

IMPLEMENTATION OF EUROPEAN STANDARDS OF LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE POLICY

ІМПЛЕМЕНТАЦІЯ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИХ СТАНДАРТІВ МОВНОЇ РІЗНОМАНІТНОСТІ В КОНТЕКСТІ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ МОВНОЇ ПОЛІТИКИ

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This article analyzes European standards for the protection and promotion of linguistic diversity with the aim of their implementation in Ukrainian language policy amid profound socio-political transformations. The focus of the study is on identifying an effective model of language governance that integrates European legal principles, Ukraine's specific historical experience as a postcolonial state, and the contemporary challenges posed by full-scale war. Language policy in this context is framed as a strategic domain of state security, national unity, information resilience, and humanitarian integration.

By comparing typologically distinct models of language policy in selected EU member states – France (unitary-centralized), Spain (decentralized), Sweden (inclusive and minority rights-oriented), and Belgium (federal-territorial) – the article examines the possibilities for adapting their principles to the Ukrainian context. The analysis shows that a mechanical application of European approaches in a setting marked by colonial language legacies may not only fail to ensure effective protection of minority language rights but also threaten the status and sustainability of the state language as a core component of sovereignty.

The article underscores the need for critical reinterpretation of European standards through the lens of decolonial language planning. It substantiates the relevance of a hybrid model of language policy that rests on three strategic pillars: emancipation (restoring the full functionality of the Ukrainian language in public life), participation (engaging linguistic communities in policymaking), and security (protecting the linguistic space from hybrid influence by the aggressor state). This approach makes it possible to reconcile Ukraine's obligations to the Council of Europe with its national interests and security imperatives, while contributing to the development of a democratic linguistic order based on justice, human rights, and cultural resilience.

Key words: Ukrainian language, bilingualism, language policy, linguistic rights, language security, postcolonial context.

Стаття присвячена аналізу європейських стандартів захисту та підтримки мовної різноманітності з метою їхньої імплементації в українську мовну політику в умовах глибоких соціально-політичних трансформацій. У центрі дослідження – пошук ефективної моделі мовного управління, яка враховувала б європейський правовий досвід, історичну специфіку України як постколоніальної держави та актуальні виклики, пов'язані з повномасштабною війною. У статті мовна політика розглядається як стратегічна сфера державної безпеки, національної єдності, інформаційної стійкості та гуманітарної інтеграції.

Порівнюючи типологічно відмінні моделі мовної політики в окремих країнах ЄС – Франції (унітарна централізована), Іспанії (децентралізована), Швеції (інклюзивна з орієнтацією на права меншин) та Бельгії (федеративна територіальна) – стаття досліджує можливість адаптації їхніх принципів до українського контексту. Встановлюється, що механічне застосування європейських підходів у ситуації колоніальної мовної спадщини може не лише не забезпечити ефективного захисту прав мовних меншин, а й створити загрозу збереженню державної мови як ключового елемента суверенності.

У роботі підкреслюється необхідність критичного переосмислення європейських стандартів через призму деколоніального мовного планування. Обґрунтовано доцільність впровадження гібридної моделі мовної політики, що ґрунтується на поєднанні трьох стратегічних принципів: емансипації (відновлення повноцінного функціонування української мови в публічному просторі), партиципації (залучення мовних спільнот до процесу ухвалення рішень) та безпеки (захист мовного простору від гібридного впливу агресора). Запропонований підхід дозволяє гармонізувати зобов'язання України перед Радою Європи із національними інтересами й безпековими пріоритетами, водночас сприяючи розбудові демократичного мовного порядку, заснованого на принципах справедливості, поваги до прав людини та культурної стійкості.

Ключові слова: українська мова, двомовність, мовна політика, мовні права, мовна безпека, постколоніальний контекст.

Introduction. Language policy is a crucial tool for shaping national identity, preserving cultural heritage, securing human rights, and fostering social cohesion in multilingual societies. In today's globalized world, it has acquired additional significance as

a factor of political stability, national security, and intercultural communication. Accordingly, language planning should not be viewed merely as a technical or cultural instrument – it constitutes a strategic dimension of state policy, especially in countries

with multiethnic populations and traumatic experiences of colonial domination.

The European Union has, over the past decades, actively promoted the concept of linguistic diversity as a fundamental value underpinning democracy, legal equality, and minority integration. Legal instruments such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (1995), and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) establish a normative framework for inclusive language policy. These documents reflect the belief that states are not only obliged to refrain from language-based discrimination but are also responsible for proactively creating conditions for the functioning and reproduction of linguistic communities.

Ukraine, with its uniquely complex linguistic situation shaped by decades of russification, the ideological suppression of Ukrainian in the public sphere, and the imposition of Russian as a prestige language, now finds itself at a critical juncture in redefining its language policy. Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022 has made language a matter of national security, civic mobilization, and resistance to cultural and informational aggression. At the same time, Ukraine's strategic course toward European integration requires compliance with international human rights standards, particularly regarding the protection of minority language rights.

This context places Ukraine before a dual imperative: to decolonize its linguistic space while aligning with European models of multilingualism. Achieving this requires not the mechanical adoption of foreign frameworks but the development of a hybrid, context-sensitive model of language policy that simultaneously addresses security concerns, social integration, and cultural justice.

– This situation gives rise to several scientifically significant questions:

– To what extent are Council of Europe standards applicable to postcolonial linguistic contexts such as Ukraine's?

– How can we avoid conflating the protection of minority languages with the reproduction of imperial bilingual hierarchies?

– Which models of language governance in EU member states can be adapted to Ukraine's sociopolitical and legal realities?

Beyond its theoretical implications, this issue has immediate practical relevance for the design of a national language planning strategy, the modernization of legislation, the reform of educational policy, the safeguarding of the information space, and the development of an inclusive cultural environment.

Thus, the study of mechanisms for implementing European standards of linguistic diversity under conditions of martial law and postcolonial transition is of paramount importance – both as a matter of academic inquiry and of public governance.

Literature Review and Analysis of Previous Research. The issue of language policy – particularly the protection of linguistic rights and the promotion of language diversity – has been a central focus of interdisciplinary research across sociolinguistics, political theory, legal studies, education, and cultural studies. Scholars have increasingly emphasized the interplay between language and identity, the role of the state in regulating the linguistic environment, and the influence of global and regional institutions on national language policies.

At the core of European academic discourse lies the concept of linguistic human rights (LHR), elaborated by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas in her seminal work *“Linguistic Genocide in Education”* [11]. She argues that linguistic rights must be treated as fundamental human rights, the violation of which may lead to forced assimilation, cultural erasure, and the loss of collective memory. This view is reinforced by Robert Phillipson [10], whose theory of linguistic imperialism (1992) exposes how dominant languages marginalize others through institutional mechanisms such as education, media, and international governance. For Phillipson, linguistic inequality is not natural, but the result of systemic political and economic domination. Jan Blommaert's research [1] further expands the analytical toolkit of sociolinguistics through his theory of language regimes – the ideologically constructed systems within which multilingual communication occurs. Blommaert reveals that multilingualism often functions not as a free cultural resource, but as a mechanism of social control and exclusion. This perspective moves beyond legal analysis to encompass the discursive and political processes underpinning language governance.

In the post-Soviet context, particularly in Ukraine, the work of Larysa Masenko [16] has been foundational. In her books *“Language and Politics”* she underscores the need for decolonial language planning aimed at counteracting the long-term marginalization of the Ukrainian language. Masenko positions language policy as a compensatory mechanism responding to the linguistic violence of the imperial and Soviet past. Similarly, Aneta Pavlenko has analyzed language ideologies, the contested status of Russian speakers, and the shifting linguistic identities in Ukraine, particularly after 2014 [9].

From a legal and institutional perspective, significant attention has been devoted to the European Charter

for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EUCFR). Scholar Klaus D'Ernst [5] has examined these instruments both as vehicles of cultural protection and as politically contingent frameworks, noting the selective application of standards across member states.

Nevertheless, a major research gap persists concerning the implementation of these standards in postcolonial language hierarchies, such as those present in Ukraine. As Joshua A. Fishman has noted, “language revival in the context of colonial suppression requires more than legal protection – it necessitates the construction of new domains for meaningful linguistic use” [8, 214]. This calls for a shift in scholarship: from normative abstraction to applied analysis of how legal norms, sociopolitical discourse, civic engagement, and security concerns intersect in real-world language policy.

Despite a broad and interdisciplinary literature base, practical strategies for integrating European language policy standards into the Ukrainian context – particularly in light of the dual imperatives of decolonization and national security – remain underexplored. This constitutes the research lacuna within which the present article is situated.

Identification of Unresolved Aspects of the General Problem. Despite the extensive theoretical and legal foundations developed within European and international frameworks, several critical aspects of language policy remain underexamined – particularly in the context of postcolonial, conflict-affected states such as Ukraine.

First, current scholarship does not fully address the challenge of adapting European linguistic diversity standards to environments where language revitalization is required due to centuries of colonial linguistic suppression. Ukraine’s case is distinctive: unlike in many EU member states where minority languages are endangered due to internal demographic shifts, Ukrainian must be actively reinstated in public life after decades of systemic marginalization.

Second, there remains a conceptual and policy-level tension between linguistic rights and language security. The coexistence of protective mechanisms for minority languages and the need to safeguard the information space from external aggression – particularly in wartime – has not yet been sufficiently theorized. While European norms emphasize non-discrimination and multilingualism, Ukraine’s context demands that these principles be balanced against the risks of linguistic imperialism and hybrid warfare. The development of a security-conscious

yet rights-based model of language governance is a pressing and unresolved issue.

Third, there is limited analysis of how specific national models of multilingualism – centralized, decentralized, federative, and pluralistic – can inform Ukraine’s own language planning process. While comparative legal studies exist, few have translated their findings into actionable frameworks suitable for Ukraine’s institutional structures, historical experience, and geopolitical challenges.

Finally, the dominant legalistic and rights-oriented focus in existing literature has often overlooked the sociopolitical mechanisms and ideological narratives that determine the success or failure of language policies. Questions of legitimacy, public trust, and civic participation in the design and implementation of language reforms remain insufficiently studied.

This article therefore focuses on these unresolved dimensions, aiming to:

- analyze the typologies of language governance in selected EU countries in light of their potential applicability to Ukraine;
- examine the legal-political contradictions inherent in balancing state language revival with compliance to international norms;
- and propose a hybrid, context-sensitive model for Ukraine’s language policy that integrates decolonial, participatory, and security-oriented principles.

By addressing these lacunae, the article contributes to the growing field of critical language policy and opens new directions for evidence-based language planning in transitional and post-conflict societies.

Formulation of Research Goals and Objectives. The aim of this study is to critically examine the applicability and relevance of European standards of linguistic diversity to Ukraine’s current language policy in the context of postcolonial transition, armed conflict, and European integration.

The key research objectives are as follows:

1. To analyze the normative foundations of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM), and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (EUCFR) in terms of their principles, mechanisms, and expectations for member states;
2. To conduct a comparative analysis of national language policy models in selected EU countries (France, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium), with particular attention to their typological diversity (centralized, decentralized, inclusive, federative) and their practical implementation of multilingual governance;
3. To assess the relevance and limitations of these models for Ukraine, considering its historical experi-

ence of russification, its current wartime context, and the strategic need to decolonize the linguistic space while respecting minority rights;

4. To conceptualize a hybrid model of language policy for Ukraine, which would reconcile the need for state language revitalization with the principles of inclusivity and linguistic justice, while also accounting for national security imperatives;

5. To identify future research directions for evidence-based, interdisciplinary approaches to language planning in post-Soviet, conflict-affected, and transitional democracies.

Through these objectives, the article seeks to bridge the gap between normative legal frameworks and the socio-political realities of implementing language policy in a context that is both deeply localized and globally engaged.

Main Research Findings and Argumentation of Results. The research conducted confirms that the implementation of European standards for the protection of linguistic diversity cannot be undertaken through mechanical adoption or normative alignment alone. Rather, it demands contextual adaptation, guided by critical sociolinguistic analysis and informed by the historical, political, and ideological specificities of each national setting.

In the European tradition, the protection of minority and regional languages is institutionally secured through legal frameworks such as the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (FCNM). These instruments emphasize non-discrimination, proactive state support, and the integration of linguistic rights into public education, administration, justice, and media. However, their effective implementation varies widely, reflecting differing models of state structure, degrees of decentralization, and societal attitudes toward diversity.

This study analyzes four typologically distinct language policy models within the EU – those of France, Spain, Sweden, and Belgium – to illustrate how multilingual governance functions in different socio-political systems. The typology adopted here builds on Spolsky's tripartite model of language policy (practices, beliefs, and management), and aligns with Blommaert's framework of "language regimes" as ideologically informed systems of regulation and distribution of linguistic resources.

France follows a centralized, monolingual model, in which the French language is constitutionally enshrined as the sole language of the Republic (Article 2). Although regional languages like Breton and Occitan are recognized as part of the national

heritage, they are institutionally marginal. France has refused to ratify the ECRML, emphasizing the indivisibility of the Republic. This approach reflects a nation-state ideology of linguistic homogeneity and is incompatible with the realities of linguistic pluralism and historical bilingualism in Ukraine.

Spain represents a decentralized, co-official model. It grants substantial linguistic autonomy to its autonomous communities, where Catalan, Basque, and Galician enjoy equal status with Spanish in education, administration, and media. Despite ongoing political tensions (e.g., Catalonia), Spain demonstrates that asymmetrical multilingualism can be managed within a democratic state. For Ukraine, this model may offer inspiration for regionally differentiated policies, though its application would require strict legal safeguards to prevent the re-legitimation of imperial hierarchies, particularly in relation to Russian.

Sweden adopts an inclusive model of minority language protection, grounded in cultural pluralism and human rights. The 2009 Act on National Minorities and Minority Languages recognizes five national minority languages (Finnish, Meänkieli, Sami, Romani, and Yiddish) and provides institutional support across multiple domains. This model aligns with the linguistic human rights paradigm [11] and is especially relevant for Ukraine's treatment of historically oppressed and endangered languages, such as Crimean Tatar and Gagauz. It also underscores the importance of separating support for true minority languages from the politically motivated elevation of dominant former imperial languages.

Belgium's federal model features territorial language governance, with Flemish, Walloon, and bilingual Brussels Capital regions having autonomy over their linguistic regimes. While this model is complex and context-dependent, it demonstrates that institutional multilingualism can be maintained through clear territorial divisions and administrative decentralization. Though not directly transferable to Ukraine's unitary structure, the principle of territorial clarity and linguistic parity could guide the design of policies for specific border regions or ethnic enclaves.

This typological analysis confirms a central argument: successful language policy is not reducible to legal norms, but rather requires a triadic alignment of institutional commitment, sociopolitical consensus, and historical sensitivity. The mere ratification of international instruments does not guarantee their effective application; nor does a formal commitment to linguistic rights translate into equitable outcomes without mechanisms of enforcement, monitoring, and public legitimacy.

In the Ukrainian context, the stakes of language policy are heightened by the postcolonial condition, the legacy of Russian linguistic domination, and the reality of ongoing hybrid warfare. As such, Ukraine cannot afford to adopt models that assume symmetrical relationships among languages or equal historical trajectories. Instead, what is needed is a hybrid language policy model, grounded in three interrelated pillars:

Emancipatory language planning: Revitalization of Ukrainian as the sole state language in education, governance, science, media, and other public spheres. This requires not only legal protection but proactive policies in teacher training, media development, academic publishing, and cultural production.

Inclusive minority protection: Provision of institutional support to genuine national minorities whose languages are under threat – not as a gesture of multiculturalism, but as a matter of linguistic justice and historical reparation. This includes clear legal differentiation between oppressed minority languages and those (like Russian) historically used for assimilation and domination.

Security-oriented language governance: Recognition of language as a strategic domain of national security, particularly in the context of information warfare. The promotion of Ukrainian must be linked to resilience building, media literacy, and safeguarding the cultural sovereignty of the state.

Ultimately, the research demonstrates that European standards can inform but cannot dictate the direction of Ukraine's language policy. The principles of multilingualism and minority protection must be reinterpreted through a decolonial lens, adapted to Ukraine's current historical moment, and operationalized through participatory and evidence-based planning. This hybrid, context-sensitive approach offers the most viable path for aligning Ukraine's linguistic future with its democratic aspirations and its struggle for sovereignty and cultural renewal.

Conclusions and Future Research Directions.

This study provides a critical perspective on the opportunities and limitations of implementing European standards for the protection of linguistic diversity in Ukraine, particularly in light of its postcolonial legacy, the ongoing war with Russia, and its aspirations for European integration. Through a comparative analysis of diverse models of language governance in selected EU member states – including centralized (France), decentralized (Spain), inclusive (Sweden), and federal (Belgium) – the research has demonstrated that there is no universal model for safeguarding linguistic rights. Effective language policy depends on a complex interplay of historical conditions, administrative configura-

tions, sociolinguistic realities, and the political will to act upon them.

Ukraine's linguistic environment is characterized by a unique set of challenges that distinguish it from the normative contexts in which European legal instruments such as the ECRML, FCNM, and EUCFR were originally conceived. As Fishman and Skutnabb-Kangas have shown, postcolonial settings demand not formal symmetry among languages but strategic, justice-oriented interventions aimed at redressing long-standing asymmetries. In the Ukrainian case, the risk of reproducing historical hierarchies through superficially neutral policies is particularly acute, given the entrenched legacy of Russian linguistic dominance and its continued instrumentalization in geopolitical aggression.

Therefore, the adoption of European standards in Ukraine must be approached not through direct imitation, but through a critical reinterpretation grounded in the principles of decolonial language planning. This involves designing a hybrid policy model that responds to the realities of national recovery, civic cohesion, and linguistic justice. Such a model must simultaneously reinforce the emancipatory function of language planning – by restoring the full status and functionality of Ukrainian as the sole state language across all public domains – and the inclusive function, by supporting historically marginalized or endangered minority languages in a way that affirms their cultural significance without challenging national integrity. At the same time, language policy must be firmly situated within the broader framework of national security, recognizing that language is not merely a communicative tool but a medium of ideological influence and identity formation, particularly in the context of hybrid warfare and disinformation campaigns.

In order to ensure both legitimacy and effectiveness, Ukrainian language planning must rely on empirical data and be supported by robust monitoring mechanisms. These should include systematic evaluation of language practices across regions, implementation of legal norms, accessibility of Ukrainian-language education and services, and the broader sociopolitical effects of language policy on interethnic relations and civic inclusion. The development of such infrastructure will be essential not only for compliance with international obligations, but also for evidence-based, adaptive governance in a rapidly changing environment.

Looking forward, future research in this domain should deepen the empirical understanding of language practices among displaced populations, internally displaced persons, and refugees – both within

Ukraine and in the diaspora. It should also explore the dynamics of public and political discourse surrounding language, focusing on how different languages are legitimized, contested, or securitized in media and political rhetoric. Furthermore, theoretical and policy-oriented work is needed to conceptualize frameworks that balance minority language protection with the consolidation of the state language, and to identify best practices from other post-Soviet and post-imperial states engaged in language decolonization, such as Lithuania, Latvia, and Georgia. Finally, an interdisciplinary approach to the concept of language security should be further

developed, incorporating insights from international law, digital communication studies, political science, and sociolinguistics.

In sum, Ukraine's language policy must evolve beyond formal declarations and cultural symbolism. It should be embedded in a multidimensional strategy of democratic state-building – anchored in linguistic justice, national unity, and the context-sensitive adaptation of European human rights principles. In this way, language policy can serve not only as a tool for social integration, but as a foundation for sovereignty, cultural resilience, and long-term democratic transformation.

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