

# Language policy of Ukraine and its representation in social doctrines of the Orthodox churches

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## ABSTRACT

The article provides a critical analysis of the leading ideas and fundamental principles of the social doctrine (teachings) of the Orthodox churches operating in Ukraine and interprets the key dominants and the specifics of their implementation of the strategic goals of the state language policy in Ukraine. The main aim is to investigate the problems of the reception of the state language strategy by Orthodox communities with different jurisdictions and to clearly clarify and justify the risks and dangers arising from the attitude to the language policy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which is under the canonical subordination of the Mosokovsky Patriarchate. As a result of the study, it was proved that the role and place of Orthodox communities in the implementation of the strategic goals of language policy in Ukraine is different. Their participation in the process of implementation of the state language policy is equally ambiguous, and even openly contradictory in terms of ideological and value orientation and methods of implementation. In the case of the activity of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, it is subversive, anti-state, harmful and poses a threat to the national security of Ukraine. The material of the article has important theoretical and practical significance in view of the integral critical justification of the state language strategy of the UOC MP and OCU as dominant vector-oriented politically oriented Orthodox jurisdictions, which is actualized in the conditions of modern challenges and leading trends and, in particular, due to the need to implement the life of legal norms, defined by the Law of Ukraine "On the protection of the constitutional system in the sphere of activities of religious organizations".

## KEYWORDS

*Church, state, social doctrine, language policy, national security, believers*

## Introduction

Military aggression and Russia's full-scale invasion have re-emerged the problem of language policy in Ukraine. It has become especially acute in connection with the chauvinistic statements of Kremlin's officials and church officials of the Moscow Patriarchate (MP), who do not hide the fact that one of the reasons for the Russian-Ukrainian war is the protection of "Russian-speaking" and infected with the ideology of the Russian world supporters of the so-called canonical church, which is in the orbit of the political interests of the Moscow Patriarchate – the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC MP).

Today, all countries of the world share common tasks and common challenges. Humanity is facing many economic, political, technological and humanitarian challenges. To summarize, one can reduce them to the following ones: 1) the demographic crisis (in some countries the population is growing rapidly, while in others it is falling to a critical level); 2) the environmental crisis, which is determined by intensive environmental destruction and threatens life on the planet; 3) problems of access to resources and provision of essential food 4) geopolitical conflicts, including military ones, which threaten humanity with World

War III and self-destruction; 5) tendencies to deepen inequality and uneven development of individual nations, countries, regions, etc., which creates permanent conflictogenicity.

It is unnecessary to argue that Russia's military aggression against Ukraine has exacerbated these problems not only now, but at all levels. As a result, not only the above-mentioned challenges, problems and tasks common to the entire international community that require immediate response have become more urgent for Ukraine, but also problems that have long been resolved for most countries and peoples. The most important problem for Ukraine is not even the establishment of a just peace and victory over racism (this will come sooner or later), but the problem of nurturing of a national spiritual, cultural, and political identity.

Even taking into account the current processes of attitudes toward the war, participation in the fight against the aggressor, assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, support for the volunteer movement and, conversely, treason, the phenomena of collaboration and cooperation with the occupiers, etc., we conclude that Ukraine will never succeed in any of its ethnic territories if it cannot establish its own national identity there. Instead, it has established itself quite

easily where this identity is well represented and consolidated. We are talking about two Ukraines – the one dominated by the structures of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Kremlin's ideology of “monolithic nation” and propaganda of the “Russian world” and the one where the spiritual, canonical, educational and soteriological mission was carried out by the historical Ukrainian Churches – the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, (UOC KP) which in December 2019 united into one the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) with autocephalous status.

Since for us the mother tongue is the main marker of national identity, the problem of critical analysis of the language factor and the attitude to Ukraine's language policy of the Orthodox churches operating in its spiritual and cultural space and clarification of their role in establishing Ukrainian national identity in the worldview of their faithful is becoming more relevant.

Without distinct national self-determination, the Ukrainians are doomed. Today, Ukraine is facing a triune task: the formation of a common view of historical memory; 2) a language and cultural policy based on the intensity of linguistic, spiritual and cultural ties between all regions of Ukraine; 3) the creation of the most favorable social and legal conditions for the formation of civil society. The potential of the OCU and other Ukraine-centered religious organizations should be involved in the implementation of all these tasks. At the same time, the influence of the Moscow-centered UOC MP on education, science, and culture should be minimized.

#### Research methods

The *theoretical* and *methodological* tools of religious and socio-legal objectification of language, the attitude of churches to state language strategies in the contest of theological teaching on society are methods of synthesis and generalization, comparative analysis of fundamental provisions of social doctrines and concepts, as well as phenomenological analysis, which provides the possibility of critical understanding the language not only with regard to its liturgical functions (meetings of man with God and the divine world), but also expressing the content of normative documents of Orthodox churches operating in Ukraine, regarding their language policy, public appeals and statements of church hierarchs and rank-and-file clergy regarding the functioning of one or another language, its spiritual, cultural and religious potential.

#### Results and Discussion

Even taking into account the current processes of attitudes toward the war, participation in the fight against the aggressor, assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine, support for the volunteer movement and, conversely, treason, the phenomena of collaboration and cooperation with the occupiers, etc., we conclude that Ukraine will never succeed in any of its ethnic territories if it cannot establish its own national identity there. Instead, it has established itself quite easily where this identity is well represented and consolidated. We are talking about two Ukraines – the one dominated by the structures of the Moscow Patriarchate with the Kremlin's ideology of “monolithic nation” and propaganda of the “Russian world” and the one where the spiritual, canonical, educational and soteriological mission was carried out by the historical Ukrainian Churches – the Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church (UAOC) and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate, (UOC KP) which in

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Without distinct national self-determination, the Ukrainians are doomed. Today, Ukraine is facing a triune task: 1) the formation of a common view of historical memory; 2) a language and cultural policy based on the intensity of linguistic, spiritual and cultural ties between all regions of Ukraine; 3) the creation of the most favorable social and legal conditions for the formation of civil society. The potential of the OCU and other Ukraine-centered religious organizations should be involved in the implementation of all these tasks. At the same time, the influence of the Moscow-centered UOC MP on education, science, and culture should be minimized.

The state language policy in Ukraine is based on the Constitution of Ukraine (Article 10), the European Charter for Regional Languages or Minority Languages (*Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, 2003*), decrees of the presidents of Ukraine, resolutions of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, rulings of the Constitutional Court of Ukraine, etc. Its main goals and strategies are also represented in the Laws of Ukraine, in particular, the Laws of Ukraine “On Education” and “On Higher Education”, “On Culture”, etc.

But despite this, and despite the fact that the concept of the state language policy was developed and approved under President Yushchenko, it has not been possible to form a coherent national Ukrainian language ground yet.

There are many reasons for this, and they are all on the surface, especially when the strategy of the state language policy in recent years has been implemented in the light of a narrative: “What is the difference?”

Meanwhile, the greatest threat to Ukraine, which poses not only a linguistic threat but also a threat to national security in general, is the existence of churches and religious communities in its religious space that do not cultivate the Ukrainian language, national culture, and traditions but are openly hostile to their revival, preservation, protection, popularization, and so on.

In this context, the most dangerous has been and remains the so-called Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), which continues to be in unity and, therefore, in canonical and political dependence on the Moscow Patriarchate.

Therefore, reflecting on the attitude of the Orthodox Church to the state language policy, its role and direct participation in its implementation, we will primarily talk about this structure, which in essence remains the fifth column of Kremlin even in conditions of the full-scale military invasion, mass terror, war crimes and genocide of the Ukrainian people.

The main document that expresses the attitude of the UOC MP to language policy is its social concept.

Why the Social concept, not a doctrine? First of all, because only the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) can develop the social doctrine, which includes so-called independent churches with broad or narrow autonomy, such as the UOC MP, which, manipulating the minds of its faithful, convinces them that it has nothing to do with the Moscow Patriarchate.

However, the fact that the social concept of the UOC is a joint creation of the UOC and the ROC is evidenced by

the fact that the document is enacted not by the Council of the UOC MP, but by the Council of the ROC. In the case of the social concept of the UOC MP, this was done at the Jubilee Council of Bishops of the ROC, held in Moscow on August 13-16, 2000 (*The Russian Church, 2000*).

The preamble to the Concept states: "This document, adopted by the Jubilee Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, establishes the basic provisions of its doctrine on church and state relations and a number of contemporary socially significant issues. This is the document that reflects the official position of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the area of relations with the state and secular society. In addition, it establishes a number of guiding principles to be applied in this area by the bishops, clergy and laity" (*Social concept, 2017*).

It is clear that the main postulates of the social concept of the UOC MP, as well as the social doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church, are fundamental theological, ecclesiastical, and social issues, as well as those aspects of state and society that, in the opinion of the fullness of this church, were and remain equally relevant for the entire church in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries and will remain relevant in the near future (*Social concept, 2000*).

This phrase "relevant for the entire Church" should be understood as meaning that it is primarily or only for the Russian Orthodox Church. After all, since 2017 the strongest theologians of the Orthodox world, in the care of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, have developed, in fact, a universal and holistic, extremely well verified in theological and socio-communicative terms, structural and functional, theocentric and anthropocentric in ideological and value contents, and therefore, stoteriological potential doctrine under the general title "For the Life of the World: Toward the Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church" (*For the Life, 2020*).

In general, the social concept of the UOC MP includes 16 independent chapters, conventionally divided into parts that are characterized by a disproportionate number of declarative statements. The smallest sections are those devoted to secular science and education, the Church and the secular media – 3 parts (subsections) each, as well as sections defining basic theological concepts, substantiating the attitude of the Church to nation-building, political processes and social transformations – they have 4 subsections each.

The largest section is Chapter 3, "Church and State", which contains 11 subsections, each of which is also described in detail.

In general, the social concept of the UOC has been developed in line with political orthodoxy, which is inherent only in the imperial Church and is completely alien to the specific Ukrainian Churches – the OCU, the Ukrainian Greek Catholic church (UGCC) and the UOC KP. It is not difficult to guess why this has been done.

As for the use of the word "language" in the document, it is indeed present. It is used 11 times. But all references to language in the singular or plural form, in one case or another, have nothing to do with the Ukrainian language; its use in church liturgical practice, preaching, or missionary activity is nothing more than most ordinary speculation.

For example, in the section "Nation and Church," it is emphasized that the Church of Christ is the One and Universal and that this unity "is not ensured by national, cultural, or linguistic fellowship, but by faith in Christ and baptism" (*Social concept, 2017*). Having remembered that the apostles preached the gospel of Christ not in the sacred

language, i.e., Hebrew, which only the people of Israel could understand, but in the languages of different nations, the concept does not even hint that every nation, including Ukrainian, has the right to hear about God in their own language, as it was on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, "began to speak in other languages" (Acts 2:4). And the sacred writer testified that at that moment in Jerusalem there were not only Jews, but pious people from every nation under the heaven – Parthians and Medes and Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the regions of Libya near Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – we hear them speaking in our own languages the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:10-11). They were all amazed and perplexed, "How is it that we hear, each in our own native language?" (Acts 2:8).

Focusing the consciousness of the Ukrainian faithful who voluntarily or under the influence of church propaganda was captured by the ideological narratives of the "Russian world," the concept proclaims the postulate of the chosen people of Israel, to whom "God gave the promised land" and who spoke "one language," which was both the language of everyday life and the language of prayer, which is an open encouragement for the flock to maintain unity, including cultivating one language in everyday life and in worship. And this language should be Russian, because they have always spoken disrespectfully of Ukrainian, constantly emphasizing that it is supposedly unsuitable for prayer. The following absolutely unjustified explanation was added to emphasize the context: "In the era before Christ's Coming, when the inhabitants of Judea spoke Aramaic and Greek was elevated to the rank of the state language, Hebrew continued to be treated as a holy language in which to worship in the temple" (*Social concept, 2017*). In other words, no matter how many laws the Ukrainian state passes on the Ukrainian language, the social concept determines the need to stick to the Church Slavonic language, and necessarily with a moscow pronunciation considering it as holy and the only one worth of worshipping.

As for other church communities, and in particular the OCU, the UGCC, and the UOC KP, these are churches that exclusively defend the national and cultural identity of the Ukrainians and contribute in every way to the revival of the Ukrainian statehood, the establishment of its status and image in the world as a sovereign, independent and democratic country.

They cherish and protect their native language, work on modernizing of the liturgical texts, on the Ukrainian translations of works of the Church Fathers, church liturgical books, modern scientific theological literature, etc. The UOC KP, headed by Patriarch Filaret, is in the same position. However, the very existence of this institution as a separate church does not contribute to the unity of the Ukrainians and the consolidation of the Ukrainian nation.

Without any doubt, the OCU, the UGCC, and the UOC KP are nationally oriented churches by all signs and criteria, and despite the unity of one with Constantinople and the other with Rome, they are both Ukraine-centered in civilizational and political terms.

However, the OCU currently does not have a Social Doctrine officially approved at the Council level, which would de iure fix its attitude to the concept of state language policy and canonically justify its role, place, and direct participation in the implementation of the language strategy. But this Church de facto cherishes everything that

identifies the Ukrainians as a separate, distinctive people and nation.

The UOC KP has a social doctrine, formalized in a lengthy and informative declaration of the Jubilee Local Council of January 23, 2001. This document does not say much about the attitude of the UOC KP to the state language policy and to the Ukrainian language itself, but it is quite convincing and takes into account the real political circumstances and difficulties that determine the state and prospects of nation-building processes, the undeniable consequence of which should be overcoming the centuries-long smoskization and displacement of the Ukrainian language factor to the periphery of literary and church-religious life: "Our Holy Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate, taking into account the state of the modern national consciousness of the Ukrainian citizens, the centuries-old Ukrainian church tradition, and the needs for the introduction and normal development of the Ukrainian language, enshrined in the Constitution of Ukraine, declares that the Ukrainian language will continue to be the liturgical language in our Church. However, in those parishes where faithful wish, worships may also be held in the Church Slavonic language, so that peace and tranquility may reign among the Orthodox. Such a definition is also necessary for the future unification of the Orthodox in Ukraine into a single Local Ukrainian Orthodox Church (*The Church, 2001*).

In addition, the Church assumes quite specific obligations, which it has faithfully fulfilled and continues to fulfill: "Being separated from the state, the Church does not separate itself from the people, from the society. It must influence the society through spiritual means. Our Holy Church joyfully welcomed the proclamation of Ukraine's independence and supports the establishment of its statehood <...>. Today, the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, standing for the state positions and protecting its interests, is the spiritual foundation of the state. We condemn any attempts to discredit our statehood in any way. The Church as a divine organism will always advocate and support the idea of consolidation, peace and harmony in the Ukrainian society <...> (*The Church, 2001*). In difficult times for our nation, the Church called on the flock to love their earthly motherland, blessed the national liberation struggle of our people <...>. Orthodox patriotism and national consciousness should be active and manifested in the defense of our state from the enemy, work for the good of the motherland, and concern for the improvement and welfare of the people".

It is noteworthy that the UOC KP, like the UOC MP, bases its attitude to the liturgical language and preaching on the testimony of the Holy Spirit's action on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles received the gift of speaking the languages of the people to whom they went to preach the Gospel of Christ, as well as on the teaching of the Apostle Paul about the importance of preaching in their native language: "Yet in the church I had rather speak five words" (1 Cor.14,19).

Of course, the majority of the episcopate of the OCU, from which His Holiness dissociated himself the following year after the Patriarchal and Synodal Tomos of autocephaly was granted on January 6, 2019, was also involved in the adoption of this Declaration and the implementation of its fundamental principles to the same extent as Patriarch Filaret.

Thus, the social concept of the Russian Orthodox Church is developed on the basis of Moscow imperialist orthodoxy and carefully disguised behind the political scenes as a concern for the salvation of the flock, serves as tools for the implementation of the "Russian World" ideology.

At the same time, the treacherous war of the Russian federation against Ukraine not only knocked the soil from under the feet of ideologues and practitioners, but also buried this essentially fascist project. By exploiting this theme, Kremlin and the Russian Orthodox Church themselves turned into a source of the Nazi ideology and evil on a global scale. It is because of these and other factors that the UOC MP has lost public and state trust.

Of course, the Ukrainian people are now forced to pay a very high price for tolerating the UOC MP with its social concept and anti-Ukrainian activities in all other spheres of our existence. But at the same time, we are witnessing rapid positive changes.

They are that over the eight months of Ukraine's heroic struggle against Russian military aggression, the number of supporters of the OCU has increased significantly. This dynamic is confirmed by the results of many sociological surveys conducted by the Kyiv International Sociological Institute in June 2022 (*Grushetskyi, 2022*) and the Razumkov Center in November 2022 with the support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in all regions of Ukraine in the territories controlled by the government of Ukraine and where there are no hostilities going on (*War and Church, 2022*).

Thus, according to the first, the OCU holds the "leading" position among Orthodox churches – 54%, and only 4% identify themselves with the UOC MP. Compared to 2021, the share of the OCU supporters has increased from 42% to 54%. Instead, the share of those who identified themselves with the UOC MP decreased from 18% to 4%.

If we talk about the regional manifestations of these parameters, it is worth noting that Ukrainian citizens who identify themselves as the OCU have the highest index in the center and western regions of our country and this index goes up to 59%, while in the East it is somewhat lower, but it is still quite high – 42% (*Grushetskyi, 2022*).

We do not mention other churches in this matter, since the dynamic of their position and prospects for influencing socio-political, spiritual and cultural life in Ukraine in 2020-2022 remains almost unchanged.

In the context of our analysis, it may be important to consider the cross-section of linguistic and ethnic categories of respondents, which confirms that the OCU is composed of Ukrainian-speaking Ukrainians (58%). At the same time, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of its spiritual children who are ethnic Ukrainians but are russified and speak the language of the occupier (46%).

Strangely enough, the percentage of Russian-speaking citizens has also increased significantly to 36%, who suddenly began to identify themselves with the OCU. But 13% still identify themselves with the UOC MP.

### Conclusion

It has been proven that all Orthodox churches operating in the religious space and public spaces of Ukraine base their social strategies (concepts) on language and language policy on evidence of the action of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, when the apostles received the gift of speaking in the languages of the nations, before which they went to preach the Gospel of Christ, as well as the teachings of the Apostle Paul about the importance of preaching in one's native language: "In the Church I prefer to say five words" (1 Cor. 14:19), but in the context of the church of the Moscow Patriarchate, they categorically oppose the use of the Ukrainian language after religious services.

Thus, we can see that the UOC MP, although it maintains de facto control over most parishes, has suffered significant reputational losses due to its canonical subordination to the ROC, its ties and sometimes cooperation with the Moscow aggressor. We hope that it has lost its influence completely and irrevocably. At the same time, there is a clear need for a precise definition of priorities for the strategy of state language policy in the church-religious sphere. In our opinion, it is necessary to make amendments to the Law of Ukraine "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations," the Law of Ukraine "On Language," and other regulations and to set obligations for all religious organizations:

- to recognize the Ukrainian language not only as a means of communication, but also as a means of intellectual, spiritual and cultural expression of a citizen, reflecting his or her individual identity and being the basis of spirituality and historical memory;

- regard the Ukrainian language as the main factor of the national, spiritual and cultural identity of the Ukrainian faithful;

- ensure the functioning of the Ukrainian language in liturgical life, educational activities and in the public sphere and not to impose any direct or indirect coercion or restrictions on the use of the Ukrainian language, referring to artificial religious statements;

- to raise and establish a sense of respect for the Ukrainian language as a national symbol along with other state symbols among faithful.

The relevant novels should be reflected in the social doctrine or other documents containing basic statements on the use of the Ukrainian language and reflecting the official position of the religious organization (church) on this issue in the field of relations with the state and civil society.

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## Мовна політика України та її відображення в соціальних доктринах православних церков

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У статті здійснюється критичний аналіз провідних ідей та основоположних засад соціальної доктрини (вчення) діючих в Україні Православних Церков та трактуються ключові доміанти та особливості реалізації ними стратегічних завдань державної мовної політики в Україні. Досліджено проблему критичної рефлексії та суспільної рецепції реалізації стратегії державної мовної політики православними спільнотами з різними юрисдикціями і визначено очевидні ризики та небезпеки, які виникають через ставлення до мовної політики Української Православної Церкви, яка перебуває під контролем канонічного підпорядкування Московського патріархату. У результаті дослідження доведено, що роль та місце православних спільнот у реалізації стратегічних цілей мовної політики в Україні – різні. Такою ж неоднозначною, а то й відверто суперечливою за ідейно-ціннісною спрямованістю та способами імплементації є й їхня участь у процесі здійснення державної мовної політики. У випадку із діяльністю Української православної церкви Московського патріархату – вона підризна, антидержавницька, шкідлива й становить загрозу національній безпеці України. Матеріал статті має важливе теоретичне та практичне значення з огляду на цілісне критичне обґрунтування державної мовної стратегії УПЦ МП та ПЦУ як домінуючих векторно зорієнтованих в політичному плані православних юрисдикцій, що актуалізується в умовах сучасних викликів і провідних тенденцій і, зокрема зумовленими необхідністю втілення життя правових норм, визначених Законом України «Про захист конституційного ладу у сфері діяльності релігійних організацій».

**Ключові слова:** Церква, держава, соціальна доктрина, мовна політика, національна безпека, віряни.

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