

Ukrainian Language And National Consciousness

A Case Study Of Russo-Ukrainian War

Author

Abstract:

The war between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 is still a hot topic throughout the world. While the Ukrainian soldiers are struggling to defend Ukraine from the Russians, we can see that more Ukrainians started to stand together with national patriotic emotion. This paper aims to investigate how conflicts and invasions between countries affect people's national identity by discussing the situation in Ukraine, which in turn influences the media and the language that people chose to use. The results show that as the Russian continued to invade Ukraine, citizens in Ukraine would utilize the Ukrainian language more intensely by shifting their daily use of language in social media and producing more Ukrainian movies, though people still listen to Russian music, because of their gradual shift of aesthetics and habits. Apart from the Donbas which is assimilated into the Russian culture, the author believes that the next generation of Ukrainians will receive more education taught in Ukrainian, due to the growing trend of war between Ukraine and Russia in the current and past decade, and the Russian language will be abandoned by Ukrainian citizens.

Date of Submission: 26-10-2023

Date of Acceptance: 06-11-2023

I. Introduction

Language can be defined as a system of conventional spoken, manual (signed), or written symbols by means of which human beings, as members of a social group and participants in its culture, express themselves.¹ A language can also be seen as a system used by a particular collectivity whose identity it expresses and is part of. Ideally, there should be a one-to-one correspondence between languages and nations.² Therefore, language is one of the dominant factors that determine one nation's ethnic and national consciousness. We can demonstrate the connection between language and national consciousness on the example of Ukraine.

¹ This concept is quoted from Britannica

² Volodymyr Kulyk. "Introduction," *Language and Identity in post-Soviet Ukraine: Transformation of an Unbroken Bond*, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2013), p. 1. Language is an important aspect in citizens' lives. If a single nation is comprised of several languages, especially in the case of Ukraine and the Balkan Peninsula, it is difficult for the citizens to form a uniform national identity as they would overemphasize the distinctions but not the similarities. In this case, the nation tends to separate into several regions based on their language preferences.

Throughout this paper, I will demonstrate this pragmatic yet gradual shift towards a national language and the link between identity and language. The first section of this paper outlines history of Ukraine and its language. The second section will investigate how the model of national consciousness devised by Benedict Anderson apply to the situation in Ukraine. The third part of the paper discusses Ukrainian and Russian films, mass media, and songs in terms of their influence on the national formation. The fourth section of the paper makes predictions and discusses about how the current war situation between Ukraine and Russia will influence Ukrainians' national identity and their practice of local culture. The sources are not limited to academic research but also brought as the examples from the Internet. I will conclude this paper by analyzing the relationship between the two countries in terms of their languages.

II. Literature Review

The relationship between language and national identity was raised by scholars throughout the world. Ernest Gellner discussed nationalism from the perspective of utilitarianism and stated that it was the ideology of an imagined community (nationalism) that prompted the formation of distinctive nations. In this case, nationalism was prompted by the development of industrialization, which citizens and the resources had better opportunities to aggregate, (stimulating people to live and work together), a key factor to form the sense of an imagined community.³ Benedict Anderson discussed the relationship between language and the spread of information, especially dialect, via printing, and he extended the topic of national identity from the perspective of culture and human imagination. His book *Imagined Communities*⁴ stated that the "choice" of language appears as a gradual, unselfconscious, pragmatic, not to mention haphazard development. In fact, Anderson implied that the distinctive nations are imagined by the citizens who hold the same features, and language is an essential factor that shapes citizen's national identity.⁵

However, recent scholars⁶ cast doubt on Benedict Anderson's model of language, especially dialect, and to a larger extent, national identity. They claim that Anderson overstressed the importance of language use. Apart from language, other factors such as geographical boundary, cultural or historical origin and the act of invasion also prompt the formation of national identity and national consciousness. These potential ideologies can be reflected by the massive research on Chinese history. The history of China showed the national identity recognized by citizens. By the Spring and Autumn period, the vessel states had already started to recognize their self-identity and adopt self-strengthening reforms.⁷ Victoria Hui stated that the vessel states in ancient China expand their influence by establishing centralization of authority and recruiting soldiers from citizens in order to minimize the

³ Earnest Gellner. *Nations and Nationalism*, Cornell University Press (1983)

⁴ Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities*, Verso (2006)

⁵ Benedict Anderson. "Old Languages, New Models." *Imagined Communities*, Verso (2006), p. 74. In the eighteenth century, Russians viewed Ukrainian (Little Russian) as a language of peasants. However, the establishment of the University of Kharkov together with the emergence of high Ukrainian literature and national organization in Kyiv proved that the use of Ukrainian was not limited to peasant communities alone.

⁶ Scholars such as Zhaoguang Ge and Nicholas Tackett doubted the significance of language on the formation of the Chinese Song Dynasty.

⁷ Victoria Tin-Bor Hui. Translated by Xu Jin. "Self-Strengthening Reforms Versus Self-Weakening Expedients," *War and State Formation in Ancient China and Early Modern Europe*, Shanghai People's Publishing House (2008), p. 38.

financial cost. Dingxin Zhao asserted that the formation of bureaucracy states in China was not mainly caused by wars between vessel states⁸ but because of the term: “RuFa”.⁹ This was the term represented the most traditional and orthodox ethnicity in China. This showed that from the Spring and Autumn period, people then had the potential to form the consciousness of “China,” but it was not until the Song Dynasty in which people began to first recognize the concept of the country----“China.”

In Song Dynasty, people first recognized their concept of “China.” As Song Dynasty emphasized civil administration at the expense of national defense, Song was defeated by many adjacent “Barbarian”¹⁰ nation such as Liao or the western Xia regime. Ge Zhaoguang stated that because of the strength of Liao’s trooper and the military failure facing Liao, the Song dynasty began to notice the unambiguous boundary between countries and ethnics, which they finally had an equivalent awareness of diplomacy.¹¹ There was a story when the Song Dynasty began to establish relationship with Liao regime, the ministers discussed about the salutation of the two nations. The ministers first used “Southern Dynasty” and “Northern Dynasty” to name the two nations. However, after a long discussion, the ministers at last decided to use Emperor of “Song Dynasty” with Emperor of “QiDan.” This was because the emperor and the ministers thought that Song and Liao are two distinctive nations with two ethnicities and could not be viewed as the same “China.”¹² The Song Dynasty began to face the adjacent nation as opponents instead of barbarian ethnics, which marked their national crisis in terms of ideology. Nicholas Tackett also had the belief that it was the Song Dynasty that the word “China” was formed. He stated that from Song Dynasty, people initiated a large-scale demarcation activity, which marked the formation of a fixed geographical boundary and the clear division between the Chinese people and the QiDan citizens.¹³ Also, the elite social class began to stress the distinctive culture of Han ethnicity and supported the act of retaking Yan, the lost territory being occupied by QiDan. This means that the Song Dynasty regarded themselves as a united nation with the same ethnicity of Han and formed a “imagined community.” The author found that the national consciousness formed in Song Dynasty was similar in pattern to the national consciousness formed in Ukraine, as both ethnicities faced strong external opponents and sought to defend themselves.

Starting from the 1840s, England and other European nations, with strong army and a substantial amount of assets, waged wars against China, then a weak nation during the Qing dynasty. With no surprise, the powerful European soldiers invaded China with no extra efforts. However, it was the time when the Chinese started to

⁸ Zhao Dingxin. Translated by Xia Jiangqi. “The Western Zhou Regime and its Decline,” *The War of Eastern Zhou and the Formation of the State of Ru & Fa*, Beijing United Publishing Cooperation (2006), p. 49.

⁹ *The War of Eastern Zhou and the Formation of the State of Ru & Fa*, pp 7. Dingxin Zhao coined the term Ru & Fa in order to describe the governance of vessel states by adopting “Ru” (Confucianism) as the basis of ideology and “Fa” (Legalism) as the pragmatic governing pattern.

¹⁰ Song regarded Liao or western Xia mainly because their lack of culture and knowledge. All the times the ethnic of Han recognize themselves as literate people mainly because they receive education when they were young and can compose poetry and do paintings.

¹¹ Ge Zhaoguang. *The Prominence of the “China” consciousness in the Song Dynast*, College of Humanities & Social Sciences, Qinghua University (2004), p. 8.

¹² Ge Zhaoguang. *When Has China Needed to Discuss “What is China,”* SiXiangZhanXian (2017), p. 2

¹³ Nicholas Tackett. *The Origins of the Chinese Nation*, Social Science Academic Press (2020), pp. 116-151

arouse their patriotism and national consciousness. Patriots such as Lin Zexu¹⁴ or Liang Qichao¹⁵ called on people to revolt and fight back and even die in the battlefield.

The research done by these scholars indicates that the formation of national identity is not limited to the development of language and the spread of information but also the factors such as geographical boundary, the cultural or historical origin, and the political suppression have to be considered. This is particular true to the case of Ukraine, which we have to consider about the multiple perspectives that prompt the Ukrainians,' especially the citizens living in western Ukraine, national consciousness.

III. The History of Ukraine

Ukraine was known for being the intersection of Eastern and Western Europe: it has been a gateway to Europe for many centuries. It balanced between the east and the west: when the gates were closed, Ukraine helped stop foreign invasions when they were open, Ukraine facilitated the interchange of people, commodities, and ideas.¹⁶

The first country, Kyivan Rus, that lied in Ukraine, was established by Rus Vikings in 882. During 10-11th century, Kyivan Rus became the largest country in Europe. Volodymyr was one of its most influential rulers. He took the throne in 980. He strengthened border defenses by building fortifications along the local rivers and maintained Kyivan Rus' stability. Furthermore, Volodymyr brought Christianity to Rus and made it an Orthodox state. The history of the Kyivan Rus' ended with the Mongol invasion. On December 7, 1240, the Mongols conquered the city of Kyiv and started the era of Rus' being ruled by foreigners.

For 400 years Ukraine had been part of Central and Eastern European monarchies. It was integrated in their cultural life and legal and social systems. Despite similarities that Ukraine shared with Central and Eastern European societies, it had a unique class of Cossacks that emerged in the 15th century. The first Cossacks were nomads who lived in the steppes and preyed on merchants without sufficient guards.¹⁷ The absolute majority of Cossacks were Ukrainians who came from the huge manorial estates. The emergence of the Cossack class was fateful for Ukraine. They started the Great Revolt in the spring of 1648, in which their chief, Bohdan Khmelnytsky, led the largest of the Cossack uprisings against the Commonwealth and the Polish king. Initially it looked like one of the previous revolts, similar to the first Cossack uprising led by Kryshtof Kosynsky in 1591. It started as a dispute over a land grant between a magnate and Bohdan Khmelnytsky.¹⁸ However, its scale exceeded all the previous revolts and brought Ukraine into the Russian orbit. After Khmelnytsky suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Berestechko in 1651, he asked Russian tsar for help. Later in 1654, he was subject to Pereiaslav

¹⁴ Lin Zexu, a Chinese political philosopher and politician, was known for his suppression of Opium considering its detrimental effect on Chinese people and fought against foreign aggression as the country faced the danger of becoming a semi-colony.

¹⁵ Liang Qichao was a Chinese politician, social and political activist. His thought had a significant influence on the political reformation of modern China and his famous poem "Young China" encouraged young people to receive education and contribute to the whole nation in order to fight the invaders.

¹⁶ Serhii, Plokyh. "Introduction," *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, Basic Books (2015), p. xxi

¹⁷ "The Cossacks," *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, p. 75

¹⁸ "The Great Revolt," *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, p. 97

Agreement, forming a military and political alliance with Russia that acknowledged loyalty to the Russian monarch. More than a century later, in 1793, Right Bank (western) Ukraine was annexed by the Russian Empire.

One of the consequences of being part of the Russian Empires was the policy of Russification. Over the years that followed, a policy known as Russification banned the use and study of the Ukrainian language, and people were pressured to convert to the Russian Orthodox faith. The emphasis on the Russian language and culture aimed to make governing the empire easier and more efficient, given the diversity of nations in the Russian Empire. In addition, for most supporters of Russification, the policy had the purpose of consolidating a Russian national identity and combatting the potential threat of imperial disintegration in the face of minority nationalism. According to Kulyk, the census of 1897 inquired about the gap between the nationality and spoken language between the two nations, and the gap turned out to be a single-digit percentage, which indicated that most Ukrainians spoke Ukrainian languages, and only few Ukrainians practiced Russian language as their spoken language.¹⁹ This means that the Russification act during the end of the 19th century may not be as effective as most people had predicted. Still, many Ukrainians strongly linked their ethnicity with spoken language, especially those who reverted to their traditional “non-Russian” identity.

After the communist revolution of 1917, Ukraine was one of the many countries to fight a brutal civil war before being fully absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1922. In the early 1930s, to force peasants to join collective farms, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin orchestrated a famine that resulted in the starvation and death of millions of Ukrainians. Kulyk shows that “since 1933, a radical change in the regime’s priorities brought about rapid strengthening of the Russian-language component of public life at the expense of Ukrainian and minority languages.”²⁰ After World War II, the large-scale immigration from Russia and other republics strengthened the role of Russian as a lingua franca, particularly in the cities where most migrants worked and lived. The Russians came to Ukraine for more economic opportunities, as Ukraine became a key industrial chain and played an important role in the Soviet Union’s manufacture industry. Although Ukrainian continued to be used in many cultural and symbolic practices, its presence diminished steadily. In 1958, a new law on education made the languages of the republics’ titular nationalities an optional subject in Russian-language schools while retaining Russian as a mandatory subject in schools with other languages of instruction. This shows that most of the past generations (in the Soviet context) of Ukrainians are Russian speakers and receive Russian language education in school. This shift brought about a drastic decline in urban titular-language education in Ukraine from the 1960s through the mid-1980s, except in the western regions.²¹

With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine became an independent nation. After the independence of Ukraine, the economic decline was significant, though. This is mainly because the Ukrainian government delayed badly needed economic reforms and continued printing more money that led to inflation. The nation then underwent a series of privatization but many enterprises still experienced deficit. Not until the

¹⁹ Volodymyr, Kulyk. “Language and Identity in Ukraine before Independence,” *Language and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Transformation of an Unbroken Bond*, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine (2013), p. 4

²⁰ *Language and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Transformation of an Unbroken Bond*, p. 4

²¹ *Language and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine: Transformation of an Unbroken Bond*, p. 6

beginning of the 21st century did Viktor Yushchenko boost the economy by lowering taxes on medium and small business.²²

The internal politics of Ukraine in the early 21st century was complicated. The presidential election of 2004 set Yanukovych, strongly supported by President Putin, in combat with Yushchenko, who tended to devise the anti-Russian policy. Yanukovych was first declared as the winner of the presidential election but was further protested by the people who supported the anti-Russian policy and aimed to collaborate with the European nations by getting rid of the dominance of Russia. The Orange Revolution took place in 2004 marked the national awakening of Ukrainian citizens. Ukrainians protested the president election in order to diverge sharply from the increasing authoritarianism of Vladimir Putin's Russia.²³ For the first thirteen years of independence, the political, cultural, social, and economic boundaries between Ukraine and Russia had remained blurred, which most people on both sides of the border continued to regard the fates of the two notionally separate countries as inextricably intertwined. Because of the economic oligarchy caused by the politicians and the volatile relationship with Russia and the western countries, Ukraine suffered from huge internal political chaos, which compromised its own development. However, this changed dramatically in 2004 when millions of Ukrainians mobilized in defense of free elections.

IV. War/Revolution and the Language Use

It is believed that the Russian aggression against Ukraine has caused an upsurge in national identification, though it did not lead to a commensurate increase in the use of the Ukrainian language. From 2014 Euromaidan and Crimean Annexation to 2022 Ukraine - Russian War, we saw more frequent use of Ukrainian language and the arousal of Ukrainian national identity. As for the entertainment, there was an increasing amount of Ukrainian films, even being selected for world film festivals. People began to use Ukrainian more for their daily communication in social media.

According to the survey conducted by Kulyk, "In 2014, 61% of respondents in the nationwide sample preferred the identity of a citizen of Ukraine, in contrast to 21% who identified with their city or village and 9% with their region (other options scored lower than 5%)."²⁴ This indicated that apart from the eastern area like the Donbas, most Ukrainians regard themselves first as citizens of Ukraine then as other regions. This showed that the Russian invasion influences Ukraine's national identity. Though the word "Ukrainian" could mean many things such as national, ethnic, or some other combination, self-perception is extremely salient in today's Ukraine. This trend could be exaggerated during the outbreak of the Russo-Ukrainian War. According to the seventeenth national survey conducted in August 2022, 94% of the citizens believed that their identity belonged to Ukraine. At the same time, almost 10% of citizens thought of themselves as a "Soviet Person," mostly consisting of senior

²² *The Gates of Europe*, p. 332

²³ Mark Beissinger & Stephen Kotkin. "Soviet Nationalities Policies and the Discrepancy between Ethnocultural Identification and Language Practice in Ukraine," *Historical Legacies of Communism in Russia and Eastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press (July 2014), p. 214.

²⁴ Volodymyr, Kulyk. "Changes in Identity after the Maidan and War," *Language and identity in Ukraine after Euromaidan*, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine (2016), p. 94. The author conducted a survey about the Ukrainians' recognition of national identity. This shows that Euromaidan had exerted a large impact on Ukrainians' minds, especially feeling a sense of belonging to their mother country.

citizens, but more than 80% did not, especially the young people.²⁵ This indicated that the outbreak of the war strengthened Ukraine citizens' national consciousness, especially for the young people who did not experience the Russification during the era of Soviet Union.

However, the emphasis on language by Benedict Anderson could not fully account for the national consciousness in Ukraine. To a larger extent, the divided political stances of the presidents in Ukraine and the geographical location of Ukraine also contributed to the formation of national consciousness. Ukraine is known as "the gate of Europe," meaning that it is located between Europe and Asia. Adjoining Russia, and European countries such as Hungary or Poland, Ukraine has strategic geographical location for both the bloc of Russia and the bloc of the western Europe. Facing the expansion of NATO in eastern Europe, Russia sought to gain the dominance of Ukraine and prevent the potential threat made by western Europe, especially the US. In the Eastern Ukraine, including Donbas, Crimea, and Lugansk, the culture is controlled or dominated by Russia, which could be shown as the existence of ethnic Russians and the frequent use of Russian language. After the collapse of Soviet bloc in 1991, the western Ukraine, including Lviv, Lutsk, or Odessa, is mostly dominated by the democratic and novel political ideas held by the European countries. As the gate of Europe, the western Ukraine is closer to the central Europe, avoiding the control of Russia. The Orange Revolution and the Euromaidan 2014 indicated the Ukrainians' embracement of western culture, especially the notion of democracy and freedom, and the willingness to get rid of the control of Russia. Because of its unique geographical location, the Ukraine citizens aroused their national consciousness with the aid of the propaganda of the western countries and the lesser control of Russia.

The national consciousness of the modern Ukraine could also be attributed to the political stance made by the presidents. Presidents such as Yushchenko and Kravchuk were pro-western presidents who tried to adjust Ukraine's status among the western countries. They devised laws to force the official use of Ukrainian language. In 1989, the Supreme Soviet of Ukraine changed the Constitution and adopted the "Law of Languages."²⁶ The Ukrainian language was declared the only official language, while the other languages spoken in Ukraine were guaranteed constitutional protection. Also, according to the laws on civil and administrative procedure enacted in Ukraine in 2005, all legal and court proceedings in Ukraine are to be conducted in Ukrainian. As we can see, without the enforcement of the laws that advocate the use of Ukrainian language, the Ukrainian citizens might not realize their national consciousness, which means that the formation of national identity should be aroused by certain policies or enforcements.

At the same time, we should not ignore the significance of the Russian invasion that prompted the Ukrainians' cohesion and national consciousness. On the morning of 24th February, president Putin announced a "special military operation" to Ukraine, indicating the start of the Russian invasion towards Ukraine. Witnessing the injuries and deaths of the compatriots and the huge damage in the Ukrainian cities made by the Russians, the Ukrainians form a united front to counter the Russian armies. In this case, the national consciousness of the

²⁵https://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/ukraine/s_mnadcyate_zagalnonac_onalne_opituvannya_dentichn_st_patr_ot_izm_c_nmost_17-18_serpnya_2022.html

²⁶ "Donetsk City Council Cancels Resolution Restricting Use Of Ukrainian Language In Educational Establishments Archived 2012-09-18 at archive.today", Ukrainian News Agency, May 26, 2008.

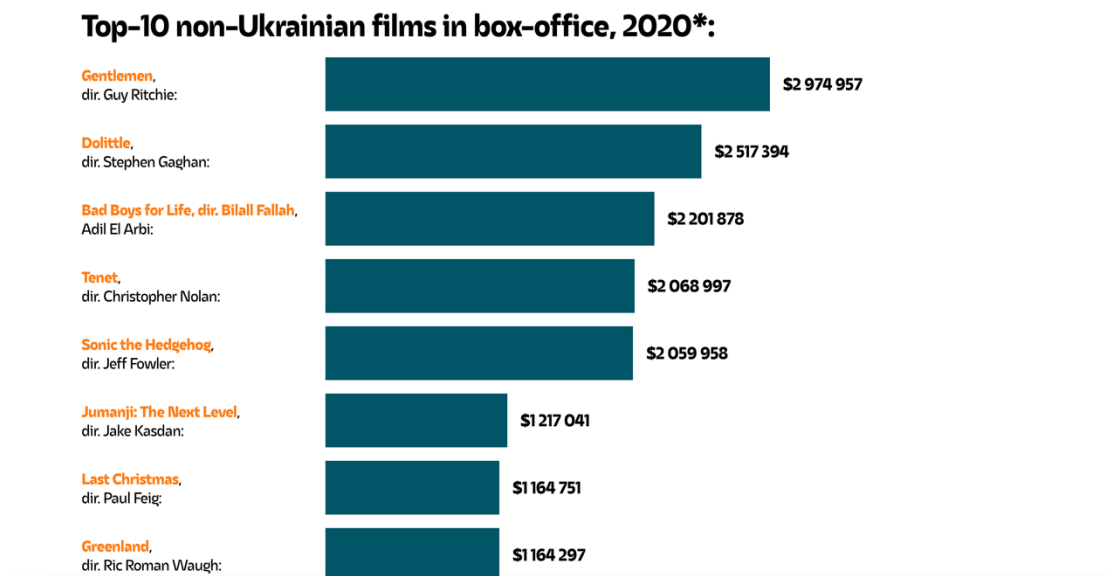
Ukrainians is even intensified, and people, especially from the western Ukraine, generated a sense of hatred to the Russians.

V. The New Ukrainian Culture:

According to the Ukrainian Cinema Overview in 2020-2021, when it comes to a popular culture, we can see that more Ukrainian films were produced and even being selected for the international film festivals, such as *The Earth is Blue as an Orange* by Iryna Tsilyk or *Bad Roads* by Nataliya Vorozhbyt.²⁷ However, there was a large portion of Ukrainian films, such as *This Rain Will Never Stop* by Alina Gorlova or *Rhino* by Oleh Sentsov that were made in cooperation with other nearby European countries, as Ukraine joined “Eurimages”, a Cinematographic Co-production platform.

However, most Ukrainian people spent their money on non-Ukrainian films, especially films from the US. For example, the chart shows that the most popular film for Ukrainian audience in 2020 was *Gentlemen* by Guy Ritchie with almost 3 million dollars of box office. On the other hand, people spent less money on Ukrainian films. For example, the most popular Ukrainian film for Ukrainian audience in 2020 showing in the chart was *My Thoughts Are Silent* by Antonio Lukich with only 4 hundred thousand of box office.

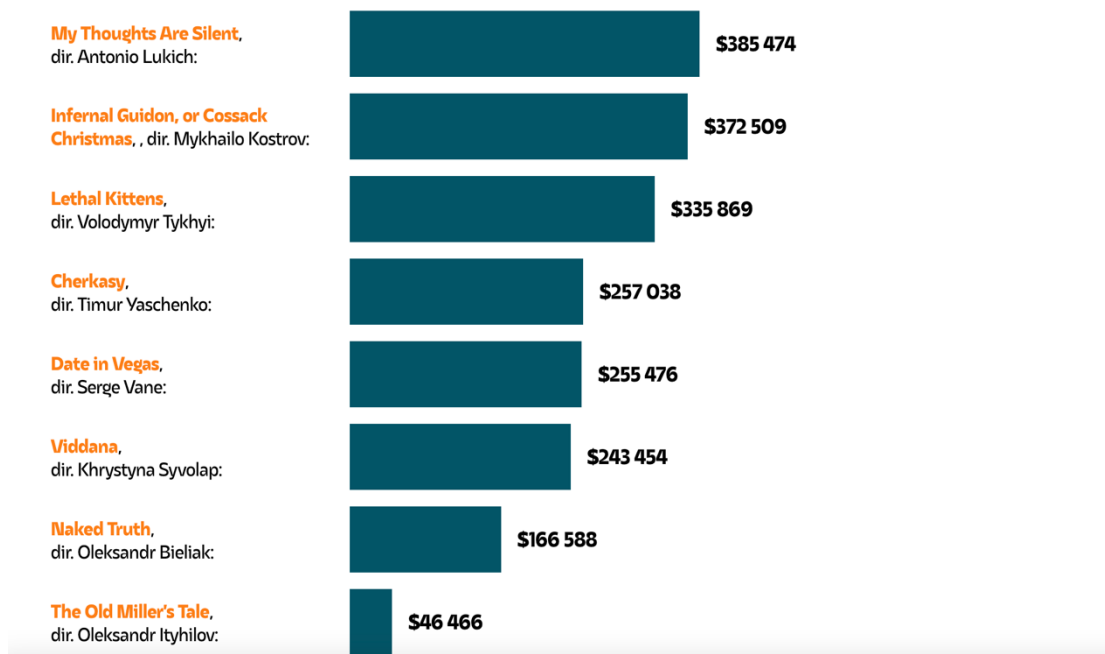
Top 10 non-Ukrainian films in 2020:



²⁷ <https://ukrainiancinema.org/overview>

Top 10 Ukrainian films in 2020:

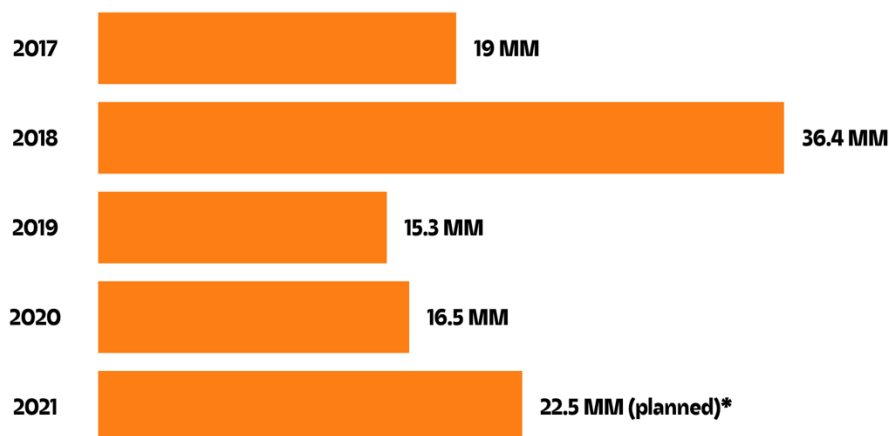
Top-10 Ukrainian films in box-office, 2020*:



Actually, the reason is not about the language but the development of Ukrainian film production.

Ukrainian state support for film, \$:

State support for films, \$

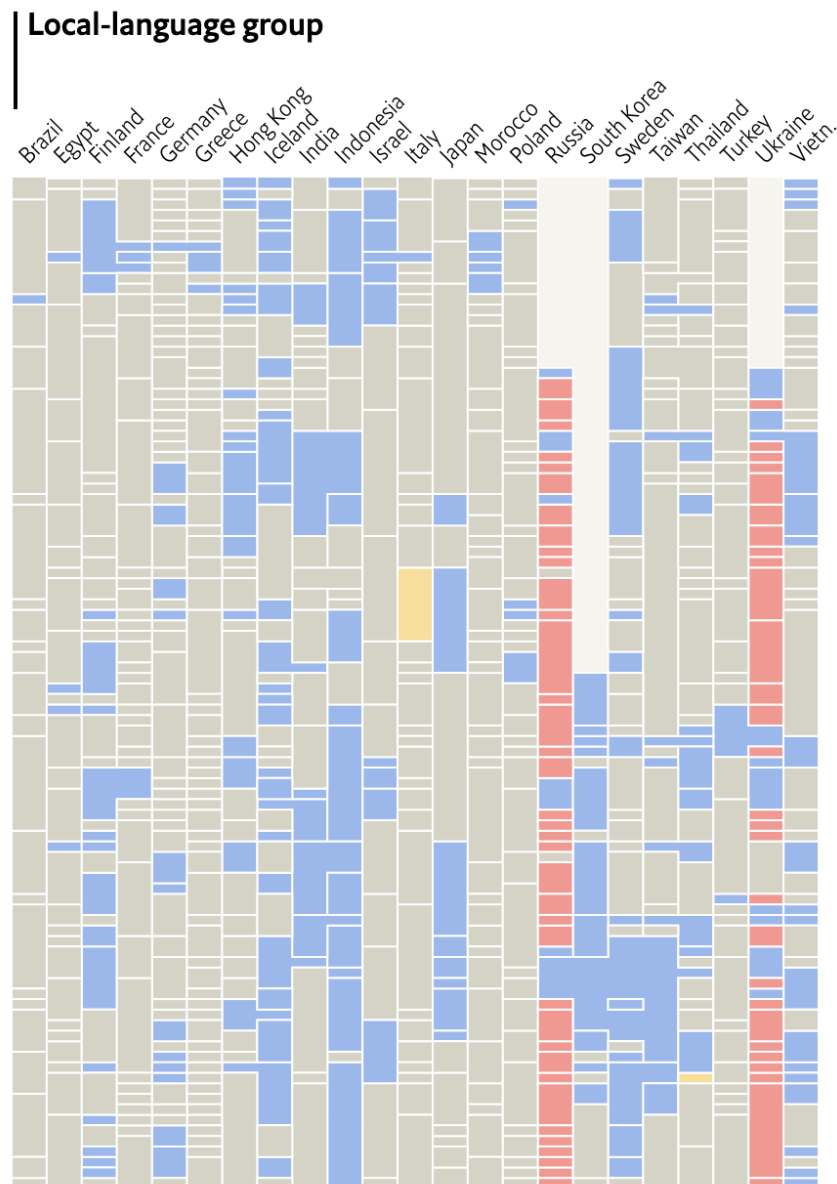


The Ukrainian government spent 22 million dollars on Ukrainian films in 2019. The United States or Western Europe spend more money on film production and create better plots and views for audiences compared to the Ukrainian films, which explains their popularity.

As for the social media, Ukrainians showed a tendency to shift their daily use from Russian to Ukrainian. The Ukrainian consulting company “Center for Content Analysis” investigated the use of Ukrainian and Russian

languages in the Ukrainian segment of social networks in June 2022.²⁸ For the analysis, posts were collected from the most popular social networks in Ukraine such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok. As the statistics revealed, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have undergone significant Ukrainianization from the daily use of Ukrainian from about 13-27% to two thirds. In terms of music, we found that Russian still has a huge impact on the Ukrainian market.

The Economists chart of Spotify songs in the Ukrainian market:²⁹



²⁸ <https://odessa-journal.com/research-what-language-do-ukrainians-use-in-social-networks-during-the-fourth-month-of-the-war/>

²⁹ The data started from January 2020 to January 2022. The red color represents Russian; the blue color represents English; and the yellow color represents Spanish

According to the chart conducted by The Economists, the Russian language music continued to occupy the Ukrainian market starting in 2020.³⁰ However, in the past two years, the Ukrainian language had gained more attention. In 2021, the Spotify added Ukrainian on mobile and web, implying the increasing influence of the language. In addition, because of the initial Ukrainian-Russian war, the Spotify official suppressed the Russian market by closing the office in Russia and providing individual support for Ukrainian employees. However, this particular aspect of social media actually conforms to Benedict Anderson's theory of national languages: the development of language is a pragmatic yet gradual process. Though the Ukrainians made rapid change of their daily use language in social media, it might take some time for them to shift their listening habit from Russian to the Ukrainian language.

VI. Predictions

Since the Russian aggression in 2014, the Ukrainian language had shown great signs of focus and advocacy, whereas the Russian language in Ukraine came to be viewed somewhat more negatively. However, because of the historical factors, which, the last generations in Ukraine had spoken the Russian language, the Ukraine government did not further interfere with the use of the Russian language. Most Russian speakers saw no reason to switch to the titular language since they viewed their belonging to the Ukrainian nation as based on free choice rather than any ethnocultural characteristics.³¹ Some Ukrainian citizens still view Russian language as their first language when speaking with their friends and families. Yet given the recent trend of switching to Ukrainian as a response to the military aggression, the author believes that apart from the Donbas, the current and future generations of Ukrainians will more likely receive education in Ukrainian language.

On the other hand, though, if Russia turns out to be more successful in the Russo-Ukrainian War, the result may be different to some point. The author predicts that the defeat of the Ukraine would mark the reinforcement of the Ukraine language within the Ukraine border, especially in the east and middle Ukraine, which includes more citizens originated from the Russian ethnicity. The Ukrainian government, with the pressure of the Russian government, may be forced to construct more schools teaching Russian language and advocate the usage of Russian. However, the citizens in Ukraine, especially from the western Ukraine, which is close to the inner regions of Europe, may continue to speak Ukrainian language in their daily lives. This ideology is similar to the idea raised by James C. Scott, who devised the term "hidden transcript" to describe the discourse happening offstage and "public transcript" to describe the discourse happening onstage.³² If the suppression of Russia is overly intense, the discourse behind the stage but not in front of the stage, or in public, may act to be more active. At the same time, the game between the dominator (Russia) and the subordinate (Ukraine) may be presented by the act, or performance, of the two sides. To escape from the dominance of Russia, the Ukrainian citizens may

³⁰ <https://www.economist.com/interactive/graphic-detail/2022/01/29/what-spotify-data-show-about-the-decline-of-english>

³¹ *Language and Identity in Ukraine*, p. 103. Kulyk showed that because most of the past generations received education in Russian language, they continued using Russian for utilitarian use. This partly indicated that the language choice does not fully influence people's national identity.

³² James C. Scott. "Behind the Official Story," *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, Yale University Press (1992), pp. 1-17

adopt the strategy of seemingly speak Russian in their public life but practicing Ukrainian language in their private life, especially in the context of family communication or social media.

According to this model, when a nation is eliminated by the nearby nation, although the border and the dynasty is destroyed, its culture and even language would still be preserved in the group of people, or an ethnicity. This ideology could be represented by the history in China during the Song Dynasty and the subsequent Yuan Dynasty, led by the Mongolian ethnicity. In 1279, Song Dynasty collapsed with the invasion of QiDan ethnicity, who then established the Yuan Dynasty. Although the geographical border was eliminated, and the territory was dominated by QiDan ethnicity, the Han's traditional culture and managing system still maintained in people's mind. For example, after control of the former Song territory, QiDan still continued the imperial examination system originated from Tang and Song Dynasty.³³ Yuan Dynasty adopted four levels of examination originated from Song Dynasty, including Xiang, Fu, Sheng, and Dian. In this case, people who succeeded in Sheng and Dian were all called as Jinshi. Sheng exam was led by Libu (a sector of government institution), and the Dian exam was led directly by the emperor. As a result, facing the powerful enemy, a single nation might collapse and lost all its territory, but its culture and tradition may still continue in people's mind, and this model still apply to the situation of Ukraine, in which the Ukrainian citizens may still practice their culture by the hidden transcript.

VII. Conclusion:

In conclusion, the effect of the war is influential in terms of language consciousness. We found that as the Ukrainian-Russian War took place, more Ukrainians started to use Ukrainian language more frequently and tended to revive their own culture, which showed their national consciousness. Ukrainians switched to Ukrainian language in their social media and produced more high-quality films. Yet this language transition was gradual but not linear. Russian language still continued to occupy certain niches such as music. However, language alone could not explain the formation of new national identity among Ukrainians. More importantly, the geographical location of Ukraine and the complex political stance by the Ukrainian presidents after the collapse of the Soviet Union also contributed to the Ukrainians' national consciousness. In a larger context, when the country is being suppressed and invaded, the citizens will evoke a sense of national identity. Accordingly, the frequency of using native language in social media and films will increase. If the war tends to be successful to the Russia and Russia comes to control vast parts of the current Ukrainian territory, the Ukrainian national consciousness may still be heightened but in a different way. The author predicts that the Ukrainians might end up practicing the strategy of "hidden transcript," which under the dominance of Russian language but still speaking Ukrainian language in the private sphere of lives.

³³ Yuhuan Wu. *General History of China's Imperial Examination System*, Shanghai People's Publishing House (2015), pp. 109-110