

INTRODUCTION

Postcolonial linguistics focuses on researching the language experience and language situations of countries of the Global South that gained independence from colonial rule in the 20th century. In particular, numerous studies address the language policy and language planning, language ideologies, creolizing of indigenous languages, multilingualism, language resilience and resistance, language victimization and language opportunism, the formation of linguistic theories, and standardization of native languages in former colonies. However, a large number of these processes can be observed on the European continent as well, although they have certain peculiarities. Viewing these phenomena through the lens of ‘subordinated–dominator,’ or in other words ‘colonized–colonizer’, will give us a chance to comprehend a deeper social interaction and language processes in some Eastern European countries, and in Ukraine, in particular, and to reveal the origins of current language issues. In the case of Ukraine, it has greater importance due to Russia’s full-scale invasion, as it facilitates the understanding of the anticolonial nature of this war and decolonial processes of wartime. Thus, on the one hand, postcolonial linguistics could be a useful basis to analyze languages, language practices, and language policy in countries that were not colonies in a traditional sense. On the other hand, postcolonial approaches need to enhance their methodological basis, collect and carefully consider empirical data that were not part of linguists’ focus before. This special issue aims to make a partial contribution toward filling these gaps.

Part One, “**Prospects and Challenges of Analyzing Ukrainian Language Issues through the Postcolonial Lens**” presents studies that apply a postcolonial methodological framework to the analysis of language issues in Ukraine. Monika Wingender engages in reflections on the rationale and efficacy of applying postcolonial theory concepts to the study of language processes in Ukraine and their correlation with concepts such as decommunization and derussification. The article argues that the field of language ideologies occupies a particularly important place in postcolonial linguistics. Using two case

studies, the author outlines the advantages and disadvantages of applying a postcolonial approach to the analysis of language processes in Ukraine, concluding that it should be combined with other sociolinguistic approaches. Additionally, the conclusions highlight a potential contribution of research on the Ukrainian language situation to the postcolonial theory. Svitlana Romanyuk and Filip Miezwa offer a perspective on Ukraine's language policy after the collapse of the Soviet Union through the lens of colonial relations, characterizing it as a gradual liberation from the dominance of imperial structures. The authors show how the 2019 language laws have become a tool of cultural decolonization and a means of protecting and maintaining cultural identity and the sovereignty of state institutions.

Part Two, **“Changing Language Ideologies and Language Attitudes in Wartime: From Postcolonial Condition to Decolonial Processes”** covers papers employing concepts of postcolonial theory to case studies based on analyses of language ideologies, language attitudes, and language behavior of Ukrainians after their liberation from political dependence within the Soviet Union. Bohdan Azhniuk traces changes in the relationship between dominant language ideologies – *‘bilingual Ukraine’* and *‘One nation, one language’* – against the background of socio-political events. By analyzing social surveys and observing the linguistic behavior of officials and influencers, the author illustrates how both grassroots and top-down language ideologies reflect the shift from an ethnic to a political conception of the nation and the rising prestige of the Ukrainian language. Natalia Kobchenko, examining textual and visual representations of the letter “i” before and after Russia's full-scale invasion, traces changes in the language ideologies of Ukrainians and reflects on how these shifts reveal two simultaneous processes: the transition from a post-colonial condition to a decolonial situation and the ongoing anti-colonial struggle. Olha Shevchuk-Kliuzheva and Pavel Levchuk, through a survey of 6–10-year-old Kyiv schoolchildren regarding their attitudes toward and use of Ukrainian, Russian, and English, show the ways in which children's linguistic preferences and practices reflect ideological influences and emotional positioning in times of national and linguistic transformation. The authors conclude that rather than being passive recipients of language policy, children actively interpret, negotiate, and transform symbolic boundaries. These three studies focus on different aspects of the language ideologies of Ukrainians during wartime. They analyze attitudes toward language represented by various manifestations and across different age groups. Nevertheless, their find-

ings point to the same overall trend: on one hand, Ukrainians' attitude towards the Ukrainian language as a national treasure is gradually being replaced with a pragmatic attitude, seeing it as an effective tool for social interaction; on the other hand, both among the general public and the authorities, there is a growing recognition of the role of language as a factor in the consolidation of the political nation.

Part Three, **“Shaping of Imperial Discourse and Counter-Discourse: From History to the Current Situation”** consists of studies that describe the construction and spread of so-called internal and external official discourses at different stages of the development of Russia as an imperial formation. In addition, one of them presents the peculiarities of the construction of Ukrainian official counter-discourse in the context of an anti-colonial war. Thomas Daiber analyses textual reworking in the Old Church Slavonic translation of the original Greek written record *Vita Constantini-Cyrilli*. The author demonstrates that the additions to this translation introduce new material reflecting the scribe's intention to accentuate the contrast between Orthodoxy and Catholicism, produced during a period when Russia opposed the impact of the Catholic Counter-Reformation. Nataliia Yasakova's paper deals with analyzing the causes and consequences of the absence in the 11-volume Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language of nouns denoting persons, associated with the experience of resistance to Moscow authorities and the idea of creating a Ukrainian state. The author demonstrates how the explanatory dictionary of the Ukrainian language, published during the Soviet era, became an instrument for enforcing state control and a form of colonial practice implemented by the colonized themselves. Iryna Odrekhivska's study examines the Soviet practice of indirectly translating Ukrainian literature into English via Russian, presenting it as a manifestation of colonial hierarchies and linguistic imperialism. The transliteration of literary work titles, authors' and characters' names, as well as toponyms served as mechanisms for appropriating Ukrainian culture, consolidating its perception on the international stage as inseparable from Russian culture. The continued use of these translations in Western academia reinforces this perceptual framework, which, as the author argues, can only be challenged if translators, publishers, and scholars embrace the principle of linguistic responsibility. Liudmyla Pidkuimuka's study analyzes how Ukrainian public figures develop strategic narratives to counter the doctrine of the “Russian world” during Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. The author demonstrates the ways in which political leaders employ strategic communi-

cation tools in wartime to create counter-narratives that confront Russia's propaganda.

This special issue is one of the first comprehensive works in linguistics that examines language and metalinguistic practices in Ukraine through a postcolonial methodological lens. The editor of the issue hopes that the studies presented will stimulate further discussion on adapting postcolonial and decolonial theoretical frameworks to the Ukrainian linguistic context, as well as serve as a reference for researching language and metalinguistic practices in countries that have experienced political dependence but were not colonies in the classical sense of the term.