

## **THE RISE OF UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN FRANCE: EDUCATIONAL POLICIES, INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES**

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The article examines the recent and rapid expansion of Ukrainian language education in France, a process driven by changes in educational policy, increasing societal interest, and strengthened cultural and diplomatic ties between Ukraine and France. Following the large-scale arrival of Ukrainian citizens in 2022, French educational institutions have taken significant steps to integrate Ukrainian at various levels of schooling. Key developments include the introduction of Ukrainian as a second foreign language (LV2) in collèges and lycées, the provision of targeted support for newly arrived Ukrainian-speaking pupils through CASNAV structures, and the longstanding academic presence of Ukrainian studies at INALCO. The study analyses official policy documents, institutional initiatives, media reports, and digital learning resources to provide a comprehensive overview of the current landscape. Particular attention is given to the role of cultural diplomacy, public communication, and innovative teaching tools – such as self-study manuals and digital platforms – that help compensate for the limited availability of traditional teaching materials. The article demonstrates that Ukrainian language instruction in France has moved beyond emergency measures and is gradually becoming a stable component of the national multilingual education framework. Despite persistent challenges, including the shortage of qualified teachers and the need for standardised curricula, the ongoing institutional support and growing public interest indicate strong potential for the long-term development of Ukrainian language education within the French system.

The findings highlight the importance of continued research into pedagogical practices, learner needs, and cross-institutional cooperation in order to support this emerging field.

**Key words:** *institutional support, France, Ukrainian language education, language policy, multilingualis.*

**Statement of the problem.** The growing international interest in the Ukrainian language since 2022 has significantly reshaped linguistic, educational, and cultural landscapes across Europe. France has emerged as one of the most dynamic contexts in which Ukrainian language education has expanded, supported by both institutional decisions and an increased societal demand. The arrival of Ukrainian-speaking learners, the rise of francophone interest in Ukrainian culture, and the broader geopolitical context have created favourable conditions for integrating Ukrainian into the French educational system at multiple levels – from primary and secondary schools to higher education and adult learning.

While the study of Ukrainian in France has historical roots, the current expansion represents a qualitatively new stage: Ukrainian is no longer viewed solely as a heritage language but increasingly as a language of academic interest, intercultural communication, and European solidarity. Recent French educational policies, including the introduction of Ukrainian as a second foreign language (LV2) in selected collèges and lycées, as well as the inclusion of Ukrainian within CASNAV structures for newly arrived pupils, demonstrate a clear institutional commitment. At the same time, the growth of university programmes, digital learning platforms, and new teaching materials indicates a diversification of resources and instructional approaches.

Despite this progress, comprehensive scholarly analyses of Ukrainian language education in France remain scarce. Existing reports tend to focus on isolated initiatives rather than on the broader constellation of actors, policies, and pedagogical implications. Consequently, there is a need for a systematic examination of how Ukrainian is being taught, by whom, under what institutional frameworks, and with what challenges and opportunities.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** Recent publications and publicly available institutional documents indicate a rapid and unprecedented expansion of Ukrainian language education in France. The majority of relevant sources appear not in traditional academic journals but in official policy documents, ministerial communications, institutional webpages, and reputable media outlets. This reflects the

novelty and dynamic character of the topic, which has only recently begun to attract scholarly and public attention.

A significant portion of the available literature consists of official documents issued by French educational authorities. The *Arrêté du 5-5-2025* (MENE2504621A), published in the *Bulletin officiel*, constitutes the most authoritative source outlining the integration of Ukrainian as a foreign language (LV2) within French collèges and lycées [7]. The document establishes the legal framework and curricular foundations for teaching Ukrainian within the national education system. Complementing this regulatory base, CASNAV de l'Académie de Versailles provides detailed guidelines for supporting newly arrived Ukrainian-speaking pupils, including language assessment procedures, pedagogical recommendations, and support mechanisms for allophone learners [8].

Institutional publications from INALCO also play an essential role in documenting the status of Ukrainian language teaching in French higher education. INALCO's webpage on Ukrainian language programmes presents information on long-standing academic infrastructure, course offerings, and cultural activities that sustain Ukrainian studies in France [9; 10]. These sources demonstrate that while Ukrainian studies existed prior to 2022, the post-2022 surge significantly amplified their visibility and societal relevance.

Media publications offer another crucial source of information. Reports from *The Village Україна* [1] and *LB.ua* [3] provide valuable insight into the political decisions and public reactions surrounding the introduction of Ukrainian as a second foreign language (LV2) in French collèges and lycées. They underscore the symbolic significance of the policy, framing it as a gesture of solidarity and cultural recognition. Meanwhile, the report by *LIGA.net* documents the publication of a Ukrainian self-study manual in France and highlights innovations in methodology aimed at francophone learners [2]. These media accounts, although journalistic rather than academic, offer rich qualitative perspectives on the sociocultural motivations driving the recent developments.

French media also contribute to the international perspective on Ukrainian language learning. The *Radio France* podcast episode, "L'apprentissage de la langue ukrainienne en essor dans le monde", situates the French context within broader global trends by documenting the rising interest in Ukrainian among non-native speakers worldwide [8]. Its analysis adds a multilayered dimension to understanding the cultural and geopolitical factors motivating French learners.

Additional relevant resources include materials produced by Ukrainian governmental institutions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine presents the *Speak Ukrainian* platform as a resource designed to support foreign learners and promote accessible digital tools for studying Ukrainian [4]. Similarly, communications from the Embassy of Ukraine in France describe the launch of pilot Ukrainian language programmes in French collèges and lycées, highlighting the role of bilateral cooperation and cultural diplomacy in shaping educational initiatives [5].

Finally, pedagogical resources such as *Labdeslangues.fr* offer practical analyses of available tools, applications, and learning materials for students of Ukrainian [11]. These sources, though not academic in a strict sense, reflect real teaching practices adopted across Europe and increasingly relevant for French institutions.

Taken together, these publications and documents form a multifaceted body of evidence demonstrating how Ukrainian language education in France has evolved from a niche academic field into a dynamic and rapidly expanding component of the national educational landscape. While systematic academic research on the topic remains limited, the available resources provide a strong empirical foundation for analysing current policies, institutional actors, and sociocultural forces shaping the rise of Ukrainian language instruction in the French context.

**The relevance of the paper.** Given the increasing geopolitical significance of Ukraine in Europe and the rising demand for Ukrainian language instruction among learners of different age groups, there is an urgent need to systematise available information and conceptualise it within the broader fields of language policy, multilingual education, and cultural diplomacy. Thus, the paper is relevant both academically and practically, addressing a clear research gap and informing future educational and policy-oriented decisions.

**The purpose of the paper** is to analyse the rise of Ukrainian language education in France by examining recent educational policies, the key institutional actors involved, and the contemporary challenges shaping this process. More specifically, the study aims to:

- synthesise current developments in the teaching of Ukrainian across different levels of the French educational system (primary, secondary, and higher education);
- evaluate the institutional mechanisms that support the integration of Ukrainian, including national legislation [7], CASNAV structures [8], and university programmes [9; 10];

- explore the role of media discourse and public communications in shaping societal perceptions of Ukrainian language learning [1–3; 12];
- outline the opportunities and limitations that influence the future of Ukrainian language instruction in France.

**Research methods:** The methodological framework of this article is based on a combination of qualitative research approaches suitable for analysing policy documents, institutional practices, and public discourse. First, the study employs *content analysis* of official French educational regulations, including the *Arrêté du 5-5-2025* [7] and CASNAV guidelines for allophone learners [8], which allows for identifying the legal and structural foundations underpinning the introduction of Ukrainian into the national curriculum. Complementing this, a *comparative approach* is applied to examine differences and similarities across educational levels, with particular attention to higher education structures such as INALCO's Ukrainian language programmes [9; 10].

In addition, the paper relies on *discourse analysis* of media publications and public communications that document societal attitudes and political motivations surrounding the expansion of Ukrainian language instruction in France. This includes materials from *The Village Україна* [1], *LB.ua* [6], *LIGA.net* [3], *Radio France* [12], and official announcements from the Embassy of Ukraine in France [5]. The analysis of these sources provides insight into how Ukrainian language learning is framed in public discourse and how this framing influences educational decisions.

Moreover, the study incorporates *descriptive analysis* of digital learning platforms and pedagogical tools, such as the Ukrainian MFA's *Speak Ukrainian* platform [4] and the resources reviewed by *Labdeslangues.fr* [11]. Evaluating these materials enables an assessment of the practical resources currently available to learners and teachers in the French context. Finally, the findings from all categories of sources are synthesised into an integrated perspective, allowing the article to present a comprehensive and multifaceted understanding of the contemporary rise of Ukrainian language education in France.

**Presentation of the main material of the study.** From a sociolinguistic perspective, Ukrainian has undergone a transformation in its symbolic and communicative value in Europe. Prior to 2022, it was largely perceived as a heritage or minority language within diasporic communities; however, the current context has repositioned Ukrainian as a language of international relevance, cultural diplomacy,

and intercultural communication. The increasing presence of Ukrainian in public discourse – reinforced by media narratives and institutional visibility in France [1–3; 12] – has contributed to raising its prestige and creating new educational demands.

Moreover, European educational frameworks emphasise the importance of integrating newly arrived pupils through language support mechanisms. In France, these principles are embodied in CASNAV structures, which play a key role in facilitating linguistic inclusion for Ukrainian children [8]. This aligns with broader EU-level objectives that promote multilingual competence, linguistic integration, and respect for cultural diversity. Thus, the teaching of Ukrainian in France is not only a response to demographic realities but also an expression of European values concerning language rights and social cohesion.

A major milestone in this process is the adoption of the *Arrêté du 5-5-2025* by the French Ministry of Education, which officially includes Ukrainian as an option for second foreign language (LV2) instruction in collèges and lycées [7]. This legal act sets out curricular guidelines, learning objectives, and assessment principles, thereby placing Ukrainian on an equal footing with other recognised foreign languages. The policy not only affirms the long-term commitment of the French state to linguistic diversity but also establishes concrete pathways for schools wishing to offer Ukrainian within their programmes.

In parallel, the CASNAV network – which provides support for newly arrived allophone pupils – has developed specific measures to accommodate Ukrainian learners and facilitate their integration into the French educational system. Updated guidance published by CASNAV de l'Académie de Versailles outlines procedures for linguistic assessment, placement, and pedagogical support, ensuring that Ukrainian-speaking children receive appropriate instruction during their transition to French schooling [8]. This targeted support strengthens the institutional foundation for the inclusion of Ukrainian and reflects France's responsiveness to the needs of displaced learners.

Media reporting further demonstrates that policy decisions are embedded within broader societal dynamics. Outlets such as *The Village Україна* [1] and *LB.ua* [3] extensively cover the political and cultural significance of introducing Ukrainian into the French curriculum, framing it as a gesture of solidarity and as part of a larger European commitment to supporting Ukraine. Such reporting has amplified public awareness and contributed to the favourable reception of Ukrainian in French schools.

Together, these policy initiatives – supported simultaneously by governmental, institutional, and diplomatic efforts – form a coherent framework that underpins the current expansion of Ukrainian language instruction in France. They create a stable foundation on which schools and universities can build sustainable programmes, ensuring that Ukrainian is not a symbolic or temporary addition but an integrated component of the educational landscape.

Among academic institutions, INALCO (Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales) occupies a central position. As the primary higher education institution offering structured and long-term programmes in Ukrainian studies, INALCO provides undergraduate and postgraduate courses, research activities, and cultural events that sustain academic interest in Ukraine and its language [9; 10]. Its long-standing expertise and institutional capacity serve as a model for other universities that may consider integrating Ukrainian into their curricula. INALCO also contributes to teacher preparation by training specialists who may later work in schools or community language programmes.

At the level of secondary education, French collèges and lycées have become increasingly involved in offering Ukrainian as a second foreign language (LV2). This development has been documented by media reports highlighting both the administrative processes and the societal significance of the initiative [1; 3]. Schools participating in the pilot programmes announced through the Embassy of Ukraine in France are among the first to explore models for delivering Ukrainian language instruction in formal classroom settings [9]. Their role is particularly important, as the LV2 framework positions Ukrainian alongside established languages such as German, Spanish, or Italian, giving it institutional legitimacy and long-term visibility.

The CASNAV system (Centres Académiques pour la Scolarisation des Nouveaux Arrivants et des enfants du Voyage) has become a key actor since 2022. CASNAV units are responsible for assessing the linguistic proficiency of newly arrived Ukrainian children, guiding their placement in appropriate classes, and providing targeted support to ease their transition into the French educational system. Updated CASNAV guidelines explicitly refer to Ukrainian-speaking learners, offering pedagogical tools and linguistic support mechanisms tailored to their needs [8]. This involvement ensures that Ukrainian is recognised not only as an optional academic subject but also as a language of immediate educational relevance.

In addition, digital platforms supported by Ukrainian governmental institutions, such as *Speak Ukrainian* [4], serve as valuable supplementary resources. These platforms complement formal educational structures by offering learners accessible self-study tools. Meanwhile, French-language learning hubs such as *Labdeslangues.fr* help integrate Ukrainian into broader multilingual learning environments by reviewing resources and providing practical guidance for learners [11].

One of the most notable developments is the appearance of new Ukrainian self-study materials tailored specifically for francophone learners. Media reports document the publication of a Ukrainian language self-study manual in France, created using an original methodology adapted to the needs of beginners who have no prior contact with Slavic languages [2]. Such resources play an important role in addressing the shortage of Ukrainian language textbooks available in French and help broaden access to the language beyond formal classroom settings.

In the French context, digital language-learning hubs such as *Labdeslangues.fr* provide additional support by recommending applications, websites, and pedagogical tools that can be used to study Ukrainian [11]. The inclusion of Ukrainian within these platforms signals growing recognition of the language and promotes its integration into mainstream multilingual learning environments.

Although teaching resources remain in development, the combination of traditional manuals, digital tools, and supplementary online materials already provides a functional foundation for educators. As the number of trained teachers increases and institutional demand stabilises, it is likely that more structured curricula and specialised teaching materials will emerge, enabling a more consistent and pedagogically coherent approach to Ukrainian language instruction in France.

**Conclusions.** The rise of Ukrainian language education in France represents a significant and multifaceted development driven by recent policy decisions, institutional initiatives, and broader sociocultural dynamics. The introduction of Ukrainian as a second foreign language in French collèges and lycées [7], the targeted support for newly arrived Ukrainian-speaking pupils through CASNAV structures [8], and the long-standing academic presence of Ukrainian studies at institutions such as INALCO [9; 10] collectively illustrate the emergence of a stable framework for the language's integration into the French educational system.

Media reporting and public communications further demonstrate a growing societal interest in Ukrainian language learning [1–3; 12], while diplomatic engagement and cultural cooperation strengthen the institutional base for the development of language programmes [5]. At the same time, the availability of digital learning tools and resources – including *Speak Ukrainian* [4] and platforms such as *Labdeslangues.fr* [11] – provides practical support for both teachers and learners, complementing the evolving educational infrastructure.

Although the field is still developing and challenges remain, particularly regarding teacher training and the need for standardised curricula, the current momentum suggests that Ukrainian language instruction in France is transitioning from an emergency-driven initiative to a sustainable and institutionally recognised component of multilingual education. The trends identified in this study indicate strong potential for continued growth, deeper institutional cooperation, and the gradual emergence of a coherent pedagogical tradition supporting Ukrainian language education within the French context.

**Perspectives for further research.** Future research should focus on developing a more comprehensive pedagogical framework for Ukrainian language instruction in France, including empirical studies on learner needs, teacher training, and classroom practices. Comparative analyses of Ukrainian language programmes across different French regions and educational levels could provide insight into factors influencing successful implementation. Additionally, further investigation into the role of digital resources, intercultural communication, and educational diplomacy would contribute to understanding the broader impact of Ukrainian language education within France’s multilingual landscape. Such studies would not only strengthen the academic foundation of this emerging field but also support the creation of evidence-based policies and teaching methodologies.

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#### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this manuscript. Furthermore, the authors have fully adhered to ethical norms, including avoiding plagiarism, data falsification, and duplicate publication.

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The work does not use artificial intelligence resources.

## **ВИКЛАДАННЯ УКРАЇНСЬКОЇ МОВИ У ФРАНЦІЇ: ОСВІТНЯ ПОЛІТИКА, ІНСТИТУЦІЙНА ДІЯЛЬНІСТЬ ТА СУЧАСНІ ВИКЛИКИ**

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Статтю присвячено аналізу розвитку та розширення викладання української мови у Франції впродовж останніх років, зокрема інтенсифікації цих процесів після 2022 року. У центрі уваги – поєднання освітніх рішень, суспільного інтересу та активізації культурної дипломатії, що створило умови для інституціоналізації української мови в системі французької освіти. Розглянуто ключові кроки Міністерства освіти Франції, а саме запровадження української як другої іноземної мови (LV2) у колежах і ліцеях, а також механізми підтримки новоприбулих українськомовних учнів

у межах структур CASNAV. Окрему увагу приділено ролі INALCO як провідного центру академічного вивчення української мови та культури, що забезпечує сталість і безперервність фахової підготовки. У роботі проаналізовано нормативні документи, інституційні повідомлення, матеріали ЗМІ та цифрові освітні ресурси, які формують сучасний ландшафт вивчення української у Франції. Показано, що зростання зацікавлення українською мовою підтримується як державними рішеннями, так і суспільним дискурсом, що підкреслює її культурне й геополітичне значення. Оцінено доступні навчальні матеріали, зокрема самовчителі та онлайн-платформи, які компенсують нестачу традиційних підручників і сприяють гнучкому формату навчання. Зроблено висновок, що викладання української мови у Франції переходить від тимчасових кризових заходів до сталого структурованого розвитку в межах багатомовної освітньої політики. Попри виклики, пов'язані з підготовкою вчителів і стандартизацією навчальних програм, наявні тенденції вказують на значний потенціал подальшого зміцнення позицій української мови у французькому освітньому просторі.

**Ключові слова:** багатомовність, викладання української мови, інституційна підтримка, мовна політика, Франція.

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