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The age factor in language practices and attitudes: continuity and change in Ukraine's bilingualism

Volodymyr Kulyk*

National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Institute of Political and Ethnic Studies, Kyiv, Ukraine

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This article analyzes inter-cohort differences and intra-cohort changes in language proficiencies, use patterns and attitudes in a society undergoing a radical political and cultural transformation. My analysis focuses on Ukraine, a country with an asymmetrical bilingualism where the new independent state mildly promotes the titular language but the formerly dominant Russian maintains an active presence in most social domains and individual repertoires. While confirming earlier findings on the small scale of age differences, this study detects the end of the inter-cohort shift toward Russian. Another important finding is that the apparent continuity with a slow drift toward the titular language in Ukraine as a whole conceals two radically different developments in the two geographical "halves" of the country. The study demonstrates an advantage of combining a synchronic analysis of inter-cohort differences with a diachronic analysis of intra-cohort changes.

Keywords: language policy; language ideologies; media discourse; ethnicity; national identity; Ukraine

Introduction

The predominance of one language variety or coexistence of several varieties in a society is reproduced over longer periods due to young members' adoption of older ones' patterns of language use and attitudes informing them. By the same token, one factor that can lead to a shift in popular preferences and thus in societal norms is the succession of cohorts as the young are likely to differ from the old, because of both greater susceptibility to change and a different formative experience. This is particularly the case in societies undergoing a radical transformation which makes the young cohorts' formative experience very dissimilar from that of older members of the same social groups. This article examines effects of one such transformation, namely the transition from the Soviet multinational empire with the predominance of Russian to the would-be national states promoting, to varying degrees, their respective titular languages.

My analysis focuses on Ukraine, an essentially bilingual country with the roughly equal strength of support for two opposing ways to deal with the Soviet legacy: on the one hand, the promotion of Ukrainian as the main language of all domains and on the other, the legalization of the use of Russian at least on par with Ukrainian (Arel 1995; Kulyk 2009). Under these conditions, the cohort succession could contribute to overcoming a stalemate in language politics. Those who were raised in independent Ukraine with Ukrainian as the

*Email: v_kulyk@hotmail.com

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sole state language and the main language of education can be expected to speak it more often and support its use in society and promotion by the state more strongly than their parents and grandparents whose practices and attitudes were shaped in the Soviet Union with its primacy of Russian. However, previous research has not detected such differences. On the contrary, the youngest cohort was found to speak Russian not less but more than the older ones, partly due to the higher concentration of youth in the cities where that language continues to predominate (Kulyk 2007; Shul'ha 2008; Vyshniak 2009).

This article revisits the age factor in the evolution of Ukrainian bilingualism by examining two sets of survey data on language proficiencies, practices, and attitudes that shed light on the most recent evolution of popular preferences. After a theoretical discussion of the significance of age in sociology and its study by means of statistics, I first make a cross-sectional investigation of different cohorts' preferences in a nationwide survey from 2012 and then conduct a longitudinal analysis in order to examine how these changed since a similar survey from 2006. Keeping in mind dissimilar linguistic and political environments in different regions and settlement types, I do not limit my analysis to the sample as a whole but also conduct it within those parts defined by each of these two parameters. In conclusion, I juxtapose and interpret the findings of the two analyses and discuss the implications of my study for investigation of language dynamics in other multilingual societies.

Age and social change

The significance of age for social sciences stems primarily from the crucial role of the cohort succession in social change.[1] As Ryder (1965, 844) put it in his influential essay,

> each fresh cohort is a possible intermediary in the transformation process, a vehicle for introducing new postures. The new cohorts provide the opportunity for social change to occur. They do not cause change; they permit it. If change does occur, it differentiates cohorts from one another, and the comparison of their careers becomes a way to study change.

In this way, the emergence of new participants in the social process and the withdrawal of their predecessors compensate the society for limited individual flexibility. At the same time, individual members of society also change, not only in the biological and psychological sense but also in the sense of assuming new social roles and acquiring skills and attitudes necessary to perform them. Scholars have thus sought to examine the relationship between the two processes:

> (1) the aging of people in successive cohorts who grow up, grow old, die, and are replaced by other people; and (2) the *changes in society* as people of different ages pass through the social institutions that are organized by age. (Riley 1987, 2)

People in successive cohorts differ not only in age but also in historical experiences to which they have been exposed. First and foremost, each cohort is crucially affected by the so-called formative experience of childhood, adolescence and young adulthood, in particular by the modes of socialization prevalent at the time. Successive cohorts are socialized to different political attitudes and values, particularly at times of radical social transformation. The imprint of early years is all the more significant because people's susceptibility to change decreases with age, due to both "psychologically based, age-related changes in the direction of greater rigidity" and the "increasing integration into the social system, which leads to a greater stake in the maintenance of the status quo" (Cutler and Kaufman 1975, 69–70). Accordingly,

> the potential for change is concentrated in the cohorts of young adults who are old enough to participate directly in the movements impelled by change, but not old enough to have become

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> committed to an occupation, a residence, a family of procreation or a way of life. (Ryder 1965, 848)

This potential is fulfilled primarily in the cities which have largely been populated by the continuous influx of new cohorts and constitute the primary loci of technological innovation whose impact young people feel most strongly.

A major challenge to scholars dealing with age as a factor of social change is to interpret observable differences between cohorts as resulting either from the processes of aging, with each cohort at a particular stage, or from their dissimilar experiences in the formative years or afterwards. As Glenn (1974, 177) explained with regard to the relationship between age and conservatism:

> Even if older people as a whole are more conservative than younger people, it does not necessarily follow that the aging process accounts for the difference. The older people's crucial formative experiences were different and occurred when the society was different in many ways from the society in which the younger people's basic values and personality characteristics were formed. Therefore, the older adults were not necessarily less conservative when they were young adults than they are now. Even if the older adults had become more conservative on the average as they grew older, aging would not necessarily have been the cause. Rather, general social and cultural changes in the society – period influences – could have brought about the change.

More generally, any analysis of change must consider the conceptually distinct, but empirically inter-related *effects of cohort, period, and age*. Unfortunately, the complete identification of the three effects is not possible since any one is totally determined by the other two.

Most studies of the age factor are based on the so-called *cross-sectional analysis* of census or survey data comparing attitudes or behaviors of different cohorts at a certain point in time. While indicating the direction of change in the population, such analysis inevitably involves "interpretive hazards of extrapolating to age *changes* from empirically observed age *differences*" (Cutler and Kaufman 1975, 70; italics added). Therefore, scholars have tried to supplement cross-sectional analyses with longitudinal studies intended to organize personal data in temporal sequence and detect causal links between otherwise isolated acts. These include panel studies in which the same individuals are interviewed at two or more widely separated moments in time as well as various more intensive analyses (from participant observation to the examination of diaries) of a small number of individual histories (Goldfarb 1960). As it provides detailed information about different periods of the lives of a limited number of participants, longitudinal analysis proliferates hypotheses but lacks a broad evidential basis necessary to verify them, which is a principal virtue of censuses or large representative surveys. The main method of overcoming the respective deficits of the two kinds of studies is *cohort analysis*, which compares data from several censuses or surveys to trace attitudes or behaviors of different cohorts through different stages of their lives. Ryder (1965, 859) presents its advantage as follows:

> The cohort record, as macro-biography, is the aggregate analogue of the individual life history. It provides the necessary temporal isomorphism for linking small-scale intensive longitudinal analyses with extensive surveys of the society at a point of time. It has the time dimension of the former and the comforting statistical reliability of the latter.

Unfortunately, cohort analysis does not resolve the problem of identification: while cross-sectional data confound aging effects with cohort effects, longitudinal data confound aging effects with period effects. However, the analyst can often single out one of these effects as more likely to account for the observed variation than the other, based on his/her theoretical understanding of the process under consideration and previous empirical research. In order

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to trace the members of the same cohorts across periods, the data should be adjusted to take into account possible change in the composition of the cohorts such as that resulting from unequal mortality rates of different sexes or social groups. Similarly, to separate the effect of aging from that of other differences between the cohorts (e.g. in the level of education) that might affect their dissimilar attitudes or behaviors, those differences should also be controlled for (Glenn and Zody 1970).

Although language processes have not been among the primary concerns of scholars examining the age contribution to social change, a number of studies have dealt with the age dimension of language proficiencies, practices, and attitudes based on data derived from censuses and surveys. While censuses provide repeated answers to a limited number of questions, surveys give nuanced information on various aspects, which is, however, rarely available at different stages of people's lives; hence scholars usually infer age effects from cross-sectional differences in one survey. As with language politics in general, the age factor has been studied first and foremost in significantly multilingual societies, particularly in the West. For instance, analyses of the Canadian situation demonstrated not only different degrees of bilingualism in the English and French mother tongue groups but also the predominant acquisition of the second language during the school and early adult years, with the latter effect being more prominent among males than females. In a mid-twentieth-century society with significant gender differentials in young adults' participation in the labor force, Lieberson (1970, 104–106) interpreted this asymmetrical age effect as generated by pressures of workplace.

Studies of the language assimilation of linguistic minorities in the USA similarly argued that the shift from mother tongue to the dominant language usually occurs at the time of school or young adulthood when people feel the greatest pressure to adjust to language preferences of their peers and institutional authorities (Veltman 1983, 20). Moreover, it was posited that immigrants who come to the USA at an early age learn English better than those coming later in life because not only the ability to learn new languages declines with age but also the youth "have more years in which to recoup their investment in English studies and therefore a greater incentive to invest" (Carliner 1995, 2). In addition, a comparison of the proficiency levels among different cohorts can reveal peculiarities of the second language acquisition in a given society at a time when the respective cohort went through its formative years of school and young adulthood, a cohort effect modulating age effects described above (Veltman 1983, 21). The formative context can, of course, vary across regions and localities as demonstrated, for example, by Lieberson's examination of the impact of the demography, education system and labor market on the age structure of bilingualism in five Canadian cities (1970, 106–116). Such effects can also be found in contemporary Ukraine, albeit in a specific form caused by its unique constellation of demographic, socioeconomic, political, and attitudinal factors.

Bilingualism in post-Soviet Ukraine

Although a number of languages are used in certain practices on certain territories, contemporary Ukraine is essentially a bilingual country, as only Ukrainian and Russian are spoken or at least understood by almost all citizens and widespread in all social domains. In terms of ethnicity, Ukrainians clearly prevail (78% in the last census of 2001, versus 17% of Russians and 5% of others) but since many of them speak primarily Russian as a result of the Soviet policies of Russification, the two languages have roughly equal numbers of everyday speakers.[2] Moreover, many people use both languages more or less equally, including the most intimate and least constrained communication at home (according to annual surveys

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by the Institute of Sociology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, 20–23% of respondents said in recent years that they used both languages in the family "depending on circumstances"). Not only do people switch from one language to the other depending on the domain and interlocutors but also they often mix the two languages in what is derogatorily labeled as *surzhyk*, a mixture particularly widespread among those with little education. No less remarkably, a considerable share of those speaking mostly Russian in everyday life identify with Ukrainian as their "native language" (it was declared as such by 68% of the population in the 2001 census), thus further blurring the line between the two language groups. Territorial distribution is also complicated: Russian prevails in the eastern and southern regions and in big cities everywhere but the west, while Ukrainian is predominant in the west and the center as well as in villages nationwide ("All-Ukrainian" n.d.; Bilaniuk 2005; Kulyk 2011; "Rezultaty" 2013, 488; Fomina 2014).

Similar to many other countries, however, Ukraine's bilingualism is far from symmetrical. A former imperial language, Russian has traditionally enjoyed higher prestige than Ukrainian, as manifested in the former language being considered much more appropriate for prestigious domains and its knowledge more useful in terms of social mobility and loyalty to the regime. While 60% of ethnic Ukrainians in the last Soviet census of 1989 declared knowledge of Russian as a second language, only 33% of non-Ukrainians (i.e. primarily Russians) claimed knowledge of Ukrainian (Kaiser 1994, 290, 294). Ukraine's independence made its citizens identify increasingly with the titular nation and language, so that the share of those claiming these identities increased between the 1989 and 2001 censuses by 5% and 3%, respectively ("All-Ukrainian" n.d.). At the same time, the new state did not radically change language practices established under the old regime as illustrated by the above-mentioned survey data on language use at home: while the share of those speaking mostly Ukrainian remained virtually unchanged, the reliance on Russian actually increased at the expense of the switching between the two languages ("Rezultaty" 2013, 487).

Although Ukrainian was declared the only state language and Russian legally demoted for two decades to the status of one of many minority languages, actual policies made it possible for Russian to be used nearly as widely as in Soviet times. Not only was there little pressure on the citizens to switch to the state language in the workplace, in communication with the authorities, or in other public domains, but also the continued presence or even dominance of Russian in many social practices resulted in its high prestige and strong pull on the younger generations. Nevertheless, having been accustomed to uninhibited use of their language, many Russian-speakers perceived the need to rely on Ukrainian in certain practices as discrimination and, therefore, supported the demand for an elevation of the legal status of Russian which was advanced by some political parties since the early years of independence. This demand was met in 2012 when a new language law granted Russian the "regional" or local official status on half of Ukraine's territory and legalized its use in many domains all over the country, a move widely perceived as paving the way for the marginalization of Ukrainian (Charnysh 2013; Kulyk 2013a).

At the same time, state policies differed by region and social domain, in accordance with both the perceived preferences of the local population and priorities of the authorities. On the one hand, Ukrainian was quickly reinstated as the main public language in the west but remained rather marginal in the east and south, notwithstanding its exclusive legal status. There also remained a considerable gap between big cities and the countryside, particularly in the center. On the other hand, the gradual and regionally uneven transition to Ukrainian in education coexisted with a laissez-faire approach to the print media resulting in the continued dominance of Russian, while public administration documents were in Ukrainian and oral communication more often in Russian (Janmaat 2000; Kulyk 2013a,

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2013b). As each of the two languages was relatively weak in some regions and domains, its champions argued that it was discriminated against, an argument reinforcing the respective population's preference for wider use and more active promotion of their language. The Orange Revolution of 2004 and its accompanying mass mobilization in the largely pro-Orange western and central regions and strongly anti-Orange eastern and southern ones exacerbated the regional differences of political and cultural attitudes and thus contributed to the divergence of patterns of language use and acquisition in the two "halves" of Ukraine (Wolczuk 2005–2006; Kulyk 2009, 2013a). The impact of the tumultuous evens of 2013–2014 is likely to be more ambiguous (see below); in any case, they happened after the data reported in this article had been obtained and thus could not affect them.

In sum, policies in the language domain reproduce societal bilingualism with considerable heterogeneity of practices across regions and domains and varying combinations of the two languages in individual language repertoires. Notwithstanding considerable changes in some policies and practices, the prevailing societal trend has been towards continuity. It is against this trend that I am going to search for signs of change, first in synchronic differences between the age cohorts and then in diachronic shifts within these cohorts.

Inter-cohort differences

The primary reason to expect differences in language proficiencies, practices, and/or attitudes of different cohorts of the Ukrainian population is these cohorts' different formative contexts. This pertains in particular to the predominantly Ukrainian language and Ukrainocentric content of education during the two decades of independence as opposed to the more widespread Russian language and Russocentric content during the times of the USSR, a difference that can be expected to affect proficiencies, attitudes and, therefore, practices of the young cohorts in favor of the titular language. Reinforcing this *cohort effect* is likely to be young people's exposure to the Ukrainian language in various formal and informal contexts during their formative years in independent Ukraine. Both these effects can be expected to vary across regions and settlement types, in accordance with their specific linguistic and/or political environment affecting young people's ability and willingness to speak Ukrainian. In particular, not only has Ukrainian-language education been much more widespread in the west and center than in the east and south but also its impact on the youth's proficiencies and practices is likely to be stronger in those regions where the titular language has been widely used and highly valued.

An *age effect* might have resulted, on the one hand, from decreased ability and willingness of older people to learn a second language, a difference arguably more important for the acquisition of Ukrainian which was not mandatory in Soviet Ukraine but has been more often required since independence. On the other hand, different age cohorts are characterized by somewhat different communication patterns with their concomitant pressures to use one or both of the two main languages of the country (in some cases, also English). An important factor of the communicative differentiation is the higher concentration of young people in the cities where they are exposed to Russian and encouraged (at work in the private sector, sometimes even required) to use it much more than their older compatriots in towns and villages. At the same time, for the youngest cohort there is an opposite pressure to use Ukrainian coming from their formal communication at institutions of higher education which are much more Ukrainianized than urban workplaces where Ukrainian is usually limited to documentation. Here, too, there is likely to be a regional variation as in the west young people feel little pressure to speak Russian even in the cities, while in the

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east and south they can live without much Ukrainian even in the allegedly Ukrainianized educational institutions.

As mentioned above, earlier research did not fully confirm these expectations, at least for the aggregate nationwide data to which scholars limited their analyses of age differences. In a survey conducted in December 2006 by the sociological center Hromadska Dumka ($N = 2015$), it was found, on the one hand, that people under 30 *knew* (or rather said they knew) Ukrainian better than those above 60, while the youth's self-reported proficiency in Russian was better than the old respondents' but worse than that of the adjacent cohort of 31–45 years. These findings were in accordance with the expected impact of the post-Soviet changes in the language of education and the workplace. On the other hand, the young respondents were no less likely to *use* Russian in various contexts than older people; in little towns and villages the former used it significantly more than the latter. As for preferences regarding the language situation in society and language policy of the state, age was not a significant factor for the sample as a whole but within language groups (as defined by the main language of everyday use) young people were more disposed toward Ukrainian than older ones, an effect particularly noticeable among the Russian-speakers. Kulyk (2007, 303–309) explained the apparent age-insensitivity of these preferences in the entire sample by the mutual offsetting of opposing trends for practices and attitudes. Similar effects for patterns of use and/or attitudes were detected at about the same time by Shul'ha (2008) and Vyshniak (2009).

For more recent data to show age differences where none had existed earlier, a significant *period effect* should be at work at the time these data were collected. The responses to a nationwide survey ($N = 2029$) conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in February 2012, two years into the presidency of Viktor Yanukovych, may reflect both the more resolute policies of Ukrainianization under his predecessor Viktor Yushchenko and Yanukovych's subsequent reversion to greater tolerance or even promotion of Russian (Kulyk 2009, 2013a; Charnysh 2013). It may be hypothesized that Yushchenko's policies improved the working cohorts' proficiency in Ukrainian and, particularly for younger people, its use in both formal and informal contexts. This effect is likely to be greater in the west and center where much of the population was inspired by the Orange Revolution and supportive of the Orange government's policy promoting the acquisition and use of Ukrainian. In terms of attitudes, young cohorts are more likely to oppose Yanukovych's changes "back to Russian" than older people who were more accustomed to that language and might thus have resented Yushchenko's Ukrainianization threatening, as many believed, to make them change their language practice late in life. Once again, this difference can be expected to manifest itself primarily in the pro-Orange, that is, western and central regions.

No less important, age differences may emerge from a recent *cohort effect*, namely the entrance in the adult population of a new cohort of people who have no personal experience of the USSR and, moreover, lived their adolescent years after the Orange Revolution. The detection of the last effect – which can also be expected to differ considerably in the pro- and anti-Orange parts of the country – requires the definition of cohorts by a narrower age range than the traditionally used 10 years. Actually, cohort analysts are advised to delineate cohorts at the same interval as that between the dates for which data are available (Glenn 1977, 46). Defining these dates, for simplicity, by the year (rather than the month) of the two surveys, namely 2012 and 2006, we get the six-year intervals for the cohorts. With such division, the now youngest cohort of 18–23 encompasses newcomers to the adult population who were not included in the 2006 sample and can be expected to differ from the cohort of 24–29 which was the youngest back then.[3]

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To examine differences between the cohorts, I compare the mean values of their members' responses to a number of survey questions on language proficiencies, practices, and attitudes. Unlike in earlier studies of the age effect, I will resort to a nonparametric analysis known as the Mann–Whitney *U* test which is better suited for variables deviating heavily from the normal distribution. Rather than computing mean *values* of the given variable in two groups under comparison, this method consists in determining mean group *ranks* of the variable's ordered values in a set including both groups. Since mean ranks are computed separately for each pair of groups, listing them all would require a separate table for each survey question. I thus limit my analysis to one crucially important comparison, namely between the youngest cohort of 18–23 years and all others, which makes it possible to put data for several questions on separate rows of the same table. Each column of the table indicates the differences of mean ranks between a certain older cohort and the youngest one, with the last column at the right showing the cumulative difference between all respondents above 24 and those below that age. Being differences of ranks (rather than of measured values or percentages), the figures in the table have no obvious meaning, except for the sign and the relation of their magnitude to those of other figures in the same line which indicate, respectively, the direction and the relative strength of the difference between the youngest and a certain older cohort. A positive difference means that the value for the cohort(s) under consideration is higher than for the youngest one; for negative differences, the former value is lower than the latter. To indicate which of the differences are statistically significant, I flag them with asterisks as common in sociological literature, the number of asterisks reflecting the level of significance. In order to disentangle age differences from those caused by the dissimilar composition of the cohorts, I standardize the cohorts by two parameters that are, as discussed above, of particular importance to language differences in Ukrainian society, namely the region and the type of settlement.[4] At the same time, I compare the cohorts' means not only for the nationwide sample but also for subsamples defined by these parameters in order to examine whether the age effect works differently in different linguistic and political contexts.

Starting with proficiencies, I compare the mean values of the 10 cohorts' self-assessed levels of knowledge of the Ukrainian and Russian languages on the scale from 1 (very good) to 5 (very bad), whereby positive differences indicate worse knowledge in older cohorts than in the youngest one. In each case, the data are presented first for the sample as a whole and then for respondents from the two geographical "halves" of the country (west/center and east/south) and for two most dissimilar types of settlements, namely big cities (those with the population above 100,000 residents) and villages (officially designated as such). The figures in the upper part of Table 1 show that people in their 50 and older assess their knowledge of Ukrainian somewhat lower than young respondents who were mostly schooled in that language. Remarkably, in the west-central regions and in villages the youngest cohort differs significantly even from the adjacent one whose socialization and education also largely took place in independent Ukraine. One may assume that the youth were raised in Ukrainian to a greater extent than people just a half decade older, due to the availability of educational and cultural facilities in that language as well as the increasing willingness of young people and their parents and teachers to rely on it rather than Russian, particularly after the Orange Revolution. In other words, the exceptional proficiency of the youngest respondents is to be primarily attributed to their unique formative experience.[5]

At the same time, no significant difference between the two youngest cohorts is to be found in the predominantly Russophone regions and big cities. In the east and south, the greater use of Ukrainian in education and some other domains during Yushchenko's

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Table 1. Differences of mean ranks between the older cohorts and the youngest one for language proficiencies and use patterns, 2012.

		24–29	30–35	36–41	42–47	48–53	54–59	60–65	66–71	72+	All 24+
Proficiency in Ukrainian	All	12.58	12.07	11.44	11.61	23.55**	21.64*	14.93	20.85**	20.73*	83.79*
	West/Center	20.77***	15.66**	11.09	15.77**	18.89**	21.92***	13.51*	19.22***	20.72**	89.37***
	East/South	1.74	2.86	7.76	0.51	10.13	6.59	6.62	3.97	13.51*	30.49
	Big cities	11.71	−2.48	6.40	6.08	18.63**	13.43*	4.77	11.20*	12.54*	47.40*
	Villages	10.23*	17.99***	5.65	14.10**	8.23	11.95**	14.10**	10.12*	11.96*	61.43**
Proficiency in Russian	All	22.69**	10.18	−2.60	19.10*	6.11	22.08**	5.26	18.85*	29.34**	73.50*
	West/Center	17.03**	4.84	−6.26	5.69	4.97	9.80	3.07	26.42***	22.02**	47.67
	East/South	1.43	3.09	−0.43	13.96*	−1.02	10.75	4.19	−2.63	4.64	19.34
	Big cities	3.53	−2.37	−2.87	2.80	−7.31	1.70	−7.47	−2.62	−0.38	−8.52
	Villages	13.60**	6.68	3.54	9.49	10.23	9.06	6.40	7.48	23.29***	53.80**
Communication at work (college)	All	−0.63	6.56	9.72	−3.22	3.95	5.28	7.58	16.86	10.37	23.43
	West/Center	14.15*	17.26**	14.88**	15.38**	16.05**	14.57**	15.89**	16.39**	18.58***	70.79***
	East/South	−7.74	−0.65	5.50	−14.47**	−5.33	−7.38	−13.73**	−3.54	−0.87	−24.64
	Big cities	10.17	5.15	8.37	5.44	9.01	10.96	6.75	9.58	6.04	37.40
	Villages	3.48	7.82	5.35	4.29	−1.02	6.18	5.50	8.27*	4.09	22.17
Communication with family	All	−11.15	14.12	5.64	4.00	13.33	1.05	6.96	5.42	1.16	22.31
	West/Center	2.07	16.66**	11.74	17.94**	18.03**	8.98	17.66**	7.24	23.62***	72.06**
	East/South	−6.35	8.83	3.62	−11.94	1.62	−4.22	−12.91*	−4.42	−4.33	−16.73
	Big cities	1.44	4.48	2.49	3.84	10.28	10.57	4.81	10.64	6.10	30.46
	Villages	0.65	12.60**	7.70	8.43	2.80	3.09	3.84	3.78	−2.04	24.11

Note: In this and the following tables the difference from the value of the same variable for the cohort of 18–23 years is significant at: *$p < .1$; **$p < .05$; ***$p < .01$.

presidency did not seem to make any difference in terms of proficiency, which implies low quality of language instruction and/or students' lack of interest therein, both reflecting negative attitudes to the Ukrainianization policy. This confirms that the formative experience of a cohort can vary in accordance with the specific socio-political environment and thus should not be taken as the same for all society. As for the cities, the knowledge of Ukrainian starts decreasing later on the age spectrum, that is, among people who during the Soviet times had little chance and/or need to properly learn it at school or elsewhere. Here a cohort effect may have been reinforced by an influence of age, in that older people had both fewer opportunities to learn Ukrainian in their formative years and lesser ability to master it at a later stage.

Surprisingly, the youngest cohort is also *the most* proficient in Russian, significantly differing from older people both in the sample as a whole and among the respondents from the west/center and villages, that is, exactly where it might be expected to lag behind the older cohorts due to the discontinuation of learning of Russian in many Ukrainian-language schools after the end of the USSR (Janmaat 2000, 71–73). As it turns out, the language skills the youth get from sources other than formal education, first and foremost the media in general and the Internet in particular, more than make up for the lack of schooling. However paradoxical that may seem, their formative context remains no less favorable for the acquisition of Russian than that of older people,[6] thus paving the way for widespread use of that language among the young cohorts of the Ukrainian population.

In the lower part of Table 1, I present the mean ranks of the cohorts' reported patterns of language use in two crucial practices, namely communication at work (for students, in college) and with the family. The respondents were asked to place the language in which they "usually communicate" in these practices on the scale from 1 ("only Ukrainian") to 5 ("only Russian"), with the interim values designating the use of "mostly Ukrainian," "equally Ukrainian and Russian," and "mostly Russian." Accordingly, positive inter-cohort differences indicate heavier reliance on Russian in the older cohorts than in the youngest one, while negative differences signal more active use of Russian among the youth. Given the fine scale suggested for the self-evaluation of one's language practice, significant differences reflect not only different shares of monolingual speakers of Ukrainian and Russian but also different combinations of the two languages in individual repertoires.

As the figures in the table demonstrate, age differences in patterns of use are somewhat similar to those in the knowledge of Ukrainian but higher proficiency in that language does not necessarily mean more frequent use thereof. For the nationwide sample, differences are insignificant, meaning that young people combine the two languages in roughly the same ratio as older ones, in other words, that the cohort succession does not result in the shrinking scope of Russian, notwithstanding the state's (rather mild) promotion of Ukrainian. Unlike for proficiencies, there are almost no differences in big cities or villages. At the same time, differences within the regional subsamples are considerable and contrary to each other. In the west/center, the youth report using Ukrainian significantly more than older respondents in both examined practices, an effect that was not noticeable in the 2006 data and should thus be attributed to the specific formative context of the current youngest cohort. While for work/college communication the heavier reliance on Ukrainian may have to do with the language regime of educational establishments in which many members of the youngest cohort are enrolled, the more active use of the titular language in the family is likely to reflect young people's own choice, necessarily influenced by sociopolitical developments. In contrast, in the east/south language patterns of young respondents are similar to those of older cohorts and wherever differences happen to be significant, it is the former that use more Russian than the latter. Remarkably, differences for work are bigger than for the

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family, that is, young people feel external pressure to use Russian, despite the Ukrainianizing tendencies in higher education which could be expected to push them in the opposite direction. One may say that the late Soviet trend toward greater (in fact, almost exclusive) reliance on Russian continues unabated in these regions, that is, the formative experience continues to be favorable to such reliance, in part due to the anti-Orange elites' rejection of any perceived Ukrainianization (Wolczuk 2005–2006; Kulyk 2009).

Having examined respondents' proficiencies and patterns of use, I will now look at how they are related to language attitudes or, more specifically, to preferences regarding the language situation and policy. Table 2 presents differences between the mean ranks of the youngest and other cohorts' responses to four questions pertaining to three different aspects. The first pair of questions inquires about the appropriate scope of the use of Ukrainian and Russian in the country, measured on a three-point scale from "more than now" through "same as now" to "less than now." Another inquiry has to do with the appropriate language situation in the future (values from 1 to 3, with the prevalence of the Ukrainian and Russian languages in all communicative domains at the ends of the scale and bilingualism of the country in the middle). The last question concerns the appropriate status of the two languages indicated on a scale from 1 (Ukrainian the only state language, Russian excluded) to 6 (Russian the only state language, Ukrainian excluded), with 2 pertaining to the legal situation at the time of the survey, with Russian as one of the minority languages, 3 to its use as a parallel spoken language, 4 to the recognition of an official status for Russian wherever the local majority wants it,[7] and 5 to the equal status of Ukrainian and Russian as state languages. For the first pair of questions, positive inter-cohort differences indicate that a certain older cohort has weaker preference for widespread use of the respective language than do the youth. For the two other questions, positive differences mean that an older cohort is more supportive than the youngest one of the active use and legal recognition of Russian, that is, its strong position vis-à-vis Ukrainian.

The figures in the table demonstrate that age differences in attitudes are as modest and regionally specific as in proficiencies and practices. For the sample as a whole, there are no significant differences between the youngest cohort and the others combined but a few of the older cohorts stand out. Remarkably, the youngest cohort is less supportive of the widespread use of Ukrainian than the adjacent group of those between 24 and 29 years, primarily due to the preferences of respondents from the east/south where the youth are also more indifferent to that language than several older cohorts. On the use of Russian, the youngest cohort of east-southern respondents is statistically indistinguishable from the others but in the west/center and big cities, this cohort is clearly less supportive than older residents. It is worth stressing that young urbanites are relatively indifferent to the spread of the language they mostly use themselves which can be explained by their primary preoccupation with the position of Ukrainian, a language they view as the (main) language of the state and the nation and, moreover, as more vulnerable than Russian (cf Kulyk 2013a).[8] For the two further questions, it is in the predominantly Ukrainian-speaking groups, the west-central residents and villagers that the youngest cohort supports the spread and promotion of Ukrainian stronger than older people do. With regard to the language situation in the future, even in the east/south the youth are more supportive of Ukrainianization than the older cohorts; at the same time, they are no more ready to accept any Ukrainianization in the present, either in more widespread use of the titular language or the maintenance of its priority over Russian in terms of legal status. On the other questions, the modest inter-cohort differences in favor of Ukrainian in the west/center are not matched by respondents in the east/south, who remain the same as older cohorts or even less supportive of the enhanced role of the

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Table 2. Differences of mean ranks between the older cohorts and the youngest one for preferences regarding the language situation and policy, 2012.

		24–29	30–35	36–41	42–47	48–53	54–59	60–65	66–71	72+	All 24+
Scope of the use of Ukrainian	All	−24.51**	3.71	−1.64	−5.84	−6.72	6.89	−1.36	0	−11.45	−25.15
	West/Center	3.11	10.32	5.75	9.19	0.60	11.57*	9.38	3.72	6.53	35.54
	East/South	−16.01**	2.20	−0.60	−16.35***	−4.83	−2.61	−11.29*	−4.60	−12.33**	−37.65
	Big cities	0.65	4.91	10.51	9.25	8.13	13.66**	6.85	7.24	7.14	39.19
	Villages	−4.60	3.42	1.40	0.67	−3.11	1.95	0.18	0.94	−2.32	−1.37
Scope of the use of Russian	All	9.37	−1.75	−16.86	−8.25	−7.26	−10.33	−0.24	−7.71	−0.50	−24.16
	West/Center	−12.10	−12.52*	−20.31***	−14.16**	−12.15	−12.94*	−7.44	−12.50**	−11.66	−67.47**
	East/South	9.55	7.99	−1.66	5.46	−1.95	−3.77	5.37	5.26	5.95	17.35
	Big cities	−6.80	−8.76	−15.99**	−14.36**	−14.85**	−17.80***	−5.55	−16.34**	−8.99	−61.19**
	Villages	3.37	0.02	−3.41	−2.52	4.66	−0.94	3.26	2.25	2.38	5.72
Language situation in the future	All	−8.77	17.87*	13.98	12.30	9.03	9.88	7.55	10.06	9.84	46.31
	West/Center	2.12	8.67*	16.28***	8.00	7.88	7.77	10.17*	4.88	11.35**	46.60**
	East/South	3.90	19.95***	8.50	9.36*	8.12	8.87	2.95	3.67	11.26*	42.93**
	Big cities	2.70	2.60	8.09	11.13*	6.18	5.82	1.66	4.23	9.17	29.74
	Villages	8.90*	16.20***	12.03**	11.02**	11.59**	10.46**	10.34**	12.12***	4.95	59.50***
Statuses of the two languages	All	−0.46	9.89	−2.13	9.09	5.35	2.07	−5.98	0.18	−1.31	9.42
	West/Center	20.35**	16.22**	15.09*	14.44*	9.66	16.89**	6.56	5.37	11.93	69.90**
	East/South	−4.40	4.88	−6.16	−2.79	1.89	−5.95	−11.16	−5.22	−1.03	−16.37
	Big cities	3.50	−0.70	−0.92	4.85	1.83	5.26	−6.82	4.50	2.42	7.68
	Villages	15.47**	19.20***	10.34	12.85**	10.09	11.47*	9.50	2.79	3.59	59.89**

titular language. Similarly to their divergence in languages they speak, the two parts of Ukraine appear to be drifting apart, albeit very slowly, in terms of languages they support.

Intra-cohort changes

In an attempt to disentangle different effects in the detected age differences, I need to supplement the cross-sectional examination by cohort analysis that would show whether the cohorts' behaviors and attitudes changed significantly between the two surveys. This section will compare the responses of the same cohorts to the same questions in the 2012 and 2006 surveys, similar to how it was done for the responses of different cohorts in 2012. Unfortunately, the comparison is only possible for language proficiencies and attitudes because patterns of use were measured on somewhat different scales in the two surveys. With fewer questions than in the cross-sectional analysis, I will present all figures in one table; to make it less cumbersome, I only show intra-cohort differences for the whole sample and its geographical "halves" which the above analysis proved to be very dissimilar (however, some interesting findings for the urban and rural subsamples will be mentioned too). Each column pertains to one of those cohorts that was included in both surveys, that is, except for the youngest cohort in 2012 and the oldest cohort in 2006 (I have also excluded from comparison the oldest cohort in 2012 which encompasses a broader year range than the others and is likely to be demographically skewed because of uneven mortality across sexes and social groups). The last column on the right presents differences between all comparable cohorts combined (age 18–65 years in 2006 versus 24–71 years in 2012), as a cumulative measure of intra-cohort change between the two surveys. Significant differences are flagged in the same manner as above. Changes within cohorts reflect a combination of period and age effects, but I expect the influence of the historical period to exceed aging-related changes for this short interval, except perhaps for the youth many of whom during these years moved from college to work.

As far as proficiencies are concerned, the upper part of Table 3 shows a remarkable improvement in the self-assessed knowledge of both languages for the years between the surveys. For the sample as a whole, there are significant changes in almost all cohorts which are, moreover, much bigger than the inter-cohort differences in the 2012 survey (cf Table 1), implying that a period effect overshadows that of cohort. However, the impact of the period turns out to vary across regions and settlement types. While in the west/center the increases in the knowledge of Ukrainian and Russian were rather even, east-central residents improved their Russian but not their Ukrainian, the latter's level remaining the same even for the cohort just out of (the increasingly Ukrainianized) education. Similarly, while the knowledge of Russian increased among both urban and rural respondents, it is only the villagers that became more proficient in Ukrainian. That is, Ukrainian advances among all cohorts in those regions and localities where it is already prevalent but it does not make inroads in everyday life of the predominantly Russian-speaking parts of the country, despite its increased use in education, television, and some other domains for most of the inter-survey period. In contrast, Russian persists among residents of different regions and settlement types, even if they differ considerably in their average levels of proficiency. The knowledge of the former imperial language gets better even in those regions where it is *not taught at school* or predominantly spoken in the street. Given the particularly big increase in proficiency in the youngest cohort of west-central residents (it was significantly worse that the older ones in 2006 and turned out to be one of the best in 2012), it can at least be partly attributed to the dominance of Russian on the Internet which became much

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Table 3. Differences of the cohorts' mean ranks in 2006 and 2012 for language proficiencies and preferences regarding the language situation and policy.

		18–23/ 24–29	24–29/ 30–35	30–35/ 36–41	36–41/ 42–47	42–47/ 48–53	48–53/ 54–59	54–59/ 60–65	60–65/ 66–71	66–71/ 72+	All 18–65/ All 24–71
Proficiency in Ukrainian	All	−32.02***	−31.02***	−41.07***	−14.03	−31.66***	−27.00**	−27.68**	−17.06*	−34.99***	−222.10***
	West/Center	−29.09***	−24.26***	−38.77***	−22.13***	−31.30***	−27.60***	−33.70***	−19.95***	−33.91***	−226.90***
	East/South	−3.85	−10.44	−6.14	0.79	−1.75	−4.35	2.69	−0.97	−3.72	−23.91
Proficiency in Russian	All	−49.82***	−28.01**	−45.70***	−11.81	−34.67***	−18.58*	−35.62***	−32.30***	−32.65***	−278.09***
	West/Center	−30.41***	−15.56*	−38.52***	−5.10	−23.35***	−8.89	−16.69**	1.01	−18.50**	−139.26***
	East/South	−24.12***	−11.30	−9.69	−3.32	−15.68**	−8.06	−16.78**	−31.83***	−17.50**	−121.36***
Scope of the use of Ukrainian	All	−14.93	1.81	3.88	12.49	−5.98	19.67*	−12.10	−1.44	−6.76	1.65
	West/Center	−4.85	−0.40	−0.42	3.49	−12.60*	1.58	−8.06	−6.13	−8.94	−29.02
	East/South	−5.34	−1.14	2.68	2.65	6.69	11.48	−8.29	−2.57	−0.93	3.23
Scope of the use of Russian	All	12.23	−0.16	−24.51**	−18.31*	−1.63	−6.35	−2.12	−13.01	−11.85	−44.28
	West/Center	6.97	−6.43	−22.24***	−10.93	−6.29	1.31	5.58	−12.65*	−4.42	−45.07**
	East/South	0.02	12.54*	−0.28	0.39	3.92	5.89	−5.83	3.28	−6.56	18.70
Language situation in the future	All	−22.00**	1.18	−1.67	0.42	−9.95	0.93	−17.10*	−9.20	−3.63	−59.74**
	West/Center	−14.79**	−4.88	5.06	−5.43	−5.44	−12.10*	−12.57**	−9.40*	−10.24	−60.06***
	East/South	−0.16	2.71	−4.94	3.36	−2.92	11.50**	−3.96	−4.01	8.34	−0.16
Statuses of the two languages	All	26.09**	11.27	5.49	21.20*	5.23	8.15	9.29	9.66	10.05	95.18***
	West/Center	18.06**	0.22	13.12	−0.49	−2.51	0.41	3.84	−5.24	4.61	26.27
	East/South	18.14**	6.95	−3.49	17.30**	7.75	3.96	3.11	10.70	16.61**	65.20***

more popular in Ukraine since 2006, first and foremost due to the exponential growth of social networks.[9]

Although changes in the cohorts' preferences regarding the language situation and policy turn out to be much smaller than those in proficiencies, they are commensurate with inter-cohort differences for the same questions (cf Table 2). With regard to the appropriate scope of the use of Ukrainian and Russian, there are no significant cumulative differences in the nationwide sample and just a few significant differences for particular cohorts. Within the subsamples, it is worth mentioning that the preferences of villagers shifted towards weaker support for Ukrainian and those of west-central residents towards greater acceptance of Russian. Both changes may seem to indicate the Ukrainian-speakers' compliance with the de-Ukrainianizing shift under Yanukovych rather than opposition to it. However, the figures for the two further questions present a more complex picture. While the Ukrainian-speakers' preference for the future Ukrainianization of society grew stronger between the surveys, their support of the status of Ukrainian as the sole official language actually decreased. Most remarkably, young residents of the west/center became more supportive of *both* the dominance of Ukrainian in the distant future and an upgrade of the status of Russian now. It may be surmised that the former shift primarily reflects the nationalist ideology prescribing the (eventual) congruence of the nation and its eponymous language, while the latter change has to be with the pragmatic recognition of the spread of Russian in Ukrainian society (which might become more obvious to young Ukrainian-speakers with the beginning of their working life; a period effect would thus be reinforced by that of age). Actually, the same disparity of inter-survey changes in the preferences regarding these two questions is characteristic of the youngest cohort in the entire sample and of all its comparable cohorts combined. Even among the predominantly Russian-speaking groups, while the residents of the east/south strengthened their support for an upgrade in the status of Russian, the respondents from big cities, rather surprisingly, shifted toward embracing the eventual predominance of Ukrainian. Given the rather even distribution of significant intra-cohort differences on the age spectrum, these changes also seem to be period effects. That is, the more resolute stance of east-southerners on the status issue is likely to result from its increased political and media prominence after the Orange Revolution, while the urbanites' greater acceptance of the eventual Ukrainianization reflects their increasing identification with the perceived national language as an important attribute of independence.

Conclusion

This article has confirmed earlier findings on the small scale of age differences in language proficiencies, use patterns and attitudes of Ukraine's population, thereby disproving hopes (or fears) that the succession of cohorts would bring radical changes in the structure of societal bilingualism. However, its main significance lies in demonstrating some effects that were not revealed by previous research. Perhaps most importantly, my analysis has detected the end of the inter-cohort shift toward Russian. Although in the nationwide sample the young people who have been raised in independent Ukraine and largely educated in Ukrainian do not yet rely on that language significantly more than the older cohorts whose socialization took place in the Soviet times with a greater role of Russian, they no longer stand out as more Russian-speaking. This change can be attributed both to the advent of a new cohort of those born after the breakup of the USSR and to the population's response to the Ukrainianization course under President Yushchenko, which was arguably stronger among younger people than older ones. At the same time, young

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respondents turn out to be more proficient not only in Ukrainian but also in Russian whose continuous use in various domains this proficiency both enables and reflects. Despite the predominantly Ukrainian-language education, the young cohorts' formative context remains no less favorable for the acquisition of Russian than that of older people, not least due to the dominance of Russian on the Internet. It is thus hard to say whether the spread of Ukrainian due to its cautious promotion by the state and citizens' hesitant embrace of the perceived national language ultimately prevails over Russian's inherent advantage as a major language of transnational communication and globalized job markets. Whatever changes in individual repertoires and group preferences, though, bilingualism at the level of society seems bound to persist.

Another important finding is that the apparent continuity with a slow drift toward the titular language in Ukraine as a whole conceals two radically different developments in the two geographical "halves" of the country whose dissimilarity was exacerbated by the opposing mobilizations of their respective populations during and after the Orange Revolution. While young residents of the west-central regions are significantly more Ukrainian-speaking in their own practice and more supportive of the Ukrainianization of society than their older fellow countrymen, their coevals in the east and south are similar to older cohorts in their predominant reliance on Russian and not much different in their attitudes. Given that these contrary synchronic differences are reinforced by opposing diachronic shifts in the two parts of the country, the "pro-Orange" and "anti-Orange" Ukraine become increasingly dissimilar linguistically which, in turn, facilitates their cultural and political divergence. Or so the situation was in 2012, at the time of the survey on which this conclusion is based. The Euromaidan protests in the west and center and the regime-instigated contrary manifestations in the east and south in the late 2013 and early 2014 seemed to strengthen this divergence, but the subsequent Russian aggression urged the residents of many eastern and southern regions to ally with the west-central compatriots in their support for Ukraine's sovereignty. However, it is not clear to what an extent the Russian-speakers' civic nationalism will translate into their embrace of the "national" language on the communicative rather than merely symbolic level. But even if its presence in individual repertoires and certain group practices of the east-southern residents markedly increases, Ukrainian will most likely supplement Russian rather than replacing it.

The juxtaposition of inter-cohort differences and intra-cohort shifts also makes it possible to interpret them in terms of different contributing effects. Unfortunately, due to disparity of scales in the two surveys I cannot make such an assessment for the detected differences in patterns of language use. With regard to proficiencies, both kinds of differences indicate the same direction of change but the intra-cohort changes are much bigger, particularly among respondents from the west/center and villages, thus implying that the improvement of (perceived) knowledge of both Ukrainian and Russian is primarily a period effect, a result of recent trends in the acquisition and use of these languages. At the same time, rather consistent inter-cohort differences in the same categories indicate that for the youth the period effect is reinforced by that of cohort, which, however, is different for the two geographical parts of the country, in accordance with different formative contexts they provide for the young cohort. For preferences regarding the language situation and policy, inter- and intra-cohort differences are commensurate in magnitude and sometimes opposite in sign, hence the interpretation of effects is more problematic. I would suggest that the seemingly incompatible intra-cohort shifts toward stronger support of future Ukrainianization and greater acceptance of a current upgrade of the status of Russian are primarily period effects, albeit driven by different sociopolitical and ideological factors. For the youngest cohort of 2006 whose members moved since then

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into working life, the shift toward greater acceptance of Russian may also include an effect of age, namely greater awareness of the prevalence of Russian in the workplace. In contrast, the stronger support of the current and future primacy of Ukrainian by the youngest cohort of west-central and rural respondents as compared to the older parts of these categories in the 2012 data seems to be equally likely to indicate a cohort effect resulting from their particular post-Soviet and post-Orange experiences and an age effect reflecting the youth's nationalist idealism prior to entering the job market. The same is true for young urbanites' greater readiness to accept the reduction of the use of Russian in society. Further research is needed to verify these suggestions.

My examination of the age factor in Ukrainian language politics has demonstrated an advantage of combining a synchronic analysis of inter-cohorts differences with a diachronic analysis of intra-cohort changes. However, not only did the short period between the two surveys limit an effect of the cohorts' aging but it also predetermined the very definition of cohorts as encompassing too narrow age intervals and, therefore, including too few respondents for a reliable study of fine distinctions between them. Future studies should be based on wider inter-survey periods and/or larger samples to enable a more convincing interpretation of differences between and within cohorts. Furthermore, scholars should be sensitive to the possibility of different dynamics in different parts of society; it is worth supplementing an examination of the sample as a whole with separate analyses of those parts known for their dissimilar linguistic and socio-political environment. At the same time, the nationwide cohorts need to be standardized by those parameters defining such dissimilar parts so that the cohorts' incongruous composition does not skew the results. Last but not least, complex studies including analyses of proficiencies, practices, and attitudes are better fit to reveal distinctions and relations between different aspects of language politics.

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Notes

1. A cohort may be broadly defined as the

   > aggregate of individuals (within some population definition) who experienced the same event within the same time interval. In almost all cohort research to date the defining event has been birth, but this is only a special case of the more general approach. (Ryder 1965, 845)

   The term "generation" is thereby reserved for the context of kinship, although some authors use the two words alternately.
2. It should be noted, however, that the increasing discrepancy between ethnic identity and language practice in the late Soviet decades resulted not only from the progressive Russification of practice but also from the predominant retention of Ukrainian identity. This discrepancy persisted and even widened in independent Ukraine (Kulyk 2011, 2014).
3. Driven by purely analytical considerations, the cutoffs of the cohorts do not indicate any inherent differences between people of almost the same age who come to be placed in different cohorts. Small changes in the cutoffs would leave most results intact, although due to the somewhat

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uneven age distribution of the sample some of the significant differences might become insignificant and vice versa. Should the delineation of the cohorts considerably change their average size, the significance of differences between them would of course change accordingly.

4. Contrary to suggestions by some scholars of the age effect, I do not standardize the cohorts by the level of education since most members of the youngest cohort are still too young to have achieved the highest level, so the standardization would drastically change the figures for this cohort. Apart from this effect, the cohorts that completed their education in post-Soviet Ukraine do not manifest any major educational differences from each other, while being clearly distinct from older cohorts whose educational opportunities were more limited.
5. In principle, it is also possible that the difference in the self-assessed proficiency reflects, at least in part, greater willingness of young people than older ones to declare good knowledge of Ukrainian which, in turn, may have to do with the youth's stronger belief that such knowledge is appropriate for Ukrainian citizens. This effect would then be noticeable precisely in the pro-Orange regions where the loyalty to the perceived national language arguably increases with time due to the impacts of education, mass culture, and other domains. Being less loyal, the youth of the anti-Orange regions would be less inclined to exaggerate their proficiency. Similar bias in favor of Ukrainian in the west and center may also have affected responses on language use. It is unlikely, however, that such bias can primarily account for the significant inter-cohort differences which are, moreover, not consistent across the survey questions.
6. At least this is the case for spoken language, which is what most people seemed to primarily assess when answering the question on their level of knowledge. At the same time, the increasing use of the Internet, particularly the interaction in social networks contributes to proficiency in written language among the young people, primarily with regard to Russian which most Ukrainians use online (Kulyk 2013b). As Internet fora and social networks demonstrate, high proficiency does not necessarily mean correct spelling.
7. Several months after the survey, the local official status of Russian and other languages of major groups was stipulated in the new language law, except that the criterion was to be the census-proven fact of a certain share (at least 10%) of the speakers of the respective language in the local population rather than the preference – however articulated – of its majority (Charnysh 2013).
8. This finding confirms the conclusion based on the 2006 data that among the Russian-speakers, young people are more supportive than the older ones of the spread of Ukrainian in society, even if this support does not translate into their own use of the language (Kulyk 2007).
9. At the same time, the increase of reported proficiency among elderly west-central and rural respondents few of whom used the Internet or had any other new experiences of communicating in Russian raises the question of whether the increase has primarily to do with a change in people's *perception* of their actual and appropriate qualities. However, it is doubtful that such perceptional change would only affect the responses on proficiencies and not on preferences regarding the language situation and policy where the intra-cohort changes are actually much smaller (see below).

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