

credible, reproducible, and fully admissible in court. Therefore, the implementation of these standards should be considered a priority for improving both the effectiveness of forensic investigations and the overall fairness of the judicial process.

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LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE FUNCTIONING OF THE STATE LANGUAGE IN UKRAINE: LEGAL AND SOCIAL ASPECTS

The issue of language policy in Ukraine is closely connected to the processes of national identity formation, social integration, and state-building. The Ukrainian language, as the only state language, performs not only communicative but also symbolic and unifying functions in society. At the same time, the question of ensuring its full functioning remains one of the most sensitive socio-political topics. The

development of language policy in Ukraine reflects the country's struggle to strengthen its sovereignty and democratic values in the context of globalisation and ongoing hybrid challenges.

The study has revealed that the Ukrainian language, as defined by the Constitution and current legislation, serves as a fundamental element of state unity. The effectiveness of the language policy depends on the balance between legal regulation and social support for linguistic development. The results show that strengthening the state language requires not only legal mechanisms but also educational, cultural, and communicative initiatives aimed at popularising Ukrainian in all spheres of life.

According to the Law of Ukraine "On Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language," Ukrainian is mandatory in public administration, education, science, media, and service sectors [1, p. 15]. This law aims to guarantee citizens' right to receive information and services in the state language, while simultaneously respecting the rights of national minorities [1, p. 16]. Legal scholars note that language policy is not merely a set of legal norms but also a mechanism for consolidating national identity and ensuring information security [2, p. 33].

The state's approach to language regulation has evolved significantly since independence. Early legal acts emphasised bilingualism, whereas modern policy focuses on strengthening Ukrainian as a unifying factor [2, p. 34]. In my opinion, this shift is a natural result of historical experience and social demand. The Ukrainian language has become a symbol of independence and cultural resilience, especially during periods of political and military confrontation.

At the same time, language policy cannot be effective without public support. Legal obligations alone do not automatically lead to language usage in everyday communication. People adopt the state language not because of coercion but because of motivation, education, and cultural pride [3, p. 12]. In this regard, I believe that promoting Ukrainian through media, art, and youth projects plays an even greater role than legal sanctions or fines.

Modern language policy must therefore balance between protection and openness. Excessive legal restrictions may provoke resistance, while a purely declarative approach without enforcement weakens state authority. The optimal model combines firm legal

guarantees with flexible social instruments such as educational reforms, teacher training, and public campaigns promoting linguistic tolerance [3, p. 13].

Language should not be treated only as a legal category, as it is a living social phenomenon that unites people, reflects culture, and builds trust between the citizen and the state. The functioning of Ukrainian as the state language is, above all, a matter of national security, civic responsibility, and cultural dignity.

Ukraine's language policy represents a combination of legal, political, and cultural instruments aimed at protecting and promoting the Ukrainian language as the foundation of statehood. The current legal framework provides strong support for linguistic development, yet its implementation depends on active cooperation between government and society. It is necessary to continue developing educational and media initiatives that motivate citizens to use Ukrainian naturally and proudly. In this way, the state language will not only remain a legal norm but become an integral part of everyday life and a key factor in the country's sustainable democratic development.

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