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MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF UKRAINE AND UKRAINIANS: A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF AMERICAN AND BRITISH MEDIA SOURCES

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Abstract

This article presents a corpus-based analysis of media representations of Ukraine and Ukrainians in popular American and British media sources. The study aims to examine language usage, framing techniques, and the frequency of specific words and phrases to shed light on the construction and dissemination of narratives. Two media sub corpora, the British media sub corpus and the American media sub corpus, were compiled using the #Lancsbox interface and search tools like Google. The corpora consisted of 100 articles each, covering the period from late 2013 to April 2022.

The analysis revealed several key findings. First, these findings underscore the media's significant role in shaping public perception and understanding of Ukraine and Ukrainians. Secondly, they highlight the importance of accurate language usage, framing techniques, and cultural sensitivity in media representations. Third, the study's conclusions have practical implications for promoting more accurate and respectful media portrayals of Ukraine and Ukrainians.

Further research avenues include exploring a broader range of media sources, investigating the influence of geopolitical factors on media representations, and examining the impact of media discourse on public attitudes and perceptions.

Keywords: *media representations, Ukraine, Ukrainians, corpus-based analysis, framing techniques, language usage.*

1. Introduction.

Since the Revolution of Dignity unfolded in late 2013, Ukraine has been the worldwide focus of extensive media coverage. The reporting intensity peaked in 2014 when conflict erupted on Ukrainian soil. From 2014 until February 23, 2022, both the United Kingdom and the United States were actively engaged in journalistic endeavors surrounding Ukraine. However, a significant shift in media rhetoric occurred in 2022 as the looming threat of a full-scale Russian invasion became apparent. Understanding how Ukraine and Ukrainians are portrayed in the media is paramount due to media narratives' profound impact on shaping public opinion and influencing policy decisions. The British and American mass media play influential roles in shaping international discourse, with their coverage of Ukraine being particularly substantial in recent years.

The media is a critical tool for disseminating information, enabling communication, and spreading knowledge, all of which are crucial for society. Television, newspapers, magazines, and radio are vital sources of information and often act as accountability mechanisms, raising important issues that may otherwise remain unaddressed.

As described by Almond, Powell, Strom, and Dalton, mass media convey information, opinions, or feelings to a mass audience without personal interaction. As a form of information about events, news can possess characteristics of both propaganda and informative content, with varying degrees of emphasis on either aspect. This can be observed in both local and international media.

Modern societies heavily rely on mass media for reliable and up-to-date information. A renowned Canadian philosopher, Marshall McLuhan, aptly described media as an "extension of man" (McLuhan, 1964). American actor Billy Thornton further emphasized that media expands people's communication ability, bridging distances and providing access to messages and images that would otherwise be inaccessible. This reality is particularly relevant for contemporary Ukrainians who, due to the ongoing crisis, have been separated from their loved ones and rely on media to maintain a connection with their homeland, even from afar.

The language used in media texts significantly influences how individuals mentally process and categorize social information, shaping their thoughts and behaviors. This aspect has long intrigued linguists, including applied linguists, sociolinguists, discourse analysts, and psycholinguists. However, the fascination with studying media language goes beyond its impact on cognition. It serves as a valuable source of linguistic data, influences language use and attitudes, provides insights into linguistic phenomena, and offers a window into broader

social institutions and dynamics. By examining the language of the media, linguists gain a deeper understanding of the intricate relationship between language, culture, and society.

This article aims to contribute to the existing body of research on framing Ukraine and Ukrainians in US and British mass media by conducting a corpus-based analysis of articles from prominent newspapers. The study utilizes search tools like Google and the #Lancsbox program to compile and analyze the British and American media corpora. By examining the language and framing techniques used in media discourse surrounding Ukraine, this analysis sheds light on the construction and dissemination of narratives and their influence on public perception.

2. Literature Review.

Mass media plays a crucial role in shaping a democratic culture that extends beyond the political system and becomes ingrained in societal consciousness. Language assumes the most significant role in exerting such substantial influence, as it allows ideas to be expressed and conveyed to the public. Mass media works cohesively and deliberately to capture the interests of the readers or viewers, convincing them of their views, providing reassurance, or calling them to action. However, in the modern world, we are also confronted with the challenge of global propaganda, which makes it increasingly difficult to effectively counter false information. Afolabi (Afolabi, 2008) asserts that propaganda involves the deliberate manipulation of information to convey more than the intended message contained within it. This form of propaganda is transmitted through various mass media channels such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, books, and cinema. It involves carefully selecting and using images, norms, and traditions that can serve the interests of propagandists, presenting ideas, programs, products, processes, or institutions in the best or worst light, depending on their intentions. Propaganda aimed at significant changes often requires substantial time, resources, and patience, except during periods of revolutionary crisis when old convictions are destroyed and new ones have yet to form. In ordinary periods, propaganda for change, no matter how worthy it may be, is often described, in the words of German sociologist Max Weber, as "the slow boring of hard boards" (Dietz, 1994). When it comes to the inappropriate and unreliable presentation of information during wartime, such actions can be considered a crime, as journalism should maintain high objectivity in its assessments. Any manifestation of subjective interpretations of events is an attempt to portray the situation as a projection of one's worldview.

Stuart Hall's work emphasizes the power of media representations in constructing meaning and influencing public perceptions (Hall, 1996). He argues that media messages are not neutral or objective but are imbued with ideological biases and values that serve specific interests. According to Hall, the media plays a crucial role in encoding and decoding messages. Producers construct narratives, encoding them with dominant ideologies and meanings. However, decoding these messages by audiences is not a passive process. It involves negotiation and interpretation influenced by individuals' social, cultural, and ideological positions. James Paul Gee's in his work on language, discourse, and literacy in the context of media and popular culture agrees that language is not a neutral tool but a means through which power is exercised, and ideologies are perpetuated (Gee, 2019). However, he stresses the importance of the audience's educational level and cultural background. Though in our work we have not addressed the concepts of audience, it is always important to bear in mind the target the mass media is addressing. Hall also highlights the role of media in shaping collective identities, such as national, ethnic, or cultural identities, by promoting certain narratives, stereotypes, or symbols.

Norman Fairclough argues that language is not neutral but a site where power is exercised and negotiated (Fairclough, 1989, 1995, 2006). Media discourse, through its choice of words, grammar, rhetorical devices, and overall structure, plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and understanding of social issues. Fairclough's approach to critical discourse analysis focuses on how language is used to reproduce and challenge power relations. He highlights how media discourse can reinforce or challenge social inequalities, construct power relations, and influence the framing of issues in the media. Fairclough's work provides a framework for examining the language of media discourse and its impact on social relations. In our analysis, we have chosen the methods of critical discourse analysis (CDA) influenced by Fairclough's approach. This allows us to delve into the language of media discourse, uncover its underlying power dynamics and ideologies, and explore its impact on social relations and framing in the media. By employing CDA, we can critically examine the role of media language in shaping public opinion, influencing social attitudes, and contributing to the broader sociopolitical landscape. It provides us with a valuable tool for understanding how media discourse constructs and reproduces power relations, and the implications it has on social dynamics.

Teun A. van Dijk's contributions to sociolinguistics and discourse analysis have shed light on the role of media discourse in shaping social cognition, ideologies, and social hierarchies (van Dijk, 1994). His research explores how media representations, through language, construct social knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. Van Dijk argues that media discourse is crucial in shaping how individuals perceive and understand social groups, events, and issues. The language used in media texts significantly influences how individuals mentally process and categorize social information, thereby shaping their thoughts and behaviors. By examining media language critically, researchers can gain insights into the mechanisms through which power operates, and social structures are reinforced or challenged. Van Dijk's contributions have significantly advanced our understanding of the intricate relationship between language, media, and power, highlighting the importance of critically analyzing media discourse to promote more inclusive and equitable communication.

Ruth Wodak's media discourse analysis focuses on the construction of ideological narratives through language choices, framing techniques, and persuasive rhetoric (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). Her work highlights the ways in which media discourse shapes public perceptions and disseminates specific ideological positions. By examining specific examples and patterns within our corpus, we can understand the subtle yet powerful ways in which media discourse influences public opinion and contributes to societal dynamics.

John Thompson's (Thompson, 2000) research explores the intricate relationship between mass media, communication, language, and social change. His work emphasizes the power of media in shaping public opinion, constructing narratives, and influencing social interactions and collective understandings. Thompson's research highlights how selective framing within media discourse can influence individuals and societies to form opinions and make decisions.

In conclusion, we can state that the theoretical background provided by scholars such as Stuart Hall, Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, James Paul Gee, Ruth Wodak, John Thompson and others (Lütge & Bös (Eds.), 2020; Pavlik & McIntosh, 2021; Vaskó (Ed.), 2021; Wood & Kroger, 2000) helps us understand the complex relationship between mass media, language, power, and society. Their research highlights the role of media discourse in shaping public perceptions, constructing ideologies, and influencing social dynamics. By critically analyzing the language of media texts, we can gain insights into how language choices, framing techniques, and persuasive rhetoric contribute to constructing ideological

narratives. This understanding is crucial for promoting more inclusive and equitable communication and fostering a critical awareness of the power dynamics embedded within media discourse.

3. Aim and Objectives.

This article aims to examine the framing of Ukraine and Ukrainians in US and British mass media through a corpus-based analysis of articles from prominent newspapers. The study aims to provide insights into the language and framing techniques used in media discourse surrounding Ukraine and their influence on public perception.

The first objective of this research is to compile and analyze a corpus consisting of articles from popular US and British newspapers. This involves using search tools like Google and the #Lancsbox program to gather articles related to Ukraine. The corpus will serve as the basis for the subsequent analysis.

The second objective is to examine the language choices and framing techniques employed in media discourse about Ukraine. This includes analyzing the selection of words and discursive patterns used to frame Ukraine and Ukrainians in the media. The study aims to identify the dominant narratives and perspectives presented in the media by exploring these linguistic strategies.

The third objective is to investigate how narratives about Ukraine and Ukrainians are constructed in US and British mass media. This involves identifying the underlying ideologies, biases, and themes that shape the portrayal of Ukraine. By analyzing the construction of narratives, the research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the media's role in shaping public opinion and influencing societal attitudes.

The final objective is to contribute to the existing knowledge on media framing by providing empirical evidence and analysis focused explicitly on the framing of Ukraine and Ukrainians. By examining the language and framing techniques used in media discourse, the research aims to offer valuable insights into how narratives are constructed, disseminated, and potentially influence public opinion.

4. Methodology.

For this research, a corpus-based analysis was conducted using the #Lancsbox interface to develop our corpus with two sub corpora: the British and American media sub corpora. The study consisted of several stages, each aimed at gathering and analyzing relevant articles from prominent US and British media sources.

The first stage involved the preparation for corpus creation. One hundred articles were selected from British and American sources, focusing on political, economic, and social themes. Articles related to sports, prominent Ukrainians, and show business were excluded from consideration. The key search terms used to locate the articles included "Ukraine," "Ukrainian," "Ukrainian crisis," "Revolution in Ukraine," and "War." All selected sources were processed in three stages, covering the following periods:

Late 2013 to 2015

2015 to February 24, 2022

February 24, 2022 to April 2022.

To find articles within specific time frames, the Google tool was employed. For example, the search query "Ukraine site:www.washingtonpost.com" enabled quick access to articles from The Washington Post within the designated period. Four sources were chosen for analysis, two British (The Guardian, The Daily Mail) and two American (The Washington Post, The New York Times), as they are freely accessible to readers.

After gathering the necessary articles from the selected sources, the next step involved cleaning the corpus and preparing it to download into the #Lancsbox.

The next step involved tracking the relevant information and saving it in Notepad format, which is well-suited for working with corpora.

Upon loading the corpora into the #Lancsbox program, it was possible to obtain statistical information regarding the number of tokens and individual words used in the 100 selected articles. The American corpus comprised 112,457 tokens, while the British corpus contained 118,092 tokens. Regarding types, the British corpus had 11,620 unique words, whereas the American corpus had 10,851.

The subsequent step involved utilizing the tools the #Lancsbox program provided to analyze the most frequently used words and collocations with the selected keywords. These tools allowed for obtaining statistical evaluations of the language patterns and associations surrounding the keywords in the corpora.

By employing these database, methods, and research methodology, this study was able to compile and analyze corpora consisting of articles from popular US and British newspapers. The statistical information obtained from the corpora provides valuable insights into the language patterns and framing techniques used in media discourse surrounding Ukraine and Ukrainians. Through the systematic analysis of these linguistic features, the research aims to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how Ukraine and Ukrainians are portrayed and framed in US and British mass media.

5. Results and Discussion.

The first set of words that we analyzed were "War" and "Crisis" in the British and American media corpora. We have chosen these particular words as they would help us to understand how the western media perceives and covers the situation in Ukraine. The word "Crisis" appears more frequently used than "War" based on the impression gained from reading articles in both British and American media sources.

In the British media corpus, "War" was used 353 times per 10,000 tokens ($353/118092 \cdot 10000 = 29.89$), while "Crisis" was used only 64 times ($64/118092 \cdot 10000 = 5.42$). The relative frequencies indicate that "War" had a higher usage frequency than "Crisis" in the British media corpus. However, it is worth noting that the word "War" started being used later in the British media corpus, while "Crisis" was used more consistently and actively.

In the American media corpus, "War" was used 664 times per 10,000 tokens ($664/112457 \cdot 10000 = 59.04$), while "Crisis" was used 34 times ($34/112457 \cdot 10000 = 3.02$). The statistical data demonstrates that "War" had a significantly higher frequency of usage than "Crisis" in the American media.

Based on the data provided, we can assume that first, the usage frequency of the word "War" is higher than that of "Crisis" in both the British and American media sub corpus. This suggests that the term "War" is more commonly employed in media discourse when discussing Ukraine, focusing on the armed conflict and hostilities.

Second, in the British media sub corpus, "War" was used later than "Crisis." This temporal difference may indicate a shift in the media narrative, where the focus shifted from perceiving the situation in Ukraine as a crisis to acknowledging it as a full-scale war. In addition, this change in terminology might reflect a deeper understanding of the severity and intensity of the conflict.

Third, the usage frequency of "War" in the American media corpus is notably higher than in the British media corpus. This disparity could be attributed to various factors, such as different editorial policies, the geopolitical perspective of the media outlets, or the level of

interest and engagement of the respective audiences. Nevertheless, it suggests that the American media pays more attention to the military aspect of the Ukrainian situation, emphasizing the presence of armed conflict.

Furthermore, the relatively lower frequency of "Crisis" in both sub corpora may indicate that the term has been overshadowed by the term "War" in media coverage. This shift in terminology suggests a stronger focus on the armed conflict rather than framing the situation primarily as a crisis. Moreover, it highlights the significance of armed hostilities in shaping the media narrative surrounding Ukraine.

These assumptions indicate that the media coverage of Ukraine in both the British and American media tends to emphasize the military dimension of the conflict, as reflected in the higher frequency of the term "War" compared to "Crisis." This focus on armed conflict may shape the public perception and understanding of the situation in Ukraine, highlighting the intense nature of the conflict and its implications.

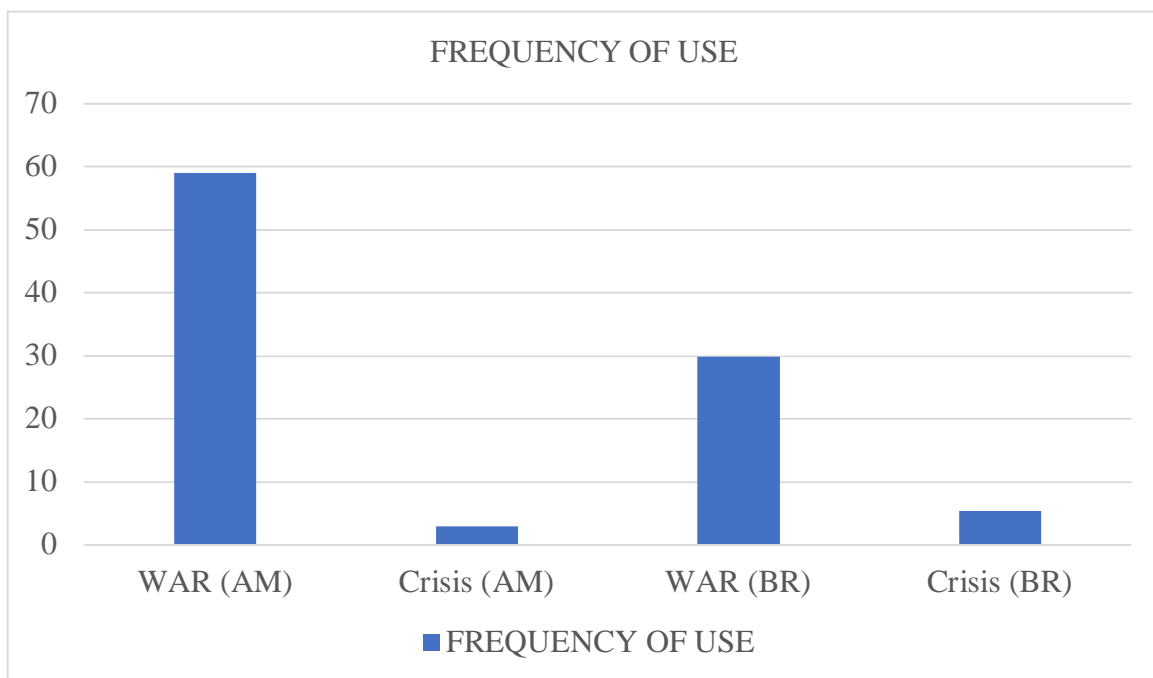


Diagram 1

Based on the observations made while reading and searching for articles, an interesting observation was the interpretation of events in Ukraine as a "civil war" from 2014 to approximately 2019. Specifically, while studying the articles, it appeared that this expression was more commonly used in British media sources. Therefore, paying attention to the frequency of the phrase "Civil war" in the American and British media sub corpora was important. Based on the data retrieved from the corpus we can assume that the initial observation is incorrect. The analysis reveals that the frequency of usage of the phrase "Civil war" is slightly higher in the American media corpus, with a difference of 0.11 occurrences per 10,000 tokens.

The difference in the usage of the phrase "Civil war" and the word "Revolution" in the American and British media sub corpora suggests a difference in the framing and interpretation of events in Ukraine. The word "Revolution" is more commonly used than the phrase "Civil war" in both media corpora, indicating a greater emphasis on the notion of a civil revolution.

The higher frequency of usage of the word "Revolution" in the British media sub corpus compared to the American media sub corpus suggests a stronger association between the events in Ukraine and the concept of a revolution in the British media.

These findings imply that media representations and framing of events in Ukraine vary between the British and American media. For example, the choice of terminology, such as "Civil war" or "Revolution," can shape the narrative and influence how the audience perceives and understands the situation in Ukraine.

The differences in language use and frequency between the American and British media sub corpora highlight the importance of considering the cultural and historical contexts in which the media operates. The interpretation and framing of events are influenced by factors such as audience preferences, historical perspectives, and geopolitical considerations.

The analysis of the frequency and usage of phrases like "Civil war" and words like "Revolution" in the American and British media corpora provides insights into the framing and interpretation of events in Ukraine. Moreover, the differences observed suggest variations in the emphasis and perspectives of media coverage, indicating the complex nature of media representations and their impact on shaping public perception.

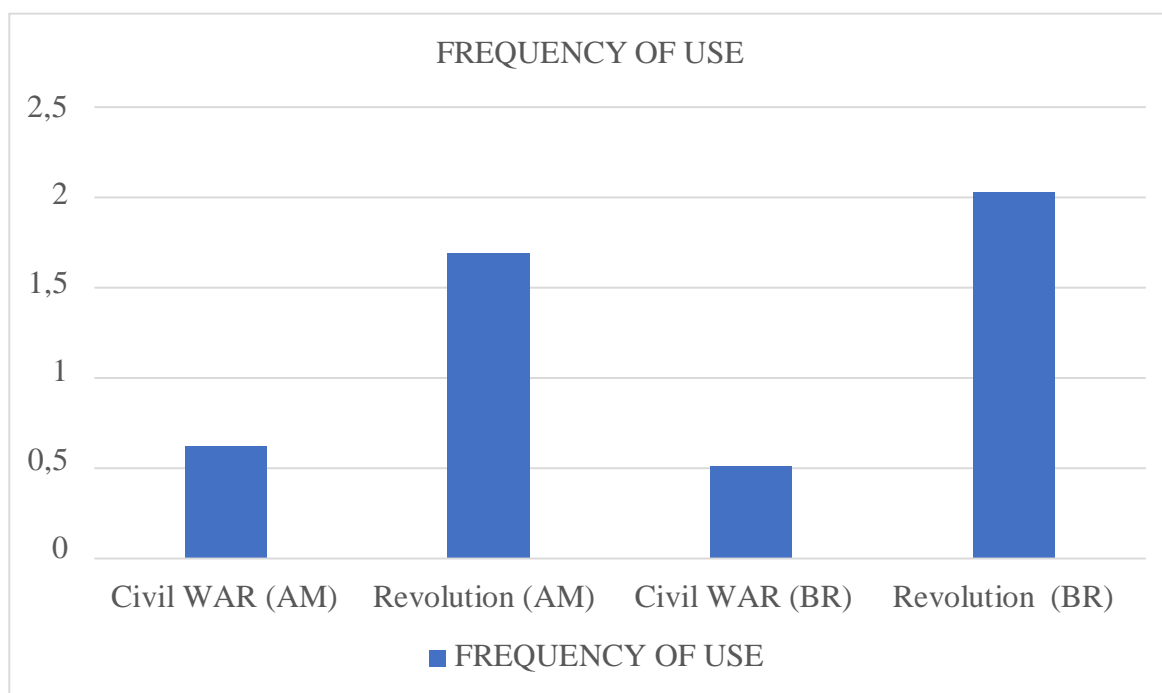


Diagram 2

The third set of words we analyzed were the surnames of the presidents of Ukraine and Russia, *Volodymyr Zelensky* and *Vladimir Putin*. In the American media sub corpus, the surname "Zelensky" frequency is 107 occurrences per 10,000 tokens and was used in 27 out of 100 articles ($107/11245710000 = 9.51$). On the other hand, the frequency of the surname "Putin" in the same corpus is 202 occurrences in 58 out of 100 articles ($202/11245710000 = 17.96$). In the British media corpus, the frequency of the surname "Putin" is 233 occurrences in 33 out of 100 articles ($233/11809210000 = 19.73$), while the surname "Zelensky" appears 42 times in 10 out of 100 articles ($42/11809210000 = 3.56$). Such differences can be explained by the fact that Volodymyr Zelensky came to power in 2019 when the leader of Russia was already in his second term. The figures also differ between the British and

American media sub corpora, with the latter showing significantly higher frequencies. The contrasting relative frequencies of the surnames reflect the media's focus and attention given to the respective leaders. Vladimir Putin, as the long-standing leader of Russia, has garnered significant media coverage over the years. In contrast, Volodymyr Zelensky, as a relatively new political figure during the compilation of this corpus, gained prominence in 2019 when he assumed the presidency of Ukraine. The higher frequency of the surname "Putin" in the American and British media sub corpora suggests the enduring media interest in his leadership and his influence on the global stage. However, it is worth noting that the frequency of the surname "Zelensky" in the British media corpus is notably lower, indicating a difference in media attention and coverage between the two leaders.

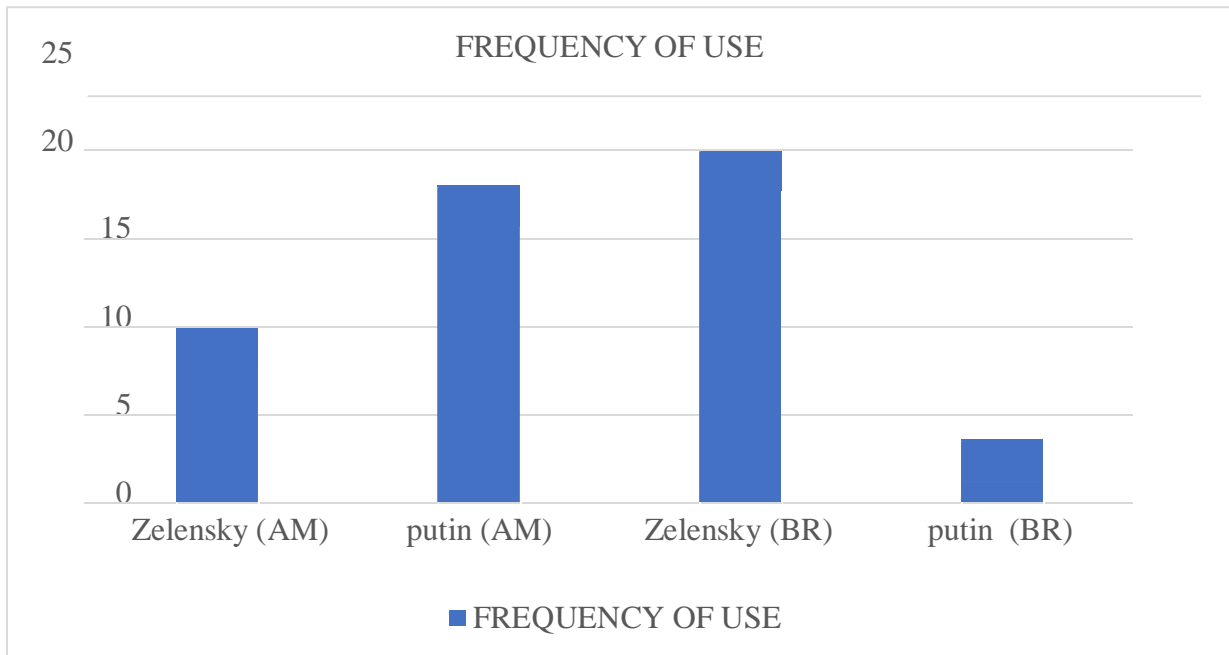


Diagram 3

The following set of words was chosen to analyze the effects of a series of journalistic investigations and advocacy campaigns promoting the correct pronunciation of Kyiv not Kiev, and respecting the transliteration done according to Ukrainian regulations. The word "Kyiv" appears 166 times in 44 out of 100 texts in the American media sub corpus, resulting in a relative frequency of 14.76 ($166/112457 \cdot 10000$). At the same time, "Kiev" has 118 occurrences in 35 out of 100 texts, yielding a relative frequency of 10.49 ($118/112457 \cdot 10000$). The situation in the British sub corpus is less encouraging, as the frequency of "Kiev" is 262 occurrences in 30 out of 100 texts, with a relative frequency of 22.19 ($262/118092 \cdot 10000$), while "Kyiv" appears 189 times in 33 out of 100 texts, with a relative frequency of 16.00 ($189/118092 \cdot 10000$). The highest and least favorable relative frequency is "Kiev" in British media sources. However, it is reassuring that "Kyiv" is more frequently used in American sources, indicating greater respect for the identity of Ukrainians.

These findings reflect a shift in the recognition and adoption of the Ukrainian transliteration standards in Western media. The awareness raised by journalistic investigations and advocacy campaigns has contributed to a growing understanding of the importance of respecting Ukraine's cultural and linguistic identity. The increased usage of

"Kyiv" over "Kiev" in American and British media sub corpora demonstrates a positive change in acknowledging and honoring Ukrainian orthographic conventions.

This shift in transliteration practices reflects a linguistic change and signifies a more profound recognition of Ukraine's sovereignty and cultural distinctiveness. Furthermore, by adopting the Ukrainian transliteration standards, media outlets are committed to accuracy, cultural sensitivity, and inclusivity. This recognition is significant as it contributes to promoting a more accurate representation of Ukraine and its people in international media discourse.

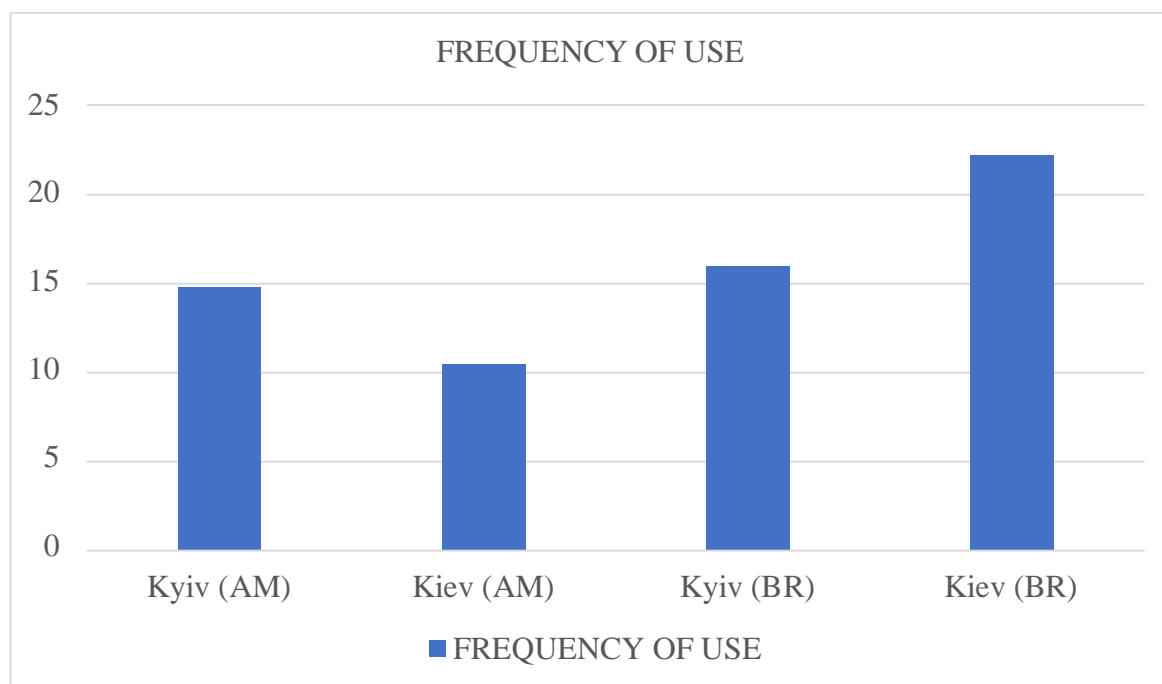


Diagram 4

The analysis of collocations of the word "Ukraine" reveals interesting insights. The most frequently used nouns in these combinations are "Russia," with a frequency of 99 occurrences, and "war," with a frequency of 66 occurrences. The most commonly used adjectives are "Russian," with a frequency of 76 occurrences, and "eastern," with a frequency of 96 occurrences. This indicates that the topic of war between Ukraine and Russia is a significant aspect of the discourse surrounding Ukraine. The adjectives "Russian" and "eastern" are commonly used to describe Ukraine in the analyzed word combinations. Unfortunately, this suggests that the geographical and cultural ties between Ukraine and Russia were often emphasized in discussions till April 2022.

The associations with Russia include words like "peninsula", "sanctions", "nuclear", "tank", "invaded", and "denied". These associations reflect the specific events and dynamics related to the war between Ukraine and Russia, such as the annexation of Crimea, the imposition of sanctions, military tactics, and Russia's denial of its actions.

The associations formed with "Russia" and the word usage patterns concerning "Ukraine" provide insights into the ongoing events and dynamics surrounding the Ukrainian-Russian war.

6. Conclusions.

The study of the framing of Ukraine and Ukrainians in US and British mass media provides valuable insights into the language and narratives surrounding Ukraine, the role of media in shaping public opinion, and the influence of media discourse on broader social dynamics and perceptions. The corpus-based analysis offers a quantitative and systematic approach to understanding the language use and framing techniques employed in media coverage, contributing to our knowledge of media representations and their impact on society. The findings suggest that the media significantly shapes public perception and understanding of Ukraine and Ukrainians. Language choices, framing techniques, and adherence to transliteration standards all contribute to constructing and disseminating narratives.

These conclusions have practical implications for promoting more accurate and respectful media representations of Ukraine and Ukrainians. Furthermore, they emphasize the importance of raising awareness about the preferred pronunciation and transliteration of Ukrainian words and promoting cultural sensitivity in media discourse.

Further research can expand on this study by examining a broader range of media sources, exploring the influence of geopolitical factors on media representations, and investigating the impact of media discourse on public attitudes and perceptions.

This study contributes to understanding how Ukraine and Ukrainians are portrayed in American and British media. The findings highlight the importance of accurate language usage, framing techniques, and sensitivity to cultural nuances in shaping public perceptions and promoting inclusive and equitable communication.

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Бібліографічний опис:

Тамразян, А. С., Старовойтова, А. А. (2023). Медійні репрезентації України та українців: корпусний аналіз американських і британських медіаджерел. *Науковий часопис Національного педагогічного університету імені М. П. Драгоманова. Серія 9. Сучасні тенденції розвитку мов*, 25, 90–101. <https://doi.org/10.31392/NPU-nc.series9.2023.25.07>

Анотація

У статті представлений корпусний аналіз відображення України та українців у популярних американських та британських медіаджерелах. Дослідження спрямоване на вивчення застосування мовних засобів, методів фреймінгу й частоти вживання певних слів та фраз і враховує особливості окремих конструкцій та поширення наративів. Два медіапідкорпуси – британський підкорпус та американський підкорпус – були зібрані за допомогою використання інтерфейсу #Lancsbox та пошукових інструментів Google. Корпуси складаються зі 100 статей кожний і охоплюють період з кінця 2013 року до квітня 2022 року.

За результатами виконаного дослідження вдалось зробити такі висновки. По-перше, підкреслити значущість ролі ЗМІ у формуванні суспільного сприйняття та розуміння України та українців. По-друге, зосередити особливу увагу на важливості точного використання мови, методів фреймінгу та культурної чутливості в медіарепазентаціях. По-третє, популяризувати точне та свідоме відображення України та українців у ЗМІ.

Подальші напрямки дослідження можуть бути спрямовані на вивчення ширшого кола медіаджерел, дослідження впливу геополітичних чинників на медіарепазентації, а також вивчення впливу медіадискурсу на суспільні настрої та сприйняття.

Ключові слова: медіарепазентації, Україна, українці, корпусний аналіз, методи фреймінгу, використання мови.