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Language Policies and National Security of Ukraine: From Education Laws to The Concept of Rashism

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Abstract

The coexistence of Ukrainian and Russian languages remained largely stable until the full-scale invasion of 2022, which fundamentally altered the linguistic and security landscape. Subsequent policy efforts to strengthen the use of Ukrainian in the public sphere gained renewed legitimacy as Russian became increasingly framed as the language of the aggressor. In this context, language has acquired heightened geopolitical and security significance. This paper examines the nexus between language policy and national security in Ukraine. It investigates how linguistic choices operate not only as markers of cultural identity but also as instruments of security, state consolidation, and geopolitical alignment. The study employs a qualitative methodology, combining analysis of policy frameworks, legal documents, and reports from international organizations with semi-structured interviews conducted with Ukrainian refugees in Romania. Findings indicate that the Ukrainian language has evolved into a central pillar of national security, fostering social cohesion and enabling resistance against external aggression. In contrast, the Russian language—despite its historical prevalence—has increasingly been instrumentalized by the Russian Federation as a tool of influence and a justificatory narrative for political and military intervention. The paper argues that language policy in Ukraine should be conceptualized as an integral component of broader security strategy rather than a purely cultural or administrative domain. By situating language governance within the framework of hybrid threats, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of strategic culture in post-Soviet states and underscores the role of linguistic policy in enhancing national resilience.

Keywords: geopolitics; identity; Ukrainian; strategy; culture