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Specific Features of the Process of Decolonisation of Modern Textbooks on the History of Ukraine

Abstract. The relevance of the subject matter was conditioned by the need to develop a programme for the process of decolonisation of modern Ukrainian history textbooks, the construction of a historical narrative and its consolidation in the public consciousness, and the great importance of practical application and implementation of decolonisation under modern requirements of the time. The purpose of this study was to conduct a detailed analysis of the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine, separate the available information in textbooks from unreliable facts, and develop recommendations for improvement. The basis of the methodological approach in this study was a qualitative combination of methods of system analysis, theoretical research, and to a certain extent, empirical research, which allowed highlighting and generalising the direct data of observations, and the combination of these methods created the dynamics of scientific knowledge as an integral organised system. The main results obtained in the framework of this study should be considered the definition of the main features of the decolonisation process, their implementation and further improvement. The results also include the formulation of the main goals and objectives of decolonisation. The results of this study and the conclusions formulated on their basis are of significant importance primarily for students, students and teachers who will repeatedly apply and operate information from textbooks, for historians, subjects whose professional activity is related to the reliability of facts about the historical past and present, which is essential from the standpoint of spreading false information and subjectivism of authors in history textbooks, and for all citizens of Ukraine

Keywords: derussification, decolonisation, identity, renewal, decommunisation, historical narrative

Introduction

The decolonisation of modern textbooks on Ukraine is essential from the standpoint of today's events in Ukrainian society and the world. Over the years of independence, school historical education in Ukraine has changed significantly not only in terms of the content itself, but also in terms of the goals and objectives of teaching and its organisation. However, it is difficult to answer unequivocally whether historical education in Ukraine is of impeccable quality. After all, according to N. Hupan [1], textbooks are very much influenced by the subjectivity of the authors who worked on them or influenced by various figures.

The process of decolonisation concerned different countries and entered its crucial phase during and immediately after the Second World War, the Polish researcher notes. This beginning of the development of decolonisation can be seen in the example of Indonesia when it declared its independence, or Africa, which in 1960 was almost completely colonised [2].

Ya.G. Hrytsak [3] highlighted that an important factor in the creation of a modern Ukrainian nation is the construction of a national historical narrative and its consolidation in the public consciousness.

Most of all, the history textbook acts as an important factor in the development of historical memory among young people. After all, the very ideas about oneself, the people, heroes and enemies are formed from adolescence. To some extent, it is formed through family stories, and historical fiction, but mainly through the school history course. Since the history of Ukraine was taught in Soviet times, although this subject was considered minor, L. Chuprii [4] emphasised that modern textbooks are important to support young people who will study them to understand the authenticity of certain events.

The general didactics of history, its role and place in the establishment of Ukrainian statehood, the need, and importance of creating a new one, and separation from the attributed and unreliable facts, currently occupy almost the leading ranks in discussions [5]. After all, based on the historical facts of the past and various authors who wrote textbooks, the topic of decolonisation of textbooks cannot but play a leading role.

Its relevance is determined by the availability of demand and development of the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine, and their

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updating. The need for decolonisation plays a major and leading role, because it has a significant impact on society.

The relevance of the investigation of the process of decolonisation of modern Ukrainian history textbooks is extremely important, because this academic discipline carries out very significant tasks, one of which is the education of future citizens of the country based on certain examples of the past, understanding the modern realities of the development of Ukrainian society, events taking place against the background of the war, and comparing them with past events. All this happens precisely through knowledge and awareness of previous experience, which will be most learned through textbooks on the history of Ukraine.

Modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine are more advanced and updated compared to older versions, but despite this, they still require more detailed analysis and decolonisation. Society is constantly developing, and with its development, it is necessary to develop new methods of presenting material in schools or universities, to make sure that the current events in the world are not ignored. History continues to be written every day, and it takes a lot of time and professionalism to write it and put it in textbooks.

The main problem of earlier studies on the subject matter was not deep enough immersion in this topic, other time frames, and events around it, which also had a certain impact. After all, as noted by O. Tkachenko [6], in the current conditions of war, the demand for decolonisation of modern textbooks is more relevant than ever before and, accordingly, requires a deeper investigation. *The purpose of this study* is to consider the system of historical education and analyse the decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine.

Materials and Methods

The following methods were used in the course of the study: theoretical (analysis; synthesis; concretisation; generalisation; induction and deduction; method of analogies; modelling, comparison, and generalisation). The study provides for the search for effective ways to understand the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine at present. The research was conducted based on a pre-compiled theoretical framework, which acts as a qualitative foundation for conducting all further studies.

The theoretical basis consists of the investigation of some mainly modern Ukrainian researchers, such as O. Udod [7], O. Tkachenko [6], aimed at studying many problematic issues related to the concept of the decolonisation process, updating textbooks, their content and the reliability of the information provided in them.

The study included three main stages. In the first stage, the theoretical basis was prepared, which was later used as the main foundation for further research. A systematic analysis of methods for implementing updates to the application of the decolonisation process and its current course was performed. The main issues that can be efficiently solved by studying and familiarising topics, discussions, and research related to the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine are described. The theoretical basis given at the first stage provides a general idea of the process of decolonisation

and its implementation, significance and impact that it has on society. General patterns of development of the decolonisation process are described and recommendations that can contribute to better and faster development of the decolonisation process are considered.

In the second stage, an analytical investigation of the prospects for the decolonisation process was carried out to analyse and understand it. In addition, this stage included an analytical comparison of the results obtained with the results and conclusions of other researchers, among which the concepts of some scientists from Europe who were engaged in the practical development of issues related to decolonisation in different age periods and its progress were considered. This helped clarify the results obtained in the course of this study and expand the prospects for research on a given topic. It is at the second stage that the given topic was most deeply explored. Comparisons and examples were given for deeper understanding.

At the final stage, based on the results obtained, the conclusions were formulated, which are the final reflection of these results and determine in general the main trends in the features of the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine, its relevance under the influence of current events and the impact on future events. The study results and the conclusions formulated on their basis can be used in the future as an effective scientific basis for conducting qualitative analysis and comparison with previous scientific research in this area.

Results

The conducted study of the prospects for the decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine gave the following results. Numerous issues related to decolonisation, the history of Ukraine, and the updating of modern history textbooks requires careful investigation and deepening.

First of all, the process of decolonisation is necessary for liberation from colonial oppression and the acquisition of statehood. This process is time-consuming and is accompanied by various events. And in modern conditions of the war, it is an integral process of the struggle against imperialism and all the alien things are being imposed [7].

In various discussions around the modern textbook on the history of Ukraine, in addition to political and ideological aspects, didactic aspects of the phenomenon of the textbook are also sought. School education today is built on a linear principle, that is, it is forced to cover the most important issues like ethnogenesis of Ukrainians and others at a very primitive level. This is because the structure of historical education does not allow doing it any other way. The introduction of European models of building a school textbook requires state support for the course of the history of Ukraine as a priority, and the establishment of constant interaction between foreign and Ukrainian researchers, which would allow the latter to keep up with world science [8].

The Ukrainian history textbook still contains Russian colonial narratives. Therefore, the process of decolonisation, which will take a long period, is a priority in the present time. Textbooks, even modern ones, require detailed analysis in order to continue restoring the correct

interpretation of historical events. Although representatives of the Ministry of Education claim that the programme is compiled correctly, some publishers still make significant mistakes both in the presentation itself and in the accuracy of the facts. The process of decolonisation is gaining significant strength, because the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory is adopting a bill that would consolidate the decolonisation of both textbooks on the history of Ukraine and the decolonisation of Ukraine at the legislative level [9].

Many prominent historians argue that it is necessary to rid the history of Ukraine of the "imperial heritage" that was used for Russian imperial influence on Ukraine. The greatest influence on the writing of textbooks on the history of Ukraine was exerted by the Soviet Union and the neighbouring aggressor country – Russia, which are now quite skilfully using this for their own selfish purposes [10].

Since Ukraine was declared independent, the issue of completely updating the content of school textbooks on the history of Ukraine has become acute. It is clear that this was caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and put an end to all previous ideologies of that time. Researchers were faced with opportunities to apply more free and variable approaches to the development of a historical concept. It can be argued that the process of decolonisation has been activated since the collapse of the Soviet Union and continues to this day. Since Ukraine declared independence, for the first time, the truth about the Holodomor, Russification, environmental disasters, and people's rights has been covered. But despite this, there were still many myths of Soviet history in the textbooks of the 1990s. Textbooks of the first decade of independence contained statements about the friendship of the peoples of the nearest neighbouring countries and the alleged importance of these ties, which led to the continuance of the decolonisation process [11].

A sign of the present is a post-industrial society, characterised by great development and the emergence of everything new. Accordingly, many textbooks practice not only in printed form, but also in electronic form. An electronic textbook should contain the same components as a printed one, but due to its implementation, students can quickly find the material they need. The appearance of electronic textbooks on the history of Ukraine contributes to the acceleration of the process of textbook decolonisation [11].

The problem of depicting "our" and "foreign" in textbooks is much more complicated than it seems at first glance. It is educational resources that have a significant impact on the establishment of national identity, so they should be devoid of negative stereotypes and propaganda, which are often covered in the submitted materials. The following criteria have been created, which are used to assess the compliance of the textbook manuscript with the principles of tolerance:

- accuracy and correctness of illustrations, dates, maps, and graphic materials;
- reflection of the contribution of other peoples to the national and world heritage;
- highlighting value standards;
- balanced, comprehensive representation and interpretation of political and international disputes and conflicts;

- the textbook focuses on international cooperation;
- broadcasting to students the ideals of freedom, dignity, and the right to choose [12].

As mentioned earlier, it was the war and today's events that launched the process of decolonisation as productively as possible. This is because Russia is trying to justify its actions using fictional historical facts. Despite the third decade of independence, the ghost of the old imperial regime still hangs over Ukraine, so for the history of Ukraine, decolonisation is primarily a liberation from Russian myths, post-colonial consciousness, and foreign identity. Decolonisation in Ukraine is currently the most actively engaged in:

- ousting the Russian language from the Ukrainian cultural space;
- return of their historical names and true history to Ukrainian cities. Accordingly, they are also changed in textbooks;
- restoration and honouring of those places of memory that revive the Ukrainian national consciousness, and not the colonial one;
- establishment of the national pantheon of heroes who fought for the Ukrainian nation [13].

All these components of decolonisation entail significant changes, which should also change in updated history textbooks, but this process is not instantaneous and also requires a lot of work.

History textbooks should be reprinted at least once every 5 years, the Ministry of Ukraine says. The latest changes that have been made to modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine are:

- shortening the description of the modern period of history;
- changing textbook covers;
- removing individual words and phrases or replacing them with others. For example, the section on the Holodomor was changed. "Artificial Holodomor" was removed from the text, leaving only "Holodomor";
- adding more drawings and interesting tasks.

Drastic changes were made to the textbooks of the 5th grade, namely, simplification and presentation of the material to make it easier for children to learn and arouse more interest. But different historians react to many such strong changes in their own way. Because updating the content of history textbooks requires constant verification of every word or date. It is necessary to constantly monitor that propaganda is not carried out and imposed values are not promoted. Some historians have reacted very negatively to the updated content of textbooks. After all, comparing the edits with previous texts in textbooks, it turned out that the description of some important events in Ukrainian history disappeared [14].

Until now, some researchers and teachers believe that the doctrinal teaching of history, that is, the validity of the correctness of the position of one or the other side, is truly correct. The textbook analysis methodology established in Europe today considers whether such an analysis and/or balanced text contains an image of nationality, or, on the contrary, provokes a confrontation between the carriers of historical memory of different ethnic groups

regarding the events of the past. Considering this circumstance, then even at the stage of preparing the textbook, it is possible to eliminate contradictions and sources of potential conflict discussions. For example, German history textbooks have taken a significant step towards giving Jews a proper place in historical documents.

One of the most common shortcomings of history textbooks today is the use of stereotypes, when generalisations about the entire nation or country are made based on a trait that is inherent in only one person or group. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to destroy stereotypes and change them. Another important thing in changing or creating textbooks on the history of Ukraine is that the text contains the subjective opinion of the authors who worked on it. It is very important that historical events are covered as they really were, without the layers and influence of the Russian Empire. Because the biggest problem today in the decolonisation of modern history textbooks is getting rid of the Russian approach to studying the past [15].

When creating and decolonising textbooks on the history of Ukraine, it is important to comply with the requirements of state standards, make sure that the content corresponds to the curriculum on history regarding the structure, volume, and sequence of material, the correlation of sections and paragraphs with units of study time, do not overload the textbook with information, do not write too complex academic language, defend national ideas, and at the same time present accurate and necessary material, do not deprive students of the opportunity to have their own opinion and express it. The textbook should consistently form a tolerant attitude to other opinions, to national identity, and arouse interest in studying its own history. Moreover, the presentation of the material in textbooks should be such that it does not impose its own vision on students, but leads to an understanding of the ideas of national identity, historical past, and culture. Authors and editors should present materials in textbooks in such a way that students, on the one hand, develop a national identity, and on the other, acquire an understanding of cultural diversity. And of course, the textbook should demonstrate a commitment to freedom, democracy, and human rights [15].

For further effective decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine, it is necessary to check historical events and facts that are printed in textbooks as often as possible, removing false information from them. Countries that use this information for their own purposes should attract experienced historians, promote cooperation with foreign researchers, and promote the development of the historical and cultural foundation of Ukraine.

Discussion

In recent years, such a type of work as a “round table” has been actively used, with the help of which as many specialists and experts as possible are involved in considering certain problematic issues. Often the topics of this “round table” are what a textbook on the history of Ukraine should be. Based on the results of monitoring, a list of questions was compiled that should be answered by specialists who

understand history. The questions relate to who should write textbooks, whether the anthropologist of the textbook is important, the objectivism and subjectivism of the authors who worked on textbooks, and how to improve the mechanisms of expertise that consider modern aspects of educational development. Historians still have a lot of work to do to make colonial narratives deconstructed. The process of decolonisation should always function, because each new generation should rewrite historical narratives [16].

Now there are concerns that the term “decolonisation” would disappear. After all, for many people, this term is perceived not as something serious, but as a buzzword. And decolonisation is too important to be neglected because it protects the values of one’s own country and nation [17, 18]. According to recent observations, the attitude of the population of Ukraine to the process of decolonisation is almost significantly supported. However, since the beginning of 2022, after a full-scale invasion of the territory of Ukraine by Russia, the interest and desire of Ukrainian citizens to get rid of the colonial past has increased. And right now, more than ever before, the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine is something that does not go unnoticed. Ukrainian historians and researchers are actively working to make the process of decolonisation even more important.

Since a significant part of Ukrainian lands was under Russian control, the aggressor country did like all empires – imposed ideas about the territories it captured – declared that it was its organic territory. And to do this, it put forward the claim that all the captured territories were allegedly founded by Russians, while it did not stop imposing its consciousness by implementing psychological mechanisms of influence on society and destroying Ukrainian identity for centuries. As an example of imperialist influence, the author considers such historical events as the 19th century, namely, the historical period when the concept of the great Russian people, which included Russians, Ukrainians, and Belarusians, was prepared for Ukrainians. At that time, the Ukrainian economy itself was made a raw material appendage to the Russian economy. But these successes of Russian influence, unlike those when the Soviet Union still existed, failed. Any nation that declares independence must carry out its decolonisation to free itself from the yoke of others. Especially those states that were under the influence of the Soviet Union [19].

The development of educational textbooks on the history of Ukraine was mainly carried out centrally and the textbook was considered a regulatory document, which led to the unification of the educational process. But if certain ideological layers are discarded, Ukrainian history textbooks had a well-thought-out methodological apparatus that contributed to the effective consolidation of historical facts. This centralised approach to writing textbooks also had another positive aspect, namely that creative teams worked on the textbooks, that is, proper testing took place. The biggest disadvantage of this approach was the ideological content, which is still trying to be eliminated from modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine by decolonisation [20].

Some researchers, such as K. Kaplyuk [20], I. Shtogrin [21], Ya. Hrytsak [22], who approach the process of decolonisation of textbooks on the history of Ukraine, argued that the problem is not so much in the subjectivism of the authors or lack of professionalism, as in the circumstances under which the textbook is created. Admittedly, any author is a product of a certain culture, which is often broadcasted in writing textbooks, and therefore, it is important to help “from the outside” to see these contexts broadcasted by the author. In addition, editors working on creating textbooks should know not only about the texts themselves, but also about the contexts [20, 22].

The head of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory said that after decolonisation, the census of history, it is very important that there are political decisions that would consolidate new dates of the founding of cities, change historical facts, and reduce the material based on historical research. And the process of decolonisation itself, which is currently quite active, should take on even greater proportions to reduce the impact on the writing of Ukrainian history by Russia as much as possible and permanently get rid of imperialism [21]. But it remains debatable whether the new material would be presented efficiently, and most importantly, with the reduction of material in history textbooks, it is very important not to take away important historical events from the curriculum that everyone should know and remember.

V. Vyatrovych [9] noted that the first stage of decolonisation is decommunisation. Because society needs to separate itself from the communist influence and totalitarianism under which the Russian imperial past is often found. Unlike other countries that seceded after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Ukraine is very far behind in the process of decommunisation. In Ukraine, back in the early 1990s, decommunisation was implemented only on the part of social initiatives, that is, no support was observed from the ruling regimes. The historian noted that the most active process of decommunisation and decolonisation took place only from the beginning of 2014 when the old regime of power was overthrown.

Historians, relying on the experience of post-communist countries, or for example, relying on the experience of Germany, where the withdrawal of the totalitarian regime was quite difficult, argued that in Ukraine the process of decolonisation is not an easy phenomenon. Researchers suggested that it would be just as difficult to decolonise modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine, because it requires both a lot of time and considerable effort and observation. It is decolonisation that should be discussed in the so-called “decommunisation laws”. Communism has always been present in Ukraine and remains to this day, but already under the guise of Russian imperial hegemony.

I. Losev [14] argued that as of today’s military events, it is very harmful and reckless to separate decommunisation and decolonisation from derussification. After all, it is the Russian empire that exerts the greatest influence on Ukrainian culture and nation for its destruction.

The creators of the “decommunisation” laws, namely, the director of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory V. Vyatrovych, realised the true significance and

essence of decommunisation processes in Ukraine as a de facto decolonisation. It is now that there is a very active separation from the imperial heritage, Ukrainians are establishing themselves as an independent and sovereign nation more and more every day [19].

English researcher R. F. Betts [23] argued that decolonisation for some British colonies was gradual and peaceful for emigrants, but violent for others, where local uprisings were fuelled by nationalism. Most countries also faced opposition from the new superpowers, the United States, and the Soviet Union. In other words, the process of decolonisation is a global phenomenon that affects most countries.

I. Shtogrin [21] considering the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine stated that textbooks should be rewritten constantly. He and his colleagues prepared a new concept of historical education, which involves writing a completely new textbook on the history of Ukraine and which would differ in many ways from the previous ones. As society is constantly changing, said I. Shtogrin [21], so, accordingly, history textbooks should change, which should keep up with the development of society and meet the latest changes. As a rule, textbooks should be written primarily by people knowledgeable in the field of history and those who have had experience working with children at school. Similarly, I. Shtogrin [21] insisted that it is necessary to update all textbooks, not only on the history of Ukraine, to create a quality education in Ukrainian schools. A history textbook is not an encyclopaedia, because it plays a very important role. The history textbook has the function of teaching a personal identification, that is, children who study history should clearly understand who they are and know their history as it was, and not study fictional or false historical events. I. Shtogrin [21] was correct, because the process of decolonisation is so large-scale that it cannot affect only one historical branch. However, this could be argued, because the historical industry in the current historical conditions is a priority and requires changes in the first place.

The main goal at present is precisely historical education and updating of history textbooks, which should be handled exclusively by specialists and experts. The process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine is quite complex and each researcher has their views on it. But following the results of recent years, it can be noted that some progress in its development is noticeable.

Conclusions

During the first decades since Ukraine became independent, the process of decolonisation has become very relevant, and the content of history textbooks has undergone significant changes and adjustments. Most of the phenomena, facts and events in textbooks began to be considered from the standpoint of the national state and Ukrainian values to reduce and get rid of imperial influence and unreliable facts as much as possible. But despite such attempts to improve textbooks on the history of Ukraine, the process of decolonisation has its advantages and disadvantages. Quite often, historians encounter the content of textbooks with the subjectivism of the

authors, unreliability of information represented by the dates of historical events, and publishers that allow not very well-tested texts to be published.

The material available in textbooks was tested for reliability and recommendations were made for improving the implementation of the decolonisation process and updating it. Specific examples of the decolonisation process in modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine and an assessment of the quality of the presented material are given.

In the process of studying the specific features of the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine, it is proved that decolonisation has been gaining the greatest development since the independence

of Ukraine and continues to this day and its expansion will continue. This process brings changes and fights against imperialism and everything imposed by other countries, defends true values and at the same time is very complex. Decolonisation of modern textbooks requires constant verification of the content and authors who write history textbooks and is carried out every 5 years.

In general, the process of decolonisation of modern textbooks on the history of Ukraine requires further careful investigation, of the current pace of development of society and the events that are currently taking place. Because the war that Russia started has led to new stages of decolonisation, which are being implemented more and more every day.

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Особливості процесу деколонізації сучасних підручників з історії України

Анотація. Актуальність заявленої тематики наукового дослідження зумовлювалась необхідністю розробки програми з процесу деколонізації сучасних підручників з історії України, конструюванням історичного наративу та його закріплення у суспільній свідомості, а також великим значенням практичного застосування та впровадження деколонізації під сучасні вимоги часу. Мета цієї статті полягала у здійсненні детального аналізу процесу деколонізації сучасних підручників з історії України, відокремленні наявної інформації у підручниках від недостовірних фактів, та розробленні рекомендацій щодо покращення. Основу методологічного підходу в даній науково-дослідній роботі склало якісне поєднання методів системного аналізу, теоретичні методи дослідження і певною мірою емпіричні методи дослідження, що дозволили виділити безпосередні дані спостережень, узагальнити, а поєднання даних методів створило динаміку наукового знання як цілісної організованої системи. Головними результатами, які були отримані в рамках цього наукового дослідження, слід вважати визначення основних особливостей процесу деколонізації, їх впровадження та реалізація з метою подальшого вдосконалення. Також до головних результатів відноситься й формулювання основних цілей та завдань деколонізації. Результати цього наукового дослідження, а також сформульовані на їхній основі висновки, мають суттєву значимість в першу чергу для учнів, студентів та вчителів, які неодноразово будуть звертатись та оперувати інформацією із підручників, для істориків, суб'єктів, чия професійна діяльність пов'язана з достовірністю фактів про історичне минуле та сьогодення, що має суттєве значення з точки зору поширення неправдивої інформації та суб'єктивізму авторів у підручниках з історії, для усіх громадян України

Ключові слова: дерусифікація, деколонізація, ідентичність, оновлення, декомунізація, історичний наратив