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Mapping Identities: Russian Resistance to Linguistic Ukrainisation in Central and Eastern Ukraine

ANNA FOURNIER

MOST SCHOLARS WORKING ON UKRAINE agree that there is no blatant civic discrimination against Russians as an ethnic minority (e.g. Arel, 1995; Kuzio, 1998; Solchanyk, 2000). However, Russian resistance persists even in the general absence of exclusion on the basis of ethnicity. Why is that? In their book *Russians as the New Minority* (1996), Jeff Chinn & Robert Kaiser point to the dramatic decline in status faced by the Russian populations outside Russia. According to these authors, the Russians' protest revolves around their *dominant* minority status being 'downgraded' to a simple minority status in the post-Soviet states. There is certainly some truth to this. However, it seems that Russian resistance is also based on a particular understanding of *identity*. The Ukrainian state may protect the rights of ethnic minorities, but do the Russians of Ukraine perceive themselves as constituting an *ethnic* group? Here I would define ethnicity as an *exclusive* sense of groupness based on the belief in shared culture, language, history etc. The nature of a group's self-perception is very important because it affects the way in which symbolic boundaries between groups are drawn. The way in which those boundaries are drawn in turn determines the perception of exclusion.

I will argue that there is a trend among Russians in Central and Eastern Ukraine toward resistance not as an *ethnic* Russian minority but as an *extended* group which they refer to as the 'Russophones' or 'Russian-speakers'. This constructed group includes the Russophone Ukrainians, and is based on the Russian imperial concept of 'Slavic brotherhood' and the corresponding assumption of linguistic *and cultural* unity between Russians and Ukrainians. The Russians can therefore be said to protest not against an *ethnic* exclusion by the Ukrainian state but against a perceived *linguistic/cultural* exclusion as an extended group. In other words, Russian resistance tends to be directed at a Ukrainian state language law that does not recognise (empire-generated) hybridity within Ukraine.

First I will deal with Russian identity in Ukraine. I will then explore the way in which the correspondence (or lack thereof) between language use and identity shapes the language debate in the country. The nature of the Ukrainian state's language law will be addressed. Finally, the nature of Russian resistance will be explored through an analysis of articles and letters of protest against Ukrainisation.

The Russians in Ukraine

I would argue that the nature of a group's resistance is closely related to the nature of self-identification within that group. What kind of identity do the Russians (who according to the last Soviet census constituted 22% of the population of Ukraine) possess? Looking at the category of diaspora will allow us to explore features of Russian identity in Ukraine. Esman (1986, p. 333) defines diaspora as 'a minority ethnic group of migrant origin which maintains sentimental or material links with its land of origin'.

First, a diaspora is characterised by a 'shared, ongoing history of displacement' (Clifford, 1994, p. 306). However, those Russians moving from Russia to the periphery of the Soviet Union (primarily for economic reasons) did not experience a sense of radical discontinuity. In fact, they perceived their movement as internal migration (i.e. they were moving 'within the Soviet Union' rather than [from Russia] 'to Ukraine'). In 1991 the collapse of the Soviet Union brought about a shift in borders rather than a population movement. The processes of territorial continuity and discontinuity caused the location of the 'homeland' to become ambiguous to Russians outside Russia.

Safran (1991, p. 84) defines diasporas as '“expatriate minority communities” ... that maintain a memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland ... that see the ancestral home as a place of eventual return ... [and whose] consciousness and solidarity are “importantly defined” by this continuing relationship with the homeland'. Do those kinds of ties exist between the Russians in Ukraine, and post-collapse Russia? According to a poll conducted in Ukraine in 1990–91, '75% of Russians in Ukraine no longer identified with the Russian *nation*' (Kuzio, 1998, p. 92, emphasis added). That is, there is a relative absence of nostalgia toward Russia within its *present* borders. In fact, only a small percentage of the Russian population of Ukraine has returned to Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Pilkington, 1998, p. 9). This lack of attachment to Russia is not surprising since what was promoted during the Soviet period was a territorial/imperial identity (based on the idea of 'Russia' in its Tsarist and then Soviet borders) rather than a Russian ethnic or national identity.

This loose territorial identity allowed for a considerable degree of 'cross-fertilisation' between Russians and Ukrainians. Indeed, many Russians have, over time, integrated culturally (and sometimes linguistically) to the Ukrainian context. In regions such as Eastern Ukraine the symbolic boundaries between Russians and Ukrainians tend to be blurred. For example, Kuzio (1998, p. 83) states that the majority of Russians living in the Donbas are 'locals' 'who have gone native and intermarried'. Some Russians whose ancestors have lived on Ukrainian territory for centuries indeed consider themselves *indigenous* to Ukraine, a complete contradiction to a *diasporic* self-identification. In any case, supra-ethnic identities such as the 'East Slavic' or 'Soviet' identities (i.e. ones that allow for the expression of both Russian and Ukrainian elements) are common among Russians, especially in Eastern Ukraine. This kind of self-identification contradicts the notion of Russians as an ethnic group wishing to maintain strong boundaries with the local culture in view of an eventual return to the homeland.¹

I have stated that most Russians in Ukraine do not consider the Russian Federation

to be their 'homeland'. However, I would argue that, insofar as Russia attempts to preserve a Soviet *cognitive* space (i.e. through anything that restores imperial continuity or renders national boundaries irrelevant, such as unrestricted media flow, imperial political discourses etc.), then perhaps it does foster a link with the Russian populations in the former Soviet space. After all, the Soviet identity is still present for many not only in self-identification but also in memory and *habitus*.² As Russia reproduces Soviet categories of experience, it generates the myth of the Soviet Union as (an emblematic) homeland.

In any case, conceptualising Russians in Ukraine as a clearly bounded ethnic 'diaspora' not only overlooks the imperial legacy in terms of identity but also leads to mistaken expectations regarding the nature of resistance to Ukrainisation.

Hybridity and the Soviet legacy

We might define hybridity as 'the [conscious and unconscious] juxtaposition of two ... cultural traditions' and the 'process of inter-reference' between those traditions (Fischer, 1986, pp. 200–201).³ What accounts for the high level of Russian–Ukrainian hybridity found in certain regions of Ukraine? It is partly attributable to migration and contact between populations. However, I believe that the institutionalisation of hybridity during the Soviet period played a key role in consolidating trends toward intermixture.

While nationality was considered primordial (i.e. static and linked to ancestry and territory) during the Soviet period, Soviet authorities treated it as a temporary phenomenon. In fact, it was thought that the nationalities would 'gradually and voluntarily shed their distinctive identities, abandon their respective languages for Russian ... and merge into a common body from which all ethnic differences will disappear—a Russian-speaking cosmopolis' (Goldhagen, 1968, p. vii). Hybridity⁴ became institutionalised through the notion of *homo sovieticus* as well as through measures that sought to erode ethnic boundaries more directly, e.g. an increased (linguistic and cultural) Russian presence in the periphery of the Union, as well as the promotion of mixed marriages.

The notion of 'Slavic brotherhood' was at the core of Soviet internationalism. The origins of this idea are to be found during the Tsarist period, after the incorporation of Left Bank Ukraine into the Muscovite state in 1654. A clear formulation emerged in the 19th century, when the 'Great Russians' became the 'real Russians' and the leading nation of the triumvirate, while the 'Little Russians' (Ukrainians) and 'White Russians' (Belarusians) were seen 'either as a junior branch of the Russian family or as Russians corrupted by foreign influences' (Szporluk, 1997, p. 96).⁵ Indeed, this was a particular kind of hybridity since the relationship between Russians and Ukrainians was defined hierarchically. As the *vertical* (cultural) boundary between Ukrainians and Russians faded, the *horizontal* (hierarchical) boundary was reinforced. While supposed cultural similarity served as a justification for Russian cultural and political penetration, the hierarchy emphasised the Ukrainians' lack of potential for a separate existence.⁶

Ukraine's supposed 'historical desire for unity with Russia' became a *leitmotiv* in Soviet historiography. It was claimed that Ukrainians had been 'the same people' as

Russians since Kievan Rus', that Ukraine had been separated from Russia for a while because of 'foreign oppression' (e.g. Polish rule), and that Ukraine had then voluntarily been reunited with Russia (Treaty of Pereyaslav of 1654), the two becoming 'one nation' again (see Velychenko, 1993). The major differences in the historical development of Ukraine and Russia were downplayed (Velychenko, 1993, p. 210) or simply blamed on disruptive foreign influences.

Because of the element of hierarchy underlying the notion of both Soviet and Slavic identities (i.e. Russians as the leading nation), I believe that the hybridity developed under Soviet rule would be better described as '*imperial hybridity*'. In addition, while evidence of cultural cross-fertilisation may be found among both Russians and Ukrainians (particularly in Eastern Ukraine), I would argue that we are dealing with *two kinds* of hybridity. The different configurations of identity among Russians and Ukrainians are based not on primordial ethnic differences but rather on the two populations' different positions within a hierarchy (emphasised through the Soviet ideological association of Ukrainians with backwardness and provincialism). Indeed, the Ukrainians' assimilation into the Russian language and culture may have required (depending on its degree) the internalisation of this hierarchy and of corresponding negative stereotypes. This embodiment of negative stereotypes was not present among Russians. In addition, the Russification of Ukrainians has been the result of various factors, including contact, mimesis, coercion and rational choice. Those processes of accommodation to cultural change have not been experienced in the same manner by Russians, which is why I would argue that the latter's hybridity is of a different nature.

The Russian language

We have talked about the nature of Russian identity in Ukraine. What is the role of the Russian language in Russian identity? Language is often understood as 'an emblem of groupness, as a symbol, and as a rallying point' (Edwards, 1985, p. 17). It can also be a marker of ethnic or national identity. Indeed, according to Kedourie (1961) the linguistic criterion is essential in distinguishing one nation from another (in Edwards, 1985, p. 11). However, in Ukrainian cities such as Donetsk or even Kyiv, Russian is widely used both by Ukrainians and Russians. It cannot therefore become the outward marker of an exclusive Russian *ethnic* identity. Rather (and as we will see in the next section), this shared language use is taken as evidence for the existence of an *extended* Russian (or East Slavic) identity that includes Ukrainians.

In independent Ukraine, where hybridity is no longer institutionalised, the Russian language is defined in the law as that of the 'ethnic Russian minority'. However, to reduce Russian to the language of an ethnic minority is to undermine both the Russian language's prestige and its role as a marker of imperial hybridity.

Language and identity in Ukraine

The variety of patterns in language use in Ukraine (e.g. mixed or context-dependent use), as well as the politically charged question of the correspondence or lack thereof

between language use and ethnonational belonging, complicate the assessment of who speaks what language. Here are some general trends, however.

The Soviet census of 1989 recorded a population comprising 73% ethnic Ukrainians, 22% ethnic Russians and 5% others. According to the same census, a majority of Ukrainian citizens (approximately 66%) considered Ukrainian to be their native language,⁷ while 31% of the population (including 11% ethnic Ukrainians) claimed Russian as a native language.

Surveys focusing on the actual *use* of language paint a different picture, however. Indeed, according to surveys conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) in 1991–94, more than half (56.1%) of all adults in Ukraine use Russian for day-to-day communication (in Khmelko & Wilson, 1998, p. 74). Another indicator of language use is the language of convenience/preference, defined as the language that an individual prefers to speak in his/her home, with a bilingual interviewer (Arel, 1995, p. 169). According to Arel & Khmelko (1996, p. 86), the statistics for language use according to this indicator (and as superimposed onto ethnic belonging) were the following: Ukrainophone Ukrainians: 40%; Russophone Ukrainians: 33–34%; and Russophone Russians 20–21%. Eastern and Western Ukraine differ significantly in terms of language practices. Surveys conducted by the KIIS in 1991–94 suggest that in the East a majority of the population (81.5%) uses Russian as a language of convenience, while in the West 77% of the population uses Ukrainian as a language of convenience (Arel & Khmelko, 1996, p. 81). In Kyiv (72% ethnic Ukrainian according to the 1989 Soviet census) only 23.6% of the population uses Ukrainian as language of convenience (Arel, 1995, p. 170). According to Bremmer (1994, p. 268), 49% of ethnic Ukrainians in Kyiv used Russian *at home*, while an additional 10% used both Russian and Ukrainian in that setting (40% used Ukrainian).

The continued use of Russian in the public sphere is certainly linked, to some extent, to the language's traditional role as a medium of 'inter-nationality communication' during the Soviet period. For some Ukrainians linguistic Russification remained superficial (while they used Russian in public, they remained bilingual and spoke Ukrainian at home), while for others Russian came to dominate use in both the public and private spheres.

Who then qualifies as a 'Russophone' in Ukraine? According to Kolsto (1999, p. 23, emphasis added), 'the term "Russophones" covers all those members of society who regard Russian as their mother tongue or who use Russian as their daily language of communication, *privately* and professionally'. I would emphasise that *both* elements (the appropriation of Russian as a native language *and* its private use) need to be present for one to be considered a 'Russophone'. This purely linguistic definition is the one I will use in this article. However, there exists another usage of the term. 'Russophone' (or 'Russian-speaker') may connote not only shared language but also shared *culture* (and possibly shared loyalty). This tendency to assume that shared culture follows from shared language is observed in Russian resistance to Ukrainisation (as we will see later), as well as in some of the scholarly literature dealing with language in Ukraine.

For example, Arel (1995, p. 166) suggests that the significant boundary in Ukraine is the linguistic boundary dividing Ukrainophones (in the West and Centre) and

Russophones (in the East and South). He defines the Russophones as a 'group that, irrespective of ethnic background, primarily identifies with the Russian language *and culture*' (p. 158), adding that 'a sizeable portion of ethnic Ukrainians belong to the Russophone group' (p. 180). According to him, Ukraine's polarisation is based on a cultural/identity variable, itself (usually) determined by language. He uses language as an indicator of identity.

In his book *Identity in Formation: The Russian-speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (1998), David Laitin deals with the emergence of the 'Russian-speakers' as a 'new' category of identity in the 'Near Abroad', including in Ukraine. Statements such as 'Many eastern Ukrainians identify closely with the Russian language and see themselves as part of a greater *Russian-speaking world*' (Laitin, 1998, p. 292, emphasis added) suggest that 'Russophone', or in this case 'Russian-speaker', entails not only shared language use but also shared identity/culture. Laitin himself admits his use of language as a proxy for culture (p. 368).

However, as Tabouret-Keller (1997, p. 323) argues, there may be a fusion *or a disjunction* between language and identity. Despite their exclusive use of Russian, some Ukrainians may possess a sense of cultural distinctiveness or even a strong Ukrainian national consciousness. In language surveys, for example, some Russophone Ukrainians identify Ukrainian as their 'native language' even though they never speak it. While the language is no longer used as a communication tool, it may retain an important *emblematic* function (Edwards, 1985, p. 17) and therefore 'may yet contribute to the maintenance of boundaries' (p. 7). In this case the appropriation of Ukrainian may allow one to manifest a certain degree of cultural and/or national distinctiveness. Thus when the 'native language' criterion is displaced by the 'language of preference' criterion in determining language use (as in Arel's surveys), the possible *symbolic* role of language in identity is overlooked. In addition, the assumption that the Russian and Ukrainian Russophones share a 'same' culture is problematic. Certainly, those populations share a common experience of Sovietisation. However, as I suggested earlier, it might be more appropriate to conceive of their identities as having different configurations.

As we will see in a moment when examining protest against Ukrainisation, the merging together of Russians and Ukrainians under the 'Russophone' label is commonplace. However, this label deserves caution. While some Ukrainians may indeed claim a Russophone linguistic *and cultural* identity, to include *all* Russophonic Ukrainians into that category is to disregard the complexity of self-identification in Ukraine. In addition, homogenising denies the fact that common identity requires *consent* and not simply the conceptual (or ideological) incorporation of one party by another.

Post-independence Ukrainian state discourse on language

Since the late 1980s Ukrainisation's aim has been to put a halt to Russification and reverse it through a reappropriation of the 'indigenous' Ukrainian language. The Language Law of 1989, passed in Soviet Ukraine, made Ukrainian the state language. The Ukrainian Constitution adopted in June 1996 confirms the status of Ukrainian as the (only) state language and ensures the 'all-round development and functioning of

the Ukrainian language in all spheres of social life throughout the territory of Ukraine' (Article 10). The constitution also guarantees the 'free development, use and protection of *the Russian language and other languages of the national minorities of Ukraine*' (Article 10; emphasis added).⁸ Here it is assumed that each national minority has its own language, which should be protected. That is, Russian should be protected insofar as it is attached to (and the exclusive property of) a Russian ethnic minority. There is no mention of the fact that Russian is used by members of a non-'national minority' groups (i.e. Ukrainians), and consequently there are no provisions for the protection of the Russian language *in itself*, as detached from a particular ethnic group.

In February 2000 the Ukrainian President's Council for Language Policy Issues approved a draft resolution titled 'On Additional Measures to Expand the Use of Ukrainian as the State Language'. This resolution was based on the December 1999 ruling of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine which interpreted the Language Law of 1989 as 'conferring on the Ukrainian language the status of mandatory means of communication for state bodies and local administrations as well as in the spheres of public life on the entire territory of Ukraine' (quoted in *Jamestown Monitor*, 11 February 2000). The government draft was elaborated in response to a presidential panel finding according to which the lack of observance of language legislation had led to an uneven and spotty Ukrainisation and a reduction of the spheres of Ukrainian language use (*Jamestown Monitor*, 11 February 2000). Quoting dismal statistics on the scarcity and/or underdevelopment of Ukrainian-language newspapers, books and television programmes, Volodymyr Yavorivsky, a member of the Language Policy Council, stated that 'in terms of language, Ukraine still remains a sort of subsidiary of Russia' (commentary in *The Day*, 19 February 2000). Among other things, the new draft proposed 'checking knowledge of Ukrainian among all state officials and re-assigning them to posts depending on their ability to use the state language' (RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 15 February 2000). The document also suggested 'bringing the system of educational institutions into line with the *ethnic* composition of the population' (quoted in RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 15 February 2000). This means that while *ethnic* Russians have the right to be educated in Russian, all those deemed ethnic Ukrainians (including the Russophone Ukrainians) should be educated in Ukrainian. Here, ethnic identity has primacy over linguistic identity. Other measures aiming at the Ukrainisation of public life in Ukraine included 'working out programmes of de-Russification for the sports and tourism sphere, bringing the repertoire of theatres into conformity with their language status, [and] using taxation levers for regulating the import of publications [e.g. from Russia]' (quoted in RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 15 February 2000).

A trend observed in the formulation of Ukrainian language laws is the primacy of ethnically based boundaries. The linguistically based Russophone identity (encompassing Russians and Ukrainians) is not represented, i.e. there exists no category for it and no basis for defending its rights. The state forces the Russians into a 'national minority' identity that they have never developed. As for the Russophone Ukrainians, they are considered primarily ethnic Ukrainians. Clearly, the state wishes for a new correspondence between language and ethnic identity. As we will see in the analysis of resistance, it is primarily the Ukrainian state's ethnic (vs. linguistic) categorisation

that comes under fire. According to Cohen (1994, p. 122), (symbolic) boundaries suggest contestability. Indeed, while one party may draw what it considers a 'natural' boundary (e.g. an ethnic one), the other party may deny the very existence of a boundary, in which case the mere fact of delineating a boundary constitutes an exclusion of sorts. We will deal with a concrete example of this in a moment.

Russian resistance to linguistic Ukrainisation

Before moving on to Russian resistance within Ukraine, let us take a brief look at the official resistance from Moscow to the above-mentioned draft. It will provide a context for the analysis of Russian (popular) resistance in Ukraine.

The approval of the draft 'On Additional Measures to Expand the Use of Ukrainian as the State Language' provoked a swift reaction from Russia's Foreign Ministry. The latter denounced the 'de-Russification' of Ukraine and stated that such policies, 'directed against the preservation and development of the Russian language and culture' in Ukraine, went against the Ukrainian Constitution's guarantee of the 'free development, use and protection of the Russian language' (RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 15 February 2000).

Russian human rights commissioner Oleg Mironov stated that linguistic de-Russification was incompatible with relations among 'fraternal peoples' (*Jamestown Monitor*, 23 February 2000) and denounced the new draft as 'a gross and blatant violation of civilised relations between people and an infringement on the basic rights and freedoms of citizens' (*The Day*, 19 February 2000).

The Foreign Ministry condemned Ukraine's 'administrative *deformation* of its original cultural and linguistic environment' (*The Day*, 19 February 2000, emphasis added), and added that it would 'lodge complaints against Ukraine with European bodies' (*Jamestown Monitor*, 11 February 2000). According to Mironov, this 'massive and unprecedented discrimination' against the Russian language affected 'more than half of Ukraine's population who considers Russian its "native tongue"' (RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 15 February 2000). However, Mironov's statement is basically mistaken, since 'most Ukrainian citizens still regard *Ukrainian* as their mother tongue in the sense that it is the language of their indigenous cultural and ethnic heritage, which is essentially non-Russian' (RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 15 February 2000, emphasis added). What is more accurate is that many Ukrainian citizens (as many as 56.1% of the adult population of Ukraine, according to the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology) are thought to prefer interacting in Russian in the *public sphere*, regardless of their ethnicity and whether or not they are bilingual.

The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs also claimed an infringement on 'the right of *national minority citizens* to receive their education in Russian' (RFE/RL, *Newsline*, 15 February 2000, emphasis added). However, as we saw above, the *ethnic* Russians' educational rights are protected by the Constitution of Ukraine *and* by the new draft. This is *not* the case for the non-Russian Russophones. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also states that the new draft violates the rights of the '*Russian-speaking* population' and that its approval 'seek[s] to ostracise the language that the *majority* considers its own native language, to confine it to a marginal role, perhaps

even to eliminate the Russian language and to eliminate the legal basis for its use' (quoted in *Jamestown Monitor*, 11 February 2000, emphasis added).

Here the official discourse from Russia tends to merge Russians and Ukrainians into one entity (e.g. through the use of categories such as 'fraternal peoples' and 'Russian-speakers', and the assumption that Russian is the 'native' language of 'a majority' of Ukrainian citizens). There appears to be an attempt by the Russian authorities to superimpose a 'Russophone' identity category onto the Ukrainian state's ethnically defined populations. Russia indeed seems to have chosen to direct Russians in Ukraine away from an ethnic minority identity (one that is, if not a purer reflection of reality, at least better protected by Ukrainian law). Instead, Russia claims the supremacy of a linguistic identity through the preservation and perpetuation of the 'Russian-speaking' identity (including the latter's Ukrainian component). In so doing, it 'extends' Russian identity into Ukraine, symbolically pushing back the border and pointing to an alleged lack of correspondence between Ukraine's state borders and national boundaries. As we will see, there are some similarities between official resistance from Russia and Russian popular resistance in Ukraine.

The extent to which the citizens of Ukraine oppose Ukrainisation is difficult to determine. Recent statistics suggest a considerable degree of indifference toward language laws among the population. For example, in early 1999 only 2% of Ukrainian citizens were concerned about the status of the Russian language (*Den'*, 20 March 1999). In addition, those political parties that campaign primarily for the defence of the Russian language and culture in Ukraine tend to remain marginal. For example, the Union Party, advocating Russian as a second state language, received a mere 0.7% of the national party list vote in the 1998 parliamentary election (Solchanyk, 2000, p. 547). It is interesting to note, however, that, when asked, in 1998, whether Russian should be an official language in Ukraine, as many as 47.6% of the citizens of Ukraine agreed (37% disagreed, while the remainder was undecided) (Golovakha *et al.*, 2000, p. 507). However, this desire to elevate the status of Russian has not been translated into mass mobilisation. It is likely that in general (and partly because of more pressing economic concerns) Ukrainian citizens are adapting to the new language laws.

Nevertheless, a minority resists. My goal is to explore *how those Russians⁹ who resist do so*, i.e. in what terms that resistance is articulated. I explore recent resistance to Ukrainisation (1997–2000) expressed through print media in Central and Eastern Ukraine. Western Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea are not represented in my analysis because I felt that Russian identity might have a different configuration there.¹⁰ I focus on two channels of resistance: letters of protest sent directly to the government and articles published in Ukrainian newspapers. The letters to the government, one addressed to President Leonid Kuchma, and another addressed to (now former) Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yushchenko,¹¹ were obtained through the former State Committee of Ukraine for Nationalities and Migration. The State Committee presented the two letters as 'typical' of Russian protest in Ukraine. In fact, the two letters were used in preparing an official response to general protest against Ukrainisation.

In order to ascertain that the content of those letters was indeed representative, I reviewed a variety of newspapers published in Ukraine (*Den'*, *Donbas*, *Fakty*,

Kievskie vedomosti, *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, *Sodruzhestvo*, *Vechernii Khar'kov* and *Zerkalo nedeli*). From those newspapers I extracted 20 articles voicing protest against Ukrainisation in which issues of identity and self-representation were central. A discourse analysis allowed me to organise the content of the texts according to basic recurring themes that cut across regional belonging. Overall, protest against Ukrainisation was expressed most frequently through (1) resistance to the 'artificial division' of 'one people' (expressed in 30% of the articles); (2) resistance to the elevation of Ukrainian as a state language (25%); (3) resistance to the labelling of Russian as a 'foreign language' in Ukraine (instead, Russian is a 'native' language) (65%); (4) resistance to the 'liquidation' of the Russian language and culture in Ukraine (50%); (5) resistance to an ethnic vs. linguistic definition of groups in Ukrainian state laws (60%). Of the 20 articles collected, I chose four¹² that articulated those themes clearly and in the most direct way. The documents quoted below appeared in Russian and were translated into English with the help of an interpreter.

The major themes identified in the articles of protest will now be discussed.

(1) *Resistance to the 'artificial' division of 'one people'*

In my sample many arguments about language are based on the 'historical fraternity and unity' between Ukrainians and Russians. Resistance to Ukrainisation appears to be, at least partly, resistance to a new, 'artificial' division between Ukrainians and Russians: 'A majority of the population of Ukraine ... is not taken in by the provocations of those [i.e. Ukrainian government bureaucrats] who persist in dividing *one people* into titular nation and national minority' (Doc. 3, emphasis added). Another author claims that 'a Russian and a Ukrainian, each speaking his own language, freely (*svobodno*) understand one another without an interpreter A mutual understanding between our peoples, *who came from one root and with all branches intertwined*, has made [a violent development of events in Ukraine] impossible' (Doc. 4, emphasis added).

One author feels the need to affirm that, unlike the present 'Ukrainianisers', Russians never drew a cultural boundary between themselves and Ukrainians: 'Yes, Ukrainian theological books in Ukrainian were destroyed, there was the *Ems Ukaz* [1876 Tsarist edict restricting the use of Ukrainian], and so on; however, with all of this Russians never considered Ukrainians as *strangers (chuzhakov)*' (Doc. 2, emphasis added).

Another author goes further and states that one should not complain about the use of *surzhyk* (the mixed use of Russian and Ukrainian) in Ukraine. In fact, Ukraine is indebted to Russia for preserving its culture and language, which would otherwise have been corrupted by Western influences.

Thinking about Ukrainian Russophonism one automatically thinks of the great trinity—of Russia itself, Little Russia and White Russia—the roots of which go deep down to Kievan Rus'. Historically, it happened that Russia took the lead of such a Slavic triumvirate, thereby preventing the conquest of Ukraine by its Western, more powerful neighbours. We can absolutely state that without re-unification with Russia, Ukraine would have lost its statehood with all its institutions—political, religious, cultural—and that this would undoubt-

edly have left its imprint on the language of communication. In other words, our contemporary *surzhyk* would not have had Russian but Polish or Austro-Hungarian roots. (Doc. 6)

All the above excerpts reproduce the boundaries between Ukrainians and Russians imagined since the Tsarist period, i.e. a blurred cultural boundary ('one people') combined with a rather sharp hierarchy ('under Russian leadership'), apparent in the last two statements. In independent Ukraine the fact of drawing an ethnic boundary between Russians and Ukrainians constitutes, for those who subscribe to Russian historiography, a direct attack on the reality of a 'same people' (i.e. what I call imperial hybridity). To them, the Ukrainisation process draws boundaries where they have never existed. In addition to 'splitting a same people', the Ukrainian state also redefines the Russians' traditional status as a 'leading nation' into a 'minority' status. This comes as Ukrainians are defined as a 'majority', a 'titular nation' and an 'indigenous population'. Here we have a complete reversal of previously imagined boundaries, where the ethnic boundary becomes clear-cut and the hierarchy is turned on its head.

(2) *Resistance to the elevation of Ukrainian as a state language*

In the documents collected I found resistance to Ukrainian's status as a state language. This is articulated very strongly in Document 1, a letter to the President of Ukraine in which the author attempts to prove the inherent inadequacy of Ukrainian as a state language.

First come the historical arguments about Ukrainian being the Russian language modified by conquerers: 'It is natural that those languages of the conquerers [i.e. Polish, Lithuanian, Tatar] had a significant impact on the development of the old Russian language that changed it significantly and transformed it into so-called Ukrainian' (Doc. 1). The author goes on to say that

Ukraine was an integral part of Russia for over 300 years, and another 70 years within the structure of the USSR, which is why Russian became the native language of the majority of the population in Ukraine. [Now, the Ukrainian state] is putting Ukrainian at the same level as Russian and making it a state language. Unfortunately, by all indicators, the Ukrainian language is inferior to Russian and therefore its use as the state language is unwise (*netelesoobrazno*). (Doc. 1)

The author's arguments against the use of Ukrainian as a state language are the following: 'First of all, the lexical fund of the Ukrainian language is approximately one third less than that of the Russian and cannot cover all aspects of modern life' (Doc. 1). Indeed, 'the Ukrainian language is a medieval folk colloquial language of village inhabitants and therefore terminology related to city life is absent' (Doc. 1). The author goes on to say: 'All scientific knowledge came to Ukraine from Russia, with the use of Russian terminology. This is why several generations of Ukrainian intelligentsia became Russian-speaking' (Doc. 1). To which he adds:

How is it possible for a civilised state to reject the perfect Russian language and to switch to a primitive and crude (*neblagozvuchnyi*) village language as the state language? To switch from Russian to Ukrainian is like switching from a colour TV back to a black and white TV.

To make the Ukrainian language the state language means to make Ukraine a peasant state. (Doc. 1)¹³

Since Russian is 'universal' while Ukrainian is 'backward', the author's conclusion is that Ukraine needs *Russian only* as a state language.

Why this refusal on the part of the author to think of the Ukrainian language as capable of 'an accurate symbolisation of the world' (Tabouret-Keller, 1997, p. 323)? Officially, the Soviet state discourse promoted the 'equality' of Russian and Ukrainian. However, I would argue that implicit in this discourse was the perception of Russian as the 'high variety' (to be used for high culture and official state business) and Ukrainian as the 'low variety' (to be used in informal contexts such as the home). One could indeed draw a parallel with the attitude found in diglossic contexts, where 'there is usually a belief that [the high variety] is somehow more beautiful, more logical, better able to express important thoughts, and the like' (Ferguson, 1959, p. 237). Against that belief, linguists agree that the value given to a language, rather than reflecting its inherent superiority or inferiority, is usually tied to the prestige of its speakers (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998, p. 3). In the Soviet Union the prestige of the Russian language was reinforced by various means (some not so subtle), e.g. elevating it to the status of 'language of inter-nationality communication'.

The author's negative perception of Ukrainian is complemented by the belief that Ukrainian is a 'bad influence' on Russian. Likewise, the author of the letter to the Ukrainian Prime Minister states that Valuev (author of the 1863 *Valuev ukaz* against the use of Ukrainian) is 'just a boy' in comparison with present Ukrainian state-builders (Doc. 2). Indeed, 'the tsars were russifying Ukraine for almost 300 years ... but did not succeed in russifying it. But Mr. Zhulinsky, Mr. Zayats, Mrs. Stets'ko [Ukrainian state officials and MPs in favour of Ukrainisation] and others want to Ukrainianise the Russian-speaking population in two weeks. For what reason? It seems that they want to "bring us down" (*opustit'*) to their intellectual level' (Doc. 2). Similarly, another author uses examples of texts by schoolchildren written in Russian with Ukrainian influences to claim that the use of Ukrainian 'brings Russian down'. He blames Ukrainisation for the widespread use of *surzhyk* (the mixed use of Ukrainian and Russian) (Doc. 4). It seems that the authors are concerned with the possibility that the use of Ukrainian as a state language might undermine Russian's superior status, and consequently the status of its speakers.

Other authors support the return to a 'traditional bilingual state': 'I am calling on the state authorities to revive traditional bilingualism as a spiritual treasure which we need to preserve and enrich' (Doc. 5). In the late 1980s Ukrainian intellectuals denounced Soviet 'bilingualism' in Ukraine as a 'cover-up' for Russification. Some Ukrainian officials fear that reinstating Russian as an official language in Ukraine would most probably mean recreating the Soviet linguistic context, where Russian dominates and there is no need to acquire fluency in Ukrainian. This would in turn influence identity formation. It would favour neither the development of Ukrainian ethnic identity nor the development of Russian ethnic identity (both desired by the Ukrainian state). Instead, a Soviet-based 'Russian-speaking' identity would be perpetuated.

It may be that those championing state bilingualism are in fact attempting to secure

a right to remain monolingual. Because of the closeness between the two languages (a closeness which accelerated Russification) there is a fear of reverse assimilation. Indeed, once all Russian-speakers are bilingual, then there is a much greater possibility of assimilation, of tipping over toward exclusive use of Ukrainian. However, if most Russians and *Russophone Ukrainians* remain monolingual, then the 'Russian-speaking' population remains intact as an identity category.

(3) *Resistance to the labelling of Russian as a 'foreign' language in Ukraine*

Many authors resist the 'exclusion' of the Russian element in Ukraine: 'In practice, it appears that Ukraine considers us [the Russian-speakers] not as sons but as step-sons, and does everything in order to humiliate us, to make us into second-class citizens' (Doc. 2). There is also resistance to the labelling of the Russian language as 'foreign': 'When you hear from nationalists such statements as "the Russian language is a foreign language", which contradict historical truth, you recall the joke: "Name a country where two-thirds of the citizens communicate in a foreign language"' (Doc. 4). The supposed 'sameness' of Ukrainian and Russian is also emphasised: 'We can speak of it as an absolutely obvious fact, that *there is no essential difference between our languages*' (Doc. 6, emphasis added).

Similarly, another author disapproves of the fact that even an extremely gifted individual cannot be a minister in Ukraine unless he speaks Ukrainian: 'Such demands can be explained in Georgia or Latvia, but a Russian and a Ukrainian, each speaking his own language, freely understand one another without an interpreter' (Doc. 4). As I have stated above, it is Ukrainian that is perceived to be the 'same' as or a variety of Russian, not the opposite. In fact, if Russians and Ukrainians understand each other perfectly (i.e. Russians understand Ukrainian perfectly), why should Russian become the second state language? Whether the only language is Ukrainian or Russian should not matter if everyone is bilingual. However, would any of those authors complain if Russian were the only state language? Would they fight for the 'bicultural' and 'bilingual' nature of Ukraine, or the recognition of cultural hybridity? It appears as though the pressures are aimed at the restoration of the Russian language's dominant status, not its equality to Ukrainian.

The logical continuation of the authors' argument against Russian's foreignness is that Russian is in fact a 'native language' in Ukraine. For example: 'In many Kharkiv schools [Eastern Ukraine] ..., education in Ukrainian was introduced and Russian is taught as a foreign language (!!!)—at the same time, for a majority of the children there, [Russian] is a native language' (Doc. 2). What is also claimed is that Russian is a 'native language' for *Ukrainians*: 'It is hard [for Western observers] to believe that millions of Ukrainians consider Russian their native language' (Doc. 4). (We have already stated that while it is incorrect to claim that Russian is the native language of most Ukrainians, it is true that many Ukrainians use Russian as a language of convenience.) Since the authors claim that Russian is the 'native' language of a large proportion of both ethnic Russians and ethnic Ukrainians in Ukraine, the state's identification of this language as 'foreign' constitutes a linguistic exclusion of both Russians and *Russophone Ukrainians*, i.e. the 'Russian-speaking' group.

Also, the authors argue that Russian cannot be foreign since it is spoken by a 'majority' of Ukrainian citizens. The Ukrainian Constitution and language laws consider Russian the language of the ethnic Russian minority. However, as we have seen, language use and ethnic origin often do not overlap in Ukraine. When protesting against the de jure minority status of Russian, the authors often claim that Russian is in fact the language of a *majority* of Ukrainian citizens (i.e. that the 'Russian-speakers' are a 'legal' majority). According to one author, 'the paradox is that in Ukraine, besides the 10 million ethnic Russians, about 20 million ethnic Ukrainians speak Russian. Where do you place them? Is this not an absurd situation for our state? Isn't [the state] oppressing not only the Russian language in Ukraine, *but the Ukrainian people itself?*' (Doc. 3, emphasis added). Here the author clearly states that the Ukrainian language policy oppresses not only the Russians but the (Russophone) Ukrainians themselves. Why this concern for Ukrainians' rights? Because Russophone Ukrainians are considered an essential part of the 'Russian-speaking majority'. Consequently, the Ukrainisation process is perceived as *alienating Russians from the Ukrainian component of their extended identity*.

The same author draws on some statistics from the Centre for Political Research and Conflictology in Kyiv and the International Institute of Sociology, according to which 43.4% of Ukrainian citizens (the participants were Ukrainians, Russians and of 'mixed nationalities') prefer to speak Russian, while 41.6% prefer to speak Ukrainian (Doc. 3). In addition, according to the author, a majority of participants in the survey opposed the Russian language's 'minority status': '82.2% [of participants] supported *the raising of the status of Russian*; of those, a little over half supported Russian as an official or a second state language' (Doc. 3, emphasis added). That is to say, even though Russian is, at least according to the author's own statistics, spoken by a majority of people (i.e. it is dominant in Ukraine), there is still overwhelming support for an even higher status for Russian. Why does the Russian population not accept the status of Russian as a (protected) minority language in Ukraine? Because a minority status excludes those Russophone non-Russians who form an essential part of the hybrid 'Russian-speaking' identity. The fact that Russians resist a minority status means that they do not resist as ethnic Russians. The above authors want Russian to gain the status of state language so that its dominance can be institutionalised (as it was during the Tsarist and Soviet periods). This would in turn perpetuate a 'Russian-speaking' identity.

(4) *Resistance to the 'liquidation' of the Russian language and culture in Ukraine*

There is a belief among some authors that the goal of Ukrainisation is to liquidate the Russian language and culture. One author states that even though President Kuchma said that forced Ukrainisation would not take place, Ukrainian bureaucrats 'have turned the support of the Ukrainian language into a merciless fight against all that is Russian' (Doc. 3). Another author points to

... the desire of certain political forces for maximum restriction of Russian ethnic *and cultural* presence in Ukraine. [Those forces] started such an experiment in the spiritual

castration (*dukhovnoe oskopenie*) of a different people [Russians], forcibly driving them into the 'procrustean bed' of discriminatory language law. (Doc. 5, emphasis added)

He adds: 'Given today's vast scope and rapid pace of Ukrainisation, the Russian language has an unenviable (*nezavidnaya*) future in Ukraine' (Doc. 5). However, according to the same author, 'the *uprooting* of Russian culture in Ukraine will not benefit the next generation. It is no secret that the former Union republics are fated to live as neighbours and economic partners, regardless of which "unknown force" would seek to draw them into Western structures' (Doc. 5, emphasis added). There is a perception by the authors that Ukrainisation poses a real threat to Russian culture. Why the use of such strong words as 'liquidation', when, for example, the Russian language (according to the authors' own statistics) is still dominant? It appears that what is in peril is not an ethnic Russian culture but an extended Russian culture (i.e. an ethnically hybrid, 'Russian-speaking' culture). Perhaps what is feared is that if linguistic (and cultural) Ukrainisation succeeds in bringing Russophone Ukrainians back to the ethnic Ukrainian side, this would make Russian a de facto minority language and Russian culture a minority culture in Ukraine.

Indeed, while some authors describe the exclusion of a 'Russian' element, others emphasise the imminent destruction of a *Russophone* culture: 'Since 1995 Ukraine has been a member of the Council of Europe and has committed itself to signing the European Charter on regional and minority languages ... Unfortunately, the Council of Europe is not paying attention to the *liquidation of a huge stratum of culture* [i.e. Russophone culture in Ukraine]' (Doc. 4, emphasis added). Here we are dealing with the perceived exclusion of a *language* group, not an *ethnic* group.

(5) *Resistance to an ethnic vs. a linguistic definition in Ukrainian state laws*

When addressing questions of law, the authors tackle the issue of ethnic and linguistic definitions directly:

We wonder how the defenders of human rights perceive [the Ukrainian law that states that education before schools, in schools and tutoring should be conducted in Ukrainian]. Where are they? Why are they quiet? True, there is still also a law of Ukraine about national minorities that guarantees to citizens, regardless of their nationality, equal political, social, economic and cultural rights and freedoms, including the right to use and be educated in their native language or learn their native language in state educational institutions. As we can see, the two laws contradict each other and the second law, judging by everything, has thus far remained a fig leaf. By the way, it is still questionable to what extent this law applies to Russian-speakers ... are they a *national minority* in Ukraine? The answer can be found in Article 10 of the Constitution, which guarantees the 'free development, use and protection of Russian and other national minority languages'. In other words, [the Russian-speakers] are a national minority. (Doc. 3, emphasis added)

In this case the author expresses the ambiguity of a linguistic identity forced into an ethnic category. In fact, the Russophones are not a national minority but a language group. There are no specific provisions in the Ukrainian Constitution for the protection of language groups, as the latter are assumed to correspond to ethnic groups. However, in May 1996 Ukraine signed the Council of Europe's European

Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, a document based on linguistic rather than ethnic rights (i.e. dealing with ‘linguistic groups’).¹⁴ The charter aims at protecting regional/minority languages, for example by ensuring their use in the spheres of education and the media, as well as in administrative and public services.¹⁵

According to some, the charter is not being respected in Ukraine: ‘In addition to a violation of international legal documents [i.e. the European Charter of 1992], the notion of “language groups” is being replaced with the notion of “national groups”, which does not correspond to the norms of the international community, of which Ukraine so eagerly wishes to become a part’ (Doc. 4). The author cited here strongly disagrees with a reductive, ethnic definition of Russophones as *Russians only*. This argument for the primacy of the linguistic over the ethnic criterion seems to confirm that Russians resist exclusion as an extended, linguistically based group, not as ethnic Russians.

Another author claims that ‘the recent appearance in Ukraine of Russian associations and societies, in addition to a clearly determined tendency of *Russian-speaking citizens* to form organisations for the defence of their own *cultural* and civil rights—here you have a counter-reaction to the “velvet Ukrainisation”’ (Doc. 5, emphasis added). Although the author seems to distinguish between Russian and Russian-speaking, he does merge the two groups’ resistance.

Here we clearly see conflicting ways of drawing boundaries, based on a different understanding of the role of language in identity. The Ukrainian state (i.e. through language laws) draws an *ethnic* boundary between Russians and Ukrainians. In so doing, the state encourages the development of a Russian ethnic identity (vs. perpetuating a linguistically dominant Russian identity that extends into its ethnic Ukrainian population). As for the Russians resisting Ukrainisation, they tend to draw a *linguistic* boundary. They want to perpetuate the hybrid category of ‘Russian-speakers’ as a unified front against Ukrainisation. Those different ways of drawing boundaries also imply two symbolic appropriations of the Russophone Ukrainian population: one by the Ukrainian state on the basis of shared ethnicity and the other by Russia and Russians of Ukraine on the basis of shared language.

It is clear that the two general understandings of identity in Ukraine dealt with in this article are limited. I believe that the Ukrainian nation builders who emphasise ethnicity need to pay more attention to a *lived hybridity* in their state, while the Russians who resist Ukrainisation need a better understanding of the role of Ukrainian national consciousness in shaping today’s Ukraine.

Conclusion

My goal was to find out why Russians resist Ukrainisation in the absence of blatant ethnic exclusion by the state. The hypothesis formulated at the beginning of this article was as follows: those Russians protesting against Ukrainisation resist a perceived exclusion by the state not as ethnic Russians but as a linguistically based *extended group* (i.e. the ‘Russian-speakers’).

In the sample of Russian protest collected from Central and Eastern Ukrainian newspapers I have found evidence of Russians resisting as an extended group that includes Ukrainians (based on supposed shared language and culture). However, the

idea of a 'same people' also implies a hierarchy. In the sample collected, Ukrainian language and culture are often perceived as inferior variants of the Russian language and culture, a pattern at least implicitly present in the Soviet interpretation of 'Slavic brotherhood'. Therefore, while the *term* 'Russian-speakers' may be new (i.e. used mostly after the collapse), I would argue that the underlying *construct* is not. The 'Russian-speaking' identity, based on the appropriation of Russophone Ukrainians, is more likely to be an imperial relic. (In that respect it is significant that the 'Russian-speaking' category is used in Russia's official discourse on Ukrainisation.) Nonetheless, I would argue that the Ukrainian state's lack of acknowledgment of this kind of hybridity is likely to lead to various forms of protest as nation building is consolidated.

A more in-depth analysis of resistance to linguistic Ukrainisation is needed in order to assess variation in the nature of Russian self-awareness in Ukraine. For example, a sample of Russian resistance in Western Ukraine or Crimea might lead to a better understanding of hybridity in Ukraine. Also, it may be that the language debate in Ukraine is symptomatic of a deeper misunderstanding in terms of identity. Scholars should indeed pay attention to other manifestations of this misunderstanding, for example in the realm of religion. In any event, a study of the link between identity and resistance seems essential, as 'war and peace cannot be understood if the powerful role of identities is ignored' (Tabouret-Keller, 1997, p. 325).

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¹ However, the Russians do not constitute a homogeneous group in Ukraine. Some may have a greater sense of ethnic awareness, for example in Western Ukraine, where the historical interaction between Russians and Ukrainians seems to have fostered a higher level of ethnic differentiation. In such regions the 'diasporic' label might be more applicable.

² Term borrowed from Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1977).

³ Fischer applies those definitions to ethnographies and American ethnic identities respectively.

⁴ Of course, 'hybridity' is my category. The Soviet leadership did not use the language of hybridity, but rather that of fusion (e.g. the concepts of *sblizhenie* and *sliyanie*).

⁵ For insight into this process see Edward L. Keenan, 'On Certain Mythical Beliefs and Russian Behaviors', in S. Frederick Starr (ed.), *The Legacy of History in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (Armonk, M.E. Sharpe, 1994).

⁶ Although the notion of Slavic brotherhood pre-supposed the unity of 'Great Russians' and 'Little Russians', not all Ukrainians accepted that idea. Admittedly, the Ukrainian elite in Imperial Russia did tend to become Russified. However, we must keep in mind that early on after the incorporation of Left Bank Ukraine into the Muscovite State, Ukrainian intellectuals started to articulate Ukrainian cultural and political distinctiveness from the 'Great Russians'. In the 19th century the Ukrainian intelligentsia began to express that distinctiveness in *national* terms. (See Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (University of Toronto Press, 1994), for an account of this process). For first-hand examples of the Ukrainian articulation of difference see Ralph Lindheim & George S.N. Luckyj (eds), *Towards an Intellectual History of Ukraine: An Anthology of Ukrainian Thought from 1710 to 1995* (Toronto, Buffalo and New York: University of Toronto Press and Shevchenko Scientific Society, 1996).

⁷ In a 1998 survey conducted by the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Institute of Sociology), Ukrainian was given as a native tongue by 61.9% of the population (Golovakha, 2000, p. 514).

⁸ One might ask why the Russians are given special mention if they are 'just another minority'. In fact, this particular formulation generated a fair amount of debate during the drafting of Article 10 of the 1996 Constitution (see Yuri Hnatkevych, *Chy zletyt' ptakh u synie nebo? Narysy pro rusyfikovanykh i rusyfikatoriv ta hirku dolyu ukrains'koi movy v nezalezhnii Ukraini* (Kyiv, Prosvita, 1999), p. 30). For example, the Social Democrats thought that mentioning the Russian language (i.e. the instrument of

Russification) would be detrimental to the process of rebirth of the Ukrainian language (*ibid.*, p. 41). A compromise was eventually reached: the formulation, while acknowledging the numerical importance of Russians in Ukraine, would also remind the Russians that they are a national minority (i.e. distinct from the Russophone Ukrainians (*ibid.*).

⁹ As stated earlier, I consider 'Russian' a hybrid (vs. ethnic) identity, especially in Eastern Ukraine.

¹⁰ Although the most extreme attitudes concerning linguistic Ukrainisation can be found in Western Ukraine and Crimea, I decided not to include those regions in my analysis. That is because I wished to focus on regions where identities tend to be *hybrid*. In (largely Ukrainophone) Western Ukraine, Russians have a '... short history and sparse representation in the local population' (Bremmer, 1994, p. 265). In addition, one would expect that the presence of a developed national consciousness among Ukrainians of the region would foster a sharper dichotomy between Ukrainian and Russian identities. (As for Crimea, in some sense the polar opposite of Western Ukraine, it is the only region of Ukraine where Russians are a majority, and as such should probably be dealt with separately.) Both Kyiv and Eastern Ukraine seemed appropriate for my analysis because of the presence of significant Russian populations that feel 'at home'. The fact that many ethnic Ukrainians in those regions speak Russian in daily interactions amplifies the perception of intermixture.

¹¹ *Document 1*: A 7-page letter from Donetsk (Eastern Ukraine) addressed to the President of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, dated 20 September 1997. The letter deals with the inadequacy of Ukrainian as a state language.

Document 2: An 8-page letter to the Prime Minister, Viktor Yushchenko, from a lawyer from Kharkiv (Eastern Ukraine), dated 4 February 2000. The letter is in reaction to the above-mentioned government draft of February 2000 and its impact on the Russophones of Eastern Ukraine.

¹² *Document 3*: Article: Pavel Smirnov, 'V Ukraine russkii yazyk ne dolzhen chuvstvovat' sebya inostrannym', *Fakty* (Kyiv), 18 September 1999, p. 4. The article underlines the paradox of discriminating against Russian, a 'majority language' in Ukraine.

Document 4: Article: Vladimir Alexiev, Ukrainian MP, 'Khuzhe Bezzakoniya: O realizatsii konstitutsionnykh garantii v yazykovi sfere', *Sodruzhestvo* (Ukrainian edition of a Russian-language newspaper published for members of the CIS), 26 May 1999, p. 5. The article deals with Ukraine's 'liquidation' of Russian as a 'native language' vs. its legal obligation to protect language groups.

Document 5: Article: N.A. Parchenkov, 'Nuzhna li strane "barkhatnaya ukrainizatsiya?"', *Den'* (Kyiv), N. 230, 11 December 1999, p. 7. The article denounces Ukrainisation's aim of 'eliminating' the Russian ethnic and cultural presence in Ukraine.

Document 6: Article: D. Martinov, 'Borot'sya s russkoyazychiem mozjno posle pobedy nad bednost'yu', *Den'* (Kyiv), N. 63, 8 April 2000. This is in response to an article that lamented the use of Russian by athletes in televised sports.

¹³ Such statements are reminiscent of Russian resistance to the Ukrainisation initiated by the Bolsheviks in the 1920s as part of a larger 'nativisation' process. For example, during that period many Russian university professors in Ukraine refused to '... use the "peasant" language for purposes of higher education' (Orest Subtelny, *Ukraine: A History* (University of Toronto Press, 1994), p. 389).

¹⁴ The law was ratified by the Supreme Council of Ukraine (*Verkhovna Rada*) on 24 December 1999. However, it was deemed 'unconstitutional' by the Constitutional Court of Ukraine and lost its power on 12 July 2000 (see official website of the *Verkhovna Rada*: www.rada.kiev.ua/laws/).

¹⁵ It is worth noting, however, that '... the protection and encouragement of regional or minority languages *should not be to the detriment of the official languages* and the need to learn them' (European Charter's *Preamble*, emphasis added).

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