artist", she started communicating with her

CEU eTD Collection

online audience in Ukrainian "to show my [pro-Ukrainian] position and that no one oppresses me here. I love the Ukrainian language myself, and I speak it." Her statement is a response to the popular narrative of Russian propaganda claiming that Russia had to launch a military incursion into Ukraine to save its Russian-speaking population from state oppression.

Being aware of political and national sentiments prevailing in society, people engage in impression management (Goffman 1990) by creating an image of themselves as Ukrainian patriots. Though marking oneself as a patriot, like any other identification, comes from the internal core of the person, it must be reflected on the surface of the body in order to transmit the message to others (Butler 2006, 185); in this case, it happens through the repeated use of language which allows an individual to be perceived as a supporter of Ukraine. Individuals perform their Ukrainianess, much like in a theatrical production, in public places where they are aware that they appear in front of observers (Goffman 1990).

During my fieldwork, I learned that after the start of the full-scale war, people often feel uncomfortable both speaking and hearing the Russian language in public places. The following situation does an excellent job of encapsulating this phenomenon. I was about to have one of my conversations in the Russian language because I knew that my interviewee was only in the process of learning Ukrainian. Maria, 55 years old PR specialist and volunteer, came from Belarus, another former Soviet country where the local language was marginalized and dominated by Russian (Gapova 2017). Even though she could understand it well, a woman had a limited Ukrainian vocabulary while speaking according to her own words. As I did not want to hinder Maria's ability to articulate her thoughts clearly, I proposed interviewing her in Russian. To my surprise, when we met over a cup of morning coffee, she greeted me and instantly expressed a desire to have an interview in Ukrainian. Even though I did not ask her what influenced her decision, I am mostly sure that it was the fact that we were in a crowded

CEU eTD Collection

café where people could hear us talk. Maria's case differs from my other interviewees, who were born in Ukraine, because Ukrainian is an actual foreign language for her. Even though it is challenging to speak Ukrainian for Maria, she does her best at it. She is aware that her performance in the 'frontstage region' of social life, i.e. in public places, influences the observers (Goffman 1990) in harmful or beneficial ways.

While the Russian language can be heard in public places, it is nevertheless secretly perceived as "a matter out of place" (Douglas 2002), being polluting or even threatening. In the following subchapter, I will provide a detailed explanation of why the Russian language became so unwelcome in Ukrainian society.

2.2. Two Sides of Understanding the Context

My interviewees largely called for empathy towards compatriots, caring about the comfort of others and understanding the context. However, there are two sides to it. One way to show such understanding is by speaking Ukrainian in public places. On the contrary, the other one is by allowing some people to continue speaking Russian. I will start by describing the first one, as it holds greater significance in the stories told by my interviewees. As Serhiy, 40 years old voice actor, put it:

> Now this [Russian] language is the language of occupation. Everyone has the right to make their own choice. But there is a context in which using the Russian language is simply not tactful. And this is exactly what pushes me to switch. (…) What caused the epiphany? The occupation of the Kyiv region, the feeling that danger is near, and people do not want to see the Russian flag above the Parliament. When there is a question of whether I start speaking Ukrainian or the Russian flag hangs over the Parliament, I will better go through the difficult stages of adaptation [to the Ukrainian language]. It was clear to me and all my close people.

CEU eTD Collection

The context here is the threat to national security, freedom and human life caused by the Russian invasion. Such a 'banal' thing as the national flag (Billig 1995) becomes vital when the question is *whose* flag is waving above the Ukrainian Parliament – Russian tricolor or Ukrainian blue and yellow bicolor. Banal nationalism becomes 'hot' once there is a need to preserve national cultural distinctiveness, maintain territorial boundaries, and defend political independence (Hutchinson 2004, 147). In contrast to everyday banal nationalism, hot nationalism promotes "the idea of the nation as a sacred and transcendent object" worthy of human sacrifice (Ibid, 150). All of these apply to the surge of hot Ukrainian nationalism that emerged due to the need to protect the nation from the Russian invasion. Language is a crucial part of national imagination (Anderson 1991) that transformed from being something mundane and given into a militant way of protecting the national identity. Borrowing from Micael Billig, the language did not create nationalism, but nationalism created the language (1995, 30) as something precious.

Quite a few people also mentioned feeling discomfort or shame when their friends or acquaintances speak Russian to them in public. They feel as if the ears of others are judging them. Sometimes, a declaration of shame can facilitate nation-building and create a sense of community (Ahmed 2004). Sara Ahmed argues that the reproduction of a nation through the expression of shame occurs at least in two ways. It can be "brought onto" the nation by others, or the nation can bring it "on itself" by recognizing the mistreatment of others (Ibid, 108). I suggest that there is a third way in the Ukrainian case. People are ashamed not of what they did but of what they did not do. They failed to separate themselves from Russia and its cultural influence until the war pushed them for it. Admitting that one is ashamed marks a new temporality in which Ukrainians are proud to have their separate identity and culture that crystalize in speaking the state language.

CEU eTD Collection

The full-scale Russian invasion turned language into a weapon, as some of my interlocutors referred to it. It is much more than a means of communication. The Russian language became associated with the traumatizing and distressing experience of war. Eva, a 21 years old woman, shared her insight gained from working with the war victims as a journalist. She told me how she was gradually becoming alienated from the Russian language that once dominated her life.

> How can you communicate in the language of those who attack you with rockets? The beginning of the war divided everything into black and white. When the first reports of rape in the occupied territories appeared, I began to feel dissonance: how can I speak the language of the people who do it? My work affected me the most. I began visiting places where people were injured. Gradually, my sadness turned into anger. The Russian language was neutral for me, but then it became the language of violence, torture, aggression, cruelty, and darkness. I can speak Russian, but every time I have flashbacks to Irpin and Bucha [2]. People can speak any language, but I have very unpleasant associations when I hear it.

These words portray a common sentiment expressed by my interviewees – Russian has become the "language of violence" in their own words. Thus, speaking Ukrainian has become a remedy. Symbolic violence of the Russian language used to circulate subtly while being unrecognized by most individuals (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 167). However, the real physical violence of the war exposed the symbolic violence of language. A public act of refusing to speak the "language of the aggressor" conveys a message that one refuses to recognize his subordinate position. People often say that they feel better when they speak

[2] The cities of Bucha and Irpin in the Kyiv region were occupied by Russian troops, resulting in numerous civilian casualties and significant damage to infrastructure. Eva went there after the liberation to have interviews with survivors.

CEU eTD Collection

Ukrainian. Even if they still struggle to adapt to it, the Ukrainian language gives them psychological ease.

As mentioned in a previous chapter, the Ukrainian language is an actively used tool. However, its appliance may not always be appropriate. Now I will explain the alternative dimension of understanding the context or, more precisely, "collective ignoring of each other's distinctive contexts", as Andriy, 42 years old independent theatre director, aptly described it. He pointed out that society should acknowledge that speaking Ukrainian is much harder for people from the country's Eastern regions who received very little or no schooling in Ukrainian and were not exposed to this language until they were forced to flee their homes. While some of my interviewees told me they expect everybody to speak Ukrainian with them, others highlighted that society should understand people who do not switch. Some situations call for empathy, and sometimes empathy means speaking Russian. For example, Eva told me that she makes an exception and speaks Russian while interviewing people who survived a particularly traumatic war experience to make them feel more comfortable. Nika, a 23 years old student, opposes the idea that Russian-speaking people are members of the Ukrainian nation to a lesser extent. She speaks Russian with some of her friends from the East of Ukraine to avoid treating them patronizingly. Ihor, 26 years old PR specialist, can switch back to Russian with older people for whom it is tough to start speaking Ukrainian because of their age. During my other conversations, I encountered similar opinions. Serhiy made the following comment about his Russophone friends who demonstrate an active pro-Ukrainian position during the current war:

> In my environment, everyone understands the importance of Ukrainization but allows people to adapt on their terms. I know people who carry this idea harshly, but we do not support such an approach. We respect people for themselves, not for the language they are comfortable speaking.

CEU eTD Collection

He values the comfort of others and allows people to take their time, as the Ukrainian language should be encouraged but not imposed. Forced Ukrainization may discourage the desire to switch by invoking the feeling of contempt and being attacked. Such position finds proof in psychology as positive reinforcement is believed to be the most effective way to establish a new habit (OpenStax and Lumen Learning, n.d.), which is speaking Ukrainian in this case. The popularization of the Ukrainian language and culture is seen as a stimulus to reinforce new language behavior.

Overall, people try to avoid speaking Russian because this language carries strong connotations of violence, danger and pain, which might cause emotional distress for surrounding people. On the contrary, the Ukrainian language creates a feeling of safety and comradeship. Nevertheless, older people and those who came from the occupied territories often have an excuse to speak Russian in the eyes of a nationally conscious society. However, all of my interlocutors expressed the hope that Ukrainian would become a dominant language in Ukraine.

2.3. The Cultural Front

Language plays a critical role in expressing, preserving, and transmitting culture within a country. It can serve as a means of symbolic domination imposing cultural norms and reinforcing power imbalances (Bourdieu 2009). Most of my interviewees agreed that to break ties with the aggressor completely, building and strengthening a separate Ukrainian culture is vital. As Roman, 38 years old ballet dancer and choreographer, put it:

> I do not understand how our ruling elites did not see that nation can only be developed through culture for so long. But there [in Russia] they understand, they invest millions, billions in the theaters; and through their culture, they influence the whole world.

CEU eTD Collection

When I asked him about the role of language in culture, he replied*: "*It is like the air in the room where the process of creating a drawing takes place. It is a fundament".

Conversations that I had proved the assumption that language acts "as a tool providing cultural components that are used to construct strategies of action" (Swidler 1986, 273). Speaking Ukrainian is a strategy to unite people and restore Ukraine's identity after years of being under Russian influence. People deny the majority of the cultural norms, values, and behaviors imposed by Russian imperialism and try to overcome their inferiority complex (Fanon 1986; Tomlinson 2002) with the desire to develop their native culture. Through the use of the Ukrainian language, people imagine themselves as a separate nation with distinctive traits.

Several people with whom I talked expressed their hope that creating and promoting high-quality Ukrainian cultural products will encourage larger masses to speak Ukrainian. The popularization of Ukrainian culture and the displacement of Russian culture are two simultaneously unfolding processes. Negative emotions of fear, pain, and anger became attached to the Russian language and to all the cultural products that come from Russia, especially if they use language as their medium. The entirety of my interviewees confessed that they stopped buying books, watching films in the Russian language, and listening to music produced by Russian artists. Those who still have Russian songs in their playlist are subject to harsh criticism. Taras, a 23 years old man, got emotional talking about such people:

> *[they say] What difference does it make that we listen to Russian music? They only earn cents from it. But then, when you realize that civilians are being shot with bullets that cost a few cents...[it makes a difference] I wish people would understand that. But they don't understand this, and it's sad.*

CEU eTD Collection

He rationalized the need to abandon Russian music, referring to artists receiving money each time somebody plays their music on streaming services. Then artists registered in Russia pay taxes to the state budget, which finances the Russian army performing the killing of civilians in Ukraine. This way, Ukrainian citizens contribute to the suffering of their compatriots.

To sum up, the cultural field is yet another battlefield where people can fight for freedom and independence. Release from the symbolic domination of language leads to the mental and cultural liberation of the Ukrainian people.

CEU eTD Collection

Chapter 3: Structure and Agency

3.1. War as an Event that Changed the Social Structure

Russian invasion became the event that disrupted the established order of things. Here, following William Sewell, I refer to the event as a rare subclass of happenings that has the potential to overturn the usual social structure (Sewell 1996). This situation went deep into every aspect of being, requiring people to adjust to unexpected circumstances. Even though the war with Russia has been officially going on since 2014, some of my Kyiv-based interviewees confessed that they only fully grasped its reality when they heard explosions and learned of Russian troops attempting to seize the capital on February 24, 2022. This day, often simply referred to as the "24th", was a moment of rupture. Unexpected and unpredicted, it affected the core of social relations (Sewell 1996) and marked a shift in the worldview of many citizens, making them "rethink the life values". People started to abandon their relatives living in Russia or the Russian-occupied territories who expressed pro-war and pro-Putin positions; they stopped following Russian bloggers, celebrities, and public figures; they deleted Russian music from their playlists; they were reducing the presence of the Russian language in their lives. Indeed, all the things I mentioned above did not happen overnight, but February 24 planted a seed of the future transformation that followed shortly thereafter. In this "dramatic crisis of existing practices" (Sewell 1996, 843), many people became alienated from the Russian language faster than they became accustomed to expressing their thoughts in Ukrainian. As my interviewees told me, they felt things could not return to how they were before the war.

While some individuals stated that they might have eventually started to speak Ukrainian on their own, others admitted that they required a solid push to consider this scenario. Alisa, a 23 years old creative director, used to feel perfectly comfortable speaking Russian before the war. She goes: "In order for something to change, an upheaval is needed. For me, it

CEU eTD Collection

was when people started dying*"*. Again, I want to highlight that the war with Russia has been followed by civilian casualties in Eastern Ukraine since 2014 (UN 2017). However, only the military escalation that culminated in the February 24 invasion had enough strength to become an event that resulted in the transformation of structure. As Roman articulated, "Something flipped in my head when we walked this path of panic and fear (...) I decided that I could communicate in Ukrainian all my life, but I didn't. War became the trigger because... when, if not now?*"* Though Roman did not have a clear position to speak only Ukrainian, he uses it more every day. As events are usually path-dependent, meaning that previous happenings affect future outcomes (Sewell 1996, 100), people who could not imagine themselves switching before the rupture did so at a later point in time.

Being both a Russophone and a patriot of Ukraine was not a big issue during the Euromaidan protests and War in Donbas; these two identities could organically fit together (Bertelsen 2016, 142). In fact, most of the people I interviewed spoke Russian but supported Ukraine during these events. In the present situation, things changed. People described the Ukrainian language to me as a border, the core of the Ukrainian identity, the secret of survival, a uniting factor, and one of the main components of patriotism and self-awareness as a nation. A few interviewees even called speaking Ukrainian a strong position, as it requires fortitude and strength to change one's habits. At the same time, continuing to speak Russian is seen as "a weak defense position" supported by laziness and reluctance to change when circumstances of war call for it.

To sum up, the full-scale Russian invasion completely disrupted the societal structure. February 24 became a brutal and unexpected event that forced people to adapt to the new life circumstances; some left their regular jobs and went to protect the country's borders, some became volunteers helping compatriots with humanitarian needs, and some lost everything they

CEU eTD Collection

had. On the everyday level, many people, both on occupied territories and those controlled by Ukraine, started to use the Ukrainian language to show that they are endangered but not deprived of their agency.

3.2. Switch as a Continuous Process

As I mentioned, the full-scale Russian invasion caused a dramatic upheaval of current practices, where people felt the need to abandon the Russian language and transition to Ukrainian. Acknowledging one's intention to speak Ukrainian is only the beginning of the process; what comes next is a great deal of cognitive, psychological and societal reconfiguration. According to the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, native language influences the worldview and cognition of individuals (Kay and Kempton 1984). Therefore, switching to Ukrainian meant challenging one's habitus, a relatively stable formation that organizes an individual's practices and perception of the social world (Bourdieu 1984, 170). The whole set of dispositions acquired through the lifetime of social interaction and embodied in language suddenly had to be changed. My conversations proved that cognitive and psychological adaptation to the Ukrainian language is a highly individual process where experiences vary.

One of my favorite questions to ask was, "In which language do you think?" From my discussions, I found out that some people were able to tune their brain to think in Ukrainian, but a majority still thinks in Russian or, rather, a weird mix of languages, especially when they are on their own. Let me start with the first group. Taras was one of the few individuals who claimed that he fully thinks in Ukrainian except when he quotes something in Russian, for example, a proverb or a saying. He got used to the Ukrainian language so much that talking in Russian became complicated because his voice sounded alien. However, Taras admitted that he had to do a lot of work to turn Ukrainian into a habit. He trained himself to think in Ukrainian every night before falling asleep until his head started aching. My other interviewees, Ihor and

CEU eTD Collection

Anzhela, had a softer transition process because they have been using Ukrainian in their work environment for several years, so they did not notice how thinking in it became a regular thing. Nevertheless, most people describe the language of their thoughts as situational and often dependent on the environment. People may think in Russian on their own but then change to Ukrainian when they speak it with somebody else. The more Ukrainian-speaking contacts they have, the more they think in Ukrainian. Some people even expressed subtle notes of pride when they recall Ukrainian words faster than Russian equivalents.

Changing the primary language of communication is a question of developing new language patterns, in other words forming predictable formations of words and sounds that give them meaning. People often go back to their default Russian settings when it comes to spontaneous emotional reactions like fear, surprise, or anger. Amusingly, a couple of interviewees told me that they could not swear in the Ukrainian language at all because they did not know how to do it. For Roman, there is a bright side to it.

> It's great to start [speaking Ukrainian] now because there are no language patterns that are tied to negative emotions. All the negativity that exists in my head is in Russian... It's cool to switch to Ukrainian because there is none. I can't even imagine a negative situation where I would swear in Ukrainian. Now for me, Ukrainian is pure, without negativity. So far.

Roman chuckled at the final words. He saw the switch as an opportunity to start fresh, leave behind old habits, and become a better person. In a sense, it is a reconstruction of old habitus. It is a complicated and continuous process. Andriy also imparted his unique and metaphorical insight into it. For him, switching is something similar to creating a Jungian *persona* – a role that an individual takes to present himself or herself to the social world (Jung 1972). Andriy framed it this way: "Switching is about creating a different character and

CEU eTD Collection

merging with him into such a ... complex identity. But there is no other way*"*. I will proceed by adding my own interpretation. Since persona is a mask to hide the true identity, it only refers to the first step. At the stage of "merging", it is supposed to become an organic part of the holistic identity, the *self*. Self appears as the result of integrating consciousness and unconsciousness (Ibid), which means accepting being Ukrainophone as something logical and natural.

When I asked my interviewees about challenges they encountered in the process of switching, about half of them mentioned how confusing it is to navigate in a Russian-speaking environment when you are unsure about your Ukrainian skills. Sometimes the interlocutor code-switches to match their Ukrainian language. However, when he or she does not, "the brain feels dissonance", and the speech "starts jumping back and forth" because one needs to listen in one language but reply in another. It is hard to speak Ukrainian with Russian speakers when Russian used to be your default language. I have experienced that myself twice during the field trip. I started to speak Ukrainian with all of my friends and family by the end of spring or the beginning of the summer last year, but since I lived in a different country, most of our communication took place online. I thought that it should be easy in real life too.

The first brain-confusing episode happened when a German-speaking friend of mine was visiting Kyiv around the time of my fieldwork. Before arriving in the city, he practiced the Ukrainian language on Duolingo for a while, so he knew some basic words and phrases. I agreed to help him with check-in and other necessary preparation upon arrival. As soon as I started meeting people such as taxi driver, cashier and landlord who were all speaking either Russian or Ukrainian, my brain went overdrive. I was constantly code-switching to match their speech. At the same time, my friend was carefully listening to us and memorizing phrases. He started to repeat some words in what he thought was Ukrainian. "That's not Ukrainian, that's Russian!" I told him. "Oh really? But I thought you speak Ukrainian, no? I guess that by the end of my

CEU eTD Collection

trip, I will learn a mixture of both languages", he replied. The second episode happened when I accidentally met my uncle's family on the street. By then, I decided to stop code-switching and just keep speaking Ukrainian. But I only applied that rule to strangers so far. Talking to my uncle, who has known me since birth, felt different. The last time we saw each other, we were all Russian speakers. So I stood and doubted in which language I should address my uncle now. I froze for a few seconds and finally said "hello" in Ukrainian. He answered in Russian, "Well, so what, you are speaking Ukrainian now?"

While some people switch in all of their interactions at once, others initiate such acts in smaller units based on the feeling of mutual comfort of both individuals. They described this as "switching with somebody", "meaning to start speaking Ukrainian in pairs with a partner, family member, one of your friends, or a friend group. Ideally, the number of people with whom one agrees to speak Ukrainian grows until the language becomes a habit.

Next, I will introduce some challenges that other people who described themselves as being "in the process of switching" faced when they attempted to change the usual method of communication with their loved ones. Many noted how the image of the significant other could be tied up to the Russian language because this is an environment in which their relationships were forming. As a result, people often find it troublesome to start speaking Ukrainian with their mom or a partner. Lisa shared her contradicting emotions that arise because she is not able to switch to Ukrainian fully.

> I cannot speak Ukrainian with my mother. I cannot erase my mother tongue, whatever it is. I grew up with her, and we always talked like that [in Russian]. We have our own words, stories. My mother will not switch [to Ukrainian] because she is almost 70 years old. It is very difficult for her to speak it, although she writes well (…) I cannot erase my mother language. I cannot erase a part of me or hate it.

CEU eTD Collection

In the current case, the emotional intimacy of the mother and daughter relationship plays a more critical role than the idea of distancing oneself from the hostile language. Khrystyna also shared that she "could not perceive her mom through the prism of another language". When her mom initiated the switch, Khrystyna felt alienated from her because even such a familiar thing as her mother's voice had changed. Khrystyna knew that her mom was bilingual but had never heard her speak Ukrainian. To facilitate the process, women decided to start by writing each other text messages in Ukrainian and then inserting some Ukrainian into the oral communication.

In the emotionally traumatic situation of war, changing the language of communication with people who bring security and stability into one's life can be stressful. For some people, it is necessary to keep things the same, at least for a while. Roman provided an insightful explanation of this phenomenon. He rarely switches to Ukrainian in his relationship with his girlfriend, even though they both want to switch someday. "Maybe because we started to date while speaking Russian, many intonations [indicating] how a person feels have been preserved in Russian. These are subtle things. In order to switch inside a couple, both people must be ready". I guess Mikhail Bahtin, who argued that all words have a 'taste', would agree with this. According to him, "The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes 'one's own' only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention" (Bakhtin 2004, 696). To start speaking Ukrainian means to appropriate words and expressions, invent some new catchphrases and jokes with friends and family, to find new ways to express feelings towards one's partner that feel genuine and your own. It is a complicated process that takes a lot of time. Nika also shared her first-hand experience on the topic:

CEU eTD Collection

> When I first started speaking Ukrainian, it didn't seem that I was speaking sincerely. It felt like I was speaking something in a different language because I had never used Ukrainian in an informal environment. Not for academic works, but for a conversation about emotions, feelings... I was saying the same things I would say in Russian, but it seemed more sincere in Russian. Only after some time did I feel that I am still myself, and I express my true feelings and emotions. It was necessary to get used to myself being Ukrainophone.

Peculiarly, for Nika, the official status of the Ukrainian language seemed to have taken on a symbolic connotation. She believed that its usage was restricted to formal settings only. It took a while before she "populated the words with her own meanings" and started to use Ukrainian for the whole specter of life situations.

Overall, switching to a different primary language requires adjusting one's habitus and way of thinking. I want to highlight that switching is not a single or fully accomplished act but a continuous process — imperfect, challenging, tiring, and collaborative. Moreover, it is often partial or contradictory.

3.3. Ukrainian Entering the Private Sphere

It is crucial to mention that the majority of people in my sample used the Ukrainian language before the war, but it was restricted to a certain context. Ukrainian was reserved for official interactions, state institutions, schooling, and sometimes for a work environment. The younger cohort of my interviewees usually spoke Ukrainian during the school lessons but switched to Russian to address their classmates as soon as the class break started. They shared that although in the early 2000s, Ukrainian was the official language of instruction in schools and universities, some professors would teach in Russian. On the job market, Ukrainian was welcome, but it was not a rule. Maria, who took a few months of Ukrainian classes two years

CEU eTD Collection

ago, confessed that in the past, she had no real need to learn Ukrainian because the absolute majority of people in Kyiv spoke Russian. For many people, the language served as a dividing line between formal and informal, public and private. Even those already proficient in the Ukrainian language found using it in a different social context challenging. Serhiy, who was professionally dubbing foreign films in Ukrainian for wide release, admitted that using it daily was a different thing one needed to get used to. Only now has Ukrainian become the language of personal feelings, emotions, friendships, and relationships. In her research on Basque language revival, Jacqueline Urla highlighted that having language-speaking social networks that are close to a person's emotional world significantly influences the chances of speaking the native language in real-life situations (Ortega et al. 2015; Urla 1993). If most of the time, people use the dominant language, Russian, in my case, people will likely lose their competence in Ukrainian even if they received some schooling in it. As my interlocutors often used the Ukrainian language in official settings but rarely in private, I argue that once they started speaking in an informal sphere, they had to reclaim their "emotional competence" in Ukrainian.

The Ukrainian language is now widely accepted and valued in society. People are constantly reminded that their language choices at home and on the street encourage others, which ultimately affects the language's historical future (Urla 1993, 835). However, it was not always like that. Andriy is the only person from my interview sample who switched completely before the Full-scale invasion. According to his own words, he spoke exclusively Ukrainian from 2015 to 2019, and now he code-switches according to the interlocutor's language. Speaking Ukrainian with close friends and family was the most challenging part. It marks an inevitable change in the natural order of things, which leaves the close people around confused as they often interpret it as a desire to be different. He shared his recollections with me:

CEU eTD Collection

> The most difficult thing is to switch to Ukrainian in everyday life. This is a key position that roots you in the Ukrainophone environment. People with whom you spoke Russian all your life and then suddenly started to speak Ukrainian do not understand why you did it. [They ask:] What are you trying to do? (…) The Ukrainian language 'others' you in relation to people you know. Also, Ukrainian-speaking people who say, "Well, don't bother too much, you can speak Russian to me," discourage you because if you don't practice the language, you won't learn it. There is no other way.

These words emphasize the significance of receiving social validation and support. Although Andriy made a firm decision to speak Ukrainian and stuck to it, the presence of 'language speaking networks close to the emotional world' would make the task much easier. From his experience, we can see that before the event, i.e. the full-scale Russian invasion had happened, people often received no social reward for speaking Ukrainian.

There is a difference between being Ukrainophone by birth and being a 'switcher'. In the latter case, one goes against the flow. Eva recalled how one day in 2015, her classmate showed up after the summer break and started speaking Ukrainian. Though everybody in her class spoke Ukrainian during the lessons, no one did so during the break. Russian was the only language of informal communication. Other pupils could not understand why she did it. Eva's classmates mostly perceived that girl negatively because it seemed like she was trying to separate herself from others. "The Russian language was an aspect of normality but she stood out". This rhymes with the previous quote by Andriy, where the Ukrainian language in the Russophone environment was an instrument of 'othering'. Taras even confessed that he secretly made fun of his friend who switched to Ukrainian a few years ago because he thought she was showing off. At the time we talked, he was embarrassed by his past opinions. He speaks

CEU eTD Collection

exclusively Ukrainian now. Taras confessed that his switch was easy because he got societal approval from most of his friends and family.

The collective nature of this linguistic transition makes the process easier for many people because they do not need to stand against the tide. The promotion of Ukrainian language and Ukrainophone content in media played a significant part in making it a mainstream process. Roman thinks that speaking Ukrainian is fashionable now. Usually, he is against mainstream behavior, but "if something is truly great, it will pass the test of time". For him, this is precisely the case of the Ukrainian language revival. Even though it is fashionable, it feels natural. When I asked people how they see the place of the Ukrainian language in modern society, they described it as prestigious and respected. Ukrainian speakers are portrayed as erudite, intelligent and caring about the future of the state and its people.

Perhaps it can be summarized in Serhiy's words: "It is a language that reinvents itself. In a sense, this is a renaissance. It has always been around, but we understand its value only now". People finally started embodying the Ukrainian language and using it to talk about emotions and feelings.

3.4. The End of Surzhyk

One important observation I made is that purity is no longer an issue. Some of my interviewees confessed that their fear of speaking surzhyk, which is a derogatory term for the grammatically incorrect mixture of Russian and Ukrainian (Bilaniuk 2004), pushed them away from using Ukrainian in daily life in the past. There was a belief that it was better not to speak Ukrainian at all than to do it wrong. In my opinion, this is why many people avoided even trying to speak Ukrainian unless required to do so. Surzhyk was the least prestigious form of speech in Ukrainian society, so speaking an impure language meant instantly losing one's cultural capital. Of all my interviewees, only one person criticizes surzhyk to this day. Anzhela, 24 years

CEU eTD Collection

old university staff, believes that all the people who speak impure Ukrainian sound "like some country bumpkins". According to her, it is better to speak Russian than surzhyk; she is also ashamed of her relatives who make mistakes in Ukrainian. Those individuals who shared Anzhela's opinion were one of the main reasons the Ukrainian language was pushed to the periphery — people were afraid to try.

Judging from my interviewees and the general sentiment in Ukrainian society regarding the marginalization of surzhyk, it mostly stayed in the past. An absolute majority of my interlocutors think that mistakes are normal and natural. Some mixing of the words at the beginning of the switch journey is almost inevitable – people whom I interviewed often inserted some Russian or even English words in varying proportions, paradoxically, including Anzhela, who is highly critical of them. Such an opinion as Anzhela holds used to be prevalent in Ukrainian society (Bilaniuk 2004) and marginalized surzhyk in times of state independence, making people stick to the Russian language for fear of low-status impure Ukrainian. Since the switch is a collective struggle, tolerance towards errors grew significantly. As Nika put it:

> I try to perceive switch as a process and no longer punish myself if I forget words and replace them with Russian or English ones. It is my native language, and I can use it how I want. It's not so scary to make mistakes when it's truly your language. Language is a living being; for me, learning it is an ongoing process. I understand why I'm doing it, and I like doing it.

For Nika, mistakes are natural and expected parts of the learning process. Taras went even further and called for the legitimization of surzhyk because it represents far more natural speech than standard Ukrainian. He felt uncomfortable speaking Ukrainian for a long time because his schoolteacher shamed pupils for mistakes and interrupted them with her corrections. *I was scared to switch. I had this stereotype that I had to speak standard Ukrainian.*

CEU eTD Collection

But it can be much simpler. Taras overcame his fear, letting the language evolve into its non-standard forms.

Overall, once people genuinely embrace the Ukrainian language, they embrace it with all the mistakes and imperfections. Ukrainian and its non-standard form, surzhyk, are no longer marginalized, and every attempt at speaking the state's official language is welcome.

CEU eTD Collection

Conclusion

This thesis explored the ways in which historical events can start the transformation of structure and the ways in which individuals contribute to the transformation of structure through the prism of linguistic practice. The full-scale war exposed the symbolic violence of the Russian language, which stopped being merely a means of communication signifying a higher social class and turned into the carrier of traumatic and disturbing sentiments. For the Ukrainian people, it became the language of violence and suffering. In return, the Ukrainian language became the tool of resistance. It gives people both courage and comfort, as when a person is among other Ukrainian-speaking people, they feel safe.

Personal recollections kindly shared by my interviewees provided me with valuable insights into how people handle the war on a symbolic level. In this regard, speaking the Ukrainian language acts in two ways – performing national belonging and claiming one's agency amid a massive and uncontrollable event. Through the use of the Ukrainian language, people imagine themselves as one community. A sense of comradeship allows people to continue to fight for their freedom in a symbolic and literal way.

Perhaps one question not yet fully answered is whether the war actually changed such a stable formation as people's habitus. While all of my interviewees came to speak Ukrainian more, most of them were unsure whether they could or wanted to abandon the Russian language completely. Too many memories dear to one's heart are recorded in Russian. Stories from childhood, context-specific jokes, and certain expressions that people use to convey the mood cannot be simply erased or translated. But people are willing to enrich them with new ones articulated in Ukrainian, this time. Even if the war did not profoundly alter one's linguistic habitus, it certainly has challenged the mental structures that constitute it.

CEU eTD Collection

Two of my interlocutors made a similar joke: considering that we must readjust our brains so much, we are not at risk of Alzheimer's disease. Switching from Russian to Ukrainian language is a process that requires a lot of time and effort. Due to the switch's collective nature, the mental readjustment process for each individual becomes easier. People tolerate each other's mistakes in speech; they become interested in learning new Ukrainian words and developing Ukrainian culture. Ukrainian language, which status was limited by being 'the state language' for many of my interviewees, is now invoking many various associations. Here are some of the most peculiar ones that people mentioned to me: some kind of treasure that your ancestors brought to you, although it was difficult to carry it; spring flowers; future; plume of perfume; unbreakable spirit; and home. Ukrainian is no longer seen as a dusty museum object; it becomes a living language that is used to talk about joy and sadness, fear and hope, love and hate. In other words, it is finally entering the personal realm of feelings and emotions.

CEU eTD Collection

Bibliography

Ahlers, Jocelyn C. 2006. “Framing Discourse: Creating Community through Native Language Use.” *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 16 (1): 58–75.

Ahmed, Sara. 2004. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.

Anderson, Benedict R. O’G. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. and Extended ed. London ; New York: Verso.

Arel, Dominique. 2018. “How Ukraine Has Become More Ukrainian.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34 (2–3): 186–89. https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2018.1445460.

“Armiia. Mova. Vira. Yak Hasla Poroshenka Staly Haslamy Zelenskoho.” 2023. *Bukvy* (blog). 2023. https://bykvu.com/ua/bukvy/armiia-mova-vira-iak-hasla-poroshenka-staly-haslamy-zelenskoho-vvs/.

Badiou, Alain. 2009. *Logics of Worlds: Being and Event, 2*. London ; New York: Continuum.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. 2004. “Discourse in the Novel.” In *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, 2nd ed, 674–85. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

Bertelsen, Olga, ed. 2016. *Revolution and War in Contemporary Ukraine: The Challenge of Change*. Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society, vol. 161. Stuttgart: Ibidem-Verlag.

Bilaniuk, Laada. 2004. “A Typology of Surzhyk: Mixed Ukrainian-Russian Language.” *International Journal of Bilingualism* 8 (4): 409–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/13670069040080040101.

———. 2016. “Ideologies of Language in Wartime.” In *Revolution and War in Contemporary Ukraine*, edited by Olga Bertelsen, 139–60. BoD – Books on Demand.

———. 2017. “Purism and Pluralism: Language Use Trends in Popular Culture in Ukraine since Independence.” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 35 (1/4): 293–309.

———. 2020. “Linguistic Conversion in Ukraine: Nation-Building on the Self.”

CEU eTD Collection

Bilaniuk, Laada, and Svitlana Melnyk. 2008. "A Tense and Shifting Balance: Bilingualism and Education in Ukraine." *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism* 11 (3–4): 340–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/13670050802148731.

Billig, Michael. 1995. *Banal Nationalism*. https://thecharnelhouse1.files.wordpress.com/2018/10/michael-billig-banal-nationalism-sage-1995.pdf.

Boriak, Hennadiy, ed. 2013. *Ukrainska identychnist i movne pytannia v Rosiiskii imperii: sproba derzhavnoho rehuliuvannia (1847–1914). Zbirnyk dokumentiv i materialiv*. Naukovye vyd. Kyïv: Inst. Istoriï Ukraïny.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1984. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press.

———. 1989. "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory* 7 (1): 14. https://doi.org/10.2307/202060.

———. 2009. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Edited by John B. Thompson. Translated by Gino Raymond. 1. publ. in paperb., Repr. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre, and Loïc J. D. Wacquant. 1992. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bureiko, Nadiia, and Teodor Lucian Moga. 2019. "The Ukrainian–Russian Linguistic Dyad and Its Impact on National Identity in Ukraine." *Europe-Asia Studies* 71 (1): 137–55. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668136.2018.1549653.

Butler, Judith. 2006. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge Classics. New York: Routledge.

Connerton, Paul. 1989. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge University Press.

Douglas, Mary. 2002. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. Psychology Press.

CEU eTD Collection

Duranti, Alessandro, ed. 2009. *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology*. Nachdr. Blackwell Companions to Anthropology 1. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell.

Fanon, Frantz. 1986. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. Repr. Pluto Classics. London: Pluto Press.

Fishman, Joshua A., and Vladimir C. Nahirny. 1964. "The Ethnic Group School and Mother Tongue Maintenance in the United States." *Sociology of Education* 37 (4): 306–17. https://doi.org/10.2307/2112114.

Flier, Michael, and Andrea Graziosi, eds. 2017. *The Battle for Ukrainian*. https://www.husj.harvard.edu/articles/the-battle-for-ukrainian-an-introduction.

Fomina, Dr Joanna. 2014. "Language, Identity, Politics - the Myth of Two Ukraines," 20.

Friedman, Debra A. 2016. "Our Language: (Re)Imagining Communities in Ukrainian Language Classrooms." *Journal of Language, Identity & Education* 15 (3): 165–79. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348458.2016.1166432.

Gapova, Elena. 2017. "The Politics of the Belarusian Self: Performing Truth, Converting in Public."

Geertz, Clifford. 2008. "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture." *The Cultural Geography Reader.*, 41–51.

Gellner, Ernest. 1988. *Nations and Nationalism*. New Perspectives on the Past. New York Oxford: B. Blackwell.

Goffman, Erving. 1990. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Penguin Books.

Harding, Luke. 2023. "'A Generational Shift': War Prompts Ukrainians to Embrace Their Language." *The Guardian*, 2023, sec. World news. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/mar/06/russia-ukrainians-embrace-language-war.

CEU eTD Collection

Hobsbawm, Eric. 1993. “Introduction: Inventing Traditions.” In *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. Canto. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hutchinson, John. 2004. “Nations as Zones of Conflict.” In *Nations as Zones of Conflict*, 115–54. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446217979.

Jung, C. G. 1972. *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*. 2. ed., 1. Princeton Bollingen paperback print. Paperback Editions of C. G. Jung’s Writings / Transl. by R. F. C. Hull. Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press.

Kay, Paul, and Willett Kempton. 1984. “What Is the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis?” *American Anthropologist* 86 (1): 65–79.

Kizilova, Svitlana. 2022. “Rosiiski okupanty znyshchuiut ukrainomovni dorohovkazy bilia Mariupolia.” Ukrainska pravda. 2022. https://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2022/05/5/7344279/.

Kulyk, Volodymyr. 2018. “Shedding Russianness, Recasting Ukrainianness: The Post-Euromaidan Dynamics of Ethnonational Identifications in Ukraine.” *Post-Soviet Affairs* 34 (2–3): 119–38. https://doi.org/10.1080/1060586X.2018.1451232.

“Language Learners Take up Ukrainian on Duolingo in Show of Solidarity.” 2022. Euronews. 2022. https://www.euronews.com/culture/2022/12/06/language-learning-app-duolingo-reveals-many-learners-take-up-ukrainian-in-show-of-solidari.

Masenko, Larysa, ed. 2005. *Ukrainska Mova u XX Storichchi: Istoriia Linhvotsydu*. Kyïv: Vydavnychyi dim Kyievo-Mohylianska akademiia.

———. 2020. “Movna sytuatsiia Ukrainy v sotsiolinhvistychnykh vymirakh. Viina z Rosiieiu vplynula na bahatokh.” Radio Svoboda. 2020. https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/30586236.html.

CEU eTD Collection

Nora, Pierre. 1989. “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire.” *Representations* 26 (April): 7–24. https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520.

OpenStax and Lumen Learning. n.d. “General Psychology.” University of Central Florida Pressbooks. https://pressbooks.online.ucf.edu/lumenpsychology/chapter/operant-conditioning/.

Ortega, Ane, Jacqueline Urla, Estibaliz Amorrortu, Jone Goirigolzarri, and Belen Uranga. 2015. “Linguistic Identity among New Speakers of Basque.” *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 2015 (231): 85–105. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl-2014-0033.

Pauly, Matthew D. 2014. *Breaking the Tongue: Language, Education, and Power in Soviet Ukraine, 1923-1934*. University of Toronto Press.

Pearce, Matt. 2022. “For Centuries, the Ukrainian Language Was Overshadowed by Its Russian Cousin. That’s Changing.” Los Angeles Times. 2022. https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/story/2022-03-30/la-ent-ukrainian-language.

Phillipson, Robert. 2012. “Imperialism and Colonialism.” In *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*, edited by Bernard Spolsky. Cambridge Handbooks in Language and Linguistics. Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press.

Plokhi, Sergi Mikolaïovitch. 2021. *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*. Revised edition. New York (N.Y.): Basic Books.

Ratsybarska, Yuliia. 2022. “Viina i mova: yak v Ukraini liudy masovo perekhodiat na ukrainsku movu?” *Radio Svoboda*, 2022. https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/pereyty-z-rosiyskoyi-na-ukrayinsku-movu/32297616.html.

Riabchuk, Mykola. 2000. *Vid Malorosii do Ukrainy: paradoksy zapizniloho natsiietvorennia*. Kyïv: Krytyka.

CEU eTD Collection

Richardson, Tanya. 2008. *Kaleidoscopic Odessa: History and Place in Contemporary Ukraine*. University of Toronto Press.

Schudson, Michael. 1997. "Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory." *Memory Distortion: How Minds, Brains, and Societies Reconstruct the Past. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP*, 346–64.

Sewell, William H. 1996. "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille." *Theory and Society* 25 (6): 841–81. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00159818.

Shulzhenko, Daria. 2023. "How Russia Has Attempted to Erase Ukrainian Language, Culture throughout Centuries." *The Kyiv Independent* (blog). 2023. https://kyivindependent.com/how-russia-has-attempted-to-erase-ukrainian-language-culture-throughout-centuries/.

Swidler, Ann. 1986. "Culture in Action: Symbols and Strategies." *American Sociological Review* 51 (2): 273–86. https://doi.org/10.2307/2095521.

Tkachuk, Yuliia. 2023. "Stsenu zumeram: nezalezhna muzychna stsena pid chas povnomasshtabnoi viiny." Suspilne. 2023. https://suspilne.media/393137-scenu-zumeram-ak-sformuvalasa-nova-nezalezna-muzicna-scena-pid-cas-povnomasstabnoi-vijni/?

Tomlinson, John. 2002. *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction*. Continuum. https://hdl.handle.net/2027/heb02149.0001.001.

UN. 2017. "UN Report on 2014-16 Killings in Ukraine Highlights 'Rampant Impunity' - United Nations in Ukraine." Internet Archive. 2017. https://web.archive.org/web/20171201042615/http://www.un.org.ua/en/45-temp/3916-un-report-on-2014-16-killings-in-ukraine-highlights-rampant-impunity.

CEU eTD Collection

Urla, Jacqueline. 1993. “Cultural Politics in an Age of Statistics: Numbers, Nations, and the Making of Basque Identity.” *American Ethnologist* 20 (4): 818–43.

Weber, Eugen. 1976. *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*. Stanford University Press.

Zahorodnii, Mykhailo. 2022. “Pryishov Chas Tse Zrobyty: Ukraintsi Masovo Vidmovliaiutsia Vid Rosiiskoi Movy.” Ukrainska Pravda. 2022. https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2022/02/23/247552/.

“Zelenskyi: pytannia movy narazi ne na chasi, ukrainska - povnistiu zakhyshchena.” 2021. Unian. 2021. https://www.unian.ua/politics/zelenskiy-pro-ukrajinsku-movu-povnistyu-zahishchena-novini-ukrajina-11346304.html.

CEU eTD Collection