Larysa D. Klymanska
Lviv National Polytechnic University

Communication technology 'discourse of the language problem' in Ukraine as a factor in the political process

ABSTRAKT

Artykul poswiecony jest problemom dotyczacym ksztaltowania sie na Ukrainie jezyka opartego na technologii jego wykorzystania. Podstawa jest analiza modelu problemow spolecznych z konstruktywistycznego punktu widzenia, co wyjasnia, w jaki sposob problem j zyka zostal przeksztalcony w element polityki spolecznej.

SLOWA KLUCZOWE: problem społeczny, polityka społeczna, problem j zyka na Ukrainie, 'ukrai ska wersja' vs. 'rosyjska wersja' problemu jezyka

In general, this article is devoted to the construction of social problems in the political discourse. It is the basis of the functioning of political discourse, the basis for the fundamental building of the program of the political subject that is recognized as a problem to be dealt with in this paper. Any political discourse is formed around the position determining the particular issue. In this sense, the language issue in Ukraine is unique; the discourse of the language problem reborn a 'wave' and this wave of interest in language issues comes out from time to time alongside the approaching elections. In recent years social problems, were empirically investigated[1]; historical and sociological research on the study of social problems in pre-revolutionary (until

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1   .   .   , ”
       ”, 2006, 12, 15-21,   . .,
      , ”   ”, 2006, 12, 3 – 8,   .,

      , ”   :   ,   ,   ”, 2005, 1, .36-65,   . .,
                  :   , ” -   ”, 2008, 240,
   . .,   . .,   , in: . .   ,   . .   , ”
             -                                ”,   , 2000, .139 -151,   .,   .,
                                                          , ”   :   ,   ,   ”, 2004, 4,
24- 38,   ,
   ”   ”, 2006, 12, 9-10,   B.JI.,
          , ”   ”, 2006. 5, 92-96.

1917) days when they were called 'social issues'[2] were conducted; the attempts of a new conceptual understanding from the position of modern sociology were implemented[3].

The theoretical aspect is related to the development of the sociology of social problems. Some social scientists are trying to keep traditional interpretation of the social problems as objective reality, others complement this position with the constructionist's approach that allows analyzing the activities of groups of claims-makers who insist that the problem exists[4]. Such multi-paradigmatic approach tries to combine the subjective and objective paradigm and in such a way to get most complete knowledge of the social problems[5].

However, there is still some uncertainty about how such problems may obtain their social status, the one that requires political interference in its decision, what technologies are involved in this process. Without pretending to answer all the issues mentioned above, we intend to analyze the construction of the social problems in the political discourse of the voting campaign (2012) as an example of language issue framing in Ukraine.

Our analysis of communicative constructs of language issue in Ukraine is based on social constructionism. Such a constructionist approach mainly focuses on the mechanisms that refer to the problem-inferring complex social conditions. A social problem is defined as a dynamic social construct that results from the reaction to the actually occurring social conditions[6]. "The social problem exists primarily as it is defined and perceived in society"[7]. We use the so-called soft version of contextual constructionism, since it allows exploring the discourse of social problems in the context of culture and social structure. To generate the sense of what is happening in reality, people use information primarily from four sources: personal experience, the experience of other individuals (who are in communication with them), social groups and institutions, and the media. In the complex post-industrial societies modern personality, in particular, depends on the mass media as the sources of information about social reality. Considering that the organizations which run the media are business organizations, it is clear that economic factors (i.e. business interests) determine the contents of messages in mass media. Newspapers publish some

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2   . .,   , "
        ", 2007, 7, 108-115.

3   . .,   ,   - -
      , - . 2004, 199,   . .,   :
    , "   ",   , 1998, 1, 3, 74 – 90,   . .,
                              ,   , "   . .   , 2003, 64,
                         , ' "
     , . .   -   , . .   . (eds.), 2002, 28 – 37.

4   . .,   :   , "
            ",   , 1998, 1, 3, 74 – 90.

5   . .,   ,   ' "   "
 . .   , 2003, 64.

6   Best J., *Social problems,* 2008, 16.

7   Blumer H., *Social Problems as Collective Behavior*, "Social Problems", 1971,.18, 300.

materials based on what journalists believe will be of interest to the public (which is the only way you can make the paper readable, and therefore economically productive, profitable business).

In addition to the choice (i.e. what to write about), a newspaper (or any other means of mass media) is included in the process of the social construction of the reality through a participation in what P. Ibarra and J. Kitsuse called rhetoric on social problems[8]. P. Ibarra and J. Kitsuse propose the term rhetorical idiom to describe the overall communication strategies used in the process of claims-making.

Rhetorical idioms are special ways in which the problem status of complex social circumstances becomes an updated status. The term 'idiom' is used by P. Ibarra and J. Kitsuse in the sense of phraseological units, idiomatic phrases, a sustainable design, integral to the value in which words lose their literal semantics and mark other cultural codes - behavioral, spiritual, moral and so on, not in the philological sense. Idioms are specific therefore linguistic formulas, a worldview encoded with information about the past, some national way of perceiving the world. It seems that in this sense the term 'rhetorical idiom' can be replaced by the term 'frame'. The understanding that a perception of the significance of any problem depends on the structure of the narrative has led to the development of the concept of framing as a process which is based on the cognitive scheme[9].

Rhetorical tools that are used by journalists and claims-makers of social issues, who thus provide the voice, helps to bring together and form a holistic view of communication constructs of social problems.

With its communicative competence a social (political) actor constructs reality in a given direction. But in a democratic society any social actor cannot be sure that his version of social reality is unified, so he is usually ready to participate in a competition of the versions of social reality, which take place in the public arenas of society. Such a social (political) actor, who is obligatorily expected to participate in democratic debate, is preparing his version, his arguments of a problem, used for establishing the credibility of the communicative technology called framing (the deliberate use of a particular understanding of a scheme, i.e. frame, in order to set the emotional attitude and willingness to act in a problematic situation in a given direction).

Political actors compete with each other and with other social actors for the inclusion of controversial issues with the 'right' attributes to the media agenda, using the animation adapted to the logics of media messages in order to bring these issues into the agenda of public debate and a subsequent impact of appropriate

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[8]   Ibarra, Peter R. and Kitsuse John I., *Claims Making Discourse and Vernacular Resources*, [in:] Holstein, James A. and Gale Miller (eds.): *Challenges and Choices: Constructionist Perspectives on Social Problems.* New York, 2003, 17–50.

[9]   Goffman E., *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience,* Cambridge 1974, Snow, David A. and Robert D. Benford, *Ideology, frame resonance and participant mobilization,* „International Social Movement Research", 1988, 1:197-217, Entman R.M., *Framing U.S. coverage of international news: Contrasts of narratives of the KAL and Iran air incidents,* "Journal of Communication", 1991, 41 (4), 6-27.

interpretations on the public opinion. That is why particular subjects of any political election process purposefully frame the problem to mobilize potential supporters and voters in order to get support on the one hand, and to demobilize opponents, on the other. This same problem is placed in the moral universe by certain frame-based schemata, allowing either to dramatize (or problemise) a situation or to dedramatize (deproblemise) it.

The level of competitiveness of political actors also depends, among others, on their ability to create powerful images of problems in the minds of consumers of election-driven information. On the level of social discourse the power of the image of the problem depends on the convincing power of rhetorics with which the image is created. The informational confrontation wins someone who will be able to impose a public discourse - the discourse that presents the problem in a positive light for the applicant and up to more supporters, not the one who is right. In the 2012 election campaign for the election of deputies to the Verkhovna Rada economics-based topics and the issues of the anti-corruption campaign were not winning clearly enough. So once again 'language card', or 'language problem' in Ukraine was raised the shield.

Problemising frames include: the frame of calamity, the frame of loss, the frame of discrimination, endangerment frame, unreason frame (titles of the frames are borrowed from P.Ibarra and J.Kitsuse, who call them rhetorical idioms[10]). Each of these frames is to provide an interpretation of complex social situations, based on different types of explanation (rationalization) and offer a different type of reaction or solution, that includes framing reasons supporting the evidence for the existence of a problem (what mostly ails or prevents), findings that provide understanding necessary to address the actions (what to do), and the excuse that reasoning and/or the values that the public should share, so as to connect the grounds and conclusions into a united logical chain of the application requirements for the problem (why it bothers us or why we have a trouble). Thus framing provides a framework that combines base problems or facts to conclusions or actions that are needed to solve the problem.In the semantic field of the language issue social and political actors are to consider several key points: first, the very existence of the language problem in Ukraine, second, formulation of language problem, finally, third, the framing of the language problem in different versions.

'Language problem' is formulated differently by different players in the semantic field of political discourse. 'Language problem' has a few possible versions:

Language problem is a problem of the Ukrainian language (the 'Ukrainian' version of language problem), which, despite the status of the state language, really has not become the major language in the country. The Ukrainian society reveals a clear imbalance in favor of the Russian language in most areas of the public life: media, business, printing, show business; instead, the Ukrainian language keeps teetering

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[10] Ibarra, Peter R. and Kitsuse John I., *Claims Making Discourse ...*, p. 25-33.

on the brink of survival, and therefore it requires a comprehensive state support. The problem can be considered as a limitation of the functional distribution of the Ukrainian language, enhanced by a mismatch, that it was officially proclaimed to hold a privileged (as compared to Russian and all other languages) status of a single state language.

The language problem is a problem with the Russian language (a 'Russian' version of language problem); this is the problem of harassment in the rights of citizens who speak Russian. Since 1989, when Ukraine adopted the Law 'On Languages in the Ukrainian SSR', there continues a debate on official status of the Russian language. A significant part of the Ukrainian society believes that Russian should become an official or even state language.

In general, the society is remains within the endless verbal discussion, which involves at least two political and ideological groups that are its main actors (cf. their classification proposed in the online publication of Ukrainian author O. Myshlovskoyi). The first group is called the National statesmen (the 'Ukrainian version of the problem'). The Credo of this group is – 'Language - is the soul of the people and the main feature of the state', namely it is identical to the state, and thus the survival of the Ukrainian state depends on the 'real' implementation of the Ukrainian language in all spheres of public life. According this point of view linguistic homogenization of the society is a factor of consolidation of the state and nation. The author notes that this position was a kind of 'official ideology' of the post-Soviet Ukrainian science and education elite, some NGOs[11]. Added to this is that such a position actually became the basis of Article 10 of the Constitution of Ukraine, according to which the only official language of the Ukrainian state is Ukrainian, and it is embodied in the creation of the state apparatus, as well as the educational system being considered as an element of the ukrainization process.

The second group – entails the supporters of the linguistic status quo, which, according to the author's publication, do not share the fundamental ideas of the Ukrainian statehood and perceive the first group as a threat to itself[12]. They mostly understand the status quo not as the actual dominance of the Russian language, but as a consolidation of the dominance by giving it a legal status – a state or at least a public official language.

The presence of these two components in the language problem discourse in Ukraine confirmed the content of the discourse of political and ideological arguments framing the 'language question' in the direction of problematization and deproblematization. Such issues are some of the most frequently heard in the debate on the language.

[11]   .,   , „   ”, 2007, 12   –   :
http://www.pravda.com.ua/archive_day/20070712.htm.
[12]   .,   , op.cit.

The analysis of publications that declared the national-political view on the language problem, indicates that the language problem is recognized real when it comes to the revival of the Ukrainian language, and evaluated as a source of provocation when it comes to initiatives on the status of the Russian language. The same can be said about the publications of their opponents. In this sense, it is impossible to deny the correctness of the remark that "unless the political position makes declare language development, it is clear that today 'language issues and policies' go together, and the policy requires 'language issue'[13].

The starting point in the position of the national statesmen is that the national state guidelines require adjustments in the direction of building of a national state of the Ukrainian people "... the Ukrainian national priorities in economics, politics, culture, language, media space ... "[14].

On the one hand, such argumentation of the national-states position touches on the problematization of the situation with the expansion of the Ukrainian language, and on the other - the deproblematization of the situation with the Russian language.

From the perspective of the supporters of the status quo the situation in Ukraine just does not look the best, but for the Russian language. The claims-makers of the 'Russian' version of the language problem in Ukraine try to keep a dominant share of the Russian language, that objectively and inevitably causes them to resist the spread of the Ukrainian language.

Thus, the proponents of the linguistic status quo make problematic the whole situation with rights of Russian-speaking population, at the same time deproblemising the situation with the limited functional distribution of Ukrainian language.

The steps aimed at framing the two versions of the language problem in Ukraine are being effected in different ways. In this paper, we will limit ourselves focusing upon the analysis of the frame of calamity in the problematization of the language issue.

The frame of calamity (with a logic 'this is a problem because, if nothing is done it will be bad, not just bad, but rather bad') brings forth the image of not a simple social problem, but – as it seems - of mega-distressed circumstances rather. The 'disaster' rhetoric is used to create a disaster image for the troubling circumstances. This rhetoric is often used in situations of the so-called 'moral panic'. The frame of calamity requires an immediate action, if this immediate action is not done, it can lead to some other problems. Within the direction of the frame of calamity of the representatives of national statesmen the following logic could be found: the inadequate functioning of language of the titular ethnic group entails the defective

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13   .,   ,   .
                , "   ", 2006, 13 -   : http://viche.info/index.php?action=archive&id=274.
14   .,   -
       : http://www.ualogos.kiev.ua/text.html?id=130&category=23.

functioning of culture, and this, in turn, pulls the defective functioning of the state, what, in turn, leads to the disastrous consequences for the Ukrainian state. This means that there is a status of a society which is recognized by the international community as normal, and the retreat from this status (which is going on in front of our eyes under pressure of certain hostile elements) can be considered as a disaster, a disaster for the country.

The very existence of the Ukrainian language is exposed as catastrophic; sometimes even the term 'death of the Ukrainian language' is used. The use of such expressions enhances the status of complex social situations and leads them into the 'problematic' orbit. Evidences of such gradual dying of the Ukrainian language are:

- its limited use (it is primarily used by the socially lower strata of the population (selyutskyy hahlyatskyy)[15], by the intelligence, or by the state bureaucracy);
- distribution of 'low-Ukrainian' - or SURZHYK 'ukruslysha' (as it is aptly named by V. Radchuk);
- feature sets, which help the Ukrainian language in the development of the Ukrainian state.

It is within the frame of calamity where we could hear the accusations against those who require public bilingualism (the status state should also be given to the Russian language), which also problemises the dissemination of the Ukrainian language in the state; . The antiheros, who are also call symbolic criminals that plague the development of the Ukrainian state, are blamed because they:

- work against the Ukrainian statehood;
- their requirements destabilize interethnic relations;
- implement purely 'selfish' interests;
- are the agents of some 'foreign' policy;
- hate everything that looks Ukrainian.
  Therefore they can be considered criminals.

Soft versions of these accusations are formulated as follows: 'those who break the question of giving an official status to the Russian language, are working against the Ukrainian state'; 'granting the Russian language a position of the second state language can initiate a destabilization of the current inter-ethnic peace in the region, and in Ukraine as a whole'[16]; 'there cannot be Ukrainian people without Ukrainian language, as there can not be an independent state on behalf of the people of Ukraine, which would be called otherwise than Ukrainian, and speak another (not Ukrainian) language. For such people the notion of a state must then be labeled differently. It is obvious that such a n approach, and exactly placing the political sense

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[15] ., - : http://www.pravda.com.ua/columns/2012/06/21/6966897/

[16] ., , ? „ ", 2003, 8, 1– 7 .

of language as the most important factor in nation-building and state-building, is the reason for strong pressure on the Ukrainian language, and political speculation about its role and place in the real life of our society'[17].

Equally categorically proclaim their thoughts those who call the supporters of state bilingualism as the 'fifth column of the Kremlin' ("We have in Ukraine our own 'fifth column' of people who hate everything Ukrainian")[18]; those that 'do not want to learn Ukrainian state language ... because they hate it and hate everything Ukrainian. These renegades 'stuffed' their own interests in the forthcoming elections to get revenge over the hated 'orange power' (published in June 2006 - auth.) and don't think about the national unity, the unity of the state. These clearly are dissenters, and therefore, state criminals'[19]. Instead, of course, there are heroes within this frame. The Ukrainian language is supported by those who argue for the European model of the state. It is important that citizens who are usually speaking Russian at home give support to the Ukrainian language and European choice. For them, language support - is also a marker of civilizational choice, not only the language choice. For example, the Russian language dominates in the streets of Kiev, but most residents of Kyiv are persistently voting for national and democratic parties, which follow a pro-Western geopolitical European choice. As for Kiev residents, the Ukrainian language is more than simply a language, it is above all, the choice in favor of democracy, human rights and the European model of the society[20].

The opinons of those who take a national-state position become more categorical and more catastrophic in connection with the situation around the law *On the Foundations of the language policy in Ukraine*. „The law of Yanukovych-Kolesnichenko-Kivalov prescribed a clear technology of total liberation of Ukraine from formally state-applied Ukrainian language, of its full replacement of all spheres of public life, of turning it into a dead language like Latin. In this law they did everything in order to please the Russian market, a part of which is the Ukraine today, as nuclear napalm burned the remains of the Ukrainian language in the information area, killed the remnants of the Ukrainian-language environment, pushed the Ukrainian language onto the margin "- said O. Medvedev, a political strategist, the vice president of the Ukrainian PR League[21].

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17 ., ?„ ", 2006, 3 - : //http://www.hw.net.ua/art.php?id=13412 – 09.07.2012.
18 ., ?- : http://gazeta.ua/discuss/11/chim-nebezpechnij-zakonoproekt-pro-dvomovnist.
19 ., ?„ ", 2006, 3 - : //http://www.hw.net.ua/art.php?id=13412 – 09.07.2012.
20 ., " " - : //http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2012/08/8/ 6970425.
21 ., , , . //http://blogs.pravda.com.ua/authors/medvedev/5022770011a18/ – *08.08.2012* (my own translation).

The frame of calamity provides a prescription of catastrophic prospects for the Ukrainian language and – in larger perspective - for the state („confusion as a minimal version, or drama and tragedy - the worst", as noted a philosopher M. Popovych[22]), namely:
• further weakening of the Ukrainian language;
• increase in hostility towards the Russian language;
• increase of the protest-driven activity of the Ukrainian-speaking population;
• destabilization of ethnic peace ('social tensions over language base, Ukrainian society split by language, when people determine their attitude to other languages by the criterion 'friend or foe')[23].

Supporters of the national statehood position predict that in the near future, after the law *On the Foundations of the language policy in Ukraine* has passed the period of legislation, the deterioration in the relations between Eastern and Western Ukraine, and the gradual 'dying' of the Ukrainian language.

"The political consequences of the adoption of the law, of course, will bring a sharp increase of tensions in the society. In the East and in the South, somewhere the power (remember the famous statement of Levchenko in Donetsk, or Konstantinova in Crimea, Dobkin in Kharkov or Kostusev in Odessa), somewhere pro-Russian activists, somewhere both rush hard to eliminate the residues of functioning of the Ukrainian language; there will have to take place a change in the status of schools, total pro-Russian language orientation in universities (which even today are mostly Russian-spoken), overwriting of plaques with the names of settlements and streets. This will be done even without the instructions from Bankova street (residence of Ukrainian President) - just according to 'the laws of the genre'. In the West and partly in the center ... massive hostility to the Russian language will dramatically increase, it will be interpreted as the 'language of Donetsk occupiers'. Then it will be quite difficult to reverse the effects of this situation in the future[24]. This law "if it comes into force, will leads, literally, to the displacement and the gradual death of the Ukrainian language"[25].

Supporters of the national language state position consider immediate coordinated systemic efforts as an adequate response to the disaster with the development and the distribution of the Ukrainian language, so as to change the situation through collective action, consistent and strong realization of ukrainization of linguistic space in society.

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[22]   .,   .   ,   ,
-   ,   ,
„   ", 26(514),6   2012,18.
[23]   .,   :   ?„   .   ", 25, 27   ,
2012.
[24]   .,   :   «   » ? -   : http://www.umoloda.kiev.ua/number/
2092/ 222/74564.
[25]   .,   -   : //http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/
2012/07/2/6967807/ (my own translation).

The frame of calamity of the supporters of the status quo position is also categorical. They estimate as catastrophic the policy of ukrainization of the society: „a policy of ukrainization carried by official Kyiv, leads to the degradation of the society in Ukraine, and this is a problem not only for philology, but also for the national security"[26]. From the supporters of maintaining the position of the status quo one could hear the idea that the ukrainization of television is the manifestation of disaster of the language issue in Ukraine, which is not an inculcation of the Ukrainian language, but its imposition, that there are no worse enemies of the Ukrainian language than some of its too zealous 'defenders'[27].

The inefficiency of the language policy of ukrainization, a desire of the 'statesmen' to ukrainize the Russian-speaking population threatens the integrity of Ukraine. In the sub-text of these allegations there lies the accusation of any person, who is not bilingual, who does not want to give an official status to the Russian language: "all of us have to realize that someone who does not want the country have two official languages?is the enemy of Ukraine"[28].

In this context the special role is played by these Ukrainians who support a special status of the Russian language. In particular, in the opinion of the Professor at Harvard University (USA), an ethnic Ukrainian Roman Szporluk: "Millions of people who consider Russian as their native language, December 1, 1991 vote for independence. Accordingly citizens for which the Ukrainian language is native, have before them a political and moral obligation .... The shortest way to destroy Ukraine - is to start to Ukrainize non-Ukrainians. The greatest danger for an independent Ukraine are language fanatics "[29].

A response to violent ukrainization of the Russian-speaking population is an appeal for civilized bilingualism in the state. However to "... ensure the dominance of the country's own language, to ensure the domination of their own culture for Ukraine there is a simple recipe: to take care of the development of the Ukrainian culture, gradually instilling it in the generation that is growing, and so to get strong Ukrainian language. This process is lengthy, but natural"[30].

Consequently, the frame of calamity in the 'Ukrainian version' of the language problem claims that the situation of using the Ukrainian language in Ukraine is like a disaster, because this evidently most important factor in nation and state-building processes, is functioning in an inadequate way like a language of the titular ethnic group. This entails inadequate functioning of culture, and inadequate functioning of

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[26] —   -   :
/http://www.nr2.ru/crimea/83524.html.
[27] http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2008/02/22/3380250.
[28]   .,   —   ?-   : http://www.left.ru/2007/5/zuev157.phtml (my own translation).
[29] http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2008/02/22/3380250/ (my own translation).
[30]   .,   ,   -   :
http://www.pravda.com.ua/articles/2008/02/22/3380250/ (my own translation).

the state. That is why the correct response to this problem requires one's awareness of the need to have introduced immediate coordinated systemic efforts to change the situation through collective action. 'The Russian version' of the language problem in the frame of calamity insists on the catastrophic circumstances of violent ukrainization, arguing that it threatens the integrity of Ukraine; thus, the an appeal for civilized bilingualism as a proposal to solve the language problem is being claimed as the only reasonable way out.

Knowledge and use of communication technology framing scheme enables members of the electoral political process to reduce the emotional background discussion of the situation on the one hand, or, conversely, to dramatize the situation, if necessary. On the other hand voters, that are engaged in this process, will enter into it not as a naive observers, but with knowledge and understanding what happens in the public arena to let them win their votes.

Further research on this issue, includes the perspective of a form of comparative study in framing different schemes of problematization or deproblematization of complex social situations and framing technologies over different political forces. Without doubt, one of the most interesting is the question of validity of a method applied to analyze the framing of complex social circumstances. However, to explore this question scientific community should create a database describing the techniques used when the framing technology to problemize complex social circumstances of different types (like classic social problems - poverty, for example, new social problems for Ukraine - inclusion of people with disabilities, etc.) is to be analyzed.

Communication technology 'discourse of the language problem' in Ukraine
as a factor in the political process
Summary

The article is devoted to framing problem- based language as technology issue in Ukraine. The basis is the model analysis of the social problems of the constructionists, which explains the way in which the problem is transformed into an element of social policy.

Key words: social problem, framing, language problem in Ukraine, 'Ukrainian' vs. 'Russian' version of the language problem