Language Policy in Education in Contemporary Ukraine: A Continuous Discussion of Contested National Identity

Ksenia Maksimovtsova*

Justus-Liebig University of Giessen

Abstract

Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, language policy has been dramatically transformed from the clear dominance of Russian as "the language of intercultural communication" in all ex-Soviet republics to the promotion of the so-called titular languages in all spheres of public life. In post-Soviet Ukraine, the transition to Ukrainian as the only state language has become particularly painful due to the spark of outrage of a significant proportion of Russian speakers and inconsistent measures in the sphere of language policy and planning. The system of education, which is the focus of the current study, has also been transformed several times, depending on the preferences of the political elites that aggravated the already complicated situation and fuelled the public and academic debates. The recent Ukrainian crisis, the military and media confrontation with Russia pose a serious challenge to Ukraine's national identity and continue to be an open field of public contestation. This article seeks to understand what role language plays in defining national identity through the analysis of the public debates on the educational reforms in the most crucial periods of 2011-2012, 2013-2015 and 2017. The study is based on the theory of social problems construction (Kitsuse and Spector, 2009) and the sociology of knowledge approach to discourse elaborated by R. Keller (2013) which provide an explanation why language policy has become such an overtly politicized phenomenon in Ukrainian discourse.

Keywords: language policy; educational reforms; national identity; blogs; social problems

---
* The author is a PhD candidate at the International Graduate Centre for the Study of Study of Culture, Justus-Liebig-University of Giessen. Email: Ksenia.Maksimovtsova@gcsc.uni-giessen.de.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 has profoundly changed the political outlook of the world. All former USSR republics obtained a sovereign status that allowed them to choose the trajectory of their political development. The Soviet period had a significant influence on language policy in contemporary Ukraine, which is the focus of the following article. In the Soviet period, the so-called languages of "titular nationalities" (and Ukrainian is among them) were underrepresented and discriminated against and Russian was designated as the 'language of intercultural communication' (Malia, 2008). Young nation-states (re)-established after 1991 were confronted, along with the severe economic and political dilemmas, with two main problems: a poor command of the "titular" language and huge influxes of migrants, especially Russian-speaking.

After 1991 and the politics of 'gradual de-Russification' (Pavlenko, 2008), the Russian language lost its privileged political position and Ukrainian was established as the only state languages, which caused the outrage of a significant proportion of Russian speakers and led to the ongoing public debates on the current *status quo* in language policy. As Aneta Pavlenko (2008: 1-2) states in the introductory part of the book *Multilingualism in Post-Soviet Countries*:

> These countries as a whole have emerged as a contested linguistic space, where emotional exchanges over language-related issues are fodder for the daily news and where disagreements over language- and education-related decisions have led to demonstrations and at times even military conflicts and secession.

Consequently, the controversial demographic situation and the promotion of Ukrainian as the only state language, without taking into consideration a huge group of Russian-speakers, enhanced a historical chance for this country to conduct the politics of nationalizing states, in terms of Rogers Brubaker's theory of nationalism. He considers them as the 'states that conceived by their dominant elites as nation-states, as the states of and for particular nations, yet as, "incomplete" or "unrealized" nation-states, as insufficiently "national" in a variety of senses' (Brubaker, 1996: 412; 2003). It means that Ukrainian politics after the restoration of independence is characterized by the decisive attempts of the governments to promote the interests of the so-called "core" nation. Language policy has also become a central element of the nation-building projects in modern Ukraine.

The current Ukrainian crisis and the military intervention of Russia have vividly shown that the question of language and the discrimination perceived by Russian speakers can become

not only the part of the political game but can also lead to serious ethnic violence in the overall post-Soviet region. For instance, Barbora Moormann-Kimáková (2015: 1) argues:

> It would be far too much to maintain that the Ukrainian conflict is one about language or that it was caused by a language law: the roots of the conflict, the parties involved and its further development are much more complex than that. But, it is a conflict in which, at one point, the change of language regime could have possibly played a positive role by perhaps winning the loyalties of more Russian speakers – and it has played a negative one instead. As the conflict between pro-Russian separatists and the Ukrainian government forces continues, the language issue remains part of the demands of the former, and most importantly, a strong argument showing that Russian speakers are not (and never would be) treated well in Ukraine.

In reaction to the Ukrainian political crisis, the language debates highlighted again the problematic position of Russian speakers who not only lost their politically advantageous status but have always been the object of the manipulations from Ukrainian politicians who heavily used the language card before the parliamentary and presidential elections. Thus, the Ukrainian course of political development has never been linear, unlike in the Baltic States which chose the trajectory of integration into Europe and NATO immediately after the collapse of the USSR. The periods of active nationalization (the presidencies of Leonid Kravchyuk, Leonid Kuchma and Viktor Yuschenko) when the Ukrainian language was actively promoted in all spheres public life, including education, were followed by the periods of partial denationalization (the presidency of Viktor Yanukovych who opted for the economic and cultural integration with Russia) when Russian got the status of the regional language in several Ukrainian *oblasts.*

The identity of Russian speakers that is the focus of the following paper has always been the question of the academic and public discussions in Ukraine. 'Because the Russian/Russian-speaking community was so fragmented from the start of the post-Soviet era, it could be argued that any study into "Russian-speaking identity" is potentially problematic from the outset' (Cheskin, 2016). However, this fact did not discourage the scholars working across humanities and social sciences to study the identity of Russian speakers (for example, see Polese, 2012; Kulyk, 2015). The peculiar feature of the Ukrainian political landscape is the polarization of the political and linguistic preferences of the population. It is argued by some scholars (see Kubicek, 1994) that Ukraine is traditionally subdivided into the more Russified West and South and the more Ukrainized Centre and West. It is also proved by the results of the online maps made by Aleksandr Kireev and Aleksei Sidorenko that the political preferences of the population are clearly divided between "pro-Russian" and "pro-Ukrainian" politicians. Thus, the majority of the Western and Central regions voted for Yulia Timoshenko in 2010, whereas

Eastern regions and the Crimea supported Viktor Yanukovych who promised to grant Russian the status of the second state language. The regional polarization is one of the factors that has a great impact on the overall course of Ukrainian political development and language and education policies in particular. This feature has also become an important prerequisite for the intervention of the Russian military troops in Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Crimea under the auspices of "Russian-speakers protection". These peculiar features make Ukraine a unique and outstanding case among other post-Soviet countries.

Since I aim to concentrate on the changed perception of national identity in Ukraine, I need to define the term "identity" that I will apply in the article. Following Berger and Luckman's understanding of identity, I consider it as a negotiable and flexible process and not as a stable phenomenon. Identities are constructed and, more often in the context of post-Soviet development, are contested by different social actors. Berger and Luckmann (1966: 194) assume that 'identity is formed by social processes. Once crystallized, it is maintained, modified or even reshaped by social relations. The social processes in both the formation and the maintenance of identity are determined by the social structure'. Thus, the aim of the paper is to analyze the process of *negotiation of identity* in the public debates on the language policy and education in the Russian-language blogs and news websites that were chosen for the empirical analysis. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2001: 249) note, 'negotiation of identities will be understood as the interplay between reflective positioning, that is, self-representation, and interactive positioning, whereby others attempt to reposition particular individuals or groups'.

In this paper, the focus is on the public debates surrounding the educational reforms and language policy in contemporary Ukraine. As Soll, Salvet and Masso (2015: 223-224), who did research on educational policies in another post-Soviet country (Estonia), argue:

> The education system plays an important role in the preservation and development of language: primary and lower secondary education are considered particularly important in terms of the development of the language skills and knowledge. One task of the education system is to ensure the cultural reproduction of society through the development of students' knowledge and skills, including language skills and knowledge and the sharing of cultural values and traditions.

It means that education and the language of instruction play a crucial role in the process of *negotiation of identities* and have become a powerful instrument in transmitting the official historical narratives and nationalizing projects in post-Soviet Ukraine. Moreover, the educational system has been extremely sensitive to the changes in the political climate in Ukraine. As it has been already noted, the period of partial denationalization, following the

presidency of Yanukovych from 2010 until 2014, was characterized by the decisive attempts of the Ministry of Education to introduce more Russian lessons at schools. On the contrary, after the Euromaidan and complete change of the political elites, the course of Ukrainian educational policies has been significantly transformed in the direction of complete Ukrainization of schools and universities.

For further empirical analysis of the public debates in education, Russian-language news websites and blogs were selected and thoroughly scrutinized. According to Graham Lampa (2004), blogs and digital media in general not only represent one of the key sources of information nowadays but altogether form a 'discursive transnational online community'. The role of blogs is also difficult to overestimate, as they offer the platform for various groups of claim-makers to articulate their interests and form agenda that is of utmost importance for the study of the discourses formation, production, and reproduction (Maratea, 2008). I have deliberately concentrated on three periods of educational reforms, namely 2011-2012 (before the Euromaidan), 2013-2015 (right during the political crisis) and 2017 (after the crisis), in order to analyse how the perception of national identity has been changed in the context of the military confrontation with Russia and reorientation towards the West and how the discourse of language and education has evolved in the last 5 years. For the purpose of my analysis, I have focused on the most visited news websites and blog platforms in Ukraine. The sources include the weekly online journal *Zerkalo Nedeli,* news website *Novoe Vremya* and two blogospheres linked to the news websites, *Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda* and *Blogs Korrespondent.*

Based on the theory of social problems construction elaborated by J. Kitsuse and M. Spector (2009), the concept of language games (Kitsuse and Ibarra, 2003) and the *sociology of knowledge approach (SKAD)* developed by R. Keller (2013), the aim of the following paper is to find out what are the public attitudes towards the educational initiatives and how the identities of Russian-speakers are constructed and articulated in the discourses of the Russian-language blogs and news websites in contemporary Ukraine. The theory of social problem construction that will be analysed in the next section provides an explanation as to why language policy has become such an extremely politicized issue that polarizes the Ukrainian society.

1. The social constructivist approach in the theories of social problems

As is clear from the description of the complicated language policy in contemporary Ukraine, language issues have been one of the most widely discussed topics since 1991. That is why for many researchers of the language situation the question, *why* is language policy is so extremely politicized, is one of the most challenging and difficult ones to answer. The theory of social problems construction developed by J. Kitsuse and M. Spector (2009) and the research programme elaborated by J. Kitsuse and P. Ibarra (2003) serve as a fruitful theoretical and methodological framework that can be applied for the investigation of the main rhetorical strategies used by social actors to construct the issue of language policy as a social problem in the discourses of the Russian-language blogs and news websites and how these attitudes reflect different notions of national identity.

'The central problem for a theory of social problems is to account for the emergence, nature and maintenance of claims-making and responding activities' (Kitsuse and Spector, 2009: 75-76). They view social problems as the *rhetoric* and not as objective conditions. Kitsuse and Spector repeatedly emphasize that their theoretical approach is based in the studies of claim-making activities. 'Claim-making is always a form of interaction: a demand made by one party to another that something should be done about some putative condition' (Kitsuse and Spector, 2009: 78). By constructing social problems, the members of the society *claim* that some harmful social conditions exist and *claim* that this problem should be eliminated or solved. Thus, different interests articulated by various groups often become an open field of contestation. Thus, I assume that the constructivist approach to social problems perfectly explains *why* and *how* language policy is constructed as a social problem and what social actors participate in the discourse formation, production, and reproduction.

J. Kitsuse and P. Ibarra (2003) developed a well-structured and comprehensive framework for analysing social problems by concentrating on motifs or language (vernacular) games that will be applied for the study of the public debates and educational reforms in the Russian-language blogs and news websites. Motifs are recurrent figures of speech and themes that highlight or summarize a central element of a social problem that often includes morally permeated phrases and metaphors (e.g. crisis, catastrophe, abuse, scandal, threat). Kitsuse and Ibarra emphasize that the construction of social problems is hardly imaginable without using moral judgments or appeals to the general public, because a great many social problems are deeply intertwined with the notion of justice and various perceptions of equality. For instance,

the investigation of motifs in discourses produced by newspapers or news websites, the tone of the articles, the structure, and rhetorical questions can reveal what actors are included or excluded from decision-making, who the recipients of information are and whose position the selected publications represent. In my research, I will concentrate on different rhetorical strategies (the rhetoric of loss, the rhetoric of entitlement etc.) used to construct language policy as a social problem in the public discourses in contemporary and Ukraine. In the next section of my article, I aim at analysing the public attitudes towards the educational reforms in Russian-language blogs and news websites for three periods such 2011-2012, 2013-2015 and 2017.

2. Debates on educational reforms in Ukraine in 2011-2012

The reforms in the sphere of secondary and higher education deserve a particular place in the overall debates on language policy in independent Ukraine. They are associated with the name of the former Minister of Education Dmitro Tabachnyk, whose activity caused heated debates and affected also language policy in Ukraine. He proposed to introduce more Russian lessons at schools, which led to an ambiguous public reaction and polarized the Ukrainian society. Moreover, new educational reforms were accompanied by the approval of the notorious law 'On the Principles of the State Language Policy' in 2012 that gave Russian the status of the regional language in those regions where it was spoken by more than 10% of the population. Both adherents of the Russian and Ukrainian language advanced the arguments either in favour or against Russian as the regional language.

For the empirical analysis of the debates on the role of language in educational reforms in Ukraine for the period of 2011-2012, I have chosen two main sources—two blogs section of the news website *Korrespondent* (http://blogs.korrespondent.net/) and online newspaper *Ukrainskaya Pravda* (https://blogs.pravda.com.ua/)—because they are supposed to be two of the most popular sources of information in the country (Media Landscapes of Eastern Partnership Countries, 2011).

Two main social problems that are articulated and contested in online media space are the perceived discrimination of Russian-speakers in the sphere of education and "the existential threat" to the Ukrainian language. The main point of clash between Internet users is whether Russian or Ukrainian should be protected in Ukraine. Therefore, the main argumentation patterns are constructed along two lines: those who support the reforms of Tabachnyk (i.e. the

Russian language) and those who support Ukrainization of schools. The peculiar feature of the overall discussion is that *Blogs Korrespondent* represents almost exclusively the arguments of those who support the Russian language, whereas journalists, bloggers and ordinary Internet users of *Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda* tend to articulate the more "pro-Ukrainian" position and favour the idea of Ukrainian as the only state language.

Different groups of claim-makers articulate their interests in Ukrainian online media, including politicians, journalists, and ordinary newsreaders. Based on the classification of the recurrent figures and rhetoric offered by J. Kitsuse and P. Ibarra (2003), it is possible to distinguish *the rhetoric of loss* and *the rhetoric of entitlement* in the selected articles on both websites. The first strategy is used when claim-makers want to stress that some valuable object or state is running the risk of losing value and needs protecting being unable to protect itself. This rhetoric is often expressed in connection with the "threatened" position of the Ukrainian language. *The rhetoric of entitlement* is a linguistic means to claim that everyone should have equal access to resources including public institutions. This strategy is used more often in regard to the "discriminated" position of Russian-speakers who cannot enjoy the full spectrum of rights along with Ukrainian-speakers. Thus, one of the bloggers claims:

> It is very sad and bitter that in one part of the United Russian World there is the problem with the most important thing that is the right to study in the native language, to talk freely in that language and get education in the native Russian language ('Russkiy Yazik v Ukrainskoy Shkole', September 1, 2012).

Here we see that not only *the rhetoric of entitlement* is expressed by the blogger but it is also emphasized that Russia and Ukraine belong to one part of the bigger "Russian world"; the assumption about the proximity of the Ukrainian and Russian cultures is used in order to construct the notion of language in the sphere of education as an urgent social problem.

The exact opposite opinion is designated in the article published by the blogger Andrey Okara in *Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda.* In the majority of the comments related to the blog entry, *the rhetoric of loss* is expressed when the threat to Ukrainian is constructed as an "existential threat" to Ukrainian nationhood and democracy. Thus, one of the users stresses:

> Every day all Ukrainian is squeezed out of Ukraine. For example, let us take any radio station. What is the main language of broadcasting? Even the host's surnames are 99% Russian. National interests are losing their position on the legislative level ('Dmitry Vladimorivich Tabachnik. Welcome to Russia!', June 1, 2011).

Thus, the following discussion reflects the process of constructing the social problem of the Ukrainian language being under threat of extinction. Consequently, the Ukrainian language is

closely intertwined with the notion of national interests and is the main prerequisite for Ukraine as an independent and sovereign state. In this case, establishing Russian as the regional language and the reforms of Dmitro Tabachnyk aimed at increasing the influence of Russian are constructed as a *threat* to the notion of Ukrainian sovereignty. Moreover, it is stressed that Ukraine can only exist independently when the state language is protected, especially from the influence of the Russian language and "the Russian world". Thus, Andrey Okara states:

> Russian language is a means of communication but it is not a symbol of brother unity [братского единения] and superiority, not as a sign of love for Russia, not as indicator of the greatness of the Russian culture, not as a ticket to the [Russian World], not as a memory of the common past and not as a dream of the common future ('Dmitry Vladimorivich Tabachnik. Welcome to Russia!', June 1, 2011).

In contrast to the opinions expressed in *Blogs Korrespondent,* where Russia and Ukraine are often depicted as culturally proximate, the publications and comments in *Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda* reflect the discussion where Ukraine is constructed as an independent state and, most important, independent from Russian political influence. In this case, the role of Russian is reduced to the language of communication.

The notion of Ukrainian identity is one of the main points of clash between the readers of *Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda* and *Blogs Korrespondent.* Interestingly, the identity problem of the highly Russified Eastern and Southern regions of Ukraine is constantly coming up not only in the publications of 2011-2012, but also after 2014, when the Ukrainian political crisis had reached its culmination. '90 % of the people aged 18-35 have Ukrainian ideas in mind, despite the fact that they speak Russian, considering it as a product of Ukraine (but not as Russian property)' ('Dvuyazychie dlya Ukraini – blago, a ne vred', September 9, 2011). Thus, the Ukrainian language is constructed as an important signifier of the Ukrainian culture and, most important, of Ukraine's survival as the nation and political community.

In contrast to this opinion, one of the *Korrespondent* bloggers Yuri Lipchevskiy claims, 'historically we were the part of the bigger Russian-speaking space. A lot of Ukrainians identify themselves with Russians or Russian speakers' ('Dvuyazychie dlya Ukraini – blago, a ne vred', September 9, 2011). Further, he expresses *the rhetoric of entitlement*:

> We need a new language law. It should provide equal opportunities for the development of Ukrainian citizen and promote equality. Discrimination based on language restricts freedom. It is impossible to be happy talking in a non-native language ('Dvuyazychie dlya Ukraini – blago, a ne vred', September 9, 2011).

The common characteristic of the selected materials is that bloggers often accuse the Ukrainian government and politicians of the speculations on the language issue. Ukrainian journalist Yuri Lukshits analyses popular myths regarding the establishment of the second state language and arrives to the conclusion:

> Any political force does not need this law [the language law of 2012], this question has been raised only to get some political points; the law will not come into force, and only because the discussion of this law will be raised in order to attract the electorate ('Mifi o Vtorom Gosudarstvennom', June 19, 2013).

The situation in Ukrainian secondary and higher education is often compared to other countries. For instance, Ruslan Bortnik claims that the experience of Canada and Finland can be valuable for Ukraine. In   his opinion, both countries succeed in integrating national minorities. For example, in Finland, where there are only 6% Swedes, all opportunities for getting education in their native language are open. Thus, Bortnik claims, 'the project of multilingual education and the politics of multiculturalism is the most appropriate for multicultural and multilingual Ukraine' ('Aspekti Multilingvalnogo Obrazovaniya v Mire: Opyt dlya Ukraini', June 6, 2012). Here the notion of Ukrainian national identity also comes into focus where contemporary Ukraine is depicted as a multilingual and multinational country that should adopt successful international experience.

The controversial reforms in the system of education proposed by the former Minister of Education Dmitro Tabachnyk led to vigorous public debates that is expressed by different discursive strategies, e.g. in *the rhetoric of loss* and *the rhetoric of entitlement*. Both Russian and Ukrainian speakers are constructed as the "victims" of contemporary nationalization politics and the manipulations of Ukrainian politicians. While *Blogs Korrespondent* largely reflects the position of the "victimized" Russian speakers and the argumentation pattern of the necessity to establish Russian as the second state language, the discussions in *Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda* generate more intense and heated debates on the notions of Ukrainian national identity and language policy that remains a highly contested issue. However, as the subsequent analysis shows, the arguments in favour of Ukrainian and Russian are almost equally distributed in the publications on two websites. In the period of 2013-2015, when the political turbulence in Ukraine reached its peak, the notion of Ukrainian national identity and the balance of power between Russian and Ukrainian has been significantly changed, which will be thoroughly analysed in the next section.

3.   Debates on the role of languages in education in Ukraine in 2013-2015

The period of 2013-2015 has become a crucial point in the political development of Ukraine. *Euromaidan* or *the Revolution of Dignity,* the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the annexation of the Crimea in 2014 have raised the question of Ukrainian national identity again. The media space was predominantly occupied by the war on Donbass and the Crimean problem in the period of 2013-2015; however, the debates over the language of education came into focus again. In order to find out the main argumentation patterns and the points of clash related to language policy and education, several news websites will be analysed in the following section.

Novoe Vremya, Zerkalo Nedeli and *LiveJournal* are chosen as the main source of empirical material. *Novoe Vremya* (http://nv.ua) is a weekly journal and news website that was established in 2014 as an attempt to create an independent and unbiased news website. According to the results of the research, *Novoe Vremya was* among the 15 most visited websites in 2015, along with *Zerkalo Nedeli* (http://zn.ua) that was also included in the sample ('NV Opredelilo 15 Samikh Populyarnikh Ukrainskikh Novostnikh Saitov', December 3, 2015). The discussion on the role of the English language in the sphere of education can be found on http://Victorshestakov.livejournal.com/ that is also included in the final sample.

The Minister of Education Sergei Kvit supported the President's initiative to make 2016 the year of the English language and referred to Estonian experience where university entrants were supposed to have a good command of English. In his interview, he also touched upon the problem with the Russian language that was expressed in *the rhetoric of loss* in relation to the "vulnerable" and "threatened" position of the state language. In his opinion, Ukrainian is considered as the language under threat:

> How to deal with Russian? Well, as with any other language. I do not propose to eliminate it. In the end, there are films and literature. We should take care of all languages but Russian has not suffered so much as Ukrainian, Greek or Crimean Tatar ('Ministr Obrazovaniya Kvit Rasskazal NV, Skol'ko Yazikov Budut Uchit' Ukraintsy i Stanut Li Vikorchevivat' Russkiy', June 9, 2015).

His statement caused a provocative debate on the role of Russian. Thus, one of the users expresses the *rhetoric of entitlement*, but in relation to the "discriminated" position of Russian speakers in Ukraine, 'Russians, congratulate you! We are now a national minority. They even tell that Russians are not oppressed with such an attitude towards Russians and the Russian language!' ('Ministr Obrazovaniya Kvit Rasskazal NV, Skol'ko Yazikov Budut Uchit' Ukraintsy i Stanut Li Vikorchevivat' Russkiy', June 9, 2015).

Another user disagrees with this statement, but refers to the oppression of the Ukrainian language in the Crimea:

> Why are you not a national minority? Should we need to praise you like Gods? Why are you oppressed? Oppression is when it is prohibited to talk in Ukrainian in the Crimea, when you are persecuted because of the Ukrainian flag ('Ministr Obrazovaniya Kvit Rasskazal NV, Skol'ko Yazikov Budut Uchit' Ukraintsy i Stanut Li Vikorchevivat' Russkiy', June 9, 2015).

The rhetoric of loss in relation to the Ukrainian language is extensively used in the selected materials. Internet users commenting on both www.nv.ua and www.zn.ua often claim that the state language in Ukraine needs to be protected, being unable to protect itself. Oksana Onischenko, a columnist in *Zerkalo Nedeli,* wrote a provocative article 'Do you speak po-russki?' ['Do you speak Russian?'] that received 422 controversial comments. She emphasizes that the Ukrainian government should pay meticulous attention to the state language and protect it.

One of the participants of the debate expresses *the rhetoric of unreason* by considering the governmental measures to support education in Ukrainian as *"deliberate Ukrainization"* that is considered to be useless and harmful for the Ukrainian political development. In response to this opinion, another user expresses *the rhetoric of loss* in relation to the Ukrainian language:

> Where do you see Ukrainization? The number of hours for the Ukrainian language are constantly reduced, Ukrainian schools are closed or they are converted to the Russian language of instruction, Ukrainian mass media and publishing are abolished ('Do you Speak Po-russki?', February 7, 2015).

These statements cited above represent a typical *argumentation pattern* where the existential threat to Ukrainian and, thus, to national survival and national identity, is constructed in the public discourse of Ukrainian online media. Moreover, Ukraine is constructed as the only legitimate places where the state languages can be developed and spoken and, consequently, should be protected by the state.

Another *argumentation pattern* that appears quite often in the selected publications is connected with the role of the Russian language that has also become a point of clash in the Internet discussions. While Ukrainian is constructed as a key element of Ukrainian nation-building, Russian is described as a means of communication and an important factor in economic development of the country and personal success. *The argumentation pattern* that is expressed in Ukrainian media is that Russian deserves a higher status in Ukraine because it is a native language for millions of Ukrainians. 'The Russian language should become the state

language. Russian is a real prospect and is not invented by some obscure strangers' ('Do you Speak Po-russki?', February 7, 2015).

The intensification of the public debates on language policy happened in 2014-2015 when the newly elected President of Ukraine Petr Poroshenko proposed to give a special status to the English language and to eliminate the duplication of the records in the Russian language in Ukrainian passports. As it is stated in the article 'Instead of Russian. Poroshenko proposed to give a special status to English', published on www.nv.ua, 'Poroshenko noted that English should become the main foreign language in the system of education' ('Vmesto Russkogo. Poroshenko Predlozhil Dat' Osobiy Status Angliiskomu Yaziku', October 3, 2014). For this purpose, he proposed that 2016 should be the notified as the year of the English language. Moreover, he supported the idea to eliminate the duplication of the passport records in Russian:

> I support Ukrainian people's indignation to the duplication of the information in the Ukrainian passport in the language of the state that is officially recognized by the Verkhovna Rada as acting aggressively against Ukraine. Taking into account the patriotic position of the people signed the petition as well as the inclination of the Ukrainian society to integrate into the European Union; I consider that all records made in Russian should be substituted by the records in English as the language of international communication ('Inglishizatsia Ukraini v chest svobodi ot dostoinstva', November 22, 2015).

The fact that Poroshenko raised the question of English certainly demonstrates that, at least, political leaders, are trying to question the future of Ukraine. For them, English has become a way of distancing from the Russian aggression and politics and a means of integrating into Europe. This trend is also observable in the continuous analysis of the online discussions on education in post-Euromaidan Ukraine. In this statement, Ukrainian national identity is constructed in the strong opposition to the Russian politics where Russian is articulated as the language of the *occupying country*. Moreover, the increase in the national consciousness and patriotism of Ukrainians are seen as important prerequisites of the Ukrainian integration into the EU; Europe also serves as the focal point and a particular system of political values that form Ukrainian nationhood after Euromaidan. This conclusion corresponds to the results of the research project led by V. Kulyk (2015) who proved:

> In terms of self-reported change in attitudes "over the last year," respondents in 2014 reported having better feelings about the Ukrainian language, with 35 percent reporting at least some change for the better and only 6 percent feeling a change for the worse.

The "Europeanization" tendency is finely illustrated by the statement of Oksana Onischenko who claims that 'I am not against the Russian language. I am in favour of Ukrainian. And I am

for European prospects' ('Do you Speak Po-russki?', February 7, 2015). Thus, Ukrainian is constructed not only as a key marker in national identity but also a necessary prerequisite for entering Europe.

The discussion of Poroshenko's proposal to establish English as the main working language in education can be also found on *LiveJournal.* Viktor Shestakov (http://viktorshestakov.livejournal.com/) critically examines the President's initiative in his article 'Anglicization of Ukraine' and claims that it is a new fraud scheme proposed by Poroshenko within the framework of the state Russophobe politics. The blogger is extremely critical about the outcome of the reform; further in the text he states; 'now the citizen of Ukraine are immersed in the severe economic crisis where the foremost question is the issue of survival and not the language' ('Inglishizatsia Ukraini v chest svobodi ot dostoinstva', November 22, 2015).

Ukrainian sources selected for my analysis (*Zerkalo Nedeli, Novoe Vremya* and *LiveJournal*) represent an excellent example of how different discursive and rhetorical strategies are used to construct the issue of language policy as a social problem in Ukrainian discourse. The Ukrainian case of social problems construction is definitely unique and challenging, since the contradictory claims about two main languages are expressed by different groups of the population. As the subsequent analysis shows, the claims about Ukrainian-speakers' discrimination are often articulated by the politicians and officials who are supposed to play the role of problem bearers and to be responsible for resolving the problems articulated by other groups of the population who are not in power (for instance, Russian-speakers' perceived discrimination). In the case of the exclusive claims about either Russian- or Ukrainian-speakers' discrimination, politicians' role is not limited to responding the claims; they also act as claim-makers when the discussion is linked to the problem of the state language.

Thus, the question whether Russian or Ukrainian should be protected in Ukraine remains the main point of clash between the discussants. Cultural and, consequently, political boundaries between "Russians" and "Ukrainians" are constantly redrawn and reflect the main argumentation patterns regarding the use of languages. Thus, the Ukrainian language is constructed as a key marker of national identity and national survival and a chance for entering the European Union; Ukraine is often portrayed as the only legitimate place on the planet where Ukrainian can be preserved, while Russian is perceived as either a means of communication or the language of the *occupying country* and the threat to Ukrainian unity and political stability.

The overall analysis reflects also the rise of the patriotic moods and nationalist arguments in favour of Ukrainian as the only state language, especially in comparison with the period of 2011-2012, where the arguments of the 'Slavic brotherhood' were still present in the public discourse. Anti-Russian sentiments and reorientation towards the West (i.e. English at schools and universities) are the main characteristic of the overall discussion of the educational initiatives in the period of 2013-2015.

4. Public debates on the adoption of the new language laws in 2017

Since 2013 when *the Revolution of Dignity* and the subsequent Russian aggression took place, the course of the political development in Ukraine continues to attract meticulous attention of international academia and politicians who attempt to investigate the changes in self-perception of Ukrainians and understanding of Ukraine's legitimate place in the world. After 2013-2014 when the language problems were fuelled by the military intervention of the Russian troops and an attempt to abolish the 2012 language law, the period of 2017 has become a turning point in the overall discussion of Ukrainian language policy and national identity. In January 2017, the deputies of *the Verkhovna Rada* initiated the discussion of the three language drafts aimed at the stable increase of the role of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life. Since 2014, when the deputies tried to abolish the notorious law of Kivalov-Kolesnichenko which provided regional status for the Russian language in several Ukrainian regions, the public debates that took place in 2017 have become the first fully-fledged attempt to rearrange the new language order in the rapidly changing political environment in Ukraine. Ukrainian deputies registered three laws, No. 5556, 5669 and 5670, aimed at 'protecting the public status of the Ukrainian language, societal integration and strengthening the state and territorial unity of Ukraine'. Moreover, the deputies proposed to establish a special institution that will punish those whose level of Ukrainian is insufficient. In its essence, this organization is similar to the Language Inspection in Estonia and the Centre for the State Language in Latvia.

The reforms of the legislation of the language use went further—in September 2017, the President of Ukraine proposed to introduce Ukrainian as the only language of instruction at schools of national minorities, which polarized the Ukrainian society and caused an extremely negative reaction of some European politicians. Altogether, these important decisions in the sphere of language use and education have subdivided the country into two "camps" and

intensified the debates in the public. The debates analysed in this section cover overall Ukrainization efforts discussed above, including the sphere of education.

Social media, news websites and blogs have become a platform for intense public discussions of the new wave of Ukrainization proposed by politicians. I have chosen two websites for further empirical investigation: news website *Novoe Vremya* (http://nv.ua/) and *Blogs Korrespondent* (http://blogs.korrespondent.net/). The decision to focus on these particular websites is determined by two criteria: *the diversity of publications* and *media coverage*. These two sources offered a large number of articles, comments, and experts' opinions on the new language laws and educational reforms and covered a great variety of opinions and arguments that will be studied carefully in the following section. The analysed period includes all publications from January 2017 until the end of September 2017 when the most heated debates took place.

Generally speaking, the analysis of both websites indicates the dominance of the comments and articles in favour of the state language, proving the growing tendency of the Ukrainian language 'victimization' which became extremely visible after 2013. However, despite the overwhelming dominance of the arguments in favour of the state language, some statements that support the Russian language were also marked out in the selected materials.

Social actors who articulate that the problem of the Ukrainian language exists in the society include various groups such as politicians, experts, journalists and ordinary Internet users who posted their comments on the news websites. For instance, the interview with the authors of the language laws was published on http://nv.ua/ where Andrey Teteruk, the member of the party 'People's Front' claims, 'Ukrainian is the state language of the country. Public institutions must provide an opportunity to communicate and keep the records in the state language. That is absolutely normal' ('Mova-emigrant: Parlament perevisyvayet zakon o yazyke – Pochemu poshel shkval negodovaniya i sporov?', January 23, 2017).

Thus, purpose of this argument is to emphasize the central role of Ukrainian in all spheres of public life and claim that the state language is the guarantee of societal integration and unity. Moreover, the knowledge of the state language is constructed as a means of national and cultural survival of Ukraine. For instance, Yaroslav Ageyenko, an ordinary Internet user, states, 'there will be no Ukraine without the Ukrainian language, culture, history and identity' ('Mova-emigrant: Parlament perevisyvayet zakon o yazyke – Pochemu poshel shkval negodovaniya i sporov?', January 23, 2017).

16

In some of the statements, the language is understood not only as a key marker of national identity but also as an effective method of preserving the territorial and political integrity, mainly from the influence of Russia. Thus, one of the users stresses:

> The state should have only one language. And it is simply the self-preservation instinct because the existence of several state languages can become a reason for aggression (the mechanisms are well-known and well-argued). You can communicate in different languages but there should be only one state language. Moreover, the language should be unique, so that nobody will encroach on it. And this language is Ukrainian ('Yazykovoy Zakon: prodolzhaite pomogat' Kremlyu', January 25, 2017).

Some of the visitors of http://blogs.korrespondent.net/ also use *the rhetoric of loss* in relation to the 'weak' and 'vulnerable' position of the state language in Ukraine. For instance, one of the Internet users argues:

> All civilized nations try to protect their languages. Russian is not despised in Ukraine; people speak it even better than Ukrainian. The state language of Ukraine is Ukrainian, and, therefore, the main duty of Ukrainians us to speak their language ('Yazikovoy vopros: chem gordites', devochki?', September 12, 2017).

The frequent use of this argumentation pattern indicates that many Ukrainians feel that the position of the state language is "threatened" and that the state needs to focus on preserving the unique cultural identity and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Thus, the state language is understood as a means of uniting the country.

Like those social actors who argue that Ukrainian-speakers' rights are infringed in Ukraine, the second group of claim-makers admits exactly the opposite—total Ukrainization of the public space is the violation of the rights of Russian-speakers. For instance, one of the top experts of *Blogs Korrespondent* Viktor Medvedchuk argues:

> And then, what should we do with the Constitution of Ukraine, its tenth article, which "guarantees the free development, use and protection of Russian and other languages of national minorities"? This is the most outrageous example of replacing the force of the law by the right of the force ('Pochemu USA nravitsya prinyatiy VR zakon ob obrazovanii', September 13, 2017).

This opinion is supported by the Ukrainian deputy Evgeniy Muraev who stresses:

> We are the "patchwork", multinational, whose borders had always been created by our neighbours. Only 26 years ago different nationalities with different languages and religions voted for united, independent Ukraine. And now these people and their descendants are trampled into the dirt and are told that they are "pseudo-Ukrainians ('Na yazike nasiliya', May 23, 2017).

17

The metaphor of "patchwork" used to emphasize the multinational character of contemporary Ukraine illustrates a more inclusive view of Ukraine that respects the rights of Ukrainian- and Russian-speakers and other minority groups.

This inclusive view of the Ukrainian nation is shared by some visitors of the news website *Novoe Vremya.* Thus, one of the users stresses that:

> Ukraine is a bilingual country, the same situation exists in many countries. And if I have the right to know and to speak Ukrainian, I will also demand the right to communicate in Russian. The hatred towards the Russian aggressor should not be transferred to the language and its speakers – it is the right way to the collapse of the country ('Razgovor na ravnykh', January 29, 2017).

The statements mentioned above are used in order to claim that Russian-speakers should have equal access to resources including public institutions along with Ukrainian-speakers.

In contrast to those claim-makers who argue that Russian-speakers' rights are violated in Ukraine, the opposite side of the discursive conflict applies a more exclusive vision of Ukrainian national identity. The characteristic feature of the claims about the special protection of Ukrainian made by politicians, experts, journalists, Internet users etc. is the discursive opposition of Russia and Ukraine which has become even more visible since 2015. As some of the arguments mentioned above illustrate, Ukrainization is understood by this group of claim-makers as an attempt of decommunization. Thus, Russia is often depicted as a 'backward', 'totalitarian' country and, consequently, Russian as the remnant of the Soviet regime that oppressed everything Ukrainian. For instance, user Vadim Schutskiy stresses:

> Actually Russian is nothing more than a vestige of the Soviet and imperial eras. There is no practical interest in it. Nowadays the practical interest lies in the knowledge of English (more and more information published in this language). The legislation should require to learn Ukrainian as the state language and not to impose Russian ('Pochemu ukraintsev tak volnuet yazikovoy vopros', February 1, 2017).

This opinion is shared by Ukrainian writer Andrey Bondar' who reflects on the future path of Ukraine's political development. Further, he argues:

> Is not it enough reason to be optimistic that we have found the strength to overthrow the authoritarian government, is it? And our three-year confrontation with one of the most dangerous empires in this dirty war – is not it the reason for further optimism? ('Net nikakogo tretyego puti, nel'zya zhit' v koridore. Pisatel' Andrey Bondar' – o meste Ukraini v mire', March 1, 2017).

In these statements, it is stressed that the political and cultural trajectories of Russia and Ukraine are totally different. This view prevails in the selected materials, especially in the articles and comments published on http://nv.ua/. In comparison with 2012, when the arguments about

"brother unity" were still present in the overall debates on language policy and education, the analysis of the publications in 2017 reveals the clear dominance of the anti-Russian sentiments, which is clear and understandable in the situation of the military confrontation and information war between two countries. Some users even insist on the ideological opposition of Russian and Ukraine. For instance, one of the readers of *Novoe Vremya* claims:

> We must articulate in our society and understand that the conflict is not language-based but value-based. If we talk about our neighbour, the things done by the Russian government are unacceptable – organizing bloody battles by the mass applause of its fellow citizens. And that is not the question of language, it is the issue of values ('Yazykovoy Zakon: prodolzhaite pomogat' Kremlyu', January 25, 2017).

Thus, Russian is attributed the "barbarian" values characteristic for the empires; on the contrary, Ukraine is depicted as a "truly European", non-aggressive nation. This essentialized view of the Ukrainian values is widespread among the comments in the analysed discussion.

Recent Ukrainization efforts in the sphere of education have attracted meticulous attention from European politicians and Ukrainian experts. The proclaimed aim of the educational reforms is to increase the use of the state language at schools of national minorities. This initiative caused an ambiguous public reaction. For example, Viktor Medvedchuk tries to construct the "threat" to Ukraine's unity and territorial integrity by oppressing Russian and other language of national minorities. Further, he claims:

> According to the experts' opinions, discrimination on the basis of language will lead to total ignorance and fuel the confrontation in the society. The new education law is launching an irreversible process of destroying the integrity of the Ukrainian nation-state, because the Ukrainian language will be doomed without Russian and interaction with other minority languages ('Pochemu USA nravitsya prinyatiy VR zakon ob obrazovanii', September 13, 2017).

Both statements mentioned above illustrate that Russian acts as the guarantee of Ukraine's survival as a nation and its integrity. This view is opposite to the one expressed by claim-makers who construct the problem of the Ukrainian language. The latter consider Ukrainian as an integral part of the nation-building project and the prerequisite for Ukraine's political stability and unity.

The education law aimed at complete Ukrainization of schools of ethnic minorities led to the intense public debates among European politicians. Many Ukrainian bloggers refer to the principles of European democracies in order to criticize the governmental initiative. For example, Medvedchuk cites the words of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Hungary who admits:

> Ukraine has betrayed Hungary by making amendments in the education law that severely violates the rights of the Hungarian minority. It is extremely shameful that the country that seeks to develop closer ties with the European Union made the decision which in the total opposition to European values ('Pochemu USA nravitsya prinyatiy VR zakon ob obrazovanii', September 13, 2017).

In the above statement, Ukraine is constructed as a non-democratic state that ignores the rights of other minority groups and is discursively opposed to the image of 'true' Europe that is supposed to be multinational, multilingual and respectful to all cultural and linguistic groups. This view is supported by the Ukrainian priest who published his opinion on http://blogs.korrespondent.net/. Thus, he argues that 'it may seem strange but all these laws directly contradict the European integration course of Ukraine. In Europe, it is normal to give maximum freedom in using the languages of national minorities' ('Pochemu bez russkogo yazika Ukraina mozhet prevratitsya v stranu Sharikovikh', February 20, 2017).

The overall discussion of the Ukrainization laws in the sphere of education and mass media reflects the existence of two conflicting discourses of language policy. On the one hand, the significant proportion of the articles and comments published in *Novoe Vremya* and *Blogs Korrespondent* reflects a growing tendency of the support for the Ukrainian language as a key marker of national identity and the holder of the state sovereignty and political independence. On the other hand, the sentiments about Russian-speakers' discrimination are still present in the public discourse on language policy, aggravated by the adoption of the education law aimed at complete Ukrainization of the schools of national minorities. Both sides of the discursive conflict are represented by various groups of claim-makers including politicians, experts, artists, clergymen, European organizations and ordinary Internet users. Two groups argue about the legitimate place of their community in Ukraine, the perception of Ukraine in the world, the role and status of both languages and Ukraine's identity. Those who express the nationalist arguments in favour of Ukrainian as the only state language often view Russian as the "language of aggressors" that needs to be eliminated from Ukrainian public space and exploit a more exclusive view of the nation based on the knowledge of the state language. For them, Ukrainian *Europeanness* is associated with respect for Ukrainian, and Ukraine is constructed as a "truly" European nation-state. The second group of claim-makers employs a totally different view— they consider knowledge of Russian as an important cultural and economic asset and construct the image of Russian-speakers as the discriminated group of the society. They create a more inclusive model of the Ukrainian nation with the idea of *Europeanness* based on the recognition of Russian and other languages of ethnic minorities.

Conclusion

The system of secondary and higher education serves as an important channel for translating the politics of nationalizing state, referring to the theory of nationalism elaborated by Rogers Brubaker (1996). That is why the debates on the state language and the language of instruction at schools and universities occupy such a significant place in post-Soviet Ukraine where the political transition from the totalitarian Soviet system to the democratic one has been extremely painful. The present article has focused on the public debates surrounding the educational reforms introduced by Dmitro Tabachnyk in 2011-2012, and the subsequent discussion on the role of languages in 2013-2015 and in 2017 in Ukraine. These periods were chosen deliberately in order to trace the changing perception of Ukrainian national identity and the evolution of the discourse of language policy. Although the article has concentrated exclusively on the Russian-language blogs and news websites and did not aim at covering the Ukrainian-language sources, the overall discussion reflects the main points of clash between two groups of claim-makers who articulate the conflicting claims about either Ukrainian or Russian-speakers' discrimination in Ukraine. Thus, the main argumentation lines are built upon the attitudes towards both languages. The English language has also become the point of reference in many articles, especially in the period of 2014-2015, when Petr Poroshenko proposed to introduce English as a working language in Ukrainian education.

The analysis included debates of different online media, including *LiveJournal, Blogs Korrespondent, Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda, Zerkalo Nedeli* and *Novoe Vremya.* In the course of analysis, the article reaches a conclusion that *the rhetoric of loss* and *the rhetoric of entitlement* are the main strategies of constructing the issue of language policy as an urgent social and political problem, in terms of J. Kitsuse and P. Ibarra's (2003) classification of language (vernacular) games. However, the first strategy is used predominantly by those social actors who construct the problem of the Ukrainian language and claim that the state language needs the special protection from the state. *The rhetoric of entitlement* is expressed by the second group of claim-makers represented by those who claim that the problem of Russian-speakers' discrimination exists in the Ukrainian society. These strategies are marked out in all analysed periods of 2011-2012, 2013-2015 and 2017.

The subsequent analysis of the publications reveals the growing tendency of Ukrainian-speakers' "victimization". Unlike in 2011-2012, when the arguments in favour of Ukrainian

and Russian were almost equally distributed in the publications, the blog entries and articles published on Ukrainian news websites after 2013 reflect the dramatic shift towards understanding Ukrainian-speakers as the group being discriminated in its own national state. The dominance of the anti-Russian sentiments that tend to depict Russian as a "backward", "imperial remnant" of the Soviet Union and the arguments that favour Ukrainian as the one and the only state language are the peculiar feature of the public discourse of language policy after 2013. In these materials, the Ukrainian language serves not only as a key marker of national identity and a means of political independence, but also as a chance for better "European prospects" and the clear sign of Ukrainian *Europeanness*. In this case, protection of the Ukrainian national interests and language is constructed as an inevitable part of the nation-building process and in strong opposition to the Russian language. In contrast to this view, those who claim that Russian-speakers and other minority groups are discriminated in Ukraine construct a more inclusive view of the nation and often refer to the principles of European democracies. They claim that Ukraine cannot be regarded as a legitimate part of the "Western world" when the rights of ethnic minorities are severely violated. Thus, the overall discussion reflects the existence of two conflicting discourses of language policy in the Russian-language online media in Ukraine. In this sense, the system of education has become one of the most powerful tools of nation-building and is often reformed in order to suit the dominant political project.

References

Artamoschenko, J. 'Mova-emigrant: Parlament perevisyvayet zakon o yazyke – Pochemu poshel shkval negodovaniya i sporov?' ['Migrant-mova: Why Did the Parliament Rewrite the Law on Language and Why Did it Cause a Flow of Outrage and Heated Debates?']. *Novoe Vremya*, January 23, 2017. http://nv.ua/publications/jazyk-emigrantka-parlament-perepisyvaet-zakon-o-jazyke-pochemu-poshel-shkval-negodovanija-i-sporov-525554.html.

Bekeshkina, I. 'Razgovor na ravnykh' ['The Discussion of Equal Terms']. *Novoe Vremya*, January 29, 2017. http://nv.ua/opinion/bekeshkina/razgovor-na-ravnyh-542929.html.

Bereza, A. 'Net nikakogo tretyego puti, nel'zya zhit' v koridore. Pisatel' Andrey Bondar' – o meste Ukraini v mire' ['There is No "Third Corridor", you Cannot Live the "Hallway". The Writer Andrey Bondar is Talking about the Place of Ukraine in the World']. *Novoe Vremya*,

March 1, 2017. http://nv.ua/publications/net-nikakogo-tretego-puti-nelzja-zhit-v-koridore-pisatel-andrej-bondar-o-meste-ukrainy-v-mire-728213.html.

Berger, P., and T. Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge.* NY: Anchor Books, 1966.

Blackledge, A., and A. Pavlenko. 'Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Context'. *The International Journal of Bilingualism* 5(3) (2001): 243-257.

Bortnik, R. 'Aspekti Multilingvalnogo Obrazovaniya v Mire: Opyt dlya Ukraini' ['The Aspects of Multilingual Education in the World: The Experience for Ukraine']. *Blogs Korrespondent*, June 6, 2012. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/users/3239669-aspekty-multylynhvalnoho-obrazovanyia-v-myre-opyt-dlia-ukrayny/.

Brubaker, R. 'Nationalizing States in the Old "New Europe" and the New'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 19(2) (1996): 411-437.

_____. *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Cheskin, A. *Russian-Speakers in Post-Soviet Latvia: Discursive Identity Strategies.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016.

Demina, L. 'Russkiy Yazik v Ukrainskoy Shkole' ['The Russian Language in the Ukrainian School']. *Blogs Korrespondent*, September 1, 2013. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/users/3215759-russkyi-yazyk-v-ukraynskoi-shkole/.

Graham, L. 'Imagining the Blogosphere: An Introduction to the Imagined Community of Instant Publishing'. Into the Blogosphere: Rhetoric, Community, and Culture of Weblogs (2004). http://blog.lib.umn.edu/blogosphere/imagining_the_blogosphere.html.

Ibarra, P.R., and J. Kitsuse. 'Claims-making Discourse and Vernacular Resources'. In *Challenges and Choices. Constructionist Perspectives on Social Problems,* eds. J. A. Holstein and G. Miller, 17-50. Aldine de Gruyter: New York, 2003.

Ierodiakon, Ivan. 'Pochemu bez russkogo yazika Ukraina mozhet prevratitsya v stranu Sharikovikh' ['Why Would Ukraine become the Country of the Sharikovs without the Russian Language?]. *Blogs Korrespondent*, February 20, 2017. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/events/3817447/.

Keller, R. *Doing Discourse Research: An Introduction for Social Scientists.* London: SAGE Publications, 2013.

Ibarra, P., and J. Kitsuse. 'Claims-making Discourse and Vernacular Resources'. In *Challenges and Choices. Constructionist Perspectives on Social Problems,* eds. J. A. Holstein and G. Miller, 17-50. New York: Aldine de Greyter, 2003.

Kitsuse, J., and M. Spector. *Constructing Social Problems.* New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, Fourth Printing, 2009.

Kubicek, P. 'Polarisation in Ukraine: Public Opinion, Voting and Legislative Behaviour'. *Europe-Asia Studies* 52 (2) (2000): 273-294.

Kulyk, V. 'One Nation, Two Languages. National Identity and Language Policy in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine'. PONARS Eurasia. New Approaches to Research and Security in Eurasia (2015). http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/one-nation-two-languages-national-identity-and-language-policy-post-euromaidan-ukraine.

Lampa, G. 'Imagining the Blogosphere: An Introduction to the Imagined Community of Instant Publishing'. Into the Blogosphere: Rhetoric, Community, and Culture of Weblogs (2004). https://conservancy.umn.edu/handle/11299/172820.

Lipchevskiy, Y. 'Dvuyazychie dlya Ukraini – blago, a ne vred' ['Bilingualism is the Good for Ukraine and not the Harm']. *Blogs Korrespondent*, September 9, 2011. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/celebrities/3252393-dvuiazychye-dlia-ukrayny-blaho-a-ne-vred/.

Lukshits, Y. 'Mify o vtorom gosudarstvennom' ['The Myths about the Second State Language']. *Blogs Korrespondent*, June 19, 2013. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/users/3219796-myfy-o-vtorom-hosudarstvennom/.

Maratea, R. 'The e-Rise and Fall of Social Problems: The Blogosphere as a Public Arena'. *Social Problems* 55(1) (2008): 139-160.

Martin, T. *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939.* Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001.

Medvedchuk, V. 'Pochemu USA nravitsya prinyatiy VR zakon ob obrazovanii' ['Why does US like the Law on Education adopted by the Verkhovna Rada']. *Blogs Korrespondent*, September 13, 2017. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/politics/3885969/.

Moormann-Kimáková, B. *Language-related Conflicts in Multinational and Multiethnic Settings. Success and Failure of Language Regimes.* Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2016.

Muraev, E. 'Na yazyke nasiliya' ['Speaking on the Language of Violence']. *Blogs Korrespondent*, May 23, 2017. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/politics/3854547/.

Novoe Vremya. 'Vmesto russkogo. Poroshenko predlozhil dat' osobiy status angliyskomu yazyku' ['Instead of Russian. Poroshenko proposed to give a special Status to the English language']. October 3, 2014. http://nv.ua/ukraine/vmesto-russkogo-poroshenko-predlozhil-dat-osobyy-status-angliyskomu-yazyku-14708.html.

_____. 'Ministr obrazovaniya Kvit rasskazal NV, skol'ko yazykov budut uchit' ukraintsy i stanut li vikorchevyvat' russkiy' ['The Minister of Education Kvit told NV How Many Languages Ukrainians will Learn and Whether Russian Will be Eliminated']. June 9, 2015. http://nv.ua/ukraine/politics/ministr-obrazovaniya-kvit-rasskazal-nv-skolko-yazykov-budut-uchit-ukraincy-i-stanut-li-vykorchevyvat-russkiy-52796.html.

Okara, A. 'Dmitry Vladimirovich Tabachnyk. Welcome to Russia!' ['Dmitry Vladimorivich Tabachnik. Welcome to Russia!']. Blogs Ukrainskaya Pravda, June 1, 2011. http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/okara/4de64fbf87e78/.

Onischenko, O. 'Do You Speak Po-russki?' ['Do You Speak Russian?']. *Zerkalo Nedeli*, June 7, 2013. http://gazeta.zn.ua/EDUCATION/do-you-speak-po-russki-_.html.

Polese, A. 'Language and Identity in Ukraine: Was It Really Nation-Building?'. *Studies of Transition States and Societies* 3(3) (2012): 36-50. publications.tlu.ee/index.php/stss/article/download/83/138.

Roitburd, A. 'Yazykovoy zakon: prodolzhaite pomogat' Kremlyu' ['The Language Law: Continue to Help the Kremlin']. *Novoe Vremya*, January 25, 2017. http://nv.ua/opinion/rojtburd/jazykovoj-zakon-prodolzhajte-pomogat-kremlju-535835.html.

Shestakov, V. 'Inglishizatsia Ukraini kak svoboda ot dostoinstva' ['Anglicization of Ukraine in Favour of the Free Dignity']. *LiveJournal*, November 22, 2015. http://viktorshestakov.livejournal.com/446954.html.

Soll, M., S. Salvet and A. Masso. 'Changes in Language Policy in Estonia: Self-Descriptions of Russian-Speaking Students'. *TRAMES: A Journal of the Humanities & Social Sciences* 19(69/64) (2015): 223-224. http://kirj.ee/public/trames_pdf/2015/issue_3/trames-2015-3-221-247.pdf.

Tiran. I. 'Yazikovoy Vopros: chem gordites', devochki?' ['The Language Question: What are you Proud of, Girls?']. *Blogs Korrespondent*, September 12, 2017. http://blogs.korrespondent.net/blog/events/3885627/.

Umland, A. 'Pochemu ukraintsev tak volnuet yazikovoy vopros' ['Why is the Language Question so Important for Ukraine?']. *Novoe Vremya*, February 1, 2017. http://nv.ua/opinion/umland/pochemu-ukraintsev-tak-volnuet-jazykovoj-vopros-575886.html.