

English and Romanian Words of Ukrainian Origin in Tourism Promotion

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Abstract

The scope of the contribution is to raise intercultural awareness and understanding in the context of globalisation. Readers will come across words familiar to them, which they have never thought of as belonging to the Ukrainian vocabulary. These are English / Romanian words of Ukrainian origin, i.e. words in the English / Romanian language that have been borrowed from the Ukrainian language at some point in time and under different circumstances. The authors have identified a corpus of 42 such Ukrainian borrowings (most of which are used in tourism mass media) based on English / Romanian language dictionaries and Internet sources, and analysed them from a linguistic perspective in an attempt to explain how and why they have entered the English / Romanian language. Research results show that Ukrainian borrowings are circumscribed to such fields as cuisine, ethnicity, geography, history, music, or politics. Some of them have entered English / Romanian directly, some others via other languages; other borrowings have originated in other languages, but they refer to Ukrainian realities (past and present); finally, some Ukrainian borrowings are used by Ukrainian diaspora in an English / Romanian-speaking environment.

Keywords: Ukrainian borrowings, English, Romanian, Tourism promotion.

1. Introduction

Lately, in the context of globalisation, there has been considerable interest in the "impact the economic performance and integration into Canadian society of post former Soviet Union (FSU) Ukrainian immigrants" [1]. Language issues have also been under scrutiny [2, 3]. However, language issues do not concern only Ukrainians living in Canada, but also tourists, tourist guide authors, scholars, etc., that could be hindered in their activities by miscommunication [4, 5].

This study aims at showing that Internet sources are not always reliable when it comes to using information to learn more about a certain country and/or about its official language.

This is the case of Ukrainian in its relation with two languages with which it has been in contact for longer or shorter periods of time: English (in both Canada and the U.S.A., in the 19th and 20th centuries) and Romanian (in Romania, for several hundreds of years). Despite the huge differences between English and Ukrainian, borrowing or adapting Ukrainian words in English has not been an issue so far [6, 7].

2. Material and Method

We analysed from an etymological perspective 42 Ukrainian words picked from Internet sources [2, 3], that we checked in both English [2, 8] and Romanian [9, 10, 11] dictionaries in our attempt to see if Ukrainian borrowings are really loanwords or not.

3. Results and Discussion

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The 42 Ukrainian words and their English and Romanian equivalents can be grouped into 7 groups, as follows:

- 8 words have (more or less) the same meaning in Ukrainian, English and Romanian: Ukr *bandura* ‘a stringed instrument’ [3], E *bandura* ‘a Ukrainian stringed instrument of the lute family’ (< Ukrainian *bandura*) [12], Rou *bandură* ‘a Ukrainian folk stringed instrument resembling a short-necked guitar, with 8 to 24 strings, some of which are stretched along the neck of the instrument’ (< Ukrainian *bandura*) [10]; Ukr *borsch* / *borscht* / *borsht* ‘a beet soup’ [3], E *borsch* / *borscht* / *borsht* ‘a beet soup served hot or cold, usually with sour cream’ (< Yiddish *borsht* < Russian *borshch* ‘cow parsnip (the original base of the soup), borscht’) [13], Rou *borș* ‘sour soup with beef and vegetables’ (< Russian, Ukrainian *borshch*) [10]; Ukr *boyar* ‘a member of a class of higher Russian nobility that until the time of Peter I headed the civil and military administration of the country and participated in an early дума’ [3], E *boyar* ‘a member of the highest rank of the feudal Russian, Bulgarian, Romanian, and Ukrainian aristocracy, second only to the ruling princes, from the 10th century through the 17th century’ (< Ukrainian *boiaren* < Russian *boyarin* < Old Russian *boljarin* < Turkic *baylar* pl. of *bay* ‘rich’) [13], Rou *boier* ‘great landlord’ (< Slavic *boljarinŭ*) [10]; Ukr *Cossack* ‘a freedom loving horseman of the steppes’ [3], E *Cossack* ‘a member of a people of southern European Russia and adjacent parts of Asia, noted as cavalrymen especially during czarist times’ (< Russian *kazak* and Ukrainian *kozak* < South Turkic *qazaq* ‘adventurer’) [13], Rou *cazac* ‘a member of an autonomous military community formed in the 16th century from elements discontent with Muscovite regime bound to defend the country against invasions in exchange for certain privileges’ (< Russian *kazak*) [9]; Ukr *gley* ‘a sticky blue grey waterlogged soil type, poor in oxygen’ [3], E *gley* ‘a sticky, bluish-grey subsurface layer of clay found in some waterlogged soils’ (< Russian dialectal *glei* ‘clay’) [13], Rou *glei* ‘a grey, bluish-green layer of clay formed under some waterlogged soils’ (< English *gley* < Russian dialectal *glei* ‘clay’) [10]; Ukr *hetman* ‘a Cossack military leader’ [3], E *ataman* / *hetman* ‘a Cossack chief’ (< Ukrainian *het'man* < Polish *hetman* < German dialectal *hötman*, *hetman* ‘captain’) [13], Rou *hatman* ‘great Polish

or Cossack military commander’ (< Polish *hetman*) [10]; Ukr *kurgan* ‘a type of burial mound found in Eastern Europe and Central Asia’ [3], E *kurgan* ‘a type of tumulus or barrow characteristic of a culture located on the steppes of southern Russia about 5000 B.C. and later spreading to the Danube, northern Europe, and northern Iran from around 3500 B.C.’ (< Russian *kurgan* ‘fortified place, grave mound’ < Old Turkic *kurghan* ‘fortified place’) + additional meaning *Kurgan* ‘a. The culture that produced these tumuli or barrows. b. A member of the people or peoples sharing this culture’ (< Russian *kurgan* ‘fortified place, grave mound’ < Old Turkic *kurghan* ‘fortified place’) [13], Rou *curgan* / *gorgan* / *kurgan* ‘big earth tread (black)’ (< Russian *kurgan* ‘fortified place, grave mound’ < Old Turkic *kurghan* ‘fortified place’) [10]; Ukr *steppe* ‘a flat, treeless plain’ [2], E *steppe* ‘a vast semiarid grass-covered plain, as found in southeast Europe, Siberia, and central North America’ (< German *steppe* < Russian *step*) [13], Rou *stepă* ‘a vast arid plain, covered mainly by grasses, rhizome plants, bushes and spiny plants’ (< Russian *step*) [10].

- 1 word has the same meaning in Ukrainian and Romanian, different meaning in English: Ukr *baba* ‘a grandmother or old woman’ [3], Rou *babă* ‘old woman’ (< Bulgarian, Serbian, Ukrainian *baba*) [10] vs. E *baba (au rhum)* ‘a leavened rum cake, usually made with raisins’ (< F < Pol *baba* ‘old woman’) [13];

- 3 words have the same meaning in Ukrainian and English, but no equivalent in Romanian: Ukr *babka* ‘a sweet Easter bread’ [3], E *babka* ‘a coffee cake flavoured with orange rind, rum, almonds, and raisins’ (< Pol diminutive of *baba* ‘old woman’) [13]; Ukr *Banderist* ‘a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists or of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army’ [3], E *Banderite* ‘a member of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists or of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army’ (< Ukrainian *Banderivtsi* < *Stepan Bandera* ‘head of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists’) [13]; Ukr *perogy* / *pyrih* ‘a pie that can have either a sweet or savoury filling; stuffed dumplings or pastry’ [3], E *pirog* ‘a large, flat, usually square or rectangular Russian pastry filled with finely chopped meat or cabbage often mixed with chopped hard-boiled eggs’ (< Russian *pirog* < Russian *pir* ‘feast’ < Old Church Slavonic *pirŭ*) [13].

- 7 words have the same meaning in Ukrainian and Romanian, but no equivalent in English:

Ukr *horilka* ‘a Ukrainian alcoholic beverage’ [3], Rou *holercă / horilcă / horincă* ‘low quality raki’ (< Ukrainian *horilka*) [10]; Ukr *hryvna / hryvnia / hryvnyia* ‘the national currency of Ukraine since 1996’ [3], Rou *grivnă* ‘official currency of Ukraine’ (< Ukrainian *hryvna*) [10]; Ukr *hucul / hutsul* ‘a pony or small horse breed originally from the Carpathian Mountains’ [3], Rou *huțul* ‘autochthonous small horse breed from the mountain area’ (< Ukrainian *hucul*) [10]; Ukr *Hutsul* ‘an ethno cultural group who for centuries have inhabited the Carpathian Mountains’ [3], Rou *huțul* ‘Slavic population from the mountain area of Northern Romania’ (< Ukrainian *hucul*) [10]; Ukr *kasha* ‘porridge’ [3], Rou *cașă* ‘a meal resembling pilav’ (< Russian *kasha*) [10]; Ukr *kniaz* ‘a title given to members of Ukrainian nobility that arose during the Rurik dynasty’ [3], Rou *cneaz* ‘prince duke’ (< Russian *kneaz*, Ukrainian *knjaz*) [10]; Ukr *pashka / paska / paskha* ‘a decorated Easter bread, a rich dessert with curd cheese and dried fruit’ [3], Rou *pască* ‘traditional Easter bread, a rich dessert with curd cheese, sour cream and raisins’ (< Latin *pascha*) [10].

- 20 Ukrainian words have no equivalents in English or Romanian:

Boiko / Boyko ‘a distinctive group of Ukrainian highlanders or mountain dwellers of the Carpathian highlands’ [3]; *chumak* ‘a class of merchants and traders from the area comprising modern Ukraine’ [3]; *gitch / gotch / gotchies* ‘underwear’ [11]; *holubtsi* ‘cabbage rolls’ [3]; *hopak* ‘a lively traditional dance’ [3]; *khorovod* ‘a Slavic art form consisting of a combination of a circle dance and chorus singing, similar to Chorea of ancient Greece’ [3]; *kolbassa / kubasa* ‘garlic sausage’ [3]; *lymonnyk* ‘a lemon pie’ [3]; *Naftogaz / Naftohaz* ‘the national oil and gas company of Ukraine’ [3]; *oseledets* ‘a haircut similar to that worn by Ukrainian Cossacks’ [3]; *pysanka* ‘a decorated Easter egg’ [3]; *Rukh* ‘a Ukrainian centre right political party the People’s Movement of Ukraine’ [3]; *Rusyn* ‘an ethnic group of Ukrainians’ [3]; *Sich* ‘the administrative and military centre for Cossacks’ [3]; *Surzhyk* ‘a mixed (macaronic) sociolects of Ukrainian and Russian languages used in certain regions of Ukraine and adjacent lands’ [3]; *sirniki / syrniki* ‘fried quark cheese pancakes, garnished with sour cream, jam, honey,

or apple sauce’ [3]; *tachanka* ‘a horse drawn machine gun platform’ (< Ukrainian diminutive for *tachka* ‘wheelbarrow’) [3]; *varenyky* ‘boiled dumplings with potato or meat inside’ (< Ukrainian *várenyj* ‘boiled’ < Old East Slavic *variti*) [3]; *Verkhovna Rada* ‘the Ukraine’s parliament, literally Supreme Council, formerly also translated as the Supreme Soviet’ [3]; *Verkhovynets / Verkhovynian* ‘a distinctive group of Ukrainian highlanders or mountain dwellers of the Carpathian highlands’ [3].

- 2 Ukrainian words do not occur in our corpus, but they occur in English:

E *knish* ‘a piece of dough stuffed with potato, meat, or cheese and baked or fried’ (< Yiddish *knish* < Ukrainian *knish*) [13]; E *latke* ‘a pancake, especially one made of grated potato’ (< Yiddish *latke* < Ukrainian *oladka* < Old Russian *oladka*, diminutive of *olad’ya* < Greek *eladia* ‘little oily thing’) [13].

- 1 Ukrainian word does not occur in our corpus, but it occurs in English and Romanian:

E *piroshki / pirozhki* ‘small Russian pastries filled with finely chopped meat or cabbage, baked or fried’ (< Russian *pirozhki*, pl. of *pirozhok*, diminutive of *pirog* ‘pirog’) [13], Rou *piroșcă* ‘a pastry filled with meat, potato, cheese, marmalade, etc.’ (< Russian *pirožki*, Ukrainian *pyrižky*) [10].

Research results show that:

- 20 of the so-called English words of Ukrainian origin do not occur in English language dictionaries outside Canada (*Boiko / Boyko, chumak, gitch / gotch / gotchies, holubtsi, hopak, khorovod, kolbassa / kubasa, lymonnyk, Naftogaz / Naftohaz, oseledets, pysanka, Rukh, Rusyn, Sich, Surzhyk, sirniki / syrniki, tachanka, varenyky, Verkhovna Rada, Verkhovynets / Verkhovynian*);

- Only 7 of the so-called English words of Ukrainian origin (*ataman / hetman, Banderite, bandura, boyar, Cossack, knish, latke*) and 8 of the so-called Romanian words of Ukrainian origin (*babă, bandură, borș, cneaz, grivnă, holercă / horilcă / horincă, huțul / Huțul, piroșcă*) are Ukrainian borrowings proper;

- The other so-called English words of Ukrainian origin come from French (*baba (au rhum)*), German (*steppe*), Polish (*babka, boyar*), Russian (*Cossack, gley, pirog, piroshki*), Turkish (*kurgan*), and Yiddish (*borsch, knish, latke*);

- The other so-called Romanian words of Ukrainian origin come from English (*glei*), Latin (*pască*), Polish (*ataman / hatman*), Russian (*borș, cașă, cazac, cneaz, curgan / gorgan / kurgan, piroșcă, stepă*), and Slavic (*boier*);
- The E *Cossack* and the Rou *borș, cneaz* and *piroșcă* have a double (Russian and Ukrainian) etymology;
- The Rou *babă* has a triple etymology (Bulgarian, Serbian, and Ukrainian);
- In the group Ukr *baba*, E *baba (au rhum)* and Rou *babă*, the English word got its different meaning from E *babka* due to the similarity in content and, maybe, in pronunciation;
- In the group Ukr *babka* – E *babka*, Ukr *Banderist* – E *Banderite* and Ukr *perogy / pyrih* – E *pirog*, there is no Romanian equivalent because the English equivalents are common in Canadian English spoken by Ukrainians;
- In the group Ukr *horilka* – Rou *holercă / horilcă / horincă*, Ukr *hryvna / hryvnia / hryvnya* – Rou *grivnă*, Ukr *hucul / hutsul* – Rou *huțul / huțul*, there is no English equivalent because Ukrainian borrowings in Romanian came from direct language contact (Ukraine and Romania have been neighbours for centuries);
- E *knish* and E *latke* do not occur in our corpus [2, 3], but they occur in English language dictionaries [13];
- E *piroshki / pirozhki* and Rou *piroșcă* do not occur in our corpus [2, 3], but they occur in English [13] and Romanian [10] language dictionaries.

4. Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from our analysis:

- Internet linguistic sources are not reliable, they need to be checked and double-checked using professional linguistic tools: this can clarify situations in which, of 42 English terms claimed to have Ukrainian origins, only 7 prove to be so;
- Information supplied by tourism materials should also be checked, particularly when it is about native terms used in gastronomy, history, and politics, to make communication as accurate as possible and avoid confusions (such as the one

between Ukr *perogy / pyrih*, E *pirog* and *piroshki / pirozhki* and Rou *piroșcă*).

- Romanian compounds, derivatives and phrases based on Ukrainian loanwords (e.g. with or from *borș*) are numerous and they prove the degree of assimilation of these borrowings in Romanian.

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