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RUDIMENTS OF COLONIAL PAST IN ENGLISH VERSIONS OF NAMES OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND THEIR CAPITAL CITIES

The article analyses the most common versions of the names of the three Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus) and their capitals in the English-speaking world, and their historical characteristics were presented. The authors studied frequency of usage of different forms of the states´s names and capitals in English sources over the past two hundred years. The authors' approach is to analyse the frequency of use of different forms of names of countries and capitals of Eastern Europe in English-language sources, and to identify trends in their spread or decrease, and to explain these trends. The authors used an interdisciplinary approach to the study of political actors in Eastern Europe combining theoretical elements of political theory, history, and sociology. A document analysing method was selected due to the need to consider the legal and regulatory of transliteration tradition. In addition, the study also used the method of statistical analysis, which helps to systematise data collection to determine the frequency of usage of the form of proper names of states and capital cities in English language corpus. It is argued that most English-language versions are based on Russian versions of the names of countries and capitals, which underscores the past ties of these countries with the Russian Federation in the form of a dominion colony. The tendency to increase the use of official names of these countries and their capitals in English sources has been revealed. The only and clearly distinguished exception is the name of the capital of Ukraine, when the overwhelming majority of sources continue to use the Russian version of «Kiev».
Key words: Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, decolonisation, English.

1. INTRODUCTION

After almost three decades after collapse of the Soviet Union, many toponymical terms of three countries contain remnants of their colonial/communism past. As to the English-speaking world, loads of those terms have their origin dated to several hundreds of years when Eastern Europe was enslaved and colonised by Russia in various forms – Muscovy, Russian Empire, Soviet Union, etc. The article focuses on studying most of variants of names of states and their capitals of three post-Soviet Eastern European countries (Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova) in English. The authors aim to differ ways of use of the terms and study their connotation.

The paper is based upon theoretical concepts of J. Fishman & O. García [11] who analysed the linguistic aspects of ethnic identity of Eastern European peoples, and G. White [33] who considered the problems of constructing ethnic identity in South-Eastern Europe. A number of scholars studied particular aspects of the use of English versions of the names of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus or their capitals [10; 12; 31] or chapters of their history that have influenced the evolution of their names [17; 22; 31]. Much attention has been paid in the scientific literature to the analysis of Russia's influence on the post-Soviet space [13; 24].

The authors' approach is to analyse the frequency of use of different forms of names of countries and capitals of Eastern Europe in English-language sources, and to identify trends in their spread or decrease, and to explain these trends.

The authors used an interdisciplinary approach to the study of political actors in Eastern Europe combining theoretical elements of political theory, history, and sociology. A document analysing method was selected due to the need to consider the legal and regulatory of transliteration tradition. In addition, the study also used the method of statistical analysis, which helps to systematise data collection to determine the frequency of usage of the form of proper names of states and capital cities in English language corpus.

As to theoretical framework, we deployed a neo-realist framework that, we argue, is most suitable to a rigorous assessment and explanation of Russia˝s foreign policy towards Eastern Europe that gave origin to the issue of Russian-based English names of the Eastern European countries.

Volodymyr Viatrovych, a former President of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, mentioned in 2015 right after the decommunisation process started in Ukraine that «names and titles recorded in the toponymy have an important educational effect; this was well understood not only by the leaders of freedom-loving democratic states, but also by the leaders of totalitarian regimes» [30, 18].

The process of renaming the toponymic names within the decommunisation policy is a response to a renewed society, the situation in which Ukraine has been living during the last years. Toponymics is a specific tool for installation of state sovereignty and national identity, and the government aimed at introducing Ukrainian names and return the geographical objects their historical names, erasing colonial and communist past of Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine on their political and geographic maps (map 1).

Map 1. *Political Map of Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova*

Ukraine vs the Ukraine: Arguments and Main Arenas for the Debate

The Ukraine is the way the Russians referred
to that part of the country during Soviet times ...
Now that it is a country, a nation, and a recognized state, it is just Ukraine.
And it is incorrect to refer to the Ukraine, even though a lot of people do it
William Taylor
US ambassador to Ukraine in 2006–2009 [25]

Before Ukraine restored its independence in 1991, the term «the Ukraine» had been generally used in English language resources. In the period 1919–1991, Ukraine was officially known as «The Ukrainian Soviet

Socialist Republic». Therefore, the article «the» appears to be a remnant of that times. However, it is unlikely as Russia had «The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic» as the official name at that times. Furthermore, «the Russia» sounds clumsy and inaccurate for English speakers.

The Resolution On Declaration of Independence of Ukraine 1991 and the Constitution of Ukraine 1996 make it quite clear that the name of the country is «Ukraine», without article: there are no articles in the Ukrainian language, and style directories for writing names of the Associated Press and the Guardian clearly state that the article «the» is not required.

Use of definite article in front of a country name may be considered as an offence for some people. «The» is used in cases if the country"s name includes a common noun, noun that can mean ordinary things beyond the name. For instance, the Kingdom, the State, the Republic, the Union, the Confederation, the Commonwealth, the Principality. It is also used before countries with plural names (e.g. the Philippines, the Maldives, and the Netherlands[1]).

English speakers sometimes use «the» without a common noun when describing a geographic or cultural region. The Arctic, the Atlantic, the East, the South, and the prairies all require the definite article, but these are not countries.

Hence, the name «Ukraine» is correct as it does not include a common noun. Moreover, «the Ukraine» implies that the entire state is simply a geographic area, and can be considered as offence. Since 1917, the Ukrainian War of Independence, Ukraine has had very definite borders so it cannot be regarded as merely a region.

There is although a possibility to put «the» in front of «Ukraine», which could be correct, when one wants to contrast the past with the present. For instance, one can correctly say, «The Ukraine of Yushchenko was much more democratic than (the Ukraine) of Yanukovych» (Fig. 1).
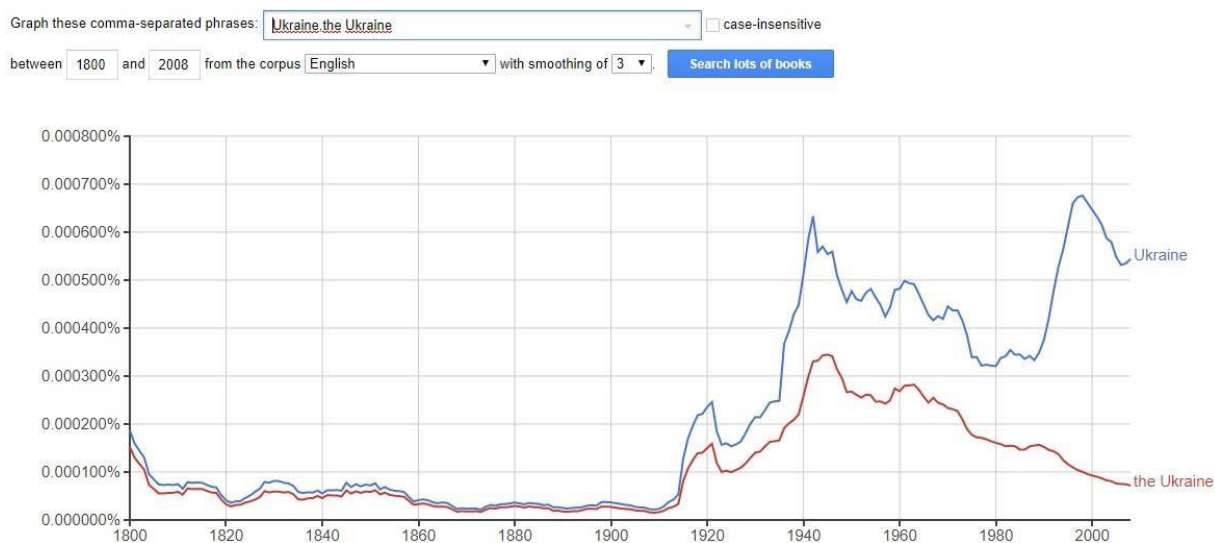

Fig. 1. *«Ukraine» and «The Ukraine» in English Text Corpus (1800–2008)*
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

This chart shows that the name «Ukraine» has been winning positions over «the Ukraine» in recent decades. As to the term «the Ukraine», it first entered popular usage during the Soviet era at a time when Moscow tried everyone to see Ukraine as a component of one nation together with Russians and Belarusians [10]. Ian Mayes, a columnist in «The Guardian», quoted from «Utopia in Power, A History of the USSR from 1917 to the Present» by M. Heller and A. Nekrich: "Moscow"s goal was to eliminate Ukraine and Ukrainians as political and cultural entities. Soviet translators, who knew the patterns for country names in English, deliberately translated the name of this area with the article "the" because it then sounds to English-speakers like a part of a country rather than the name of an individual, independent country"» [19].

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[1] Another explanation is that the English translation includes a common noun «lands».

The current hybrid war in eastern Ukraine has exposed the full extent of the Kremlin"s post-Soviet imperial pretentions. According to I. Pronoza [21, 126], the basic reason for the Russia-Ukraine war in eastern Ukraine is ideology of Russian nationalism that combines Russian fascism, the personality cult of Putin, anti-Western (anti-NATO and anti-American) rhetoric, the «Russian World» doctrine, and international terrorism.

Russia used a concept of «hybrid warfare» against Ukraine that is unique by its structure and functioning: it is hybrid by the form is and the asymmetric by the meaning. A new type of war was clearly demonstrated for the first time during Russia"s annexation of Crimea in February-March 2014, support for local radical elements and then a full-scale Russian invasion to the eastern regions of Ukraine [29, 211].

Each element of this «hybrid warfare» is not new and was used in almost all the wars of the past, but its uniqueness is combination and co-operation of these elements, dynamism of their use and growth of importance of information factor.

Russian TV regularly provides platforms for those who stand Ukraine is an artificial nation. Putin, too, is keen on denying Ukraine"s sovereignty. At NATO summit in Bucharest in 2008, Putin, according to Russian media, told US President Bush: «You don"t understand, George, that Ukraine is not even a state. What is Ukraine? Part of its territories are Eastern Europe, but a greater part is a gift from us» [24, 64]. He hindered if Ukraine attempted to joint NATO, Russia could tear eastern Ukraine and Crimea. Consequently, if somebody uses knowingly or not «the Ukraine» form, they demonstrate the Kremlin's current attitude towards this sovereign state.

As to Donbas issue, there are two variants of spelling the name of this territory. When mentioning Russia"s occupation of eastern Ukraine, some mass media have been using term «Donbass» (e.g. BBC), others use «Donbas» (e.g. The Economist), with one «s» [26; 1]. Generally speaking, this is a historical, economic coal-mining region comprised of eastern Ukrainian regions together with Russia"s Rostov oblast [13, 120]. When talking about the Ukrainian part of this region, one should indicate «Donbas», as a portmanteau form of Donets Basin («Донецький басейн» in Ukrainian). As to the Russian part, «Donbass» is completely correct, having relation to «Донецкий бассейн» in Russian.

Kyiv vs Kiev

The capital city of Ukraine has a long history (having already celebrated the 1,500th anniversary), so its name has also suffered a gradual evolution. One of the oldest English maps of Eastern Europe and Central Asia «Rvssiae, Moscoviae et Tartariae Descriptio», published by Anthony Jenkinson in 1570 for the English Muscovy Company, the name of the city is spelled «Kiou» [3, 54].

In the map of the French cartographer Guillaume de Beauplan in 1650, the name of the city is Kiiow [34]. After the Muscovites invaded and annexed the city (late seventeenth century), the name became «Kiev» until present days in Russian tradition.

Following proclamation of independence in 1991, the Ukrainian government introduced the national rules for transliteration of geographic names from Ukrainian into English, according to which the Ukrainian form «Київ» transliterates into «Kyiv». Name «Kyiv» is the romanised version used in modern Ukrainian has been used in all official documents issued by the governmental authorities since March 1995 (Table 1).

Table 1

Transliteration Records of «Київ» to «Kyiv»

Year	Norm	Document
1995	К=К, и=y, ї=i, в=v	Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 31.03 № 231
2006	Київ=Kyiv	US State Department Memorandum, 03.10
2010	Київ=Kyiv	Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 27.01 № 55
2012	Київ=Kyiv	UN Resolution X/9
2014	Київ=Kyiv, Київська=Kyivska	Order of the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine, 29.07 № 282

Sources: Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, UNO, Kyiv Post

This has established the use of the spelling Kyiv. This version of the city"s name is indicated in English versions of Declaration of State Sovereignty of Ukraine (16.07.1990), Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine (24.08.1991) and Constitution of Ukraine (Article 20). Interesting fact, the 1990-year-version of the Declaration of Independence contains form «Kiev» [9]. The official form is nowadays used by the United

Nations, all English-speaking foreign diplomatic missions and international organisations. At the same time, most major English-language news sources, such as the BBC, Associated Press, Reuters, The Economist, and the Washington Post, continued to favour Kiev. Nonetheless, transferring the name of the Ukrainian capital as Kiev is an «exonym», a geographical name that is not used by the local population. We can assume that incorrect transliterations, such as Kiev, arose from the use of an intermediary language (Russian) (Fig. 2).
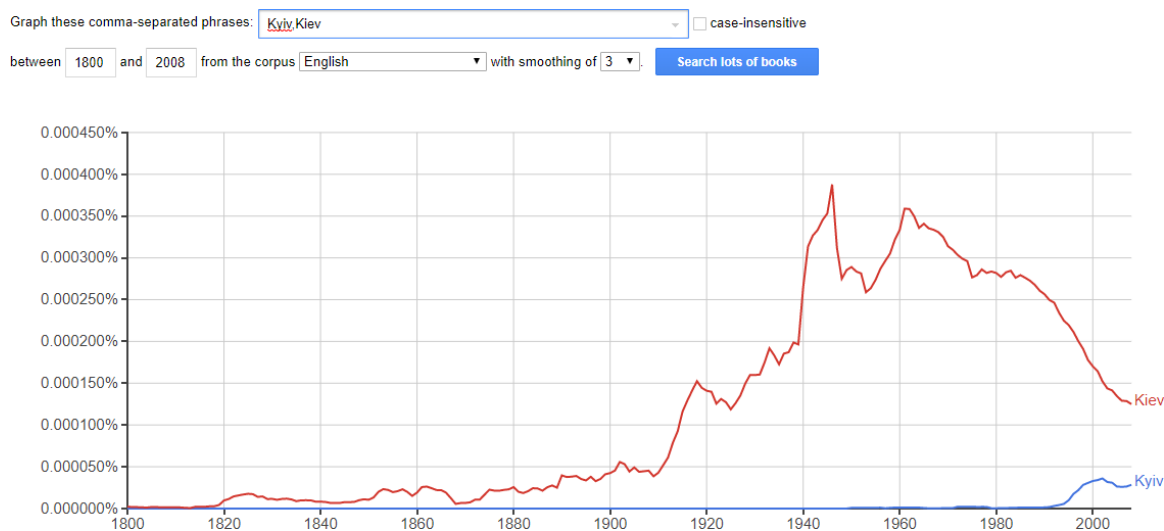

Fig. 2. *«Kyiv» and «Kiev» in English Text Corpus (1800–2008)*
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

There are alternative versions for «Kyiv» as «Kyyiv» and «Kyjiv» that appear in some English-language resources. Andrew Gregorovich argued in 1995 that as «Kiev» was based on an old Ukrainian-language name for the city, and that Kyiv and other potential Roman transliterations (Kyjiv and Kyyiv) were confusing for English speakers. «English is a strange language because it really doesn't care about the spelling of the name in the original language. For example, it doesn't care if Florence is spelled Firenze in Italian, or Prague is spelled Praha in Czech, or Moscow is spelled Moskva in Russian, or Rome is Roma, or Munich is Muenchen in the original language» [12].

In early October 2018, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, together with the Strategic Communications Centre StratCom Ukraine, launched an online CorrectUA campaign. It aims to appeal to foreign media and foreign airports to correct the spelling of the city of Kyiv in Latin alphabet (KyivNotKiev). Many capitals, cities, international organisations and publishing houses have already supported this initiative. Many of them like BBC, the Associated Press, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, the Guardian and The Economist already changed the spelling of the Ukrainian capital in English from Kiev to Kyiv, and looks like this battle in Ukraine's fight for international identity independence has now been truly won.

Belarus vs Belorussia

The name «Belorussia[1]» was first used in early eighteenth century, since Peter the Great was called «His most Sacred Majesty, the Tsar of all the Russias» [18] when Muscovy and later Russian Empire was ideologically formed by three parts – Great Russia (Russian territories), White Russia (Belarus) and Little Russia (Ukraine). It meant that all those peoples were variants of the Russian people, and, henceforth, those territories were also considered as parts of Russia [11, 122].

The term «Byelorrussia» in English, based on its Russian form «Белоруссия», was the only official during the Soviet era until its collapse in 1991. After proclamation of independence, the authorities adopted a new name for the country «Belarus», included in the Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Belarus 1994) (Fig. 4).

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[1] In Russian, the term «Белору ссия», is spelled similar to «Росси я (Russia)» but is stressed differently.
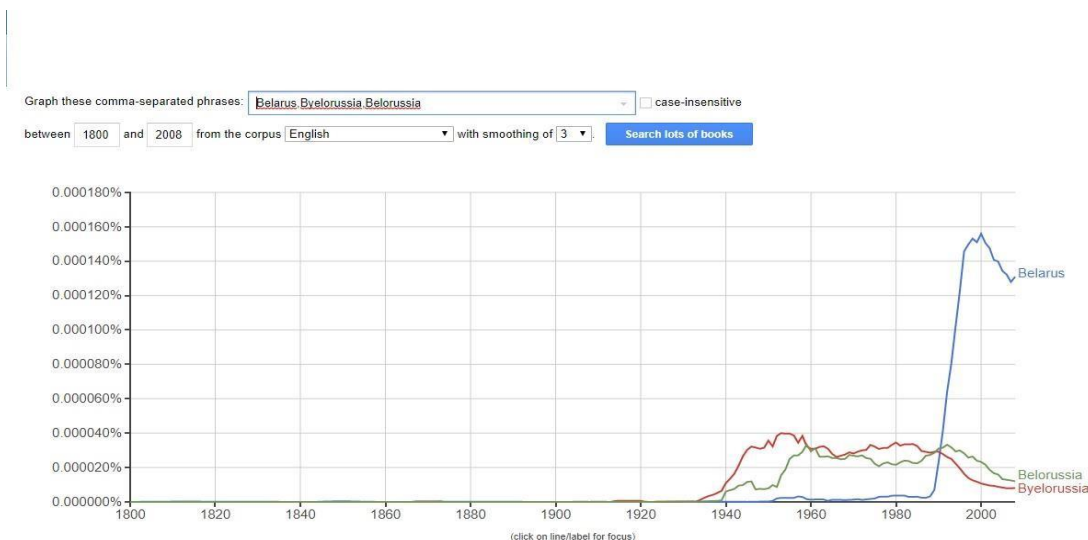
Fig. 4. *«Belarus», «Belorussia» and «Byelorussia» in English Text Corpus (1800–2008)*
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

Officially, the full name of the country is «Republic of Belarus» (Рэспубліка Беларусь, Республика Беларусь). The name «Byelorussia» was replaced by «Belarus» in English and the adjectives Belorussian or Byelorussian was replaced by Belarusian or Belarusan in English (table 2). It is also worth mentioning that loads of local newspapers keep the old name of the country in Russian in their names. Those who wish for Belarus to be reunited with Russia continue using Belorussia. The both names are in current usage in the Russian Federation.

Table 2

Register of «Belarus» and its Adjective Form in English Dictionaries

Dictionary	Name of Country	Adjective or Noun
Oxford English Dictionary	Belarus, formerly called Belorussia, White Russia	Belarusian
Cambridge Dictionary	Belarus	Belorussian
Miriam-Webster Dictionary	Belarus, formerly Belorussia	Belarusian, Belarusan, Belarussian
Collins Dictionary	Belarus, Byelorussia or Belorussia	Belarussian, Belarusian, Byelorussian or Belorussian
Longman Dictionary	Belarus	Belarusian

Sources: Cambridge Advanced Learner"s Dictionary 2005; Collins English Thesaurus; Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English for Advanced Learners 2009; Oxford Dictionary of English 2006; Webster"s New World College Dictionary.

Minsk vs Mensk/Miensk

The original name of the capital of Belarus was Mensk. According to one of the theories, Minsk was initially located 16 km to the southwest, on the banks of Menka river that gave the city its name. It was changed to Minsk by Polish authorities in the sixteenth century, and that name was used by Russian authorities up to the modern times [33]. The city returned to its original name in the 1920s when eastern and central Belarus were part of the newly formed Soviet Union, while its western regions belonged to the Second Polish Republic (fig. 5).

The name «Mensk» was normative and was used everywhere in official documents until 1939 in the Soviet era, when it was changed in to «Minsk» aiming at intensifying repressions against nationally conscious people together with consolidating the process of russification in the republic. The form «Minsk» became normative in the Belarusian language since then.

In 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Minsk City Council appealed to the Parliament with a request to return the former form of the name «Mensk» to the city, but the request was refused [29]. Today, some independent mass media and history publishing houses still use the form «Mensk/Miensk».
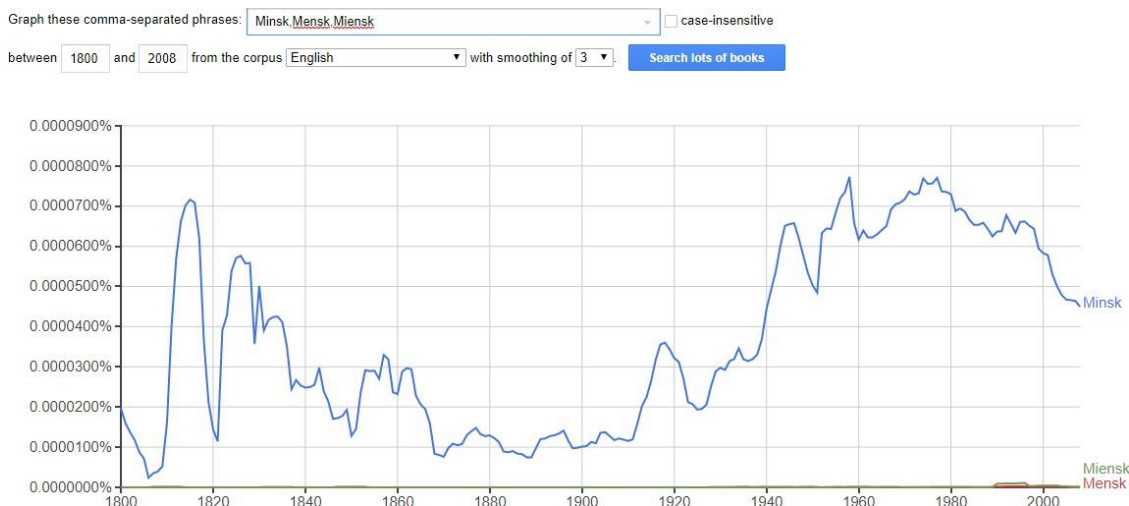
Fig. 5. *«Minsk» and «Mensk/Miensk» in English Text Corpus (1800–2008)*
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

Moldova vs Moldavia

How do you name a nation? Is the rightful answer found in paying homage to historic origin and struggle, or to modern victory and independence? After a history of occupation, foreign oppression, and ongoing territory disputes, the true title for the modern day Republic of Moldova is often misunderstood or lost in history and translation [31].

The name «Moldova» derives from the Moldova River; the valley of this river served as a political centre at the time of the foundation of the Principality of Moldavia in 1359 [22, 274]. Moldavia is a historical region and former independent principality set in fourteenth century in Eastern Europe whose western half is now part of Romania and the eastern side belongs to the Republic of Moldova [33, 144–145]. Moldavia can also mean a region in Romania (Western Moldavia or Romanian Moldavia). It was also a name for the Republic of Moldova during Soviet times (Moldavian Soviet Socialist Republic), formerly called Besarabia [33, 15].

For a short time in the 1990s, at the founding of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the name of the current Republic of Moldova was also spelled «Moldavia» [19]. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the country began to use the Romanian name, Moldova. Officially, the name Republic of Moldova is designated by the United Nations. The adjectival form and demonym of Moldova is Moldovan, following Moldavian of Moldavia [27] (fig. 6).
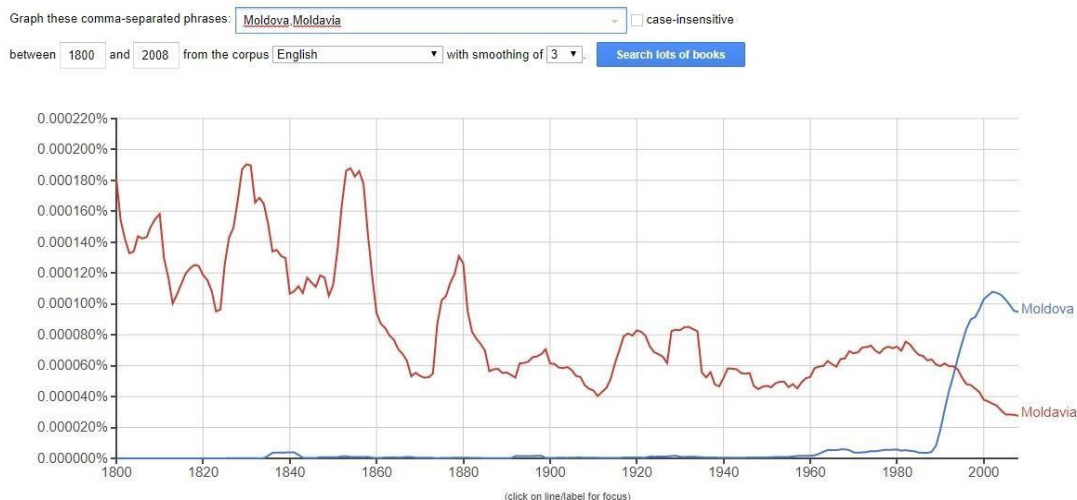

Fig. 6. *«Moldova» and «Moldavia» in English Text Corpus (1800–2008)*
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

As to language denomination issue, it is also a visible remnant of the Moldovȧ's colonial past. During the last centuries, domination of Russian and Soviet empires, «Moldovan/Moldavian» was the only one allowed. Russian authorities underlined distinction between Romanian and Moldovan as they had, and still have, different histories embodied into different political entities. The Declaration of Independence of Moldova in 1991 mentioned «Romanian» as the state language. The Constitution of Moldova, however, identified «Moldovan» as the official language (Art. 13.1): «The State language of the Republic of Moldova is the Moldovan language based on the Latin alphabet»[1] [8]. The Constitutional Court of Moldova drew the line in the disputed in 2013 having provided official status only to the «Romanian» language, as it was mentioned in the Declaration: «In the event of a divergence between the text of the Declaration of Independence and the text of the Constitution, the primary constitutional text of the Declaration of Independence prevails» (Judgment No.36 of 05.12.2013).

It also worth mentioning that the Transnistrian authorities, Russia-led separatist region, solely recognise «Moldovan» language (Art. 12), following policy of its metropole, Russia, in order to impede discussions concerning any possible union of Moldova with Romania [5].

Chişinău vs Kishinev

The origin of the city's name is unclear, but in one version, the name comes from the archaic Romanian word *chişla* (meaning «spring», «source of water») and *nouă* («new»), because it was built around a small spring.

Chişinău is known in Russian as Кишинѐв (Kishinyov) and is written Kişinöv in the Latin Gagauz alphabet. There was also form «Chişineu» up till the 20th century in Romanian tradition and «Кишинэу» in the Moldovan Cyrillic alphabet.

As to the English language, the historical name for the city was «Kishinev», based on the modified Russian version because it entered the English language via Russian at the time Chişinău was part of the Russian Empire, the colonised name. There is even a term «Kishinev pogrom» in English meaning an anti-Jewish riot that took place in Chişinău in 1903 [14]. Therefore, it remains a common English name in some historical contexts. Otherwise, the Romanian-based «Chişinău» has been steadily gaining wider currency, especially in written language (fig. 7).
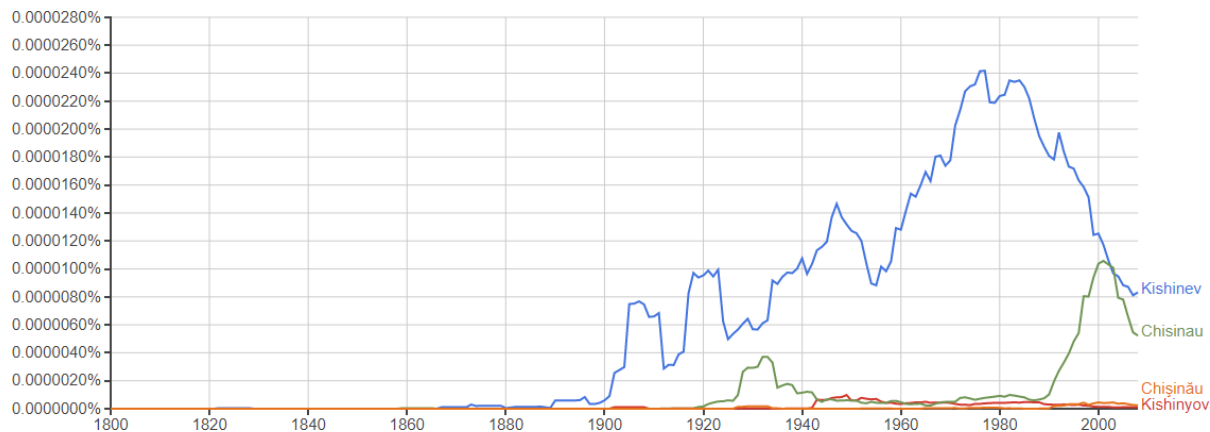

Fig. 7. *«Chişinău», «Kishinev», «Kishinyov» and «Chisinau» in English Text Corpus (1800–2008)*
Source: Google Books Ngram Viewer

3. CONCLUSION

Grammar of any language is an important element in the communication of the speakers, especially between native speakers of different languages. Therefore, misuse of grammatical forms can lead to misunderstandings that will even cause severe consequences. As an example of this is the use of «the» article before «Ukraine», which can be interpreted as disrespect for the sovereignty of the state.

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[1] The State language of the Republic of Moldova is the Moldovan language based on the Latin alphabet.

The existence of several variants of names of cities or countries is due to their long and turbulent history, when these territories were parts of several states. Those political structures pursued their assimilation policies regarding these territories, changing their topographical names.

Table 3

Variants of Names of Eastern European States and its Capitals in English

Name	Status/Use
Belarus	Official name
Bielorussia/ Belorussia/ Byelorussia	English version for Russian speakers
Ukraine	Official name
The Ukraine	Incorrect, may refer to its zero statehood
Moldova	Official name
Moldavia	Historical contexts, when Moldova was part of Russian Empire or Soviet Union, current Eastern Romania
Chișinău/ Chisinau	Official name
Kishinyov	English version for Russian speakers
Kishinev	Historical contexts, when Moldova was part of Russian Empire or Soviet Union
Kyiv	Official name
Kiev	Incorrect, Russian form
Minsk	Official name
Mensk/Miensk	Not official, possible due to historic accuracy

Source: Authors'' compilation.

The English equivalents to these names are, therefore, based on the names of the metropolitan language, Russian in this case. Existence of several variants of the names of countries, for example, Moldova and Moldavia, Belarus and Belorussia prove this tradition. Moreover, Russia continues to use old, incorrect forms in everyday use, despite the fact that official names were introduced into compulsory use more than 25 years ago.

As for the names of the capitals, the situation here is not ameliorating. Most English-language sources use the Russian form «Kiev» so far, referring to the centuries-old historical tradition, and not taking into account modern realities. The Belarusian capital now has the Polish-Russian form «Minsk«, although the historical Belarusian name, «Mensk» is not appeared in use.

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ПЕРЕЖИТКИ КОЛОНІАЛЬНОГО МИНУЛОГО В АНГЛОМОВНИХ ВЕРСІЯХ НАЗВ КРАЇН СХІДНОЇ ЄВРОПИ ТА ЇХНІХ СТОЛИЦЬ

У статті проаналізовано найпоширеніші версії назв країн Східної Європи (України, Молдови, Білорусі) та їх столиць в англомовному світі, подано їх історичну характеристику. Проведено дослідження частоти вживання різних форм назв держав і столиць в англомовних джерелах за останні двісті років. Підхід авторів полягає в аналізі частоти використання різних форм назв країн і столиць Східної Європи в англомовних джерелах, а також виявлення тенденцій їх поширення чи зменшення та пояснення цих тенденцій. Застосовано міждисциплінарний підхід до вивчення політичних акторів у Східній Європі, поєднуючи теоретичні елементи політичної теорії, історії й соціології. Метод аналізу документів обрано через необхідність урахування законодавчих і регуляторних норм транслітераційної традиції. Крім того, у дослідженні також застосовано метод статистичного аналізу, який дає змогу систематизувати дані для визначення частоти використання форм власних назв держав та столиць в англійському мовному корпусі. Доведено, що більшість англомовних відповідників ґрунтуються на російських версіях назв країн і столиць, що підкреслює минулі зв'язки цих країн із Російською Федерацією у формі домініон-колонія. Виявлено тенденцію до зростання використання офіційних назв цих держав та їхніх столиць в англомовних джерелах. Єдиним і чітко виокремленим винятком є назва столиці України, коли в більшості джерел продовжує використовуватися російський варіант «Kiev (Киев)».

Ключові слова: Україна, Білорусь, Молдова, деколонізація, англійська мова.