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Socio-Cultural Changes in the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language in Ukraine in 2014–2024

1. Introduction

The problems of interaction between a language and society, language policy, language planning and multilingualism in various countries have attracted the attention of scholars (House, 2003; Jansen, 2017; Lipińska, 2003; Myers-Scotton, 2006, etc.). However, languages in post-colonial/post-communist Ukraine have been addressed in only a few foreign works, such as Bester-Dilger (Бестер-Дільгер, 2010), Bilaniuk (2005), Lubaś (2009), Søvik (2007), etc.,

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while several authors have written about the specifics of how the Ukrainian language was used by certain speakers during the Russian–Ukrainian war of 2014–2022. The articles in a Special Issue of “Language and War” (“East European Journal of Psycholinguistics”, 2022) discussed the impact of war on the cognitive development of refugee children (Yeter et al., 2022); the linguistic features of President Zelenskyi’s speeches addressed to Japanese citizens (Matsuoka & Matsuoka, 2022); and the psycholinguistic aspects of propaganda (Isacoff, 2022). Two foreign scientists submitted articles to the collective monograph “Language and war: dynamics of the language system and language policy” (2024): Michael Moser wrote about the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages during of the Russian war in Ukraine, while Laada Bilaniuk investigated subtitles and standards – language ideologies in Ukrainian news videos on social media (see: Bilaniuk, 2024; *Мова і війна*, 2024).

Let’s pay attention to the fact that at the beginning of the 21st century the language situation and language policy in Ukraine were studied by many Ukrainian researchers (Залізняк & Масенко, 2001; Масенко, 2004; Шумарова, 2000, etc.). In the global and European contexts, these issues have been considered in individual and collective works (Danylyuk, 2018; АЖНЮК, 2019, 2021; Данилюк, 2013; Тараненко, 2003, etc.). It should be emphasized that most publications by Ukrainian scientists are written in Ukrainian, while some of them are not available on the internet, so they remain inaccessible to a wide scientific audience. Therefore, we have translated most of the scientific and journalistic materials used in our article into English for the first time.

We note that highlighting the studies of foreign and Ukrainian scientists is important for us as a way of presenting different views on the problem from the outside and from the inside. In addition, we did not find special works that analyze the impact of the war on changes in the functioning of the Ukrainian language in the last decade.

In order to better understand the current language situation and language policy in Ukraine, we will provide brief information about the first years of the functioning of the state. Scholars have noted that with the formation of the independent state of Ukraine (August 24, 1991), there arose the problem of eliminating the consequences of the long-term Russification and assimilation of the Ukrainian language that it experienced in the Russian Empire (from the middle of the 17th to the beginning of the 20th century) (see: Danylenko & Naienko, 2019), and then in the Soviet Union (1922–1991).

It is known that Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine enshrines the state status of the Ukrainian language: “*The state language*¹ in Ukraine is the Ukrainian language [...]. Ukraine guarantees the free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities of Ukraine” (*Конституція України*, 2004). This is a typical practice for post-communist Slavic countries that followed the path of granting status to majority languages, which acquired legal guarantees as state/official languages (Lubaś, 2009, p. 525). At the time of the formation of independent Ukraine, two languages were most widely spoken: Ukrainian and Russian. However, this *bilingualism*² had the form of *diglossia*³, that is, it was asymmetrical with a great predominance of the Russian language. The linguistic development of the regions (especially the east and south) was “unsynchronized as a result of Russification in the Soviet period and linguo-ethnic mixing” (Масенко, 2010, p. 13). Therefore, it was necessary to overcome these post-colonial/post-Soviet consequences.

The intensification of the language policy in Ukraine, the events of the Orange Revolution (November – December 2004), the Revolution of Dignity (November 2013 – February 2014), Russia’s hybrid war against Ukraine (February 2014 – February 2022), and Russia’s full-scale aggression (February 24, 2022 – present) have led to an increase in Ukrainians’ civic and linguistic consciousness, which has led to changes in the use of Ukrainian and other languages. Socio-cultural transformations in the functioning of the state language over the past decade require academic comprehension and analysis by scholars, and it is this that determines the topicality of our article.

The aim of the article is to trace socio-cultural changes in the functioning of the Ukrainian language in Ukraine in 2014–2024 by reviewing and systematizing legislative documents from the last decade, the works of scholars, articles in the media, the results of monitoring and sociological surveys, and

¹ *State language* is “the official language of state institutions, the language of education, science, culture, etc. The language in which the state declares its sovereignty in international communication” (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, pp. 93–94).

² *Bilingualism* is “a sign of the functioning of the two official languages is formed in those states that were formed by the union of two ethnic communities and their territories [...]. Another model of bilingualism is characteristic of postcolonial society, where the language of the metropolis occupies a socially privileged place in society, displacing the language of the indigenous ethnic group from the sphere of public use (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, p. 44) (The second model concerns Ukraine. N.D.& O.R.).

³ *Diglossia* is “the coexistence of two languages that perform different functions in society” (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, p. 47).

by following changes in the qualitative, quantitative and evaluative parameters of the use of the Ukrainian language in the redistribution of its functions. Our research hypothesis consists in the assumption that the socio-political changes and military challenges of 2014–2024 have caused socio-cultural changes in the functioning of the Ukrainian language.

In our work, we analyze existing works on the problem, synthesize their results, compare the results of relevant studies, and describe our view of the main directions of the development of the Ukrainian language over the last decade. We also present the obtained results quantitatively.

The contribution of our research lies in the fact that it systematizes information about the use of the state language during the ethnosocio-political challenges of 2014–2024 in diachrony. It also summarizes the results of a study of the specifics of the language situation in Ukraine and establishes socio-cultural transformations in the functioning of the Ukrainian language and trends in their development. For the first time, extensive source material is processed and presented to the English-speaking user, offering a theoretical interpretation and conclusions about the significant changes in the functions of the Ukrainian language in Ukraine over the past 10 years under the influence of the war.

2. Presentation of the main material and results of the research

Study of the language situation in Ukraine in 2014–2024. A number of works have considered aspects of the language policy and language situation, the functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language and other languages in Ukraine, and changes in the communicative space of cities in 2014–2024 (Данилевська, 2019; Масенко, 2020a; Матвеева, 2022, etc.).

Surveys have been conducted by the Institute of the Ukrainian Language of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2017), the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (2022, 2024), the “Rating” Sociological Group (2022), the State Service for Quality of Education (2022, 2023), the “Rating Lab” laboratory (2023), the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation (2023), and individual scholars. These studies are heterogeneous and were carried out according to different parameters, so it is rather problematic to find a common

basis and analyze them comparatively. Therefore, we have to compare relevant works and summarize their most important results in chronological order.

Changes in attitudes towards languages in the language consciousness and linguistic behavior of Ukrainians as linguistic personalities at work and in other public communication under the influence of Russian aggression have been studied by several researchers (Kulyk, 2024; Малаш, 2023; Руда, 2021; Соколова, 2023; Цар, 2023; Шумицька, 2022, etc.). These researchers testified to the motives for the transition to the Ukrainian language of public figures and ordinary citizens who recognize their Ukrainian identity.

In 2024, a collective monograph was published containing the proceedings of the international “Language policy and interlingual relations in the conditions of war” scientific conference (Institute of Linguistics of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 9 November 2023) (*Мова і війна*, 2024). As Oleksandr Taranenko rightly emphasized: “The current Russian–Ukrainian war, [...] which is now the main content of the life of Ukrainian society, has naturally become a rather powerful impetus for changes both in the corpus (composition) of the Ukrainian language and the features of its implementation, [...] as well as in its social status” (Тараненко, 2024, p. 12). This has led to changes in the *functions*⁴ of the Ukrainian language, as we will try to show in this article.

Language policy of the state regarding the functioning of the Ukrainian language in 2014–2024. Socio-cultural transformations in the use of the Ukrainian language

⁴ *Functions of language* – the role of language and its purpose and areas of use in society. Note that there is no unanimity among scientists in defining the functions of language and their interpretation. For example, Michael Halliday, a British linguist, identified seven functions of language: instrumental, personal, interactional, regulatory, representational, heuristic, and imaginative (Halliday, 1975). Russian-American linguist Roman Jakobson proposed six functions of language: referential, emotive, conative, phatic, metalingual and poetic (Jakobson, 1985). In the short explanatory dictionary of ‘linguistic terms’, the functions of language are listed alphabetically: appellative, voluntative, emotive, cognitive, communicative, poetic (aesthetic), phatic (contact-establishing) (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, p. 195). In the “Ukrainian language” encyclopedia, Yu. O. Karpenko singles out the following functions: communicative, cognitive, thought-forming, cognitive, expressive, impressive, aesthetic, contact-establishing, metalinguistic, the function of inter-ethnic (international) communication (Русанівський & Тараненко, 2007, p. 510). We believe that at the current stage of the development of linguistics, it is worth highlighting and researching such important functions of language as the function of national and social identification, state communication, national and cultural, and others (Данилюк, 2012, p. 244). These are especially important for the development of the Ukrainian language in independent Ukraine. At the same time, during the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2014–2024, changes took place and new functions of the language were activated.

have taken place at the official and private levels of communication. They became possible thanks to *the language policy*⁵ of the state, the publication of a number of legislative documents and programs for their realization, the implementation activities of executive bodies of state power, institutions and organizations, and control of authorized bodies and the public over their execution. The task of strengthening the state status and expanding the scope of use of the Ukrainian language has become especially important during Russia's full-scale war in Ukraine as it is directly related to national security.

The active language policy of the state is evidenced by special documents of the last decade: the Decree of the President of Ukraine "On Urgent Measures to Strengthen the State Status of the Ukrainian Language and Promote the Creation of a Single Cultural Space of Ukraine" (2018); the Order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On Approval of the Strategy for the Promotion of the Ukrainian Language until 2030; "A Strong Language is a Successful State" (2019); the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" (2019); "The Concept of the State Target National and Cultural Program for Ensuring the Comprehensive Development and Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language in All Spheres of Public Life for the Period up to 2030" (2021). The implementation of these acts is constantly monitored by the media and the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language, Taras Kremin. As a result of the creation of an appropriate legislative framework and the implementation of legal documents in the most important spheres of Ukrainian society, the linguistic function of *state communication, national and state-building* in general has strengthened. In our article, we will consider the changes in the functioning of the state language in several areas: education, media, book publishing, and film production. Let's start with the results of sociological surveys which testify to changes in the use of the Ukrainian language in public and private spaces.

The Ukrainian language according to the results of opinion polls. Scientists consider the data of the last All-Ukrainian Population Census (December 2001) to be the starting point for comparisons. According to it, Ukrainians were the largest ethnic community in Ukraine (more than 37.5 million). The Ukrainian ethnic

⁵ *Language policy* is "measures taken by the state to address the issues of language (languages) development in society and the country. [...] Political policy includes issues of language planning which are relevant for countries that have been part of empires for a long time and in which the language of the metropolis was cultivated and established as a socially prestigious one" (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, p. 93).

group prevailed in all regions (except for the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea) and constituted 77.8% of the population. There were 8.3 million Russians, i.e., 17.3% of the population. 67.5% of Ukrainians called Ukrainian their *mother tongue*⁶ (10.3% less than the number of ethnic Ukrainians, and slightly more than 40% spoke it), 29.6% – Russian (12.3% more than the number of ethnic Russians), and 2.9% – another. At the same time, 95.9% and only 3.9% of Russians considered Russian and Ukrainian their native language, respectively. This means that the level of Russification of Ukrainians was much higher than the level of assimilation of Russians (*Всеукраїнський перепис*, n.d.).

It should be noted that the use of languages in different regions, cities and villages of Ukraine at that time was not the same. The overwhelming majority of Ukrainians in the west were Ukrainian-speaking, in the south and east they were Russian-speaking, while there was no clear dominance in the center. In addition, most people used Ukrainian-Russian and Russian-Ukrainian *surzhyk*⁷ in everyday life, rather than *the literary language*⁸. Most of the cities in the east, south, and center were Russified, and the villages were predominantly Ukrainian-speaking. The consequences of this situation are reflected in the results of later opinion polls.

Sociological studies confirm that in 2014, after the Revolution of Dignity, an irreversible movement towards an increase in the popularity of the Ukrainian language began, and the war, started by Russia allegedly to “protect Russian-speaking residents” (in fact, their destruction), significantly accelerated this process.

The results of a mass survey of the population of Ukraine (May 2017), conducted by scholars of the Institute of the Ukrainian Language of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine together with the Giessen Institute of Slavic Studies (Germany), showed positive changes in the use of the state language. 79.7% of respondents agreed with the statement that the Ukrainian language is one of the attributes of

⁶ *Mother tongue* is “the first language that a child began to speak (the language of the parents), or the language with which an individual entered the culture during the period of his conscious life” (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, p. 92).

⁷ *Surzhyk* is “a journalistic name for a mixture of two or more languages, when alternating, confusing [...] words and phrases cause the effect of an illiterate language from the point of view of the literary norm” (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, p. 179).

⁸ *Literary language* is “a standardized, standard, correct form of the national language from the point of view of established, codified norms, which serves the cultural and educational needs of society and performs a consolidating function through its use in the spheres of public administration, mass media, science, artistic culture and literature (Єрмоленко et al., 2001, p. 91).

the statehood of Ukraine, and 90.1% of the respondents answered in the affirmative to the question “Is it necessary for citizens of Ukraine to speak Ukrainian?”. 64.1% of the respondents considered Ukrainian their mother tongue, 17.1% – Russian, 17.4% – Ukrainian and Russian equally, and 0.8% – other. However, answers regarding the use of the Ukrainian language in everyday life were not so encouraging: “only Ukrainian” and “in most cases Ukrainian” – 46.9% of respondents, “Russian” – 31.8%, “equally Ukrainian and Russian” – 20.8%. Thus, the number of Russian-speaking speakers was 14.7% higher than the share of those who considered Russian their native language.

Ukrainian and foreign scientists have paid attention to this linguistic situation in Ukraine. As Larysa Masenko wrote: “The postcolonial linguistic situation has led to the fact that in our community, unlike most nation-states, the balance between the understanding of language as a symbol of identity, on the one hand, and the means of communication, on the other, is disturbed” (Масенко, 2020b). According to Curt Woolhiser, “the situation of the Ukrainian language is striking from the point of view that, at first glance, it is the language of the ethnic majority in Ukraine, at least the majority of Ukrainians recognize it as their native language. But when it comes to the daily use of the Ukrainian language, you understand that in some regions of Ukraine it is actually the language of an ethnic minority, or the language of “reduced cultural value.” This is caused by the linguistic assimilation of the local population, as a result of which the Ukrainian language has practically been ousted in these territories (in the east and south of Ukraine. *N.D.&O.R.*)” (Ливинський & Вулгайзер, 2019). The researchers pointed to the political component in the choice of the language: many new Ukrainian speakers’ choice in favour of Ukrainian was motivated precisely by the events of 2014 and Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine. They believed that the main task of young people was to revive the Ukrainian language – to return it to use in public and in the family.

Recent studies show that the use of the Ukrainian language in official, and especially in private, communication was primarily due to the growth of Ukrainians’ linguistic consciousness. The sixth nationwide survey: language issue in Ukraine (March 2022), conducted by the sociological group “Rating” by telephone interview in all regions except for the temporarily occupied territories, showed that there was a steady increase in the number of respondents who consider Ukrainian their native language: in 2012 – 57%, in 2022 – 76% (19% increase). On the other hand, there was a decrease of those who consider Russian their native language (from 42% to 20%, a 12% decrease). The study

showed that the number of those who constantly use only Ukrainian at home increased slightly (from 44% to 48%), but the percentage of Russian-speaking Ukrainians decreased (in 2012 – about 40%, at the end of 2021 – 26%, and at the beginning of the war in 2022 – 18%). The number Ukrainians who joined the segment of “bilinguals” also increased (from 15% to 32%). It is important that two-thirds of bilinguals are Russified Ukrainians, who are ready to switch to the Ukrainian language in the near future. There have been significant changes in attitudes towards the status of the Ukrainian language: the vast majority of respondents in all regions, age and language groups (83%) are in favor of Ukrainian being the only state language in Ukraine (*Шосте загальнонаціональне опитування*, 2022). These results indicate the strengthening of such functions of the Ukrainian language as *(self-)identification*⁹ and *consolidation, national-cultural function, and nation- and state-building* in the official and private spheres.

The dynamics of positive changes compared to 2017 is also evidenced by a survey conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (December 2022; 2005 respondents from the government-controlled territories of Ukraine). Note that the question about the use of languages was one of many in a long list, so we will single out the answers to it. Let's turn to the report, presented on the website of the institute in Ukrainian. Volodymyr Kulyk presented its results in a comparable aspect: at the end of 2022, 41% of respondents spoke only Ukrainian, 17% spoke Ukrainian “in most situations”, 6% spoke only Russian, and 9% spoke mostly Russian (another 24% said they used both languages). Thus, compared to 2017, the share of Ukrainian-speaking persons had increased by 8%, while the share of Russian-speaking persons had decreased by 11%. Regional indicators are impressive: even in the east and south, there are now no fewer Ukrainian speakers (29%) than Russian speakers (27%). The percentage of Ukrainians who speak Ukrainian in the family has also increased (50% – only Ukrainian, 12% – mostly Ukrainian, 19% – both languages equally, 16% – only or mostly Russian (in 2017 it was 25%), 2% – other languages). Ukrainians began to communicate more in Ukrainian at work and at school (68% of them, and 11% of Russian-speakers). The use of the Ukrainian language is more

⁹ *Self-identification* – “Determination by the citizen himself of his nationality // Self-identification, which is considered in relation to the state, testifies to the processes of integration within society associated with the political-economic and national-cultural self-determination of a particular people or nation” (*Словник.и.а*, n.d.).

noticeable on the internet: 26% of respondents use only Ukrainian, 26% – mostly Ukrainian (52% in total), 2% – only Russian, 4% – mostly Russian, 38% – both languages equally. English is also present here (especially among young people). Compared to 2014, the share of people who consider the Russian language generally unimportant for Ukrainian citizens has increased from 9% to 58%. On the other hand, only 1% consider the Ukrainian language unimportant. The indicator of national self-consciousness has increased: 95% of respondents associate themselves with Ukrainian nationality (in the south and east – 90%, compared to 64% in 2017), less than 2% – Russian, 1% – Ukrainian and Russian, 2% – another. The criteria for choosing a nationality have also changed: in 2017, 68% of respondents inherited it from their parents, but this was only 48% in 2022. Instead, the percentage of those who chose it consciously increased (by country – from 24% to 36%, or by attitude – from 3% to 7%) (“Війна спричинила”, 2023).

The new All-Ukrainian public opinion survey “Omnibus” was conducted on February 17–23, 2024 (1,052 respondents aged 18 and older from all regions of Ukraine which were controlled by the Government of Ukraine were interviewed). Changes in the attitude towards the Russian language during the time of Russia’s aggression in Ukraine are most noticeable. The results show that the share of those who believe that the Russian language should not be studied in schools at all has increased sharply in all regions (in 2019, this was only 8%, but this had risen to 52% by 2023). By 2024, only 10% of people in Ukraine wanted to see Russian as an official language in their region, and even fewer wanted it as a second state language. Instead, 81% either wanted it to be removed from the official communication throughout the territory or were against its use in their region. The most striking changes are taking place in the south and east of Ukraine. In 2015 in the south of Ukraine, for example, 37% wanted to have Russian as the second state language, and 43% believed that it could become official in regions where the majority of the population are in favor of that. Only 13% answered that it should be removed from official communication. Thus, in 2024, 69% either supported its complete removal from the official sphere or at least opposed Russian being the official language in their region. In contrast, 18% wanted either the Russian language to be official in their region or to become the state language. In the east, 52% either support its complete elimination from the official sphere or at least oppose Russian being the official language in their region. In contrast, 34% either want the Russian language to be official in their region or to become

the state language. In fact, in all regions the majority of the population does not support the granting of official status to the Russian language, instead believing that the Ukrainian language should have state status. It is important to point out that the younger the respondents, the more actively they insist on eliminating the Russian language from official communication. Of the youngest respondents (18–29 years old), 84% insist on the complete elimination of the Russian language from official communication. As the researchers note, “The paradigm shift in the perception of the Ukrainian language by age is notable. Back in the early 2000s (and, in fact, even later), the Ukrainian language was associated by many as the language of older people and people from rural areas (the language of “grandparents”). Now we see that the youngest Ukrainians are the ones who insist most of all on the unified state and official status of the Ukrainian language” (Динаміка, 2024).

All other surveys also confirm the conclusions of the 2022 and 2024 Kyiv International Institute of Sociology surveys about changes in the attitudes of Ukrainian citizens to the Ukrainian and Russian languages, which led to the activation of such functions of the Ukrainian language such as *(self-) identification and consolidation, national-cultural function, and nation- and state-building*.

Some sociolinguistic research has focused on analysis of the impact of war on the consciousness of the citizens of Ukraine, including their attitude to languages. According to the study “How the War Changed Me and Ukraine. Results of the Year”, conducted by the “Rating Lab” laboratory (February 2023, 600 participants), 22% of Ukrainians began to use the Ukrainian language more often in the first year of the war. There have also been changes in self-identification: the vast majority of respondents identify themselves citizens of Ukraine (compared to 2021, the figure increased from 76% to 94%), and half consider themselves Europeans (Комплексне дослідження, 2023).

The survey “War, Peace, Victory, Future” conducted by the Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation together with the Center for Political Sociology (June 2023, 2001 respondents), also demonstrated a high level of civil consciousness of Ukrainians: more than three-quarters (77%) were quite confident in Ukraine’s victory, while 16% rather believed in victory (93% in total). The answers to the questions about languages are as follows: 85.5% of respondents consider Ukrainian their native language, Russian – 12.4%, and another language – 1.1%; 75.6% speak Ukrainian at home, 23.3% speak Russian, and 1.2% speak another language (*Віра у перемогу*, 2023). That is,

the disproportion between the recognition of the Ukrainian language as a native language and its use has significantly decreased.

The survey “Language Consciousness and Multilingualism of Ukrainians during Russian Aggression”, conducted by Petro Levchuk with the support of the Polish Academy of Sciences via the internet (May–June 2023, 1300 respondents), also showed changes in language behavior one year after the start of the full-scale war. Together with families in which two languages are spoken, more than 87% of respondents identified themselves as Ukrainians. The researcher noted: “The current linguistic situation in Ukraine should be considered a classic example of diglossia. The Ukrainian language in Ukraine has a higher status than Russian; it is perceived positively, while rather negative connotations are associated with Russian” (Левчук, 2023).

We will illustrate the changes in the functioning of the Ukrainian language in the socio-cultural sphere with quantitative indicators taken from websites of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine, the Book Chamber of Ukraine, the largest publishing houses, and internet portals.

The Ukrainian language in education. The situation with the study and use of the Ukrainian language in the field of education has improved due to the adoption of the Laws of Ukraine “On Education” (2017) (Article 7), “On Complete General Secondary Education” (2020) (Article 5), and “On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language” (2019) (Article 21), according to which the language of the educational process is the state language. In classes and groups with instruction in the languages of national minorities, the right to use the language of the relevant national minority is guaranteed, along with the state language. The State Service for Education Quality conducted monitoring in 2022–2023 on ensuring the functioning of the state language in the educational process (almost 90 thousand participants in rural and urban schools and in the city of Kyiv). The study showed a positive dynamics for one year, which indicates the strengthening of the role of the Ukrainian language. The use of Ukrainian-language materials by teachers had increased from 82% to 93%, and Russian-language materials had decreased from 4% to 0%. The number of parents who are satisfied with the use of the state language in educational institutions had increased from 87% to 93%. It is noteworthy that 72% of students expressed a desire to develop their knowledge of the Ukrainian language (Моніторинг, 2023). However, on the basis of other surveys, it was found that although 89.7% of people were covered by Ukrainian-language education, the Russian language is still present in informal communication, in particular in the capital and other large

cities in the east and south (Danylevs'ka, 2019). As a result of the widespread use of the Ukrainian language in the educational process, *cognitive, thought-creating (thought-forming), contact-establishing expressive, impressive, and educational* functions, among others, have increased.

The Ukrainian language in the media. Monitoring conducted by the Center for Content Analysis (2020, 2022) showed positive changes in the use of the Ukrainian language in social networks. The key ones – Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram – showed a significant increase of Ukrainian-speaking users: from 13–27% in 2020 to almost 60% in 2022. However, the Russian language is still widespread on YouTube and TikTok, although the situation is improving (*Українська мова у соцімережах*, 2022).

The results of the study “Ukrainian Media, Attitudes and Trust in 2023”, commissioned by the international organization Internews (2023), show that the number of people who use the internet every day has reached 89% among people aged 18–35 – 98%. Respondents get news from social networks (76%), news sites (41%), television (30%), radio (10%), and the press (3%). Trust in Ukrainian radio, TV and print media has increased since the disappearance of pro-Russian stations and channels and Russian music from the air. 92% of respondents used media in Ukrainian. Only 8% used Russian media, but the level of trust in them is low (*Українські медіа*, 2023).

Article 25 of the Law “On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language” (January 16, 2022) came into force, according to which print media at the national and regional levels in Ukraine must be published in the state language (except for those published in indigenous languages, English and other official languages of the EU). The Law of Ukraine “On Media” (2023) has also been adopted, which establishes requirements for the use of state and other languages in television and radio programs, in print and online media (Article 40). The active introduction of the Ukrainian language into the spheres of press, radio, television, and the internet has led to the activation of the following functions: *communicative, thought-creating, nominative, contact-establishing, influential, voluntary, emotional, expressive, impressive, and aesthetic*.

The Ukrainian language in book publishing. The situation in the Ukrainian book market, which used to be dominated by Russian-language products, changed after 2014, when Ukrainian-language book publishing began to develop actively, and 38.1 million books were produced in the state language in 2018. 21.9 thousand books were published in 2021, with a circulation

of almost 44.7 million copies. The year 2022 was difficult: medium and small publishing houses were affected by the war, and 22% of offices and warehouses were damaged, especially in the Kharkiv province. According to the Book Chamber of Ukraine, 9.7 thousand books were published in 2022, with a circulation of 11.5 million copies (half the number of previous years). However, in 2023, the output of book products increased: 15.2 million books were produced, with a circulation of 24.7 million copies (an increase of 73% in the number of publications, and a 203% increase in circulation compared to 2022). 99.5% of books, brochures and periodicals in 2023 were published in Ukrainian (*Bidomocmi*, 2023). At the beginning of the war, the Yakaboo publishing house (along with 50 others) opened free access to reading and listening to Ukrainian books via a mobile application. The increasing interest in literature written in the Ukrainian language and the publication of a significant number of books also led to the activation of many functions: *communicative, thought-creating, nominative, appeal (influencing the addressee), voluntary (conveying), emotional, expressive, impressive, aesthetic (poetic) etc.*

The Ukrainian language in cinematography. The revival of Ukrainian cinema, Russified in Soviet times, intensified after the Revolution of Dignity. Since 2014, films in Ukrainian have become box office releases. The Law of Ukraine “On State Support of Cinematography” (2017) was adopted, according to which Ukrainian films began to receive state funding. In 2017, a record number of films appeared at the box office – 33. To advertise Ukrainian cinema, the “Watch Ukrainian” project was launched. The best Ukrainian films cover historical events in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: documentaries – “Euromaidan. A Rough Cut” (2014), “The Earth is Blue as an Orange” (2020), “A House Made of Splinters” (2022); fictions – “The Guide” (2014), “Donbass” (2018), “Kruty” (2019), “Klondike” (2022), etc. At the end of 2018–2019, the film “Cyborgs. Heroes Never Die” (about the Ukrainian defenders of the Donetsk airport) had the biggest box office receipts. In 2023, the most popular films were: “Mavka. The Forest Song”, feature films “Shchedryk” (about the events of the 1930s), “Myrnyi-21” (about the beginning of the war in 2014), “Dovbush” (about the national hero Oleksa Dovbush). The documentary “20 Days in Mariupol” (2023), filmed at the beginning of the Russian occupation, received the 2024 Oscar for Best Documentary. “Ukrainian historical and heroic-patriotic films are becoming a weighty argument for Russian propaganda, an incentive not only to study the history of Ukraine, but also to participate in modern political

processes, to develop an active life position for the younger generation” (Єпик & Єпик, 2020, p. 36). The great popularity of modern Ukrainian films and their high quality have contributed to the activation of the following functions of the Ukrainian language: *communicative, thought-creating, appeal, voluntary, emotional, expressive, impressive, aesthetic* etc. They ensure the development of a number of modern functions of the Ukrainian language, in particular *the functions of (self)-identification and consolidation, national-cultural function, nation- and state-building*.

Learning the Ukrainian language during the war. Russian military aggression in Ukraine (2014–2024) affected the functioning of the Ukrainian language and its speakers. Since February 2014, as a result of the annexation or temporary occupation of part of the territories of our state, and since February 2022, as a result of active hostilities and fighting, many residents have been forced to flee to safer places, mainly to the center and west of Ukraine. According to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, at the beginning of 2024, 4.9 million internally displaced persons were officially registered, of which 3.6 million were people who moved after the start of the full-scale war (*Внутрішньо переміщені особи*, 2024). Some Ukrainians were forced to emigrate abroad (in September 2023, there were about 6 million refugees in the European Union). According to EU Commissioner Ilva Johansson, about 450 thousand children were attending European schools in June 2023, many of whom studied online with Ukrainian schools at the same time. To facilitate the adaptation of students in 2023–2024, educational projects have been launched: “Ukrainian School in the EU” and “Neo Study Ukraine”, according to which full-time education takes place in Ukrainian and English with the study of the language of the host country.

In Ukraine, many citizens of all ages have begun to actively study the state language. The all-Ukrainian project “Free Ukrainian Language Courses”, the volunteer project “Teaching Ukrainian Language Online”, the E-Mova platform (“Business Speaks Ukrainian”), the online course “Ukrainian Language” from the project “Education Era” etc., have gained popularity. New projects have appeared thanks to the help of European partners: the online course “Teaching Ukrainian in Classes with Instruction in the Languages of National Minorities” (Finnish-Ukrainian EU project), the Suspilne/LingvisPlay Ukrainian language learning platform (Swedish-Ukrainian EU project), etc. According to Duolingo, since February 2022 more than 1.3 million users have started learning Ukrainian as a sign of solidarity. In the countries that received

the most refugees, the number of applicants for Ukrainian language courses increased greatly: by 1651% in Germany, by 1615% in Poland, and by 1515% in the Czech Republic.

In many cities of Ukraine (Kyiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Rivne, Lutsk, Lviv, etc.), language courses and speaking clubs have appeared where Ukrainians who previously communicated in Russian learn Ukrainian. We support the idea that, despite the forced nature of the process, “the latest temporary ‘resettlement’ of residents of Ukraine [...] contributes to the gradual and organic transition of Russian-speaking citizens to Ukrainian. It is about the practice of everyday live speech, and about the purposeful study of the language with the help of specialists” (Шумицька, 2022, p. 5).

Modern researchers, studying the language biographies of Ukrainians, have revealed the individual motives for their transition to the Ukrainian language. Among the arguments, the most typical are the following: the reluctance to associate oneself with Russian culture and the aggressor through the Russian language; the desire to overcome the colonial past, and the understanding of the Ukrainian language as a means of national unity (Малаш, 2023, p. 105). “There is a clear connection between language and national self-identification. In order to be called a Ukrainian, it becomes important to know Ukrainian and communicate in it” (Цар, 2023, p. 109).

3. Conclusions

So, in 2014–2024 there were significant socio-cultural transformations in the use of the Ukrainian language at the official and private levels. Thanks to the legislative actions of the state and its practical implementation, it was possible to increase the communicative prestige of the Ukrainian language in the state and public spheres (primarily in the field of education and culture) in order to strengthen its role in Ukrainian society as a means of state unity.

The spread of the Ukrainian language in private communication is a consequence of the growth of the national and linguistic consciousness of Ukrainians, their ethnic and state self-identification, the development of linguistic personality, and meaningful linguistic behavior. According to the results of research, the most conscious were young educated people, born in independent Ukraine.

Over the past decade, there has been a reorientation of the diglossia in Ukraine towards the expansion of functions: on the one hand, increasing the status and prestige of the Ukrainian language; on the other hand, marginalization of the Russian language. As a result of the redistribution of functions of the Ukrainian language, communicative, informative, cognitive, and thought-creating functions, for example, have become more powerful. This has happened due to the expansion of the spheres of its usage and an increase in the number of native speakers. During the ethno-socio-political challenges, (self-)identification and consolidation, national-cultural, and nation- and state-building functions were actualized. During the war, the Ukrainian language began to perform special functions: it became a symbol of independence, a means of national security, struggle and resistance to the hostile aggression, and a “language weapon”.

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Zmiany społeczno-kulturowe w funkcjonowaniu języka ukraińskiego w Ukrainie w latach 2014–2024

Artykuł przedstawia zmiany społeczno-kulturowe w funkcjonowaniu języka ukraińskiego w Ukrainie w latach 2014–2024 na podstawie dokumentów ustawodawczych, prac naukowców, artykułów prasowych oraz wyników monitorowania i badań socjologicznych. Stwierdzono, że w wyniku polityki językowej państwa wzrósł prestiż komunikacyjny języka ukraińskiego w sferze państwowej i publicznej. W komunikacji prywatnej język ten rozpowszechnił się w związku ze wzrostem świadomości narodowej i językowej Ukraińców, a także ich identyfikacji etnicznej i państwowej. W obliczu wyzwań etnicznych, społecznych i politycznych uaktywniły się funkcje (samo)identyfikacyjne, konsolidacyjne, narodowo-kulturowe oraz związane z budowaniem narodu i państwa. W czasie wojny język ukraiński zaczął pełnić szczególne funkcje – stał się symbolem niepodległości oraz środkiem zapewniania bezpieczeństwa narodowego, walki i oporu wobec agresji wroga.

Słowa kluczowe: dwujęzyczność; polityka językowa; sytuacja językowa; autoidentyfikacja; zmiany społeczno-kulturowe; język ukraiński

Socio-cultural changes in the functioning of the Ukrainian language in Ukraine in 2014–2024

The article traces socio-cultural changes in the functioning of the Ukrainian language in Ukraine in 2014–2024 on the basis of legislative documents, works of scholars, articles in the media, and the results of monitoring and sociological surveys. It was found that due to the language policy of the state, the communicative prestige of the Ukrainian language in the state and public spheres has increased. In private communication, the language has spread as a result of the growth of the national and linguistic consciousness of Ukrainians, as well as their ethnic and state self-identification. During the ethno-socio-political challenges, the functions of (self-)identification, consolidation, national-cultural, nation- and state-building have been actualized. During the war, the Ukrainian language has begun to perform special functions: it has become a symbol of independence and a means of national security, struggle and resistance against enemy aggression.

Keywords: bilingualism; language policy; language situation; self-identification; socio-cultural changes; Ukrainian language

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