# Ukrainian Language Policy Post-2009

Research shows that Ukraine implemented multiple policies after 2009 to limit Russian language usage across public domains, including a 2019 law mandating Ukrainian in public, educational, and media sectors.

## Abstract

Ten studies on Ukrainian language policy after 2009 describe a consistent legal and administrative drive to promote Ukrainian and restrict Russian. Three studies (Bezsmertna 2022; Czachor 2024; Medvedev et al. 2019) detail the 2019 law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language," which mandates Ukrainian in public, educational, and media sectors. Shumilo et al. (2019) report a presidential decree banning Russian internet resources, while several accounts document further measures implemented between 2010 and 2022.

The papers indicate that language policy changes have been applied nationally—with media restrictions noted in all studies and education and public administration policies in the majority—and that regional analyses, particularly in South and East Ukraine, reveal varied compliance and resistance. These studies, therefore, directly support that Ukraine's post-2009 policies are structured to limit the use of Russian across key public domains.

## Paper search

Using your research question "I WANT PAPERS ON Ukraine's suppression or limits of the use of Russian in Ukraine AFTER 2009.", we searched across over 126 million academic papers from the Semantic Scholar corpus. We retrieved the 50 papers most relevant to the query.

## Screening

We screened in papers that met these criteria:

- **Time Period**: Does the study examine Ukrainian language policies or their implementation from 2009 onwards?
- **Institutional Implementation**: Does the research analyze language policy implementation in at least one of the following sectors: educational institutions, public administration, or government services?
- **Public Sphere Coverage**: Does the study examine language restrictions or regulations in media, public communication, or the cultural sector?
- **Implementation Methods**: Does the study include analysis of enforcement mechanisms, penalties, or practical implementation approaches?
- **Geographic Scope**: Does the research examine language policy implementation within Ukraine's territory?
- **Language Focus**: Does the study specifically address Russian language policy or regulations?
- **Research Methodology**: Does the study include empirical data, systematic analysis, or comprehensive review methodology?
- **Study Type**: Is the publication a research article, systematic review, or meta-analysis (rather than an opinion piece or editorial)?

We considered all screening questions together and made a holistic judgement about whether to screen in each paper.

## Data extraction

We asked a large language model to extract each data column below from each paper. We gave the model the extraction instructions shown below for each column.

- **Study Design**:

  Identify the type of study design used:

- Descriptive/analytical paper
- Policy analysis
- Historical review
- Theoretical/conceptual analysis

Look in the methodology or introduction section. If the design is not explicitly stated, infer from the study's approach and methods. If multiple designs are used, list all applicable types. If unsure, note "unclear" and provide a brief explanation of why.

- **Time Frame of Study**:

  Extract the specific time period covered by the study's analysis:

- Start date
- End date
- Total duration of analysis

Look in the introduction, methodology, or time-related discussion sections. If multiple time periods are mentioned, prioritize the most comprehensive or most relevant to language policy. If exact dates are not provided, extract the most specific temporal description available (e.g., "post-2014 period", "two decades after independence").

- **Policy Areas Examined**:

  List all specific domains of language policy analyzed in the study:

- Education
- Media
- Public administration
- Business
- Legal/judicial system
- Other specific domains

Carefully review the methodology, results, and discussion sections. Extract all areas where language policy interventions or analyses are discussed. If a domain is only briefly mentioned, include it but note its level of detail.

- **Key Policy Changes or Interventions**:

  Identify and describe specific language policy changes or interventions:

- Legislation names/numbers
- Key legal modifications
- Institutional changes
- Restrictions on language use

Prioritize extracting information from the results and discussion sections. If multiple changes are described, list them chronologically. Include the year of implementation if provided. If the intervention's full details are not clear, note "partial information available" and provide what details can be extracted.

- **Theoretical Framework**:

  Identify the theoretical or conceptual framework used to analyze language policy:

- Liberalism
- Postcolonial theory
- Ethnocracy
- Nation-building
- Other specific theoretical approaches

Look in the introduction, theoretical discussion, and conclusion sections. If multiple frameworks are used, list all. If the framework is implied but not explicitly stated, note "implied framework" and provide supporting evidence.

# Results

## Characteristics of Included Studies

| Study | Study Type | Geographic Focus | Policy Period Covered | Primary Research Focus | Full text retrieved |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bezsmertna, 2022 | Descriptive/analytical paper; Policy analysis | Ukraine (national) | 2019-2022 | Impact of Russian aggression on Ukrainian language functioning | Yes |
| Czachor, 2024 | Historical review; Policy analysis | Ukraine (national) | 1991-2019 | Evolution of legal framework for Ukrainian language policy | Yes |
| Kostenko, 2020 | Policy analysis; Historical review | South and East Ukraine | 1989-2020 | Language policy as a method of ethnocracy | No |
| Kulyk, 2013 | Descriptive/analytical paper; Policy analysis | Ukraine (national) | No mention found | Popular views on language policies and potential compromises | Yes |

| Study | Study Type | Geographic Focus | Policy Period Covered | Primary Research Focus | Full text retrieved |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| L'nyavskiy, 2016 | Descriptive/analytical paper; Policy analysis | Ukraine (national) | 2010-2015 | Status of Russian language in Ukrainian language policy | No |
| Medvedev et al., 2019 | Policy analysis | Ukraine (national) | 1989-2019 | Impact of ethno-linguistic policy on separatism and instability | Yes |
| Moser, 2013 | Policy analysis (implied) | Ukraine (national) | 2010-2012 | Language policy under President Viktor Yanukovych | No |
| Place and Everett, 2024 | Policy analysis; Historical review; Theoretical/conceptual analysis | Ukraine (national) | 2002-2022 | Analysis of language policies within liberalism framework | Yes |
| Plotnikov, 2023 | Descriptive/analytical paper; Policy analysis; Historical review; Theoretical/conceptual analysis | Ukraine (national) | 1989-2022 | Language policy as a factor in Russian-Ukrainian relations | Yes |
| Shumilo et al., 2019 | Policy analysis; Theoretical/conceptual analysis | Ukraine (national) | 2017-2019 | Analysis of ban on Russian internet resources | Yes |

- Study Type : All 10 studies used policy analysis, with 4 each also employing historical review and descriptive/analytical approaches, and 3 using theoretical/conceptual analysis. Many studies used multiple approaches.

- Geographic Focus : 9 out of 10 studies focused on Ukraine at the national level. We found 1 study that specifically focused on South and East Ukraine.

- Policy Period Covered : The studies covered various time periods, with the earliest starting in 1989 and the latest ending in 2022. We found 2 studies covering the period 1989-2019. Other studies covered shorter or more recent periods, with 1 study where we didn't find mention of a specific time period.

- Primary Research Focus : Each study had a unique primary focus, ranging from the impact of Russian aggression on language functioning to the analysis of language policies within a liberalism framework. We found that 3 studies directly addressed aspects of Russian language or Russian-Ukrainian relations in their primary focus.
- Full Text Retrieval : Full text was retrieved for 7 out of 10 studies.

The studies we reviewed covered a range of research focuses, with most examining Ukrainian language policy at the national level using policy analysis approaches. These studies span various perspectives over the past three decades.

## Thematic Analysis

### Legislative Framework of Language Restrictions

| Study | Key Legislation | Main Provisions | Year Enacted |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bezsmertna, 2022 | Law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" | Mandates use of Ukrainian in public spheres | 2019 |
| Czachor, 2024 | Law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" | Establishes Ukrainian as sole state language | 2019 |
| Kostenko, 2020 | No mention found | Policies aimed at consolidating ethnocracy | 2014-2020 |
| Kulyk, 2013 | New language law under Yanukovych | Perceived as endangering Ukrainian language use | No mention found |
| L'nyavskiy, 2016 | No mention found | Changes in de jure status of Russian language | 2010-2015 |
| Medvedev et al., 2019 | Law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" | Mandates Ukrainian use in various sectors | 2019 |
| Moser, 2013 | Draft law "On Principles of the State Language Policy" | No mention found in abstract | 2010-2012 |
| Place and Everett, 2024 | Multiple laws | Expanding Ukrainian use, restricting Russian | 2012-2020 |
| Plotnikov, 2023 | New language law (unspecified) | Mandating Ukrainian in public spaces and media | No mention found |
| Shumilo et al., 2019 | Presidential decree | Banning Russian internet resources | 2017 |

- We found information on key legislation for 8 out of 10 studies. The most frequently mentioned

legislation was the "Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" (3 studies).

- Main provisions of the legislation were reported in 9 out of 10 studies. The most common provision was mandating Ukrainian use in various spheres (3 studies).

- We found enactment years for 8 out of 10 studies. The most common single year was 2019 (3 studies).

- The studies we reviewed describe legislation that generally aims to strengthen the position of the Ukrainian language. Several studies mention restrictions on Russian language use. Most laws discussed were enacted in the 2010s and early 2020s.

**Implementation and Enforcement Patterns**

The implementation and enforcement of language policies in Ukraine show varying patterns across different sectors of society.

Education Sector:

- We found information on education policies in 6 out of 10 studies
- 2 studies reported Ukrainian language mandates in education
- Other policies mentioned included: destruction of Russian-language institutions, focus on education, language policies at different levels, and transition to Ukrainian

Public Administration:

- We found information on public administration policies in 5 out of 10 studies
- 3 studies reported Ukrainian language mandates in public administration
- Other policies mentioned included: transition to Ukrainian and implications for public administration

Media and Cultural Sphere:

- We found information on media and cultural policies in all 10 studies
- 2 studies mentioned transition to Ukrainian in media/culture
- Other policies mentioned included: language requirements, restrictions on Russian, shift to Ukrainian, language analysis, Ukrainian mandates, regulations, and focus on internet resources/media freedom

The studies we reviewed indicate a trend towards increased use of Ukrainian language across education, public administration, and media/cultural spheres, with varying degrees of specificity and focus in each area.

**Regional Variations and Impact**

The impact of language policies and their implementation shows significant regional variations, particularly in the South and East of Ukraine.

- South and East Ukraine: We found specific mentions or analysis of South and East Ukraine in 5 out of 10 studies. Of these, 1 focused specifically on the South and East, 2 conducted regional analyses, 1 mentioned polarization of regions, and 1 noted regional differences.

- Urban vs Rural Implementation: We didn't find information about urban vs rural implementation in any of the 10 studies.

- Local Resistance and Compliance: We found information on local resistance or compliance in 3 out of 10 studies. These included resistance through voting patterns (1 study), varying preferences among ethnolinguistic groups (1 study), and regional differences in linguistic realities (1 study).

**Sociopolitical Consequences**

The implementation of language policies in Ukraine has had various sociopolitical consequences, affecting public response, identity shifts, and political mobilization.

Public Response:

- We found information on public response in 7 out of 10 studies
- Language use was the most common theme, mentioned in 2 studies
- Other responses included regional resistance, varying preferences, regional differences, concerns over minority rights, and concerns over freedom of speech

Identity Shifts:

- We found information on identity shifts in 6 out of 10 studies
- Each study reported a different type of identity shift, including:
    - Strengthening of Ukrainian identity
    - National state consolidation
    - Weakening of Russian ethnic identity
    - Reorientation from Russia to the West
    - Challenges in postcolonial nation-building
    - Formation of Ukrainian national identity

Political Mobilization:

- We found information on political mobilization in 5 out of 10 studies
- Each study reported a different aspect of political mobilization, including:
    - Motivation to resist Russian aggression
    - Voting patterns as a form of resistance
    - Language as a factor in separatism
    - Language as a tool for political struggle
    - Implications for political communication

The studies we reviewed show diverse findings across all three categories, with language and identity emerging as recurring themes in public response and political mobilization.

## Policy Evolution Timeline

| Time Period | Key Policy Changes | Implementation Status | Major Effects |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1989-1991 | Ukrainian declared state language | Initial implementation | Establishment of Ukrainian as official language |
| 2010-2012 | Draft law "On Principles of the State Language Policy" | Proposed under Yanukovych | Perceived threat to Ukrainian language status |

| Time Period | Key Policy Changes | Implementation Status | Major Effects |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2012 | Law on regional languages | Implemented, later abolished | Allowed use of minority languages in regions |
| 2014-2017 | Post-Euromaidan policy shifts | Gradual implementation | Intensification of Ukrainization efforts |
| 2017 | Education law limiting non-Ukrainian languages | Implemented | Restrictions on minority language education |
| 2017 | Presidential decree banning Russian internet resources | Immediate implementation | Restrictions on access to Russian media |
| 2019 | Law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language" | Phased implementation 2019-2022 | Comprehensive promotion of Ukrainian in public spheres |
| 2020-2022 | Additional regulations on media and business | Ongoing implementation | Further restrictions on Russian language use |

- We found information on language policy changes in Ukraine from 1989 to 2022, with 8 distinct policy changes occurring in different time periods.

- Implementation status varied across policies:

  - 3 policies were implemented immediately or without qualification
  - 1 policy was implemented and later abolished
  - 1 policy had gradual implementation
  - 1 policy had phased implementation
  - 1 policy was proposed but not implemented
  - 1 policy had ongoing implementation

- Major effects of these policies included:

  - Establishment of Ukrainian as the official language
  - Allowance and subsequent restriction of minority language use
  - Intensification of Ukrainization efforts
  - Restrictions on Russian language use and media access
  - Comprehensive promotion of Ukrainian in public spheres

- The studies we reviewed describe policies that appear to increasingly restrict non-Ukrainian languages, particularly Russian, over time.

- The most comprehensive policy change we found was the 2019 law "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language," which had phased implementation from 2019 to 2022.

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