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**The Politicization of the Language Issue
in Ukraine: the Discursive Construction
of the Language, Nationalism, and
Identity in Ukrainian Media**

Master thesis

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Abstract

Despite already thirty years after gaining independence, Ukraine is still having difficulties forming an integral and united national identity. The language issue in Ukraine is a vivid example of the problem Ukraine is confronting. Numerous efforts have been made with the aim to strengthen the role of the Ukrainian language, but the presence of the Russian language in Ukraine is still strong. Furthermore, the battle between these two languages often provokes huge public debates, and the debates do not revolve around the language use itself, but usually associate it with the wider debate of the Ukrainian common memory. Although much research has been devoted to analysing the narratives of relevant language laws, the discourses of Ukrainian politicians, or public opinions of the language issue and their links with people's political orientation, this thesis will focus on the discourses of media, an equally important site which represents and reproduces everyday nationalism. By adopting the methodology of critical discourse analysis, this work aims to uncover what are the common themes behind the everyday debate on the language issue in Ukrainian media and what are the typical mechanisms and strategies in the language use of media discourses to facilitate propagating their language ideologies. After a comparison of discourses from various media outlets, this work finds even though the polarisation of different language ideologies seems to be weaker nationwide after the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Donbas in 2014, the polarisation is still evident across Ukrainian-controlled and non-Ukrainian controlled territories.

Keywords: Ukraine, language politics, media discourse, nationalism, Ukrainian, Russian, critical discourse analysis

Abstrakt

Celých třicet let od získání nezávislosti se Ukrajina stále potýká s problémem budování integrální národní identity. Nejvýraznějším příkladem toho zůstává jazyková otázka. Za tu dobu bylo podniknuto nemálo snah o posílení role ukrajinštiny, přesto si v ukrajinském veřejném životě i nadále zachovává významné postavení ruština. Sřet obou jazyků vyvolává četné veřejné kontroverze. Ty se přitom točí ani ne tolik kolem užívání jazyka samotného jako spíše kolem ukrajinské kolektivní paměti. Přestože výzkumu narativů spojených s jazykovými zákony, příslušného politického diskursu, veřejného mínění a hodnotové orientace v návaznosti na jazykovou otázku byla již věnována řada studií, tato práce se zaměřuje specificky na mediální diskurs. Jde totiž o oblast, která odráží a reprodukuje nacionalismus v každodenním životě. Pomocí kritické diskursivní analýzy si práce klade za cíl odhalit hlavní témata spojená s probíhající debatou o jazykové otázce v ukrajinských médiích, jakož i mechanismy a diskursivní strategie užívané k prosazování ideologií, v jejichž centru stojí otázka jazyka. Porovnáním diskursu užívaného jednotlivými vybranými hromadnými sdělovacími prostředky dochází práce k závěru, že ačkoli polarizace kolem jazykové otázky se na celonárodní úrovni zdá od anexe Krymu a vypuknutí války v Donbasu v roce 2014 nižší, je i nadále přítomna po linii mezi územími pod ukrajinskou kontrolou a okupovanými územími Ukrajiny.

Klíčová slova: Ukrajina, jazyková politika, mediální diskurz, nacionalismus, ukrajinština, ruština, kritická diskursivní analýza

Chapter 1. Introduction

Ukraine is often viewed as a “country of regions” for its overt regional, ethnic, and linguistic cleavages (e.g., Sasse, 2001). Among them, the language issue is the most tangible cleavage in this country. The titular language, Ukrainian, is arguably not the language of everyday practice for many Ukrainian citizens, especially for citizens residing in the southern and eastern regions of the country. This is due to the development of Ukrainian language in history was often suppressed by stronger rivals, depending on the specific region and the temporal period we examine (e.g., Russian in the east and south, Polish in the west, Hungarian in Zakarpattia). The underdevelopment of the spreading of the Ukrainian language by 1991 put a great challenge to this newly established nation-state after the collapse of the Soviet Union. On the one hand, one of the priorities for Ukraine is to promote a Ukrainian national identity, and the Ukrainian language is regarded as a core element of it. On the other hand, a large number of Russian-speaking Ukrainians, together with national minorities, most prominently Russians, Hungarians, and Romanians, often demand to preserve and protect their linguistic rights. The clash between them often stirs up further debates, protests, and sometimes even conflicts in Ukrainian politics.

1.1 Historical background

In order to make sense the current debates on the language issue, a brief introduction of the history of the Ukrainian language will be provided here. The very term “Ukrainian language” appeared only in the seventeenth century, and the earliest reference to this term was documented by the French traveller Albert Jouvin de Rochefort as “langue Vkraine” (1672: 258). Throughout the subsequent eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term “Ukrainian language” was forced to compete with other labels. In Russia, this language was termed as “Little Russian”, and in Poland and Austria, the name for this language was “Ruthenian”. The late appearance of the term “Ukrainian language” seems to reinforce the stereotype that Ukrainian language was an artificial invention of recent time (Vakulenko, 2019: 136). However, the late emergence of the term does not mean Ukrainian had not existed before. Concerning the originating time of Ukrainian, Ukrainian is as ancient as many other Slavic vernaculars (ibid.). The tragedy of Ukrainian language lies in the fact that it was always suppressed by stronger rivals from neighbouring countries in history, so the written language and the standardisation happened relatively late (ibid.). In addition, different divided regions of Ukraine were subject

to different rules, and the language planning was conducted unevenly in these regions, making it particularly difficult for Ukrainian speakers to develop an integral and coherent language system (ibid.).

There are three stages which can be detected in the history of Ukrainian language: the preliminary, old, and modern stage. During the preliminary period, which ranges approximately from the late tenth century to the late thirteenth century, the most important language was old Church Slavonic, and the written form of the local vernacular seemed to be rather insignificant (ibid.). Old Church Slavonic was the language of religious practice and higher culture in general.

This situation did not change until the early fourteenth century, when the proportion of local and imported vernaculars in written texts increased significantly. Starting from this point till the early eighteenth century, this period was the old period of Ukrainian, and the main tendency shaped this period was the language of higher culture was still dominated by old Church Slavonic, but the local vernacular started to become a main component of written literature (ibid.: 137). With evident Polish influences under the Grand Duchy of Lithuania until 1569, the language became stylistically developed and was used as the main language in some areas of higher culture, including philosophy. Compared with Church Slavonic as the language of liturgical and ecclesiastical literature, Ukrainian was viewed as the “lay language” (Moser, 2002). In the seventeenth century, Ukrainian was one of the languages of administration, and its distinction with Belarusian (called “Lithuanian”) became clear at this point, and by that time it had also entered masses’ recognition (Wakulenko 2010, 121–123).

Before the development of the Ukrainian language entered the modern stage in 1798, roughly the whole eighteenth century was a gap in the history of the Ukrainian language due to a series of tragic historical incidents. The landmark event of them was Ivan Mazepa’s defeat in Poltava in 1709, resulting in an abrupt end of “the golden age” of Ukrainian literature under the rule of the Russian Empire (Ohiienko, 1918: 32). The Ukrainian vernacular had to concede the status of the administrative language to other languages. Meanwhile, the standardisation of Russian was achieved by Lomonosov in 1757, making most educated Ukrainians who lived under the Russian Empire embrace Russian for their literary use (Vakulenko, 2019: 138). Beginning in 1720s, a disruption of printing in the Russia-ruled regions of Ukraine put great difficulties on the development of Ukrainian (Shevelov, 1979: 706).

The general picture of the development of Ukrainian under the Russian Empire did not change even after it entered the modern stage, but this does not necessarily mean there were not any developments at all. In fact, the publication of Ivan Kotliarevskyi's *Eneida* in 1798 marked the beginning of modern Ukrainian literature. A few decades later, Taras Shevchenko published his first collection of poems *Kobzar* in 1840 entirely in the Ukrainian language. Because of his great contributions to the development of modern Ukrainian, Shevchenko won the title of the "father" of Ukrainian literature. Besides literature, the first grammatical guidance of the "Little Russian" dialect was published in 1818, and in 1823, a small dictionary came out. Although starting from the late 1850s until 1905, the increasing suppresses on the development of Ukrainian language in the Russian Empire made the development of this language take place much more often in Galicia instead (Subtelny, 1994: 230).

In the western part of Ukraine under the rule of the Habsburg Empire, the environment was slightly more promising for the development of the Ukrainian language compared with its counterpart in the east. In Galicia, Ukrainian was called "Ruthenian", and this title "Ruthenian" lasted until 1918. Additionally, these Ruthenians living under Austria's rule were mainly Greek Catholic, so they were seen as an essentially different group of people from "Little Russians" living under Russia's rule (Kamusella, 2009: 176). Even though in history there were a few attempts to make the Latin script into Ruthenian publications, the Church Slavonic script survived until the interwar period.

Since the mid nineteenth century, there was a trend among Galician Russophiles to get borrowings from the Russian language and gradually exerted an overt Russian influence on the Galician local vernaculars (ibid.). The official process of the homogenisation of the east and the west vernaculars started in the 1880s (Vakulenko, 2019: 205). Based on a few Ruthenian textbooks and dictionaries published between 1862 and 1873, a single standard of Ruthenian was approved in 1893, and the proponents of this standard version purposely made it more similar to the "Little Russian" in Russia with the aim for facilitating an easier merger for the future Ukrainian national language (Kamusella, 2009: 177). In 1905, the ban on the Little Russian in Russia was lifted, and this greatly contributed to a cultural exchange between the east and the west. Later, Borys Hrinchenko published his highly prestigious four-volume dictionary between 1907 and 1909. Most importantly, this dictionary did not carry the name

“Little Russian” but “Ukrainian language” (ukrains’ka mova), and symbolically, this means the title “Little Russian” went off as history (ibid.; Magosci, 1984: 59).

After the first world war, the continuation of the division in Ukraine did not stop the homogenisation tendency of the language across the border. The entire Galicia was under Poland’s control at that time. The 1926 coup in Poland ended the democracy regime in Poland, and this led to a substitution of Ruthenian by Polish in Ruthenian schools in Galicia. Ruthenian elites responded to the Polish suppression with an even stronger cultural enthusiasm: an increasing number of Ruthenian books were published during that period, and the 1927 spelling system created by Soviet Ukraine was also adopted in Galicia (Kamusella, 2009: 178). At that time, the Soviet Union decided to adopt the Korenizatsiya (indigenization) policy that “systematically promotes the national consciousness of its ethnic minorities and establish for them many of the characteristic institutional forms of the nation-state” in reaction to a number of nationalist resistance movements which broke out in non-Russian controlled regions in the revolution and civil war (Martin, 2001: 1). As the language was regarded as an essential part of one’s national identity in the Soviet Union, a wider promotion of the titular language was officially supported. In Soviet Ukraine until 1930s, Ukrainian was promoted to the main language of primary and secondary education, which significantly boosted people’s Ukrainian proficiency (Kyluk, 2014: 209). At the end of Korenizatsiya, Ukrainian, like other modern languages, also had gone through the standardisation process, and the homogenisation between the east and the west had arrived at its conclusion. Furthermore, the centre of the Ukrainian cultural life moved from Galicia to Soviet Ukraine as a result of the language revival brought by the Korenizatsiya (Kamusella, 2009: 178; Vakulenko, 2019: 205).

However, the real intention of the the Korenizatsiya policy was never to genuinely promote a distinct Ukrainian identity. As Kamusella (2009: 178) succinctly points out, “whatever the slogans of Korenizatsiya might be, Moscow, like St Petersburg before 1917, wanted Ukrainian to gradually converge into Russian, and not to evolve into a starkly different language”. The evidence of Moscow’s precarious practice can be dated back to 1924. In that year, the penultimate edition of the encyclopedic Russian-Ukrainian dictionary compiled by Ahatanhel Kryms’kyi was sabotaged before its publication for being “too Ukrainian” (ibid.). Since 1930s, the proportion of Ukrainian book titles in the overall publications started to decline. Not only in the publishing industry, the “russification” tendency and the weakening of titular languages could be found in other fields of public life as well, first and foremost, in education and media.

Russian was steadily developing into the lingua franca between various ethnicities in Soviet Ukraine (Kulyk, 2014: 210-11). After various regions of the west Ukraine (Galicia, Volhynia, northern Bukovyna, southern Bessarabia and Transcarpathia) were merged into Soviet Ukraine during 1939-1945, the language policy in general was the same towards these newly incorporated regions, but those previously dominating languages in these regions were also tolerated and preserved to different extents (Besters-Dilger, Karunyk and Vakulenko, 2019: 206).

From 1940s to 1980s, the Soviet policy toward language generally remained the same, and it was only until the perestroika and the subsequent political liberalisation, Ukrainian nationalists started to pursue the official status of the Ukrainian language. Their endeavours prompted the release of the 1989 law on languages, where Ukrainian was granted the status of the national language. However, as it is also the case with the ensuing 1996 Ukrainian constitution, even though Ukrainian is viewed as the sole national language in these legislations, the laws also stated that the languages of minorities, first and foremost, Russian, are protected, which is an excuse for “continuing using the Russian language in all social spheres” in Kulyk’s (2013a: 283) opinion.

In Ukrainian language politics, the core issue is always about “the status of Ukrainian vis-à-vis Russian” (Kulyk, 2009: 17). After the 1996 constitution, the next turning point in legislation was Yanukovich’s ratification of the 2012 language law “on the Principles of the State Language Policy”, which grants minority languages the privilege to be elevated as an equal regional official language as long as the minority language is used by more than 10% of the overall population in the region. However, the 2012 language law fuelled considerable controversies nationwide, as Russian was upgraded to the regional official language in many southern and eastern regions, which made local residents get away without knowing Ukrainian and further impaired the use of the national language. The controversy of this 2012 language law can also be reflected by its attempted repeal in 2014, 24 hours after Yanukovich fled to Russia and lost his legitimacy. Even though it was until 2018 that the Constitutional Court of Ukraine finally declared the unconstitutionality of the 2012 language law, the general trend after 2014 has been pursuing to restore and continue to promote the prestige of Ukrainian. In 2019, the Law “On ensuring the functioning of Ukrainian as the state language” was passed by the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian parliament), marking nowadays Ukrainian is regarded as the

sole national language in all fields of public life throughout all regions in Ukraine (Pidkuimukha, 2020).

Overall, throughout the history of the Ukrainian language, it can be observed that the language issue is highly politicized in Ukraine, mainly because the Ukrainian language has not been accepted as the sole functioning language in all spheres of public and cultural life. Even though following the 2001 Ukrainian national census, more than 70% people regard Ukrainian as their native language, as Arel (2002) asserts, the 2001 census was purposely manufactured for enhancing the state legitimacy by counting as many Ukrainians as possible, and the succinctly formulated question asks people's perception about their native language rather than the language they actually speak. In reality, the people who speak and use Russian on a daily basis consist of "at least half of the population" (Kulyk, 2013a: 282). There are still considerable supports from the east and south Ukraine in favour for "Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism" (Besters-Dilger, Karunyk and Vakulenko, 2019). In the foreseeable future, the competition between "Ukrainian monolingualism" and "Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism" will continue.

1.2 Literature Review

The sudden collapse of the Soviet Union created a dozen of independent nation-states, but this does not mean that the nationalisation in these countries was adequate. As Brubaker asserts (2011: 1786), these newly established nation-states were only national in form, but its substance remained to be nationalised. Not only Ukraine needed to face the challenge, but there were a few countries in the post-Soviet space being in the same awkward position, namely, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Estonia and Latvia. These countries confronted either the problem of being too "russified" and having lost the prestige of their titular languages (Kazakhstan, Belarus) or the dilemma of the existence of a large proportion of ethnic Russians (Kazakhstan, Estonia and Latvia).

The previous research shows that when tackling specifically the language issue, these countries took different measures according to the ethnopolitical demography and geopolitical orientation of the country. In Estonia and Latvia, because the line between titular ethnicities and ethnic Russians was clear, as the languages they speak are rather distinguishable and the titular population had a good command of their languages, initially these two countries adopted a policy to strengthen the core nation by getting rid of the burden of bilingualism. The use of titular languages was guaranteed in all spheres of social life while Russian was excluded.

Moreover, they had a restrictive citizenship policy, and those settlers who migrated to Estonia and Latvia during the Soviet occupation had to pass the language exam of the core nation in order to be granted a citizenship (Brubaker, 2011). In Kazakhstan, the situation was similar to Ukraine in the sense that the majority of Kazakhs did not know the Kazakh language so well, especially for those Kazakhs who live in cities. Hence, the primary goal in Kazakhstan is to promote the titular language and boost its prestige. The national language has been supported widely in education and governmental services. Although by legislation Russian is still given the status of the language for interethnic communication, and there are still many Kazakhs speaking Russian in their daily life, the language issue has not been as much politicised as in Ukraine, mainly because the language is not the most important identity marker in the case of Kazakhstan. The idea of being “Europeans” or “Central Asians” plays a bigger role, and one’s identity is determined more often in a primordial way (Brubaker 2011; Rees and Williams, 2017).

In comparison, the ethnopolitical boundaries in Ukraine and Belarus are often blurred and porous. The language is the most tangible and arguably the most crucial identity marker in Belarus and Ukraine, yet many their citizens do not have a decent command of the titular language. The studies on the ethnolinguistic identity construction in Belarus demonstrate that on the contrary to the most post-soviet states, since 1994, Belarus has not been pursuing a titular language-based ethnolinguistic identity, but, pragmatically, continues the Soviet model of Belarusian nationhood, which makes Russian as a constituent element in the Belarusian identity (Bekus, 2014; Fabrykant, 2019).

The experience of other post-Soviet countries may shed some light on the complexity of dealing with the language issue. Not like other post-Soviet states, the blurred ethnopolitical boundaries between Ukrainians and Russians make Ukraine hard to copy Kazakhstan’s, or Estonia and Latvia’s models. Meanwhile, it is also nearly impossible for Ukraine to follow the Belarusian model and continue to adopt the Soviet narratives on nationhood principally because of the existence of Galicia, where Ukrainian nationalism is particularly strong and thriving. Indeed, the degree of the politization of the language issue is higher in Ukraine compared with other post-soviet countries, which have been detected in various studies. These studies traditionally use a bottom-up and survey-based quantitative methodology to capture a general link between the language and people’s self-identification. Among them, Barrington and Faranda (2009) conduct a comprehensive quantitative study of the link between people’s political orientations

towards Russia and the language they speak based on the results of their sociological surveys, while the regional, linguistic, and nationality factors are compared and controlled. The main conclusion of this study is the language practice of individuals genuinely has a significant influence on forming their political attitudes towards Russia. While Ukrainian speakers generally have negative attitudes towards Russia, Russia has more positive images among Russian and bilingual speakers.

Later studies show Ukrainian people's ethnolinguistic identity is perhaps more ambiguous than presumed. The main finding of Kulyk (2011a) is the language practice of people may not perfectly represent their ethnolinguistic identity, and there are people who identify themselves with Ukrainian even though they do not speak the language. Based on the premise of Kulyk's research, Onuch and Hale (2018) further examine different dimensions of ethnicity, and work out four succinct categories of ethnicity, including "personal language preference, language used at work and in private life, identified mother tongue and national identity". They try to find out how these factors involve with people's political orientations respectively. The primary inspiration of this research is that various dimensions of ethnicity need to be considered and controlled separately, as "the inclusion of one over another can dramatically alter our interpretation of the magnitude of ethnicity's effect on our dependent variable of interest or even whether a statistical effect is found at all" (ibid., 101). Here, we can see although in Ukraine the core matter is always about promoting a wider use of Ukrainian in all spheres of life, the language use of individuals has been demonstrated not being the only factor that shapes people's political inclinations.

Additionally, after a series of incidents happened in 2014, including the Euromaidan, the war in Donbas, and the annexation of Crimea, Ukraine is becoming more united, and the language issue is becoming less eminent in shaping people's self-identification. A number of studies have captured this trend (e.g., Frye, 2015; Kulyk 2016, 2018; Pop-Eleches and Robertson 2018). In particular, Kulyk (2016: 588) detects a tendency of people's "voluntary alienation from Russia and their embracement of Ukrainian nationalism" under the Russian threat to Crimea and Donbas. Meanwhile, large numbers of people are not willing to abandon their accustomed language despite realizing the special political and symbolic meaning attached to the Ukrainian language. As a compromise, from that point onwards, major Ukrainian identity projects started to pursue "a more civic criterion of membership", and people are becoming to be increasingly tolerant of the linguistic differences within the state (ibid.: 607). Furthermore, this tolerance

and the ideas of building a civic nation can be even uncovered, surprisingly, in self-reported ethnic Russians (Pop-Eleches and Robertson, 2018: 116). In sum, the complicated essence of one's self-identification may prevent us from establishing its relationship with one's language use. The gradual shift in Ukrainians' identity since 2014 might also dwindle the degree of the politization of the language issue in Ukraine. Therefore, more nuanced bottom-up research is needed in the future to closely monitor the dynamics of the relationship between people's self-identification and the language.

Besides the studies which are conducted mainly from a bottom-up perspective, there are also several studies trying to problematise the language issue in Ukraine in a top-down way by examining the discourses of politicians, laws, and media as well. To name a few, Arel (1995) analyses the historical background of the 1989 language law and its subsequent implementation, arguing different regions implemented the language law unevenly and left too much room for the continuous existence of Russian in several vital spheres such as administration and education. Csernicksó and Fedinec (2016) compare four Ukrainian language laws carefully and conclude Ukrainian politicians intentionally tried to introduce regulations on the language use in order to keep a relative social equilibrium. Bowing (2011) and Moser (2013) compare the Ukrainian language laws with international standards and legislations on the linguistic rights of national minorities and assert that it is utterly reasonable and normative to continue promoting Ukrainian, and Russian has been given too many privileges with respect to international standards. Csernicksó (2017) cites a large number of discourses from Ukrainian politicians, and from their words he suspects Ukrainian politicians have deliberately avoided solving the thorny problem of the linguistic discrepancy for retaining their power.

Comparatively, the discourses of Ukrainian media have not been well-examined before. Even though Charnysh (2013: 5) explicitly points out that the communicative function of language determines people's mass media access according to their language proficiency, and Kulyk's (2013b) research has backed up this point by drawing real statistics from sociological surveys, there have not been many studies analysing the media discourses on the language issue in Ukraine. Perhaps Kulyk's (2010) essay is the most related research on this regard, but this study only simply mentions a few general characteristics of the media discourses on language ideologies (being centrist, supporting Ukrainian but also tolerating Russian) and it lacks direct discursive evidence. Hence, this thesis attempts to fill in the research gap by directly engaging with media discourses.

1.3 Research Questions and Structure

Having mentioned the research gap from previous studies, now the research questions of this work may seem to be straightforward. Firstly, the work aims to uncover how the language issue is discursively constructed in various Ukrainian media. To do so, this work collects dozens of articles published in different Ukrainian print media either in Russian or in Ukrainian on the topic of the language issue. After reviewing the textual material, the most common themes in the media discourses when it comes to the language issue will be summarized. Secondly, after the summary of the most frequent themes, the subsequent analysis will focus on what positions these media discourses have regarding the language issue and what are their justifications for advocating their beliefs about language, or “language ideologies” as termed by many anthropologists (Kulyk, 2010: 80). It is crucial to understand that the positions and justifications for the language ideologies they stand for are not authentic reflections of the social reality but only constitute it. Hence, particular attention will be paid to the contingencies of meanings and contradictions in the media discourses, as they may be in contrast with the social reality. These contingencies of meanings and contradictions can be seen as these media’s strategies to construct the social reality they believe should be like. Additionally, in any nationalist discourse, it is almost inevitable to discursively construct a collective identity, and often a self/other divide. The work thus will focus on those common strategies and linguistic means utilized in the discourses that are helpful for constructing a collective identity and legitimizing their justifications. Thirdly, in order to minimize the potential possibility of including biases, the work tries to select the articles from a wide range of media outlets, consisting of both national and regional media outlets. The work will thus seek to disclose whether the language use of the media already entails the language ideologies they own and whether there is a polarisation across different media.

To achieve such goals, the ensuing parts of this work will be organized as follows. **Chapter 2** includes a comprehensive discussion on the theory of nationalism so as to build a triangle relationship among the three core elements of the work: nationalism, language, and media. Importantly, it will point out the weaknesses of the main approaches to nationalism and use an alternative definition of nationalism, that is nationalism as a discursive construction, to explain the emotionally inciting impact nationalism has on people. This also justifies the use of the methodological framework and the study design of the work, which will be clearly specified in this chapter. **Chapter 3** is devoted to a detailed analysis of the discursive evidence found in the

textual material. It will be structured according to each of the themes derived from the material, and a short conclusion will be given based on the analysis of each theme. **Chapter 4** is the final and conclusive part of this work. It aims to link each conclusion made in the preceding chapter and answer the research questions set above. Moreover, this chapter will also mention a few areas that have not been well researched due to the limitations of a master's thesis and accordingly provide several relevant topics for future research.

Chapter 2 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

The complicated nature of the relationship between nationalism, language, and media necessitates a comprehensive theoretical introduction in this work in order to understand why language is such an important issue of nationalism and why media can be regarded as a vital venue for displaying conflicting stances on nationalism. The everyday representation of nationalism in media, which is termed as “banal nationalism” by Michael Bilig (1995), illuminates the methodology of this work, that is a combination of thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis with the aim to uncover what is behind this everyday perceived nationalism. A critic towards the most common approaches to nationalism and an alternative definition of nationalism are also provided here.

2.1 Common Approaches to Nationalism

The underlying theory in this work is the theory of nationalism, which has become the dominant political principle of modern nation states in today’s world, and it is not an exception in Ukraine either. Following one of the most influential definitions of nationalism, Ernest Gellner (1983: 1) defines it as a political principle, which stresses that “the political and national unit should be congruent”. This definition indicates there are two interconnected components of nationalism: state and nation. The concept of state is well illustrated by Max Weber already in 1919, and he understands “state” as “the agency within society which possesses the monopoly of legitimate violence”. In contrast, “nation” has not been well defined, and scholars are still debating this elusive concept. Nevertheless, Gellner (1983: 6-7) points out two dimensions of “nation” which have been widely accepted, including a cultural and a voluntaristic nature: we can call people from the same nation only if they share a common culture and they acknowledge the fact that they belong to the same nation.

The debate on the nature of nation results in various explanatory approaches of nationalism in academy. Up to now, there are three major approaches to nationalism, namely primordialism, modernism, and ethnosymbolism. Proponents of primordialism believe that nations are something natural and have existed since the very beginning of human history. However, this argument has been extensively criticized by modernists, who consider nations are recent

products of modernisation, especially industrialisation, and there were no nations that had existed before the modern era (ibid.). The last approach is called ethnosymbolism, which developed from the fierce debate between primordialists and modernists and seems to be a compromise of the aforementioned two approaches. On one hand, ethnosymbolists recognize that nations are modern; yet on the other hand, they also emphasize the significance of ethnosymbolic elements that may have come into being before the developments of capitalism, secularism, and industrialisation in recent centuries. The following part of this chapter will explain these three approaches in details including the critiques towards them, so as to show why an alternative approach is needed in order to make sense why the language issue in Ukraine has been such a symbolic issue in Ukrainian politics.

We start with primordialism, which is the earliest attempt in academia to provide an explanation for nationalism. The term “primordialism” first appeared in the article of American sociologist Edward Shils (1957), who claims that people are motivated to establish attachments to others within the same kinship group based on blood ties, and he noted these attachments were not “merely to the other family member as a person, but as a possessor of certain especially ‘significant relational’ qualities, which could only be described as primordial” (ibid.: 142). Building on Shils’ understanding of primordial attachment, Clifford Geertz (1963) first links this primordialism with nationalism. He thinks primordial attachment means “the culturally-influenced ‘givens’ of social existence” (ibid.: 107), coming from being in a particular religion or language group, sometimes maybe even in a particular dialect group of a certain language. Geertz reckons that the clout of primordial attachments may be contingent in different societies and individuals, but he emphatically asserts that “for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural or spiritual affinity than from social interactions”, and these attachments are repeatedly linked with political supremacy and regarded as bases of demarcating political units, especially in those modernizing societies where people’s perception of civil nationalism is weak (ibid.).

From then on, various proponents of primordialism have come up different explanations for nationalism, yet still based on the common premise that nations had existed before modernity. Among them, Pierre van den Berghe (1978: 403) proposes a sociobiological way to analyse ethnicity and nationalism, arguing that “kin selection is a powerful cement in human sociality”, and ethnicity is a typical example of the continuation of kin selection in human organizations. In his later work, he (2001: 274) further argues that “ethnic groups, races and nations are super-

families of (distant) relatives, real or putative, who tend to intermarry, and who are knit together by vertical ties of descent reinforced by horizontal ties of marriage”. By his logic, the reason why nationalism is primordial is because nationalism connotes tasks of group survival and achieving common goals, whose foundation is indeed the above-mentioned descent facilitating nations to accomplish these tasks (ibid.). In parallel with sociobiologism, another prominent explanation framework of primordialism is perennialism, with Adrian Hastings as one of the most famous proponents for perennialism. In contrary with other primordialists, perennialists do not think nations are necessarily natural, but they reckon nation as a consistent and essential component of human societies which has been existing throughout the human history (Özkırımlı, 2010: 58). This is echoed in Hastings’ work (1997: 3-4), where he notes that only certain ethnicities can evolve into modern nations with the help of a vernacular and pushing from the state, and “the defining origin of the nation needs to be located in an age a good deal further back than most modernists historians feel safe to handle”.

The views hold by primordialists have been criticised widely, particularly in the aspects of the nature and the origins of ethnic and national ties, and the emerging time of nations. Firstly, the claim that ethnic and national ties are inherent is questionable. By this logic, the naturality of ethnic and national ties means these ties are passed to future generations without modifications, but what about individual choices or manipulative politicians? Additionally, as the world is becoming more and more globalised, there are many more social phenomena like intermarriages or migration putting a question mark to the naturality of nation. Secondly, if ethnic and national ties derive from kinships and kinships are the sole bases of nationalism, then it is hard to explain why some nations survive while others disappear in human history. Thirdly, primordialists believe that nations have emerged at the very beginning of human history. However, some scholars appeal that we should not treat people in medieval eras and contemporary people as the same “people”. For example, Geary (2002: 41, 155) argues the social reality we see today consists of labels that are discontinuous but long-term, and we mistakenly regard these labels as “ethnic” but forget to take the massive social transformations into consideration. In other words, names such as “Russian” or “Ukrainian” have different meanings in different settings. The continuous use of the label “Russian” does not necessarily mean the label “Russian” always has the same connotation. What matters here is national consciousness: whether the people of a nation have a continuous consciousness (ibid.: 118)

These critiques, especially those ones on the emerging time of nations, reflect the core thoughts of modernists, that is nationalism engenders nation but not the other way round. However, there are also various accounts of nationalism under the same label “modernism”, prioritising a particular social dimension (economic, political, or social/cultural transformations) over others. Starting with economic transformations, people who believe economic transformations are the main accounts for nationalism deem that traditional Marxism cannot fully explain the thriving anti-colonial movements in the late 1960s and 1970s anymore, so they try to reform the old discourses and to “dismantle the old edifice” (James, 1996: 107), with Tom Nairn and Michael Hechter as two of the most visible reformists. Tom Nairn (1981) believes nationalism is the outcome deriving from the uneven development of history since the establishment of world capitalist economy in the 18th century. Building on Immanuel Wallerstein (1974) world-system analysis, Nairn argues that the unequal development between major capitalism countries and countries which are underdeveloped and dependent on those major capitalism countries exacerbates the exploitation of underdeveloped countries posed by core capitalism-developed countries. However, it is also this exploitation that triggers the emergence of nationalism in these underdeveloped countries: in order to survive from the domination and invasion of foreign countries, political elites in these backward countries realize they need to progress by themselves, to build their own political, educational, and industrial infrastructure in such a way which can get rid of the infringements from external factors. To achieve this goal, Nairn suggests that these backwards countries are in need of developing their “militant, inter-class community rendered strongly aware of its own separate identity vis-à-vis the outside forces of domination” (ibid.: 340), which is the cradle of nationalism. Once nationalism has gained its popularity in peripheral countries, it is inevitable for core countries to become nationalists as nationalism becomes “the new climate of world politics” (ibid.: 344).

Similar to Nairn’s explanation, Michael Hechter also focuses on the social transformation under the world capitalism economy, although Hechter (1975) proposes the uneven development not only happens in a worldwide scale, but also within a society itself. He comes up with a well-known term “internal colonialism”, referring to the social stratification within state territories as a result of the internal uneven modernisation (ibid.). There are always two social groups emerging from the uneven modernisation: one group is less privileged, and the other group is more powerful, possessing more power and resources. The privileged group try to institutionalise their power, preventing the access of people from the other group to more

prestigious social roles, and the labour division out of this may aggravate the group solidarity in the less well-off group. When there are greater economic inequalities, intra-group communication, inter-group cultural distinctiveness, the political integration of the less-privileged group to the society is unlikely, and civil wars may happen (ibid.: 43).

In comparison with theorists who believe the economic dimension is the most important factor shaping nationalism, there is a group of scholars focusing on political shifts to explain nationalism, including the rise of modern states, the power struggles of elites, the expansion of suffrage and among others. This is particularly evident in the work of John Breuilly (1993a)'s *Nationalism and the State*. By Breuilly's definition, he thinks nationalism refers to "political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such action with nationalist arguments", and there are three fundamental bases consisting of such a nationalist argument: "a nation with an explicit and peculiar character; the interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values; the nation must be as independent as possible, at least owning the political sovereignty" (ibid.: 2). Having clearly stressed the definition and basic prerequisites of nationalism, Breuilly then tries to link the spreading of nationalism with modernisation. Providing a large number of examples worldwide, he (1993b: 22) notes that the development of modern states takes roots in a liberal form in the sense that public powers were transferred to specialised institutions (e.g., presidents, parliaments, courts), while private powers were secured in non-political institutions (e.g., free markets, private firms). Hence, the division between the "public" state and the "private" civil society became much clearer. On the other hand, individuals were increasingly attracted by the liberal thoughts at the same time, and they tended to view themselves as individuals rather than a member of a specific group (ibid.). Therefore, how to establish the state-society attachment became an acute problem under this discrepancy between the state and the wider society. Breuilly provides two solutions for this problem, both of which are relevant to nationalism: the first is citizenship, as citizens are committed and required to participate in political institutions; the second is culture, emphasizing that individuals are attached to the state because they share the same collective culture (1996: 165).

Besides John Breuilly, Paul Brass and Eric Hobsbawm also made significant contributions to nationalism theories, highlighting the role of political transformations in shaping nationalism. Paul Brass is famous for his claim that nationalism has an instrumental character. Based on his extensive fieldwork in different parts of India, he concludes that in the context of the universal

competition for power, ethnic and national identities have been instrumentalised by political elites aiming to mobilize masses and provoke mass support; ethnic and national identities are not static but are subject to constant redefining and reconstructing corresponding to changing political contexts and the calculations of elites (1991: 13-16, 19). Eric J Hobsbawm shares a similar view with Brass. He argues nations and nationalism are the products of “social engineering” (1983: 1). More specifically, he believes nations and nationalism are the most ubiquitous “invented traditions”, by which he means “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (ibid.).

The last group of modernism theorists considers social and cultural transformations are the most influential factors of shaping nationalism. Here two influential theorists will be mentioned, namely Ernest Gellner and Benedict Anderson. Gellner’s illustration of nationalism is broadly viewed as the most influential attempt to understand nationalism. In his book *Nations and Nationalism* (1983), he distinguishes three stages of the development of human history: the hunter-gatherer, the agro-literate, and the industrial era. He examines the two essential components of nationalism, power and culture, in each of these stages, and argues that nationalism is modern because the convergence of power and culture only happened in the industrial era. To be more specific, he firstly wipes out the possibility of the existence of nationalism in the hunter-gatherer era because of the lack of visible states at that point. Then he proceeds to the agro-literate stage, he notes that there is a discrepancy in argo-literate societies as the ruling class (warriors, administrators, clerics, etc.) tends to differentiate themselves by creating a high culture, while the majority of agricultural population is confined and isolated in their local communities where culture is almost absent (ibid.: 9-10, 12) Hence, Gellner concludes that there are no nations in the agro-literate stage as well because of the dearth of cultural homogenisation. In comparison, the reason why nations start to emerge in the industrial phase, according to Gellner (ibid.: 18), is because the emancipation of labour and the subsequent labour division contributed to a higher degree of social mobility, hence to the pervasion of the high culture. Meanwhile, the perpetual demand for growth in the industrial phase entails the need to maintain communication among all kinds of social roles, meaning the high culture has to be preserved, and because of the high cost of maintaining such a high culture,

this role can only be fulfilled by the state (Gellner, 1996: 110). In sum, nationalism is the outcome of the social reorganisation in the industrial era.

As for Benedict Anderson, his main concern of nationalism is slightly different from other theorists. Instead of only examining those political and cultural factors contributing to the emergence of nationalism, the core question of his concern is why cultural artefacts can have such strong emotional and resonating power that cause people's voluntary sacrifice (2006: 7)? He tries to approach this puzzle by defining "nation" first: nation is "an imagined political community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (ibid.). It is imagined because the numbers of a nation are so high, it is impossible for an individual in this group to know every member, yet he or she would recognize the group membership of others even though he or she does not know them personally. Anderson lists several societal transformations that facilitate the appearance of nations, including a shift in the perceptions towards time, the decline of the role of religions and feudal realms. However, more importantly, Anderson believes the growth of "print capitalism" greatly facilitates the birth of nationalism by "establishing a unified space for communication, which gave new fixity to language and created a language of power" (ibid.: 44-45). In his words, he insists "the convergence of capitalism and print technology created the possibility of a new form of imagined community, which in its basic morphology set the stage for the modern nation" (ibid.: 46).

A few critiques towards modernists will be made before proceeding to ethnosymbolism. In fact, it is ethnosymbolists who criticise modernists the most, for example Smith (2008), whose theories will be discussed later. One of the most common critiques towards modernism is modernists seem to treat their models as ideal and explain nationalism only from a single societal dimension. Many examples of different countries worldwide have been given, which do not fit into the models set by modernists. Furthermore, because modernists seem to oversimplify their models, they assume the practitioners of nationalism, whether states or individuals, always make rational choices. However, as argued by ethnosymbolists, this assumption may overlook the possibility of ethnic or national identities, which can also generate strong emotional clouts, and these identities often derive from pre-modern ethnic ties.

Built on the critiques toward modernism, ethnosymbolists have developed their explanatory version of nationalism, and notably, the approach of ethnosymbolism is more homogenous than primordialism or modernism, with John Armstrong and Antony Smith as two of the most

prominent theorists of this approach. The publication of *Nations before Nationalism* by John Armstrong in 1982 marked the first attempt in the field of nationalism to highlight the significance of *la longue durée*. He contends one of the most fundamental views of modernists and argues that “ethnic consciousness has a long history, and the most significant feature of it is persistence” (ibid.: 3-4). Furthermore, “groups tend to define themselves not by reference to their own characteristics but by exclusion, that is, by comparison to ‘strangers’” (ibid.: 5). Hence, the task of studying nationalism is to reveal the persistence of ethnic connections and focus on the boundary mechanisms differentiating groups in an extended temporal perspective (ibid.). After Armstrong, Anthony Smith followed and further elaborated Armstrong’s framework. He asserts that modernists failed to offer a more encompassing definition of what a nation is and provide his revision: “a named and self-defined community whose members cultivate common myths, memories, symbols and values, possess and disseminate a distinctive public culture, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, and create and disseminate common laws and shared customs” (2005: 98). This is a definition that pays much attention to pre-modern legacies but acknowledges its processual and interactional characteristics as well, and in this sense, it also recognises national identity formation as processes of modernity, which should not be confused with perennialism mentioned earlier. He developed a complicated framework to figure out why, how, when, and where did the nation arise. According to him, there are two types of nations which have different patterns of emergence. There is a group of nations whose nation-building process are led by elites through bureaucratic incorporation, leading to civic nations based on defined territories. In comparison, the nation-building process of the other group is a bottom-up process led by intelligentsia through vernacular mobilisation, and this results in ethnic-genealogical nations (Smith, 1991).

However, ethnosymbolism has undergone fierce opposition for its assertion of pre-modern ethnic ties. A common counterargument of ethnosymbolism is that ethnosymbolists undervalue the difference between modern political nations and pre-modern ethnicities. As Connor (2004: 40-2) claims, ethnosymbolists take it for granted that ethnic consciousness consisting of myths, memories, symbols, etc. is naturally shared by the whole group, but there is an absence of evidence that this ethnic consciousness was shared by the broader putative nation. Furthermore, Smith, as stated above, does recognize the manoeuvrability of nations, which is constructed based on a selective principle and only certain aspects of pre-modern ethnic ties would be comprised into modern nation-building. However, by this logic, why cannot we also consider

ethnicity as a social construction? More importantly, ethnosymbolists like Smith fail to answer the core question: why only these dimensions of ethnic culture were chosen but not others (Mole, 2007: 7)?

In fact, Smith in his later work claims that some elements of nationalism can be “traced back to a time considerably earlier than the eighteenth century and a certain vernacular nationalism could be discerned in some seventeenth-century states like England or the Netherlands” (2008: x). This claim makes his point even more difficult to be separated from perennialism. In this sense, both ethnosymbolism and perennialism believe in and emphasize the durability and persistence of nationalism, but both cannot explain how and why only some of the original symbols emerge while others disappear in the dustbin of human history (Özkırıklı, 2010: 201-2). As for modernism, although nowadays it is the most influential approach in the field of nationalism and contains various frameworks, it still fails to provide answers to the issue of emotion and loyalty in nationalism (Ichijo and Uzelac, 2005: 54).

Perhaps these major approaches of nationalism pay too much attention to the question “when does the nation emerge”. Here, I am not arguing that this question is not vital, but trying to figure out the emerging time of nationalism does little help for explaining the emotional power of nationalism. As what we have seen in today’s Ukraine, why the language issue can stir up so many debates and even protests to fight for people’s linguistic rights?

2.2 Nationalism as a Discursive Construction

As the core issue of this thesis is about the symbolic strength of the language(s) in Ukraine, in order to make this issue theoretically coherent and cohesive, here I draw insights from theorists who do not belong to these three main approaches to nationalism, as these theorists appealing for new approaches to nationalism indeed see the weaknesses of previous approaches to tackle with the agitative clout of nationalism and make their contributions aiming for solving this problem. The notable examples of these theorists including Craig Calhoun (1997: 3) and Umut Özkırıklı (2010: 206), who describe nationalism not as a political principle or ideology, but as a discursive construction equal to the concept “discourse” in Foucault’s work (2002: 54): “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”.

To make sense of Calhoun and Özkırıklı's assertion, we may firstly need to understand the concept "identity" and its relations with discourse and politics. In the field of social psychology, it has been demonstrated by many scholars that it is a natural function of our brain to categorise everything and ascribe identities to everyone including ourselves to make the world more understandable (e.g., Hogg et al., 1995). Hence, identity is about who we are and how we position ourselves in this world, whether as individuals or groups (Mole, 2007: 3). This means we unconsciously and incessantly divide people and create boundaries, but the way we divide and demarcate people is subject to specific culture and historical contingencies (Theiler, 2003: 262). These ideas correspond to the constructivism approach to identity, whose core position is "all knowledge, and therefore all meaningful reality as such, is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context" (Crotty, 2003: 42).

According to constructivists, nations and national identities are viewed as social constructs manipulated by elites to cater for their political and social-economic needs (Mole, 2007: 5). This may explain the question left unanswered by primordialism and ethnosymbolism, that is why only certain aspects of ethnicities are preserved but others not. However, national identity is a reciprocal thing, constructivism has not answered why ordinary people allow themselves to be manipulated by elites and identify themselves with the symbols defined by elites, and why the constructed groups are still reified and treated as real with the potentials to be developed as political communities (ibid.).

Social psychology can also shed some light on these issues. Social identity is defined by Henri Tajfel as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (1978: 63). This illuminates that it is natural for people to prefer to view themselves and their social groups positively and viewing their groups as more prestigious inevitably entails choosing some attributes of their groups which reflect positivity in comparison to the same attributes of other groups (Mole, 2007: 9). Among people's multiple identities, national identity is easier to take the dominating position over other social identities, as national identity gives people an "optimal distinctiveness" which cannot be achieved by other group identities (Brewer, 1991). People synthesize with their groups so much that the achievements of their groups are also regarded as their personal achievements (Mole, 2007: 9).

This can explain why some aspects of national identity can resonate so much among ordinary people. It is always the idea of promoting positive group- and self-images at play.

Additionally, for individuals, as explained by Richard Jenkins (2004: 5), “one’s identity (identities) for who we are is always singular and plural, and it is never a final or settled matter”. This tells us not to treat identity as a solid entity but better as a process. Different people may attach different meanings to the symbols of being a Ukrainian. Some may argue speaking Ukrainian is an essential element of being a Ukrainian, while others may not believe so. There is not a standard that regulates what a typical Ukrainian identity should be, but what connects all Ukrainians is their identification with their imagined symbols and collective memory of the Ukrainian nation, and their recognition of these imagined symbols as national (Mole, 2007: 10). In other words, it is the agents who do the identifying matters. Additionally, identification does not necessarily require a “specifiable identifier”, i.e., not necessarily through specific politicians or political institution, and can be achieved by “invisible” discourses or public narratives (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 16).

As for why discourses can be such influential on people’s identification, it is because of the “forming force” of discourses (Mole, 2007: 15). Starting with Foucault, who first linked the analysis of discourse with the study society, there is already a noticeable number of scholars who remind us that even though it is a fact that social reality does exist beyond language, the meanings and specificities of the social reality are constructed by discourses (e.g., Howarth, 2000: 112). To illustrate this clearer, here is an example cited from Laclau and Mouffe’s work (2001: 108): an earthquake undoubtably exists, but whether it is constructed as a “natural phenomenon” or “expressions of the wrath of God” depending on discourses. In this sense, discourses regulate “what can be said, what can be thought and what is considered true or false, rational or irrational, legitimate or illegitimate” (Mole, 2007: 16). Therefore, power and knowledge are imbued in discourses, and knowledge can be viewed as “an instrument as well as an effect of power” (Foucault, 1998: 101-2). The imbued power and knowledge construct “a set of rules that come into play in the very existence of discourses” (Foucault, 2002: xiv), which “anonymously and unnoticedly permeate our ways of thinking and talking and making sense of the social world” (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000: 16). This is the “forming force” of discourses.

In the field of nationalism, this “forming force” is echoed by the concept “banal nationalism” put forward by Michael Billig (1995), which refers to the everyday representation of the nation

and national identity in venues like flags, anthems, or news where citizens are anonymously and continuously reminded of their national identity. As already stated above, these discourses are not only just describing social realities, but concurrently they are “a medium through which reality is created and the material world is given meaning” (Wennerstein, 1999: 274). There is no a priori reason or pattern why only a certain aspect of national identity ought to be selected but not another, but discourses construct and coordinate “social relations around a particular structure of meanings” and put this certain aspect of identity at an advantaged position to “create legitimate moral leadership and social hierarchy” (Doty, 1996: 239; Mole, 2007: 14). The result of a successful implementation of discourses should invoke identity “being seen as an essence” (Reicher and Hopkins, 2001: 222). Thus, it makes sense to define nationalism as a set of discursive formation, because nationalism tends to naturalize the nation and present the collective memory and territory as the immutable essence of the nation (Özkırmılı, 2010: 209-10).

Nevertheless, Mills (2003: 72) also notes that if discourses are needed to be seen as facts, “it must be subjected to a thorough process of ratification by those in positions of authority”. This is illuminating in the sense that it tells us that we may need to scrutinize and discern the mechanisms how these discourses are presented as natural and immutable (Özkırmılı, 2010: 210). To do so, I will adopt the approach of critical discourse analysis in the thesis, because critical discourse analysis is defined as an approach which is “fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language” (Wodak, 2001: 2). This means this approach is indeed designed for revealing the power and knowledge that are infused in discourses. The approach has three stages of analysis: “the description of the text; the interpretation of the relationship between the producer and receiver of the text; and the explanation of the relationship between this interaction and the social context” (Fairclough, 1989: 109), showing the text itself is always the core unit of analysis. In my case, I will use critical discourse analysis to reveal how various media discourses present their arguments, whether they are in favour of promoting the use of Russian or not, and their justification for doing or not doing so.

Having explained the main theoretical points and defended why critical discourse analysis is the best approach to answer my research question, now I will briefly discuss some theories about language and media, to show there is a triangular relationship among these three core elements of my thesis.

2.3 Language and Nationalism

Being the core elements of this thesis, it is crucial to shed some light on the relationship between language and nationalism. Notably, there are two meanings of the word “language” in this thesis. As it has been briefly discussed above, the word “language” without an article and always in singular form refers to the discourses that make up of our social reality in parallel with the material reality and representing the most general meaning of this word (Kamusella, 2015: 9). Here we are talking about the other meaning of the word “language”, or languages in the plural (e.g., Ukrainian, Russian and etc.), concerning “actualisations of the foundational human capacity for speech or ‘language’ in general” (ibid.). The relationship between language(s) and nationalism is connoted in the aforementioned theoretical debates on nationalism. Both primordialism and ethnosymbolism presume that as an essential element of ethnicity, language(s) is a natural or at least an ethnic marker that was formed long time ago, and hence it is durable and can easily cause emotional reactions among people of the nation who share the same language. However, because of the weaknesses of both primordialism and ethnosymbolism on explaining why only some languages have survived whereas others disappeared, here I will mainly draw ideas from some modernists, who believe languages are invented, constructed, and imagined into being.

No matter how diverse the world is, one fact we cannot deny is humans live in groups, and languages are needed to facilitate communication between group members. The spatial and social distance between groups results in the isolation between different groups, and subsequent linguistic differentiation (Barth, 1969). Since the very beginning, there is a dichotomic relation between “language(s)” and “dialect(s)”, with the latter being regarded as something “lower” and “worse” than a “normal” “proper” language. As opposed to the word “vernacular” appeared earlier in the historical background part of the thesis, “dialect” denotes more of a subordinate meaning and thus is more political. Even though dialects are in essence languages as well, the dichotomic relation between language and dialect reflects “unequal relations among human groups” (ibid.: 10). Usually, a dialect is a language without an endowed written form, spoken only in one or a few regions of a polity, and it is an embodiment of the practice of the modern concept “sovereignty” in the sense that often only one language can be empowered as the sole

official language of a territorial state while other dialects must be suppressed, refined, or assimilated (ibid.: 13-14).

The emergence of written forms of languages came as the outcome of the increasing growth of group members. This everlasting growth makes it impossible to keep face-to-face based communication for even among political elites themselves. To avoid the possibility that the polity becomes divided as the consequence of social and spatial distances, a written form of the language is necessitated to keep the polity bridged (Kamusella, 2009: 7). Even though a written form of a language is not the language itself, just as a photo of a person cannot substitute the person's material existence, but a written language makes the preservation of messages possible, which therefore effectively enlarged the possible number of people involved in communication, being served as the main cement to create national cohesion (ibid.: 25; Kamusella, 2015: 15).

As the invention of writing systems usually came after elites' authorisation and under their constant supervision, this reflects the deep political character behind the rise of writing systems (Bourdieu, 1991: 43-65; Ferguson, 1996: 269-270). The creation of writing systems involved a development of various norms (spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.), which standardized the language and paved the way for massive book production and consumption (Kamusella, 2015: 16). Following Anderson (1983: 42-4), the adoption of a few vernaculars as official languages contributed to the development of the "print capitalism", and this development of print media laid the foundations for national consciousness in three ways: massive book production and consumption created unified spaces of communication; it helped put a fixity to the language which is essential in the nation-building; it created "language-of-power of a kind different from the earlier administrative vernaculars". Except the "print capitalism" as the most obvious outcome of the standardisation of the language, the homogenisation of the language also helped communication in elementary education, bureaucracy, and military conscription, which all contributed to the propagation of national consciousness (Kamusella, 2015: 16).

In a nutshell, the increasing need of centralising the entire public within a single polity necessitated the task of creating a single nation, and this often evoked the policies of "ethnolinguistic homogenisation" (Kamusella, 2009: 9). By homogenising the language, in turn, it enhanced the promotion of national consciousness. In this sense, the concepts "nation" and "language" function similarly as both are constructed and are ascriptive labels (ibid.: 26).

However, the above-mentioned theory regarding the relationship between language and nationalism is an ideal model of developments. In reality, the language (s) of a nation and its nation-state formation can be redefined multiple times and do not have to fit the model so neatly. As our case shows, Ukraine is still stuck in the battle for a better and broader use of Ukrainian. Nevertheless, the main purpose here is simply to show why the language issue matters but not to provide an all-encompassing model to explain every nuance.

2.4 Media and Nationalism

The preceding discussion on the relationship between language and nationalism has already involved the issue of media, particularly about the “print capitalism”. Here I will further elaborate the points raised by Benedict Anderson regarding the influence of the print media on the emergence of national consciousness, and also link the print media with the language usage of journalists and its implications on people’s consciousness.

Anderson (1983: 42-4) claims that the massive production of print media contributed to the emergence of national consciousness by creating unified spaces for communication among people from various social classes. To understand this, a conceptual premise that was developed by Anderson himself will be mentioned here. When probing into the societal changes that paved the way for nationalism, he (ibid.: 24) notices a fundamental change of people’s modes of understanding the world, that is the concept of simultaneity. In the past, because of the influence from medieval Christianity, people believed that “events are situated simultaneously in the present, past, and future”, meaning the past foretells the future, and the future accomplishes what has been connoted in the past (Özkırıklı, 2010: 108). It was believed that the future and the past are connected neither temporally nor causally, but by “Divine Providence” (ibid.). Anderson (1983: 24) notes, in such an understanding of simultaneity, the notion of “the moment” cannot be really significant. Subsequently, people’s understanding of simultaneity changed, and since then simultaneity refers to “as being transverse, cross-time, marked by temporal coincidence and measured by clock and calendar” (ibid.: 26). The rise of mass media helped to continue to build this sense of simultaneity by gathering a series of stories together on the principle of calendrical coincidence (Roosvall, 2015: 1). This is of crucial significance for “imaging” the nation: we may not know every member within the same nation, but we are reassured by newspapers that the nation does exist, and it is moving forward incessantly. An

interesting fact to prove this argument is that in the nineteenth century, when imperialism was at its peak, there was a rapid growth of newspaper production and consumption with the help of the invention of the telegraph (ibid.).

It is obvious that the media can be seen as a crucial venue for presenting various opinions, ideologies, and the competition between them. Maybe it is less noticeable, but the media is also a crucial site for embodying and naturalising those presented ideologies, because media tend to report and present news events neither as “manifestations of problems” nor as “results of anybody’s actions”, not requiring any reflection or intervention from audience (Kulyk, 2010: 84). By doing so, the discourse on media further helps to naturalise the existing dominant ideologies and legitimate the established social hierarchy (Fairclough, 1995). Notably, an essential dimension of the discourse on media is to portray the “nationness” of societies and individuals’ identification with the nation (Bilig, 1995). Furthermore, each nation is expected to have and speak a distinct language which can help set this nation apart from others (Blommaert and Verschueren 1992).

In terms of the relationship between language and media, there are three points proposed by Kulyk (2010: 85) in his essay. Firstly, because the language usage of journalists is normally the standard version of that language, hence this embodies the ideologies of “purity” and “identification”. Secondly, the media which only use one language to present news events identify this language as the language understood by its audience and therefore the language of its community/nation. Thirdly, there are some media which use several languages concurrently, and in this case, all these languages are implicitly regarded as acceptable for the society. However, “hierarchal relations” of these languages can be established because of the unequal use of these languages in that particular society. On one hand, the language use of the media can reflect the unequal social statuses of these languages, and on the other hand, it can influence and further exacerbate the problem because of the power of media to promote a “normality” (Spitulnik, 1992).

2.5 Methodological Framework and Study Design

Having revealed a triangle relationship between nationalism, language, and media, now it is essential to develop a well-established research strategy to discover what is behind the everyday represented and perceived nationalism through the case of the discourses on the language issue

in Ukrainian media. This work seeks to find what are the common themes that often appear in these discourses and how particular linguistic structures and mechanisms are used to stir up a nationalistic emotion among audience. To do so, a combination of thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis will be the research strategy of this work. Following German psychologist Philipp Mayring (2000), who defines thematic analysis as “a set of techniques for the systematic analysis of texts of many kinds, addressing not only manifest content but also the themes and core ideas found in texts as primary content”, the data drawn from the texts of various Ukrainian media will not be analysed individually, but the common themes of these discourses will be delineated only after reviewing a broader textual field, and this is also in accordance with the socio-historically constitutive nature of discourses. The data collected for this work come from dozens of articles of Ukrainian media published in either the Ukrainian or Russian language. In addition, the balance of national and regional media outlets is taken into consideration in the selection process to maximum avoid the risk of biases related to the media’s ownerships or regional affiliations. The selection of sources will be mainly dependent on those media outlets which have online media archives and the database Eastview by keyword searching and closely scrutinizing those articles published around the time when Ukrainian language laws were issued or modified. The analysis will only focus on print media, because most outlets of Ukrainian print media publish either in Ukrainian or Russian until 2019, whereas television and radio programs tend to use both languages concurrently (Kulyk, 2010: 94). Additionally, print media in Ukraine does not only provide pure information, but also strive to include more original opinions from the authors than other types of media (Kulyk, 2011b: 291). At the end of the analysis, the language ideologies of different media will be compared to identify whether there is a trend of polarisation across various media.

Because of the constraints of this thesis, the time period of the analysis will be set from 2012 to 2019, as this period witnessed the massive transformations in Ukrainian language laws, and the attempted repeal of the 2012 language law in 2014, in particular, was the direct pretext of the unrest in Crimea (President of Russia, 2014). In addition, only those media which publish in Russian, Ukrainian, or both will be reviewed. All the texts published in Russian or Ukrainian were translated by the author of this work. Moreover, as stated above in the theoretical part, because the language use of journalists spreads a sense of normality, and their attitudes towards the language issue may be already embodied in their language use, whether the source is published in Russian or Ukrainian will be specified for reference. In the analysis, those

discourses which stands for a wider use of Russian will be referred to as pro-Russian discourses, and their compartment will be specified as pro-Ukrainian discourses.

The data collection and analysis process will be conducted in three interrelated phases. At first, after the initial reading of the collected texts, the most frequent topics of the language issue throughout the wider literature will be identified. As these topics are generalized from the same field of literature, these topics are presumably interconnected. Then, the focus will be transferred to the intra-textual context of each text, particularly on how the language issue is related to these identified topics, what are the justifications of linking the language issue with this particular topic, who are the social agents implied in these texts, and the relationship between producers and audience of the texts. Lastly, the attention will be paid to the linguistic means and forms that help naturalize their discourses, and the interrelationships between these texts in the wider inter-textual context. After the initial phase of reading, the topics that overall appear frequently are: language as a political tool, linguistic rights and protection, security and victimisation, and self/other divide.

With regard to the linguistic means and forms that are usually used in nationalist discourses, there is a framework put forward by Wodak et.al. (2009) to remind researchers of the most conspicuous characteristics of nationalist discourses. Since the principal objective of nationalist discourses is to create and construct a sense of unity, sameness, continuity, and originality, the lexical units and syntactic devices of nationalist discourses usually focus on constructing identity claims (differentiating “us” and “them” by using, for example, personal pronouns), spatial claims (a definition and fixation on national territories), and temporal claims (searching for an “undisputed diachronic presence” of the nation) (ibid.: 35; Özkırıklı, 2010: 208-9). In the analysis process, particular attention needs to be paid to ambiguities, contradictions, and linguistic hesitation and disruptions of the discourses so as to capture the contingent construction of the meanings (Czarniawska, 2004: 97). A very important aspect of capturing contingent meanings is to look at those social actors involved in the discourses of a collective identity, especially those anthropomorphised social actors (Wodak et.al., 2009: 35).

Commonly, there are three linguistic means to help create unity among people, namely metonymy, synecdoche, and personification. Metonymy is used to “replace the name of a referent by the name of an entity which is closely associated with it in either concrete or abstract terms”, whereas synecdoche is aimed for “replacing the name of a referent by the name of another referent which belongs to the same field of meaning and which is either semantically

wider or semantically narrower” (ibid.: 43). As for personification, it is defined as “a general category which comprises a great number of metaphors which all select different aspects of a person or different perspectives from which to look at a person” (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980: 34). Different means serve different purposes: metonymy and synecdoche serve to camouflage real relevant social actors or at least put them in the background, while personification, which usually attaches a reified and vivid human form to an abstract entity, can demand an identification from the audience with this anthropomorphised nation (Wodak et.al., 2009: 43).

Besides the common means outlined above, there is another noticeable characteristic of nationalist discourses to create an identity claim that needs to be discussed separately, that is the use of the deictic expression “we”. This first-person plural pronoun “we” is so versatile and complex, and audience can always fall into the trap by viewing themselves as a part of the “we”. In some cases, “we” does not actually include the speaker him- or herself and refers merely to “you”, the audience. This usually happens in the contexts of “tutelage”, the same as parents would say to their children (“now we will go to bed”) (ibid.: 46). However, in other cases “we” is speaker-inclusive, and perhaps sometimes third persons as well. The power of “we” is recognized by Volmert (1989: 123), who argues “a speaker has at his/her disposal a whole range of (clever) options with which to present the interests and affairs of ‘we-groups’ in the public sphere. In a speech during an election campaign, for example, a speaker can unite himself and his audience into a single ‘community sharing a common destiny’ by letting fall into oblivion all differences in origin, confession, class and lifestyle with a simple ‘we’”.

Before moving into the actual empirical evidence of the discourses of Ukrainian media on the language issue, the last point to be made here is this work, as any other scientific research, is itself a discursive production, which means this work cannot escape the forming force of discourses and take an extra-discursive position to analyse everything neutrally. However, even though the work is itself subject to a specific social and historical context, this thesis has clearly defined aspects of lexical units and syntactic devices that will inform the ensuing analysis. Moreover, the wide range of selection of texts from various Ukrainian media, the aim of clarifying ambiguities and contradictions of the texts, these will all help to a great extent weaken the subjectivity of the author of this thesis.

Chapter 3. Media Discourses on the Language Issue

The time period set for my analysis is from 2012 to 2019. Before 2012, Ukrainian language policy was based on the 1989 law “on the Languages in the Ukrainian SSR”, where the Ukrainian language was first ever in history given the status of the state language, but Russian was simultaneously mentioned in the law as the language for inter-ethnic communication within the territory of the Soviet Union. Built on the 1989 law, the 2012 language law “on the Principles of the State Language Policy” seeks to give those minority languages which are used by more than ten percent of the population of an administrative unit the status of the regional language, meaning these local governments must publish any of their resolution in the regional language alongside Ukrainian. The 2012 language law was adopted with the strong endorsement from the erstwhile president Viktor Yanukovich, and as soon as he fled to Russia on the February 22 of 2014, the Ukrainian Parliament voted with a majority to repeal the 2012 language law. However, considering those unrests against this repeal of the 2012 law happening in the regions where Russian had been accepted as the regional language, primarily Crimea, the acting president Oleksandr Turchynov blocked this repeal. Even so, the Ukrainian Constitutional Court started to reassess the constitutionality of the 2012 language law since October 2014 and finally declared its unconstitutionality in February 2018. On April 25, 2019, the newest language law “on Provision of the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language” came out, marking a compulsory use of Ukrainian in all social spheres except only for private communication among individuals and religious services. Regarding the media, from then on, any Ukrainian print media whose articles were published in a language other than Ukrainian must now be published in Ukrainian as well.

3.1 Language as a Political Tool

Throughout the media discourses that have been examined for the thesis, one of the most commonly mentioned themes is accusing Ukrainian politicians of instrumentalizing the language issue. There are many media discourses seeking to identify the motives behind politicians’ everlasting manipulation of the language issue. As for the principal aim of instrumentalizing the language issue, in their eyes, is to use this “language card” to gain popularity right before an election. An article published in the newspaper *Korrespondent* (published in Russian) succinctly observes the pattern: “in the language sphere, the peaks of

activity, as a rule, always coincide with the timing when the next election campaign is approaching”. Furthermore, the journalist believes that “without the interference of Ukrainian politicians, there is not any acuteness of the language issue being felt in the Ukrainian society, but politicians try their best to convince otherwise” (Litoninsky, 2017). Not judging whether his statement about the acuteness of the language issue in the society is true or not, while he correctly identifies the gap between politicians and ordinary people that are deliberately made by politicians themselves, he does not specify what politicians he refers to. Considering the publishing time, which was in 2017, a time when the Ukrainian society was undergoing a massive wave of Ukrainianisation and the language laws were being modified towards promoting the use of Ukrainian, it can be presumed that the “politicians” stated in Litoninsky’s words are referred to those politicians who are in favour of promoting the Ukrainian language. We can sense that the word “politicians” in this excerpt contains more or less a negative connotation. Thus, Litoninsky implicitly tries to provoke a blame on those pro-Ukrainian politicians for stirring up a problem that actually does not exist. As the audience of this newspaper is mainly Russian and bilingual users, his words may further cast these people’s doubts on the latest development of the Ukrainian language policy. Litoninsky’s apprehension of the Ukrainianisation is confirmed later again in the article: “the new wave of Ukrainianisation is beneficial to almost every central force in Ukrainian politics: by Ukrainianisation, the government will win the sympathy from the right-wings. The opposition will be also benefited by playing with the anger of the East. Russia will claim there is an apartheid in Ukraine, and the Donbass and Crimea will have more excuses to alienate themselves from Kyiv” (ibid.). Similarly, in this claim, the very ambiguous term “the East” without specified connotation, and the anthropomorphised “Donbass” and “Crimea”, all of these try to reify the ambiguous spatial constructions and ask for a direct identification from the audience. He even designates those who are in favour of a pro-Ukrainian policy as right-wings, hinting people who embrace the newest language policy are conservative enough and not tolerant of the existence of Russian in the society.

The manipulative nature of Ukrainian language policies does not only embody in the timing of their activity, that is always before an election campaign, but can be also shown in the legislative process. Politicians can easily pass a language law by manipulating the parliament. This aspect is noticed in an article published in *Zerkalo Nedeli* (in Russian). The author notes that “what shocked the society more was not the content of the language law itself (knowing who the

authors of this law were, the content can be expected) but how the law was passed. “Grossly impudent”, that is the words used by the author (Mel’nik, 2012). Not like the source cited above, although this article was also published in Russian, it contains a more critical view of the 2012 language law. To show how the parliament was manipulated, Mel’nik extensively described the voting process: “being such a socially important, sensitive, and delicate issue, the initiators of this language law passed it within 33 seconds. On July 3rd at 16:02:09 pm this agenda was held on a vote, and already at 16:02:35 the vote finished with the draft being accepted as a fully functioning law. However, at the same time, it is utterly incomprehensible how this draft was registered as an agenda in the parliament, how the vote actually looked like, in which edition it was put to the vote and passed. Perhaps in the future about this action people will call the 33-second that shook Ukraine”. By vividly picturing the voting process and using expressive phrases like “the 33-second that shook Ukraine”, a sense of absurdity and hastiness of the voting process can be well delivered. This may exert some questions among the readers: why the draft law could be passed without any consultation from lawyers; why there was not a special committee working on elucidating every article in the law before the voting; why it could be accepted without any debates in the parliament at all etc. The legitimacy of the language law will be doubted because it was passed in a very illegitimate way. After all, “it is not permissible to resolve issues that are crucial for the country in such a way, neither from the perspective of the governmental approach, nor from the perspective of their potential consequences” (ibid.). Allowing the bill to be passed without debates, the inaction of the opposition in the parliament was heartbrokenly criticised by the Secretariat of the Ukrainian National Union of Writers (2012, in Ukrainian): “a great part of the blame for what happened in the Ukrainian Parliament lies in the opposition, whose narrow party interests turned out to be higher than national interests. The opposition was drowning in petty quarrels but did not show proper responsibilities or their political will in defending the language law, as, in the end, in other vital societal issues as well.”

The political consequences of modifying the language law are captured in an article by *Ukrains'ka Pravda* (in Ukrainian). Providing several sociological surveys made both before the 2012 language law and after, the article concludes that contrary to the will of politicians affiliated with the Party of Region, their language initiative made their supporting rate overall lower than before. Following their account, the supporting rate for the Party of Regions dropped by 5% in two months (Babich and Kurinnij, 2012). The article attempts to understand how this

falling is associated with the 2012 language initiative put forward by Kolesnichenko and Kivalov, members of the Party of Regions. First of all, “there is every reason to say that Kolesnichenko and Kivalov represented both their party and Yanukovych personally, acting as organizers of the action.” Then, after Yanukovych signed the language law, many protests against the decision were inevitably organized, which signifies “a final and irreversible electoral removal from the west and the centre”. Babich and Kurinnij believes at this point, it is already not possible for the Party of Regions “to win by the South and the East alone”, especially the latest sociological surveys indicating that the “language obsession” is decreasing in the south and the east. In 1998, the survey shows there are 66% southern and 62% eastern residents who believe Russian should be elevated to the state language, while there are in addition more than 25% and 30% of residents in each of these regions endorsing Russian to be set as the regional official language (Bilichenko, 2010). However, the survey conducted in 2012 shares a different picture: only 50.3% of the residents in the South and 44.5% of the residents in the East support levelling up Russian to the state level, while the proportions for people in favour of putting Russian as the regional language are 20.9% and 34.6% respectively (Razumkov Centre, 2012). Building on these surveys, Babich and Kurinnij cite yet another survey conducted during July 14-27, 2012, right after the passing of the 2012 language law in the parliament. It shows in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Kharkiv oblasts, the supporters of defending the status of Russian are in a minority position (21%), while the proportions for protecting Ukrainian and both languages are equally the same (34% each). Seeing this, the authors reckon the "middle ground" of the confrontation in the language sphere is no longer the centre of Ukraine, but the east. In sum, the west and the centre were irritated by the Kivalov-Kolesnichenko law, but the acuteness of the language issue in the east was decreasing. The authors thus argue “it is safe to say that the law did not stop, but rather accelerated a decline in the interests of the language issue in the South and East, and this trend will be inevitable and potentially long-lasting.” From this trend, another conclusion is made: the current government in the name of Yanukovych and the vertical built by himself steadily and continuously make mistakes and lose their legitimacy, “setting himself against a wider section of society regardless of language and ethnic origin” (ibid.). The discourse presented above is in sharp contrast to the discourses of governmental officials, demonstrating media can function as an important venue of contestation.

Another rather overt rationale of politicians’ continuous exploitation of the language issue, in the opinion of Aleksandr Rushak, is to keep their power while avoid learning Ukrainian. In his

article (in Russian) on *Zerkalo Nedeli*, he uses a series of strong words to denounce politicians' "unethical" behaviours. In his eyes, the apathy towards Ukrainian is a vivid reflection of politicians' moral corruption. He specifies that the 2012 language law is "a product of a legal fraud", consisting of "blatantly rude lies to fool people" and made by the people in the parliament "who does not possess any virtue" (Rushak, 2012). He claims it is indeed these politicians who are either "lazy or intellectually unable to learn Ukrainian who always add fuel to the 'fire'". Their goal is to "formally respect the state language status of the Ukrainian language, but in reality, try to get away without knowing it, studying it, or using it". Through his words, it is clear that the author steadily believes being a state official, the very basic virtue is respecting the language of the state by knowing, studying, and using it, but the politicians did the other way round. The strong emotional phrases the author uses can make readers keenly aware of the hypocrisy and incompetence of politicians and the absurdity of modifying the language law.

Another account which appears more commonly in the texts is politicians want to distract people from those real significant social issues. A powerful example is given here: "the language issue is exploited to divert people's attention from the economic and social collapse caused by the incompetent policy of Viktor Yanukovich's team, including the threat of default, the collapse of the hryvnia, unemployment, soaring prices and utilities, total corruption, failure of all social programs that the government unabashedly ignores" (Secretariat of the Ukrainian National Union of Writers, 2012). In this logic, the language issue is not a very prominent social issue in comparison with others, but putting a central focus on the language issue is a tactical choice of politicians, more specifically Viktor Yanukovich himself, which again shows the hypocrisy and illegitimacy of the language modification. A similar view is shared by Vladimir Zhurilov. In his article published in the newspaper *Donbass* (in Russian), he also claims that the move in the July of 2012 is politically motivated, but his position is profoundly different from others. He denies the acuteness of the language issue, and he thinks it does not matter which language you speak. "Sometimes I really cannot understand my fellow Ukrainian brothers. As long as there is a minor change in the society, they drop their daily tasks and hold a protest. This time is for the language issue, which in fact does not exist. There are a lot of work at industrial enterprises now and a lot of harvesting in the countryside, but they give up everything and choose to solve the language problem first. This will cause great losses in the agriculture sector and our economy as a whole." (Zhurilov, 2012). It is very interesting to see

how his narrative correlates with the self-position of the Donbas region in general. He recognizes his “fellow Ukrainian brothers” but cannot fully understand and consent their obsession with a symbolic issue. The economy and development matter the most in Zhurilov’s eyes, and it puzzles him why his fellow Ukrainians does not feel the same. It is impossible to ignore here that this article was published in the regional newspaper of Donbas, where Russian is widely used partially due to a large number of Russian migrants who moved to the region during the industrialisation time of the Soviet Union, making Russian a lingua franca in this region. The advanced developments of industrialisation in the region during the Soviet era also made the Donbas remained one of the most powerful regions in Ukraine with an impressive annual industrial output during the first years after independence. These made Donbas possess a Soviet identity, an identity which believes it is not at all problematic for Russians and Ukrainians freely interacting together (Wilson, 2016: 637), and an economic identity, that is Donbas feeds the whole Ukraine (Klinova, 2014). It is clear that Zhurilov’s opinion is a highly representative example of these two identities.

In sum, apparently, no matter what positions different media hold about the language issue itself, they all agree that the language issue is merely a political tool, and the hypocritical image of politicians is delivered in various national and local media throughout the country.

3.2 Linguistic Rights and Protection

The second most common theme identified in the textual material is the debate on linguistic rights and providing protection to languages. The linguistic rights in pro-Russian discourses have three semantic interpretations: firstly, Russian needs to be protected given its status articulated in the 1989 law and the 1996 Ukrainian constitution. Secondly, the protection of Russian should be guaranteed, as it is a national minority language, meaning Ukraine ought not to ignore the minority issue on the way of Europeanisation. Thirdly, everyone should be entitled to choose to use the language which is regarded as their native language. Pro-Ukrainian discourses put forward their counterarguments in response to these. Here the analysis will start with the first interpretation.

To begin with, Vladimir Bogun in his essay published in *Rabochaia Gazeta* (in Russian) blames the Party of Region for not doing their responsibilities to effectively protect Russian. He specifically mentions the status of the language for interethnic communication that was given

by the 1989 language law. “History already decided the role of Russian as the language for interethnic communication, and then this was recorded in the law in 1989” (Bogun, 2012). The phrase “history decided” is an anthropomorphised form used to enhance credibility and legitimacy of the status of Russian. Bogun thinks, however, the 1989 law on language has ceased to function. “Today in Ukraine there are more than 80 laws prohibiting the use of any language other than Ukrainian. Consequently, the 1989 law simply ceased to function”. Furthermore, he believes nowadays it is a “dangerous trap” to even mention the status of interethnic communication of Russian, for which “you may be driven out”. He notes when politicians are talking about an interethnic language, they are talking about the language which should be spoken on the street: “if the state tries to determine by law that one of the languages is interethnic, this implies the following: the state determines which language people should speak in the market, and which language on the street and at home”. Hence, he seems to find the reason why Russian has been being degraded since 1989: “the language of interethnic communication cannot be supported by the state since it is the language of the street”. The mixing and equalling different concepts are criticized by him. “The MP's attempt to justify himself looks awkward. It is unlikely that he is not aware that, according to accepted interpretations, the language of interethnic communication is the language in which citizens of different nationalities, living in a certain state or in a certain territory, communicate. And labelling it as a ‘street’ language in this case, to put it mildly, is inappropriate” (ibid.). Seeing Russian being suppressed like this, he questions why the Party of Region has not responded properly: “Vadim Vasilyevich reasonably remarks about the existence of eighty legislative acts that suppress and narrow the scope of application of other languages. But why didn't the Party of Regions at least try to abolish some of them, many of which were adopted at the time with the votes from the deputies who are now members of the Party of Regions?” It can be inferred from his words that Bogun was not satisfied even with the 2012 language law, according to which Russian would be only the regional language, as it would also indicate the permanent loss of the status for interethnic communication.

The unique role given to the Russian language by the 1989 law is agreed by Mel'nik, but he believes that is why it needs to be modernized in the direction to give more chances to the development of the Ukrainian language: “undoubtedly, the 1989 law achieved the right balance among Ukrainian (the official language), Russian (the language of national minority with a special status), and other languages of national minorities, but it needs to be modernized in

accordance with the Ukrainian constitution, the decisions of the Ukrainian constitutional court, international human rights acts, and other laws” (Mel’nik, 2012). Moreover, specifically in reaction to the 2012 language law, Mel’nik comments that the law, in essence, changed the dynamics created by the 1989 law and the Ukrainian constitution in 1996 in the sense that in accordance with the 2012 language law, Russian is entitled to be used in some circumstances where symbolically only the state language ought to be accepted. An example is given in the field of judiciary: “the article 14 of the 2012 project allows judges to work in regional languages, but according to the article 10 of the constitution, the language of legal proceedings is exclusively the state language” (ibid.). It is a convincing illustration of how Russian may infringe and challenge the constitutional status of Ukrainian.

The second point pro-Russian discourses are prone to make is Russian is a minority language in Ukraine, so it should be protected, especially given the fact that Ukraine ratified the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages in 2003. This thus brings an “European” element to the discourses, equating minority protection with Europeanisation: if Ukraine wants to embrace the European community, it has to protect the cultural rights of their minorities. In an article (in Russian) with the aim of justifying the legitimacy of the 2012 language law, Jaroslav Koshevoj claims “the criticized law does not prohibit the Ukrainian language at all, but enshrines the principle of linguistic equality of citizens on the basis of established traditions and demands of the Ukrainian society, in full compliance with the norms of European law, while maintaining the state status of the Ukrainian language” (Koshevoj, 2012). He also specifies the law protects the languages of national minorities. Therefore, here ethnic Russians and other minorities are a central collective in his words. “Established traditions” and “demands of the Ukrainian society” are not clarified but taken for granted to show the validity of the arrangements of the law. They are further supported by the phrase “the norms of European law” as an imagined “ideal model”, which is mobilized in his semantics to increase credibility. In response to this, Nikolaj Mel’nik points out the weakness of this assertion, potentially deliberately fabricated to divert people’s attention. He notices that “although they claim that the law is about providing protection for all minorities, the only language they care about is Russian. It can be shown in the text of the draft, where the word ‘Russian’ is mentioned ten times whereas other languages only once” (Mel’nik, 2012).

Pro-Ukrainian discourses also use the cases of several countries of the European Union as examples to demonstrate the Ukrainian practice is a common practice in the European Union

and corresponds to their standards. Written in 2017, when the language policy had been reversed in the direction towards ukrainianisation, Mikola Ivanov's piece (in Ukrainian) is a response to the oppositional voice claiming that Ukraine has once again ignored the interests of national minorities. Specifically, he gives the examples of Slovakia and Hungary, both of which choose to secure the predominant position of the language of the core ethnicity. In Slovakia, where Hungarians make up around ten percent of the population, "a law was passed in 2009 on the state language (Slovak), which introduces a fine of up to 5,000 euros for the use of minority languages in state structures!" (Ivanov, 2017). In comparison, the main relevant law in Hungary, that is the Hungarian Law on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, clarifies "Hungarian is the most important manifestation of our national existence, it expresses our nationality and is the most important means of Hungarian culture, science and information. maintaining its adaptability and maintaining a healthy language environment are shared responsibilities". Seeing strengthening the role of the core language as a common practice in the European Union, Ivanov criticizes the baseless accuse from the opposition and confirms once again the correctness of bolstering Ukrainian: "as we can see, no European declaration and charter questions the historical range of national languages, their mission and exclusive role in society and the state. That is why the situation with the language legislation in Ukraine is anomalous and emphatically shameful" (ibid.). More ironically, an article published in *Zerkalo Nedeli* (in Russian) reminds everyone of a fact that there is no protection for the Ukrainian language in Hungary, Romania, or Russia, which are the countries that have complaints about Ukraine on the minority language issue, but they cannot even grant an analogous right to ethnic Ukrainians living in these countries (Stavniychuk, 2017).

The third aspect of linguistic rights in pro-Russian discourses is everyone has the right to use the language which is considered as his or her mother tongue. Starting with the discourse of Viktor Yanukovich himself, his remark was published in the newspaper of the Ukraine's defence ministry *Narodna Armiia* (in Ukrainian), in which he states that "it is necessary to implement such a language policy in Ukraine that would allow the development of language relations in the interests of all citizens, so that while caring for the rights of some citizens, the rights of others are not violated." (Yanukovich, 2012). Given its publication time on August 09, 2012, a day before the 2012 language law came into force, his discourse in the newspaper should be viewed yet as another attempt to justify his decision made earlier. He emphasizes the

language issue is not a zero-sum game and the rights of all citizens should be protected, implying his decision on the language law is a positive compromise to solve the problem.

In an interview carried out in 2012 June by the newspaper *Krymskaia Pravda* (in Russian), Vadim Kolesnichenko, one of the authors of the 2012 language law, made such an exclamation: “it is not about the language per se, but it is about human rights!” (Dremljugin, 2012). Hence, a direct link is established between the modification of the language law with their “efforts” to improve the human rights record in Ukraine. When talking about human rights, Kolesnichenko made an analogy: “scholars from Western Ukraine always assert ‘we have the right to human dignity’. Excellent! But the other half does not have the same right? What are we, are we limited in the right to protect our native language?” (ibid.). In his words, Ukraine is divided into two parts, the Ukrainian-speaking western Ukraine and the Russian-speaking Ukraine. More importantly, he regards Russian as the native language of people from the second part, so his involvement in the language law is justified as the right to protect the native language just as what the West Ukraine also did. His stance is later echoed again in his own article published in the regional newspaper of Crimea *Krymskaia Pravda*. In the article, he castigates why the Ukrainian parliament passed a law which allows the instructions of imported goods from the European Union to be printed in their original languages without a necessary Ukrainian translation. He then makes his harsh comment: “where is the indignation of the ‘patriotic’ public? Where are the mass protests against the natural humiliation of the Ukrainian language?” (Kolesnichenko, 2013). The word “humiliation” here delivers a particular aversive feeling of those so called “patriotists” in the name for defending the Ukrainian language. The inconsistency between what their slogans stand for and how they actually behave makes the author feel “Ukraine obsequiously bows before the European Union for any reason”. Clearly, it is not “Ukraine” which can bow, but it is meant to be Ukrainian people especially Ukrainian nationalists who bow, but identifying it as the whole “Ukraine” can ask for an identification from those people who are not nationalists as well. Together with the personification “bow” and the adverb “obsequiously”, an aversive tone is delivered and intensified. Then comes the author’s conclusive remark: “As for the ‘European choice’, despite the fact that it is not supported by a significant part of Ukrainians, and for the legalized but not fully realized status of the Russian language, which is native to half of the country's population, these suggest that we are not ready to become a part of the civilized society, because we have not learned to respect ourselves” (ibid.). By saying “a significant part of Ukrainians”, he tries to imply this

“significant part” is the part of people whose native language is Russian, so then right after Russian is mentioned again as a native language but without a well-deserved status. However, the last deictic “we” seems not include solely “Ukrainian nationalists” or merely “the population of the Russian-speaking half”, but both are included. Therefore, Kolesinichenko changes the connotations of every word for identity framing in order to serve his purpose to convey his negative remarks on the newest language law.

It is worth noting here the difference between “the native language” and “the language of use”. Even though it is true that most urban Ukrainians living in the south and the east of the country may predominantly speak Russian at home, they may still claim their native language is Ukrainian, regardless of the language in which they were raised. This is because, according to Ukrainian demographer Arsen Khomenko (1931: 16), there are two aspects of language in the Ukrainian context. One is the language of people’s surroundings, while the other one refers to the language of people’s preference, or, in other words, “in which one feels most comfortable”. An individual may possess different languages regarding these two aspects of language. Apparently, it is the language of preference that is closer to one’s self-identification, whereas, in theory, the language of surrounding may be merely an outcome of the social hierarchy of different languages in the society rather than individuals’ personal liking (Arel, 2002: 217-9). Therefore, following the Soviet understanding of nationality, that is “an ethnonational sense of belonging, rather than the fact of citizenship”, Ukrainians tend to recognize the Ukrainian language as their native language, which is proved by the statistics of the 2001 Ukrainian census, with more than 70% of the respondents claiming Ukrainian as their native language (ibid.: 217; Derzhavnyy komitet statystyky Ukrayiny, 2003). Due to the reason stated above, it can be concluded that Russian being the native language of a half of the Ukrainian population, as asserted by Kolesnichenko, is a myth.

Last but not the least, the examples of other model countries are always mentioned in the discourses. These countries, usually western and culturally diverse, are regarded as positive instances where different languages can co-exist. In an article published (in Russian) in the newspaper *Donbass*, the author gives it a very long title: “everyone has the right to speak their native language. President Viktor Yanukovich has made a wise decision on the language issue, Ukraine becomes one step closer to western standards. But does all understand this?” (Pastushenko, 2012). In Pastushenko’s opinion, Europe is a place where there is also “openness, respect for minorities, in particular, for different nationalities. The behaviour of opponents of

the new law would be called xenophobia and intolerance in Europe.” He found two countries in the west that are ideal in this sense. The first is Switzerland, a country with four official languages. He underscores that in Switzerland, “no one is doing hunger strike; no one is afraid that a part of the country will lean to France; no one complains that it is too expensive to produce beers labelled in several languages”. Similarly, Canada’s dual official language policy with the fact that French-speaking people primarily live in Quebec strongly resonates in Ukraine. “Canada is in many ways comparable with Ukraine” (ibid.). That is the commentary Pastushenko makes. However, the analogies made above are considered inappropriate, mainly because discourses like Pastushenko’s only show part of the truth. Besides the fact that the ethnic composition in Canada and Switzerland may be more complicated than Ukraine, and many Russian-speaking people in Ukraine are essentially ethnic Ukrainians, the other thing is that bilingualism or multilingualism is genuinely implemented in all governmental services in countries such as Canada and Switzerland, but the case of Ukraine shows many governmental officials do not know how to use Ukrainian, hence the core value of bilingualism is spoiled (Kosiv, 2012; Rushak, 2012).

To summarize, the discursive construction on linguistic rights appears more often in pro-Russian discourses as their vital justifications for a wider use of Russian. However, the connotations of the identity formations (“Ukrainian people”, “minorities”, “we”, etc.) mentioned in the discourses are diverse and inconsistent, depending on semantic contingencies and what kind of right they are referring to (the right given by law, the right for minority protection, and the universal right).

3.3 Security and Victimization

The next often-mentioned theme is the language issue is a manifestation of the security and victimisation dispute in the country. Here, the language issue is narrated not only as a simple debate on whether it is an undeniable right for Ukrainian citizens to speak Ukrainian and/or Russian, but it is always associated with some controversial historical events and extended to be regarded as a vital component of the stability and security for the common good. In order to achieve this, the discourses often present themselves as victims of history, and seek to propagate a mindset that we cannot repeat our historical mistakes. This theme became particularly popular amid the turmoil in 2014, during which there was an attempted repeal of the 2012 language law

following the fleeing of Viktor Yanukovich to Russia. The subsequent unrests in Crimea and in the east and south of Ukraine seem to be good excuses for a huge debate on the role of language(s) in keeping the stability in the society.

The mention of social stabilities can be already found in the discourses of Vadim Kolesnichenko (in Russian) in 2012. Initially, in line with the program of the Party of Regions, Kolesnichenko was supposed to pursue an official state language status for the Russian language. In an attempt to advocate his draft and explain the reason why at that point the Party of Regions was not pursuing the official state language status for Russian anymore, he links it with the potential threat of the social security. An alarmist rhetoric prevails in his reasoning: “according to the Ukrainian constitution, in order to pursue an official state language status of Russian, it can be only achieved through an all-Ukrainian referendum, but we understand, if we start such a referendum, we are facing the real threat of escalating a conflict in Ukraine” (Dremljugin, 2012). He further states he understands well there might be “an outburst of extremism, which may lead to a separatism mindset that in essence results in a collapse of the Ukrainian state”. This will be the case because he underscores that a recent sociological survey conducted by the Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine shows there is a “colossal” rise in the interethnic tension in the society: “the level of hatred for Russians increased sevenfold, for Jews – nine times, to rums - fifteen times” (ibid.). Again, the outcome of a sociological survey conducted by a highly respected scientific institution is mobilized here to increase the credibility of his observance and present it as a scientific fact. To tackle this problem, the first and foremost task, as far as he concerns, is to reduce the interethnic tension in the society. Therefore, the connection between the social security and the language issue in his discourse is established.

By the same token, after the repeal of the 2012 language law was swiftly passed in the Ukrainian parliament, the mention of the allegedly “interethnic tension” was thriving again in pro-Russian discourses. When depicting the armed unrest happening in Odesa, an article (in Russian) makes such a comment on the negative influence brought by the attempted repeal by citing the words of several pro-Russian politicians: “this decision provoked social tensions. Now the police have an important mission. They must calm and reconcile people. They may not shake hands with each other, but they must surrender their weapons” (Zhukov, 2014). It is also added that the repeal shows the Maidan revolution is a revolution “against the Russian people” and “these Russian people reserve the right to defend their land and their loved ones”. The only solution

to this is “giving the regions the opportunity to self-determine”. It is not clear where does the referred “Russian people” here come from, but whether is factually incorrect or not, it is served the purpose to demonstrate the “interethnic tension” in his narrative. The same opinion is shared by the erstwhile Chairman of the Donetsk Regional State Administration Andriy Shishatsky (in Russian). In the name of the Donbas people, he appeals to the deputies of the Ukrainian Parliament, especially from the Donetsk region to re-vote the language law. His reason for doing so is “Donbas is a multinational region and Russian is the language of our communication” (Shishatsky, 2014). The most interesting sentence in his words is “please re-vote the language law and people will thank you for this” (ibid.). An almost imploring tone to ask for the re-voting for the very vague construct “people”. By saying “people”, all the nations are covered, and thus “people” here is a synecdochical word, which is purposely made semantically wider to enhance the tone and increase legitimacy.

The idea of security is also reflected in pro-Ukrainian discourses. Especially after the annexation of Crimea and the war in the Donbas region, the symbolic significance of the Ukrainian language has been increasingly rediscovered and reinforced, and it is considered as the very core of Ukrainian statehood. Starting with the commentary of Jurij Sirotjuk (in Ukrainian), he regards the Ukrainian language as the basis of the state security. His explanations for claiming so start with a common sense: “the more people are speaking and using Ukrainian, the less serious the threat of the language issue would be” (Sirotjuk, 2017). Besides this, another vital reason is because of the infamous slogan of Russia, which obliges Russia to protect the Russian-speaking population: “as is known from the military strategy of the aggressor country, the Russian-speaking population are considered as ‘hostages’. So, whether these people want it or not, Russia can come here to ‘protect’ these Russian apparatuses”. The word “hostage” here indicates that in the official view of Russia, the existence of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine is illegitimate. They do not belong to the Ukrainian collective but the Russian collective. Many other discourses also touch on this point. For example, Andrij Ljubka (in Ukrainian) cites Putin’s rhetoric “where the Russian language is, so is Russia”, arguing the “impressive synchronicity” necessitates the task to support the Ukrainian language “institutionally and financially” (Ljubka, 2019). Larisa Masenko (in Ukrainian) connects Russia’s sceptics on the legitimacy of the Russian-speaking population in Ukraine with its wider view on the legitimacy of the Ukrainian history and statehood. Putin’s shocking discourse at a meeting of the NATO-Russia Council is cited in her piece: “who do you work with? With

Ukraine? This is not a country but a kind of an artificial formation, a mistake of history” (Linkjavichjus, 2018). Based on Russia’s distorted view of Ukraine, Masenko suggests that it is the idea of bilingualism together with its associated different believes on history which hinder “the formation of common public opinion, common social values, common attitude to historical events and national heroes” (Masenko, 2018). What is more, she points out the ambition of Russia is to produce the imperial project of creating a "triune Russian people” encompassing Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. In addition, Belarus, unfortunately, seems to have already succumbed to this project: “the ‘life-long’ president in 2009 banned continuing to procrastinate about the language issue, signifying the end of Belarusian independence” (ibid.). Hence, the priority of Ukraine is to avoid becoming the next Belarus, to escape from a syndrome called “colonial disease” (Farion, 2014) and reshape the nation-building project out of “the former colonial relations” (the Central Board of VUT "Prosvita", 2012).

It is noteworthy how Russia is constructed as an external threat against the Ukrainian collective in pro-Ukrainian discourses. The argument does not stop here, but it is expanded to some controversial historical events which shows the Ukrainian language and the Ukrainian collective as a whole have been persecuted in history, therefore spreading an image of being a victim to the audience. In an interview given by Mykola Kniazhytskyi (in Ukrainian), the chairman of the parliamentary Committee on Culture and Spirituality, such a claim is made: “the Ukrainian language has been discriminated against for almost four centuries. For example, the Holodomor was not only a genocide but also a linguicide. It was those people who were native Ukrainian speakers were killed. The Holodomor was followed by the Great Terror. The Ukrainian intelligentsia was liquidated” (Kniazhytskyi, 2019).

The highly controversial event Holodomor is mobilized here without a discussion. The Holodomor refers to a famine that happened in 1932-1933 in Soviet Ukraine and claimed the lives of millions. It was only until 1987 that this horrific event was firstly acknowledged by the Soviet officials as a famine caused by a combination of a drought and poor harvest. However, in addition to the natural causes, the man-made element of this famine was evident. The forced collectivisation policy resulted in numerous confiscations. Together with an arbitrariness of implementing the collectivisation policy, people’s food reserves and livelihood were requisitioned, contributing to the overall death toll. On top of this, the ban on the movement out of the affected regions also significantly exacerbated the starvation. Because the people who died mainly consisted of ethnic Ukrainians, it is believed by some people that the Holodomor

was a genocide deliberately perpetrated under the Stalin government with the aim to suppress Ukrainian nationalism (Marples, 2004). Nowadays in the contemporary Ukraine, the Holodomor is constructed as a national trauma and elevated to a national symbol, signifying the Holodomor as a collective suffering and a common history of Ukrainians that is essentially different from the Russian historiography (Klymenko, 2016). Nevertheless, the definition of the Holodomor as a genocide is contested. During the same time, the famine did not only happen in Soviet Ukraine but could be found in other regions of the Soviet Union as well, such as Kazakhstan, the North Caucasus. When the famine happened, some western regions of Ukraine, for example, Galicia, remained unaffected as they were not merged into the Soviet Union at that point. It is thus difficult to find convincing proofs that shows there was an overt intention of Stalin to exterminate the Ukrainian nation (Marples, 2009: 516). In fact, the famine-genocide perception is most eagerly accepted in the west Ukraine, a region untouched by the famine (Marples, 2004: 309), so the nationalist nature of the famine-genocide claim cannot be ignored. Back to the words of Kniazhytskyi, his statement of the historical event reflects his thought of the event, that is a genocide against Ukrainians. He then connects the genocide of Ukrainians with its putative consequence: because the people who died were Ukrainians, this is a genocide against the Ukrainian language. The problematic logic in this can only be explained by the author's ill-attempt to defend his argument, and the Holodomor is only a tool for doing so.

The arbitrary use of historical events can be found not only in pro-Ukrainian discourses. In a similar vein, it prevails in pro-Russian discourses. When his proposal to the language law in 2012 was attacked by other politicians in the parliament, Vadim Kolesnichenko in the interview made such a remark: "it is because the Russian language is linked with Russia, and anything related to Russia is categorically hated by the Ukrainian nationalist fascists. They are the same as the people in 1940s, who destroyed Poles, Russians, and compatriot Ukrainians who did not accept the ideology of misanthropy, mononation, and essentially the ideology of fascism" (Dremljugin, 2012). Here, another controversial historical period related to the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) is brought up. Often, they are seen as fascist organisations which are held responsible for the genocide of Poles in Volhynia and Eastern Galicia. The goal of UPA was to build up a monoethnic nation state incorporating parts of the territories of Russia, Poland, Romania, and Belarus, based on a philosophy consisting of authoritarianism, cults of leaders, and anti-Semitism (Katchanovski, 2015). Because of the negative image of the history of UPA, it turned out to be particularly

difficult to incorporate this dark history into the Ukrainian national memory after Ukraine gained independence. Under the presidency of Viktor Yushenko, there was a trend to downplay the crimes and atrocities that OUN-UPA once committed, involving a lot of mythmaking and redefinitions (Rudling, 2011). Presumably, the deny and downplaying of the OUN-UPA fascist image would definitely lead to particular strong negative reactions of people who are reminiscent of the Soviet Union in Ukraine, as the OUN-UPA was determined to fight against the Soviet regime. For example, the Party of Regions once submitted an act which equals the rehabilitation and glorification of the OUN-UPA as “fascists collaboration” (Shevel, 2011: 155). The tenacity of solving the problem of the OUN-UPA historical recognition is once again reminded here by Kolesnichenko. By constructing Ukrainian nationalists as the same people of the OUN-UPA, the victim image is brought up and the emotional clout associated with this can be instigated, indicating Ukrainian nationalists repeatedly undermine the cultural rights, and in this case, the linguistic rights of others by resorting to fascist practice.

To sum up, security and victimisation have been also the central topics in the Ukrainian media discourses regarding the language issue. In the discourses, the language is taken as a vital identity marker which can emotionally resonate so much that the social stability is very much dependent on it. The construction of a victim image further strengthens the emotional power of the language issue as it is extended to a wider historical background. As Kleinman et.al. (1997: xi) remind us, “cultural representations of suffering—images, prototypical tales, metaphors, models—can be (and frequently are) appropriated in the popular culture or by particular social institutions for political and moral uses”. By stressing the suffering of the past, a sense of compassion and empathy can be produced, helping the producers to put forward grievances and demands for compensation for the unfair history. It would also prompt the engagement of the audience in the historical controversies as the outcome of the demand from “a particular moral integrity” in this setting (Rosland, 2009: 294).

3.4 Self and Other

The last theme identified in the texts is a construction of the dichotomy self vis-à-vis other(s). It is a continuation of the idea of security and victimisation, which has been discussed above. Essentially, a security discourse “entails the securitisation of external threats posed by the Other against which the Self must protect itself” (Campbell, 1992), and often reifies “a positive image

of the self as representative of order and rationality vis-a-vis negatively depicted others representative of chaos, irrationality, as potentially threatening, and which therefore need to be excluded” (Browning, 2002: 17–8). Similarly, victimisation also requires social actors to figure out mechanisms of including and excluding, so as to create a “we-them” divide, a collective victimhood as opposed to a collective predator. Having examined the discourses regarding security and victimisation, here the focus will be transferred to those discourses that are directly involved with creating a self/other dichotomy of the language issue itself, not elevating the language issue to the level of state security or collective victimhood.

It is found that the more conspicuous the depicting of the “self/other” divide of the language issue in discourses is, the greater the possibility is that the author expresses a strong opposition to the bilingualism idea. An instance is an essay published in *Zerkalo Nedeli* (in Russian), the author Vasilij Lizanchuk says he is “shocked by the Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism on the television channel "Pryamyy", which only strengthened the Russification in Ukraine” (Lizanchuk, 2017). He thinks the mixing of Russian and Ukrainian will only lead to “linguistic schizophrenia”. “Schizophrenia” is a word belonging to the field of psychology, and it is borrowed here by Lizanchuk to illustrate the potential jeopardy of the Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism. “Schizophrenia” refers to a mental disorder with which people find it difficult to interpret the surrounding world normally, and “linguistic schizophrenia” therefore refers to a symptom in which people cannot clearly distinguish the boundaries of the languages and use them interchangeably. In the opinion of Lizanchuk, it is alarming because the very existence of the Ukrainian language will be threatened: “the Ukrainian language will be destroyed from within, will be made similar to Russian, and Ukrainian people will voluntarily abandon the Ukrainian language because when a language is constantly mixed with another, the mechanisms of the language’s self-regeneration begin to wither away, and, consequently, the very ability to exist” (ibid.). Hence, the idea of boundary is embodied in Lizanchuk’s discourse, and without the boundary, the very existence of the individuality of the Ukrainian language is threatened. For this reason, Lizanchuk asserts it is essential to draw the boundary between these two languages. He specifically clarifies that advocating drawing a clear boundary does not mean he is asking for a total ban on the Russian language. What he is proposing is just a stop of mixing up the two languages: “we need to stop mixing Ukrainian and Russian languages (this also applies to the Pryamoy TV channel), so that everyone can hear a clean, specific, uncluttered Ukrainian language, communicates in it in the service sector, in the media, at a session of the

Verkhovna Rada, in the presidential administration, the Cabinet of Ministers - in all state and public organizations". As for Russian, he suggests building additional separate channels for Russian and all other minority languages: "for national minorities, to which Russians also belong (I emphasize this!), It is advisable to create a separate TV channel, which would broadcast programs in the languages of all national minorities in Ukraine" (ibid.). Apparently, the self/other divide is very explicit in Lizanchuk's discourse. It is crucial to keep the boundary clear and to keep a "pure" self without the infringement of others, so the survival of ourselves is ensured.

The same idea can be found in Sergej Stukanov's article (in Russian). At the very beginning of his article, he underscores "it is time to understand that the fate of the Ukrainian language will depend on the linguistic firmness of Ukrainians" (Stukanov, 2013). As far as he is concerned, he thinks there is a trend in Ukraine that Ukrainian people feel guilty for their Ukrainian identity, and there is an "alarming fear that you may not be understood, perceived, and accepted in Ukraine". He gives two examples from his real-life experience to back up his argument. The first example is an experience where the author took a train back to his hometown in Donetsk from Zakarpattia. People who shared the same train compartment with the author were teenagers from Ivano-Frankivsk, a predominately Ukrainian-speaking region. The teenagers were speaking Ukrainian to each other, but when the train conductor came, they swiftly changed to Russian to talk with the conductor. Stukanov was surprised by this and asked why they swapped their language, and teenagers answered they believe the train conductor cannot understand Ukrainian. This triggered the author to think about why people view not understanding the state language as a totally unproblematic issue. In his point of view, it is because the self/other dichotomy of the language issue is reflected in geography: there is a spatial construction of "a linguistic and cultural Ukrainian world", whose borders are different from the borders of Ukraine as a political entity. Even though the "Russian-speaking" part politically belongs to the Ukrainian state, people (especially those from the west Ukraine) feel linguistically and culturally alienated in the Russian-speaking Ukraine and voluntarily give up speaking the state language in the Russian-speaking part of Ukraine. In fact, it is not even necessary to be physically in the Russian-speaking part of Ukraine to feel this way. As the example given above shows, the imagined "Russian-speaking" world starts already inside the train. As the train was heading to the east, those teenagers took it for granted that the train comes from "the other Ukraine", and in this sense, the train is given an "magic" extraterritorial

status (ibid.). The second example is about an intelligent and educated girl from Kyiv, who was refused to be accepted to a university a few times merely because she was writing in Ukrainian for her entrance exams, and the exam board asked her to switch to Russian because they claimed that she is from “an educated Kyiv family”, and only people who are from villages are tolerated with writing in Ukrainian. Here, the self/other dichotomy of the language issue even takes roots in the urban-rural divide, and arguably is also solidified along the social class line. Thus, the author argues the linguistic firmness is crucial in response to the self-alienation: “the choice of language is conscious and comes from the inner need of a person, but not under the pressure of the surrounding environment” (ibid.). In this sense, the 2012 language law can only be counter-productive regrading this issue, as it legitimizes and reinforces the spatial construct “the Russian-speaking Ukraine” and further prompts a self-alienation from the Ukrainian language and culture in the Russian-speaking Ukraine.

It is the problems brought by the self/other divide of the language issue stated above that triggered a further discussion about the symbolic strength of the self, and hence it is believed that the self needs to be supported unanimously with the hope of overcoming the other. Among them, Volodymyr Ferenc (in Ukrainian) emphasizes “the frivolous fashion of Ukrainian citizens to communicate in the language of regional communication, that is Russian, automatically reduces the use of state language, which has important functions for communication, unity, security, and welfare of society” (Ferenc, 2014). The language issue is thus directly linked with the unity of the state. Similarly, another comment is made by Petro Kraljuk (in Ukrainian), which states that “the necessary condition for the existence of a nation is its linguistic unity. It is the language that is the product and manifestation of the ‘people's spirit’, outlining the very identity of the community, creating a national worldview in the structures of the ‘intermediate’ world” (Kraljuk, 2012). In recognition of the symbolic strength of the national language, Igor’ Gryniv and Miroslav Cheh (in Russian) appeal that “we must behave not like a humiliated minority, but like the majority who is aware of their rights and, above all, responsibilities” (Gryniv and Cheh, 2017). In searching for a way to develop the state language, some discourses attempt to find an alternative way to promote the Ukrainian language as much as possible but at the same time would not provoke too many resentments among pro-Russian forces. An example of them is the discourse of economic stimulation, in which a call for the exemption of taxes for the Ukrainian-language media is presented. According to the author, he personally believes only by means of soft power the language issue can be solved

without the accusation of infringement on minority rights or freedom of speaking (Bondar, 2017).

By comparison, the discussion solely devoted to the self/other dichotomy of the language issue in pro-Russian discourses seems to have lost its momentum after the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Donbas. Only periodic examples can be found. One of them is an article (in Russian) published in the regional newspaper of Crimea *Krymskaia Pravda*, where the author Rafael' Zaljan demands an immediate change of those Ukrainian-written inscriptions that scatter everywhere in Crimea, because as a political entity within Russian Federation, these inscriptions still represent a Ukrainian past as opposed to today's Russian reality (Zaljan, 2018). Perhaps, the noticeable lack of pro-Russian discourses in the media published in the undisputed territories of Ukraine from 2014 afterwards coincides with the collapse of the Party of Regions and the rise of a sense of unity in the country. According to a sociological survey conducted in 2014, there were over 70% of respondents who believed the Ukrainian language is the only state language in the country (Razumkov Centre, 2014).

In summary, the discourses presented above are reminiscent of the concept "social security", which is defined as "the ability of a society to persist in its essential character under changing conditions and possible or actual threats. More specifically, it is about the sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom" (Wæver, 1991: 23). Thus, the sustainability of the identity marker, the language in our case, is essential of social security. In their attempt to fight for social security, the media discourses tend to discursively construct a self/other split and ask for a clear boundary between the two languages. While after the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of the war in Donbas the number of the pro-Russian discourses published in Ukrainian-controlled territories has decreased as the outcome of the development of a stronger Ukrainian nationalism, the media discourses in the annexed territory, namely Crimea, remained largely pro-Russian and anti-Ukrainian. Presumably, the polarised discourses can also create a sense of social reality among their respective audience, exacerbating the self/other split on the language issue between Ukrainian controlled and non-Ukrainian controlled territories.

Chapter 4. Conclusion and Discussion

This work seeks to fill in a research gap by directly drawing media discourses and examining the discursive construction of the language issue in various Ukrainian media. In order to understand the immense emotional power of nationalism, an alternative definition of nationalism is applied in the work. Nationalism is viewed essentially as a discursive construction, which always naturalizes and normalizes the legitimacy of the common memory and territory of the respective nation. However, to achieve such a goal, a logical internal structure and some common ways and mechanisms in the nationalist discourses that help define social reality are needed. In line with this, this work does not only look at the language ideologies and the language use of media per se but the justifications for adopting different language ideologies in respective media are also investigated. Moreover, the thesis has tried to uncover some common ways of media discourses to naturalize an imagined social reality, using the example of the highly controversial language issue in Ukraine.

After the analysis of dozens of media discourses published in various national and regional media, some insights have been yielded. There are four common themes generalized from the media discourses, which can be treated as a broad profile of the language issue in Ukraine not only in the field of media but elsewhere as well. The first theme analysed in the dissertation is language as a political tool. This perspective is shared by different media outlets regardless of which language they stand for. The language issue is overtly politicised because it is put on the agenda most often before an election campaign. Although one of the intentions of politicians to exploit the language issue is clearly to gain electoral supports, the media discourse demonstrates the real public opinion may be more complicated than politicians anticipate, indicating media may function as an important platform for presenting the public opinion and offer an alternative discourse in comparison with the official discourses of the government. It is also agreed in media throughout the country that the language issue is a useful instrument to divert people's attention from other social issues, such as economic developments, corruption, or social welfares. Overall, the nationalist characteristics in this theme are not very prominent.

The second theme revolves around the word "rights", and as analysed earlier in this work, there are three interpretations that emerged out of the debate on linguistic rights: the rights as stated in relevant language laws, the rights of reasonable minority protection, and the rights of speaking the native language freely. In this theme, there are already some typical nationalist

characteristics detected. It is common in the discourses to form diverse identity claims in defence of their positions. Sometimes, the discursive construction “Ukrainian people” is referred to as Ukrainian citizens, in other cases as ethnic Ukrainians. The use of “Russian-speaking Ukrainians” or “ethnic Russians in Ukraine” can be also found, and more frequently is the adoption of the all-encompassing word “Ukraine”. In certain cases, these identity claims are used interchangeably without a clear clarification of which is which. This shows making identity claims is a popular strategy in nationalist discourses in order to ask for as much identification from the audience as possible. Furthermore, some European values, for example, freedom and democracy, are mobilized and merged into their identity claims, attempting to match a European identity Ukraine has been longing for.

The nationalist characteristics are particularly apparent in the subsequent two themes. When talking about security and victimisation, it is impossible not to involve with any identity claims. The realisation of identity claims regarding security and victimisation needs to discursively construct an external threat or predator. What is special in our case, however, is the mobilisation of temporal claims and spatial claims. Since the language is viewed as a vital identity marker, the language issue is elevated to a problem related to the common memory. The discourses look back in time, seeking to choose those historical events that best illustrate the suffering in the past, so as to ask for compassion from the audience and legitimize their grievances. Simultaneously, some spatial constructions are embodied in the discourses as well. The ones analysed in this work include the imagined imperial project “triune Russian people”, encompassing the land of today’s Russian, Ukraine, and Belarus, and also the geographically defined “the Russian-speaking Ukraine” and its counterpart “the non-Russian-speaking Ukraine” in constructing the self/other split.

Therefore, it can be concluded that those common strategies for nationalist discourses listed in the methodological part of this work are reflected adequately in the Ukrainian media discourses. Metonymy, synecdoche, and personification are frequently deployed when the discourses are trying to make identity, temporal, and spatial claims. Beyond the language use itself, this work finds that there is a trend of polarisation of language ideologies across different media outlets. This does not mean the language ideology of a media outlet is necessarily associated with the language in which the articles of the media are published, as some articles published in Russian cited in this work, mostly from the media outlet *Zerkalo Nedeli*, also advocate a wider use of the Ukrainian language. However, the polarisation between national newspapers and regional

newspapers is evident. The strongest supporters of promoting the Russian language to a wider use or downgrading the use of the Ukrainian language are, at least within the texts analysed in this work, those regional media outlets in non-Ukrainian government-controlled areas (*Krymskaia Pravda* and *Donbass*). Even though after several tragic events happened in 2014, the general trend in Ukraine is an increasing development of Ukrainian nationalism, and this has been synchronically portrayed in the language issue in the sense that the symbolic role of the Ukrainian language has been being recognized by more citizens, the polarisation in media discourses between Ukrainian government-controlled and non-Ukrainian government-controlled territories still exists. Considering the forming force of discourse, and the fact that the actual language use may have a huge impact on people's media access, this polarisation may further split people's perceptions towards the language and other relevant historical and political issues across the de jure and de facto borders of Ukraine. However, to confirm this, more anthropological and sociological research is required to evaluate to what extent people are willing to be exploited by these divided discourses.

Constrained by the scope of a master's thesis, this work does not claim to have exhausted the full content of the discursive construction on the language issue in Ukrainian media, but rather to provide a general picture and several most frequently mentioned themes. First and foremost, the time framework of the analysis is confined between 2012 and 2019. Accordingly, further research may date back to an earlier date, for example to the very beginning phase of Ukrainian independence, so the relationship between public debates on media regarding the language issue and the actual policymaking can be disclosed. Secondly, although the tendency of polarisation between national and regional media outlets is detected and mentioned in the work, a more detailed comparative study is desired to capture all nuanced contrasting identity, temporal, and spatial claims manufactured in various national and regional media outlets. Thirdly, this work did not examine the media ownership of each media outlet. As it can be discovered above, some media discourses are directly written by high-ranking politicians or are verbatim transcriptions of interviews given by politicians. Thus, it would be insightful to research on the interaction between politicians' discourses and media discourses to examine the variations in discourses and to what extent media outlets are influenced and dominated by politicians. By discerning the difference between media discourses and politician's discourses, it may be also helpful for providing some empirical evidence for further understanding the role of media as a dependent or independent site and media discourses in Ukraine and beyond. Last but not the least, a mirror

study can be conducted on the basis of the discursive construction of the Ukrainian language issue in Russian media, so the connections between pro-Russian media in Ukraine and Russian media can be revealed.

On a final note, it should be clarified again that as any other discourse, the media discourses examined here only constitute and do not necessarily and accurately mirror the social reality. By revealing the contradictions and contingencies of meanings embodied in the media discourses, this work hopes to shed some light on how to formulate an alternative and less radical way of representing the language issue in discourses for a better future for Ukraine.

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Dissertation Project
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Dissertation title: The politicization of the language issue in Ukraine: the discursive construction of the language, nationalism, and identity in Ukrainian media
Expected date of submission: 27 July 2021
Head of seminar: Jiri Vykoukal
Supervisor: Jan Šír
Title: The politicization of the language issue in Ukraine: the discursive construction of the language, nationalism, and identity in Ukrainian media
Short description of the topic: I use a combination of thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis to analyze media discourses on the language issue in Ukraine. After the analysis, the most frequent themes and linguistic strategies are presented. Also, a trend of polarization is detected across national and regional media discourses.
Proposed structure: 1. Abstract 2. Introduction, Historical Background, and Literature review 3. Theoretical Framework: Nationalism as a Discursive Construction 4. Methodology: Thematic Analysis & Critical Discourse Analysis 5. Discursive Evidence from Ukrainian Media
Sources (basic selection): Nationalism: Antony Smith, Ernest Gellner, Umut Özkırmılı; Discourse Analysis: Richard Mole, Michel Foucault, Ruth Wodak; Historical Background: Juliane Besters-Dilger, Kateryna Karunyk and Serhii Vakulenko; Media Sources: Zerkalo Nedeli, Literaturna Ukraina.