



The Impact of War on Language Ideologies: A European Perspective

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.11649/sn.3393>

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Abstract

Language ideology frequently features in political and social debates worldwide. Recently, there has been a trend towards a broader understanding of language ideology and its impact on sociopolitical life, language itself, and its usage, particularly regarding status and corpus language planning. The article focuses on language policy and planning (LPP), providing a brief historical overview of language ideologies in Europe and examining how they are currently shaped by contemporary events, notably Russia's invasion of Ukraine. By offering examples from Ukraine, the article explores how language ideologies evolve in a war-torn country. It then identifies and analyses the dominant language ideologies as expressed in LPP in Europe, considering the roles of English and other European languages within the European Union and the broader European context.

Keywords: language ideology; language policy and planning (LPP); war; Ukraine; English language; European languages

The research was carried out with own funds.

Competing interests: no competing interests have been declared.

Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences.

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Introduction

The term “language ideology” was introduced by Silverstein (1979, p. 193) with reference to “any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a rationalisation or justification of perceived language structure and use”. Since then, Silverstein and other scholars have further developed the term and the topic, considering language ideology as a bridge between linguistic and social theory. This is because it connects the microculture of communicative action with political and economic considerations of power and social inequality, while also addressing macro-social constraints on language behaviour (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994, p. 72). Woolard (2020) further explores the social aspect of language ideology, treating the terms “language ideologies”, “linguistic ideologies”, and “ideologies of language” as interchangeable labels. This paper adopts this approach, aiming to identify and analyse dominant language ideologies in Europe since the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Language ideologies play a crucial role in shaping how individuals and communities perceive and use language, influencing everything from everyday communication to broader social and political dynamics. They seem to be “everywhere” around us, especially when we aim to understand how power and language are connected (Cavanaugh, 2019). By examining these ideologies and interrelations, we can gain insights into the ways in which language both reflects and perpetuates power structures and social inequalities. This analysis is particularly pertinent in the context of recent geopolitical events, such as the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which have brought issues of national identity, cultural preservation, and linguistic hegemony to the forefront. Understanding the dominant language ideologies in Europe during this period can shed light on the complex interplay between language, power, and society, and help us to better understand the broader implications of these ideologies for social cohesion and conflict. Therefore, our main research question is to identify and analyse dominant language ideologies in Ukraine and Europe during the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine and to explore whether there have been any changes.

Language ideologies, as sets of shared attitudes, worldviews, and beliefs about language, underpinned by certain social and cultural values, have a direct impact on language policy and planning (LPP). Governments, the EU, and local authorities formulate, disseminate, and shape future-oriented activities aimed at influencing and modifying the language behaviour of a speech community, society, an entire country, or even a bloc of countries. Language ideologies and the ways in which they shape language planning may affect both the use and form of the language or a group of languages. At the same time, LPP specifies and impacts how language is used by government agencies, educational institutions, non-government organisations, and other entities (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997, p. 6).

Regarding specific language ideologies, Cobarrubias (1983, p. 63), when considering language-status planning, initially identified the following “typical language ideologies”: linguistic assimilation, linguistic pluralism, vernacularisation, and internationalism. Given our objective to trace the most prevalent ideologies in Europe, it is crucial to also consider the ideologies of multilingualism, mother-tongue, purism, and those related to English-medium instruction (EMI) in this analysis, as the EU and other European countries have undergone national revival and closer cooperation within the bloc. Considering Europe’s history and language ideologies, characterised by the rise and fall of empires, colonisation both within and beyond the continent, as well as periods of independence and post-colonial development, it is reasonable to suggest that the ideologies of colonisation and decolonisation should be included in the taxonomy of typical language ideologies in Europe.

Ideologies of Colonisation and Decolonisation

The ideologies of colonisation and decolonisation are deeply intertwined with Europe’s historical context. When we consider the main historical events in Europe, we observe that, since the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, European history has largely been a history of wars, invasions, and empires, with notable exceptions such as the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution, and the so-called Age of Revolutions. These empires led to the colonisation of other peoples, often involving the imposition of the coloniser’s language and culture on indigenous populations, sometimes resulting in language shift and loss.

The process of colonisation was not merely a political or economic endeavour but also a cultural one. The colonisers often sought to impose their own cultural norms, values, and systems of governance on colonised societies. This imposition frequently led to significant cultural transformations and, in many cases, the erosion of indigenous traditions and languages. Decolonisation, therefore, involves not only the political and economic liberation of colonised nations but also a cultural revival and the reclamation of indigenous identities and languages. The legacy of colonisation continues to influence contemporary European and global politics, as former colonies navigate the complex process of rebuilding and redefining their national identities in a post-colonial world.

While exploring current English Language Education (ELE), Meighan (2023, p. 147) introduced the concept of coloniallingual ideology, arguing that it “illustrates the transformative limits of translanguaging (Jaspers, 2018) and plurilingualism”. In other words, Meighan claims that languages used in a classroom bring the knowledge and beliefs embedded in the society of the language taught, i.e. English. He defines coloniallingualism as an approach by which colonial legacies, imperial mindsets, and inequitable practices are covertly or overtly upheld in ELE (Meighan, 2023, p. 146). This approach is not only relevant to English but can also be applied to other colonial languages such as French, Russian, Spanish, and others. These languages, like English, carry with them the historical

and cultural legacies of their colonial pasts, influencing the way they are taught and perceived in various educational contexts around the world. In one of her essays, bell hooks, drawing on her personal experiences growing up in Kentucky during desegregation and her professional experiences in academia, writes that “it is not the English language that hurts me, but what the oppressors do with it, how they shape it to become a territory that limits and defines, how they make it a weapon that can shame, humiliate, colonize” (hooks, 1995, p. 296).

When formerly colonised countries achieved their independence, often at the cost of significant suffering and the loss of many lives, they soon realised that physical independence does not automatically equate to the liberation of their minds from colonial or post-colonial ways of thinking. The process of decolonisation is both lengthy and painful, requiring societies to reassess colonial cultural values, imperial mindsets, and worldviews, and to develop new approaches and visions. This journey inevitably leads to the formulation of new ideologies, which are shaped by the unique circumstances of each country, society, and language situation.

Moreover, the psychological impact of colonialism cannot be underestimated. The internalised sense of inferiority and the pervasive influence of colonial ideologies can persist long after independence has been achieved. Overcoming these deeply ingrained attitudes requires sustained effort and a collective commitment to redefining national identity and values.

Decolonisation involves a profound transformation that touches every aspect of society. It requires a critical examination of historical narratives, educational systems, and cultural practices that have been influenced by colonial rule. Societies must strive to reclaim and revitalise indigenous knowledge and traditions, fostering a sense of pride and identity that is rooted in their own heritage. This process is not uniform; it varies greatly depending on the historical, social, and political context of each nation or linguistic community.

Bearing in mind that Meighan (2023) proposed the concept of colonialingual ideology in English Language Education (ELE) or education in a broad sense, our intention is to apply the term to a wider array of language ideologies during the stages of colonisation and post-colonialism. Since our research analyses the language situation during the independent post-colonial development of countries or societies in Europe, it is crucial to introduce the notion of decolonialingual ideology, a term I have developed based on Meighan's (2023) concept of colonialingual ideology. Decolonialingual ideology promotes the freedom and independence of mindsets, knowledge, and belief systems through the teaching and learning of languages. It aims to undo and redo the previous colonial status and corpus language planning, imposed cultural values, worldviews, and traditions. Both colonialingual and decolonialingual ideologies influence how we use language(s), the categorisations we apply, what we value, and how we relate to each other in various societal contexts. These ideologies ultimately contribute to the creation of a new linguistic landscape and environment where it is possible to offer other world visions as part of decolonisation process.

However, Vaccaro (2021), using the example of South Africa after the end of apartheid, demonstrates that overcoming colonial legacies in language practice and teaching is challenging, particularly in schools where English and Afrikaans remain dominant. In view of this, she suggests that the process of decolonisation would be accompanied by “providing indigenous language speakers with representation and tools to have a say in broader social matters” (Vaccaro, 2021, p. 12). This supports the idea that education should lead to the development of knowledge and broader understanding, which will be instrumental during the decolonisation process.

Decoloniallingual ideology, therefore, not only seeks to dismantle the remnants of colonial language policies but also aims to empower communities to reclaim their linguistic heritage. This involves the consistent integration of indigenous languages and cultures into educational curricula, promoting multilingualism, and recognising the value of diverse linguistic identities. By doing so, societies can foster a more inclusive and equitable environment where all voices are heard and respected. Additionally, this ideology encourages the development of language policies that support the preservation and revitalisation of minority languages and cultures, ensuring that they are not overshadowed by dominant languages. It also advocates for the creation of spaces or platforms where marginalised linguistic communities can share their knowledge and cultural practices, contributing to a richer and more diverse societal tapestry.

Ukraine as an Example of Decolonisation and Decoloniallingualism

Before considering language ideologies and planning in Ukraine, it is necessary to observe that in the West and former Soviet Union countries, the terms “anti-colonial”, “post-colonial”, and “decolonial” are most often associated with Africa, Latin America, or South Asia, and the legacies of British, French, Spanish, and Belgian colonialism, among others. The overlooking of Russian colonialism is largely due to the Russo-centric nature of Western knowledge about Eastern Europe and Eurasia (Kassymbekova, 2023). This knowledge was usually presented through the Russian language and resources, reflecting the perspective of the colonising state and thus contributing to epistemic injustice.

The dominance of Russian narratives has overshadowed the colonial experiences of other nations within the former Soviet Union, including Ukraine. This has led to a skewed understanding of the region’s historical development and the perpetuation of colonial mindsets. The marginalisation of Ukrainian perspectives and the imposition of Russian or Soviet cultural and linguistic norms and approaches have had profound impacts on Ukraine’s national identity and language policy and planning.

Russian and Soviet coloniallingualism in Ukraine was characterised by centuries of Russification and the imposition of the Russian language in all spheres of life, as other languages were deemed to “hinder” progress and development (Krouglov, 2021). The authorities elevated the status of Russian, the so-called “great and powerful language”, as the principal language

or language of wider communication, while simultaneously limiting or completely banning the use of Ukrainian (Krouglov, 2016). The description of the language situation would be incomplete without mentioning the imposed ideology of “bilingualism” and the emergence of Surzhyk, a Ukrainian/Russian mixed variety (Krouglov, 2002). Russian was the sole language of science, technology, and business, and all PhD dissertations in the Soviet Union had to be completed in Russian. This was reinforced by centralisation and the promotion of a Soviet, Russian-biased cultural identity, as well as the ideological orientation of all reforms and widespread incompetence, when Communist Party apparatchiks made decisions on various issues in the development of the economy or culture. Soviet ideology, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, aimed at the elimination of all ethnic differences in the USSR with a view to creating a new unity of people, i.e. the Soviet people.

Colonial tendencies could be traced in everything connected to language policy and planning in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. Translation practice was no exception, where world literature was first translated into Russian and then from Russian into other languages of the Soviet Union. This approach resulted in linguistic and cultural appropriations or calques from the Russian language instead of the original language of the source text. This was part of the Russification process, where borrowed lexical items¹ from other languages of the world were first used and “tested” for their appropriateness in Russian before being applied in other languages of the Soviet Union (Krouglov, 2002, p. 226). This situation led to an unprecedented proliferation of various Russian lexical items in Ukrainian and other languages of the USSR through the translation of world literature, film dubbing, and mass media. News items and articles were first translated into Russian, after which media outlets in other languages were permitted to duplicate them in their national or local languages. A similar principle was applied to Ukrainian literary texts, which were usually translated into Russian first and then into other languages of the world, thus presenting them through “the pervasive influence of the Russian imperial and Soviet lens” (Odrekhivska, 2024, p. 12). The policy of translating world literature into Ukrainian via Russian contributed to the further Russification of Ukrainian, while translating works of Ukrainian authors into other languages via Russian led to the spread of Russian imperial and Soviet narratives about Ukraine, as well as Ukrainian language and culture, overseas.

However, will it be sufficient to replace Russian, a colonial language, with Ukrainian as part of the decolonisation process or decoloniallingualism? The answer to this question is “no”, and it is never easy to substitute one language with another since so many issues are involved in the process, such as the ability of speakers to make the shift, their traditions, and habitual use, which are not easy to change. On top of that, what is crucial in this process is to change worldviews, perceptions, beliefs, and approaches as part of a wider decolonisation process. The government may adopt a raft of laws and regulations as part of LPP, but they

¹ Lexical items are understood here as a single word, a chain of words (catena), or a phrase that constitutes the basic building blocks of a sentence.

may remain ineffective if the process of decolonisation does not start in earnest. Although decolonisation began in 1991 with the independence of Ukraine and later adoption of the new Constitution, it was only since 2014, with the Revolution of Dignity and the start of the Russo-Ukrainian war, that the process of decolonisation has accelerated.

The process of decolonisation in Ukraine has not always been smooth and clear. For example, the controversial Education Law of 2017 (*Zakon Ukraïny "Pro osvitu", 2017*) limited education in minority languages to pre-school and primary education. Although the intention behind this law was to promote the use of Ukrainian, it contradicted the main principles of the EU and liberal approaches to language planning, especially with regard to minority languages. To address this issue, the government passed the Law on Supporting the Functioning of the Ukrainian language in 2019 (*Zakon Ukraïny "Pro zabezpechennia funktsionuvannia ukraïns'koï movy iak derzhavnoi", 2019*), followed by the 2020 Law on Secondary Education (*Zakon Ukraïny "Pro povnu zahal'nu seredniu osvitu", 2020*), which partially resolved certain issues in the 2017 Education Law. Despite these efforts, the implementation of these laws faced challenges, and the balance between promoting the national language and respecting minority language rights remains a delicate and ongoing process.

In view of this, the Ukrainian government passed two laws: "On the Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine" (*Zakon Ukraïny "Pro korinni narody Ukraïny", 2021*) and "On National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine" (*Zakon Ukraïny "Pro natsional'ni menshyny (spil'noty) Ukraïny", 2022*), which offer further definition of indigenous people as "an ethnic minority within the Ukrainian population that possesses a distinctive language and culture; has traditional social, cultural, or representative structures; considers itself native to Ukraine; and does not have its own state entity beyond Ukraine" (*Zakon Ukraïny "Pro korinni narody Ukraïny", 2021, Art. 1, para. 1*). More specifically, the Law on National Minorities (Communities) of Ukraine aims to protect the interests of autochthonous ethnic groups that have formed on the territory of Ukraine and do not have their own state formation outside of the Ukrainian state. These communities are listed in the law's second article, which names three indigenous peoples living on the territory of the Crimean Peninsula: Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks (a Turkic-speaking, ethno-religious community that professes Judaism), and Karaites (another Turkic-speaking group that follows Karaite Judaism) (*Zakon Ukraïny "Pro natsional'ni menshyny (spil'noty) Ukraïny", 2022*). The laws triggered the creation and approval of the Strategy for the Development of the Crimean Tatar Language for 2022–2032 (*Kabinet Ministriv Ukraïny Rozporiadzhennia "Pro skhvalennia Stratehii rozvytku kryms'kotatars'koï movy na 2022–2032 roky", 2022*), which incorporates various activities such as the creation of the National Corpus of the Crimean Tatar Language (NCCTL),² the development of an official spelling of the Crimean Tatar language based on the Latin alphabet,³ and many other initiatives aimed at corpus and status planning of the language.

2 See "Creation of National Corpus of Crimean Tatar Language underway in Ukraine" (2023).

3 See "Iryna Vereshchuk: Crimean Tatar language must be protected" (2023).

While the new Law on the Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine provided a useful framework for the development of indigenous cultures and languages, it was criticised by Russia as discriminatory legislation against Moldovan, Russian, and Belarusian speakers (Sribniak, 2021). At the same time, Human Rights Watch published an article expressing “concerns about whether guarantees for minority languages are sufficient” (Denber, 2022). However, Kremin dismisses the accusation of discrimination and the restriction of the rights of Russian-speaking citizens as unfounded. He states: “The results of sociological research completely refute the mentioned fake. Namely: 85% of ethnic Russians and 90% of Russian-speaking residents of Ukraine believe that there is no oppression of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine” (Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, 2022, as cited in Kremin, 2025, p. 232).

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began in February 2022, has led to considerable changes in the worldviews, cultural mindsets, perceptions, and attitudes of many Ukrainians. Patriotism and the defence of the country have become key issues, and speaking Ukrainian is considered a form of patriotism, or a language shield against the aggressor (Hrytsenko, 2022, p. 10). Emotive narratives in Ukrainian media have reinforced notions of the motherland and the Ukrainian people, and have supported the glorification of the Ukrainian army and soldiers, who defended and liberated Ukrainians from the occupiers. The Ukrainian language has become the “language of victory”, as both its increasing use and its designation reflect the determination of Ukrainians to achieve victory in the shortest possible time (Suprun, 2022). At the same time, the idea of distancing from Russia as an aggressor state and from Kremlin-promoted “Russian World” expansionist ideology has been encapsulated by Volodymyr Zelensky’s phrase “Without you”, which has become a symbol of Ukrainian resistance to the Russian invasion (Pidkuimukha, 2025, p. 276).

The ideology of national revival and the resurgence of the Ukrainian language has transformed into an intensive process of decolonisation and decoloniallingualism. This coincides with calls for the wider use of English and the eventual approval of Bill 9432 “On the Use of English” in June 2024 (*Zakon Ukraïny “Pro zastosuvannia anhliis’koi movy v Ukraïni”*, 2024). This legislative act not only proclaimed English as Ukraine’s language of international communication but also specified the expanded use of English at all levels of education, along with English language requirements and tests for civil servants and military personnel. This is a positive development, especially considering that Ukraine was ranked 45th in the world and nearly at the bottom of the table among other European countries in the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI) ranking (EF Education First, 2023). By passing this law, the government and legislators emphasised the importance of English for their European and NATO aspirations, while simultaneously limiting the use of Russian in international communication, although the latter is not explicitly mentioned in the legislation. This raises the question of whether the government aims to transform the existing bilingualism in the country into multilingualism, or to substitute Ukrainian/Russian bilingualism with Ukrainian/English bilingualism.

The Russian Invasion of Ukraine and Europe's Awakening

Since the start of the Russian full-scale invasion in February 2022, there have been numerous political and economic developments in Europe. However, the recognition of and need for the process of decolonisation and decoloniallingualism have accelerated, especially in the Baltic states. The ideologies of defending national identities and national languages as symbols of independence have come to the forefront of governments' policies in view of the threat from Russia (Budrytė, 2023). This is not only concerned with memory politics and the removal of monuments that remind them of their colonial past and association with the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. It has gone further, as the Baltic states have felt insecure while facing neo-imperialist Russia, which has developed new approaches in its propaganda activities aimed at the minds of ethnic Russians, especially those living in Latvia and Estonia.

In view of the aggressive actions of the Russian Federation, the countries of the EU and wider Europe have had to unite and increase their cooperation in offering military, political, economic, and financial support to Ukraine, while ensuring mutual support, particularly in the fields of security and defence.⁴ Consequently, the role of English has grown significantly, as the majority of international meetings on Ukraine have been conducted in English, often with interpretation into Ukrainian (Krouglov, 2025). At the same time, English remains an official and working language of the EU, despite the UK's departure from the bloc in January 2020 (European Union, n.d.-b). Among the positive sides of English remaining in the EU is that it is no longer the language of a member state (although Ireland and Malta consider it their official language). For most member states, English does not have any direct associations with the colonial past and does not require any decolonisation process. The English language has already become the principal language of science, technology, and international business, which makes the knowledge of the language a very positive trend.

While there are many positive aspects to the consistent growth of English, there are some issues that affect the position of other languages of wider communication, such as French. Even though the UK left the EU, the position of French has been diminishing ever since. Herbert (2023, p. 37) points to abundant evidence that English is by far the dominant working language in the EU institutions, with the exception of the European Court of Justice, and that "it has replaced French, which was originally dominant".

There are also arguments that English may restrict the use of national or other official and regional languages in the EU. For example, more and more courses in many universities across the bloc are taught in English, and this, according to critics, may represent a threat to the development of other languages and even lead to a partial loss of their functional-

⁴ The EU and its member states have provided substantial financial and military support to Ukraine, including nearly €85 billion in overall assistance. See *Chapter 1* (n.d.).

ity, such as in higher education or sciences (Phillipson, 2006). Some scholars suggest that requiring every EU citizen to know at least English, French, or German seems not only “asocial but contrary to the basic principles of law in a *Rechtsstaat*, a community governed by the rule of law” (Van der Jeught, 2015, p. 245).

At the same time, as Wright (2004) and de Swaan (2001) point out, the spread of English in the academic world may lead to non-native speakers facing disadvantages, particularly in academic communication and publications. There may be disadvantages for English-speaking academics as well who do not speak local languages. For example, Mair (2024) describes the situation in Germany, where “colleagues with limited competence in German can publish, research and teach in English without any problem in their departments, [but] they are likely to experience frustration with their university administration, which continues to operate in German” (p. 252). However, as Cogo and Jenkins (2010) argue, English has become a *de facto* lingua franca in Europe, and EU official and minority languages and multilingualism only benefit from more English as a lingua franca (ELF), especially since ELF has removed any association with the English spoken by native speakers. Their findings show that multicompetence is achieved only by Europeans learning other languages as well as English (Cogo & Jenkins, 2010, p. 288).

It is worth mentioning here that there has been a stable, albeit modest, growth in the number of people able to communicate in English. According to a Eurobarometer survey, English is spoken by about half of Europeans (47%) as a foreign or second language, notably increasing by 5 percentage points since 2012 (European Union, 2024). A more notable increase of 9 percentage points was registered among young Europeans (15–24 years old) over the same period, meaning that 7 out of 10 young Europeans can have a conversation in English. Among other languages, French (11%), German (10%), and Spanish (7%) are the most spoken foreign languages in the EU.

Nevertheless, the 2023 EF Report (EF Education First, 2023) registers some negative aspects in English proficiency trends. It specifically addresses the issues of lower scores in high proficiency countries, such as the Scandinavian countries, Germany, and the Netherlands, and the inability of several of the largest EU economies, e.g. France, Spain, and Italy, to reach the same proficiency levels as their neighbours. These are worrying tendencies, especially since there are lower English proficiency indices in almost all age groups, except perhaps the 31–40 age group, while the trend is particularly disappointing for the 18–20 age group, where the results have been stagnant for a number of years now. These results are somewhat aggravated by the fact that there have been gender gaps in Northern European countries in favour of men by more than 40 points.

As the role of English as an international language or language of wider communication has been growing in Europe and beyond, EU countries and the wider European region, actively endorsing the strengthening of political, economic, and military ties in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, have shown a commitment to preserving the unique multicultural and multilingual make-up of European society, where English has become the pan-European lingua franca (Modiano, 2024, p. 210). Numerous examples of how the European Commission

supports regional and minority languages are provided in the report *Linguistic Diversity in the European Union: Examples of Projects Supporting Regional and Minority Languages*, published by the Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (European Commission – Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2024). Many of these projects were aimed at young people in the EU. For example, the project “Language without Borders” aimed to make participants from Slovakia, Croatia, Austria, and Hungary aware of the importance of languages as a means of communication across borders and strengthened the network of ethnic Croats in the Austrian state of Burgenland. Another project, “Feeling Europe: Languages, Identities and Collective Emotions”, coordinated by Universidad de Castilla – La Mancha, Spain, addressed the issues of cultural and linguistic diversity in designing and developing modules and courses at the university level. These and many other projects show that multilingualism has been the principal ideology in the European Union as a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity, one of the cornerstones of the European project (European Commission, n.d.-a). As part of this multilingualism approach, EU institutions aim to communicate with Europeans in their own languages, protect linguistic diversity of the bloc, and promote language learning across the EU (European Union, n.d.-b).

There is significant support from EU organisations and member states to promote multilingualism in Europe even further. For example, 49% of upper secondary pupils in the EU study two or more foreign languages (European Union, n.d.-a), which is a notable achievement of the EU education system. It is important to note that there is an overwhelming support for multilingualism in the EU, where 86% of EU citizens agree that everyone should speak at least one other language than their mother tongue, while 69% think that EU citizens should know more than one additional language (European Union, 2024). At the same time, 76% of Europeans consider that improving language skills should be a policy priority across the EU. The survey also demonstrated an increase in foreign language speakers compared to 2012, showing that while 59% of Europeans (an increase of 3 percentage points compared to 2012) speak at least one foreign language, 39% speak two or more foreign languages. Interestingly, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) conducted research on the adult population of Ukraine living in government-controlled territories between December 2022 and January 2023. They found that the majority of Ukrainians, specifically 68%, have some knowledge of at least one foreign language, although this knowledge is often not deep. In particular, 51% of Ukrainians indicated that they have some knowledge of the English language, but a more detailed analysis shows that only 23% can read, write, and communicate in this language at everyday and professional levels.⁵ We need to bear in mind that many people in Ukraine were internally displaced, and around five million people found temporary refuge in various countries around the world. For this reason, any statistical data since February 2022 will not be fully representative.

⁵ See “Level of Proficiency in English and Other Foreign Languages in Ukraine: Results of Quantitative Sociological Research Conducted in December 2022 – January 2023”. The press release was prepared by Maksym Yashnyk, KIIS analyst (Yashnyk, 2023).

Since Ukrainians who emigrated due to the war are predominantly women and children, the issue of education for their children has arisen, highlighting the need to provide at least some teaching in Ukrainian. The resolution of this issue depends on various factors, including the ability of local authorities or individual schools to assist Ukrainians who have fled the war. This situation also raises broader questions about the numerous languages of migrant communities across the EU and their ability to continue their studies in their native languages, or at least to continue learning their languages within the EU education system. The ideology of multilingualism⁶ and diversity across all EU states supports minority languages and languages of immigrant communities. It is estimated that citizens of at least 175 nationalities are now living in the EU (European Commission, n.d.-b). The support of diversity is key and is enshrined in Article 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which states that the Union shall respect cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity within the bloc.⁷ The ideology of diversity in the EU is based on two key reasons: the humanistic value of Europe's multilingualism on the one hand, and the business, economic, and commercial rationale on the other, in order to sustain "a healthy, multilingual economy through language learning" (Van der Jeught, 2015, p. 90).

The influx of Ukrainian refugees in 2022 has underscored the importance of a multilingualism and diversity approach in integrating these individuals into the host countries' education systems while respecting their linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This integration effort not only supports the immediate educational needs of Ukrainian children but also fosters a more inclusive and diverse educational environment. According to a survey conducted in September–October 2023, language diversity is considered important by the majority of respondents, and 84% of Europeans think that regional and minority languages should be protected (European Union, 2024). The issue of Ukrainian and other refugees in the EU and the Eurobarometer survey prompt a re-evaluation of existing policies and resources dedicated to multilingual education, ensuring that all migrant communities have the opportunity to maintain their linguistic heritage while acquiring new language skills necessary for their integration into European society.

Conclusions

The attainment of independence marks a significant milestone; the true liberation of a nation lies in its ability to decolonise its mind and culture. This ongoing process is essential for building a future that honours the past while embracing new possibilities and perspectives. Furthermore, the implementation of decoloniallingual ideology requires

⁶ In the EU, multilingualism is understood as "the ability of societies, institutions, groups and individuals to engage, on a regular basis, with more than one language in their day-to-day lives" (see European Parliament briefing "Multilingualism: The Language of European Union"; EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service, 2022).

⁷ Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. 2012/C 326/02 (European Union, 2012).

a collaborative effort between policymakers, educators, and communities. It necessitates the development of language policies that reflect the linguistic diversity of the population and the provision of resources to support the teaching and learning of indigenous languages. This holistic approach ensures that the process of decolonisation is comprehensive and sustainable, ultimately leading to a more just and culturally rich society.

While the introduction of decolonial language ideology is a critical step towards achieving genuine independence, its success depends on a shared commitment to re-evaluating and transforming existing language practices. By prioritising education and ensuring fair representation, societies can create the conditions for a future in which linguistic diversity is valued and every individual can participate meaningfully in discussions about the country's language situation. In Ukraine, for example, this means engaging in dialogue about the roles and status of Ukrainian, English, minority languages, and international languages, as well as future language planning.

In the Ukrainian context, recognising and addressing the legacy of Russian and Soviet colonialism is crucial for developing effective language ideologies and planning. This requires not only promoting the Ukrainian language but also acknowledging and revitalising the country's diverse linguistic heritage, including minority languages. Efforts to decolonise language policies must be accompanied by broader educational reforms.

Furthermore, the process of decolonisation in Ukraine requires a concerted effort to dismantle the structures of epistemic injustice. This includes creating spaces for Ukrainian scholars and voices to contribute to global knowledge production and ensuring that Ukrainian perspectives are represented in academic and cultural discourses. The expanded use of English and other languages will further facilitate this engagement. By doing so, Ukraine can reclaim its linguistic and cultural autonomy and foster a more equitable and just society.

The Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine has intensified the processes of decolonisation and decolonial language ideology aimed, as identified in this article, at promoting the freedom and independence of mindsets, knowledge, and belief systems through the teaching and learning of languages. It aims to undo and redo the previous colonial status and corpus language planning. In these circumstances of post-colonial development, the ideology of defending national identity and the Ukrainian language as a symbol of national independence has become central to uniting all layers of society. At the same time, the rise of English may potentially evolve into an ideology of Ukrainian-English bilingualism and eventually into the ideology of multilingualism, where numerous languages will be in use at local and regional levels, with Ukrainian remaining as the state language and English as the language of international communication in the country.

In conclusion, while the terms "anti-colonial", "post-colonial", and "decolonial" are often associated with regions other than Eastern Europe, it is essential to recognise the unique colonial experiences of countries like Ukraine. Addressing the legacy of Russian and Soviet colonialism and promoting decolonial language ideologies are vital steps towards achieving true independence and cultural sovereignty.

Ideologies supporting multilingualism and linguistic diversity have been steadily developing in the twenty-first century, resulting in the increased mobility and employment opportunities for EU citizens across the bloc.⁸ The Russian invasion of Ukraine has further intensified the unity among EU nations, highlighting the need to support each other and to enhance the multilingual and English language skills of their citizens to improve communicative opportunities. English-medium instruction (EMI) has become a significant ideology in many European countries, reflecting the global dominance of English and its perceived benefits for academic and professional advancement. Additionally, the movement to revitalise minority indigenous languages and support the development of numerous migrant languages within the EU remains a crucial task for EU, national, and local governments. An analysis of language ideologies in Europe must encompass these additional ideologies supporting minority and migrant languages to fully understand the continent's complex linguistic landscape.

Furthermore, the promotion of multilingualism is not only about fostering communication but also about preserving cultural heritage and identity. By encouraging the use of multiple languages, the EU aims to create a more inclusive society where linguistic diversity is seen as an asset rather than a barrier. This approach helps to bridge gaps between different communities, fostering mutual respect and understanding. The ongoing efforts to support language learning and linguistic diversity are essential in building a cohesive and resilient European Union, capable of facing future challenges together.

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⁸ See "Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. Multilingualism: An asset for Europe and a shared commitment" (Commission of the European Communities, 2008).

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Wpływ wojny na ideologie językowe. Perspektywa europejska

Abstrakt

Ideologia językowa często pojawia się w debatach politycznych i społecznych na całym świecie. Ostatnio obserwuje się tendencję do szerszego rozumienia polityki językowej i jej wpływu na życie społeczno-polityczne, sam język oraz jego używanie, szczególnie w kontekście planowania językowego o charakterze statusowym i korpusowym. Artykuł skupia się na polityce językowej i planowaniu językowym, przedstawiając krótki historyczny przegląd ideologii językowych w Europie i analizując, w jaki sposób kształtują je obecnie współczesne wydarzenia, zwłaszcza rosyjska agresja na Ukrainę. Na przykładach z Ukrainy artykuł bada, jak ideologie językowe ewoluują w kraju ogarniętym wojną. Następnie identyfikuje i analizuje dominujące ideologie językowe wyrażane w polityce językowej i planowaniu językowym w Europie, biorąc pod uwagę rolę języka angielskiego i innych języków europejskich w Unii Europejskiej i szerszym kontekście europejskim.

Słowa kluczowe: ideologia językowa; polityka językowa i planowanie językowe; wojna; Ukraina; język angielski; języki europejskie

Citation

Krouglov, A. (2025). The impact of war on language ideologies: A European perspective. *Sprawy Narodowościowe: Seria nowa*, 2025(57), Article 3393. <https://doi.org/10.11649/sn.3393>