

Cultural Orientations of the Politics of Education in Ukraine (2010–2013): Ideology Strikes Back

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Abstract

In this article, the author has analysed educational reforms and educational policy in general, which was implemented in Ukraine during the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich. A few political cases were analysed, in particular the opposition of the National University of “Kyiv-Mohyla Academy” to the educational trends implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine under the leadership of Dmytro Tabachnyk. The manifestations of colonial policy in Ukrainian education, which were aimed at the rapprochement of Ukraine and Russia and the positioning of Ukraine as a colonial part of the imperial body, have been outlined. It has been discussed in what implicit way the colonial strategy was implemented in the educational reforms in Ukraine, in particular in the aspect of teaching humanitarian disciplines, e.g. Ukrainian literature. Forms of possible resistance to colonial strategies in the educational field, the principles of

overcoming imperial pressure and intensifying the narrative of resistance, which made it possible to avoid further splitting of the Ukrainian identity in the imperial body, have been analysed. The legislative activity, which was focused on strengthening the status of the Russian language as a regional language, has been outlined. Linguistic colonial approaches at the level of legislative initiatives in language policy have been spotlighted, in particular in the Kivalov-Kolesnichenko Law.

Keywords: Ukraine, language policy, colonialism, educational policy, regional languages, identity, narrative of resistance

Kierunki kulturowe w polityce oświatowej w Ukrainie (2010–2013): ideologia kontratakuję

Abstrakt

W artykule autor poddał analizie reformy edukacyjne oraz całokształt polityki oświatowej, realizowane w Ukrainie w okresie prezydentury Wiktora Janukowycza. Zbadano kilka konkretnych kwestii politycznych, w szczególności sprzeciw Uniwersytetu Narodowego „Akademia Kijowsko-Mohylańska” wobec trendów oświatowych wprowadzanych przez Ministerstwo Edukacji i Nauki Ukrainy zarządzane przez Dmytro Tabacznika. Przedstawiono przejawy polityki kolonialnej w ukraińskiej oświacie, które miały na celu odnowienie więzi między Ukrainą i Rosją oraz uczynienie z Ukrainy części imperium kolonialnego. Omówiono niejawne sposoby realizacji strategii kolonialnej w reformach oświatowych w Ukrainie, w szczególności w aspekcie nauczania przedmiotów humanistycznych, takich jak literatura ukraińska. Przedmiotem analizy były dostępne formy oporu wobec strategii kolonialnych w oświacie, metody przewyciężania nacisków imperialnych i umacniania narracji oporu, pozwalające uniknąć dalszego rozszczepienia ukraińskiej tożsamości w łonie imperium. Omówiono działania legislacyjne, zogniskowane wokół utrwalenia statusu języka rosyjskiego jako języka miejscowego. Zwrócono uwagę na kolonializm w inicjatywach

legislacyjnych w zakresie polityki językowej, obecny w szczególności w ustawie Kiwałowa-Kolesniczenki.

Słowa kluczowe: Ukraina, polityka językowa, kolonializm, polityka oświatowa, języki miejscowe, tożsamość, narracja oporu

The Ministry with two faces

During 2010–2014, major innovations emerging from the new political situation and the ideology of the new leaders of the country were introduced to the educational system in Ukraine.

The first point which is highly important to mention is that the Cabinet of Ministers, headed by Mykola Azarov, implemented a strategy of integration between ministries. The Ministry of Education and Sciences of Ukraine was united with the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Ukraine into one organisational body under this policy. Integration had more of a negative than a positive impact with this reform, which caused a deterioration of the policies in the areas of education and science. As a result of the merging of the ministries in 2010, the notion of 'Family' was completely lost in the name of the newly created Ministry – we had the Ministry of Education and Sciences, Youth and Sport led by Dmytro Tabachnyk¹, one of the controversial leading figures in promoting the *Russian World* politics.

The realisation of this integration strategy implemented by the Cabinet of Ministers brought negative tendencies into the spheres of education and sciences. The process of secondary education was transformed into a very bureaucratic sector, with little attention to the real needs of teachers.

At the same time, the policies adopted towards higher education (at the university level) were also marked with two antagonistic tendencies: the desire of the newly formed ministry to control university life and the desire to give to the universities all possible academic freedoms (autonomy in the European and American tradition), including the universities' right to have independent academic

¹ In 2013, the reasons for that integration between two Ukrainian Ministries were criticised by the President of Ukraine, Yanukovich, for more information see: <http://company.shodennik.ua/presscenter/42668>; <http://tsn.ua/politika/dialog-z-krayinoyu-yanukovich-viznav-pomilku-z-ob-yednannyam-ministerstv-osviti-i-sportu-283297.html>. The Ministry of Education and Sciences, Youth and Sport again was divided into two separate ministries (as it was when the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine was headed by Julia Tymoshenko) and the project of 2010 about their integration was officially proclaimed as 'non-successful' and leading to negative tendencies, both in sciences and education. The new Ministry of Youth and Sport in 2013 was headed by R. Safullin, and D. Tabachnyk, despite lots of student demonstrations and protests by teachers, professors, and journalists, became the Minister of Education and Sciences of Ukraine according to the President's law: <http://president.gov.ua/documents/15492.html>

councils which can issue PhD diplomas, invite guest professors for special courses from abroad or just other cities and academic institutions, etc. The discussions regarding the transformation of higher education were intensified in 2010 by the draft law, *On Higher Education*, lobbied for by the Ministry and Tabachnyk. Taking into account those discussions, ex-president of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy Prof. Brioukhovetskyi agrees that the

draft law “On Higher Education”, prepared with the direct participation of Tabachnyk, is so anachronistic that it is a wonder how a person who lives in the 21st century can think in categories that have been rejected long ago by the rest of the world: rigid centralization of education, restrictions on the rights of educational institutions².

In addition, the expert names the key problems of higher education in Ukraine which should be solved by the new law; however, Tabachnyk’s innovation only produces deterioration in the democratic transformation of higher education and cancels out the results of the previous work according to the Bologna Declaration:

Autonomy was declared, but autonomy does not exist. Every detail is regulated. They instruct us on which exams to administer. This did not happen previously, even during the Soviet era. Apparently, Tabachnyk is smarter than all the university rectors, and knows how to better formulate curricula, for which specialties, and at which universities across the board. However, universities differ and are diverse institutions. Only dried – up trees are alike – they all burn. Living trees grow and develop in diverse ways and they are beautiful in their diversity. This also applies to the education system which cannot be run like the army. We are not the military. Actually, Tabachnyk did not serve in the military, yet he has served himself up a ‘pseudo-colonel’ title, but I did serve and I know what he is doing. He is following an army manual like a lance-corporal. An army manual is imperative for the military, but in education – it is scandalous³.

In 2008–2013, the law *On Higher Education* in Ukraine became a ‘hot’ point, which intensified a series of professional discussions by leading Ukrainian professors and experts in education and sciences, who tried to persuade the ministry not to lobby for the new law and to use the draft of the law prepared by the alternative group headed by the President of the Kyiv National Polytechnic University Prof. M. Zhurovskyi⁴ (who also was the former Minister of Education and Sciences of Ukraine). However, the Ministry of Education and Sciences, Youth

² http://www.kmfoundation.com/p-2_1_english_publications-lan--alan-en-id-387-a-.html

³ *Ibidem*.

⁴ See <http://blog.liga.net/user/achernih/article/11242.aspx>

and Sport provided their own version of the law that was completely different to the project prepared by the group of experts headed by Zhurovskyi⁵.

Besides, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, which from 1992 onwards proclaimed its adherence to modern American and European educational principles in the academic process (the *liberum arts* education principle, etc.) tried to attack the official project of the Ministry demonstrating its anti-European basis and that it embodies trends in educational policy based on the post-Soviet paradigm⁶. However, the Ministry, under Tabachnyk's leadership, adopted undemocratic methods of 'persuasion' and attacked the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in various ways (e.g. the master program for Journalism was rejected by the Ministry, some faculties received a much smaller number of positions for students to apply for, and state funding was cut). "The Ministry of Education has cut state funding for a number of master's programmes offered by the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in Kyiv, including those in the School of Journalism"⁷.

"Tabachnyk to close Kyiv-Mohyla Academy!". This emotionally charged headline grabbed the attention of Ukraine-watchers worldwide after the Dec. 9 press conference by the university's president, Serhiy Kvit. That day, Kvit declared that Ukraine's Minister of Education, Dmytro Tabachnyk, had mounted a concerted administrative attack on Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) by refusing to approve its statute, and by denying approval of NaUKMA student admission rules for 2011⁸.

Ministerial ideology of 2010–2012

It is important to admit that all the major tendencies in the Ukrainian educational politics after 2010 were marked with the new ideology of the Ukrainian government. In fact, these policies were the opposite of the tendencies that Ukraine had experienced during 2005–2010. Dmytro Tabachnyk became the Minister of Education and Sciences, Youth and Sport in the 'authoritarian political way'

⁵ To compare two versions of the Law *On Higher Education*, see the comparative analysis of the documents: http://osvita.ua/vnz/high_school/33641/

⁶ For more information about the confrontation between the NaUKMA and the Ministry, read: <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/op-ed/kyiv-mohyla-academy-versus-ministry-of-education-318468.html?flavour=mobile>

⁷ <http://khp.org/en/index.php?id=1310421601>

⁸ The key idea of the Ministry politics against Kyiv-Mohyla Academy was to "to control it: ministry's press service declared that the NaUKMA draft statute includes various provisions that deviate from the ministerial norm for such documents, and that the English proficiency requirement that the university insists upon for new student entrants is unique in Ukraine, and therefore unacceptable". That was Tabachnyk's main goal: <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/op-ed/tabachnyk-threatens-autonomy-of-kyiv-mohyla-academ-92925.html>

– despite all the representations from students and professors, and vigorous protests. This political decision was taken by President Yanukovich (December 9, 2010) despite lots of opposition to this political figure⁹. D. Tabachnyk was accused of being politically incorrect in his attitude to the Western Ukrainian region (e.g. *Halychyna*, the region of Galicia, mainly Lviv, Ternopil, and Ivano-Frankivsk regions) and, furthermore, his political views as represented in the media appear post-Soviet and totally pro-Russian. The ideas represented by the new minister often had a drastic effect. For instance, for Tabachnyk, “millions of people who came to Maidan Nezalezhnosti in 2004 during the Orange Revolution were a result of neuro-linguistic programming, a psychological technology to influence people, originating in the United States”¹⁰.

What is more, the minister was “a strong advocate of Russian as Ukraine’s second state language (which contradicts the Constitution) and considers Halychyna (a historical region that covers most oblasts in western Ukraine) to be an alien formation, with a non-Ukrainian mentality”¹¹. Tabachnyk’s sayings about ‘the primitive and dirty Galician people’ (that ‘Halychany (western Ukrainians) practically do not have anything in common with the people of Great Ukraine, not in mentality, not in religion, not in linguistics, not in the political arena’¹², etc.) were the main focus of intensive student protests. Those ideas demonstrated intolerant attitude to the people from some Ukrainian geographic regions, and a person with such views should not become a minister. Nevertheless, Tabachnyk became the new Minister of Education and Sciences, Youth and Sport (2010–2013). When being interviewed by Russian journalists¹³, he always demonstrated his totally sympathetic attitude to the Russian people, Russian history, Russian political views and traditions. The Ukrainian minister neglected the historical traumas of the Ukrainian nation during the Soviet totalitarian regime, he refused to talk about the Holodomor of 1933 as a Ukrainian catastrophe. In the media, even the Russian journalists said that, when talking with Tabachnyk, they felt as if they were talking with not a Ukrainian but a Russian Minister.

The political intentions of the Ukrainian minister were characterised by the media as a manifestation of post-Soviet KGB traditions, and the minister was

⁹ <http://president.gov.ua/documents/12612.html>

¹⁰ <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/op-ed/tabachnyks-views-are-dangerous-in-classroom-62058.html>

¹¹ *Ibidem*.

¹² <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/letters/the-likes-of-tabachnyk-undermine-ukraines-democrac-63350.html>. See also: <http://www.ukrcdn.com/2010/03/17/yanukovichs-new-education-minister-believes-western-ukrainians-practically-have-nothing-in-common-with-the-people-of-the-greater-ukraine/>

¹³ Besides, in media we had the information about Tabachnyk’s intention to become the Minister of Education in Russia: <http://napare.net/tabachnik-stremitsya-zanyat-post-ministra-obrazovaniya-rf-zayavlenie>

named the unofficial representative speaker of the *Russian World* and as actively completing its ideological programmes. He was most frequently compared to the Russian politician Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, who is a ‘mouthpiece’ for Putin’s ideology in Russia: “As for Halychyna’s linguistics and other alleged digressions, a glance at south-east Ukraine – which resembles the moonscape in terms of its absence of Ukrainian content – shows that Tabachnyk’s swipe is ludicrous. It is indistinguishable from the flapdoodle coming from Russia’s Vladimir Zhirinovskiy”.

In the same Russian newspaper, Tabachnyk then escalated his tone, swiping at Roman Shukhevych and Stepan Bandera as “killers, traitors, and abettors of Hitler’s executioners”.

But these classifications actually characterise, in that order, the Soviet KGB (that rubbed out millions of Soviet citizens and organised the Holodomor in Ukraine with Stalin’s blessings), “the contemptible Malorosy”, who despise themselves, and the Soviet complicity in Adolf Hitler’s ventures by way of the Nazi-Soviet pact¹⁴.

The conceptual points of view of this political figure were determined by ideas which were formulated in the ideological dimension of the *Russian World*¹⁵ (they also revitalise some of Putin’s neo-totalitarian views¹⁶). This organisation (it is based in Russia, but is also very powerful in Ukraine), whose key purposes were connected with the idea of the ‘back-USSR’ feelings, concentrated in the supervisory and leadership positions of Russia, a neo-imperial political body. D. Tabachnyk was highlighted in the Ukrainian press as a key figure of the *Russian World*, who might even have some relationship to the Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Church (*Pravoslavna tserkva moskovs’koho patriarchatu*) and Patriarch Kirill, also a very odious figure in the new Russian politics, whose actions and viewpoints were oriented to unite Ukraine and Russia under the dominance of the Russian Federation – thus creating a new Russian Orthodox Empire.

It is important to admit that Kyiv was necessary for the ideology of the *Russian World*.

In the nineteenth-century Russian cultural universe, the government continued to be the main referee. It had a new retrospective view of history, introduced by Nikolai Karamzin, who stressed that a new conception of Rus’ as Russia completed the politically programmed sacral continuum of Russian history. Orthodoxy, as a civilizing mission, became the ideological justification of imperial expansion (Pachlovska 50).

¹⁴ <http://www.kyivpost.com/opinion/letters/the-likes-of-tabachnyk-undermine-ukraines-democrac-63350.html>

¹⁵ The official ideological positions of this organisation can be traced here: <http://rusmir.in.ua/>; <http://www.russkiymir.ru/russkiymir/ru>. The rhetoric intentions of these conceptions are close to propaganda based on Russian nationalistic superiority: http://www.ideologiya.ru/index.php?option=com_content&task=tag&id=35.

¹⁶ <http://rt.com/politics/official-word/putin-russia-focus-challenges-845/>

In present times, the language politics in Ukraine of 2010–2012 (especially as realised in the law) includes the revitalisation of the linguistic imperial expansion. Furthermore, from the historical point of view, the Kyiv Rus State was formed much earlier than the Moscow State (*Moskovske tsarstvo*).

This fact was totally neglected in the past Soviet times, because it could demolish the Soviet ideology of the ‘peaceful coexistence’ of the various Soviet nations and states (USSR consisted of 15 Republics), but, in fact, that coexistence took place under the totalitarian control emanating from Moscow.

However, speaking about the ideological tendencies of the new projects initiated by the Ministry of Education and Sciences, Youth and Sport of Ukraine in 2010–2012, we must take into account that the success of these activities (after 2010) was also connected with the fact that, even before Tabachnyk’s period, the Ministry, unfortunately, did not play a leading role in the democratic transformation of Ukrainian education. It was mainly a bureaucratic body which prevented important educational reforms. As an example, during the period when the Ministry was led by Lviv scientist and the president of the Ivan Franko Lviv National University I. Vakarchuk, the PhD problem was not solved; however, according to the Bologna Declaration, this third part of the university educational process should have been implemented in Ukraine and PhD schools organised. The implementation of PhD schools initiated a number of discussions which demonstrated that the Ukrainian scientific sphere was not ready to accept important European tendencies in education (e.g. even during the pre-Tabachnyk period VAK, the Higher Attestation Committee, created in Soviet times, still played a substantial role in this area rather than universities’ academic councils). The crises in the educational sphere could be solved first with the understanding that the Ministry needs a kind of ‘re-start’, inviting new professional staff who understand the importance of post-Soviet deconstruction of corruption and whose activities would be oriented towards the democratisation of the educational process and its adaptation towards European traditions.

Conceptions of Ukrainian liquidation in the humanities

Tabachnyk’s period in the Ministry of Education and Sciences, Youth and Sport was marked with the publication of some very tendentious documents which were required to regulate the humanitarian sphere, the educational process in the humanities (literature and languages).

The first steps of the Ministry were connected with two crude documents – *the Conception of Language Education* and *the Conception of Literary Education*¹⁷.

¹⁷ The document was cancelled in April, 2014, i.e. a few months after S. Kvit became the Minister of Education and Sciences of Ukraine.

If the first document was not officially declared and legalised (it received a totally negative expert evaluation from the Institute of the Ukrainian Language of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine and some other leading Ukrainian universities and linguistic departments; Yushchuk, *Pro kontseptsiyu* 7), then the second one was signed by the new minister Dmytro Tabachnyk on January 26, 2011 (№ 58, according to the decision of the Attestation Council of the Ministry from August 20, 2010, protocol № 8/1–2) not taking into account the academic resistance (see: Klochek) (despite the negative expert evaluation from the Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy¹⁸ and all other important recommendations¹⁹; the life of this document started with a real detective story when the ministry apparently demonstrated that the document was signed by Mykola Sulyma, vice-president of the Shevchenko Institute of Literature. However, Prof. Sulyma said officially in the media²⁰ that he did not sign that document and his signature was a fake).

The new Conception of Literary Education was revitalised to organise new forms of understanding the concept of 'literary education' which should match the new cognitive, social, and cultural transformations of the Ukrainian society. The document was structured to outline the key components of the literary educational mechanisms; however, in fact, the points of the conception were influenced by the new Ukrainian governmental ideology, based on the concepts of the revitalisation of the USSR and a pro-Russian orientation. Despite the fact that the Conception was written to develop the new paradigms for the understanding of Ukrainian literature as an independent one with its own authentically fixed cultural 'gems', the document proclaimed the superior position of Russian literature²¹, which received the highest status in that conception.

Some of the most polemical extracts from the Conception (in Ukrainian) are as follows:

¹⁸ <http://litakcent.com/2011/02/11/nebezpeky-novoji-koncepciji-literaturnoji-osvity/>

¹⁹ The expert opinions can be found here: <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/2294523.html>

²⁰ "U nashomu varianti pro vplyv rosiys'koyi literatury ne yshlosya". Odyn iz avtoriv Kontseptsiyi literaturnoyi osvity Mykola Sulyma pro te, navishcho znadobyvsvya tsey dokument ta yak do n'oho potrapyv abzats pro «osoblyvu rol' rosiys'koyi literatury» // *Ukrayina Moloda* (electronic version: <http://www.umoloda.kiev.ua/regions/0/174/0/64960/>); *Minosvity pidminylo Kontseptsiyu literaturnoyi osvity* // <http://osvita.ua/school/news/13694/>; *Yak shulers'ki metody stayut' chastynoyu kul'tury y osvity* // <http://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2011/02/25/5954033/>

²¹ <http://tsn.ua/ukrayina/u-tabachnika-rosiysku-literaturu-v-koncepciyu-literaturnoyi-osviti-vpisali-potayki.html>; <http://editorial.in.ua/news/obshhestvo/koncepcija-literaturnoi-osviti-vid-tabachnika.html>

Предмет літературної освіти – вершинні твори українського, російського, світового письменства та представників інших національностей, що проживають в Україні». (one of the tasks) – «Прилучення учнів до найкращих здобутків українського, російського, світового письменства та представників інших національностей, що проживають в Україні».

«Особлива роль належить при цьому російській літературі як художньо-словесному надбанню, у тісній взаємодії з яким протягом декількох століть формувалася українська література, а також з урахуванням того місця, яке займає російська література у загальнолюдській системі духовно-культурних цінностей²².

According to the Conception, Russian literature was represented as a kind of separate aesthetic unity which can be compared to the concept of 'world literature'. World literature was mentioned in the document together with Russian literature. In this way, the document had mainly Russian-centric positions and could result in the transformation of courses in Ukrainian and world literature in Ukrainian secondary and higher education into one course neglecting, step-by-step, the Ukrainian literature section. Besides, for the first time in the Ukrainian education, not only the status of the Russian literature was marked as 'special', but also Russian-language Ukrainian poetry was included in the programme of the Ukrainian literature in the secondary school (the 11th forms.) This innovation was supported by ideas about the comparative motif in the educational process: Ukrainian literature should be taught in the context of other literatures and in comparison with them.

...зіставлення етапів, фактів, явищ, особливостей художніх творів української літератури, російської і світової літератури та літератур інших національностей, що проживають в Україні, дозволяє розкрити загальні закономірності літературного процесу й водночас неповторну своєрідність творів різних народів²³.

However, only the works of the Russian-language poets born in Ukraine were presented in the new programme. The Russian language has not been compulsory for pupils and students in Ukraine since 1991, so the Russian-language poetry section in the new programme initiated the necessity of possessing a good knowledge of Russian in order to be able to understand the specific features of poems by Chichebabin, Kiselyov, etc., especially if we take into account the fact that the programme was legalised not only for the eastern and southern Ukrainian regions, but also for the Lviv, Ternopil, and Ivano-Frankivsk regions, where pupils of the 11th forms are not required to speak Russian fluently.

²² The full text of the document can be traced here: <https://docs.google.com/document/edit?id=1281QvUUxOZ-SJBwT1hlp--ned7OeHokmm-JRbJV14xk&hl=uk>

²³ *Ibidem*.

What is more, no other poetry written in any other language (Polish, Romanian, Bulgarian, Crimean, etc.) was represented in the new programme of Ukrainian literature; however, we have Crimean literature and also writers who use the Romanian, Hungarian, Polish, and Slovak languages in their works. The linguistic variety of Ukrainian literature and the comparative mode of the new paradigms of teaching were limited to the study of Russian language poetry.

Let us remember that in Ukraine, Russian language use was instilled vigorously in the Soviet era. This intensive ideological work supported by the Kremlin-based leaders of the Soviet Empire resulted in the deformation of the Ukrainian language and the emergence of *surzhyk* (a kind of linguistic contamination as a result of Russian-Ukrainian bilingual situation) as a special linguistic phenomenon. Moreover, the status of the Ukrainian language also deteriorated as the Russian language was proclaimed to be the key language in Soviet times. In the post-Soviet period, the Ukrainian media still could not create a Ukrainian platform and a new conception, so the Russian language was dominant in this sphere.

The Ukrainian language minority

The language politics in Ukraine after 1991 *de jure* was oriented towards the formation of the new modern Ukrainian identity of the independent period. Since language was an essential part of the identity of the new Ukrainian state, then a new series of debates was opened after 1991. In the Constitution, the Ukrainian language was determined as a state symbol of independent Ukraine, the symbol that should be developed and maintained by Ukraine and all its state institutions. However, the situation with the Ukrainian language priority was not easy to change, as for the Soviet period the Russian language was totally maintained as the language of the Soviet peoples. All other Soviet languages had the sub-dominant positions and their speakers were not considered privileged enough. This tendency resulted in that the Russian language in Ukraine became stereotypically a symbol of *urbanity* – it demonstrated that the speakers belong to the city (urban) culture. Besides, it also demonstrated a kind of urban identity contrary to the rustically-marked identity of Ukrainian language speakers.

After 1991, media content was still created through the Russian language, which took a leading position in Ukrainian journalism. The language policies of Ukraine crashed, or, as Larysa Masenko says, ‘there was no language policy at all’²⁴. This means that no policy was created and the Ukrainian language, now the official language of Ukraine as an independent state, was perverted to a lower status

²⁴ “Znyshchyty humanitarnu auru nemozhlyvo”: rozmova z d-rom filoloh. nauk, prof. kaf. ukr. movy NU Kyievo-Mohylyans'koyi akadem. Larysoyu Masenko / viv D. Drozdovskiyi // Slovo Prosvity. 2010. Dec. 9–15: 4–5.

in the social mind. The positive image of the Ukrainian language was not created, as this language was eliminated from many institutions and spheres of social, cultural, and political life.

In the years since independence, the use of Ukrainian in institutions, the media and urban public spaces has grown... But overall, Russian has retained a very strong presence, especially in the media and in public urban spaces in the southern and eastern parts of the country (Bilaniuk 341).

Throughout the period of Ukrainian independence, some of the members of the Ukrainian parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*) still used the Russian language, demonstrating a negative attitude to the official state language. Russian was the unofficial language of the Crimea and the Ukrainian south and east. In the western and central Ukrainian regions, the Ukrainian language was also developing under the pressure of the Russian-language media, which intensified the *surzhyk* tendencies. In the southern and eastern parts of Ukraine, the Ukrainian language was in effect banned from social use or perhaps its urban zones.

After the crises of President Yuschenko's regime, the new political party ("The Party of Regions", *Partiya rehioniv*) took the key roles in the governmental process, and changes took place in major governmental positions. For example, with the support of the ruling party, O. Kostusev became the mayor of Odesa. While working in Kyiv, Kostusev always demonstrated an aggressively negative attitude towards the Ukrainian language. The first steps in his policies as a mayor of Odesa were connected with a desire to eliminate the usage of the Ukrainian language, which resulted in a document that proclaimed the Russian language as the official one in Odesa. It stipulated that all official documents should be written in Russian²⁵, despite the Constitution articles (no. 10) about the priority of the Ukrainian language. And, as the experts argue about the capital of Ukraine, Kyiv still "embodies the tension between the Ukrainian-dominant west and Russian-dominant east" (Bilaniuk 341).

Let us remember that, during the Orange Revolution, a meeting in Severodonetsk decided to proclaim the Russian language as the official state language in Ukraine. We can name a large number of examples which demonstrate that the use of the Russian language in Ukraine after 1991, but especially during 2004–2012, was not a linguistic, but mainly a political issue, connected with the ideology of the *Russian World*. The Ukrainian language was aborted in many southern and eastern Ukrainian regions despite the facts that in those regions (*oblasti*) there

²⁵ *Mer Odesy zaboronyv ukrajyns'ku movu v dokumentakh* // <http://tsn.ua/ukrayina/mer-odesi-zaboroniv-ukrajynsku-movu-v-dokumentah.html>; *Mer Odesy zaboronyv ukrajyns'ku movu* // http://www.politinform.odessa.ua/news/mer_odesi_zaboroniv_ukrajynsku_movu/2010-12-11-665; *Kostusyev nakazav Odes'kyy mis'kradi vprovadzhuvaty movnyy zakon* // <http://tyzhden.ua/News/57545>

are a lot of Ukrainian language speakers. The sociolinguistic parameters were not taken into account by the politicians who based their state political programmes on language aberrations. The political communication of the ‘Party of Regions’ (*Partiya rehioniv*) incorporated messages based on propaganda.

In this way, the implementation of the law regarding language politics in Ukraine in August 2012 was a realisation of the ideological and propagandistic orientations of the leading party. On the one hand, the law had (or, speaking frankly, its authors had) an ambition to solve the language ‘problem’ in Ukraine, taking into account the European experience and European multilingual communications. On the other hand, the law, in fact, was created to ‘defend’ the laws of the Russian-language speakers of Ukraine. The implementation of the Law had economical ‘connotations’ – its realisation in Ukraine was supported financially by the *Russian World* organisations.

Besides, we can say that the law did not even defend the Russian-language speakers, but, rather, the desire of the politicians not to use the Ukrainian language, the rights of the Russian political parties to develop their policies in Ukraine tolerating the traditions of the Russian identity based, to some extent, on the patterns of the tyrannical identity of imperial Russian leaders. The imperial Russian mind had a special vision of the Ukrainian lands and people as useful resources which can be exploited by Moscow, a new capital of the post-Soviet neo-totalitarian world. Let us remember the fact that V. Putin was one of the world’s first presidents to greet V. Yanukovich as a president of Ukraine before the official results of the vote of 2004²⁶, which resulted in the Orange Revolution. Moscow always played a great role in Ukraine, defending the cognitive patterns of the empire’s identity and preserving its cultural heritage. For the Russian Federation, which, after 2000, chose a special strategy of nation- and state-building with the intention of combining the Soviet and Russian imperial identities existing in the neo-totalitarian, coordinates were featured as ‘past-modernism’²⁷. This notion symbolises the orientation towards the re-utilisation of the past, which, in fact, totally prevents Russia from the modernisation of the European type and it has an impact on the sociocultural, economical, and political situation in Ukraine, which on one side borders Europe, and on the other borders post-Soviet territories, some of which have chosen neo-totalitarian regimes.

The key articles from the law, ‘The Principles of the State Language Politics in Ukraine’, visualise the post-Soviet tendencies and the ideology of the *Russian World*. After the implementation of the document (when it was signed by the president, despite the all-Ukrainian protests and the letters signed by

²⁶ *Derzhsekretar ne vyznayut’ rezul’taty vyboriv zakonnyymi* // http://www.bbc.co.uk/ukrainian/news/story/2004/11/041124_powell_illegitimate.shtml

²⁷ See Irina Hakamada’s *Russia in past-modernism*: <http://hakamada-irina.livejournal.com/32967.html>; <http://so-l.ru/news/show/6809494>

the academicians, professional linguists, and famous writers), the Russian language was proclaimed the regional language in many cities and regions. However, the Bulgarian people in the Odesa region were refused the right to proclaim the Bulgarian language as regional on the territories of their settlement. The same situation happened in the Crimea when the Crimean Tatars were refused the right to proclaim their language as regional, despite that fact that the Crimean Tatars belong to the original ethnic group in the Crimea and the history of this people saw many extreme and tragic moments.

What is more, some ideas explicated in the language law had an anti-Ukrainian orientation, and this point provoked all-Ukrainian protests that lasted for some months. But this all-Ukrainian democratic resistance did not change the mind either of the politicians, who lobbied for that law, or the president. The proclamation of the regional languages in Ukraine stimulated the elimination of the Ukrainian language in a large number of social, educational, and media spheres. The new language law was initiated according to the norms of the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*²⁸.

However, we must admit that the law which proclaims anti-Ukrainian ideology cannot be implemented in Ukraine as its rules offend the rights of Ukrainian-speaking citizens. In addition, the thesis explaining this law consists of some remarks written by Kivalov and Kolesnichenko which prove that the law was implemented to defend the status of the Russian language²⁹ in Ukraine, which is not, in fact, a regional language. The distribution of this language in the country cannot be compared to the other genuinely regional languages, such as the Moldavian, Crimean, Greek, Romanian, Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, and Bulgarian languages³⁰, which are widely spread across various Ukrainian regions (as in the Odesa, the Donetsk, the Chernovtsy, the Zakarpattya regions, and in the Crimea). The existence of the Russian language in the southern and eastern Ukrainian regions has an ideological reason – it was determined by the anti-Ukrainian politics of the Russian and later the Soviet Empires. The principles of the functioning of this language in Ukraine are completely different from the reasons for the presence of the really regional languages mentioned above. For example, we can say that the distribution of the Greek language in Odesa

²⁸ http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang/default_en.asp; see also: <http://conventions.coe.int/Treaty/en/Treaties/Html/148.htm>

²⁹ Kolesnichenko khoche "zakhyshchaty" rosiys'ku za rakhunok inshykh mov menshyn // <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2013/02/1/6982660/>; Rada Yevropy: Zakon pro rehional'ni movy zakhyshchaye til'ky rosiys'ku // http://dt.ua/POLITICS/rada_evropi_zakon_pro_rehionalni_movi_zahischaie_tilki_rosiysku.html; Zakon pro movy zakhyshchaye rosiys'ku v dev'yat' raziv bil'she za inshykh // <http://www.expres.ua/news/2012/07/28/70655>

³⁰ However, the Bulgarian language as regional in Izmail (Odesa region) was not allowed: Na Odeshchyni ne zakhotily robyty bolhars'ku rehional'noyu // <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2012/08/18/6971054/>

and Donetsk regions was influenced historically when some Greek groups settled on geographically Ukrainian territories, or we can find powerful Bulgarian and Moldavian settlements in the Odesa region, the Hungarian villages in the Zakarpattya regions, etc. The immigrants created a regional linguistic minority. However, the Russian language distribution in eastern and southern parts of Ukraine was not determined by the Russian-speaking national minorities which settled there in different historical periods. The state policy on that territory was influenced by the ideology of colonisation and the language implementation was a part of the politics of colonisation. All other languages of the original national minorities were eliminated and ‘melted’ into a new identity constructed by the centre of the empire. The new identity had to be built on the idea of the one central language which has a high status in the Empire. Thus, the usage of that language could bring benefits to the speaker. The same colonial ideology was reinforced by the implementation of the language law in Ukraine in August 2012. The law was not a law, but a sort of mimicry of the post-Soviet propaganda used by the leading state party.

We can find many examples which prove that the document about the language politics was created to maintain the ‘friendship’ between Ukraine and Russia (that kind of friendship was a realisation of the policies promoted by the *Russian World* organisation) and not the other minority languages in Ukraine. In April 2013, the Minister of Education and Sciences, Tabachnyk, said that he found it unreasonable that a lot of Ukrainian students of the 11th form choose to write their ZNO (exam the students have to pass to be able to become students) in different languages such as Romanian or Crimean, etc. The minister characterised those tendencies as ‘anti-Ukrainian’³¹. However, Tabachnyk initiated the new section in ZNO – tests in the Russian language and literature and the translation of all the tests (except for the Ukrainian language and literature) into Russian.

All these facts demonstrate that the language distribution law was a new revitalization of the policies of the *Russian World* with no true attention to the linguistic minorities in Ukraine. The law was signed to maintain the Russian language in the Ukrainian society, educational and governmental spheres etc., popularising the Russian language.

³¹ *Tabachnyk khoche zaboronyty kyyivs'kym abituriyentam «hratysya» kryms'kotatars'koyu movoyu na ZNO* // <http://kyiv.comments.ua/news/2013/04/10/144216.html>; *Tabachnyk skarzhyt'sya, shcho abituriyenty zamovlyayut' testy ZNO movamy natsmenschyn* // http://gazeta.ua/articles/politics/_tabachnik-skarzhitsya-scho-abituriyenti-zamovlyayut-testi-zno-movami-nacmenschyn/492102

Final remarks

In conclusion, it is important to underline that the policies implemented in the educational sphere in 2010–2012 were oriented towards the rethinking of the Ukrainian identity within the paradigm of the Russian identity, maintaining scientific, educational, and humanitarian bonds with Russia (a neo-totalitarian federation). The policies accepted some European forms of realisation, but the key vectors were connected to the desire of the new leading party (*Partiia rehioniv*, ‘The Party of Regions’), the Cabinet of Ministers, and the president to develop Ukraine in the closest relationship with Russia, neglecting the specific national peculiarities and destroying the positive experience implemented during 1991–2009. The new official documents, which should regulate the humanitarian sphere (Literature Conception, Language Law, etc.) were signed by President Yanukovich and Minister Tabachnyk despite the massive hurricanes of all-Ukrainian protests and representations. We can conclude that the documents were implemented in order to realise some political ambitions, but not to solve the existing problems of developing the Ukrainian identity of this independent country.

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