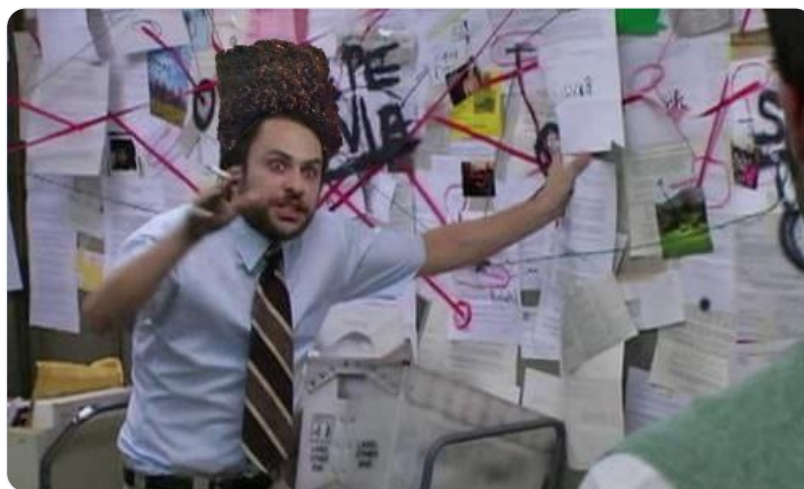




Jeanosis 🇺🇦 + @jeanosis_ef

Mar 15 · 49 tweets · [jeanosis_ef/status/1636080375087734789](https://twitter.com/jeanosis_ef/status/1636080375087734789)

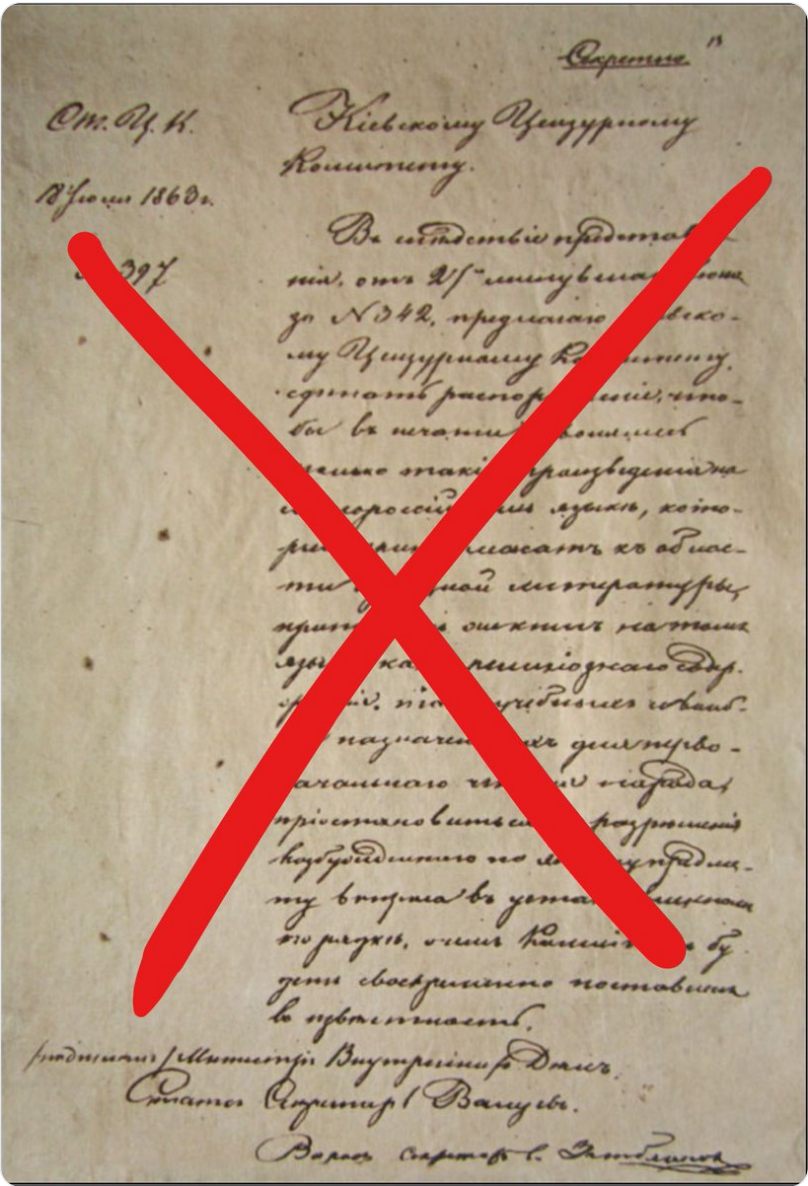
Okay, fellas, there is a lot of nonsense takes about language in Ukraine flying around in the foreign infospace. “Oppressed” russian speakers? Everybody speaks Ukrainian? Sometimes it’s both, yet neither at the same time? How is this possible? Let’s discuss. 1/43



First things first, a disclaimer: I’m not a linguist with a shiny degree, just a guy living his whole life in Dnipro, a highly russified city, failed to switch to Ukrainian in 2014, succeeded after full scale invasion. So it’s just my personal perspective & experience. 2/43

So let’s start with the most important part. Language you speak \neq your beliefs/political alignment. Our Baltic friends would disagree, since there those who still speak russian refuse to integrate into society & dream of USSR reunion. Here it’s more complicated. So why? 3/43

Unlike Baltics, we were denied identity & heavily russified for centuries. It started with russian empire with things like Valuev Circular, aimed at suppressing our language to make us "little russians" so everyone, ourselves included, would believe it. 4/43

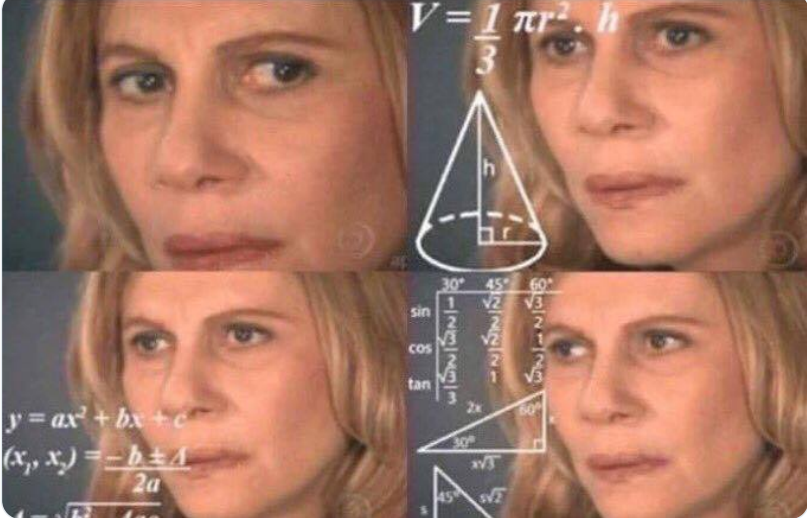


But russification went stronger in some areas than others. Why? Because of 2 things: proximity to russia & proximity to our seas. The closer the territory to you, the easier it is to enforce your rules. But why seas? Why, for example, Odesa being far away from russia is 5/43



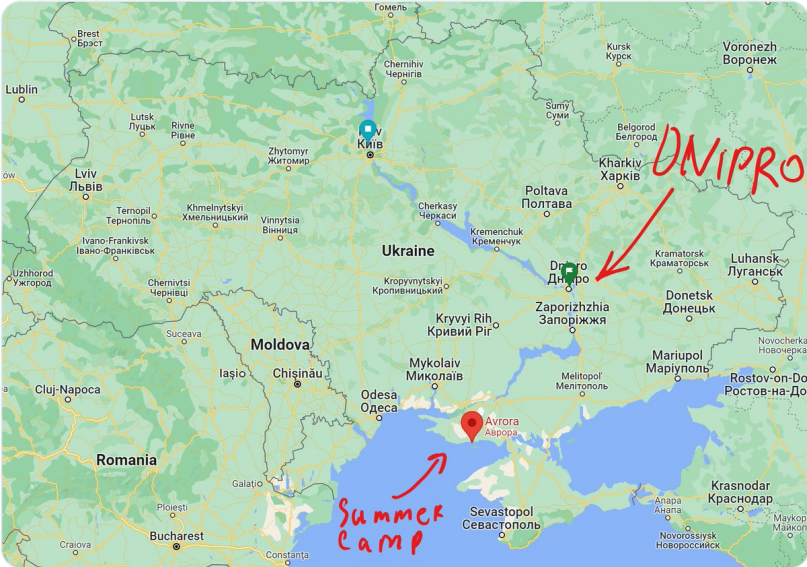
so overwhelmingly russian speaking? The answer is simple. russians love Odesa & Crimea so much because these are good places to have a vacation/live in, with a good climate & ability to go to the beach instead of sitting in your brown swamp in Svinogor'e. 6/43

So everything Ukrainian and in case of Crimea everything Qirimlilar being erased & replaced with russian, we had the situation where, while official language is Ukrainian, half the country was speaking russian as a main language & not speaking at the same time. 7/43



As a result a few unexpected phenomena occurred. First one and more well known is that russian speaking Ukrainians understood Ukrainian to the fullest & easily pronounced Ukraine-specific words, while russians couldn't understand it at all. Why? 8/43

When I was young, parent sent me to Avrora summer camp, Black sea A Bunch of russian kids were there too. The instant notice was they were mocking Ukrainian language, like "do you know how khohols call the lighter? Spalakhuika [burn + penis curse] haha" (it's a made up word) 9/43



I was a russian speaker, so I was safe from that, but not from the laughing at Ukrainians in general. "How do you understand those movies in the theater? Can't get a simple word of that gibberish" - they said. And then, like a lightning from the sky, it hit me: 10/43



This is the result of stigmatization of Ukrainian, my native, yet not main at the time, language as a "kolkhoz" (sort of Soviet farm) or "selo" (a village in Ukrainian) one. And that was hammered in our heads for generations. This curse haunted us up until Feb 24. 11/43

The answer to how it came to be, again, lies in history & russification practices. You've probably heard that "Ukraine is the breadbasket of Europe". It goes further as we feed ~400m people across the world, including a lot of developing nations. 12/43

During russian empire days we were "кріпаки" (kripaks?), peasants without property, basic rights & a freedom to leave. That's where stereotype came from. But it got worse, as literature in Ukrainian was oppressed as part of russification practices and 13/43

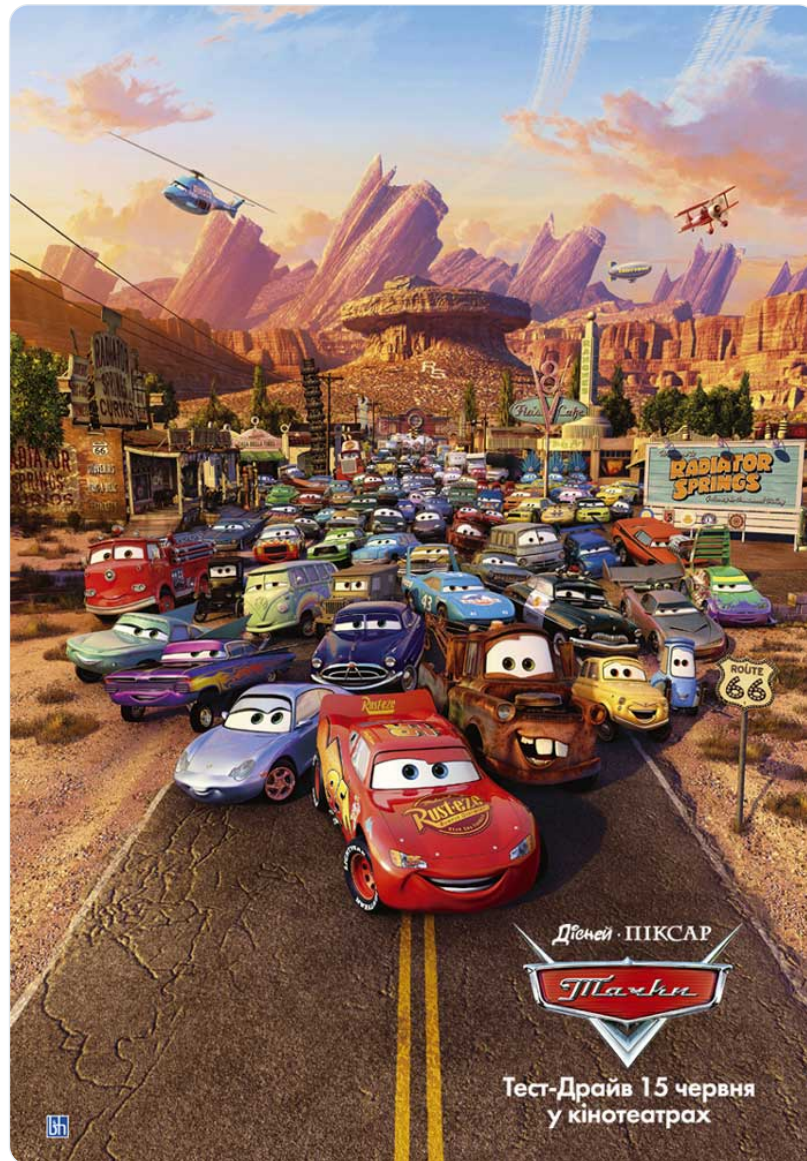


lack of modern technology led to russian spreading through major hubs (aka cities), while being preserved in villages since there was no TV/internet to influence everyone equally. So this stigma is still present in russia & their infospace and was 14/43

still present here up till Feb 24, although the Revolution Of Dignity reduced it a lot. And, as you could put 2 + 2, it slowed down natural reversing of russification significantly. So the battle for our identity was raging for a long time. 15/43



For example, it might sound stupid now, but we didn't have a movie localization in Ukrainian when half a country spoke it. It was movie Cars and titanic efforts of our localization team to make it happen. And it was a hardship everywhere with anything Ukrainian. 16/43



So what our diaspora & our migrants that left the country especially before Feb. 24 and before Maidan mostly missed were drastic societal changes brewing under the radar, as the stigma weakened and now fallen. Ukrainian was rising from ashes, like Phoenix. 17/43

What we discovered about ourselves & those around us after Feb 24 was the fact that not only we could understand & write in Ukrainian, but we could also speak it, and with some practice, speak it natively, in our own way. 18/43

Ukrainian in Lviv is different from Ukrainian in Kyiv and they both are different from Ukrainian in Dnipro, but all these, not just a first one, are native & natural. Kinda like Californian, Texan & a Florida man would speak differently, yet it all would be a native English 19/43

For example, during the early days of the invasion, we used words like “паліяниця” (palyanitsya?) to check whether you are a russian infiltrator or not. Every single Ukrainian could say it, while 99% of russians failed. Our curse became our weapon. 20/43



"But, Sir, you said that there is a third case, where it's Ukrainian & russian at the same time, yet neither!" And here comes the fun part: there were a few consequences of russification. And one of which is the boogiemans of language teachers, Surzhyk. 21/43

Ah yes, the Alchemy problem was solved long ago it turns out. People in our villages were able to combine something that can't be combined. So what is going on? Surzhyk is a combination of Ukrainian, russian & some completely new words without upholding any language norms. 22/43



It's a phenomenon not unique to Ukraine, but accidentally one of our secret weapons that helped us preserve our language. Typically, as it originated in villages, it has a stigma of it's own. It was called «селянська мова» (a redneck language essentially) 23/43

russians view it as a “redneck language of redneck language” (Ukrainian). We viewed it as “language of uneducated villagers”. So what changed? Turned out it’s a very unique stylistic tool to use in literature/music. And it’s a 100% Ukrainian thing, russians don’t have it. 24/43

I can share of a few prominent examples. Remember the last thread (Zelensky, Astafieva, Hugh Hefner, music videos)? Well Astafieva collabed with one such example: Kurgan & Agregat. It’s a music band of 3 dudes from the village Twins (село Близнюки) near Kharkiv. 25/43



Their native tongue is a Slobozhanshchyna Surzhik (a local dialect/version of it so to say, similar to the one in my region). Zheka is in the Kraken unit of our Defense Forces now, while Amil & Ramil (twins from the Twins, yes) are fundraising for our military. 26/43

They write unique music, which would be hard for foreigners to understand, but very easy to connect for Ukrainians that weren’t born in cities/have understanding of regular village shenanigans. They can speak Ukrainian, but Surzhyk is their thing. 27/43



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/CpWP8Wmlvdc>

So let's analyze the part of the Paranoia lyrics, ru words will be capitalized, UA ones in lower case, mixed ones "aaAA" style and something out of the box will be marked with "?":

двері я провІРИВ
НО на відео не зняв
[?]завтикав[?]

28/43



So it's a fragment about how the dude was closing the door into his apartment, but didn't shoot it on video and now is paranoid that he forgot to close it and will now get robbed. As you can see, it's the mix of two with a slang. But what you can't see 29/43

is that it's also has language norms broken, hence the bogeyman of our language teachers, yet it's 100% understandable for us & completely alien to russians. It's a good example how all of a sudden we were able to switch from russian with ease. Without that you can't. 30/43



Also, a fun fact: there is a movie coming out soon with twins starring as main heroes: “Luxembourg, Luxembourg”, which was presented at Venice Festival. So, who is interested, you will be able to watch Surzhyk & our guys in action soon. 31/43



Another example is LATEXFAUNA For a foreigner it should be easier as it is not as heavy in terms of local-only humor

They also had a collab with Kurgan & Agregat.

So how is it relevant to the language situation in my country, you might ask? Directly! 32/43



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/3bovowDWN7g>

In Ukraine, pre-2014, it was ~50/50 russian & Ukrainian, with Surzhyk being a taboo bogeyman of our teachers. Kyiv was ~50/50, Dnipro was entirely russian speaking. After Revolution of Dignity & russia waging war on us, it shifted. Some of people I knew switched to UA. 33/43

Yet, while people in Dnipro & other russified areas like Kharkiv from pro-Ukraine majority switched to overwhelming pro-Ukraine majority, Ukrainian weren't heard on the streets, only 2-3 times I heard it in the period of 2014-2021. 34/43

The explanation is simple, switching language is hard in itself, even if, as we discovered recently, you & everyone knows it. But switching with a stigma of inferior language still flying around, that could cost you a job (yes, you speak UA – good luck) 35/43

or you can be laughed at is completely another level of difficulty. I failed in 2014, as me being an introvert & being afraid of such scenarios overcame the common sense. Yet, Feb 24 was the straw that broke the camel's back. We saw the truth. 36/43



And that truth was that not only we were stronger & infinitely more noble than russians, not only our language was beautiful, but that it's our land, our culture and our lives. So why the hell should we be ashamed to speak our language in our own home? 37/43

So the derussification has started. No law or a common sense appeal could make it, it was & is natural. While laws are helpful and should be in place, the final decision is always on the people and it is being made, as we speak, in the favor of Ukrainian. 38/43

So now I hear Ukrainian in the streets of Dnipro more and more and, while it's not a quick change, it will take years & sometimes decades, we'll go to ~50/50 like once Kyiv was and eventually completely Ukrainian speaking city, I truly believe it. 39/43



So what to make of it? Turns out it's not that simple russian/Ukrainian speakers split with a clear border. Surzhyk, different dialects resurfacing & flying around, use of russian diminishing rapidly. The truth is that we are in the historic moment of a nation rebuilding

40/43



itself from the ashes into the what it should've always been if not the russian influence, colonization & genocides. Ukrainian is alive as never before, improving, adapting, changing. So if you want to learn & use it, you might influence it too as it's continues to evolve. 41/43



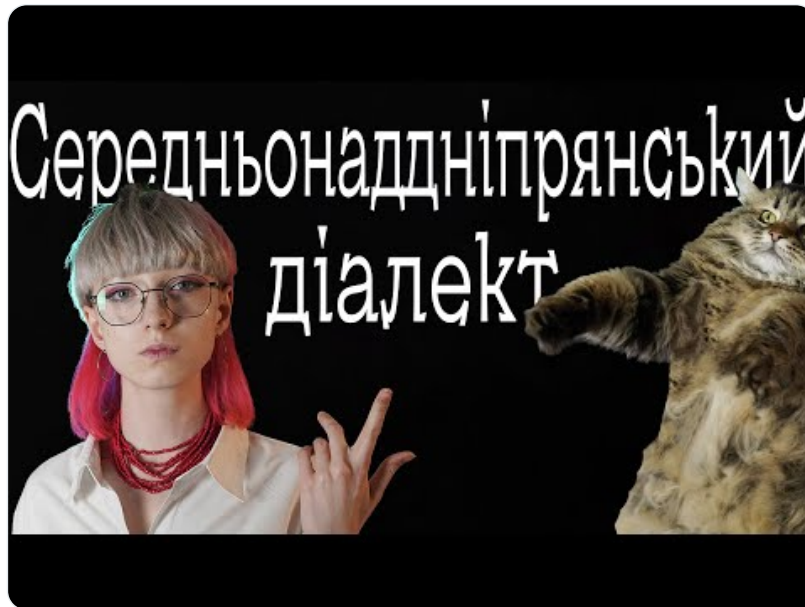
Hopefully, we'll reach Baltics prosperity sooner, with russian being spoken only by a minority of russian loving marginals & then we'll be able to go further with said small marginal group either changing their minds or fading into the void. 42/43

It's no utopian dream, as we once thought so too, as, again, the discovery that we know Ukrainian, just didn't make a switch before was the key to our language's revival. 43/43

Additional content:

This young YouTuber describes some of Ukrainian dialects. If you know/want to know Ukrainian, it should be interesting

44/43



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/2pJRBcqv6E>

IMDB page of Luxembourg, Luxembourg. There will be a lot of Surzhyk for those who interested how it sounds in casual talk.

45/43



Luxembourg, Luxembourg (2022) - IMDb

Luxembourg, Luxembourg: Directed by Antonio Lukich. With Amil Nasirov, Ramil Nasirov, Lyudmyla Sachenko, Nataliya Gnityi. Kolya and Vasily go in search of their father after they come to know that he...

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt19783714/>

Latest clip of Kurgan (a solo project of Zheka who is serving in Kraken unit of our Defense Forces).

46/43



<https://www.youtube.com/embed/xJk8hojKtyk>

"Зембонджу" album of Kurgan & Agregat, arguably their best hits.

47/43



Зембонджу

Listen to Зембонджу on Spotify. Курган & Agregat · Album · 2021 · 7 songs.

<https://open.spotify.com/album/1SZZCrhzJuPZohgeYbuLIA?si=fUKI0iqKTty75296eWZ...>

Latest LATEXFAUNA music video. It's in pure Ukrainian, no Surzhyk, just fyi.

48/43



https://www.youtube.com/embed/2y56wHAW_FQ

My personal favorite from LATEXFAUNA: Ajahuaska. It's about cowboys, indigenous people, UFOs and, surprise, Ajahuaska 🤪

49/43



Ajahuaska

LATEXFAUNA · Song · 2018

<https://open.spotify.com/track/3JbCVWbqd6jtAh2ZU4ZZZU?si=PSzcywWzRPm17IRAI...>

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