Totalitarian Realia: Abbreviation-Based Sovietisms and the Methodology of Their Recreation in English Translations of Ukrainian Literature

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Abstract. This paper explores the topic of totalitarian realia, represented by Sovietisms in the Soviet Union, from linguistic, ideological, and translation-oriented perspectives. Sovietisms can be categorized into two types: conventional and abbreviation-based. An analysis of three translations of Ukrainian Soviet-era literary works, which make extensive use of Sovietisms, identifies 139 examples. The primary focus of this paper is on abbreviation-based Sovietisms, which constitute 65.5% of the research corpus, encompass many unique linguistic phenomena, and are predominantly rendered through a domesticating approach (76%), despite the nation-narrating objectives of their translators. Based on this analysis, the key strategies for translating abbreviation-based Sovietisms into English are outlined. Additionally, an alternative strategy, termed *combined renomination* (calque), is proposed for foreignization-oriented nation-narrating translations involving abbreviation-based Sovietisms.
Keywords: Sovietisms, totalitarian, realia, domestication, foreignization, neutralization

Totalitarinės realijos: santrumpomis reiškiami sovietizmai ir jų perteikimo metodologija ukrainiečių literatūros vertimuose į anglų kalbą

Santrauka. Straipsnyje lingvistiniu, ideologiniu ir vertimo požiūriu aptariamos totalitarinės realijos, kurias Sovietų Sąjungoje reprezentavo sovietizmai. Sovietizmus galima suskirstyti į du tipus: konvencinius ir trumpinius. Išanalizavus trejetą ukrainiečių sovietmečio literatūros kūrinių vertimų, kuriuose panaudota gana daug sovietizmų, pateikiami 139 jų pavyzdžiai. Daugiausia dėmesio skiriama santrumpomis perteikiamiems sovietizmams, nes jie sudaro 65,5 proc. tiriamojo korpuso, apima daug unikalių kalbinių reiškinių ir, nepaisant vertėjų tautinio naratyvo tikslų, yra verčiami taikant savinimo strategiją (76 proc.). Remiantis jų pavyzdžiais aptariamos pagrindinės santrumpomis perteikiamų sovietizmų vertimo į anglų kalbą strategijos. Siūloma alternatyvi strategija santraukas versti kalkėmis, kuri tinka į svetiminimą orientuotiems nacionalinio naratyvo vertimams, perteikiant santraukomis reiškiamus sovietizmus.
Pagrindiniai žodžiai: sovietizmai, totalitarizmas, realijos, savinimas, svetiminimas, neutralizacija

1. Introduction

1.1. Key Aims of the Paper

Scientific literature written after the Soviet Union's collapse presents two significant approaches to the legacy of Communism. Many studies address the economic outcomes of socialism and attempt to assess its efficiency. This field includes seminal monographs by authors such as Robert Allen (2009: 1–312) and Paul Gregory (2004: 1–322), who offer objective assessments of the economic system from the econometric and political economy standpoints, respectively. Numerous studies also target the ideology behind socialism, Marxist Communism, and its consequences. The books by Anne Applebaum (2017: 1–496) and Timothy Snyder (2016: 1–560) inquire into the Soviet Union from this perspective. A significant aspect of these investigations is their concentration on the immense human suffering provoked by the Communist regimes.

Initially, this type of research concentrated on the direct genocidal activities of the Communist states, such as the Holodomor Genocide of Ukrainians in 1932–1933. However, interactions between Eastern European and Western scholars are now drawing attention to the more subtle crimes of the Communist regimes. For example, attention is growing regarding the language policy of the Soviet Union. In "Red Famine", Anne Applebaum (2017: 205–222) highlights the policy of oppressing Ukrainian language speakers that began in the Soviet Union with the rise of forced industrialization and collectivization in the 1930s. The policy resulted in the widespread Russification of Ukrainians, amounting to cultural genocide. The Soviet rule started a steady erosion of the Ukrainian language from public discourse and even private lives in Ukraine. This trend was reverted only after the collapse of the totalitarian system

In the light of the outlined issues, this study has three main goals. Firstly, it aims to draw attention to the often overlooked phenomenon of Soviet language policy, an attempt to promote a form of "newspeak," exemplified by so-called Sovietisms. The author will analyze Sovietism subtypes and outline their long-term implications. Secondly, one more goal of the analysis is to discuss this topic based on the Translation Studies frameworks. The core objective is to review the approaches to translating Sovietisms in English translations of Ukrainian prose. Finally, the paper outlines alternative methods for rendering Soviet expressions into other languages that reflect their destructive and totalitarian nature.

1.2. Research Sample

The novels of Valerian Pidmohilnyi titled "The City" and "A Little Touch of Drama" and their translations by Maxim Tarnawsky and a translator team of George and Moira

Luckyj, respectively, as well as the short story "Duel" (or "Death" in original) by Borys Antonenko-Davydovych, translated by Yuri Tkach, serve as the key sources of examples for this analysis. The two novels and the short story are noteworthy for their precise portrayal of the Soviet society at its onset. They depict a period between the Communist-provoked war against Ukraine's independence and Stalin's forced industrialization, providing a comprehensive understanding of the totalitarian ideology in its early stages. 139 examples of Sovietisms were collected from those works of literature.

The rules for sample collection should be noted before proceeding with its analysis. If a similar translation of a term is recurrent in one text, it is included only once. If similar or different translations occur in different texts, the same term can be included multiple times. This was done to simplify the analysis of individual translations and their overall text recreation strategies.

The review of Sovietisms in Valerian Pidmohilnyi's novels indicates that "The City" features 45 unique instances of such terms, "A Little Touch of Drama" involves 22 terms of this type, and "Duel" by Borys Antonenko-Davydovych features 72 instances of Sovietisms. Most of these words and phrases reference politics and, more importantly, state influence: Sovietisms manifest Soviet state power in language.

2. Literature Analysis

2.1. Sovietisms as a Phenomenon in Political and Linguistics-Oriented Literature: Soviet-Era and Post-Soviet Analysis

Before proceeding with the theoretical outline of Sovietisms as a phenomenon, it is necessary to review the preceding literature. One of the most notable contributions regarding Sovietisms and their influence on language belongs to a British writer and major opinion leader, George Orwell (2000: 143–149). In the appendix to his famous novel "1984", the author provides a thorough description of newspeak, an abbreviation—and simplification-centric language created by Ingsoc, a ruling British socialist party in the totalitarian future described by the author.

Two views of the novel are prevalent in academic literature. The left-wing interpretations of the book tend to focus on the anti-totalitarian narratives. According to a common assertion, this literary work describes the threat of totalitarianism. Adherents of this view note that Orwell was a socialist with anti-establishment views (Newsinger 2007: 55–80).

However, one ultimately has to agree with the right-wing interpretations. According to this view, the novel offers a clear description of a Marxist Communist system from an anti-totalitarian socialist standpoint. Orwell's anti-capitalism has minimal

influence on the condemnation of the system outlined in the book. There are significant reasons to support this interpretation because the social organization described in "1984" is close to the descriptions of socialism given by political economists like János Kornai (1992: 1–350) and Paul Gregory (2004: 1–322). More importantly, the ruling organization in "1984" called itself the party of English Socialism, Ingsoc, and its "twin" ideology in the world was Neo-Bolshevism. One can describe the position of Orwell as an inversion of the view held by libertarians, who believe that both the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany were socialist. For him, both states were fascist/state capitalist.

Regarding the core topic of this paper, Sovietisms, the argument receives even further support: abbreviations like *Minipax* (Ministry of Truth) are similar to terms such as *sovnarkhoz* (Council of National Governance) or *kolkhoz* (collective farm).

The German language has a similar phenomenon, Silbenkurzwörter (Gestapo and Nazi). However, an investigation of this linguistic peculiarity indicates that they are a rare occurrence and did not represent a definitive trend in it, even during the Nazi rule. Considering the tendency of the German language towards complex one-word terms, the prevalence of these words and phrases is too low to consider them equivalent to Sovietisms, which were widespread in the Soviet-era Ukrainian discourse. Orwell's views on the Soviet-inspired newspeak were negative. He introduced Ingsoc "Sovietisms" as a direct danger to freedom. The language experiments of the Ingsoc Party officials aimed to disrupt the human capacity to consider anti-governmental actions. The goal was to remove any ability to even consider rebellion, making the Orwellian totalitarian regime absolute.

In the Western academic (as opposed to literary) discourse, Sovietisms were primarily researched by anti-totalitarian scholars. For instance, Robert Conquest, a researcher of Soviet totalitarianism, notes that the Soviets used abbreviations *en masse* because they wanted to show their progressive nature (Masenko 2017: 35). Authors such as Anne Applebaum (2017: 205–222) also refer to the destructive character of the Soviet language policy by highlighting its genocidal nature.

In the Western Translation Studies research, Sovietism translation *per se* receives attention in Natalia Kaloh Vid's 2017 article in the "Meta" journal. The researcher analyzes several English translations of Bulgakov's novel "The Master and Margarita" (Kaloh Vid 2017: 178). This research is descriptive, offering an empirical review of the existing approaches to the translation of Sovietisms. Other research focuses on the translation policies of the Soviet government. Nonetheless, its discoveries further confirm the statist essence of the Soviet Union and its attempt to create an all-encompassing totalitarian bureaucratic society. Susanna Witt (2011: 149–170) shows that the Soviet government created the most ambitious translation project in human history during

its rule. It aimed to organize a Communist-approved canon of literature and rewrite the past to support the ideas of class-based resentment. Natalia Vid's (2007) research further supports this position by highlighting that the dominating strategy of translation corresponded to the canon-creating objectives of Communists. Domestication was promoted as the "correct" translation method, and foreignizing approaches were discouraged. Communists aimed to make both literature and language Communist.

Post-Soviet discourse contains the most advanced investigations of Sovietisms. Larysa Masenko's monograph, "Language of Soviet Totalitarianism", was published in 2017. This book displays the Soviet newspeak as a double language of fraud/deception (ошуканство) and violence. Masenko believes it is similar to the Russian argot of the 20th/21st centuries. Regarding violence, she notes its preference for emotional evaluations (propaganda made terms such as *kurkul* and *Trotskyism* vague) and a black-and-white vision of the world (Socialists vs. Capitalists, Kurkuls vs. Workers). As for the language of fraud, Masenko (2017: 5–148) highlights euphemisms, quasi-specifying statements (for instance, adding the adjective *socialist* to democracy helped hide the totalitarian nature of the Soviet Union), and abbreviations (also known as Sovietisms). All these elements were kept together by the ideological dictate of the Communist Party and transformed the affected languages into a stream of constant slogans. Everything, from pejoratives to grammar, was government-issued. Larysa Masenko (2017: 37) notes the ties of her research to Orwell: she supports the position that Orwellian newspeak drew inspiration from Sovietisms and similar linguistic tendencies present among Communists.

Translation Studies and philological research on Sovietisms is also widespread in the Ukrainian discourse. For example, A. Domenko (2012) reviewed Sovietisms in the novel of O. Honchar titled "The Cathedral". Katerina Bondarenko and her colleagues (2021: 117–121) analyze Sovietisms in HBO's "Chernobyl" (2019) miniseries and its Ukrainian translation. Those studies show that most analyzed terms include references to state functions, offering additional empirical confirmation for Masenko's analysis.

As for their methodology, they are primarily descriptive: the main goal of this research is to showcase Sovietisms and their translations. A definite trend in the existing literature is the absence of more prescriptive papers that attempt to review alternative translation methods for Sovietisms.

2.2. Realia Theory and Sovietisms

A central translation theory of the late Soviet and post-Soviet period in Ukraine is that of realia. The realia concept is a direct response of Eastern Bloc scholars to the difficulties of rendering notions that do not exist in the languages and realities of other na-

tions. The most extensive study of realia can be found in the seminal book of Roksolana Zorivchak titled "Realia and Translation" (1989). For the author, Sovietisms, which have a significant representation in this research sample, are realia, "mono- and polylexemic units, the main lexical meaning of which includes (regarding the binary contrasting) the traditionally established mass of ethnocultural information, which is foreign for the objective reality of the target language " (Zorivchak 1989: 58).

The definition is appropriate for explaining the difficulties of translating Sovietisms. They represent something uncommon in the Western world: most Western countries avoided the fate of being subjected to a dictatorship of socialist governments. As the overall scope of the research mentioned above confirms, the terms in question constitute a significant obstacle for translators.

3. Outlining Sovietisms as a Phenomenon

3.1. Defining Sovietisms

The research discussed in the section above allows for the definition of Sovietisms: Sovietisms are realia in the form of government-issued words and collocations that appear under Communist influence.

The phenomenon is more restricted than the language of fraud and can be considered a component of it. The language of fraud often includes well-established terms because its goal is deception. Sovietisms intended to deceive and show the new reality created by the Soviet government. The analysis of the research sample that comprises 139 Sovietisms shows that they involve either Soviet governmental institutions (the most common use) or, in rarer cases, unique ideological phenomena. This data confirms the preceding research findings on a wide number of examples.

3.2. Categorizing Sovietisms

A notable research gap is the lack of a detailed categorization of Sovietisms. For instance, Orwell concentrates on the so-called combined fragment-based Sovietisms (this term is explained below), such as Minitruth = Ministry of Truth. Larysa Masenko notes that the Soviet regime mixed combined fragment-based Sovietisms with various abbreviations.

The real extent of the phenomenon is much wider:
1) *New terminology built according to the common language rules (this group will further be referred to as "conventional" Sovietisms):* 48 examples in the sample list are characterized by the terminology that is built according to the prevailing language rules and does not involve any abbreviations or other attempts

to change words. A characteristic example of such a term is *народний комісар* (people's commissar). This category of Sovietisms represents 34.5% of the research sample.

2) *Abbreviation-based Sovietisms:* these are Sovietisms built via various abbreviations. There are five types of these Sovietisms. They represent 65.5% of the research sample:

   a) Acronyms: these are terms built from the first letters of government-related collocations. The words denote organizations, institutions, and government policies such as РАГС (family register offices), ЧК (Emergency Committee, often known in the West as Cheka), and НЕП (New Economic Policy). They represent 12 examples in the sample list, or 8.6% of it. This method of building Sovietisms is not unique. It is a common trend for modern governmental structures. For example, the US government uses many abbreviations, such as FBI or USAID. The American military also promotes various acronyms and abbreviations.

   b) Informal acronyms: the first notable approach to building Sovietisms that is purely Soviet can be found in the term *чека* (Cheka). It is an informal spelling of ЧК (Emergency Committee) that uses the pronunciation of the letters forming the acronym. This phenomenon is isolated and occurs only in one form (albeit several times). It represents 0.7% of the analyzed research sample.

   c) Combined fragment-based Sovietisms: combined fragment-based Sovietisms are terms that combine syllables from a collocation (*kolkhoz*), a syllable with a complete word (*Gosplan*), or a whole syllable with an acronym (*Gulag*). In rare cases, an acronym may also be joined with a whole word (*VUKospilka*). Thus, the term syllable word, which reflects a similar aspect in German, is unacceptable. Combined fragment-based Sovietisms do not involve syllables alone. The Ukrainian term *складноскорочене слово*, which can be translated as a complex abbreviation, is suboptimal, too. The phenomenon of abbreviations is much wider.

   This Sovietism type combines word fragments that often result in significant language distortions. Fragment-based Sovietisms represent 53% of the analyzed research sample (74 examples). These words are the most characteristic sign of the early Soviet discourse and may be called a symbol of its revolutionary and most radical totalitarian phase (Stalinism). This statistical information contradicts the position of Larysa Masenko, who implies that combined fragment-based Sovietisms were as widespread as acronyms. Most likely, the frequency of this approach to building Sovietisms fell with

the decrease in ideological fervor of the post-Stalinist Soviet Union. Acronyms became much more common, showing a transition to traditional governance. Soviet rulers transformed from fanatical revolutionaries into bureaucrats who rarely knew the underlying Marxist theory.

d) Isolated fragment-based Sovietisms: an isolated version of fragment-based Sovietisms is expressed by shortened terms that are not joined with other words/acronyms/fragments. There are 3 instances of this phenomenon. They are signified by such terms as *спец* (shortened from *specialist*: this term used to signify experts educated before the Communist takeover) and *виш* (a contraction of the word *вищий (higher)* that is a part of a collocation *вищий навчальний заклад* (*higher education institution*)). The notions represent 2% of the chosen sample list.

e) Subject acronyms: the final modification transforms acronyms into subject nouns. It is performed with the help of suffixes. For instance, a member of the Cheka is called a *чекіст* (chekist). A NEP business specialist is named a *NEPman*. These Sovietisms appear in the texts 2 times (1%) and are informal.

4. Methodological Approach to the Translation Analysis of the Research Sample: Realia Theory

This paper concentrates on the realia theory for the analysis of Sovietisms. Sovietisms can be seen as an example of Soviet-specific realia. For this reason, the author intends to use the classification of realia translation methods developed by Zorivchak (1989: 58):

1) Transcription: full recreation of the original term's pronunciation and grammatical features (for example, *копа*, a popular council, becomes *kopa* in translation);

2) Hyperonimic renomination (derealizing realia); translation of a realia with a general term that presents its main denotation (for instance, *свитка*, a Ukrainian element of clothing with unique features, turns into a *coat*);

3) Descriptive paraphrase: an explication of a realia that replaces an original term (*Покрова*, a religious event celebrated by many Ukrainians, is translated as a phrase *at the end of October*);

4) Combined renomination: usually a mix of transcriptions and descriptive paraphrases (*чумак*, a wandering seller of various goods, is rendered as *chumak, wandering carrier*). However, as the analysis further shows, it can appear as a combination of a calque and a descriptive paraphrase. Consequently, the methods will be described as "combined renomination (transcription)" and "combined renomination (calque)";

5) Calque: a direct translation of one or several morphological elements within realia into a foreign language (for example, *продрозкладка*, a policy of wheat expropriation from peasants during the 1917–1921 Civil War that led to mass famines, is translated as *prodallotment*). This term is close to the Western understanding of calques or, as they are often known, loan translations (Sewell 2002: 607–115). The core distinction may lie in the adherence to original terms. The Western approach to loan translations is more literal, emphasizing closer obedience to original texts. The term suggested by Zorivchak involves the possibility of a less literal rendering. In this research, the author intends to use a stricter definition of the term that includes a more literal methodology;

6) Transposition on a connotative level: using a term that removes the original denotation but preserves the connotative elements (for example, *червона як калина* = *blushed for no reason*);

7) Imitation method: the use of one realia to present another (*козачок* equals *valet*);

8) Contextual explanation: an imitation combined with an explanation (for instance, *kopa* becomes "*assembly*, community council");

9) Situational correspondence: a term that corresponds only to a specific context is used to translate a realia (for example, *свати* = *matchmakers*) (Zorivchak, 1989: 83–141).

Three other terms are also of interest to this research and will be used within it extensively:

1) Domestication: a strategy of adapting Source Language features to Target Language standards in translation;

2) Foreignization: a strategy of preserving Source Language features in a Target Language during translation;

3) Neutralization: a strategy of removing certain denotative and connotative features of an original term during translation (for instance, turning *комсомол* into the *Communist Union of Youth*).

5. Reproduction of Sovietisms in Translation

The research sample analysis allows splitting Sovietisms into two groups based on their translation method. Sovietisms built via conventional methods are frequently translated through calques/loan translations, representing a trend towards foreignization or at least a balance between foreignization and domestication. 68% of them undergo loan translations/calques, and 20% are translated through transcription-based methods such as direct transcription and combined renomination.

Simultaneously, the reproduction of abbreviation-based Sovietisms follows a model of neutralization and domestication. Most of these terms are translated through domesticating approaches, represented by descriptive paraphrase or hyperonimic renomination (69.5%). Only 24% of the abbreviation-based Sovietisms involve foreignizing methods such as combined renomination (transcription)/transcription (16.8%) or calque (7.3%). Attempts to offer foreignizing translations started to appear only in the late Soviet and post-Soviet translations (late 1980s until today), but even they are sporadic.

5.1. Abbreviation-based Sovietisms: Analysis of the Translation Approaches

Further analysis will concentrate on the abbreviation-based types of Sovietisms (95 cases) as their translation is challenging, leading to many recreation methods. Conventional Sovietisms are translated literally and do not need advanced analysis.

5.1.1. Sample Analysis of "A Little Touch of Drama". In the translation of "A Little Touch of Drama" ("non-conventional" Sovietisms represent 20 cases out of 22), which is the oldest one in this sample (1972), showcases an especially notable example of the neutralization trend because it mostly focuses on descriptive paraphrases (10 instances) and hyperonimic renomination (4 instances):

> Example 1*: махортрест/makhortrest* became a *Tobacco Trust* in translation (Pidmohilnyi 1972: 19; Pidmohilnyi 1956: 28).
> *Translation Method: Descriptive paraphrase.*
>
> Example 2: *нархарч/narkharch* became *People's Food* in translation (Pidmohilnyi 1972: 20; Pidmohilnyi 1956: 30).
> *Translation Method: Descriptive paraphrase.*
>
> Example 3*: житлокооп/zhytlokoop* became a *housing co-op* (Pidmohilnyi 1972: 39; Pidmohilnyi 1956: 65).
> *Translation Method: Hyperonimic renomination.*

In this translation, the only serious attempts at rendering Sovietisms and simultaneously preserving their structure and functions (language of fraud) occur only for well-known terms such as NEP (New Economic Policy). These are translated using the combined renomination (transcription) approach that involves a mix of transcriptions and descriptive explanations (via footnotes in this case)):

> Example 4: *Неп/Nep* became *NEP* in translation and received the following footnote: "New Economic Policy (1921-28), government policy based on concessions to private enterprise" (Pidmohilnyi 1956: 67; Pidmohilnyi 1972: 40).
> *Translation method: Combined renomination (transcription).*

Example 5: *РАГС/RAGS* was transcribed via a Russian form ZAHS and received the following footnote: "Marriage Registry Office" (Pidmohilnyi 1956: 38; Pidmohilnyi 1972: 24).
Translation method: Combined renomination (transcription).

"A Little Touch of Drama" directly discusses Sovietisms within the text, highlighting their absurdity. Here, the translators use calques to recreate the fragment in English. However, this approach is too isolated and unlikely to be noticed by English readers.

Example 6. "If your argument were followed a little further, comrade," Slavenko smiled, "it would be more rational to use 'Mister.'
– It's true that the word 'comrade' is longer than 'mister,' but so what? Maybe, to be practical, 'comrade' should be shortened to *'com'*?" (Pidmohilnyi, 1972: 54)
Translation method: Calque

5.1.2. Sample Analysis of "The City". Maxim Tarnawsky's translation of "The City" (2014–2018) (sample: 26 cases out of 45) mostly focuses on the usage of descriptive paraphrases (17 instances) and at least one instance of hyperonimic renomination. Both approaches represent neutralization strategies. However, being a newer one (2014–2018), it includes attempts at rendering some terms through transcription (3 cases) or combined renomination (transcription) (4 cases):

Example 7*: Сільбуд/Silbud* became *Village Hall* (Pidmohilnyi 2014: 13; Pidmohilnyi 1954: 12).
Translation method: Descriptive paraphrase.

Example 8: *ВИШ/VYSH*, which means a higher education institution, became a *university* in translation. (Pidmohilnyi 2014: 28; Pidmohilnyi 1954: 28).
Translation Method: Hyperonimic renomination.

Example 9: *Робземліс/Robzemlis* became *Robzemlis Trade Union of Agricultural and Forest Workers* (Pidmohilnyi 2014: 13; Pidmohilnyi 1954: 12).
Translation method: Combined renomination (transcription).

Example 10: *Раднарком/Radnarkom* (the Council of People's Ministers) became *RadNarKom, Rada Narodnykh Komisariv, the Council of People's Ministers* (Pidmohilnyi 2014: 44; Pidmohilnyi 1954: 50).
Translation method: Combined renomination (transcription).

5.1.3. Sample Analysis of the "Duel". The translation of the "Duel" produced by Yuri Tkach (1986, republished and edited in the 2010s/2020s) features similar patterns. 45 terms were used in the short story; their translation belong to the abbreviation-based

Sovietisms. In the translation, 33 instances of Sovietisms are translated through descriptive paraphrase, which neutralizes their meaning. The translation of two famous terms, *Cheka* (Emergency Committee: the key repression-centered institution of the early Soviet Union) and *Komsomol* (Union of Soviet Youth) is achieved using transcriptions. Four terms receive a combined renomination (transcription) treatment, featuring a mix of transcriptions and footnotes. Lastly, 5 terms undergo a unique calque translation (translation of each element: Komsomol as Comunyouth), which does not appear in other translations.

> Example 11*: Наросвіта/Narosvita* became *Board of instruction* (Antonenko-Davydovych 1954: 34; Antonenko-Davydovych 1986: 35).
> *Translation method: Descriptive paraphrase.*

> Example 12: *Чека (Cheka)* became *Cheka* in translation (Antonenko-Davydovych 1954: 58; Antonenko-Davydovych 1986: 60).
> *Translation method: Transcription.*

> Example 13: *Допр (DOPR) became* DOPR in translation with an addition of a footnote offering the following description: "Russian acronym for house of correctional labor" (Antonenko-Davydovych 1954: 95; Antonenko-Davydovych 1986: 98).
> *Translation method: Combined renomination (transcription).*

> Example 14: *Ревком/Revcom* became *revcom* in translation (Antonenko-Davydovych 1954: 31; Antonenko-Davydovych 1986: 33).
> *Translation method: Calque.*

5.2. Key patterns in the sample list

A distinct pattern emerges for the conceptual characteristics of non-conventional Sovietism translations. George and Moira Luckyj use a full-scale neutralization strategy. Maxim Tarnawsky and Yuri Tkach focus on neutralization, too, but render some terms through a mix of combined renomination (transcription) or calques.

In the case of George and Moira Luckyjs' translations, Sovietisms disappear altogether in all but one case that mocks the newspeak tendencies of Soviet society. Thus, their translations, at best, recreate the conceptual elements of State and Suppression (Sovietisms in translation = State (not necessarily Soviet) and Suppression). Simultaneously, it is unclear whether the terms are Soviet (one can imagine something similar in progressive European states) and involve rationalization and fraud elements. Nothing emphasizes the distinctive approach of the Soviets towards progress at all costs. Instead, these Soviet realia are neutralized, losing their full meaning from the standpoint of the English audience.

Maxim Tarnawsky focuses on combined renomination (transcription) as an alternative to descriptive paraphrases, since he combines the Ukrainian names of Soviet institutions with full-scale English translations that explicate the titles of the organizations. Here, the average reader should be capable of perceiving the following elements of totalitarian lexis: state-based orientation, partial representation of progressivity (knowledge of context is necessary), and threat of suppression (Sovietism in translation = Soviet State, Progressive (partially), Suppression/Threat of Suppression). Nevertheless, few readers are likely to understand the "rationality" of the terms and the full extent of their fraud-centric orientation because of their foreignness.

Similar observations are valid for most of the translation choices made by Yuri Tkach in his translation of the "Duel". The use of neutralization masks the fraudulent and pseudo-rational aspects of the Soviet Union. Combined renomination reflects the foreign nature of the terms and even some of their totalitarian state elements but may be confusing for the readers. Simultaneously, this translation offers a new and potentially promising approach to recreating Sovietisms through the calque method (previously, it was only used once and, probably, sporadically by George and Moira Luckyj). This approach renders Ukrainian Sovietisms as if they were created in English. Consequently, it showcases both the foreign and unique nature of the terms and their discourse of fraud/rationality. This approach mimics the one chosen by George Orwell to recreate the realia of Communist societies in his novel "1984". Ultimately, the author of this paper considers this strategy to be close to optimal for recreating ideology-centric novels when the main goal of a translator is to engage in national storytelling.

6. Discussion

6.1. Analysis of the Translation Methods and Strategies for Abbreviation-Based Sovietisms

The analytical section above has outlined the core methods of translation for Sovietisms. Five approaches are common. They involve neutralization through hyperonimic renomination and descriptive paraphrase or partial recreation via transcriptions, combined renomination, and calque.

These methods all have their significant positives and downsides that become more or less prominent depending on the translator goals:

1-2) *Descriptive paraphrase and hyperonimic renomination:* they lead to the loss of unique discourses of rationality/modernism and fraud; simultaneously, they are much more accessible to the average reader in the West.

3) *Transcription:* this strategy highlights the foreign nature of the terms and, most likely, at least some elements of their totalitarianism by focusing on the exact

forms used in Ukraine. Nonetheless, it may confuse the readers because it lacks context. The approach is mostly used when the Sovietisms in question are well known.

4) *Combined renomination (transcription-based):* this method combines the benefits of descriptive paraphrase (it is understandable) and transcription (it is foreign and reflects at least some elements of modernity/fraud). Simultaneously, it makes texts more difficult to read by introducing hard-to-decipher concepts and, more importantly, many footnotes.

5) *Calque*: this method fully recreates the structure of Sovietisms, rendering their foreignness and some aspects of rationality and fraud. However, calques without footnotes are unlikely to be understandable to the foreign reader. This approach is used when the relevant terms are easy to understand (for instance, because of context).

All those methods lead to losses, either in reading ease or recreating Sovietisms. For this reason, these approaches are equally valid and depend on the translator goals. Literary works are multifaceted: they have multiple layers of meaning. A decision to domesticate Sovietisms prioritizes the non-political layers over the political ones. Translation choices are not "good" or "bad" from a purely descriptive standpoint. A judgment on optimal or suboptimal strategies requires knowledge of a translator's scope. For this reason, it is necessary to analyze translated novels/short stories and the potential motivations of their translators.

Foreignization-centric methods are notable for their ability to showcase the complexity of Sovietisms. However, they are likely to be very difficult in terms of reading: a truly adequate foreignizing translation strategy will likely require the creation of a translation that will be primarily accessible to individuals with special knowledge and (or) education. A domestication strategy, which involves the neutralization of foreign terms, is of interest because, to a great extent, it is more convenient for the readers: in the case of Ukrainian literature, this accessibility can play a vital role in assisting its promotion. At the same time, the loss of original sense is utterly clear in this case; such an approach to translation does not recreate the true nature of Sovietisms.

Even though neutralization may seem suboptimal, the real decisions facing translators are much more complex. A translator of Soviet Ukrainian literature should understand that Sovietisms became part of the Ukrainian mentality. Most relevant abbreviations are not shocking to any Ukrainian person. In fact, the characters in Pidmohilnyi's novels, while sometimes skeptical of innovations, do not view Sovietisms as repulsive and use the notions freely in everyday scenarios. Thus, Sovietisms and structurally similar abbreviations gain an aspect of normality among Ukrainians (Sovietisms = Normality).

While most purely "Soviet" Sovietisms are out of use, many Soviet-like state-related terms, such as Minfin, are popular in the Ukrainian language. Thus, a translator who presents Soviet neologisms in another language using foreignizing approaches risks undermining an important component of meaning, that of normality. A translator's choice then depends on context and ideology: a political novel may need a foreignization strategy if a translator wants to outline the dangers of totalitarian systems. A love story can be domesticated, even if a translator is driven by ideology.

A translator's choices can be analyzed from two perspectives: Skopos theory and translation activism. According to Skopos, translation strategies differ based on the scope or *skopos* of translators (Schäffner 2001: 235–238). Therefore, translation criticism is legitimate within their scope: one can analyze whether a translator has managed or failed to achieve their stated goal. As for the translation activism, it relates to the relatively recent turn in Translation Studies advanced by scholars such as Maria Tymoczko (2010: 1-22) and Mona Baker (2009: 222–242) that promotes a focus on the pro-justice and anti-colonial activities among translators. Ukraine faced a significant period of oppression by Communists in the past. For this reason, it is reasonable to expect that the translators of Ukrainian literature can have a goal of promoting nation narration, as Homi K. Bhabha calls it (1990: 1–8), to warn other nations about the dangers of Soviet ideology. In translation, it can take the form of radical activism-like foreignization aimed at showing the Ukrainian culture to foreigners as accurately as possible.

Based on this theory, it is possible to outline four major translation strategies for Sovietisms:

1) Nation-narrating skopos + ideology-driven text: foreignization of Sovietisms is optimal;
2) Nation-narrating skopos + non-ideological text: foreignization/domestication of Sovietisms are optional.
3) Non-narrating skopos + ideological text: domestication/foreignization of Sovietisms are optional.
4) Non-narrating skopos + non-ideological text: domestication of Sovietisms is optimal.

"The City" (1928) is a personal and autobiographical novel. It features almost no politics, and its criticism of the Soviet reality is, at best, secondary. Instead, the author narrates the relationships of the protagonist and his attempts to become a writer. The translator's (Maxim Tarnawsky's) goal is unclear, as no paratexts are available. However, it can be assumed as nation-narrating due to his lifelong work in the field of Ukrainian philology. Consequently, two strategies are optimal here: the translator could have omitted Sovietisms through descriptive paraphrasing or translated them via combined renomination (either calque- or transcription-based). Maxim Tarnawsky chose a mix-

ture of options, even though the novel could have easily maintained most of its atmosphere without explicit Sovietisms.

Contrary to that, "A Little Touch of Drama" (1930) is a political novel. While the novel does not mention politicians, it describes the pseudo-rationalist and anti-nationalist forces negatively (even though Pidmohilnyi supported socialism). More importantly, the translators' (George and Moira Luckyj) goal was to represent Ukrainian literature in the West objectively, as paratexts (for example, the translation's preface) indicate (Pidmohilnyi 1972: 7–8). In this light, the strategy of domestication for Sovietisms becomes suboptimal because of the translation goal.

This case highlights that ideological convictions can disrupt a nation-narrating approach. Above all, George Luckyj seems to have wanted to deny any credence to Sovietisms, considering the tragic events in his family connected to repression (George Luckyj's father was executed by the Soviets when they entered Western Ukraine in 1939). In the preface to the translation, he calls the novel sardonic and ironic, potentially showing an anti-Soviet vision (here, one cannot agree with the translator: while the life of petite bourgeois individuals is indeed portrayed ironically, the Soviet narratives appear in a positive light) (Pidmohilnyi 1972: 7–9). Another explanation may be more prosaic. A removal of Sovietisms might have occurred due to the dominating audience requirements. Ukrainian culture and literature, as the preface to the translation made by George and Moira Luckyj notes, is of secondary interest to Westerners. Thus, an attempt to attract them through a simpler approach was probable.

The short story "Duel" (1927) by Borys-Antonenko Davydovych is even more ideological. It narrates the story of a former Ukrainian nationalist who joined the Communist Party during the 1917–1922 Civil War. The narrative explicates his constant moral struggle and the inability to choose an identity, either Ukrainian or Communist. The protagonist is constantly met with the utter vileness and cruelness of the Soviet institutions, facing a major moral struggle: to become a true Communist or not. The story, which surprisingly was published in the 1920s within the Soviet Union, presents the Soviet government as totalitarian: it openly mentions wheat expropriations from peasants that led to the Volga Famine in 1921–1922 and the Red Terror. Ultimately, the novel ends with a harrowing metaphor. The main hero, who kills a *kurkul* (also known as *kulak*: a representative of wealthy peasants who were classified as parasites in the Soviet Union) at the end of the story, sees killing as 'loss of virginity' and a rebirth.

Lastly, Yuri Tkach is a dedicated translator of Ukrainian literature who has produced dozens of English translations. The analysis of the translator's motivation indicates his aim to represent the Ukrainian culture as accurately as possible in the West. Considering those factors, the foreignization strategy may be the most optimal for the "Duel". From the standpoint of the nation-narrating goals, his translation is the most accurate in the sample list.

6.2. Alternative foreignizing/literal approach to the translation of Sovietisms

The preceding section has outlined five approaches to translating Sovietisms from an empirical standpoint. The analysis of the translation scopes shows a common goal of promoting Ukrainian narratives in the West that offers stronger support for foreignizing approaches. In this light, a mix of two existing methods, combined renomination and calque, may offer an even more in-depth rendering of Sovietisms. This method should be called *combined renomination (calque)*. Yuri Tkach uses a precursor version of the *combined renomination (calque)* approach once in his translation to showcase the nature of prodallotment (expropriation of wheat by the early Soviet revolutionary government):

> Original:
> – *А як тут у вас* продрозкладка *йде?!*
> – *Що ви спрашуєте? – не зрозумів одразу Гарасименко:* - розвьорстка *як? (Antonenko-Davydovych 1954: 65)*

> Translation:
> "How's the **prodallotment** going here?"
> "What do you mean?" Harasymenko did not understand straight away. "You mean the produce allotment." (Antonenko-Davydovych 1986: 68)

A modified version of this approach can be used as the closest recreation of the real fraud/modernity nature of abbreviation-based Sovietisms for the nation-narrating translations:

1) *A clear introduction to the issue of Sovietisms in the form of a discussion within a preface.* A translator should outline their reasons for choosing the combined renomination (calque) method and explain why Sovietisms are important from the standpoint of intellectual tradition in the Ukrainian discourse. Alternatively, the first appearance of Sovietisms in a text and its combined renomination (calque) translation can be explained with a long footnote outlining the problem to the reader. Preference for each method depends primarily on the expected audience and its potential intellectual habits.

2) *Footnotes outlining the meaning of the calque-based Sovietisms.* Alternatively, one can add a dictionary of Sovietisms for the readers to use as a reference. The aim is to clearly explain what those terms mean to prevent confusion during reading. Once again, this choice should be discussed with editors and publishers to understand whether the audience would be willing to read footnotes or even a full-scale explanatory section at the end of a book in the first place.

2.5) *Perhaps explaining the terms inside a text may be more optimal.* However, in

cases of the more complex Sovietisms with unique pronunciations, this approach may lead to losses of the original melodic component as it will be impossible to set up a proper transcription for these notions.

3) *Calque-based translation of Sovietisms.* In this regard, one should follow the model of Soviet abbreviations and contract several words into a singular expression. Two rules are vital:

Firstly, a translator should pay attention to the calque's meaning. The reader must be capable of deciphering it into a full-scale descriptive title of an institution. Random elements should not be present; it must be an abbreviation. *For instance, Comunyou or Comyou/Comyouth is the Communist Union of Youth (Komsomol).*

Secondly, calques should reflect the 'melodic' aspects of Sovietisms. Consequently, they do not have to necessarily render every structural element of an original. One should respect the phonetic rules of their Target Language to make them memorable. *For instance, using the abbreviation Comyouth instead of Comunyou may be rational.*

4) Some examples of translations using this model are listed below. The outlined strategies can work both with footnotes and in-text explanations:

   a) Acronyms: in this case, a Soviet collocation can be translated literally and then reconstructed via the first letters of its constituents:
   - *РАГС/РАЦС (RAGS/RACS); Civil Records Registration Office (CRRO);*
   - *ЧК (CK): Emergency Committee (EC).*

   b) Informal acronyms: here, a strong method is using the existing acronyms and recreating their pronunciation through spelling. Where such a transformation is impossible because of phonetic and spelling rules, a workable choice is to use a combined fragment-based approach to Sovietisms, which also recreates the foreign nature of those terms:
   - *Cheka: I-si or Emcom (from EC).*

   c) Combined-fragment-based Sovietisms: here, a proper translation should involve a literal recreation of Sovietism fragments and their combination. Rearrangements are possible to make them accessible to the native speakers of English:
   - *махортрест: tobtrust (Trust of Tobacco Producers)*
   - *нархарч/narkharch: peoplefood/peopfood (People's Food)*
   - *житлокооп/zhytlokoop: housecoop (House cooperative)*
   - *совнархоз (sovnarkhoz): Demecoun or Econcoun (People's economy council: in this case, one of the variants is translated with a Greek word demos to preserve the melodic nature of the Sovietism)*

- *колхоз (kolkhoz): colfarm (Collective Farm)*
- *радхоз (radkhoz): councilfarm/counfarm (Soviet farm)*
- *Мінфін (minfin): minfin (Ministry of Finances)*

d) Isolated fragment-based Sovietism: here, the translation principle is similar to the preceding case. The only difference is that there is no need to combine words:

- *спец (specialist): spec/spets/spesh*

e) Subject acronyms: in this case, one can add a certain subject-oriented suffix to the calque-oriented translation of an acronym:

- *чекіст/чекістка (chekist): emcomist/I-si-man/I-si-woman (member of the Cheka/Emcom/I-si).*

The proposed translations are extremely close to the originals. They accurately showcase the extremist nature of the Soviet language experiments (from a nation-narrating perspective) and can add an Orwellian aspect to the translated texts. Nonetheless, this strategy is radical enough to alienate many readers, even if it achieves the nation-narrating goals better than other foreignizing strategies. One should be very careful with it. This strategy is acceptable only when a translator wants to recreate the Ukrainian culture and the tragic events of the Soviet occupation as closely as possible, engaging in a radical version of nation narration.

Conclusion

While translating abbreviation-based Sovietisms, an expert should understand that translations are meant to be read. Sacrificing fidelity in the name of better sales and promoting literature relating to national identity is a rational strategy. While translatable in theory (in the light of George Orwell's contributions), Sovietisms may need major simplifications from translators because of the foreign nature of the terms. Foreignization-centric calque-based approaches outlined in this paper are oriented at academic readers ready to deal with extensive paratexts.

Ultimately, this research faced two limitations. Firstly, the sample list includes only 139 elements, a relatively small number considering the phenomenon's scope. Secondly, three translators out of four (apart from Moira Luckyj) were of Ukrainian origin. Therefore, some translation strategies analyzed in this case might have been motivated by their language knowledge.

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