

UKRAINE'S MULTIETHNICITY IN SERHII PLOKHYI'S THE GATES OF EUROPE

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БАГАТОНАЦІОНАЛЬНІСТЬ УКРАЇНИ У «THE GATES OF EUROPE» СЕРГІЯ ПЛОХІЯ

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This article unveils the multiethnic identity of Ukraine as depicted in Serhii Plokhii's The Gates of Europe. Corpus analysis was applied to unravel linguistic patterns, recurring themes, and the portrayal of diverse ethnic groups within the text. Ukraine is a country at the crossroads of Eastern Europe, and its history is influenced by the Vikings, the Cossacks, its interactions with different countries, such as Poland or Soviet Union the Soviet Union and Poland, etc. Looking at the long-term effects on the country's multiethnic society, the study explores the difficulties that Ukraine faced during World Wars and the Soviet upheaval in the 20th century. Giving a clear picture of Ukraine's multiethnic identity, the corpus analysis data draw attention to the intricate relationships between historical factors, cultural influences, and geopolitical dynamics. Ukraine's identity as a tapestry woven from different cultures, languages, and historical legacies is represented in the article, emphasizing the country's resilience, adaptability, and ability to navigate through diverse influences. This study advances our knowledge of Ukraine's identity and lays the groundwork for further research on the dynamic and changing nature of the country's multiethnic makeup. The ongoing research into Ukraine's historical and cultural heritage in light of the country's current struggles is promoted. It can provide new perspectives on the factors that have shaped Ukraine's identity and continue to shape its future.

Keywords: *Ukraine, multiethnicity, cultural heritage, linguistic patterns, corpus analysis.*

Стаття розкриває багатоетнічну ідентичність України, зображену в книзі Сергія Плохія The Gates of Europe. Використано метод корпусного аналізу для розкриття мовних моделей, повторюваних тем і зображення різних етнічних груп у тексті. Україна – країна на перехресті Східної Європи, і на її історію вплинули вікінги, козацтво, взаємодія з різними країнами, такими як Польща чи Радянський Союз. Розглядаючи довгострокові наслідки для багатоетнічного суспільства країни, досліджуються труднощі, з якими Україна зіткнулася

під час світових воєн та радянських потрясінь у ХХ столітті. Даючи чітке уявлення про багатоетнічну ідентичність України, корпусні дані унаочнюють складні взаємозв'язки, що існують між історичними факторами, культурними впливами та геополітичною динамікою. У статті представлена ідентичність України як мозаїка, виткана з різних культур, мов та історичної спадщини, що підкреслює стійкість, адаптивність та здатність країни орієнтуватися в умовах різноманітних впливів. Розвідка поглиблює наші знання про ідентичність України та закладає основу для подальших студій динамічного та мінливого характеру багатоетнічного складу країни. Дослідження сприятиме подальшому вивченню історичної та культурної спадщини України у світлі нинішньої боротьби, яку переживає країна. Це може відкрити нові важливі перспективи щодо факторів, які сформували ідентичність України і продовжують формувати її майбутнє.

Ключові слова: *Україна, багатонаціональність, культурна спадщина, мовні закономірності, корпусний аналіз.*

Introduction. In the heart of Eastern Europe lies Ukraine, a nation whose cultural and historical fabric is a rich tapestry shaped by centuries of diverse influences, migrations, and political dynamics. Ukraine is situated at the intersection of multiple cultures, religions, and traditions, making it a diverse and dynamic country. From the roots of the Kyivan Rus state in the 9th century, where Byzantine and Norse cultures left lasting imprints, to the present day, Ukraine has been home to a lot of ethnic groups, including Ukrainians, Russians, Poles, Jews, and Crimean Tatars, fostering a landscape of cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity.

The 20th century posed formidable challenges for Ukraine, marked by the tumultuous events of the World Wars and Soviet upheaval, which left enduring scars on the nation's multiethnic society. The echoes of war resonated through the intricate interplay of history and culture, shaping Ukraine's identity in profound ways. Despite the adversities, contemporary Ukraine stands resilient, embracing its diverse heritage amidst the aftermath of conflict. A multitude of languages is spoken in the country (Sergeyeva and Chesnokova, 2008; Chesnokova and Yakuba, in press), and various religious groups coexist, serving as a testament to the strength of Ukraine's cultural fabric. This resilient spirit positions Ukraine as a subject not only for scholars of Ukrainian history and culture, but also for those intrigued by European history and the complex dynamics of multiethnic societies navigating through the aftermath of war. Often referred to as "the crossroads of Europe," Ukraine's enduring history of diverse ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups cohabiting within its borders becomes even more crucial for understanding the nation's complex identity in the context of the challenges brought forth by periods of conflict.

The ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, which began in February 2014 is also challenging Ukraine, testing the resilience of the nation. Beyond the immediate humanitarian

concerns, the war poses hurdles in preserving cultural heritage, managing internal displacement, and navigating the complexities of post-war reconstruction. This contemporary struggle adds layers to Ukraine's historical narrative, shaping its identity amid the challenges of war and emphasizing the urgency for international attention and support.

As we delve into the complex web of Ukraine's multiethnic identity, Serhii Plokhyi's *The Gates of Europe* provides a scholarly exploration of the historical pathways that shape this culturally diverse nation.. The exploration of Ukraine's multiethnic identity, as depicted in Plokhyi, presents a compelling avenue for investigation. Plokhyi, a distinguished historian, and storyteller, adeptly examines the intricate interconnections that bind the diverse communities residing within the territorial bounds of Ukraine. Through his meticulous research and narrative prowess, Plokhyi provides readers with a lens to reveal what binds these communities together, offering insights into how the nation's multiethnic composition has shaped by the currents of time.

The Gates of Europe serves as a key to unlock the deeper layers of Ukraine's past, allowing us to understand the complexities of its multiethnic society. From the medieval foundations laid by the Kyivan Rus to the challenges posed by 20th-century conflicts, Plokhyi navigates the diverse landscapes of Ukrainian history with mastery. It is within these pages that we encounter the struggles and triumphs of Ukrainians, Russians, Poles, Jews, and Crimean Tatars, each contributing a distinctive hue to the overall mosaic of Ukrainian culture.

Theoretical background. It has been observed that Ukraine is the country that attracts the highest level of international attention in comparison to other nations. It remains of interest to historians, linguists, politicians, and cultural scholars (Seegel, 2011; Vorbrugg & Bluwstein, 2022; Prager, 2022; Sukhorolskyi, 2022). The continued interest in Ukraine goes beyond scholarly research and encompasses humanitarian issues as well, such as its part in refugee crises, human rights violations, and cultural preservation. This diverse interest in Ukraine is a reflection of the nation's ongoing influence on the international scene and the applicability of its nuanced history in a wide range of academic and professional domains.

The historian and writer Timothy Snyder has written and spoken a great deal about the historical significance of multiethnic Ukraine (Snyder, 2003). Snyder has emphasized in his writings the intricate interactions between various ethnic and cultural groups.

Snyder's attention to Ukraine has been especially noteworthy as that of a historian with experience in the context of Eastern Europe. Many facets of Ukraine's history, politics, and place in the larger European context have been clarified by his research. Snyder's interest in Ukraine is apparent from his numerous publications, which cover a great deal of the turbulent 20th-century Ukrainian experience, including the devastating famine-genocide known as the Holodomor (Snyder, 2010). However, his writings are not solely about Ukraine.

Earlier research (Khymych, 2022) has mostly examined the media portrayal of Ukraine, primarily that by *The Economist* magazine. However, considering the increasing interest in Ukraine, it would seem useful to look at how it has been represented historically and to perform a corpus analysis of the portrayal of Ukraine in Serhii Plokhy's book *The Gates of Europe*.

The most recent research on Serhii Plokhy's work (Perkins, 2016; Prager, 2022; Ivanyshyn, 2023) has surely added a great deal of value to our comprehension of his findings. It is important to note that the book has not yet been examined through the prism of corpus analysis. By examining the textual and linguistic components of the work, corpus analysis can offer a distinctive viewpoint by illuminating patterns, themes, and language usage that might not have been thoroughly examined in earlier studies. This method can provide a more thorough and data-driven understanding of the book's ideas and its position in the larger academic conversation. Consequently, a corpus analysis of Serhii Plokhy's writings may provide a novel and perceptive viewpoint on this work of scholarship.

Corpus linguistics is defined by Barth and Schnell (2022, p. 1) as an essentially particular approach to language study that involves methodically analyzing language use in various contexts. The highly variable use of language is the main concern of corpus linguists. When speaking or signing to different social classes, language users are usually aware of the various uses of a language. However, variations where the choice and form of expressions may be delicately influenced by specific structural contexts in which they can occur are receiving a great deal of attention in corpus linguistics.

According to Flowerdew and Mahlberg (2009, p. 108), corpus research in particular has been holding onto evidence that suggests the distinctions between grammatical and lexical categories are not as clear-cut as conventional approaches would have us believe. Lexical patterns are important and are often overlooked in corpus linguistics, which studies recurrent word groups. Possibly the greatest benefit of corpus linguistics is that it allows researchers to focus on types of texts and word patterns while simultaneously containing enormous amounts of authentic evidence.

According to Stefanowitsch (2020, pp. 353–354), a technique called keyword analysis is frequently used to look into connections between words (or other linguistic units) and texts (or text clusters).

While inductive keyword analysis is the most common method, if we have suspicions about the over- or underrepresentation of particular lexical items in a text or collection of texts, we can still apply a deductive approach. In any case, there are two nominal variables: text (which have the values text and reference corpus) and keyword (which have the values specific words).

Thus, we aim at a corpus-driven examination of Ukraine's multiethnic identity as portrayed in Serhii Plokhy's *The Gates of Europe*. Leveraging the tools and methodologies of corpus linguistics, this study aims to systematically analyze linguistic patterns, recurring themes, and the

representation of various ethnic groups within the text. The research seeks to uncover linguistic nuances that may offer insights into the author's perspective on Ukraine's multiethnic composition and how different ethnicities are depicted.

The study intends to identify key terms, recurring phrases, and linguistic trends that may reveal underlying themes related to Ukraine's historical and cultural diversity by employing corpus analysis techniques. The goal is to go beyond a traditional literary analysis and use quantitative and qualitative approaches to explore language patterns that contribute to the construction of the narrative. This research methodology allows for a systematic examination of the text, providing a more nuanced understanding of how the author navigates and portrays the multiethnic aspects of Ukraine's identity.

In essence, this research seeks to bridge the gap between qualitative interpretation and quantitative insights through corpus analysis, offering a comprehensive exploration of Ukraine's multiethnic identity as depicted in Ploky's work.

Our analysis will focus exclusively on Serhii Ploky's *The Gates of Europe*; and it is the only corpus used in this study. This book was selected as the research material because of its renown in the field of Ukrainian history scholarship and its thorough examination of Ukraine's political, cultural, and historical evolution. We will thus have the chance to investigate the complex portrayal and varied aspects of Ukrainian multiethnicity.

Research Methods. This analysis was conducted using the AntConc software. An extensively used tool for text corpus analysis, AntConc enables the discovery of linguistic patterns, word frequencies, concordances, and important terminology in the text. Its numerous functionalities and easy-to-use interface make it a practical choice for researchers seeking to conduct detailed linguistic analysis.

1.1. Keywords

As the initial step, the frequency of each keyword was determined. In corpus linguistics, keywords are used to distinguish between various corpora or sections within a corpus. Barth and Schnell (2022, p. 73), hold that the procedure for determining keywords entails examining word frequencies in both (sub)corpora and using log-likelihood analyses to determine whether words are relatively more common in one of the two (sub)corpora. These keywords are usually lexical objects (verbs, adjectives, and nouns) that aid in our comprehension of the corpus's subjects, that is why grammatical words are filtered in this analysis.

Frequency is the most basic measure of a corpus. Frequency tables display the number of terms that are frequently found under one or more conditions. They are easy to understand and highly informative. One can construct hypotheses and extrapolate theories based on the observation that there is more of something in one condition and less of it in another.

As previously indicated, the bulk of linguistic corpora are composed of word forms; additional levels of linguistic representation cannot be expressed without annotations. Aside from lexical, Stefanowitsch claims that the text is the only level that can be directly represented in written corpora (2020, p. 353).

Stefanowitsch (*ibid*, pp. 353–354) employs a method known as keyword analysis to examine relationships between words (or any other language structure element) and texts (as well as text clusters). When specific lexical elements were being used to study cultural values and practices, the term "keyword analysis" was first used to describe such circumstances. When words occur with extraordinary frequency in a text or collection of texts, they are used in a related but slightly broader sense; "unordinary" refers to high frequency when compared to a reference corpus. These words are typical of a particular text, linguistic variety, or demography.

Thus, keyword identification is similar to differential collocate identification, but it investigates the relationship between a word and a given text or collection of texts in contrast to the language as a whole (represented by the reference corpus, which is usually sizable and well-balanced).

For further investigation, the following keyword frequency list was made (see Table 1.1 below):

Rank	Word	Frequency
1	Ukrainian	1154
2	Ukraine	998
3	Russian	590
4	New	438
5	Polish	425
6	Soviet	412
7	Kyiv	386
8	Cossack	313
9	Rus	272
10	Political	272
11	War	259
12	Empire	246
13	Union	243
14	Russia	239

Table 1.1 Keywords in *The Gates of Europe*

A deeper comprehension of the book's themes and the story surrounding Ukraine's multiethnic identity, history, and geopolitical significance can be gained by examining the

contextual use of these high-frequency words and their co-occurrence in particular textual sections. To understand these words' overall significance in the corpus, it seems imperative to look at how they relate.

1.2. Collocations

Collocation is "the occurrence of two or more words within a short space of each other in a text" by Sinclair (1991, p. 170). The KWIC (Key Word in Context) index is used in this study to find the most common collocations with keywords and the relationship between nodes and collocates. Through the use of concordances, corpora enable us to investigate word meaning. Research on a word's meanings can start with a study of its collocates or other words that the word under study is associated with. It is possible to analyse the word's range of meanings in an efficient and trustworthy manner by emphasizing the most common collocates and their hierarchical relationship.

The nodes *Ukrainian, Ukraine, Russian, New, Polish, Soviet, Kyiv, Cossack, Rus, Political, War, Empire, Union, and Russia* identified above have been selected for the following investigation.

The collocations associated with *Ukrainian (language, national movement, national communists, National Democratic Party, national project, national agenda, national anthem, national democrats, national identity, national liberation)* go beyond linguistic aspects, emphasizing the role of language in defining national identity and highlighting the historical struggles for independence. The lexeme *Russian (Russian Empire, Russian government, Russian-ruled Ukraine, and Russian nationalism)* in its contextual collocations, suggests historical and geopolitical complexities, shedding light on the enduring impact of Russian governance on Ukrainian culture and autonomy. Meanwhile, collocates tied to the lexeme *new*, such as *new Ukrainian state, new Ukrainian credo*, suggest a dynamic evolution in Ukraine's identity, indicating shifts in political structures and guiding principles. *Polish* unveils historical and geopolitical dimensions, portraying diverse relationships that contribute to Ukraine's multiethnic narrative. *Soviet* reveals insights into the political and security structures of the Soviet Union, underscoring its influence on Ukraine's multiethnic composition. *Kyiv*, with its collocates, paints a multifaceted portrait of the capital, encompassing geographical, historical, cultural, and administrative dimensions. The lexeme *Cossack*, through its associated collocations (*Cossack officers, Cossack state, Cossack hetman/Hetmanate, Cossack elite, Cossack register and Cossack Ukraine.*), showcases the intricate social and military hierarchy that shaped the destiny of territories within Ukraine. *Rus*, namely the collocations with *princes, lands, elites and Vikings*, illuminate the early political leadership, diverse territories, social classes, and cultural exchange facilitated by the Vikings during Kyivan Rus, leaving an indelible mark on Ukraine's diverse identity. In essence, this

corpus analysis not only highlights the interconnectedness of various elements shaping Ukraine's identity but also emphasizes the significance of linguistic and historical nuances found within specific collocations.

The corpus analysis of *The Gates of Europe* by Serhii Plokhyy reveals the complex interactions between historical forces, cultural influences, and geopolitical dynamics, providing a vivid picture of Ukraine's multiethnic identity. Viking-related collocations highlight the early Kyivan Rus period and highlight the variety of interactions and cross-cultural exchanges that marked Ukraine's early history. The analysis reveals that the Cossacks left behind an enduring legacy that underscores their crucial influence in establishing political autonomy, social hierarchies, and military structures in the region.

Collocations that depict interactions with Poland highlight a history characterized by both cooperation and conflict, highlighting the complexity of relationships that have added to the rich and varied story of Ukraine. Studying collocations associated with the Soviet Union reveals the significant influence of Soviet rule on Ukraine, forming its multiethnic population and leaving a long-lasting mark on its political and cultural environment.

Conclusions and Discussion. The corpus analysis reported above emphasizes how deeply ingrained historical events — from the early influences of the Vikings and Cossacks to the complexity of interactions with neighboring powers like Poland and the Soviet Union — have shaped Ukraine's multiethnic identity. This identity is not just a result of linguistic diversity. The identity of the country is revealed as a tapestry, with strands from diverse cultures, languages, and historical legacies interwoven.

In essence, the diverse ethnic makeup of Ukraine stands as a testament to its strength and versatility, with its identity shaped by various cultural influences. This analysis serves as a valuable tool in understanding the depth and complexity of Ukraine's identity, shedding light on the diverse elements that have contributed to the nation's rich cultural heritage. As Ukraine continues to forge its path in the contemporary geopolitical landscape, this exploration of its multiethnic history provides valuable insights into the factors that have shaped its identity and continue to influence its trajectory.

Looking ahead, further research could delve deeper into specific historical periods, such as the interactions between Ukraine and Poland or the nuanced impact of Soviet policies on the nation's identity. Additionally, exploring contemporary manifestations of Ukraine's multiethnicity in the context of its ongoing geopolitical challenges could provide valuable insights.

Subsequent studies could explore more deeply into particular historical eras, like the relations between Poland and Ukraine or the subtle effects of Soviet policies on the national identity. Furthermore, examining multiethnic manifestations of Ukraine today within the framework

of its ongoing geopolitical challenges may yield insightful information. This study provides a comprehensive view of the forces that have shaped the nation and continue to influence its trajectory, laying the groundwork for future research into the dynamic and evolving nature of Ukraine's identity.

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