

**THE STATE LANGUAGE POLICY IN UKRAINE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE
OF THE NEWSPAPER 'THE DAY'**

*Tkachenko Olena, Dr. of Philology,
Sumy State University,
2, Rimsky-Korsakov St., Sumy, 40007, Ukraine.
E-mail: olenasumdu@gmail.com*

The article considers the problem of role of mass media in the formation of the state language policy.

Keywords: *language policy, journalistic content, text, function, ideological principles.*

The independence of Ukraine became the basis of its development as a separate state with its language, culture and traditions. The language is a powerful means of state consolidation, an important feature of state activities. The language is the main factor of the national geopolitical identity of a state, which gives the perspective to introduce the state into the modern world in prospect. The forming of language policy is an important direction of state activities tending to society consolidation. A significant role in this process is performed by the mass media. Therefore, the principal basis of state language policy is apprehended by society thanks to the mass media which defines the status of a certain phenomenon or event forming a public opinion. The newspaper 'The Day' is one of few Ukrainian newspapers whose editing strategy is formed logically according to national interests putting insistently the Ukrainian national idea into life. [Yevhrafova]

State language policy as a scientific problem is actual both in Ukraine and abroad. Language relations in society, a bilingual status, the influence of extra linguistic factors on the forming of state language policy and its interpreting in the mass media became researching objects of such scientists as: M. Varych, P. Hryshenko, A. Yevhrafova, H. Yevsieiev, I. Zots, M. Karpenko, L. Kovach, L. Lyzanchuk, L. Masenko, O. Serbens'ka, A. Taranenko, I. Farion, M. Yatsymirs'ka and the others.

The language policy questions in post-Soviet states was researched by V. Alpatova, M. Hubohlo and the others.

The foreign scientists, in particular E. Vilson, D. Dzhanmaat, T. Kuze, H. Fouzin researched different branches of modern language relations in Ukraine.

The purpose of our research is to determine the role of the newspaper 'The Day' in the process of forming the state language policy in Ukraine.

The state language policy is 'the system of total state activities which is based on constitutional principles and intended to be used for the practical realization of public administration and for achieving determined goals' [Yevsieieva 2011, p. 62]. Thus, it is necessary to have an appropriate legislative basis for the validation of state language policy in a country because the appropriate legislative basis is the mechanism of forming and developing the state language policy. This legislative basis exists in Ukraine. It is difficult to name all the laws, resolutions and acts regulating the language situation in the state within the article. They are more than ten.

The first Ukrainian law which gave the state status to the Ukrainian language was the Law of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic 'On the Languages in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialistic Republic' adopted on 28 October 1989.

The principal directions of the Ukrainian state language policy were formulated in the Constitution of Ukraine adopted in 1996. The Article 10 sets the status of the Ukrainian language as the state language of Ukraine. According to the formal interpretation of the Constitutional Court it means that the Ukrainian language is the obligatory means of communication within all the territory of Ukraine which, simultaneously, guarantees free developing of the languages of national minorities.

It completely corresponds to the state forming role of the Ukrainian nation that is for the native born population within the territory of Ukraine and that gave the formal name of the state.

It should be noted that there is no definition of the term 'the state language' in the Constitution of Ukraine. It is given in 'The Commentary to the Constitution of Ukraine': it is legally acceptable to call the state language the one which is recognized by the Constitution or by the law for being used in legislation, business, judicature, education and so on.

Such a considerable legislative basis seems to establish the Ukrainian language within Ukraine and create conditions for its development as the main means of communication in the state. However, a hope that the independent Ukrainian state in course of its development will pay ultimate attention to developing and strengthening the power of the Ukrainian language failed. The hopes, entrusted to the Council for the Language Policy under the control of the President of Ukraine and the Department for Executing the Language Policy under the control of the State Committee of Ukraine for Nationalities and Migration (both authorities were established in 1997), also failed. Later these institutions stopped existing and it strongly influenced the state language policy.

No conditions for forming prestige and social significance of the Ukrainian language have been created, and today there are reasons to point out slight weakening of the level of the Ukrainian language power achieved during the first years of the Ukrainian independence, which became not only a language problem but also a social one or even a state one [Kovach 2010].

Today, in spite of many official documents determining the basis of the state language policy, there are no authorities inspecting the observance of correspondent regulations in Ukraine. In particular, executing the State Program for Developing the Ukrainian Language (adopted in 1991) was suspended until 2000. The same concerned the government resolutions 'On the Administrative Responsibility for Breaking the Language Legislation', 'On the Integrated Measures for Developing the Ukrainian Language', 'On the State Program for Developing the Ukrainian Language and Its Functioning' for the period from 2004 to 2010. In fact, the judgement of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine dating from 14 December 1999 concerning the formal interpretation of Clause 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine has changed nothing. 'The Ukrainian language, or its state status to be more precise, is held as a hostage in political struggle and political manipulations'.

'The Act on the Principles of the State Language Policy' adopted by the Verkhovna Rada on 5 June 2012 and signed by Viktor Yanukovich (the President of Ukraine) on 8 August 2012 worsened the language situation in the state even more. The act stirred up the Ukrainian society causing actually its split into a Russian-speaking part and a Ukrainian-speaking one. It eliminated the slight achievements of the national self-identity and witnessed to the absence of the conception of the language policy because, in fact, the Ukrainian language had not become the state language, according to its status set in the Constitution, for 21 years of the Ukrainian independence.

Within our research we studied 239 issues of the newspaper 'The Day' from February to December 2012 published then daily, except for on Mondays and Sundays. That was the period when the Ukrainian draft law 'On the Principles of the State Language Policy' was debated and adopted and as a consequence such a situation appeared.

The analytic article 'Who Will Stop 'the Linguistic Wars''? (№ 92, p. 5) by Antonina Berezovenko starts our narration. Scientifically substantiating the phenomenon of the bilingual situation in Ukraine the author stresses that such a language situation will lead to the predominance of the Russian language over the Ukrainian one in active use. The bilingual problem became a burning one in the reading material 'The Linguistic Schizophrenia' (№ 97-98, p. 20) by Ihor Losiev. The bilingual situation of the Ukrainian television programs is a destructive matter, and he offers how to solve this problem by removing surzhyk from the Ukrainian language and by producing Ukrainian TV programs in Ukrainian, which will be the beginning of the Ukrainian people's change and awareness.

By the way, this journalist of the newspaper 'The Day' logically and insistently raises one of the most sensitive problems of the Ukrainian information space that is the television broadcasting. And this sensitive problem still more sharpens with the adopted law, which is observed in the analytic article 'The State Language but not an Obligatory One?' (№ 102-103, p. 4).

In the problem report 'Draft Law №9073. The Call Responsibility' (№95, p. 5) Mariya Tomak, a journalist of the newspaper 'The Day', reproduces the situation of debating the language draft law, gives the names of the members of the parliament voting 'for', points out the benefit which can be got by them after adopting the draft law. She finishes her report with a question directed to her colleagues: 'How responsible is the Ukrainian journalism for the 'crucial' decision?' (№ 95, p. 5).

The genre set of the 'language' materials is supplemented with the range of the short interviews recorded by the journalists of the newspaper 'The Day'. One of them has Orest Mut's point of view, a member of the ruling party, who voted against the draft law. His interview is called 'I Do not Want My Children or Grandchildren Ever to Say My Farther or Grandfather Was a Traitor' (№ 95, p. 5). Another interview contains the perspective from Andriy Senchenko, a member of The Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc (a political party in Ukraine), and his interview is called 'An Ordinary Cheating Manipulation of the State Power' (№ 95, p. 5). Senchenko emphasized that the parliamentary opposition considered the draft law as an antistate one.

Serhii Holovatyi said in his short interview 'Ukraine Has not Experienced Such a Split because of Such a Moskal' Provokation for Ages' (№115, p. 5) and that the language problem for the Ukrainian society was the problem of survival and statehood. He also added the following words: 'If we have achieved the legislative regulation of the language problem, it has to be defended at all costs. We must not let the Constitution be changed. And we must not let anything called a law be adopted if it worsens and destroys the legal status of the Ukrainian language as the state one' (№ 115, p. 5).

The editorial staff of the newspaper paid a great attention to different actions which tried to defend the Ukrainian language. Tetiana Kozyrieva wrote in her article 'There Was a Meeting for Defending the Ukrainian Language in L'viv' (№99, p.5). Her journalist investigation called 'The Unfair Judicature'. The Farther It Moves, the Closer It Approaches Everyone' (№ 99, p.4) probed into three actions, different in place and time, defending the Ukrainian language. According to the results of this investigation, in 2010 Ukrainian courts accepted 83 per cent of actions at law of the local authorities concerning banning peaceful meetings and in 2011 they accepted 88 per cent of the same actions at law. It couldn't be found out how many actions at law of the power were accepted in Kharkiv (№ 99, p. 4).

Olena Sokolyns'ka informs her readers concerning the protest actions against 'The Act on the Principles of the State Language Policy' in Kharkiv, which is observed in her broad item 'Kharkiv Maidan: The Language Law Was Thrown at Ukraine as a Bone' (№ 119, p. 4). It is important that young people participated in the actions, which is a significant sign when young generation is interested in the future of the state.

New protest actions are observed in the report 'The War for the Language' by Taras Chuhlib (№ 120-121, p. 6-7). From his perspective, the law 'On the Principles of the State Language Policy' is a crushing blow for the Ukrainian language.

Petro Kraliuk in his analytic article 'The Phenomenon of the Language Protest, or The Involuntary Heirs of Oleksandr Potebmia' (№ 128, p. 5) warns that if there is a threat to a language, then there is a threat of nation's disappearing.

In conclusion, the author says that the normal development of a language is one of the main preconditions of state development. The nation losing its own native language and accepting a foreign one is not independent spiritually. Moreover, such nations fail to protect their right to life among the other ones and, actually, they are doomed to death (№ 128, p. 5).

New tides of protests against the language law are probed in the broad article 'The East Was not Silent' (№ 129, p. 5) by Nataliia Bilousova, a journalist of the newspaper 'The Day'.

Scientists expressed their opinions concerning the law on the pages of the newspaper as well. As Larysa Masenko, a professor and an author of the analytic article 'What Is a Real Aim of the draft Law Authors' (№ 95, p. 4), the law is a part of the strategic purpose to split Ukraine, and it is, in fact, the encroachment on the territory of Ukraine by means of awarding the legal regional status to the Russian language. It should be noted that Larysa Masenko came into the conflict more than once regarding the law as the one directed against the Ukrainian language, which is observed in the article 'The War of the Languages. Which One Will Win?' (№ 112, p.5).

'The Charter Was Ratified with the Breach of the Constitution of Ukraine' and 'It Entails Huge Financial Implications' being the subheadings of the two parts of the analytic article 'Scientists Estimate the Law on the Principles of the Language Policy' (№ 100, p. 4) go without saying.

Volodymyr Pohrebennyk in his article 'The Engine Tearing the State Has Been Started' (№ 104, p. 4) calls his readers for paying their attention to the inaccuracies of the law. He considers that these inaccuracies have the hidden meaning which will affect the development of the Ukrainian language in future.

The editorial staff of the newspaper drew its readers into the discussion as well. The polemical letter 'Yaroslavna's Weeping, or The Ukrainian Language Can Independently Defend Oneself' (№ 100, p. 5) by Anatolii Pavlenko is an attempt to find the ways concerning keeping the Ukrainian language and making it impossible to be russianized referring to the experience of Israel with Hebrew, its state language, which revived and became prestigious and generally used within the state.

In her appealing polemical letter 'On the Native Language and the DNA' (№ 110-111, p. 12) the reader Oleksa Ryzhuk expresses her own view concerning the Ukrainian language problem and the significance of a language for any person. Addressing to all Ukrainians the author calls everyone to take care of the language personally comparing it with the DNA that is the memory and history of any nation.

The importance of the respectful attitude to languages is probed in the appealing letter 'For not to Live in the Province of the Russian Empire' (№ 154-155, p. 12) by Ivan Yurkiv'skyi, a reader of the newspaper 'The Day' and a physicist. He convinces a national language to be an absolute factor for achieving success.

Tetiana Krop broadens the genre set of the discussion due to her review 'How to Become Aware of a Language' (№ 110-111, p. 23) of linguist Pylyp Selihei's book 'The Language Awareness: Its Structure, Typology and Training'. Studying the book the journalist of the newspaper 'The Day' shows the main reason for the language issue in Ukraine that is the failure of the nation to become aware of the significance of the Ukrainian language as the state one. Another reason for this issue is the absence of the power support needed for the development of the Ukrainian language.

Mariia Tomak, a journalist of the newspaper 'The Day', introduces her readers into the process of the Verkhovna Rada's voting and adopting the controversial draft law in her broad item 'Moscow Is not Sorry for Yanukovich' (№ 113, p. 2). According to the peculiarities of the genre, this main fact is shown by the subheading of the material 'Yesterday the Parliament Voted for the Disgraceful Language Draft Law'. It is interesting that the phrase put in the beginning of the material is a part of the text block and the key thought of the author. Mariia Tomak insistently stresses that draft law № 9073 is a challenge for every living being in the Ukrainian society and, simultaneously, it is a collapsing force for the Party of Regions (№ 113, p. 2). The comments of the members of the parliament on the situation happened in the Verkhovna Rada and the comments of the public figures are a significant informational addition to the publication.

The language law is the consequence of a range of serious political defeats of the last two decades. It is not the language but the rescue of statehood that is discussed (№ 114,

p. 4-5). This key-note was expressed by Ivan Kapsamun and Mariia Tomak, journalists of the newspaper 'The Day', in their analytic article 'Two Decades of Defeats: The Consequences' (№ 114, p. 4-5).

Summarizing the discussed topics, it is possible to form the following conclusions. The newspaper 'The Day' did not stand aside from the crucial problem of the Ukrainian society. As the publication the editorial policy of which is built on the basis of the Ukrainian national idea, this newspaper tries to involve all possible mechanisms to form the language awareness of readers and to influence the power of the state to work constructively.

As the editorial staff of the newspaper sees the state language policy is an integral part of national policy and national security of a state. The state language is the social and spiritual institution which is, except for anything else, the measure of not only statehood but also of a social and political system, of a democracy level; the measure of the guarantee of dynamic national development. The state language is a consolidating factor of a nation as well.

The contents of the newspaper 'The Day' the informational reason of which became adopting of the language law is characterized by the subject and genre variety of materials penetrated with the following single idea: the law of Ukraine 'On the Principles of the State Language Policy' is a threat to the Ukrainian sovereignty.

ДЕРЖАВНА МОВНА ПОЛІТИКА УКРАЇНИ У ВИСВІТЛЕННІ ГАЗЕТИ «ДЕНЬ»

О. Г. Ткаченко

У статті розглядається проблема ролі ЗМІ у формуванні державної мовної політики.

Ключові слова: мовна політика, журналістський контент, текст, функціональні, ідеологічні принципи.

LIST OF REFERENCES

1. Євграфова А. О. Українська національна ідея як українське духовне начало / А. О. Євграфова, О. Г. Ткаченко // Вісник Сумського державного університету. — 2008. — № 1. — С. 164-169.
2. Євсеева Г. Реалізації державної мовної політики в Україні в контексті української національної ідеї / Г. Євсеева // Вісник Придніпровської державної академії будівництва та архітектури. — 2011. — № 4. — С. 61-66.

Надійшла до редакції 30 вересня 2014 р.