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CONTEMPORARY TRANSCARPATHIAN MEDIA IN THE CONTEXT OF THE LANGUAGE INFORMATION POLICY

Summary. *The article analyses the problem of information language policy on the example of Transcarpathia. It is a multiethnic region in Ukraine where people of different nationalities have been living for centuries. The author studies the Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Gypsy and other media of the information field of Transcarpathia. This research is carried out in the light of the access to information in native languages. The author also analyses the role of the media in the formation of a tolerant attitude towards the representatives of other ethnic groups of the land. The research raises the need to broaden and deepen the term "information policy". It should include the language and multiethnic peculiarities of multinational regions. To the author's mind, this might help to produce a statesmanship-mentality among the representatives of different ethnic groups.*

Key words: *media, information policy, media of ethnic groups, intercultural communication, ethnic tolerance.*

Formulation of the problem. To our mind, the language policy of the Ukrainian Media is one of the most relevant issues of the modern journalism studies. Of primary importance in the information activity are the accurate and balanced language policy of Ukraine and the preservation of our country's position in the world arena as a country with high intellectual and technological potential. All this results in an immense number of problems. They are connected with the level of the training of Ukrainian specialists. In this regard, journalism as a science "depends on the journalist as a person all the time. It depends upon the journalist's professionalism, knowledge, moral face, political views, cultural level" [13, p. 268]. There is no use of convincing anyone that the language policy of a state is introduced because of each separate journalist.

As a scientific problem, the information and language policy had been regarded in Ukraine from the ideological point of view for a long time. For the slightest mention of it could have been treated as Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism. According to Prof. V. Zdoroveha, Ukraine, "having been one of the parts of the great Soviet empire, one of its largest provinces, it had to follow the laws dictated by Moscow" [16, p. 95]. Thus, the Ukrainian language policy had been "underway" as a part of the only Soviet nation, the only international culture for a long time. Actually, the language problem was truly acute in Ukraine. The very "philological approach had an inclination of political repression" [7, p. 466]. The method of denationalisation was actively applied among Ukrainians. It was used in all Ukrainian regions that belonged to Russia, the Soviet Union and those under the control of other countries.

However, to our mind, the information policy, not only the Ukrainian one, is often viewed from the point of the position of the sociological-technological approach. It is treated as the politicians' ability and possibility to influence the consciousness, the mind and the behaviour of the people in favour of the state. In this respect, a significant component, i.e. the language, is not taken into consideration.

Analysis of recent research and publications. There are several laws on the information industry in Ukraine: "On Information" (1992), "On The Printed Means Of Mass Media (press) in Ukraine" (1992), "On Television And Radio Broadcasting" (1993), "On State Secrets" (1994), "On Information Agencies" (1995), "On The National Council Of Ukraine On Television And Radio Broadcasting" (1997), "On The National Informatisation Program" (1998) etc.

The majority of the domestic and foreign studies on this problem beginning with Marshall McLuhan's research [11] touch upon the essence of the technology of the information policy [3], epistemology [4] and its specificity in the conditions of the globalisation [2, 8, 10], the political impact of the technologies of the information society [14], the role of the media of the information policy in the creation of the national narrative [6, 9, 10], in the context of the national culture [15] etc. The development of the uniform standards for the information policy is the responsibility of the decision-making bodies of the EU [1]. The problem of the link between the information policy of the mass media and the purposeful formation of the mass consciousness has been studied recently. As practice

shows, the media do not always treat the formation of their information policy with responsibility. They are not aware of the whole spectrum of the social responsibility. The media, while actualising a certain set of problems and generating a discussion and formulating the view of the people, may often not aim at reflecting the public interest and supplying it with objective information. This results in the problem of the balanced approach of the state and the society in the media activity and the achievement of a constructive information strategy.

Selecting the previously not studied parts of the general problem. Most researchers, while analysing the issue of the information policy, mainly accentuate on the technological influence on the society and the formation of the public opinion. However, the problem of language is studied very poorly in this context, but it is the language that transmits the information to the recipient. The problem is especially relevant in the information field of multicultural regions where representatives of different ethnic groups have been residing for centuries.

The importance of the language policy in the mass media has been confirmed in the process of the modern national renaissance. As the propaganda of the social-political, cultural-artistic and spiritual renaissance of our society streams through the media. On the other hand, thoughtless approach towards the language issue in Ukraine may create new, unforeseen problems. It should be remembered that the Ukrainian national rebirth was not the only to begin with the independence of Ukraine. It was also the beginning of the rebirth of those ethnies that have been living on the territory of our country for a long time. Of crucial importance is that the rebirth of the Ukrainian ethnos, the state-building one, would not disturb the ethnies residing in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian language itself, as the main attribute of our culture, should not be left behind. Because today, according to political analysts, “as it was in the Soviet era,...everything is being applied to prove that Ukrainian, that is Little Russian, more precisely the village folk culture” is not even able “to produce its own bard, pop or rock music” [15, p. 161].

The aim of the article is to analyse the peculiarities of the language information policy in the multiethnic media field on the example of Transcarpathia; to study the problem of the balance in the formation of the public opinion of the multicultural region in the context of equal access to information in native languages. These problems are especially urgent because of Ukraine’s active attempts to integrate with the European information space and the weak control over the refugee crisis. The topic is also relevant due to three important aspects: 1) the ethnic problem is acquiring a dominant character in the newest media; 2) the attention of the mass media in the mentioned

topic usually arouses not from the interest towards the peculiarities of the culture of the neighbour nations but from the interethnic conflicts or their dormant stage; 3) the growing influence of the media on the society in the conditions of the globalisation, on the one hand, and the national renaissance, on the other, puts the task for the government to timely and properly react to the needs of the society in the management and adjustment of the ethnonational policy of the country.

Main material. Transcarpathia is a specific region of our country. It had been apart from the “mainland” Ukraine for the longest period. Also the region has undergone a demolishing process of assimilation and nationalisation by the neighbouring countries. The Transcarpathian Ukrainians as the dominating nation have preserved their language and culture. According to the 2001 consensus, out of 1 254 614 Transcarpathians, 1 010 127 were Ukrainians (80,51%). On the other hand, different national groups have been cohabiting in peace in Transcarpathia: Hungarians, Romanians, Germans, Slovaks etc. Hungarians, being the eighth largest ethnic group in Ukraine (0.3% of the total population), are the second in Transcarpathia with 151 516 people (12.8% of the region’s population). The Romanian group is the third largest in Transcarpathia with 32 152 people (2,56%). At the same time, they are only the ninth largest ethnic group in Ukraine (0.26%). Russians, being the second largest group in Ukraine, occupy the fourth place in Transcarpathia – 30 993 (2.4%); Romani people – 14 004 (1,12%). Other ethnic groups of Transcarpathia are of low quantity: Slovaks – 5 696 (0,45%), Germans – 3 582 (0,29%), Belarusians – 1 540 (0,12%), Jews – 565 (0,05%), Poles – 518 (0,04%).

A network of educational institutions is subordinated to the ethnic composition of Transcarpathia. Today, there are schools with different languages of tuition in the region. 583 Ukrainian, 65 Hungarian, 3 Russian, 11 Romanian, 29 Ukrainian-Hungarian, 2 Russian-Hungarian and 2 Ukrainian-Slovak schools. Children of German-speaking families study the language beginning with the first grade in places of compact living of Germans. There are 3 Jewish schools operating on Sunday, where Hebrew is taught. One of the schools is being reformed to teach Romani children in Uzhhorod.

The ethnic composition of the population is also taken into account in the operation of the television and radio companies. Daily programmes are broadcast in Ukrainian and weekly ones in Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, Slovak and German. The national rebirth is facilitated by the cultural-educational communities of the region: the “Cultural-educational society “Prosvita”, the “Olena Teliha Cultural society”, the “Hungarian Cultural Federation in Transcarpathia”, the “Transcarpathian Community of Hungarian Intellectuals”, the “Association of Slovaks in

Transcarpathia”, the “Transcarpathian Slovak Women’s Association “Dovera”, “Association of Romanians in Transcarpathia”, Transcarpathian Romani cultural-educational communities “Roma”, “Romani Yag”, “Rom som”, “Transcarpathian Jewish Welfare Centre Hesed Shpira”, the “Cultural-educational community Transcarpathian Germans” etc.

To some extent, the contemporary press also reflects the ethnic mosaics of the region. As to November 2015, 227 periodicals were registered or reregistered at the Press and Information Office of the Transcarpathian RSA (cf. as to 2000, around 300). According to our research, 126–130 editions have been published with varying regularity in the region since the middle of the 2000s. 65 editions are published regularly (the total circulation is around 325 200 copies). Among these are: Ukrainian editions – 56 (total circulation around 278 700 copies), Hungarian ones, including doublets – 9 (total circulation around 36 500 copies), Russian ones – 2 (3000 copies), Russian-Ukrainian ones – 1 (1500 copies), Slovak – 2 editions (1500 copies), Romani-Ukrainian ones – 3 (2500 copies), Romanian ones – 2 (1500 copies). For now, the German press has disappeared from the information field of Transcarpathia. Although between 1992 and 1995 500 copies of the German newspaper “Wiedergeburt” (“Rebirth”) had been published not on a regular basis. It had been issued by the “Transcarpathian regional social-political and cultural-educational community of Transcarpathian Germans”.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned, we can see that the Ukrainian rebirth in Transcarpathia has its peculiar traits today as well. The Ukrainisation in all areas has become a notable feature of the social life of the most western region. The Russianisation has been actively opposed in the area since 1991. The democratisation of the society has given an opportunity to express the most diverse opinions.

However, such a tendency has not only positive but negative sides as well. Because such ideas exist that not only directly or indirectly retard the Ukrainian national rebirth but also destroy the very principle of the intelligent coexistence of different ethnic groups in Ukraine. Neoruthenism is one of the significant destructive elements in Transcarpathia. Its representatives are trying to declare Ruthenians to be the fourth East Slavic nation. The political demand of the Ruthenians lies within the demands full autonomy of Transcarpathia. However, Ruthenism as trend itself is not consentient. Today, there are at least three Ruthenian organisations under the guise of cultural-educational societies: “The society of Transcarpathian Ruthenians”, “Ruthenian scientific-educational society”, “The Alexander Dukhnovych Association of Ruthenians”.

Transcarpathian editions with open Ruthenian positions are the “Ruthenian newspaper” (Khust soci-

ety of Ruthenians, editor Y. A. Dumnych, registered on 8.12.1994, circulation of 500 copies), “Podkarpatska Rus” (registered on 10.04.1992, circulation of 1000 copies), “Ruthenian talk” (editor I. Y. Petrovtsiy, registered on 22.05.1997, circulation of 500 copies), “Christian family” (editor-in-chief archpriest Dmytriy Sydor, registered on 31.08.1996, circulation from 2000 to 4000 copies). The periodicity of these editions is not regular. The “Podkarpatska Rus” has not been published since 1999. Sometimes, the so-called problems printed in the “Ruthenian” newspapers are not only fictional but ridiculous too. This concerns their form and content as well. One of the editions of the biweekly “Podkarpatska Rus” reads: “Guided by the resolution of the regional Council of the People’s Deputies I decided to restore my true, Ruthenian, nationality in my passport” (“Podkarpatska Rus”. – 1992. – October 22). Soon, a satirical parody-poem was written by Pavlo Chuchka Jnr entitled “Lines on the Ruthenian passport”. The poem mocks the editor-in-chief’s attempts to create a fourth East Slavic nation [5, p. 158].

We can observe a support of the Neoruthenism on the pages of the religious edition “Christian family” (body of the Cyril and Methodius Transcarpathian Orthodox society, editor Fr. Dmytriy Sydor, circulation of 4000 copies). The newspaper is published twice a month as if in Ukrainian. It is given for free to those laymen who attend the Uzhhorod Holy Cross Orthodox cathedral. However, if we analyse the materials of the edition, we can see that it is not so much religious as political. For instance, in the June 18, 1999 edition of the “Christian family”, we find a material entitled “Olexiy Kabaliuk – a faithful protector of the Transcarpathian Orthodoxy” printed in Ukrainian. At the same time, we come across the following publications: “We, Ruthenians, are preserving the sacred Church Slavonic language”, “In Ukraine, the ECRI experts have revealed a bit of racism and a little of intolerance”, “He was a Ruthenian with a capital letter”, written in some kind of artificial language. Although the newspaper is claimed to be a religious edition, the published materials are often far from being devout. The problem of the so-called Ruthenian editions is the absence of a codified literary language. They use the various Transcarpathian dialects of the Ruthenian subethnos. This makes it difficult to understand the editions even for those who mentally determined themselves as Ruthenians or Ruthenian-Ukrainians during the All-Ukrainian consensus.

The printed Transcarpathian media have the following structure: 1) editions the founders of which are government authorities, institutions or organisations (“News of Transcarpathia”, “Kárpáti Igaz Szó” (“Carpathian True Word”), “The Youth of Transcarpathia-reform”, “Transcarpathian kaleidoscope”, “Militia data”, “Warrior’s voice”, “The news of Uzhhorod district”,

“Verkhovyna” etc, 26 editions in all); 2) editions the founders of which are political parties and public organisations (“Social-democrat”, “Carpathian voice” (Transcarpathian regional organisation of People’s Movement of Ukraine), “Carpathian truth” (Provincial Committee of the Communist Party), “Bell” (Ukrainian republican party), 17 editions in all); 3) periodicals the founders of which are religious associations (“Evangelist”, “Christian family”, “Orthodox Irshava district” etc, 6 editions in all); 4) editions the founders of which are editions of newspapers (“Transcarpathian truth”, “Carpathian Ukraine”, 7 editions in all); 5) editions, the founders of which are commercial structures (“RIO”, “Ratusha”, “Orbita-Logos”, “Staryi Zamok” etc, 35 editions in all); 6) editions the founders of which are private individuals (“Chorna Hora”, “Krayanka”, “Karpatska panorama” etc, 18 editions in all).

Based on the circulation and the information impact, the most influential Transcarpathian newspapers are: “Staryi Zamok” (founder Private limited company “Newspaper “Staryi Zamok””, circulation between 13000 and 20000 copies); “Fest” (founder information and advertising agency “Nash Chas” (“Our Time”), since March 1996, circulation of 11000 copies); “RIO” (registered by the RVF “Tyzdheny-pres” (“Weekly press”), since March 4, 1998, circulation between 13000 and 20000 copies), “Novyny Zakarpattia” (body of the Transcarpathian Regional Council and the Regional State Administration, founded on August 18, 1990, circulation between 4560 and 10000 copies), “Sribna Zemlia” (founded on March 1, 1994 by the concern “Sribna Zemlia”, circulation of 7100 copies); “Uzhhorod” (newspaper of the Uzhhorod city council and Executive Committee, founded on July 20, 1999, circulation of 4700 copies). It is interesting to note that these newspapers not only underline the importance of the Ukrainian national rebirth, but also speak about the preservation of the culture of the ethnic minorities of Transcarpathia. For instance, the newspaper “Novyny Zakarpattia” actively includes elements of Ukrainian, Hungarian, Romanian, Slovak and German folklore in its satirical regular column “Holyi u tyrniu” (“Naked in the bushes”). The newspaper gives information about the multiculturalism of the region on a regular basis. One of the editions of the “Novyny Zakarpattia” includes Ukrainian translations of the anti-fascist Dmytro Vakarov’s Russian poems (2000. — № 164–165. — November 4). At the same time, to our mind, there is an excess usage of dialectic forms used in the newspaper: children’s page “Medvedyk” (“Beary”), satirical page “Ferkovi figli” (“Ferko’s anecdotes”) etc.

For multiethnic regions, it is important to know the culture of the neighbouring ethnics. The newspaper “Staryi Zamok” is an example of such propaganda. It describes the cultural variety of Transcarpathia on the page “Culture”:

“Vylok musicians entertain the audiences in Europe and the USA”, “The Transcarpathian Paganel about love and hate” (“Staryi Zamok” — 2000. — April 6. — P. 12); “Novoselytsia revives horse breeding and ancient traditions” (“Staryi Zamok” — 2000. — October 5. — P. 6); “Bard of Transcarpathia...” (“Staryi Zamok” — 2000. — October 26. — P. 13).

The tolerance in the interethnic relations is also facilitated by the importance given to the language policy in the periodicals of the national minorities of Transcarpathia.

The largest Transcarpathian national minority is the Hungarian. Hence, the most influential Hungarian newspaper “Kárpáti Igaz Szó” (“Carpathian True Word”) is supported by the Transcarpathian Regional Council and the Regional State Administration. The mentioned journal is one of the oldest in the region. It celebrated its 95th anniversary on January 31, 2015. The newspaper had been issued under the title “Munkás Újság” (“Worker’s Newspaper”) between 1920 and 1946. It was a doublet of the regional “Zakarpatska pravda” (“Transcarpathian truth”) newspaper in 1946–1967. Since March 8, 1967, the newspaper has undergone an important period of establishment as an independent Hungarian newspaper of the region. Among the modern Hungarian editions, “Kárpáti Igaz Szó” is one of the deepest and most operative sources of information of the Hungarian population of Transcarpathia. The newspaper highlights the problems of political and social-economical life of the region, the formation of the culture of international relations, the consolidation of the feeling of mutual respect between the representatives of different nationalities. The newspaper has subscribers on the whole territory of the region and enjoys the popularity of the Hungarian population of Transcarpathia. The flood of November 1998, may be considered the instance of the swift work of the newspaper. The editions were delivered to the subscribers together with the essential packages to the flooded areas. Today, the newspaper is issued thrice a week: on 8 pages on Tuesday and Thursday and on 16 pages on Saturday.

The newspaper “Kárpátalja” (“Transcarpathia”) has become an explicit opponent of the newspaper “Kárpáti Igaz Szó” in the formation of the information policy. It was found on December 25, 2000 by TOV “KARPATOLYO”, circulation of 8300 copies. The “Kárpátalja” newspaper differs from the other one with its being much more up-to-date. It has its own website and actively communicates with its readers via the social network Facebook.

Other Hungarian editions which influence the formation of the information language policy in the region are published chiefly in four districts of Transcarpathia in the compact living of Hungarians. These are: the Berehovo district (6 editions, including the doublet of the newspaper “Visnyk of the Berehovo district” (“Beregi

Hírlap”)); the Vynohradovo district (the doublet of the regional newspaper “News of the Vynohradovo dystrict” (“Nagyszőlősvideki Hírek”)); the Uzhhorod district (2 editions, including the doublet of the newspaper “News of the Uzhhorod district” (“Ungvidéki Hírek”)); and the Mukachevo district (the doublet of the newspaper of the district council had been published until 1998).

The Romanian population of Transcarpathia has been residing on the territory of the modern Tiachevo and Rakhiv districts since the 13th century. Nevertheless, it did not have its periodical published in Romanian for a long time. The doublet of the Tiachevo newspaper “Druzhba” (“Prietenia” (“Friendship”)) had been published for several years first in Moldovan, then in Romanian. However, it was withdrawn due to the financial situation and lack of Romanian-speaking journalist staff in 1998. The problem has been raised by the local press (V. Ilnytskyi “How Romanians became Moldovans”). In 1999, there was an attempt to publish the Romanian doublet of the newspaper “Social-democrat” (SDPU (untied)). However, due to the lack of funds, only one issue had been published on the eve of the presidential pre-election campaign. Soon, the Transcarpathian regional cultural-educational Romanian society “Dachia” published the “Apşa” newspaper (registered on September 6, 2001). Another Romanian newspaper “Maramureşenii” (People of Maramureş) appeared in the information space in November 2001. It was intended to be a social-political edition (circulation of 500 copies, founders the district state administrations of Tiachevo and Rakhiv). Unlike “Apşa”, the “Maramureşenii” edition devotes somewhat less attention to the historical-cultural aspects of the Romanian ethnoses.

The Russian-speaking population of Transcarpathia has had no newspaper printed in Russian since 1999. Until then, there had been published the “Yedinstvo” (“Unity”) (1991) newspaper. It was later named “Yedinstvo-plus” (1993) based on the Russian doublet of the newspaper “Zakarpatska pravda”. Its declared circulation was 6230 copies. Although the newspaper was not issued in such an extent because it was not popular among the readers. In all, the newspaper was not as much of cultural, as of political character. Together with important social problems the newspaper “Yedinstvo-plus” called on returning to the socialistic past etc. For some reason, the society of Russian culture in Transcarpathia “Russkiy dom” (“Russian house”) does not stipulate for publishing newspapers in Russian in the region in its programme. The absence of the newspapers issued in Russian is compensated with such editions as “Visti tyzhnia” (“News of the week”), “Yevropa-tsentr” (“Europe centre”), “Eho-Karpat” (“The echo of the Carpathians”) that include several pages in Russian. However, these are most often only the reprinting of the national journals or online editions.

The appearance of the newspaper “Romani Yag” (“Romani bonfire”, circulation of 2500 copies) in February 1999 was a picturesque event in the development of the modern press. It is published by the Transcarpathian Romani cultural-educational society of the same name. The periodical appears in Ukrainian, Romani (Cyrillic) and Hungarian. The edition has a bright and original character. It begins with an epigraph: “We are a golden draught in the history of states”. On a weekly basis, a Romani programme is broadcast in the “Tysa-1” TV-channel. However, except financial aid, the Gypsy media require a strategy of overcoming the status of social outsiders in the context of the problem of the information policy of the state.

The Slovak press of Transcarpathia fulfils the information needs of one of the smallest ethnic groups of the land. The media demand of the Slovak ethnic group is provided by two newspapers (“Podkarpatskiy Slovak” (“Transcarpathian Slovak”), “Slovenske slovo” (“Slovak word”), a journal (“Dovera” (“Trust”)) and radio and television broadcast at the Transcarpathian Regional Television and Radio Company “Tysa-1”. These media popularise the ethnic and socio-cultural identification and stimulate the synthesis of the Slovak national identity. In addition, they build a constructive and tolerant approach toward the language information policy of the land.

Conclusions and recommendations. Today, in the conditions of the Ukrainian statehood, we can observe not only the process of the Ukrainian national rebirth but also the revival of those ethnoses that have been living on the territory of our country. There are no analogues with the Transcarpathian information language policy in other regions of Ukraine. Thus, it requires political wisdom and confident media policy, on the one hand. On the other, it demands a tolerant approach to the national-cultural heritage of the ethnoses that have been residing on this territory initially. Therefore, it is important to achieve a balance in the interethnic cohabitation in such a multiethnic region as Transcarpathia. At the same time, it is crucial to avoid the possibility of the development of Ukrainophobia. In addition, the growth of all spheres connected with the formation of the national identity of the population is of utter importance. The total informatisation of the society requires a scientifically based, up-to-date state information policy. This should be intended to satisfy and protect the information needs of the state, the civil society and every individual altogether.

Transcarpathia is a multicultural region. Thus, its experience can be used in the formation of the information policy of Ukraine. This presupposes the public's maximum access to information in their native language. In addition, the media should aim at forming an individual responsible for the future of their country regardless of nationality and religious confession.

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