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Language Consciousness and Ukrainian Students' Attitudes Towards the Ukrainian Language in a Time of War

Abstract

By applying the survey method, the article presents and summarizes the theoretical questions of language policy, the language consciousness of students and their attitudes towards the Ukrainian language both before and after the start of the current Russo–Ukrainian war. Students from four universities took part in the survey: Kyiv National Linguistic University, Ivan Franko National University of L'viv, V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, and Yuriy Fedkovych National University of Chernivtsi.

Keywords: language policy; students' language consciousness; emotional attitudes to language; survey method

“At the cost of the lives of our very best, we fight for the right to speak our native language, to be Ukrainian, and to determine our future. Ukrainian is the language of our parents and children. It is the language of our victory.”

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine
General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi

1 Introduction

We live in the harsh realities of the present: a time of war between Russia and Ukraine. These events are not easy. The struggle continues not only for territory but also for Ukrainian identity, homeland, language, and culture. Behind the frontline combat, where the flower of the nation dies for national ideals, questions about society's language consciousness and language policy are, and will remain to be, important factors. Many linguistic studies have been dedicated to the problems of language policy and language as a nation's means of self-identification: (Bauring, 2010; Besters-Dil'ger, 2010; del' Gaudio & Tarasenko, 2010; Kulyk, 2010, 2021; Masenko, 2010; Matsiuk, 2009; Miodunka, 1990, 2017; Pavlenko, 2009; Radevych-Vynnyts'kyi, 2011; Sn'ozyk, 2022; Zaluzniak, 2010).

The aim of this article is to summarize the results of a study into language consciousness and students' attitudes towards the Ukrainian language before and during the war by using the methods of survey, analysis, and synthesis.

Mirosława Sagan-Bielawa considers language consciousness to be a part of public consciousness, which uses language in order to:

1. build, strengthen and emphasize unity amongst group members
2. differentiate one's own group from foreign groups
3. build the group's prestige (Sagan-Bielawa, 2014, p. 52).

Another factor which should be examined is the emotional attitude towards the Ukrainian language, which should have changed. The emotional attitude towards the Ukrainian language in particular has previously been the subject of P. Levchuk's research (Levchuk, 2015, 2019, 2020).

Studying the problems of language policy, Władysław Miodunka emphasizes the importance of such policy to the state (Miodunka, 2016, pp. 21–26). Another researcher, Pavlo Levchuk, draws attention to the problems of protecting native languages (Levchuk, n.d., pp. 91–102). According to Levchuk, one of the priorities of language policy is undoubtedly the learning of foreign languages. Krystyna Wróblewska-Pawlak and Iwona Strachanowska write about the motivations for language learning (Wróblewska-Pawlak & Strachanowska, 2000, pp. 99–114).

In the article “Ukrainian Language in Polish Public Space”, Levchuk writes about the use of the Ukrainian language by Ukrainian migrants in Poland's public space, which gives Ukrainian a different status – that of a foreign language in the public space of another country (Levchuk, 2021).

Representatives of the younger generation have always been and will always be particularly active in social discourse. Students have always taken an active part in important events, both past and present and they are an active force that responds as quickly as possible to any event in society. We were interested in the topic of language consciousness and students' attitude towards the Ukrainian language during the war. The topic, of course, is under-researched and relevant to the problems that we were able to see through certain sociological studies. Language gains an even larger significance in wartime. The Ukrainian language is marked as the nation's code and the preservation of the language is a factor of self-identification. Changes on the level of language consciousness are apparent and there are also changes in emotional attitudes towards Ukrainian. Ukrainian has come to be seen as the language of victory in the war.

The Polish scholar Mirosława Sagan-Bielawa wrote an article dedicated to researching students' attitudes toward the Polish language (Sagan-Bielawa, 2017, p. 19). The author writes that an important factor is the language consciousness of students when they evaluate the issues of language policy in Poland. Discussing the importance of research on language consciousness, Władysław Miodunka emphasizes that such research must be conducted every ten years and among people returning to Poland after long periods spent living abroad (Miodunka, 2017, p. 14). However, we believe that the war is a pivotal moment, especially for young people, whose task will be to rebuild Ukraine after victory.

In her study “No One Will Do This For Us: The Linguistic and Cultural Practices of Young Activists Representing European Linguistic Minorities”, the Polish sociolinguist N. Dołowy-Rybińska (2020) presents young people who represent language minorities in Europe. Using the interview method, the author argues that the young people are the conductors of the culture of their national minorities. The researcher shows the process of identity formation of young people, taking into account the context of different forms of social life and the preservation of their language and culture (Dołowy-Rybińska, 2020).

A monograph by researcher Maria Zelinska is dedicated to the communicative competence of young people who are native Polish speakers living in the L'viv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil regions of Ukraine (Zelins'ka, 2020). Attitudes towards Polish as a second language for English philology students, as well as students who study it as a foreign language, were subjects of research by two groups of scholars, led by P. Levchuk (Levchuk, Belyavska, & Vaseiko, 2022; Levchuk, Bihunova, & Vorobiova, 2022).

In Ukrainian linguistics, attention must be paid to the works of Ivanna Tsar, who researched the problem of bilingualism among young Russian-speaking people who emigrated from Crimea and Donbas, which Russia occupied in 2014 (Tsar, 2019, pp. 52–62).

2 Presentation of the Material

The survey method was chosen for our research, “Language Consciousness and Students’ Attitude Towards the Ukrainian Language in a Time of War”. The survey was conducted between 17 October 2022 and 22 November 2022. The students were given 30 questions. In this article, we present only a part of the results. Due to the fact that we received a significant amount of material, we grouped and divided the materials according to thematic principle, thus planning to write a series of articles about the language consciousness of students in relation to the Ukrainian language before and during the war and the formation of national identity among students during the war. For this article, we have selected questions about the personal data of the respondents (age, gender, place of birth), the first language of the respondents, their communication in other languages, and the young people’s own attitude to the Ukrainian language during the war. We surveyed students from four universities: Kyiv National Linguistic University, Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, and Yuriy Fedkovych National University of Chernivtsi.

Age

More than 300 respondents took part in the survey. The respondents’ ages vary from 17 to 25 years old. 1,102 people (34.0%) were 17 years old at the time of the survey. 70 people (23.3%) were 18 years old and 66 respondents (22.0%) were 19 years old. We can therefore make the following generalizations:

1. Junior students (aged 17–19): The largest age group that participated in the survey were seventeen-year-olds. These students are in their first year of study and are the most active group of students, being engaged with current affairs and social issues. The second largest group consisted of eighteen-year-olds, who are sophomore students. Nineteen-year-old students were less active.
2. Senior students (aged 20–25): The older age groups were not so active. It is surprising that these older respondents did not show much interest in the survey about their mother tongue.

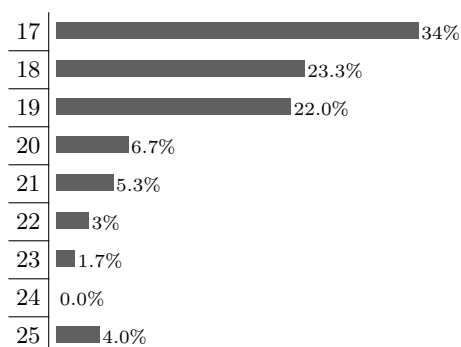


Figure 1. Age of respondents.

Gender

239 respondents (79.7%) are female and 61 male respondents (20.3%) participated in the survey. The number of females prevails by almost four times. This can be explained by the obvious fact that there are more female students than male students. According to statistics, about 1,300 people study at the Faculty of Philology of Ivan Franko National University of L'viv. Of these, 1,200 are women and 100 are men.



Figure 2. Gender of respondents.

Place of Birth

The respondents represent all of Ukraine's regions and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Among other countries are Italy and Portugal. Most of the respondents that took part in the survey were born in the L'viv region (146 people, 48.7%). The Ivano-Frankivsk region is in second place (22 people, 7.3%). In third place is the Ternopil region (17 people, 5.7%).

The number of respondents by region are as follows: Western Ukraine – 240 people, Eastern Ukraine – 6 people, Southern Ukraine and Crimea – 23 people, Northern Ukraine – 17 people, Central Ukraine – 8 people, other countries – 6 people. Thus, the number of respondents from Western Ukraine strongly prevails. In order to learn about the language consciousness of the students, we chose from 30 possible questions in the survey those that gave an accurate picture of students' attitudes towards the Ukrainian language before and during the war. The chosen questions are grouped according to thematic principle and concern the respondents' first language, other languages they know, attitudes towards the Ukrainian language before the war, attitudes towards the Ukrainian language before and during the war, and attitudes towards the Russian language before and during the war.

Native Language

When asked about their native language, respondents gave the following answers: Ukrainian was native to 255 people (85.0%). Both Ukrainian and Russian were the native languages of 31 people (10.3%). Russian was native for 10 people (3.3%). For one female participant, Polish is the native language (0.3%). In the comments to the survey, Ukrainian and English were named as other native languages (1 person). Another female respondent wrote that "Russian was the language of our family, that's why up until the fourth grade I didn't know Ukrainian well". One respondent noted that she spoke Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, and sometimes heard Hungarian. A clear majority of respondents have Ukrainian as their native language. For a much smaller group of respondents, both Ukrainian and Russian are native and for very few people Russian is native (10 people). Polish is native to one respondent. Overall, the vast majority of students from other departments considered Ukrainian to be their native language.

Other Languages that Respondents Know

Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of respondents, 226 (92.7%), speak Ukrainian. Equally unsurprising is the fact the second most spoken language is English: 164 people (75.3%). Polish is spoken by 126 respondents (40%). Other languages are spoken by 73 respondents (24.3%). Turkish is spoken



Figure 3. First language of respondents.

by 6 respondents (2.0%), three of the respondents speak Slovak (1.0%) and one person claimed to have knowledge of Bulgarian (0.3%). It is interesting to note that the students were keen to talk about which languages they are less fluent in. In this list are languages such as German, French, Chinese, Spanish, Korean, Czech, Japanese, Serbian, and Yiddish. Russian stands out in this list as having negative emotional connotations. It is referred to as “moskal” and “the language of the orcs”. This is only natural, the language having obtained such status during the beginning of the war in 2022, when Russian invaded Ukraine. Some informants explain the reasons why they had studied Russian:

- (1) “Unfortunately, Russian because of media space influence since childhood.”
- (2) “...had it in school in grades 5–6, but it would be better if I’d never known it at all.” Sadly, “I heard a lot of Russian through media, literature, etc. That’s why I’ve been learning it willy-nilly.”
- (3) “Through the Russification that has been happening since childhood. I don’t use it now”.

The negative attitude towards Russian displayed by many of those surveyed is amplified with the adverbial phrase “unfortunately”. One of the respondents, in addition to Russian, also writes about the Belarusian language, but she cannot speak it. One of the informants notes the fact that she studied Ukrainian in Austria as a refugee. Many countries that have accepted large numbers of Ukrainian refugees have also offered language courses immediately, in order to improve the adaptation process. Such courses have proved to be particularly effective in Poland. In March 2022, the Institute of Slavic Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences organized Polish language courses in different cities of Poland, where it was possible to learn Polish online for free. The project was led by Pavlo Levchuk, an associate professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies PAN. At the end of the language courses, the participants received certificates of proficiency in Polish at the A1 level. Thus, the three most commonly spoken languages according to the survey results are Ukrainian, English, and Polish. Other languages mentioned include Russian, German, French, Chinese, Spanish, Korean, Czech, Japanese, and Serbian. Turkish (2.0%) and Slovak (1.0%) are less frequently spoken. However, a significant share of the respondents was in the “other languages” category, which as a percentage equals 24.3%.

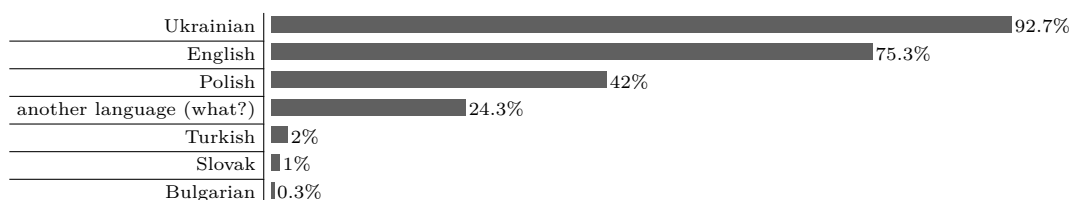


Figure 4. Languages spoken by respondents.

3 Attitudes Towards Ukrainian During the War

Concerning the question of students' attitudes towards Ukrainian during the war, some interesting arguments can be observed. The Ukrainian language was stated to have become even more native to them during the war by 197 respondents (65.7%). 224 respondents (74.7%) answered decisively that language was of great importance during the war. Only six people said that the language was not relevant for the duration of the war (2.0%). Twelve people (4.0%) answered this question in the "Other" column.

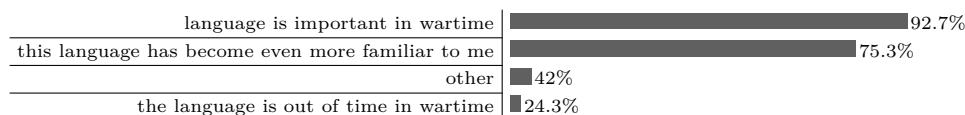


Figure 5. Attitudes towards Ukrainian during the war.

In the comments to the survey, students stated that language was of great importance at all times, both during war and in peace. Some expressed that their attitude towards the Ukrainian language before and during the war is one of love without limits. Some informants stated that language has always mattered, but that since the start of the war it has gained a special, collective purpose. Some people claim that language has always been important and native to them, but that during the war the significance of Ukrainian has become even more apparent.

The language issue has become even more relevant during the war. Every conscious Ukrainian should realize the importance of the state language. It is clear that the language, like the state, must always be protected. Some are of the opinion that until it is "the right time" for the language, conflicts and wars will continue to occur. The language is alive as long as the people are alive, they are inseparable. Therefore, it is always the right time to develop "our own" when this very "own" has been persistently threatened with extermination for several centuries.

Many of the respondents proposed such "figurative" definitions of the language:

- it is a link between separate nations;
- it is a border;
- it is the code of the nation;
- it is history;
- it is self-identification;
- it is enables distinction on the "friend and foe" level.

Some of the answers given concerning changes in attitudes towards Ukrainian during the war seem strange, with statements about how it's "no longer shameful to speak it (Ukrainian)". It would be interesting to ask that young person why they considered speaking Ukrainian shameful. A true citizen of Ukraine would never declare that they are ashamed to speak Ukrainian. It is embarrassing that some young people think like this. However, the same respondent later comes to the "path of enlightenment": "I argued more in my head, why we shouldn't tolerate the aggressor's language".

One of the respondents noted that language always matters. In extreme situations, however, when soldiers on the front speak Russian, she deems it inappropriate to ask them why they do so. The same applies to young people who live in warzones and also speak Russian. According to the respondent, Russian is their home language and it is necessary to treat this with understanding.

According to one respondent, language is an identifier on the battlefield. If you hear the question "Is anyone here?" in Russian, "*Здесь кто-нибудь есть?*", or Ukrainian, "*Тут хтось є?*", the Russian phrase will obviously be more alarming, because you do not know who is in front of you: an "orc" or a Ukrainian.

Every Ukrainian should understand the importance of Ukrainian as the state language, because until they do so they will not have a single strong, united nation that respects itself and its language. Language plays a key role in shaping a nation's worldview.

Some respondents voiced different opinions. These are the ones who, for various reasons, use Russian in communication. Some talk about being raised in a "Russified family", and efforts to switch to Ukrainian are not easy for them. The most important thing is that they have the desire to speak Ukrainian because it is a necessity. Some declared that during the war they started to use Ukrainian more in their everyday lives, but, sadly, continue to speak Russian with their friends and family, justifying this by the fact that they have been speaking Russian since childhood and their entire environment is Russian-speaking.

Other respondents firmly expressed their negative attitude towards people who still speak the "aggressor's language" in everyday communication, knowing how much they have suffered from speakers of this language. The female author does not have sympathy for this category of people, as in her opinion "Ukrainians speak Ukrainian". In addition, language is primarily an indicator of who someone is as a person.

According to the observations of the other respondents, it is easy to identify people that are imbued with feelings of concern for their land and their people during the war. If someone has stopped speaking Russian, they deserve respect for it. It is sad, however, that most of the refugees who have suffered the most from the war continue to speak the "language of the enemy". It is a big disappointment. The author draws this conclusion: "If we all spoke Ukrainian, our state would become even stronger spiritually and culturally".

A pivotal point can be seen in the conscience of one female respondents, who sincerely admits to consuming "Russian-language content" and listening to "Moscovian music". A complete re-evaluation then occurred and the desire to nurture Ukrainian became a way of life. Therefore, language gained even more important value for her during the war. A desire for an even deeper understanding of the mother tongue and the need to draw inspiration from the Ukrainian language arose. "I started to become interested in it (Ukrainian) more deeply, and began looking at it historically", one of the respondents said.

The position of two respondents regarding their attitudes towards Ukrainian during the war is strange. One thinks that it does not matter what language we speak. Instead, the most important thing is one's attitude towards the country. The second believes that people must be required to know their nation's language, but should communicate in a way that is convenient for them, even if it is in Chinese. She writes about the obligation to know one's language, but not to communicate in it. Such "convenience" is beneficial because a person with this mindset does not have a sense of national identity and identification through language. The amount of Chinese-speaking Ukrainians is not sufficient for Chinese to be spoken in Ukraine. Will Ukrainian be spoken in China? This is a rhetorical question. According to the author, language is only a communication tool and there is no "need to discriminate against people on the basis of language".

4 Attitudes Towards Ukrainian Before and During the War

Concerning the students' positions towards Ukrainian before and during the war, the survey shows that the attitude of 27 respondents (9.0%) has changed. 41 people (13.7%) gave the answer "no change" to describe their attitude and a further 39 respondents (13%) responded that their attitude towards Ukrainian "remained unchanged". The results of the survey are pleasantly surprising, as the majority of students felt a great deal of pride in the Ukrainian language during the war. 192 people (64%) responded in this way. This is only natural, as students are a powerful force who care about all kinds of social issues, especially with regards to issue of language. The students are always among the first to go on Maidan protests to protect their rights and show their position. Only one respondent (0.3%) answered this question in the "Other" column, see figure 6.

The students gave some interesting and diverse comments in the survey. One of the respondents wrote about feeling pride in the Ukrainian language: "Because despite all the occupiers' attempts

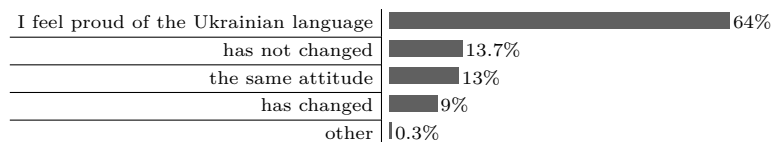


Figure 6. Attitudes towards Ukrainian before and during the war.

to destroy the Ukrainian language and culture, it was reborn again and again”. Students note that they have always been proud of Ukrainian and that they are Ukrainians who try to speak the proper Ukrainian language. One respondent wrote about their love and respect towards the Ukrainian language both before and during the war. Another respondent wrote about the importance and value of Ukrainian. One of the students had been overflowing with pride in the Ukrainian language long before the start of the full-scale invasion, as the war really began in 2014. She had always liked Ukrainian but only started speaking the language in 2015. Another respondent started speaking Ukrainian one year before the full-scale invasion and her position has become more radical regarding the language issue ever since. According to one student, the need to speak Ukrainian strengthens the state. The Ukrainian language is positioned as the language of a strong nation, because in the ongoing war, the Ukrainian nation is defending not only the territorial borders of the state, but is also defending the language from the Russian aggressor. One respondent wrote about the language issue becoming even more acute during the war. She explained that: “We fight with the native Russian speakers and to continue speaking the aggressor’s language is humiliating to oneself”. Another respondent stated that it is not very pleasant for her to speak the occupier’s language. Such opinions are undoubtedly appropriate for this time. The comment from a young person who writes that she was influenced by the idea of a “peasant language” (Ukrainian), although she considers herself a patriot, seems strange, but she is not indifferent when everyone around her laughs at her language and asks her to switch to a “normal language” (Russian). The importance of the Ukrainian language was emphasized by another respondent, who noted that she did not want “to repeat the Belarusian language scenario in Belarus”. One respondent writes that Russisms and some Anglicisms have disappeared from use.

Consequently, taking into account the results of the survey and comments on changes in students’ attitudes toward Ukrainian before and during the war, we can summarize:

1. Changes in students’ attitudes have occurred at the level of consciousness.
2. Many respondents are overflowing with feelings of pride for the Ukrainian language.
3. During the war, Ukrainian is the language of a strong nation.
4. Many have switched to speaking Ukrainian during the war.
5. There has been a realization of the value of the Ukrainian language.
6. Some of the young people do not wish to speak the language of the “aggressor” and “occupier”.

5 Attitudes Towards Russian Before and During the War

Looking at the answers of the students who took part in the survey about changes in attitudes towards Russian before and during the war, we can see the following statistics. 232 respondents (77.3%) stated that their attitudes had changed. 33 respondents (11%) said that their attitudes “remained unchanged” and 29 people (9.7%) gave the answer “no change”. 6 respondents (2%) answered this question in the “Other” column.

It can therefore be stated that changes in attitude towards Russian have occurred for the vast majority of the students surveyed. For a small number of respondents, this attitude has remained either the same as before or during the war, or has not changed at all, see figure 7.

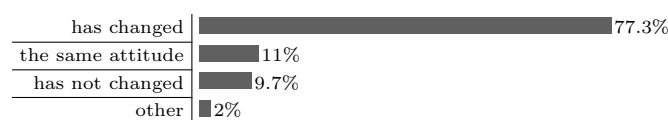


Figure 7. Attitudes towards Russian before and during the war.

We can summarize that Russian is perceived negatively during the war and that emotional attitudes towards Russian have significantly changed since the invasion. For many respondents, Russian is the “language of the occupier”, “a murderous language”, “the language of death”, “the language of the enemy”, “the language of the aggressor”, “the language in which orders are given to kill, destroy, rob and rape Ukrainians”, “the language of the historical enemy of Ukraine”, “a *Katsap* language”, “a language of slaves and torturers”, and “an artificially imposed language”.

Some respondents noted that their attitude towards the Russian language has changed during the war and there is a complete rejection of this language happening. For some, this language triggers disgust. One respondent wrote that everything Russian is repulsive, not only referring to language. Some cannot stand Russian at all. Some are not comfortable speaking Russian, because it is “the occupier’s language”. The unwillingness to speak Russian during the war also occurs because it is the language of people that wish death on us. Some try to avoid consuming Russian content. Some of the responders had never spoken Russian because it simply never existed to them. “I have never spoken it and I never will” affirms one respondent, even though she describes her attitude towards Russian as neutral. One of the students answered in the survey that she used to be indifferent to Russian, but that now can she cannot stand it. Another respondent writes about disliking Russian, saying that he “is sick of it”.

Some respondents are annoyed by Russian, others hate it with all their hearts, and some do not tolerate it at all.

Some of the students state that they have never liked Russian and now they even hate it. They do not want to either hear it or read it. We can read in one of the survey forms that some have started acknowledging that this language has always been hostile to the respondent and their family. This is the language of the enemy, of the occupier, says another survey participant. “We shouldn’t drag it into our country”, says another.

Since 2014, Russian has not been welcome in the family of one respondent. It is the language of the enemy and that is the last argument for not speaking it. The respondent notes that since 2014 she has refused to use Russian or perceive Russian culture because her brother was a direct participant in the war. All that she could do for her sibling was to boycott Russian content and in this way support him and our country.

One of the students wrote that she had stopped using Russian in social media even before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine (the war started in 2014). One respondent wrote that he used to be unaware of the language issue and did not pay much attention to it. He could listen to and even sing Russian songs. Now, this “*Katsap* language” irritates him. He has stopped listening to Russian content and even makes remarks when it comes to the use of Russian. In his attitude toward Russian-speaking Ukrainians, however, he is restrained and patient.

Another respondent described her previous indifference towards which language to speak. Her thoughts have changed drastically, however, and she now thinks that if you are an Ukrainian citizen you should speak the state language, not that of the enemy. One student believes that this language should not be present in Ukraine at all. Another respondent insists that Ukrainians in Ukraine do not answer in Russian, but instead respond more in Ukrainian or English. One of the respondents, previously indifferent, wrote that if her friends use “*Katsap* language” in conversation, they stop being her friends. Another student was more conciliatory, insisting on spreading Ukrainian among Ukrainians but saying that she “will not harass” people using Russian. The informant writes that before the full-scale invasion she considered Russian to be the language of slaves and torturers and she has not changed her attitude. Another respondent, answering the question about attitude

towards Russian during the war, emphasized that she had once tolerated it. However, after the invasion her attitude changed dramatically: “For me, everything Russian has died, and I hate their language”. Another respondent wrote that she has read a lot about the Russian language being murderous for all the oppressed ethnicities of Russia, as well as for the countries that were part of the former USSR. She is now adamant that she does not want Russian to be her mother tongue. The respondent reached a realization of the language’s importance in 2020 but after February 24 2022, she developed an absolute rejection of Russian language and has ignored it ever since.

In the comments to the survey, we can find alternative attitudes towards Russian during the war, but it is encouraging to see that there are not many such respondents. One of them claims that language is a means of communication. She does not use Russian in everyday life, only to talk with friends. She has also limited “her leisure time and stopped consuming content produced by Russians or in Russian”. Another respondent’s thoughts about language seem uncertain. She writes that “Language is the jewel of any nation, even the Russian one”. It could be argued that thinking this way about the aggressor’s language in a time of war is unacceptable. She then continues her thoughts that the language is not to blame, but that people who support the war are. Language does not overly concern the author, although she does say that “Ukrainians speak Russian, neglecting their native language”. I believe that ethnic Ukrainians must, obviously, speak Ukrainian from birth. Until we have a firm nation-centred position in regard to our attitude towards our native language (Ukrainian), we will continue to have such views in regard to the language issue.

One of the respondents wrote about the support of those who speak Ukrainian. She, however, does not speak Russian herself. Another respondent wrote that she never liked the “*язик*” (the Russian language). One student wrote that “language is and will be one of the expansion instruments”. The following comment sounds optimistic: “The sooner all of Ukraine is Ukrainiized, the better!”

6 Conclusions and Prospects for Further Research

To summarize and make some generalizations about students’ attitudes toward their mother tongue during the war, we can draw the following conclusions: *The language issue has always been, is, and will be relevant.*

The war and full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine has changed students’ attitudes toward their native language. Ukrainian has become even more important during the war and is associated with the nation, borders, the national code, history, and self-identification. Emotional attitudes towards Russian have changed drastically, as it has gained many negative connotations: “the language of the occupier”, “a murderous language”, “the language of death”, “the language of the enemy”, “the language of the aggressor”, “the language in which orders are given to kill, destroy, rob and rape Ukrainians”, “the language of the historical enemy of Ukraine”, “a *Katsap* language”, “the language of slaves and torturers”, and “an artificially imposed language”. The changes in attitudes towards the mother tongue during the war has occurred on the level of consciousness and there has been a noticeable transition to communication in Ukrainian among students. There has also been a decrease in the amount of Russian content consumption, due to the desire not to use the language of the “aggressor” and “occupier”. In addition to Russian, the students surveyed are fluent in other foreign languages (mostly English, Polish, and German; to a lesser extent, French, Chinese, Spanish, Korean, Czech, Japanese, and Serbian). Some speak Turkish and Slovak.

The issues raised in this research are of interest and are under-researched. There are not many scientific developments that would relate to the current research on the language consciousness and national identity of the younger generation. The publication of several more scientific articles on this issue is planned. Involving more students in the survey and expanding and further elaborating on the questions in order to summarise aspects of this relevant and promising research. Future research is likely to cover this topic more broadly and to deepen the methodology of its study.

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