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CONFESSIONAL STYLE OF THE UKRAINIAN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The scientific work presents the practical possibilities of stylistics in the development of the confessional variety of the Ukrainian language, covering its diachronic and synchronic planes of study. The authors raise the question of the classification of the confessional style, outline its problems, and to demonstrate the patterns of speech that highlight the characteristic features of this stylistic variety. The areas of use, the dynamics of development, the limits of influence, and the popularity of the style are considered; lexico-stylistic units are listed as an illustrative example. The temporal dimension encompassed by the style begins during paganism in the Ukrainian lands and continues into the present time. Accordingly, the style is recognized as the most ancient type of language known to linguistics. The stylistic system of the Ukrainian language includes seven styles: colloquial/everyday, formal official business, journalistic, artistic, scientific, epistolary, and confessional. The last became the object of thorough research only since the independence of Ukraine. It is worth remembering, however, the legacy of Vasyl Nimchuk, who noted the lexico-semantic and stylistic parameters of the Ukrainian language at the turn of the 17th century through the prism of his confessionalism.¹ In connection with the freedoms of speech and religion proclaimed in Article 35 of the Constitution of Ukraine, every citizen can visit and profess any denomination, solidifying the rights of every Ukrainian to faith, thereby consolidating the position of the sacred style of the Ukrainian language and providing opportunities for its free use. The sublimity of the style creates a certain sacred harmony which is not possessed by any other known style of the Ukrainian language. It is noticed that the sacred language laid the foundation for the flourishing

¹ Василь Васильович Німчук, “Конфесійне питання і українська мова кінця XVI–початку XVII століть,” in *Берестейська унія і українська культура XVII століття* (Львів, 1996), 1–34. [Vasyl Vasyliovych Nimchuk, “Confessional Question and the Ukrainian Language of the Late 16th – Early 17th Centuries,” in *Brest Union and Ukrainian Culture of the 17th Century* (Lviv, 1996), 1–34.]

of both its own and other varieties of Ukrainian speech, setting the tone for the formation of other styles.

Research Problem

The relevance of our work is due to historical and social factors that influenced the formation of the confessional style of the Ukrainian language. The widespread use of the style indicates its necessity in religious and priestly circles and in the development of Ukrainian speech. The sacred style attracts researchers in such scientific fields as religious studies, history, and linguistics, each of which raises the problems of its formation and considers possible prospects for its development. Religious sciences refer to this specified stylistic variety of the Ukrainian language in theoretical and practical aspects, namely: how and where it is applied, its norms, criteria, features of formation, etc. The diachronic plane considers the origin, stages of formation, and the further path of development of its stylistic direction. Of course, in this case, one should consider the political, social, and religious conflicts arising on the territory of Ukraine. Linguistics determines the signifiers of confessional vocabulary and explores what distinguishes this style from others. The interest of researchers and the function of the style in worship, church records, sacred texts, sermons, etc. demonstrate its particular utility, a holistic meaning, its necessity in society, especially among believers.

The **object** of scientific research is the confessional variety of the Ukrainian language. The **subject** of the research is to determine the diachronic and synchronic planes of the formation and development of the sacred style in oral and written form.

The **work aims are** to consider the features of the confessional style and to analyze its lexical and semantic parameters. To achieve the goal, the following **tasks** must be completed: first, to consider the historical factors of the formation and development of church communion; second, to identify the differences between sacred speech and other stylistic varieties; and third, to establish the prevalence of the use of the confessional style in practical speech and give examples of church forms in literature.

Analysis of Scientific Sources

An important contribution to the historical study of the formation of sacred speech was made by the linguist, Doctor of Philology, V.V. Nimchuk in the series of articles “The Ukrainian language is a sacred language” (1992-2001). He analyzes the principles of the functioning of the Ukrainian confessional language in the religious sphere of life, from the Old Slavonic form of sacred language to the contemporary. The features of the confessional style

are described by N.S. Parish in the scientific publication “Features of the confessional style of the Ukrainian language.” N. D. Babich, in his work “Theological style of the Ukrainian language in the context of stylistic science,” expands the understanding of confessional stylistics in the research spectrum, contextualizing the rise of church, confessional, and theological literacy and speech in the Ukrainian communicative space.

First of all, let us analyze the diachronic plane of the issue. From time immemorial, confessional language performed a priestly function in serving the deities of Slavic mythology. Fulfilling the needs of the pagan service, researchers measure the point of reference for the history of the religious language—the language of prayers, cults, rituals, etc. Subsequently, with the Baptism of Rus in the 10th century and in response to early Orthodox canons, the religious language was Christianized, and the culture of divine services, especially their language, changed.

From the mid-12th to late 13th century, on the territory of Kievan Rus, the Church Slavonic language, a product of the literary Old Slavonic, was widely used. Church Slavonic existed purely as a language of worship and religious writing. It was created by the brothers Cyril and Methodius based on the Old Bulgarian and Old Macedonian (which researchers today call Old Slavonic). The original form of the Church Slavonic language is written in the works of divinely inspired composition, which have sacred significance, therefore, the oral form is derivative of the written one. Church Slavonic is a codified variant of the Old Church Slavonic language, the oldest known written Slavic language. Thus, it persisted until the 17th century in church communication, being popular among the clergy, and remains the traditional language of Orthodox divine services.

The researchers consider that the Church Slavonic language had different phonetic shades in different regions of Ukraine, although it was intended as a universal one. Therefore, the ancient Ukrainian believers used Church Slavonic with their regional dialectical idiosyncrasies. V.V. Nimchuk writes about this phenomenon:

The identity of the confessional and living-speaking orthoepy caused the fact that, with all due respect to the Church Slavonic language, the Ukrainian believers did not have the feeling of their native language, a dialect as something low, low in comparison with the confessional. The Ukrainian version of the Church Slavonic language, which was most clearly expressed in its Ukrainian orthoepy, in the absence of Ukrainian statehood, appeared among those powerful spiritual and cultural factors that protected the integrity

of the Ukrainians-Rusyns as an ethnic group. And this is although they were part of different states and different confessions (Orthodox and Greek Catholic).²

The Church Slavonic language has consolidated its relevance among the Kyiv-Mohyla Collegium and the Ostroh Academy, where students were instructed in it.

The history of the Church Slavonic language is firmly rooted in the histories of Christianity in Russia and of Slavic speech in general. The divine liturgy today is conducted in Church Slavonic in all departments of the Orthodox metropolitanates and patriarchates; interchurch correspondence, however, and other communications in religious institutions are carried out with the confessional literary language of a particular people, adapted to modern times with residual Church Slavisms, archaisms, etc. Therefore, we regard the influence of the Church Slavonic language on the Ukrainian confessional style of speech as obvious.

Literary memos played an important role in the formation of the confessional style of the language. The most valuable and famous monument of the Old Slavonic language of the times of Kievan Rus is the Ostromir Gospel, dated mid-11th century, which remains a model of Old Church Slavonic writing even before the introduction of a special Slavic language in church writing and worship. It retains many phonetic, lexical, grammatical, and stylistic features common in the use of Old Church Slavonic communication and liturgical practice.

The first complete translation of the Bible into Church Slavonic, which became an example of the then already developed confessional literature, is the Ostrog Bible, commissioned by Prince Constantine-Vasily of Ostrog and published in Ostrog in 1580-1581. The translation testifies to the high linguistic culture and broad typographic and literary capabilities. This Bible was of great importance for Orthodox education, which had to withstand strong Catholic pressure in Ukraine and Belarus. It is still used by Old Believers who do not recognize any new translation of the Bible, like those of the 17th century.

Ukrainian translations of the Bible, especially of Kulish, Nechui-Levytsky, and Pulyuy of 1903 and Ivan Ohienko (Metropolitan Hilarion) of 1962,³ are of value for how they preserve

² Василь Васильович Німчук, "Українська мова — священна мова," *Людина і світ*, no. 11–12 (1992): 31. [Vasyl V. Nimchuk, "Ukrainian language is a sacred language," *Man and the World*, no. 11–12 (1992): 31.]

³ The first complete translation of the Bible into Ukrainian was made by Panteleimon Kulish. He began his work in the 1860s, then in 1869 he published anonymously in the city of Lviv (Ukraine). He was joined in 1869 by Ivan Pulyui (later a well-known physicist), who, despite his young age, had a deep knowledge of theology and knew some classical languages. In 1881, the Shevchenko Scientific Society published in Lviv the New Testament in their translation. Work on the Old Testament continued. A mysterious fire in November 1885 at the Kulishevo farm Motronovka (Gannina Pustyn) became a tragic page in the history of the Ukrainian Bible; the manuscript of the translation of the Old Testament burned down during the fire. The translators started working again on the translation of the Old Testament from the very beginning. The translation was completed after the death of P. Kulish by I. Pulyuy together with Ivan Nechuy-Levitsky. Only in 1903 did the British and Foreign Bible Society

the sacred stylistics of Ukrainian speech and writing. Against the background of a new upsurge of the national liberation movement in Ukraine, it became necessary to create in the native language and achieve euphony in the Holy Scriptures with a modern literary form, which drove the impetus for translation. These translations achieved the biblical style while reducing the number of books and Church Slavonic elements. The Orthodox canon did not add these translations to divine services without first blessing them for use. M. I. Sagarda, a Ukrainian historian and bibliographer, wrote enthusiastically that the translation of P. A. Kulisha “reflects the deep understanding and high inspiration of a person who has invested in him all his great knowledge of his native language, all his love for it and the Word of God, all his soul. Kulish really made Moses, Isaiah, and other prophets speak very good Ukrainian.”⁴

Thanks to the efforts of sacred language historians and documentarians, there is a clear depiction of the confessional direction of Ukrainian communication and writing. This survived into the modern era despite its exclusion from Ukrainian speech in the 1930s, due to the doctrine of the Bolshevik party, where the atheistic worldview prevailed. Nevertheless, some scholars still do not distinguish it as a separate style, instead calling it a “stylistic variety” or

publish the first complete Ukrainian Bible (“The Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testaments”) translated by P. Kulish, I. Pulyuy, and I. Nechuy-Levitsky. By 1917, princes, consecrators, and wealthy people could afford to buy this translation, but it was not available to the majority of the population. The Bible translated by Kulish, Pulyuy, and Nechuy-Levitsky was reprinted in 1912 (Vienna), 1921 and 1930 (Berlin), 1947 (New York, London). On the territory of Ukraine, the Kulish translation was first published only in 2000 (Kyiv).

The most authoritative translation of Holy Scripture by Ivan Ohienko was published in 1962. Professor Ivan Ohienko, Minister of Education and Religions of the young Ukrainian People’s Republic began the translation of the Holy Scriptures. Direct work on the translation continued from 1917 to 1940. Presenting to the public the long-desired idea of a new translation of the Holy Scriptures into Ukrainian, Ivan Ohienko noted: “... We really need such a translation of the Bible, which would be in the modern literary all-Ukrainian language. To translate the whole Bible--and first, the New Testament follows such a literary language that would become exemplary at least for the first 50 years. It was felt that Ukrainians must have a translation that would be the best textbook for learning the Ukrainian language. Without this, the normal development of the literary language will not be the “cornerstone;” which is much needed, because it is necessary that the peasant masses--the main reader of the Holy Scripture--get used to a good literary language. Such a translation must be published with the indication of stresses, so that everyone can read it in a truly literary way. That is why, starting this extremely complex work, Ohienko set himself two most important tasks: firstly, to accurately convey the content of the original, taking care primarily of the content accuracy of a number of polysemantic words, and, secondly, to ensure the translation is euphonic, in a modern literary language. The work revived after the British and Foreign Bible Society entered into an agreement with the translator (1936) to publish the book. Today, the translation of Ivan Ohienko is a model of the Ukrainian language and an authority. Although some terminology is already outdated, and the translator himself tried to translate it in accordance with the original, which deprived the translation of harmony, however, this translation is an authority today and is continually used in the printing of Ukrainian Bibles.

All Christian denominations (churches) in Ukraine use the same translations of the Bible, except for Jehovah's Witnesses (they have their own special translation of the Bible). The number of Protestants and other Christian denominations are very few in Ukraine and it is unnecessary to create special translations for their own needs by a specific sacred language.

⁴ М. Сагарда, “Поетичні переклади П. О. Куліша Св. Письма,” in *Українська перекладознавча думка 1920-х – початку 1930-х років*, ed. Л. М. Черноватий and В. І. Карабан (Вінниця: Нова Книга, 2001), 63. [M. Sagarda, “Poetic translations of PA Kulish's Holy Scriptures,” in *Ukrainian Translation Studies Thought of the 1920s and Early 1930s*, ed. LM Chernovaty and VI Karaban (Vinnytsia: Nova Kniga, 2001), 63.]

“sub-style,” just like the epistolary one. It should be understood that the sacred style is used in a specific context, serving the needs of believers, priests, preachers, church leaders, and therefore no consensus exists among scholars as to its definition. Countless terms have been used to identify the style: sacred style, confessional style, theological style, religious style, sacred language, holy language, cult language. The connections and expressions of the confessional language among other styles have not been studied; it does, however, feature a distinct basis, directions, and foundations, has its vocabulary and range of use, as evidenced by research, oral, and written sources. In the end, this makes it possible to distinguish it from other styles and encourages linguists to study its stylistic features more thoroughly.

Ukrainian linguistic stylistics of the late 20th to early 21st century detect, since their beginning at the end of the 19th century, two directions in the development of the sacred style: a focus on the Church Slavonic heritage and a reference to intralingual resources. Considering these two concerns, contemporary linguists study the confessional style and continue to find Church Slavonic roots in the lexical base of the Slavic languages, which were, in fact, the sacred style of communication of Orthodox Christians. Confessional expression is characterized by solemnity, inversion (reversal) of word order in a sentence, repetitions of words and phrases, with the help of which a certain opinion is noted; inherent in the wide use of periphrases, allegories, metaphors, comparisons, archaisms (Old Church Slavonicism, Church Slavonicism), figurative speech, and a general sense of the sublime style, which complement the experience of divine revelation. The listed phrased and terms features make it possible to consider the sacred style delimited from other styles.

The *confessional style* is also characterized by complex words: *God-man, evangelism, divine service, Epiphany, Great veneration, baptism, worship, gifts, two-song, rod-bearer, scribe, kneeling, moon-talker, prayer book, all-pervasiveness, crusader, clergyman, trinity, miracle*, etc.

The vocabulary of the confessional style contains well-established symbolic words and phrases such as *Heavenly Father, Kingdom of God, Holy Spirit, Holy Trinity, servant of God, Last Supper, Your Beatitude, Service, God's, Your All-Holiness, Your Eminence, the gift of righteousness, all people—the temple of God*, etc.

In grammar, the essential feature is the overwhelming majority of words that are purely adapted to this style. Even secular words acquire a religious meaning in this context, in particular words like: bread, brother, teacher, wine, sisters, parents, crown, water, bell, bowl, candle, etc. Thus the style is characterized by the use of stylistically colored words and

expressions, in which the church-religious meaning has long been entrenched; an abundance of peculiar abstract names, pertaining to religious reality, the names of God, the priestly hierarchy, etc.; and a reappropriation of words that would in other contexts be considered neutral. Sacred language is unusual, rather strict, concentrated on elucidating the spiritual dimensions of the mental and sensory reality of a person in service of making him think and believe.

Attention should be paid to the prevalence among believers of different denominations of Christian slogans proclaimed on great national holidays: Christ is risen! – Truly resurrected! Glory to Jesus! – Forever glory! Christ was born! – We glorify Him! Happy God's day to you!; With God's blessing!

The confessional style of the Ukrainian language is most often found in translations of the Holy Scriptures, in liturgical practice, in Christian slogans, in special words, etc. Moreover, it should be noted that it was precisely thanks to the suppression of the development of the Ukrainian language by the Soviet government that a special direction of the sacred style of the language emerged, easily distinguishable from other styles due to the saturation of signifiers that are understandable only in the context of the use by the Ukrainians themselves.

Conclusions

The confessional style of the Ukrainian language began to take shape even under Kievan Rus. Each stage in its development is due to different socio-historical factors. In this work, we have proven that the sacred language must be considered distinct within Ukrainian language, due to such distinguishing qualities as its ancient historical roots, its role as the language of church communication today, its use in all areas of religious activity and among believers, and its realization in divine services, sermons, and prayers.

In the Ukrainian religious space, the features of classical religious speech are realized thanks to the corresponding canons.⁵ Sacred language has oral and written forms, flexible

⁵ Canons of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church

Canon VII. Mother tongue in the Church

1. In the Ukrainian Orthodox Autocephalous Church, the living Ukrainian language of the people is used, because Christ, the apostles and their deputies preached in people's native languages, because only in the native language can one better pray, manifest one's soul to God.

2. Whoever laughs at the Ukrainian language of the gospel, he blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, who in fiery tongues gave the gifts of tongues for the gospel to all peoples, he must be expelled from the Church until he repents.

3. Bearing in mind that the translations of liturgical books into Ukrainian, which the All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council has so far made, fully meet the needs of our Church, the Council recognizes it necessary that the All-Ukrainian Orthodox Church Council continue to carry out its useful work in translating liturgical books, to

enough that both priests and laity, people of different social classes, can be its transmitters. Its main functions are religious: to call sinners to repentance, to reconcile believers with God, to fulfill God's commandments. In our opinion, it is the preaching of the Word of God that will be able to turn people and society as a whole to face the Creator, who will grant true happiness here on earth and in eternity. This is precisely the goal set by the clergy. We see further consideration of this problem in the analysis of psycholinguistic parameters that actively produce the confessional style, especially at the present stage of their development.

enable the Ukrainian Orthodox person always and in all cases to use their native language in the Church for the glory of God and the affirmation of Christ's teaching among the people.

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