






NATIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

DOI: 10.46340/eppd.2025.12.3.3

LANGUAGE SECURITY OF UKRAINE UNDER THE CONDITIONS OF COUNTERACTING RUSSIAN AGGRESSION: PUBLIC-ADMINISTRATIVE DIMENSION

Halyna Kuts¹, D.Sc. in Political Science; Volodymyr Zolotarov², PhD in Economics;
Yurii Kuts², D.Sc. in Public Administration; Olena Sergeyeva², PhD in Public
Administration; Iryna Peresyphkina², PhD in Political Science

¹ H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Kharkiv, Ukraine

² V.N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Kharkiv, Ukraine

Corresponding author: Halyna Kuts; email: kuts.niss@gmail.com

Citation: Kuts, H., Zolotarov, V., Kuts, Yu., Sergeyeva, O., & Peresyphkina, I. (2025). Language Security of Ukraine Under the Conditions of Counteracting Russian Aggression: Public-Managerial Dimension. *Evropský politický a právní diskurz*, 12, 3, 28-40. <https://doi.org/10.46340/eppd.2025.12.3.3>

Abstract

The article examines the issue of Ukraine's language security in the context of public administration amid the country's opposition to Russian armed aggression. The language policy in Ukraine is reviewed, noting that it aims to establish, develop, and ensure the widespread use of Ukrainian as the state language.

The recent history of Ukraine is marked by constant attempts by pro-Russian political forces to undermine the status of the Ukrainian language as the state language. These forces have even used the «European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages», which was mistranslated.

To conceptualise the notion of «language security», a comparative analysis of the language-related provisions in four «National Security Strategies of Ukraine» (2007, 2012, 2015, 2020) has been made.

The concept of ruscism, a new totalitarian ideology defined in the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (2023), is analysed. Attention is focused on the key features of ruscism: expansionist state policy and practices of spreading Russian language and culture among other peoples.

The dominant status of language issues in Russia's war against Ukraine is highlighted. If the state does not adequately protect the language environment, threats to national interests can arise within this environment.

It is stated that Ukraine's language security is an integral part of its national security and stressed the importance of the state of protection of the state language, support of its development and functioning in all spheres of public life, strengthening its role in Ukrainian society as a means of enhancing state unity and the democratic constitutional order, alongside other vital interests of individuals, society, and the state. It also involves measures to ensure the free development, use, and protection of the languages of national minorities and the promotion of learning languages of international communication.

Keywords: language security, national security, public administration, language policy, war, Russian aggression, state, Ukraine, authority, political manipulation.

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Introduction

The modern development of Ukrainian society, which is resisting armed Russian aggression, is largely influenced by the nature of ethnonational processes within it. Transformational and modernisation changes, along with the war with the Russian Federation, have led to diverse changes in social relations, including national relations. This situation necessitates the formation of new approaches to state ethnonational policy, with public administration playing a crucial role. At the same time, the role of public administration as a science is growing, as it can comprehend and substantiate various ethnopolitical strategies to develop effective management decisions and technologies in language issues. In a multinational country, the problematic field of language policy becomes one of the components of public administration, especially considering the need to stabilise a society at war. Therefore, the development of measures for language security in the context of Ukrainian society's resistance to Russian armed aggression needs urgent resolution, particularly from the perspective of public administration and the science of public administration.

The concept of «language security» has not become widespread in the field of social sciences. Moreover, this term is used rather fragmentarily in both English and Ukrainian scientific discourses. It should be noted that the term «language security» is used in the field of programming: for example, for the analysis of programming languages or to denote a language's security profile.

At the same time, there are examples of the use of the term «language security» in the field of social and humanitarian sciences to denote the problems that arise in communities suffering from linguistic insecurity or discrimination based on language. As «language can also be divisive and serve as a powerful contributor to conflict and war» (Ringe, 2022, p. 2).

According to Jagiello-Tondera, «security systems in the non-military dimension should definitely cover the issue of linguistic security on many levels» (Jagiello-Tondera, 2024, p. 20). The author notes that language security should be perceived as an integral part of national security. In other words, the status of language security should be treated in the same manner as the status of information security or cultural security, which are already included in the sphere of national security.

The term «language security» is actively used by scholars from China, analyzing the linguistic vulnerability of communities at risk of disappearing (Hongwei, 2016; Jiang, 2020).

Additionally, the term «linguistic insecurity» is sometimes used to describe the issues of linguistic vulnerability within communities. Nonetheless, the term «linguistic insecurity» is rarely used to address these problems.

The concept of language security is almost absent in the Ukrainian scientific discourse. According to Berestok, language security is primarily associated with preserving national identity (Berestok, 2022). It is noted that in the conditions of military aggression and economic crisis, special attention should be paid to the national language.

Sytko believes the term «linguistic security» should be used, which «is understood as the state of legal protection of the state language» (Sytko, 2020, p. 45).

Sometimes the term 'language security' appears in philological research. However, the use of this term is associated not with language-political or security discourse but with the safety of expressions, non-conflict of texts (Tsareva, 2025).

In some works, language issues are analysed in the context of national security. For example, Demchenko considers the Ukrainian language as a factor of state security (Demchenko, 2016).

Researcher Makarets analyses the language dimension of Ukraine's national security in her work. She rightly noted that a single state language is very important for the formation of a young independent state, as it «becomes one of the tools for protection against possible encroachments on its national interests» (Makarets, 2017, p. 40).

When researching the outlined issue, it was extremely important to familiarise oneself with the studies of modern Ukrainian scholars whose scientific interests are related to the development of the problems of state regulation of language policy in various dimensions. Among them are: Kalyta, Kovalyova, Levchenko, Plotnytska, Popovych, Trybushnyi, and others. However, most of these researchers did not aim to thoroughly analyse public administration issues of the normative and legal support for implementing language policy in Ukraine. Moreover, insufficient attention has been paid to the issue of language security in Ukraine in the context of countering Russian aggression.

The purpose of this article is to conceptualise the category of language security in Ukraine in the context of countering Russian aggression from the perspective of public administration.

Materials and Methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the study consists of general scientific methods of cognition regarding the problem of language security in Ukraine, in particular, analytical, comparative, empirical, and descriptive methods. The research methods are also based on the principles of historical, structural-functional, and system analysis.

To identify the specifics of language policy in Ukraine, the studies of the following Ukrainian scientists were analysed: Kalyta, Kovalyova, Kuts, Levchenko, Plotnytska, Popovych, Sergeyeva and others. An analysis of Ukraine's normative and legal legislation was also carried out to identify the priorities for the formation of language policy in Ukraine: Constitution of Ukraine (1996); «European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages» (2003); «Concept of State Language Policy» (2010); Law of Ukraine «On Ensuring the Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language» (2019); Decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine on the constitutionality of the Law of Ukraine «On Ensuring the Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language» (2021); «State Targeted National and Cultural Program for Ensuring the Comprehensive Development and Functioning of Ukrainian as the State Language in All Spheres of Public Life for the Period Until 2030» (2024).

Focus is given to the problematic translation of the name «European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages» (2003), which was long used by pro-Russian political forces to russify Ukraine. The authentic name of the Charter uses the term «regional or minority languages», not «regional languages or languages of minorities».

The authors of the study analysed the security, regulatory, and legislative framework of Ukraine using content analysis, synchronic-diachronic method, and others. The methodological basis for the conceptualization of the category of language security in Ukraine was the normative and legislative framework of Ukraine: Law of Ukraine «On National Security of Ukraine»; «Strategies of National Security of Ukraine» (2007, 2012, 2015, 2020); «Doctrine of Information Security of Ukraine» (2017); «Information Security Strategy» (2021); Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine «On the Use of the Political Regime of the Russian Federation of the Ideology of Ruscism, Condemnation of the Principles and Practices of Ruscism as Totalitarian and Misanthropic» (2023).

To identify the specifics of the concept of «language security», the concepts of Jagiello-Tondera and Jiang were used, while the concept of Shakhov and Madisson was used to analyse Ukraine's national interests.

A comparative method was applied to consider language security issues in four «Strategies of National Security of Ukraine» (2007, 2012, 2015, 2020), which were in effect during the presidencies of Yushchenko, Yanukovych, Poroshenko, and Zelensky.

Sociological studies of Ukrainian citizens regarding language-political issues were examined.

Results and Discussion

Ethno-national policy in the field of language relations is determined by various factors: the ethnic composition of the population, the political regime, the geopolitical situation, etc. The «Small Encyclopaedia of Ethno-State Studies» defines language policy as «a set of ideological guidelines, normative acts, and practical actions aimed at regulating language relations in the country or at developing a language in a certain direction» (Kuts & Sergeyeva, 2019, p. 17). The vagueness of the definition is obvious. It reflects the goals and activities of the state but does not indicate the processes of interaction between policy subjects, nor does it outline the role of ethnic communities in the language issue.

In the «Encyclopaedia of Public Administration», language policy is defined as a set of ideological principles and practical measures aimed at solving language problems in the state and society. Language policy in a multinational state is particularly complex. In a multinational state, factors such as bilingualism or multilingualism must be taken into account, as well as the peculiarities of the national composition and interethnic relations, while identifying the role of individual languages and their speakers in public life (Levchenko et al., 2011, p. 364).

In public-administrative discourse, notes Popovych, language policy becomes a demonstration of the state's attitude, represented by state power institutions, towards solving language problems in a particular country (Popovych, 2013). According to Kovalyova, language policy should be understood as a set of guidelines, theories, legislative acts, and various measures designed to influence both the processes of language life in society and the regulation of these processes (Kovalyova, 2008).

Language policy in Ukraine is intended to be part of national policy, reflecting its principles and corresponding state ideology. Based on this, I. Lopushynsky defines language policy as a component

of ethno-national policy. Language policy is aimed at establishing, developing, and ubiquitous functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language in Ukraine, ensuring the proper provision of language rights for national and regional communities for the consolidation of the entire society (Kuts & Sergeyeva, 2019, p. 17).

From Cherednyk's point of view, the concept of state language policy should be understood as the activity of the state and society aimed at solving problems in the field of language relations. Such activities are based on reconciling the interests of different language groups (Kuts & Sergeyeva, 2019, p. 18).

In our opinion, the provided definitions lack mention of the main subjects of language policy – ethnic communities in nation-building. Therefore, language policy should be considered as the activities of subjects of ethno-policy (the state, ethnicities, political parties, etc.) in identifying, reconciling, and meeting language interests and needs not only of the titular nation but also of ethnic communities. The subjects of ethno-policy are currently equal partners in the development and implementation of language policy based on democratic discourse. If there is no interaction between ethno-policy subjects on language issues, it means that the country has established the dictatorship of one subject. In such conditions, language policy exhibits the totalitarian-dominant nature of one language.

Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine clearly states that the Ukrainian language is the state language in Ukraine (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996). In 2010, the Concept of State Language Policy was approved, declaring that language policy takes a key place in the system of state priorities. The strategic task of language policy is «to ensure strict adherence to constitutional guarantees regarding the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language in all spheres of public life throughout Ukraine, free development, use, and protection of the languages of national minorities, and meeting the language needs of Ukrainian citizens» (President of Ukraine, 2010).

At the time of Ukraine's declaration of independence, the use of the Ukrainian language in various public spheres was rather catastrophic. The knowledge and application of the Ukrainian language in society were at a low level, and in the public-administrative sphere, at the political level, the Ukrainian language was completely displaced by Russian. However, in mass media, publishing, and school education, the Ukrainian language was used thanks to state support. The acquisition of the Ukrainian language as the state language did not lead to significant positive shifts. Ultimately, language policy in Ukraine was constantly accompanied by political manipulations, resulting in political confrontations. As Pavlo Zhebrivskyi, Head of the Donetsk Military-Civil Administration, remarked on the eve of the large-scale invasion, if today Russia did not conduct its dirty and brazen «hybrid war» against Ukraine, it would be possible to think about language as a cultural phenomenon. «But the Russian language, through the efforts of frenzied imperialists, has turned into an effective tool of hybrid warfare. Practically the same as the once innocent 'Georgian ribbon'» (Zhebrivskyi, 2016).

Not without reason, there is a widespread opinion that the unprotected state of the Ukrainian language is one of the main factors in the threats to Ukraine's national security. To further strengthen the stability of the polyethnic society, it is necessary to pay increased attention from state administrative structures to language policy issues.

After the start of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine in 2022, the position of the Ukrainian language has significantly strengthened (see Table 1). According to the data of the nationwide survey on «Identity. Patriotism. Values», conducted by the «Rating» sociological group in August 2022, the share of individuals who believe that the Ukrainian language should be the only state language in Ukraine and the Russian language should have no preferences increased by 21 % compared to September 2021, reaching 86 %. The percentage of those willing to grant the Russian language alongside Ukrainian the status of the state language decreased from 22 % to 3 % (Sociological Group Rating, 2022).

At the same time, as emphasized by the Constitutional Court of Ukraine in its decision dated July 14, 2021, in connection with the military aggression by the Russian Federation and its use of the «language issue» as one of the tools of its geopolitical expansion, «the threat to the Ukrainian language is equivalent to the threat to the national security of Ukraine, the existence of the Ukrainian nation and its state» (Constitutional Court of Ukraine, 2021). The Ukrainian nation, in the absence of full-fledged functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life and throughout the territory of Ukraine, is threatened with losing the status of a titular nation and a state-forming nation. Such threats can determine the disappearance of the Ukrainian state.

Table 1

**Responses of respondents in Ukraine to the question:
«How should the Ukrainian and Russian languages coexist in Ukraine?»
(Sociological survey, 2022)**

Survey month and year	How should the Ukrainian and Russian languages coexist in Ukraine?, %			
	The Ukrainian language – the only state language	The Ukrainian language – state language, Russian – official status in certain regions	The Russian language, along with Ukrainian, should become the state language throughout Ukraine	Difficult to answer
April 2014	47,0	23,0	27,0	4,0
June 2014	50,0	29,0	19,0	2,0
July 2014	50,0	27,0	21,0	2,0
September 2016	58,0	22,0	15,0	5,0
May 2017	61,0	19,0	18,0	2,0
August 2017	64,0	17,0	17,0	1,0
December 2017	61,0	20,0	15,0	4,0
June 2018	61,0	21,0	14,0	4,0
July 2018	61,0	17,0	19,0	3,0
December 2018	62,0	16,0	16,0	5,0
January 2019	68,0	14,0	16,0	4,0
May 2019	70,0	11,0	17,0	2,0
June 2019	66,0	11,0	21,0	2,0
November 2019	66,0	12,0	19,0	3,0
February 2020	66,0	13,0	19,0	3,0
June 2020	66,0	10,0	22,0	2,0
July 2020	66,0	11,0	22,0	2,0
September 2021	65,0	12,0	22,0	2,0
March 2022	82,0	8,0	7,0	2,0
August 2022	86,0	10,0	3,0	1,0

In March 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted the Resolution «On the approval of the State Targeted National Cultural Program for Ensuring Comprehensive Development and Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language in All Spheres of Public Life until 2030». The goal of this Program was «to ensure constitutional guarantees and create conditions for the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language in all spheres of public life throughout the territory of Ukraine» (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2024). It is noted that it is necessary to promote the mastery of the Ukrainian language by people. Effective strategies should also be developed to increase the prestige of using the Ukrainian language, strengthening its role in Ukrainian society. In particular, promoting the idea that the widespread use of the Ukrainian language becomes a means of strengthening state unity, contributing to the protection of the national linguistic-cultural and linguistic-information space.

The Program outlines several tasks to be implemented for an effective language policy. In particular (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2024): strengthening the state status of the Ukrainian language, developing an effective mechanism for its protection, advancement and promotion; ensuring compliance by officials and employees of various public authorities (state authorities, local self-government bodies), other officials and employees with the requirements of the Law of Ukraine «On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2019) regarding the obligatory use of the state language during the performance of official duties, etc.

Overall, effective measures should be taken to protect and develop the Ukrainian language as the state language. According to Kalyta, strict legal protection of the Ukrainian language as the state language should be introduced to prevent various attempts to destroy the state and linguistic-cultural integrity of Ukraine (Kalyta, 2024, p. 54).

All modern history of Ukraine is marked by constant attempts to devalue the Ukrainian language (as the state language) by pro-Russian political forces. Periodically, these political forces promoted the idea of russification of the political and socio-cultural space of Ukraine.

Within the russification of Ukraine by pro-Russian political forces, even the «European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages» was used, which was ratified by the Law of Ukraine in 2003 (European Charter, 2003). The name of the Charter was incorrectly translated, which constantly led to political manipulations on the linguistic grounds. The original name of the Charter uses the term «regional or minority languages», not «regional languages or languages of minorities». That is, an unfortunate mistake was made in the official translation, as the Russian version of the Charter was used for translation, not the original document. The English version of the Charter uses the terminology: «regional or minority languages». Similar terminology is used in the French version of the Charter's name: «langues régionales ou minoritaires».

This translation error determined a long-term distortion in understanding language policy in Ukraine, as it was believed that the Charter is intended to protect the languages of national minorities. Accordingly, this mistakenly translated Charter was used by pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine for more than two decades, demanding extensive linguistic rights for the Russian national minority. However, the Charter is actually intended to protect minority languages, that is, languages that are endangered and may disappear. The real essence of the Charter lies in preserving linguistic-cultural diversity.

Back in 2021, the Constitutional Court of Ukraine adopted a decision regarding the elimination of the ambiguous interpretation of the Charter. The Constitutional Court recommended to the authorities, particularly the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine «to establish unambiguity in the matter of official translation of the Charter into Ukrainian, as well as to take other actions required for the proper fulfilment of Ukraine's obligations under the Charter as an international treaty» (Constitutional Court of Ukraine, 2021).

Finally, in December 2024, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine submitted the relevant draft law to the parliament, according to which the name of the Charter is brought into compliance with the original document – «European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages» (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2024).

Also, the Charter has identified a list of languages that needed special support and protection. Due to the erroneous translation of the Charter's name, the Russian language, which is a language of the national minority but not a minority language, was included in this list. Currently, in the draft law that will change the name of the Charter, the list of languages has been updated and the Russian language has been removed from it (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2024).

Such political manipulation actualizes the problem of language security, as the lack of protection of the state language can produce threats to the national security of Ukraine.

According to Jiang, who analyzed the linguistic insecurity of specific communities, the theory of language security is closely related to the issue of linguistic identity (Jiang, 2020, p. 124). He identified three levels of language security: macro-level, meso-level, and micro-level. At the macro-level, attention should focus on issues of cultural security. At the meso-level, it is important to analyze the relationship between language and cultural security. At the micro-level, attention should be directed to the security of individual language speakers.

From the perspective of Jagiello-Tondera, given new security challenges, language security should be considered in three interconnected contexts: 1. protecting your own language; 2. protection of the nation and national identity; 3. language security as a new category of security (Jagiello-Tondera, 2024, p. 21-22).

To conceptualise the notion of «language security», we first turn to the concept of national security, which encompasses various dimensions of security. Article 1, paragraph 9 of the Law of Ukraine «On National Security of Ukraine» states that national security of Ukraine means «the protection of state sovereignty, territorial integrity, democratic constitutional order, and other national interests of Ukraine from real and potential threats» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2024).

Thus, in simplified terms, the concept of national security means the protection of Ukraine's national interests. Of course, the fundamental national interests primarily include categories of state sovereignty,

territorial integrity, democratic constitutional order, sustainable development of the national economy, civil society and the state, the integration of Ukraine into the European political-legal space, etc. Meanwhile, other priorities of national interests may change depending on the political situation in which the country finds itself.

By its orientation, national interests «are aimed at ensuring survival and progressive development and, to some extent, leadership of the individual, society, and the state» (Shakhov & Madisson, 2013, p. 46). If there is constant uncertainty and significant discrepancies in the formation of basic criteria for defining national interest, this is primarily evidence of a divided society and an unformed political nation.

The state has a monopolistic right to form and legitimate interpretation of national priorities. Therefore, the formation and implementation of national interests are the prerogative of the state. However, in a democratic system, besides the state, various political actors participate in the realisation of national interests: authorities of different levels, business structures, civil society, political parties, etc. Accordingly, «a national interest reflects the unity of aspirations of civil society and the state» (Shakhov & Madisson, 2013, p. 50).

Under the national interests of Ukraine (Article 1, paragraph 10 of the Law of Ukraine «On National Security of Ukraine») are understood «vital interests of the individual, society, and the state, the implementation of which ensures the state sovereignty of Ukraine, its progressive democratic development, as well as safe living conditions and well-being of its citizens» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2024). Given the above definition of national interests, it can be stated that in the conditions of Ukraine's confrontation with armed Russian aggression, the Ukrainian language is a part of the vital interests of the individual, society, and the state. The realization of these interests can ensure the state sovereignty of Ukraine. Accordingly, the Ukrainian language needs protection and support in all spheres of its functioning.

It is important that the issue of protecting the Ukrainian language as the state language was among the priorities of Ukraine's national interests. This was mentioned in the Law of Ukraine «On the Basics of National Security of Ukraine», which was adopted in 2003 and lost its validity in 2018 due to the adoption of a new law. Thus, in Article 6 of this law, it was stated that one of the priorities of Ukraine's national interests is «ensuring the development and functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language in all spheres of public life throughout the territory of Ukraine» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2003). However, in the same article, guaranteeing the free development of the Russian language, its use, and protection are also mentioned. Therefore, it is not surprising that in 2018, four years after the start of Russian armed aggression against Ukraine, this point disappeared from the priorities of Ukraine's national interests.

Actually, the priorities of state policy in the spheres of national security, as well as threats to Ukraine's national security, are separately detailed in documents called «National Security Strategy of Ukraine» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2024, Article 3, paragraph 5). This document, which is adopted during the term of each President of Ukraine, defines the current threats to Ukraine's national security. Also, in the «National Security Strategy of Ukraine», corresponding goals, tasks, and mechanisms for protecting Ukraine's national interests are formulated. In Ukraine, this security document was introduced into the legislative field starting with the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko.

Let us turn to the comparative analysis of provisions regarding language issues in the four «National Security Strategies of Ukraine», which were adopted during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko, Viktor Yanukovich, Petro Poroshenko, and Volodymyr Zelensky.

In the «National Security Strategy of Ukraine», which was in effect during the presidency of Viktor Yushchenko (2005-2010), language policy is mentioned in the section «Strategic priorities of Ukraine's national security». In the Strategy-2007, it is stated that the language policy is one of the key components of state humanitarian policy. Language policy «should be based on the necessity of strict compliance with constitutional guarantees regarding comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language and the language of official communication in all spheres of public life throughout the territory of Ukraine» (President of Ukraine, 2007, paragraph 3.5).

During the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich (2010-2014), who became notorious for fleeing Ukraine to Russia after the Maidan («Revolution of Dignity»), the «National Security Strategy of Ukraine» from 2012 was in effect. In the Presidential Decree, it is stated that the text of the Strategy-2012 is a new updated version of the text of the Strategy-2007.

In the Strategy-2012, the emphasis shifted significantly towards giving more importance to the Russian language in Ukraine (President of Ukraine, 2012). In section 4 of Strategy-2012, strategic goals and main

tasks of national security policy were highlighted. Among the main tasks of national security policy, along with the provision dedicated to the issue of protecting the Ukrainian language as the state language, the provision on guaranteeing the development of the Russian language and the need for its protection is included as seemingly equal (President of Ukraine, 2012, paragraph 4.3). Thus, the parity between the need for protection of the state Ukrainian language and the need for protection of the Russian language in Ukraine was established. Moreover, in the same paragraph 4.3. of Strategy-2012, one of the tasks of national security policy was defined as the elimination of barriers of a linguistic nature (along with barriers of cultural, confessional, regional nature). Such a definition of priorities suggests that the postulation of the need for simultaneous protection of both Ukrainian and Russian languages is due to some artificial barriers that need to be eliminated. Subsequently, the elimination of linguistic barriers led to a significant narrowing of the status of the Ukrainian language as the state language.

Ultimately, this led to political manipulations with the adoption of linguistic legislation in Ukraine in 2012, which significantly expanded the use of the Russian language in various public spheres (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2012). The law seems to suggest that the use of regional languages in Ukraine should expand, provided that at least 10 % of speakers live in a certain region. But in practice, this law led to the rapid expansion of the use of the Russian language in the eastern and southern territories of Ukraine.

It is indicative that the promotion of the Russian language into various spheres of public life in Ukraine during the presidency of Yanukovich contradicted the existing priorities of Ukrainian society. Let's turn to the data from sociological surveys. The Razumkov Centre in 2024 published the results of a sociological survey «Identity of Ukrainian citizens: trends of changes» (Razumkov Center, 2024). Among the questions asked to respondents regarding their attitude to the attributes of an independent Ukrainian state, there is a question about the attitude to the state Ukrainian language. It is important that the survey provides the dynamics of respondents' answers starting from 2011 (see Table 2).

Table 2

**The attitudes of respondents in Ukraine towards the Ukrainian language
as a feature of the independent Ukrainian state
(Sociological survey, 2024)**

Survey month and year	How do you feel about the state Ukrainian language as an attribute of an independent Ukrainian state?, %				
	Proud of it	Positive	Negative	Negative and would like to change	Difficult to answer
August 2011	31,8	60,5	2,4	2,6	2,6
August 2012	35,8	54,7	2,0	3,1	4,5
December 2015	48,7	42,8	2,8	0,9	4,8
May 2023	74,4	23,5	0,6	0,3	1,1
June 2024	64,7	30,7	1,0	0,6	2,9

As seen from the survey results, in both August 2011 and August 2012, a significant majority of Ukrainian citizens fully supported the status of the Ukrainian language as the state language, considering it an important attribute of Ukraine's independence. Therefore, the language law of 2012 did not meet the expectations of Ukrainian citizens at all.

Following the beginning of the Russian armed aggression against Ukraine in 2014, the «Law on the Principles of State Language Policy» (from 2012) was annulled by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. This language law finally lost its validity in 2018 following the corresponding decision of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine.

During the presidency of Petro Poroshenko (2014-2019), the «National Security Strategy of Ukraine» came into effect starting from 2015. Section 3 of the 2015 Strategy identified current threats to Ukraine's national security. In particular, it stated that Russia's aggressive actions were aimed at «humiliating the Ukrainian language and culture, falsifying Ukrainian history, and forming an alternative distorted information picture of the world using Russian media» (President of Ukraine, 2015, clause 3.1.).

Therefore, the 2015 Strategy clearly articulated that as a result of Russian aggression, the problem of preserving the Ukrainian language was classified as a threat to Ukraine's national security. Due to the state's insufficient protection of those areas, the Russian enemy actively engaged in operations and promoted its own narratives.

According to the «Law of Ukraine on National Security», the concept of national security threats is interpreted as follows (Article 1, clause 6): «phenomena, trends, and factors that make it impossible or difficult or may make it impossible or difficult to realize national interests and preserve national values of Ukraine» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2024, Article 1). Thus, raising language issues to the level of threats in connection with the devaluation and humiliation of the Ukrainian language due to Russian aggression means that ignoring these problems can significantly complicate the realisation of Ukraine's national interests. Accordingly, threats to the Ukrainian language automatically become threats to Ukraine's national security.

In addition to the 2015 Strategy, during President Poroshenko's tenure, the «Information Security Doctrine of Ukraine» was approved and was in effect throughout his presidency. The Information Security Doctrine outlined Ukraine's national interests in the information sphere. Regarding language issues, it was stated that the national interests of Ukraine in the information sphere included «ensuring the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life throughout Ukraine» (President of Ukraine, 2017, section 3).

With the arrival of President Volodymyr Zelensky in power in 2019, a new «National Security Strategy of Ukraine» was adopted, which is still in effect. The 2020 Strategy does not mention language issues. Only in the section «Main Directions of Foreign and Domestic Policy Activities of the State to Ensure Its National Interests and Security» it is stated that decisive measures should be taken to counter attempts to incite national enmity, to humiliate national honour and dignity, and to counter restrictions on rights or the establishment of privileges based on linguistic grounds (President of Ukraine, 2020, clause 46). It emphasises the need for the development of Ukrainian culture as a basis for consolidating the Ukrainian nation and strengthening Ukrainian national identity.

At the same time, language issues are mentioned in the «Information Security Strategy», which was adopted in 2021 (President of Ukraine, 2021). The Information Security Strategy outlines tasks to achieve the goal of «Ensuring the comprehensive development of Ukrainian culture and the establishment of Ukrainian civil identity». Among the priority tasks to achieve this goal is the issue of language policy: «ensuring the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life throughout Ukraine» (President of Ukraine, 2021).

Let us turn to the survey of Ukrainian citizens regarding identity choice priorities. The Razumkov Centre conducted a sociological survey in 2023 titled «Identity of Ukrainian Citizens: Trends of Change» (Sociological survey, 2023). Respondents were asked to which cultural tradition they relate themselves: pan-European, Soviet, Ukrainian, Russian, or other. Table 3 shows the dynamics of Ukrainians' responses to this question.

It is interesting that since 2014, after the beginning of Russian aggression against Ukraine, the number of respondents who identify themselves with the Ukrainian cultural tradition has increased significantly. And in the same period, the number of people who associate themselves with the pan-European cultural tradition has increased. Interestingly, in 2019, the Constitution of Ukraine (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996) was amended in the Preamble, which states that the Ukrainian people have a European identity.

In 2023, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted a resolution introducing the concept of «ruscism» and explaining it as a new totalitarian ideology. Ruscism means «a new kind of totalitarian ideology and practices that underlie the regime formed in the Russian Federation under the leadership of president vladimir putin and are based on the traditions of Russian chauvinism and imperialism, the practices of the communist regime of the USSR and national socialism (nazism)» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023).

The Resolution identifies the key features and consequences of ruscism, including the following: expansionist state policy of «the practice of spreading the Russian language and culture, the Russian Orthodox Church, media, political and public institutions, and propaganda of the ideas of the 'Russian world' among other peoples» (Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2023). In other words, in Russia's war against Ukraine, the forcible imposition of the Russian language on Ukrainian citizens has become one of the dominant practices of ruscism as the latest totalitarian ideology.

Indeed, in Russia's war against Ukraine, there were facts of the extermination of Ukrainian citizens (native speakers of the Ukrainian language) based on language. In addition, there are widespread cases

Table 3

**Responses of participants in Ukraine to the question
«Which cultural tradition do you primarily identify with?»
(Sociological survey, 2023)**

Survey month and year	Which cultural tradition do you primarily identify with?, %					
	pan-European	Soviet	Ukrainian	Russian	other	Difficult to answer
May 2006	6,6	16,4	56,3	11,3	1,5	7,9
October 2008	4,2	17,3	58,1	15,5	1,4	3,5
December 2013	7,5	12,5	67,7	6,2	1,7	4,4
March 2015	10,0	13,8	65,5	4,2	2,2	4,2
December 2015	7,1	10,3	70,0	3,2	1,7	7,7
December 2017	13,1	9,9	68,9	2,0	0,9	5,1
June 2021	9,8	9,8	72,9	3,3	0,8	3,4
May 2023	10,3	3,6	80,8	0,5	1,7	3,1

of destruction of Ukrainian books in the Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia. For example, in the Kharkiv region, in 2022, Russian troops occupying villages and towns immediately destroyed (often burned) Ukrainian textbooks and other Ukrainian books in libraries. Instead, in the occupied territories of the Kharkiv region, Russians quickly imported only Russian textbooks to Ukrainian schools, mostly published in 2022. Also, on Ukrainian lands, Russians immediately changed all Ukrainian signs, street and city names, etc. In addition, immediately after the arrival of the Russian occupation regime, Ukrainian-language media disappeared from Ukrainian lands.

Given the dominant status of the language issue in Russia's war against Ukraine, let us turn to the conceptualisation of the category of «language security». If the linguistic environment is not sufficiently protected by the state, then threats to national interests may arise in this environment.

In post-soviet Ukrainian society, where the idea of linguistic division has long been cultivated through political manipulation, there are risks associated with the establishment of a single state language. If the state language does not become a guarantee of national security, language relations can be transformed into a threat to the integrity of the state.

It is the state language that, given the existence of different ethnic communities in the country, becomes a determinant of their unification into a single nation, especially in the context of armed aggression. Accordingly, the concept of language security in Ukraine primarily refers to the state of legal protection of the state language.

Thus, the language security is an integral part of the national security of Ukraine, the state of protection of the state language, ensuring its development and functioning in all spheres of public life throughout Ukraine, strengthening its role in Ukrainian society as a means of reinforcing state unity and the democratic constitutional order, other vital interests of a person, society and the state, in which the language rights and freedoms of a person, his or her language needs, language identity and uniqueness are duly ensured, as well as a system of measures to ensure the free development, use and protection of languages of national minorities and to promote the study of languages of international communication.

In general, special attention should be paid to ensuring the priority development of the Ukrainian language as the state language. After all, the Ukrainian language is an important factor in state-building and the consolidation of the Ukrainian political nation. Mastery of the state language should become a vital need for every Ukrainian citizen and an integral part of their patriotism.

Conclusions

Thus, the issue of language security in the public administration context in Ukraine is of utmost importance given the Ukrainian society's opposition to Russian armed aggression.

The article deals with the issues of language policy in Ukraine. It is noted that the language policy is aimed at the establishment, development and widespread functioning of the Ukrainian language as the state language in Ukraine. Its goal is to ensure the proper protection of the language rights of national and regional communities to consolidate the whole society.

It is stated that the entire modern history of Ukraine is marked by constant attempts to devalue the Ukrainian language (as the state language) by pro-Russian political forces. These forces have even used the «European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages», the title of which was mistranslated, in the russification of Ukraine. The authentic title of the Charter uses the term «regional or minority languages», not «regional languages or minority languages». In other words, the Charter is intended to protect minority languages that are threatened and may disappear. There is currently a draft law that would change the name of the Charter.

It is noted that, given the constant political manipulations in the language environment, the issue of language security is becoming more relevant. After all, if the state language is not protected, the language environment is capable of producing threats to the national security of Ukraine.

To conceptualise the concept of «language security», the authors examine the regulatory and legislative framework of Ukraine. In particular, a comparative analysis of the provisions on language issues in the four «National Security Strategies of Ukraine» which were in force during the presidencies of Yushchenko, Yanukovich, Poroshenko and Zelenskyy is carried out.

The article analyses the concept of ruscism as a new totalitarian ideology, which is defined in the Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (2023). In particular, attention is focused on the key features of ruscism: expansionist state policy, practices of spreading the Russian language and culture among other peoples.

Attention is focused on the dominant status of the language issue in Russia's war against Ukraine. If the linguistic environment is not sufficiently protected by the state, then threats to national interests may arise in this environment. It is the state language that, given the existence of different ethnic communities in the country, becomes a determinant of their unification into a single nation, especially in the context of armed aggression. Accordingly, the concept of language security in Ukraine primarily refers to the state of legal protection of the state language.

It is stated that language security of Ukraine is an integral part of national security of Ukraine, the state of protection of the state language, ensuring its development and functioning in all spheres of public life throughout Ukraine, strengthening its role in Ukrainian society as a means of strengthening the state unity and democratic constitutional order, and other vital interests of a person, society and the state, under which the language rights and freedoms of a person, his/her language needs, language identity and uniqueness, as well as a system of measures to ensure the free development, use and protection of languages of national minorities and to promote the study of languages of international communication.

Acknowledgements. None.

Conflict of Interest. None.

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