

Lexical Markers of Regional History (Podillia, Ukraine)

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Abstract. The paper considers linguistic mirroring of the regional history of Podillia in Mid-Western Ukraine. The territory now termed as Podillia (Ukrainian *поділ* – lowland, plain) is situated on the crossroads of trade, military, religious, cultural, ethnic routes the intertwining of which affected the local placenames and speech. Mostly, the centre of Podillia – the town of Kamianets-Podilskyi – reflected and preserved the eventful past and kept the memories of the years gone by. The historic events, processes, policies, transformations the region went through left their traces in the landmarks which are still in use today, these refer to the names of villages (*Мукарів Татарський* / Mukariv Tatarskyi, *Татаринці* / Tatoryntsi), town streets and districts (*Вулиця Князів Коріатовичів* / Vulytsia Kniaziv Koriatovychiv – Karijotaičiai; *Вулиця Татарська* ‘Tatarska Street’; *ринок* / rynok (Rynek), its suburbs (*Каравасари* / Karvasary ‘Caravanserai’). There are numerous lexemes in the local speech which appeared after the invasions, close contacts with other peoples, partitions of the countries, state treaties, political contracts, etc. These lingual units bear the national colouring of the source language and decorate the local speech of Podillia dwellers making it peculiar and recognizable due to the historic past our region went through. The paper is an attempt to analyze and systematize the etymology of linguistic signs, the reasons and nature of borrowings, the causes and logic of nominations and their value for the further generations of Podollians.

Key words: Podillia, regional history, placename, landmark, local speech, lexical unit, borrowing, etymology.

Regioninės istorijos leksiniai žymenys (Podolė, Ukraina)

Anotacija. Straipsnyje nagrinėjamas Podolės regioninės istorijos lingvistinis atspindėjimas Vidurio Vakarų Ukrainoje. Teritorija, dabar vadinama Podolė (ukr. *поділ* – žemuma, lyguma), yra prekybos, karinių, religinių, kultūrinių, etninių kelių kryžkelėje, kurių persipynimas turėjo įtakos vietovardžiams ir vietinei kalbai. Podolės centras – Podolės Kameneco miestas – daugiausia atspindėjo ir išsaugojo įvykių kupiną praeitį bei išlaikė prabėgusių metų atminimą. Regiono istoriniai įvykiai, procesai, politika ir transformacijos, kurias patyrė regionas, paliko pėdsakus objektuose, kurie naudojami iki šiol; tai atsispindi kaimų pavadinimuose (*Мукарів Татарський* / Mukariv Tatarskyi, *Татаринці* / Tatoryntsi), miestų gatvių ir rajonų pavadinimuo

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se *Копіювання / Vulytsia Kniaziv Koriatovychiv – Karijotaičiai, Вулиця Татарська / Tatarska gatvė, jos priemiesčių (Каравапу). Vietinėje kalboje yra daugybė leksemų, atsiradusių po įvairių invazijų, glaudžių kontaktų su kitomis tautomis, valstybių padalijimų, tarptautinių sutarčių, politinių susitarimų ir pan. Šie kalbiniai vienetai turi kilmės kalbos nacionalinį atspalvį ir praturtina Podolės gyventojų šnekta, suteikdami jai savitumo ir atpažįstamumo dėl istorinių patirčių, kurias išgyveno šis regionas. Straipsnyje bandoma išanalizuoti ir susisteminti kalbos ženklų etimologiją, skolinimosi priežastis ir pobūdį, nominacijų priežastis ir logiką bei jų vertę vėlesnėms Podolės gyventojų kartoms.*

Pagrindinės sąvokos: Podolė, regiono istorija, vietovardis, objektas, vietinė šnekta, leksinis vienetas, skolinys, etimologija.

Introduction

For a researcher, there is nothing more pleasant and rewarding than investigating the native land, the mother tongue, the specificities of the birthplace and the language learnt from the parents. Thus, native history and language will always attract those historians and linguists who would like to know more than can be seen on the surface. These aspects suggested the **objectives** of the present research which aim at analysing how the sequence of historic events of the territory where we, the two co-authors, have been living and working, influenced the vocabulary of the Ukrainian language as spoken in the region of Podillia situated in Mid-Western part of Ukraine.

The problem of lexical markers in regional history from its theoretical linguistic interpretation is within the theory of nomination. Landmarks are meant to represent regions in spatial terms and incorporate implicit attributes in navigating in the surrounding (Schick et al., 2015), they are interpreted as centres around which local and national political and cultural positions are articulated; therefore, they help improve national identity (Johnson, 1995); landmarks are perceived as mirror for regional phonetic features serving as acoustic cues and clues to local history and traditions (Juneja & Espy-Wilson, 2008). From a narrower semantic point of view, landmarks are considered to be those buildings, monuments, fountains, etc., which are regarded noticeable images to be recognized or identified the locality by. Thus, they facilitate visualization and site description bearing the contextual information usually employed by tourist guides. Hence, their lingual ground fits the general atmosphere of the sight (Binbin, 2021).

The necessity to nominate a particular location, a geographically determined concept explains the presence of loan words either where no native equivalent exists or where the influence of a foreign culture prevails due to various reasons. Here, as Franco et al. state, the loan word usage is determined by speech community or “particular groups, connected by social ties or characterized by geographical proximity” (Franco et al., 2019, p. 14). Thus, the distribution of loan words results from the history of each definite location and the impact of the native community or those who due to various reasons came to inhabit the territory and spoke a different language.

Research methodology. In this study, we apply research approaches which provide qualitative aspects and descriptive principles of the presentation of the problem in ques-

tion. As far as the hypothesis is to prove the connection and interdependence between the history of the Podillia region and regional lexical tapestry, we attempted to find out and fix the historic events that influenced urban and rural nominations as well as enlarged the regular vocabulary of local dwellers. To trace the origin of the studied units, elements of etymological analysis were employed supported by etymological dictionaries. “The Etymological Dictionary of the Ukrainian Language” in 7 volumes (*Етимологічний словник української мови / Etymologichnyj slovnyk ukrajins’koyi movy*, 1982) served the key source of historic-linguistic information about the presented vocabulary and provided evidence for its foreign origin, linguistic development, and assimilation in the Ukrainian language. So, historic-linguistic approach proved valid for demonstration of close links between the history of the nation (Podillia region, in particular) and the local specifics of the national language. The research claims different linguistic nature of the toponyms and common loanwords which are not equally treated in the lexical system of the language.

The sequence of the research stages follows the historic chronology: we process from the earliest period of the history of Podillia (Ancient Rus’) which laid the foundations of the regional specifics up to the latest invasion of the Russian Empire and the Soviet regime. The historical-chronological approach verifies the reasons and consequences of the events and their impact on the local linguistic identity.

Ancient Rus’ and Old East Slavic

Landmarks are semantically and etymologically motivated linguistic signs which have distinctive features and are rooted in the nation’s history. We assume that from the linguistic point of view, landmarks arise from different semantic categories, they are derived from special proximity and require a particular context to be properly understood. In this paper, we try to trace the appearance of geographical names, names of urban and rural territories arising from roots of non-Ukrainian languages which found their way to Podillia topography and local speech. We make an attempt to provide an overview of historic processes followed by lexical signposts.

Lexical borrowings and morphological influences are traditionally caused by deviation of linguistic regularities from some external, or rather other reasons of non-lingual character. The linguists state several alleged causes why the toponymical lexicon forms a framework of borrowings, namely loan words and derivatives with borrowed roots (Grieve et al., 2011; Geeraerts, 2010).

The origin of the Ukrainian language, as it is called and perceived worldwide today, goes back to the late 14th – early 15th centuries (Rusaniv’s’kyj, 2001). But still long before, during the Kyivan Rus’ state, as the researchers discovered and deciphered the medieval birchbark letters, the language from the regions of Kyiv and Halych differed significantly from the one spoken to the north and south (Moser, 2016, p. 6), or beyond its western boundaries, as far as Novgorod or Pskov whose regional dialects later developed into the Russian language.

Sharing some common features, East Slavic dialects functioned on the modern Ukrainian language territory which more or less covered the boundaries of contemporary Ukraine. So, the supradialectal Old East Slavic based precisely on the language of Kyiv could be reasonably called Old Ukrainian (Moser, 2016, p. 12).

Meanwhile, the medieval kingdoms and state formations of the kind began to develop as national states. The abovementioned Rus' (Rus'-Ukraina, Kyiv (Kyivan) Rus') was gradually transforming into a country with a dominating folk – Ukrainians. As Kuzio (2018) states, this process is not easy. The survey he undertook proves that the concept of national Ukrainian identity was accompanying those of nation building, identity, and historical myths creation.

Alongside with the parcelling process of Rus', each of new state formations began to separate itself advocating its own language. With the expansion of the state territory, the language expansion farther from the capital city of Kyiv followed. The linguistic landscape of the territory was far from uniform. The medieval spread of Old Ukrainian crossed the boundaries of several medieval states. The region of present-day Podillia is identified as south-western part of the former Slavic settlements. At the time of the Ukrainian language formation, it was a part of so-called Halych-Volhyn territory.

Rus' was part and parcel of medieval Europe, thus the political and economic process characteristic of European states were relevant for Kingdom of Rus', too. Here, we use the term 'kingdom' and its ruler King of Ruthenia (Rex Ruthenorum) due to the fact it was granted by the Pope Innocent IV to Daniel of Galicia (Danylo Romanovych) in 1253 for the Kingdom of Galicia-Volhynia (Maiorov, 2018; Raffensperger, 2017; Font, 2019). It made Danylo the first recognized King of Rus', designated as korol' in ancient chronicles (Maiorov, 2018, p. 322; Font, 2019). The 19th century historians used the nomination of 'Galician-Volhynian Principality' (Font, 2019, p. 15), which, alongside with 'Galician-Volhynian State', 'Galician Rus', 'Galicia-Volhynian Rus', 'Galicia-Volodymyr Rus', 'Principality of Galicia', 'Principality', etc. is a historiographical construct (Merenuk, 2024, p. 4).

Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Rzeczypospolita)

In the 14th century, after its collapse, the Ukrainian lands became a part of the powerful empire – the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The Grand Duke Algirdas, the son of Gediminas, defeated the troops of the Golden Horde (the other name of the Ulus Juchi, the western part of the Mongol empire) in 1362 and attached Podillia, alongside with other Kyiv Rus' territories, to Lithuania. This way, the largest state in Europe was formed. It was multi-ethnic and multiconfessional, with great diversity in languages, religion, and cultural heritage.

The majority of its population were the Slavs, so the structure of the state government was inherited from Rus'-Ukraine. The Rus' principalities were preserved, as well as their traditional political, military, judicial, and legislative systems. The official tongue was the Rus' language, the dominant religion was Orthodox Christianity – the Rus' belief (it

was called). A new dynasty – the Gediminas – reigned in the principalities (Merenuik, 2024). Podillia was ruled by the Koriatovych brothers (Lithuanian – Karijotaičiai), the Lithuanian princes. In fact, the Koriatovych founded our town of Kamianets-Podilskiy in its present understanding. According to the legend, they were hunting a deer in the local forest. When, after the long chase, the deer stopped, the hunters slowed down and looked around. What they saw was an incredible view – a stone island surrounded by the river in a deep canyon. They built a town on the island and called it Kamianets ‘Stone town’.

We deliberately omit the qualification of their presence in Podillia, as far as it might be called “an occupation of Podillya”, “the liberation of Podillya from the hegemony of Tatars”, “Lithuanian Expansion” (Mykhaylovskiy, 2019) focusing only on the linguistic traces on the map of the city and its premises left after these historic events.

So, the Duchy of Podolia (or Principality of Podolia) was one of the largest principalities with the center of Kamianets (now Kamianets-Podilskiy), our native town whose landmarks resulting from historic events we are intending to trace in this paper. In 1374, the Koriatovych brothers bestowed Kamianets on Magdeburg Law (Subtelny, 2009, p. 74).

Our town commemorated the Lithuanian Princes. Now, one of the central streets is named after the Koriatovych Princes (in Ukrainian: *Вулиця Князів Кориатовичів* / *Vulytsia Kniiaziv Koriatovychiv*). This landmark indicates the common history between the Lithuanian and the Rus’-Ukrainian peoples. There are also a few sculptures of a deer in the town which remind of the legend of the town foundation. As for other lexical markers of Lithuanian influence, a few words of everyday usage may be mentioned. For example, a well-known and widely used word Ukrainian *клуня* Lith. *klūonas* (also Latvian *klōns*) ‘barn’; Ukrainian *скирда, скирта, сміг* Lithuanian *stūrta* (also Latvian *stūrta*) ‘haystack’; Ukrainian *клишоногий* Lithuanian *klīšas* ‘bandy-legged, baker-legged’; Ukrainian *клишні рака* Lithuanian *klīšės* ‘claws’, etc. These lexical units are found not only in Podillia, like the mentioned above proper names, nevertheless, they signal language interference due to close contacts between the peoples. The assimilation of the described words had gone through many centuries until they found their way in the system of the Ukrainian language and local speech. Due to the long historic period, there occur regional variations of some of them. For instance, the Koriatovych Princes are perceived differently, both phonetically and orthographically: here, in Podillia, they are spelt *Кориатовичі* / *Koriatovychi* [koriaˈtovyʃi], but in the western part of Ukraine the spelling and sound are *Корятовичі* / *Koriatovychi* [korˈaˈtovyʃi]. According to Tyshchenko (Tyshhenko, 2010), such deformation of toponyms results from long period of use.

The Koriatovych rulers supported the election of Jogaila, Grand Duke of Lithuania, as King of Poland in 1386, aligning themselves with the emerging Polish-Lithuanian union. In 1434, following further conflicts and consolidation of Polish control, the territory of the former Podillia principality was fully incorporated into the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland. In the year of 1569, a new country appeared on the map of Europe – a federation, union of two neighbouring states: Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (or *Rzeczypospolita*), dual Polish-Lithuanian state which was created by the Union of Lublin on July 1, 1569. So, the Polish period in the history of Podillia lasted from 1434 to 1793 (359 years). In

spite of the fact that the new state was multinational, multi-ethnic, and multi-confessional, it managed to preserve the national features of the people living there who succeeded in constituting a common military might and defence system to effectively restrain external threats (Rodrigues, 2010).

This vast historic fragment caused language interference and numerous landmarks. For example, three markets appeared in our town: Polish, Armenian, and Rus'. Besides, the speech of the locals incorporated a great number of foreignisms where Polish lexemes prevailed. Thus, Polish landmarks can be found both around the region of Podillia and in the town of Kamianets-Podilskyi. One of these is the town district called Ukrainian *Польські фільварки* 'Polish Farmsteads', whereas at the other end of the town there is a district with a similar name – Ukrainian *Руські фільварки* 'Rus' Farmsteads'. Besides, nowadays there is still Ukrainian *Польський ринок* 'Polish Market', Ukrainian *Польська брама* 'Polish Gate'. As for the vocabulary of everyday importance, the lengthy period of Polish rule and domination in the region resulted in diverse lexical units borrowed from the Polish language or local dialect words derived from Polish roots. The examples of the words still in use are: Ukrainian *бінда* "кісник; кольорова стрічка" Polish *binda* 'ribbon, to bind', Ukrainian *кана* "скатерка" Polish *капа* 'cloth, bed-cover', Ukrainian *образ* "ікона" Polish *obraz* 'icon', Ukrainian *ружа* "троянда, шипшина, мальва" Polish *róža* 'rose', Ukrainian *склеп* "підвал" Polish *sklep* 'cellar, store', Polish *цебрина, цябро* Polish *ceber* 'bucket, pail', Ukrainian *бриль* "капелюх" Polish *bryl* 'hat', etc. These words spread all over the territories with the Polish rule and have assimilated into the active vocabulary since then.

Turkish Invasion

Though there was a break in the long Polish rule in Podillia: from 1672 to 1699 (27 years) the town of Kamianets-Podilskyi was conquered by the Turks of the Ottoman Empire, which reached the peak of its territorial expansion with military invasion of Ukraine (Michels, 2024, p. 137). Podillia became a province of Ottoman Empire and was called *Podillia Eyaleti*. This dramatic period left its traces in the local history and language. During the Turkish reign, numerous military, religious, educational and trade buildings appeared in the city. According to the local chronicles, there were 8 coffee-shops and 2 candy-stores in 1683 in Kamianets.

The Turkish influence can be found in the local vocabulary where some of the lexical units are still in use. First of all, these include city landmarks and the Turkish buildings which today are most visited tourist sights. Among them is the *Turkish Bastion* – a fortification construction which was meant to protect the city from the north. There is also a district in the city called *Каравсару / Karvasary* 'Caravanserai' (from Persian, meaning an inn that provided lodging for travelers, merchants, and caravans).

That was the time when local citizens got to know the meaning of the word *minaret* – the Ottoman invaders built it near the Catholic church (St Peter and Paul's Cathedral) after transforming it into a mosque. As soon as our town was returned to the Polish rule

again, the Poles restored the function of the church but did not ruin the minaret. They only placed a statue of Virgin Mary on top of it.

The Turks also converted St Nicolas Dominican Cathedral into a mosque and built a *minbar* in it. This is where Muslim sermons are preached from. Leaving Podillia, the Turks could not take it but arranged its preservation according to the truce. So, the cathedral was restored but the religious sign and the word are still present in the town.

Beside these landmarks and lexical units with religious semantics, there are some more words of Turkish origin which are active in the local vocabulary. For instance, we still go to *базар* / *bazar* ‘market’ to buy food-stuffs and other goods whereas historically such places were called *ярмарок* / *jarmarok* and on the territories under the Polish rule they were called *ринок* / *rynek* (Polish *Rynek*). Moreover, here are Turkish borrowings widespread all round Ukraine, and our region is using them alongside with the others, e.g. *лелека* ‘leleka’ from Turkish *leylek* ‘stork’, though in other Ukrainian regions these birds may be called differently, mainly by native Ukrainian words: *бузько* / *buz’ko*, *бузьок* / *buziok*, *журавель* / *zhuravel*, *чорногуз* / *chornohuz*. The other examples from present-day lexicon are: *килим* / *kylym* from Turkish *kilim* ‘carpet’; *майдан* / *maidan* – Turkish *meydan* ‘square’, *торба* / *torba* ‘textile bag’ from Turkish *torba* ‘bag, sack’; *чумак* / *chumak* ‘long-distance trader’ from Turkic word *chum* ‘storage container’, etc.

Crimean Tatars being the allies of the Ottoman Empire came to our town together with the Turks and expanded their influence, too. That is why Tatar lexical markers can also be found. There are some notable landmarks like Ukrainian *Татариски* / *Tatarysky* ‘the Tatar district, area’. It nominates the southern suburb of the town where the Tatars settled down in the late 17th century and later converted to Christianity. There is also *Вулиця Татарська* ‘Tatarska Street’ in the old district of our town. Beside Kamianets-Podilskyi, there are some other landmarks in the close vicinity which remind of the Tatars, like names of villages Ukrainian *Мукарів Татарський* / *Mukariv Tatarskyi*, *Татаринці* / *Tataryntsi*, *Татариска* / *Tataryska*.

Russian Empire

According to the Second Partition of Poland in 1793, Podillia constituted a part of the Russian Empire until its collapse in 1917, or, in other words, until it “collapsed in the wake of World War 1” (Hagen, 1976, p. 115). During the 19th century, there was a strong Polish impact in social and religious spheres. Almost all the urban dwellers spoke Polish, villagers spoke Ukrainian. The early 20th century initiated the language policy of Russification in towns. As the result, a third of the population spoke Ukrainian, another third spoke Russian and the last third – Yiddish. It influenced both the topography and local dialects.

The Russian interference was immense. It was enhanced by the strong imperial state mechanism and later – by the Soviet occupation whose treatment of Ukraine and Ukrainians was not different from that of the tsarist Russia. We suffered constant prosecutions from the side of the Moscovite-Russian totalitarian political regime. As a result, there appeared a lot of Russian borrowings in the Ukrainian language which had spread all over

the Empire and were not characterized as peculiar only in Podillia Province (or Russian *губерния* ‘gubernia’, Ukrainian *губернія* / *hubernija*, as Russians called administrative units instead of ‘provinces’). These referred to all spheres of administrative, social, educational, cultural, religious spheres and included military ranks, civil titles, occupations, judicial terms, street names, personal and family names. One of the striking examples is still a conspicuous sight today – the central cathedral of the (Russian) orthodox church is named in honour of the Prince of Novgorod known as *Alexandr Nevskiy* whose alias appeared after the battle at the river Neva where he led the army and, according to the Russian propaganda, defeated the Swedes in the 13th century. Later, he was canonized and proclaimed the saint protector of Russian diplomacy and marines.

Our national language and culture have been distancing from Russian oppression and establishing the Ukrainian national identity. The overwhelming takeaway from the Russian language is apparent in substituting words of Russian origin by Ukrainian neologisms, contemporary derivatives or words of English or Latin origin.

Conclusion

The history of the land of Podillia is a patchwork of events, invasions, battles, conflicts, and wars. This region appeared on the map of Europe in late Middle Ages and has often been mentioned in written records since then. Being an integral part of ancient Rus’, later – of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, then – Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (or *Rzeczypospolita*), suffering from Turkish and Tatar invaders, Russian Empire and Soviet occupation, Podillia absorbed the influences and formed its unique identity. It is reflected in the linguistic sphere, namely among toponyms, loanwords, and some common lexemes.

The analysed lexicon is not homogeneous; the vocabulary units may be divided into three groups: toponyms, borrowings and loanwords standing for specific national concepts which have been introduced into local life and speech, and dialect words which appeared as a result of foreign impact and which have synonyms in the system of language (standard vocabulary). Still, numerous urban and rustic place names, dialect words, and assimilated borrowings preserve historic cues and attract researchers who seek to decipher them. Specificities of the Ukrainian language used in Podillia explicate shared commonalities with the national tongues of the peoples who inhabited this land throughout its long history.

In other words, all political and administrative transformations left their traces on the map and in the local speech. Lexical markers of historic events and processes have been passed on from generation to generation thus making the region picturesque from the geographical and linguistic point of view.

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