

CULTURAL CODES IN UKRAINIAN DIASPORA ART: INFORMATION-
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND TRANSLATIONAL DIMENSION

Oleksandra Pavliv
Master's Student,
Larysa Shchychlo
PhD, Associate Professor,
Sumy State University, Ukraine

The growth of interstate and intercultural interactions increases the importance and role of the ability to recognise the cultural characteristics of different peoples and to respect them both. The global community is highly invested in addressing the issue of preserving historical and cultural heritage through the most advanced methods in each country. The artwork uniquely engages viewers by involving them in key historical events. The nature of art and its role in society focus on art's capacity as a sociocultural phenomenon to fulfil cognitive, communicative, compensatory, harmonizing, and educational functions. Art is a form of human communication, realized through the creative process of embodying the artist's intent (Suhr, 2022). Works of art are often accompanied by descriptions, whose primary goal is to help viewers understand the symbolism and establish an emotional connection with the subject. We are primarily interested in bilingual texts (English-Ukrainian) with a focus on Ukrainian studies, in which the values and meanings of our culture are expressed through its imagery.

Canada historically developed one of the largest Ukrainian diasporas, with immigrants and their descendants striving to preserve their identity (Ledohowski, 2009). One such figure is the great Canadian artist William Kurelek. Many of his written and illustrated works became bestsellers in Canada and the USA. Kurelek dedicated one of his largest works to his own heritage and perspective: the history of Ukrainian settlers in Canada. This extraordinary series of paintings – simultaneously historical, cultural, and religious – is titled *The Ukrainian Pioneer* and forms part of the Kurelek Collection at the Niagara Art Gallery and Museum. The author himself prepared the accompanying text, and his explanation of the drawings was also recorded and published in a book.

In the translation of historical and socio-cultural texts, it is important to consider the evolution of language and the specific lexical choices that reflect particular eras. One notable example is the term "the Atlantic" translated here as «АТЛЯНТИКА». In modern Ukrainian, the standard equivalent would be «АТЛАНТИКА» yet the historical variant «АТЛЯНТИКА» reflects either an older orthography or a more colloquial adaptation from the time when the text was written.

The translation of socio-historical realities presents significant challenges, particularly when attempting to render terms that hold distinct cultural and historical resonance. For example, the translation of "pioneer" as «піонер» is technically accurate but carries connotations linked to the Soviet era in the Ukrainian context. This necessitates a careful consideration of the cultural implications to avoid introducing unintended associations in the target language. Similarly, the term "gendarmes," rendered as «жандарми» is a precise equivalent that effectively conveys the oppression faced by Ukrainian peasants under imperial rule. This lexical choice underscores the importance of preserving historical accuracy while ensuring the social context remains intact, thereby facilitating a more authentic portrayal of the era. In terms of social stratification, the translation of "Ukrainian peasantry" as «українське селянство» maintains the integrity of the original, reflecting the demographic and economic class without introducing any additional connotations (Kurelek, 1980). The use of a direct equivalence here is instrumental in conveying the socio-economic conditions of the time in a neutral, yet contextually rich, manner.

The translation of culturally specific material elements also demands precise lexical choices. For instance, "boorday" is translated as «бурдей», a term that is transcribed rather than adapted, thereby preserving the architectural and cultural uniqueness of this structure. This transliteration is justified by the need to maintain the historical specificity of the referent. In contrast, "root cellar" is translated as «погріб», a term that reflects the functional equivalent in the Ukrainian cultural context. Although not a literal match, this choice offers a culturally resonant adaptation that aligns with domestic practices in Ukrainian villages of the era. Additionally, "clay-plastered," translated as «обліплена глиною», effectively captures the traditional building methods employed in rural Ukrainian settings, combining both literal accuracy and cultural specificity. The phrase "drawing rigs," translated as «старокрайова криниця (журавель)», introduces cultural specificity that goes beyond a literal rendering. «Журавель» refers to a traditional type of well, commonly seen in Eastern Europe, which uses a counterbalance mechanism to draw water. Other terms, such as "embroidered jacket" and "tobogganing," further exemplify the need for culturally appropriate translation. The phrase "embroidered jacket" refers to a traditional Ukrainian garment, most likely «вишита сорочка» or «жупан» (Kurelek, 1980). This not only indicates a garment but also carries deep cultural significance tied to Ukrainian heritage, ritual, and identity.

The translation must balance fidelity with preserving mood. For instance, the phrase "the dark night in Ukraine symbolizes the rather hopeless lot of the Ukrainian peasantry" is translated as «темна ніч в Україні символізує радше безнадійну долю українського селянства». The use of «радше» – "rather" introduces a subtle shift that softens the declarative tone of the original while maintaining the underlying

sense of despair. Similarly, "overcrowding is symbolized by the closely packed village houses" is rendered as «перенаселення символізоване тісно стиснутими сільськими хатами», which preserves the spatial imagery of the original, effectively communicating the oppressive living conditions of the time (Rubchak, 2019). The phrase "making a primitive shelter strong enough and snug enough to see them through the first winter" is translated as «будувати примітивний притулок, настільки міцний і затишний, щоб перетривати бодай першу зиму» (Kurelek, 1980). The verb «перетривати» ("to endure") adds a layer of emotional intensity, encapsulating the existential threat posed by the harsh winter conditions, while also emphasizing the resilience and determination of the settlers. «Самітність» ("isolation") similarly deserves analysis (Kurelek, 1980). The choice of «самітність» rather than «ізоляція» to translate "isolation" conveys not only physical separation but also emotional solitude. «Самітність» is a more nuanced term, evoking loneliness and the personal struggles of the pioneers, whereas «ізоляція» would suggest a more clinical or mechanical form of separation, lacking the emotional depth inherent in the context.

In conclusion, this analysis of cultural codes in bilingual books of the Ukrainian diaspora is not exhaustive. Various translation strategies transliteration, adaptation, and loan translation – help convey meaning while preserving authenticity, reflecting immigrant life. However, the diverse bilingual works analyzed in our research enable us to speak of the presence of a distinct national flavor in English-language texts on Ukrainian themes.

References

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