

NATALIIA ROMANYSHYN

Lviv Polytechnic National University, Ukraine; CEFRES, Prague, The Czech Republic

nataliia.i.romanyshyn@lpnu.ua

ORCID: 0000-0001-5918-5423

The Ukrainian Language and Identity under Soviet Totalitarism: Discursive Practices and Ideological Impositions

Abstract

Language is a leading factor of statehood and national identity. Akin to the central nervous system in a human being, it is intricately intertwined with different dimensions of social life and secures the formation of national consciousness. Over the centuries of its history, the Ukrainian language has survived the periods of a deliberate limitation in its use or even complete prohibitions by colonizing imperial powers. Seven decades of Soviet occupation and totalitarian regime caused the most dramatic deformation of the Ukrainian language's status and functionality. The research integrates the historical, socio-political, and linguistic insights to uncover the connections between the concept of the Ukrainian language and the institutional and social contexts that influence discourses and, thereby, affect the semantics of the concept. The findings of the study shed light on the essence of lingual cognitive processes that embody the policy of the Ukrainian language marginalization, deliberate reconfiguration of cultural and linguistic landscape of Ukraine, diminishing the space for Ukrainian self-expression and promoting a homogenized Soviet identity that privileged Russian language and culture.

Keywords: Ukrainian language and identity, discursive strategies, conceptualization, metaphor, corpus linguistics

Introduction

National identity is defined as a relatively stable system of mental constructs in individual and collective consciousness formed through specific types of intersubjective interactions within a historical context (Romanyshyn 2021: 47). Constructivist theory sees national identity as an intersubjective discourse product, shaped by macro-strategies (like unification, identification, and solidarity) and micro-strategies

(manifested in various linguistic-cognitive entities), indicating a dialectical relationship between discourse and social practices (Wodak *et al.* 2009; Benwell and Stokoe 2006).

Ukrainian academic discourse on national identity has become increasingly comprehensive, integrating Western scientific models and locally adapted approaches (Kolesnyk 2013; Kniazhynskyi 1959; Karmazina 2015; Rozumnyi 2012; Stepyko 2011; Vermenych 2016) responding to ongoing societal changes, integrating various theoretical frameworks to address the complexities of national identity in Ukraine's unique sociopolitical context. Scholars define the following chain of interconnected problematic issues in the domain of Ukrainian identity, where each one is both a consequence of the preceding and a catalyst for the following one determining the complexity of conceptualizing the discussed phenomenon. Ukrainian national identity has been shaped under challenging cultural, economic and political circumstances, often as a nation occupied and oppressed within various imperial structures. This history created complex layers of identification, particularly evident during enforced assimilation into the Russian Empire and the USSR, which deteriorated the Ukrainian identity landscape. These historical-geographic dimensions of identity further resulted in ambivalence and a fragmented consensus on societal values (Korabliova 2020: 43) in post-Soviet Ukraine, namely the issues of national memory, symbols, heroes, and the national elite. The prolonged period of statelessness preconditioned the complex of inferiority in collective self-perception and consciousness. The period of soviet occupation (1920–1990) was marked by the extermination of the intelligentsia during the 1920s and 1930s, the Holodomor, the erasure of national identities of the victims of World War II, ethnic cleansings, forced relocations of entire ethnic groups, arrests and annihilation of the most conscious members of society, persecution and rights restrictions on national activists. These events collectively left a profound and lasting impact on national memory shaping the phenomenon of collective trauma (Conquest 1986; Hornostay 2012; Shporluk 2016).

Language as a factor of statehood and identity was also severely targeted by imperial and totalitarian powers through deliberate limitation, deformation and widespread destruction of its status and functionality. These practices have not only impinged on language development but also impacted the cultural and national identity associated with the Ukrainian language in the period of Ukrainian independence, caused further socio-political tensions. The language policy in Ukraine after reestablishing independence in 1991 was too liberal and weak to safeguard the status of Ukrainian language. The situation was aggravated by constant manipulation of "language question" fueled by pro-Russian political forces. Consequently, the position of national language as a leading factor of identity was problematized by implementing the conception of co-presence of Ukrainian and Russian languages in communicative space as natural and unavoidable, as two specific forms of identities, creating, in fact, the condition of devaluation and diminishing the role of Ukrainian language, its displacement from intellectual and cultural practices, which opened the door for new Russian imperial assault.

The Russian aggression has played a pivotal role in reshaping mass consciousness, driving a more critical reevaluation of Ukraine's historical, cultural, and linguistic challenges. However, despite these advancements, deep-rooted language-related problems of Ukrainian society persist, and require in-depth consideration of their causes highlighting the complex interplay of factors. Akin to the complexity of Ukrainian national identity issue in general, the conceptualization of the Ukrainian language as a crucial factor of nation building is a firmly tied knot of social, historic, political, ethical and scientific threads that have been binding the existence of Ukrainians for centuries.

Purpose

The paper aims to reveal the conceptualization of the phenomenon of the Ukrainian language in 20th century (1920–1990) by tracing its dynamics, focusing on destructive discursive practices that create and implement negative idiomemes, biased political images, stereotypes and conceptions into collective consciousness under the conditions of soviet (Russian) totalitarizm. The research displays the essence of lingual cognitive processes that reflect the policy of Ukrainian language marginalization, deliberate reconfiguration of cultural and linguistic landscape of Ukraine, diminishing the space for Ukrainian self-expression and promoting a homogenized Soviet identity that privileged Russian language and culture.

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Methodology

Methods for studying conceptualizations of identity and its manifestations in language have been profoundly influenced by the theoretical frameworks the researchers adopt. A discursive view of identity is understood in two primary ways: as a performance or construction in interaction, or as a set of historical structures with regulatory power over identity. Reconfiguring identity as a sociocultural and sociohistorical construct, influenced by discourse became one of the leading conceptions of the late 20th century. Key theorists like Althusser, Gramsci, Anderson, Ricoeur, Bhabha and Foucault have significantly contributed to this understanding focusing on discourses forming the basis of subjectivity, suggesting that identities are products of dominant discourses tied to social practices. This discursive view implies that identity is not an inherent essence but a product of mediated representations, primarily through language and discourse. Theorists argue that reality and identity are constructed through discourse and that social space, including identities, must be treated as discursive. With a common understanding that identities are constructed discursively most scholars support a holistic approach that blends various interdisciplinary, methodological, and specific source-based methods to examine identities as unique discourse phenomena (Benwel, Stokoe 2006: 17–48) and focus on “the central role of language and interaction as the site of identity work” (*ibid.* 34). Since the language is a form of ideological practice that mediates, influences and even constructs our experiences, identities and ways of viewing the world, the discursive analysis of identity is based on a close engagement with the language of texts by paying due attention to the social and cultural contexts in which it occurs.

In this research, historical, socio-political, and linguistic insights are integrated to uncover the connections between concepts of Ukrainian identity (notably, the Ukrainian language) and the institutional and social contexts that influence discourses and, thereby, affect the changes of concepts' semantics. These changes are traced diachronically in historically and stylistically differentiated subcorpora created on the basis of corpus of Ukrainian language GRAC. The application of corpus linguistics tools (that allow to operate with the diversity of quantitative data), cognitive linguistics (that allows to display the formation of conceptual semantics) and discourse studies (that explore how discourse constitutes social practice and is at the same time constituted by it) illuminates the dynamics of change in concepts structure, the prevalent modes of conceptual metaphorization that shape both personal and collective views of reality, and offers valuable insights into shifts in the axiological systems of societal contexts.

We focused on the cluster of phrases “Ukrainian language /literature,” word combination with attributes “national” and “nationalistic” and opposed to them “Russian language/literature,” “soviet literature.” By analyzing the frequency and combinability of these lexical units within certain periods, we identify the emergence of connotative and evaluative meanings and establish the axiological senses in conceptual content influenced by external factors.

Results and Discussion

Before analyzing the discursive processes of the stated time frame, let us dwell on some historical prerequisites (19th century – first decades of 20th century). The final formation of modern literary Ukrainian is connected with the name of Ivan Kotliarevskii (1769–1838) and his famous poetic work “Eneida.” Further development of new Ukrainian literature and its linguistic framework unfolded over nearly five decades, culminating in the creative contributions of Taras Shevchenko (1814–1861) to the literary and linguistic landscape. 19th century saw an intensive growth of Ukrainian linguistic practices, predominantly Western Ukraine, which was under Austro-Hungarian rule at the time: compilations of grammars and dictionaries by O. Pavlovsky (1818), I. Mohylnytskyi (1822–1824), M. Luchkai (1830), Y. Levytskyi (1834), Y. Lozynskyi (1846), T. Hlynskyi (1845), Ya. Holovatskyi (1849), P. Diachan (1865), S. Smal-Stotskyi and T. Hartner (1893), the development of Ukrainian literary translation from world languages. However, Russian narrative posits that the Ukrainian language does not constitute a distinct language but rather a dialect (the little Russian dialect) thereby arguing against its legitimacy and right to exist as an independent linguistic entity. In general, during the centuries of Russian imperial colonization the Ukrainian language survived the prohibitions 134 times with the strongest constraints being imposed by Valuyev (July 18, 1863) (Klymchuk 2003) and The Ems Decree (May 30, 1876) (Savchenko 1930: 381–383; Skarbey 2005). The latter prohibited any books published in Ukrainian without special permission, printing of any original works or translations, forbade all stage performances, musical texts, public readings, and teaching in Ukrainian. Other landmarks are the 1888, the Decree of Alexander III “On the prohibition of the use of the Ukrainian language and the christening with Ukrainian names in official institutions”; 1908, the Senate decree stating that educational work in Ukraine is harmful and dangerous for Russia; 1910, P. Stolypin’s Decree classifying Ukrainians as aliens and prohibiting any Ukrainian organizations; 1914, Decree of Nicholas II on the prohibition of the Ukrainian press (Ocheretianko, Riabets 2010).

The status of Ukrainian in Galicia was relatively better. Under Austro-Hungarian rule in Western Ukraine, the cultural and educational freedoms allowed for the growth of a Ukrainian national movement. However, during the Polish control, especially after the Austro-Hungarian Empire’s fall and in the interwar period, the Polish authorities enforced Polonization, limiting the use of Ukrainian in public life and education (Rubliov 2011). Despite these challenges, the Ukrainian language demonstrated resilience against cultural assimilation. And in the period of independent Ukrainian People Republic (1918–1921) the Ukrainian language gained the status of official language of Ukraine. The adoption of the Main Rules of Ukrainian Orthography developed by Ivan Ohienko (Ohienko 2001) and the publication of the most authoritative dictionary by Borys Hrinchenko (Hrinchenko [1907–1909] 1956–1958) are the main landmarks in the development of Ukrainian of this period.

The first decade of soviet occupation of Ukraine (1920–1930) unfolded under the banner of “Ukrainization.” The promising term in fact hid the soviet policy to counteract the national-liberation desires of Ukrainian people solidifying Bolshevik authority in the Ukrainian SSR. This strategy anticipated employing national personnel in Soviet, party, and social establishments and organizations, broadening the Communist Party’s ideological sway over Ukrainian society through implementing “proletarian and Bolshevik’s elements” in national culture under the guise of promoting the Ukrainian language. Soviet “Ukrainization” served as a tactic for the Bolshevik leaders to reinforce control over any manifestation of national rebirth. Publicly declaring compulsory learning of Ukrainian they aimed to bridge the gap between the Russified urban areas and the Ukrainian countryside and to foster a stronger bond between the working class and the peasantry, thus promoting social stability, crucial for crafting a “communist future.”

Let us dwell on how the corpus data reflect this process: the lexeme’s Ukrainianization frequency (лемма українізація) is 681, its relative frequency per million is 0.38. The corpus analysis reveals the intentional, compulsory essence of Ukrainianization in the high density of combinations with lexeme Ukrainianization: *Ukrainization of party establishment/ Komsomol/ public servants/ terms of Ukrainianization, quick / slow pace of Ukrainianization, oppression/control/opposition/conditions/achievements/commission/ implementation of Ukrainianization; precipitation/intensification of Ukrainianization actions; attributive combinations: comprehensive, complete, overwhelming, moderate/radical Ukrainianization etc.* Ideological content of Ukrainianization is manifested in the frequency of discursive cliché “radical and decisive measures,” “safeguarding equity of languages,” “just and equitable national/ethnic policy” as contextual environment of the word Ukrainianization and is intensified by military metaphors *to struggle for / the frontline of / the victories of / defense of Ukrainianization* and alike. The table below (table 1.) exemplifies the diversity of lexeme Ukrainianization combinability with lexemes that reinforce these ideological senses rather than relation of the concept to the domains of nationality and culture.

Table 1. Combinability of lemma Ukrainianization / **українізація** in subcorpus of 1920–1930

	Cooccurrences [?]	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice
зловмисний malignant	4	1,409	2.00	14.82	6.37
передчувати anticipate	4	2,811	2.00	13.82	5.46
проводитися conduct	4	8,539	2.00	12.22	3.91
переведення transfer	8	22,889	2.83	11.80	3.51
декрет decree	4	14,045	2.00	11.50	3.20
опір resistence	4	35,134	2.00	10.18	1.89
апарат apparatus	10	123,696	3.16	9.68	1.40
поширюватися spread	3	44,703	1.73	9.42	1.13
партийний party	3	53,520	1.73	9.16	0.87
установа establishment	7	182,503	2.64	8.61	0.33
радянський soviet	12	353,345	3.45	8.43	0.15
довести complete	3	126,867	1.72	7.91	-0.37
перевірка check	4	189,909	1.99	7.74	-0.54

	Cooccurrences [?]	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice
гальзъ field	4	222,163	1.99	7.52	-0.76
спосіб way	4	288,367	1.99	7.14	-1.14
справа action	16	1,453,326	3.96	6.81	-1.47
черга turn	3	310,962	1.71	6.62	-1.66
комісія commission	5	520,883	2.21	6.61	-1.67
школа school	5	531,818	2.21	6.58	-1.70
партія party	5	794,766	2.20	6.00	-2.28
захід event	4	808,879	1.96	5.65	-2.63
почати start	4	814,201	1.96	5.64	-2.64
процес process	3	616,876	1.70	5.63	-2.65
робота робот work	4	860,394	1.96	5.56	-2.71

Ukrainization measures were implemented across various sectors, including the Communist Party of Ukraine (Bolshevik) itself. A specially formed Central Committee commission noted that the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (Bolshevik) considered it necessary to elevate the social status of the Ukrainian language. The commission's recommendations were adopted and later implemented (1923–1926), which shifted the focus of Ukrainianization efforts from rural areas to cities and industrial regions. As a result of these measures, by mid-1926, the proportion of Ukrainians in the party increased to 47% compared to 23.7% at the beginning of 1923. Official documents of this period also declared that "Ukrainization" should encompass the entire cultural process and ensure the Ukrainian personnel dominate all aspects of the country's life. The decade of "Ukrainization" (1923–1933) marked a significant development in Ukrainian literature, art, theater, and cinema, despite ideological brakes, heralding a cultural renaissance. From 1923 to 1929, 85% of the press was Ukrainianized, and the best theater venues were allocated to Ukrainian theaters. Guided by positive expectation, the majority of Ukrainian elite were actively involved and advanced the Ukrainianization. Efforts, initiated by Mykola Skrypnyk, to spread Ukrainianization beyond the Ukrainian SSR to ethnographically Ukrainian territories within the RSFSR (like Kursk, Voronezh, Saratov regions, Kuban, Kazakhstan) included introducing Ukrainian-language education, press, and literature distribution, and establishing Ukrainian cultural houses, clubs, and educational facilities. The period also saw a tolerant approach to national minorities in Ukraine, ensuring their rights in administration, education, press, and theater (Halushko 2019).

Despite some academic and literary circles perceiving it as only partially fulfilling the Ukrainian people's natural rights and cautioning against the revival of Russian imperial tendencies and Russification, the Ukrainian intelligentsia broadly endorsed and supported Ukrainianization (Kasyanov 1992; Mace 1983). The most significant benchmark of Ukrainianization was the adoption of a new variant of the Main Rules of Ukrainian Orthography in 1928 and its implementation into publishing and education.

The next stage of the analysis includes discursive dynamics of the concept language and Ukrainian language (lemma *мова*, lemma *мовний*). Frequency of lemma "language" in 1920–1930 corpus is 18,638, relative frequency per million is 12.48. Frequency of lemma "language/linguistic" (as adjective) -184 (0.1 per million). This high frequency indicates the significance of the concept of language in the

context of so called “national and language questions” as discursive practice and instrument of soviet ideology of Ukrainization. The highest in frequency are combinations of lexeme *language* with concepts *national, nominations of national/ethnic languages*; contextual clustering with concepts of *learning/studying, acquisition, mastering, comprehension* and creative manifestations like *poetic, literary, artistic, translation*. Alongside its terminological usage as a notion of linguistics, it manifests the high metaphoric productivity (*living, life, robust, creative, thriving, etc.*).

Ukrainian language vs. Russian language

Frequency, combinability and distribution of these lexemes were compared: cql [lemma=>»український»] [lemma=>»мова»], 1,814 (0.914 per million); cql [lemma=>»російський»][lemma=>»мова»], 390 (0.018 per million). The analysis of corpus data on the concepts of “Ukrainian language” and “Russian language” reveals a significant disparity in frequency, combinability, and distribution between the two languages. The data indicates a more substantial presence and usage of the Ukrainian language in the corpus.

“Ukrainian language” combinability allows defining the following conceptual profiles – linguistic term, linguistic fact with special properties, cultural fact/ cultural value; focus of attention; instrument of politics / power; object of investigation / study; means of communication; focus of school/educational establishment/ educational activity; local/areal distribution, popularity. The diversity of combinability supports this conclusions (table 2.):

Table 2. Combinability of lemma Ukrainian language / **українська мова**

Lemma	Cooccurrences [?]	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice
зведення reprot	14	1,944	3.74	12.86	6.93
невластивий uncharacteristic	14	2,625	3.74	12.43	6.69
інструменталь instrumental	7	631	2.65	13.49	6.55
дієприкметник Participle I	11	2,638	3.32	12.07	6.34
дієприслівник Participle II	6	715	2.45	13.08	6.28
діловодство business communication	10	2,946	3.16	11.78	6.11
відріжнтя distinguish	4	198	2.00	14.35	6.03
датив Dative	4	288	2.00	13.81	5.96
зворот expression	17	7,232	4.12	11.25	5.94
діеслівний verbal	10	3,787	3.16	11.41	5.87
милозвучність harmony	4	457	2.00	13.14	5.85
писаний written	16	7,741	4.00	11.06	5.78
акузатив Accusative	4	601	2.00	12.75	5.76
правопис orthography	16	8,543	4.00	10.92	5.66
словянський Slavic	4	797	2.00	12.34	5.65

Lemma	Cooccurrences [?]	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice
богослужбовий cereminial	4	1,068	2.00	11.92	5.51
друкування printing	6	2,773	2.45	11.13	5.42
євангелія Gospel	3	487	1.73	12.64	5.42
граматик граматика grammar	5	2,176	2.24	11.21	5.36
робітниче-селянський worker – peasant unity	3	613	1.73	12.30	5.34
звуковий phonetical	14	10,504	3.74	10.43	5.22
українізувати to ukrainize	3	918	1.73	11.72	5.17
орудний Instrumental	3	1,162	1.73	11.38	5.05
ріжниця difference	4	2,267	2.00	10.83	5.01
малоруський little russian	3	1,262	1.73	11.26	5.00
інфінітив infinitive	3	1,292	1.73	11.23	4.98
граматика граматик	7	5,449	2.64	10.38	4.98
народній folk	13	11,965	3.60	10.13	4.95
проводитися to conduct	9	8,122	3.00	10.16	4.89
висловлюючись to express	3	1,823	1.73	10.73	4.76
мішаниця mixture	3	2,045	1.73	10.57	4.67
лектор lector	5	4,759	2.23	10.09	4.64
Огієнко Oheyinko	5	4,828	2.23	10.06	4.62
перекручувати distort	3	2,198	1.73	10.46	4.61
переводитися to exhaust	4	3,719	2.00	10.12	4.57
відмінок case	6	6,522	2.45	9.89	4.56
українознавство Ukrainian studies	5	5,255	2.23	9.94	4.53
знатець expert	9	11,004	3.00	9.72	4.52
конспект notes	3	2,471	1.73	10.29	4.52
прислівник adverb	4	4,062	2.00	9.99	4.48
письменство literary art	8	10,437	2.82	9.63	4.42
письмо literature	18	25,827	4.24	9.49	4.42
нарис essay	11	15,272	3.31	9.54	4.40
згоджуватися to conform	3	2,936	1.73	10.05	4.37
перевід transfer	3	2,974	1.73	10.03	4.36
кatedra department, chair	4	4,662	2.00	9.79	4.34
перекладати to translate	12	17,747	3.46	9.45	4.33
прикметник adjective	9	14,261	3.00	9.35	4.20
порадник advisor	3	3,571	1.73	9.76	4.19
українізація Ukrainization	6	9,053	2.45	9.42	4.18

Lemma	Cooccurrences [?]	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice
перекладений translated	5	7,271	2.23	9.47	4.17
незнання ignorance	4	5,515	2.00	9.55	4.16
засвоїти to learn, comprehend	5	7,467	2.23	9.44	4.14
фонетичний phonetical	4	5,854	2.00	9.46	4.10
родовий genetive	6	9,829	2.45	9.30	4.08
реферат paper	3	4,411	1.73	9.46	3.98
учити study	5	8,841	2.23	9.19	3.94

“Russian language” combinability is less variegated combinability; the dominating conceptual profiles defined on the basis of contextual environment include “means of communication”; Russian as language of writing/writers is used in texts of historical references and analysis (Table 3.).

Table 3. Combinability of lemma Russian language / **російська мова**

Lemma	Cooccurrences	Candidates	T-score	MI	LogDice
писаний written	5	7,741	2.24	12.81	4.37
перекладений translated	3	7,271	1.73	12.16	3.72
підручник manual	5	39,802	2.23	10.45	2.04
повістъ novel	3	30,108	1.73	10.11	1.70
проводити to conduct	3	31,003	1.73	10.07	1.66
переклад translation	4	79,607	2.00	9.12	0.72
видаватися to publish	3	61,643	1.73	9.08	0.67
твір literary worl	5	244,414	2.23	7.83	-0.58
газета newspaper	4	268,080	1.99	7.37	-1.03
школа shool	7	563,700	2.63	7.11	-1.30
зовсім almost	3	395,317	1.71	6.40	-2.01
праця work	3	411,253	1.71	6.34	-2.07
написати to weritegood	3	464,178	1.71	6.16	-2.24
добре добрий good	3	525,420	1.70	5.99	-2.42
говорити to speak	4	831,470	1.96	5.74	-2.67
мова language	3	733,189	1.69	5.50	-2.90

This discursive dynamics reflects, however, a deceptive ideological move of seemingly active promotion and integration of Ukrainian into many facets of public life, contrasting with the Russian language’s more limited and specific usage. By officially endorsing the Ukrainian language in education, administration, and public life, the Bolsheviks aimed to gain the loyalty of the Ukrainian populace while also attempting to counteract nationalist movements that could threaten Soviet control. The corpus data

from the 1920s provides empirical support for the historical accounts of the Ukrainianization policy as a nuanced approach by the Bolsheviks to navigate the complexities of national identity in Ukraine.

We also compare the lexemes Ukrainian literature vs. Russian literature `cql [lemma="посійський"] [lemma="література"],cql [lemma="український"] [lemma="література"]`. Frequency, combinability and distribution: frequency of lemma "Ukrainian literature" – 476 (0.25 per million); frequency of lemma "russian literature" – 109 (0.058 per million). Corpus provide evidence in favour of Ukrainian literature conceptual significance and its discursive productivity. Based on corpus data observation we can define the following conceptual profiles: Ukrainian language as a societal phenomenon (as an object of attention, interest or lack of interest in certain social strata), an object of investigation/ study (predominantly from historical perspective).

Nevertheless, this frequency is misleading as it hides various discursive strategies and manipulations. Contextual analysis indicates that the concepts of Ukrainian and Russian literature (including the history of Ukrainian literature, Ukrainian writers/poets, etc.), are endowed with implicit evaluative connotations. Ukrainian literature is portrayed as having gained genuine value and significance only after the October Revolution, suggesting that its true development began in the Soviet era. Consequently, anything predating this period or not conforming to Soviet style and function is branded as bourgeois and nationalistic.

The soviet power enforced the compulsory engagement of Soviet youth with Ukrainian literature turning it into an instrument of ideology and educational/political activities, such as *Komsomol clubs dedicated to Ukrainian literature and societies of new Ukrainian writers*. Conversely, Russian literature is esteemed as a paradigm of artistic and stylistic value, suggesting that the enrichment of ethnic literature could benefit from Russian artistic and stylistic examples.

The analysis also highlights a manipulative tactic of "appeal to authority," where authors intentionally manipulate facts about the close literary interactions between representatives of Russian and Ukrainian literature. It notes how prominent Ukrainian writers and poets of the previous century lauded the achievements of Russian literature and its influence on the development of Ukrainian literature. It is also worth mentioning, that the contextual analysis highlights the absence of combinations with Ukrainian and Russian literature in the context of nationhood, ethnicity, or national development, instead their distribution speaks in favor of promoting a unified Soviet cultural and ideological framework.

Thus, we supplemented our study by the analysis of the adjectives *soviet* and adjectival word combination *soviet literature* (lemma *радянський*). Frequency of the adjective "soviet" – 8,999 (4.8 per million). "Soviet" as an attribute is applied to nouns denoting all aspects of social life, agency, activities, social, professional, creative manifestation, communication and information distribution, which reflects the creation of a new soviet reality.

The emergence of the metaphor of a "linguistic / literary front," attributive combinations "proletarian literature," and direct or figurative expressions profiling the concept of literature as a structure and hierarchy indicates the destruction of the true essence of literature, and the substitution of its ethnic and national functions with artificially created concepts. This discursive manipulation reflects a real policy of Ukrainianization to undermine the genuine cultural development by prioritizing political over cultural and national values.

In the late 1920s, efforts to revive Ukraine's culture were suppressed; any move towards independence was blocked. The Ukrainianization policy was terminated by 1933 as the focus shifted to quelling any national expressions and bringing cultural activities under strict Communist control. By the late 1930s, the Soviet regime completely abandoned Ukrainianization, opting for Russification instead, which

it saw as necessary for the USSR's centralization and unification. During the 1930s, the extermination of the Ukrainian national elite – including writers, poets, composers, actors, linguists, and philosophers who ardently supported and advanced national resurgence – marked a tragic chapter known under the notion, suggested by Polish scholar Jerzy Giedroyc, "Executed Renaissance" (Ushkalov, Ushkalov 2010; Rubliov 2012).

In 1930–1940, the U-turn in national policy of Bolsheviks resulted in attack to Ukrainian language. Unable to prohibit Ukrainian as an independent language of the nation, they tried to destroy its essence. It was decided to "renew" and "reconsider" the principles of Ukrainian Orthography fixed by the Main rules of Ukrainian Orthography in 1928. On March 7, 1930, the Presidium of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences passed a resolution for the reform of linguistic institutions. It led to the dissolution of the Institute of Ukrainian Scientific Language and the committees for lexicography, normative grammar of the Ukrainian language, studies in dialectology, and the history of the Ukrainian language. On their remnants, the Research Institute of Linguistics headed by people with strong pro-russian views was established. On April 6, 1933, following the directives of the new leadership of the People's Commissariat for Education of the Ukrainian SSR, there was organized a commission whose mandate was to address the artificial segregation of the Ukrainian language from the Russian language in lexicographical works and to eliminate nationalist orthographic rules that aligned the Ukrainian language with Polish and Czech bourgeois cultures.

On April 26, 1933, at the Central Committee meeting of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine, it was highlighted that the education sector had been infiltrated and compromised by elements hostile to the Bolsheviks' ideology and imbued with nationalism, obstructing the implementation of the Soviet national policy. The resolutions of this meeting paved the way for initiatives aimed at "Eradicating and Destroying Nationalist Roots in the Linguistic Field." The directives issued to the public encompassed the immediate cessation of all publications of Ukrainian dictionaries, a thorough review of existing dictionaries and terminologies, the unification of technical terminology to conform with the Russian standards prevalent in the scientific domain, the execution of ideological purges among linguists to expel those harboring bourgeois-nationalist inclinations, the revision of guidelines for language usage in the Ukrainian Soviet Encyclopedia, the formulation of comprehensive directives to ensure the advancement of Ukrainian Soviet culture in the linguistic field through genuinely Bolshevik approaches, and the reform of Ukrainian orthography (Masenko, Kubaichuk, Demska-Kulchytska 2005: 17–108).

On May 3, 1933, the Collegium of the People's Commissariat for Education adopted and ratified a resolution titled "On Amending Certain Aspects of the Official Ukrainian Orthography." This overhaul of the orthography was ratified without comprehensive public discourse and lacked any scientific justification for the amendments, which affect the Ukrainian language at every level, from its inherent phonological and morphological structures to its syntax. The revision of orthography precipitated the banishment of all works by bourgeois linguists in the fields of terminology, lexicography, and syntax. This was accompanied by the compilation of new dictionaries, encompassing both general and specialized terminologies (Masenko, Kubaichuk, Demska-Kulchytska 2005: 17–108; Nimchuk 2004: 264; Orthograpgy 1933: 3).

Soviet regime focusing on "Nationalist Deviations within the Party Organization and Strategies to Combat Them" condemned Ukrainian linguists – the authors of the Orthography 1928 – for their overt calls to "foster national consciousness." One of the decree of the Secretary of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine's Central Committee, emphasized:

The language and orthography issue has become critically important in the struggle against bourgeois nationalism and Ukrainian nationalist tendencies. The Central Committee of the Communist Party (Bolshevik) of Ukraine deems this matter of utmost importance. Bourgeois nationalists, mainly from the ranks of Western Ukrainian emigrants, have aggressively worked to corrupt the Ukrainian language and terminology, aiming to distance Ukrainian culture from its Russian counterpart as much as possible. (Masenko, Kubaichuk, Demska-Kulchitska 2005: 47)

In February 1934, the new “Ukrainian Orthography (1933)” was released. Its introduction stated

The principal amendments aim to remove all guidelines that steered the Ukrainian language towards the bourgeois cultures of Polish and Czech, that misrepresented the modern Ukrainian language, and that created a divide between the Ukrainian and Russian languages. (Orthography 1933: 3)

August 1937 completely interrupted the continuity of the development of Ukrainian linguistics by either physical elimination or exile of the staff of the “Institute of Linguistics,” most Ukrainian scholars and authors of the previous Orthography.

Corpus data interpretation

The described social and political processes are reflected in combinability of *Ukrainian language, Russian language, Ukrainian, Russian, soviet literature* and their semantic and contextual correlates ‘*orthography, dictionary*’ (cql[lemma=“український”][lemma=“мова”], cql[lemma=“посійський”][lemma=“мова”]).

Table 4. Lemmas Ukrainian language and Russian language frequency in corpus 1930–1939

lemma	frequency
Ukrainian language	349 (0.2 per million)
Russian language	108 (0.06 per million)

Between 1930 and 1933, the conceptualization of “Ukrainian language” predominantly revolved around its role as an object of study, a means of oral and written communication, and the language of literary translations, among others. This period recognized the Ukrainian language’s multifaceted roles, highlighting its significance in scholarly work. However, from 1934 to 1939, a profound shift in the concept content reflects the underlying ideological processes of the time. The analysis of contextual usage during this latter period reveals a diverse combinability of terms that allows for the identification of prominent discursive strategies of their textual representations:

- evaluations of existing linguistic norms, often leading to their modification or outright rejection in favor of new Soviet-aligned guidelines, secured by contextual realization of concepts rules/regulations, orthography, estimations/reconsiderations of language norms;
- justification and presenting changes and adjustments in Ukrainian spelling rules aligning more closely with Russian orthography as positive manifestation of natural language dynamics that reflect ideological preferences; close aligning with Russian as evidence of progress, the portrayal of the Russian language as a ‘brother language’ and the encouragement of linguistic convergence as a sign of cultural and social advancement;

- “purification/normalization” of Ukrainian from “nationalistic elements” supported by descriptions of the Ukrainian language as being polluted / contaminated by nationalist or counterrevolutionary elements;
- internationalization of Ukrainian, extolling the initiatives to incorporate elements from other languages, particularly Russian, under the guise of promoting unity of proletariat;
- critiques of the retention of linguistic norms seen as outdated or overly nationalistic, contrary to the Soviet vision of a unified linguistic policy; description of “old norms” as contradiction the living language/language practices of the working masses, including the proletariat;
- substantiating the leading function and higher status of Russian, ascribing local and regional status to Ukrainian; reference to authorities of famous Ukrainians who allegedly praised the Russian language;
- the diminishing role of the Ukrainian language in educational settings, particularly in secondary and higher education, reflecting a broader strategy to reduce its prominence and influence.

Propagating and implementing the new Ukrainian orthography that consolidated the senses of language “innovations” as struggle culminated in the militaristic metaphor of the “language front,” “language as a frontline,” “battle for language.” This discursive strategy reflects the militarization of cultural and linguistic efforts, highlighting a radical approach to reshaping Ukrainian cultural expressions. Examples¹:

1. Meanwhile, as English, French, and Italian languages beautifully adopt many words formed during our revolution, pests occupying even leading positions in the People's Commissariat

1. Тим часом, як до англійської, французької, італійської мов прекрасно прищеплюється чимало слів, утворених за нашої революції, шкідники, що посіли навіть керівні посади в Наркомосі, викидали з української мови ті слова, на які вона збагатіла за роки революції, тягли її назад.
2. Це прищеплювання так званих «народних» слів збігається з «орієнтацією на Захід», тобто на польську й чеську мови, на штучний відрив української мови від братерської російської.
3. Водночас українські націоналісти добивалися відірвати будову української мови від живої мови українських мас.
4. Отак намагалися шкідники забруднювати українську мову, відірвати її від живої мови українських робітників і селян, відривати її штучно, від братерської російської мови.
5. Скрипник не міг не знати, що він сам став на шлях відчудження української мови від російської й наближення її до польської.
6. Один погляд обстоював потребу створити такий правопис, який служив би розвиткові української радянської культури, а другий погляд виходив із потреби зробити поступки націоналістичним елементам і будувати правопис на базі тієї мови, що її творять буржуазні націоналісти з Галичини.
7. Професор Синявський, один з авторів схваленого 1928 року українського правопису, так і заявив, що «довелося зробити поступки польщизні».
8. Нинішнє керівництво Наркомосу за проводом ЦК партії рішуче бореться, щоб очистити український правопис від занесеного туди контрреволюційного націоналістичного мотлоху.
9. Це шкідництво було спрямоване до того, щоб українську наукову термінологію, український правопис та граматику одірвати від потреб соціалістичного будівництва, від завдань, що стоять перед радянською культурою.
10. Збори відзначають, що тов. Скрипник, роблячи ці націоналістичні помилки, дав можливість українським буржуазно-націоналістичним елементам вносити в український правопис та граматику низку правил, які відтягали українську мову від завдань, що стоять перед соціалістичною Україною, повертали українську мову на шляхи буржуазно-націоналістичні, на шляхи відриву української мови від російської мови.
11. В дійсності Драгоманов завсіди обороняв російську мову і літературу,.... що (в його уяві) мали й на майбутнє сповнити в Україні провідну культурну роль побіч регіональної української мови і літератури.

for Education were removing from the Ukrainian language those words that enriched it during the years of revolution, pulling it backward.

2. This adoption of so-called “folk” words coincides with the “orientation towards the West,” that is, towards Polish and Czech languages, artificially detaching the Ukrainian language from its brotherly Russian language.
3. At the same time, Ukrainian nationalists sought to detach the structure of the Ukrainian language from the living language of the Ukrainian masses.
4. Thus, the pests tried to contaminate the Ukrainian language, detach it from the living language of Ukrainian workers and peasants, and artificially separate it from the brotherly Russian language.
5. Skrypnyk could not have been unaware that he himself embarked on a path of alienating the Ukrainian language from Russian and bringing it closer to Polish.
6. One view advocated the need to create a spelling system that would serve the development of Ukrainian Soviet culture, while another view stemmed from the need to make concessions to nationalist elements and build the spelling on the basis of the language created by bourgeois nationalists from Galicia.
7. Professor Sinyavsky, one of the authors of the Ukrainian spelling approved in 1928, even declared that “it was necessary to make concessions to Polish influences.”
8. The current leadership of the People’s Commissariat for Education, under the guidance of the Central Committee of the party, is resolutely fighting to cleanse the Ukrainian spelling from the counterrevolutionary nationalist trash that was introduced into it.
9. This sabotage was aimed at detaching Ukrainian scientific terminology, Ukrainian spelling, and grammar from the needs of socialist construction, from the tasks facing Soviet culture.
10. The assembly notes that comrade Skrypnyk, by making these nationalist mistakes, allowed Ukrainian bourgeois-nationalist elements to introduce a series of rules into Ukrainian spelling and grammar that pulled the Ukrainian language away from the tasks facing socialist Ukraine, returning the Ukrainian language to bourgeois-nationalist paths, towards detaching the Ukrainian language from the Russian language.
11. In reality, Dragomanov always defended the Russian language and literature, ... which (in his imagination) were to continue playing a leading cultural role in Ukraine alongside the regional Ukrainian language and literature.

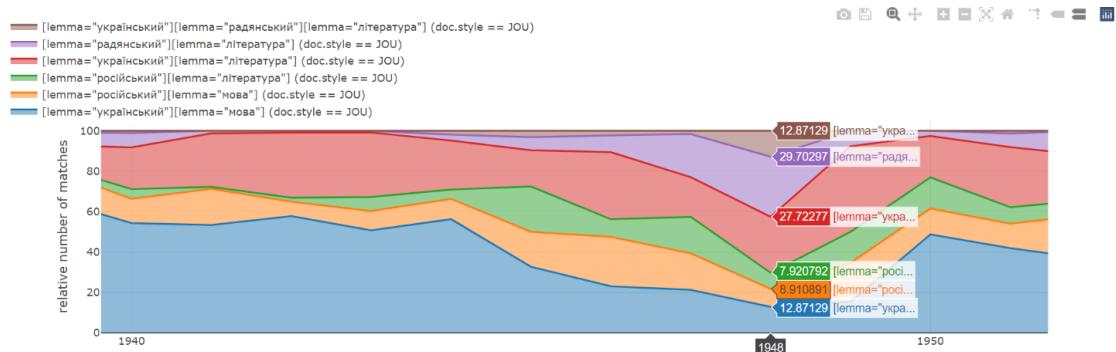
Consequently, the language’s degradation was already in progress, however, the literary domain remained relatively untouched at that time². The Ukrainian language’s representation in the corpus underwent a conceptual displacement, transitioning from a marker of national identity to an instrument to foster a common Soviet identity, effectively undermining the distinct Ukrainian identity. The described discursive practices reflect a comprehensive effort to reshape the Ukrainian language and, by extension,

2 The corpus analysis indicates that the concept of literature’s deconstruction occurred later, in the post-war era. This observation complements the discussion regarding the systematic dismantling of the Ukrainian language and identity through orthographic changes and the undermining of its intrinsic structure. While these aggressive policies targeted the language directly during the 1930s, literature was somewhat shielded from this direct ideological assault until the post-war period. The eventual infiltration of literature by similar forces aimed at aligning it with prevailing ideological narratives underscores a broader strategy of cultural assimilation and the redefinition of identity under Soviet control.

Ukrainian identity, aligning both more closely with Soviet ideologies and practices. The period saw a deliberate manipulation covering ideological policies as linguistic reformations, which in fact eroded the foundations of Ukrainian national consciousness. The difference in frequencies between the phrases Ukrainian language and Russian language suggest an obvious increase of the conceptual significance of the former. However, in fact it is the embodiment of conceptual displacement: the idea of substituting authentic principles of Ukrainian orthography by alien norms under the guise of purification or normalization manifests the destructive social policy resulted in the formation of distorted stereotypes of artificial closeness of nations.

The discourse 1930–1939 reflects the concepts of repression of the Ukrainian language and the rolling back of the Ukrainization process. While it was impossible to outright ban the language, a strategy of linguistic poisoning was employed, aimed at dismantling its internal structure. By altering the orthographic rules and systematically eroding the language's unique features, the policy did not just change how Ukrainian was written but also how it was perceived, affecting the very identity of its speakers. This was a calculated move to weaken the national consciousness tied to the Ukrainian language and, by extension, to dilute the process of Ukrainization that had gained momentum in the early 20th century. This deliberate contamination of language can be described by the following metaphor: a word as a heart of the language was turned into the word as a weapon targeted at the heart of the language, whereas all the discussed processes took place against the background of physical extermination of Ukrainians by Holodomor 1932–1933 and repressions against Ukrainian intelligentsia in 1936–1937.

The social and political processes of 1940–1950 caused by the conditions of World War II and post-war periods intensified the ideological pressure on Ukrainian society clamping it in a vise of totalitarianism. The picture below visualizes relative frequency of discussed concepts *Ukrainian language*, *Ukrainian literature*, *Russian language*, *Russian literature*, *Soviet literature* and *Ukrainian Soviet literature*.



Source: author's own work

Ukrainian language (blue line): This term starts at its highest point in 1940, indicating a high relative frequency, and then declines slightly until about 1946. After 1946, there's a sharp drop, reaching its lowest point around 1948 before slightly increasing towards 1950. *Russian language* (yellow line): This line shows a moderate frequency in 1940, dips slightly more than the Ukrainian language until about 1946, then sharply increases, peaking around 1948, and maintains this peak until 1950. *Ukrainian literature* (red line): The relative frequency starts lower than the Ukrainian language in 1940, then fluctuates slightly while

generally retains its frequency 1948. It then increases again towards 1950. *Russian literature (green line)*: This term has the lowest frequency in 1940 compared to the others. It sees a gradual increase until about 1946, after which it rises more sharply, reaching a peak around 1945–1946 that is maintained through to 1950. *Soviet literature (purple line)*: Demonstrating the lowest frequency in comparison with all other concepts it sees a significant rise by 1948, overtaking the frequency of the Russian language and literature, then slightly dips towards 1950. *Ukrainian Soviet literature (brown line)*: This term emerges around 1945–1946. It then declines slightly but remains at a high frequency in 1948–1949.

The increased mention of the “Ukrainian language” from 1940 to 1946 can be ascribed to divergent textual material within the corpus. Diaspora authors illuminated the oppressive measures of the Soviet regime against the Ukrainian language, and criticized the policy of Russification. Galician and diaspora texts label the new orthography as anti-Ukrainian and an artificial “Bolshevik orthography.” In contrast, Soviet narratives asserted the regime’s role in nurturing the language, creating a distorted reality. They claimed, unlike the Tsarist government that repressed the Ukrainian language pre-revolution, the Soviets were allegedly fostering its growth. Moreover, the Soviet press avidly discussed the so-called benefits of the new orthography, propagating pseudoscientific ideologeme of the “fraternal languages,” positing that their separation was a fallacious practice. The dominating discursive move was to justify changes in orthography as logical and in line with the evolution of language. The corpus reflects the beginning of the process of “overt Russification,” the formation of the idea of the inferiority of the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian identity.

As the significance of the concept of Ukrainian language decreased considerably in late 40s (the process of destructing the essence of the Ukrainian language as a factor of identity was practically completed), the Soviets undertook the creation of new ideologemes in the field of literary studies. These ideologemes embodied the creation of the concepts of new identity – the concept of greatness of the Russian literature and the uniqueness of the soviet literature; secondary, subjugated status of Ukrainian literature and other national literatures of soviet union; establishing the pantheon of great, almost sacred personalities of Russian literature. Extolling the achievement of Russian literature, propagating the idea of fraternal unity of literatures and derivativeness of national literature from the unsurpassable examples of Russian literature, denying any Ukrainian-European parallels in literature, relentless criticism of “Ukrainian nationalist circles” that refuse to acknowledge the origins of Ukrainian literature from the “great Russian” became the dominating discursive practices of this period. The Russian literature was praised by stable evaluative attributes *democratic, great, powerful, renowned, magnificent, advanced, heroic, glorious, avant-garde, miraculous*, by spatial metaphors of *expansion, uplift, embrace, inclusion*, and “botanical” metaphors of *growing, thriving, blossoming, fruitfulness, sawing seeds and harvesting*. These discursive practices characterized not only media but also scientific texts, which deprived the latter of their critical academic nature and filled them with semantically void and shallow propaganda slogans. *The “heroic” nature of Russian literature; Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov as teachers for entire generations of Western European writers; the conquest of the global arena by advanced Russian literature; Soviet literature honors and loves its predecessors, respects and cherishes the glorious traditions of pre-revolutionary* such and similar clichés penetrated all types of official, media and scientific discourses. The creation of the ideologemes of new identity was completed in the concepts of soviet literature as the acme of literary fraternity of all national literatures in USSR and Ukrainian soviet literature as the only possible format of new Ukrainian literary development.

The conception of literary brotherhood was emphasized through the appeals to the established and acknowledged personalities of Ukrainian literature classics Shevchenko, Franko, Lesia Ukrainka. By discursive antiscientific manipulations, the audience was convinced that these authors allegedly praised the union of fraternal literatures. "New mythology" reinforced the foundational value of "Soviet literature" on 'the global arena' by reiteration of stable semantic clusters "literature for people and party is the literature of supreme achievement," "realism and objectivity as the leading features of literature means imagery perfection and truthfulness. Soviet and Russian literatures were ascribed high ideals, patriotism and global messianism". The established evaluative judgments crystalized the only ideologically "correct" artistic models and implemented them into all spheres of social communication. Whereas the so-called "antisocialistic" concepts – the concepts of Europeism, modernism, nationalism, bourgeoisie – were synonyms of all the world's sins and vices, moral and ethical failings.

Examples³:

1. Therefore, in the "Outline," the history of Ukrainian literature is not shown in connection with other related literatures, especially with Russian literature.

3 1. Тому в «Нарисі» історія української літератури не показана у взаємозв'язку з іншими спорідненими літературами, особливо з російською літературою .

2. В рішенні ЦК КП(б)У також було відзначено, що: «в «Нарисі» ігноруються факти позитивного впливу на українську літературу прогресивних діячів та течій російської літератури, замовчуються факт російсько-українських літературних зв'язків, перебільшується вплив західно-європейських літератур».

3. Радянська, література шанує й любить попередників, шанує й любить славні традиції дореволюційної демократичної літератури, зокрема і особливо – російської літератури , літератури Пушкіна, Лермонтова, Некрасова, Гоголя, Щедріна, Тургенєва, Толстого, Островського, Чехова.

4. Ми знаємо, що XIX сторіччя – це вік завоювання передовою російською літературою всесвітньої арени, знаємо, що коли Пушкіна за його життя та й по смерті на надежну, тобто недосяжну, височінь ставили в Західній Європі тільки окремі знавці, як, скажімо, Приспер Меріме, то вже Тургенев, Толстой, Чехов стали вчителями цілих поколінь західноєвропейських письменників, і то не тільки як майстри слова, але і як учителі життя – учительний-бо, «геройчний» характер російської літератури становить її прикметну рису.

5. З одного боку це література великоруського племені, а з другого це література в державній мові, що в наслідок деспотичної централізації стала органом освіти й порозуміння в багатьох невеликоруських провінціях і абсорбує інтелігенцію цих провінцій в користь російської літератури .

6. За ці чотирнадцять років, сповнених великих історичних подій, українська радянська література та її творці – радянські письменники – пройшли всі разом і кожний особно знаменний шлях, окрім славним і мужнім трудом на благо нашого народу – будівника соціалізму, на славу нашому натхненнику і організаторові – могутній партії більшовиків.

7. Внаслідок величного і самовідданого труда народились гіганти – заводи і фабрики, виросли нові прекрасні міста, нові шляхи вимережили неосяжні простори Батьківщини, росла і ширилася слава колгоспів, і разом з цим чудодійним піднесенням радянського соціалістичного суспільства відбувалося піднесення нашої великої радянської культури, нашої науки, нашої радянської літератури .

8. Про невпинний поступ вперед української радянської літератури свідчить та висока оцінка, яку дали творам наших письменників України партія, уряд, весь радянський народ.

9. В той час, коли американські й англійські імперіалісти, реалізуючи свої космополітичні, а по суті, імперіалістичні лозунги, душати національні культури, переслідують передових демократичних письменників, наповнюють книжковий ринок мутною зливою антигуманістичних, людиноненависницьких творів, – в цей час весь світ бачить чудові плоди розквіту наших радянських національних культур, красу й здоров'я нашої молодої, але найідейнішої і найпредовішої в світі радянської літератури .

2. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine (Bolsheviks) also noted that the "Outline" ignores the facts of the positive influence of progressive figures and movements of Russian literature **on Ukrainian literature**, omits **the fact of Russian-Ukrainian literary connections**, and **exaggerates the influence of Western European literatures**.
3. Soviet literature honors and loves its predecessors, respects, and cherishes the glorious traditions of pre-revolutionary democratic literature, particularly and especially Russian literature, the literature of Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Gogol, Shchedrin, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Ostrovsky, Chekhov.
4. We know that the 19th century was the age when avant-garde Russian literature conquered the global arena. We are aware that during his lifetime and even after his death, Pushkin was elevated to an unattainable height in Western Europe only by a few connoisseurs, such as Prosper Mérimée. However, Turgenev, Tolstoy, and Chekhov became teachers for entire generations of Western European writers, not just as masters of the word but also as teachers of life. Indeed, the "heroic" character of Russian literature constitutes its distinctive feature.
5. On one hand, it is the literature of the Great Russian nation, and on the other, it is literature in the state language, which ... became an instrument of education and understanding in many non-Great Russian provinces, absorbing the intelligentsia of these provinces for the benefit of Russian literature.
6. Over these fourteen years, filled with significant historical events, Ukrainian Soviet literature and its creators – Soviet writers – have together and individually traveled a remarkable path, uplifted by the glorious and brave work for the benefit of our people – the builders of socialism, and in glory to our inspirer and organizer – the mighty Bolshevik party.
7. As a result of the grand and selfless labor, giants were born – factories and plants, new beautiful cities arose, new roads laced the vast expanses of the Motherland, the glory of the collective farms grew and expanded, and along with this miraculous uplift of the Soviet socialist society, there was a rise of our great Soviet culture, our science, our Soviet literature.
8. The relentless progress of Ukrainian Soviet literature is evidenced by the high evaluation given to the works of our Ukrainian writers by the party, the government, and the entire Soviet people.
9. At a time when American and English imperialists, implementing their cosmopolitan, in essence, imperialist slogans, suppress national cultures, persecute progressive democratic writers, and fill the book market with a murky flood of anti-humanistic, misanthropic works, – at this time, the whole world sees the wonderful fruits of the flourishing of our Soviet national cultures, the beauty and health of our young, yet the most ideologically advanced and leading literature in the world, Soviet literature.

Therefore, this period 1940–1950 was not marked by repression and prohibitions, but experienced a crystallization of anti-Ukrainian ideology that destroyed Ukrainian uniqueness in terms of its artistic and literary development and identity through the concepts soviet and Ukrainian soviet literature (Baran, Danylenko, 1999: 80–112).

Two decades of 1950–1970 saw further processes of aggressive russification of Ukraine. The following events mark critical landmarks in the process of deconstructing Ukrainian identity, underscoring a systematic approach of eroding the distinctiveness and autonomy of Ukrainian language and culture.

On April 17, 1959, the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR passed the law “On Strengthening the Connection of School with Life and on Further Development of the System of People’s Education in the Ukrainian SSR” (Law on strengthening … 1959: 2–3). The study of the Ukrainian language in schools was declared non-mandatory. “At the request of parents and children,” the number of schools teaching in Ukrainian was reduced, the study of Ukrainian language and literature in Russian schools was ignored, and the number of hours devoted to teaching Ukrainian literature and language in secondary specialized educational institutions was decreased. On September 17, 1959, the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR adopted the Resolution of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU on the transition of Ukrainian schools to the Russian language of instruction. This was a direct attempt to assimilate Ukrainian youth into a Russian-speaking milieu. This policy not only marginalized the Ukrainian language in educational settings but also significantly impacted the transmission of cultural and historical narratives in a manner that favored a Russified perspective.

1961. The XXII Congress of the CPSU introduced a new party program on the “merging of nations” into a single Soviet people. Additionally, in 1961, the “Ukrainian Orthography of 1960–1961 (fourth edition)” came into effect, where “Ukrainian orthography was completely assimilated to the ‘Rules of Russian Orthography and Punctuation.’ 1970. The Order of the Ministry of Education of the USSR mandated the writing and defense of all dissertations exclusively in Russian. These regulations are indicative of a broader strategy to subordinate Ukrainian academic and intellectual life to Russian standards, to control the production of knowledge and the development of intellectual elites within Ukraine. These measures, collectively, were instrumental in the Soviet state’s efforts to reshape Ukrainian identity, reducing the visibility and viability of Ukrainian cultural and linguistic expressions within the public sphere and academia. They represent a deliberate attempt to reconfigure the cultural and linguistic landscape of Ukraine, diminishing the space for Ukrainian self-expression and promoting a homogenized Soviet identity that privileged Russian language and culture (Hrynevych, Danylenko 2004: 236–389).

The situation was aggravated by the so-called Ukrainian scholars advocating anti-Ukrainian views in Humanities and Social sciences. Guided by the program documents of the high soviet leadership they “scientifically” substantiated the decay of national languages as natural and unavoidable. The concept of “harmonious billinguism” was established in all spheres of life – education, science, economy, administration. Soviet science considered this official billinguism a positive and progressive phenomenon, claiming that the transition to Russian in everyday and official communication was voluntary and fostered the social and national equity.

This unscientific stance facilitated the continuation and consolidation of ideologies regarding Ukraine’s, its language’s, and its literature’s inferiority. It emphasized the natural connections and origins of Ukrainian literature from the vast expanse of Russian literature, framing the development of Ukrainian literature not as an independent and unique phenomenon but only in terms of its convergence with Russian literature. Ukrainian writers were either assimilated into the pantheon of Russian literature (for example, Gogol) or their devotion and “love” for the grandeur of Russian literature was foregrounded.

Examples⁴

1. The Soviet public and all progressive humanity are celebrating the 150th anniversary of the birth of the great writer-realist, the founder of critical realism in Russian literature, the father of Russian satirical prose and drama, Nikolai Vasilievich Gogol.
2. The formation of Ukrainian literature was significantly influenced by various impulses received by Ukrainian figures from Russian literature.
3. She wanted to trace how Russian literature influenced the work of Lesya Ukrainka, particularly Pushkin, Nekrasov, Gorky...
4. Next, we will talk about the connections of Kobzar with Soviet literatures – Russian and Belarusian, about the responses to his fiery word and the “indelible trace” it left in Soviet Ukrainian poetry.
5. Like an undying guiding star, Shevchenko’s work shines in the sky of new Ukrainian literature, illuminating the boundless expanses of Soviet literature.

As the corpus frequency indicates, being discriminatively profiled, the concepts of Ukrainian language and literature remained topical in discourse. This perceptible increase can be, among others, explained by a strong wave of diaspora texts dedicated to the research of Ukrainian language, literature and culture in the corpus (Table 5.).

Table 5. Corpus frequency of key concepts

lemma	1950–1960 frequency in corpus		1960–1970 frequency in corpus	
	absolute	per million	absolute	per million
Ukrainian language	973	0.55	4,382	2.46
Russian language	536	0.3	1,617	0.91
Ukrainian literature	501	0.32	1,625	0.91
Russian literature	172	0.1	298	0.17
Soviet literature	210	0.12	381	0.21

Two ideologically and conceptually different discourses (soviet and Ukrainian diaspora) provide different ways of addressing the issue of Ukrainian identity. Diaspora texts described the processes of the Ukrainian language russification by a metaphor of “cleaning in every Ukrainian corner,” the authors of pseudoscientific endeavors of rewriting the orthography as “cleaners of nationalistic words,” the metaphor

4. 1. Радянська громадськість і все прогресивне людство відзначають 150-річчя з дня народження великого письменника-реаліста, засновника критичного реалізму в російській літературі, батька російської сатиричної прози і драматургії Миколи Васильовича Гоголя.
2. Становленню української літератури значною мірою сприяли і різноманітні імпульси, які сприймали українські діячі з боку російської літератури.
3. Й хотілося простежити, як впливала на творчість Лесі Українки російська література, зокрема Пушкін, Некрасов, Горький...
4. Далі йтиме у нас мова про зв’язки Кобзаря з радянськими літературами – російською та білоруською, про відгуків його вогняного слова і «нестертий слід» його в радянській українській поезії.
5. Мов непогасна провідна зірка, сяє Шевченкова творчість на небі нової української літератури, опромінюючи безмежні далі літератури радянської.

of “language *turmoil*,” suggesting a period of distress, conflict, or upheaval specifically related to language issues. Diaspora texts axiology of the metaphor “*literary front*” acquired a strong sarcastic coloring. Whereas in soviet press the intentional subjugation of Ukrainian language by Russian, an aggressive assault at Ukrainian lexicography, translation, terminology were deceptively decorated by pseudo concepts of “language norm,” “language dynamics” and “language development,” “care for mother tongue.”

Destructive discursive practices of soviet propaganda employ extensively negative metaphoric expression for all manifestation of Ukrainian identity. All national was derogatively degraded to nationalistic; nomination of national elite was performed by pejoratives:

- “націоналістична пліснява” – “nationalistic mold”
- “націоналістичні недобитки” – “nationalistic remnants”
- “жовто-блакитні літературні мастаки” – “yellow-and-blue literary dabblers”
- “продуценти календарної халтури” – “producers of calendar trash”
- “хамелеони з націоналістичного зоопарку” – “chameleons from the nationalist zoo”
- “злосні націоналістичні вихвитки на літературному фронті” – “malicious nationalist squibs on the literary front”

Nationalist scoundrels attempt to falsify the works of the great Taras Shevchenko, who called for “all Slavs to become good brothers” and who admired the works of great Russian writers – Pushkin and Shchedrin.

Yet, nationalist scribblers spit upon Ukraine, calling it a “wild field.”

Meanwhile, nationalist villains like Malanyuk and his ilk write about Ukraine with contempt and hatred in their “poems.”⁵

The derogative nominations of everything related to national and European manifestations, issues, topics, discussions in literature or literary criticism was tarnished nationalistic or bourgeois-nationalistic. The corpus presents evidences of variegated combinability of these words *national*, *nationalistic* and *bourgeois* disclosing their negative connotations (cql [lemma=“буржуазний”][lemma=“націоналіст”]). The table below displays the frequency of lemma bourgeois-nationalist and its collocations.

Table 6. Corpus frequency of lemma bourgeois-nationalist / **буржуазний націоналіст** and its collocations

Word	Cooccurrences [?]	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice
запроданство treachery	4	86	2.00	17.24	7.72
сіоністів sionists	3	499	1.73	14.28	6.57
недобитків remnants	3	569	1.73	14.09	6.47
банд bandits / gangsters	4	3,291	2.00	11.98	5.10

5 1. Націоналістичні негідники намагаються фальсифікувати творчість великого Тараса Шевченка, який закликав, «щоб усі слова-яни стали добрими братами», який шанував творчість великих російських письменників - Пушкіна і Щедріна.
 2. І разом з тим націоналістичні писаки обпліюють Україну, називають її «диким полем».
 3. А націоналістичні негідники Маланюк та йому подібні в своїх «поезіях» пишуть про Україну з презирством і ненавистю.

Word	Cooccurrences [?]	Candidates [?]	T-score	MI	LogDice
українськими Ukrainian	19	47,830	4.36	10.36	3.69
вороги enemies	7	17,438	2.64	10.38	3.67
люти furios	3	10,863	1.73	9.84	3.11
ненависть hatred	3	16,370	1.73	9.25	2.54
табору camp	5	36,393	2.23	8.83	2.15
кордоном boarder	8	77,282	2.82	8.42	1.75
використовує use	3	37,801	1.73	8.04	1.36
викликає recall	4	59,118	1.99	7.81	1.14

Examples⁶:

1. Let us remind here that **nationalist motives were once also denounced in some of the lyrical poems of Bazhan.**
2. But upon closer examination, it turned out that all those 'quotes' were taken from the dirty works of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists.
3. Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists have done a lot of harm in the field of Shevchenko studies over the last years.
4. Only one third of these bulky books consists of Shevchenko's poetry, the rest are articles, comments, explanations by the Ukrainian bourgeois nationalist Leonid Biletsky, who does not disdain any dirty means to slander the great Kobzar.
5. Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists overseas are making great efforts to hollow out all the revolutionary pathos from the works of Shevchenko.

The idiom of bourgeois-nationalist/nationalists is traceable in the corpus up to the late 1980s.

The Soviet regime constantly enriched the arsenal of Russification tools. The main instrument in this regard was the secondary school. Khrushchev's "thaw," which, on the one hand, improved the conditions of national-cultural life in Ukraine, on the other hand, gave a powerful impulse to Russification. The 1958 law on the connection of school with "life" gave parents the right to decide in which language their children would be educated. This outwardly "democratic" decision made the language of education a private matter of the parents and provided "legal" grounds for Russification. Consequently, from 1970

6 1. Нагадаємо тут, що націоналістичні мотиви свого часу бреніли також і в деяких ліричних поезіях Бажана.
 2. Але при більшому ознайомленні виявилося, що всі ті «цитати» взяті з брудної творчості українських буржуазних націоналістів.
 3. Багато нашкодили українські буржуазні націоналісти в питанні шевченкознавства протягом останніх років.
 4. Лише одну третину цих товстолезних книг становить поезія Шевченка, решта ж — це статті, коментарі, пояснення українського буржуазного націоналіста Леоніда Білецького, який не гребе ніякими брудними засобами, щоб звести наклеп на великого Кобзаря.
 5. Українські буржуазні націоналісти за океаном докладають великих зусиль, щоб вихолостити весь революційний пафос з творчості Шевченка.

to the mid-1980s (a period in history known as stagnation), it was possible to live in Ukraine without learning the Ukrainian language: only one in five students in the cities of the republic attended Ukrainian schools. As the prestige of Russian was constantly promoted, the attitude towards Ukrainian became more and more condescending, especially in big cities. By the late 1970s, Russian language schools dominated the educational landscape in Ukraine, constituting 72% of all schools in major cities and completely replaced Ukrainian schools in some areas like Donetsk and Crimea. In the regional centers of Ukraine and its capital, Ukrainian and mixed Russian-Ukrainian schools accounted for only 28% at the end of the 70s, while Russian schools made up 72% of the total number of schools. Thus, in Donetsk, there were no Ukrainian schools left, a similar situation was in Crimea.

Significant milestones in the Russification campaign included two all-union conferences held in Tashkent in 1975 and 1979, aimed at extending the Russian language's reach within national republics and enhancing its teaching quality. Recommendations from these conferences led to the widespread introduction of Russian language instruction starting from preschool age. The efforts were further bolstered by the so-called "Brezhnev circular" of 1978, which outlined measures for advancing Russian language study across the union republics. The Andropov decree of 1983 reinforced this trend by granting special privileges to Russian language and literature teachers.

This policy led to a rapid decline in the use of the Ukrainian language. By the late 1980s, there were more Ukrainian schools in Edmonton, Canada, than in Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipro, and Kharkiv combined. The 700,000 Ukrainians in Crimea did not have a single Ukrainian school. Generations grew up without knowing the language of their parents and grandparents. After being removed from schools, the Ukrainian language was even more aggressively displaced from higher education institutions, theaters, economic sectors, party activities, and Soviet establishments. At the same time, the number of Ukrainian books, including those for children, decreased. For instance, in 1960, 49% of books in the Ukrainian SSR were published in Ukrainian, by 1990 this number had dropped to just 20%. Public places, streets, institutions were renamed to honour Russian history, literature, culture, the expansion of russification reshaped the social environment (Baran, Danylenko 2003; 469–518).

According to corpus data, by the late 1980s, the Soviet press had effectively showcased the high productivity of the main ideological myths surrounding great Russian and soviet literature and culture discursively realized in metaphors of *struggle, growth, blooming, thriving, upward movement, celestial objects*, spatial metaphors (*depth, expansion*), etc. Soviet literature is a "battlefield," a "container filled with life-giving substances," "a treasury," "the rays illuminating universe," it is "an educator," "an instrument of influence." Soviet authors are "fighters," "battlers on the literary frontline," "innovators," "worthy sons," "descendants of the revolution," "pillars of society," "titans," "great teachers." *Novelty, devotion, moral samples, patriotism, progress, surpassing all Western / world achievements, completeness, accomplishment, perfection, energy of life* – such metaphoric cliché created stable conceptual profiles of soviet literature opposed to Western literature with its typical associates of decay, degradation and destruction. All these linguo-cognitive constructs proliferated in all types of discourses: endowing the media texts with artificial pompousness and displayed quasi-scientific, ideological features of scientific ones.

Examples⁷:

1. “**The Combat Tasks of Ukrainian Soviet Literature**,” proclaimed on the first day after the election to the honorary presidium of the congress by the entire absent Politburo of the CPSU Central Committee.
2. In these conditions, **our native Ukrainian Soviet literature and art flourish and strengthen**.
3. **Ukrainian Soviet literature, its flourishing and strengthening, …the most progressive in the world**,” …
4. … “**Soviet literature** under the guidance of our native Lenin’s party **has reached unprecedented development**.”
5. The last section of Shabliovsky’s work, “**Ukrainian Soviet Literature in the Constellation of Fraternal Literatures**,” reveals the characteristic features of Soviet Ukrainian literature from the October Revolution to our days.
6. These pioneers of Ukrainian Soviet literature became the spokespersons for **the heroic pathos of the revolution, the spirit of the new Soviet era**.
7. … literature characterized by deep dedication to the cause of socialism, communism, and proletarian internationalism.
8. … with **pure and bright humanism**, with the **internationalism** that pervades all great Soviet literature.

Corpus data allows establishing a time spot of emerging the most expressive metaphor of soviet propaganda – the metaphor of the “older brother” – approximately the first half of 1970s.

Analyzing the dynamics of Ukrainian identity deconstruction it is worth mentioning the issue of literary and scientific translations. The Ukrainian language was co-opted as a tool for Communist propaganda, evidenced by the translation of political literature and significant gaps in artistic and scientific translation. Ukrainian translators were constantly persecuted, arrested, limited in resources, experienced total censorship (Shmiger 2009). The degradation of translation practices was marked by the intermediary role of the Russian language, positioning Ukrainian as a secondary language of translation. A comparative analysis of the history of Soviet translations of works by leading foreign authors shows that translations into Russian often preceded translations into the languages of other Soviet republics, sometimes by several decades. For example, the Russian translation of J.D. Salinger’s novel “The Catcher

7 1. «Бойові завдання української радянської літератури », виголошений першого дня після обрання до почесної президії з ‘їзду усього складу неприсутнього політбюро ЦК КПРС.

2. У цих умовах розквітає і міцніє наша рідна українська радянська література і мистецтво.

3. … її розквіт і міцніння, про те, що вона є «високоідейною, партійною і народною, найбільш прогресивною у світі», …

4. … « радянська література під проводом рідної партії Леніна досягла небувалого розвитку».

5. Останній розділ праці Шаблювського – «Українська радянська література в сузір’ї братніх літератур» – показує характерні особливості радянської української літератури від Жовтневої революції до наших днів.

6. Ці пionери української радянської літератури стали виразниками героїчного пафосу революції, духу нової радянської епохи.

7. … література, що характеризується глибокою відданістю справі соціалізму, комунізму і пролетарського інтернаціоналізму.

8. … з чистою і світлою гуманістією, з інтернаціоналізмом, яким овіяна вся велика радянська література .

in the Rye" was first published in 1965, while the Ukrainian translation appeared only in 1984. The publication of Ukrainian translations of works by E. Hemingway lagged behind the Russian versions by decades. This relegated status of the Ukrainian language in the realm of translation, both scientific and artistic, was metaphorically celebrated as "Russian language – a banner of friendship and brotherhood of peoples." This narrative underscores the systemic undermining of Ukrainian linguistic and cultural identity, as the Russian language was not only preferred but also imposed as the primary medium for intellectual and creative exchange.

The table below shows the frequency dynamics of the discussed concepts from 1950 to 1990.

Table 7. The frequency dynamics of the key concepts from 1950 to 1990

lemma	1950–1960 frequency in corpus		1960–1970 frequency in corpus		1970–1990 frequency in corpus	
	absolute	per million	absolute	per million	absolute	Per million
Ukrainian language	973	0.55	4,382	2.46	5,535	3.11
Russian language	536	0.3	1,617	0.91	2,640	1.48
Ukrainian literature	501	0.32	1,625	0.91	2,637	1.5
Russian literature	172	0.1	298	0.17	523	0.29
Soviet literature	210	0.12	381	0.21	781	0.44

Propagating the "unity of languages and literatures" marked by the deliberate and unscientific assertion of genetic roots and inter-literary parallels between Russian and Ukrainian literatures, was a common discursive strategy. This approach became particularly pronounced in the 1980s, emphasizing the notion of their fusion and genetic relatedness. The dilution and systematic Russification of the language being completed, the unraveling of literary identity proceeded without losing momentum. The eradication of any signs of ethnic and national cultures and uniqueness of literature culminated in the notion of internationality and multinationality of soviet literature.

All the discussed destructive processes in the context of socio-political phenomena could have led to a complete stagnation of Ukrainian identity or even made the Ukrainian language and culture extinct if not for the emergence of one powerful counteracting factor. This factor was introduced into Ukrainian history under the term "the movement of sixties." The Sixtiers, or "shestydesyatniki," refer to a generation of Soviet and Ukrainian national intelligentsia with a pronounced civic stance that entered the culture (art, literature, etc.) and politics of the USSR in the second half of the 1950s – a period of temporary relaxation of communist-Bolshevik totalitarianism and Khrushchev's "Thaw" (destalinization and some liberalization) – and most fully expressed themselves creatively at the beginning and in the mid-1960s. The Sixtiers opposed official dogmatism, advocated for freedom of creative expression, cultural pluralism, and the priority of universal human values over class values. Significant influence on their development was made by Western humanistic culture, the traditions of the "Executed Renaissance," and the achievements of Ukrainian culture at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century.

The Sixtiers were an internal moral opposition to the Soviet totalitarian state regime, among them were political prisoners and “prisoners of conscience,” dissidents. The Sixtiers defended the national language and culture, freedom of artistic creativity.

The Sixtiers movement managed to last distinctly for barely a decade before it was crushed and driven into an internal “spiritual underground”. In the period from 1965 to 1972 the majority of representatives of the movement were arrested and sentenced to long-term imprisonment (Ivan Svitlychny, Yevhen Sverstiuk, Vasyl Stus, Iryna Kalynets, Ihor Kalynets, Valeriy Marchenko, Mykola Plakhotnyuk, and others). Some of them died there (Vasyl Stus, Valeriy Marchenko), those who survived were completely banned from participating in the literary process after their release. The Sixtiers movement played a significant role in strengthening the resistance against Russian imperial chauvinism and Russification in Ukraine. It gave the Ukrainian language, literature and culture the impulse to survive in the Russian/Soviet imperialist stranglehold (Mokryk 2023)⁸.

Conclusion

Imperial and totalitarian regimes profoundly and systematically undermined Ukrainian identity, with the Ukrainian language serving as a prime illustration of their meticulous manipulative strategies for identity deconstruction within specific socio-historical contexts. These strategies involved various forms of destructive discourse practices. Some practices were designed to justify and support restrictions on the functioning and development of the Ukrainian language, while others sought to erode its very essence, its integrity, uniqueness, authenticity, and distinctiveness by falsely asserting its status as a derivative of the Russian language and exaggerating its kinship to Russian.

Furthermore, this distorted conceptualization was enacted through linguistic means themselves, including the use of concepts with distorted connotative backgrounds, as well as a network of associative concepts with corresponding axiological content. The aim was to embed within the national consciousness distorted mental models of world perception, wherein the national and unique were systematically diminished in favor of artificially constructed, common quasi-realities with the generations of Ukrainians being intentionally disconnected from their cultural heritage.

The resilience of the Ukrainian language through centuries of totalitarian and imperial oppressions can be described by John Keats’ powerful metaphor of the enduring symphony of nature from his famous poem “On the Grasshopper and the Cricket.” Just as Keats illustrates how “the poetry of earth is never dead,” the Ukrainian language embodies this undying essence. Despite the relentless attempts to silence its voice, the spirit of the Ukrainian language, much like the cricket’s song in winter and the grasshopper’s in summer, has persisted, echoing the ceaseless poetry of the earth. Through every harsh winter of repression, the Ukrainian language has continued to sing, ensuring “the poetry of earth is ceasing never.” It stands as a testament to the indomitable spirit of a people and their unyielding bond to their heritage, culture, and land.

Building upon the metaphor of John Keats’ ode, the resilience of the Ukrainian language through periods of repression and attempts at elimination from social discourse owes much to the unwavering devotion of the people. From nursery school teachers to poets, writers, and stage directors, these

⁸ The role of Sixties in reestablishment of Ukrainian independence is complex issue and can be the object of special research.

individuals refused to conform, give up, or abdicate their cultural identity. Their efforts mirror the grasshopper's ceaseless summer song and the cricket's resilient winter chirp, as described by Keats, symbolizing an unbroken chain of cultural continuity.

On February 11, 1989, the founding conference of the "Taras Shevchenko Ukrainian Language Society" demanded "to establish the Ukrainian language in all areas of public life." Shortly after, on February 16, 1989, the "Literaturna Ukraina" newspaper published a draft program for the "People's Movement of Ukraine for Perestroika," which included a demand to grant the Ukrainian language the status of the state language in the Ukrainian SSR. In 1989, the Supreme Council of Ukraine passed a law on the state status of the Ukrainian language (the Law "On the Language in the Ukrainian SSR"). This law, adopted on October 28, 1989, before Ukraine's declaration of independence, marked a significant achievement of the national-democratic forces and solidified the positions gained by the Ukrainian intelligentsia and national movement at the time. According to Article 2, the Ukrainian language was established as the state language of the Ukrainian SSR. The Ukrainian SSR ensures the comprehensive development and functioning of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life. The republican and local state, party, public bodies, enterprises, institutions, and organizations create the necessary conditions for all citizens to learn the Ukrainian language and to master it thoroughly. Moreover, the law stated that the state would create necessary conditions for the development and use of languages of other nationalities living in Ukraine. Based on this law, the "State Program for the Development of the Ukrainian Language and Other National Languages in the Ukrainian SSR for the period up to the year 2000" was drafted and approved. This program envisioned the phased establishment of the Ukrainian language as the state language across different regions of the country⁹.

In 2012, almost 22 years after the fall of the Soviet Union and Declaration of Ukrainian independence the new legislative initiatives concerning the status and functioning of Ukrainian were introduced. However, this law was too controversial and did not correspond to the state need and demand of the society for strengthening the state-building and consolidating functions of the Ukrainian language and for enhancing its role in ensuring the territorial integrity and national security. In 2019 the previous law was cancelled and substituted by a new version of Law on Functioning Ukrainian as State Language.

Yet, the "language question" remains a complex problem of modern Ukrainian society. The lingering effects of Russification, which had entrenched linguistic hierarchy, remained rather strong. The remnants of the mental models of this quasi-reality complicated the country's path toward forging a cohesive national identity post-independence and still impacts the normal functioning of Ukrainian in the timeframe from 1991 to nowadays. Thus, the complexity of this issue requires further comprehensive investigation.

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