

*Nadia Gergało-Dąbek*

Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, Poland

nadia.gergalo-dabek@mail.umcs.pl

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4065-4511>

## The Orthodox Church in Ukraine and the Ukrainian Language after Revolution of Dignity

### Introduction

Religion is what makes culture; it is a source of the social system of values and a vital culture-defining component, as well as one of the pillars of national self-identification<sup>1</sup>. Religion furnishes the most convincing answers to the relevant question of “Who am I?”<sup>2</sup>. It is also one of the primary criteria describing the external world; it delineates the space of shared values; it shapes the reality and human attitudes.

Religion comes to the fore when the cultural identity of societies and national security are exposed to threats. Religious denominations fulfil crucial functions in social and political life. Specific historic events can either strengthen or impair their position, integrate societies around them or make them fall apart depend-

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g.: R. Zenderowski, *Religia a tożsamość narodowa i nacjonalizm w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej między etnicyzacją religii a sakralizacją etnosu (narodu)*, Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego 2011; K. Kishi, K. J. Starr, *Many Central and Eastern Europeans see link between religion and national identity*, Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/11/03/many-central-and-eastern-europeans-see-link-between-religion-and-national-identity/>, accessed: 15.12.2021; J. Krasowska, *Religia jako czynnik wpływający na tożsamość narodową Polaków*, „Studia Sandomierskie: teologia, filozofia, historia”, 20 (2013), p. 109-123.

<sup>2</sup> See: S. P. Huntington, *Zderzenie cywilizacji*, przeł. H. Jankowska, Warszawa 2008, p. 148-150.

ing on the stance adopted towards events and developments important for the nation and state. The event that has undoubtedly influenced the perception of the place and role of religion and the position of the Church on the new reality in Ukraine, including its ability to set models of social behavior, is the hybrid war with Russia.

This article aims to: (i) have a closer look at the importance of the national language for the functioning of the Church, (ii) analyze the attitude of the Orthodox Church in Ukraine to the Ukrainian language and (iii) analyze the impact of the 2014 Revolution of Dignity and war with Russia on the language of religious practices. The author employs the following research approaches: critical discourse analysis, qualitative content analysis, comparative method and historical method.

### The Importance of National Language in Religious Practices

Language has a central role in the religious life of individuals, community and state. A language spoken by a specific community fosters a sense of unity, helps determine identity, forges community bonds and facilitates integration. The consolidating role of language is mirrored in the Bible which says that before God punished people for pride and a desire to cross boundaries by mixing up their languages and making them scatter around the world, he said, “Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do. And now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do” [Genesis 11:6].

The importance of the mother tongue for the nation and state, as well as its role in the Church, was appreciated by the well-known Ukrainian educator and theologian, Ivan Ohienko (Metropolitan Ilarion). Ohienko was a great proponent of the Ukrainian national church and advocated the introduction of Ukrainian vernacular to religious rites and services. Some one hundred years ago, he wrote, “The mother tongue is the firmest foundation on which every nation cultivates its spirit and culture. In the life of every nation, especially one that has no state, the native language plays the most important role... A nation that does fails to understand the power and meaning of the native language will take much time to evolve into a conscious community as it strays from the way towards statehood”<sup>3</sup>. Ohienko believed that language is the firmest “cement” that keeps an ethnographic nation together and transforms it into a conscious nation.

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<sup>3</sup> І. Огієнко (Митрополит Іларіон), *Рідна мова*, упор., передм. і ком. М. Тимошик, Київ: Наша культура і наука, 2010, р. 34, 37.

Following the Scriptures, Ivan Ohienko proposed “Ten Lingual Commandments of a Conscious Citizen” aimed to discipline citizens to respect language as a sacred phenomenon. The first commandment goes: “Language is the heart of the nation: if it becomes extinct, the nation will become extinct as well”<sup>4</sup>. Ohienko’s references to the Bible demonstrates that he attached a sacred meaning to the mother tongue. In his opinion, a nation connected by literary language will always turn into a nation state.

Ohienko also emphasized the importance of the mother tongue for prayer, faith and the Church: “Every faith is most strongly linked to the nation’s mother tongue because that tongue is the most important and fertile field for every faith. The mother tongue is a way to God”<sup>5</sup>. He supported the opinion that all services in the Church should be said in the “living language of the nation... . Services in an incomprehensible language fail to offer the faithful all the spiritual benefit that they are supposed to convey. A nation that does not hear its native language in the Church does not generally respect it and does not care for it as if it were its priceless treasure. A nation that hears the liturgy in a foreign language resembles a prisoner who savors the world of God through prison bars”<sup>6</sup>. Others shared the same opinion. A staunch supporter of the use of Ukrainian in the Orthodox church was, for example, Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivsky, who devoted his life to the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church operating in Ukraine in the years 1921-1931<sup>7</sup>.

The opportunity to use a specific language while at church is of great importance to the faithful because the vernacular of prayer largely forms the believer’s identity. The question of “How do I communicate with God?” is the same as asking, “What is my faith?” (in other words, “What is my Church like?”). Metropolitan Ilarion, like Metropolitan Vasyl Lypkivsky, was convinced that the Church bore the greatest responsibility for the linguistic denationalization of the nation because services held in a foreign language developed harmful indifference to the mother tongue. The Church that allows the linguistic denationalization of her faithful loses authority, thus doing harm to herself in the first place. He underlined that the Church and the clergy were obligated to strengthen the faithful in their mother tongue because “who is strong in their mother tongue, he is strong in the fathers’ faith.” Therefore, the clergy should unconditionally use the nation’s

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 55.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g.: Ю. Шевельов, *Українська мова в першій половині XX ст. (1900-1941)*, „Сучасність” 1991, p. 152; К. Гудзик, *Народний митрополит*, „День. Україна Incognita”, <http://incognita.day.kyiv.ua/narodnij-mitropolit.html>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

native language, “A priest who uses a language that is foreign to his family and the faithful commits an unforgivable sin against them and the Church”<sup>8</sup>.

Metropolitan Ilarion believed that native language policy (*рідномовна політика*) was the most important policy of every nation and emphasized the state’s responsibility for that policy for the sake of the unity of the nation, “A state that does not unite all its tribes by means of a shared literary language will always run a risk of political separation of these tribes”<sup>9</sup>. Given that language was the alleged reason raised by Russia when annexing Crimea and invading Ukraine (allegedly to defend the Russian and Russian-speaking population<sup>10</sup>), Metropolitan Ilarion’s words sound like a bleak prophecy.

### Language and the Orthodox Church

One of the matters that caused dissension between the Orthodox churches in Ukraine before the creation of the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine (“OCU”) at the end of 2018 was their attitude to the Ukrainian language. The pro-Ukrainian side was represented by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (“UOC-KP”) and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (“UAOC”) <sup>11</sup>, and the pro-Russian side by the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (“UOC-MP”). As the researcher Svitlana Savoys’ka puts it, it was the “linguistic and political separatism” that caused the separation of the Orthodox church in Ukraine in the early 1990s and hinders the process of unification today<sup>12</sup>. The Russian Orthodox Church (“ROC”), which governs the UOC-MP in Ukraine, has been a tool employed for the Russification and denationalization of Ukrainians for centuries<sup>13</sup>, i.e. since the Ukrainian language was completely eradicated from the Orthodox church in the Ukrainian lands in

<sup>8</sup> I. Огієнко (Митрополит Іларіон), *Рідна мова*, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 35, 38.

<sup>10</sup> For example, at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on 2 June 2017, Vladimir Putin stressed that through its activity in Crimea and Donbass Russia “supported Russian and Russian-speaking people, that is, those who who hold ‘the Russian world’ dear” (*Пленарное заседание Петербургского международного экономического форума*, <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/54667>, accessed: 15.12.2021).

<sup>11</sup> The third Orthodox church – much smaller than the UOC KP, the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church – existed mainly in Western Ukraine in 1989-2018. This church came from the Ukrainian Orthodox diaspora in the United States and in Western Europe.

<sup>12</sup> С. В. Савойська, *Українська православна церква і міжцерковні мовно-політичні конфлікти*,

„Наукові записки Інституту політичних і етнонаціональних досліджень ім. І. Ф. Кураса НАН України”, 2008, вип. 41, с. 196-197.

<sup>13</sup> See e.g.: I. Огієнко, *Українська церква*, т. 2, Прага 1942.

1720, by prohibiting preaching and readings from religious books in Ukrainian<sup>14</sup>. The ROC's attitude towards the Ukrainian language and people has a profound impact on the UOC-MP.

The ideological underpinning of the Kremlin's aggression against Ukraine is the doctrine of the "Russian world" (*Russkiy mir*) framed by the ROC. At the 2009 congress of the Russkij Mir organization, the ROC patriarch, Kirill, gave a policy speech in which he shared the Church's vision of the "Russian world" and how to grow and strengthen it. In his opinion, "...it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what the Russian world represents today. It seems to me that if we agree that the Russian Federation within its contemporary borders is the only core, then we will sin against the historical truth and will artificially cut off many millions of people who are aware of their responsibility for the future of the Russian world and consider its establishment the main goal in their lives." In his opinion, the nucleus of the "Russian world" is Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, and one of its key pillars is the Russian language and Russian culture<sup>15</sup>. The "Russian world" has no room for the Ukrainian and Belarusian languages. The doctrine of the "Russian world" elevated the criterion of language and mentality above the desire of unity of the Church and required that linguistic and mental unity to be safeguarded.

Both the ROC and the UOC-MP operating under its jurisdiction do not accept a Ukrainian identity that is separate from the Russian one and regard Ukrainians and Russians as one nation, while denying the former the right to decide how their Church and state should develop. The Ukrainian national identity has already been exposed to "leveling" by the ROC and its Ukrainian "branch." This is confirmed by sociological research conducted in May 2016, by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. The faithful of the UOC-KP and UOC-MP differ in terms of defining their national identity and linguistic practices: 90 percent of the UOC-KP's faithful and 76 percent of the UOC-MP's faithful consider themselves Ukrainian-only (without linking to a Russian or other identity; the survey does not include Crimea and the occupied territories)<sup>16</sup>, while 64 percent and 59 percent of the faithful of the respective Churches point to Ukrainian as the language of communication.

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<sup>14</sup> Р. Сушко, М. Левицький, *Хроніка нищення української мови. Факти і коментарі*, Київ 2012.

<sup>15</sup> *Выступление Святейшего Патриарха Кирилла на торжественном открытии III Ассамблеи Русского мира*, Официальный сайт Московского патриархата, <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/928446.html>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>16</sup> *Релігійна самоідентифікація і молитва в Україні*, КМІС, <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=638&page=1>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

As noted by Archbishop Eustratius (Zorya) of the UOC-KP, "...the fundamental reason for the very operation of the structures of the Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine is the lack of trust in Ukrainian identity," which can be attributed to the attitude of both the Russian authorities and the ROC to Ukraine as a failed state which should re-unite with Moscow sooner or later. The lack of endorsement for the creation of the autocephalous OCU and reluctance to unite all Orthodox churches in Ukraine into one ecclesiastical body come from the conviction that Ukraine's independence will not last long and that Ukraine and Russia will become one state of the "Russian world"<sup>17</sup>.

In the vast majority of parishes of the UOC-MP, services are held in Church Slavonic<sup>18</sup>, while sermons are delivered in Russian. In addition, theological education and religious publications are also available only in Russian. The use of Ukrainian for liturgical purposes faces rejection and even the hostility of most representatives of the UOC-MP. They perceive the performance of religious rites in Ukrainian as betrayal of the "Russian world," fueling the process of secularization and surrender of canonical Orthodoxy to the national democratic movement and supporters of autocephaly ("only schismatics practice rites in Ukrainian"<sup>19</sup>).

However, not everyone cultivates a hostile attitude towards the Ukrainian language in this Church. Metropolitan Oleksandr (Drabynko) used to speak in favor of the widespread use of Ukrainian in the liturgy of the UOC-MP. As he wrote in 2016, Ukraine faces, "an awkward situation with the use of the national (modern) language in liturgy..., where Ukrainian liturgical services take place in most of parishes of the UOC-KP and the UAOC, as well as in about 200 parishes of the UOC (mostly in Volhynia and the Rivne region)"<sup>20</sup>. He was of the opinion that the UOC-MP informally bans the use of the official language and references to the titular nation of Ukraine. His joining of the newly formed OCU was a natural consequence because in the UOC-MP, such individuals are in minority and do not implement the vision of the "Russian world".

Even if the UOC-MP leaders did not openly prohibit the use of the official language of Ukraine (and the previous metropolitan, Volodymyr, even admitted

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<sup>17</sup> С. Хоменко, *Киевский патриархат: автокефалия для церкви Украины – не проект Порошенко*, <https://www.bbc.com/russian/features-46531089>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>18</sup> Recently, the ROC patriarch, Kirill, allowed the reading of some chapters in Russian, yet the rest should remain in Church Slavonic.

<sup>19</sup> А. Голубева, С. Хоменко, *Кругообіг православних: як українці сваряться за церкви*, ВВС Україна, <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-44140690>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>20</sup> О. Драбинко, *Мовна ситуація в Руській Православній Церкві та «українська проблема»*, „Релігія в Україні”, <https://www.religion.in.ua/main/bogoslovyia/32065-shhodo-diskusiyi-pro-bogosluzhbovu-movu-chastina-iv.html>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

such a possibility), popular propaganda spread across many parishes was that “Ukrainian is a bazaar vernacular used by peasants and should be kept away from liturgy”<sup>21</sup>. In some temples, such as the Pochayiv Lavra, there have been cases of intolerance and even aggressive conduct towards Ukrainian-speaking believers, for example, some were refused confession<sup>22</sup>. In 2003, the official bulletin of the temple, *Pochayivsky Listok* (published in Russian), featured an article whose author maintained that the Ukrainian language was not suitable for communing with God. The text sparked great anger among the faithful<sup>23</sup>.

Unlike the UOC-MP, the non-canonical UOC-KP has always supported a broad use of the Ukrainian language in liturgy and the Church’s life, although this was not possible at the early stage as many religious books lacked Ukrainian translations<sup>24</sup>. According to Patriarch Filaret (the head of the UOC-KP in the years 1995-2018), “without the Ukrainian language, there is no Ukrainian Orthodox church as such”<sup>25</sup>. It was clear for Filaret that the language of liturgy is the Church’s distinguishing factor, “...there will be no Ukrainian church if the Ukrainian language is not the vernacular of liturgy. Otherwise, it will still be the same Russian Church...Do not forget how Ukrainians were made into Russians, what methods were in use. The Church and school both had a vital role in that... to restore the Ukrainian language, the Church should pray in Ukrainian, and schools and universities should instruct in Ukrainian”<sup>26</sup>. One of Filaret’s greatest contributions to the Ukrainization of the Orthodox church was his translation of the Bible into Ukrainian. The text was also adopted by other ecclesiastical organizations in Ukraine, including the Greek Catholic Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Church<sup>27</sup>.

As regards the OCU, established after the dissolution of two pro-Ukrainian religious organizations: the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate and the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church, it pursues a rather flexible language policy: in most parishes, services are held in Ukrainian, while if

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<sup>21</sup> See: Патріарх Філарет, *Українська церква сьогодні: українізація чи русифікація?*, “Літературна Україна”, <http://hram.in.ua/biblioteka/pratsi-patriarkha-filareta/260-book260/3110-title3653>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>22</sup> А. Вацик, *На Тернопільщині – нова суперечка через Почайівську лавру*, UNIAN, <https://www.unian.ua/society/758424-na-ternopilschini-nova-superechka-cherez-pochajivskulavru.html>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>24</sup> See: Патріарх Філарет, *Українська церква сьогодні: українізація чи русифікація?*, *op. cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Патріарх Філарет, В. Шкляр, М. Вересень, В. Кириленко, *Три розмови про Україну*, Харків: КСД, 2018, p. 59.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 56.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 58.

a religious community wants to keep Church Slavonic, they are free to choose the language.

### The Orthodox Church and the War in Eastern Ukraine

The ROC, whose doctrine of unification of the “Russian world” is pursued by the Kremlin, has never condemned the annexation of Crimea and Russian armed aggression against Ukraine; in contrast, it termed the Russian activity in Ukraine – a “peacekeeping mission”<sup>28</sup>. Indeed, the chairman of the Synodal Department for the Cooperation of the Church and Society of the Moscow Patriarchate, Vsevolod Chaplin, called for the seizure of the entire Ukraine<sup>29</sup>. Aligned with Moscow’s expectations, through sermons, the UOC-MP promotes the ideas of the “Russian world,” inflames separatist sentiment and holds contempt for the Ukrainian language and Ukrainian culture.

The UOC-MP exhibits a different geopolitical stance than the UOC-KP, as well as relying on other historical, ethno-cultural and political realities and models. When the UOC-KP backed protesters in the Maidan Square, sheltered them and offered spiritual protection, the UOC-MP adopted a pro-Russian attitude, i.e. were ill-disposed and often even hostile towards the Ukrainian soldiers defending the independence and territorial unity of their country. Its leaders believe that there is no Russian aggression, and eastern Ukraine is torn apart by internal conflicts, so they pray for peace between Ukrainians in Ukraine.

Moreover, some priests of the Moscow Patriarchate used to help the separatists, hid and blessed weapons and refused to celebrate memorial services for troopers who had fallen in the east. For example, in the village of Morozivka in Kyiv Oblast, a priest expelled from the temple and insulted close relatives of a soldier and hero who had fallen in Donbass. The UOC-MP priest called him “fratricide” and humiliated his sons<sup>30</sup>. The local community was upset by the clergyman’s behavior. The children cried and did not understand why their family was forced out of the temple in which their grandmother had prayed and which

<sup>28</sup> В Русской Православной Церкви рассматривают миссию России на Украине как миротворческую, Всемирный Русский Народный Собор, <https://vrns.ru/news/2658#.WAUWIZMrKV4>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>29</sup> *Крыма нам мало – нужно захватить Киев! Чаплин призывает захватить всю Украину*, [youtube.com/watch?v=DvMD\\_I8CFmA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DvMD_I8CFmA), accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>30</sup> Священник називає загиблого на Донбасі Героя «братовбивцею» і знущується над його синами, „Вісник”, [https://visnyk.lutsk.ua/news/ukraine/46985-svyashennyk-nazyvaie-zagyblogo-na-donbasi-geroya-bratovbyvceyu-i-znushaietsya-nad-iogo-synamy/?fbclid=IwAR2QCAUENCMoIeZgO53VhIC\\_OHKK6HPkP39LAiiG1ycMfkX8yBv-IzbLY9M](https://visnyk.lutsk.ua/news/ukraine/46985-svyashennyk-nazyvaie-zagyblogo-na-donbasi-geroya-bratovbyvceyu-i-znushaietsya-nad-iogo-synamy/?fbclid=IwAR2QCAUENCMoIeZgO53VhIC_OHKK6HPkP39LAiiG1ycMfkX8yBv-IzbLY9M), accessed: 15.12.2021.



they had attended since their early days. Following that event, the soldier's family, as well as some of the locals, got the message and realized that the UOC-MP was hostile towards the Ukrainian struggle for independence. Such situations are not uncommon and result in the growing aversion of Ukrainian citizens to the UOC-MP and a reduction in the number of churchgoers.

The anti-Ukrainian activity of the UOC-MP also caused indignation and opposition among local authorities. In December 2017, the self-government of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast reported to the president and the security service that the UOC-MP was provoking conflicts, using manipulation, disseminating anti-Ukrainian publications, prohibiting the faithful to pray in Ukrainian, supporting separatists, and refusing to bury Ukrainian soldiers<sup>31</sup>. The local self-government officials requested the central Ukrainian authorities to take immediate action to put an end to this type of practices of this Church.

The active and passive participation of the ROC and the UOC-MP in the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has made many believers realize that this was not their Church and has generated a surging demand across the Ukrainian society for an independent autocephalous ecclesiastical organization. That expedited the process of establishing the Orthodox Church of Ukraine<sup>32</sup> at a unification council on 15 December 2018. Today, it boasts the biggest number of the faithful: 48.8 percent of all Ukrainian citizens (61.5 percent of all Orthodox believers), while 14.2 percent of all Ukrainians (17.9 percent of all Orthodox believers) claim to be members of the Moscow Patriarchate<sup>33</sup>. Before the foundation of the OCU, there were three times more priests in the Moscow Patriarchate than in the Kyiv Patriarchate and the number of religious communities was 2.5 times higher<sup>34</sup>. This huge gap can be explained by the pro-Ukrainian attitude of the faithful and by the fact that they often do not know that the "Ukrainian Orthodox Church" sign over the temple door (without indicating its alliance with the Moscow Patriarchate) means that it is part of the Russian

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<sup>31</sup> *Про звернення обласної ради щодо антиукраїнської діяльності Української православної церкви Московського патріархату на території держави, Івано-Франківська обласна рада*, <https://orada.if.ua/decision/про-звернення-обласної-ради-щодо-анти/>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>32</sup> See e.g. *Архимандрит Кирилл Говорун: Украинского раскола больше нет, „Сноб”*, [https://snob.ru/entry/187881?fbclid=IwAR2crUwFVfaCelnj3PUC\\_7x6-zBMhsuEFYuEd5Fzw253wN8vQHeNaKst1Do](https://snob.ru/entry/187881?fbclid=IwAR2crUwFVfaCelnj3PUC_7x6-zBMhsuEFYuEd5Fzw253wN8vQHeNaKst1Do), accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>33</sup> *Конфесійна структура населення України і створення Православної церкви України: травень 2019*, Київський міжнародний інститут соціології, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=862&page=1>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>34</sup> *Релігійна самоідентичність і молитва в Україні*, Київський міжнародний інститут соціології, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=638&page=5>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

Orthodox Church. In this context, the fierce opposition of the MP leaders is very revealing. After the establishment of the new autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine, they say that it should be renamed as the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine. But this means clear identification with Russia, which has not been really exposed until now, and, consequently, the loss of many faithful who will not want to be part of the Church siding with the enemy.

### Transformation of Citizens' Language Awareness after the Revolution of Dignity

Under the influence of the Revolution of Dignity and the armed conflict with Russia, Ukrainian society began to enhance its national awareness and revise its attitude towards the Ukrainian language as the language of the titular nation. At Maidan, they struggled for dignity and dignity is also people's right to speak their mother tongue in their own land, in their own temple, after all, this right is guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine. Before the Revolution of Dignity, the Ukrainian-speaking citizens had not defended that right as much<sup>35</sup> as they did after the Euromaidan. In addition, a large group of citizens began to perceive Russian as a factor in Russia's hybrid war against Ukraine and a tool for exerting pressure on the society<sup>36</sup> and an excuse to take the invasion to the next level. As demonstrated by research, 81 percent of all citizens of Ukraine consider Ukrainian as an important attribute of independence, and 69 percent are in favor of Ukrainian as the only official language<sup>37</sup>. These changes also surface in the religious sphere: the faithful are increasingly demanding the right to say prayers in their own language and not in the language of their adversary.

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<sup>35</sup> According to sociolinguist Larysa Masenko, 74.8 percent of all Ukrainian-speaking citizens (as much as 90.6 percent among young people) switch to Russian when their interlocutor was speaking Russian; Russian-speaking citizens stick to their language in a bilingual communication situation (95.3 percent ignoring the official language and often even disdaining it (Л. Масенко, *Мова і суспільство. Постколоніальний вимір*, Київ, Видавничий дім «КМ Академія», 2004, p. 148).

<sup>36</sup> According to a study by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, Russian-speaking citizens are 2.5 times more susceptible to Russian propaganda than Ukrainian-speaking communities (*Індекс результативності російської пропаганди*, Київський міжнародний інститут соціології, <http://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=510>, accessed: 15.12.2021.)

<sup>37</sup> *Патріотизм, мова та зовнішньополітичні пріоритети – громадська думка України*, Фонд Демократичні ініціативи ім. І. Кучеріва, [https://dif.org.ua/article/%20patriotyzm\\_mova%20%20](https://dif.org.ua/article/%20patriotyzm_mova%20%20), accessed: 15.12.2021.

Meanwhile, in the UOC-MP, resentment towards the Ukrainian language increased after the Revolution of Dignity. Today, using Ukrainian in religious practices may result in condemnation and even expulsion from parish (in the case of the clergy). One of such cases that attracted much publicity occurred in the Zaporizhia Diocese. “This Church is not Ukrainian. It uses Ukrainian money, sponges on it, but it hates it at the same time,” said Anatoli, a priest from that diocese who left the UOC-MP<sup>38</sup>. Before the war with Russia, he served in Russian, but after Russia invaded Ukraine under the alleged reason of protecting the Russian-speaking community, he switched to Ukrainian and began to travel to Donbass to provide spiritual comfort to the fighters. He was reprehended and condemned by his superiors and some parishioners<sup>39</sup>.

Moreover, it may happen that a priest of the Moscow Patriarchate refuses to give Communion to people praying in Ukrainian, as was the case in the Ternopil region<sup>40</sup>. Although before the war many believers did not reflect on the differences between the two patriarchates, now, due to the pro-Russian attitude of the UOC-MP in the war, they begin to walk away and join the new OCU. Currently, 28.7 percent of all Ukrainian citizens are negative about the UOC-MP and 20.9 percent show disfavor to its Ukrainian leader, Onufriy (for comparison, only 5.6 percent of the surveyed have a negative attitude towards the OCU and 5 percent towards its head, Epiphanius)<sup>41</sup>. One of the reasons for transfer of allegiance from the Moscow Patriarchate to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is the language and a growing sense of national identity, “...we are Ukrainians and we live on Ukrainian soil. ...we do not want to pray in a language that we do not understand; we want to hear Ukrainian. We teach children patriotism, how to be patriots”<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Священик УПЦ МП, якого сварили за українську мову, покинув служіння церкви, UNIAN, <https://www.unian.ua/society/2340463-svyaschennik-upts-mp-yakogo-svarili-za-ukrajinsku-movu-pokinuv-slujinnya-tserkvi.html>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup> На Тернопільщині московський піп відмовився причащати дитину через молитву українською мовою, Сайт міста Тернопіль, 13.06.2018, <https://www.0352.ua/news/2068360/na-ternopilsini-moskovskij-pip-vidmovivsa-pricasati-ditinu-cerez-molitvu-ukrainskou-movou>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>41</sup> Конфесійна структура населення України і створення Православної церкви України: травень 2019, <https://www.kiis.com.ua/?lang=ukr&cat=reports&id=862&page=1>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

<sup>42</sup> Церковний конфлікт: на Волині вірянам ПЦУ довелося відбивати храм з кулаками, 5 канал, <https://www.5.ua/regiony/tserkovnyi-konflikt-na-volyni-virianam-ptsu-dovelosia-vidbyvati-khram-z-kulakamy-190769.html>, accessed: 15.12.2021.

## Conclusions

The Revolution of Dignity and Russia's aggression against Ukraine contributed to an increase in the national awareness of Ukrainian citizens and a re-evaluation of the role of the Ukrainian language for national identity and state security. The church plays an important role for Ukrainian society, therefore its attitude towards key events in the country is of great importance to its citizens. The Orthodox Church of Ukraine, represented by two institutions – the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine – took a different position on the groundbreaking events in Ukraine. The UOC MP, staying under the Russian protectorate, took a pro-Russian position, i.e. unfavorable and often even hostile to the protesters in the Maidan and to the soldiers defending the independence and territorial unity of Ukraine. It promotes the values of the “Russian world”, stimulates separatist sentiments and contempt for the Ukrainian language and culture. The hierarchs and clergy of this church believe that there is no aggression by Russia, and that in the East of Ukraine there is an internal conflict / fratricidal war, the culprit of which is the Ukrainian side. The autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine took a completely different position. The pro-Ukrainian attitude of the OCU contributed to an increase in trust in this church on the part of citizens and an increase in the number of the faithful. Despite the fact that the process of moving from the UOC – MP to OCU is often met with hostility and even violence on the part of priests and supporters of the UOC MP who do not accept the new church, it will inevitably progress with the growing national and linguistic awareness of Ukrainian citizens.

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**Summary:** Language plays a very important role in the religious life of an individual, community and state. A common language gives a feeling of unity, helps to create community bonds and facilitates integration and consolidation. Under the influence of the Revolution of Dignity and the hybrid war with Russia, the sense of national identity has begun to grow in Ukrainian society, and the attitude towards the Ukrainian language as an important component of national identity and security has changed. Many Orthodox believers in Ukraine attach more importance to the language of worship and the attitude of the Church towards the hybrid war with Russia. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate and the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine established in 2018 represent different attitudes towards the annexation of Crimea, the war in eastern Ukraine and the language of religious practice. The UOC MP, staying in the protectorate of the Russian Orthodox Church, has never condemned the annexation of Crimea and the armed aggression of Russia against Ukraine. In the UOC MP, there is an informal ban on the use of the Ukrainian language, as they perceive liturgical activities in Ukrainian as a betrayal of the “Russian world”. Such an attitude causes misunderstandings and even indignation on the part of the faithful, who more and more often have switched allegiance, taking up that towards the autocephalous Orthodox Church of Ukraine – which presents a pro-Ukrainian attitude.

**Keywords:** the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, Ukrainian language, hybrid war with Russia

### Kościół Prawosławny na Ukrainie wobec języka ukraińskiego

**Streszczenie:** W życiu religijnym jednostki, wspólnoty i państwa język odgrywa bardzo ważną rolę. Wspólny język daje poczucie jedności, pomaga tworzyć więzi wspólnotowe oraz ułatwia integrację i konsolidację. Pod wpływem Rewolucji Godności i wojny hybrydowej z Rosją w społeczeństwie ukraińskim zaczęło wzrastać poczucie tożsamości narodowej, jak również zmienił się stosunek do języka ukraińskiego jako ważnego składnika tożsamości i bezpieczeństwa narodowego. Wielu wyznawców prawosławia na Ukrainie przywiązuje większą wagę do języka nabożeństw oraz postawy Kościoła wobec wojny hybrydowej z Rosją. Ukraiński Kościół Prawosławny Moskiewskiego Patriarchatu oraz powołany w 2018 roku Prawosławny Kościół Ukrainy prezentują odmienne postawy wobec aneksji Krymu, wojny na wschodzie Ukrainy i języka praktyk religijnych. Przebywający po protektoracie Rosyjskiego Kościoła Prawosławnego UKP MP nigdy nie potępił aneksji Krymu oraz agresji zbrojnej Rosji przeciwko Ukrainie. W UKP MP panuje nieformalny zakaz na stosowanie języka ukraińskiego, gdyż odprawianie czynności liturgicznych w języku ukraińskim postrzegane jest przez nich jako zdrada „rosyjskiego świata”. Taka postawa wywołuje niezrozumienia, a nawet oburzenie ze strony wiernych, którzy co raz częściej przechodzą do autokefalicznego Prawosławnego Kościoła Ukrainy prezentującego proukraińską postawę.

**Słowa kluczowe:** kościół prawosławny na Ukrainie, język ukraiński, wojna hybrydowa z Rosją